

Architecture & Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN SCOTLAND

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING (83)

Online Via MS Teams

10:00 on Thursday 16 February 2023

Present: Ann Allen (AA) Chair, Angela Bonney (AB), Caroline Parkinson (CP), Kirsty Macari (KM) & Sam McCabe (SM)

Staff: Jim MacDonald (JMacD) CEO, Lynne Lineen (LL), Heather Claridge (HC), Sue Reynolds (SR), Anja Ekelof (AE), Danny McKendry (DMcK), Emelie Borg (EB) & Andrea Hepburn (AH - Minutes)

Observers: Eilidh Henderson (EH) & Lizzie Smith (LS)

Apologies: Alistair Scott (AS), Daisy Narayanan (DN), Lynn Wilson (LW), Sandy Robinson (SR) & Graeme Walker (GW) (both PARD)

Absent: Bruce Ross (BR) & Georgiana Varna (GV)

1. APOLOGIES & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Alistair Scott, Daisy Narayanan and Lynn Wilson along with Sandy Robinson & Graeme Walker from our sponsor team.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes from the meetings on 17 November 2022 and 15 December 2022 were both approved.

It was noted that all matters arising were completed.

3. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2023/24

The Draft Business Plan and Budget for 2023/24 was tabled. The Chair commended the team for the work that had gone into the paper and for protecting our funding to the extent that was possible.

JMacD acknowledged the work by LL, HC, and the wider team in preparing the plan for next year. This represents the final year of work to deliver our three-year Corporate Plan, itself the first stage in implementing our ten-year Corporate Strategy.

JMacD noted that the context to the work presented is one of reduced real-term income and this has necessitated some difficult choices. Our priority in making these choices has been to protect staff resources and those activities which most closely align with our strategic priorities. AA welcomed this and highlighted the importance of ensuring that our programme ensures we are well-positioned going into the 2024/25 spending review.

AA asked how it was decided what items should be omitted from the forward programme? JMacD confirmed that we have prioritised those activities that we feel best align with our strategic priorities and thereby with those of the Scottish Government.

HC added that design advice have looked at activities they will step back from such as a range of working groups, pause such as module 2 skills work or undertake in a different way such as rural tourism infrastructure fund.

LL added that Learning and Communication Team is working closely with the other home teams to look at how we share our work with our audiences.

KM stated that these changes are welcome from an Audit Committee perspective. JMacD thanked KM and advised that the approach being adopted for reporting should allow audit to see more clearly how each activity is progressing.

AA noted that our approach to this is exemplary and asked what the Board can do to help promote the value of our work to our key stakeholders. JMacD agreed to consider this within the context of the Stakeholder Strategy work. AA welcomed this and emphasised how important it is to ensure we have the tools for measuring our outcomes and impacts.

AA concluded by reminding Board Members to be disciplined in seeking to add to the programme of work in year and to support the work planned.

The draft Business plan and Budget for 2023/24 was APPROVED.

4. BOARD MEETINGS 2023/24

The meetings cycle to June 2024 provides for eight meetings per year, six online and two in person.

AA reminded everyone that we have quorate requirements and Board Members should make every effort to protect their diaries to allow attendance.

It was noted the May 2023 meeting (18/05/23) clashes with the opening of the Venice Biennale so it is suggested this is instead held on 25 May 2023.

Action 1: Chair to contact Board Members regarding change of date for May 2023 meeting and agree which two meetings will be in-person next year.

KM reiterated the need for quorate Audit Committee meetings and reminded members that everyone except the Chair is a member and expected to attend. Some members asked that the dates for these meetings be recirculated.

Action 2: Chair to email and remind Board Members of requirement to be quorate along with Audit meeting attendance.

Action 3: CIT to ensure upcoming Audit Meeting invites are sent to all Board Members.

5. DRAFT CLIMATE ADAPTION PLAN

JMacD introduced the paper and reminded members of the work done to date in developing our efforts to ensure our business contributes positively to tackling the climate emergency and reducing our emissions.

SR explained that as we are a small organisation, many of the items can be implemented in the short term, eg, monitoring, reporting via SSN (Sustainable Scotland Network) on yearly basis. While public bodies are not obliged to report via SSN, we expect this will be required in the future so believe it is appropriate to adopt this approach now. Reporting will be via Audit Committee on a quarterly basis and there is a requirement in the FREM (Financial Reporting Manual) for the Annual Report and Accounts to show more on climate reporting.

