

Strategic Investment Board

Chief Executive's Report – August 2014

INTRODUCTION

Programme and Project Managers provide their Quarterly Reports in August, so this paper will cover only the most significant issues.

PROJECTS IN SUPPORT OF PFG OBJECTIVES

NICSC AT DESERTCREAT

1. The Justice Committee took evidence from the A/DCC and officials on Desertcreat on 2nd July. The hearing went well and committee members reiterated their support for the project.

SOCIAL CLAUSES

2. We expect to appoint shortly a new Associate Adviser with significant experience in the field of Social Clauses. This will strengthen the SIB advisory team in this area of our work. Progress with the revised version of the new Toolkit continues to plan.

ARC21

3. A group opposed to arc21, entitled 'No-Arc21' has been formed. The group has engaged a firm, 'Strategic Planning', to contest the planning application on their behalf.

NORTH WEST REGION WASTE MANAGEMENT GROUP (NWRWMG)

4. The period within which the bidder had the right to mount a challenge to the decision to terminate the NWRWMG procurement expired on 16th June without notice of such a challenge being served.

URBAN VILLAGES/COLIN TOWN CENTRE

5. On 9th June Brenda, Wesley and I attended a meeting of the Urban Villages Board chaired jointly by Junior Ministers McCann and Bell. Also present were the Ministers' special advisors, the DSD Minister's special advisor and officials from OFMDFM, DSD and Belfast City Council.
6. I have drafted a paper for the next meeting of the Board (in early September) that sets out SIB's understanding of Ministers' requirements and our proposals for meeting them.

OTHER PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

ARMAGH GAOL

7. Armagh City Council's development partner, the Trevor Osborne Group, has issued a press release stating that, unless government commits by September to providing an additional £4m to augment the public funds already committed to the project, it will withdraw from the scheme.

REVIEWS, STUDIES AND SERVICES

REVIEWS OF OPERATIONAL PFI PROJECTS

8. John Green attended a useful meeting with HMT, representatives from the devolved administrations and central government departments that discussed their experiences of reviewing operational PFIs.

REVIEW OF COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT

9. The June meeting of the Procurement Board considered a draft paper setting out its sub-group's response to the Review of Commissioning and Procurement. (The report will be discussed further at the Board meeting.)

INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

10. The first thematic dinner took place on 26th June and proved very useful. A good cross-section of stakeholders with interests in networks attended and the debate was lively. Input from the event has been recorded and will be fed into the ISNI process. The next event will be held on 30th September.

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

SIB INTERNAL NEWSLETTER

11. Two editions of the SIB Newsletter have now been issued. The intention is that they should be distributed every fortnight. Initial feedback from staff has been positive and comment from Directors would be welcome.

PAC HEARINGS

12. The PAC hearing into the NIAO report on the future impact of RRI and PFI borrowing commitments was held on 11 May. The hearing seemed to go well. The committee has since written to DFP seeking clarification on a number of non-contentious points.
13. The PAC intends to hold a second hearing into BMC. The committee has asked Pat O'Neill to give evidence.

HR MANAGER

14. Ursula Doherty began work as SIB's HR Manager on 1st August.

FINANCE MANAGER

15. Candidates for the post of Finance Manager will be interviewed on 8th August.

AMU

16. The Property Information Manager in the AMU, has resigned to take up an appointment in Dublin.

STAFF CONFERENCE

17. The next staff conference will be held in Belfast in October. The day will include presentations on the new SIB brand, new thinking in risk management; an update on equality legislation and a seminar led by Stephen Grimason. Directors are, of course, most welcome to attend.