

## MINUTE OF MEETING

### SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE – BOARD MEETING

06 OCTOBER 2022

CROSS KEYS HOTEL, KELSO

<p><b>Board</b> Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Alistair Cameron Professor Sara Carter Viv Cockburn Helen Forsyth Emma Guy Kirsten Hannay Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive Duncan McConchie Lindsay McDowall Paul Winstanley</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> Jeremy Sainsbury</p> <p><b>SOSE Senior Leadership Team</b> Anthony Daye, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement Bryan McGrath, Director of Place and Enterprise Dr Martin Valenti, Director of Net Zero (via MS Teams)</p> <p><b>SOSE Corporate Office (attendees)</b> Susan Cannon, Corporate Governance Lead Jane Malloch, Executive Assistant Linsey McGillivray, Board and Committee Secretariat and Governance Support Officer</p>	<p><b>SOSE Attendees (in person)</b> Paul Wheelhouse, Net Zero Implementation Lead – Energy Transition</p> <p><b>SOSE Attendees (via MS Teams)</b> Peter Dobson, Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist Chris Hammell, Business Development Specialist Garry Legg, Head of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement Neil MacGregor, Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist Stella Milsom, Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist Laura Neish, HR Manager Claire Renton, Head of Area Operations Ed Shoote, Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist</p> <p><b>Guests by MS Teams</b> Scottish Government Officials – Regional Economic Development Division</p>
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#### WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed Board members and colleagues to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above, and the meeting was declared quorate.

#### BOARD INTERNAL MATTERS

2. This item was discussed in private with Board Members and SLT.

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Approved at Board on 08.12.22

3. Emma Guy noted interest in the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre, and it was agreed that she would remain in the meeting for that item.

## MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4. The minute of the Board meeting on 18 August 2022 was approved.

## ACTION LOG

5. The action tracker was noted.  
*Sentence removed in the interests of the effective conduct of public affairs.*

## CHAIR'S REPORT

6. The Chair informed of ministerial visits and of the recently held Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) consultation events. Formal thanks were given to the Chief Executive, Director of Place and Enterprise and his team for their work on two challenging cases and also for keeping the Minister informed.

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

7. The Chief Executive provided a verbal update which included the following points:
  - Thanks to the Chair and Board for their support regarding two challenging cases - SOSE staff had been working to find positive resolutions within all the relevant frameworks.
  - The Convention of the South of Scotland (COSS) and the follow up session on Housing and rent controls. Concerns were shared and financial projections of the cumulative effect of the rent cap were outlined. An anonymised paper had been shared and raised with Ministers.
  - There had been ongoing conversations to respond to NSET and focus had been on workstreams, the resource spending review and next year's budget. There were challenging times ahead and collaboration work continued with other agencies.
  - Scottish Government were very pleased with SOSE's response to the tighter financial constraints.
  - SOSE had re-engaged with both Dumfries & Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council re the Homes for Good model.
  - The SLT update and dashboard was provided.

## ENERGY CRISIS

8. The Net Zero Implementation Lead Energy Transition gave a presentation to the Board which included the following key points:
  - The rise in energy costs for businesses and domestic customers and the impacts and difficulties in finding fixed price deals: delayed, reduced, cancelled investment and recruitment, lack of matched funding and impact on mental health and stress.
  - SOSE was part of the Team Scotland's response, and the Find Business Support website gave free advisory support.
  - Internally SOSE client facing staff were collecting data on impacts, supporting clients to look at energy efficiency, providing practical solutions (energy saving through simple solutions), looking to future assistance with technology and providing analysis colleagues at Scottish Government.

## PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATIONS

9. The Board considered two project funding applications both of which were approved with conditions.

*“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](#)”*

## MOUNTAIN BIKE INNOVATION CENTRE UPDATE (MBIC)

10. The Board were provided with an update on the project.

## FINANCE /BUDGET

11. Anthony Daye, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, spoke to the paper and a discussion followed on resource, staffing and the challenging capital and financial transactions.

