

INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM
MINUTES 2024

Tuesday 9th January 2024
Tuesday 6th February 2024
Tuesday 13th February 2024

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 9th January 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Mel Chittock

Attendees: Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper;
 Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p>Apologies & Conflicts of Interest Apologies received from Steve Harper who will join the meeting late. There were no conflicts with any items under discussion today.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting of 5th December were approved and will be published online.</p>	
3.	<p>Outstanding Actions All outstanding actions were discussed.</p> <p>Productivity Programme Team – ELT to consider any suitable staff members and forward names to BD by end of week.</p> <p>Caseworks – MC to provide update following discussion with Chair.</p>	
4.	<p>ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) Paddy Robb (PR) attended the meeting to present an update on the ESG scorecard providing an overview of progress against the 2023/24 agreed Action Plan and to outline the draft 2024/25 Action Plan. PR presented the scorecard, as of December 2023, focussing on two areas – carbon literacy and real living wage.</p> <p>PR confirmed that ESG Carbon Literacy training for all staff will be rolled out in February. PR asked that ELT and Directors commit to undertaking accredited training which is delivered over 2 half days. PR stated that to achieve accreditation participants create their own individual or group actions to reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>PR stated that the proposed training is about raising knowledge and awareness around the organisation. BD asked if the training can be set in terms of what the organisation is trying to achieve. The group agreed that ELT and Directors should undertake this more in-depth training and will be their responsibility to carry the message forward.</p> <p>BD highlighted that there is a lot of training currently underway and referred to a</p>	

	<p>previous training calendar for the organisation and asked if this could be reinstated.</p> <p>Action: PL to ask L&D team to produce training calendar.</p> <p>PR then referred to the Real Living Wage target. PR stated that the recent increase to the Real Living Wage has implications on current and future pay scales within the organisation and guidance is currently being sought from the Department for Finance. PR felt that the organisation should lead by example.</p> <p>PR highlighted the key areas and themes that are proposed to bring forward next year.</p>	PL
5.	<p>KPI Update</p> <p>The Corporate Information Team (CIT) attended the meeting to present this item.</p> <p>DD opened the discussion stating that the team will provide an update on where we are in the 2023 KPI process. DD wished to make the group aware that the cohort of businesses is declining significantly, this is the smallest sample size in 10 years. DD emphasized that the completion of this important exercise will require active leadership and management at Executive Director level.</p> <p>BD reflected the need to recognise that many staff have been moved into other roles, which will have an impact on the completion of this exercise.</p> <p>CIT provided an overview of the value of the KPI process and how the information is used across a broad range of areas. Increasing the completion rate and undertaking detailed validation adds to the quality and value of the KPI process. The group discussed the percentage rate of returns and the timeframe for completion of this exercise.</p> <p>MC asked colleagues for commitment from their respective teams to ensure this invaluable process has buy-in. ELT committed to ensuring their teams would follow up with clients to encourage a timely response to the survey.</p> <p>MC asked CIT to keep ELT and respective Executive Directors updated on progress.</p> <p>Action: DD to keep ELT updated on progress.</p>	DD
6.	<p>Car Parking</p> <p>JF referred to his tabled paper, the purpose of which is to propose an updated policy approach to INI provision of car parking and to make a recommendation on the way forward.</p> <p>The group discussed the paper including the allocation of spaces within HQ and the expenditure cap, which will be reviewed each year.</p> <p>ELT agreed with the proposal tabled and it was agreed that an update be provided to staff via Newsweekly in respect of expenses claims.</p> <p>Action: JF/PL/PH to prepare update.</p> <p>Steve Harper joined the meeting.</p>	JF/PL/PH
7.	<p>Post Project Evaluation (PPE)</p> <p>MC referred to the tabled paper which highlights where the organisation is on</p>	

	<p>completion of PPEs and asked ELT colleagues to ensure there is a push to complete this exercise.</p> <p>JF confirmed that staff are working hard to complete by 31st January.</p> <p>BD indicated that the Audit Committee and the Board will review and it is imperative that we aim to have all PPEs completed by end of the month.</p> <p>As this is another priority area of focus for the organisation, JF asked if there was capacity for other staff within the organisation to complete the PPEs.</p> <p>Action: ELT members agreed to consider and raise if support could be provided.</p>	ELT
8.	<p>Board Workshop - Business Strategy</p> <p>Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to present this item.</p> <p>GMcN took the group through the proposed format and agenda for the forthcoming workshop which has been approved by the Strategic Resources Committee. The group discussed the high-level objectives and the key areas of focus for the session.</p> <p>Any final feedback to be provided to GMcN before end of week.</p>	
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
9.1	IDM letters – MC provided an update.	
9.2	January Board agenda – The group reviewed the agenda for the next Board meeting. PH stated he would circulate his presentation/paper prior to the meeting.	PH
9.3	Energy Efficiency Scheme – JF informed the group that this has progressed through DfE and is now with DoF for approval. JF asked if it is possible to commence with the communication/resourcing to be ready for April launch.	JF/PL
9.4	A2F – BD flagged that he will be bringing a paper for presentation on some oversight changes to Access to Finance funds.	
	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>6th February 2024</p>	

