

**INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND**  
**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM**  
**MINUTES 2024**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024  
Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024  
Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024  
Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Mel Chittock

Attendees: Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper;  
Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> Apologies received from Steve Harper who will join the meeting late. There were no conflicts with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 5 <sup>th</sup> December were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.  Productivity Programme Team – ELT to consider any suitable staff members and forward names to BD by end of week.  Caseworks – MC to provide update following discussion with Chair.	
4.	<b><u>ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance)</u></b> Paddy Robb (PR) attended the meeting to present an update on the ESG scorecard providing an overview of progress against the 2023/24 agreed Action Plan and to outline the draft 2024/25 Action Plan. PR presented the scorecard, as of December 2023, focussing on two areas – carbon literacy and real living wage.  PR confirmed that ESG Carbon Literacy training for all staff will be rolled out in February. PR asked that ELT and Directors commit to undertaking accredited training which is delivered over 2 half days. PR stated that to achieve accreditation participants create their own individual or group actions to reduce carbon emissions.  PR stated that the proposed training is about raising knowledge and awareness around the organisation. BD asked if the training can be set in terms of what the organisation is trying to achieve. The group agreed that ELT and Directors should undertake this more in-depth training and will be their responsibility to carry the message forward.  BD highlighted that there is a lot of training currently underway and referred to a	

	<p>previous training calendar for the organisation and asked if this could be reinstated.</p> <p><b>Action: PL to ask L&amp;D team to produce training calendar.</b></p> <p>PR then referred to the Real Living Wage target. PR stated that the recent increase to the Real Living Wage has implications on current and future pay scales within the organisation and guidance is currently being sought from the Department for Finance. PR felt that the organisation should lead by example.</p> <p>PR highlighted the key areas and themes that are proposed to bring forward next year.</p>	PL
5.	<p><b>KPI Update</b></p> <p>The Corporate Information Team (CIT) attended the meeting to present this item.</p> <p>DD opened the discussion stating that the team will provide an update on where we are in the 2023 KPI process. DD wished to make the group aware that the cohort of businesses is declining significantly, this is the smallest sample size in 10 years. DD emphasized that the completion of this important exercise will require active leadership and management at Executive Director level.</p> <p>BD reflected the need to recognise that many staff have been moved into other roles, which will have an impact on the completion of this exercise.</p> <p>CIT provided an overview of the value of the KPI process and how the information is used across a broad range of areas. Increasing the completion rate and undertaking detailed validation adds to the quality and value of the KPI process. The group discussed the percentage rate of returns and the timeframe for completion of this exercise.</p> <p>MC asked colleagues for commitment from their respective teams to ensure this invaluable process has buy-in. ELT committed to ensuring their teams would follow up with clients to encourage a timely response to the survey.</p> <p>MC asked CIT to keep ELT and respective Executive Directors updated on progress.</p> <p><b>Action: DD to keep ELT updated on progress.</b></p>	DD
6.	<p><b>Car Parking</b></p> <p>JF referred to his tabled paper, the purpose of which is to propose an updated policy approach to INI provision of car parking and to make a recommendation on the way forward.</p> <p>The group discussed the paper including the allocation of spaces within HQ and the expenditure cap, which will be reviewed each year.</p> <p>ELT agreed with the proposal tabled and it was agreed that an update be provided to staff via Newsweekly in respect of expenses claims.</p> <p><b>Action: JF/PL/PH to prepare update.</b></p> <p>Steve Harper joined the meeting.</p>	JF/PL/PH
7.	<p><b>Post Project Evaluation (PPE)</b></p> <p>MC referred to the tabled paper which highlights where the organisation is on</p>	

	<p>completion of PPEs and asked ELT colleagues to ensure there is a push to complete this exercise.</p> <p>JF confirmed that staff are working hard to complete by 31<sup>st</sup> January.</p> <p>BD indicated that the Audit Committee and the Board will review and it is imperative that we aim to have all PPEs completed by end of the month.</p> <p>As this is another priority area of focus for the organisation, JF asked if there was capacity for other staff within the organisation to complete the PPEs.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT members agreed to consider and raise if support could be provided.</b></p>	ELT
8.	<p><b><u>Board Workshop - Business Strategy</u></b></p> <p>Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to present this item.</p> <p>GMcN took the group through the proposed format and agenda for the forthcoming workshop which has been approved by the Strategic Resources Committee. The group discussed the high-level objectives and the key areas of focus for the session.</p> <p>Any final feedback to be provided to GMcN before end of week.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p>	
9.1	IDM letters – MC provided an update.	
9.2	January Board agenda – The group reviewed the agenda for the next Board meeting. PH stated he would circulate his presentation/paper prior to the meeting.	PH
9.3	Energy Efficiency Scheme – JF informed the group that this has progressed through DfE and is now with DoF for approval. JF asked if it is possible to commence with the communication/resourcing to be ready for April launch.	JF/PL
	<b>Action: JF and PL to discuss</b>	
9.4	A2F – BD flagged that he will be bringing a paper for presentation on some oversight changes to Access to Finance funds.	
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>6<sup>th</sup> February 2024</p>	

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;  
Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> No apologies received. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Welcome &amp; Introduction</u></b> KD opened the meeting stating that it was a great honour and privilege to join Invest NI and wished to record the organisations and ELTs gratitude to MC for his leadership over the last two years and on a personal note wished to acknowledge MCs guidance and advice in his first week.  KD wished to also thank ELT colleagues for the bilateral meetings over the last week and looks forward to meeting their individual teams and visits to the regional offices. KD laid out his short-term priorities for the next number of months.  In terms of working as a leadership team, KD would like the Executive Team to embrace the concept of collective cabinet responsibility and explained how this process works.	
3.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 9 <sup>th</sup> January were approved and will be published online.	
4.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.  PPEs – JF to come back with proposal on what can be achieved.	JF
5.	<b><u>Replacement MyINI Customer Portal</u></b> AMcK provided an overview of the purpose of the MyINI customer portal to aid KD's understanding of how the organisation engages with its customers. The portal currently operates on open source which is coming to the end of its life span and will now move to a software as a Service (SaaS) approach.  AMcK indicated that a paper has been previously presented and approved for a 7-	

	<p>year scheme. However, on reflection, and on advice from the Economist Team, the recommendation is to go with a 10-year scheme. There will be break clauses included and therefore with this increased cost it will now require DoF approval.</p> <p>The portal is considered to be a crucial element in the digital transformation efforts of the organization, and it has been identified as a priority by the Board. AMcK confirmed that they are currently in the final stages of preparing the business case for the portal. The request made today is to acknowledge a long-term financial commitment and to agree that once the business case is finalized, it will go through the usual processes and be presented to DfE and DoF for further review and approval.</p> <p>BD stated that this will be a fundamental change to how the organisation acquires tech going forward. The final outcome is the business case will go through the approval process and then be presented to the ELT Finance meeting for a final determination on its affordability and approval to proceed as appropriate.</p> <p>KD queried the level of utilisation of the portal and any client / user feedback. AMcK stated that all clients are required to create a portal log on (around 4-5k customers). MC remarked that this will provide the desired digital interaction we aim for in the future. BD stated there is a parallel link in task and finish in terms of how we interact with our customers.</p> <p>The group discussed how a future portal could be used for the organisation's customers. BD expressed that there is a need to manage expectations in terms of what the organisation can afford and deliver.</p> <p>ELT approved the updated affordability statement as presented.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Hybrid Working</u></b></p> <p>PL provided background to hybrid working within the organisation laying out the discussion at a previous meeting and the agreement reached. PL provided feedback/challenges received and stated that it is essential this issue be reviewed on a regular basis. This led to a comprehensive discussion by the Executive Leadership Team.</p> <p>The group agreed that the feedback provided reflects what is being heard from their staff. AMcK felt that there has been a definite uptake in attendance in the office since the Christmas period. The group reflected on what was happening in the wider public service and within some sectors in business.</p> <p>There was a discussion, with the main points summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any changes could be seen as unfairly penalising staff who are attending the office forty-percent of the week.</li> <li>• examples of some normalised behaviours.</li> <li>• if the organisation wants to move the culture in a positive direction it needs to ensure that staff are in office on a more regular basis.</li> <li>• essential that staff are updating diaries to capture their location and activity and this needs to be overseen by line management.</li> <li>• There is no evidence of a drop in productivity, standards or lack of engagement as a consequence of hybrid working.</li> <li>• there is an opportunity to make the 2-day office based working</li> </ul>	

	<p>experience better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concerns over possibility of losing technical staff.</li> </ul> <p>Following discussion it was agreed to continue with the forty percent / 2-days in the office hybrid operating model subject to ongoing review, the needs of the business and the requirements of future strategy. The group debated an 'anchor day' for the organisation and agreed this should be tied in with corporate organisational activities.</p> <p>In closing, it was agreed that ELT members would continue discussions with teams on hybrid working and that staff should use Outlook to keep track of their location and tasks.</p>	
7.	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>	
7.1	Productivity Development Tool – DD provided an update indicating that Grant Thornton was commissioned to carry out a piece of work on behalf of INI, DfE and DoF and are currently preparing a position paper.	
7.2	Forthcoming Casework – JF asked colleagues, in response to a forthcoming casework, if they can respond in a timely manner to help the project complete in this financial year should it be approved.	
7.3	Employee Ownership – JF provided an overview of a recent meeting he had attended where he had been informed of a model called "employee ownership" and hopes to attend a future meeting to learn more.	
7.4	Regional Split – BD raised the topic of regional split and felt it may be an opportune time to have a conversation on what the split should be. The group discussed recent debate on this topic.	
7.5	Conversational AI – SH asked if the organisation has a team looking at 'conversational AI' as this may have benefits for the organisation in terms of interrogation of our data. BD stated that there was a small team looking at AI. AMcK commented that he will ask the digital team to carry out some research.	<b>AMcK</b>
7.6	Comms - AMcK wished to put on record his thanks to PH and his team for the updates made to the Invest NI 2-minute Update ezine.	
7.7	IR Action Plan – KD stated that he would like this to be a standing item on the weekly ELT meeting agenda going forward to keep on top of progress against the various actions.	
7.8	Resourcing – KD stated that PL has briefed him on requests for further resourcing. These additional headcount requirements are quite substantial. KD believes that these requests need to be re-evaluated in the context of future strategy, any associated organisational restructuring and areas of vulnerability, increased workload and specialist skill needs. The organisation also needs to demonstrate that it is fully utilising all existing resources. KD asked that those resource asks relating to areas of increased workload or vulnerability e.g., progressing commitments under the Action Plan, City & Growth Deals, HR, IT and Finance & Assurance, client facing etc. be identified and progressed to business case stage.	

	<p>The group touched on the resourcing required to deliver the Action Plan and if deferring any immediate decision that resourcing will need to be found from other parts of the organisation.</p> <p>JF asked if posts that funding have from outside the organisation can be progressed. KD asked colleagues to prepare a list of mission critical posts with some narrative as to why they are critical. This will be the basis for progressing these requests in the short-term.</p> <p><b>Action: <i>ELT to provide lists to PL</i></b></p>	<p><b>ELT</b></p>
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b> 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024</p>	



**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;  
 Alan McKeown

Apologies: Steve Harper; Paula Logue

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		<b>Action Assigned to</b>
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> Apologies received from Steve Harper and Paula Logue There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 6 <sup>th</sup> February were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.  Caseworks – MC to forward copy of delegations paper to KD.	<b>MC</b>
4.	<b><u>Feedback from Discussion with Minister Murphy</u></b> KD briefed the group on his introductory meeting with the new Economy Minister, Conor Murphy, MLA  KD indicated that the interaction was friendly, constructive, and warm. Minister Murphy set out his agenda and spoke of the important role Invest NI plays in the overall economic development of Northern Ireland and the importance he also attaches to the organisation's reform agenda.  KD briefed the group on the forthcoming speech to be made by the Minister and the group discussed some of the finer points within the speech.  AMcK shared detail around a potential Shared Island Fund announcement.	
5.	<b><u>IR Action Plan Update</u></b> KD stated that the group need to keep track, as a collective, on which actions individual members of ELT are responsible for and progress against same.  MC shared feedback on the recent IOG meeting commenting that the Department provided feedback on the level of assurance it was receiving on progress against the individual actions.	

