

**Business Isle of Man Agency
Board Meeting Minutes**

Date: Thursday 25th January 2024

Time: 14:00-16:00

Venue: Embassy Room, The British, North Quay, Douglas/MS Teams

INVITED ATTENDEES - VOTING MEMBERS			
Steve Pickett, Chair, Business Isle of Man	SP	Dr Michelle Haywood MHK, Political Member	MH
Tim Cowsill, CEO Of Business Isle Of Man, DfE	TC		
Alex Fray, Sector Champion, Biomed & Medicinal Cannabis	AF	Dave Hester, Sector Champion, Engineering & Manufacturing	DH
Ollie Neale, Sector Champion, Drink Production	ON	Findlay Macleod, Sector Champion, Food Production	FM
Ieda Yell, Sector Champion, CleanTech	IY	Brian Butler, Sector Champion, Construction	BB
Carol Glover, Sector Champion, Small Business & Entrepreneurship	CG	Scott Pearse, Sector Champion, Local Economy - Retail	SPe
Jamie Lewis, Sector Champion, Local Economy - Hospitality	JL	Andy Sanderson, Sector Champion, Local Economy - Retail	AS

INVITED ATTENDEES - NON-VOTING	
Mark Lewin, Chief Officer, Department for Enterprise	ML
Hira Modan, Marketing Manager, DFE	HM
Katy Ashwell, Business Development Co-Ordinator, DFE	KA

Please note all available members of the Business Agency Team are able to join on Teams to support where required.

Agenda item	Owner(s)
<p>Start: 14:05</p> <p>Chair's welcome and introduction to new board members</p> <p>Standing items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies - DH • Code of Conduct • Declarations of new/potential conflicts of interest <p>Decision paper BB20240126 - JL, FN, ON will step out of the meeting during these discussions and vote as the board members businesses are attending the event and would receive a potential financial benefit from the initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions to Gifts/Hospitality Register - none • Previous minutes to be signed off by board - October 2023 Board minutes - Subject to a couple of typing errors being 	SP

<p>corrected, the minutes were approved by the Board. - November 2023 Workshop Notes - were also approved.</p>	
<p>Papers for Decision</p> <p>TC updated the Board, ahead of consideration of the decision papers, on the Budget position and further explained the amounts for decision would be from existing revenue or underspend from other sectors.</p> <p>DH (not present) confirmed support for all three papers.</p> <p>BB20240125 Local Economy - Business Operational Cost Analysis</p> <p>MG presented the proposal, to complete a comprehensive review and analysis of operational costs associated with conducting business on the Isle of Man's high streets, compared to comparative regions of the UK. Following feedback that operating costs are often cited by businesses as a major concern and a number of businesses have closed, stating increased costs as the reason.</p> <p>Other comments from the Board were noted including high staffing costs, energy costs and rental costs for premises.</p> <p>It was discussed how the CACI report compared the Island to other regions. Some board members were of the opinion that not all of those used face similar challenges. The importance of considering regions with comparable population densities, along with similar logistics and freight cost challenges such as logistics was discussed.</p> <p>TC confirmed that whichever organisation was appointed to carry out the research would have substantial UK data and be capable of recommending those valid comparisons. The board will have opportunity to review the brief.</p> <p>MG explained that the perception from multiples is that operating costs are higher on the Island. The results of this report will substantiate this and confirm where the costs are and equally, are not as high. Board approval was granted and the next step is to run the quick quote aligned with the completion of the Local Economy Strategy.</p> <p>ML added that as there is current debate around the local economy, this was an essential initiative that will provide key data to support the strategy.</p> <p>MH also confirmed her role on a Tynwald Committee, to review the Sea Services Agreement and freight costs would be considered as part of the review.</p> <p>Other comments from the Board included how external businesses can struggle to understand why things cost more here and having the comparison data would be useful. A board member agreed that this work should build insights and an evidence base, but the real value will come from the actions that come off the back of the report. If it will be used to make effective policy change then it is a good idea. A board member asked</p>	<p>MG</p>



what methodology would be used to collect the data. MG confirmed that it would be up to the supplier, as noted above, as they will likely have other data available. TC added that they would also ask businesses to take part in the project, which ideally needs to come from external parties rather than Government.

