



MINUTE OF MEETING

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE – BOARD MEETING

9 DECEMBER 2021

SMITHS HOTEL, GRETNA GREEN

<p>Board Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Alistair Cameron (via MS Teams) Alan Daubney Helen Forsyth Duncan McConchie Lindsay McDowall Jeremy Sainsbury David Sulman</p> <p>Apologies Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive Professor Sara Carter Kate Rowell Hazel Smith Colin Cook, Scottish Government</p> <p>SOSE Senior Leadership Team Anthony Daye, Director of Finance & Corporate Resources John Evans, Director of Transformation & Development Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnerships & Engagement Martin Valenti – Director of Net Zero Bryan McGrath – Director of Place & Enterprise</p>	<p>SOSE Attendees Claire Renton, Head of Area Operations, Place & Enterprise Linsey McGillivray, Corporate Office (note) Fiona Sköller, Corporate Office</p> <p>SOSE Attendees (via MS Teams) Paul Wheelhouse, Net Zero Implementation Lead Julie Hogg, Community Development Specialist Kate Musgrave Head of Area Operations Justine Donlevy, Economic Infrastructure Development Project Manager Scott Robertson, Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist Garry Legg, Strategy & Planning Manager Tracey Graham, Communications & Marketing Manager Lucy Henderson, Communications and Marketing Sharon Ogilvie, Community Development Advisor Susan Cannon, Corporate Governance Lead</p> <p>Guests Gretna Green Limited</p> <p>Guests by MS Teams Scottish Government Official - Regional Economic Development Division</p>
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WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed Board members and guests to the meeting. Apologies were noted. Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnerships & Engagement was acting CE in Jane Morrison-Ross's absence.

HOSPITALITY AND WEDDING SECTOR

2. The Chair introduced the guest speakers from Gretna Green Ltd and Scottish Wedding Industry Alliance who shared their knowledge and insights of tourism hospitality and the wedding sector in South of Scotland.
3. Gretna Green discussion included:
 - The future challenges to reduce costs, improve eco credentials, improve digital technology and the aim to deliver the Fair Work framework.
 - The challenge of the competitive market nationally and internationally, rising customer expectation and transport infrastructure.

- Future opportunities included the review of the investment plan strategy to become leaner and more effective, to improve the website/customer experience and the aspiration to create an additional 200 new jobs in the region whilst supporting the Scotland Outlook 2030 Strategy.
 - Targeted visitors and tour groups will be encouraged to the Smiddy experience.
 - Collaboration with schools to know the history of Gretna Green will continue.
 - Footprint – car parking etc will be examined
 - Recruitment process had been stripped back, job descriptions, roles and titles have been adapted.
 - On boarding induction process had been changed to educate about business and family history and to learn about new recruits. Provision of a tailored training programme.
4. Wedding industry discussion included:
- SWIA is the “go to” voice for the wedding industry in Scotland.
 - There had been improvement since restrictions were lifted in August.
 - Dumfries & Galloway had the lowest share of the wedding sector supply chain.
 - Restrictions had a massive impact on tourism.
 - South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) had seen growth with big aspirations and targeted marketing including television advertising which had made a big impact on visitor numbers with a boom in caravan parks and glamping.
 - The lack of internationally recognised hotel chains was noted.
 - Challenges included poor take up with digital on-line booking and marketing, resistance to change and the proposed implementation to licensing of self-catering sector.
 - Staffing challenges included the proposal for vaccine certification and career perception.
 - Recruitment was a challenge – the education sector needs to provide courses and promote career opportunities.
 - Consideration was being given to a college cooking school and a demonstrable career path.
5. Thanks were given to the guest speakers.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

6. Hazel Smith had noted interest in a funding application (item 8). Hazel had provided apologies for today’s meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

7. The minute of the full Board meeting on 11 November 2021 and the ad hoc meetings held on 22 October 2021 and 24 November 2021 had been circulated.

Decision: The minutes of the previous meetings held on 11 November and 22 October were approved.