	<p>Following this meeting, the PMO team have implemented several actions including a RAG status report. The organisation needs to be able to demonstrate that it is making progress against the actions.</p> <p>BD asked if the RAG document was necessary given this is a duplication of information already held in the system. MC acknowledged this, indicating that the software used does not allow for the information to be extracted in a format that is useful. BD asked if there is any way to use the system to extract this information that would be his appeal. KD commented that this could be raised at the next IOG meeting.</p> <p>The group discussed the RAG status on some of the actions and KD asked that action owners ensure the RAG status accurately reflects the current position. BD mentioned that the primary concern remains regarding the allocation of resources.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Organisational Innovation</u></b></p> <p>KD asked the group how the organisation goes about innovating internally, for example, how would it develop a new programme, proposition, or product. Is there an existing process that is sub optimal – too resource intensive or time consuming and could be done better? KD believes in doing things simply and reducing the burden on staff.</p> <p>JF shared a couple of examples namely the development of a new programme and how the IRD Division works on a problem. JF reflected that it is back to how we empower the staff who are facing the challenges on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>AMcK referred to previous transformation processes from which there are lessons to be learnt. There is an opportunity to develop a clear strategy of what and how we are going to improve and drive that through. AMcK used the example of digitisation. DD felt that most of the innovation comes from the ground up.</p> <p>KD outlined a process he would like to put in place. He would like the leadership team to identify challenges/problems, identify staff who are innovative, solution orientated or problem solvers and task them to come up with a solution. KD stated that he would like to trial this approach on the casework process.</p> <p>The group discussed the process including the current bandwidth of staff. Following debate the group agreed to trial the process.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Ministerial engagement/announcements</u></b></p> <p>PH confirmed that the Head of Press had met with the Minister's team to discuss this topic. PH provided an overview of the areas discussed and the availability of the Minister to assist Invest NI with engagements and announcements.</p> <p>PH stated that the Comms Team will put a process in place and asked that staff engage with his team in the first instance on any potential involvement of the Minister.</p>	

8.	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>	
8.1	Legal Adviser – BD confirmed the new Legal Adviser is now in situ.	
8.2	Regional Paper – The group discussed the process of papers going to Board and it was agreed KD would speak with Chair regarding this paper.	<b>KD</b>
8.3	Future Medicines Institute – JF and KD to discuss.	<b>JF/KD</b>
8.4	NILGA – AMcK provided feedback from his session with NILGA. AMcK will thank them for their time and suggest a more regular meeting with Councillors.	
	<b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b> 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p><b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b></p> <p>No apologies received.</p> <p>There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> February were approved and will be published online.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b></p> <p>All outstanding actions were discussed.</p> <p>Casework – Current action will be closed as we await the outcome of the project team work. DD asked about the composition of SECC and MC confirmed this would also be reviewed by the project team. AMcK raised an issue around reports being produced solely for SECC and it was agreed this would also be included in the project review.</p> <p><b>Action: AMcK to provide MC with copy of paper referred to.</b></p> <p>BD raised an important point regarding consistency and transparency of case papers as they progress through the approval process. KD stated if ELT colleagues have specific issues that they would like the project team to include in their consideration to forward to KD/MC.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT to forward any specific issues to KD/MC.</b></p> <p>PPEs – action is now closed. JF agreed to share with Economist Team.</p> <p><b>Action: JF to provide copy of response shared to DD for the Economist Team.</b></p>	<p><b>AMcK</b></p> <p><b>ELT</b></p> <p><b>JF</b></p>
4.	<p><b><u>IR Action Plan Update</u></b></p> <p>MC referred to a high-level summary document and agreed to share with colleagues.</p> <p><b>Action: MC to circulate strategic actions status document.</b></p>	<b>MC</b>

	<p>MC indicated that the organisation is making good progress on a number of the actions, SA22 and SA33 in particular. Since the last IOG meeting a number of structures have been put in place such as roles/responsibilities, governance etc. The roles/responsibilities document will be issued to all action owners to ensure clarity. The PMO team have also developed the risk register module and are currently investigating if monthly templates can be lifted from the system to reduce duplication.</p> <p>MC confirmed that an interdependencies paper has been prepared and there are a number of challenges across a number of the actions. MC stated that a number of the projects are in danger of moving to red such as the reorganisation and policy work.</p> <p>KD shared some feedback received and it was agreed to meet with DfE leads in advance of the next IOG meeting.  <b>Action: KD and MC to meet with DfE colleagues.</b></p> <p>JF highlighted that there is client facing training on Alternative Sources of Finance, which is one of the actions, and confirmed that the organisation has just had positive news that the Shared Prosperity Funding has been approved, which will provide funding for some of those roles. It would be good to announce that we will be advertising these roles at the training session.</p> <p>To conclude the conversation, KD asked if colleagues had any particular comments regarding the individual tasks assigned to them.</p> <p>BD reflected that whilst the organisation has hit some of the targets around the action plan the delivery of the outcomes requires further discussion. DD shared some insight around engagement with the Department around a 'Good Jobs' and the Minister's other economic priorities.</p>	KD/MC
5.	<p><b><u>Invest NI Business Strategy Update</u></b>  Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to discuss this agenda item.</p> <p>KD opened the discussion by thanking GMcN and colleagues for all the work carried out to date on the strategy. GMcN reflected that the first narrative draft now needed to take into account the Minister's new Economic Vision and four objectives namely Good Jobs, Regional Balance, Productivity and Reduced Carbon Emissions.</p> <p>GMcN asked if ELT were broadly content with the strategic priorities as laid out in the draft document, which have been slimmed down to better reflect the Minister's priorities. There were no objections raised.</p> <p>The group discussed the priorities for inclusion and those areas that they felt have been omitted from the draft document. In discussing some of the detail, there was consensus that the organisation needs to agree the strategy first which will be followed by form and function and not to dive in to the detail on delivery at this stage.</p> <p>GMcN asked for a view on the People &amp; Culture input. PL believes that the</p>	

	<p>strategic plan should come first, followed by the structure and then the HR strategy. PL's team is currently focusing on this process and will continue to do so, in order to develop a workforce plan that supports the overall strategy. While PL is content with the current progress, decisions cannot be made too far in advance until the overall strategy is finalised.</p> <p>The group discussed Dual Market Access. SH stated that this is both a concern and an opportunity that affects everything in Northern Ireland and is one of the biggest opportunities for the region. SH felt there was still a lot of confusion in the marketplace about how to take advantage of it or how to overcome the problems affecting businesses. SH also felt the Dual Market Access piece very much focuses on inward investment as opposed to how locally owned business can maximise the opportunity.</p> <p>KD asked ELT colleagues if they felt the document is directionally correct in relation to the strategic priorities they are proposing, the overall narrative and set of messages that are included in this draft. ELT were content with this first draft but there were areas to further discuss.</p> <p>The group reflected on the regional target debate and it was felt that the organisation needed to start to shape that narrative within its corporate documentation.</p> <p>KD shared his initial thoughts on the first draft indicating that it was very policy led-and would like to see more emphasis on the business, clients, sectors, challenges and opportunities that firms are managing and their expectations of Invest NI and how the organisation can help them. KD indicated that the strategy should paint a picture about what Invest NI does as an organisation, what we propose to do and focus on over the next three years.</p> <p>In closing, KD asked colleagues to share any comments on the document with the drafting team.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT members to provide feedback to GMcN.</b></p>	ELT
6.	<p><b><u>New Economic Strategy - Policy Considerations</u></b></p> <p>Maureen McGuigan (MMcG) and Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to discuss this agenda item.</p> <p>MMcG referred to the tabled paper stating that the organisation issued interim guidance back in January, following discussions with the Department. This guidance now requires updating to include the Minister's Economic Vision and to provide practical measures for staff. Decisions are now required on the approach to four specific areas as laid out in the tabled document. MMcG spoke to each of the four objectives.</p> <p>The group debated Invest NI's use of financial employment support to support jobs above the Real Living Wage (RLW) and Invest NI's previous focus on delivering jobs which paid above the NI Private Sector Median (PSM).</p> <p>KD asked how staff at the frontline interacting with clients would perceive the organization adopting the RLW while maintaining the PSM. JF believed it may be</p>	

	<p>seen as lowering standards, but also agreed that flexibility is necessary to effectively address the issue. SH suggested that sending a clear message that the organization will not endorse any jobs paying below the RLW would be well-received.</p> <p>MC reflected that there could be a potential downside if there is an increase in the number of projects with lower salaries being offered, which poses a risk.</p> <p>KD asked the group if they were content to sign up to what is proposed in terms of the RLW, promoting Regional Balance (subject to further discussion), Productivity and Net Zero. ELT agreed with the proposed paper with a number of changes.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Board actions and March agenda</u></b></p> <p>Trevor Connolly (TC) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>TC presented the agenda for the upcoming March meeting, which will mark the new Chair's first time leading the group. The group discussed the next steps following the decisions made during February's board meeting.</p>	
8. 8.1	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>Access to Finance Governance Arrangements – BD referred to the tabled paper recently presented to the Governance Council. BD asked if colleagues were content with the recommendation and rationale presented.</p> <p>BD outlined how he saw the process working and the group discussed their concerns including the lack of experience by ELT members to manage a fund and what good practice looks like. There was also a concern regarding the limited number of people who will be available to carry out this task and the bandwidth to undertake this work.</p> <p>KD asked that he be provided with a schematic of what the new committee group would look like and that BD also share an example of the reports. KD asked that this be tabled for further discussion.</p> <p><b>Action: BD to share schematic and example report.</b></p>	BD
8.2 8.3	<p>Investment Zones – JF referred to paper shared with ELT colleagues. The group discussed and agreed the paper should not be shared more widely at this time.</p> <p>Communications – PH reminded colleagues to provide notification of marketing and communications requests for the upcoming year and asked Teams to promptly respond.</p>	ELT
8.4	<p>Performance Management – PL provided an update on the completion rate of mid-year reviews and asked colleagues to remind teams to complete any outstanding reviews and to notify the P&amp;C team once completed.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT members to cascade to Divisions.</b></p>	ELT

8.5	<p>Finance Information – BD briefed the group on a recent request. BD suggested this should be discussed at the next O&amp;L meeting.</p> <p><b>Action: <i>BD to share the request with KD.</i></b></p>	<b>BD</b>
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>23 April 2024</p>	



**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;  
Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> No apologies received. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 5 <sup>th</sup> March were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.	
4.	<p><b><u>Ambition to Grow Pilot Extension</u></b></p> <p>AMcK discussed a tabled paper and gave a brief summary of its contents, focusing on the Ambition to Grow (ATG) pilot program for new businesses working with Invest NI. The pilot has been running for approximately 1½ years and there are plans to make it a mainstream program. Approval was sought to run one more round/call for applications.</p> <p>KD questioned the need for additional approval as the paper indicated approval had been granted until March 2025. However, it was clarified that approval had only been granted until March 2024, prompting the request for approval for another round of applications.</p> <p><b><i>Action: AMcK will update the record accordingly.</i></b></p> <p>JF inquired about the process, and AMcK confirmed that it will follow the standard procedure once everything is finalised.</p> <p>SH asked about the difference between ATG and Go Succeed. AMcK explained that Go Succeed is popular, whereas ATG is geared towards companies in the later stages of Go Succeed. AMcK outlined the progression from Go Succeed to ATG to becoming an Invest NI client.</p> <p>AMcK mentioned that regional variations of the program have not been implemented as intended due to, in the main, resource constraints. ELT approved an extension for one more round of applications for the pilot, with no further rounds planned. A full business case will be presented to ELT for three more years</p>	AMcK

	<p>of ATG, focusing on different stages of business growth.</p> <p>KD suggested forming a small internal group to explore a program similar to ATG for innovative start-ups. AMcK agreed, emphasizing the importance of finding and supporting viable businesses.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Status Update on Action Plan</u></b></p> <p>MC provided an update on the Action Plan progress ahead of the Board presentation on Thursday. Overall, good progress has been made and a breakdown of the status of actions was given. MC commented that the project oversight is effective. MC mentioned that deep dive sessions have been conducted with more scheduled, providing increased visibility on ongoing activities.</p> <p>BD referred to Action 11 and raised concerns about resource allocation and emphasised the importance of discussing staffing issues to meet the Action deadlines. There is potential for the same challenge to apply to a number of other projects. JF highlighted recent discussions at the green economy deep dive around recruitment, and PL was content to discuss with the Department if necessary.</p> <p>BD highlighted potential challenges in staffing and suggested differentiating between essential roles for the organisation to function and roles for specific Task &amp; Finish asks. KD proposed making a clear distinction between these two types of roles moving forward.</p> <p>KD and PL will meet with the Chair to discuss future resourcing needs. KD thanked colleagues for their efforts, noting the Department's recognition of their hard work on the Action Plan.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Dual Market Access &amp; Support for businesses to navigate post EU Exit trading arrangements</u></b></p> <p>AB attended the meeting to discuss the topic. KD thanked AB for her paper and asked her to share the key issues and requests.</p> <p>AB mentioned two areas of work that she believes the organisation should focus on: supporting businesses with post EU Exit trading arrangements and crafting narrative and messaging for various audiences, including our staff. AB highlighted the challenge of there not being one single source of information/resources for businesses in Northern Ireland and the need to translate government messages into commercial terms to aid understanding for businesses and new investors as well as understanding sector specific trading dynamics.</p> <p>KD sought clarification on AB's request to ELT for approval to establish a group to carry out the tasks outlined in the paper, with available budget. AB confirmed this was correct based on how the organisation had previously approached the challenge for businesses in preparing for Brexit as set out in the paper.</p> <p>BD inquired about InterTradeUK (ITUK) and its potential role. AB explained that ITUK has not yet been constituted but could have a role in engaging with GB suppliers and buyers with Invest NI leading on the promotion of trade opportunities in GB for NI businesses. AB also mentioned the Traders Support Service set up by the UK government to aid businesses importing goods from GB to NI.</p>	

	<p>AMcK asked if AB had a sense of the volume of requests Invest NI is receiving for clarification. AB noted that BST does not record individual enquiries but refers them to the relevant support services/bodies.</p> <p>KD asked if there is an existing government body that could address the confusion around trading arrangements. AB referred to the existing organisations that each only address particular issues/markets and also stated that we need clarity on the role of the EU Exit team in the department.</p> <p>SH stated that this is a priority for the organisation, the issue is how we resource it. AB reflected that the challenge is finding credible subject matter experts and the procurement process by which to engage them, given that there will be key changes taking affect in Sept/Oct 2024 that may impact businesses.</p> <p>KD discussed the importance of distinguishing between dual market access from an inward investment and trade perspective and the need to explain the benefits to indigenous companies in detail.</p> <p>KD concluded the discussion by confirming ELT's agreement for AB to come back with a specific proposal outlining the resources required and suggestions on how to take this forward, noting the importance of the issue but also the limitations of the organisation in addressing every single issue.</p> <p><b>Action: AB to return to ELT with further developed proposal.</b></p>	AB
7.	<p><b>Performance Management</b></p> <p>Kerri Farrel (KF) attended the meeting to discuss this topic. KD asked KF to provide a high-level overview and to draw out the key asks of the leadership team.</p> <p>KF provided a brief overview presentation focussing on what the organisation is trying to achieve, how it will achieve it, current/perceived issues, phase programme/timeline and process. KD thanked KF for her presentation and opened for discussion/questions.</p> <p>PL indicated a need to encourage all Managers to re-engage fully on the performance management process to ensure higher level of completion and pointed out that the Independent Review highlighted the need for high-performing teams, and therefore it is crucial that managers ensure that staff understand expectations and have clear objectives in place.</p> <p>During the discussion, the group reviewed the presented process. BD suggested incorporating several SMART objectives, specifically related to governance and mandatory training, into job plans. PL noted that since this is only a temporary proposal, these objectives may not be included this year but will be considered in the future. It was also decided that organisational values and behaviours should be integrated as they are essential to job performance.</p> <p>PH suggested using the next staff briefing session to start to position with staff the changes that are coming.</p> <p>KD concluded the discussion by noting that ELT agrees with the proposed direction of travel and recognises it as a key aspect of a multi-year improvement plan for performance management. It would be beneficial for ELT to prioritise</p>	

