

Architecture & Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN SCOTLAND

BOARD MEETING (101)

Online Via MS Teams

10.30 am on Wednesday 12 March 2025

Present: Ann Allen (AA) Chair, Alistair Scott (AS), Bruce Ross (BR),
Caroline Parkinson (CP), Georgiana Varga (GV), Kirsty Macari (KM),
Lynn Wilson (LW) & Sam McCabe (SM)

Staff: Jim MacDonald, (CEO), Lynne Lineen (LL), Sue Reynolds (SRe),
Heather Claridge (HC), Kate Hendry (KH) (Items 5 & 6),
Soirse Docherty (SD) (Items 5 & 6) & Andrea Hepburn (AH - Minutes)

Guests: Sandy Robinson (SRo) & Graeme Walker (GW) Planning, Architecture &
Regeneration Directorate, Scottish Government

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Angela Bonney & Daisy Narayanan.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

The previous Minutes were AGREED.

Matters Arising

Jan 25 No 4 - the skills matrixes have been sent out and are due back the end of the month.

Jan 25 No 5 - JMacD is arranging a meeting with the Board shadows which will hopefully take place next week (20th).

4. CEO MONTHLY UPDATE

The Board NOTED the report and thanked SR for what has become a useful paper. Unlocking Town Centre Living was of particular interest, and it was agreed that the related blog on the website will be circulated to members.

Action 1: Website blog on Unlocking Town Centre Living to be circulated round Board Members.

5. VALUE OF DESIGN EVALUATION

KH and SD joined the meeting and presented the highlights of the Value of Design Campaign. This was a multi-channel campaign and a trial for the Outreach team. There are large numbers in the statistics which is due in part to the duration of the campaign. As this was a new approach there are no comparable stats available. It was noted that there was large jump in media views although this formed a large part of the campaign.

The skills to produce this were developed in house and we have a lot of learning from this which has been analysed therefore it will be easier to set out the metrics next time.

Board members enjoyed the campaign and asked questions around where it goes in the future, the frequency and subjects for future campaigns. We will look ahead over the next period on topics and work streams we can focus on.

It was noted that the people involved with this campaign were “friends” of A&DS – for future campaigns we could reach out to wider audiences and people who want to challenge us to stimulate debate.

Would there be capacity to engage with marketing experts/academics for future campaigns? SD advised that additional free help would be useful especially now we have a model to work on.

SRO commented on the metrics resetting and defining us. The sessions with RIAS and architects indicated what we measure against and visibility in key areas probe what our audiences are. The impact and legacy of the review is looking at this to establish new networks which can help with the Centre of Excellence model.

The Chair thanked everyone for the time spent on this and the Board NOTED the evaluation report.

6. ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

LL updated the Board on the draft Annual Review 2024 document which showcases our work during the year. The review does not focus on 2025 but does reference it in both the introduction and in the looking forward section at the end. The Board felt it had the balance between reflecting on what we have done over the last year and signposting where we are going post Review.

SRO felt there may be questions asked around the Review and references to November in respect of it.

Action 2: JMacD and SRO to pick up on references to the Review within the Annual Report.

Questions were asked around staff anonymity - individual mentions have been debated in the past but most work is carried out by teams not individuals. We can look at this again as some aspects could be reflected.

There is nuance around the words but there should be no delay in issuing this and it would be beneficial if SRO can cast his eye over it prior to finalisation.

It was noted that all work on the Annual Review had been done in house as we are trying to upskill staff so that no budget is spent externally.

Action 3: Any further dialogue around this should be done by email to avoid any delay in the publication.

The Chair thanked everyone for their work on the Annual Review which the Board NOTED.

7. FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT REVIEW

LL advised that the document summarises the roles of the Board and the Chief Executive and should be reviewed regularly. It is a means to make sure we are happy with the responsibilities set out and we need to be aware of what is in it. Once approved by Board it needs to go back to sponsors for ministerial approval.

KM felt this is a good time to reflect on this as Audit had discussed roles, skills and effectiveness of training earlier.

JMacD highlighted that under the revised document, we will be reverting to annual business plans and three-year corporate plans. The current 10-year strategy will therefore be withdrawn following the review.

SRO advised the framework needs reviewed every two/three years and PARD are undertaking this as part of part of their review of activity. He thanked the A&DS team for their work on this.

The Board were supportive of the approach to a three-year planning cycle as we evolve and thanked the team for this piece of work.

The Framework document was APPROVED.

8. REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

JMacD confirmed that since the last meeting there have been discussions with various other parties sharing the outcomes of the Review and these will be factored into the next steps.

The Board noted that this has been a significant piece of work that is ongoing on a regular basis and thanked everyone for this.

The report was NOTED.

9. 2025/26 BUDGET

LL highlighted that the operating budget for next year is based on 3% salary increases but SG are still in negotiation with the trade unions therefore this may change. We have found savings from some secondments/career breaks which allows a balanced budget with £40k approximately to spend on projects, but we will not commit to any of this until we know the outcome of the pay policy and any SG contribution for the increased National Insurance costs. GW updated that he hopes to have confirmation of the NI contribution within the next few days and indications are we will receive £15k.

The Board thanked LL for the clarity around the pay costs and the robust conversations that had been had at Audit earlier.

The Operating Budget for 2025/26 was APPROVED.

10. 2025/26 BUSINESS PLAN

JMacD presented the draft Business Plan. This is not a detailed plan with resourcing due to the Review and will be worked up in detail after the Review work is completed. We can identify what work we are not taking forward along with ongoing work. The shape of work established will be in a detailed plan available in Q1 at some point.

The ordering of activities was queried and JMacD confirmed this would be looked at as part of the detailed planning.

Members asked how much the Value of Design campaign and Annual Review fed into the scoping of this document and how these documents impact this? JMacD confirmed the business plan reflects what has been learned to date and that we need to focus while maintaining key aspects and demonstrate the value of design to different audiences, and this is something we can look out for.

The draft Business Plan was APPROVED.

11. KEY STAKEHOLDERS STRATEGY

JMcD presented the paper which sought Board agreement to bring this work into the review implementation project. AA advised that stakeholders have never been more important than now.

Members noted that the list is very light on private sector engagement. JMcD confirmed that the list will develop through the course of the implementation work and that suggestions for key contacts within the private sector would be welcomed.

The Board AGREED to merge the key stakeholder strategy with the work to implement the review recommendations.

12. STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

The Chair noted the importance of this and was pleased to see it has been completed. LL advised that the results from January 2025 are compared to the previous detailed survey in 2022. There have been smaller surveys in between around things like the office move but we now propose to do the full survey annually. There was an opportunity to provide comments on what we do well, what we can improve on and what people would like to see change but due to the low numbers of staff this is not published as it could be easy to identify where the comments came from.

It was felt that the responses were mainly positive and three areas picked up on were communication, Leadership Team trust and Leadership Team decisions. We have an all staff session booked next month with Kinharvie on building trust and we're arranging two further training days thereafter.

The Board felt the survey results were generally positive for the most part due to the Review work and changes associated with that. Also with the small number of staff any negative answers will look larger. It was felt that trust falls on everyone and works two ways. A further paper will follow after all the actions have been undertaken.

The paper was NOTED.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Board Annual Reviews

These are usually completed in April but will be put on hold until the results of the skills matrixes are known.

Mr McKee

JMacD confirmed he has a meeting around Public Sector Reform in the diary with Mr McKee, Minister for Public Finance, on 3 April and will update Board thereafter.

Date of next meeting – 10.30 am on Wednesday 9 April.

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm.



Signed:

Ann Allen, Chair

Date: