

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

**August 2009**

### **ISNI 2008-2018**

We now have a more complete analysis for last year's out-turn and, through the DTS, are also gaining a better definition for this year and the following year's capital investment figures with the potential pinch points. Martin will outline the progress we are making when we meet.

We are also making good progress on the publicity material that FM and dFM have asked us to prepare for the ISNI. It is hoped that they might do a public announcement in the week commencing 14/9 and potentially the launch venue might be in the new Library at Queen's. Martin will update us and will also provide some of the material that has been prepared. They have also asked for further collateral for the "man on the street" so more work is being undertaken in conjunction with EIS.

Martin and I are now turning our minds to preparation for ISNI 3 and we are planning to schedule a meeting with Richard Pengelly to understand better his view of the potential funding envelope and what other major issues he sees on the horizon. We would then like to review this at next month's Board meeting and try to identify the major themes that might permeate the next ISNI. Following this, we had in mind a series of workshops with a small number of major stakeholders, to develop these and then seek an engagement with Ministers in the late autumn. We can discuss this flight path in more detail at this month's Board meeting.

### **CENTRAL ASSET REALISATION TEAM (CART)**

Ed Vernon has submitted his draft report to FM and dFM and we are hopeful that we might get final sign off before the month end. It would be very helpful for the work that we are undertaking that the Report is put to the Executive in September as it will have knock-on consequences for a number of elements.

### **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (RDS)**

We understand that the RDS is now with the Minister. Clearly this document will need to go to the Executive at some point and it will be interesting how the timing of this might align with the work on the ISNI as one of the central themes of the RDS is the role of Cities and in particular Belfast and London~Derry.

## **PROJECTS/ PROGRAMMES**

This quarter each adviser has provided a case report so I will be brief:

**Education** – It would seem that progress is being made on Lagan and TorBank schools project – we have been providing some assistance. We are also making good progress on the Lisanelly site in Omagh and assuming that there is some settlement on how the site might transfer from MOD then the signs are increasingly that we have a viable and transformational project. The Minister has put a particular emphasis on the engagement with stakeholders as set out coherently in the communications plan that Fiona Kane has developed for the project. I have also received a letter from Peter Robinson enquiring about the next phase of the SPA at BELB; I have spoken to DE and will be responding to him shortly. Orangefield Primary is a tangible demonstration of all that had been hoped would come from such a partnership.

**Titanic Signature Project** – This project continues to present many challenges. The Minister is about to put forward her recommendation to FM, dFM and DFP Minister and we also need the approval of BHC and BCC. In the meantime TQL/ Harcourt have commenced work on site at their risk and good progress has been made.

**MLK** – The work being done on the Conflict Transformation Centre is being considered by Ministers with a time line for a decision required over the next month. Good progress has been made on the establishment of a Programme Board to take forward the development of the site and Kyle Alexander is now back full-time having completed his temporary appointment at Ilex.

**Commercialisation** – Following the positive meeting with Malcolm McKibbin and AFBI in June we arranged for a meeting to consider a longer-term strategy for AFBI. I have kept Malcolm informed and will hopefully meet him in the next period to see how he might wish to take this forward.

**Waste** – The outcome of re-run of the vote at Belfast Council City has been very challenging for Arc 21 and we had a meeting with Stephen Peover to consider more fully the consequences. Interestingly the MLK site is an option that is increasingly attractive and some good work is taking place to explore its potential.

**Odyssey** – We are undertaking some further detailed work on behalf of DCAL.

**MAC** – We have also been supporting DCAL on the FBC on the MAC and are hopeful that it will get DFP approval in the near future. This project is very critical to Cathedral Quarter and will be a further important part of the regeneration of the area.

**Grosvenor Transport Hub** – The inaugural Programme Board met this week to take forward this exciting and transformational project. The principal representatives on the Board come from NITHCO, DRD and SIB. We have a clear path of work over the next twelve months with much to do. It is again another project where a clear and deliverable communications strategy will play a major role in its success and NITHCO and the Department have asked us to assist them in developing this for Ministerial approval. The

Minister sees it as a key way of both improving transport logistics in Belfast (and beyond) as well creating much better connectivity across the City.

**Titanic Quarter/ Belfast Rapid Transit/ Connsbank Junction** – There have been further discussions with TQL and DRD on the ongoing infrastructure issues that are potentially realisable from developments at TQ. We continue to provide support on how government should interface with TQL and BHC on the ongoing infrastructure issues in TQ recognising the balance of responsibility for the developer to pay and the public interest.

**Partnership Boards** – The work we have been asked to undertake in West Belfast is moving forward and we are embarking on the first pilot in conjunction with DE on the land adjacent to the Irish Medium School on the Falls Road. We have also had a very positive initial meeting on the infrastructure needs in the Shankhill and we hope to make progress on this in the coming months. More work is to be undertaken on how to best give effect to this work through local delivery vehicles and it is anticipated that in time this might have wider applications across the PBs.

## **GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS**

**Staffing.** We had sought to appoint a Finance Manager following the recruitment exercise but unfortunately have not been able to do so as the two candidates that we had made an offer to (one after the other) got better offers elsewhere. We are reviewing what we should do next but believe that there are still good opportunities in the market given the current economic climate. Sadly, [REDACTED] will be leaving us at the end of September and is taking up an assignment in the Department of the Environment to oversee the waste infrastructure programme. Clearly that will be very positive to our work in waste so there is a real silver lining but he has made a very positive contribution since he joined us nearly two years ago. We also need to resolve the appointment of a resource to cover the communications area.

## **GENERAL**

**Infrastructure issues in GB and the island of Ireland** – PUK hosted a dinner in London last month to discuss with the infrastructure delivery bodies in GB and Ireland what where the principal issues that we were all experiencing. Clearly everyone is concerned with the changing economic landscape but there still remains a strong feeling that infrastructure has a central role to play. There was however a real sense that we need to get smarter about procurement and a general frustration was expressed about Competitive Dialogue with at least one European country breaking ranks and reverting to the negotiated procedure. It was also recognised that contractors could not wear the costs of CD and we need to recognise this.

**Agenda NI** – I was invited to attend a round table discussion this week with Alastair Hamilton, Brian Ambrose, Peter Dixon and Alan Thompson from Arthur Cox on the economic climate in NI. It will be reported in the next issue of the magazine. There was a good discussion and again infrastructure was seen as being a key plank in maintaining and developing the economy.

**British Irish Association** – The BIA will be held in Cambridge next month and I have been asked to chair the session on the economic challenges to the island. Dan O'Brien

from the Economist Intelligence Unit and Terry Neill (*Former Senior Partner in Accenture and was chairman of its global board. Chairman of Camerata Ireland. Appointed to the Court of Directors of Bank of Ireland in April 2004. A member of the Governing Body, and chairman of the Finance Committee, of London Business School. A member of the Boards of CRH plc and Trinity Foundation*) are the principal speakers.

**Bloodhound** – Pat O’Neill did an outstanding job in co-ordinating a bid that came out of a visit by Richard Noble who is seeking to break again the land speed record.

**Emerald Fund** – We have played a role in the on-going interface with the Emerald Fund who have been actively looking to present a social housing funding idea to DSD and also presented to FM and dFM.

**SIB/DNG**

**18/08/09**