	<p>this topic as an agenda item at upcoming divisional meetings.</p> <p>KD highlighted that it is important to emphasise that performance management will be enhanced as part of the development of a new HR strategy, which will align with our overall organisational strategy. This ensures that performance management is not viewed in isolation but rather as part of a holistic approach that includes important HR strategy components such as succession planning and career development.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT to brief at divisional meetings</b></p>	ELT
8	<p><b><u>Rationalisation of Invest NI's Programmes and Interventions</u></b>  Clare Mullan, Aaron Wilkinson and Ross Kelly attended.</p> <p>KD welcomed the team to the meeting and thanked them for the papers provided. KD asked CM to position the paper and to draw attention to the specific asks of the Executive Team.</p> <p>CM stated that the paper tabled outlines advice and recommendations and if ELT wish to action then the Economics Team would be happy to assist. CM confirmed that throughout the process all Operating Directors and Programme Managers have been consulted or involved in the advice and clinics and have been very helpful and engaged in the process. CM wished to put on record her thanks to the Operating Directors and Managers.</p> <p>CM drew attention to the Programme Review Outcomes. The Review indicated that estimates sat "between 102 as documented in information provided for the Review to 140 as discussed in interview with members of Invest NI staff." Following the Sir Michael Lyons review a stocktake was completed. A number of interventions were not included in the Sir Michael Lyons Findings. The total number of interventions stood at 154.</p> <p>CM provided a high-level overview of the recommendations for the Powers and Programmes.</p> <p>Moving on to the individual recommendations, CM stated there are 13 in total, which have been grouped together. CM provided a brief synopsis of each of the recommendations.</p> <p>KD complemented the team on a great piece of work. KD commented that the team have devised a methodology that can be used on an ongoing basis and have helped to progress the implementation of the Action Plan.</p> <p>KD suggested that each recommendation be looked at and given approval (or not) to move forward. JF reflected that there are some parts of the recommendations that would warrant further discussions with the Operating Directors before a final decision is made.</p> <p>ELT concluded that 10 of the 13 recommendations would be accepted.</p> <p>The three-remaining centre on a review of GAP, a review of Trade interventions and further development of productivity focused support. KD asked the respective ELT members to consider and report back to ELT.</p>	ELT

	<p><b>Action: ELT members to consider the three remaining recommendations and report back to ELT.</b></p> <p>All recommendations will be noted in an Action Plan and presented to the SRO for approval. Each ELT member has committed to addressing the Action Plan.</p> <p>KD thanked the team for all their hard work in completing this exercise and commented that communication will be as important as the content as we move forward.</p> <p>CM closed by stating that this piece of work has now been completed by her Team and queried who will take forward each of the recommendations. Initial thoughts would suggest that it should be each of the respective ELT members. KD asked that this decision be left with the Executive Team and that he would come back to CM with a decision on who will take forward each recommendation.</p> <p><b>Action: KD</b></p> <p>BD asked who would own the methodology model going forward. It was agreed that this should sit within the, still to be established, Centralised Coordination Team.</p>	<b>KD</b>
9.	<p><b>CEO Update</b></p> <p>KD provide feedback on two recent engagements he participated in.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>10.1 CSR / Social Committee – KD referred to a request received from a staff member. It was agreed that KD, PL and the relevant staff member would meet to discuss but in principle ELT were content.</p> <p><b>Action: AU to set up meeting.</b></p> <p>10.2 Board agenda – noted.</p> <p>10.3 KPI Official Stats Publication Date – DD provided an update in terms of the timing of the release of forthcoming official statistics.</p> <p>10.4 KPIs – DD wished to put on record his thanks to staff as the response rate to KPI is now at 84%.</p> <p>10.5 PCA – DD highlighted that there is a review of Parliamentary constituencies currently underway.</p> <p>10.6 Pay Award – PL provided an update on the imminent Pay Award.</p> <p>10.7 Staff Awards – KD asked if there has been clarification on providing staff awards. PL commented that it was agreed but would only be for NI based staff. Due to HMRC rules, international staff would not be eligible. KD asked that we establish what we can and cannot do, the amount that can be given and would be nice to identify an award to an agreed number of staff for an agreed reason at the June Staff Conference.</p> <p>10.8 Carry over leave – Executive Director sign off is still required.</p>	<b>AU</b>
	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>30 April 2024</p>	

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;  
 Alan McKeown

Apologies: Steve Harper; Paula Logue

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		<b>Action Assigned to</b>
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> Apologies received from Steve Harper and Paula Logue. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the previous meeting will be tabled for review at the next meeting.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> Outstanding actions will be tabled for review at the next meeting.	
4.	<p><b><u>Belfast Pride</u></b>            DD, as the Diversity &amp; Inclusion Champion, referred to the tabled paper on behalf of the LGBTQ+ employee group. DD outlined that in previous years Invest NI have participated in the Belfast Pride event as part of the wider NI Civil Service (NICS) grouping. The proposal being tabled is that Invest NI participate as a single entity this year and the employee group is looking for support from both ELT and subsequently the Board.</p> <p>KD expressed his support in principle but inquired about whether there was a process or other requirements to follow to enable the organisation to participate at the event. It was noted that the event includes participation from the NICS, other public sector organizations, and client companies, and therefore no specific process needs to be followed. DD stated that participation and attendance in the event is entirely voluntary. The current request is also seeking approval for the group to march with an Invest NI banner in the parade.</p> <p>JF asked about the guidelines for future employee groups wishing to use the organisation's name/logo. The Comms Group will handle discussions on usage and seek approval from ELT on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>ELT endorsed the proposal for the organisation to be formally represented at the event.</p>	

5.	<p><b>Productivity Model</b></p> <p>Clare Mullan (CM) and Aaron Wilkinson (AW) attended</p> <p>CM provided a brief background to the work undertaken, also highlighting the recent Productive Investment Capital Grant (PICG). To roll out PICG the organisation had to build a new approval process for those cases including a productivity model. CM stated that, following a request from the Department, Grant Thornton were procured to help develop the model going forward. CM highlighted that this has been an exceptionally tough process. CM asked if ELT were content with the model, the questions being asked of Client Executives and how we move forward in terms of mainstreaming the model within the organisation, taking on board the lessons from PICG.</p> <p>KD firstly complemented CM and AW on the work undertaken to date and added that this is an excellent piece of work.</p> <p>A robust discussion ensued which focussed on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workability of the model - articulating how the model will work within the organisation should it be approved.</li> <li>• Data inputs/sources – real versus nominal.</li> <li>• Model will reflect productivity of a business and show impact of project and rate of growth. There are benchmarks built in that will result in a pass or fail model result.</li> <li>• FDI clients providing a transfer price and retention of profits in Northern Ireland.</li> <li>• Are we right to have such a heavy weight on profit element or will this skew results?</li> <li>• Should we be supporting FDI companies with a productivity support? Need for a policy decision.</li> <li>• Risk highlighted in terms of clawback – currently working through process. Need for real focus on monitoring and relationship with client.</li> <li>• Interpretation of the model in a realistic way, guidance notes and training will be fundamental.</li> <li>• In theory the model will work for FDI, indigenous, manufacturing and services businesses. However it has not been piloted yet.</li> </ul> <p>CM signified the need for a Productivity Champion, a business solution to mainstream productivity and how it will be rolled out across the organisation including educating staff, guidance notes, templates etc.</p> <p>KD summarised the debate confirming ELT were happy to endorse and approve the model as presented. KD stated that he would consult colleagues on a Productivity Champion. CM confirmed that the model will be owned and updated by the Economics Team as part of the Economic Efficiency Test.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT to provide suggested names for Productivity Champion.</b></p>	<p>ELT</p>
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6.	<p><b><u>IR Action 9 – Segmentation</u></b></p> <p>George McKinney (GMcK) and Iain Joannides (IJ) attended.</p> <p>KD opened the discussion questioning if the tabled document was asking for approval. GMcK stated that the request was for approval to move to the next stage i.e. operationalisation.</p> <p>IJ provided a brief presentation focusing on the principles of the model, what is similar and different to the previous model, segmentation criteria and proposed modes of engagement.</p> <p>KD offered his complements to the team for the work undertaken and clarified that the ask today is to approve the model as presented.</p> <p>A robust discussion ensued which focussed on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding what the Lyons report meant by the wider business base (non-clients).</li> <li>• Operationalisation of the model and suggestion to convene a Sectoral Development Committee (SDC) to review portfolios and to ensure a focus on the right businesses and their future development.</li> <li>• Portfolio management – need to design mode of engagement and provide resources.</li> <li>• There was some uncertainty that the suggested model addresses the Lyons recommendation. GMcK challenged this describing how he felt the model did address the recommendation.</li> <li>• Need to have a clear definition of a client.</li> <li>• Approach to using employment numbers as a definition driver i.e. sales or employment and how does this sit with other criterion.</li> <li>• Communication of the model will be a critical piece.</li> <li>• Further development to bring out the long term continuous relationship piece.</li> <li>• The importance to clearly define, within the proposal, who qualifies as a client and explain the specific criteria and steps for a company to become a client.</li> </ul> <p>KD commented that with some modifications, in light of the discussion, we have a basis for progressing. KD suggested connecting the segmentation exercise to the management of our existing portfolio, not just business development but sector development too. KD floated the idea of setting up a Sectoral Development Committee and laid out how he saw this working.</p> <p>KD inquired whether implementing the proposal would result in the segmentation exercise being conducted on a yearly basis, and if there would be a system in place for companies to move between segments determined during the annual review. GMcK noted that this was the current plan, although the process has not been fully confirmed.</p> <p>In conclusion, KD stated that the Executive Team were not in a position to approve the proposal as tabled today. There are mixed and different views around the table on the way forward. KD would like ELT to have another discussion on this and revert back on next steps.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT to report back by 14<sup>th</sup> May.</b></p>	ELT
7.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p>	



7.1	ELT Meetings – KD outlined a proposal to change the format of ELT meetings. KD also outlined a change to the format of documents being submitted to ELT for consideration and will share a new template in due course.	ELT
7.2	<p>Submissions to Board – KD outlined the process for papers being submitted to the Invest NI Board and stated papers must be presented, and approved, by ELT first. The group discussed the types of papers to be presented to ELT prior to Board. The group discussed the ‘sign-on’ process and suggested a similar process could be used here.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT members to provide suggestions for how we can direct the traffic to ELT, on its way to Board, or the instances where something can go directly.</b></p>	
7.3	Business Strategy – KD indicated he has shared the draft organisational strategy with Operating Directors and International leads for feedback. PH stated that he has briefed our Comms Agency on the look and feel of producing the public version of the strategy.	
7.4	Access to Finance Governance Paper – BD reported that subsequent to the last discussion it has been agreed that it would be taken forward as it sits and BD, JF and NMCK would fill the advisor roles in the immediate term.	
7.5	<p>Productivity Champions – KD asked colleagues to forward suggestions for this post.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT to provide suggestions</b></p>	ELT
7.6	Budgets – JF provided an update on the FMI budget position.	
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b> 7 May 2024</p>	

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper;  
Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: Dónal Durkan

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> Apologies received from Dónal Durkan. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the previous meetings held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> and 30 <sup>th</sup> April were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.  Productivity Champion – KD thanked colleagues for suggestions, he will consider and confirm in due course.	
4.	<b><u>Casework Project Group</u></b> Ian Maxwell (IM), Helen Coyle (HC) and Paul Taylor (PT) presented the outworkings of the project group.  The group reflected on the tabled paper, and the current casework process, in advance of the presentation by the project group members.  KD welcomed the presenters and wished to take the opportunity to acknowledge all the work undertaken by the project team in the review of the casework process. HC opened stating the presentation will take the group through some of the work undertaken since the “skunkworks” was established in February, talk through the approach used, the feedback from staff across the organisation, the recommendations being proposed and will also provide some feedback on how the “skunkworks” worked as a process and will identify other areas that might benefit from the same “skunkworks” approach.  KD commented that this was an excellent piece of work and that the project team have provided some valuable insights and recommendations for the organisation. The task now is to make sure that there is agreement and to implement as many of the recommendations as possible.	

