

INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM
MINUTES 2024

Tuesday 9th January 2024
Tuesday 6th February 2024
Tuesday 13th February 2024
Tuesday 5th March 2024
Tuesday 23rd April 2024
Tuesday 30th April 2024

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 9th January 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Mel Chittock

Attendees: Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper;
 Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p>Apologies & Conflicts of Interest Apologies received from Steve Harper who will join the meeting late. There were no conflicts with any items under discussion today.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting of 5th December were approved and will be published online.</p>	
3.	<p>Outstanding Actions All outstanding actions were discussed.</p> <p>Productivity Programme Team – ELT to consider any suitable staff members and forward names to BD by end of week.</p> <p>Caseworks – MC to provide update following discussion with Chair.</p>	
4.	<p>ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) Paddy Robb (PR) attended the meeting to present an update on the ESG scorecard providing an overview of progress against the 2023/24 agreed Action Plan and to outline the draft 2024/25 Action Plan. PR presented the scorecard, as of December 2023, focussing on two areas – carbon literacy and real living wage.</p> <p>PR confirmed that ESG Carbon Literacy training for all staff will be rolled out in February. PR asked that ELT and Directors commit to undertaking accredited training which is delivered over 2 half days. PR stated that to achieve accreditation participants create their own individual or group actions to reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>PR stated that the proposed training is about raising knowledge and awareness around the organisation. BD asked if the training can be set in terms of what the organisation is trying to achieve. The group agreed that ELT and Directors should undertake this more in-depth training and will be their responsibility to carry the message forward.</p> <p>BD highlighted that there is a lot of training currently underway and referred to a</p>	

	<p>previous training calendar for the organisation and asked if this could be reinstated.</p> <p>Action: PL to ask L&D team to produce training calendar.</p> <p>PR then referred to the Real Living Wage target. PR stated that the recent increase to the Real Living Wage has implications on current and future pay scales within the organisation and guidance is currently being sought from the Department for Finance. PR felt that the organisation should lead by example.</p> <p>PR highlighted the key areas and themes that are proposed to bring forward next year.</p>	PL
5.	<p><u>KPI Update</u></p> <p>The Corporate Information Team (CIT) attended the meeting to present this item.</p> <p>DD opened the discussion stating that the team will provide an update on where we are in the 2023 KPI process. DD wished to make the group aware that the cohort of businesses is declining significantly, this is the smallest sample size in 10 years. DD emphasized that the completion of this important exercise will require active leadership and management at Executive Director level.</p> <p>BD reflected the need to recognise that many staff have been moved into other roles, which will have an impact on the completion of this exercise.</p> <p>CIT provided an overview of the value of the KPI process and how the information is used across a broad range of areas. Increasing the completion rate and undertaking detailed validation adds to the quality and value of the KPI process. The group discussed the percentage rate of returns and the timeframe for completion of this exercise.</p> <p>MC asked colleagues for commitment from their respective teams to ensure this invaluable process has buy-in. ELT committed to ensuring their teams would follow up with clients to encourage a timely response to the survey.</p> <p>MC asked CIT to keep ELT and respective Executive Directors updated on progress.</p> <p>Action: DD to keep ELT updated on progress.</p>	DD
6.	<p><u>Car Parking</u></p> <p>JF referred to his tabled paper, the purpose of which is to propose an updated policy approach to INI provision of car parking and to make a recommendation on the way forward.</p> <p>The group discussed the paper including the allocation of spaces within HQ and the expenditure cap, which will be reviewed each year.</p> <p>ELT agreed with the proposal tabled and it was agreed that an update be provided to staff via Newsweekly in respect of expenses claims.</p> <p>Action: JF/PL/PH to prepare update.</p> <p>Steve Harper joined the meeting.</p>	JF/PL/PH
7.	<p><u>Post Project Evaluation (PPE)</u></p> <p>MC referred to the tabled paper which highlights where the organisation is on</p>	

	<p>completion of PPEs and asked ELT colleagues to ensure there is a push to complete this exercise.</p> <p>JF confirmed that staff are working hard to complete by 31st January.</p> <p>BD indicated that the Audit Committee and the Board will review and it is imperative that we aim to have all PPEs completed by end of the month.</p> <p>As this is another priority area of focus for the organisation, JF asked if there was capacity for other staff within the organisation to complete the PPEs.</p> <p>Action: ELT members agreed to consider and raise if support could be provided.</p>	ELT
8.	<p>Board Workshop - Business Strategy</p> <p>Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to present this item.</p> <p>GMcN took the group through the proposed format and agenda for the forthcoming workshop which has been approved by the Strategic Resources Committee. The group discussed the high-level objectives and the key areas of focus for the session.</p> <p>Any final feedback to be provided to GMcN before end of week.</p>	
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
9.1	IDM letters – MC provided an update.	
9.2	January Board agenda – The group reviewed the agenda for the next Board meeting. PH stated he would circulate his presentation/paper prior to the meeting.	PH
9.3	Energy Efficiency Scheme – JF informed the group that this has progressed through DfE and is now with DoF for approval. JF asked if it is possible to commence with the communication/resourcing to be ready for April launch.	JF/PL
9.4	A2F – BD flagged that he will be bringing a paper for presentation on some oversight changes to Access to Finance funds.	
	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>6th February 2024</p>	

