

Minutes of a Board Meeting of Strategic Investment Board Limited

Held at 10.00am on Tuesday 11th February 2014 at
Carleton House
Gasworks Business Park
1 Cromac Avenue
Belfast

Present: Brett Hannam (BH)
Chris Thompson (CT)
Duncan McCausland (DM)
Gerry McGinn (GMcG)(Chairman)
Marie Therese McGivern (MTM)
Frank Hewitt (FH)
Bro McFerran (BM)
Geraldine McAteer (GMcA)

In attendance: Gregor Hamilton (GH)
Scott Wilson (SW)
Martin Spollen (MS) (Items 1-4 only)
Adele Marshall (Queens University) (Item 4 only)
Chief Superintendent Alan Todd (PSNI) (Item 4 only)
Pat O'Neill (Item 4 only)

FH specifically noted his interest in NITHCo and NI Science Park (in light of potential discussions around Financial Transactions Capital). He explained that he would absent himself in event that these topics arose. There were no other interests which were expected to give rise to a specific need to declare given the items on the agenda.

1. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the January 2014 board meeting were approved (subject to correction of typographical error). Regarding actions arising, it was noted that the Communications Committee would not be in a position to review its terms of reference until Fiona Kane returned from leave. DM noted that he had asked if information on salary comparables could be obtained, and GMcG suggested this could be picked up in discussion of report from the Remuneration Committee (which had met earlier).

2. Chairman's and Directors' Business

GMcG noted that he had attended the Infrastructure Conference and that it had been a successful event well received by its audience. It had been a good example of how SIB could play a thought leadership role. BH noted the positive media coverage.

MS commented that the most striking thing arising from the Investment Conference had been the comparison between NI and GB in terms of the greater focus on economic infrastructure and the greater use of private capital in GB.

CT noted that he had attended a procurement seminar hosted by the CBI during the following week. There had been general agreement at the seminar with the recommendations of the Procurement Review.

3. Report from Remuneration Committee

GM reported the discussions of the Remuneration Committee. He noted that both recruitment and retention remained problematic areas. The committee had discussed some ways of addressing the issue. In making any argument for increasing pay to attract or retain the right staff, it would be important to highlight the increasing size of the projects which SIB was taking on.

The case had to be made that bigger projects required bigger budgets and a degree of freedom in determining how they could best be used.

4. Police Operations Decision Support System

Adele Marshall, Chief Superintendent Alan Todd and Pat O’Neill joined the meeting.

MS explained the general context of the work being done with QUB and PSNI on the Police Operations Decision Support System – it was a specific example of the strategic infrastructure planning models being used in a number of areas to ensure the “right infrastructure in the right place”.

Pat O’Neill explained how a similar model had allowed the NI Ambulance Service to improve response times while reducing the requirement for capital investment. CS Todd described how the system was being tested in two operational areas and would allow the optimal deployment of response teams. Adele Marshall explained the range of information which was fed into the model and the outputs which were then available to users.

Following this presentation, the board asked a number of questions. FH asked how reliable the model was in forecasting incidents, and Adele Marshall explained that there was a process ongoing to ensure more accurate data was input which would lead to more accurate outputs. BM asked whether the model could take account of information available from other sources and it was explained that it would eventually do this. GMcA asked whether information from local sources could also be taken into account and it was explained that there was scope for officers at a local level to input information regarding particular events or individuals.

CT acknowledged the benefits of the project to PSNI, but wondered why SIB was involved in this particular matter. MS explained that SIB involvement had developed out of the work done with the ambulance project, and from discussions with PSNI in other contexts (eg Desertcreat). He noted that SIB were only involved in supporting the design and development end of the process with QUB, not the detailed implementation, and that it was only one of a number of areas where this type of model would be used in infrastructure planning. BH noted that the technology underpinning the PODSS was the same as that being used in Strategic Infrastructure Planning Models. GMcG acknowledged CT’s general point regarding need to have a clear explanation as to why SIB’s resources were expended on one project rather than another.

5. Chief Executive’s Report

BH spoke to his report. He drew attention particularly to the following:

Strategic Waste Programme: BH explained in detail the content of discussions with the bidder on the Arc21 project. He explained the position in respect of that project and the wider context of the waste sector in NI. Having received a full briefing, the board was supportive of BH's ongoing efforts to explore with the bidder ways to achieve a positive outcome, while recognising that there were limited chances of success. *Financial transactions Capital:* BH explained the proposal to draw down FTC monies and in turn lend them on to Ulster University. *Desertcreat:* BH noted ongoing work.

Lisanelly: The board noted the position on the shared campus development. CT noted the importance of putting in place a proper structure for delivering full benefits of the project, rather than allowing schools simply to replicate existing arrangements at a partially shared site.

6. ISNI Report and AMU Report

The ISNI report was taken as read.

SW reported on the AMU. He explained that they had exceeded target for the disposals programme by £1.41m.

SW noted that AMU continued to put pressure on departments to improve their Asset Management Plans. He noted that while the 2012 State of the Estate Report had been put on the SIB website a recent assurance exercise had highlighted certain issues with the information which had been provided. In the light of this it would be difficult meaningfully to update the report by the end of March as originally intended. CT noted that the State of the Estate Report was quite useful insofar as it went, but the real question was how next to use the information. SW agreed – the reform of property management was a more important priority than just updating the report for its own sake.

SW noted that AMU were assisting with the recruitment of a project manager for Collaborative Procurement, and that a report was in production on the Social Housing Reform Programme – LRP for the Social Development Committee.

7. Draft Corporate and Business Plans (including Letter of Expectation)

BH invited comments on the draft Corporate and Business Plans. The Board made a series of suggestions for their improvement.

GMcG asked that any comments on the draft letter of expectation should be addressed to Brett.

Overall, the Board was broadly content with the draft Corporate and Business Plans. A final draft would be considered at the next meeting.

8. Finance Report and Media Pack

The Finance Report and Media Pack were noted.

