

## **ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD**

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

Minutes of a Board of Directors Meeting  
10.30, Wednesday 27 March 2019  
Cambrai Street, Belfast

### **Present**

Mr J Perry	Chairman
Mr T Hinds	Director
Mr D Mackay	Director
Ms C Magill	Director
Dr G Adams	Director
Mr A Bennett	Director
Mr W Atkinson	Chief Executive
Mrs SJ Mowbray	Company Secretary/Head of Corporate Services

### **Apologies**

#### **1. Conflict of Interest**

1.1. No perceived/actual conflicts of interest were noted.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2019**

2.1. Minutes from meeting on 27 February 2019 were approved.

2.2. Actions from previous meetings were noted as cleared:

- In relation to Intellectual Property (IP) and the KTP project – IP falls to the Company. An IP Agreement is signed off when the Associate starts;
- Minor amendments were made to Business Plan 2019-20 and was submitted to the Department;
- Following the March Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, the risk in relation to GMP Equalisation will be added to the risk register.

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

3.1. The Chairman updated members in relation to:

- The official opening of the new Ballymena site was a great success and press coverage has been significant;

- The draft report following the Tailored Review is on schedule for completion by the end of March;
- The Board confirmed the appointment of a Professional Trustee to the Usel Pension Scheme;
- The outsourced HR Business Partner is conducting a job evaluation process for the senior management team.

#### **4. Pension Scheme Update**

4.1. The Chair updated members in relation to:

- The Department have advised that the appointment of the actuary to review the benefit scheme re-design business case is delayed due to security clearance;
- Changes to the cash commutation factor during the 2018-19 financial year will impact on the Annual Accounts. Accounting treatment will be agreed with the external auditors;
- GMP Equalisation will also impact the 2018-19 Annual Accounts. The exact figure is yet to be determined as the calculation methodology is to be agreed by Pension Trustees. The Board recognises the liability which arises and awaits further advice from the Trustees regarding the exact amount;
- The Triennial Funding Review is almost complete, as at 5 April 2018. This process requires the Trustees to develop an Employers Covenant, which is at the initial stages.

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

5.1. The Directors reviewed the Chief Executive's Report which had been circulated with Board papers. The following was noted:

##### **Strategic Partnership Development**

5.2. Two new strategic partnerships are now confirmed. Firstly, a new partnership has been developed and agreed with the IFA Foundation. The aim of the partnership is to link work, positive physical and mental health with social inclusion. The key focus is to allow both partners to focus on key strengths within their current provision, in order to create an enhanced end user experience.

5.3. Secondly, a formal service level agreement with Belfast Met (BMC) has been agreed, to be their key disability partner. Usel will work with BMC in providing disability employment support for students progressing into work, having completed training and education.

## **New Business development**

- 5.4. Discussions are continuing with a new commercial partner in order to scope the provision of a baling service on the main Belfast site.
- 5.5. During the discussion's a number of opportunities have been identified, including operating a shared outcomes delivery model in which Usel would provide a range of out sourced baling and processing services.

## **Staff Engagement**

- 5.6. A review of Usel's values and behaviours has commenced. The current approach no longer represents the key behaviours that will support the ethos of the business going forward.
- 5.7. The review of the values will also allow for the redesign of the current performance management system. The current system does not fully support the effective assessment of performance across all areas of the business. At times, it can be overly complex to deliver across the production and circular economy areas of the business.
- 5.8. The review was in the form of a development day for the entire management team. A follow up session has been scheduled.
- 5.9. It is planned that an overview of the proposed amendments will be ready for review and comment at the April/May Board.

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

### **Finance**

- 6.1. The Directors reviewed the summary financial position against budget, for **February**, and noted an operating surplus of £42k. Budget forecast for **February** was £33k surplus, therefore there is a variance of £9k. We are therefore in line with our forecast.
- 6.2. YTD a surplus of £51k was noted. Budget forecast for YTD position, as at 27 **February** was a surplus of £72k, which is a £21k negative variance. Whilst outturn is largely in line with budget, there are two significant contributing factors: cover for long term sickness absence and the cost of living pay increase.
- 6.3. Any additional clarification requested by Board members was provided.

## **HR**

6.4. No substantive issues to note.

6.5. Usel are continuing to engage with its out-sourced HR business partner as required and monitor the contract spend each month.

## **ICT & Compliance**

6.6. In addition to delivering the ICT Strategy, recent activity included:

- Project management of the new internal intranet Unet, which will officially launch on 27<sup>th</sup> March to all staff. This will provide staff with an interactive handbook portal to use;
- Responded to questions from Invest NI regarding the Skills Growth Programme Outcome;
- Infrastructure work for the relocation of our Portadown office;
- Digital Mileage Solution is launching on 1<sup>st</sup> April and will digitalise the entire process. Staff are currently being trained and software installed on mobile devices. This will be applicable for all staff who claim business miles with a Company phone;
- Internal audit process now completed across IT, HR and Business Continuity;
- Usel showcased in a UK wide Webinar with DocuSign on the digitalisation of paper processes for our employment programmes.

6.7. There were no incidences of ICT Breaches to report.

## **Business Development and Marketing**

6.8. In addition to delivering the Communication Plan, recent activity included:

- Preparation and delivery of Ballymena Official Launch and associated press coverage – BBC Radio Ulster, Good Morning Britain, Q Radio, Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, Ballymena Guardian, Newsletter, Business First
- IFA and Better Leisure Centre Skills and Jobs Academy
- IFA Official Partnership Launch
- Drafting tender for café at Ecos Centre
- Submission to Belfast Business Awards – two entries: Social Enterprise and Environmental Impact.

6.9. Communications to staff continues to operate in line with plan. No issues or concerns have been raised.

## **Quality & Policy**

6.10. Recent activity included:

- Annual participant and employer surveys issued
- ETI Chief Inspectors Report disseminated for work-based learning and ESF
- Quality calendar for year being finalised to ensure good evaluation of programmes delivery

### **U.matter.**

- New Year New U continues
- Yoga block 2 finished with block 3 booked
- Lunch & Learn sessions on Nutritional and Sleep
- Inspire Workplaces running information sessions to encourage staff use of the Employee Assistance Programme
- Organised Management Team Volunteering Day – NI Hospice – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## **7. Chair of ARAC Update**

7.1. An update from the ARAC was provided to the Board, including:

- Pension issues were brought to the attention of the Committee;
- Risk register was reviewed in full;
- The MSFM is almost finalised and may be brought to April Board for approval.

## **8. Adult Safe Guarding Issues**

8.1. No new issues to report.

## **9. Health & Safety**

9.1. Health & Safety forum continues to operate on monthly basis.

## **10. ALB Bi-Annual Assurance Statement: October 2018 – March 2019**

10.1. The Board approved the ALB Bi-Annual Assurance Statement: October 2018 – March 2019.

## **11. Risk management**

11.1. The Board noted the changes to the risk register.

## **12. Policies for Approval**

12.1. The following policies were approved:

i. Car, Travel & Subsistence Policy v3

12.2. No policies were submitted for approval in April's Board.

## **13. Any Other Business**

13.1. None.

## **14. Date of Next Meeting**

14.1. 17 April 2019.