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 6th February 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;
 Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p><u>Apologies & Conflicts of Interest</u> No apologies received. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Welcome & Introduction</u> KD opened the meeting stating that it was a great honour and privilege to join Invest NI and wished to record the organisations and ELTs gratitude to MC for his leadership over the last two years and on a personal note wished to acknowledge MCs guidance and advice in his first week.</p> <p>KD wished to also thank ELT colleagues for the bilateral meetings over the last week and looks forward to meeting their individual teams and visits to the regional offices. KD laid out his short-term priorities for the next number of months.</p> <p>In terms of working as a leadership team, KD would like the Executive Team to embrace the concept of collective cabinet responsibility and explained how this process works.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u> The minutes of the meeting of 9th January were approved and will be published online.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Outstanding Actions</u> All outstanding actions were discussed.</p> <p>PPEs – JF to come back with proposal on what can be achieved.</p>	JF
5.	<p><u>Replacement MyINI Customer Portal</u> AMcK provided an overview of the purpose of the MyINI customer portal to aid KD's understanding of how the organisation engages with its customers. The portal currently operates on open source which is coming to the end of its life span and will now move to a software as a Service (SaaS) approach.</p> <p>AMcK indicated that a paper has been previously presented and approved for a 7-</p>	

	<p>year scheme. However, on reflection, and on advice from the Economist Team, the recommendation is to go with a 10-year scheme. There will be break clauses included and therefore with this increased cost it will now require DoF approval.</p> <p>The portal is considered to be a crucial element in the digital transformation efforts of the organization, and it has been identified as a priority by the Board. AMcK confirmed that they are currently in the final stages of preparing the business case for the portal. The request made today is to acknowledge a long-term financial commitment and to agree that once the business case is finalized, it will go through the usual processes and be presented to DfE and DoF for further review and approval.</p> <p>BD stated that this will be a fundamental change to how the organisation acquires tech going forward. The final outcome is the business case will go through the approval process and then be presented to the ELT Finance meeting for a final determination on its affordability and approval to proceed as appropriate.</p> <p>KD queried the level of utilisation of the portal and any client / user feedback. AMcK stated that all clients are required to create a portal log on (around 4-5k customers). MC remarked that this will provide the desired digital interaction we aim for in the future. BD stated there is a parallel link in task and finish in terms of how we interact with our customers.</p> <p>The group discussed how a future portal could be used for the organisation's customers. BD expressed that there is a need to manage expectations in terms of what the organisation can afford and deliver.</p> <p>ELT approved the updated affordability statement as presented.</p>	
6.	<p>Hybrid Working</p> <p>PL provided background to hybrid working within the organisation laying out the discussion at a previous meeting and the agreement reached. PL provided feedback/challenges received and stated that it is essential this issue be reviewed on a regular basis. This led to a comprehensive discussion by the Executive Leadership Team.</p> <p>The group agreed that the feedback provided reflects what is being heard from their staff. AMcK felt that there has been a definite uptake in attendance in the office since the Christmas period. The group reflected on what was happening in the wider public service and within some sectors in business.</p> <p>There was a discussion, with the main points summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any changes could be seen as unfairly penalising staff who are attending the office forty-percent of the week. • examples of some normalised behaviours. • if the organisation wants to move the culture in a positive direction it needs to ensure that staff are in office on a more regular basis. • essential that staff are updating diaries to capture their location and activity and this needs to be overseen by line management. • There is no evidence of a drop in productivity, standards or lack of engagement as a consequence of hybrid working. • there is an opportunity to make the 2-day office based working 	

	<p>experience better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concerns over possibility of losing technical staff. <p>Following discussion it was agreed to continue with the forty percent / 2-days in the office hybrid operating model subject to ongoing review, the needs of the business and the requirements of future strategy. The group debated an ‘anchor day’ for the organisation and agreed this should be tied in with corporate organisational activities.</p> <p>In closing, it was agreed that ELT members would continue discussions with teams on hybrid working and that staff should use Outlook to keep track of their location and tasks.</p>	
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p> <p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p> <p>7.8</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Productivity Development Tool – DD provided an update indicating that Grant Thornton was commissioned to carry out a piece of work on behalf of INI, DfE and DoF and are currently preparing a position paper.</p> <p>Forthcoming Casework – JF asked colleagues, in response to a forthcoming casework, if they can respond in a timely manner to help the project complete in this financial year should it be approved.</p> <p>Employee Ownership – JF provided an overview of a recent meeting he had attended where he had been informed of a model called “employee ownership” and hopes to attend a future meeting to learn more.</p> <p>Regional Split – BD raised the topic of regional split and felt it may be an opportune time to have a conversation on what the split should be. The group discussed recent debate on this topic.</p> <p>Conversational AI – SH asked if the organisation has a team looking at ‘conversational AI’ as this may have benefits for the organisation in terms of interrogation of our data. BD stated that there was a small team looking at AI. AMcK commented that he will ask the digital team to carry out some research.</p> <p>Comms - AMcK wished to put on record his thanks to PH and his team for the updates made to the Invest NI 2-minute Update ezine.</p> <p>IR Action Plan – KD stated that he would like this to be a standing item on the weekly ELT meeting agenda going forward to keep on top of progress against the various actions.</p> <p>Resourcing – KD stated that PL has briefed him on requests for further resourcing. These additional headcount requirements are quite substantial. KD believes that these requests need to be re-evaluated in the context of future strategy, any associated organisational restructuring and areas of vulnerability, increased workload and specialist skill needs. The organisation also needs to demonstrate that it is fully utilising all existing resources. KD asked that those resource asks relating to areas of increased workload or vulnerability e.g., progressing commitments under the Action Plan, City & Growth Deals, HR, IT and Finance & Assurance, client facing etc. be identified and progressed to business case stage.</p>	<p>AMcK</p>