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 6th February 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;
 Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p><u>Apologies & Conflicts of Interest</u> No apologies received. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Welcome & Introduction</u> KD opened the meeting stating that it was a great honour and privilege to join Invest NI and wished to record the organisations and ELTs gratitude to MC for his leadership over the last two years and on a personal note wished to acknowledge MCs guidance and advice in his first week.</p> <p>KD wished to also thank ELT colleagues for the bilateral meetings over the last week and looks forward to meeting their individual teams and visits to the regional offices. KD laid out his short-term priorities for the next number of months.</p> <p>In terms of working as a leadership team, KD would like the Executive Team to embrace the concept of collective cabinet responsibility and explained how this process works.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u> The minutes of the meeting of 9th January were approved and will be published online.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Outstanding Actions</u> All outstanding actions were discussed.</p> <p>PPEs – JF to come back with proposal on what can be achieved.</p>	JF
5.	<p><u>Replacement MyINI Customer Portal</u> AMcK provided an overview of the purpose of the MyINI customer portal to aid KD's understanding of how the organisation engages with its customers. The portal currently operates on open source which is coming to the end of its life span and will now move to a software as a Service (SaaS) approach.</p> <p>AMcK indicated that a paper has been previously presented and approved for a 7-</p>	

	<p>year scheme. However, on reflection, and on advice from the Economist Team, the recommendation is to go with a 10-year scheme. There will be break clauses included and therefore with this increased cost it will now require DoF approval.</p> <p>The portal is considered to be a crucial element in the digital transformation efforts of the organization, and it has been identified as a priority by the Board. AMcK confirmed that they are currently in the final stages of preparing the business case for the portal. The request made today is to acknowledge a long-term financial commitment and to agree that once the business case is finalized, it will go through the usual processes and be presented to DfE and DoF for further review and approval.</p> <p>BD stated that this will be a fundamental change to how the organisation acquires tech going forward. The final outcome is the business case will go through the approval process and then be presented to the ELT Finance meeting for a final determination on its affordability and approval to proceed as appropriate.</p> <p>KD queried the level of utilisation of the portal and any client / user feedback. AMcK stated that all clients are required to create a portal log on (around 4-5k customers). MC remarked that this will provide the desired digital interaction we aim for in the future. BD stated there is a parallel link in task and finish in terms of how we interact with our customers.</p> <p>The group discussed how a future portal could be used for the organisation’s customers. BD expressed that there is a need to manage expectations in terms of what the organisation can afford and deliver.</p> <p>ELT approved the updated affordability statement as presented.</p>	
6.	<p>Hybrid Working</p> <p>PL provided background to hybrid working within the organisation laying out the discussion at a previous meeting and the agreement reached. PL provided feedback/challenges received and stated that it is essential this issue be reviewed on a regular basis. This led to a comprehensive discussion by the Executive Leadership Team.</p> <p>The group agreed that the feedback provided reflects what is being heard from their staff. AMcK felt that there has been a definite uptake in attendance in the office since the Christmas period. The group reflected on what was happening in the wider public service and within some sectors in business.</p> <p>There was a discussion, with the main points summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any changes could be seen as unfairly penalising staff who are attending the office forty-percent of the week. • examples of some normalised behaviours. • if the organisation wants to move the culture in a positive direction it needs to ensure that staff are in office on a more regular basis. • essential that staff are updating diaries to capture their location and activity and this needs to be overseen by line management. • There is no evidence of a drop in productivity, standards or lack of engagement as a consequence of hybrid working. • there is an opportunity to make the 2-day office based working 	

	<p>experience better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concerns over possibility of losing technical staff. <p>Following discussion it was agreed to continue with the forty percent / 2-days in the office hybrid operating model subject to ongoing review, the needs of the business and the requirements of future strategy. The group debated an ‘anchor day’ for the organisation and agreed this should be tied in with corporate organisational activities.</p> <p>In closing, it was agreed that ELT members would continue discussions with teams on hybrid working and that staff should use Outlook to keep track of their location and tasks.</p>	
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p> <p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p> <p>7.8</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Productivity Development Tool – DD provided an update indicating that Grant Thornton was commissioned to carry out a piece of work on behalf of INI, DfE and DoF and are currently preparing a position paper.</p> <p>Forthcoming Casework – JF asked colleagues, in response to a forthcoming casework, if they can respond in a timely manner to help the project complete in this financial year should it be approved.</p> <p>Employee Ownership – JF provided an overview of a recent meeting he had attended where he had been informed of a model called “employee ownership” and hopes to attend a future meeting to learn more.</p> <p>Regional Split – BD raised the topic of regional split and felt it may be an opportune time to have a conversation on what the split should be. The group discussed recent debate on this topic.</p> <p>Conversational AI – SH asked if the organisation has a team looking at ‘conversational AI’ as this may have benefits for the organisation in terms of interrogation of our data. BD stated that there was a small team looking at AI. AMcK commented that he will ask the digital team to carry out some research.</p> <p>Comms - AMcK wished to put on record his thanks to PH and his team for the updates made to the Invest NI 2-minute Update ezine.</p> <p>IR Action Plan – KD stated that he would like this to be a standing item on the weekly ELT meeting agenda going forward to keep on top of progress against the various actions.</p> <p>Resourcing – KD stated that PL has briefed him on requests for further resourcing. These additional headcount requirements are quite substantial. KD believes that these requests need to be re-evaluated in the context of future strategy, any associated organisational restructuring and areas of vulnerability, increased workload and specialist skill needs. The organisation also needs to demonstrate that it is fully utilising all existing resources. KD asked that those resource asks relating to areas of increased workload or vulnerability e.g., progressing commitments under the Action Plan, City & Growth Deals, HR, IT and Finance & Assurance, client facing etc. be identified and progressed to business case stage.</p>	<p>AMcK</p>

