



## Minutes of Board Meeting

**Held by video conference on Friday 19 June 2020**

**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 Bernard Higgins, Director, Transport Technology; Mr David O'Flynn, Senior Finance Manager, Mr Noel Beecher, Head of Governance, Mr Gerard McBrien, Risk Manager (Item 5); Mr Mark Bradwell, Senior Procurement Manager, Mr Igor Popenko, Procurement Manager (Item 6); Ms Marian Wilson, Head of Service Planning (Item 8); Mr Karl Seeber (Minutes).

**Others in attendance:** Mr Edward Rhys Thomas, Principal Transport Planner, Jacobs Engineering Limited (Item 8)

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### **1. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting**

The draft minutes of the Board meeting on 15 May 2020 were approved.

### **3. Matters Arising & Board Schedule**

The Chairperson noted that the detailed reporting to the Board on Covid-19 issues would now be scaled back in view of the improving situation in that regard.

The Chairperson indicated that a review of matters arising from previous Board meetings and the schedule of matters for consideration at future Board meetings will be undertaken at the Board's July meeting.

The Chairperson noted that following on from discussions at the last Board meeting, the Executive had prepared an update on the proposed National Transport Training Centre, which is being developed by the National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) assisted by capital grant funding provided by the Authority. The Chairperson noted that the project is below the threshold for which Board approval is required and is therefore the responsibility of the Executive.

During the discussion that followed the Chief Executive noted that the NCBI had originally envisaged developing a transport training centre which would be available for visually impaired people only. However, the Authority had indicated that it could only support such a centre on the basis that it would also be available to other disability groups, which NCBI had willingly agreed to. Mr Creegan also confirmed that the funding for the initiative would not impact on the continuation of or provision of funding for other accessibility projects including the travel assistance scheme.

The Board noted that there appears to be some concern among other disability organisations that they have not been properly consulted regarding the purpose and objectives of the proposed centre and the appropriateness of the centre's proposed title.

Following the discussion, it was agreed that the Chief Executive should convey the Board's comments to the NCBI in view of its role as project sponsor.

#### **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: -

- Draft Programme for Government;
- MetroLink developments on St. Stephen's Green;
- The impact of the Covid-19 public health emergency on travel by public transport and car modes and some international comparisons;
- Government promotion of face covering on public transport;
- Financial support for certain sectors which have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 public health emergency; and
- Legal issues.

#### **5. Finance & Corporate Governance**

- a. The Board noted the main points of the Management Accounts for May 2020 as outlined by Mr O'Flynn.
- b. Mr Beecher explained that the Board is required to review the effectiveness of internal control in the Authority for 2019 in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 and he presented a report in the matter. Following discussion the Board confirmed the conclusions of the 2019 review.
- c. Mr O'Flynn outlined the changes which have been made to the draft 2019 Financial Statements approved by the Board last February. He noted that the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General expect to issue their management letter in July. He outlined the contents of the draft letter of representation and the draft letter from the Chairperson to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. Mr O'Connor confirmed that the Audit and Risk Committee had reviewed the documentation and was satisfied that it. Following discussion, the Board approved the changes to the draft 2019 Financial Statements and the contents of the draft letters to be signed by the Chairperson.
- d. The Board approved the addition of Bernard Higgins, Director of Transport Technology as an authorised signatory for the Authority's AIB accounts.
- e. The Board noted the contents of a report from the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee on the outcome of its meeting on 5 June last.

- f. The Board approved a number of amendments to the Authority's policies in respect of Protected Disclosures and Fraud & Corruption.
- g. Mr Beecher provided an update on risk management. He noted that there had been no changes to the Authority's Corporate Risk Register since the last meeting. He outlined the main points of a recently completed review of key supplier risk ratings. Mr Beecher also outlined the main elements of the Authority's Covid-19 risk register.

## **6. Procurement**

Following a presentation by Mr Popenko, the Board approved the award of a contract for the provision of economic advisory services related to public transport provision to KPMG Ireland, for a period of three years and with the option to extend the contract, at the Authority's discretion, for a further year.

## **7. DART Plus Programme Governance**

Mr Creegan noted that the DART Expansion Project has been renamed as DART Plus. He advised that the project governance structure is broadly similar to the governance structure in respect of MetroLink which was recently reviewed by the Board.

During the discussion that followed Mr Creegan confirmed that the Executive is fully satisfied that the governance structure is appropriate and balanced, ensuring that the Authority will be fully involved in the development and implementation of the project while maintaining a clear distinct role. He also confirmed that the Executive is satisfied with the capacity of Iarnród Éireann to execute the project. He undertook to clarify the role of the CÍE Group in respect of certain matters regarding the DART Plus project.

The Board noted the position in the matter.

## **8. Connecting Ireland consultation commencement**

Mr Gaston, Ms Wilson and Mr Edward Rhys Thomas explained that the Connecting Ireland initiative aims to improve public transport connectivity in non-urban areas across the State. The new approach involves a systematic approach to analysing the characteristics of the existing network and to developing and prioritising proposals to address network deficits.

During the discussion that followed, the Board expressed its strong support for the project but raised a number of detailed points for consideration by the project team including some proposals with regard to the proposed consultation. The Chief Executive noted that work has started on examining how to prioritise delivery of the initiative nationally.

The Board approved the commencement of phases 1 and 2 of the consultation plan, and the development of templates for local level consultation with the general public as design work is completed.

## **9. Next Generation Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) Strategy**

Mr Higgins outlined the background to the development of the Next Generation AVL Strategy. He explained that the current AVL systems used to provide real-time information to passengers, to help operators run their bus services and to assist the NTA manage contracted bus services are limited in a number of ways. In that regard he noted that some of the technology used is old and approaching life expiry, interoperability requires complex interface developments and are difficult and costly to expand, and some of the outputs from the systems are not as accurate or complete as they could be.

For these reasons, the NTA has investigated the potential of a new AVL system that will aim to address these deficiencies and take advantage of newer technologies in this space that could provide real benefits to the NTA, transport operators and public transport customers.

During the discussion that followed Mr Higgins advised that work will now begin on the development of a business case for the project. The Board welcomed the work being undertaken on this important public transport project.

#### **10. Any other business**

Board members raised the need for consideration to be given to:-

- the likely impact of Covid-19 on the public transport system over the longer term; and
- the impact of Covid-19 on the use of public transport by people with disabilities.

The Chief Executive noted that there will be a need to rebuild support for public transport among customers.

#### **11. Meeting without Executive**

None.

**Next Meeting: Friday 17 July 2020 @ 10.30am.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_