	<p>The group touched on the resourcing required to deliver the Action Plan and if deferring any immediate decision that resourcing will need to be found from other parts of the organisation.</p> <p>JF asked if posts that funding have from outside the organisation can be progressed. KD asked colleagues to prepare a list of mission critical posts with some narrative as to why they are critical. This will be the basis for progressing these requests in the short-term.</p> <p>Action: ELT to provide lists to PL</p>	<p>ELT</p>
	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u> 13th February 2024</p>	

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 13th February 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;
 Alan McKeown

Apologies: Steve Harper; Paula Logue

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	Apologies & Conflicts of Interest Apologies received from Steve Harper and Paula Logue There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting of 6 th February were approved and will be published online.	
3.	Outstanding Actions All outstanding actions were discussed. Caseworks – MC to forward copy of delegations paper to KD.	MC
4.	Feedback from Discussion with Minister Murphy KD briefed the group on his introductory meeting with the new Economy Minister, Conor Murphy, MLA KD indicated that the interaction was friendly, constructive, and warm. Minister Murphy set out his agenda and spoke of the important role Invest NI plays in the overall economic development of Northern Ireland and the importance he also attaches to the organisation’s reform agenda. KD briefed the group on the forthcoming speech to be made by the Minister and the group discussed some of the finer points within the speech. AMcK shared detail around a potential Shared Island Fund announcement.	
5.	IR Action Plan Update KD stated that the group need to keep track, as a collective, on which actions individual members of ELT are responsible for and progress against same. MC shared feedback on the recent IOG meeting commenting that the Department provided feedback on the level of assurance it was receiving on progress against the individual actions.	

	<p>Following this meeting, the PMO team have implemented several actions including a RAG status report. The organisation needs to be able to demonstrate that it is making progress against the actions.</p> <p>BD asked if the RAG document was necessary given this is a duplication of information already held in the system. MC acknowledged this, indicating that the software used does not allow for the information to be extracted in a format that is useful. BD asked if there is any way to use the system to extract this information that would be his appeal. KD commented that this could be raised at the next IOG meeting.</p> <p>The group discussed the RAG status on some of the actions and KD asked that action owners ensure the RAG status accurately reflects the current position. BD mentioned that the primary concern remains regarding the allocation of resources.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Organisational Innovation</u></p> <p>KD asked the group how the organisation goes about innovating internally, for example, how would it develop a new programme, proposition, or product. Is there an existing process that is sub optimal – too resource intensive or time consuming and could be done better? KD believes in doing things simply and reducing the burden on staff.</p> <p>JF shared a couple of examples namely the development of a new programme and how the IRD Division works on a problem. JF reflected that it is back to how we empower the staff who are facing the challenges on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>AMcK referred to previous transformation processes from which there are lessons to be learnt. There is an opportunity to develop a clear strategy of what and how we are going to improve and drive that through. AMcK used the example of digitisation. DD felt that most of the innovation comes from the ground up.</p> <p>KD outlined a process he would like to put in place. He would like the leadership team to identify challenges/problems, identify staff who are innovative, solution orientated or problem solvers and task them to come up with a solution. KD stated that he would like to trial this approach on the casework process.</p> <p>The group discussed the process including the current bandwidth of staff. Following debate the group agreed to trial the process.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Ministerial engagement/announcements</u></p> <p>PH confirmed that the Head of Press had met with the Minister’s team to discuss this topic. PH provided an overview of the areas discussed and the availability of the Minister to assist Invest NI with engagements and announcements.</p> <p>PH stated that the Comms Team will put a process in place and asked that staff engage with his team in the first instance on any potential involvement of the Minister.</p>	

<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Legal Adviser – BD confirmed the new Legal Adviser is now in situ.</p> <p>Regional Paper – The group discussed the process of papers going to Board and it was agreed KD would speak with Chair regarding this paper.</p> <p>Future Medicines Institute – JF and KD to discuss.</p> <p>NILGA – AMcK provided feedback from his session with NILGA. AMcK will thank them for their time and suggest a more regular meeting with Councillors.</p>	<p>KD</p> <p>JF/KD</p>
	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>5th March 2024</p>	

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 5th March 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;
 Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p><u>Apologies & Conflicts of Interest</u> No apologies received. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u> The minutes of the meeting of 13th February were approved and will be published online.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Outstanding Actions</u> All outstanding actions were discussed.</p> <p>Casework – Current action will be closed as we await the outcome of the project team work. DD asked about the composition of SECC and MC confirmed this would also be reviewed by the project team. AMcK raised an issue around reports being produced solely for SECC and it was agreed this would also be included in the project review. Action: AMcK to provide MC with copy of paper referred to.</p> <p>BD raised an important point regarding consistency and transparency of case papers as they progress through the approval process. KD stated if ELT colleagues have specific issues that they would like the project team to include in their consideration to forward to KD/MC. Action: ELT to forward any specific issues to KD/MC.</p> <p>PPEs – action is now closed. JF agreed to share with Economist Team. Action: JF to provide copy of response shared to DD for the Economist Team.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AMcK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ELT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JF</p>
4.	<p><u>IR Action Plan Update</u> MC referred to a high-level summary document and agreed to share with colleagues. Action: MC to circulate strategic actions status document.</p>	MC

	<p>MC indicated that the organisation is making good progress on a number of the actions, SA22 and SA33 in particular. Since the last IOG meeting a number of structures have been put in place such as roles/responsibilities, governance etc. The roles/responsibilities document will be issued to all action owners to ensure clarity. The PMO team have also developed the risk register module and are currently investigating if monthly templates can be lifted from the system to reduce duplication.</p> <p>MC confirmed that an interdependencies paper has been prepared and there are a number of challenges across a number of the actions. MC stated that a number of the projects are in danger of moving to red such as the reorganisation and policy work.</p> <p>KD shared some feedback received and it was agreed to meet with DfE leads in advance of the next IOG meeting. Action: KD and MC to meet with DfE colleagues.</p> <p>JF highlighted that there is client facing training on Alternative Sources of Finance, which is one of the actions, and confirmed that the organisation has just had positive news that the Shared Prosperity Funding has been approved, which will provide funding for some of those roles. It would be good to announce that we will be advertising these roles at the training session.</p> <p>To conclude the conversation, KD asked if colleagues had any particular comments regarding the individual tasks assigned to them.</p> <p>BD reflected that whilst the organisation has hit some of the targets around the action plan the delivery of the outcomes requires further discussion. DD shared some insight around engagement with the Department around a 'Good Jobs' and the Minister's other economic priorities.</p>	<p>KD/MC</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Invest NI Business Strategy Update</u> Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to discuss this agenda item.</p> <p>KD opened the discussion by thanking GMcN and colleagues for all the work carried out to date on the strategy. GMcN reflected that the first narrative draft now needed to take into account the Minister's new Economic Vision and four objectives namely Good Jobs, Regional Balance, Productivity and Reduced Carbon Emissions.</p> <p>GMcN asked if ELT were broadly content with the strategic priorities as laid out in the draft document, which have been slimmed down to better reflect the Minister's priorities. There were no objections raised.</p> <p>The group discussed the priorities for inclusion and those areas that they felt have been omitted from the draft document. In discussing some of the detail, there was consensus that the organisation needs to agree the strategy first which will be followed by form and function and not to dive in to the detail on delivery at this stage.</p> <p>GMcN asked for a view on the People & Culture input. PL believes that the</p>	

	<p>strategic plan should come first, followed by the structure and then the HR strategy. PL's team is currently focusing on this process and will continue to do so, in order to develop a workforce plan that supports the overall strategy. While PL is content with the current progress, decisions cannot be made too far in advance until the overall strategy is finalised.</p> <p>The group discussed Dual Market Access. SH stated that this is both a concern and an opportunity that affects everything in Northern Ireland and is one of the biggest opportunities for the region. SH felt there was still a lot of confusion in the marketplace about how to take advantage of it or how to overcome the problems affecting businesses. SH also felt the Dual Market Access piece very much focuses on inward investment as opposed to how locally owned business can maximise the opportunity.</p> <p>KD asked ELT colleagues if they felt the document is directionally correct in relation to the strategic priorities they are proposing, the overall narrative and set of messages that are included in this draft. ELT were content with this first draft but there were areas to further discuss.</p> <p>The group reflected on the regional target debate and it was felt that the organisation needed to start to shape that narrative within its corporate documentation.</p> <p>KD shared his initial thoughts on the first draft indicating that it was very policy led-and would like to see more emphasis on the business, clients, sectors, challenges and opportunities that firms are managing and their expectations of Invest NI and how the organisation can help them. KD indicated that the strategy should paint a picture about what Invest NI does as an organisation, what we propose to do and focus on over the next three years.</p> <p>In closing, KD asked colleagues to share any comments on the document with the drafting team.</p> <p>Action: ELT members to provide feedback to GMcN.</p>	<p>ELT</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>New Economic Strategy - Policy Considerations</u></p> <p>Maureen McGuigan (MMcG) and Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to discuss this agenda item.</p> <p>MMcG referred to the tabled paper stating that the organisation issued interim guidance back in January, following discussions with the Department. This guidance now requires updating to include the Minister's Economic Vision and to provide practical measures for staff. Decisions are now required on the approach to four specific areas as laid out in the tabled document. MMcG spoke to each of the four objectives.</p> <p>The group debated Invest NI's use of financial employment support to support jobs above the Real Living Wage (RLW) and Invest NI's previous focus on delivering jobs which paid above the NI Private Sector Median (PSM).</p> <p>KD asked how staff at the frontline interacting with clients would perceive the organization adopting the RLW while maintaining the PSM. JF believed it may be</p>	

