



MINUTE OF MEETING

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE – BOARD MEETING

03 FEBRUARY 2022

MANSFIELD HOTEL, HAWICK

<p>Board Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive Alistair Cameron (via MS Teams) Professor Sara Carter Alan Daubney Helen Forsyth Duncan McConchie (via MS Teams) Jeremy Sainsbury David Sulman Kate Rowell Hazel Smith</p> <p>Apologies Lindsay McDowall John Evans, Director of Transformation & Development</p> <p>SOSE Senior Leadership Team Anthony Daye, Director of Finance & Corporate Resources Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnership & Engagement Martin Valenti, Director of Net Zero Bryan McGrath, Director of Place & Enterprise</p>	<p>SOSE Attendees Linsey McGillivray, Corporate Office (note) Susan Cannon, Corporate Governance Lead Jane Malloch, E.A. to Russel Griggs Steph Lamb, E.A. to Jane Morrison Ross</p> <p>SOSE Attendees (via MS Teams) Susan Harkins, Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Paul Swarbrigg, Business Development Specialist Claire Renton, Head of Area Operations, Place & Enterprise Phil McCreadie Head of Operations, Place & Enterprise Ben Campbell, Head of Digital Development Tracey Graham, Communications & Marketing Manager Fiona Sköller, Corporate Office</p> <p>Scottish Government Guests by MS Teams Scottish Government Officials - Regional Economic Development Division</p>
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WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed Board members and guests to the fourth hybrid meeting. Apologies were noted.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. Professor Sara Carter noted interest in a funding application (Item 7).

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3. The minute of the full Board meeting on 9 December 2021 and the ad hoc meeting on 24 November 2021 had been circulated. It was noted in the minute of 9 December, under the Chief Executives Report, that an extract of the dashboard had been circulated to the Board and not the full dashboard.

Decision: The minute of the meeting held on 9 December was approved with one amendment. The minute of 24 November was approved.

ACTION LOG

4. The action tracker was noted.

CHAIR'S REPORT

5. The Chair provided an update:
 - There had been excellent feedback from the engagement tour from companies and enquiries and contacts had increased. Discussion had been around infrastructure – housing, transport and connectivity. Positive feedback had been received around communication and individual SOSE staff.
 - New Board member recruitment was almost complete, and although verbally agreed, agreements were yet to be signed.
 - A meeting would be facilitated with Langholm Community to assist with regroup following Covid. There was discussion around the potential engagement of Russel, Jane, SLT and customer facing staff at local community events in the Borders and D&G. (Common ridings, agricultural shows, mountain bike events, civic weeks, Herring Queen week etc.) Previous discussion had been held about a mobile unit at events to strengthen presence.
 - The Communities team had been working on a plan to engage with communities.
6. The Board discussed engaging with new councillors following elections and also engaging with intermediaries such as lawyers, accountants, bankers.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

7. The Chief Executive update included:
 - Year end challenges to meet budgets, the challenges to revenue, capital and pipeline and the work to structure the budgeting process for the future. Staff have been focussing on delivery as a priority with equal focus on delivery to Scottish Government and communities and businesses.
 - Susan Harkins, Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship illustrated the new SLT Dashboard which was being constructed to provide information and data including enquiries, businesses in relation to sector and local authority, referrals etc. It is aimed to be rolled out within two months following the roll out of additional training and Board will be provided it in summary form next quarter. (If gaps exist then these will be highlighted.) Reporting on Business Gateway in Dumfries & Galloway was queried, and Susan will look to see if reports are published by D&G Council.

PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATIONS

8. The Board considered four project funding applications. All of the proposals were agreed or agreed in principle.

“Details of projects funded, and their values are published by SOSE on a quarterly basis once all relevant contractual terms have been agreed. Please refer to the SOSE website for information on the Grant Funding that we have distributed. [SOSE - Accessing our information](#)”

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

9. Karen Jackson presented an update on NSET, outlining that SOSE was very aligned with the NSET strategy. Potentially there will be a Delivery Board in Scottish Government which SOSE should be engaged in that discussion. Although challenges around resourcing and capacity had been raised, SOSE would face this as an opportunity going forward – looking at pathfinder pilots. Board

members were excited but nervous about the level of ambition and SOSE's ability to deliver. It was noted that the Regional Economic Strategy and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation were both part of SOSE's action and delivery plan.

