

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 24th January 2014

11am Friday 24th January 2014

Northern Ireland Screen, Alfred House, Belfast

Present: Rotha Johnston (Chair), Brian McMahon (Vice Chairperson), Michael Catto, Adeline Dinsmore, Jennifer Johnston, Michael Kuhn, Fiona MacMillan, Aodán MacPóilin, Tim McKane, Ian Parsley, James Penny, Laurence McKeown, Arthur Scott (DCAL), Peter May (DCAL)

In attendance: Richard Williams (CEO), Linda Martin (Head of Finance), Andrew Reid (Head of Production), Moyra Lock (Head of Marketing), Bernard McCloskey (Head of Education), Bríd Falconer (Head of ILBF), Elsie Brown (Operations Manager & Minutes),

Apologies: None

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

1.0 Chairwoman's Opening Remarks

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Board and Peter May (Permanent Secretary, DCAL) and Arthur Scott (DCAL) and she extended her gratitude to DCAL for their help in resolving the issues around staff terms and conditions.
- 1.2 Peter May spoke briefly to update the Board on DCAL's funding for 2014-15 and the steps that had been taken to resolve the issues relating to staff terms and conditions.
- 1.3 The Chair advised that there had been significant engagement with both Invest NI and DETI in the last quarter regarding the new strategy and thanked James Penny and Michael Kuhn for their help with the strategy presentation to the Invest NI Board and Executive.
- 1.4 The Chair updated the Board on her regular meetings with the Senior Management Team, CEO and with DCAL on the Zero Budgeting Exercise.
- 1.5 She reported on a meeting with Tony Hall, Director General of the BBC and advised that it was agreed that a further extended meeting would take place in March/April to discuss the BBC's commitment to Northern Ireland.
- 1.6 The Chair expressed her delight that issues surrounding staff terms and conditions are close to a resolution but noted that more effort is required to finalise details of the package by the start of the new financial year. It was noted that the CEO's pay remit is still to be resolved.

2.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 27th September 2013

2.1 No amendments were noted and the minutes were agreed.

3.0 CEO Report

3.1 The CEO expressed his satisfaction with progress made in year and noted that the organisation is on track with the vast majority of its key performance indicators.

3.2 The CEO noted that considerable progress has been made regarding the new strategy and that we await the decision from Invest NI and DETI. He stated his optimism that Northern Ireland Screen will know the parameters of its future budget by 14th February.

3.3 The CEO updated the Board regarding funding from ACNI and advised that their Board has asked for more information on the value of Lottery funding to the screen industries and wider film community. The Chair asked that we accommodate the request and address any information gaps.

3.4 The Chair asked if 2014-15 Lottery funding is confirmed, the CEO stated that the request for additional information is a concern as it will delay a funding decision. We do not have confirmed funding beyond March 2014.

4.0 Finance Audit & Governance

4.1 The CEO updated the Board in relation to progress made in resolving staff terms and conditions and confirmed that a package of support has been offered by DCAL which will bring terms and conditions into line with other public sector ALBs. Admission to the NILGOSC pension scheme, payment of staff bonuses for 2010-13, mapping of salaries to NICS scales and a review of other conditions including maternity leave and pay, sickness provision and holiday entitlement are included in the package. Work will continue to finalise the remaining details in an endeavour to implement pay and pension changes before 31st March 2014. The CEO confirmed that the staff were aware of and had accepted the terms and conditions offered.

4.2 The Management Accounts were approved by the Board. The Chair asked if the budget was on track for the year and Linda Martin advised that cash flow and spend were on budget.

4.3 The CEO reported that a number of risks on the Risk Register will either be downgraded or will be removed from the register before the next Board meeting including risks associated with the zero-based budgeting exercise, staff terms and conditions and the VAT appeal.

4.4 The Quarterly Assurance Statement was considered and the CEO advised that a further minor change to the 'Acknowledgement of Ownership' statement proposed by the Chair was awaiting approval by DCAL's Governance Support Unit. The CEO advised that the assessment of Board effectiveness is to be

completed at the end of the meeting. The Chair stated that Board effectiveness was previously carried out on an individual basis through appraisals and that we will adopt a process that includes board discussion and follow-up questionnaire this year.

- 4.5 The Chair asked for an update on USBF and ILBF funding, the CEO said that dialogue continues to secure long-term funding but that 2015-16 funding is now confirmed. Peter May advised that no confirmation regarding long term funding will be taken until Whitehall's Comprehensive Spending Review is complete.
- 4.6 The Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee expressed his delight that the staff terms and conditions were being resolved. He stated that he felt the work carried out on zero-based budgeting had been a worthwhile exercise.
- 4.7 The Chair also expressed satisfaction that the VAT review had now been satisfactorily resolved.

5 PI Report

- 5.1 The CEO advised that performance is on target with the exception of skills percentage targets. He noted the issues around measuring skills targets in percentage terms. As the number of projects in production was growing, the skills percentages tended to drop. Andrew Reid pointed out that crew numbers are increasing year on year but that large scale incoming productions such as Universal's DRACULA must bring Heads of Department and senior crew in with the relevant high level experience necessary for this scale of production. While this impacts negatively on the percentage achieved against target, the production impacts positively on the total crew numbers and on the development of higher level skills in the longer term.
- 5.2 Film Club are behind target on total number of schools but the target was already accepted to have been too high and too great a percentage of the available schools.
- 5.3 It was agreed that future targets should include numbers of pupils and geographic spread as well as numbers of schools.
- 5.4 The Chair asked if a large scale project had been secured for 2014-15? The CEO advised that the lack of new sound stages and uncertainty around the availability of funding is hampering this work.

