

## **MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 24th September 2014**

**11am, Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

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

**Present:** Rotha Johnston (Chair), Adeline Dinsmore, Mike Catto, Jennifer Johnston, Fiona MacMillan, Aodán MacPóilin, Tim McKane, Arthur Scott (DCAL)

**Via Telephone:** Michael Kuhn

**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), Áine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Marie Shivers (minutes)

**Apologies:** Ian Parsley, Laurence McKeown, James Penny, Sinead McCartan

### **Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts were declared.

#### **1.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 17th June 2014**

1.1 The minutes of the June meeting were agreed and signed.

1.2 The CEO updated the Board on the status of action points noting that: further work is needed on the review of representation of women in the sector and this will be brought to the next meeting; the Chief Executive will write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport inviting him to visit Belfast to brief him on the work of the Creative Industries in Northern Ireland and invite him to a set visit of *Game of Thrones*; Chief Executive and Head of Production to discuss re-pitching production incentives in relation to covering crew costs for smaller budget films and therefore provide some protection against the current issue of crew shortages; minor works to the Ulidia Building had been carried out but there is still more to be done, and the Chairwoman will visit the building in due course; Tim McKane updated the Board on the recent digital workshop noting that it was a very positive meeting with a young, dynamic group. Tim will engage with the Marketing Department on developing the 'linked in' posts network.

All other action points were completed.

### **Chairwoman's business**

2.0 The Chairwoman updated the Board on the current re-appointments and recruitment of new members noting that the Minister's decision was pending. She is hoping to have an update for the December meeting.

- 2.1 The Chairwoman and Chief Executive were undertaking briefings with local MPs on the future of the BBC Charter renewal. She may call upon Board members to sit in on some of these meetings. The Chairwoman will also offer to brief Nelson McCausland in his new position as Chair of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee.
- 2.2 The Chairwoman has written to Sir Kenneth Branagh asking to meet and discuss his role as with Northern Ireland Screen Honorary President.
- 2.3 Four MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) have been launched by the BBC. These are four pilot series with GB universities. The Chairwoman has made contact with the Head of BBC Learning to arrange a meeting when she is next in Northern Ireland. Into Film are also launching a UK-wide MOOC on teacher training which could be NI specific too.
- 2.4 Arthur Scott noted that a digital platform was discussed at a recent learning forum which is aimed at a teaching audience. Arthur will liaise with Head of Education when more information is available.
- 2.5 The Chairwoman noted that James Penny was called away urgently and that his presentation will be pushed to the next Board meeting.

### **3.0 CEO Report**

- 3.1 The CEO reported to the Board that the initial roll out of recruitment for the Opening Doors Strategy was going well, with two out of the three new appointments made and the recruitment process for the final position beginning now.
- 3.2 The CEO briefed the Board on the Investment Report and stressed the developments in each sector: the ILBF and USBF are going well; the appointment of Donal Phillips has added energy and optimism to the digital/gaming sector; and the animation sector is buoyant with two second series projects expected to close this year.
- 3.3 The CEO updated the Board on the need for new sound stages, noting that he will be accompanying Titanic Quarter and Belfast Harbour representatives to meet Mark Huffam in Budapest to visit Korda Studios in the hope of moving forward a decision on the new sound stages build. Heads of Production and Marketing will also be visiting Los Angeles in October to explore the market place for possible future projects and Michael Kuhn has offered to accompany if necessary.
- 3.4 The CEO outlined the level of work which has been carried out to secure large scale projects and highlighted the availability of studio space as a barrier to securing a project immediately. The Board expressed concerns about the lack of a large-scale project and the impact this would have on delivering the strategy.



#### **4.0 Strategic Resource Committee update**

- 4.1 The Chairwoman updated the Board on forthcoming DCAL funding cuts, noting that the in-year reduction in DCAL funding has resulted in programmes of activity being cut based on timing rather than prioritisation. Key concerns are that further reductions for next year will be more serious, potentially impacting on core activity particularly at the Creative Learning Centres and Film Clubs and these areas require sustainable funding.
- 4.2 The key issue remains around whether the original baseline of £1.4m funding, or the additional £750k funding identified through the Zero Based Budget exercise, is agreed as the baseline. DCAL has funded Northern Ireland Screen since 2012 at more than £2m per annum and the continuation of the core activity around Creative Learning Centres, FilmClubs and Third Party Organisations is dependent on this level of funding.
- 4.3 It was agreed to arrange an earliest meeting with Peter May to inform the Department that planning and implementing changes needs to take place as soon as possible as the severity of original baseline cuts would have a major impact on strategic partners. It may also lead to the closure of FilmClubs in extended schools. The Board emphasised the need to communicate the potential implications to DCAL.
- 4.4 Full cuts in-year are now 12.6%. There is no further scope for funding to be reduced in-year without breaking funding agreements with Third Party Organisations.
- 4.5 Arthur Scott informed the Board that the Department continues to prioritise Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion (PETPSE) and this should be taken into consideration when preparing the planning assumptions for 2015-16 but ultimately the Minister will decide on the amount and where the cuts are made. Subject to the position being clearer, the Chairwoman will update the Board at the next meeting.
- 4.6 A confidential staff survey will be conducted to capture general feedback from staff.

