

ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD

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

Minutes of a Board of Directors Meeting held on Wednesday 25 October 2017
at 10.30 a.m. at 182-188 Cambrai Street, Belfast

Present

Mr J Perry	Chairman
Mr T Hinds	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

Apologies

Mr D Mackay	Director
Ms C Magill	Director

1. Conflicts of Interest

None were noted.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2017

Minutes were approved.

Actions from September meeting were noted:

- CEO updated the Board in relation to DfC not providing a letter of comfort for the ESF bid, due to lack of Executive
- Paperless Board meetings – no further action
- Website link – to be presented on Friday 27 October
- Marketing resource – noted
- “User voice” – Business Development & Marketing Manager is working on this content
- Board induction training – agreed for 14 December 2017
- Attendance at CO3 events is for members only

Action: Risk register to be updated in relation to potential impact on staff of not being successful in ESF bid

Action: Further information to be provided in relation to VSC website

3. Chairman's Business

The Chair advised the Board of the following:

- PAU have been advised that Board members, whose term of office comes to an end in 2018, are prepared to extend their term, if required

- Update provided on recent serious incident regarding cashflow, which arose due to the fact that the Department did not transfer required funds in accordance with timetable
- Chairman is meeting with Ms S Russell (DfC) on 8 November 2017. A number of topics will be discussed, including Usel pension arrangements, cash flow incident and governance issues
- Usel have been successful in a World Green Award for Environmental Best Practice in Waste Management. The award is presented in Dubai. The Board support Usel representation at the award ceremony, subject to appropriate approvals and evidence of business need
- Karen Gilgunn was recognised as one of the top 50 individuals working for top organisations in Northern Ireland and received a personal achievement for “Empowering Belfast”

Action: Make arrangements for overdraft facility - ensuring appropriate controls are in place to mitigate against any future cashflow incidents

Action: Demonstrate business need and seek appropriate approvals for attendance at the presentation of World Award event

4. Chief Executive’s Report

The Directors reviewed the Chief Executive’s Report for **September** activity which had been circulated with Board papers. The following was noted:

- Comprehensive ISO gap analysis, regarding implementing a fully integrated quality, environmental and safety system, is now complete and report has been received. The next stage of the process is a formal review of the findings and a draft implementation plan agreed with owners and target dates.
- Confirmation received from McAleer Rushe, that Usel have been successful in securing an order for 1,200 units for the new student accommodation in Belfast. The entire order is due for delivery in April 2018, including a range of factored products. Members noted this is excellent result for the sales team within Usel as this is the largest single order ever successfully tendered for
- Confirmation received from the postal service within Republic of Ireland that we have been shortlisted with one other supplier to submit a “best and final price” for 4,000 post bag units. The result of the final stage of this tender should be communicated by the end of October
- Usel have been working with East Belfast Mission (EBM) on basis of an MOU. The MOU required Usel to recycle mattresses, in return for some capital equipment. EBM were required to sell Usel mattresses via their shops. Due to the significant increase in Usel work commitments, Usel have terminated the MOU. Appropriate discussions have taken place with EBM regarding the decision

5. Head of Corporate Services' Report

a. Finance

The Directors reviewed the summary financial position against budget, for **September**, and noted an operating surplus of £4k. Budget forecast for September was £4k surplus, therefore position is in line with budget.

YTD we have delivered a surplus of £75k – the members note this is a positive result. Budget forecast for YTD position, as at 30 September was a surplus of £24k. This is a positive variance of £51k.

NFI exercise is now complete. Approximately 30 invoices were identified for investigation. No issues arising.

Summary of post project evaluations was provided to the Board. Board were assured there is an effective compliance framework for projects in place.

Further detail was provided in relation to the serious cashflow incident, resulting from the Department failing to transfer funding as agreed/claimed

b. ICT

- ICT manager took the lead on project of relocating the Portadown office
- Assessed options for Board to operate on paperless model – no decision was taken
- Development of intranet following a number of focus groups. Work is ongoing in this area
- As a result of EPR process and feedback from focus groups, the ICT manager provided training on a variety of ICT packages, for internal staff, such as Microsoft Sharepoint, Usel Connect etc

Action: SJM to report on any ICT breaches

c. Business Development & Marketing

- Finalising content of website, such as the Corporate video
- Tender writing for new business development opportunities – ESF project; Interreg; and Co-Innovate
- Organising a range of staff events, such as the newsletter, Christmas breakfast and lunch

d. Compliance

- Co-ordinating manager responses to Balance Scorecard activity and ensuring it is presented effectively
- Taking the lead on implementing the Information Retention Policy e.g. agreeing timescales with managers for review of data held, identifying new paperless ways of working

- Management of ISO integration project – understanding the requirements of the transition, ensuring appropriate resources are in place for a smooth transition
- EFQM assessment now complete and improvement plan has been agreed with senior team

e. Procurement

- Planning for McAleer & Rushe – ensuring raw materials to arrive in line with production schedule
- Detailed assessment of stock levels to inform future purchases
- Development of procurement forms and policies is underway

6. Head of Operations Report

a. Employment Services KPI Report

The KPI Report circulated with Board papers was analysed and it was noted that Workable YTD, is approximately £63k better than budget.

STRIDE YTD is approximately £7k better than budget.

b. Manufacturing/Sales KPI Report

The KPI Report circulated with Board papers was analysed and it was noted that in September, bedding sales are better than budget by £16k.

This results in a YTD position of sales of £23k better than budget.

Industrial sewing for August was £4k under budget. YTD, we are £6k under budget.

In September, circular economy was £8k over budget. YTD, we are in line with budget.

7. Adult Safe Guarding Issues

No issues were reported to the Board.

8. Health & Safety

Health & Safety forum continues to operate on monthly basis.

9. Policies for Approval

- a. The following policies were approved:
- i. Conflict of Interest Policy
 - ii. Code of Conduct

- b. The following policies were presented to the Board for review and approval in November Board:
 - i. Redundancy Policy
 - ii. Drugs & Alcohol Policy

10. Perceived risks from the Risk Register

After discussion on the key risks, the following have been identified as the top risks from the Risk Register:

- a) Financial risk due to loss of ESF funding
- b) Risks regarding the timing of Departmental approvals e.g. resulting in cashflow incident
- c) Impact of Brexit on EU funding

11. Pension Update

DfC officials have indicated that they would not attend the pension meeting. The Chairman agreed to follow up on this. A brief meeting with Mercers to be scheduled for end of November 2017 for Board members and Pension Trustees.

12. Any Other Business

None