



Draft Minutes of Board Meeting

Held by video conference on Friday 25th February 2022

Board Members in attendance

Mr Fred Barry (Chairperson), Ms Anne Graham (CEO), Mr Hugh Creegan (Deputy CEO), Mr Pat Mangan, Ms Ann Fitzgerald, Mr Frank O'Connor, Mr Brian McCormick, Mr David Gray, Mr Iain Docherty, Ms Eleanor O'Neill, Ms Joyce Loughnan.

Apologies from Board Members

Mr Owen Keegan (CEO, Dublin City Council).

Others in attendance

All Items: 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, Public Transport Regulation; Ms Margaret Malone, Head of Corporate Services; Mr Karl Seeber (Minutes).

Items 4: Mr Stephen Gallagher, Head of Strategic and Business Planning.

Item 5: Mr Stephen Gallagher, Head of Strategic and Business Planning; Mr Noel Beecher Head of Governance.

Items 6 to 10: Mr Noel Beecher Head of Governance; Mr Gerard McBrien, Risk Manager; Mr David O'Flynn, Financial Controller.

Item 11: Mr Paul Scully, Facilities Manager.

Item 12: Mr Edward Rhys Thomas, Transport Planner; Ms Marian Wilson, Head of Service Planning.

Item 14: Mr Eoin Gillard, Head of Public Transport Investment.

Item 10: Mr Tom Kirby, Director, Avison Young; Mr Eoin Gillard, Head of Public Transport Investment.

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1. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The draft minutes of the Board meeting held on 21 January 2022 were approved without amendment.

3. Matters Arising & Board Schedule

The Board noted the matters arising and Board schedule. The CEO agreed to update the Board on the issue of engagement with transport operators.

The Chairperson indicated that the Board will return to in-person meetings from next month following the removal of restrictions due to Covid-19.

The Chairperson noted that there is a vacancy at present on the Audit and Risk Committee and asked Board members who have not already served on the Committee to consider putting their name forward for appointment.

4. CEO Report

The Chief Executive outlined developments since the last meeting and responded to matters raised by Board members.

Mr Gallagher outlined the first progress report on the implementation of the Authority's Business Plan for 2022 and responded to questions from Board members.

Mr Creegan provided an update on the status of major capital projects. He noted that a detailed report in the matter is provided to the Board after the end of each quarter.

The Board noted that, following a European Court of Justice decision upholding the Authority's position with regards to passenger rights, Irish Ferries have introduced a Compensation Scheme in relation to W.B. Yeats cancelled sailings in 2018. Ms Thompson confirmed that the judicial review proceedings initiated by Irish Ferries were struck out with no order as to costs and NTA provided Irish Ferries with a formal letter of withdrawal for the Notices issued. The Chairperson asked the CEO to pass on the Board's thanks to all staff concerned for their detailed work since 2018 on bringing this matter to a successful conclusion.

The Board discussed the contents of recent correspondence from the Minister for Transport concerning the Draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. It was agreed that the Minister's letter was, in effect, a direction, and as such must be acted on accordingly by the NTA. Mr Creegan indicated that the revised Draft Strategy should be ready for publication within the next three weeks. He confirmed that the revised document will be circulated to the Board in advance of publication.

5. Board Review of Statement of Strategy 2023 – 2025 and Risk Matters

Mr Gallagher and Mr Beecher outlined plans for the Board review of strategy / risk issues on 24 March next.

During the discussion that followed, Board members requested some adjustments to the plans with a view to ensuring that the review process is appropriately structured. The Board also requested some background documentation on relevant issues.

6. Risk Update

Mr Beecher summarised the up-to-date position on risk management issues and responded to questions from Board members.

7. Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) Update

Mr Gray outlined the main issues discussed at the meeting of the ARC meeting held on 21 February last. In particular he drew attention to the decision of the ARC Committee to recommend that the Board approve the forwarding of the draft unaudited 2021 Financial Statements to the NTA's Auditors (see agenda item 9).

