



Minutes of Board Meeting

Held by video conference on Friday 17 July 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 Noel Beecher, Head of Governance, Mr Gerard McBrien, Risk Manager (Item 5); Mr Mark Bradwell, Senior Procurement Manager (Item 6); Mr Michael Warnock-Smith, Head of Public Transport Regulation (Item 8); Mr Karl Seeber (Minutes).

Others in attendance: None.

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1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The draft minutes of the Board meeting on 19 June 2020 were approved.

3. Matters Arising & Board Schedule

The Board reviewed progress on matters arising from previous Board meetings and the schedule of matters for consideration at future Board meetings. It was agreed to review the position on succession planning for senior management positions at the Authority towards the end of the year.

The Chairperson advised that a survey of Board members will be undertaken during July and August to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the Board and that the outcome will be discussed at the Board's September meeting.

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: -

- Establishment of Department of Transport;
- Government economic stimulus package;

- The trend in public transport passenger numbers and progress of the Government Roadmap for the reopening of society and business;
- Adoption of regulations requiring the wearing of face coverings on public transport;
- Legal issues;
- Preparation of the Authority's 2021 budget;
- Accommodation issues.

5. Finance & Corporate Governance

- a. Mr L'Estrange outlined the main points of the Management Accounts for May 2020 and the emerging financial position for 2020 and responded to questions from Board members.
- b. Mr Beecher provided an update on risk management. He outlined a change which had been made to the Authority's Corporate Risk Register since the last meeting. He advised that the internal audit programme is progressing satisfactorily. During the discussion that followed, the Board noted that the ongoing Covid-19 public health emergency could give rise to additional risks in areas such as capital funding and staff working arrangements. It was agreed to keep these aspects under review.
- c. Mr Creegan outlined proposed changes to the list of matters reserved for the Board as set out in the Authority's Corporate Governance documentation in order to align the list with a revised version of the Public Spending Code published in December 2019, which sets out the requirements for evaluating, planning and managing public capital investment in Ireland, in addition to providing similar guidance in relation to current expenditure. Following discussion the Board approved the proposed changes subject to a revision.

6. Procurement

Following a presentation by Mr Bradwell, the Board approved the award of a contract to Trapeze for the provision and operation of travel information systems and ancillary systems and services, for a period of five years from the operational services start date, as defined in the contract. The contract will include an option for the Authority to extend the term for a further period or periods of up to five years in total, in accordance with the provisions of the contract.

7. BusConnects Governance

Mr Creegan outlined work being undertaken with a view to evolving the BusConnects governance arrangements in order to ensure full alignment with the revised Public Spending Code. He noted that this will require separate consideration of a proposal to the Board for amendment to the list of matters reserved for the Board as set out in the Authority's Corporate Governance documentation. During the discussion the Board noted the position and raised a number of issues for consideration in the context of the work already underway.

8. Liffey Valley Interchange Agreement

Mr Creegan outlined a proposal for the Authority to enter into a Development Agreement and associated lease with the owners of the Liffey Valley Shopping Centre for the delivery of a bus interchange proposal and associated bus lanes at the Shopping Centre as part of the overall BusConnects Dublin programme. The rationale for locating a bus interchange at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre is to service the existing bus services which pass through the area, in addition to facilitating the increased number of services anticipated under the BusConnects Bus Network Redesign project.

He explained that the agreement would require the Liffey Valley Shopping Centre owners to obtain planning consent for the proposal, to provide the necessary lands to the NTA under a lease arrangement at a nominal cost and to construct the agreed layout with the cost of design plus construction to be paid by the NTA. He noted that the execution of the Development Agreement and associated lease would be subject to the granting of planning permission by An Bord Pleanála.

During the discussion that followed the Board welcomed the proposal which would ensure the development of a high-quality interchange area for bus passengers and rest facilities for bus drivers. Mr Creegan confirmed that the NTA is proposing to develop similar bus interchanges at other major shopping centres and key transport locations in Dublin.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Board approved the proposal subject to ensuring that the early termination provisions in the lease would enable the amortised recovery of the Authority's contribution to the construction of the bus interchange.

9. DART + Programme Strategic Assessment Report

Mr Creegan noted that a Strategic Assessment Report is required in respect of the DART + Programme. He explained that the necessary report has now been prepared by Iarnród Éireann and submitted to the Authority for approval prior to its submission to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for its consideration. A preliminary review of the report by the Authority has been completed which indicates that the report is broadly compliant with the requirements of the Revised Public Spending Code. However, a more detailed review is ongoing.

Mr Creegan explained that in view of the significant time interval until the next Board meeting in September, the Executive was seeking Board approval to progress the DART + Programme to the next stage i.e. the development of the Preliminary Business Case.

Following discussion Board approved the adoption of the Strategic Assessment Report for the DART+ Programme, to incorporate any amendments arising from the on-going review.

10. Emergency Direct Award contracts to support licensed services

Mr Gaston and Mr Warnock Smith explained that the commercial bus sector has been drastically impacted by the Covid-19 public health emergency and that the Authority has been tasked with the implementation of a Government temporary financial support package for the sector on behalf of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. They outlined two mechanisms which have been identified to support commercial bus operators and they noted that preliminary discussions have taken place with commercial bus operators.

During the discussion that followed the Board noted that the Executive will be responsible for determining the qualifying commercial bus operators and the allocations. The Board also noted the importance of implementing strong supporting financial control and audit arrangements and keeping the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport fully apprised of developments.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Board gave approval to the Executive to:-

- a. directly award public service contracts including the contracts above €2 million threshold, subject to final Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport approval of the scheme, to qualifying operators; and
- b. administer the grant-aid scheme on behalf of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for qualifying operators by administering a Government approved aid scheme for commercial bus operators.

11. Any other business

A Board member raised the need for the Authority to support and fund the development of innovative public transport projects.

Mr L'Estrange noted that the Authority had recently successfully participated in an Enterprise Ireland scheme to develop collaborative projects between innovative companies and the public sector.

Following discussion it was agreed that the Executive should bring forward a suitable proposal as part of the Authority's 2021 business plan.

12. Meeting without Executive

None.

Next Meeting: Friday 18 September 2020 @ 10.30am.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Dated: _____