	<p>The group touched on the resourcing required to deliver the Action Plan and if deferring any immediate decision that resourcing will need to be found from other parts of the organisation.</p> <p>JF asked if posts that funding have from outside the organisation can be progressed. KD asked colleagues to prepare a list of mission critical posts with some narrative as to why they are critical. This will be the basis for progressing these requests in the short-term.</p> <p>Action: ELT to provide lists to PL</p>	<p>ELT</p>
	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u> 13th February 2024</p>	

INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
Meeting Minutes: 13th February 2024
CEO office, INI HQ

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;
 Alan McKeown

Apologies: Steve Harper; Paula Logue

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	Apologies & Conflicts of Interest Apologies received from Steve Harper and Paula Logue There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting of 6 th February were approved and will be published online.	
3.	Outstanding Actions All outstanding actions were discussed. Caseworks – MC to forward copy of delegations paper to KD.	MC
4.	Feedback from Discussion with Minister Murphy KD briefed the group on his introductory meeting with the new Economy Minister, Conor Murphy, MLA KD indicated that the interaction was friendly, constructive, and warm. Minister Murphy set out his agenda and spoke of the important role Invest NI plays in the overall economic development of Northern Ireland and the importance he also attaches to the organisation’s reform agenda. KD briefed the group on the forthcoming speech to be made by the Minister and the group discussed some of the finer points within the speech. AMcK shared detail around a potential Shared Island Fund announcement.	
5.	IR Action Plan Update KD stated that the group need to keep track, as a collective, on which actions individual members of ELT are responsible for and progress against same. MC shared feedback on the recent IOG meeting commenting that the Department provided feedback on the level of assurance it was receiving on progress against the individual actions.	

	<p>Following this meeting, the PMO team have implemented several actions including a RAG status report. The organisation needs to be able to demonstrate that it is making progress against the actions.</p> <p>BD asked if the RAG document was necessary given this is a duplication of information already held in the system. MC acknowledged this, indicating that the software used does not allow for the information to be extracted in a format that is useful. BD asked if there is any way to use the system to extract this information that would be his appeal. KD commented that this could be raised at the next IOG meeting.</p> <p>The group discussed the RAG status on some of the actions and KD asked that action owners ensure the RAG status accurately reflects the current position. BD mentioned that the primary concern remains regarding the allocation of resources.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Organisational Innovation</u></p> <p>KD asked the group how the organisation goes about innovating internally, for example, how would it develop a new programme, proposition, or product. Is there an existing process that is sub optimal – too resource intensive or time consuming and could be done better? KD believes in doing things simply and reducing the burden on staff.</p> <p>JF shared a couple of examples namely the development of a new programme and how the IRD Division works on a problem. JF reflected that it is back to how we empower the staff who are facing the challenges on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>AMcK referred to previous transformation processes from which there are lessons to be learnt. There is an opportunity to develop a clear strategy of what and how we are going to improve and drive that through. AMcK used the example of digitisation. DD felt that most of the innovation comes from the ground up.</p> <p>KD outlined a process he would like to put in place. He would like the leadership team to identify challenges/problems, identify staff who are innovative, solution orientated or problem solvers and task them to come up with a solution. KD stated that he would like to trial this approach on the casework process.</p> <p>The group discussed the process including the current bandwidth of staff. Following debate the group agreed to trial the process.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Ministerial engagement/announcements</u></p> <p>PH confirmed that the Head of Press had met with the Minister’s team to discuss this topic. PH provided an overview of the areas discussed and the availability of the Minister to assist Invest NI with engagements and announcements.</p> <p>PH stated that the Comms Team will put a process in place and asked that staff engage with his team in the first instance on any potential involvement of the Minister.</p>	

<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Legal Adviser – BD confirmed the new Legal Adviser is now in situ.</p> <p>Regional Paper – The group discussed the process of papers going to Board and it was agreed KD would speak with Chair regarding this paper.</p> <p>Future Medicines Institute – JF and KD to discuss.</p> <p>NILGA – AMcK provided feedback from his session with NILGA. AMcK will thank them for their time and suggest a more regular meeting with Councillors.</p>	<p>KD</p> <p>JF/KD</p>
	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>5th March 2024</p>	