	<p>A debate ensued following the presentation summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for business plans and whether there would be an option to move to an application form type document. An application type form can be easily digitised to optimise workflow and allow for pre-population of casework papers.</li> <li>• There was a query on whether the team looked back at any previous Public Accounts Committee hearings/recommendations i.e. FDI, as this may need to be reviewed. MC recalled that all green field FDI projects receiving government funding in excess of £100k are subject to a separate independent appraisal. The team agreed to take this on board.</li> <li>• With respect to FDI, operating in a competitive space, the efficiency of our processes is very important.</li> <li>• In relation to the potential use of SAYOR the need for clarity on when additionality is “recognised” and appropriate evidence to support this assertion for subsequent approval panels.</li> </ul> <p>KD asked the group to make a decision on each of the recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 1 – agreed in principle subject to addressing the issue raised around &lt;£50k and the request for additional information on the volume of offers at particular levels of support. MC to lead on that process.</li> <li>• Recommendation 2 – agreed in principle.</li> <li>• Recommendation 3 – agreed in principle.</li> <li>• Recommendation 4 – agreed in principle. KD agreed to discuss with the Chair as a lead-in to a discussion with the Chair of the Business Funding Committee to define the role of the Board in the approval process.</li> <li>• Recommendation 5 – Defer decision – requires further discussion.</li> <li>• Recommendation 6 – agreed in principle but further thought to be given to operationalisation. Try to devise a pre-approval mechanism where non-contentious cases are approved and the team are notified.</li> <li>• Recommendation 7 – agreed in principle further to engagement with DfE and evidence of additionality needs to be operationalised.</li> </ul> <p>KD thanked the team for their time and asked that thanks be passed on to other members of the project team.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Business Strategy – follow up</u></b></p> <p>Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>GMcN referred to the tabled paper which summarises the key points following recent feedback from Board members and Operating Directors on the draft strategy.</p> <p>The group discussed the following issues that required clarification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplification and clarification of our Purpose, Mission and Vision. GMcN will make changes as discussed and pass to PH for finessing.</li> <li>• Agreement to simplify our framework, reduce the number of priorities and clarify our messaging around our approach.</li> <li>• Need to view the Minister’s four policy priorities as the ‘what’ of the strategy, our strategy then becomes the ‘how’ of achieving the policy priorities.</li> <li>• Suggestion that organisational values will need to be revisited.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing the terminology with regards to our new segmentation model and portfolio approach i.e. client, customers or businesses. Preference was to stick with client but explain to ourselves and others what we mean by a client and remind people of the positive psychological impact of having a client focus.</li> <li>• Increase our focus on, and commit to build out our resources and capability for, Digitalisation.</li> <li>• Organisational Structure.</li> </ul> <p>ELT collectively thanked GMcN, and colleagues, for the work undertaken to date. KD will meet with GMcN separately to share further comments.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Business Innovation Grant (BIG)</u></b></p> <p>Karen Finlay (KF) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>AMcK provided background information on the proposed Business Innovation Grant program for non-Invest NI clients in Northern Ireland. The focus is on indigenous businesses that are pre-commercialisation, with the aim of raising awareness among those who may think Invest NI is not accessible to them. The goal is to create a structured and open program centred on innovation, which could ultimately result in increased referrals and more businesses engaging with Invest NI.</p> <p>BD presented feedback from the casework panel regarding BIG, who emphasised the difficulty of achieving Innovation Accreditation throughout Northern Ireland. The panel noted that our numbers have fallen significantly below the required target, indicating a substantial effort is needed to reach the goal. The panel viewed this programme as an opportunity to assess the feasibility of potential solutions to this issue.</p> <p>KF presented a brief overview of the proposed Business Innovation Grant.</p> <p>The group reflected on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the qualifying criteria will be including sectors not supported?</li> <li>• How a project will be assessed?</li> <li>• How the percentage contribution figure was reached?</li> <li>• Proportionate support and the reasons this option was not selected?</li> <li>• Natural fit for the programme and for this to be reviewed following the pilot.</li> </ul> <p>KD expressed his gratitude to KF for her presentation and emphasised the importance of engaging with a broader range of businesses outside of Invest NI's client base. KD sees the programme as a valuable opportunity to attract new clients to the organization.</p> <p>KD confirmed that the Executive Team were happy to support, possibly with some modifications following discussion with Board members.</p> <p><b>Action: KD to speak to Board members.</b></p>	

8.	<p><b><u>Ambition to Grow for Innovative Start Ups</u></b></p> <p>Susan O’Kane (SOK) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>SOK presented an overview highlighting that Invest NI works with several High Potential Start Ups (HPSUs) through activities such as research and development, SFA and GAP. SOK is requesting approval from the Executive Team to further explore the potential for an Innovative Start scheme tailored for HPSUs. This would be part of a “skunkworks” approach, allowing all employees to contribute and participate in discussions to strengthen our offering to HPSUs.</p> <p>The Executive Team discussed the proposal and confirmed they were content. JF and BD asked that individuals from the REAP and product design teams be included, respectively.</p> <p>KD expressed his desire to officially introduce the “skunkworks” project and invite colleagues to volunteer to join. He has delegated the decision regarding the number of participants and their selection to SOK, who will consider the importance of including individuals with specific domain knowledge and skillsets. A timeline of 2-3 months has been set for SOK to report back to the Executive Leadership Team. Additionally, SOK will engage with the Communications team to create a newsweekly piece on the “skunkworks” project.</p> <p><b>Action: SOK/PH</b></p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Net Zero Accelerator Fund</u></b></p> <p>KD referred to the tabled paper. KD shared his thoughts on the request, reflecting why this would be a good fit for Invest NI. The proposal provides provision to cover staff costs to manage the fund and we would go to the marketplace to invite Fund Managers to bid to run the Fund on our behalf.</p> <p>KD asked if there were any fundamental objections to the request. It was agreed that Invest NI was a good fit to take this forward.</p> <p>KD confirmed ELT were supportive and will engage with DfE on next steps.</p> <p><b>Action: KD to speak to Permanent Secretary</b></p>	KD
10.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>10.1 Car Parking – PL provided an update on the release of the new policy.</p> <p>10.2 Ulster Society Conference – JF shared feedback from his recent attendance at this conference and praised the efforts of the US team, noting Invest NI's strong representation which will help to raise our profile.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>14 May 2024</p>	

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper;  
 Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: Dónal Durkan

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> Apologies received from Dónal Durkan. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 <sup>th</sup> May were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.	
4.	<b><u>Sub Regional and Place agenda</u></b> Gerard McNally (GMcK) attended the meeting for this item. AMcK referred to the tabled paper and thanked colleagues for their input.  AMcK provided an overview of the paper commenting that it is a proposed direction of travel in relation to Invest NI's subregional strategy and sets out areas where and how Invest NI's infrastructure and operations could be enhanced to support the delivery of economic development at a regional level. The paper focusses on the Regional Team and the existing network of offices, resources and partnerships.  After reflecting on his paper, AMcK identified a few gaps that he believes should be addressed. These include targeting at sub regional levels, providing varying levels of support in underperforming areas, and evaluating the appropriateness of the organisation's office locations. AMcK does not think that developing new products is necessary, but rather suggests focusing on packaging, branding, and simplifying existing offerings for easier customer comprehension.  A debate ensued concentrating on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement that the eight key challenges highlighted are accurate.</li> <li>• Desire to see increased regional spread of business growth across NI.</li> <li>• How to encourage growth of existing businesses within NI including second sites.</li> <li>• Focus on export starts and how to assist top rated companies who will</li> </ul>	

	<p>create the businesses of the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The optimal management of clients between regional and sector teams.</li> <li>• How the organisation can play a part to tackle levels of economic inactivity and low level of economic performance.</li> <li>• A need to be visible in terms of what is going on in the regions recognising one size does not fit all i.e. possibility of differentiated offerings for different regions.</li> <li>• Increased regional spread in terms of the physical location of staff so long as there is a credible rationale and business development focus behind it.</li> <li>• Reviewing the data on regional performance as this will help address what interventions are deployed.</li> </ul> <p>KD summarised his perspective on the paper and shared his thoughts on various aspects. One of the issues highlighted is the importance of engaging with the broader business community in the regions, with the regional teams taking a more prominent role locally and leading partnerships. Invest NI should take the lead in advancing regional economic plans, necessitating additional resources for establishing and overseeing local partnerships and driving the agenda and priorities outlined in these plans.</p> <p>In concluding AMcK thanked colleagues for the discussion and the helpful feedback. AMcK will update the paper.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Business Strategy Update</u></b></p> <p>Gerard McNally (GMcK) attended the meeting for this item.</p> <p>GMcK provided a short update on progress on the Business Strategy over the last week including engagement with the Department, Chief Executive and Enterprise Ireland. GMcK highlighted some new areas of focus that have been identified and talked through each.</p> <p>KD thanked GMcK for his ongoing work and the group discussed some amendments that could be made to the strategy.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Visibility of Potential Future Major Investment Proposals</u></b></p> <p>BD referred to the tabled paper.</p> <p>BD noted that the executive team had previously indicated a desire to review investment proposals prior to submission to the Invest NI Board for approval to ensure they align strategically and have collective understanding and support. The document presented outlines three potential options to meet this goal.</p> <p>KD asked the group if they were content with the proposed recommendation – option ‘c.’ JF highlighted two upcoming projects as an example. KD expressed the importance of avoiding extra administrative work and unnecessary bureaucracy and believed that proposal 'c' was the most efficient solution for meeting the need without being overly burdensome.</p> <p>MC commented that the principle here was to provide ELT with visibility and understanding of a project, MC raised concerns around the proposal namely that it is introducing a new complicated step. Is there a way to gain visibility without going through the sign on process?</p>	

	<p>KD stated that the intention was not for the executive team to duplicate or become another casework panel but rather to have sight of and assess strategic alignment without getting into the minutia. MC felt that there was a risk of the proposed option turning into a mini casework.</p> <p>KD reflected on the discussion, stating that the organisation will continue with the existing process, trust in the judgement of the sign on committee, and provide the executive team with a monthly list of projects that have gone/or going to the sign on committee which will provide the visibility the executive team are asking for. KD asked that if there are any projects that the executive team/CEO need to see before going to the Invest NI Board that these should be flagged.</p> <p>BD emphasized the importance of implementing a sign-on process for Programmes, and the executive team agreed.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Dual Market Access</u></b></p> <p>Anne Beggs (AB) attended the meeting to discuss this item and provided an update on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dual market access stakeholder session plan,</li> <li>• Engagement with InterTradelreland regarding their Trade Hub and potential for collaboration and</li> <li>• Proposed use of “skunkworks” model to determine forward plan for Invest NI support in promoting dual market access/managing post EU exit.</li> </ul> <p>The group discussed the Trade Hub and decided that a proposal should be put together for the executive team with a clear understanding of the offerings. It was agreed that AB would reach out to InterTradelreland to discuss possible collaboration on the Hub. AB mentioned that she would incorporate this information into the larger document she is working on regarding dual market access.</p> <p>AB suggested creating a “skunkworks” project team to delve deeper into this issue, recognizing its impact on all aspects of the organization. It was decided to move forward with this group, and KD emphasized the importance of producing a comprehensive document outlining the steps necessary for effective marketing and promotion of dual market access including as well as identifying opportunities for both the organization and its clients.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p>	
8.1	<p>Staff Conference – PH provided an update on the forthcoming staff conference.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>4 June 2024</p>	



**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024**  
**CEO office, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;  
Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: None

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> No apologies received. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 <sup>th</sup> May were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.	
4.	<b><u>The Belfast Business Promise</u></b> Paddy Robb (PR) attended the meeting and provided a brief overview of the tabled paper. The Belfast Business Promise (BBP), developed by Belfast City Council, is a new accreditation for employers in Belfast. It is designed to cultivate an ethos of responsible and inclusive business practices: fair pay, good jobs, and secure contracts. PR confirmed that it maps to other good business charters in other regions of the UK.  PR outlined the request is to seek support and endorsement to start the journey to become an accredited member of the BBP and to be a partner organisation. PR confirmed that the Department for the Economy (DfE) are a member and are accredited and that the Charter maps to the Minister's economic vision. DfE are encouraging its ALBs to sign up.  The group discussed the proposal focussing on the timing of joining, preference to join a national charter and questions about strategic fit and alignment to regional partnership work.  KD stated that there is currently not enough knowledge about the Charter, and believed it would be beneficial to gather feedback from client companies who have already signed up. This feedback would help in understanding the obligations of the Charter and to assist consideration of the proposal to associate our brand and reputation with it. KD felt it was too premature to make a commitment. In closing the discussion, KD thanked PR for the proposal and confirmed that the	

	<p>organisation would not be applying for accreditation at this present time but that he does see the merits of what is proposed and the strong alignment with our own ESG agenda. KD asked for the paper to return addressing the queries raised, outcome of the discussions with SOLACE (their interest in it) and a list of existing Invest NI clients who are members to allow the Executive Team to consider again.</p> <p><b>Action: AMcK/PR to present at a future date.</b></p>	<b>AMcK/PR</b>
5.	<p><b><u>Makers Alliance</u></b></p> <p>Grainne McVeigh (GMcV) and Kelly Murphy (KM) attended the meeting to present this paper.</p> <p>GMcV referred to the tabled paper and explained the request to authorise funding for Makers Alliance for a period of 12 months. GMcV highlighted the accomplishments of Makers Alliance thus far and suggested extending funding for another year to support ongoing work on the delivery plan and to explore potential future funding opportunities. KM then outlined the primary goals for 2023/24 and underscored the importance and value of Makers Alliance.</p> <p>The group discussed the request focusing on SMART objectives, a need to be clear on what we are trying to achieve and if future funding is part of the work programme for the year. GMcV indicated that there are some Innovate UK programmes that fund clusters and that there is still a hope of High Value Manufacturing Catapult (HVMC) and the value that branding would bring.</p> <p>JF commented that before Makers Alliance there was a gap and questions around whether there was a manufacturing strategy for Northern Ireland and that having Makers Alliance in place is a positive. JF had concerns around the cost of funding and the need for the Body to find a way that it can continue without funding support from Invest NI every year.</p> <p>AMcK wished to record that the Alliance have been a fantastic resource in terms of the sub regional piece and the business dimension.</p> <p>Being unfamiliar with the formation and history of Makers Alliance, KD asked a number of questions around the appointment of the Chief Executives, ownership of the strategy and the budget requirement.</p> <p>The Executive Leadership Team agreed funding for one final year.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Programme Evaluation – GAP Review Phase 2</u></b></p> <p>Clare Mullan (CM) and Mark Carruthers (MCa) attended the meeting to join this discussion.</p> <p>CM stated that the tabled paper was developed by a number of staff in response to a paper from the Business Growth group and lays out a number of options for consideration.</p> <p>JF shared his concerns around the potential removal of GAP and asked that before a decision is taken that the proposal is discussed with the Operating Directors. From JFs understanding, there are things that GAP can do that the alternatives cannot and to give up that flexibility would be an error. CM outlined the consultation that was undertaken during the review.</p> <p>MCa outlined the previous evaluation of GAP in 2016/17 and it along with the</p>	

