

Architecture & Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN SCOTLAND

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Online Via MS Teams

14:00 on Thursday 12th November 2020

Present: Ann Allen (AA) Chair, Sue Evans (SE), Alistair Scott (AS), Angela Bonney (AB), Caroline Parkinson (CP), Daisy Narayanan (DN), Graham Hill (GH), Kirsty Macari (KM) & Lynn Wilson (LW)

Staff: Jim MacDonald, (JMacD, CEO), Heather Chapple (HC), Lynne Lineen (LL), Sue Reynolds (SR), Anja Ekelof (AE), Emelie Borg (EB), Andrea Hepburn (AH) & Val MacBeath (Minutes)

Apologies: Bruce Ross

Guest: Ian Gilzean PAD (IG), Graham Wilson PAD (GW) and Marie Ferguson PAD (MF)

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair welcomed everyone to the online Board Meeting. Apologies were received from Bruce Ross. No declarations of interest were noted.

It was agreed that the meeting would be recorded, and the recording destroyed after the Minutes are prepared.

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The previous Minutes were APPROVED as an accurate record.

Both Matters Arising were complete.

3. STRATEGY UPDATE

Throughout 2019/20 we have been working to establish a new 10-year strategy and to date we have completed the following work:

- an evaluation of our work
- a map of our stakeholders,
- a review of our policy/operating context,
- held discussions with staff, Board members and Scottish Government,
- agreed a forward focus,
- engaged our wider stakeholders and
- agreed what we think the fundamental elements of our next strategy should look like.

- Most recently we discussed how this could translate to a Corporate Plan, re-engaged with our stakeholders and prepared drafts of both documents.

Production work is underway on both documents and the latest drafts were discussed.

The current drafts reflect recent stakeholder feedback including with our sponsor team to ensure effective alignment with their programme. The drafts presented reflect these discussions and seek to present our work in the context of the National Performance Framework and relevant national policy. In particular, emphasis has been given to Climate Change, Housing, Regeneration, Planning, the Health and Learning Estates issues as well as to the implementation of Creating Places, Scotland's policy for Architecture and Place.

The draft documents are presented together to test complementary and alignment of content, language and narrative. The content of each reflects the Board's request for clarity and concision and as far as possible, duplication across the two has been minimized. As outlined above, work continues on editing and formatting. To assist with this, we have appointed an editor and will also be using a graphic designer to ensure the finalized drafts reflect our mission and values.

To summarise, the draft 2021 – 31 Strategy sets out our long-term ambitions and describes how we plan to achieve these. As agreed with Board, this is described in relation to series of horizons that move us from where we are to a point where a whole-place approach is the norm across the country. The basis for the strategy is our theory of change which underpins the work we do and helps us to understand the extent to which we are achieving what we've set out to do.

The 2021-24 Corporate Plan draft sets out what we will achieve by 2024 and outlines the activities we expect to undertake to do so. It reflects closely what we've learned from our work, the views of our staff, stakeholders and sponsors and is rooted in the context provided by policy and the world as it is. The work outlined will be reviewed each year and presented via an Annual Business Plan which will provide the basis for the Board's overview of our performance.

The description of activities will be developed further in the final draft to minimize duplication as will specific outcomes-related performance measurement and evaluation.

The board noted that further discussions with SG are planned and work will take place with staff to finalise the programme that supports the delivery of the Strategy with the aim of establishing a Strategy that is robust and clear and a programme of work that will allow us to deliver that.

Board members were reminded of the ambition for them to become ambassadors and champions to develop and push forward the various themes within the Strategy making use of the Boards expertise working with and supporting colleagues within the organisation. Board members were asked to consider themes now to enable that thinking to be carried forward at the final sign off of both documents in December.

The Chair asked for two Board members sit on a small editorial group to support the corporate planning team to take an overview on how the documents hang together and how they are read from an external perspective. Board members who are interested and have the capacity to support the team to undertake this over the next 4 weeks should email the Chair with their note of interest.

