



Present Members: Alderman: Hillis (UUP), Knight-McQuillan (DUP)
Councillors: Holmes (UUP), Callan (DUP), Schenning (SDLP), McShane (SF), K McGurk (SF)

Officers:
D Jackson, Chief Executive
R Baker, Director of Leisure & Development
N McGurk, Head of Prosperity & Place
N Harkness, SIB Project Manager
J Beggs, SIB Project Manager
L Mullan, Digital & Strategic Projects Officer

In Attendance: M Higgins, Principal/Chief Executive, Northern Regional College
P McKeown, Director of Finance and Economic Engagement, North West Regional College
V Gault, Associate Dean (Research & Innovation), Ulster University
J Gilmore, Head of City & Growth Deals, Department of Economy

NO.	ACTIONS
1. Welcome and Declaration of Interests	Chair welcomed Members to this meeting of the Executive Programme Board (EPB). No declaration of interests declared. Focus for today: EPB to be updated on the progress of individual projects, including expected SOC submission date and recap of Critical Friend Visit.

NO.		ACTIONS
2.	Apologies	
	<p>Councillors: Anderson (DUP)</p> <p>Ulster University: L Maguire, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (V Gault deputised)</p> <p>Department for Infrastructure: Kaine Lynch, Director of Major Projects & Procurement</p>	
3	Approval of Minutes from Meeting held 16th June 2022	
	<p>Following amendment by P McKeown, minutes of previous meeting agreed.</p> <p>Proposed by P McKeown Seconded by Councillor Schenning</p> <p>Minutes will now be brought to Leisure & Development Committee on 21st February 2023 for information.</p>	Previous EPB minutes to be taken to L&D Committee
4.	Project Updates	
	<p>R Baker provided an overview of workstreams currently being undertaken by the Programme Management Office (PMO), including upcoming training courses.</p> <p>N Harkness provided Members with a brief overview of progress made on each project and noted the RAG status regarding submission of SOC.</p> <p>Centre for Drug Discovery (CFDD) – Draft SOC has been received from Ulster University (UU) and PMO have provided feedback. UU are planning to hold workshops on the SOC in the coming weeks. Next step is to informally submit SOC to relevant Department for feedback, prior to formal submission.</p> <p>Business Incubation and Innovation Hub (BIIH) – SOC is currently under development and PMO have provided feedback to consultant on first draft. Consultant to explore potential synergies with the CFDD and/or merging proposal with the Food Innovation and Incubation Hub (FIIH) – consultant to arrange meeting with UU representatives. It was also noted that business case needs to explore</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>multiple site options, to satisfy Department value for money requirements, not simply assume Enterprise Zone will be preferred location.</p> <p>Food Innovation and Incubation Hub (FIIH) - SOC is currently under development, queries over potential displacement of CAFRE services and proof of need for another innovation centre. Formal response from DAERA requested. Project may move forward with a focus on developing incubation hubs only.</p> <p>Bushmills Regeneration – Public consultation commenced on 21st January 2023 with drop-in session at Bushmills Youth Hostel (circa 60 attendees), in addition online consultation will remain open until 20th February 2023. It was noted that PMO are experiencing difficulty getting engagement with select landowner – Chief Executive to commence dialogue with respective parties.</p> <p>Dungiven Regeneration – Draft SOC received and feedback provided by PMO. Intention is to informally submit next draft to relevant Department for feedback, prior to formal submission. Members were asked to note, that current indicative budget for the project would need to be increased or project scaled back.</p> <p><i>Councillor McShane joined the meeting at 6:45pm</i></p> <p>Mountsandel – PMO have provided technical report on costs associated with new bridge and are currently commissioning a second opinion. Expectation is SOC will determine that project will not proceed under Growth Deal but other avenues for funding could be explored.</p> <p>Dunluce Castle – A range of potential options have been shared with landowner and his solicitor about how project could proceed but no response received. It is believed landowner is progressing work on his own planning approvals, to develop centre to ‘shell’ and then rent out. Members were advised that SOC will recommend project does not proceed and if in agreement, it will be removed from Growth Deal consideration.</p> <p>Grow the Glens – PMO visited project site on 27th January 2023 and were advised that contractor has been appointed to complete Phase One. Phase Two of project will be a further extension to works completed under Phase One. Due to the advanced stage of this project, PMO decided to proceed directly to OBC which is currently on target.</p>	<p>Chief Executive to engage with Bushmills landowners (DJ)</p>

