

**SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE – BOARD MEETING
9 APRIL 2020 – BY MICROSOFT TEAMS**

MINUTES OF MEETING

<p>Board Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Nick Halfhide, Chief Executive Alistair Cameron Alan Daubney Helen Forsyth Duncan McConchie Lindsay McDowall Kate Rowell (for part of meeting) Jeremy Sainsbury Hazel Smith</p> <p>Apologies Professor Sara Carter David Sulman</p>	<p>SOSE Senior Leadership Team Anthony Daye, Director of Finance John Evans, Director of Enabling Services Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy Bryan McGrath, acting as Director of Operations</p> <p>Other SOSE staff Isla Houston, Communications</p> <p>Others attending Paula Ward, Visit Scotland</p>
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WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

1. Russel Griggs, Chair welcomed members to the meeting. There were apologies from Sara Carter and David Sulman.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

2. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF 2 APRIL (paper SOSE (M) 4)

3. The minutes were approved.

ACTION LOG

4. The action log was noted. John Evans confirmed that members would receive training on Board Portal now it had been procured and that sose.scot emails were being created for members.

COVID-19 - UPDATE

5. Russel Griggs invited Duncan McConchie and Paula Ward to give an update on the impact of COVID-19 on tourism. Duncan McConchie introduced the item underlining the severity of the impact on the sector which risked losing many key businesses. Paula Ward presented a detailed overview of the significant impact, the sector's current challenges to keep going given the loss of income and seasonality and the requirement for the right sort of support to ensure the sector and

key businesses within it could survive through the crisis. Failing businesses would lead to vacant property and a lack of offering for visitors. This would impact across the supply chain.

6. Paula Ward also highlighted the potential activity and focus that would help restart the sector once the lock-down was lifted. Domestic tourism would be an important part of the recovery and the region was well placed with most of its visitors domestic with an appealing offer to the domestic market. The South of Scotland Tourism Leadership group was well placed to support future activity building on the investment that the South of Scotland Economic Partnership, VisitScotland and the two local authorities had made in the group. There was a commitment from VisitScotland to future destination marketing. While VisitScotland had paused current marketing activity, its campaign with Channel 4 and expedia was ready to re-run. However, businesses needed tailored support, including grant support, at this stage in the crisis to ensure their survival. While the UKG and SG support was welcomed, key businesses were falling through gaps in the support.
7. In discussion the following points were made:
 - The Board welcomed the presentation and the insight given and recognised the urgency surrounding addressing some of the specific issues;
 - Hotels and accommodation providers were also important for businesses and infrastructure providing temporary accommodation for workforces eg maintaining infrastructure including wind turbines and forests;
 - Refunds were draining providers of resources but they wanted to ensure that they treated guests fairly and avoid reputational damage;
 - Self-catering had now been included in the support being offered after considerable lobbying from the sector;
 - The seasonality of businesses meant that repaying loans would be challenging as they would not be generating income until next season so would be unlikely to be able to meet repayments while being able to operate.

8. The Board agreed:

- **That VisitScotland be invited to provide an estimate of the resources needed to support the South of Scotland Tourism Leadership Group take forward activities to support the marketing of the sector (action - Karen Jackson to follow up with Paula Ward);**
- **That VisitScotland provide the analysis that they had of the businesses impacted that were falling outwith the current support so that SOSE could work to identify the most appropriate forms of support (action - Karen Jackson to follow up with Paula Ward);**
- **That SOSE drew on VisitScotland expertise to help understand the needs of the sector; (action – John Evans to work with VisitScotland team) and**
- **That the sectoral approach should continue and that Helen Forsyth, Lindsay McDowall and Hazel Smith would present to the next board on the impact on the Third Sector (action – Board Secretariat to confirm details).**

SOSE RESPONSE (SOSE (20) 8, SOSE (20) 9 and PowerPoint presentation on analysis)

