

Strategic Investment Board

Chief Executive's Report – March 2013

PFG PROJECTS

Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT)

The BRT Project Board approved the plans for the next stage of the project, which will see some £10m invested in preliminary and enabling works. Care has been taken to ensure that this work will not be nugatory, should the major portion of funding not be available in the next spending period.

Belfast Transport Hub

The programme has recently been revitalised. A Design Consultancy should be appointed shortly.

City of Culture

Events delivered through the cultural programme continue to be exceptionally successful with recent high profile dance and orchestral productions. Additional staff resources have been made available, in particular the appointment of an Executive Producer and event managers.

Colin Regeneration

Three Ministers (DSD, DE and DHSSPS) will attend the formal launch of the Colin Town Centre public consultation report on a new date - the afternoon of April 18. SIB non-executive directors will be most welcome if they wish to attend.

SIB is currently advertising for a Construction Project Manager, who will lead the project forward into its next stage.

Brenda Burns met the Education Minister and then Belfast Councillors to discuss the project. All were supportive.

DSD has written to me asking for Brenda's support for a project similar to Colin. I also met Jenny Piper, Deputy Secretary in DSD, and her directors. They are currently considering the implications of RPA for regeneration work. DSD has a list of projects where they believe SIB support would be useful.

Delivering Social Change

OFMDFM has asked SIB to establish a 'Social Change Delivery Unit' to provide technical assistance and expertise for a range of projects under the 'Delivering Social Change' programme. I attended the first Programme Board meeting. The first piece of work is likely, however, to be centred on the delivery of the 'Green New Deal'. It is clear that the scope of the work envisaged is likely to be substantial and will require additional resources, which will be funded by OFMDFM.

Desertcreat College

The Justice Minister met the Finance Minister, who confirmed that any additional funding for the College would have to come from DoJ's existing budget. The Programme Board has therefore tasked to project team with reducing costs to within 10% of the agreed budget. The Business Case will be revised and submitted in mid May. Subject to the agreement of DHSSPS & DOJ Ministers, the "Preferred Bidder" will be appointed and the project will proceed as planned.

E-Cars

The e-Car team held a major conference and demonstration at Titanic Belfast on 6-8 March, which attracted large numbers of visitors. There are a videos of the various events at <http://www.youtube.com/theecarni>. The team also launched the new e-car website and mobile phone app, www.ecarni.com.

The project recently shared joint first place with the National Trust for Outstanding Work in the Renewable Sector at the Action Renewable Association Awards and was a finalist for the UK Climate Week Award for 'Best Initiative by a Government Body'.

ESA

Work to recruit staff for the ESA Project Delivery Support Unit has met with mixed success. Competitions to fill the three HR posts only led to one appointment; the other two will be re-advertised. Two other posts were advertised last week.

Denise Stockman is working on the design of arrangements within ESA for the delivery of its capital programme.

I met Gavin Boyd to discuss the progress of the implementation project and he expressed his appreciation of Pat O'Neill's and Denise's work.

Lisanelly

The Assembly adjournment debate on the progress of the Education Campus at Lisanelly on 19th February attracted cross-party support. All speakers from every party supported the project and urged the Minister to move as quickly as possible to deliver it. In his contribution, John O'Dowd stressed his personal commitment to the project and indicated that those schools that did not participate could expect no support for any other plans they might develop.

MLK Development Corporation

Kyle and his team have developed their corporate and business plan which will be considered shortly by the MLK Board.

The Marketing and Communications Manager presented her branding proposals to the MLK Board. These were agreed on an interim basis but a fully developed approach is required for October/November (the first major event for PbCRC.) Similarly, an interim web site is to be established pending the launch in a few weeks of the full site.

NI Prison Service Estates Strategy

The Minister is expected to announce today that he has approved a seven year strategy for the development of Magilligan Prison.

PbCRC

The draft RIBA Stage D report on the PbCRC is expected by 14 March. This prepares the way for the development of documents for the ITT and brings greater certainty to expected construction costs. A planning decision is expected by the end of March. No formal objections have been received to date. The team gave a presentation to Ministers on 19 February on the Interpretive Framework and a draft RIBA Stage C report on the Exhibition and Archive is currently being reviewed prior to its presentation to Ministers.

Contractor procurement for the PbCRC is currently showing slippage of 6 weeks. At this stage McAdam Design are providing assurances that this will not present a risk to the delivery of the project in 2015.

Poultry Litter SBRI Project

Stage 1 of the competition has closed. There were 39 submissions. Their external assessment is underway and a short list is expected to be announced by early-May. A Gateway Review of the project achieved a Green/Amber rating.

