Minutes of Strategic Investment Board meeting
6th January 2026, The Kelvin Building Boardroom

Present:

Duncan McCausland (Chair)
Kathryn Thomson
Marie Therese McGivern
Danny McSorley (by videoconference)
Steve Harper
Louise Johnston
Scott Wilson

In attendance:

Paul McWilliams (for agenda item 7)
Helen McNeill (as replacement minute taker)

Apologies

Apologies received from Gregor Hamilton.

Declarations of Interest & Board Terms of Reference

No new declarations of interest. The Board Terms of Reference were noted.

1) **Minutes of the November 2025 meeting were approved, subject to the following amendments being made:**

   Page 2 Paragraph 8 line 4: Change to **'It was** suggested that..'
   Page 2 Paragraph 9 line 3: Correct spelling error and Change to *'an arrangement which **may** impact on effective operations'.*

2) **Chairmans' Business – None**

3) **Report from Chair of Remuneration and Personnel committee**

   i. The terms of reference for the **independent pay policy review** were agreed in principle. They include the possible introduction of pay bands, an analysis of gender related pay, a review of procedure for ARAs and annual leave entitlement for length of service. The Board asked for updates on these items to be presented at the March meeting.
   ii. **The Partnership agreement** has not been approved by TEO corporate governance branch to date. Progression on the reinvestment of generated

income to SIB is an agenda item at the next TEO/SIB Stocktake meeting. L Johnston and S Harper to discuss with TEO.

iii. **Senior Leadership Team**. The Chief Delivery Officer has been recruited and interviews for the Chief Innovation Officer will take place at the end of the week.

iv. **Pay Remits** for 24/25 and 25/26 are awaiting approval from DoF & TEO. This item is on the agenda for S Harper and L Johnston to discuss at the next Stocktake meeting with TEO. Board members asked to be notified at the next Board meeting if there are any further delays on the authorisation of the pay remits. L Johnston confirmed that all queries from DoF/TEO have been answered and the pay remit calculations have been accounted for in the 24/25 financial year, and hoped that the payments could be included in February or March payrolls.

v. **Board recruitment:** The Chair and all three Board members indicated they are content to continue in office past the current extension date of 31st January, should a written extension of terms of office be offered from TEO.

4) TEO Issues

i. As outlined above, the outstanding issues remain on the agenda for the next TEO/SIB Stocktake meeting.

ii. An action plan from the SIB review recommendations has been identified. SIB has documented progress on the actions which they are responsible for. The dates for the actions for which TEO are responsible have been subject to revision.

iii. A copy of the findings of the SIB Review has been circulated to all staff.

iv. Board members acknowledged the excellent implementation of progress which S Harper has achieved within the first twelve months since taking up the CEO post, in particular the establishment of a senior leadership team, which will provide improved strategic and organisational direction.

v. Dates of next Board and committee meetings were agreed and are listed in the note below. To provide continuity of governance, it was considered that the dates should be set until September 2026 to allow time for a handover or transition period pending the starting dates of the incoming Board members.

5) CEO/KPI REPORT

All Board members agreed that they were content with the format of the reporting of KPIs to replace individual project reports and agreed that, once the full SLT is established, each team member will report on the progress of their particular business areas.

INVESTMENT KPIs (Scott Wilson)

i. There is no clear indication of when ISNI will be brought to the Executive. However, SW continues to engage with FM and dFM officials to ascertain any potential changes or amendments to the language and tone of the strategy.
ii. Revisions will be needed on the ISNI document and changes will be required pending the decision of the legal appeal of the A5 in relation to the NI climate change Act (2022). An assessment will need to made as to how other capital projects may be affected once this decision is known.
iii. The DE end to end review of capital project work is complete.
iv. SW has been asked to accompany DoF to the Public Accounts Committee to discuss the Memorandum of Reply to the follow up report on delays to major capital projects.

DELIVERY KPIs (S Harper)

i. S Harper reported on the KPIs for Delivery. No comments from Board members to note.

INNOVATION KPIs (S Harper)

i. Separate to the Agentic AI Garage proposed by SIB's Paul McWilliams, a review has been carried out to assess the level of demand for the NICS to avail of AI services, identifying a clear appetite and potential for SIB to offer this service. Engagement with HOCS and TEO continues and will be progressed by the new CIO.

CORPORATE (S Harper/ L Johnston)

i. No comments arose from Board members, as they were satisfied that all items had already been discussed either in the audit committee or previous Board meetings.

CEO updates

i. A review of the strategic focus and governance arrangements for Procurement is complete. One of the recommendations from the review is to examine whether Social Value should be transferred to DoF. If this proves to be impractical, the Board agreed that SIB should begin to charge for SIB's social value work for clients on a cost recovery basis.

Delayed major capital projects RAG Status

i. One verbal update was given on the Southern Regional College project. An alternative to the Marlborough House listed building issue has been presented as a way to overcome the obstacle, but lack of funding may still cause delays in progression of the project.

ii. There was a discussion regarding the last slide of the presentation, which lists major capital projects and their RAG status with notes on any particular causes and the length of delays.

iii. The Board asked that this slide be revised and updated.

iv. The Ending Paramilitarism and other non capital projects should be taken off the list and any updates should be noted for the next Board meeting.

Action Point: S Harper to revise the slide with major capital projects for the February Board meeting, and Chief Delivery Officer to report on capital projects going forward, once a more robust data monitoring system is in place.

Record of Decision: From the new financial year (26/27), Social Value work carried out by SIB will be charged on a cost recovery basis.

6) FINANCE

i. The finance paper was noted by the Board with no concerns raised.

ii. L Johnston reported 64% expenditure in Q3, noting a delay in getting the AI business case and funding in this quarter, but this has now been approved by TEO.

7) PRESENTATION: AI ENABLEMENT Work

Paul McWilliams presentation covered the following topics:

i. Update on delivery of the AI enablement, three approved ISNI workstreams (Enabling Actions 3, 6 and 12) AI Assisted Business case production, DataMap and quantification of carbon and scenario planning, including monetised benefits and assumptions, the value of the pipeline (circa £9m) and the risks to delivery (resource, lead times and lack of capacity).

ii. The Board welcomed the approach and was content that Paul should continue to work on building the infrastructure in SIB to be able to deliver on this work. The Board found the example of using AI assisted Business case a useful illustration, as it showed that human reviewer decision points in the process. Use of AI for business cases showed how to alleviate time delays to critical business decisions needed to progress capital projects.

Action Points

Board members endorsed the proposal for AI being taken forward, and asked that;

1) A post project evaluation is reported back to the Board at the May meeting

2) the proposals are incorporated into the operational business plan for the incoming financial year.
3) Paul McWilliams circulate the enabling actions with the panel of experts to show the level of human intervention and controls in place to manage risks.

ALB Assurance Guide

I. The Chair referred to an item on page 22 had been downgraded from 2 to 3 which should be checked with NIAO and/or removed.
II. The Board noted that one mobile phone data breach was reported and dealt with according to the policy and procedure for missing IT items.
III. The Board was content to approve the ALB Assurance Guide.

No AOB

Dates of next Board and committee meetings:

10th February: Audit & Risk committee

11th March: Remuneration & Personnel committee 15th

April: No committee meeting.

13th May: Audit & Risk committee

9th June: Signing of accounts (all Board members to attend)

Remuneration & Personnel committee No

meeting in July.

11th August: No committee meeting.

8th September: Audit & Risk committee.