**Decision: The Board noted the Finance Board Update to August 2022.**

## CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

12. Anthony Daye, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, spoke to the paper on the half-yearly review of risks, horizon scanning and risk appetite 2022-23. The Board noted the pestels and horizon scanning chart and were content the risk appetite and tolerance ratings continued to reflect SOSE’s current organisation position. There was discussion around risk attitude, the need to be opportunistic and the need to understand the relationship between reputation and robust risk management.

## CULTURE OF SOSE

13. SOSE’s HR Manager provided context to the paper which gave an overview on “how our employees were doing” following a recent employee engagement survey and the plan to support objectives. The key comments included:
- The Board were pleased with the results of the survey and were reassured that, issues such as sharing more information with staff are being tackled proactively. Human Resource policies had been reviewed and a people strategy is being developed.
  - The Board recalled that SOSE wanted to employ bright, knowledgeable, creative, dynamic people and it was natural for people to have opinions and views and essential for them to be listened to and feel understood. SOSE staff came from local authorities, private sector and public sector and although this was challenging, it was a hugely positive mix.
  - Board members congratulated SOSE on the positive results.
  - It was discussed that SOSE was at the leading edge in pay, conditions and flexibility and from a Fair Work lens, was fantastic in terms of voice and obtaining feedback.
  - A leadership programme was currently underway for senior leaders to look at their own approaches and work culture. Structural change was ongoing re span of control and delegation to give senior leaders focus to lead and not deliver all the time. The leadership programme would last for several years and would include every member of

staff eventually. The Organisational Cultural Inventory (OCI) approach was to be considered to look at the balance of leadership/style/impact on culture.

- The Board would appreciate attendees at Board to introduce themselves. An organisational chart was to be shared when it was updated.
- Board members acknowledged SOSE was a new company and were positive with the shared results of the survey.
- SLT fed back that staff had been open and honest and work was underway to improve communication, collaboration and leadership.

14. The HR Manager appreciated the support of Board members and the CE of the action plan going forward. SOSE were an exemplar of Fair Work in that staff had a voice, SOSE listened and shared, there was healthy discussion and participation.

**Decision: The Board noted the results of the survey and considered the follow up actions to improving employee engagement.**

## UPDATE ON SOSE ACTION PLAN

15. A process paper had been circulated to update the Board on the timescales for SOSE's Action Plan and associated operating plans for 2022/23 and 2023/24. It was noted that the timescale for the presentation of a final draft Action Plan to the Board in March 2023 and the development of the Operating Plan was ambitious, but assurance was given that it was achievable.

16. Discussion was around capacity, and it was noted that partnerships would provide assistance and the five-year Operating Plan would allow to negotiate and reschedule if necessary.

**Decision:**

- **The Board noted the work underway to develop SOSE's Action Plan and the 2023/24 Operating Plan.**
- **The Board endorsed the revised timescale for the preparation of the Action Plan and Operating Plan and its role in the process.**
- **The Board agreed the approach to the production of our 2022/23 Operating Plan with a planned publication in week commencing 7 November 2022.**

## MINISTERIAL VISITS

17. The Director of Place and Enterprise provided a paper on recent key stakeholder visits to the South of Scotland. Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise and Director-General Economy visited Dumfries & Galloway and Co-Chair of the NSET Delivery Board visited the Scottish Borders.

The visits demonstrated the impact of SOSE and the innovation, passion and enterprise in the region and enabled key stakeholders to understand the challenges in the South of Scotland. Planning and preparation for the visits demanded a significant amount of resource.

**Decision: The Board noted the successful summer visits to the region and noted the lessons learned from these visits to help shape and inform future visits by key stakeholders.**

## PROPERTY STRATEGY

Approved at Board on 08.12.22

*18. Paragraph removed in the interests of the effective conduct of public affairs.*

## **AOB**

19. The updated external website was near completion. The Chair's Executive Assistant would arrange a demonstration on the new website for Board members.

## **PAPERS FOR INFORMATION**

20. **Committee Minutes and papers for note:**
- Minute of POD (RNHR) Committee on 11 May 2022
  - Minutes of ARC on 2 Mar, 23 Jun and 3 Aug 2022
  - Minute of Economics Committee on 28 Apr 2022
  - Board Forward Plan
  - Board and Committee dates 2023

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

21. 8 December 2022 at Smiths Hotel, Gretna Green (joint meeting with SSDA).