

INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM
MINUTES 2020

Tuesday 7th January 2020
Tuesday 4th February 2020
Tuesday 13th February 2020
Tuesday 3rd March 2020
Tuesday 31st March 2020
Tuesday 7th April 2020
Wednesday 15th April 2020
Tuesday 5th May 2020
Tuesday 13th May 2020
Tuesday 2nd June 2020
Wednesday 10th June 2020
Tuesday 7th July 2020
Tuesday 28th July 2020
Tuesday 4th August 2020
Wednesday 12th August 2020
Wednesday 2nd September 2020
Wednesday 9th September 2020
Tuesday 6th October 2020
Wednesday 14th October 2020
Tuesday 3rd November 2020
Tuesday 24th November 2020
Tuesday 1st December 2020
Wednesday 9th December 2020
Tuesday 22nd December 2020

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM
PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND PLANNING MEETING**

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 7TH JANUARY 2020

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Amanda Braden, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan,
Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Alan McKeown, Anne Beggs

Apologies: Steve Harper

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 11th December were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 Best Companies – DD confirmed PR will meet with each ELT member to review data. Comms plan to be shared with ELT.

1.2.2 CSE Accreditation – DD confirmed it was not possible to extend for one year. It was agreed to continue for 12 months and then reconsider as part of strategy plan development.

1.2.3 Female Representation – Information presented on 18th December. AB will follow up on short term actions. DD & AB will hold follow up session with relevant staff on 30th January.

1.2.4 Interview Notes – The team discussed. It was agreed to review interview panel paperwork process. AB to undertake review.

All other action items were closed off.

2. 2019-20 BUSINESS PLANNING

2.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Gary Campbell attended the meeting to present.

GC gave a broad definition of AI giving examples of the four broad segments that AI is made up of. While AI can be used in its own right, it is normally incorporated into other technological enhancements. GC show examples of how AI is being used by local companies.

GC detailed the ambition to grow core AI capability in NI by 2021 focussing on skills development, trade & FDI support, sectoral partnerships, R&D, funding, infrastructure and AI within Invest NI.

KH stated that there is a nervousness of AI out there and there is a need to educate and show positives too.

The group discussed the area of skills in relation to AI. GC stated that there is a need to think differently on how skills are provided. GC felt there was a need to look at a different model of delivery other than the academic model.

KH asked if it was possible to provide information on which sectors AI will have the biggest impact in NI and what impact AI will have in NI. Is there analysis about where the demand is going i.e. AI, cyber etc.

Action: DD

It was agreed to discuss this topic further at the upcoming ELT Strategy meeting as part of the Corporate Strategy development discussion.

3.2 ELT Strategy Day Agenda

The group discussed the proposed agenda for the forthcoming ELT strategy day and the timeline for the development of the next business strategy.

3.3 Any Other Business

3.3.1 Budget – MC provided an update on budgets for next year.

Next meeting: 4th February 2020

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM
PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND PLANNING MEETING**

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 4th FEBRUARY 2020

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Amanda Braden, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan,
Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 7th January were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

- 1.2.1 Smart Working – DD stated that the team are still working through the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for the project. DD, MC to discuss, DD will report to ELT with an update.

Action: DD

2. ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES

No items for discussion.

3. 2019-20 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Board

3.1.1 Board Actions

MC referred to the tabled papers. The group discussed the actions from January's Board meeting.

It was agreed that a refresher session on conflicts of interest for existing Board members should be run in conjunction with the induction session for new Board members.

Action: MC

JF & BD to ask their teams to pull together a list of internal and publicly available services for family owned businesses.

Action: JF/BD

It was agreed to circulate to ELT a copy of the annual salary survey.

Action: DD

3.1.2 February Board Agenda

The group discussed the proposed agenda for the Board strategy meeting.

3.1.3 Forward Planner

It was agreed to propose to move the Mid-South West Growth Deal presentation to April, when the Board meeting will be held at a regional location.

It was agreed to add a standing item to discuss the Business Strategy development.

KH asked ELT colleagues to forward any suggested items for the forward planner.

Action: ELT

All documents will be updated.

3.2 Core Brief

PH referred to the tabled paper. It was agreed that the Operational Directors would present the quarter 3 performance update. Smart Working roll out update to be amended to reflect delay in commencement.

3.3 Risk Register

Katrina O'Dowd and Colin Morelli attended to discuss the tabled paper.

CM provided a headline update on the risk register to 31st December 2019. One risk has been added, COR030, relating to City Deals. There have been no deletions as a result of this update.

The group discussed the risk score movement to COR018, COR019, COR025 and COR028. In relation to risk COR019, it was agreed to close this specific risk and to create a new risk around the NI Protocol and future Trade Deals.

The group discussed the return of the NI Executive (COR025) and it was agreed to leave this risk as is and to review in the next quarter.

It was agreed to amend the scoring on COR005, meaning that it is likely to be in the 'Very High' category. It was also agreed to reduce the score on COR027 and to focus on succession planning in the next quarter.

The group discussed the current global issue of the coronavirus. It was agreed to add a risk to the register at the next update and to include a reference to coronavirus in the current update under the existing risk about business continuity.

CM to make the changes as discussed and issue the register for signing.

3.4 Update on Expo 2020

SH provided the group with an overview of Expo 2020 Dubai. SH confirmed that a dedicated Expo Manager has been appointed on an 18-month contract and that they are currently undertaking a scoping exercise. SH stated that he will be reaching out to colleagues for ideas.

3.5 Joint Departmental Meeting

KH referred to the proposed agenda for next week's meeting with Departmental colleagues. The group discussed amendments and KH will discuss with the Permanent Secretary later this week.

Action: KH

3.6 Business Strategy

DD referred to his paper issued this morning and his recent discussions with DfE Policy. DD indicated that Invest NI's current Business Strategy is likely to continue through its last year as is and we will be asked to prepare a "bolt on" year in 2021/22 or a One Year Plan, as a forerunner to a new PfG (2022/26).

DD referred to the upcoming Board Strategy Day on 26th February and set out a draft agenda, which will be provided in advance of the ELT meeting on 13th February for discussion and agreement.

Action: DD

In light of evolving economic realities both nationally and globally the group discussed the role Invest NI has regards future strategic thinking. JF felt it was important that ELT have a consensus agreement on that before the strategy day. ELT to forward their thoughts to DD on the role of Invest NI before close of play Friday 7th February.

Action: ELT

3.7 Transition Update

KH asked the team, now that we are in a post EU environment, are there any communications or campaigns that we need to start to implement?

PH stated that there is a national level 2-week campaign underway, however this is primarily redirecting to www.gov.uk for advice. PH also stated that a new trade campaign would commence within the next number of weeks. PH also reported that some guidance had been issued on use of terminology. The group agreed to consider further communications and campaigns once further clarity on key areas, eg NI Protocol was available. PH to share current guidance with ELT.

Action: PH

DD indicated that the Core Script is currently being updated and will be issued when available.

Action: DD

3.8 Any Other Business

3.8.1 CEO Lunches – KH provided some feedback on his first CEO sector lunch. BD to populate the timetable with allocated sectors. JF suggested including the business bodies such as accountancy, legal and banking. It was agreed to focus on the sectors first.

3.8.2 Staff Conference – PH stated that there are two possible dates for the staff conference – 1st and 4th June. It was agreed to go with 1st June. The group discussed possible venues and combining the conference and an L&D event. PH to investigate suitable venues.

Action: PH

- 3.8.3 Coronavirus Preparations – AB reported that communications are being issued regularly and the situation is being monitored on a daily basis. AB stated that the biggest impact is on our staff in China but that the Regional Director for South East Asia is staying in contact with his team.

The group discussed areas of work that the staff could focus on whilst they are confined to home. Is there research they could undertake? ELT to consider.

Action: ELT

KH stated that whilst the virus is currently largely centred in China, it is not impossible that it may reach NI or our other business locations. ELT to familiarise themselves again with the Business Continuity Plan.

Next meeting: 13th February 2020

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM
PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND PLANNING MEETING**

MEETING MINUTES – THURSDAY 13th FEBRUARY 2020

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Amanda Braden, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Ethna McNamee

Apologies: Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 4th February were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 Smart Working – DD stated that the DPIA review is still ongoing. ELT discussed the progress of the Smart Working pilot and its implementation and are content that this is an alternative way of how we currently work rather than a radical shift. On that basis, ELT agreed that there is no requirement to inform customers and is content to move forward with the implementation. All Invest NI policies are robust and cover data protection. ELT recognised the criticality of Smart Working as part of the preparedness for the Coronavirus pandemic.

1.2.2 Conflicts of Interest – Refresher training planned for March.

1.2.3 Family Business – JF stated that work is ongoing to pull together the information requested and will be provided to Board by way of an update paper.

1.2.4 Terminology Guidance – PH issued copy of Whitehall terminology guidance to be used now we are in post EU exit transition. It was stated that the guidance from Whitehall is not the same as NI guidance.

1.2.5 Staff Conference – confirmed date is 1 June. PH to return to ELT with proposals for venue.

2. ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES

2.1 Best Companies Survey Analysis

Paddy Robb attended the meeting to present the analysis from this recent survey and feedback from the recent Women in Leadership group event. PR stated that today's presentation would focus on emerging themes, areas of focus, biggest impact and proposals on the way forward. PR stated that he would be seeking ELT's agreement to move forward with the process.

PR explained the overall engagement scores (by Group) and compared the results to the last survey in 2017. Leadership, Management and Personal Growth were the areas to focus on.

PR stated that the next steps are to build out the Attract, Develop, Retain framework; specific actions / owners / KPIs / timeframes; agreement and endorsement from ELT;

launch and communicate out to staff and track and report on progress as a standard item at ELT.

DD stated that whilst the Strategy and HR Groups will build the framework; it would need ownership across the whole of the executive team. AB commented that the Engagement Champions play an essential role and are feeding well in to the process.

KH stated that Attract, Develop, Retain will be the biggest issue that ELT will deal with this year.

KH asked what the organisation is doing that we want to keep doing and if there was one thing that could be changed what would it be. KH asked ELT members to provide their thoughts to him within the next week. Is this evolutionary or revolutionary?

Action: ELT

AB stated that Invest NI has strong results across HR compared to majority of companies e.g. liP, Best Place etc. Strategy & HR will work up a proposed framework and bring back to ELT for further discussion in March.

Action: DD/AB/PR

2.2 Honours

Alistair Moffett attended to discuss. The group discussed the tabled paper and ELT members will feedback to AM.

Action: ELT

3. 2019-20 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Board Strategy Preparation

Martin Robinson and David Roberts attended to discuss this item.

MR set the scene in terms of the New Decade New Approach agreement and what a refreshed Industrial Strategy could look like. MR highlighted some of the key issues that came out of the ELT strategy discussion focussing on high growth firms, partnership working, productivity, skills and internationalisation.

MR reported that the Business Strategy Working Group has now met and highlighted key issues emerging. The Board Sub-Group wanted agreement/clarity on Invest NI future role in wider ecosystem, steer on policy direction from DfE, clarity on customers, consensus on strategic priorities and themes for future work.

MR presented a proposed agenda for the forthcoming Board Strategy Day. The group agreed with the proposed agenda however it was felt that the discussion on 'desired outcomes' should be the starting point from which the debate should flow. DD to devise a schedule/grid of outcomes that can be used to steer the discussion.

Action: DD/MR

KH felt that economic sustainability would be a good area for discussion. What is the pathway to economic self-sufficiency and is the target 2030? DD agreed to incorporate this into the agenda for the Board Strategy Day.

3.2 New to NI Guidance

Gerard McNally attended the meeting to discuss this tabled paper. Business Performance team has been working with International Investment to review and update Invest NI's approach to reporting Inward Investment projects, particularly those that are considered 'New to NI'. The tabled paper provided a proposed set of guidelines for consideration.

The group had a lively discussion around what was considered as 'New to NI' with differing views. ELT agreed that the organisation should continue to target projects that are New to NI. In addition, there was agreement on the need for some additional flexibility around New Ownership projects qualifying as 'New to NI'. However, the group agreed that it would be best to leave the implementation of any changes until the new business strategy period. GMcN was asked to liaise with SH and DD to consider further when setting the new Four Year External Job Targets.

Action: GMcN/SH/DD

3.3 Roundtable

ELT members updated colleagues on areas of current focus. Some areas to note were:

- Executive Director for Human Resources is currently out for recruitment. Communicate and share with contacts. Closing date 20th February.
- Uplift in AQs, updated guidance to issue to staff on answering of questions.
- Access to Finance strategy currently being drawn up and will come to ELT for approval before presenting to Board.
- Technology Solutions, Compliance & NPD Division now up and running.
- KPI collection now underway.
- Recent visit by international management staff provided positive feedback on interactions with other teams. Agreed to do twice a year going forward in April and October.
- New HR Business Partners starting and mental health/absence management training has been piloted. Tailored session for the executive team will be pulled together.

3.4 Any Other Business

- 3.4.1 Business Continuity Planning – The group discussed the current Coronavirus pandemic. Siobhan Haughey provided an update on the organisation Business Continuity Plan. SH asked ELT members to review any current staff travel plans to ascertain if essential or not.

4. Joint ELT/DfE session

ELT moved to DfE for a joint ELT/DfE session on strategy and budget 2020/21.

Next meeting: 3rd March 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 3rd March 2020

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Amanda Braden, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 13th February were approved.

1.2 **Actions outstanding from last meeting**

- 1.2.1 Smart Working – DD confirmed that the DPIA has now been signed. An Action Plan has been developed and will be discussed/agreed with colleagues over the coming weeks.

2. **ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES**

2.1 **Coronavirus Update**

AB referred to her circulated note and the team discussed.

The group discussed protocol for inward visits and overseas travel and confirmed that this would be reviewed daily in line with FCO and COBR guidelines. In regards to trade shows, SH confirmed that we will follow the advice of each trade show.

AB stated that there was lots of work going on behind the scenes and asked ELT members to ensure they review their group Business Continuity Plans. AB to share Business Continuity plans. The roll out of laptops for smart working will now be escalated.

Action: AB

The group discussed the potential economic impact of the virus. BD stated that companies had been identified and feedback requested. BD will lead this exercise.

Action: BD

KH asked that a daily update be provided to ELT to include any official government notices.

Action: AB

3. **2019-20 BUSINESS PLANNING**

3.1 **Board**

3.1.1 **Actions and agenda**

The group discussed the outstanding actions and ELT leads confirmed these were underway. The group also discussed the proposed agenda and suggested amendments will be made.

3.1.2 **Forward planner**

It was agreed to hold the April Board meeting in a regional location. MC to discuss suggestion with the Chair.

Action: MC

DD to circulate the Board/ELT pairings agreed at the Board strategy session and to wait to see the outcomes from those before populating the Board agenda forward planner.

Action: DD

MC asked that 'strategic projects' paper be added to April agenda and also stated that he was currently working on the new Board members induction programme which he will circulate to colleagues when ready.