6. CEO's Report

6.1 Investment Committee

Michael Kuhn reported on the Investment Committee and noted that the activity had been covered in the CEO's report and there were no additional issues to highlight.

6.2 Irish Language Broadcast Fund

Brid Falconer reported on ILBF activity. The process for the recruitment of a new committee member will be finalised before the end of the month and it is hoped to have the person in place by mid March. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of April and it is expected that the number of applications will be high.

A future review of the fund will include looking at the quality of programmes being delivered, training needs, increased sector development and improving co-broadcasting including working more with RTE.

6.3 Ulster Scots Broadcast Fund

Ian Parsley advised that viewing figures for USBF programming are good but that long-term funding remains an issue.

6.4 Education Policy Working Group

Adeline Dinsmore reported that Jennifer Johnston has been seconded to Film Nation and will work out of the Ulidia offices. She also highlighted the huge demand for Creative Learning Centre's services but noted that they are coping with this demand.

She reported that school budget constraints could impact on Film Club activity with some schools dropping out of the scheme, the situation will be monitored.

The Future Classrooms conference will take place in March 2014 and Bernard McCloskey advised the Board that Lego will be providing a keynote speaker.

6.5 Skills Panel/Training

The CEO reported that Anne Stirling of Stirling Film & Television has agreed to be the new Chair of the committee.

The Belfast Media Festival may take place in Derry again but it was more likely it will come back to Belfast.

The CEO reported on Skillset's CIIF Training Fund and stated that Northern Ireland Screen is trying to attract as much of this funding to NI as possible.

7. **DCAL Funding 2014-15**

7.1 Baseline funding has increased from £1.3M to £2.1M.

- 7.2 Creative Learning Centre and Film Club activity remains a priority and contributes strongly towards social inclusion targets. The Digital Film Archive outreach activity is contributing towards meeting social inclusion targets also and a small increase in its baseline has been proposed.
- 7.3 The crisis that existed in the exhibition sector has been reduced with funding levels restored, although the QFT has seen a reduction in its funding for Northern Ireland Screen following its successful Film Hub bid to the British Film Institute.
- 7.4 It was noted that the funding was not adequate to support the Digital Apprentice Scheme at this stage but should an opportunity arise in year this project will be prioritised. The Coder Dojo project will proceed as will the FabLAB project which is aimed at extending FabLAB's reach into schools
- 7.2 The Board approved the zero-based budgeting proposals.

8. Development of the Sector – the role of Broadcasting

- 8.1 The CEO reported that there was a willingness from the BBC to develop better ways of delivering value for Northern Ireland and that proposals were needed for discussion with the BBC Director General, Tony Hall. It was noted that Tony Hall has a particular interest in increasing spend in Arts programmes.
- 8.2 The Board considered possible areas for partnerships with the local sector. The Chair proposed possible links with local universities with a view to creating a unique offering in Northern Ireland. Animation, coding and MOOCs were discussed. It was agreed that Adeline Dinsmore, Tim McKane and Jennifer Johnston would consider education possibilities.
- 8.3 Andrew Reid suggested that we try to convince BBC Commissioners to engage more with 'up and coming' content developers. Peter May (DCAL) said that the BBC may look to bring an Archiving Hub to NI.
- 8.4 It was agreed that devolution of commissioning, financing of film and purposeful development should be considered.
- 8.5 The Chair asked the Board to provide feedback to the CEO.

9. Submission to OFCOM on Channel 4 'Out of England' quota

- 9.1 The Chair noted the good work undertaken by the CEO in the consultation process.

Executive left the meeting except the CEO.

10.0 Board Effectiveness

- 10.1 The Board reviewed its effectiveness and was generally satisfied with the overall structure of its activities, with its relationship with the Executive and with information provision by the Executive.
- 10.2 A number of actions were agreed.
- 10.3 It was agreed that the Board was relatively weak in the area of financial expertise and human resources. The Chair and CEO were tasked with proposing solutions.
- 10.4 It was agreed that the Finance and Audit Committee should be replaced by an Audit and Risk Committee and a Finance and Remuneration Committee reflecting best practice in separation of duties.
- 10.5 The Board decided that the introduction of further expertise in the area of digital could be beneficial.
- 10.6 It was agreed that presentation of Board papers would be refreshed.
- 10.7 It was agreed that questionnaires would be circulated to the Board as a further aspect of Board effectiveness assessment.

11.0 Any Other Business

- 11.1 Fiona MacMillan highlighted the issue of women being under-represented in the sector and asked if this could be reviewed and benchmarked.
- 11.2 The CEO said a review of gender balance would be undertaken.
- 11.3 Fiona MacMillan reported that the Newcastle Film Club (now known as the Newcastle Community Cinema Club) has won 'Film Club/Society of the Year 2013' from the British Federation of Film Societies (BFFS) and she noted that this was the second year in a row they had won this award. She asked for the Board to write to the club to congratulate them.

12.0 Date of Next Meeting

- 12.1 The date of the next Board meeting will be agreed and communicated to members.

<i>Point</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>To be actioned by</i>
1.6	Details of staff terms and conditions to be finalised with DFP and DCAL.	LM /CEO
3.3	Report to ACNI to address information gaps	CEO
4.4	Confirmation of QAS chair statement due from DCAL GSU	DCAL
5.3	Review of FilmClub targets for 2014-15 Operating Plan	BM/LM
8.5	Board to provide feedback on BBC proposals	CEO
10.7	Questionnaires to be sent to Board members	Chair
11.3	Letter of congratulation to be sent to Newcastle Community Cinema Club	Chair
12.1	2014 Board dates to be emailed to Board members and observers	EB

Signed:

Date:

31 March 2014