UPDATES

10. Updates were provided on the following:

- **Wedding industry** – There was a third tranche of funding to support businesses in the wedding industry sector with 154 payments made. Thanks were given to a Board member for his contacts via the Wedding Industry Alliance.
- **Priority Places** – Place planning –the paper highlighted relationships with both Dumfries & Galloway and Scottish Border Councils. SOSE had taken a lead role in the Borderlands, place programme working closely with Stranraer as a pilot. The Appendix provided a list showing the geographic spread of different community groups and social enterprises. The Board thanked Bryan McGrath for the update and suggested that SOSE engage with SENS Scot, Social Enterprise Fund, Firstport and other social development agencies.

SOSE FINANCE REPORT and DRAFT BUDGET 2022/23

11. Anthony Daye provided a financial report for December 2021 and an updated outline of the Budget position. The final draft budget will be brought to the March Board for sign off.

Decision: The Board noted the Financial Report and Draft Budget for 2022/23.

SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL (SFC) PATHFINDER

12. Karen Jackson captured the progress of delivering one of the key recommendations to the Scottish Funding Council around driving forward pathfinder for the South of Scotland. It was an opportunity to look at the education and skills system at regional level. SFC were developing the regional work programme and were developing consultancy so SOSE would look at adding to the capacity of that.

Decision: The Board noted the work of the South of Scotland Pathfinder.

NET ZERO – CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY

13. Martin Valenti introduced the discussion by setting the strategic context and how developing supply chains was a key enabler for the NSET. Developing supply chains was an essential element of driving a just transition to Net Zero and also for building capacity in the region. Claire Renton, Head of Area Operations gave a route map for construction and energy supply chains, their contribution to carbon emissions and the support for transition to net zero.

14. The Board agreed to the direction of approach and asked how the strong drive and leadership from SLT was transferred to SOSE specialists and advisors. The Board were informed that all staff members would attend a Carbon Literacy course.

Decision: The Board were supportive of the Net Zero Construction and Energy Supply Chain Strategy.

SOSE DIGITAL STRATEGY

15. Ben Campbell, Head of Digital Development, introduced the latest version of the digital strategy. The Board thanked Ben for his paper and were in agreement with the direction of travel but shared concerns re connectivity and infrastructure.

Decision: The Board noted the paper and were in agreement to progress with the Digital Strategy.

CABINET SECRETARY FOR FINANCE AND THE ECONOMY

16. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, and the Economy, joined the SOSE Board Meeting to hear about SOSE's activities. They were extremely impressed with the work of SOSE, recognising SOSE as being bold and different, and making exciting changes across the South of Scotland, benefiting businesses and communities and creating a stronger economy. She shared words of encouragement and gave fantastic feedback on the work SOSE are doing as an organisation.
17. Discussion took place around the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and Board members gave an overview of the work SOSE is doing that is relevant to the five key themes in the NSET: entrepreneurship, new market opportunities, productive businesses and regions, a skilled workforce and a fairer society.
18. The Chair thanked the Cabinet Secretary for their kind words and reflected back that it had been a very positive experience and SOSE would continue to deliver to national priorities with regional focus.
19. The Cabinet Secretary gave sincere thanks to the Board for sharing an hour of their day and looked forward to further engagement.

LEARNING FROM OUR CHALLENGES

20. This new agenda item would alternate with the "How We Make a Difference" item. Bryan McGrath, informed of the challenge around how SOSE commits and spends their capital and revenue budget. Discussion was around resource, pipeline, lessons learned, lateness of taking decisions in some projects, staff exhaustion, community led capital projects taking longer to come through, people, commitment of funds, focus, working in a more cross directorate way across the budget and streamlining processes.
21. The Board congratulated SLT and SOSE staff on the phenomenal amount of work that had been done, in difficult circumstances. The Board were heartened that difficult areas such as the challenge to develop a new organisation at the same time as working to deliver for communities and businesses, the challenge with staff resource and project pipeline were being shared and the Board will be trusting and more supportive. The Board encouraged learning from mistakes and not to be risk averse.

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

22. The following papers were for information:
 - Audit and Risk Committee update - Paper SOSE 22 (06)
 - Draft Minute of RNHR Committee 16 December 2021
 - SOSE Board Forward Plan (standing item) - Paper SOSE 22 (07)

A.O.B.

23. **Health & Safety** - A Board member highlighted an action that was required around fire safety in the offices.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

24. Next Full Board Meeting: Thursday 31 March 2022
25. The Chair gave thanks to the four co-opted members whose last attendance at Board was today. Thanks were given on behalf of all colleagues, and it was very sad to see them go. The Chair expressed a very big thank you as all four members had gone beyond the call of duty.