Action: MC

3.2 Staff Core Brief

The group discussed the proposed core brief. KH stated he would like to provide an update on the coronavirus preparations and feedback from his recent Ministerial meeting. ELT approved the document for circulation.

3.3 NI Skills Strategy

Niall Casey (NC) joined the meeting to present an update on the NI skills strategy. The presentation provided a summary of the key skills challenges facing the region, a summary of the main labour availability challenges, how Invest NI is helping to address the issues and what more can be done to address the issues.

NC stated that Invest NI is the biggest investor in upskilling and spends approximately £6.5 - £7m per annum with companies investing another £21m. The skills investment we support will help Invest NI achieve its targets.

NC stated that DfE engaged OECD on Skills Strategy Assessment, with analysis highlighting four key priorities:

- creating a culture of lifelong learning;
- reducing skills imbalances;
- effectively using skills in workplace and
- strengthening the governance of skills policies.

KH asked if there is an Invest NI view on how we would like the system to change. NC stated that felt that DfE would welcome our involvement. KH asked NC to prepare a short position paper bringing together our recommendations i.e. the five things we would like to see happen.

Action: JF/NC

3.4 North South Collaboration and Innovation

Dr Vicky Kell (VK) and Ciaran McCartan (CMcC) joined the meeting to present. VK stated that the purpose of today's presentation was to provide ELT with information on the North/South collaboration proposal. VK stated that the team have also briefed DfE on what is potentially in the offing and that there are no specific ask of Invest NI at this time.

CMcC stated that Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) have proposed an ambitious programme of North/South collaboration, through all-island spokes and centres. The initial funding ask has been worked out on an (RoI) 2/3 and (NI) 1/3 basis and indicative costs therefore are equal to €266M RoI and €113m NI, over 6 years.

Of the areas of focus proposed, two would be led in NI namely food security and precision medicine.

The next steps will be for NI representatives to meet in March to prioritise gaps in Agri/Food research, for UKRI consideration, repeat this task for other proposed research areas within NI and UKRI to hold UK/IRE Funding Forum in spring/summer 2020 and will discuss the SFI proposals and the funding ask.

MC felt that there are still lots of loose ends namely the relationship of these projects with to the City Deals projects and how they fit, budget (large commitment over multiple years) and in regards to Food-i how it fits in regards to the Agri Food Quest Centre.

KH thanked the team for their presentation and stated that for now we will keep a watching brief. KH asked if the team have a recommendation as to what we should be asking for to help shape the proposal. KH would be keen to input early in the process.

Action: JF/VK

3.5 Budget Update

MC provided an update on the budget indicating it will be some weeks before we have confirmation of budget allocation.

BD stated that we need to be mindful that the organisation is still writing business.

3.6 Sub Regional

KH referred to increased coverage and discussions around 'sub regional' over recent weeks.

KH felt the issue was twofold, firstly that there was an element around how the organisation communicates what it does (there is more activity happening in the regions than is being reported) and secondly there is a debate to be had on how the organisation does things in the future.

SH provided an update on the work undertaken by the International team. He stated that there was lot of working going on that is not being captured and that the organisation need to get smarter on how it reports this information.

AMcK stated that there is a lot of positive work being undertaken in the regions. He also stated that he is in the process of refreshing the Sub Regional Working Group and hopes to involve the new Board members.

PH reported that the Communications team are in the process of updating the corporate brochures.

KH asked SH, AMcK and PH to pull together an action plan that can also provide an update to the Board.

Action: SH, AMcK & PH

KH also asked that PH and DD pull together a political outreach plan.

Action: PH & DD

3.7 Any Other Business

- 3.7.1 CRM – KH reported that he had recently received a demo on the CRM system and was very impressed. CRM can really help the organisation in terms of data collection and asked ELT members to ensure their staff are recording all visits.
Action: ELT

Next meeting: 31 March 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 31st March 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Amanda Braden, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd March were approved.

1.2 **Actions outstanding from last meeting**

1.2.1 Best Companies Survey Analysis – to be rescheduled for a later date.

1.2.2 Strategic Projects – Board keen to see this information. Agreed to focus on projects over last 12 months. MC to prepare paper and share with ELT for meeting on 15th April. DD stated Chair would like to get Economist involved in analysis.

1.2.3 Board Induction – MC to issue draft plan to ELT by end of the week.

1.2.4 NI Skills Position Paper – JF stated he has a draft and will share with KH.

1.2.5 North South Collaboration and Innovation – JF will pick up with KH separately.

1.2.6 Sub Regional – Team to prepare summary paper. MC stated the Chair is keen to set up a Sub Regional Board Sub Committee.

1.2.7 Political Outreach Plan – PH to revisit in current climate.

2. **2019-20 BUSINESS PLANNING**

2.1 **Communications Update**

PH provided a brief update in terms of the communications issued over recent weeks to staff. A 'daily update' email is now being issued to staff alongside the nibusinessinfo summary.

In terms of the customer base, PH commented that we have fed in to the Executive campaign both online and offline; four business treatments and two radio voice-overs were approved yesterday which will roll out in three-week bursts. The two-minute update will continue to issue and Comms will be pushing ahead with the priority webinars. Comms are also revising case studies, will be repackaged under the COVID-19 response banner.

SH asked that we add the international staff to the all staff text message particularly the recent video message from CEO. PH agreed to look in to how international staff can be included.

Action: PH

2.2 **Board**

2.2.1 **Actions**

The team discussed the headline actions from the COVID-19 discussion. KH asked MC to follow up on draft minutes as these had not yet been received.

Action: MC

2.2.2 **April Agenda**

MC referred to the proposed agenda, which had been drafted prior to the COVID-19 emergency.

It was suggested to focus the April board meeting on welcoming the new board members, covering areas relating to the constitution of the Board and COVID-19 discussion. KH asked that a conflicts of interest piece be included.

MC to redraft agenda and discuss with Chair. It was agreed to produce the CEO report to Board for March however, KH was content for this to have a lighter touch given COVID-19 priorities.

Action: MC

2.2.4 **Forward Planner**

The forward planner was not discussed given other current priorities.

2.3 **Budget Update**

KH commented that with the start of the new financial year tomorrow he was surprised Invest NI had not received formal indication of budget allocation however, it was understood the Finance Minister would be making a budget statement later today.

KH briefed the team on a conversation he had had with DfE colleagues this morning in terms of what the budget is believed to look like "same Res Dell allocation as last year".

JF stated that the affordability statement in caseworks expires today and asked for clarification on whether we roll forward with the statement we have. MC agreed to continue with the current statement until we have a clear understanding of what Invest NI's budget will be.

DD asked if, in the current climate, we need to put the brakes on the allocation of budgets across the organisation until we have a clearer sense of where the money is going to be required. MC stated this was a valid point and he foresees a number of divisions freeing up resources later in the year. It was agreed to have a specific budget meeting to discuss.

BD asked what the process is for bidding for COVID-19 money. DD confirmed that DfE was leading on this however he would circulate the spreadsheet of solutions with the various elements so that colleagues could input.

Action: DD

KH concluded that whilst the budget situation is still loose and unclear, the organisation will enter in to a new financial year tomorrow and that the team will have a more in-depth discussion on 21st April.

3. ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES

3.1 Resource Redeployment

KH stated that the plan for this session was to get first thoughts from the executive leadership team on team resourcing and activities now we are home working and the external environment has changed. The last two weeks have focussed on getting things done/out and ensuring the organisation could keep operating under the current conditions and this has been done successfully. The next two weeks will start to focus on critical work that has to be completed and then to look at what the environment will look like going forward and how our actions can help start economic recovery.

Each ELT member gave an update on how they saw their group operating in the next two weeks and two months. Some of the key areas stated were:

- HR – planning for potential illness of staff (and their families); induction of new Executive Director for HR 20 April and the continued development of the new HRMIS system. AB stated that the HRMIS system will not be ready for the new performance management year and therefore will need to continue with the current system.
- BSDG – continue to support customers; won't push for completion of KPIs and will estimate for those client cannot get information from. Considering a thought leadership piece, PH happy to pick up on this with BD. Need for conversations around commercial knowledge training within teams (commercial, legal, financial). AB suggest L&D team could help with this. BD asked if possible to extend the Grade 7 list for 12 months as have had to hold back on releasing staff. ELT agreed with this proposal and AB will follow up on this with HR team.

Action: AB

- Communications – Develop content and assets aligned to agreed priorities and scheduling for alternative delivery; work with overseas and sector teams to build digital content and capability; revamp our international presence on investni.com; maintain a pipeline of PR opportunities to support external comms messaging and deliver internal comms to ensure staff remain supported and informed.
- Strategy – continue supporting COVID-19 response; analysis of changing economic conditions and implications; continued development of new Business Strategy; feeding in to Brexit negotiations/policy.
- Regional Business – AMcK opened by thanking his ELT colleagues for all the help that was offered to help support the Business Support Team. Regional team will continue to focus on customer contact and partnership contact assessing the needs of clients and supporting them and signposting. AMcK stated that every other devolved administration has a separate support package to offer, whilst NI does not. Need to have quick conversations around packaging budget and how we can portray the totality of our support.
- International Business – despite everything going on there was still some interest coming through, with some very good signals from recent US visit. Trade calendar is currently up in the air, looking at moving a lot to September

however could then become congested. Expo 2020 in Dubai have recommended delaying for a year. Budgets will be the most difficult thing to monitor.

- Business Solutions – with the largest group JF had split his information in to Divisional inputs. Clarity, Cash and Coordination. Some of the key work will be on developing temporary Access to Finance solutions for early stage companies (J-curve) and £45m+ turnover businesses; indications of a desire to move quickly on R&D projects; develop and implement new support delivery channels
- Finance & Operations – completion of year end accounts; continued support for IT to keep organisation working remotely, increased work in co-ordination.

KH thanked the team for their inputs and did not see anything that needed to be challenged but asked that the team reflect on the information to see if anything had been missed. KH stated the team need to start to look at what the organisation will focus on over the next two months and preparation for any increase in illness within the organisation and how we deal with that.

AB stated that there is a huge reliance on a small IT team and asked if there were any staff that could be quickly reskilled to provide back up to this team. JF agreed to speak to ebusiness Manager to see if any staff have that skillset.

Action: JF

KH will pick up with each Executive Director in their forthcoming one-to-one meetings with a view to knitting all the information together to make sure there is a strategic overview.

Action: KH

3.2 Any Other Business

3.2.1 Advisory Forum – BD provided some feedback coming from companies who were sharing concerns that Invest NI is not involved in this forum. KH agreed to raise with the Permanent Secretary.

Action: KH

3.2.2 IT Products – SH raised an issue regarding the use of conferencing products other than Skype and staff not joining meeting if using a different package is used. MC to discuss with IT to find a way to broaden access.

Action: MC

Next meeting: 7 April 2020 - TBC

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 7th APRIL 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Amanda Braden, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 31st March were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting (31st March)

1.2.1 Strategic projects – to be tabled at meeting on 15th April.

1.2.2 Sub Regional Action Plan - to be tabled at meeting on 15th April.

1.2.3 Grade 7 list – AB proposed instead that over the next few weeks that the HR team work with ELT to review the current list of posts and discuss next steps.

1.2.4 Stakeholder engagement – BD (previously) GMcK to consider high level forum engagement with larger companies. Come back with more detailed suggestion.

1.2.5 CEO Support Statement – PH looking at producing another e-zine to stakeholders and MLAs to issue around Easter. Further CEO message (internal and external) to be issued before Easter break.

2. ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES

2.1 Easter Arrangements

The group discussed cover for the forthcoming Easter holiday. Agreed not to put a duty roster in place but to deal with issues on demand and assign to relevant ELT member as required. The group agreed to remain in contact should urgent issues arise.

3. 2019-20 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Covid - Increasing Liquidity Expediting Customer Payments

KH referred to the tabled paper; the paper has been updated to reflect discussions on the last ELT call. KH asked if ELT colleagues had any objections to the revised paper.

JF wished to raise a point for inclusion regarding final claim. ELT agreed that programmes where there is only one payment can be included under our exceptional partial vouch option (up to 70%).

MC again stated he was not sure we should be supporting furlough workers and fears this moves us in to a difficult space. BD stated to be clear we are not supporting the costs of furloughed workers.

ELT agreed the paper with the amendment suggested by JF. Final paper to be shared with the ARC Chair, Chair and Internal Audit. MC to produce cover note to accompany paper.

Action: MC

3.2 Covid – Recovery Plan

Martin Robinson and David Roberts joined the call to discuss this item.

MR stated that the tabled paper is an indicative draft framework for the development of a proposed Invest NI Recovery Plan, for consideration by ELT.

The Recovery Plan framework represents a generic model and will focus, in the short-term on supporting those businesses most seriously impacted and in need of 'intensive care'.

The group discussed the four proposed phases as demonstrated in the graphic. It was agreed that the 'shield/hibernate' phase should also include activities to assist those companies who are continuing to trade during this time.

ELT agreed the difficult discussions are going to be around those companies that may not survive. It is going to be a difficult environment with end market changes.

KH asked if it was possible to get some key sector information from UUEPC for 2019 and how things look now for 2020/21. DD stated he would approach UUEPC and also align with information from other sources.

Action: DD

It was agreed that KH will speak to the Permanent Secretary to keep the department in the loop on these discussions.

Action: KH

KH stated that it would be useful for the International team to keep an eye on what is going on in market. SH commented that he has already asked his Heads of Territory to prepare a document on economic stimulus plans for each of their markets. This will be a living document and he will share with DD.

Action: SH

KH asked if client executives will be able to work on recovery plans with each of their client businesses. BD stated that most will be having those conversations but that it would be good to think of structured questions to help understand where the issues are and how Invest NI might be able to help.

AMcK felt that this was the opportune time for clients to step back and carry out strategic reviews of their business. If we are able to set up some sort of process to help businesses look at recovery plans and what market place they will be able to operate in this would be invaluable. DD felt this was akin to a business health check.

We can continue to ask companies what they are doing but we need to move towards providing more support. With 407 bad news notices and over 20 thousand employees, there is clearly a major recovery plan to be implemented. What can we do to expedite COVID19 response plan. Companies don't understand why we don't have something more already now.

KH stated that we have the chance to display the corporate knowledge of this organisation. We have changed announcements over the last months to move away from just stating the grant support to stating Invest NI is bringing its expertise and its funding support. Now we have a great chance to put the 650 people and often >25 years of expertise to use and demonstrate what we can bring to companies as they plan their future.

It was suggested that we could start to draw up a skeleton business health check. BD felt that this would be helpful but that there is a need to compartmentalise this. Clients are still in phase one of this process and are trying to source cash to survive; we need to be mindful of where they are at the moment.

In concluding the discussion on the tabled paper, JF asked if the activities could be classified or grouped together in a better way. KH stated that the development of a recovery plan will be a fundamental part of what we are doing over the next six months. ELT to feedback any final comments by tomorrow.

MR to refine paper to include reworking of 'shield/hibernate' to include continuity; piece up front on board involvement; grouping of activities and assignment of who is going to do what.

