



APPROVED MINUTE OF MEETING

[Note: This public minute excludes wording removed in the interests of effective conduct of public affairs.]

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE – BOARD MEETING

31 OCTOBER 2024

CARMONT HOUSE, BANKEND ROAD, DUMFRIES DG1 4TA

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| Board Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Alistair Cameron (via MS Teams) Rory Christie Viv Cockburn Helen Forsyth Emma Guy Duncan McConchie Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive Jeremy Sainsbury Mary Thomson Paul Winstanley (via MS Teams) Zoe Greenfield (Board apprentice)(via MS Teams) Apologies Kirsten Hannay SOSE Senior Leadership Team Anthony Daye, Acting Director of Place and Enterprise Allan Harrow, Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Resources Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement Martin Valenti, Director of Net Zero, Nature and Entrepreneurship | Scottish Government via MS Teams Scottish Government Officials – Regional Economic Development Division SOSE Staff via MS Teams Tom Bishop, Strategy Manager – Infrastructure and Investment Kirstie Scrimgeour, Entrepreneurship Lead Paul Wheelhouse, Head of Energy Transition SOSE Staff in person Mark Geddes, Strategy Manager – Cultural and Creative Capital Melissa Gunn, Youth and Employability Manager Garry Legg, Head of Strategy, Planning and Partnerships Donna Marshall, Head of Economic Infrastructure Laura Neish, Head of People Linsey McGillivray, EA to Chair (Minute) Yvette Samuels, EA to Allan Harrow Heather Unsworth, EA to Karen Jackson |
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WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed Board members and colleagues to the meeting. The meeting was declared quorate.

BOARD INTERNAL MATTERS

2. This item was discussed in private.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTION LOG

4. The Minute of the meeting held on 22 August 2024 was approved with two amendments.
5. Action Log: the action log was noted, and no comments were received.

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| Decision | The minute of the previous meeting on 22 August 2024 was approved with two amendments |
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CHAIR'S REPORT

6. The Chair informed of recent activity and engagements:
- The opening of Forest Holidays site at Glentress.
 - A visit to the Destination Tweed Project where the Deputy First Minister (DFM) also attended to announce Borderlands money for the project.
 - The Convention of the South of Scotland (CoSS).
 - The Chair had sent a letter to the DFM on the National Park.
 - The Chair informed Board members of potential inward investments and opportunities.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

7. The Chief Executive spoke to the SLT Board Report and informed Board members of recent activity and engagements including:
- A session with SLT on reporting, audit and MySOSE.
 - The increase in inward Investment, especially in the natural capital innovation zone.
 - Increased external engagements including the Business Summit.
 - The upcoming joint launch with SBC Leader at Mountain Bike Conference.
 - A meeting was held with infrastructure partners.
 - An SLT planning session to provide more granular plans to Board.
 - Budget/Scottish budget.
 - Thanks were provided to the Finance Team for an excellent finance audit report.
 - Work continued on partnerships.
 - Social media – there had been negative sentiment, but it was explained that peaks and troughs in social media were normal and there was a specific driver for the negative press which was not unexpected.
8. There was discussion around recruitment and inward investment projects.
9. The Chair informed Board of SOSE colleagues and their motivation to deliver, the workplace culture, their Clear Review objectives, the sharing of good practice and success stories, management of time and allocation of resource and the use of a resource management tool.

MONEY MATTERS

10. The Finance Update had been circulated to Board members. The Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Resources informed the Pipeline tool had been useful this year and it was anticipated to land on budget in March. Resource expenditure was also expected to come in on budget. Some projects that had been approved were highlighted and in future an appendix of approved funds will be attached on a quarterly basis.

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| Decision | The Funding Update was noted. |
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PROJECT FUNDING AND INWARD INVESTMENT ACTIVITY

EYEMOUTH HARBOUR

11. Due to technical issues the paper would be re-presented at a future date.

MTBIC UPDATE

12. The Board were provided with an update on the progress of the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre Project.

