

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

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

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

**Present:** Rotha Johnston (Chairwoman), Michael Kuhn, Laurence McKeown, Mike Catto, Fiona MacMillan, Elaine Sperber (via phone), Greg Maguire, Jennifer Johnston, James Penny

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

**Apologies:** Adeline Dinsmore, Ian Parsley, Aodán MacPóilin, Tim McKane, Sinead McCartan, Moyra Lock (Head of Marketing)

### **Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

### **1.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

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

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

- 2.1 The Chairwoman and CEO met with the DfE Permanent Secretary to discuss a number of issues, primarily Board member renewal terms and transition arrangements. Discussions with the department to complete this process are ongoing. Overheads have now transferred from DfC to DfE.
- 2.2 Belfast Harbour Studios is on track for completion by the end of the year and significant work is underway to confirm a first production to occupy the space.
- 2.3 The Chair and CEO recently met with a Fermanagh based survivors association to hear their concern that their stories are not represented in the media, on film and on television.

### **3.0 CEO's Report including Summary PI Report and Investment Report**

- 3.1 The CEO reported on the high number of projects going into production, noted the record number of trainees across the gaming and animation sectors as well as general crew and production trainees. He also noted the high profile cultural exhibition projects taking place, primarily funded by the BFI.
- 3.2 The CEO noted the recent significant commercial success for start-up game, Of Kings and Men. The Chairwoman suggested a brief presentation from Donal on gaming at a future meeting.

- 3.3 He reported that Britvic had lain empty during the summer months at a significant cost to the Northern Ireland Screen Fund. While disappointing, it had been necessary to have Britvic available to support large-scale projects that might need workshops and build space ahead of Belfast Harbour Studios becoming available in December. Rigorous marketing of Britvic continues but if a project is not secured soon the license will not be extended.
- 3.4 The Board discussed the sales and marketing focus at Northern Ireland Screen and it was agreed that London would be given more focus over the coming period.
- 3.4 The CEO noted good press coverage for Pablo, Morgan and Disney's The Lodge and the success at the Craft Emmy Awards for Game of Thrones as well as the more challenging coverage of 66 Days.
- 3.6 The mid-term evaluation of the Opening Doors Strategy had been delayed due to procurement issues. However, this shouldn't impact on the June deadline for delivery of the next strategy to Invest NI.
- 3.7 The CEO confirmed that stakeholder and Board engagement on the new strategy will begin in the autumn. It was agreed that a workshop/update with the Board be arranged in December and a more detailed plan ahead of the Board meeting in March.
- 3.8 Pls are currently on target despite a slow first half of the year. The Investment Report showed the tracking of potential projects.

#### **4.0 Finance, Audit and Governance**

- 4.1 Fiona MacMillan updated the Board on the recent Audit and Risk Committee meeting noting the amendment to the Governance Statement of the Directors' Report and Financial Statements as a result of an NIAO request. This amendment was agreed by the Board.
- 4.2 We still await the draft Management Statement and Financial Memorandum from DfE and hope to receive this within the next 2-3 weeks. The Committee agreed to adopt new levels of assurance in the Internal Audit Opinions DAO. Reviews will no longer have a 'substantial' opinion.
- 4.3 The Committee agreed that the self-assessment process was useful and that the next assessment should be customised to exclude areas that aren't relevant and add others that are. The Committee also suggested the minutes be circulated earlier and that Any Other Business be requested in advance.
- 4.4 CEO outlined the summary of changes in the Risk Register noting that a reputational risk had been added in light of recent negative press coverage. The infrastructure risk remains unchanged. The Board approved the risk register.
- 4.5 Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016 were presented to the Board. There were no significant variances.
- 4.6 The Chair updated the Board on the Strategic Resources Committee, noting that the staff survey had been fully implemented, transitional arrangements



from DfC to DfE were progressing, recruitment for a new USBF Committee was underway and current HR issues were also discussed.

- 4.7 The Chair noted that responsibility for Northern Ireland Screen's lease had reverted to Northern Ireland Screen with negotiating support from LPS. Given the intention to remain in our present premises, a capital funding bid was submitted to DfE for modest but overdue refurbishment.

## **5.0 Committee Updates**

- 5.1 EPWG – Bernard McCloskey highlighted potential funding from SIB to schools within all 5 urban villages to teach coding skills to teachers. DfE very positive about this initiative as is DE. Useful meeting with QUB which is interested in being part of a group to enable this to happen. The Chair noted the need for engagement across a range of government departments and agreed to raise it with the DfE Minister when they meet, and also suggested a meeting with the Education Minister.

Bernard McCloskey informed the Board that entrant numbers for Moving Image Arts, especially at GCSE and AS level, are up.

- 5.2 Investment Committee – Michael Kuhn noted the Investment Committee decisions in the CEO's Report. He also reiterated his recommendations from the last meeting to take a pro-active approach to the UK producers of large-scale projects and it was agreed to discuss further at the next Investment Committee meeting.

- 5.3 ILBF – The ILBF is holding its Trainee Graduation Ceremony tomorrow and the next Investment Committee meeting will take place on 29<sup>th</sup> September. The ILBF evaluation process has begun and is with CPD for the tender process.

- 5.4 USBF – The USBF Evaluation has been completed and recruitment for a new Committee is underway. A trainee/apprenticeship scheme is being developed.

The BBC is currently appointing an Ulster-Scots Executive.

- 5.5 Skills Panel and Training – The CEO noted the success and range of the Aim High Training schemes with 60 trainees involved in the various schemes. All placements are currently going well. Greg Maguire questioned if the current Aim High animation scheme model meets the needs of the industry. Rotating the trainees is useful and has a number of positive outcomes but it was agreed to discuss further at a separate meeting.

## **6 Any Other Business**

- 6.1 Board member visits were currently underway. Please continue to channel replies through Marie.
- 6.2 The Chair has received a letter regarding the need for more Channel 4 production in Northern Ireland. She will draw up a formal reply.
- 6.3 Meeting dates for 2017 have been circulated. Marie will follow-up with an email to all Board members confirming the dates.

## 7 Date of Next Meeting

- 7.1 The next Board meeting scheduled for Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December will now take place on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 11am.

<i>Point</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>To be actioned by</i>
3.2	Brief presentation from Donal on gaming at a future meeting	Donal Phillips
3.7	Arrange workshop/update on next Strategy with the Board in December and a more detailed plan ahead of the Board meeting in March	Marie Shivers
4.3	Circulate ARC minutes to the Committee earlier and AOB to be requested in advance of the meeting	Linda Martin/ Marie Shivers
5.1	Raise issue of coding skills with DfE Minister and Education Minister	Chairwoman
5.2	Discuss pro-active approach to the UK producers of large-scale projects at the next Investment Committee meeting	CEO/Michael Kuhn
5.5	Discuss Aim High animation scheme model meeting the needs of the industry at a separate meeting	CEO/Greg Maguire
6.1	Replies for Board visits to continue to be passed to Marie	Board
6.2	Draw up a formal response to a letter received from Channel 4 on the need for more Channel 4 production in NI	Chairwoman
6.3	Confirm 2017 meeting dates and change of date of December 2016 meeting to all Board members	Marie Shivers

Signed:



Date:

13 December 2016