

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

April 2010

ISNI 3 2011-2021

The workshop that had been arranged for last month with officials in DFP and OFMDFM took place last week and proved to be very useful. It was agreed that there would now be a monthly meeting with Noel Lavery, Richard Pengelly and Martin Spollen to identify key issues but Martin and the ISNI team will have more frequent meetings with DFP and Tim Lusty in OFMDFM to ensure that all three organisations are fully aligned. These arrangements are an improvement on what existed in delivering and settling ISNI 2.

The first seminar (in the series of ISNI seminars) on the funding gap next week has had a good response and we anticipate some 40 people attending. Papers will be circulated in the next day to all attendees and we anticipate circulating a note of the seminar to all attendees following the event.

Martin and I attended an event held by the Chief Executives' Forum (16/4) looking at the potential funding envelope available to the Executive. It was well attended with a number of Permanent Secretaries and senior officials including DFP together with 2 councils. The best case scenario for capital expenditure is a 10% reduction year on year over the next three years but the more likely prospect could be a reduction of 15% year on year which would mean a c.50% cut in capital expenditure by year 4. On the resource side the cuts will also be harsh and there was an increasing feeling that the Executive would need to consider more carefully the role of government..

CENTRAL ASSET REALISATION TEAM (CART)

The pilot projects with DFP and DARD are proceeding well. Ed Vernon is also more hopeful of finding a way to obtain Executive approval of the second report as this has been outstanding for more than 9 months.

PROJECTS/ PROGRAMMES

This quarter the advisers have provided case reports so I will be brief:

Education – John McGrath, Gavin Boyd and I met on Friday 16th following the note that I sent on a new job description for a strategic advisory post. They are content for an advert to be prepared and we have since met with Wesley Emmett who will put this in train. In terms of our existing support to ESA.

Desertcreat Training College – We are still waiting for the business case which is currently with DHSSPS to be approved. The importance of proceeding with this project in the current economic circumstances cannot be underestimated.

MLK – Kyle has been liaising with RUAS regarding their interest in establishing an Agricultural Centre of Excellence. Noel Lavery, myself and the MLK team, met Colliers earlier this month as Colliers CRE has been commissioned to explore the potential for the site believe that this initiative together with the Peace Centre provide a very good nucleus for the project (summary attached and a complete report will be available shortly). It was interesting that on yesterday's Radio 4 that the Re-Union which feature

Maze Long-Kesh, there was reference to the site being a potential “University of Peace” (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007x9vc>) which resonates strongly with the work that Mary and the team have been undertaking.

In terms of the governance arrangements that we discussed last month there has been quite extensive subsequent discussions. Progress has been made but “the proof of the pudding will be in the eating”.

AFBI – Leo McKenna and I met Malcolm McKibbin and Mark Browne of DARD together with the Sean Hogan, the Chair of AFBI on the 16/4. After some discussion, it was agreed that an interim (say 12 months) strategic change manager would be sought and Leo will liaise with Wesley Emmett to develop a specification which he will agree with Sean and DARD.

Stadia – Pat O’Neill and I met Rosalie Flanagan, Permanent Secretary, and Edgar Jardine to discuss progress on the three stadia. Significant issues remain which Pat will set out at the Board Meeting.

Belfast Central Library – We are also due to meet Rosalie Flanagan later this month to determine how the Department intends to proceed with this project. It was also interesting to learn from Paul O’Connor how Chicago (see **Belfast without Barriers** below) used libraries as a platform for the reversing of this city’s fortunes.

UK City of Culture Bid “Legend~Derry” – A logo has now been agreed and we are using it on all our e-mail correspondence alongside Ilex and DCC are the three sponsors to the bid:



Please register your support for Derry~Londonderry's Bid to become UK City of Culture 2013 at www.cityofculture2013.com

The Board might also be aware that Declan Kelly, the USA Economic Envoy, has added his weight to the bid and we are now working closely with his representatives to make as positive impact as possible on our chances for success.

GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS

Staffing –Wesley Emmett is due to start in post as the Strategic Recruitment Adviser on the 26/4.

GENERAL

Belfast – City of the Quarters March 26th 2010 – The conference was a great success and Máirtín Ó Muilleoir is already busy preparing for the sequel in New York on the 8/9 June. The biggest challenge for Belfast is to ensure that the Quarters recognise the need to unite under one banner particularly when we look to attract overseas attention.

Belfast without Barriers – The Lord Mayor of Belfast has run a successful series of events with this month's being focussed on the learning we might take from the dramatic changes in Chicago; Paul O'Connor, one of the principals who lead this change, shared his experiences over three days. There were a number of significant learnings including the central role of business in revitalising the city – Peter McNaney is looking to see how we might engage better with business and next month's event with Declan Kelly might provide a platform for a new and more meaningful engagement between government and business.

Infrastructure (Ireland) 2030 Taskforce Report – The report, commissioned by InterTrade Ireland and undertaken by Engineers Ireland and the Irish Academy of Engineering, looking at the infrastructure needs on the island of Ireland to 2030 was presented by Liam Connellan, the Chair, to dFM last week. FM was unable to attend but dFM took time afterwards to discuss the report and invited Conor Murphy, Minister of DRD, into the meeting. Both agreed the report would make a major contribution to policy thinking in the coming months and years. Liam and the other representatives from the two organisations were delighted with this response.

Infrastructure UK – In last month's Budget IUK produced its first detailed report including the announcement of a Green Investment Bank with potential funding of some £2billion with half of that coming from the private sector.

NI-CO Request for Support in Morocco – The CEO of NI-Co met DD to outline the importance of our support to his activities and it would be useful to agree how we can assist them in the coming months. Brett and I are meeting NICO later this week to hopefully agree a way forward.

SIB/DNG
16/04/10