

Minutes of a Board Meeting of Strategic Investment Board Limited

Held at 10.00 am on Tuesday 8 August 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)
Dave Vincent (DV) (Item 14 only)
Adam Wallace (AW) (Item 14 only)
Nigel Robbins (NR) (Item 14 only)
Sharon Smyth (Item 19 only)

Declarations of Interest and Board Terms of Reference

1. The previously stated declarations of interest were confirmed.
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 June 2021 board meeting were approved.
4. GMcG reviewed the action points from the June meeting. He noted that the October/November board would review the operation of the escalation process and that the October meeting of the Remuneration and Personnel Committee would discuss performance management for embedded staff.

Chairman's and Directors' Business

5. BH explained that TEO would now commence the process for appointment of a new Chair in September. In the meantime TEO proposes to extend the current appointments of GMcG, DMcC and MTM for 6 months. GMcG explained that he would be contacting other bodies to encourage interest in the Chair appointment and the 4 other board positions. It was agreed that as a matter of practicality (given the time which would be required to complete all 5 appointments) it would be advisable for the extensions to run for "12 months terminable early on appointment of replacement", as it was probable that 6 months would be insufficient. BH agreed to suggest this to TEO.

6. BH explained that TEO had now responded to DoF on the issues they had raised in connection with the reorganisation and senior leadership team. TEO and DoF were due to meet shortly to discuss these matters.

7. BH explained that the Covid 19 Recovery Plan issued by the Executive included a commitment to set up an Infrastructure Commission. It was likely that SIB (which was specifically identified as a stakeholder) would have a role in its operation, although precise details were as yet not known.

8. GMcG proposed that the September board meeting be held by videoconference, but consideration could be given at that meeting to returning to face to face meetings from October.

Report from Remuneration and Personnel Committee

9. GMcG reported on the proceedings at the Remuneration and Personnel Committee held earlier in the morning. He explained that the committee had:

- reviewed the Covid 19 Risk Register;
- been updated on the proposed internal restructuring;
- discussed the 2020-21 Pay Remit, and agreed a proposal to distribute the available funds to give higher increases to lower paid staff;
- reviewed last year's absence record; and
- ratified a number of out-of-committee decisions.

10. DMCS requested a suitably anonymized breakdown setting out the spread of salaries across the organisation.

Chief Executive's Report

11. BH updated the board on the items in the CE Report. He noted in particular the continuing issue of construction cost inflation, and explained the content of the new "Procurement Advisory Note" published by the Executive. While supportive of the intention behind the note, he drew attention to the potential risks of exceeding approved budgets and legal claims which might unintentionally be created.

12. DMCC welcomed the decision of the Infrastructure Minister (referred to in the CE report) to grant planning permission in respect of Casement Park.

13. The Board formally reviewed and noted the position on the red/amber projects. It was noted in particular that Strule had now moved to green.

Digital Infrastructure

14. Martin Spollen, Dave Vincent, Adam Wallace and Nigel Robbins joined the meeting and each gave a brief presentation on the work they are doing in the field of digital infrastructure. MS explained the rapid growth in the activity being carried out for a range of different departments and other public bodies by the Data Analytics Research and Exploitation Unit. He noted the difficulties the unit experienced in recruiting and retaining staff. DV described the work he carried out, principally for DfE (in particular the support provided to the Shop Local scheme). He also commented on the increasing demand for assistance with creating digital strategies in the public sector, and the difficulties in finding staff to meet this demand. AW described the growth of the NI Digital Catapult. NR explained the background to Project Stratum, and progress on the ground since the contract was signed. He noted the use of additional funding to complete broadband coverage, and the issues which the project had faced .

ISNI Update

15. Martin Spollen gave a short presentation on the draft Investment Strategy. He explained that the new ISNI differed from its predecessors in having a much longer time horizon (to 2050) and in the unprecedented scale and nature of the infrastructure required to deal with environmental challenges. He described the extensive consultation process which had been undertaken, and explained that rather than being just a list of projects, the focus of the ISNI would be on five key objectives: decarbonizing society and the economy, maximizing benefits from new technology, supporting connectivity (both physical and digital), enhancing communities and places, and strengthening essential services (including water and waste). He noted that the implementation of the ISNI would require a broad medium term finance plan in addition to individual departmental investment plans. Once the current consultation with SpAds was complete, MS expected the draft ISNI to be published for formal consultation in early autumn, with a view to final publication in the New Year (although timing was inevitably dependent upon progress with the PfG).

16. MS agreed to circulate his slide presentation to the board.

Procurement Update

17. Sharon Smyth (recently appointed CEO of CPD) joined the meeting and gave the board a brief presentation on the principal issues facing the organisation, including the prospect of new procurement rules. She noted the recent reconstitution of the Procurement Board as a positive development, and explained the rationale behind the recent Procurement Advisory Note to meet the current short term imbalance between supply and demand.

Media Pack

18. The board noted the content of the media pack.

[Signed] Chair

Actions

Actions from previous meetings

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Expected Completion</i>
6/21/2	Draft ISNI to be circulated to board members	BH/MS	September 2021

Actions from August 2021 Meeting

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Expected Completion</i>
8/21/1	BH to suggest TEO offer “up to 12 months” extensions to board appointments	BH	September 2021
8/21/2	Anonymized salary breakdown to be circulated to board members	BH	September 2021