

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 4th December 2017

11am, Tuesday 4th December 2017

Boardroom, Northern Ireland Screen, 21 Alfred Street, Belfast

Present: Rotha Johnston (Chairwoman), James Penny, Mike Catto, Fiona MacMillan, Elaine Sperber, Michael Kuhn, Greg Maguire, Adeline Dinsmore, Tim McKane

In attendance: Richard Williams (CEO), Linda Martin (Director of Finance and Corporate Services), Bernard McCloskey (Head of Education), Aine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Marie Shivers (PA to CEO), Brian Dolaghan and Tracey Walsh (Invest NI – Observers)

Apologies: Laurence McKeown, Jennifer Johnston, Ian Parsley, Andrew Reid (Head of Production)

1.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 12th September 2017

- 1.1 The minutes of the September meeting were agreed, signed and the action points reviewed.
- 1.2 The Chairwoman will report to the next meeting on Board Effectiveness.

2.0 Chairwoman's business

- 2.1 The Chairwoman and CEO met recently with the Permanent Secretary and colleagues at DfE. A number of issues were discussed including the Economic Appraisal and Board appointments. There was a positive response to the business case evaluated by DfE. The main issue remains there being no Executive to formally approve.
- 2.2 Board appointments are also delayed due to lack of a government. Recruitment of 4 Board members is required immediately. In addition, 5 members' second terms of office will complete in December 2018. The Department understand the issues regarding the structure of the Board and hope to commence a recruitment competition in the New Year.

3.0 Chief Executive's Report

- 3.1 The CEO clarified that the Casework Committee indicated approval of a figure of £50.3m, subject to availability of funds. Initial feedback from Krypton has been very positive with local crew numbers high. Response to the first episode at Warners was positive.
- 3.2 The need for further film studio capacity was discussed and it was agreed that the needs of the sector would be best served by expanding Belfast Harbour Studios in the near to medium term.
- 3.3 The CEO noted that the Westeros takeover of the airport during the Christmas period is a well targeted exercise in branding and should attract considerable interest.
- 3.4 And that, Italic Pig won the Big Indie Award in China recently for Mona Lisa. The project is attracting strong interest in terms of investment and was usefully linked in the media to the UK/China Conference which took place in Belfast last week.

- 3.5 The CEO noted the success of the Moving Image Arts showcase awards, and that a real connection to the industry was being made.
- 3.6 Slippage funding was being utilised for the digitisation of the UTV archive, the relocation of Nerve Belfast and to appoint the Strategic Investment Board to produce a pre-Business Case for the Belfast Film Centre.

4.0 Performance Indicator Report

- 4.1 We will exceed the £250m strategy figure but the figure for the year's target £14m against £64m targeted will not be met as the award to both Krypton and Game of Thrones fell in the previous year despite the activity falling in this year.
- 4.2 Andrew Reid undertook a successful visit to New York last week with a team of documentary producers to meet with the HBO documentary team. They also met National Geographic and Discovery channel. Nicola Lyons is currently in Manchester at a children's summit under the Partnership Agreement with the BBC. CEO will update at the next Board meeting on the BBC Partnership.
- 4.3 The CEO noted the sad news that Stirling Productions has gone into liquidation. Anne Stirling has been a stalwart of the independent sector for many years and was a very early developer of Irish language content setting up a specialist unit within her production company. TG4 have exercised takeover rights for those projects which are still to be completed. It is believed all of the staff have been picked up by the sector.

5.0 Finance, Audit and Governance

Audit and Risk Committee Update

- 5.1 The Committee met last week and NIAO gave a clean audit of the financial statements. The Chair of the Committee has written to Dawn Johnston to thank her for her contribution.
- 5.2 The Complaints Review Process was discussed by the Committee and it was agreed this would be reviewed annually. It was agreed that we should also consider how to monitor the response to Northern Ireland Screen on social media.

Risk Register for Approval

- 5.3 Richard Williams summarised the table of changes to the risk register. It was noted that a significant funding risk exists if a Minister is not in place when the economic appraisal for ODS 2 funding requires approval.
- 5.4 The postponing of funding for Digiskills is a significant risk to the continuation of this work. As it is unclear when this funding will be reviewed again by the department we will engage further to clarify.
- 5.5 The impact of EU Exit has been added to the Risk Register.
- 5.6 Loss of funding has been added to the register.
- 5.7 Lack of progress on Board appointments is not yet on the register but may become a risk if government is not in place to appoint. This will continue to be monitored and added if necessary.

- 5.8 The Board approved the risk register.

Policies for Approval

- 5.9 The Chairwoman thanked the Committee and James Penny for reviewing the organisation policies.
The Board was content and all were adopted.