A board member observed that smaller retailers have issues managing stock levels since the change in mail services and are having to keep more stock in. They asked how the costs related to this would be captured. MG replied that there are always other factors, some of these will be included.

It was agreed that the Quick Quote Brief would be shared with board members ahead of submission (ACTION MG)

Vote: yes (unanimous)

BB20240126 Island Wide Footfall Tracking Solution - Update Paper

MG presented this paper, which was originally brought to the board 6 months ago. At that time it was rejected, as the costs were too high, the recommendation was to go back to the supplier and reduce the scope.

It has now been agreed that £50,000 financing from BERP can be put towards this project and the supplier has been approached again for a revised 2 and 3 year cost for 8 cameras. The contribution from revenue is £12k, split over two years in addition to the £50k from BERP.

TC outlined the importance of having this data alongside the Local Economy Strategy as a means of measuring the current position and future success of growth initiatives.

MG

It was asked whether the additional cameras would integrate with the existing ones in Douglas, MG confirmed this would be the case and the data combined and that the cameras would track footfall only, and not the demographics of people. TC added that the data will also be benchmarked against the UK and other factors such as weather will be noted.

A board member questioned whether two years is a long enough term and what would happen after that time. TC replied that there wasn't an obvious saving for adding a third year. MG added there would be room to negotiate once board approval has been granted. SP suggested that as part of the negotiations whether an extension cost, without commitment, could be locked in at this stage.

A brief discussion followed around the locations of the cameras in the proposed towns. MG advised that discussions would be held with the trading groups and board members to confirm locations, taking into consideration any recommendations from the suppliers. MG added that the aim is for a quick turnaround of this project to get the trackers in place and start collecting the data as soon as possible.



<p><u>Vote: yes (unanimous)</u></p> <p>BB20240126 Isle of Man Food and Drink Showcase</p> <p>The Board Member for Food provided a Food & Drink Export Group update for the board including that the International Food and Drink Event (IFE) is on in London in on 25th - 27th March, and the intention to run a showcase event nearby for buyers to meet our suppliers.</p> <p><i>JL, ON, FM left the room due to COI</i></p> <p>TC explained that this has been brought to the board, as the allocated Food and drink budget would be exceeded based on holding the showcase. The request is that the additional funds would be taken from unallocated funds elsewhere within the existing revenue budget.</p> <p>In response to who would be sending the invites. TC explained the plan is to send formal invites from the Minister, noting who had recommended the invitee. A discussion followed around the mechanism and best approach to sending these invites.</p> <p>The importance of making this a quality event was discussed, with the key aim to showcase our local producers and the Island as a whole, TC confirmed that Visit IOM had agreed to support the event.</p> <p><u>Vote - Yes (unanimous)</u></p> <p><i>JL, ON, FM returned to the room</i></p>	<p>RG</p>
<p>Initial Briefing:</p> <p>Chair -</p> <p>SP provided update noting: Publication of the Programme for 2024 Manx Menu launch on the 5th Feb Innovation Challenge 2024</p> <p>It was raised at the last DfE Cross Agency Meeting that should there be some form of remuneration/subsistence costs for board members. SP asked the board for their views on this.</p> <p>Board members thanked for the offer but broadly felt that the costs of attending board meetings were minimal and this was not necessary. There were also concerns about the amount of administration that would be involved. TC noted that this could be an annual payment to reduce the administrative burden.</p> <p>MH observed that there are situations where the expenses (for example childcare) would make it prohibitive for some people to volunteer and this should be mitigated.</p>	<p>SP</p>



