



Minutes of Board Meeting

Held on Friday 17th January 2020

At 10.30am in Cork City

Present: Mr Fred Barry (Chairperson), Ms Anne Graham (CEO), Mr Hugh Creegan (Deputy CEO), Mr Owen Keegan (CEO, Dublin City Council); Mr David Gray; Mr Pat Mangan, Ms Sineád Walsh, Ms Ann Fitzgerald, Mr Frank O'Connor, Mr Brian McCormick, Mr Kevin Kelly.

Apologies: None

Staff in attendance: Mr Philip L'Estrange, Director, Finance & Corporate Services / Board Secretary; Mr Tim Gaston, Director, Public Transport Services; Dr Declan Sheehan, Chief Information Officer; Ms Wendy Thompson, Director, Transport Regulation; Mr Karl Seeber (Minutes).

Others in attendance: Cork County Council: Ms Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Mr Gerry O'Beirne, Director of Infrastructure Development, Mr Fearghal Reidy, Director of Strategic & Economic Development, Ms Edith Roberts, Senior Engineer (Item 7); Local Link Cork: Mr Neilie O'Leary, Chairman, Mr David O'Brien, General Manager (Item 8).

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1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The draft minutes of the Board meeting on 13 December 2019 were approved without amendment.

3. Matters Arising & Board Schedule

The Chairperson indicated that he and the Chief Executive met with the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport before Christmas to highlight the expected shortfall in funding in respect of the Authority's administration costs and the grant for the provision of subsidised (PSO) public transport services in 2020. He noted that subsequent developments would be covered more fully under agenda item 5.

The Chairperson noted the need for the Board to discuss and determine the range of skills and expertise that the Board requires in order to carry out its functions effectively. He indicated that the Board's views will be conveyed to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in order to assist in the filling of the existing Board vacancy as well as future Board vacancies.

4. CEO Report

The Chief Executive outlined developments since the last meeting and responded to issues raised by Board members. The principal matters covered included: -

- Update on staff resources and a legal matter;
- Decision by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to issue a Final Direction to the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly concerning their Regional and Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES);
- Significant (+9%) growth in 2019 in the number of passengers using subsidised public transport services;
- Formal signing of the Direct Award contract between the Authority and Iarnród Éireann;
- Transfer of remaining commuter bus routes in Kildare to Go Ahead Ireland on 19 January next;
- Review of Authority's principal achievements in 2019.

Mr L'Estrange outlined the position at the end of 2019 on the implementation of the Authority's Business Plan. He noted that 70% of the objectives had been fully met. Of the remaining 30%, all bar one were still on course for delivery in early 2020. Mr L'Estrange also noted that the Authority's financial position at the end of 2019 was in line with previous projections. He noted that the Authority's draft Financial Statements will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Mr L'Estrange confirmed that arrangements are being made to include a staffing matrix in the monthly financial report to the Board.

5. Finance & Corporate Governance

The Chief Executive and Mr L'Estrange noted that discussions had taken place between officials in the Authority and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport following the Chairperson and Chief Executive's meeting with the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport during December.

They noted that the Authority has now received written approval from the Department for the use of capital funding for non-pay administrative costs. However, no additional funding is available for PSO services. Accordingly, they outlined proposed measures to bridge the gap in the Authority's 2020 budget.

Following discussion, the Board approved the Authority's Budget for 2020 subject to implementation of the additional measures outlined and requested that the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport be informed of the Board's decision.

The Board approved the award of the contract for the provision of fare evasion survey services to Tracsis Traffic Data Limited.

6. Procurement

- a. Following a presentation by Mr Cregan and subsequent discussion, the Board approved the purchase of three hydrogen fuel cell double deck buses for operational trial and research purposes, subject to confirmation of hydrogen fuel supply for the vehicles, at an approx. cost of €2.4 million (subject to currency exchange) from Bamford Bus Company (trading as Wrightbus) in collaboration with Ryse Hydrogen. The Board noted that under European legislation, there is a procurement derogation for the purpose of "research, experiment, study or development".

- b. Following a presentation by Mr Creegan and subsequent discussion, the Board approved the award of the contract for the provision of park and ride design office services to Clifton Scannell Emerson Associates Limited, for a period of two years and with options to extend the contract, at the Authority's discretion, for up to a further two years.

7. Cork City Council

Ms Doherty outlined recent and expected future demographic and economic changes in Cork City. She explained that Cork City Council is committed to the development of a sustainable, integrated transport system for the benefit of all sections of the community. She noted that Cork has experienced significant growth in the use of bus services as well as cycling and walking in recent years due in large part to initiatives such as Leap Card, real-time passenger information and the public bike scheme.

Ms Doherty noted that the NTA and Cork City Council had successfully worked together in the development and implementation of schemes to improve the speed and reliability of bus services and encourage walking and cycling. Finally, she outlined the high priority which the City Council attaches to the implementation of projects within in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) including BusConnects Cork, the development of a light rail route and expansion of park and ride.

During the discussion that followed, the Cork City Council representatives indicated their view that the necessary strategic plans are now in place to support the sustainable development of Cork City. They noted that the recent approval of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the southern region had cleared the way for the preparation by the Council of a new development plan which will support the implementation of CMATS. However, she emphasised the need for resources to ensure the timely delivery of CTMAS.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Doherty and her colleagues for their attendance at the meeting.

8. Local Link Cork

Mr O'Leary outlined the structure and governance of the Bantry Rural Transport Partnership which currently trades as Local Link Cork. He noted that the Company was initially established to provide rural transport services in Bantry in 2002. Since then the number and range of services had gradually increased and in 2018 the Company had successfully tendered for the role of Local Link Cork giving it responsibility for the delivery of rural transport services throughout County Cork. Mr O'Leary noted that the Authority and Local Link Cork are working closely to expand services as evidenced by the launch of a new scheduled service between Bandon and Kinsale on the previous day.

In his presentation Mr O'Brien outlined the extent of the services provided by Local Link Cork, which range from the provision of scheduled bus services to the transport of patients to and from hospital appointments. He noted that Local Link Cork owns and operates its own fleet of vehicles as well as contracting services from a range of private operators. He highlighted the significant contribution made by staff and volunteers to the delivery of services. Mr O'Brien explained that plans are well advanced for the use of electric vehicles to deliver rural transport services on Sherkin and Cape Clear Islands.

During the discussion that followed, Mr O'Leary and Mr O'Brien highlighted the need to develop a fleet investment programme for Local Link services as the current arrangements, which include local fundraising efforts, are not satisfactory. They also expressed the view that the length of Local Link management contracts should be increased beyond the current 4-year period. Mr Gaston noted that discussions are taking place with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport regarding fleet replacement issues.

The Chairperson thanked Mr O’Leary and Mr O’Brien for their attendance at the meeting.

9. Any other business

The Board noted the appointment of Ms Thompson to the position of Director of Transport Regulation at the Authority.

Mr O’Connor, Chair of the Audit and Risk noted that the Committee’s independent external member has completed a review of the internal audit of a Transport Coordination Unit (TCU). The report will now be forwarded to the TCU.

10. Meeting without Executive

The Executive members of the Board and staff members left the meeting at this point.

Next Meeting: Friday 21 February 2020 @ 10.30am in the NTA Offices.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Dated: _____