Action: DD/MR

3.3 Any Other Business

3.3.1 Board Agenda – MC referred to the updated Board agenda. It was agreed to remove items to be discussed at a separate session with board members. CEO report to include 19/20 year end outturn and to push 20/21 plan to May/June. It was noted that 20th April set aside for non-Board session with Board members and ELT to discuss COVID recovery plan.

3.3.2 Board Induction – MC referred to the draft induction plan previously circulated. It was felt that some of the induction programme will need to take place prior to the next board meeting. MC to draft a programme calendar including a timeline of training.

Action: MC

3.3.3 Covid Response Grant – JF stated he wished to discuss this further in terms of how we could expedite the approvals for the Covid Response Grant. JF felt it would be possible to carve out £15m from Invest NI's budget. It was agreed to discuss in detail on tomorrow's ELT call.

3.3.4 Forward Communications Activity – PH asked colleagues to feedback any comments on the paper circulated on Friday. PH also highlighted that the Comms team have been approached to deal with 'business as usual' communications around the promotion of products and services and good news stories. PH stated his team will be focussing on all things Covid related and asked ELT colleagues to relay this to their teams. ELT agreed.

3.3.4 China – SH highlighted that staff in China team are getting requests to help companies find suppliers. Whilst the team would not normally carry out this service, many of the companies are currently helping with Covid efforts and therefore he is happy to relax the rules around this. ELT agreed.

3.3.5 MIPIM – SH provided an update regarding MIPIM 2020. Any approaches made to ELT regarding refunds or funding are to be redirected to SH as he is dealing with ongoing discussions.

- 3.3.6 Weekly International call – SH stated that on his weekly call yesterday he had 75 staff members online. Staff wished to show their appreciation to ELT for the support and communication they have received. SH would like to have some guest speakers on and suggested the CEO be the first. KH happy to join and SH to liaise with office regarding participation.

BD also relayed in speaking to staff members, staff are relaying their thanks to IT to get us all remote working so smoothly. It was agreed that this be highlighted in the CEO next video engagement. KH keen to get something out around Easter.

- 3.3.7 Staff Recognition – AMcK would like to have a discussion on staff recognition in light of the exceptional work being undertaken by some staff members. AB would like the current cycle to close out (currently 22 in the system pre Covid) and deal with these in the normal method. AB will pull together initial thoughts for discussion at the next meeting.
- 3.3.8 PPE – AMcK stated that Alison Grundell has been named as coordinating consultant for purchasing PPE etc.

Next meeting: 15 April 2020 – via Skype call

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 15th APRIL 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Amanda Braden, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown, David Roberts

Apologies: Donal Durkan

1. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 7th April were approved.

1.2 **Actions outstanding from last meeting**

- 1.2.1 Strategic Projects – MC confirmed will share presentation as soon as available. Finishing this open request with ELT and then Board will facilitate Recovery Strategy and 20/21 budget discussions.
- 1.2.2 Covid Recovery Plan – DD shared overall UUEPC report. Key sector information to follow.
- 1.2.3 International – SH stated he had received feedback from the Heads of Territory on economic stimulus in the international markets. SH to share with ELT in advance of Board session Monday 20th April.

2. **ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES**

2.1 **Employee Recognition**

AB reported that there were 22 staff put forward for recognition (pre Covid). It is proposed that these staff are dealt with under the normal process.

It is expected that we will receive a number of nominations for staff that will be Covid work related. The organisation will need to give consideration as to how to recognise staff under these circumstances. AB asked ELT colleagues if they had any ideas to share with her. AB will update when Joanne Stewart is back on duty.

Action: AB

2.2 **Executive Director Human Resources**

KH stated that Denise Black, newly appointed Executive Director, would take up her post on 20th April. AB is currently working on an induction/handover plan.

3. **2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING**

MC provided a short update on new financial year business planning. MC stated that Finance has produced a budget allocation spreadsheet – left hand side with budget allocations as submitted/requested and (currently blank) right hand side to plan for

how we spend post-COVID but that it is challenging to predict what requirements will be going forward.

A budget meeting is planned for Tuesday 21st April and MC has asked the team to outline the OPMR and key performance criteria. MC suggested that we bring forward targets and amend as we move through the year.

3.1 Strategic Projects – Board Approval

MC stated that he was currently working on this paper for Board and proposes to share with ELT colleagues as soon as ready and before Tuesday 21st budget meeting.

3.2 Sub Regional update

SH provided background to the tabled paper. The paper laid out a number of proposed actions, which the group discussed.

Action 1 – It was agreed to rewrite this to specifically lay out the action to be undertaken i.e. data and communication.

Action 2 – SH highlighted that following a recent meeting with a local Council authority whereby it was explained how the inward proposition cycle works, the Council then had a better understanding. It was agreed to include some guidance on roles for the different groups who can contribute to the selling pitch.

BD asked if it was possible to include ‘travel to work’ data which would also have an impact i.e. an investment in Belfast (for example) would draw employees from other areas of the province. SH was unsure how this could be achieved but agreed it would be worth looking at.

DR stated that the main official source for this type of information is the census of population, which provides a comprehensive view of movements and that there would be scope to revisit that information. DR also stated that he would share a piece of work undertaken by the Economy Policy Centre with whom we engaged and asked to map where employees came from.

Action: DR

Action 3 – Try to find a way and build some data beyond the recording of a physical visit, i.e. to show how leads flow through to FDI with some idea of numbers at each stage.

Action 4 – content.

Action 5 – SH stated he had seen the first redraft of the new brochure and highlighted that the Communications Team had done an excellent job in covering all areas.

Action 6 – SH stated that particularly under the current crisis, it is a good time to look at developing virtual visits. The team have come up with some great suggestions which will allow us to present a much wider proposition where we have time constraints.

Action 7 – SH stated he is considering (in consultation with AMcK) in relocating some international group staff in to the North West and Southern regional offices. It was agreed to discuss this further when we set the post-COVID business plan.

Action 8 – content.

KH asked the team about the role of DIT and the awareness of the wider DIT network in NI. SH stated that in terms of wider DIT that he had prepared a briefing paper for the DfE Minister, which he will share with ELT colleagues. SH stated that feedback he receives from the HoTs is that DIT in-market, are too London centric. HoTs have tried to change that message and up the knowledge of NI proposal but are making limited traction.

Action: SH

KH asked for some feedback on the High Potential Opportunity Programme. SH stated that his team directed the request for HPO nominations through to the sector teams, there may have been a LHS opportunity but it was decided not to take this forward.

BD stated that one area we could benefit from with DIT was their huge market/sector knowledge, if we could have access to it. SH stated that DIT are slow/reticent to share this information in-market but we need to find a way to work together on this and bring their huge sector knowledge into our value chain analysis and own sector evaluations.

KH asked for some background information on the HPO programme and SH will provide a short summary prepared by Jenny Liu.

Action: SH

SH commented that part of Jenny Liu's role in the London office is to be the liaison with DIT. It was agreed that Jenny would present to ELT an overview of DIT structure, current organisation, touch points she is engaging with and an update on DIT priorities relevant to Devolved Administration. KH also suggested following the update from Jenny that he might ask John Mahon to join an ELT meeting.

Action: SH

In closing, KH asked ELT colleagues to read the paper in more detail and provide any further feedback to SH by the end of the week. SH will then revise the paper and this could be used as part of the recovery plan discussion.

Action: ELT

FDI may be more challenging post-COVID in a domestically protective world and NI will have to fight harder across whole of NI to be successful and attract foreign businesses here.

3.3 Covid Update

KH provided feedback following his call with DfE Permanent Secretary.

KH referred to the notes from Friday's ELT call. KH asked ELT colleagues to review and provide any comments back, in particular around item number two.

Action: ELT

JF reflected negative feedback he has received on the £25k retail/hospitality grant; around the UK grant each outlet is eligible whereas in NI it will be once against the company and not each of their outlets. DR stated that the Scottish Government had just announced that they will be extending the scheme to provide a further 75% grant on subsequent properties and that the NI Executive may come under more pressure.

In relation to the Small Business Grant Scheme, MC stated that DfE had accepted all changes to the MOU and had shared Invest NI suggestions on budget/accounting

treatment appendix with their Finance team but as yet we have not received any feedback.

DR commented that some data has been released on the CBILS scheme. Approvals stand at around £1 billion which seems to be a very small number. This leads to a question on how the loans are being considered and how many are being approved.

AMcK stated he was reviewing standing down the IMT team and will follow up with MC and AB before making that decision and informing ELT.

BD raised the issue of support to companies who are repurposing and in particular Invest NI's role. AMcK stated that he was working on a paper on this with Grainne McVeigh and would bring that to ELT in due course.

Action: AMcK

KH stated that the Recovery Plan process paper (and one pager) has been shared with ELT and will be discussed at the Board session next week. Key next step is agenda/steps for Monday discussion.

Action: DD/DR

3.4 Any Other Business

3.4.1 Customer Engagement Strategy – BD asked if Invest NI should move ahead and re-establish its Business Liaison Group as the membership will need refreshed. KH agreed.

3.4.2 A2F and COVID response - Two key follow up items from “lively” discussions last week require follow up call between KH/MC/JF to cover:

- next steps for A2F paper on J-curve companies and “slipped out of CBILS” companies and
- next steps for COVID Grant paper.

For both, how do we bring this to ELT recommendation, process for casework/board awareness/signoff and then path through DfE?

Next meeting:

**21 April budget discussion meeting - via Skype call
5 May 2020 – via Skype call**

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 5th MAY 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 15th April were approved.

1.2 **Actions outstanding from last meeting**

All outstanding actions completed.

2. **ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES**

2.1 **Restoration Planning - Back to work for INI offices**

Siobhan Haughey joined the call for this discussion. DB set the scene for resuming normal operations for Invest NI and stated that we need to be clear about what will work best for all of us not just in NI.

Siobhan delivered a presentation covering the impact on staff and operations in Invest NI since moving to lockdown. Siobhan indicated that the Prime Minister is planning to deliver a statement on lockdown review on 10th May.

Siobhan provided an update on the areas that will need to be considered before staff can return to office based working and detailed a possible approach for Bedford Street and regional offices.

In terms of international staff, Steve Harper stated unfortunately that a one size fits all on restoration planning will not suit them. DB positioned the view, as previously mentioned by DD in relation to a company deciding everyone will continue to work from home until 1 September, if we should have an agreed corporate view around a continuation to work from home for an agreed period.

Steve stated that staff are craving clarity from ELT and backed this suggestion of Invest having a blanket decision of staff not returning to office based working for “x” amount of months. This would provide both clarity and relieve pressure. Steve also stated that he would be advocating no travel unless extremely necessary and that approval needs to be sought from ELT member.

KH felt we should wait for the announcement from government this weekend and then make a decision at the start of next week but agreed there does not appear to be any immediate impetus for staff to return to office based working as home working proving effective.

DB stated that from a risk assessment perspective any current thinking highlights the need to risk assess both premises and people and to explicitly get feedback from staff. This is an opportune time to get “live” feedback from staff on both the

professional and personal impact of office based working. AMcK suggested his regional office staff could be engaged on this.

It was previously agreed that we would undertake a staff pulse survey in the first week in June and some Covid explicit questions could be included. DB & Siobhan to pick a date and work on questions. DB to ensure Comms are engaged at early stage.

Action: DB/Siobhan Haughey

Steve Harper asked if it would be possible to map out the locations of staff working from home. This information would be useful for the regional balance debate. Siobhan stated this would be possible so long as information anonymized.

KH will raise the home working/return to work discussion during this week's Direct Reports meeting to get some initial feedback.

3. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Optimising Board Input Documents and Discussion

Ian Maxwell joined the call for this discussion. MC stated that he felt that last month's board meeting felt more like an information sharing session and that there was little opportunity for debate/discussion. IM stated feedback has been very positive and Board Members appreciated the quality of presentations received.

KH asked ELT members to review the draft minutes and share any comments to Board Secretariat by cop tomorrow.

In terms of the draft agenda for May's meeting, IM asked what other items should be included. It was agreed to include recovery plan and organisation objectives.

KH stated that he would like to get back to the agenda being locked down two weeks before the board meeting and papers issued one week before.

IM to share draft agenda with the Chair and agreed by 13th May.

Action: MC/IM

3.2 DIT Update

Jenny Liu joined the call for this discussion. SH introduced JL to the team and highlighted that this presentation was an action from previous meeting. SH informed ELT that JL is running the Trade team in London and managing DIT as a client. JL has experience of working in DIT as she worked for Invest NI in Hong Kong and was based in DIT offices.

JL commented that our relationship with DIT is moving from a more formal relationship and a low base primarily in GB/London to being more collaborative and international. Relationship building with DIT is challenging due to high staff turnover but will be positioning Invest NI as a value added partner to UK DIT.

JL's presentation focussed on how we can better leverage the new and wider operational and international relationships. JL detailed the structures within DIT and the relationship models.

In closing, JL asked ELT how they would like to better engage with DIT, and how can we work together on this?

KH thanked JL for her presentation and for the work she is doing in keeping the connection with DIT. KH stated that once JL has control of that relationship he would like to see us building the same relationship with BEIS who are key for industrial/sector strategy and leading a lot of the COVID response measures.

JF referred to building relationships with DIT and stated that a lot of it is down to discipline and asked if perhaps there was a need to put this in job plans.

PH commented that there is probably a 'hit list' of people in DIT that would be good to get on our communications list. PH also stated that traditionally we have struggled to get involved with the GREAT Campaign and ensure NI is represented.

DD commented that as we develop the post Covid Recovery Plan and the next stage of the Business Strategy it would be good to make sure DIT and BEIS are featured. DD will connect a member of his team with JL.

Action: DD

BD commented that a key area he would be keen to develop is around the sector knowledge, it would be really good to try and leverage some of that.

SH asked if it would be worth JL taking the sector leads through this presentation. BD agreed and suggest JL get in touch with Grainne McVeigh who is the lead. AMcK suggest that JL also present to the regional group to broaden their knowledge.

3.3 Hardship Fund

AMcK provided a brief update on the Hardship Fund development. AMcK stated he was working on a briefing for the Chair and CEO's meeting with the Minister. We have still not received the data from HMRC / LPS.

AMcK stated that the challenge for the organisation will be when we start to ramp up and there is a need to ensure the Board are aware that undertaking this fund will have a huge impact on our daily work.

AMcK also stated he is preparing a risk mitigation document they he will want the Department to sign off on.

3.4 Budgets – Bids

Stephen Wightman and Maureen McGuigan joined the call for this discussion and KH thanked them both for helping to manage this bid process.

KH referred to the latest version of the bids spreadsheet, which he had shared with ELT and proposed that the group review each proposed programme/intervention, as we need to understand the proposal, quantify it and prioritise the list in advance of submitting to the Department by Thursday 7th May.

MMcG stated that the attached list was a list of ideas, proposals for new schemes and some adaptations of current schemes.

There were five areas of proposals namely cash flow, jobs support, business diversification, competitiveness supports and markets & opportunities. The team discussed each project/intervention in detail and assigned a category for progress. SW & MMcG will update the spreadsheet to reflect the discussion and share for final approval at tomorrow's meeting.

