

Minutes of a Board Meeting of Strategic Investment Board Limited

Held at 2pm on Tuesday 27th June 2017 at
FinTrU House
Gasworks Business Park
1 Cromac Avenue
Belfast

Present: Gerry McGinn (GMcG)(Chair)
Marie Therese McGivern (MTM)(Items 1-14)
Danny McSorley (DMcS)
Duncan McCausland (DMcC)
Kathryn Thomson (KT)
Brett Hannam (BH)

In attendance: Gregor Hamilton (GH)
Scott Wilson (SW)
Martin Spollen (MS)
Paul Priestly (Item 16 only)
Alan McVicker (Item 17 only)

Apologies: None

Declarations of interest

1. The usual declarations of interest were taken as read. There were no specific declarations.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

2. The minutes of the May 2017 board meeting were approved (subject to minor changes to items 16, 17, 19 and 20).

3. The minutes of the June 2017 board meeting were approved. DMcS noted that although he was listed under “apologies” he had arranged to attend by telephone but contact had not been made.

Chairman’s and Directors’ Business

4. GMcG noted that a candidate for the Board Room Apprentice Scheme had been identified. She would be attending meetings for one year.

5. GMcG reported that he had met with BH and DMcC (as Chair of Audit Committee) and had discussed how risks were dealt with and reported between the Audit Committee and to review the most significant current risks.

6. GMcG noted that he would be progressing the annual directors’ review process.

7. GMcG reported that he had attended a Brexit Symposium at Ulster University. A discussion about skills for business had featured prominently. BH said that, under the heading of infrastructure, he had taken part in a useful discussion about the future of the single electricity market.

Chief Executive’s Report, ISNI Report, AMU Report

8. BH updated the board on developments since the preparation of his report. In particular;

- MLK: he said that money might be freed up from Ebrington, which would allow essential health and safety work to be carried out at MLK.

- Desertcreat: BH explained the nature of the FoI requests and the responses to them.

- Pay remit: BH explained that discussions had progressed and that DoF continued to work on the issue.

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9. GMcG asked for an update on the accommodation position. SW explained that the landlord of FiNtrU House had offered an incentive for DoF/SIB to leave the building before the expiry of the lease. It was now for SIB to give DoF details of our accommodation requirements in the event of relocation. Mark Wishart and Ursula Doherty were now working on this.

11. DMcS asked for an update on the Newry CCTC project. GH explained the position on car-parking/planning and design development.

12. DMcC noted that the Audit Committee proposed to look afresh at all conflicts of interest and involvement of staff in other interests, in the light of recent media interest.

13. MS spoke to the ISNI Report. He explained that the political situation remained very uncertain. The ISNI would be “dusted off” only once new ministers were in place – a process which would take about four weeks as the paper would have to be recirculated to the departments.

14. SW spoke to the AMU Report. He explained that he would be attending the NICS Board on 30th June and that he would circulate a set of the papers for that meeting to the next board meeting.

In the context of estate rationalisation, SW noted that there is a significant amount of proposed Grade A office space already through the planning process. However there is a limited number of potential occupiers.

SW noted the request from DAERA to assist in the development of an estates strategy. He noted that AMU were increasingly receiving requests for assistance of this type and a specific business plan was being prepared to cover this activity.

SW said potential Invest to Save proposals were under consideration.

DMcC asked if there had been any activity arising indirectly as a result of the Grenfell Tower disaster. SW said there was no SIB involvement, but the Building Standards board had been asked to report.

SIB Review

15. BH explained that a first draft of the written report of the SIB Review team would be available at the end of July and could be discussed at the August Board meeting, although a preliminary meeting was scheduled with the review team on 28th June. DMcC noted the importance of taking time to consider the report properly and responding appropriately. It was agreed that the report would be fully considered at the August meeting. DMcC asked that BH circulate a note of the preliminary meeting. DMcS agreed it was important to get notice of any likely recommendations as soon as possible.

Validation of Benefits and Achievements Assessment

16. Paul Priestly joined the meeting and explained the work undertaken to validate the SIB Benefits and Achievements Assessment. He explained that following a search process a senior lecturer in accountancy at UU had been appointed to carry out the validation. The work undertaken had included a review of the information provided, a comparison with Scottish Futures Trust and a number of meetings with members of staff. The assessor had made a number of recommendations, which would be adopted. These included:

- a greater degree of disaggregation of benefits;
- a clear distinction between capital and revenue;
- year on year comparison figures to be included; and
- more detail to be provided around jobs model.

PP said he would make some graphics of year on year performance available for the next meeting. GMcG asked whether any useful lessons had emerged from the comparison with SFT. PP thought the business models were so different that it was difficult to make a proper comparison.

Work of Council Support Unit

17. Alan McVicker joined the meeting and gave a presentation on the work of the Council Support Unit. He rehearsed the reasons why the unit had been established and explained the hybrid approach taken to the differing requirements of councils. He noted a number of common themes across different Councils, including waste and the refurbishment or replacement of ageing sports and leisure facilities. DMcS expressed concern that SIB might, by providing project management themselves, be discouraging councils from developing a capability of their own. AMcV agreed this was a risk, although he stressed that the CSU was happy to provide limited assistance from outside rather than placing staff inside councils. BH noted that a number of the projects which SIB had assisted with had been £40m plus projects which did not arise so often as to justify councils developing in-house capability. GMcG asked SW if councils were interested in developing more efficient asset utilization. SW said they were at a comparatively early stage but quite enthusiastic.

Finance Report and Media pack

18. The contents of the Finance Report and media pack were noted.

ACTIONS:

- Amendment to May 2017 Minutes (GH)
- Circulation of Note of meeting with SIB Review Team (BH)
- SIB Benefits and Achievements Graphics to be provided for next meeting (PP)