MEETING OF STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD LIMITED

Tuesday 17th September at 10am, The Kelvin Building

Present

Kathryn Thomson (Chair) [KT]
Marie Therese McGivern (by video conference) [MTMcG]
Danny McSorley [DMcS]
Duncan McCausland [DMcC]
Brett Hannam [BH]

Attendees

Scott Wilson (for ISNI report)
Paul McWilliams and Martin Spollen (for Data Office item)

Appointment of Meeting Chair

Kathryn Thomson was appointed to chair the meeting.

Apologies

None

Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

Board Terms of Reference

All members confirmed the Board Terms of reference.

Minutes of August Meeting & Matters Arising

1. The minutes of the August Board meeting were approved, subject to the removal of the last sentence of paragraph 10 on page 3 (relating to the Mobuoy remediation programme).

Chair and Directors' Business

Pending appointments of Interim Chair and Chief Executive Officer.

2. Neither of these two appointments have yet been confirmed by TEO as they are still awaiting Ministerial approvals.
3. The Board expressed their concerns about the consequences of the delays for SIB's governance.

Report from the Audit Committee

4. The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that:
    a. The Committee had reviewed the Internal Audit Plan and Strategy 2024-26, including a review of progress in the current year;
    b. The register of audit recommendations had been reviewed by the committee;
    c. The Committee Effectiveness Survey had been presented and noted.
    d. Two current risks had been raised: two Board members have still to receive extensions of their terms of office in writing and the delay in approval of the incoming CEO.

TEO Issues

5. BH provided an update on the Social Value Unit, reporting that TEO has reviewed the position and concluded that the staff from the Unit will stay within SIB. Staff will not be transferred to TEO. This is despite Social Value continuing to be a priority for Ministers. BH confirmed that this will not have core SIB budget implications.
6. The SIB Review was still in draft. It had been reviewed by Permanent Secretaries and no significant changes were made. BH explained to the Board that the TEO Permanent Secretary plans to convene a joint body to look at the implementation of the review findings once Ministerial approvals have been received. Members noted that a copy of the final review findings has not yet been passed to the Board.
7. BH reported that the Permanent Secretary, TEO, was content for the Independent SIB Pay Policy Review and Senior Leadership Team Proposals to go forward, but these must remain cost neutral. The Permanent Secretary expected that a joint TEO/SIB Board panel would oversee this work.
8. Board members expressed their continued concerns about lack of progress on these issues, and the significant impact on SIB governance arrangements and staff retention.

Reports

ISNI Update

9. Scott Wilson reported that the First and Deputy First Minister had been briefed on ISNI at a meeting on 29th August. Competing priorities will make it difficult to progress social housing. Work on enabling action 9 (alternative financing options) continues.

10. ISNI has not yet received Ministerial approval, but it is hoped that this will be within the next two months. The ISNI subcommittee continues to meet. Details of the Investment Plan will not be made publicly available when ISNI is published.

11. SW informed the Board that SIB, along with HOCS and DoF have been asked to attend an upcoming evidence session at the Public Account Committee, which will examine follow-up actions to the NIAO major capital projects report.

CEO Report

12. BH spoke to his report adding the following points:
    a. Casement Park and City Deals: The UK government had announced that it will not be supported financially by the UK Government. DfC already have broad options for current options for the next steps on the Casement Park development, which they will now begin to explore more fully.
    b. The Councils most affected by the City and Growth Deals funding pause remain Causeway Coast and Glens and Mid Ulster. There is a risk that levelling up funding and some Future Towns funding may also be paused.
    c. BH reported that the UK government will abolish the National Infrastructure Commission and the Infrastructure Projects Authority (IPA). A new body will be established – the National Infrastructure Service and Transformation Authority.

13. Board members commended the progress made with Strule.

14. D McSorley noted the lack of early impetus and ongoing funding gaps for the Casement Park redevelopment, which had contributed to the current situation.

15. In answer to a question, BH confirmed that the SIB project director for renewable energy – should one be appointed - will be recharged to DfE.

Presentation: Centralized Data and Digital Office

16. Paul McWilliams and Martin Spollen presented the rationale for the creation of a Digital and Data Office. This would have the potential to establish a centralized data collation and access function which could be shared across all Departments. The purpose of the office would be to accelerate research, deployment and decision making. Several

operational and financial advantages would accrue if such an office were to be operated through SIB by expanding the current DARE unit.

17. The Board noted the proposal and welcomed the principles and ambitions. However, Board members advised that a cautious approach to any next steps to implement the proposal should be taken. The Board also advised that any reference to the 10X strategy should be removed from the draft proposal.

<u>Media Pack</u>

18. The contents of the media pack were noted.

<u>AOB</u>

19. The Board discussed privately a personnel issue.

Chair