	<p>seen as lowering standards, but also agreed that flexibility is necessary to effectively address the issue. SH suggested that sending a clear message that the organization will not endorse any jobs paying below the RLW would be well-received.</p> <p>MC reflected that there could be a potential downside if there is an increase in the number of projects with lower salaries being offered, which poses a risk.</p> <p>KD asked the group if they were content to sign up to what is proposed in terms of the RLW, promoting Regional Balance (subject to further discussion), Productivity and Net Zero. ELT agreed with the proposed paper with a number of changes.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Board actions and March agenda</u></p> <p>Trevor Connolly (TC) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>TC presented the agenda for the upcoming March meeting, which will mark the new Chair's first time leading the group. The group discussed the next steps following the decisions made during February's board meeting.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>8.1 Access to Finance Governance Arrangements – BD referred to the tabled paper recently presented to the Governance Council. BD asked if colleagues were content with the recommendation and rationale presented.</p> <p>BD outlined how he saw the process working and the group discussed their concerns including the lack of experience by ELT members to manage a fund and what good practice looks like. There was also a concern regarding the limited number of people who will be available to carry out this task and the bandwidth to undertake this work.</p> <p>KD asked that he be provided with a schematic of what the new committee group would look like and that BD also share an example of the reports. KD asked that this be tabled for further discussion.</p> <p>Action: BD to share schematic and example report.</p> <p>8.2 Investment Zones – JF referred to paper shared with ELT colleagues. The group discussed and agreed the paper should not be shared more widely at this time.</p> <p>8.3 Communications – PH reminded colleagues to provide notification of marketing and communications requests for the upcoming year and asked Teams to promptly respond.</p>	<p>BD</p> <p>ELT</p>
8.4	<p>Performance Management – PL provided an update on the completion rate of mid-year reviews and asked colleagues to remind teams to complete any outstanding reviews and to notify the P&C team once completed.</p> <p>Action: ELT members to cascade to Divisions.</p>	ELT

8.5	Finance Information – BD briefed the group on a recent request. BD suggested this should be discussed at the next O&L meeting. Action: <i>BD to share the request with KD.</i>	BD
	<u>Date of Next Meeting</u> 23 April 2024	

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 23rd April 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;
 Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p><u>Apologies & Conflicts of Interest</u> No apologies received. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u> The minutes of the meeting of 5th March were approved and will be published online.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Outstanding Actions</u> All outstanding actions were discussed.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Ambition to Grow Pilot Extension</u> AMcK discussed a tabled paper and gave a brief summary of its contents, focusing on the Ambition to Grow (ATG) pilot program for new businesses working with Invest NI. The pilot has been running for approximately 1½ years and there are plans to make it a mainstream program. Approval was sought to run one more round/call for applications.</p> <p>KD questioned the need for additional approval as the paper indicated approval had been granted until March 2025. However, it was clarified that approval had only been granted until March 2024, prompting the request for approval for another round of applications.</p> <p>Action: AMcK will update the record accordingly.</p> <p>JF inquired about the process, and AMcK confirmed that it will follow the standard procedure once everything is finalised.</p> <p>SH asked about the difference between ATG and Go Succeed. AMcK explained that Go Succeed is popular, whereas ATG is geared towards companies in the later stages of Go Succeed. AMcK outlined the progression from Go Succeed to ATG to becoming an Invest NI client.</p> <p>AMcK mentioned that regional variations of the program have not been implemented as intended due to, in the main, resource constraints. ELT approved an extension for one more round of applications for the pilot, with no further rounds planned. A full business case will be presented to ELT for three more years</p>	AMcK

