

# **Minutes of a Board Meeting of Strategic Investment Board Limited**

Held at 10.00 am on Tuesday 16 February 2021 by videoconference

**Present:** Gerry McGinn (GMcG)(Chair)  
Duncan McCausland (DMcC)  
Danny McSorley (DMcS)  
Brett Hannam (BH)  
Marie Therese McGivern (MTM)  
Kathryn Thomson (KT)

**In attendance:** Gregor Hamilton (GH)  
Martin Spollen (MS) (Items 21-26 only)  
Kevin Hegarty (KH) (Items 27-30 only)

## **Declarations of Interest and Board Terms of Reference**

1. The previously stated declarations of interest were confirmed. MTM drew particular attention to her position with NI Water, as it was mentioned in the papers. DMcC reminded all board members to submit the annual update of their registers of interests to Sam Pringle.
2. The board Terms of Reference were noted. Board members confirmed they had read the board papers.

## **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

3. The minutes of the January 2021 board meeting were approved. It was noted that the Audit Committee had not met in February, but would meet before the March board, and that the results of the staff survey would now be considered by the March board.

## **Chairman's and Directors' Business**

4. GMcG sought the views of the board on the communication he had received and circulated from the Public Appointments Mentoring Scheme. It was agreed that while the board were

supportive in principle, it would be preferable to defer participation until next year given the substantial changes to occur in board membership in the current year.

5. The board discussed the recently published NI Executive draft budget for 2021-22 and the budget position of various departments and other bodies within the NI public sector.

### **Board Governance and Transition Update**

6. GMcG explained that he had spoken with TEO and the competition to appoint a new Chair was expected to be launched in the next couple of weeks.

7. BH reported that there was still no response from DoF in relation to Senior Leadership Team allowances, although he had a meeting scheduled with TEO on 17<sup>th</sup> February at which the issue would be discussed.

8. GMcG welcomed the new format of the Board Pack.

9. GMcG noted that he and DMcC had already commented on the draft Corporate and Business Plans, and invited comments from other board members. MTM said she was happy with the plans, but suggested they might benefit from the inclusion of some explicit linkage to the broader context. DMcS and KT agreed.

### **Chief Executive's Report**

10. BH updated the board on matters that had arisen since the CE Report was written.

11. GMcG and BH briefed the board on their meetings with the Infrastructure minister and with the DUP and SF special advisors. GMcG noted in particular that the minister remained committed to the proposed Infrastructure Commission

12. DMcS noted the reference in the CE report to a "whistleblowing incident" and sought confirmation that the correct procedures had been implemented. BH and DMcC confirmed that they had, and the matter would be formally reported to the Audit Committee.

13. The Board discussed the Strule Education Campus projects and its ongoing delays.

14. KT asked if SIB was making a formal response to the PFG consultation. BH explained that SIB's input was provided through discussions on the ISNI.

15. BH updated members on the work of the Procurement Board.
16. In response to a query from KT, BH updated the board on his understanding of the position in relation to Casement Park.
17. DMcC noted the reference to the development of the high street support scheme in the CE Report, and in particular the possibility that up to £7m could be spent on development costs.
18. The board congratulated Jonathan Gray on becoming an Accredited Commercial Lead.
- 19.. The board noted the position on the red/amber projects on the Major Projects list, all of which had been discussed or were as noted in the CE Report.

### **Quarterly Reports and Dashboards**

20. The board noted the Quarterly Reports and Dashboards. BH noted in particular the risk of a cut in SIB's budget, and consequential staff losses

### **ISNI Report**

21. Martin Spollen joined the meeting and gave an update on the work of the ISNI team. He explained that they had met with SpAds, and all departments, as well as local councils, NILGA, SOLACE and other key participants to understand the "demand" side of the equation. They were also in discussions with DoF on the "supply" side. The next stage would be the development of some overarching themes, including digitization, Covid recovery, town centre regeneration, smart places, transition to net zero carbon and a joined-up approach to development of surplus council sites. Underneath these themes would be lists of specific projects.
22. MS explained that the draft ISNI would be circulated to the board in advance of it being issued for formal consultation, which was currently scheduled for the end of April (although timing would be dependent on PFG).
23. DMcC asked if the concept of "flagship" projects had been dropped. MS conformed that in a formal sense it had, although it was obviously still necessary to identify certain important projects to allow a metric for progress.

24. GMcG asked about the “digital divide.” MS explained that this was something which was being considered by the DARE unit.

25 The Board discussed all-island dimensions to infrastructure planning.

26. BH emphasised the importance of getting input from outside the public sector through the consultation process.

### **Green Growth**

27. Kevin Hegarty joined the meeting and gave a short presentation on the Green Growth Strategy. He explained strategy in the context of the 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget, the net zero approach to asset construction and refurbishment and the concomitant increase in front loaded UK expenditure. He talked about the budgetary implications for NI from this front-loaded expenditure, and the medium/long term returns on that investment.

28. KH noted that consultation on the NI Climate Change Bill had just closed, and that an enactment was expected in the current mandate. He explained that some uncertainty remained as to whether the NI target should be net zero NI emissions by 2050, or, given relatively large contribution of agriculture to the NI economy, for NI to contribute its fair share towards the achievement of net zero UK emissions by that date.

29. KH explained that a draft Green Growth Strategy was under preparation to be taken to the climate change conference in Glasgow in September, and this was expected to be finalized in Feb/March 2022.

30. GMcG thanked KH for his presentation and requested that a copy of the slides be circulated to the board.

### **Report from Remuneration and Personnel Committee**

31. GMcG reported on the proceedings of the Remuneration and Personnel Committee that had met earlier. He noted that the committee had:

- reviewed the revised Covid 19 risk register (and been updated on the annual leave position);

- reviewed additional responsibility allowances;
- approved the content of a draft ARA report to TEO (subject to any developments between now and year end);
- reviewed the ARA policy;
- reviewed the position of Urban Villages (in light of potential funding issues);
- formally approved decisions taken out of committee;
- discussed increased focus on individual and team development; and
- reviewed the risk register in context of the current Covid 19 spike.

He noted that the results of the staff survey were to be circulated for discussion at the March board meeting.

### **Financial Report**

32. BH confirmed that SIB was on track to achieve its budget within tolerance.

33. DMcC noted that the Audit Committee would meet in March, and could also meet before board on 19<sup>th</sup> April, although the latter meeting might be deferred until May.

### **AOB**

34. DMcS noted the recent publicity around the uncertain future of the poultry waste anaerobic digestion plant in Donegal. BH explained the role played by SIB as project managers in the SBRI competition.

35. KT repeated her offer to host the board meeting at Cultra post lockdown.



## Actions

### Actions from previous meetings

Reference	Action	Responsible	Expected Completion
1/20/3	Record training by board members in personal logs	Board members	March 2021
1/21/3	Review spending against budget	Audit Committee	ongoing

### Actions from February 2021 Meeting

Reference	Action	Responsible	Expected Completion
2/21/1	Staff survey to be considered by Board	Board	March 2021
2/21/3	Green Growth slides to be circulated	Helen McNeill	March 2021