SM asked what we are doing about the energy use in the buildings we occupy? SR confirmed the new boiler that was installed last year is more efficient and has Hive fitted for more control over the heating when the office is not in use. Draft proofing has also been used round windows and doors. SM suggested that monitoring this should be in the action plan to show we are thinking about this and suggested that the accommodation is broken into a separate plan.

Action 4: SR to liaise with SM re the suggested changes to the Climate Adaption Plan.

KM asked how we bed climate actions into our work and grow the knowledge of those we work with? HC advised that how we map this out will vary in terms of different advice. We are nurturing relationships we have – there is a great opportunity with Climate Action Towns and a lot of learning from that. It is on our radar on how to integrate it across all of our advice work and take the opportunities where we can.

EB added that as part of the Business Planning all the projects were asked what their links to the climate emergency and climate adaptation might be to start making links going forward and start incorporating this.

The draft Climate Adaptation Plan was APPROVED.

6. CORPORATE PLANNING UPDATE

JMacD outlined the challenges encountered in preparing the ground for the next Corporate Plan (2024-27), notably the lack of evidence around some outcomes. On this basis, additional work is required as set out.

The Chair was happy with this approach and that priority was given to developing the Business Plan.

The report was NOTED.

7. STAKEHOLDER STRATEGY

Following the paper at the October meeting work to implement the Stakeholder Strategy is now up and running and Board will be updated each meeting.

DMcK updated that this work is crucial and is an active endeavour that is being worked on continuously. Key learning is we need to home in on key stakeholders, eg ministers and their portfolios. With officials we are targeting deputies rather than heads. We are working with our sponsor team on this - knowledge of key stakeholder issues is important along with targeting specific engagements, being well prepared and well briefed. Key themes are coming out of early conversations, eg NPF4 and we feed this back into our teams. How can we bring the collaborative place approach to big investments? The key is to tailor engagements and build it back into our corporate planning. Currently we are setting up meetings with MSPs and sponsors. Our role is to support those who plan, design and fund. We have milestones to work towards but we are learning as we go along on what we speak to people about. The ever changing landscape can shift and we need to ensure we are aligned to this – our sponsor team advise on the best approaches.

Questions asked included were stakeholders aware that they have a role to share what we have shared with them more widely? We feed the conversation back to our own meetings and decide what the next steps should be, eg another conversation, send further information. We need to ensure we think about what we want stakeholders to do for us after these conversations. We are trying to shape our future and be ahead of the curve by identifying things as early as possible on how we can help stakeholders do their work.

The Chair put a call out to Board Members to offer any support they can and encouraged the team to use the Board Members in any way they can.

The impact this work is starting to have is allowing us to focus on the relationship with the Chief Planner and how our work can be deployed to help with what she is responsible for.

The Board NOTED the update and thanked everyone for all the work they are doing.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Scotland + Venice

Invites to the opening event on 19 May 2023 have been sent out. The catalogue submission has been made today which supports the Communications Strategy. We are working with an external comms agency who will be busy setting out collaborations and we are looking at commissioning some young writers to do pieces from the exhibition so there is capacity for good coverage.

The Scotland + Venice creative team will be making a presentation to the March Board.

Annual Review Event

JMacD thanked everyone who participated in the Annual Review event. Feedback can help to shape future events and we are looking to build on this approach for this year.

We have established a new Place Forum and we hope to have four or five online events over the year. The first is on 1 March and the theme is Child Poverty and the Costs of Living Crisis.

Board members were asked to promote these events through their own channels.

Staffing Changes

JMacD highlighted a few staff changes to the Board as Karen Ridgewell has gone on a 20 month secondment to Creative Scotland and Chiara Fingland, who was on a temporary contract, left to take up a permanent position with Fife Council. We are looking to backfill these posts internally, reducing our staffing number by two. We will keep the Board updated.

March Board Meeting

The March meeting will be online and JMacD will send the draft agenda round shortly. If anyone wishes anything included in the agenda please advise JMacD.

The meeting closed at 11.35.



Signed:
Ann Allen, Chair

Date: 16 March 2023