

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

22 AUGUST 2024

PEEL TOWER, GLENTRESS, PEEBLES EH45 8NB

<p>Board Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Alistair Cameron Rory Christie Viv Cockburn Emma Guy Helen Forsyth Duncan McConchie Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive Jeremy Sainsbury (via MS Teams) Mary Thomson Paul Winstanley</p> <p>Board Apprentice Zoe Greenfield</p> <p>Board apologies Kirsten Hannay</p> <p>SOSE Senior Leadership Team Anthony Daye, Acting Director of Place and Enterprise (MS Teams) Allan Harrow, Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Resources Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement Dr Martin Valenti, Director of Net Zero, Nature and Entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Scottish Government Scottish Government Officials – Regional Economic Development Division</p> <p>SOSE Staff via MS Teams Paul Cathrow, Head of Economic Infrastructure Peter Dobson, Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist Lynne Kirkwood, Head of Performance, Measurement and Pipelines Kirsten Logue, Community Development Specialist Nicola McArthur, Head of Finance Services</p> <p>SOSE Staff in person Claire Barrett, EA to Director of Place and Enterprise Susan Cannon, Corporate Governance Lead Susan Harkins, Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Linsey McGillivray, EA to Chair (Minute) Frances Woodifield, Learning and Skills Strategy and Development Manager</p>
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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

Approved at Board on 31.10.24

3. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTION LOG

4. The Minute of the meeting held on 06 June 2024 was approved. The action log was noted and no comments were received.

Decision	The minute of the previous meeting on 06 June 2024 was approved.
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CHAIR'S REPORT

5. The Chair's update included:
 - a. **National Park** and SOSE's neutral position.
 - SOSE would be independent and impartial but would offer information. NatureScot and the Reporter understood the range of stakeholders involved. The Reporter would do a number of surgeries and would start the formal consultation in November which SOSE would formally reply to. Board members agreed to discuss the National Park in more detail at either October or December Board to debate input to the formal consultation.
 - Board members asked if it was possible to have more information about other National Parks such as Cairngorms or Trossachs, but it was felt Northumberland and Pembrokeshire may be more similar. Further Board discussion would include what opportunities a new model of a national park would bring.
 - There was discussion around the "problem statement" and polarised local debate, implications for tourism, impacts of funding and the role of the Biosphere.
 - It was important to keep communication channels open with local MSPs.
 - SOSE's Head of Natural Capital had provided a paper of update on the National Park and it would be circulated to Board members.
 - b. **Housing** – huge praise was given to the Head of Strategy, Planning and Partnership and the Strategy Manager – Strategic Planning and Partnership and their team on the launch of the Housing Plan.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

6. The Chief Executive informed Board members of recent activity including:
 - Housing Action Plan – speaking with other bodies as part of the challenges to economic development.
 - Recent focus had been on the annual accounts and audit – thanks were given to the Finance Team for the huge effort and the good relationship with the audit team was recognised.
 - Focus was also on public sector reform – meetings with other agencies looking at parameters of Public Sector Reform and Scottish Government (SG) guidance.
 - SOSE along with HIE, SE and VisitScotland attended a roundtable with the Minister for Public Finance, Ivan McKee. Cost savings discussion was around:
 - EIS costs – did not see savings with this shared service.
 - SG implementation of Oracle – not a workable system for SOSE.
 - MySOSE – positive response was received from the Minister.
 - Workstream improvement to client interface, approvals, grants, pipeline planning approach and performance measurement.
 - SOSE culture – embedding values, head count freeze, no automatic back fill.

