

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

21 MARCH 2024

STEM CENTRE, BORDERS COLLEGE, HAWICK TD9 0EH

<p>Board Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Alistair Cameron Rory Christie Viv Cockburn Helen Forsyth Emma Guy Kirsten Hannay Duncan McConchie Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive (MS Teams) Jeremy Sainsbury Mary Thomson Paul Winstanley Zoe Greenfield (Board apprentice)</p> <p>SOSE Senior Leadership Team Anthony Daye, Interim 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 in person: Scottish Government Officials – Regional Economic Development Division</p> <p>Scottish Government via MS Teams Scottish Government Officials – Regional Economic Development Division</p>	<p>Guests in person Representatives from ReBlade</p> <p>SOSE Staff via MS Teams Melissa Gunn, Youth and Employability Manager Garry Legg, Head of Strategy, Planning and Partnerships Donna Marshall, Economic Infrastructure Manager Ed Shoote, Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist Andy Tharme, Strategy Manager – Natural Resources Lorna Watson, Business Development Specialist</p> <p>SOSE Staff in person Blair Miller, Net Zero Ventures Lead</p> <p>Corporate Office Claire Barrett, Executive Assistant to Director of Place and Enterprise Linsey McGillivray, Executive Assistant to SOSE Chair Fiona Sköller, Corporate Support Administrator</p>
---	--

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed Board members and colleagues to the meeting, especially welcoming the new Board members, the Board Apprentice and the Scottish Government Sponsor Team. The meeting was declared quorate.
2. There were no apologies.

BOARD INTERNAL MATTERS

- This item was discussed in private.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTION LOG

- The Minute of the meeting held on 01 February 2024 was approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- The Chair informed Board members of recent meetings and engagements:
 - Housing – the action plan was approved at the Regional Economic Partnership. Engagement was to be made with the Minister prior to the launch of the action plan.
 - Better Benefit from Onshore Wind – Community Engagement – two good meetings with communities were held. One more engagement was planned before a developer's forum was created. The Chair had an upcoming meeting with Muirhall energy.
 - The Scottish Community Tourism (SCOTO) conference was successful.
 - South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) conference – was well attended.
- The Chair congratulated the Director of Net Zero, Nature and Entrepreneurship on SOSE's Gold Standard Net Zero Accreditation – SOSE was the first non-departmental body in Scotland to achieve this. Thanks were given to SOSE's Net Zero Strategy Lead for his work on this achievement.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

- The Chief Executive informed of:
 - Year-end activity and the tremendous amount of work that had gone into process and planning around pipeline.
 - Operating Plan.
 - Activity around housing.
 - Regional Economic Partnership – partner organisation and sharing of responsibility.
 - Convention of the South of Scotland (CoSS) – excellent session.
 - Sustainable Tourism – Iron Age assets in the South of Scotland, Trimontium and the ambition for a string of assets coast to coast. Work was underway with Historical Environment Scotland (HES).
 - Discussion of the public sector reform continued within a working group and was aligned with other workstreams across Scottish Government and partner organisations to ensure there was no duplication.
 - Interesting inward investment opportunities.
 - Client visits including Rowan Glen.
 - Meeting with the First Minister via a Chambers event and met with the Dumfries Town Board Chair. (One of the four Boards looking at the town centre of Dumfries.)

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Board Report

- Board members thanked SLT for a great summarising activity report. Board comments included:

- Activity reporting could be misleading – consideration was to be given to how reporting should work.
- A request that the report showed delivery of annual plan and 5 year plan.
- The Operating Plan document was included in the Board paper pack for information – it was what SOSE was accountable for so consideration could be given to how it was reported to Board.
- The Board Apprentice appreciated the amount of detail but there was lack of context for comparative purposes.

CYBER SECURITY

10. A Board member reported on Cyber Security engagement within SOSE and thanks were given to the Head of IT, Digital & Programme Management. Observations included:
 - Cyber security threats – phishing and malware and SOSE’s preparedness for it.
 - Staff training was very much aligned to needs and was an effective training programme.
 - Cyber threats and appropriate response would continue to be monitored.
 - SOSE continued to operate and work well with IT Shared Services.
11. Board members queried transacting SOSE business on non-SOSE devices and the risk that should be considered. This led to discussion around the impracticality of having numerous devices (including a dedicated SOSE device which was originally offered to all Board members).
12. It was suggested Board should be included in the staff training and that multi-factor authorisation should be set up. The Director of Place and Enterprise emphasised the need to use the Admin Control Board paper portal and if papers were downloaded, they should be deleted after use.

MOUNTAIN BIKE INNOVATION CENTRE

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

REBLADE

14. Representatives from ReBlade Limited, attended Board to inform of their circular economy business which reused wind turbine blades rather than them going to landfill. The organisation was Dumfries based and used Dumfries and Galloway based contractors. Their presentation highlighted:
 - The certainty of pipeline work as turbine blades required to be replaced and windfarm sites become decommissioned.
 - Use of blades to make patent registered shelters at electric vehicle bays and bus stops (including the smart system design of bus stops).
 - Requirement of space for storage of large wind turbine components and the interest in Chapelcross site. (At present they are at Cargenbridge Business Park).
 - The strong CapEx plan – the need for excavators, vehicles, cutters.
 - Plans for acceleration of expansion overseas.
 - Requirement to increase staff.
 - Other research and development projects (solar panel recycling and supply chain materials)
 - The potential for social impact e.g. pods for homelessness, glamping pods etc.

15. In summary the Onshore Sector Deal was critical. A cross party letter went to the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy recommending Chapelcross became a centre of excellence and ReBlade would like SOSE Board to help make that happen.
16. The representatives were thanked for their time and their presentation to Board members.