	<p>Lyons Review identified duplication that exists across SFA, Development Grant, GAP and the Trade offering. MCa outlined the original conception of GAP. MC pointed out the marked decline in utilisation of GAP and reflected what these had been used for.</p> <p>The group discussed a number of areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issuing of multiple Letters of Offer; which is not good customer service.</li> <li>• Availability, albeit in limited circumstances, for use by large companies.</li> <li>• Staff confidence that they have the tools they need to engage with clients.</li> <li>• Any Trade support cannot be offered under GAP and must have involvement of the International Team.</li> </ul> <p>KD referred to the recommended option (4) within the paper and the group discussed the pros and cons.</p> <p>In summary, KD stated that there is no consensus today. KD asked for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A short proposal document on what an enhanced Trade Development Grant would look like, what it would do, the benefits of it in terms of business development, how it would be operationalised, the governance/risk management/oversight of it. Whilst that is being developed we will maintain the use of GAP. <b>Action: SH</b></li> <li>• Consult with Operational Directors on the paper tabled today. Record feedback and present within the next iteration submitted. CM and MCa to meet with KD prior to the Operational Directors Meeting. <b>Action: CM &amp; MCa</b></li> <li>• Map all programmes, interventions and tools against the Six Strategic Priorities of the organisations draft Business Strategy. <b>Action: CM/MCa/GMcN</b></li> <li>• Prepare a short paper on the governance, risk management and oversight of GAP. <b>Action: CM/MCa</b></li> </ul> <p>All GAPs issued before a final decision is made with trade support should be referred to the Trade team in the interim.</p> <p>KD asked MCa for confirmation that all existing Programmes including Ambition to Grow are all State Aid compliant. MC referred to a spreadsheet that showed the linkages from State Aid right down to Approvals, and MCa confirmed that was still in place.</p> <p>KD asked CM and MCa to meet with him before attending a meeting with the Operating Directors. <b>Action: CM/MCa</b></p>	<p>SH</p> <p>CM / MCa</p> <p>CM / MCa / GMcN</p> <p>CM / MCa</p> <p>CM / MCa</p>
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7.	<p><b>Independent Review Action Plan</b></p> <p>The group discussed the recent Board workshop focusing on the Action Plan and exchanged their feedback. It was agreed that the feedback received from Board members was beneficial.</p> <p>KD noted that the Board acknowledged the dedication, time, and effort put into each action. They also recognised the high quality of the work and deemed the engagement positive.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>8.1 GFCC / Global Innovation Summit – DD referred to a recent meeting between Invest NI and Queen’s University and briefed the group on the discussion.</p> <p>8.2 Corporate Information – DD asked colleagues to ensure that the Corporate Information Team are engaged with when producing documentation containing statistics to ensure the most up to date data is being used.</p> <p>8.3 Review of Programmes – DD raised a concern regarding the amount of additional work that the lead Economist is undertaking now that the review has been completed. The group discussed.</p> <p>8.4 Work In Progress (WIP) – KD referred to the recent update on WIP and asked how this compared to 2019 (pre-Covid year). DD stated that it is down on 2019 figures. KD asked for comparative figures to be produced. <b>Action: DD to request information from Corporate Information Team.</b></p> <p>8.5 Covid-19 Inquiry – AMcK noted that Module 9 (Economic Impact) of the Covid Inquiry will open in July and that Invest NI will receive requests for evidence from the Inquiry counsel. AMcK is suggesting an ELT member be assigned as the lead for this exercise. It was agreed AMcK and MC would be the leads working in conjunction with the Co-ordination Team. <b>Action: AMcK and MC to engage with Co-ordination Team to prepare.</b></p> <p>8.6 Temporary Promotion / Bereavement Leave – PL referred to the tabled paper and outlined the issue at hand. PL outlined the recommendations for consideration.</p> <p>It was agreed the proposed changes were a sensible approach with the Executive Director for People &amp; Culture having flexibility on a case by case basis to extend the period.</p>	<p>DD</p> <p>AMcK/MC</p>
8.7	<p>North West Regional Office – PL referred to the tabled paper and highlighted that option 1 was preferred. PL outlined the current status and the timeline for approval if proceeding. The group discussed the options and were supportive of option 1. KD also provided an update on his thinking for changes to headquarters.</p> <p>KD stated he will discuss, with the Chair, in terms of presenting the decision to Board and also his thoughts around changes to headquarters. <b>Action: KD to discuss with Chair.</b></p>	KD
	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b> 8 August 2024</p>	

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024**  
**Room 3M04, INI HQ**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Dónal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson;  
Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: Steve Harper

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts of Interest</u></b> Apologies from Steve Harper. There were no conflicts of interest with any items under discussion today.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 <sup>th</sup> June were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.  Staff Conference – PH provided a brief update on the programme for the forthcoming staff conference. The conference will be split over two days namely a client day and a staff day. The group discussed potential client participation. PH to pull together a one-page brief for use in discussions with clients. <b>Action: PH</b>	PH
4.	<b><u>Independent Review Action Plan</u></b> MC provided a brief overview of the progress being made on the Action Plan, reflecting on discussions from the recent IOG and ELT meetings, as well as outlining key points for consideration regarding progress and next steps.  MC noted that there are concerns regarding the pace of progress in policy development and the review of the skills landscape. The Department and Invest NI are exploring a Benefits Realisation Management Framework as a tool for tracking the change management.  MC referred to the segmentation work presented at the recent staff briefing and expressed a desire to gather feedback on how well it has been understood. Additionally, MC suggested that it is important to clarify the delivery plan to implement the segmentation effectively, the expected timeline for the next steps and how we will define the solutions and interventions for businesses. It will also be necessary to determine who will be responsible for connecting the solutions to the segments, and then outline what the communication strategy will entail moving forward. MC closed his update informing the group that an update on the Action Plan will	

	be presented to the Economy Committee in October.	
5.	<p><b><u>Draft Digital Strategy</u></b></p> <p>Tanya Otterson (TO) joined the meeting to present this item. TO delivered a presentation covering the digitalisation solution statement, themes, the digital customer engagement process, outlining the customer journey, potential use of AI and automation, a progress roadmap and other work being undertaken.</p> <p>The group discussed how this will be presented to the Invest NI Board in August with a view to providing them with an update on progress but also seeking approval. The group provided feedback for consideration before submission to the Invest NI Board.</p> <p>BD stated identified that it is important to elaborate on the timing of certain tasks and their alignment with the broader strategy, especially in terms of segmentation. Digital engagement capability is emphasised as a key element within the operational delivery model of the proposed segmentation approach.</p> <p>The Executive Team confirmed the portal to be called the 'client' portal.</p> <p>BD expressed his concerns about publicly identifying a client's segment and preferred a more generalized explanation. KD noted that as an Executive Team, in collaboration with team working on the segmentation model, we must define the organisational boundaries clearly, ensuring there is no confusion regarding who qualifies as a client. Additionally, we need to carefully consider the practical implementation of the segmentation model.</p> <p>In concluding the discussion, it was decided to incorporate an Executive Summary that effectively presents the digitalisation strategy to the Board from a strategic perspective. This summary will highlight the benefits of endorsing the strategy, emphasizing that by embracing it, the organization will enhance its effectiveness and improve client services through digitalization.</p> <p>KD thanked TO and her team for the excellent work they are doing.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Land &amp; Buildings Strategy</u></b></p> <p>Sharon Keenan (SK) and Gary Cushnahan (GC) joined the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>BD opened the discussion by emphasising the importance of aligning the land and property initiatives with broader regional and international strategies, as well as the need for collaboration with Local Enterprise Agencies (LEAs) and local Councils. The objective is to address local needs effectively, fostering tailored solutions through close regional collaboration.</p> <p>The group discussed the spread of property available across the 11 Council regions against properties within Invest NI's five regional areas. SK highlighted the importance of consultations with Councils to understand unique regional requirements and the potential for co-designing initiatives. BD pointed out that limitations regarding infrastructure, such as power and wastewater, could hinder progress.</p> <p>JF raised concerns about Invest NI's previous challenges in demonstrating market demand due to existing processes, suggesting the need for a change in approach.</p>	

	<p>KD noted that clarity in communication and framing at Invest NI Board level was essential and suggested linking the strategy to the two strategic priorities: winning investments and promoting places and partnerships.</p> <p>BD acknowledged timing issues between the international and business strategies, which could affect the articulation of a sales tool. KD proposed renaming the proposed Land &amp; Property strategy to the "Invest NI Regional Property Programme" to signal a regional focus and to support the regional balance agenda. KD also emphasised the importance of branding and signage to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of sites locations for clients/investors.</p> <p>Finally, KD inquired about the publication of a land and property strategy and following discussion, ELT concluded that it would be preferable that the strategy was included as part of the wider Regional Strategy, given its potential impact on delivery of place based policy aspirations.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Segmentation Model</u></b></p> <p>JF referred to the tabled paper. The tabled paper provides an update on two specific queries from the Invest NI Board namely to provide a schedule showing Invest NI's extant client portfolio analysed by segment and to provide assurance that the critical work to enhance the Client Portal was ongoing and would be fully implemented.</p> <p>JF indicated that it is planned to carry out the first iteration of the new segmentation in quarter four this financial year with a view to be completed for the new financial year. The group reflected on how this will align with the KPI data collection due to commence in September.</p> <p>BD emphasised the need to consider resource management and allocation in any new segmentation model.</p> <p>Having debated the question of digital strategy alignment ELT were content with the tabled paper and agreed it should be issued to Board in advance of the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Action: JF</b></p>	JF
8.	<p><b><u>Regional Strategy</u></b></p> <p>KD and AMcK provided a verbal update on the ongoing work in relation to the regional strategy.</p> <p>AMcK informed the group that the main fundamental change will be moving from a regional team approach to a corporate regional leadership model. Moving away from reactive business support into strategy development. One of the key differences will be the advocacy role, around being the voice of the region.</p> <p>AMcK provided an in-depth verbal update on the development and focus of the regional strategy including the proposal to move from four to five operating regions.</p> <p>KD highlighted his perspective on the organisation's regional strategy. He believes the organisation needs a regional strategic agenda - a document outlining our goals for each operating region. This agenda should clearly identify</p>	

	<p>the regions' strengths and weaknesses, providing a foundation for our advocacy strategy both within the region and on a national level with key stakeholders.</p> <p>KD stated that it is essential that our regional strategy aligns with our core purpose and mission. The group discussed the benefits of establishing the locus of certain functional activities outside Belfast.</p> <p>KD concluded the discussion indicating the updated strategy is currently being finalised and will be shared with colleagues.</p> <p><b>Action: AMcK</b></p>	<b>AMcK</b>
9.	<p><b><u>Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Presentation</u></b></p> <p>JF delivered an overview presentation on the results from the recent KPI exercise.</p> <p>The headline results show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong increase across Sales, External Sales and Exports.</li> <li>• Employment among businesses sampled increased by 2%.</li> <li>• Exports growth was driven primarily by increases in sales to Europe and the Americas.</li> <li>• Sales growth was driven by year-on-year increases of 9% in both Agri-Food and Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing, along with a 6% growth in sales in the Construction sector.</li> <li>• More than 50% of exports growth was attributable to the Advanced Engineering &amp; Manufacturing sector.</li> </ul> <p>KD asked about the organisation's utilisation of the data collected, while JF highlighted the value of the Performance Report in dispelling myths. He suggested better promotion of this report. KD expressed gratitude for the team's efforts in making the data accessible, noting that it is typically presented to the Board. MC emphasised the report's role in challenging existing beliefs. As a follow-up, KD plans to discuss the matter with the Chair and proposed future discussions on maximizing the data's value.</p> <p><b>Action: KD to discuss with the Chair</b></p>	<b>KD</b>
10.	<p><b><u>Mid-South West Growth Deal (MSW)</u></b></p> <p>Ethna McNamee (EM) joined the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>EM presented a proposal to inform the CEO and seek support from the Executive Leadership Team for Invest NI to manage the Challenge Funds on behalf of the Mid-South West (MSW) following expected SOC approval in late 2024.</p> <p>The discussion highlighted concerns about mission creep and whether Invest NI should take on additional responsibilities that could divert resources from its core business. While fully supporting the idea and setting out why Invest NI should support MSW, DD, in response to the issue of mission creep, stated that Invest NI should evaluate the merits of each individual request for support coming from Councils, and shouldn't apply a 'one size fits all approach'. BD expressed the need for clarity on the approval process and the implications of managing projects outside Invest NI's usual client base.</p> <p>MC sought clarity in respect of the flow of funds and allocation of responsibilities. JF questioned the rationale for taking on such a task, pointing to Invest NI's goal of reducing the number and complexity of the programmes that the organisation manages.</p>	



	<p>The group discussed potential governance conflicts, eligibility criteria for funding, and the necessity of involving Councils in the process. BD suggested establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to clarify relationships and roles.</p> <p>In concluding the discussion, KD emphasised the need for alignment with Invest NI's strategy and resource capacity before proceeding. While open to the opportunity, KD deferred a final decision until he had the opportunity to review relevant additional documentation and concluded further consultations on the proposal.</p> <p><b>Action: EM to share documentation with KD</b></p>	EM
11.	<p><b><u>Internal Audit Review of Corporate Target Monitoring</u></b></p> <p>DD referred to the tabled paper. DD said that the positive takeaway from the report is that Internal Audit is pleased with the organisation's reporting and views systems as accurately reflecting our activities. However, DD highlighted that we continue to face challenges with consistency on data entry, accuracy, and validation.</p> <p>DD emphasised the need to establish and enforce discipline to ensure that these practices are consistently applied throughout the organisation.</p> <p>KD asked that ELT members share the report with their senior management teams to draw attention to the importance of accurate data entry.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT</b></p>	ELT
12.	<p><b><u>Corporate Targets</u></b></p> <p>Gerard McNally (GMcN) attended the meeting to discuss this item. GMcN led the group through a presentation on the proposed corporate targets, outlining each strategic objective. The group engaged in an in-depth discussion regarding the suggested targets.</p> <p>KD concluded that, based on the discussion, the Executive Leadership Team is satisfied with GMcN making the discussed changes and sending them to the Department.</p>	
13.	<p><b><u>Invest NI Performance Report 2019/20 - 2023/24</u></b></p> <p>DD referred to the tabled paper. DD stated that he felt the organisation does not leverage this report effectively. PH noted that it has been disseminated through the 2-minute update, stakeholder newsletter, and social media. He explained that while KPIs and business results have been shared, the challenge lies in presenting the quantitative data with compelling messaging. Currently, CIT produces a quality document, but Comms lacks a narrative to enhance relevance.</p> <p>KD suggested printing copies to send to key stakeholders, accompanied by a letter from the CEO or Chair. It was recommended that a copy could be sent to all client companies, MLAs, Economy Committee etc. It was suggested that a 'state of the nation' address or end of year briefing for key stakeholders, guests, and media could be used to animate the data.</p> <p>KD asked that PH provide a foreword for inclusion and to source printed versions.</p> <p><b>Action: PH</b></p>	PH