ACTION: BOARD MEMBERS TO EXPRESS NOTE OF INTEREST TO THE CHAIR TO SIT ON EDITORIAL GROUP

The Corporate Planning team were asked to check with our sponsor team if the Corporate Strategy should have a supporting Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

ACTION: JMACD TO CHECK IF STRATEGY NEEDS A SUPPORTING SEA OR OTHER ASSESSMENT

When we reference Local Authorities within the document, we need to ensure we mean LA's and are not referring more generally to the public sector.

It was suggested we do more work to set the policy context in both documents particularly around climate change on where we are now and for the next 10 years.

The Board AGREED the drafts of the 2021-31 Strategy and the 2021-24 Corporate Plan with further work required.

4. A&DS STAKEHOLDER REVIEW AND WORKSHOP

In the spring of 2019 A&DS staff and Board held a workshop to determine a range of stakeholders, and working together, arranged them in areas of priority based on the stakeholders' ability to help us achieve our objectives.

During July and October in 2020 Staff members were invited to update any engagement they have had with the stakeholders in 2020 with the objective to move those stakeholders around the heat map. They also added proposed new organisations and included rationale for suggesting those organisations.

It was important over the next 6-8 weeks that as we sign off the Strategy, we agree who will own what themes as it was noted that Board members will be asked to engage with will reflect what themes they will become ambassadors for.

The Chair asked that Board members consider Councillors, Convenors politicians and prospective politicians who may be influential in their own areas and send names to AE

The Board were asked to send further contributions to the document within the next 7 days to enable us to have a stakeholder map by 1st December that can be tracked, updated and reviewed.

ACTION: BOARD TO SEND FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MATRIX TO AE BY 19TH NOVEMBER 2020

The Board AGREED the revised stakeholder matrix as the basis for future engagement

5. DIGITAL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Board noted that the digital strategy seeks to provide the right digital tools to deliver the new A&DS strategy.

It was confirmed that "Digital" refers both to our outward facing channels, e.g. website and social media, our events and service delivery, as well as how it all links with our in-house structures (e.g. Microsoft 365).

Our way of working in 2020 has demonstrated the opportunities to deliver services using digital channels, reaching beyond our normal geographical/capacity limitations.

The overall aim is to help us deliver our new strategy in a seamless and impactful way taking full advantage of our current and future digital channels. It was noted that the Digital Strategy is being developed as a strand of the Communications Strategy.

The principal need for the project is to ensure that we align our future digital channels with the objectives of the new Corporate Strategy.

The Digital Strategy project will start with a review of our current structures. We will use external expertise for this to help develop a strategy suitable to our needs and which considers developments and trends in digital use.

This will then be followed by a development phase where we will look at optimising our web presence to effectively help us deliver our work, share our messages and create a body of evidence of the benefit of the Place Principle at work.

The project will work to ensure that all investment and development in our digital delivery is coordinated and achieves the greatest impact for effort and investment. It will look at how digital can support our service delivery in a blended model as well as optimising our internal systems.

The initial review will take place in late 2020/early 2021 with development work taking place throughout 2021/22.

The project aims are designed to lead to:

- Greater understanding for A&DS about the digital channels available to reach our audiences.
- Greater integration/flow between internal and external systems
- Digital platforms that are robust, resilient and effective to aid the delivery of our work.

IG noted a digital strategy for Planning and Architecture will be launched soon and suggested the Comms Manager liaises with SG on the launch.

It was noted that the implementation of this strategy needs to be mindful of health and wellbeing on colleagues going forward.

The Board thanked the Digital Strategy Team and looked forward having an update on the Digital Strategy at a future meeting.

The Board NOTED the paper.

6. AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Issues to Highlight:

- No significant areas of concern to highlight;
- Management Accounts to 30 September 2020 were presented. Spend is lower than forecast due to Covid-19. Management Team are reviewing options to spend the income not yet allocated to be spent;
- Progress of work in the Business Plan from April-September 2020 was below the level planned due to the Covid-19 situation and less staff capacity due to home schooling. Management Team has put in place a system to determine how our work will change as a result of Covid-19;

- The Risk Register continues to be reviewed and updated by the Management Team;
- A three-year programme for internal audit is being established and in 2020/21 will include a review of the 10-year Corporate Strategy and the Performance Pack Refresh
- Due to Covid-19, Audit Scotland has confirmed that the contract for the provision of external audit services has been extended by one year to 2021/22. The extension will be through to the audit of the 2021/22 financial year. Mark Ferris of Audit Scotland will remain the auditor for Architecture & Design Scotland throughout this period.
- Board member BR had been invited to attend Audit Committee as an observer. When a future vacancy arises for the Audit Committee, BR will be in a position to be elected to the Audit Committee. This succession planning for Audit Committee, along with a recruitment process to replace GH and SE when they step down in April 2022, will help to ensure continuity and options for the Chair of the Board in terms of future membership of Audit Committee.