IMPROVING THE PIPELINE OF EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

17. SOSE's Five Year Plan set out SOSE's strategic priorities for 2023-28 and how SOSE intended to make a difference through working in partnership with the people, communities and enterprises of the South, and beyond. The plan acknowledged SOSE's role in capitalising on the South's strengths, supporting existing industry and attracting new businesses and institutions to the area. A key priority in the plan was advocating for and supporting improvements to infrastructure. It was acknowledged that in order to drive change, collaboration was required to improve the pipeline of readily available employment and land supply.
18. SOSE's Economic Infrastructure Manager updated Board on the Property Strategy and progress:
 - Movement in purchase of land and sales – this was now much better worked through internally.
 - SOSE was working with both Councils to develop a pipeline of sites.
 - SOSE was working with private sector and third sector partners to achieve solutions and to add value to the Borderlands Growth Deal.
 - Use of the SOSE website to showcase land for inward investors.
19. Board members found the report very positive and a good summary. Further discussion was around:
 - Social infrastructure required – housing, staffing and colleges.
 - Private landowners, partner management, and facilitating of key stakeholders in the public and private sectors.
 - Contacts with contractors.
 - The geographical spread – local authorities identified the priority sites but sites regionwide needed to be identified.
 - SOSE meeting an immediate demand in the Dumfries area.
20. Thanks were given to the Economic Infrastructure Manager.

UPDATE ON REGIONAL LAND USE PARTNERSHIP (RLUP) AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE REGIONAL LAND USE FRAMEWORK (RLUF)

21. SOSE's Strategy Manager, Natural Resources attended Board to update members of the Regional Land Use Partnership and South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership pilot which had been carried out over the last 2.5 years and consultation had been concluded. A presentation was provided detailing:
 - The Pilot Project funding and costs.
 - The RLUP Governance – its structure to enable delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy's actions.
 - Main phases and outputs of the pilot which engaged over 600 stakeholders.

Approved at Board on 06.06.24

- How the Regional Land Use Framework could align with other policies.
 - The relationship between the RLUF, Economic Strategy and statutory Planning.
 - Next steps and opportunities.
22. Board members discussed:
- Practical steps and benefits to the community.
 - The engagement of landowners and foresters to produce a positive plan for the landscape rather than a threat.
 - The formation of Place Plans and Plan B's within them.
 - To better communicate with communities.
 - Adoption by the Regional Economic Partnership – SOSE's engagement and resource allocation.
 - Land Reform Bill – Chair and Strategy Manager, Natural Resources to discuss and consult with Scottish Government.
23. Thanks were given to the Strategy Manager, Natural Resources for the enormous amount of work that had gone into this consultation.

NET ZERO ACCELERATOR FUND

24. SOSE's Net Zero Ventures Lead provided a presentation to Board on the creation of the Net Zero Accelerator Fund in 2023 for period 23-24 FY, the impact of the fund and the next steps. Thanks were given to the Net Zero Ventures Lead for their presentation. The pilot had been very successful.

ECONOMICS COMMITTEE

25. The Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement shared with the Board the present positive situation of the Economics Committee. With the change of the Committee Chair the opportunity was taken to reflect on the Terms of Reference, the diverse range of topics and what the Committee had delivered. The Committee had delivered its key priorities and had met its initial Terms of Reference. Time would be taken over the summer to determine the next steps and Board would be informed.
26. The Board was asked to note the decision to pause the work of the Economics Committee, recognising that it had delivered on its initial Terms of Reference.

Decision	The Board approved a pause in the work of the Economics Committee.
-----------------	--

FINANCE UPDATE REPORT AND FINAL DRAFT BUDGET 2024

27. The Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Resources provided a financial report for February 2024 and the final draft budget for 2024-25.

Decision	The Board noted the Financial Report for February 2024.
-----------------	---

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER AND RISK APPETITE

28. The Board were provided with a report on current Corporate Risks, horizon scanning PESTELS Chart, top Directorate Risks and proposed refreshed Risk Appetite for 2024-25 Board members:

Approved at Board on 06.06.24

- Noted the refreshed Corporate Risk Register for 2024-25 and top current Directorate Risks.
- Agreed the refreshed PESTELS Chart.
- Approved the proposed revised Risk Appetite ratings and descriptions for 2024-25.

Decision	The Board approved the refreshed Risk Appetite ratings for 2024-25.
-----------------	---

YOUTH ADVISORY FORUM

29. SOSE's Youth and Employability Manager and the Head of Strategy, Planning and Partnerships attended the Board to discuss the approach and agenda to the upcoming Youth Advisory Forum/Board meeting on 02 April 2024.
30. Two Board members were tasked with providing short presentations at the upcoming meeting on "A Day in the life of".
31. The Board apprenticeship programme was to be included in the agenda.
32. The Youth Advisory Forum presently had six members and recruitment was still underway for members from the east (Scottish Borders).

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

33. A paper was provided to Board with oversight on the management of Health and Safety matters in SOSE. One near miss was reported.
34. Health and Safety Learning and Development was being inserted to the new staff training platform.

A.O.B.

35. The length of papers – particularly presentations were noted, and thought would be given to restricting the length of these going forward.

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

36. Board members noted the below papers which were provided:
 - Operating Plan Progress
 - Minutes of ARC September and December 2023
 - Board Forward Plan
 - D&G Community Planning Partnership – Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 02 April 2024 (6pm) – SOSE Board and Youth Advisory Forum – Moat Brae, Dumfries.
- 06 June 2024 – SOSE Board – Venue tbc.