14.	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>	
14.1	August Board agenda – noted	
	<b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b> 10 September 2024	

## INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

## Meeting Minutes: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024

## Room 3M02, INI HQ

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Donal Durkan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: Steve Harper

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<p><b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts</u></b>  Apologies were received from Steve Harper.  ELT members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b>  The minutes of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024 were approved and will be published online.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b>  All outstanding actions were discussed.</p> <p>New Programmes – DD raised the issue of the number of new Programmes not being added to the Central List.  <b>Action: BD to pick up with PCC division.</b></p> <p>KD asked that all new Programmes be submitted to the Executive Team for consideration and decision. The team agreed.  <b>Action: DD and KD to discuss closed Programmes.</b></p>	<p>BD</p> <p>KD/DD</p>
4.	<p><b><u>Independent Review (IR) Action Plan</u></b>  MC provided a verbal update on the status of the IR Action Plan. MC confirmed 10 actions have now been completed. September/October are critical months with around 15 actions due for completion, with all but one expected to meet the deadline. Some actions have revised deadlines and MC highlighted a number of actions for discussion.</p> <p>The group debated SA7 Policy and agreed that this would be raised at the forthcoming IOG meeting and KD stated that he will also discuss with the Permanent Secretary.  <b>Action: KD</b>  <b>Action: MC to share the IOG update with colleagues.</b></p> <p>On Benefits Realisation, MC confirmed further work has been undertaken and the PMO team will be working with the Department's Oversight &amp; Assurance team to work out what success looks like and to pose the question : are the actions</p>	<p>KD MC</p>

	delivering the change that was envisaged from the original independent review?	
5.	<p><b><u>Retrospective Approvals</u></b></p> <p>BD referenced the document that was presented. The group engaged in a discussion about the paper and provided their feedback. KD noted that the paper conveyed a clear message regarding the overall effectiveness of the organization's compliance environment. BD outlined the proposed training schedule, and it was decided to incorporate some of this information into the paper to reassure Board members.</p> <p><b>Action: BD will amend and submit to Board.</b></p>	BD
6.	<p><b><u>Business Strategy Update / Corporate Performance Framework</u></b></p> <p>Gerard McNally (GMcN), Brona Fitzpatrick (BF) and Darrell McCullough (DMcC) attended the meeting to present this item.</p>	
6.1	<p><b><u>Business Strategy</u></b></p> <p>DD stated that the Business Strategy was submitted to the Department in August and understands that it is now with the DfE Minister for consideration. GMcN confirmed there has been no further update.</p>	
6.2	<p><b><u>Corporate Performance Framework</u></b></p> <p>BF provided a short presentation on a new Corporate Performance Framework.</p> <p>The presentation demonstrated a new monthly performance report, focused on our most important metrics, that will inform the Board, the Executive Team, the Department and ultimately the Public on our performance. The report will align with Strategic Objectives and Supporting Metrics and will also cater for the specific requirements of the SRC, Board and the Executive Team.</p> <p>DMcC demonstrated the prototype dashboard, which is still a work in progress, but can be overlaid with our targets once approved.</p> <p>BD inquired about the amount of work and effort being invested in the new system to ensure its successful implementation. He also asked if we would utilise this system differently from our current one. GMcN explained that the proposal includes automating the scorecard, which will feature a simple RAG status reflecting our key metrics. Although there is a significant initial investment involved, the goal is to tailor the system to meet the organisation's needs.</p> <p>KD commended the prototype, expressing that it would serve as a valuable tool for the organization. The group engaged in a discussion about potential uses for the dashboard. KD inquired about any ongoing data validation processes to prevent potential errors and how those risks are being mitigated. DMcC noted that the Corporate Information Team (CIT) conducts extensive validation at the end of the year, but it is believed that increased visibility will enhance data quality.</p> <p>JF inquired about how this will align with our client segmentation model and our intentions regarding KPIs. DMcC suggested that a hybrid model might be feasible. DD mentioned that the proposal aims to ensure continuity with the current group of companies, given that we have trend analysis extending beyond 10 years.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT members to provide any feedback to the team on the proposed metrics.</b></p>	ELT

	An updated presentation will be made to ELT in October before final presentation to the Board to allow sign-off of Strategic Actions 16, 17 and 18.	
7.	<p><b><u>Ambition to Grow</u></b></p> <p>AMcK provided an overview of the tabled paper which seeks approval from the Executive Team to proceed with further Ambition to Grow application calls, until a Business Case, outlining an enhanced and expanded programme, is brought through the approval process for the wider 'Ambition' set of programmes.</p> <p>AMcK stated that Ambition to Grow has proven very successful in the marketplace and feedback from customers and stakeholders is very positive. Advice from Economists is that Ambition to Grow should be run as a Programme, which would give the organisation the ability to measure it. AMcK confirmed that there would be no requirement for additional finance or staffing.</p> <p>The group robustly debated the paper as tabled with the main points summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation that the proposal would not breach any conditions or limits from the previous approvals.</li> <li>• In the absence of a strategy for Selective Financial Assistance (SFA), consideration needs to be given if this sits as a Programme or non-Programme. What is proposed is similar to what has been done with AFII.</li> <li>• Ambition to Grow, as it stands, is not a Programme. However, a concept has been developed that would include Ambition to Export, Ambition to Grow and Ambition to Grow Further.</li> <li>• Opposing views were voiced on extending the pilot for a further three calls versus creating a Programme as a subset of Selective Financial Assistance (SFA) which is a Power for Invest NI to deliver financial support to business.</li> <li>• The Performance and Compliance Division has advised that the pilot can be extended. Funding and staffing resources are already allocated, and there are no compliance issues or irregular expenditures associated with extending the pilot and conducting three additional calls.</li> <li>• There are risks involved in extending the pilot. However, the interim evaluation is very positive and, therefore, the risks are low.</li> <li>• There was a concern that the original approvals might be subject to some gradual changes, highlighting the need for clarity regarding the approval process.</li> </ul> <p>In concluding the discussion, KD suggested that a more effective proposal would be to announce the end of the pilot, highlighting the value of its outcomes. He recommended that we expedite our efforts and allocate resources to complete the necessary processes to formally propose "Ambition to Grow" as a programme and relaunch it accordingly. While this approach was deemed the most prudent, it was noted that it could result in the offering being unavailable in the market for 6-8 months. Consideration should be given to whether extending the pilot would pose a greater risk than experiencing a gap in our service provision.</p> <p>After seeking further views from the team, KD requested that AMcK provide further information and responses to the questions raised during the discussion and that a final decision would be dependent on these responses.</p>	
8.	<b><u>Shared Island Update</u></b>	

	<p>Paul Gunn (PG) joined the meeting to discuss the tabled paper.</p> <p>AMcK opened the discussion by stating that this is a programme that Invest NI has worked collaboratively on with Intertradelreland and Enterprise Ireland over the past two years to co-design and submit a bid for to the Irish Government for Shared Island funding.</p> <p>PG provided an update on the status of each of the three areas developed namely Clusters, Female Entrepreneurship and Green Investment. PG confirmed that the Enterprise Fund will launch in November 2024. PG also outlined the opportunities, challenges and risks associated. The Shared Island Unit have confirmed that money is required to be spent by December 2027. KD thanked PG for his summary.</p> <p>Clarification was provided on several questions namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PG confirmed that the enabling Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the authorities in NI and ROI has not yet been formally signed. However, we have seen and provided comments on a draft. It is expected that the MOU will be signed within the next 2-3 weeks as this confirms the funding flow.</li> <li>• Projects are required to be scaled on a cross-border basis but the concept note did indicate that if a project was undertaken predominantly in one jurisdiction but could demonstrate benefit to the All-Island economy that this would be sufficient.</li> <li>• JF provided an update on the resourcing around the Grade 7 post.</li> <li>• PG stated that utilisation of the funding (within the timeframe) will be challenging, and a call will need to have been launched by April 2025.</li> <li>• Clarification is being sought from DfE on the required approvals in terms of the Five Case Business Model, but the hope is that these will not be required due to the origin of the funding.</li> <li>• It was also confirmed that Invest NI has the vires to participate in this latest Shared Island initiative.</li> </ul> <p>KD expressed the view that a more in-depth, future conversation will be necessary to evaluate the benefits of creating a small team to oversee and manage the Shared Island initiative, particularly if it is expected to be a long-term funding source. PG mentioned that there are currently additional Shared Island opportunities available.</p> <p>KD thanked PG for his update.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Regional Fund</u></b></p> <p>AMcK provided an update on the Regional Fund, indicating plans to meet with the Department for further insights on the forthcoming regional strategy and proposed regional fund.</p> <p>The group discussed the main points summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation that the role of Invest NI would be as a strategic advisor to local partnerships.</li> <li>• Flow of funds, and quantum of funding, have not yet been agreed.</li> <li>• The Fund will need to align key areas namely unlocking some of the infrastructure blockages and investing in place shaping and skills</li> </ul>	

	<p>development at a local level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential challenges for Invest NI in exercising oversight and governance if it does not have control over the funding.</li> <li>• Who will have the ultimate responsibility for making the investment decisions? Councils are intended to be the decision-makers, with the Minister aiming for project ideas to stem from local partnerships anchored by the Councils.</li> <li>• Concerns about whether Invest NI's broad scope in economic development might dilute its focus.</li> </ul> <p>KD expressed a wish for Invest NI to exercise more leadership on the regional development agenda including the use of the proposed regional fund. Invest NI should propose projects to the Council and local stakeholders, aiming to align them with the organisation's strategy and plans to stimulate new firm formation, reinvestment by existing clients across NI, our work to attract FDI and our wish to increase the attractiveness of NI's sub-regions. However, he also noted some uncertainty about the Minister's intended role for Invest NI.</p> <p>KD will discuss the matter with the Department.  <b>Action: KD</b></p>	KD
10.	<p><b><u>People &amp; Culture</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Budget &amp; Resourcing</u></b></p> <p>PL discussed her recent meeting with the Chair regarding the Board's request for a high-level resourcing paper covering the next three years, which will include baseline figures. PL asked colleagues to provide information on future roles they may require within their Groups.</p> <p><b>Action: ELT to provide high level information within the next week.</b></p> <p>The group also talked about the potential for a graduate programme and student placements, with PL noting that inquiries regarding student placements should be directed to People &amp; Culture Group, though any additional requests will impact overall headcount.</p> <p>KD emphasised the importance of aligning current resources with the organisation's new Business Strategy set to launch in November. He urged ELT members to evaluate whether their areas are adequately staffed and equipped with the necessary skills to meet the strategic targets, and to assess any redeployment opportunities that could improve resource utilisation and positively impact resource requirements and delivery of the strategy over the coming three years.</p> <p><b><u>Update on Cultural Audit</u></b></p> <p>PL confirmed that it is proposed to include a session on culture and values at the forthcoming Board workshop. PL stated that a culture audit will commence including gathering of employee opinions through a survey, with the assistance of an external organisation to ensure neutrality. This will begin with a desktop review of past survey outputs. The survey is scheduled for October and will be accompanied by focus groups also facilitated by the external organisation. Due to the extensive work to be undertaken (and recent changes), finalising the values exercise may take until the new year. PL asked that every effort is made to encourage participation.</p>	ELT

	<p>KD raised a question regarding whether to include our existing values in the new Business Strategy. It was agreed to omit the current values in favour of stating that new values are being developed. The group also agreed to the removal of the values from the current screensaver and electronic notice boards whilst this audit is underway.</p> <p><b>Action: AMcK to speak to IT and PH to speak to Comms re. screens.</b></p>	<b>AMcK</b>
11.	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>	
11.1	SRC Update - Dónal Durkan provided a summary overview of the SRC Meeting of 9 <sup>th</sup> September. SRC commended the format of the new CEO Report to Board and advocated a similar approach being adopted for other reports/presentations going to the Board. Areas of discussion included a Business Strategy update, the new draft Corporate Reporting Framework and Performance Dashboards, with a view to further updates in October. Updates were also provided on the Regional Strategy, the Digital Strategy, Communications & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and People & Culture, with a request that more time be given to a deeper discussion on Communications & Engagement and People & Culture at the October Meeting.	
11.2	AMcK provided some commentary on the Childcare Providers Support Scheme.	
11.3	AMcK also provided some commentary on Levelling Up (Entrepreneurship).	
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>8 October 2024</p>	



## INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

Meeting Minutes: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Room 3M02, INI HQ

Chair: Brian Dolaghan

Attendees: Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper; Paula Logue; Alan McKeown

Apologies: Kieran Donoghue; Mel Chittock; Dónal Durkan

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts</u></b> Apologies were received from Kieran Donoghue, Mel Chittock and Dónal Durkan. ELT members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 10 <sup>th</sup> September were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.  <b><i>GAP Review Phase 2</i></b> – A meeting has been scheduled to jointly agree the planned approach and the make-up of the working group to take this item forward.  <b><i>New Programmes</i></b> – BD confirmed staff communication has been issued to remind staff of the process for bringing forward a new programme. A final definitive list is being prepared, including a request for a reconciliation of the programmes to be carried out.  BD requested a paper to clarify the distinction between sponsorship and sectoral activity, focusing on funding for sectoral development that may not qualify as sponsorship. JF will ask GMcK to develop a paper on how we support sector development initiatives. <b><i>Action: JF</i></b>  <b><i>Ambition to Grow (AtG)</i></b> – AMcK confirmed that AtG will end as a pilot. Based on the additional activities that are intended to be supported under this new initiative, consideration will be given as to whether this results in the activity being classified as a standalone programme. A business case is currently being prepared.	JF