Action: SW & MMcG

There were a number of areas flagged as not being covered on the spreadsheet. BD asked about Skills Academies. It was agreed to make a note on the return as the Department is in the lead on Skills Academies.

BD raised credit insurance underwriting – is that our role or central government? It would be remiss of Invest NI not to flag. DD stated that he has already raised this with the Department (*later feedback commented this as high on UK government agenda*).

SH referred to UK Export Finance, which does not cover small deals in Northern Ireland. Is there a gap for a NI Export Credit scheme? This is in early stage analysis but it was suggested this be added to the proposals as a national policy for consideration.

MMcG highlighted that Trade may want to consider some solutions for inclusion on the list. SH indicated that there were three areas in Trade, namely Export Market Visits, Trade Advisory Support and Solex which he had not considered as being specific to Covid. It was agreed that MMcG would speak to the Trade Director.

With regards to International Investment it was agreed to add an international element to the Jobs Fund SFA proposal and increase the criteria around that.

BD referred to robotics productivity realignment asking if it was possible to put on the table around capital support towards social distancing.

JF asked if all of ELT could be copied on any budget returns being submitted to the Department and MC agreed to ensure they were copied.

KH thanked the team for the useful discussion. Any further inputs/changes to be sent directly to SW & MMcG who will update the spreadsheet for final approval tomorrow.

3.5 Any Other Business

No further business

Next meeting: 13th May 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 13th MAY 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 5th May were approved.

1.2 **Actions outstanding from last meeting**

1.2.1 Restoration Planning/Pulse Survey - DB confirmed team have met and will provide a draft survey and timeline for discussion on Friday 15th May.

1.2.2 Board agenda – Awaiting agreed agenda.

2. **ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES**

2.1 **DfE Strategy & Policy Resourcing**

KH briefed the team on a request from DfE asking for shared ownership and more flexible use of resource of some key programs. High priority projects today include City Deals (particularly digital and innovation) now they have secured close to £1bn funding, Brexit which will move very swiftly now and COVID Recovery. We have a chance to pick up and lead some of the key projects beyond delivery. KH stated that he would make some proposals and share with the team before discussing further with the Permanent Secretary.

As a starting point, KH wanted to get a sense of level of interaction across INI group with DfE. Each ELT member highlighted current interaction.

KH asked ELT members if they had any thoughts/inspirations on how to approach this request to share with him.

Action: ELT

KH will pick up directly with AMcK who was temporarily absent.

Action: KH

3. **2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING**

MC and AMcK joined the call at this discussion point

3.1 Corporate and Covid 19 Risk Registers

Colin Morelli and Katrina O'Dowd joined the conference call to discuss this item.

3.1.1 Corporate Risk Register

CM stated that the attached documents are updates to 31st March 2020. However, where relevant, entries have been updated to reflect the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Two risks COR005 and COR008 remain in the 'Very High' category. A further risk COR011 has moved into this category. Two risks have been moved to the relevant Group Register COR025 and COR026.

Other risks discussed included:

- COR007 – may have morphed in to a different risk, which can be reflected on the Covid Risk Register.
- COR009 – current position incredibly volatile, currently carrying out evidence based research work, adapting business plan and budget accordingly. Agreed to change unmitigated score to 5 & 4 and mitigated score to 5 & 3.
- COR010 – agreed to review for next quarter update.
- COR019 – still lack of overall clarity, agreed to leave as is but review.
- COR027 – agreed to increase mitigated score to 4 & 4.

Subject to the changes discussed, ELT confirmed they were content to approve the update.

3.1.2 Covid 19 Risk Register

CM thanked ELT and their teams for the input to this new register. Overall 65 ideas were received and the Risk Team have distilled down to 21 risks that show a commonality and overlapping themes. This has been shared with the ARC Chair who provided some suggested changes. CM asked if ELT were content that the key risks are captured and that the correct ownership of each risk is assigned and used for the basis of updating the register.

ELT agreed it was a good first cut but that due to the fluid situation is likely to be continually evolving – is almost changing weekly. DD stated that the register was very INI heavy and that it needs to reflect more of the engagement with businesses and stakeholders. Following discussion it was agreed to add two new risks (allocated to BD and AMcK) to specifically address failure to recognise impact on clients.

It was agreed to share the register with the Audit & Risk Committee and include the written 'narrative' currently being drafted. Risk Team will ask ELT to start drafting mitigations to be reviewed at meeting scheduled for 10th June.

3.2 Customer Questionnaire Feedback

BD set the background to his presentation. The information presented is a culmination of work undertaken over the past 10 days and equates to some 1,500 hours of interviews with 1,557 businesses. Whilst the information gathered is extremely powerful what it does lack is some of the bigger global impacts in sectors.

The structured customer interviews focussed on four main areas - what factors impacted when lockdown commenced; what support packages have been utilised;

what are major issues that customers envisage as they plan to come out of lockdown and resultant sectoral issues arising.

BD provided a very comprehensive overview of the information gathered and a breakdown of customer feedback by sector. BD closed stating that the information provided is a good reflection of where our client companies are now and the challenges they face.

KH thanked BD for this excellent presentation. KH stated that it would be good to start to draw linkages between this and the work currently being undertaken on bids. There is no substitution to hearing this information live and KH thinks it would be useful to have a session at Board and with DfE colleagues. AMcK suggested that we might want cross reference geography and scale.

DD stated in terms of timing KH may wish to offer live presentation on this information to DfE sooner rather than later as aligns with the timing of the bid documents. DD also stated that the next stage is how to capture employees returning from furlough and if we can track this electronically. BD to consider how this can be done.

SH stated he would like to see us flesh out, with businesses, what it is they really want to aid their recovery. We need to get the companies view on what will really help them.

KH will approach DfE with offer of presentation.

Action: KH

3.3 Hardship Fund

AMcK provided a verbal update on the status of the Hardship Fund. AMcK stated that it is likely that we will be able to hit the timescales proposed by the Minister. It will largely be a portal accepting applications from 20th May but this contingent on immediate HMRC and full LPS data availability.

AMcK stated again that we are still awaiting data from HMRC/LPS. There is a Hardship Fund Board session this afternoon, which will reflect on resourcing needs and timescales.

AMcK thanked colleagues for putting forward resource but reminded them that this is not solely for lower grade staff.

KH stated he would escalate the issue of lack of data from HMRC/LPS to the Permanent Secretary and the potential impact on go-live dates.

Action: KH

3.4 Bids

KH referred to the latest version of the bids document circulated. KH stated these will be submitted to DfE by close of play today. Annex templates are currently being completed by relevant teams for inclusion.

DfE will then review in line with bids from other ALBs and will then submit to the Minister for approval.

3.5 Any Other Business

- 3.5.1 Staff core hours/flexi working/customer live event postponement – In light of recent Executive guidance ELT agreed to extend both these to 1st July.

3.5.2 Roundtables – SH highlighted a forthcoming FDI announcement and asked if he could use comments at a recent roundtable in a commentary piece if comments are anonymised. KH felt this would be ok. BD to check minutes are sanitised and share with participants and ELT.

Action: BD

3.5.3 Furlough Returners – As discussed earlier, DD stated we need to start to consider how we can capture data on furloughed workers returning to work. BD to consider how this can be captured.

Action: BD

3.5.4 DD mentioned that Gary Campbell should be prime internal contact for City/Growth Deals now that Gren has moved to Regional team.

Next meeting: 2nd June 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 2nd JUNE 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 13th May were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

- 1.2.1 DfE Strategy & Policy Resourcing – KH stated that he has responded to the Department, as yet no feedback received.

2. ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES

No items for discussion.

3. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Board Meeting

Ian Maxwell joined the call to discuss the next item.

3.1.1 Actions

All actions listed are underway. PH confirmed looking at week commencing 8th June for session with Business Organisations.

KH asked ELT members to review the draft minutes and highlight any actions that may have been missed back to Board Secretariat by Thursday 4th June.

Action: ELT

3.1.2 June Agenda

The group discussed the proposed agenda and suggested a number of changes. IM to redraft and share with CEO before issuing to Chair.

Action: MC/IM

IM wished to discuss further induction for the new Board members. New Board members have already been through two half-day sessions and the proposal is to carry out two further half-day sessions. These sessions will focus on the work of each of the Groups and performance and compliance.

It was agreed to proceed and to set up the first session for week commencing 8th July. IM to share the draft outline of the programme.

Action: MC/IM

IM also wished to discuss the scorecard outturn for the end of May. Due to objective and target setting exercise still underway and PCC team being heavily involved in other Covid related work, IM proposed that the next update would be end of June. ELT agreed.

3.1.3 Board Agenda Forward Planner

The group discussed the forward planner. It was agreed to present a wider innovation update to the Board in September. JF will take the lead.

In terms of longer term Business Strategy development, DD to pull together schedule including dates of forthcoming elections, political manifestos etc. We anticipate 20/21 objectives, an "18 month plan to March '22" and a new 4 year PFG 2022-26.

Action: DD

BD highlighted two areas of discussion from the recent Board meeting that will need to be addressed i.e. funding for City Deals and student referral.

The group discussed the impact Covid-19 is having on the two local universities. KH agreed to write to the two VCs to ask them for an up to date statement on bringing students in to NI after the current live discussions are completed between England and NI universities.

Action: KH

3.2 Project Birch / Sector Recovery Plans

DD provided an overview of the tabled papers and accompanying data slides.

The group discussed Project Birch and it was discussed that likely none of Northern Ireland's companies would fall within the UK top priority list. KH indicated that we should explore if there is an appetite to replicate some elements of Project Birch at NI level but more importantly is to work through whole sector recovery plans for NI.

BD stated that he has undertaken to carry out further work on sector analysis also covering ownership (local v international).

Action: BD

3.3 Update from O&L and ARC

KH provided feedback from recent Audit & Risk Committee and Oversight & Liaison meeting.

KH asked ELT members to ensure they discuss with their teams fraud prevention. As the organisation is now remote working the risk of fraud is potentially higher than in the past.

MC will circulate Invest NI Programme and PPE/test drilling action plan.

Action: MC

3.4 Any Other Business

- 3.4.1 Performance Reviews – DB reported completion rate for completed end of year reviews is currently 90.51%. There are currently 54 outstanding reports to be completed, including some employees not in scope (to be removed from the count).
- 3.4.2 Pulse Survey – DB reported that the survey launched yesterday and already 300 staff have completed.
- 3.4.3 Future Site Visits by INI staff – DB provided feedback on the draft proposal and wider consultation. The group discussed and DB will take forward.
- 3.4.4 Annual Leave – DB raised the issue of annual leave and informed the group of the amendment to Working Time Regulations which came in to effect in NI on 24 April 2020. It was agreed to wait for clarity on NICS position and look at a communication to staff within a few weeks. ELT members to encourage staff to take leave, this will help with staff health and wellbeing whilst on lockdown.

Action: ELT

Next meeting: 10th June 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 10th JUNE 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black, Mel Chittock, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown, Clare Mullan, George McKinney

Apologies: Brian Dolaghan

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd June were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 Board Induction – MC to follow up with programme and dates.

1.2.2 Strategic planning timeline – DD to forward by 12th June.

1.2.3 VCs – KH to pursue following outcome of next week discussions on UK students access to DA universities.

1.2.4 PPE/test drilling action plan – MC to share by 12th June.

2. ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES

2.1 HRMIS update

Siobhan Haughey (SHy) and Carolyn Ruddy (CR) joined the discussion. SHy provided background to the project including the project aims and objectives. CR gave a live demonstration of the system.

DD left the meeting at this point.

KH thanked SHy and CR for the update and opened for questions. JF asked if the performance management section would allow free script/document attachment. It was confirmed that this is possible. It is also possible to attach objectives across a team, job role or individual person.

SH asked if the system will be hosted on premises or in the Cloud. SHy reported that this was discussed with IT colleagues during procurement and it will be hosted on site. MC stated that with recent experience he felt it should be hosted in the Cloud. SHy reported that to move to the Cloud now would have implications with the procurement procedure. SHy stated that this could be looked at when the system is due for review in 2/3 years.

DB reflected on the statement that the recruitment module had been paused and asked how quickly the system could respond when we wish to move forward with that. SHy explained that the recruitment module in iTrent will not fit with latest requirements and the organisation would need to procure a separate interface

particularly if it is to interact with the Attract Develop Retain framework. A number of systems are available, including from NI businesses.

SH commented that a number of international staff are on the FCO platform and to avoid duplication in the job planning process asked if their job plans could be uploaded. CR confirmed this was possible. SH asked that international staff are included in any training for the system.

DB asked in terms of the job plan actions/milestone would the system prompt staff members that actions are due. CR confirmed that workflows can be set up and an email prompt sent to staff member.

KH thanked SHy and CR for their time today and asked if the presentation could be updated to include a timetable for each phase to include decision points and what needs to be completed. In addition, to include more details on the goals we are trying to achieve with this major move.

Action: DB/SHy

It is anticipated that the system will go live in December 2020. SHy and CR left the discussion.

2.2 Cycle to Work Scheme

DB referred to the paper to introduce an updated Cycle to Work Scheme. DB confirmed that as of 9th June, Invest NI has not received a response from the preferred supplier.

The group discussed the elements of the scheme and asked for some further detail to be included in the paper. It was agreed to update the paper to clarify the duration of the hire scheme, administered by third party, what the final payment is to transfer ownership to staff member and what happens if staff member leaves organisation during scheme. KH asked for confirmation that there are no permutations whereby Invest NI would have residual financial implications.

Action: DB

2.3 Objective Setting – Leadership Session

DB confirmed that the next Leadership Forum will be held on 18th June and the group discussed what the session would focus on.

KH felt that the session should cover 2020/21 organisation objectives and the outcomes of the recovery bids process. Minister and TEO make final decision given the significance of the economic shock. CM felt that staff wanted to know what the definition of “business as usual” is within the current home working circumstances. What does it mean for staff with care dependencies? This may be a common question in the Pulse Survey which can be addressed in a package of HR guidance.

Given the fluidity of the bids process and the staff survey, JF asked if it was worth postponing. KH commented that we were tied with dates in relation to the June Board and rollout of objectives.

SH suggested opening the current Direct Reports sessions to all staff via a town hall. The group agreed this was a good idea and PH stated he would look in to the technical aspects of having a large number of staff. Some previous Direct Reports have been made available by video link but normally the Direct Reports team should pass on the info to their own teams after each session.

Action: PH

Final agreement was to wait until Friday for the outcome of the Executive session and in the meantime hold the 18th June date for an overview of the recovery plan, discussion on people, drill down objectives process and a session from JF on the bids.

3. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Covid Risk Register

Katrina O'Dowd (KOD) and Colin Morelli (CM) joined the discussion. CM took the group through a number of issues to be addressed.