- New collaborations received a lot of interest and new targeted funds.
- Additional value was provided to Pathways and Accelerate funding and focus provided to entrepreneurship with the creation of a network of coaches across the South of Scotland.
- Business Gateway in-house. Discussion was still underway with D&G Council on Business Gateway.
- The evolved approach of working with SDI, inward investment opportunities, Chapelcross, Net Zero investment strategy and the additional focus on unlocking the foundational challenges, housing and skills.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Board Report

7. Board discussion included:

- SOSE's Head of Enterprise and Business would attend a meeting in October relating to opportunities to work together with SE and SNIB.
- There was discussion at the previous Board meeting around quantifying consulting value –good progress was being made. Consideration was to how to identify and record it and what was the value of it to make it auditable. Further discussion was suggested at December Board.
- SOSE's Head of Performance, Measurement and Pipelines informed Board of auditable primary measures and the setting of target ranges to better inform future trends. MySOSE would be able to show activity intervention with projects, achievement forecasts, unintended consequences or impacts and it is aimed to capture the invisible value from the expertise SOSE has put into clients that so far has not been measured.
- Board would not only be interested in those projects approved for funding at Board but they would also be interested in projects where there had been no financial support i.e. time providing guidance and working with people. (Not "advisory services".)
- Timesheets could be considered to capture time.
- Key Performance Indicators for SOSE's individual employees was also suggested to demonstrate employees were covering their cost and were creating margins. However, the Acting Director of Place and Enterprise informed that employees within the business team, the communities team and infrastructure team have set objectives with granular targets for each day and that allowed them to add value to the business. It was important that there was a balance of workload within teams to ensure there was no staff burnout. Learning was gained from star performers and there was consistency across staff.

FINANCE UPDATE REPORT AND SOSE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

8. The Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Resources provided an update on Finance and the Head of Finance Services attended to speak to the Annual Report and Accounts.

Decision	The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts 23/24 and the ancillary documents.
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FUNDING /PROJECT UPDATE

9. The Board considered one funding application.

"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.

Mountain Bike Innovation Centre (MTBIC)

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

UPDATE ON SKILLS REFORM PROGRAMME

11. SOSE's Learning and Skills Strategy and Development Manager attended Board to speak to the paper she had provided to Board members. The Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement spoke to a slide presentation on the national and regional skills landscape. It was possible that agencies may have a bigger role in skills development going forward although this was yet to be decided but SOSE can bring insight to the future needs of economy and what businesses were saying.
12. An overview was provided on the Scottish Government's National Reform Programme, recent regional activity, current regional focus, regional skills planning and scoping SOSE's role. There was agreement that a partnership approach was important and that a delivery partner should not lead the process. The next Convention of the South of Scotland would be on 28 October in Kelso which would focus on skills, nationally and regionally and also look at learning pathways and employer perspectives.
13. SOSE's Learning and Skills Strategy and Development Manager and The Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement were thanked for their update on the current Scottish Government consultation and the overview of the national and regional skills landscape.

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

14. The Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship attended the meeting to give a background to the Pathways Regional Pilot. The following points were noted:
 - Scottish Government commissioned a piece of research to look at women in entrepreneurship from start up to scale up.
 - SOSE identified a gap in the entrepreneurial support system and worked with under-represented groups on their business plans and coached around that. Coaches were employed to focus on young people and women in particular.
 - SOSE will contract 10 place-based enterprise coaches – five in Dumfries and Galloway and five in Scottish Borders Council. Grants of £1k will be provided and the grant process was being streamlined with Finance Team and it was hoped to be fully operational by the first week in September.
 - Targets have been set to gain an understanding of SOSE's impact. It was hoped to see 200 or 300 sustainable businesses growing, bringing opportunities and employing people.
 - SOSE were best placed to deliver this pilot.
 - The Board were supportive and keen for the coaches to have local knowledge and for them to be focussed on what SOSE and the businesses want to achieve in order for success.
15. The Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship was thanked for her presentation and the Board wished her and the team success with the Pathways Pilot.
16. The Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship thanked Scottish Government for the funding to deliver this Pilot.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

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

A.O.B.

18. There was no further business.

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

19. Board members noted the below papers which were provided:
 - Approved minute of POD 27 March meeting
 - Approved minute of ARC 13 March meeting
 - Forward Plan

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 08 October – PowerBI Session 1500hrs
- 09 October Ad Hoc SOSE Board –1400hrs
- 31 October 2024 – SOSE Board – Venue tbc – D&G