

## **MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

**11am, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

**Northern Ireland Screen, Alfred House, Alfred Street, Belfast**

**Present:** Rotha Johnston (Chairwoman), Laurence McKeown, Mike Catto, Fiona MacMillan, Elaine Sperber, Greg Maguire, Jennifer Johnston, James Penny, Adeline Dinsmore, Ian Parsley, Tim McKane

**In attendance:** Richard Williams (CEO), Linda Martin (Director of Finance and Corporate Services), Andrew Reid (Head of Production), Moyra Lock (Head of Marketing), Bernard McCloskey (Head of Education), Aine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Brian Dolaghan and Tracey Walsh (Invest NI – Observers)

**Apologies:** Michael Kuhn, Aodán MacPóilin

### **Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

### **1.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

1.2 The minutes of the September meeting were agreed, signed and the action points reviewed.

### **2.0 Chairwoman's business**

2.1 The Chairwoman and CEO had a successful meeting with the DfE Minister at which transitional arrangements, Board member renewal terms, the Digiskills Foundation Programme and screen tourism infrastructure were discussed. A follow-up meeting will be arranged to discuss further.

2.2 DfE had suggested direct reporting to the department in the future is likely following completion of the current Invest NI Letter of Offer.

2.3 DfE had confirmed that renewal of Board appointments was expected as agreed in principal and letters of approval would be issued by the Minister soon.

2.3 Belfast Harbour Studios is on track for completion by early January and significant work is underway to confirm a first production to occupy the space.

### **3.0 CEO's Report including Performance against Opening Doors Strategy to date**

3.1 The CEO reported on the increasing number of recent awards and nominations received by local companies and projects spread widely across the sectoral priorities.

3.2 The CEO updated the Board on the securing of a project for Belfast Harbour Studios. The market is energetic and a number of possibilities were being explored.

- 3.3 He reported on the recent very successful large-scale London producers' visit to Belfast and on a number of incoming recce visits by US companies.
- 3.4 Tim McKane noted the potential to attract advertising production capacity. He will pass on contact details to the Executive.
- 3.5 The CEO noted the BFI Strategy which was launched recently and has a number of implications for Northern Ireland Screen. It is a good document which strengthens the commitment to a UK-wide approach. The BFI Film Hub has come to the end of its first tranche of funding however the commitment to the Film Hub is strong as is the commitment to Film Clubs through Into Film.

#### **4.0 Business Plan 2017/18**

- 4.1 We have some certainty over the main areas of funding including the first £8m of Invest NI funding and ILBF/USBF funding. There is uncertainty around Lottery Funding arrangements which have to be renewed for 17/18 and beyond.
- 4.2 CEO noted 3 elements of the Business Plan: profiled activity is in line with Programme for Government, contributing to 8 out of 14 outcomes; the Business Plan is likely to align well with the Economic Strategy which should be published in January; the business plan serves as a good opportunity to highlight other significant areas which are not part of significant funding agreements including the BBC Partnership Agreement, Belfast Film Centre and new studios. These feature more prominently in the Plan.
- 4.3 The CEO is confident that we will hit our economic targets across the Strategy.
- 4.4 Greg Maguire asked for an explanation of the objective within animation to encourage service work alongside self-created work. The primary rationale is that it helps sustain a continuity of work across the sector.
- 4.5 The Board approved the Draft Business Plan for submission to the Department.

#### **5.0 Development of New Strategy**

- 5.1 The CEO circulated a development plan to Board members broken down into sectoral priorities with a timeline for completion. The Board discussed this and agreed what needed to be done ahead of the June deadline for submission of the new draft strategy to the Department.
- 5.2 It was agreed that a list of suggested points to ask, key factors, coherent feedback and strategic thinking from the current strategy be drawn up to help Board members when engaging with the sector.
- 5.3 It was noted by Invest NI that the context for this strategy would be constraints on funds.

## **6.0 Finance, Audit and Governance**

- 6.1 CEO outlined the summary of changes in the Risk Register noting that the infrastructure risk remains unchanged. A potential reduction in Department for Communities funding and the need to secure a large-scale project to remain in line with performance targets were also noted. The Board approved the Risk Register.
- 6.2 Fiona MacMillan updated the Board on the recent Audit and Risk Committee and Linda Martin noted the key variances in the Management Accounts.
- 6.3 The Chairwoman updated the Board on the recent Strategic Resources Committee noting the Digiskills Foundation Programme, the recent Gender Split review and an update on transitional arrangements. The Schedule of Policies was amended to include responsible authority and, once confirmed, all policies will come to the Board for approval.

## **7.0 Committee Updates**

- 7.1 USBF – Recruitment for a new committee is underway with new members to be confirmed in January. A number of applications have been received for the trainee/apprenticeship scheme.
- 7.2 EPWG – Significant issue is the development of the Digiskills Digital Foundation programme in urban village schools. There is continuing support for Into Film and BFI Academy. Nerve Belfast will be required to move to new premises in the near future. Bernard McCloskey is drafting a revised submission for the European Funding Programme ahead of a February 2017 deadline.
- 7.3 Investment Committee – Andrew Reid noted the Investment Committee decisions in the CEO's Report. The CEO also noted that the New Talent Focus project Bad Day for the Cut has been selected for the midnight screening at the Sundance Festival in January.
- 7.4 ILBF – Aine Walsh highlighted the beautiful documentary Eithne which will screen in Dublin this week. The Linenhall Library will be organising an event in March round the Robert Burns documentary.
- 7.5 Skills Panel and Training – The CEO confirmed that skills will be a big part of the new Strategy with connections back into Education. We need to start promoting more coherent pathways into the sector.
- 7.6 Exhibition – Nothing to add.

## **8 Any Other Business**

- 8.1 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee noted a booklet on Board Effectiveness that was brought to the attention of the Committee at the last meeting. We will request further hard copies of this booklet and distribute to Board members.

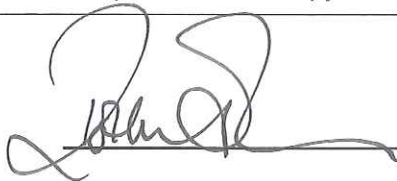
- 8.2 The use of MinutePad to reduce the need to circulate hard copy Board papers was discussed. The Board were happy to look at this further depending on what licence fee and other costs may be involved.
- 8.3 The Chairwoman thanked the Board and Executive for all their hard work over the past year.

**9 Date of Next Meeting**

- 9.1 The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March at 11am.

<i>Point</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>To be actioned by</i>
5.2	Suggested pointers on engagement with the sector to be drawn up as guidance	RW
6.3	Corporate policies to be approved by the Board	SRC/LM
8.1	NIAO Board Effectiveness booklet to be distributed to Board	LM
8.2	Review options for soft copy board papers	LM

Signed:



Date:

14 March 2017