

Strategic Investment Board

Interim Chief Executive's Report – April 2011

The Advisors have provided Full and Summary project reports this month, so this report covers only those matters they have not addressed.

Projects & Programmes

Asset Management Unit

There was an excellent response to the advertisement for the Head of the AMU. Four candidates will be interviewed. The response to the advert for the two other advisor roles was smaller, but again of good quality. Rosalie Flanagan, Permanent Secretary at DCAL has agreed to sit on the selection panels.

Ed Vernon and I have held a series of constructive meetings with LPS, DFP, DHSSPS, DoJ and DoE. There is clearly already much good work being done in Departments.

I will shortly be meeting the NIAO in advance of the publication of its survey of asset management within the public sector and will brief the Board at the meeting.

Draft Terms of reference for the Mr Vernon's work with the AMU will be discussed at the meeting.

Maze/Long Kesh

The Gateway Review of the MLK programme gave it a clean bill of health. The full report is being considered by the SRO, Noel Lavery whose initial reaction has been very constructive.

Lisanelly

As was reported widely in the press, the Department of Education lost the action taken against it by Loreto College. The department is considering an appeal and in any case argues that all it is now required to do is to reconsider the original decision not to fund the redevelopment of the school on its existing site.

Waste Programme

The Finance Minister rejected requests to reinstate the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund and as a result it seems certain that Councils will have to foot the entire bill for the programme.

The withdrawal of one of the two bidders for Arc21 has led to a reassessment of the entire strategy for waste treatment within the project's areas of responsibility. There are some indications that this may lead to the procurement being delayed or even cancelled whilst this reassessment is completed.

NI Prison Infrastructure

I had a very useful meeting with officials in DoJ and we agreed the broad outline of the work that we will be doing with them over the coming year. Pat O'Neill and Anthony Harbinson (Director Resources at DoJ) will draft a new Operational Partnering Agreement (OPA) for consideration by the new board committee on Programmes and Projects.

ILEX

Hazel Jones carried out a soft market testing exercise on behalf of ILEX which reviewed the private sector's attitude to the various plans being developed for London~Derry. She presented the results of this to the ILEX board and a subsequent seminar. Aideen McGinley, Chief Executive of ILEX wrote to Hazel:

"I wanted to say how much I appreciated your input and expertise. The board have found the reports very valuable and they are timely as they are influencing the overall investment plan in terms of our short, medium and long term approaches."

Lagan & Tor Bank Schools

The project has reached financial closure, albeit eight years after the procurement began. Leo McKenna deserves much credit for his work in attracting the private finance required by this venture.

Templemore Avenue Regeneration

The Social Development Minister, Alex Attwood, has confirmed funding for the refurbishment of the former Templemore Avenue School in East Belfast. Michael Briggs, Director of the East Belfast Community Development Agency wrote to Bryan Gregory to say:

"Thanks also for your support and the support of SIB, the reality is without the support of SIB over the past 2 years this actually would not have happened."

Rapid Transit

An Internal Audit of the project is underway and I met the review team. From the feedback I received it seems that they agree that the key issue is whether or not the project is affordable, given the limited available capital.

London~Derry City of Culture

ILEX and the Chairman of the Culture Company have asked me to sit on its Board in order to advise on how the programme can create a lasting infrastructure legacy.

BMC

The project, which is ahead of schedule and under budget, has been nominated for an award as 'Best Educational Project of 2011'. The NIAO continues its audit of the procurement process.

Governance, Finance & Administration

Finance

At £4k, the final underspend for the year is within the 0.5% target set by OFMDFM.

Scrutiny

I held a Business Case workshop with OFMDFM which identified a number of ways in which we could adapt our processes and procedures to provide additional assurance to the sponsor department. We will be implementing these changes over the coming weeks.

Staffing

Grace Bartley has been appointed as temporary Assistant Accountant to fill Stephen Jamison's post while he covers Patricia Mallon's maternity leave. I will submit a request to the Remuneration Committee to approve, by written procedure, his acting up allowance for the period he is in post.

Advertisements for the Education Advisor and e-Cars project manager will appear in the press shortly. A secondee from the Planning Service should join the AMU in early May.