

Minutes of the Strategic Investment Board meeting
Held on 16th April at 11am in the Digital Catapult Offices,
Ormeau Baths, Belfast

Attendees

Gerry McGinn (Chair)
Duncan McCausland
Marie Therese McGivern
Kathryn Thomson
Danny McSorley

Present

Martin Spollen
Scott Wilson
Conor Taggart
Helen McNeill (notetaker)

Apologies None

Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were made.

PRE-MEETING

Prior to its main meeting, the Board met in private with the CEO to discuss proposals for the establishment of a Senior Leadership Team.

MINUTES OF MARCH MEETING

The minutes of the March meeting were approved, subject to minor amendments.

The following matters arose:

- Communications workshop: GMcG, DMcC and BH will meet before the next Board meeting to review and develop the points raised. Further discussion on communications will be brought to the Board in due course.

CHAIRMAN'S AND DIRECTORS' BUSINESS

- The Chairman referred to the recently published NI Code of Good Practice for ALBs. BH reported that he had attended a meeting with a TEO representative who referred to INI's and SIB's "earned autonomy". Other Board members reported their awareness of the code through attendance at workshops.

- Further communication about the code will be shared with ALBs. The code does not lay out any change to the financial arrangements that would affect SIB.
- DMcS reported that he has received notification from TEO that his term of office on the SIB Board has been extended by a further 12 months.

REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

The Chair reported on the meeting of the Remuneration Committee. It had noted a letter from Mark Browne, TEO that authorised the ongoing operation of the Additional Responsibility Allowance (ARA) scheme.

The Committee, while welcoming this, considered that there was still a lack of clarity concerning the ARA policy's application in the case of individuals whose new, additional responsibilities were open-ended. The Committee had charged the CEO with taking forward this issue with TEO and SIB's legal advisers.

The Committee had noted some progress with the 2017/18 pay remit. It had also given formal approval to a single appointment.

KT asked for clarification of the procedure followed if a partner organisation terminated a SIB staff member's contract that had been extended beyond 4 years and which had thus been made 'permanent' by default.

BH agreed that 'the 4 Year rule' is that an individual who is on a rolling series of temporary contracts in the same job is, after 4 years, deemed to have permanent status. For SIB there is no substantive difference between a permanent and a temporary contract. The notice periods and other terms and conditions are exactly the same. If there is no work for someone then we must make him or her redundant, and this decision is not influenced by whether he or she has a permanent or a temporary contract. In both cases, SIB will always look to find someone in such a situation alternative suitable work. Often, but not always, this can be done.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The report was taken as read, and the following comments and questions arose:

- SIB's office move is now complete. The transition process was extremely smooth and staff have reported being very content with the new accommodation.
- Budget: The GIA reduction was lower than that which the finance team had anticipated.
- Two Board members expressed disappointment that SIB could not go ahead with being the vehicle for the delivery of Financial Transactions Capital. BH reported that SIB offered everything to be able to help, but the final decision was taken elsewhere.

- The announcement of the retirement of the Interim CEO of ARC21 will not have any material effect on the project, as the position he held was temporary, and a recruitment process will take place in due course.

The Board considered the current status of projects including:

- ARC21 Revised planning permission has been submitted.
- STRULE Shared Education Campus: BH attended the recent Strule Programme Board in which the addendum was discussed.
- EBRINGTON: Construction inflation costs and the consequences of BREXIT are 2 of the most prominent factors affecting this development.

ISNI REPORT

- MS informed the Board about the SBRI competitions currently being run.
- It is proposed that the DARE unit expands resources, with plans to recruit additional research officers into SIB.

AMU REPORT

- SW reported that capital realisations for the last represent a 10% return on investment. SW will present at the NICS Board on the 10th May. The terms of reference have already been accepted.
- Further papers in the AMU report refer to restructuring and reform of property management, which includes agile working.
 - DMCS raised the point that any plans for reforming working practices and offices spaces should include a strategic intent for the development of office space across the regions of Northern Ireland, particularly outside of Belfast and Derry~Londonderry.
 - The Board discussed whether the AMU's plans for offices could encourage economic development across the less urban areas of Northern Ireland.
 - SW noted that there have been examples of 'touchdown' spaces in public sector offices which had not always had the occupancy or use expected.

- MTM noted that the right technology needs to be enabled, as it is not always accessible across the NICS in order to promote an agile working culture.

QUARTERLY DASHBOARD AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHT REPORTS

The Board noted that there are 11 new recruitment competitions in the dashboard report. They asked that ARAs remain on the risk register. The risk appetite and exposure diagram remains on the report for further analysis during the next reporting period.

FINANCE REPORT

The Board noted the budget cut for 2019-20 and that the projected underspend for 2018-19 would be within the target.

PRESENTATION ON DIGITAL CATAPULT AND IMMERSIVE LAB

- Digital Catapult is a UK wide acceleration programme to support the acceleration and growth of emerging technology in SMEs.
- Adrian Johnston, Digital Catapult Director, gave the Board an overview of his role in Digital Catapult.
- The Board went on to test some of the immersive technology projects currently being developed/showcased.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- DMcS asked whether there had been any SIB engagement with Fermanagh and Omagh Council on the St. Lucia project. BH undertook to report back, having made enquiries.

Chairman

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

1. GMcG, DMcC and BH will meet before the next Board meeting to review and develop the points raised at the Communications Workshop.
2. BH will seek clarification environmental controls at the Nerve Centre at Ebrington.
3. BH will seek clarification in respect of SIB engagement with Fermanagh and Omagh Council on the St. Lucia project.