

Minutes of a Board Meeting of Strategic Investment Board Limited

Held at 10.00am on Tuesday 17th November 2015 at
Carleton House
Gasworks Business Park
1 Cromac Avenue
Belfast

Present: Brett Hannam (BH)
Gerry McGinn (GMcG)(Chair)
Frank Hewitt (FH)
Marie Therese McGivern (MTM)
Chris Thompson (CT)
Kathryn Thomson (KT)
Danny McSorley (DMcS)

In attendance: Gregor Hamilton (GH)
Scott Wilson (SW)
Mary McKee (MM)(Item 15 only)
Richard McFarlane (RM)(Item 15 only)
Paul Priestly (PP)(Item16 only)
Bryan Gregory (BG)(Item 17 only)

Apologies: Duncan McCausland (DMcC)
Martin Spollen (MS)

Declarations of interest

1. The usual declarations of interest were taken as read. In the light of the items potentially open for discussion: FH particularly noted his interest in NI Transport Holding Co; KT noted interests in HMS Caroline, Seige Heroes Museum, Museum of Free Derry and Belfast Waterfront Hall; DMcS noted interest in DCAL Safety and Technical Group for Casement Park; and CT noted interest in G4S.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. The minutes of the October 2015 board meeting were approved (subject to amendment to note KT's declaration of interest in Waterfront Hall).

Chairman's and Directors' Business

3. GMcG reported that a decision had still not been made on the issue of retaining SIB within the ambit of OFMdFM.

4. GMcG reported that he had met with Henry Johnston (Under Sec at OFMdFM) and that generally the department was content with the functioning of SIB.

5. CT asked whether it would be possible for board members to attend the staff conference. BH said they would be very welcome, but noted that the conference might be postponed because of the number of other staff commitments on the proposed date of 25th November.

Board Committees

6. GMcG spoke to the board paper setting out the terms of reference for the various board committees. He explained his desire for the Communications and Engagement committee to become more active in engaging with stakeholders, and for the Strategy Committee to take the lead in ensuring SIB did not lose sight of its wider strategic remit, picking up any actions in this area arising from the board away day. GMcG invited comments on the board paper and there was general agreement with its content.

Chief Executive's Report, ISNI Report, AMU Report

7. BH updated the board on some of the projects referred to in the Chief Executive's Report. In particular:

Arc21: BH noted that the planning appeal had been lodged.

-Ebrington: BH explained that SIB would be taking on responsibility for the further development of Ebrington Barracks now that ILEX was being wound up.

-SIB Status: BH explained that it had been determined that if SIB were to transfer to the Department for Infrastructure, it would be placed within the “Planning” directorate.

- Boardroom Apprentice: BH tabled a paper which set out the details of a proposed “apprentice” scheme which HOCS had asked SIB and a number of other NDPBs to consider. FH explained that Translink had also received such a request and they had been guardedly positive about it, while identifying a number of issues to be resolved around confidentiality, participation and remuneration. MTM expressed reservations as to the use of the term “apprentice” and noted that if done properly the requirement could be rather onerous. She described experience of similar arrangements at BMC and noted that a very strong mentoring arrangement was necessary if the intended benefits were to be delivered. MTM also questioned if the scheme would really address the evident requirement for a bigger and more diverse pool of potential non-execs. DMcS and FH agreed that there were wider issues around gender balance and social inclusion which the scheme wouldn’t address. CT said he was cautiously positive, and certainly wouldn’t rule it out, but it would require a lot more work. KT noted that Arts in Business operated a similar scheme, and agreed that it was a good idea that would require more work. In summary it was a good idea in principle, but required more work, and GMcG agreed to respond to HOCS in those terms.

8. FH noted the difficulties arising on the Urban Villages project.

9. FH noted that although lack of political support for the Belfast Rapid Transport project had been identified as a potential risk in the aide-memoire, there was currently very clear political support for the project. BH agreed but noted that there was opposition from some parties and trade organisations that was likely to increase as the project progressed.

10. CT asked for an update on the position regarding the Civil Service Commissioners and SIB staff working with departments. BH explained that discussions were now in abeyance as a wider review was being carried out.

11. SW briefly explained the work which was being undertaken with DFP to establish an infrastructure investment fund.

12. SW delivered the AMU report. He explained that the Invest to Save programme had been approved at the PSG meeting on 13th November and had now gone to ministers for approval. CT asked if departments would be able to come up with sufficient proposals. SW expressed

confidence that they would. DMcS asked if there was scope for local government to undertake invest to save projects. SW said there was, if the spending department was supportive.

13. SW described progress with the capital receipts programme. He explained that there was limited scope for obtaining receipts simply by disposing of surplus assets, and that outsourcing of services might be considered. CT noted that there was a risk that time and effort might be invested in consideration of outsourcing when there was insufficient political support to implement it. MTM noted that if anything the pressure was in the other direction towards increased use of centralized shared services in IT, procurement, audit etc. GMcG thought this would be a topic to discuss with HOCS at the away day.

14. SW explained that the ONS had recently reclassified Housing Associations in England as “public non financial corporations”. Although the legislative background was different in NI it was quite likely that NI housing Associations would be similarly reclassified. SW noted that this might affect the Social Housing Reform Programme.

SIB Review of the Use of Social Clauses

15. MM and RM joined the meeting. They made a presentation to the board on the Review of Social clauses which they had carried out (and which had been approved by the Procurement Board on 5 November). They explained the progress which had been made over the previous year and the nature of the consultation they had carried out in preparation of the review. They outlined the key recommendations of the review and described some of the projects where “Buy Social” was being implemented.

Lessons Learned from SIB Support to Reform Projects

16. PP joined the meeting and gave a short presentation on his “lessons Learned” report. He explained that there was no single factor which guaranteed success, but key determinants included a pre-engagement review (where possible), strong political mandate, good leadership,, effective governance and appropriate staffing. The board discussed the report and it was agreed that a version of it could be shared with departments in order to demonstrate how they could most effectively work with SIB.

Desertcreat

17. Bryan Gregory joined the meeting. He gave a presentation on Desertcreat, outlining the history of the project and SIB's involvement in it. He explained the business case process and the changing strategic context and training requirements which had led to the preferred strategic option – being the relocation of NIFRS to Desertcreat and the refurbishment/rationalisation of the existing PSNI and NIPS training facilities.

Progress against Ministerial Letter of Expectation

19. The board noted the positive progress against the Ministerial Letter of Expectation as set out in the status report.

Finance Report and Media Pack

18. The Finance Report and Media Pack were noted.

Other Business

20. FH expressed the appreciation of Translink for the ongoing assistance of SIB.

Chair