- Risk scoring – ELT were content with the risk scoring has appropriately identified the priorities. KH stated that the risk he is hearing most about is the possibility of a second wave Covid transmission. It was agreed to include consideration of a second wave in the next update.
- ARC – ELT agreed that the register be shared with ARC members by email.
- Department – ELT agreed to share register with the Department.
- Timing – ELT agreed to consider the register at its monthly meeting.
- Customer Risk – ELT agreed with the proposed risk to cover all customer segments (CVD020) and asked for an amendment to the wording to reflect the need to 'recognise and act on' the impact on customers.
- CVD004 – It was agreed to amend this risk to 'Access to suppliers' and MC would be assigned as the lead.
- CVD014 – It was agreed the ELT lead would be SH. KOD stated that civil unrest has been moved up on the Emerging Risk Register.
- CVD005 – It was agreed that JF would lead in terms of solutions and that MC would support and input from a corporate viewpoint.

CM commented that the register was particularly lengthy and asked if any risks could be removed. It was agreed to move any risks that were not updated within two requests and keep those aside for quarterly reviews.

3.2 Moving recovery bids from budget approval to implementation

Katrina O'Dowd attended to participate in this discussion. The group discussed the process for moving the recent recovery bids results from budget approval to implementation.

JF referred to the prioritisation methodology applied by the Department and the criteria by which the bids were considered. JF stated that Invest NI had five proposals that would be moving forward with two others still under funding review.

The next step is to consider the casework process. Strategy Team will lead to set up a casework template in conjunction with Business Solutions Team. CM has sought guidance from DfE on what the proportionate effort question means. The team hope to have the template completed by the end of the week and will then submit to DfE for their sign off to expedite approvals later.

JF asked if it would be possible to produce a standard justification paragraph with an added specific element for each programme. CM stated that from an economic point of view we need to cost out the options to be able to stand over them. JF felt the challenge is trying to balance the process or it will take a longer period of time.

MC stated we are not covered by Ministerial Direction but still need to be careful not to over engineer as we have limited time to ensure the programmes have greatest impact. We need to agree a template and have it cleared by the Department and then work off that.

PH stated the communications bid would be different, as these do not go through casework. He will need to get Departmental approval to follow his normal process.

In respect of budget, JF commented that a number of projects in 2020/21 will have commitments arising in 2021/22 and we need clarity from the Department that we will get cover for these and not be expected to fund from our baseline next year. If there is over or underspend, is there flexibility? MC stated that these programmes should all be Resource DEL but that we need to avoid constraints from multiple ring-fencing. KOD will ask the Department for guidance.

Action: MC/KOD

KOD stated that the Finance Team will shortly commission a budget exercise to get TM1 updated for this year and next year for business as usual. The reason being we need a clearer picture of business as usual for next year (as well as this year) to allow us to better manage.

In summary, JF stated the key issues to be addressed are:

1. What is approval process?
2. Clarity on proportionate effort for economic efficiency.
3. Prioritisation of implementation for the new bids.
4. Identify resource and any staffing constraints (to prevent bottleneck).
5. Budgets.

It was agreed that ELT would take a deeper look at each individual programme one by one to address these questions and to ensure the individual projects are framed in wider proposals e.g. digital sales project should also highlight existing digital offerings

KH asked for an overview timeline to be produced for the programmes to include expected approval and launch dates.

Action: JF

3.3 Any Other Business

3.3.1 Marketeer – KH asked the team to highlight any of their staff who would be considered an expert marketeer so we can assess depth of our skills in this key area

Action: ELT

3.3.2 ELT frequency – It was agreed to keep the current frequency of ELT calls until we are further through the Covid bid process, then we will reduce back to 1-2 a week.

3.3.3. Current status on two key clients were discussed. It was noted that June may see redundancy announcements as companies work through their plans for end of furlough scheme.

3.3.4 KH commented he will join a BEIS Economic Recovery Taskforce this week

**Next meeting: 7th July 2020
INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**

**MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 7th JULY 2020
Via Skype Conference Call**

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 10th June were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

- 1.2.1 Universities – KH stated that he is participating in a meeting with both the Universities 9 July and will ask for an update on bringing students to NI.

Post meeting note – Universities confirmed:

- (i) that in practice students are not deferring as some feared*
- (ii) many international students have paid deposits so they can be anticipated to start autumn term but tbc on arrival. QUB has taken some extraordinary measures such as chartering flights from China)*
- (iii) caps on GB students remain unresolved*

- 1.2.2 HRMIS – DB to confirm action completed.

- 1.2.3 Cycle to Work Scheme – DB to follow up and confirm any financial implications.

- 1.2.4 Recovery Bids/Budget Approval – Preliminary guidance received, MC to review and circulate to group.

2. ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES

2.1 Staff Pulse Survey Comments

DB presented to the team the results of the recent staff pulse survey. DB confirmed that an update on the status of the results was issued to staff via newsworthy and that the plan is to present the results to staff via a recorded webinar week commencing 20th July.

The presentation focussed on the headline scores and comments, themes, suggested actions and next steps. The group discussed the results noting some of the positive outcomes of home working on staff whilst also focussing on some of the negative impacts on staff.

In focussing on next steps, DB outlined suggested actions relating to mental health & wellbeing, social interaction, work life balance, home office set up, home commitments and re-opening of offices. The group discussed each of the areas and agreed that the proposed actions were appropriate.

3. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Covid Risk Register

Colin Morelli (CM) joined the discussion. CM took the group through a number of issues to be addressed on this risk register.

CM reported that six risks remain in the very high category and asked if the executive leadership team (ELT) were content that these are the current priorities on this register. ELT confirmed they were content.

CM reported that two risks have been removed (CVD004 and CVD021). MC confirmed as the owner of these risks that he was content they be removed. ELT confirmed they were also content.

CM asked ELT if CVD013 warranted an increase in scoring. ELT debated and agreed that this risk should be increased to 16. CM to add justification line.

BD stated that he felt the bigger risk was to existing programmes. MC stated that this was captured within the budget risk on the Corporate Register which also covers the Shared Prosperity Fund. CM to cross reference both registers.

CM referred to the addition of a new risk namely CVD023 relating to the risk that Access to Finance funds may not receive the capital required that had previously been committed by investors. ELT discussed whether this was specific to a particular fund or all funds. It was agreed that CM would look at the wording of how wide this risk should be.

CM closed by stating that the next commissioning note will issue this week for a return by 24th July and this register would be shared with ARC and DfE. CM will provide a short paper to DfE highlighting the priorities.

3.2 Review of proposed targets in Corporate Scorecard for 2020/21

Gerard McNally, Alistair Moffett and Alan Harris joined the discussion for this item.

Following a request by the Chair to review our projected outturn for this last year of our four-year business strategy, GMcN took the group through the presentation.

The group discussed in depth the various options for presenting this information and it was agreed GMcN would revise the slides to reflect the discussion.

BD referred to his presentation on sector priorities. It was agreed BD would set the context on the opening few slides.

BD referenced the Agri Food Investment Scheme stating that if it is not launched within the next week that we will not be able to use the scheme before December. BD stated that the main issue is around future year's capital drawdown. KH asked what the barrier was. BD stated that the lack of clarification on future year's budget was the issue. It was agreed that BD would raise this in the discussion at the Board workshop.

Post meeting note: message received from DfE on 9 July that AFIS has not been approved to proceed at this juncture with strategic review of sector ongoing.

KH concluded by asking that all presentations are updated as per discussion and sent to Board Secretariat for sharing with the Chair and subsequently Board members by Wednesday 8th July.

3.3 Progression of Covid Bids

This item will be rescheduled.

3.4 Any Other Business

No further items for discussion.

Next meeting: 28th July 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 28th JULY 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 7th July were approved.

1.2 **Actions outstanding from last meeting**

- 1.2.1 Cycle to Work – DB reported that the procurement document has been updated and is currently with the Finance team for approval.

2. **ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES**

2.1 **Draft People Strategy**

DB presented a discussion paper on Invest NI's draft people strategy with a view to presenting to the Invest NI Board in August or September. DB referred to Invest NI's current values and asked if they reflected the new environment. Does ELT still feel comfortable that these values represent the organisation?

DB focussed on some of the areas that have influenced her thinking since joining the organisation 12 weeks ago and outlined key focus areas from the recent Best Companies survey. DB felt the key people priorities are investment in leadership capabilities; engagement; collaboration; redefine HR; communication and change management capability.

DB laid out her initial take on the Attract, Develop, Retain strategy and concluded that the next steps will be to confirm areas of focus, set up project plans and milestones to track progress.

DB outlined her thoughts on how she would like the Human Resources Group to organise for future priorities.

In conclusion DB highlighted the four projects she would like to focus on before year end namely Covid, Attract/Develop/Retain, iTrent HRMIS and the HR group.

ELT members commented that this was a refreshing and strong direction of travel particularly around transforming how the organisation works.

AMcK reflected that HR is not a function that rests in one part of the organisation and that it rests with all of the leaders.

PH felt that from a wider staff point of view that the organisation needed to remain consistent in putting people at the centre of everything, as this is the best way to win hearts and minds.

It was stated that one of the frustrations can be the whole process of recruitment. SH felt that there was a need to get excitement back in that process and about people accepting that, from the individual's perspective, they may not always feel it is an ideal outcome – we have many applicants for some roles but only one appointment. DB stated that the review of the competency framework will help with that and that a review of the recruitment process is something that she wishes to focus on.

BD agreed that the competency framework is over-engineered and stated that he would like to see the organisation get to a position where we can have conversations, based on a simplified competency framework, that are centred around agreed strengths and weaknesses of staff.

DD would like to see more agility in terms of moving people, skills and resources around the organisation; this tends to only happen when we are under pressure and would like to see this happen when we agree priorities for the organisation.

In closing, DB stated that she would present this draft strategy to her HR team and then bring back to ELT to confirm next steps. KH asked for ELT members to provide further comments or reflections to DB so we build an ELT owned People plan.

Action: ELT

3. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Covid – Third Round Bid Process & September Monitoring Round

Katrina O'Dowd joined the meeting for this item. DD reported that in terms of the current Second Round bids, these have now been through a senior casework panel within DfE and the bids are now with the DfE Minister for consideration. To date the only feedback received is that the Invest NI bids were considered strong. KO'D provided some feedback she had received from the Finance Director in DfE.

KH asked what assumptions would be made on ERDF funding. MC stated none, this will be done based on demand and forecasting will be baselined.

MC asked in relation to the additional monies coming from Westminster, for allocation to NI, if we have any desire to make additional bids. Do we have the resource and company demand activity to spend this money?

JF felt the challenge with the new programmes would be spending the budget allocation in time. We are losing time the longer it takes to get these programmes approved.

MC stated that a commissioning exercise for a third round of bids has not been commissioned. MC felt this may be wrapped up within the October Monitoring return. KH felt that this third round of bids will be for budget longer than just this year and that we need to be ready with any proposed bids – we should expect a short turnaround so be ready in advance. DD commented that he had issued a request to the team to start to think about potential initiatives and programmes.

MC stated that we now need to allocate and upload budgets in advance of the outcome of the latest bidding rounds. He said that for now we would need to allocate on the basis of the £57m but that further allocations would be made as we receive updates on bids.

MC stated that he and KO'D would seek some guidance from the Department on whether there was any multi-year element to the latest round of additional funding and keep ELT updated.

Action: MC/KO'D

3.2 Any Other Business

3.2.1 Capital – BD raised the issue of the availability of future capital money and the need for clarity asap. BD and MC to discuss following this meeting.

Action: BD & MC

Next meeting: 4th August 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 4th AUGUST 2020 Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown, David Roberts

Apologies: Donal Durkan

1. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 28th July were approved.

1.2 **Actions outstanding from last meeting**

- 1.2.1 Cycle to Work – DB confirmed that Finance have now reviewed and confirmed that there are no permutations whereby Invest NI would have residual financial implications from availing of this scheme. Staff will be informed via an upcoming article in Newsweekly.
- 1.2.2 Draft People Strategy – DB commented that she and PH will meet to prepare presentation for Board. KH asked that any final comments be shared with DB by 18th August.
- 1.2.3 Bid Process – MC reported that there has been no confirmation as yet of any multi year dimension on bid process. MC will update at next Finance Committee.
- 1.2.4 Capital Money – MC reported that BD and he have spoken and that there is no instruction on availability, only feedback received is that there is an understanding capital will be extremely tight. The organisation has now received a request for four year capital profiling exercise.

2. **2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING**

2.1 **Feedback from Permanent Secretary meeting**

KH provided feedback on his recent meeting with the Permanent Secretary.

2.2 **Board**

Ian Maxwell (IM) joined the call to discuss this item. IM informed the group that the Board Secretariat team have been tasked with arranging the August Board meeting in INI HQ. The Chair has also asked that a meeting be convened to discuss a potential energy project in advance of the Board meeting in HQ. Invitees will include ELT, Board members, Departmental Permanent Secretaries, CEO's of Translink and NI Water. IM indicated that the Chair is looking for an ELT lead and JF proposed he take this role as line manager for Energy Lead. IM to share presentation that has been prepared with ELT members.

Action: MC/IM

JF and BD both indicated that there are a number of similar projects currently being discussed. It was agreed that Richard Rogers and Thomas Byrne (DfE) should both be invited to participate. IM to add them to list of attendees.

Action: MC/IM

2.2.1 Board Actions

The group discussed the outstanding actions from June's Board meeting.

Action 1 – to be reassigned to AMcK who will take forward.

Action 2 – AMcK to share with ELT before inclusion in Board papers.

Action 3 – JF to present to ELT at next meeting. Critical for us to get this right.

Action 4 – AMcK will provide a brief update at the Board meeting.

2.2.2 Board Agenda

The group discussed the proposed agenda and agreed with the items proposed. KH stated that the People Strategy should be moved to September given packed agenda and preference to fix overall goals before organisation reset.

IM highlighted a request from the Chair to include details of the RAM model in the casework report paper. JF suggested that he and BD could cover this within the Programme Effectiveness agenda item. JF to discuss with BD.

Action: JF

2.2.3 Forward Planner

KH asked that the forward planner be discussed at a later date.

2.3 Corporate Risk Register & Covid Risk Register

Katrina O'Dowd (KOD) and Colin Morelli (CM) joined the call to discuss this item.

2.3.1 Corporate Risk Register

CM referred to the tabled paper and risk register for the period to 30th June 2020. CM stated that there are now six risks in the 'very high' category and asked ELT if they were content with this.

It was agreed to reduce the scoring on COR010 as the training course has now been completed. KH asked that COR009 be updated to reflect the most up to date position to recognise what the organisation is doing.

CM asked with the reduction in score to COR010, were ELT therefore content with the remaining five risks in the 'very high' category. ELT agreed.

KH referred to COR019 asking if too much detail was being included. DR was asked to ensure at the next update that the narrative is condensed.

CM asked ELT whether the Hardship Fund warrants an overarching risk on the corporate risk register. As the Hardship Fund has its own risk register, it was agreed to refer to this whilst the scheme is live and once the scheme has closed ELT should discuss if it warrants being included then to pick up any residual issues.

Subject to changes as discussed ELT were content to approve the corporate risk register.