#### **5.0 Finance, Audit and Governance**

- 5.1 The acting Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee reported to the Board. (This update will follow the CEO report in future Board meetings.)
- 5.2 The Committee focused on agreeing the 2014-15 internal audit plan and NIAO noted that security of IT systems was not on the plan. Work will be done in this area and noted in the assurance statements.

#### **6.0 Management Accounts to 31 August 2014**

- 6.1 The Management Accounts were approved by the Board.

## **7.0 Review of Risk Register**

- 7.1 DCAL and Invest NI funding remain the key issue on the register.
- 7.2 ILBF and USBF funding are currently red as we are nearing the renewal date for the funds. The General Election will impact on the timing and approach. CEO will follow up with Ian Parsley.
- 7.3 CLC expansion has been highlighted as a key risk if we receive large cuts to DCAL funding. This may not be appropriate following funding changes and will be reviewed again when drawing up the next Risk Register.

## **8.0 Bi-Annual Assurance Statement**

- 8.1 The Chairwoman noted the revised wording of this Statement. The Board considered the detail of the Bi-Annual Assurance Statement. Following a query about Single Tender Actions, the Head of Finance confirmed that we had carried out a small number, all had been approved by the CEO and that we report to the Department regularly on these. The Board requested that the Audit and Risk Committee would review these as part of its remit.
- 8.2 The Statement was agreed and signed.

## **9.0 Committee Updates**

- 9.1 ILBF - Áine Walsh informed the Board that a new ILBF Officer would be starting next week and would undergo a two week handover.
- 9.2 Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund - In Ian Parsley's absence the CEO read out comments noting that the Committee had tightened up the definition of Ulster-Scots content for potential projects and we will be pursuing dialogue with other Ulster-Scots stakeholders.
- 9.3 Education Policy Working Group (EPWG) - Adeline Dinsmore noted her concerns at the potential DCAL cuts. She confirmed that the Inspection Report had been published and was available online. She was pleased with the latest Moving Image Arts results noting that this tremendous achievement was testament to great teaching.
- 9.4 Bernard McCloskey updated the Board on his and the CEO's very productive meeting with Clare Mangan at BELB and hoped for a follow-up meeting in January.
- 9.5 Skills Panel/Training - CEO noted the current issues around formalising and regulating apprenticeships within the screen industries. He noted the good relationship currently with DEL.

## **10.0 Any Other Business**

- 10.1 Aodán MacPóilin requested that BBC and Channel 4 submissions be re-presented to OFCOM.



10.2 The Chairwoman noted a request to move the September 2015 Board meeting back by two days. Marie Shivers will circulate details to members in due course.

#### 11.0 Education Presentation

11.1 Bernard McCloskey gave a presentation on the Creative Learning Centres and Education Strategy.

#### 12.0 Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The date of the next Board meeting will be Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

Point	Detail	To be actioned by
1.2	Further work to be done on the representation of women in the industry	CEO
1.2 & 7.2	CEO to write to the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, Sajid Javid, to brief on screen industries and invite to a set visit of <i>Game of Thrones</i>	CEO and Moyra Lock
1.2	Discuss production incentives in relation to covering crew costs for small budget films	CEO and Andrew Reid
1.2	Chairwoman to visit Ulidia Building	Chairwoman
1.2	Tim McKane to engage with Marketing Department on developing 'linked in' posts network	Tim McKane
2.1	Chairwoman to offer to brief Nelson McCausland as new Chair of CAL committee	Chairwoman
2.4	Arthur Scott to liaise with Education Section when more information is available on the new digital platform aimed at the teaching audience	Arthur Scott and Bernard McCloskey
2.5	James Penny's presentation on 'How the industry works' postponed to December Board meeting	James Penny
4.3	Seek urgent meeting with DCAL Permanent Secretary re potential outcome of funding cuts	CEO and Linda Martin
4.6	Confidential staff survey to be compiled for general feedback from staff	Linda Martin
5.1	A&R committee to report to the Board at top of the finance and governance section of the meeting	Marie Shivers
5.2	IT system security to be added to Assurance Statement	Elsie Brown
7.2	CEO to liaise with Ian Parsley re an approach to DCMS for future funding	CEO and Ian Parsley
7.3	Review CLC expansion when drawing up next Rick Register	Linda Martin
10.1	BBC and Channel 4 submissions to be re-presented to OFCOM	CEO
10.2	Re-schedule September 2015 Board meeting to alternative date	Marie Shivers

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

  
10/12/2014