ACTION LOG

8. The action tracker was noted.

CHAIR’S REPORT

9. The Chair informed of the Engagement Tour and fed back on some issues which had been raised including infrastructure, housing, transport, connectivity and electric cables. SOSE’s greatest role

is advocacy. The Chair highlighted the lack of housing and it was suggested to produce a paper on the housing supply chain including RSLs and developers in the South of Scotland.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

10. The Chief Executive spoke of:

- SOSE's work with SDS on the skills shortage and assisting employers with job descriptions and how to attract people.
- Discussion had taken place with D&G Council re Business Gateway.
- Excellent work had taken place on the SME carbon footprint.
- An extract of the dashboard had been circulated.

11. Board members had a wider discussion about SOSE staff:

- Focussing on areas of need and the Priority Towns programme. (SOSE staff have been engaging with Stranraer Development Trust re a Place Plan and potential £6M Scottish Government capital investment.)
- Working with energy companies to co-ordinate and engage with communities (if consensus reached).
- Working with small villages and communities to set some criteria about the strategic view of windfarms and use of money.

PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATIONS

12. The Board considered three project funding applications, all of which was 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](#) "

LUNCH BREAK

CHAPELCROSS AND STEP UPDATE

13. The Board were informed of potential interests in the site and continue to support the opportunities that arise to harness the potential of the strategically important Chapelcross site.

SOSE FINANCE REPORT and DRAFT BUDGET 2022/23

14. The Board noted the Financial Report and Draft Budget for 2022/23. Progress has been good, and the Board were informed of potential ad hoc Board meetings in the coming months. A reminder was provided of levels of funding applications and when they come before the Board.

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

ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND TIMELINE

15. The Board was asked to note the work underway to develop SOSE's Action Plan and was invited to comment on the proposed additional engagement efforts and the process for involving the Board. There are challenging but good times ahead. SOSE will continue engagement with local authorities through its hierarchy at leadership level and also at operational level.

Decision: The Board noted the Action Plan update and timeline.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

16. Tracey Graham, Communication and Marketing Manager, gave a presentation on high level activity of this year and plans for 2022. Key points included:

- SOSE's social media activity was "safe", and the Board was keen to see how SOSE can be more risky on social media to reach the right markets and to target young people and sole traders. Young people in communities have great ideas and inspiration is required to promote SOSE's ability to help them. Tracey informed the Board of the huge amount going on behind the scenes looking at stakeholder mapping and focussed target areas. There will be focussed campaigns with new initiatives and communication plans for significant pieces of work to maximise reach.
- Advice was given to look to integrate communications with, for example, SDA and Biosphere and to look at each media platform in a structured way.
- Tracey and the Communications team were congratulated by the Board on doing a fabulous job in the last difficult year and were encouraged to continue in the same vein.

Decision: The Board were supportive of SOSE's approach to build their profile.

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

17. Glentroot and Bargrennan Community Trust have formed a Community centre, the Hive as an event space, hosting weekend packages for tourist and youth groups with a 4-berth bunk style apartment, craft gallery, community garden, outreach health services and office space. The Trust aim to purchase 3 x 3-bedroom homes to refurbish and to address lack of affordable housing in the village. Rent will be used to secure the viability of the Hive. Key points included:

- The Board reflected on the small-scale project and cost of £1.6m. The Board was appreciative of the project and its impact on a small community. Outputs include low rent level provision for housing for four families and the offer of other services and support via the community health drop-in clinic.
- SOSE had an ongoing relationship via a monthly meeting between SOSE and D&G Council. The community want to recruit a business manager and seek matched funding. That person is key to making the venture work. Bryan reiterated that SOSE needs to be here for the long-term investment and nurture the advocacy role.
- The Board agreed this was a lovely example of helping a community and congratulations and thanks were given to Sharon Ogilvie and to the Team.

Decision: The Board noted the update on Glentroot and Bargrennan Community Trust.

AOB

Updates

18. The Board were provided with an update on 4 projects which had received SOSE funding.
19. Russel thanked all and gave wishes to all for a wonderful Christmas.

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

- Minute of RNHR meeting 28.10.21

Approved on 03.02.22

- SOSE Board Forward Plan (standing item)

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20. Next Full Board Meeting: Thursday 03 February 2022