2.3.2 Covid Risk Register

CM stated that the tabled paper and register relates to the period to 4th August 2020. CM reported that the team would continue to request monthly updates to this register. The register will be shared with the Audit & Risk Committee and Board, and then the Department for the Economy.

CM stated that seven risks remain in the 'very high' category and asked if ELT were content these risks are the current priorities on this register?

CVR001 was queried in terms of the organisation currently have a low absence rate and whether it was appropriate to reduce the risk level. KH stated that he was concerned about the increased possibility of a second wave in light of some of the recent news reports. ELT agreed to reduce this risk to 15 and review again shortly.

In relation to CVD010, CM stated that unmitigated and mitigated scores have remained the same indicating that we feel there is currently no effective mitigation for this risk. Is ELT content that this is the case? The group discussed and agreed to keep the score at 25.

Subject to changes as discussed ELT were content to approve the Covid risk register.

CM closed by stating that the team will be asking colleagues to consider the potential for a second Covid wave when providing their next updates.

2.4 Any Other Business

2.4.1 Staff – ELT agreed that the proposed note on social events with colleagues should be issued to advise team to follow good distancing practice even when off-duty.

2.4.2 Document Retention Review – AMcK asked if the document retention review can be postponed due to current business pressures. MC agreed as this was not a high priority at this time.

2.4.3 International – SH shared some feedback from his recent calls with international staff and in particular proposed return to office dates for some major companies in the US.

2.4.4 US visit – SH highlighted that there has been a suggestion that the NI SoS will participate in a virtual visit to the US. KH provided feedback on this discussion with DfE Minister. SH agreed to follow up with the NI Bureau.

BD commented that there is merit in having some virtual meetings with US companies. KH agreed and stated that we had proposed broader senior contact work with international clients in the setting up of the EAG group and International Advisory groups to feed into that. KH to consider taking this forward.

Action: KH

Next meeting: 12th August 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
MEETING MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 12th AUGUST 2020
Via Skype Conference Call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Anne Beggs, Gary Campbell, Des Gartland, Carolyn McKenna

Apologies: Donal Durkan, Denise Black, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 4th August were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 Draft People Strategy – Comments to be provided back to DB by 18th August.

1.2.2 International engagement – KH proposed setting up following the next meeting of Economic Advisory Group at the end of August.

2. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

2.1 Board Workshop Action Follow Up

Niall Casey (NC) joined the call for this discussion. GC stated that the Chair has requested this become a standard agenda item for discussion at Board meetings. Three to four areas will be identified and discussed each meeting. It is proposed the first topics for discussion will be Digital Innovation, Exports/International Growth, City & Growth Deals and Global Supply Chain.

GC worked through each topic asking relevant ELT member for any further update. Some points to note include:

- Alternative Funding - JF has agreed with the Board lead that these actions will be picked up by the Access to Finance Board Working Group as part of the work on the Access to Finance strategy.
- Digital Innovation - JF has agreed with the Board lead that these Actions will be picked up by the Digital Innovation Board Working Group.
- Exports / International Growth – AB provided further background/detail on the proposals and the next steps envisaged.
- Skills External – NC to share OECD update.
- Regional – DG highlighted that sub regional targets be a priority discussion area for the executive team. KH agreed and items will be added to future agenda.

There was a query if we would be expected to meet this additional work out of our usual budget. There was no definitive answer to this question and it was suggested could be included in third round of Covid bids.

It was agreed that that Brexit Opportunities be put forward for discussion at the August Board meeting.

Next steps are for Strategy team to summarise/amalgamate the spreadsheet and follow up on any outstanding input.

Action: GC

2.2 Programme Effectiveness presentation to Board

JF took the group through a proposed presentation for the Board in August. Colleagues made comment and suggested amendments. JF to revise in advance of presenting.

Action: JF

The group discussed the possibility of using AI, in the future, to interpret the data that Invest NI holds.

BD shared a first draft at updating the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) to incorporate key cross cutting themes from the discussion at the last Board. The group discussed the relative weighting / scoring of the differing elements. It was agreed to reference in the programme effectiveness presentation and pick up following that meeting. KH indicated that he would be keen for this to be done in a digital method.

2.3 Energy Meeting

KH confirmed that a meeting will be held on 26th August. It was stated that there are current 3-4 substantial projects (around hydrogen) that are currently being discussed that have the potential to come to Invest NI. It was agreed to discuss further following this the meeting on 26th August.

2.4 Any Other Business

- 2.4.1 Potential global UK post EU/centenary activities – PH provided feedback on first preliminary meeting he had attended to discuss the possibility of some future focused events in 2021.

Next meeting: 2nd September 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER 2020

Location: INI HQ

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 12th August were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 International engagement – KH, SH and BD to meet to discuss and take forward.

2. ORGANISATION DESIGN / HUMAN RESOURCES

2.1 Employee Recognition

DB referred to the tabled paper drafted in conjunction with AMcK and PH. The group debated the proposal, process and eligibility. DB highlighted some of the outstanding queries/considerations.

In conclusion, the group agreed a way forward with a proposed go live date of end of September. DB to ensure DfE is informed.

Action: DB

2.2 Direct Reports

KH highlighted the topics to be presented at the next Direct Reports meeting.

3. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Honours

Ian Maxwell (IM) and Alistair Moffett (AM) joined the meeting to discuss this item.

AM referred to the tabled paper and the group discussed the information therein. AM will take forward actions from the discussion.

3.2 Board

Ian Maxwell joined the meeting to discuss this item.

The group discussed the outstanding actions and proposed agenda for September and October's meetings.

IM to update and share revised versions with KH before discussion with the Chair.

Action: IM/MC

It was noted that the October board meeting will be held on Wednesday 21st October.

3.3 Board/Energy Meeting follow up

KH referred to the recent energy discussion. The session laid out opportunities for Northern Ireland in the green energy arena. KH stated that a cross government business plan needs to be produced to include some of the big projects that are on the table.

It was agreed to postpone further discussion on this item until minutes of the session have been shared.

SH stated that some of the statistics shared would be useful as part of the FDI proposition.

3.4 EU Exit Action Plan

David Roberts (DR) joined the meeting to discuss this item.

DD opened the discussion commenting that following a quiet period, Brexit activity is starting to accelerate very quickly and the organisation needs to be more mobilised as we try to get as many businesses ready.

DR referred to the draft plan outlining key action points to be addressed over the next four months to the end of the transition period. As a first step, it is proposed to re-establish an EU Exit Steering Committee to oversee the delivery of the key strands of this plan.

DR highlighted areas of focus including:

- webinars/events on specific topics to get as much guidance out to businesses
- staff training and awareness to ensure staff are up to speed in terms of latest developments – planned for 17th September
- reconstitution of EU exit champions
- work with DfE, business bodies and stakeholders to align efforts to ensure we reach as many businesses as possible
- communications

DD asked colleagues to provide any feedback on the papers tabled.

Action: ELT

DD asked colleagues to ensure client facing staff are capturing any Brexit related issues on CRM. SH raised an issue he had experienced, DD to investigate.

Action: DD

DD also highlighted the need to return Brexit Team staff to their Brexit roles. AMcK asked colleagues to let him know if any of their staff, assigned to the Hardship Fund, are now required back.

Action: ELT

3.5 Any Other Business

Each Executive Director provided an update on their Group.

AMcK wished to put on record his thanks to his colleagues for all their assistance over the past number of weeks in relation to the Hardship Fund.

Next meeting: 9th September 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
MEETING MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2020
Location: INI HQ

Attendees: Steve Harper (Chair), Kevin Holland, Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Alan McKeown

Apologies: Denise Black

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd September were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 EU Exit Action Plan – AMcK to circulate list of staff working on hardship fund.

2. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

2.1 Export Client

Colin Hassard (CH), Patrick McCrossan (PMcC), Leo Donnelly (LD) joined the meeting via Skype to present this item. The team delivered a presentation on the journey of an export client within the agri-tech sector.

SH thanked the team for their presentation. SH commented that we talk a lot at Board about the benefits to the economy of IT software companies, who produce products as opposed to providing services. Here is an indigenous company with a niche product that has a good pipeline of potential orders. A company like this is too small for our scaling program but is growing well – how do we put a package of support around such a company in order to increase that speed of growth?

AMcK commented that there needs to be increased communication between our teams and the Invest NI Board and it would be useful to share these types of examples. It was agreed that a presentation of this type should be made to the Board.

2.2 Regional Business Client

Susan O’Kane (SOK), Stephen O’Neill (SON), Majella Haren (MJ) joined the meeting via Skype to present this item. The team delivered a presentation on the journey of a regional office client in the digital and creative sector.

SH thanked the team for their presentation. AMcK asked what the biggest challenge SON faced as a client executive. SON felt that it would be useful, at the outset, to have an account development plan from an early stage. SON commented that he has encountered resistance to working with early stage companies, as we do not always want to take on the risks. The organisation can be too fixated on the risks it is taking and not the risks promoters are taking.

JF asked SON if the Propel Programme helps to identify these types of companies. SON felt that the ecosystem is more sophisticated now and this helps. SOK commented that the team are building many relationships with the likes of TechStart and Clarendon. Whilst there is a risk going in behind these companies, others are not doing it.

DD asked if we could accelerate the development of these types of companies. SOK commented that it is hard to see how to accelerate these companies as market forces drive a lot of it but that regional staff are working with international colleagues to see the changing dynamics globally.

2.3 FDI Pipeline Client

Elaine Curran (EC) and Andrea Haughian (AH) joined the meeting via Skype to present this item. The team delivered a presentation on a current FDI client and the next steps to securing this project.

SH thanked the team for their presentation and the group discussed blockages in securing this project. It was agreed JF would place a call.

Action: JF

2.4 Sector Team Significant Account

Michael Polson (MP in person), Ethna McNamee (EMcN) and Stephen Fullerton (SF) joined the meeting via Skype to present this item. MP provided a detailed history of the sector team client and SF briefed the group on regional engagement.

SH thanked the team for their presentation.

2.5 Any Other Business

2.5.1 Customer Satisfaction Survey – Due to the number of requests on INI customers for information, PH asked if the organisation should postpone the customer survey for this year. ELT discussed and agreed with PH's proposal. INI Board agreement to be sought.

2.5.2 From Student to First sale Programme – AMcK referred to this programme and commented that some applicants are planning to take gap year. AMcK proposed to continue to provide support during any gap year as long as numbers requesting this remain low. ELT agreed with this proposal.

2.5.3 Process Improvement Grant bid – AMcK informed the group of his proposed action in regards to this bid.

Next meeting: 6th October 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2020

Location: via Skype call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 9th September were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 International Advisory Group – SH stated terms of reference currently being drawn up and will issue shortly.

Action: SH

1.2.2 City & Growth Deals – DD referred to tabled paper. DD stated that City & Growth Deals are starting to escalate significantly in terms of the amount of work being asked of INI staff. BD highlighted that it would be helpful, around staffing discussion, to understand the size of impact in terms of allowing planning on the ground. DfE is asking us to provide team expertise across numerous areas and there is a need to coordinate this. JF commented that this is starting to impact on staff bandwidth and consequences are starting to be felt. JF also stated that some of our projects will be ahead of the City Deals and if we keep delaying on OBCs then other projects may be lost. ELT agreed to add additional comments on our role to deliver good commercial outcomes and approved the tabled paper.

2. ORGANISATION DESIGN

2.1 Employee Recognition

DB referred to tabled paper and the group discussed in detail.

BD highlighted some concerns around the proposal and the group discussed these concerns and their individual views on the proposal. DB provided some feedback on action taken by the Department. It was agreed that some staff had gone over and above during this time and there was merit in the proposal.

The group agreed a way forward and DB and PH will prepare communications.

Action: DB/PH

2.2 Car Parking

DB referred to tabled paper and the group discussed.

This paper outlines current Invest NI car parking arrangements for staff and cost implications of renewing the service contract during the Covid-19 pandemic while staff work from home. There is a need to find a temporary and cost effective solution (due to the timing of the contract to provide car park spaces) while the majority of

staff are working from home. The paper provides a number of options and a recommendation.

The group agreed that continuing to pay for car park spaces whilst staff are working from home is not good use of public money. ELT agreed with proposed option 4.

3. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Board

Ian Maxwell (IM) joined the meeting to discuss this item.

The group discussed the outstanding actions and proposed agenda for the next meeting. ELT members to take forward actions as discussed.

The group discussed potential locations for future meetings. IM will follow up in conjunction with safety considerations and appropriate local health messages.

3.3 Thematic Evaluation - Options Paper

Clare Mullen (CM) joined the meeting to present this item.

CM stated that in May 2019 the Economics team presented the concept of a new approach to evaluations which include thematic evaluations. Currently we are in a transition phase whereby we are aligning approval timescales for programmes/interventions that will be evaluated together.

CM stated that Invest NI has procured for three evaluations, which have now all been awarded. Covid-19 has affected the original delivery timescales. CM provided a summary of each of the evaluations and detailed each of the options analysis.

KH raised a query around bid cost. CM stated that bids are not assessed on the basis of cost alone, but the range was between £95k-£110k. Assessment generally comes down to methodology and engagements. CM confirmed that the evaluation of the bids has been carried out in conjunction with CPD.

DB asked why the evaluation period was different – was there any science behind it? CM stated that the organisation has been trying to align the time periods and group programmes coming to a natural end and approval going forward.

CM stated that the preferred way forward is Option 2. DfE are also keen to proceed with Option 2 with some additional Covid questions included.

CM highlighted the risks and mitigations.

JF commented that there will be some inevitable cross over. CM stated that the aim is to identify any duplication and either identify a single person in company to answer or take the largest offer offered and survey on that. DD commented that we need engagement from companies and this is part of their letter of offer.

BD asked if the proposed consultation numbers have been arrived at for statistical confidence. CM stated that the business survey population is on average 1300 and therefore we need between 300-400 responses.

ELT agreed to proceed on the basis of Option 2.

3.3 Covid Risk Register

It was agreed that this item would be dealt with by email correspondence.

3.4 Any Other Business

3.4.1 KH provided some feedback on recent call with Minister Dodds and Invest NI Chair.

3.4.2 Segmentation – BD highlighted that he and AMcK will be issuing a note shortly on the segmentation process which will state that we will not be moving to a £1m threshold at this stage.

Next meeting: 14th October 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
MEETING MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER 2020
Location: INI HQ, Boardroom

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 6th October were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

- 1.2.1 International Advisory Group – SH updated the group on discussions with the Executive Office and will table draft terms of reference at 11th November meeting.

2. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

2.1 Investors in People

DB referred to the tabled paper commenting that the paper outlines the cost/benefit analysis of continuing to seek IIP accreditation. While recommending a strategic review of our overall approach, there is a priority decision about IIP, given our current accreditation ends in November 2020. DB asked the group if now was the right time to re-enter this accreditation process.

SH asked if having this accreditation was a prerequisite for any business, the organisation does. The group were unable to highlight any reason to have this particular accreditation. JF stated that there is a greater move towards diversity accreditations. BD would be keen, before making a decision to halt IIP, to know what accreditation the organisation will move to.