SOSE'S INFLUENCING TO GROW INWARD INVESTMENT

13. The Director of Net Zero, Nature and Entrepreneurship gave a presentation illustrating the growth of inward investment from its launch in April 2020 to now managing over 30 live inward investment opportunities in 2024.
14. Due to the abundance and diversity of natural resources the right sort of interest was being brought to the region and there was government and investment interest.
15. It was hoped that with projects coming to the area there would be a symbiotic cluster building approach and that organisations would work in a synergistic relationship and young people would be inspired to stay in the area.

CREATIVE ECONOMY

16. The Strategy Manager – Cultural and Creative Capital attended Board and gave a presentation of update on the fully allocated CreaTech fund which was a capital fund to combine creative industry and technology. Examples of projects that had been supported were provided
17. Immersion developments were taking part in the ecommerce accelerator programme and there is worldwide interest. The South of Scotland Screen strategy will grow and expand locally based film screen development opportunities in partnership with local Councils and Film Edinburgh. The four areas of key activity were:
- i) South of Scotland Screen Commission Partnership – to enhance the region's screen presence
 - ii) To develop facilities, local crew and services
 - iii) To explore opportunities to support local skills, creativity and talent in the region
 - iv) To create a sustainable Screen Industry in the South of Scotland.
18. Colleagues were working with local authorities, local residents and landowners for filming on location in the South of Scotland in a diverse range of locations and accommodating productions, providing logistical support to encourage filming away from cities.
19. Board members enquired about the scoping work and database of sites and locations and commented on the lack of secure employment and fair work principles in the screen industry and the realistic rate of return.
20. Screen Scotland were leading work on Fair Work in the industry and there was a Scottish Government Fair Work task force for Creative Industries. SOSE had a role to play to ensure the supply chains are local.
21. The Strategy Manager – Cultural and Creative Capital was thanked hugely for his hard work, resilience and determination and was congratulated on his achievements.

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| Decision | The Board noted the delivery of the South of Scotland CreaTech fund and endorsed the draft South of Scotland Screen Strategy 2025 – 2030. |
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REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2025-27

22. The Head of Strategy, Planning and Partnerships had provided a paper to Board members which sought the Board's endorsement of the refreshed South of Scotland Regional

Economic Strategy (RES) Delivery Plan which was developed by the Regional Economic Partnership (REP).

23. Over the next three years the revised delivery plan would focus on the most significant issues for people, businesses and communities throughout the South of Scotland. The refreshed plan had identified three priority issues (housing, transport and skills) and nine additional actions.
24. An action group of REP members was formed to develop proposals for new actions. Wider SOSE officers and SOSE Board members have been involved in the development of the revised RES Delivery Plan through workshops and discussions at the REP, including crucial support from SOSE's Youth Advisory Forum.
25. The actions in the refreshed Delivery Plan aligned strongly with SOSE's own strategic objectives and SOSE would play a crucial role in delivering all of the actions alongside partners across the region.
26. The final draft would be endorsed by the REP and shared with the Board. A communications plan was being developed to launch and promote the plan. The RES Action Plan was being recognised across Scotland. SOSE were formally requested to be part of the Scottish Government Rural Housing Action Plan and that was being taken forward.

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| Decisions | Board endorsed the refreshed RES Delivery Plan for 2025-27. |
| | Board endorsed SOSE's role in driving and supporting the twelve actions within the RES Delivery Plan. |

NATIONAL PARK

27. A paper had been circulated to update the Board on developments for the proposed new style Galloway National Park and prepare for the 12 week public consultation. The Chair had produced a letter to rebalance discussions. The National Park will be within the Biosphere boundary. There was discussion on Biosphere funding which ends at end March 2025 and the maintenance of its UNESCO badge.
28. Board members would be contacted to gain views required to feedback in the formal consultation from NatureScot. More informative discussion would take place in December Board.

