



## Minutes of Board Meeting

Held in NTA HQ and via video conference on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### **Board Members in attendance**

Mr Peter Strachan (Chairperson), Ms Anne Graham (CEO), Mr Hugh Creegan (Deputy CEO), Mr Pat Mangan, Mr Brian McCormick, Mr Iain Docherty, Ms Joyce Loughnan, Mr Frank O'Connor, Mr David Gray, Ms Ann Fitzgerald, Ms Eleanor O'Neill, Richard Shakespeare (Acting CEO of Dublin City Council)

### **Others in attendance**

All Items: Mr Philip L'Estrange, Director of Finance & Corporate Services / Board Secretary; Mr Declan Sheehan, Chief Information Officer; Mr Jeremy Ryan, Director of Public Transport Services; Mr Richard Kelly, HEO (Minutes).

Items 5, 6, 10 & 11: Mr Noel Beecher, Head of Governance; Mr Gerard McBrien, Risk Manager.

Item 7: Mr Ger Regan, Head of Public Transport Contracts; Mr Donal Brennan, Senior Public Transport Contracts Manager.

Items 7, 10 & 11: Mr David O'Flynn, Financial Controller.

Items 9 & 10: Ms Freda Quinlan, Senior Capital Finance Manager.

Item 10: Ms Joanne Regan, Finance Manager; Mr Adrian Cleary, Public Transport Services Finance Manager.

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

None.

### **2. Minutes**

#### **a) Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The draft minutes of the Board meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were approved.

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

The meeting dates for 2024 were approved by the Board.

The Board noted the letter received from the Minister for Transport regarding Public Service Obligation (PSO) funding for 2024.

#### **4. CEO Report**

The Chief Executive outlined developments since the last meeting and responded to matters raised by Board members. The CEO outlined the Crisis Management Procedures particularly in the light of recent crisis events that impacted public transport services and infrastructure.

#### **5. ARC Report**

Mr Gray outlined the main issues discussed at the ARC meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December last and responded to questions from Board members.

#### **6. Risk and Governance Matters**

##### **a) Risk Report**

The Board noted the Risk Report provided by Mr Beecher. The Chairperson thanked Mr Beecher and his team for their work on Risk and Governance matters throughout 2023.

#### **7. Procurements**

##### **a) Operation of a Public Bus Service on Route 139 Naas to Blanchardstown**

Mr Regan provided an overview of the procurement competition related to the operation of a public bus service on route 139 between Naas and Blanchardstown.

Following the overview provided, the Board approved the awarding of the contract to JJ Kavanagh and Sons.

##### **b) Finance Resources**

Mr O'Flynn provided an overview of the procurement competition related to Finance Resources.

Following the overview provided, the Board approved the awarding of two contracts to Ernst & Young and to Org Global Investment Holdings Unlimited Company respectively.

#### **8. AI Strategy**

Mr Sheehan provided an overview of the NTAs AI (Artificial Intelligence) Strategy and responded to questions from the Board members.

The Board noted and thanked Mr Sheehan for the overview provided.

#### **9. Capital Programme Committee Report**

##### **a) Committee Report**

Mr Docherty provided an update report from the December meeting of the Capital Programme Committee.

Mr Docherty noted that there were two items considered by the Committee which were being recommended for approval by the Board, comprising of the following matters:

- Revised Terms of Reference for Committee & Reserved Functions of the Board; and
- Foynes Line Reinstatement Project Final Business Case (FBC)

Each of these items was then considered by the Board.

- **Decision Item – Revised Terms of Reference for Committee & Reserved Functions of the Board**

Following discussion, the Board deferred a decision on the Revised Terms of Reference for Capital Programme Committee & Reserved Functions of the Board to the January 2024 Board meeting.

- **Decision Item – Foynes Line Reinstatement Project Final Business Case (FBC) – Decision Gate 3**

Having considered the Final Business Case as presented, and having noted that:

- Foynes has been designated as a Tier 1 port under EU Regulation 2015/13 and is required under that legislation to be connected to the rail network by 2030;
- the National Development Plan 2021-2030 identifies the Foynes rail link as a Government priority;
- in April 2023 the Department of Transport requested the NTA to undertake the role of Approving Authority for the project under the Public Spending Code;
- in November 2022, the Department of Transport approved and allocated funding for the completion of the civil engineering works necessary to reopen the line to freight traffic – Work Package 1 ( *Track & Civils*), being the substantive part of the overall project;
- the Department of Transport have confirmed that funding will be provided by for the remaining elements of the project, in particular Work Package 2 ( *Operational Readiness*);
- that a Final Business Case for the Foynes Line Reinstatement Project has been prepared by Iarnród Éireann and reviewed (including requiring amendments) by the NTA; and
- that the Final Business Case provides details on the projected maintenance/operating costs and potential revenue ranges and recognises the potential for ongoing subsidy to support the maintenance/operating costs;

The Board authorised the issuance of Decision Gate 3 approval (Final Business Case) under the Public Spending Code in respect of the Foynes Line Reinstatement Project.

## **10. Draft Budget 2024**

Mr O’Flynn provided an overview of the Draft 2024 Budget for the National Transport Authority. An extensive discussion took place on this item. Following the discussion, the Board expressed their concern at the current levels of PSO funding indicated for 2024 as it will have a significant impact on delivery of new services under the BusConnects and Connecting Ireland programmes and potentially have an impact on the delivery of current services.

The Board agreed to write to the Minister for Transport regarding the level of PSO funding for 2024.

The Board approved the Draft 2024 Budget that relates to capital investment and deferred approval the Draft 2024 Budget that relates to PSO funding.

**11. Finance Matters**

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

**12. AOB**

None.

**Next Meeting: Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024 @ 10.30am in NTA HQ.**

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

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