	<p>of ATG, focusing on different stages of business growth.</p> <p>KD suggested forming a small internal group to explore a program similar to ATG for innovative start-ups. AMcK agreed, emphasizing the importance of finding and supporting viable businesses.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Status Update on Action Plan</u></p> <p>MC provided an update on the Action Plan progress ahead of the Board presentation on Thursday. Overall, good progress has been made and a breakdown of the status of actions was given. MC commented that the project oversight is effective. MC mentioned that deep dive sessions have been conducted with more scheduled, providing increased visibility on ongoing activities.</p> <p>BD referred to Action 11 and raised concerns about resource allocation and emphasised the importance of discussing staffing issues to meet the Action deadlines. There is potential for the same challenge to apply to a number of other projects. JF highlighted recent discussions at the green economy deep dive around recruitment, and PL was content to discuss with the Department if necessary.</p> <p>BD highlighted potential challenges in staffing and suggested differentiating between essential roles for the organisation to function and roles for specific Task & Finish asks. KD proposed making a clear distinction between these two types of roles moving forward.</p> <p>KD and PL will meet with the Chair to discuss future resourcing needs. KD thanked colleagues for their efforts, noting the Department's recognition of their hard work on the Action Plan.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Dual Market Access & Support for businesses to navigate post EU Exit trading arrangements</u></p> <p>AB attended the meeting to discuss the topic. KD thanked AB for her paper and asked her to share the key issues and requests.</p> <p>AB mentioned two areas of work that she believes the organisation should focus on: supporting businesses with post EU Exit trading arrangements and crafting narrative and messaging for various audiences, including our staff. AB highlighted the challenge of there not being one single source of information/resources for businesses in Northern Ireland and the need to translate government messages into commercial terms to aid understanding for businesses and new investors as well as understanding sector specific trading dynamics.</p> <p>KD sought clarification on AB's request to ELT for approval to establish a group to carry out the tasks outlined in the paper, with available budget. AB confirmed this was correct based on how the organisation had previously approached the challenge for businesses in preparing for Brexit as set out in the paper.</p> <p>BD inquired about InterTradeUK (ITUK) and its potential role. AB explained that ITUK has not yet been constituted but could have a role in engaging with GB suppliers and buyers with Invest NI leading on the promotion of trade opportunities in GB for NI businesses. AB also mentioned the Traders Support Service set up by the UK government to aid businesses importing goods from GB to NI.</p>	

	<p>AMcK asked if AB had a sense of the volume of requests Invest NI is receiving for clarification. AB noted that BST does not record individual enquiries but refers them to the relevant support services/bodies.</p> <p>KD asked if there is an existing government body that could address the confusion around trading arrangements. AB referred to the existing organisations that each only address particular issues/markets and also stated that we need clarity on the role of the EU Exit team in the department.</p> <p>SH stated that this is a priority for the organisation, the issue is how we resource it. AB reflected that the challenge is finding credible subject matter experts and the procurement process by which to engage them, given that there will be key changes taking affect in Sept/Oct 2024 that may impact businesses.</p> <p>KD discussed the importance of distinguishing between dual market access from an inward investment and trade perspective and the need to explain the benefits to indigenous companies in detail.</p> <p>KD concluded the discussion by confirming ELT's agreement for AB to come back with a specific proposal outlining the resources required and suggestions on how to take this forward, noting the importance of the issue but also the limitations of the organisation in addressing every single issue.</p> <p>Action: AB to return to ELT with further developed proposal.</p>	AB
7.	<p>Performance Management</p> <p>Kerri Farrel (KF) attended the meeting to discuss this topic. KD asked KF to provide a high-level overview and to draw out the key asks of the leadership team.</p> <p>KF provided a brief overview presentation focussing on what the organisation is trying to achieve, how it will achieve it, current/perceived issues, phase programme/timeline and process. KD thanked KF for her presentation and opened for discussion/questions.</p> <p>PL indicated a need to encourage all Managers to re-engage fully on the performance management process to ensure higher level of completion and pointed out that the Independent Review highlighted the need for high-performing teams, and therefore it is crucial that managers ensure that staff understand expectations and have clear objectives in place.</p> <p>During the discussion, the group reviewed the presented process. BD suggested incorporating several SMART objectives, specifically related to governance and mandatory training, into job plans. PL noted that since this is only a temporary proposal, these objectives may not be included this year but will be considered in the future. It was also decided that organisational values and behaviours should be integrated as they are essential to job performance.</p> <p>PH suggested using the next staff briefing session to start to position with staff the changes that are coming.</p> <p>KD concluded the discussion by noting that ELT agrees with the proposed direction of travel and recognises it as a key aspect of a multi-year improvement plan for performance management. It would be beneficial for ELT to prioritise</p>	