9. The Board noted SOSE (20) 8 which captured specific updates from the members as well as recent updates and useful information. This would continue to be produced.
 - **Action – an update note would be produced each week (action - Board Secretariat/Karen Jackson)**

10. Nick Halfhide set the context for the discussion that covered analysis from business engagement, proposals for specialised accountancy support and work to develop a place-based approach and proposals for a fund of “last resort” for business unable to access support from other sources. He asked the Board to consider the focus they wanted to give to immediate response activity and longer term restart and recovery activity. The other enterprise agencies were also considering their focus, recognising that they could not help everyone. It would be important to be able to explain the criteria informing decision making.
11. The Board welcomed the update given by Anthony Daye on the work to develop a scheme to provide specialised accountancy support focused on corporate finance and corporate recovery. They noted that support was being procured with further details on prioritisation and an update on delivery being provided to the next board.
 - **Action – an update on delivery would be provided to the next Board
(action - Anthony Daye)**
12. The Board noted John Evans’ presentation on the outputs of work being taken forward by SOSE’s Business Relationship Managers to engage with their account managed clients to understand the issues they were facing. The Board recognised that this was a narrow snapshot of business need given the spread of other businesses and asked that further work be done with a broader range of businesses to identify their needs. This would help understand specific issues and shape a response rather than being about general intelligence gathering. This engagement could be undertaken by a range of people, including through local authorities and the Third Sector Interfaces, informed by a standard list of questions to focus discussion.
 - **Action – further work to be undertaken on analysing business need to be undertaken
(action – John Evans)**
13. Bryan McGrath set out the approach to the place-based approach to identifying businesses and other organisations important to communities across the area. The Board agreed that there was value in this approach but asked for further information about the criteria being used to assess what was a key organisation. In taking the work further, there would be value in broadening engagement to use the expertise in the Third Sector Interface. Regional charities would also deliver important service locally.
 - **Action – further work to be undertaken on producing a place-based analysis drawing on a broader range of expertise
(action – Bryan McGrath)**

BUDGET - SOSE (20) 10

14. Anthony Daye presented a paper updating the Board on budget commitments and confirmed that the Board would receive regular Budget updates. The paper set out current commitments and identified a range of potential commitments that would come to the Board for decision. The Board asked for further information on a number of the projects proposed and on whether the current situation would impact on the timelines for project delivery.
 - **Action – papers on specific projects would be presented to the next Board
(action -SLT – Karen Jackson and Anthony Daye)**

DELEGATED AUTHORITY - SOSE (20) 11

15. Anthony Daye presented the paper updating the Board on delegated limits. The Board approved the paper and noted that a further update would be provided once the current emergency situation had passed.

- **Action – an update on delegated limits to come to the Board after the Covid-19 emergency had passed (action - Anthony Daye)**

COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (SOSE (20) 12

16. John Evans updated the Board on discussion with the Scottish Government’s sponsor team about the terms of reference for the remaining committees. Following those comments, the committee terms of reference could be finalised. It was agreed to merge the Nomination Committee with the Remuneration and HR committee. Alistair Cameron as chair of the Workers’ Interest Committee would arrange to have discussions with the STUC and proposed that the research done by the Jimmy Reid Foundation be circulated to the Board. The terms of reference for the Audit and Risk committee had been agreed and arrangements were being made for the first meeting.

- **Action – an update on the finalised terms of reference for the Board’s agreement be provided (action - John Evans)**
- **Action – a discussion to be arranged with the STUC (action - John Evans) and research from the Jimmy Reid Foundation be circulated (action - Karen Jackson)**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT

17. Nick Halfhide gave an update on the meetings he had had to build relationships between SOSE and key organisations and businesses. Recruitment and work to build SOSE continued. The SLT were also working to ensure that care was taken of staff welfare during the COVID-19 situation with regular all-staff calls and individual meetings.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18. The next meeting would take place on 16 April.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19. As there was no other business, Russel Griggs thanked members for their participation and closed the meeting.

SOSE Board Secretariat – 23 April 2020