Primary Care Infrastructure Programme

The Minister has issued a direction that the 3rd Party Development Model is to be used to procure the first two projects within the Primary Care Programme. He believes that he should retain conventional capital for those projects for which RFI is not suitable. Issuing a direction obviates the need for DFP to consider the business case, so procurement can begin shortly. The Minister's rationale will, however, be scrutinised by the NIAO and PAC.

Regional Stadiums Programme

Ravenhill is one week behind schedule. Additional efforts are being made to engage with the community and an Educational Officer is to be appointed.

Windsor Park obtained its planning permission less than two months after submitting the application. The ITT has been issued and included social clauses.

The DCAL Minister has asked Noel Molloy to advise on the feasibility of a new 'Sports Village'. He is also providing input to a review of the business plans of DCAL arms length bodies.

Social Housing Reform

The DSD Permanent Secretary has asked SIB to take on an enhanced role with the Stock Transfer project within the Social Housing Reform Programme. Will Haire will speak to this at the Board meeting. If the Board agrees, this new role may require the establishment of a dedicated project delivery unit.

Strategic Waste Programme

The two remaining councils, Derry and Magharafelt have still to decide whether to proceed with the NWRWMG project to financial close. A decision is now expected by end-March.

An announcement was made on March 12 concerning the proposed site for the Arc21 waste treatment plant.

The Waste PDSU will close at the end of March. The Ministerial Programme Board gave a vote of thanks to Alan and his team for their contribution to the regional waste programme over the last four years. The team is being retained, on a part time basis, to complete the Chicken Litter Project. They will move out of Goodwood House and into Carleton House with the rest of SIB.

REVENUE FINANCED INVESTMENT (RFI)

Patrick McMeekin and I discussed the guidance for the quantification of risk issued by DFP with Mike Brennan and Bill Pauley (the two acting Deputy Secretaries in DFP).

The Budget Review Group has asked for a progress report in April on the RFI programme. With the exception of Primary Care there is little to report.

OTHER PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Belfast Media Hub/DETI

A meeting of stakeholders was held at City Hall and the consultants expect to provide initial feedback in early April.

Forest Service Wind Farms

There was a very good response to advertisements for the post of Forest Service Wind Farm project manager. Interviews will take place shortly.

GP Out of Hours Service

John Adamson has been asked to follow up his earlier work with a study into the feasibility of using NI Direct as the access mechanism for an out of hours GP service.

HMS Caroline

The HLF funding application has been lodged and the HLF London team has visited the ship. A decision is expected in May.

Libraries NI

The Libraries NI IT System contract should be signed on 29 March. This is the first project for which SIB has provided all legal support. The savings to the taxpayer of this approach have been considerable.

PFI Buyback

The INI proposal continues to plan. Due diligence is underway with an expected completion date of mid-April. The NIAO would like to use SIB's work on this as a (positive) case study in a forthcoming report.

RUC GC Foundation

John Green held a PID workshop with the project team and has proposed a procurement strategy.

Safety Centre

Design work continues.

Siege of Derry Heritage Project

Work continues to plan.

St Comgall's

No significant activity.

Waterfront Exhibition & Convention Centre

With respect to the procurement: the PQQ process is complete and the standstill period finished on 8th March with no challenges. The tender documentation is being produced and reviewed by BCC and CPD. It is due for release to seven short-listed firms.

World Police and Fire Games

Noel Molloy completed a rapid assessment of the various sites proposed for the opening ceremony and identified the King's Hall as being suitable.

RESEARCH & OTHER STUDIES

Community Consultation Toolkit

Development of the content of the web site continues to plan. A paper version is currently being peer reviewed.

Infrastructure Audit

Mark Wishart presented his interim findings to the Board's Strategy Committee. The committee suggested a number of new perspectives for the study which will now be incorporated into the study.

SME Access to Finance Study

Johann Gallagher will speak to her report, which was published on 14th March, at the Board meeting.

Review of Commissioning and Procurement

The review is now in its second phase, during which Paul Priestly will model processes and systems in the light of his review of a number of case studies.

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Staffing

Margaret Millar has been appointed as an Associate Adviser with responsibility for business process modelling and analysis.

Office Accommodation

Work continues to prepare for the relocation to Carleton House. Sam Pringle is the Project Manager and Michael Donnelly the SRO. At present there is still no firm date for the move, but it is expected to be in May.

OFMDFM

Dr Mark Browne of DARD has replaced Noel Lavery in OFMDFM. He will take up his post on April 8th.

Equality Scheme

The Equality Commissioners approved SIB's Equality Scheme on 27th February.

Visit by Chief Executive of Scottish Futures Trust

Barry White, Chief Executive of the Scottish Futures Trust visited SIB on 4th March and later spoke to a CBI committee.

Pay Remit

The proposals for pay increases for 2011/12 agreed by the Remuneration Committee have been accepted by OFMDFM and are now being considered by DFP.