Mr Gray also presented the main points of the ARC Annual Report 2021. Mr Gray, noting that he had only recently taken over as ARC Chairperson, took the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of his predecessor Mr O'Connor during 2021. Following discussion, the Board noted both reports.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mr Gray and his ARC colleagues for the important and painstaking work that they undertook on behalf of the Board during 2021.

8. Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control

Mr Beecher outlined the arrangements in place to ensure the effectiveness of the Authority's system of internal control.

Following discussion the Board noted its satisfaction with the arrangements as outlined.

9. Draft Unaudited Financial Statements 2021

Mr O'Flynn outlined the main features of the draft unaudited 2021 Financial Statements including the Statement on Internal Control and responded to questions from Board members.

Following discussion the Board approved the draft unaudited 2021 Financial Statements 2021 as presented.

10. Finance Update

Mr O'Flynn outlined the Authority's current financial position and responded to questions from Board members.

11. Lease term for new NTA office

Mr Scully recalled that it is the Authority's intention to consolidate its existing office premises into one consolidated head office with the objective of all staff being relocated and occupying a new premises by Q1 2024 and outlined the proposed arrangements in that regard.

Following discussion, the Board gave its approval for the Authority to negotiate and seek commercial terms for a new consolidated workplace in accordance with the proposal presented to the Board.

12. Connecting Ireland Update

Mr Edward Rhys Thomas provided an update on the development of the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan including the feedback from the recent public consultation process and the plans for its implementation over the period 2022 – 2026.

He indicated that a report on the public consultation will be published in the near future together with a detailed initial implementation plan for 2022.

The Board noted the position in the matter.

13. Public Transport Fares Update

Mr Gaston recalled that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Authority had decided not to implement a full fares determination in 2021, but was exploring the opportunity to make a small number of adjustments necessary to address some anomalies and in support of the emerging fares structures arising from the national fares review which is being developed at the present time. He explained that it is planned to bring a full revision of the fares structures nationally to Board later in 2022.

Mr Gaston advised of the Government's decisions to provide a 20% reduction across all fares and to provide a Young Adult Card and associated 50% discount on PSO fares. The process of implementing the changes is a little complicated by special and already-discounted fares, and the need to update software systems to reflect the changes, all of which will be addressed by early May. He also outlined proposals with regard to Tax saver tickets. However, he noted that the issues involved in the inclusion of commercial operators in the Young Adult Card scheme are unlikely to be resolved to support implementation before early 2023.

The Board noted the position in the matter.

14. Colbert Station Renewal Scheme Preliminary Business Case approval

Mr Creegan explained that Colbert Station Interchange, which is a key transport node in the Mid-West, is no longer fit for purpose due to limited operational capacity and resilience, poor operational efficiency, and poor customer facilities. He noted that Iarnród Éireann has developed a project to address these issues through delivery of a scheme designed to create a higher capacity, more inclusive and better functioning transport interchange.

Mr Creegan explained that a full business case for the project has been prepared in accordance with the Public Spending Code and he noted that Board approval is required for capital projects and programmes with a capital cost in excess of €20 million.

Following discussion the Board gave its approval for Decision Gate 3, Final Business Case, which will permit Iarnród Éireann to proceed with the implementation of the project.

15. Bus Depot Proposals

Mr Creegan explained that the conversion of the bus fleet to electric buses will result in a need for additional bus depot facilities in the Greater Dublin Area. Accordingly, the NTA had engaged Avison Young to undertake work to identify possible locations for new depots.

Mr Kirby then outlined the process that had been undertaken by his Company to identify an initial list of suitable locations and to prepare a short list for more detailed consideration.

Mr Creegan explained that it is now planned to make further enquiries on two sites and prepare concept designs and initial cost estimates in consultation with bus operators.

The Board noted the position in the matter.

16. AOB

The Chief Executive responded to a question about the implementation of the new Dublin Area bus network.

17. Meeting without Executive

None

Next Meeting: Friday 25th March 2022 @ 10.30am.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Dated: _____