<p>The board agreed and that an optional approach would be the best solution, although it was likely that not many members would apply.</p> <p>TC/KA to take proposal for an optional annual remuneration amount for board members back to CALT and the Department for inclusion in the Agencies Governance Manual. (ACTION TC/KA)</p> <p>DfE Chief Officer- ML provided an update on the other agencies activities and the wider Department developments. All four agencies have now submitted their 2023 reviews and 2024 programmes.</p> <p>Finance IOM have recruited for an on-ground presence in South Africa. Digital are attending ICE in February and have applied for their AI project to create a knowledge hub for the business community to access skills to get best out of AI. Visit are preparing for the arrival of the British Guild of Travel Writers. ML suggested the itinerary be shared with the board.</p> <p><i>(Update: this was shared by email 1/2/24)</i></p> <p>The Minimum Wage committee is an ongoing piece of work. The impact to businesses needs to be understood, as does the need to be fair socially. With Work permits the suspension was stalled and now being reframed as a means to improve the process for employers and applicants. This is expected to progress in February.</p> <p>An Air Services review is ongoing in parallel with the sea services agreement and long-term consideration needs to be given. A board member stressed the importance for flights connectivity for businesses and not just tourism. ML agreed, confirming the Heathrow and City routes have been cemented by Government and the need to get the balance between the low cost routes for residents and the frequency and certainty required by businesses. There are further plans for focus groups and in Feb/March, there will be sessions held with industry, as these groups were last run in 2020.</p> <p>TC added that Skills Board Reps would be presenting at the February BIOM Board Meeting.</p> <p>The Budget for 24/25 is due to be announced and ML confirmed the agencies will see an increase in revenue.</p> <p>ML concluded by thanking the board, referencing the recently released Covid report, noting it reflects the challenges faced and reads well on the work done by the Department. TC noted the work done by Construction IOM was referenced in the review positively.</p>	<p>ML</p> <p>TC</p>
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<p>CEO of Business Agency;</p> <p>TC expressed thanks to the team and board for the work in December to get the Business IOM 2024 programme published on time.</p> <p>The Local Economy Strategy continues to be a large portion of MG’s workload and the input from earlier discussions during this meeting was particularly useful.</p> <p>E&M review- the first round of interviews are now being held with businesses and the report is expected to be available at the end of February. Following this report a future strategy will be developed. The engagement from businesses was also noted and appreciated by the Board. .</p> <p>In relation to Medicinal Cannabis TC is pushing hard those colleagues in UK for concluding matters with regard to the MOU and with the MHRA. (Update - on 26/01 a draft was received following a call along with the confirmation that the IOM will be prioritised for inspections)</p> <p>A Board discussion followed asking for a broader explanation as to what the current situation is, and the critical next steps with Medicinal Cannabis progress on the island. An update was provided by a board member, who noted frustrations with a particular planning issue. An action was suggested to request a letter from the Minister explaining the issue and recommended solutions that could expedite the process going forward.</p> <p><i>(Update: CEO OF Business has now received an update from planning on the particular application.)</i></p> <p>TC went on to explain that there is a piece of work ongoing to understand the situation with commercial properties that are potentially available to interested businesses.</p> <p><i>ML left 15:31</i></p>	
<p>Marketing Update</p> <p>HM provided a marketing update. In reference to the social media stats, it was noted these are positive, and encouragement was offered from the Board to keep the messaging going.</p> <p><i>AF left 15:45</i></p> <p>HM reminded the board of the Events Calendar available on Teams and to advise if any member wishes to attend any of the events listed.</p> <p><i>FM left 15:49</i></p>	<p>HM</p>
<p>Local Economy Strategy Policy Pillars</p>	<p>MG</p>

<p>SP recommended that due to time constraints a follow up meeting is arranged to cover this agenda item.</p> <p><i>(Update: Meeting arranged for 2/2/24)</i></p>	
<p>Standing Item: AOB</p> <p>A board member requested a copy of the papers decision log. It was agreed this can be shared on Teams (action KA)</p> <p>A board member requested an update on the findings from business development meetings. TC advised a dashboard is being worked on as part of the development of the new CRM system. Testing is planned in the next couple of months, prior to launching the new CRM system.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Meeting Close 16:00</p>	<p>SP</p>