ELT explored the benefits of IIP and agreed not to enter into another accreditation process. ELT would like to reassess the right external assessment tool for 2020 post Covid.

2.2 Customer Service Excellence

Paddy Robb (PR) joined the meeting to present this item. PR outlined the purpose of this presentation was to consider if the organisation should continue with the Customer Service Excellence accreditation and if yes, which approach fits best with our current situation?

PR provided background to the accreditation. PR commented that now might be the opportune time to reflect and evaluate the role of CSE; there is a sense it has moved from being a driver of improvement to a validation of achievement. PR laid out three possible options and recommendations.

ELT discussed the benefits of CSE and questioned in an evolving world (post Covid) was the accreditation still relevant.

KH stated that he would be keen that Invest NI benchmarks itself against other similar organisations across the world. There was some concern that CSE may not be at pace with where we are on delivery of services. We are in a different working environment and the accreditation has to reflect that. AMcK stated that he would be content to be the ELT sponsor.

BD highlighted his concerns around the demand of taking part in this at a time of high demand on staff. Whilst BD is reluctant to drop CSE there is a need to think seriously about how we would undertake this at this time.

BD suggested that the three customer focussing groups carry out further research in to other forms of customer service accreditation. BD, SH and AMcK to take forward.

Action: BD, SH and AMcK

ELT agreed the organisation would not carry out assessment in December and defer to April. In the meantime, PR will discuss with accreditation body to ascertain how the scheme will change to reflect the current environment.

Action: DD/PR

2.3 City/Growth Deals Resourcing

DD gave an overview of the current position in relation to City/Growth Deals and highlighted the need to put additional resource in place to work on specific Outline Business Cases (OBC's) and to help in the development of other proposals. At this stage, there is an immediate need to address four specific areas with funding coming from the Department for the Economy.

DD outlined two proposals namely, an Expression of Interest at the grade or temporary promotions with backfill. ELT discussed the options as laid out and agreed to proceed with a blended approach. DD and DB to take forward.

Action: DD/DB

2.4 Recovery Plan 8 pillars/approach

Martin Robinson (MR) joined the meeting to discuss this item. MR thanked ELT colleagues for completing the return request at such short notice. At this stage, ELT members were asked to identify key strategic actions/goals that will be included in our Recovery Plan.

Each strategic lead briefed the group on the short and long term action/goals. Some follow up questions during discussions were:

1. Grow External Sales

- Where are the markets and who are the companies who can target and deliver?
- What is the annual spend by UKEF and how much is deployed for NI markets?
- Identify those businesses not exporting.

2. Obsession for Innovation

- Each action to have a quarter assigned.
- Need to raise profile of innovation in PfG.
- Add further long term actions e.g. how do you get immersion in innovation.
- Add securing funding.
- Innovation needs simplified – articulate how companies can do this, where is the benefit?

3. Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship

- Complete mapping exercise around who does what in this space.
- Include scaling, access to finance and how we fund companies through this journey.
- Consider portfolio management rather than individual projects. Will need to discuss with DfE.
- Pull together list of potential stars from Propel, Ignite, HBSU, Scaling, EY.
- KH to write to DfE to offer induction in this area.

4. Business & Employee Skills

- Tie in future skills need to future strategy.
- What are the hot skills of today and how does the demand change as skills move forward. Include milestones on skills for employees today for tomorrow.
- Make the actions bolder about what we are doing rather than supporting businesses.
- Reference academies including running speculative academies.
- Overlap with international on apprenticeship piece as could be used with investment in terms of new inward investors.

5. Attract & Stimulate Investment

6. Zero Carbon

7. Manufacturing Competitiveness & Global Supply Chains

8. Levelling up

- Broader levelling up agenda other than just City & Growth Deals.
- Engage with DfE on sub regional targets
- Include north/south and east/west co-operation.

KH thanked the team for their briefings on each pillar. The next version will require the language to be refined and then to start building the narrative.

The next stage will require a process around what is the best way for each pillar owner to take work streams forward. BD commented that we need to show how this all joins together with other projects i.e. board leadership projects.

MR will re-issue document for review and amendment.

Action: DD/MR

3. ORGANISATION DESIGN

3.1 Discussion on Organisation Design

DB outlined the purpose of the session and to share her experience in this area from previous roles. DB presented on organisation design and methodology including some of the key activities and various models.

BD asked what is driving this discussion, are we aiming to be the most efficient organisation or is it to ensure we have the right structure. KH stated that we need to be an organisation that can deliver the outputs whilst working in an environment that none of us is accustomed to.

The group discussed organisational effectiveness and the possibility of an organisation redesign. How does the organisation change to make itself more relevant to the customer? Is now a good time to look at if we are operating most efficiently.

KH stated that he wanted to start this discussion as the world has changed. As we firm up the recovery plan and milestones, we will then focus on organisation design and engage with the Department. KH would like to see a list of the additional areas of work we are being asked to participate in.

The next stage will be to look at project plans for each of the eight pillars and what that means in terms of milestones. Following that will look at the purpose and function teams and how they align.

KH asked ELT members to reflect on the discussion.

3.2 Leadership Forum

KH referred to the upcoming leadership forum. KH will present on priorities and DB will cover people strategy.

3.3 Team Update

Item deferred.

3.4 Any Other Business

3.4.1 Brexit News – DD stated there was nothing new to report today.

3.4.2 Further Lockdown Restrictions – The group discussed the new restrictions issued by the Executive. The group discussed the key areas in relation to staff. Agreement was reached and a communication will be issued to staff by the end of the week.

3.4.3 Build Back Responsibly – DB referred to an earlier email. Following discussion it was agreed that DB would put herself forward to be included in the “inclusive employment” discussion.

3.4.4 Competitiveness Report – DD confirmed that the report is nearing completion. It was agreed to have it presented to the group.

Action: DD

3.4.5 Business Support Team – AMcK informed the group that he was down a number of staff in this team. There is a contingency list of staff who will need to be regularly trained. AMcK will share the list and colleagues to confirm staff are still available.

Action: ELT

3.4.6 Entrepreneurship Champion – AMcK confirmed that the current contract will be extended to complete the contracted days.

3.4.7 WIP – KH asked MC to provide a full list of work in progress. MC to provide in visual format the forward year by year of the major casework and other future projects to help demonstrate funding requests.

Action: MC

3.4.8 Mid year reviews – KH referred to the upcoming mid year review meetings. KH will issue guidance for this discussion.

Action: KH

Next meeting: 3rd November 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 2020
Location: via Skype call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 14th October were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 International Advisory Group – Terms of reference to be tabled for discussion at future meeting.

1.2.2 Customer Service Excellence – DD stated that if there is to be a fundamental change to CSE it would be good to make a decision sooner rather than later. KH is keen to see output of research by customer facing groups in advance of next Board meeting. AMcK, BD and SH to complete research in advance of the next Board Meeting.
Action: AMcK, BD and SH

1.2.3 Business Support Team resourcing – AMcK to return with update.

2. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

2.1 Competitiveness Report

KH welcomed Richard Johnston (RJ), Dr Karen Bonner (KB) and Gillian McCausland (GMcC) from Ulster University Economic Policy Centre. RJ presented to the group focusing on what competitiveness is and why it is increasingly important; benchmarking NI's competitiveness; where INI impacts upon competitiveness and suggestions for the future. Martin Robinson and David Roberts from Invest NI also joined the call for this discussion.

Competitiveness is more important than ever as lagging regions will be hit hardest whilst leaders will recover more rapidly. Brexit will bring opportunities and challenges.

RJ outlined how NI's competitiveness has been benchmarked. Overall, the story is one of decline. NI is improving in many areas, but other nations are improving more rapidly. NI is strong on technological infrastructure, business regulation, environment and quality of life and stable in R&D & hard infrastructure. Areas for improvement were highlighted.

Many activities and programmes directly impact on NI's competitiveness. RJ stated that to maximise Invest NI's sphere of influence, the organisation should lead and inform others in society and encourage them to raise their aspirations.

RJ focussed on suggestions for the future, including building the framework, learning from the best, maximising the use of funding, integrating competitiveness into Invest NI's strategy and leadership through influence.

KH asked if productivity and competitiveness are the same. RJ commented that productivity is one of the key elements of competitiveness but from a business perspective is about 80%.

DD commented that we have all the ingredients to improve competitiveness yet performance is falling. Is this because we are not doing it or is it because others are doing more and better than we are? RJ felt that it is partly driven by what you do and partly by how you do it. Everybody is engaged in this race however, NI needs to gear up and move faster in terms of boosting productivity.

KH asked what the view was on the disruption of 2020, the world has changed and will there be a fundamental re-ordering of competitiveness? Are there countries doing well in the current climate? RJ stated that one of the challenges is to get people engaged in competitiveness. Due to Covid, economies who are more digitally enabled are going to come out of this better (the likes of Korea). Areas of strong manufacturing will also come out quite well. What you will see is the strong getting stronger and the weak becoming weaker.

JF asked if RJ could comment on the importance of innovation to competitiveness. RJ stated that NI is bottom of the UK region and this may be a reporting issue as innovation is self-reported. There is however potential to improve that through the likes of the innovation vouchers and the KTN network.

SH asked if we are going to drive competitiveness do we need to concentrate growth in the larger companies? RJ felt that if we only focus on the top 5-7% this will not move the dial much however if you can help a smaller company who has never exported this will help and will also be a massive achievement for that company.

MR asked that whilst we focus on the recovery plan and business strategy, what should our focus be on, what are the key things we should be flexing or changing? RJ felt that focus should be on productivity and jobs that come directly from unemployment or those that are inactive. This will reduce GVA per head but at this time i.e. a recession, we should be focussing on employment.

KH thanked the team from UUEPC for their time and very informative presentation. DD stated the draft report is currently being finalised and will be shared with the group upon completion. DD also stated that this will come back to the Invest NI Board and the Chair is keen to have it presented to the Economy Committee at some point.

2.2 Board Actions and Agenda

Ian Maxwell joined the call to discuss this item. The group discussed each of the actions from the October Board and the proposed agenda for November. IM to take forward and update.

2.3 Shared Prosperity Fund

DD provided an update on a recent meeting between INI and DfE. DD stated that DfE were unable to provide any further update on the Shared Prosperity Fund at this time.

DD highlighted that the focus of the discussion was around the current needs of NI business in the face of economic impacts of ongoing Covid19 pandemic. DD relayed some of the finer points of the meeting including the need to consider specific sectoral and sub-sectoral impacts of the current, ongoing pandemic, and how we collectively address the potential job losses.

DfE will issue outputs of the meeting and arrange to have a further brainstorming session to include INI and DfC. DD stated that this would require input from across the organisation.

Next meeting: 24th November 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 24th NOVEMBER 2020

Location: via Skype call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd November were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 International Advisory Group – to be tabled on 1st December.

1.2.2 Customer Service Excellence – BD confirmed first discussions have taken place. Further work to be done before can bring back.

2. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

2.1 Matrix Presentation

KH welcomed Rob Grundy (RG), Chair of Matrix and Sara Arbuthnot (SA), DfE to the meeting. Martin Robinson also attended for this presentation. Following introductions, RG presented to the group on the role of Matrix. RG highlighted areas that the Matrix Panel advise on, areas of focus and previous studies, current work plan for 2020/21 and their future work plan for 2021/23.

RG commented that their current work plan has had to change/pivot due to Covid and they are currently delivering on recommendations from previous studies. The future work plan is still to be agreed but will focus on areas such as - health data analytics, impact of Covid-19 on food security and safety, roll out of 5G, green economy, innovation infrastructure and AI.

RG emphasised that the areas of work of Matrix is intended to feed in intelligence and allow the Department to build this into their strategies; this work also can be of use to Invest NI. RG is keen that Matrix and Invest NI are as lined up as possible so that information can be fed through.

KH thanked RG for his presentation. In relation to energy, KH asked where RG felt Matrix, DfE and INI fit and what is next for green energy. RG commented that they do have an interest in local energy infrastructure and it is perhaps an opportunity for Matrix to help shore up any potential in this area. RG stated that there is a piece of work to be done to draw all of this together to build a framework and to take advantage of the capability in Northern Ireland.

SH asked, specifically around green economy and automation, if Matrix are joining up with the Department on post-Brexit analysis as a lens for FDI. RG commented that they are as much as they can, but that more could be done. SH stated that there is a piece of work to be done to look at the sectors Northern Ireland has been

successful in re. FDI and also what opportunities there are out of an NI protocol and how we can pivot towards those.

In relation to City & Growth Deals, DD asked what Matrix's level of engagement is? RG commented that they have deep involvement and spend a lot of time on this and work closely as an industry representative body so that those deals look like something industry can work with. DD reflected that the INI Chair and Board are keen industry have a strong voice in directing the future of any centre.

JF asked if there was any indication on direction of travel or conclusion to the AI/Turing report. RG stated that they currently have draft reports and hope to finalise these before the beginning of next year. RG stated that AI could be deployed to great effect and that there are a couple of key sectors that could be transformed.

BD referred to the research agenda and asked if Matrix's work is influenced by that or vice versa. BD commented that a lot of what Northern Ireland sells internationally is its skillset but who is driving those skillsets is critical to where the NI economy ends up. Where is that alignment happening? RG commented that Matrix have brought the Department for Education in to discussions and takes on board BD's point and will work hard to make sure there is a line.

KH stated that he would like to see deeper sector strategies and knowing that BEIS analyse and prepare many industry strategies for the future asked if Matrix were engaged with BEIS and if there was more we should do to engage with them more closely on this. Life after Covid is going to be hard and we need pathways out of this. RG felt that Matrix and the Economic Advisory Group should try to focus on what the scenarios of the future are going to be.

KH thanked RG and SA for their time today and for the open discussion.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES/ORGANISATION DESIGN

3.1 Resources

KH thanked colleagues for their feedback on the draft presentation. KH stated that he had discussed with the Chair and provided some feedback from that discussion.

Following the presentation to Board, KH will look to set up a small group to look at the various areas and in particular will ask DB and SH to be part of that group.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 4.1 Digital Selling Grant – JF referred to the instruction to expand this scheme. JF highlighted some of the issues the organisation will face with this proposal and asked if we could request a Ministerial direction letter. There are clearly many challenges and JF and his team will work up and report back to ELT by 27th November.

Action: JF

- 4.2 CRBSS – AMcK provided an update on the CRBSS scheme. AMcK and DB to meet and discuss way forward on call handling.

Action: AMcK & DB

- 4.3 EAG meeting - DD referred to an upcoming meeting of the Economic Advisory Group and KH confirmed he will be in attendance.
- 4.4 Covid Restrictions – ELT discussed the updated restrictions coming in to effect on 27th November. ELT agreed comms lines to be issued to staff. KH and PH to discuss client visits/press.
Action: KH & PH
- 4.5 Staffing Request – BD raised a staffing request. ELT were content and agreed.