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>Connected Causeway and Traffic Infrastructure (CCTI) – Multiple stakeholder engagement has taken place and AECOM have developed Action Plan. Council are progressing with the parking hubs, as part of the Growth Deal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Portstewart</i> – no viable location identified. Recent approach has been made to Dominican College. • <i>Portrush</i> – preferred option emerging as ‘The Bowl’. • <i>Bushmills</i> – engagement with local landowner who has already secured planning permission • <i>Ballycastle</i> – site at Shesburn House has strong potential, following recent success of Levelling Up Fund for the Ballycastle Leisure Centre <p>SOC expected to be delivered before March deadline.</p> <p>Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway – meeting took place with Ulster Farmers Union (UFU) on 19th January 2023, group largely unsupportive of the greenway. A number of options presented detailing how to move forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proceed with the business case with a view to achieving voluntary sales agreements; 2. Proceed with the business case with a view to using vesting; 3. Accept that the project has limited local landowner support and withdraw but consider opportunities to upgrade and/or extend the Tow River path, as part of the LUF Ballycastle Leisure Centre project; or 4. Accept that the project has limited local landowner support and close the project for the foreseeable future. <p>Portrush to Bushmills Greenway – To date landowner engagement has been positive, with a slight concern over lands in proximity to Dunluce Castle. PMO will bring paper to Leisure & Development Committee, to formally bring this project into Growth Deal portfolio. SOC expected to be delivered by May 2023.</p> <p>Chair opened meeting up to questions from Members.</p> <p>Councillor Schenning queried how the proposed removal of projects would impact the financial position of the Growth Deal.</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>Chair advised that, with the imminent completion of the SOCs, the Growth Deal was moving towards an important decision point. He also noted that if a project has lost political support and/or there was no strategic justification or prospect of VFM and sustainability, there would be a strong case for it to be removed from the programme.</p> <p>M Higgins questioned if projects sponsors needed to be identified before SOCs are completed and noted that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) have the powers and have set the precedent to vest land which they deem to be of regional significance.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development advised that SOC could proceed without project sponsor but this element would need to be resolved at OBC stage. In terms of greenways, the Director advised that an attendance list for the UFU meeting has been requested and that he has escalated land acquisition issues with DfI, noting the need for Department to lead on vesting.</p> <p>Councillor McShane expressed disappointment at the negativity of the landowner meeting regarding the Ballycastle to Ballymoney greenway. She was hopeful that it could still be retained within the Growth Deal with the business and community sectors having a different perspective. Councillor McShane suggested a Ballintoy to Ballycastle path should be considered as part of the Growth Deal. In closing, she expressed that she was happy to hear that Grow the Glens and the Ballycastle Transport Hub are progressing.</p> <p>N Harkness agreed that the Ballintoy to Ballycastle path proposal has strong merits but since it is not a DfI Greenway priority Greenway it is very unlikely to fit within Growth Deal criteria.</p> <p>Councillor Holmes expressed that as a farmer himself, no amount of money would convince him to let members of the public onto his land.</p> <p>Alderman Knight-McQuillan echoed the disappointment of Members and noted that time is running out to make decisions, other projects are more likely to succeed and should be prioritised.</p> <p>Councillor Callan agreed with the sentiments expressed by other Members and noted that greenways could bring massive benefits to the rural community.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development brought this section to a close by summarising the next steps:</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmed SOCs are on track to meet the March 2023 deadline; • Three projects are potentially at risk (Dunluce Castle, Mountsandel and Ballycastle to Ballymoney greenway); and • Recommendations will be taken to next Leisure & Development Committee. 	
4.	<p>Budget Update</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development noted that budgets are indicative until accurate costings are developed at OBC stage. He reminded Members that Council has a limited capital budget and business cases may still fail to gain Department support.</p> <p>EPB may need to consider a number of options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce the number of projects included in the Growth Deal; 2. Revise budgets for all projects; or 3. If budgets permit, additional projects to be brought into Growth Deal consideration. <p>Decision paper will be brought before EPB in March 2023.</p> <p>Councillor Schenning questioned how additional projects will be assessed for inclusion in Growth Deal.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development advised that projects would need to meet Growth Deal criteria and are at a state of readiness would be considered.</p> <p>J Gilmore advised that decisions will ultimately rest with Council. She also noted that the Derry and Strabane City Deal, put aside £20m for a project(s) to be determined at a later stage. If Council wanted to proceed down this route, the decision would need to be approved at Delivery Board Level. Finally, she reminded Members that construction inflation and green growth considerations will impact all budgets.</p> <p>N Harkness advised that PMO have included budget uplifts to account for these requirements and noted Council's policy on Net Zero for all new builds.</p> <p>P McKeown concurred that Net Zero will have an impact on budgets.</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
5.	Update on 'Critical Friend' Visit	
	<p>Head of Prosperity & Place updated Members on the Ambition North Wales (ANW) visit which took place between 16th & 17th January 2023.</p> <p>Due to adverse weather, Critical Friend Review (CFR) element had to be cut short, but virtual session has been rearranged for 16th February 2023. This portion of the CFR will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Risk Registers • Project Feedback <p>Details of lessons learned will be shared with EPB.</p> <p>Chair acknowledged the work that went into organising visit.</p> <p>V Gault shared how the visit has enabled the University to create linkages across a number of projects and is hopeful that further relationships can be fostered.</p> <p>M Higgins expressed his appreciation for being invited to the dinner and observed how establishing this Critical Friend relationship demonstrated great commitment to collaboration by all stakeholders.</p> <p>J Gilmore echoed previous comments and shared how being able to attend site visits was beneficial to her wider team. In addition, she has been able to follow-up with ANW regarding their Net Zero approaches.</p>	
6.	Any Other Relevant Business	
	None mentioned.	
7.	Date of Next Meeting	
	Thursday 2 nd February 2023 – Location to be confirmed.	Meeting invites to be issued (RB)

Meeting closed at 7:30pm