Management Accounts to 30th November

- 5.10 The Management Accounts were presented to the Board for review with the following significant variances highlighted:

- Screen Fund is forecast to cash-flow the full budget for the year, the forecast has been reduced as we no longer anticipate a large scale production to cash flow in the current year;
- DfC has allocated additional funds to education project areas from slippage funding;
- The Digiskills project has been postponed due to the unavailability of a Minister to approve the spend;

- 5.11 The Management Accounts were approved by the Board.

Outline Budget 18-19

- 5.12 The figures are based on Year 1 of the new 4 year Strategy at the Option 4 level as approved by the DfE Casework panel, £50.3m over 4 years. 2018-19 funding includes:

- DfE funding increases to £12.5m including £10m on Screen Fund and £900k on skills;
- Staffing costs increase by 1 additional post in skills and training, and 3 posts upgraded;
- Inflation rate of 2% has been applied to overheads plus known changes including rent charges and IT security costs;
- The Language & Cultural Funds remain at the current Letter of Offer level;

- 5.13 Approval is needed soon on some areas above where work needs to begin quickly. The interactive hub requires a lease and new posts need to be recruited which requires the use of Business Consultancy Services. Three posts also need to be assessed for regrading.

- 5.14 The Board was content with the above draft budget outline.

Mid-Year Assurance Statement – October 2017

- 5.15 The Statement was signed at the beginning of October. The CEO confirmed there were no material changes in the assurance given from that date.

Strategic Resources Committee Update

- 5.16 The Chairwoman updated the Board on the recent Committee meeting
- 5.17 It was noted that there has been no further movement on agreement of the MSFM. The Chair suggested we write to the Department to request that this be finalised as a matter of urgency.

6.0 Other Committee Updates

Investment Committee

- 6.1 Michael Kuhn provided an update from the Investment Committee. There are currently a number of projects shooting including Come Home, Krypton and Game of Thrones, and Dig is about to wrap. We are currently undertaking a number of recces from companies interested in filming in NI. A new Chinese project from Chris Curling is the first project to come out of the new UK/China co-production agreement. Michael Kuhn heard positive comments recently from the production sector in LA about the sector in NI.
- 6.2 Michael Kuhn has just undertaken a tour round UK TV sector to get a feel for what is happening. The result is universal belief that the large-scale scripted production boom will continue and there seems to be a general consensus there is a bottle neck with trying to get decisions at commissioning level in the UK.
- 6.3 The Board were shown a number of clips of projects recently in production.

Skills/Training

- 6.4 All training schemes are currently going well.

ILBF

- 6.5 The commemorative fund for Aodan MacPoilin was launched as part of the Belfast Media Festival with the deadline for applications on 15 December. The exhibition of Rocky Ros Muc is going from strength to strength. It is the first Irish language documentary to be considered for an Oscar. The score has been nominated for an award. A link will be sent through to anyone who wasn't able to attend the screening.

USBF

- 6.6 A dedicated portal for Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund content and Irish Language Broadcast Fund content is now available on BBC iPlayer. Audiences will be able to access the content beyond the standard 30 day period. This initiative fulfils a commitment made by the BBC as part of its Partnership Agreement with Northern Ireland Screen and will give significantly enhanced access to a range of content. Fiona Keane at BBC NI is doing a good job at pushing it on. The Fund is also opening up radio for Ulster-Scots content. The Board thought it would be interesting to get some feedback from both funds as to how successful iPlayer has been.
- 6.7 Two USBF trainees completed their first company placements. The feedback from the companies was very positive and the trainees have now moved onto their second placements. The third trainee completed boot camp training and has started their first company placement.

EPWG

- 6.8 Adeline Dinsmore noted the recent Moving Image Arts Award event which was very well attended. Former students were there to talk about their experiences in the industry. CCEA were also present and provided information on potential careers in the industry. CLCs are continuing to work to raise awareness with careers teachers about pathways into the industry.
- 6.9 Bernard McCloskey noted that the top award winner at the event was an Irish language film made by a student from Campbell College. The CEO will forward the link to the film to Board members.

7.0 Any Other Business

- 7.1 This meeting concludes 10 years' service from James Penny and Tim McKane. The Chairwoman thanked them both for their service noting the enormous amount of professional skills and guidance they have brought to the Board, and the enormous success story that the screen industry in Northern Ireland has been in that time.

Point	Detail	Actioned by
1.2	Report to the next meeting on Board Effectiveness	Chairwoman
2.2	Continue to push Board appointments with the Department	Chairwoman
4.2	Update on BBC Partnership Agreement at next meeting	CEO
4.2	Invite Tim Davie to Belfast from BBC WW	CEO
5.18	Write to the Department to urge finalisation of the MSFM	Chairwoman
6.5	Send a link to Rocky Ros Muc for those unable to attend the screening	Aine Walsh
6.6	Feedback on success of USBF/ILBF content on iPlayer	CEO/ AW
6.9	Forward link to the winning film at the MIA Awards	CEO

Signed: _____

Date: _____

13 March 2018