	<p>this topic as an agenda item at upcoming divisional meetings.</p> <p>KD highlighted that it is important to emphasise that performance management will be enhanced as part of the development of a new HR strategy, which will align with our overall organisational strategy. This ensures that performance management is not viewed in isolation but rather as part of a holistic approach that includes important HR strategy components such as succession planning and career development.</p> <p>Action: ELT to brief at divisional meetings</p>	<p>ELT</p>
<p>8</p>	<p><u>Rationalisation of Invest NI's Programmes and Interventions</u> Clare Mullan, Aaron Wilkinson and Ross Kelly attended.</p> <p>KD welcomed the team to the meeting and thanked them for the papers provided. KD asked CM to position the paper and to draw attention to the specific asks of the Executive Team.</p> <p>CM stated that the paper tabled outlines advice and recommendations and if ELT wish to action then the Economics Team would be happy to assist. CM confirmed that throughout the process all Operating Directors and Programme Managers have been consulted or involved in the advice and clinics and have been very helpful and engaged in the process. CM wished to put on record her thanks to the Operating Directors and Managers.</p> <p>CM drew attention to the Programme Review Outcomes. The Review indicated that estimates sat “between 102 as documented in information provided for the Review to 140 as discussed in interview with members of Invest NI staff.” Following the Sir Michael Lyons review a stocktake was completed. A number of interventions were not included in the Sir Michael Lyons Findings. The total number of interventions stood at 154.</p> <p>CM provided a high-level overview of the recommendations for the Powers and Programmes.</p> <p>Moving on to the individual recommendations, CM stated there are 13 in total, which have been grouped together. CM provided a brief synopsis of each of the recommendations.</p> <p>KD complemented the team on a great piece of work. KD commented that the team have devised a methodology that can be used on an ongoing basis and have helped to progress the implementation of the Action Plan.</p> <p>KD suggested that each recommendation be looked at and given approval (or not) to move forward. JF reflected that there are some parts of the recommendations that would warrant further discussions with the Operating Directors before a final decision is made.</p> <p>ELT concluded that 10 of the 13 recommendations would be accepted.</p> <p>The three-remaining centre on a review of GAP, a review of Trade interventions and further development of productivity focused support. KD asked the respective ELT members to consider and report back to ELT.</p>	<p>ELT</p>

	<p>Action: ELT members to consider the three remaining recommendations and report back to ELT.</p> <p>All recommendations will be noted in an Action Plan and presented to the SRO for approval. Each ELT member has committed to addressing the Action Plan.</p> <p>KD thanked the team for all their hard work in completing this exercise and commented that communication will be as important as the content as we move forward.</p> <p>CM closed by stating that this piece of work has now been completed by her Team and queried who will take forward each of the recommendations. Initial thoughts would suggest that it should be each of the respective ELT members. KD asked that this decision be left with the Executive Team and that he would come back to CM with a decision on who will take forward each recommendation.</p> <p>Action: KD</p> <p>BD asked who would own the methodology model going forward. It was agreed that this should sit within the, still to be established, Centralised Coordination Team.</p>	KD
9.	<p><u>CEO Update</u> KD provide feedback on two recent engagements he participated in.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>10.1 CSR / Social Committee – KD referred to a request received from a staff member. It was agreed that KD, PL and the relevant staff member would meet to discuss but in principle ELT were content. Action: AU to set up meeting.</p> <p>10.2 Board agenda – noted.</p> <p>10.3 KPI Official Stats Publication Date – DD provided an update in terms of the timing of the release of forthcoming official statistics.</p> <p>10.4 KPIs – DD wished to put on record his thanks to staff as the response rate to KPI is now at 84%.</p> <p>10.5 PCA – DD highlighted that there is a review of Parliamentary constituencies currently underway.</p> <p>10.6 Pay Award – PL provided an update on the imminent Pay Award.</p> <p>10.7 Staff Awards – KD asked if there has been clarification on providing staff awards. PL commented that it was agreed but would only be for NI based staff. Due to HMRC rules, international staff would not be eligible. KD asked that we establish what we can and cannot do, the amount that can be given and would be nice to identify an award to an agreed number of staff for an agreed reason at the June Staff Conference.</p> <p>10.8 Carry over leave – Executive Director sign off is still required.</p>	AU
	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u> 30 April 2024</p>	

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 30th April 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;
 Alan McKeown

Apologies: Steve Harper; Paula Logue

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p><u>Apologies & Conflicts of Interest</u> Apologies received from Steve Harper and Paula Logue. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u> The minutes of the previous meeting will be tabled for review at the next meeting.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Outstanding Actions</u> Outstanding actions will be tabled for review at the next meeting.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Belfast Pride</u> DD, as the Diversity & Inclusion Champion, referred to the tabled paper on behalf of the LGBTQ+ employee group. DD outlined that in previous years Invest NI have participated in the Belfast Pride event as part of the wider NI Civil Service (NICS) grouping. The proposal being tabled is that Invest NI participate as a single entity this year and the employee group is looking for support from both ELT and subsequently the Board.</p> <p>KD expressed his support in principle but inquired about whether there was a process or other requirements to follow to enable the organisation to participate at the event. It was noted that the event includes participation from the NICS, other public sector organizations, and client companies, and therefore no specific process needs to be followed. DD stated that participation and attendance in the event is entirely voluntary. The current request is also seeking approval for the group to march with an Invest NI banner in the parade.</p> <p>JF asked about the guidelines for future employee groups wishing to use the organisation's name/logo. The Comms Group will handle discussions on usage and seek approval from ELT on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>ELT endorsed the proposal for the organisation to be formally represented at the event.</p>	