The Board NOTED the minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting on 3 November 2020

7. ANNUAL AUDIT PROCESS LESSONS LEARNT

The Board had asked that a lesson learnt exercise be undertaken on the annual audit process to establish the good practice which could be fed into the organisation going forward.

There were 4 main areas where lessons were apparent from the audit process:

1) Early identification of potential issues caused by Covid-19

As soon as the situation regarding Covid-19 arose, consideration was given to the implications on all aspects of A&DS Corporate Services' areas of responsibility including the preparation of the ARA and the external audit.

2) Communications

Audit Scotland was appointed as external auditors for A&DS in 2016. Both Audit Scotland and A&DS have worked to ensure they have a good relationship with open and honest communication.

Audit Scotland and A&DS held early meetings via Microsoft Teams to discuss the challenges created by Covid-19 and consider the implications for the preparation of the ARA and the external audit work.

Audit Scotland and A&DS had regular catch up meetings via Teams throughout the audit process to discuss any issues as early as possible in order to find solutions.

3) Technology

Due to the work on information technology and the Business Continuity Plan by the Corporate Services Team over the past three years, the transition to working from home and providing the records needed by the auditors was more straightforward.

In the time since the offices have been closed, A&DS colleagues are making greater use of technology, e.g. use of break out rooms and whiteboards. This is an area which will be under constant review as the speed of technological changes will continue to increase in future.

4) Excellent Corporate Services Teamwork

The Corporate Services team has demonstrated a willingness to work together to face the challenges of Covid-19 and staff have shown they are willing to take on any additional tasks required. The team has also demonstrated hard work ethics and shown commitment and flexibility to complete the work in line with the original timetable by working the additional hours which were required, often out with core working hours.

The Chair was pleased to see how successful the annual audit had been and the willingness to consider what works and on occasions what might need to be done differently.

Staff survey

The Board asked when the next staff survey was due. The CEO reported this will be discussed at the next Management Team meeting.

8. AOB

Update from Policy and Analysis Subgroup on Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan

KM reported that the Subgroup met on 11th November 2020 to review a draft of the consultation. The Climate Change team were thanked for preparing a thorough, coherent and detailed response. In summary our contribution to the consultation involved our place-based approaches, our priorities and also provided evidence and good practice to how that might inform the overall final document. KM also thanked SE and DN for their input. The final document would be circulated to the Board for information.

Annual Review

The 2020 Annual Review will be a digital product only including the usual statistics and highlights. We also want to focus on people and are asking staff and Board members to consider the following:

- (In the context of your work in A&DS) What was the main less you took away from 2020?
- Did your relationship with "place" change in 2020 and if so, how?
- Bonus round: Do you have any photos/videos from 2020 that you think capture this?

Any contributions to be emailed to AE by 27 November 2020.

Potential Value of Design Exhibition

CP reported she would be meeting with Leonie Bell, new Director of V&A Dundee, and would highlight the above exhibition as a means of working together without making a commitment.

Meeting with Cabinet Secretaries'

It was noted that a meeting with Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture, had been confirmed for 8th December 2020 and a date for also being sought for a meeting with Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government. The Chair and CEO will attend both meetings, along with IG from PAD.

Landscape Institute Awards and Glasgow Institute of Architects Awards

The LI awards ceremony taking place online on 26th November 2020 and the GIAA awards on 27th November 2020.

The Chair thanked the Board and Colleagues from Scottish Government for the attendance and the Board meeting closed at 15:15.

Signed: 
Ann Allen, Chair

Date 11/02/21