

Strategic Investment Board

Interim Chief Executive's Report – January 2011

ISNI 3

Martin Spollen will provide a full update at the meeting.

The draft ISNI has been sent to SPADs in OFMDFM and we await a detailed response. The text has also been sent to all Departments and their comments have been considered. We still await a response from DHSSPS.

It is not yet clear whether there a Programme for Government will be published before the election. It may be that the ISNI could also be held back in the same way.

Projects & Programmes

Asset Management Team (formerly CART)

A DFP spokesman, while speaking to the press, attributed views to SIB which are at variance with the advice we have provided to Ministers (see Press pack for details). In particular, the spokesman said that SIB had validated Departments estimates of the sums that could be released through asset sales. The draft budget assumes that £100m will be released through the work of the AMU. SIB has not validated any such estimates; indeed we have advised that realising £100m would be extremely challenging in the current climate. I am writing to Noel Lavery, at his suggestion, to ensure that there is a correct record of the advice we provided to Ministers.

The work of the AMU continues in DCAL and DoJ. Amendments to the e-PIMS database requested by DFP have now been implemented. Most of DCAL's assets are now on the system.

Maze/Long Kesh

Ministers have approved the proposals for the governance arrangements so the recruitment of a Chair and Board can now begin.

Kyle and his team met Junior Ministers Kelly and Newton to brief them on progress and show them the draft designs and business plan for the Conflict Transformation Centre (CRC). These were well received. Kyle intends to provide a similar briefing to the OFMDFM SPADs.

Mary McKee is working hard to ensure that the submission to the SEUPB for a grant to the CRC of €20m is submitted on time (17th January).

Lisanelly

Hazel Jones and I will be meeting John McGrath this week to discuss the issues raised by the Board at its last meeting. I will report back.

The Judicial Review sought by Loreto College has been heard in the High Court. A decision is expected shortly.

The Minister wrote a personal note to Hazel Jones thanking her for the work she has done on the project and expressing her confidence that it will continue.

Desertcreat

The DoJ spending plans includes funding for the Desertcreat Joint Training College, which is now expected to proceed without significant further delay. The project will take a further three years to bring into service. One issue that remains to be resolved is that of the revenue contribution from DHSSPS, which the Minister is understood to believe cannot be found from his budget.

Department of Justice

Funds have been allocated towards a new prison, but these are not sufficient for a conventional procurement. Pat O'Neill has brought in an expert from NOMS to scrutinise the assumptions being used by the Prison Service. His preliminary conclusions are that there is significant scope for rationalisation, even allowing for the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland.

Education

DE has renewed its request for a Strategic Adviser to be seconded into the Department to assist its strategic planning. I am meeting the Deputy Secretary this week to discuss this requirement in more detail.

The work on pupil numbers to inform schools planning that was suggested by the Board at its last meeting has now been completed and a model to estimate these at LGD level is now available. Further work is underway in-house to understand better those factors (of the child/family and schools set) that influence the choices observed, and this work will in due course underpin the construction a full Strategic Estates Planning Model for DE.

TQSP

Work on TQSP was adversely affected by the bad weather, which restricted deliveries to the site. An announcement regarding the operator contract is expected shortly. We are funding work to scope the improvements required to the spaces between the various elements in TQ (TQSP, Thompson Docks, NISP etc etc).

DVA Contract Renegotiation

The DoE business case for legal support for contract renegotiations has been approved,.

Belfast Transport Hub

I attended a meeting of the Steering Group of the Belfast Transport Hub. The project has made a sound start in that it is being led by an experienced project director from within NITHCO. The business case for the proposal remains problematic and the implementation phase is some three years away at best.

Waste Programme

The reduced capital allocation made to DoE in the draft budget is likely to have a significant effect on all the waste management projects. It may require fundamental changes to the proposed funding arrangements and will affect the Department's ability to buy the required sites. I am meeting shortly with DoE to discuss the implications of the budget cuts.

The difficulties over the changes to the consortia bidding for the NWRWVG contract have been resolved and negotiations have begun again.

London~Derry Regeneration Plan

I attended a strategy definition meeting with the ILEX team. Developing infrastructure is a major theme of the plan and I expect that we will be asked to provide significant support to their work.

Other Projects

A planning application has been made for an Addiction Centre on Rathlin Island.

There is no money available to progress work on Belfast City Library or even to maintain three listed local libraries. In this context, our work on new service delivery models will be very important.

Bryan Gregory has met officials from Craigavon Council who have asked for support in the drafting of its regeneration strategy.