5.	<p>Productivity Model</p> <p>Clare Mullan (CM) and Aaron Wilkinson (AW) attended</p> <p>CM provided a brief background to the work undertaken, also highlighting the recent Productive Investment Capital Grant (PICG). To roll out PICG the organisation had to build a new approval process for those cases including a productivity model. CM stated that, following a request from the Department, Grant Thornton were procured to help develop the model going forward. CM highlighted that this has been an exceptionally tough process. CM asked if ELT were content with the model, the questions being asked of Client Executives and how we move forward in terms of mainstreaming the model within the organisation, taking on board the lessons from PICG.</p> <p>KD firstly complimented CM and AW on the work undertaken to date and added that this is an excellent piece of work.</p> <p>A robust discussion ensued which focussed on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workability of the model - articulating how the model will work within the organisation should it be approved. • Data inputs/sources – real versus nominal. • Model will reflect productivity of a business and show impact of project and rate of growth. There are benchmarks built in that will result in a pass or fail model result. • FDI clients providing a transfer price and retention of profits in Northern Ireland. • Are we right to have such a heavy weight on profit element or will this skew results? • Should we be supporting FDI companies with a productivity support? Need for a policy decision. • Risk highlighted in terms of clawback – currently working through process. Need for real focus on monitoring and relationship with client. • Interpretation of the model in a realistic way, guidance notes and training will be fundamental. • In theory the model will work for FDI, indigenous, manufacturing and services businesses. However it has not been piloted yet. <p>CM signified the need for a Productivity Champion, a business solution to mainstream productivity and how it will be rolled out across the organisation including educating staff, guidance notes, templates etc.</p> <p>KD summarised the debate confirming ELT were happy to endorse and approve the model as presented. KD stated that he would consult colleagues on a Productivity Champion. CM confirmed that the model will be owned and updated by the Economics Team as part of the Economic Efficiency Test.</p> <p>Action: ELT to provide suggested names for Productivity Champion.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">ELT</p>
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6.	<p><u>IR Action 9 – Segmentation</u> George McKinney (GMcK) and Iain Joannides (IJ) attended.</p> <p>KD opened the discussion questioning if the tabled document was asking for approval. GMcK stated that the request was for approval to move to the next stage i.e. operationalisation.</p> <p>IJ provided a brief presentation focusing on the principles of the model, what is similar and different to the previous model, segmentation criteria and proposed modes of engagement.</p> <p>KD offered his complements to the team for the work undertaken and clarified that the ask today is to approve the model as presented.</p> <p>A robust discussion ensued which focussed on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding what the Lyons report meant by the wider business base (non-clients). • Operationalisation of the model and suggestion to convene a Sectoral Development Committee (SDC) to review portfolios and to ensure a focus on the right businesses and their future development. • Portfolio management – need to design mode of engagement and provide resources. • There was some uncertainty that the suggested model addresses the Lyons recommendation. GMcK challenged this describing how he felt the model did address the recommendation. • Need to have a clear definition of a client. • Approach to using employment numbers as a definition driver i.e. sales or employment and how does this sit with other criterion. • Communication of the model will be a critical piece. • Further development to bring out the long term continuous relationship piece. • The importance to clearly define, within the proposal, who qualifies as a client and explain the specific criteria and steps for a company to become a client. <p>KD commented that with some modifications, in light of the discussion, we have a basis for progressing. KD suggested connecting the segmentation exercise to the management of our existing portfolio, not just business development but sector development too. KD floated the idea of setting up a Sectoral Development Committee and laid out how he saw this working.</p> <p>KD inquired whether implementing the proposal would result in the segmentation exercise being conducted on a yearly basis, and if there would be a system in place for companies to move between segments determined during the annual review. GMcK noted that this was the current plan, although the process has not been fully confirmed.</p> <p>In conclusion, KD stated that the Executive Team were not in a position to approve the proposal as tabled today. There are mixed and different views around the table on the way forward. KD would like ELT to have another discussion on this and revert back on next steps.</p> <p><i>Action: ELT to report back by 14th May.</i></p>	ELT
7.	<u>Any Other Business</u>	

7.1	<p>ELT Meetings – KD outlined a proposal to change the format of ELT meetings. KD also outlined a change to the format of documents being submitted to ELT for consideration and will share a new template in due course.</p>	
7.2	<p>Submissions to Board – KD outlined the process for papers being submitted to the Invest NI Board and stated papers must be presented, and approved, by ELT first. The group discussed the types of papers to be presented to ELT prior to Board. The group discussed the ‘sign-on’ process and suggested a similar process could be used here.</p> <p>Action: ELT members to provide suggestions for how we can direct the traffic to ELT, on its way to Board, or the instances where something can go directly.</p>	ELT
7.3	<p>Business Strategy – KD indicated he has shared the draft organisational strategy with Operating Directors and International leads for feedback. PH stated that he has briefed our Comms Agency on the look and feel of producing the public version of the strategy.</p>	
7.4	<p>Access to Finance Governance Paper – BD reported that subsequent to the last discussion it has been agreed that it would be taken forward as it sits and BD, JF and NMCK would fill the advisor roles in the immediate term.</p>	
7.5	<p>Productivity Champions – KD asked colleagues to forward suggestions for this post.</p> <p>Action: ELT to provide suggestions</p>	ELT
7.6	<p>Budgets – JF provided an update on the FMI budget position.</p>	
	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u> 7 May 2024</p>	