4.	<p><b><u>Independent Review Action Plan</u></b></p> <p>Mary Gormley (MG) attended the meeting to provide an update on the status of the actions in Mel Chittock's absence.</p> <p>MG reported that overall, out of 35 actions 17 have been completed to the end of September with another four due to complete this month (October). MG provided a detailed update on those actions due for completion by the end of October and those that have requested extensions.</p> <p>In terms of key challenge areas, MG stated that the SRO has previously identified five key challenge areas but noted that the challenges have been reducing over the past few months. BD asked whether the forthcoming loss of senior managers from the organisation needs to be reflected on the Corporate Risk Register.</p> <p><b>Action: BD &amp; PL to discuss.</b></p> <p>In terms of Measuring Impacts, MG reported that the SRO and the PMO team have been continuing to engage proactively and an agreed Benefits Realisation template is nearing completion. The PMO team continue to consider how the overall impact of the Actions can be assessed/aligned with the Minister's four strategic priorities and the Invest NI Business Strategy to provide a direct line of sight from policy to outcomes so that consideration can be given to project closure and transition into Business as Usual.</p>	BD/PL
5.	<p><b><u>Business Strategy Update / Corporate Performance Framework</u></b></p> <p>Gerard McNally (GMcN), Brona Fitzpatrick (BF) and Darrell McCullough (DMcC) attended the meeting to present this item.</p> <p>5.1 <b><u>Business Strategy</u></b></p> <p>GMcN referred to the movement in our main geographical based target from an 'Outside Belfast' focus to an 'Outside Belfast Metropolitan Area' focus and the agreed target now being '<i>By 2026/27, 65% of Invest NI's Investments will be outside of the Belfast Metropolitan Area</i>'. The group discussed the Economy Committee's questions about this target.</p> <p>5.2 <b><u>Corporate Performance Framework</u></b></p> <p>BF provided an updated presentation from that delivered last month. The outline of the framework will cover four areas – our impact, activity, regional activity, and the quality of our interventions. BF presented on the activity area of the framework and the group discussed the detail and requested some minor changes.</p> <p><b>Action: BF to share slides with ELT.</b></p> <p>JF praised the tool for its online, real-time functionality. BF emphasised the importance of keeping the data current and ensuring that work in progress is accurately reflected. Once the framework is finalised, the team will collaborate with IT to create a Cognos dashboard.</p> <p>DMcC presented the updated Corporate Dashboard, highlighting the importance of automated reporting for efficient tracking of performance amid new system-based reporting requirements. The group discussed the level of detail on the dashboard. JF praised the team's efforts and deemed the dashboard an excellent tool from a management perspective, with plans for its availability within the financial year. BD recommended including a timeline for SRC and Board presentations, while PL stressed the need to consider access to the system.</p>	BF

	The Executive team approved.	
6.	<p><b><u>Invest NI Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</u></b></p> <p>Darrell McCullough (DMcC) and Robin Griffith (RG) attended the meeting to present this item.</p> <p>JF highlighted the challenges in collecting KPI data from client companies. JF suggested focussing efforts on collecting data from the ‘<i>focussed 500</i>’ businesses from which we should have consistent data over the past 11-12 years. JF also advocated simplifying the approach for the collection of productivity data and recommended targeting large carbon producers separately to establish benchmark data.</p> <p>DMcC noted the value of the extensive data collected from the ‘500’ companies and emphasised that a shorter survey could still yield useful insights. RG pointed out the need to measure Invest NI’s impact on Northern Ireland’s productivity, as outlined in the Independent Review report.</p> <p>AMcK raised concerns about survey fatigue from multiple requests, while DMcC argued that a single comprehensive survey would overwhelm internal teams, justifying the need for shorter versions. BD concluded that further discussions would take place in upcoming Business Director’s and Regional Manager’s meetings, as the initiative needs to start soon.</p> <p><b><i>Action: JF/AMcK to engage DMcC and RG in respective leaders’ meetings and agree a proposed way forward.</i></b></p>	JF/AMcK
7.	<p><b><u>Communications and Engagement Strategy</u></b></p> <p>PH referred to the tabled paper.</p> <p>PH confirmed that a full updated Communications Strategy paper will be brought to the Board and presented to the Strategic Resources Committee. The paper outlines the organisation’s communication context, target audiences, and engagement strategies. PH noted positive discussions with the Chair regarding the paper’s direction.</p> <p>AMcK emphasised the importance of sequencing communications to align with overall strategy delivery. There is a concern about the current reactive approach, with multiple requests to the Comms team. PH agreed on the need for a discussion among the Executive Team to prioritise and schedule communications more strategically.</p> <p>SH raised the importance of having a spokesperson for the organisation amid external commentary. PH suggested building an advocate network involving all staff. BD highlighted the need to promote the organisation’s investment in Access to Finance. PH clarified that Fund Providers are responsible for promoting these funds. BD also shared comments from the CEO regarding entrepreneurship.</p> <p>BD asked if colleagues were supportive, and ELT confirmed they were.</p>	

8.	<p><b><u>Budget &amp; Resourcing</u></b></p> <p>PL opened the discussion commenting that the Invest NI Board requested a paper outlining the organisations resourcing strategy for next three years to address recommendations outlined in the Lyons Review and to support the new Business Strategy.</p> <p>PL indicated that colleagues were asked to outline the resources needed to implement the recommendations and strategy. The presentation included these inputs, and PL stated that support will be provided by a recruitment team that is restructured to ensure it is aligned to meet these priorities.</p> <p>The group engaged in a detailed discussion regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resourcing requirements</li> <li>• Temporary promotions</li> <li>• New work areas needing additional resources</li> <li>• The impact and costs of proposed staffing requests</li> <li>• Challenges ahead</li> </ul> <p>PL agreed to share the presentation and requested urgent reviews of the resourcing numbers to ensure accuracy and to eliminate any duplication. Additionally, training requirements will be addressed in a separate presentation which will also focus on culture and values.</p> <p>JF left the meeting at this point (12:45).</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>International</u></b></p> <p>9.1 <u>Review of International Office Footprint</u></p> <p>Steve, Anne Beggs (AB) and Colin Neill (CN) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>SH opened the discussion by explaining that this review was initiated as part of the Independent Review Action Plan, which included a commitment to develop a new strategy for International Offices. The anticipated loss of approximately 25% of the International Offices budget, along with the end of funding from the Northern Ireland Office, highlights the urgency of reassessing the network's size and scope.</p> <p>CN provided an overview of the methodology of the model. There were three phases of work undertaken namely the design and build of a country ranking model, benchmarking against peer agencies and stakeholder interviews. The review concluded that the overseas offices are judged to be 'right sized', with some exceptions, and are in the right places. However, there is a need for some rebalancing between various geographic markets. The group discussed the analysis presented.</p> <p>AB noted that the discussion is focused on staff placement, highlighting the relationship between FDI, exports policy, and ongoing research initiatives. She emphasised that strategic research on trade priority sectors is essential before fully operationalising these policies, suggesting that the current tactical discussion may be premature. SH agreed, stating the importance of securing sustainable funding for the office footprint before making operational decisions based on client needs and potential opportunities.</p>	

	<p>AMcK inquired about how the re-organisation of the overseas offices would generate more business. SH responded that it would enhance access to opportunities, particularly in FDI and trade, where having staff on the ground significantly impacts success. BD expressed concern about presenting a “presence location tool” before having finalised the FDI/export strategy, while AB acknowledged some progress but emphasised the need for further work to refine priorities. BD also shared comments from the CEO in his absence.</p> <p>BD praised the team's impressive work on developing the tool but raised concerns about whether it was the right time to present it to the Board due to unanswered questions. SH noted that he must present to Board to meet the strategic action deadline.</p>	
9.2	<p><u>FDI Policy Update</u> Anne Beggs (AB) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>AB provided a brief update indicating that this is a shared strategic action with the Department to produce the next version of the Trade and Investment Policy. Final amendments are being made that require agreement with DfE. The final draft will be presented by DfE and INI to the CEO and Chair before bringing to this group for discussion and presentation to the Board.</p>	
9.3	<p><u>Letters of Offer</u> Anne Beggs (AB) and Tracy Stuart (TS) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>BD introduced a potential project and referenced a draft Letter of Offer (LoO). AB explained that the objective was to consider clauses in the LoO that are routinely problematic for overseas investors and are frequently re-negotiated. In doing so, the aim is to arrive at a new draft that addresses the anticipated investor concerns upfront whilst protecting Invest NI's interests. Whilst this matter is being considered in the context of a potential project, it was recognised that in the longer term there would be further work required to revise the current LoO boiler plate for all clients.</p> <p>The group discussed the proposed changes, ultimately agreeing to revert to the standard wording in clause 5.6.2 regarding the Client versus the NI Operation.</p> <p>TS informed the group about an ongoing project to update the LoO. She is working on a proposal using the OACMS system, which is nearing the end of its lifecycle. TS aims to streamline the LoO while ensuring comprehensive coverage and improving its readability and accessibility. It is proposed to bring an update on the project to ELT for discussion at a future date.</p> <p>ELT were content, subject to the change, for the LoO to be issued.</p>	

10.	<p><b><u>Corporate Risk Register</u></b></p> <p>Colin Morelli (CM) and Katrina O'Dowd (KOD) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>CM presented the report covering the period up to June 2024 and requested Executive Directors to update their risk registers through September. CM noted that risk COR005 remains in the very high-risk category, and there has been a scoring change for risk COR044. A review of risk ownership for any new proposed risks is necessary, and the risk context field should be updated.</p> <p>PL asked if there was any guidance in terms of review dates for controls. KOD stated in general it would be every quarter but that there may be something specific where a longer review date is required.</p> <p>The ELT approved the Corporate Risk Register.</p>	
11.	<p><b><u>DoF / DfE Delegations Exercise</u></b></p> <p>Ian Maxwell (IM) and Alistair Moffett (AM) attended the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>IM commented that within the Independent Review there is an action to review delegations. Internal delegations have been reviewed and approved. Above these delegations, there is another suite of delegations that DfE and DoF set for Invest NI and these have been in place since the last Independent Review in 2010. The Department have approached Invest NI to seek our proposals for any changes to these external delegations.</p> <p>IM referred to the tabled paper which lays out the current and proposed delegations. AM acknowledged that in some areas we are proposing some significant change, whilst the impact of inflation on delegation limits should also be considered. The basis of each proposed uplift has traditionally excluded inflation.</p> <p>AMcK stated he was content given the objective is to achieve fewer delays.</p> <p>ELT were content for the paper to progress to the Department.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Staff Conference</u></b></p> <p>PH referred to the tabled paper commenting that the staff conference is fast approaching and there is still a significant number of actions to be completed. PH outlined how both the client and staff day will run. In terms of the exhibition, PH stated that his team have approached both sector and regional teams to ask for suggestions for clients to be invited to the client / staff conference. PH is proposing to focus on the top 50 and will ask client managers to assist with conversations. The breakout sessions have been identified and leads have agreed to take forward.</p> <p>PH asked what parameters we should put in place in terms of inviting clients to the client day. It was agreed to focus on the KPIs, and PH will discuss with JF.</p> <p><b>Action: PH to discuss with JF.</b></p>	PH

13.	<b><u>October Board workshop</u></b> This item was not covered as the relevant individuals were not in attendance.	
14.	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>	
14.1	The Mid-South West (MSW) Innovation Productivity Challenge Fund – AMcK provided a brief update confirming that he will table an updated paper next month.	
14.2	Interchange – PH asked if Invest NI can use the Interchange scheme as he is struggling to fill posts within his Group. PL to check and report back to PH. <b>Action: PL</b>	<b>PL</b>
	<b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b> 12 November 2024	

# INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

Meeting Minutes: 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Room: 3M02

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper; Paula Logue

Apologies: Dónal Durkan; Alan McKeown

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts</u></b> Apologies received from Alan McKeown and Dónal Durkan. ELT members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 8 <sup>th</sup> October were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.	
4.	<b><u>Independent Review Action Plan</u></b> Mary Gormley (MG) joined the meeting virtually to discuss this item.  MC stated that work continues on implementing the Actions with a further 4 completed in October, bringing the total completed at the end of October to 21. MC provided an update on the Actions completed and on those due to complete in November/December and in early 2025.  <b><u>Measuring Impacts</u></b> MC reported that the team has been actively working to develop a Benefits Realisation Framework to track the impacts of their actions within established reporting structures. MC also outlined how the Action Plan will be embedded into business as usual, focusing on shifting from implementation to measurable positive change.  MG presented two examples of Benefits Profiles and discussed the goal of helping Action Owners develop elevator pitches for each Action. MG took the group through a short presentation outlining the information required to be captured and brought into business as usual reporting.  MC concluded stating that the next steps include finalising the approach and sharing it with the Department before presenting it to the Invest NI Board.  PL asked if there was a danger of losing the impact of our purpose. MC confirmed that this is captured within the longer-term benefits and provided an example of how this will be quantified. KD inquired whether the framework would allow	



	<p>ongoing monitoring of the Review's impact. MC confirmed it would, with reporting at 6 and 12 month intervals and integrating existing data within the organisation. BD emphasised the alignment with the corporate plan and how measuring progress towards it would signify moving towards the desired outcomes.</p> <p>KD also asked whether the Action would measure impact on the organisation, the wider economy, or both. MG clarified that the intention is to demonstrate the organisation's progress in implementing the recommendations, both internally and to the broader business community.</p> <p>KD suggested, in closing the discussion, to build in one or two slides to connect this with our Business Strategy and the benefits we hope to deliver to the wider economy would make this better.</p> <p><b>Action: MC to share presentation</b></p>	<b>MC</b>
5.	<p><b><u>Corporate Risk Register</u></b> Colin Morelli (CM) and Katrina O'Dowd (KOD) joined the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>CM provided headlines from quarter ending 30<sup>th</sup> September namely 1 Risk still in the very high category, 1 Risk reduced in score and 1 proposed new Risk. CM asked for approval of the Register on the condition that the Team circulate the proposed new Risk and get agreement that it should be included and added to the Register prior to the Audit &amp; Risk Assurance Committee meeting. CM urged colleagues to ensure Risks are signed off.</p> <p>KOD highlighted recent discussions at the Operating Director's meeting around Group Risk Registers and that these should be discussed at their quarterly group meetings. CM confirmed that the new contract for the online system will allow the organisation to have unlimited licences allowing more staff to have access to complete the Register.</p> <p>The group discussed risks COR043, COR044 and the proposed new risk. MC asked what further actions could be taken to address COR005. KOD indicated that discussions continue and proposes raising this matter at the next Oversight &amp; Liaison meeting for discussion with the Department.</p> <p>ELT approved the Risk Register as presented.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)</u></b> Paddy Robb (PR) joined the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>PR reported that the ESG Action Plan was developed and agreed with the ESG Steering Group. The Action Plan sets out our activity under each of the three pillars of ESG. The Action Plan, in its development, aligns with the Minister's Economic Vision and supports the ambitions of our new Business Strategy. PR shared key highlights and progress to date.</p> <p>SH inquired about the results from the recent staff survey regarding commuting habits. PR confirmed that the data shows the emissions generated from our staff's daily commuting. However, further validation of this data is needed to ensure accurate comparisons before sharing with the Executive team.</p>	