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| Decision | The Board noted the update and support the ongoing one to one engagement prior to the Board session in December, to shape the drafting of the formal consultation response and to inform the Board session in December. |
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FUEL SWITCHING – AN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

29. The Head of Energy Transition provided a presentation on fuel switching as an economic opportunity. He recapped on the mission for Scotland's future economy and informed of SOSE's support for organisations to get into the competitive process and develop business cases.
30. Board members discussed the opportunity of being an early adopter for proving the technology, leading in innovation and demonstration but were uncertain of the scale up to global level. There was discussion on energy production, hydrogen, and geo-politics. The Head of Energy Transition was thanked for his presentation.

PATHWAYS PILOT FUND

31. The Entrepreneurship Lead spoke to the paper which was provided seeking the Board approval for the delivery of a micro grant fund for underrepresented groups as part of the

Pathways Pre-Start Pilot. Applicants could apply for up to £1k with the total fund value of £400k.

32. The pilot would deliver coaching support to 250 individuals (100 have applied already and are 90% female and underrepresented groups). Grants were separate to the coaching which was targeted as 6 x 1hr sessions.

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| Decision | The Board approved the Pathways Pilot Pre-start micro grant fund with a total value of £400k. |
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WORKING WEEK EVALUATION

33. The Head of People gave an update of the Working Week Evaluation: the first phase was completed on 30 September 2024. There was agreement from Scottish Government to continue with the evaluation until the end of March 2025.
34. Autonomy (a leading UK independent research organisation) had produced an evaluation report – the findings were shared with the Board in the paper which was circulated. In the present extended evaluation period the HR Team were developing a range of options for a flexible working week. Autonomy was widening their net of customers to speak to meantime to obtain more external evaluation of the impact. Consideration would be given to the whole package that staff receive.
35. The Chief Executive commented on recent sad events and her pride that SOSE colleagues had held their noses to the grindstone and still delivered. The Head of People was thanked for her paper and the wider evaluation phase was now in progress.

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH SOSE'S YOUTH ADVISORY FORUM

36. The Youth and Employability Manager provided an update on the Youth Advisory Forum (YAF). She informed of topics covered including RES, European Lunar Symposium, Skills provision, employability, input into the Skills Reform response and the REP Delivery Plan.
37. Successes included some members achieving a Participative Democracy Certificate, partnership working with Open University, meeting SOSE Board members, networking and training, mentoring career support. There were six new recruits, and two new training sessions were planned next year.
38. Impacts had been considerable with new confidence levels, friendships and connections.
39. The Board requested the YAF members to report back on their thoughts of the National Park for inclusion in the response the Board would be providing to the consultation. In summary, YAF members felt challenged, were dedicated, passionate and were provided with development opportunities and phenomenal support. The Board were appreciative of the hard work of the Youth and Employability Manager.

INFLUENCING POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

40. The Head of Economic Infrastructure provided a presentation on the SRUC-Dairy Nexus build of a new facility on SRUC's Barony campus. There was a programme of works over 7 months- SRUC used a modular construction method. Thirty one individual modules with solar panels in their roofs were brought on site providing a sustainable and flexible space for the future. The formal launch would be in March 2025.
41. Dairy Nexus will drive transformational research to decarbonise the dairy sector and move it towards a circular bioeconomy. Training courses would be provided to upskill. There were significant investments with Arla and there had been conversations with Lactalis.
42. Board members were impressed with Dairy Nexus and it was suggested to put Dairy Nexus on the Invest in the South of Scotland website.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

43. The Health and Safety Report had been circulated to Board members for information and it was formally noted.

A.O.B.

44. Board was informed that Business Gateway were undertaking a review.

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

45. Board members noted the below papers which were provided:
- Approved minute of JTC 25 September 2023 meeting
 - Forward Plan

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

46. 19 December 2024 – D&G National Park Area – The Johnston, Kirkcudbright