

## **ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD**

(Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Minutes of a Board of Directors Meeting held on Thursday  
31 August 2017 at 9.30 a.m. at 182-188 Cambrai Street, Belfast

### **Present**

Mr J Perry	Chairman
Ms C Magill	Director
Mr T Hinds	Director
Mr D Mackay	Director
Mr A Bennett	Director
Dr G Adams	Director
Mr W Atkinson	Chief Executive
Mrs SJ Mowbray	Company Secretary/Head of Corporate Services
Mr A Savage	Head of Operations
Mr M O'Loan	Mercers (for Agenda Item 12)
Ms L Cochrane	Mercers

### **1. Conflicts of Interest**

Mr A Savage noted a perceived conflict of interest in relation to Agenda Item 12.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2017 and 27 June 2017**

Minutes were approved subject to some minor amendments.

### **3. Chairman's Business**

- An update was provided to members in relation to Departmental review of ALB
- The Chair is to meet with Departmental Officials in relation to appointment of new Board members in 2018
- Mercers to present options for future pension arrangements

### **4. Chief Executive's Report**

The Directors reviewed the Chief Executive's Report for **June and July** activity which had been circulated with Board papers. The following was noted:

#### **Continuous Improvement**

- We have now engaged a supplier to support the reaccreditation of ISO 9001:2015 standard; this process will include the full integration of ISO 1400:2015 and OHSAS 18001: 2007 both of which will be new accreditations

for USEL. It is planned that a full accreditation against all three standards would be complete by July 2018.

### **Circular Economy**

- We have now confirmed a new pilot mattress recycling project with Derry and Strabane Council will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> September.
- We have had confirmation of be awarded a recycling contract by Mid and East Antrim. This contract requires recycling operations across 5 work streams. This award covers a 3-year period with 1-year reviews. A full overview will be provided within the presentation regarding the acquisition of the proposed new site.
- We have also had further discussions with Belfast City Council regarding a tendering opportunity that will be issued in Sept. This new opportunity will require recycling operations across 5 work streams including carpet, furniture, mattresses, bicycles and cardboard.

### **New Business**

- We are now in preparation for the upcoming call for a new ESF funding. We have had a range of discussions with various partners, these include BCC, Mid and East Antrim and our sponsor department. This match funding component is critical to be able to submit a possible bid and will require the partner to provide a "letter of comfort" outlining bid support of approx. 25% of the total funding application.
- We have also received final contract award sign off for TFS and have now begun our recruitment of possible students. This process initiated with a TFS open day on the 10<sup>th</sup> August which in the main was well supported by staff and interested students.
- We are also awaiting the outcome of several high volume tenders - these relate to a bed tender for 1,200 units required by McAleer Rush to service the new student accommodation currently being constructed for Queens University and also a tender to 1,500 units per annum for the postal service in the Republic of Ireland. Both outcomes should be known within the next 4 weeks.

### **Environmental, Health and Safety**

- We can now confirm Usel have been successfully accredited to BS8555 having successfully completed the annual site audit. This accreditation will run until August 2018 and will further support the process of upgrading to ISO 14001.

## **5. Head of Corporate Services' Report**

### **a. Finance**

The Directors reviewed the summary financial position against budget, for **June**, and noted an operating surplus of £25k. Budget forecast for June was £13k surplus, therefore position is £12k over budget.

The Directors reviewed the summary financial position against budget, for **July**, and noted an operating deficit of £10k. Budget forecast for July was

£14k surplus, therefore position is £23k under budget. The deficit was due to increased costs: labour (£6k), skip hire (£6k) and repairs to building (£12k).

YTD we have delivered a surplus of £51k – the members noted this is a positive result.

#### **b. ICT**

- System development continues to support all areas of the factory, such as sales and production

#### **c. Business Development & Marketing**

- New website and promotional material continues to be developed
- Completion stages of Social Impact Survey
- Identifying and developing strategic partnerships e.g. Citizens Advice, Charles Hurst Group, Grand Opera House
- Staff communications continue to operate in line with our Internal Communications Plan

#### **d. HR / Business Improvement**

- Continued to develop new policies and training
- Leading process for ISO transition

Members noted they were content with presentation of information.

### **6. Head of Operations Report**

#### **a. Employment Services KPI Report**

The KPI Report circulated with Board papers was analysed and it was noted that YTD, for Workable, we are approximately £19k (surplus) better than budget. There are currently 296 participants on Workable NI.

ES and STRIDE are on budget.

The members note this is an excellent result.

#### **b. Manufacturing/Sales KPI Report**

The KPI Report circulated with Board papers was analysed and it was noted that in June, bedding sales were in line with budget.

In July, bedding sales was £8k under budget due to an issue with one customer which has now been resolved.

This results in a YTD position of sales in line with budget.

Industrial sewing for June and July is in line with sales budget. YTD, we are £2k over sales budget.

In June, mattress recycling was £3k over budget. In July, it was £2k over budget. YTD, we are £1k over budget.

Members noted they were content with presentation of information.

## **7. Adult Safe Guarding Issues**

No issues were reported to the Board.

## **8. Health & Safety**

Health & Safety forum is now operating on monthly basis.

## **9. Policies for Approval**

- a. The following policies were presented to the Board for review and approval in September Board:
  - i. Conflict of Interest Policy
  - ii. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
  - iii. Complaint Procedure

## **10. Perceived risks from the Risk Register**

The following are the top risks from the Risk Register:

- a) Financial risk due to loss of ESF funding
- b) Risks regarding Departmental approvals
- c) Impact of Brexit on EU funding

## **11. Proposal for new site**

The Chief Executive presented a proposal to the Board for a new site in Ballymena.

The Board approved the proposal in principle.

SMT will proceed with necessary submissions to the Department for approval.

## **12. Pension presentation**

Mercers presented options for future pension arrangements.

The Board recognised it is imperative to fundamentally review current pension arrangements.

## **13. Any Other Business**

The Chief Executive updated the Board in relation to the compulsory redundancy process.