Next meeting: 1st December 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 1st DECEMBER 2020
via Skype call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan,
Donal Durkan, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown, Vicky Kell

Apologies: Jeremy Fitch

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 24th November were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

1.2.1 Customer Service Excellence – BD confirmed that research work is underway.

1.2.2 CRBSS – AMcK will be reaching out to a contact in DfC to discuss their approach to staff mental health dealing with difficult calls.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES/ORGANISATION DESIGN

2.1 Board

Ian Maxwell (IM) joined the call to discuss this item.

The group discussed the outstanding actions from November's Board meeting. All actions were discussed and a way forward agreed. BD highlighted his thoughts on the action pertaining to RAM. Following debate on ultimate scope of RAM usage, it was agreed to initially carry out pilot testing on recent projects retrospectively down to £100k with further trials for projects below this to follow before ultimately defining final scope of usage.

IM referred to the draft Board agenda for December. KH asked IM to establish the format of the December meeting.

2.2 HR Projects Update

DB presented an update on the people strategy into HR projects. DB reported that terms of reference have been completed for each project and the next stage is to produce project plans. DB provided a brief overview of each of the eleven HR projects.

KH felt that it was a very ambitious schedule with everything else going on and that DB should review the timeframe for completion.

2.3 iTrent Update

Siobhan Haughey (SH) and Carolyn Ruddy (CR) joined the call to discuss this item.

SH presented an update on this project – now referred to as the HR Hub. SH stated that the impact of Covid has meant that the organisation has had to delay the 'go live' of this new system. The launch is now planned for January 2021. SH commented that the team plan to use the next five weeks for further user testing.

SH provided an overview of what the HR Hub will deliver and the impact it will have. CR provided a short demonstration of the Manager Hub view. SH laid out the new roll out plan and what phase II will encompass.

KH thanked SH and CR for the presentation and for keeping the project on track during this difficult time. ELT looks forward to the system going live.

MC asked if HR has a roll back plan if there are any issues when we go live with new system. SH stated she expected to know before the go live date if there are any potential issues but she will discuss with IT to ensure there is a back up plan.

2.4 Diversity Charter Mark

DB referred to the tabled paper and was seeking the executive teams approval for Invest NI to register with Diversity Mark NI and to begin the journey towards accreditation.

The proposal is that the organisation applies for bronze level, which will focus on gender diversity. The organisation will ambitiously aim to gain accreditation within the next six months. DB confirmed that the annual subscription cost could be covered within the L&D budget. The Charter will then be sent to either the CEO or Chair to sign up to and we will need to nominate a D&I Champion at Board Level. This will add weight and focus to our commitment.

SH asked if the organisation could enter at silver level? DB stated that the data tells us that we are diverse at the lower grades within the organisation but not across the board.

ELT agreed with the proposal.

3. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 International Advisory Group

Anne Beggs (AB) joined the call for this discussion. AB referred to the updated terms of reference and proposed life and health sciences diaspora members.

KH stated that he was cautious about building lists of names and asked if proposed individuals had been approached. AB stated that this is still to be done. The proposed names are from pre-existing contacts from our US team. KH stated he reviewed the proposed list but felt a discussion between our team who know the individuals and our team who know the types of roles they have and how they interact would be required to optimise the final selection. AB commented that there is a need to look at sector strategies and see what fit we need across the sectors and sub sectors.

AB stated that in regards to the regional panel the next steps will be for regional to discuss with heads of territories and craft a similar list of names in key territories.

KH highlighted that he has recently had some discussions (and a Minister letter) around an economic conference in 2021, and thinks there will be a role for some of these groups making sure 2021 works well particularly post Brexit and economic conference.

AB asked who will own the development of these groups – will responsibility sit with sector groups. BD was concerned that if we are trying to keep these groups going as a network we need to see the value in it and output from it or it won't work and also if there is bandwidth to manage several at same time.

It was agreed AB will continue to work through practical examples.

Action: SH/AB

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 4.1 Direct Reports – It was agreed to proceed with direct reports session this week and use as a way to acknowledge what the organisation is addressing and who we are engaging with.
- 4.2 Staff Christmas Reception – It was felt that there will not be much engagement with a virtual reception. PH suggested KH record a personal message for staff to issue via Newsweekly on 18th December.
- 4.3 Get Fit update – SH provided brief status update and asked that colleagues return their information as soon as possible.
- 4.4 Casework – BD referred to a number of upcoming caseworks for PPE and a desire to utilise the use of mixed packages of grant and repayable funding as an appropriate form of support. Given the up-front nature of repayable funding he sought clarification on its potential use in the current budgetary environment. MC stated that the presenter should be asked if there is budget cover in place for the project as part of the casework. It was agreed to progress PPE caseworks to ascertain commercial substance and then review the outcome and funding requirements across caseworks and in light of the different ongoing DfE funding interactions.

Next meeting: 9th December 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 9th DECEMBER 2020 via Skype call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. **PREVIOUS MEETING**

1.1 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 1st December were approved.

1.2 **Actions outstanding from last meeting**

1.2.1 Customer Service Excellence – Team to present out workings in January.

2. **2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING**

2.1 **Innovation Accreditation**

Dr Vicky Kell (VK) and Paul O’Callaghan (POC) joined the call to discuss this item.

As background, POC stated that DfE introduced a new Innovation Accreditation Programme, in October 2019 that would recognise innovative businesses and support them to achieve a globally recognised accreditation.

POC indicated that the recognition awards have been a great success to date and will have a large part to play in any recovery plan and post recovery for NI. To date 84% of the target for 2020/21 has been achieved.

POC outlined key findings including the continued lack of understanding that innovation is a process. POC highlighted that real brand value is being created, demonstrated by how companies are promoting the accreditation and that this is complemented by the awareness campaign.

POC outlined how the scheme will align with the Invest NI recovery plan and highlighted the particular areas of focus. New website will launch shortly.

The group discussed branding and how it ties in to Invest NI, can we strengthen the visibility for Invest NI e.g. an “Invest NI inside” branding? KH asked when the team expects to hit 1000 certificates and POC replied that it is hoped to reach this by the end of quarter one – this should provide an opportunity for innovation publicity with Minister.

KH thanked the team for their presentation. VK asked colleagues to ensure their executives help to promote this scheme with their client companies.

Action: ELT

2.2 Post Project Evaluation (PPE) Policy

David Roberts (DR), Clare Mullan (CM), Ian Maxwell (IM), Alistair Moffett (AM), Stephen Wightman (SW) and Gerard McNally (GMcN) joined the call to discuss the following items.

DD outlined that the large volume of offers issued annually by Invest NI and the DfE requirement for a PPE to be completed for all individual expenditures of £5k or more means that the current PPE requirements are onerous and often not completed on a consistent basis. In order to identify the key issues and consider options for improvement, a review of Invest NI's approach to PPE's was carried out by the Economics Team. The review involved extensive analysis of PPE documentation and systems across Invest NI, as well as detailed discussions.

DD outlined the main review findings and the proposed recommendations. It is proposed that the minimum financial threshold for completing a PPE is raised, with smaller expenditure still covered by Programme evaluations. This change will significantly reduce the number of PPE's required to be completed annually. DD pointed out that this will require DfE approval.

Other changes recommended will increase consistency, improve compliance and enable the sharing of findings and lessons learned. Addressing the weaknesses identified in the review will require dedicated resources and buy-in across the organisation in the months ahead. If ELT is content, work to develop an Action Plan and deliverables should commence immediately.

The group discussed the issues as outlined.

It was agreed that an enhanced and more consistent approach to PPE's was needed across the organisation. MC advised that the Performance, Compliance and Co-ordination team will take on lead responsibility for developing the policy and the detailed Action Plan as part of its wider governance role.

It was also agreed that there will be an enhanced role for the Compliance Group, given the spread of responsibilities across divisions for completing PPE's.

A first action is to request DfE approval to increase the minimum threshold from £5k to £25k, at which a PPE must be undertaken. In setting out the proposal to DfE, KH requested that consideration be given to including a sampling approach for projects with a value of between £5k and £25k.

Actions: The PCC team will assume formal responsibility for developing the policy and the detailed Action Plan for PPE's.

As part of its policy responsibility PCC will consider how the role of the Compliance Group can be enhanced.

PCC will seek formal approval from DfE on increasing the minimum threshold for the 100% completion of PPE's from £5K to £25k with sampling between £5k and £25k.

2.3 Evaluations Lessons Learned

DD referred to the tabled paper which identifies and shares lessons learned from 16 external, 2 internal and 4 post project evaluations, completed between March 2018 and April 2020. The report identifies a number of learning themes and recommendations.

DD highlighted the recommendations as ensuring that all indicators and monitoring information is collated within a single, easy to use and easy to access system. He also proposed a re-launch of the CRM Project Monitoring Procedure document and instructions, combined with promotion of the system on a bi-annual basis with additional guidance highlighted on the intranet.

It was agreed that the monitoring process should be reviewed as part of the "Get Fit" Initiative in conjunction with the work DB and SH are leading on, on behalf of ELT. The group advised that the work completed to date on CRM improvements should be expanded and built upon.

Actions: JF/GMcK to action communications on a relaunch of CRM guidance and CRM week in which all staff will be asked to refresh and update monitoring information.

DB and SH to ensure that the monitoring process is reviewed as part of the "Get Fit" Initiative.

2.4 Evaluation Plan (April 19 – March 22)

DD outlined that the purpose of the tabled paper is to seek ELT approval for the Invest NI Programme Evaluation Plan for the period April 2019 to March 2022. DD commented that the Thematic Evaluation approach received ELT approval and Board endorsement in June 2019, however consideration of the Evaluation Plan has been delayed due to Covid. The plan has been developed during the transition to a revised thematic approach to programme evaluations.

DD outlined that there is a key risk of a number of programmes that are going to potentially expire or the approval period will expire before the next approval is in place. The group discussed the status of a number of programmes and audit risks. CM commented that there is a need to issue one tender every two weeks from January to March, in order to cover everything on the list and therefore some form of prioritisation will be required going forward. The anticipated roll-out did not include the potential areas highlighted as Audit Risks. JF asked if it is possible to delay some audits due to the significant ongoing demands across many areas. CM agreed that it was reasonable to prioritise, given the resourcing impact, but highlighted that those programmes/interventions where approvals may potentially expire, need to be completed. CM added that in some instances approval periods should be extended.

DD stated that he wanted to make ELT aware of the significant risks. DD and Economist Team will liaise with Programme Managers to deliver the proposed plan in a timely fashion, recognising that ELT and Director support will be required to address those programmes that are potentially about to expire or pose audit risks.

ELT approved the Invest NI Programme Evaluation Plan April 2019 – March 2022.

Actions: DD to sign off Evaluation Action Plan required for Internal Audit.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES/ORGANISATION DESIGN

3.1 'Get Fit' Plan

The group discussed the proposed presentation.

3.2 DfE Discussion

Mike Brennan, Permanent Secretary (MB), Paul Grocott (PG) and David Malcolm (DM) joined the call. KH welcomed DfE colleagues to the meeting and thanked them for their time to discuss current issues.

MB provided some commentary on three converging issues - emerging budget positions, Covid and Brexit. In relation to Brexit, MB commented that discussions are moving at pace as more clarity is sought on NI protocol. It is recognised that businesses will not be ready and various transitions will be in place, requiring ongoing support.

The group discussed budget pressures and that delivering long term projects is going to be challenging and the organisation needs to be creative on how it plans to do this. It was proposed that the organisation writes to Minister Dodds setting out the importance of continued investment in order to support a sustainable economic recovery.

MB advised preparing budget submissions around external impact that Invest NI can have.

PG provided a brief update on further Covid schemes that are being proposed. DfE may look to Invest NI to assist in the delivery of some of these schemes.

The group discussed the impact of the Covid pandemic on both DfE and Invest NI staff.

KH thanked DfE colleagues for their time today.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 DD provided some feedback from recent political engagement session. It was agreed to table broader engagement plan early in New Year.

Action: PH

4.2 MANI/AIC – DD reported that proposals are accelerating at some pace and will provide a further update later in the week. MC commented that there is a need to consider if this needs to be part of any budget submission for next year.

4.3 Economics Team – DD informed the group that two staff members from economist team were successful in a recent NICS recruitment trawl, which will have an impact on the capacity within the team. DD is flagging as there is an increased demand on the team and will need to look at work in progress.

4.4 Christmas Leave – The group agreed to draft communication for staff.

Next meeting: 22 December 2020

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY 22nd DECEMBER 2020
via MS Teams call

Attendees: Kevin Holland (Chair), Denise Black Mel Chittock, Brian Dolaghan, Donal Durkan, Jeremy Fitch, Peter Harbinson, Steve Harper, Alan McKeown

1. PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 9th December were approved.

1.2 Actions outstanding from last meeting

- 1.2.1 Customer Service Excellence - Decision to be taken in January if we are to go ahead with assessment in April. Recommendation to be brought to ELT in January.
- 1.2.2 Post Project Evaluation (PPE) Policy – MC to report back to ELT in due course after discussion with DfE.
- 1.2.3 Evaluations Lessons Learned – JF to pick up with Internal Communications team.

2. 2020-21 BUSINESS PLANNING

2.1 Recovery Plan Timetable

DD presented a draft Recovery plan timeline, identifying key dates to the end of March 2021. KH referenced the four key sectors within the DfE Recovery Plan and highlighted the need for Invest NI to look at the requirements of additional sectors e.g. Food. KH noted that, at ELT Strategy Session on 21st January, the Team should try to define our approach to the Food Sector.

Action: DD/BD

DD agreed to supplement the timeline to include Invest NI Recovery Plan and details of upcoming key political dates.

Action: DD to bring draft ELT Strat Day agenda to Jan ELT and consider potential Feb Board Strat agenda

KH provided update on call with Minister and invitation from Chair for Minister to join January Board meeting. Team noted Feb Board is set aside for Board Strat day.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 3.1 Covid Schemes - AMcK updated on Covid Schemes and the potential for further bids to lead to a request for additional resource in the New Year. Some are complicated by latest restrictions.

BD noted his concerns that the organisation may be spread too thin across multiple initiatives and team might need to agree key areas of focus. BD also noted his concerns over EU Exit complexities for businesses (e.g. de minimis aid for duties) and his ongoing work on RAM.

- 3.2 Communications - PH provided update on Communications group and staff movement.
- 3.3 EU Exit - DD gave details on current EU Exit negotiations and noted the potential allocation of a further funding allocation (£300-400k) from DfE, with a requisite that it is directed towards the wider business base. DD to continue to engage with DfE to seek greater clarity, to inform decision making on whether additional allocation can be spent in year. Timetable does not allow a vouched and approved scheme to be launched and completed before end of financial year.
Action: DD
- 3.4 Budget - JF reflected on recent DfE budget paper and subsequent queries raised by his direct reports. JF also noted the levels of fatigue within Business Solutions staff and proposed that ELT give further consideration to the Staff Recognition Scheme.
Action: ELT
- 3.5 Recruitment - DB updated on recruitment ask for January, Get Fit and Future Ways of Working and MC advised that he has instructed his team to stand down and take a break over festive period, ahead of budget exercises in January.

KH closed meeting by thanking the team for their support throughout 2020.

Next meeting: 5th January 2021