

Strategic Investment Board

Chief Executive's Report – February 2014

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

STRATEGIC WASTE PROGRAMME

An update has been provided on this area.

FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS CAPITAL (FTC)

At the meeting I will ask the Board to consider proposals by DFP that:

- (a) SIB should develop the capability to manage the Executive's FTC investments. This represents an extension and enhancement of SIB's current responsibilities for supporting the RFI programme. Such a change is likely require the amendment of the organisation's establishing legislation and may require the employment of additional specialist staff.
- (b) SIB should be the channel through which DEL makes a loan of £25m to the University of Ulster. This loan must be made before the end of this financial year if it is to unlock a much larger loan to UU from the European Investment Bank.

Because of the urgency associated with (b), discussions have progressed involving DFP, DEL, OFMDFM and the Departmental Solicitor. Gregor Hamilton, Patrick McMeekin and Paul Priestly have been working on the issue for SIB. Attached at Appendix B to this report is a paper from DFP that sets out DFP's proposals and provides further information on FTC. The Board will wish to note DFP's commitment to meet the costs of their implementation.

SUPPORT TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

I met Paul Sweeney and Fiona Hepper to discuss the Lisanelly project. I heard that the project is the Minister's first priority; that its delivery must be accelerated and that £30m has to be spent in FY2016/17. The achievement of the latter objective is extremely demanding and will need much more streamlined decision-making processes than have been evident up to now.

ARMAGH GAOL

OFMDFM SpAds have agreed that SIB should manage the process for assessing its outline business case. Meetings with SpAds are planned for the next week,

BELFAST TRANSPORT HUB

I met Richard Pengelly (Permanent Secretary DRD) and Mike Brennan (DFP) to discuss the Belfast Transport Hub project.

NI COMMUNITY SAFETY TRAINING CENTRE – DESERTCREAT

SOCIAL CLAUSES

There have been further discussions between SIB staff and SF SpAds on how to promote the use of social clauses in public sector procurements.

COLIN TOWN CENTRE (CTC)

I met the Grade 3 in DSD with responsibility for CTC. The meeting was very constructive and we reached agreement on a range of subjects related to the project and the wider 'Urban Villages' programme.

e-CARS

The e-Car project has won £600,000 funding from Westminster to install 100 charge points across the public sector estate.

An SBRI competition has been launched by the project team to develop mobile applications and solutions that will encourage the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) and usage of the charge point network. The output of the project is likely be one or more Smartphone 'apps'.

Irene Breen met the new Utility Regulator, Jenny Pyper. Irene gave her a presentation on e-car to introduce her to the project and outlined the problems she has in respect of adding e-car assets to the Regulated Asset Base. The latter is necessary to enable NIE to commercialise the infrastructure. Jenny was very positive overall and took a positive interest in the project. She indicated that NIAUR would certainly engage, either through sitting on the Project Board or engaging in strategic workshops.

SIEGE HEROES MUSEUM PROJECT

The project received one contractor tender return from the six firms that were shortlisted. The tender price submitted was above the pre-tender estimate. James McIlvar is hopeful he can still reach a successful conclusion within the current competition. Having analysed the tender, both he and CPD are content it offers Value for Money and reflects current market conditions. The lead funder (SEUPB) is confident the additional money required is available within its budget. At their request James has requested additional funding support. Whilst this will delay the project, everyone involved recognises the importance of securing a contractor within this competition, as running another may risk its funding.

WATERFRONT HALL EXTENSION

The Business Case for the Waterfront Hall Extension was approved in December 13 and the DETI Minister has given the required approvals from which will flow the NITB (£4.0m) and ERDF (£14.5m) funding offer letters. Belfast City Council has also approved its contribution.

MAC

Last week the MAC exceeded its annual visitor number target for 2013/14. 236,122 visitors have been recorded at the MAC since April 2013 (this figure has been adjusted to exclude all MAC and canteen personnel and support service employees). (The target to the end of March 2014 was 230,000.) This means that the MAC has had well in excess of 500,000 visits since opening.

G8 Impact Assessment

The Northern Ireland Executive initiated a formal evaluation of the economic impact of the G8 Summit in Northern Ireland to ensure that the impact is recorded, assessed and reported on in a systematic and comprehensive way. This includes measurement of the costs and benefits to Northern Ireland of hosting the event, identifying the value of the media coverage, identifying the potential legacy of the Summit on Northern Ireland's and Fermanagh's image and assessing what local/community benefits have been achieved. All elements of the Impact Assessment have now been completed with the exception the Mutual Aid Officers survey. A draft report is currently being compiled. The publication date is to be finalised.

INFRASTRUCTURE SEMINAR

The Infrastructure Seminar held at Titanic Belfast on January 23rd appears to have been a great success. It was covered by both the BBC and ITV and the local press (see press pack). Attendees included the Secretary of State, HOCS, most Permanent Secretaries and senior figures from the private sector.

RESEARCH & OTHER STUDIES

REVIEW OF COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

QUERY FROM OFMDFM COMMITTEE

I have been directed to attend the OFMDFM committee on 19th February. The committee has asked for further details of the salaries paid to SIB staff and for an account of SIB's current work.

FINANCE TEAM

A new member has joined the finance team as an accountant.

HR MANAGER

The HR Manager post has been re-advertised.

DATA CONNECTION

The problems caused to the finance team by the slow data connection continue, and have recently become worse. For this reason it has been unable to prepare the monthly management accounts in time for them to be issued with the rest of the Board papers.

Noel Molloy

Noel has left SIB and has been replaced, on a part time basis, by Rory Miskelly (project manager for HMS Caroline).