	<p>PR requested approval of the Action Plan. PR explained that the plan had been reviewed by the ESG Steering Group, which discussed resourcing and the scope of the plan, and the Steering Group agreed that the objectives outlined are achievable and manageable.</p> <p>KD raised a concern that some of the timescales in the plan are outdated and suggested adding a status update column to track progress on actions that are overdue. PR confirmed that if the Action Plan is approved today, a status and/or Red/Amber/Green (RAG) indicator will be incorporated.</p> <p>BD questioned whether the plan clearly outlines how the organisation will meet its statutory requirements, especially from a risk management perspective. BD expressed concern that this wasn't clearly addressed in the current version of the plan. PR responded that this issue will be addressed in the development of the Sustainability Plan. PR also confirmed he is collaborating with the Risk Team to ensure all relevant risks are captured in the Corporate Risk Register.</p> <p>Regarding the ESG reporting platform, PR provided an update on the associated costs and noted that he will be going to market to procure a new platform to cover a 3-year period.</p> <p>PL commented on the Social pillar of the plan. The original action related specifically to the need for a Diversity &amp; Inclusion Strategy and this element was removed at the last Steering Group meeting. PL confirmed that this element will be developed after the overall HR Strategy is completed. PL expressed concern that Action 4, which targets completion by March 2025, may be overly ambitious. PR reassured that he is committed to meeting the timeline.</p> <p>KD questioned whether the ESG Strategy is aligned to the Business Strategy, as there is a need to ensure alignment. KD asked for a copy of the baseline ESG Strategy.</p> <p><b>Action: PR to send share</b></p> <p>ELT approved the ESG Action Plan as presented.</p>	PR
7.	<p><b><u>Staff Conference Update</u></b></p> <p>PH outlined the number of expected attendees at the forthcoming staff conference/client day and proposals to deal with any overflow of attendees. The group discussed the overflow proposals, and it was agreed to manage on the day.</p> <p>It was agreed that PH would provide a copy of the list of customers/delegates registered to attend.</p> <p><b>Action: PH</b></p>	PH

8.	<p><b><u>Major Project Sign-On</u></b></p> <p>BD tabled a paper outlining major project sign-ons, noting that most have been approved, but two require additional work. The group reviewed the details of several of the projects, including the Net Zero Accelerator Fund. KD questioned whether this project meets the organisation's definition of a project, and BD explained that market testing had been requested due to concerns about demand for the Fund.</p> <p>JF suggested distinguishing between investment projects and programmes, recommending that programme sign-ons over £1 million should be brought to the full Executive Team for approval due to their strategic nature. This suggestion was agreed.</p> <p>BD then referred to the Ambition to Grow (AtG) project, questioning if it was a stand-alone programme. The group discussed whether parts of AtG, particularly elements outside the scope of Selective Financial Assistance (SFA), should be approved separately or as part of a broader business case. It was decided that further discussion would be deferred until AMcK could participate. Future discussions will focus on defining AtG's objectives and scope, particularly concerning its third phase, which may become a standalone programme.</p> <p><b>Action: BD to follow up with AMcK on AtG prior to the next discussion.</b></p> <p>The group also agreed that future reports to the Executive Team should include an Executive Summary.</p> <p><b>Action: BD to ensure future reports include an Executive Summary.</b></p>	<p>BD</p> <p>BD</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Finance Group Board Actions</u></b></p> <p>BD referred to an action from the last Board meeting and provided a high-level working plan on current property activity for information purposes. BD also provided an update on the resourcing of the Property Team.</p> <p>KD agreed to raise the Regional Property Programme at a forthcoming SOLACE meeting.</p> <p><b>Action: KD</b></p>	<p>KD</p>
10.	<p><b><u>Talent Attraction Programme</u></b></p> <p>Anne Beggs (AB), Niall Casey (NC), Joanne McMullan (JMCM) and Moira Loughran (ML) joined the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>NC opened the discussion by noting that the original approval for the Talent Attraction programme was received in September 2023. However, due to significant changes in the UK's immigration system and a shift towards reducing reliance on overseas workers, it was decided to revisit and revise the business case as a material amendment.</p> <p>KD reflected that the ask today was for a decision on whether the Talent Attraction initiative still holds merit and should be resourced, given the changes in the external environment. NC confirmed but also given that it is more of an emphasis on Attract Back (to achieve good outcomes) suggested that the Programme be aligned with NI Connections.</p>	

	<p>The group debated the programme focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of expectation from priority sectors for some type of initiative,</li> <li>• Identifying those with a right to work in NI and whether we are attracting them back or from other parts of the UK,</li> <li>• Any proposed amendment to assess demand,</li> <li>• How both foreign multi-nationals and SMEs, within the client portfolio, attract talent,</li> <li>• Need for an improved 'front window' for why NI is a great place for an individual or family to come live and work and is sector agnostic including a 'life admin' element,</li> <li>• How recruitment agencies operate in this space, with some support for considering outsourced solutions due to the complexity involved,</li> <li>• Extent to which clients are recruiting internationally, with a particular focus on the drop in EU migration post-Brexit.</li> </ul> <p>KD questioned if the original proposal for a 3-year pilot with a £2.6m budget had been overtaken by recent events, to which NC agreed stating that the original engagement model needed to change. BD expressed disappointment that a tested model hadn't been developed but acknowledged the necessity for a reshaping.</p> <p>In conclusion, KD suggested drafting a short paper outlining a revised Talent Attraction initiative that considers the new reality, justifying the changes, and offering a range of options. NC agreed to revise the business case following engagement with the Economist Team.</p> <p><b>Action: NC to return with a revised outline proposal</b></p>	SH/NC
11.	<p><b><u>Delivery of a Productivity Investment Intervention</u></b></p> <p>Ethna McNamee (EMcN), Stephen Wightman (SW) and Clare Mullan (CM) joined the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>EMcN opened the discussion commenting that the paper tabled aims to provide answers to previous questions raised and is set in the context of wider productivity options and benefits around City &amp; Growth Deals.</p> <p>CM detailed the background to productivity within Invest NI including detail around the Productive Investment Capital Grant Scheme (PICG), the Agri Food Investment Scheme (AFIS), and Productivity Tool Development, along with four proposed options. SW provided background on the City &amp; Growth Deals' dimension.</p> <p>EMcN reflected that the first paper had presented a binary choice, but further discussions revealed broader implications, including issues like resource constraints, duplication, governance, and alignment with targets. The new paper clarified these points in the context of productivity and City &amp; Growth Deals.</p> <p>KD thanked the team for addressing previous questions and asked for a recommendation among the four options. The team favoured Option 2. BD expressed concerns about limited funding but supported Option 2 if funding could be secured. JF also supported Option 2 but was cautious about the organisation being stretched too thin and if there was an opportunity to assist the Council to learn through secondments. SH and BD reiterated their support for Option 2, with BD adding a caveat regarding funding availability.</p>	

	<p>KD asked if implementing Option 2 would require a dedicated team, and CM confirmed it would.</p> <p>ELT approved Option 2 as presented in the tabled paper.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Energy Efficiency Capital Grant</u></b></p> <p>JF provided a verbal update on the Energy Efficiency Capital Grant scheme. JF stated that this grant scheme was launched earlier this year and it has a £17m budget over 5 years and is open to the wider business base. JF outlined how the process for this scheme works, indicating that there have been 1200 enquiries to date and provided a breakdown of the numbers.</p> <p>JF highlighted the achievements to date including a positive response, a good locational spread including outside of Belfast and applications coming from across the wider business base. However, there are challenges emerging with the implementation of scheme which were discussed by the group. JF indicated how each of these challenges were being addressed.</p> <p>JF acknowledged the team running the scheme have been fantastic and KD asked that complements be passed on.</p>	
13.	<p><b><u>Enhanced Investment Zones (EIZ)</u></b></p> <p>Rachel Sankannawar (RS) joined the meeting to discuss this item.</p> <p>RS provided an overview of the Enhanced Investment Zones (EIZ) and her recent engagement with the Department on this topic. The proposed EIZ for Northern Ireland includes both Freeport and Investment Zone money. Green industries have been prioritised for Northern Ireland and pending approval could receive up to £150m. However, a geographical location decision has not yet been made.</p> <p>RS outlined how funding could be used to develop green industries and to enhance business competitiveness through decarbonisation, skills development and a productivity uplift. RS also outlined the requests from the Department for Invest NI's involvement in this area including playing a role in delivery and oversight of the funding initiatives. RS stated that at present there is no corporate approach to EIZs and any long-term work in this area has not been included in any recent resourcing discussions for her team and that the implications cut across the whole organisation. The group discussed the information provided.</p> <p>JF summarised that from the discussion there is a much bigger picture and the need to elevate the strategic thought going into this. KD asked for this to be added to the next O&amp;L agenda in December.</p> <p><b>Action: KD</b></p> <p>In the meantime, KD asked RS to prepare a short proposal paper for the Executive Team giving suggestions and options as to how this could be dealt with at an organisational level.</p> <p><b>Action: JF/RS</b></p>	<p><b>KD</b></p> <p><b>JF/RS</b></p>

14.	<p><b><u>Budgeting &amp; Resource</u></b></p> <p>PL referred to the last conversation on this topic and the request to now include redeployment data. PL asked colleagues to provide evidence of redeployment/reallocation of work, within their groups, over the last two years focussing on key themes not individuals.</p> <p><b>Action: PL will reach out to colleagues for examples.</b></p>	PL
15.	<p><b><u>Reward &amp; Recognition Scheme</u></b></p> <p>PL provided an overview of the current scheme and highlighted some of the issues around the scheme. The group reflected on the issues, and it was agreed that PL would task her team to prepare a paper with proposals for a way forward.</p> <p><b>Action: PL to bring paper in due course</b></p> <p>SH suggested asking staff to help design and PH commented that this could be picked up as part of the focus groups around the culture survey.</p> <p>KD commented that with a new set of organisational values in place next year, we should introduce a recognition scheme where we ask staff to vote for colleagues who they think exemplify or live the values of the organisation and awards can be given as part of the staff conference.</p>	PL
16.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p>	
16.1	<p>Culture Survey – PL confirmed that the survey was issued last week. It was agreed to extend for one further week and to ask Directors to encourage participation by teams.</p>	ELT
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>10 December 2024</p>	

**INVEST NI EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024**  
**Room: CEO office**

Chair: Kieran Donoghue

Attendees: Mel Chittock; Brian Dolaghan; Jeremy Fitch; Peter Harbinson; Steve Harper;  
Alan McKeown

Apologies: Dónal Durkan; Paula Logue

Minute Taker: Arora Upritchard

		Action Assigned to
1.	<b><u>Apologies &amp; Conflicts</u></b> Apologies received from Dónal Durkan and Paula Logue. ELT members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest.	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the meeting of 12 <sup>th</sup> November were approved and will be published online.	
3.	<b><u>Outstanding Actions</u></b> All outstanding actions were discussed.	
4.	<b><u>Independent Review Action Plan</u></b> MC stated that colleagues were given a comprehensive update at the recent Board meeting and offered a brief update on areas where there has been progress since then.  Key areas from the Board update included the Benefits Realisation, focusing on embedding it into the performance reporting framework and measuring the impact of changes. MC raised concerns about areas where actions are not progressing as expected and proposed discussing these at the upcoming IOG meeting.  MC also suggested winding down the PMO function and parallel processes, as significant progress has been made and the activities are now embedded in the performance framework. A small amount of resource/admin will be needed to close out final processes over the next few months.  MC shared a positive overall assessment of the Action Plan's implementation, noting good progress and confidence in closing out remaining actions within the agreed timeframe. SH praised the team's efforts, acknowledging the noticeable improvements within the organisation. BD highlighted the importance of implementation and the resource requirements, noting that while progress has been made, the next challenge will be delivering within a challenging environment.  KD thanked MC for his leadership in driving the Action Plan.	

5.	<p><b><u>Budget Update</u></b></p> <p>BD referenced the recent budget update presented at the Board meeting and provided a summary of the outcome of the latest Monitoring Round, as well as the work carried out with the Department.</p> <p>BD also provided an overview of the recent budget discussion at the Departmental Oversight &amp; Liaison meeting, where the group reviewed the information provided.</p> <p>It was agreed that KD and BD would meet to continue the discussion.</p> <p><b>Action: KD/BD</b></p>	KD/BD
6.	<p><b><u>Shared Island - Green Investment Strand</u></b></p> <p>Brendan McGuigan (BMcG) and Peter Donnelly (PD) joined the meeting to discuss this item. KD left the meeting and MC chaired this item.</p> <p>BMcG presented a proposal for the delivery of the “All-Island Sustainability Capital Grant,” which is part of the Shared Island Green Investment Fund, with a €20m budget (€10m allocated to Invest NI). The budget is secured and ringfenced, flowing through Invest NI. The proposal involves bringing each project individually for approval, which the organisation has the authority to do.</p> <p>BMcG highlighted risks, such as managing demand and the timeline to spend the money by December 2027, but also noted opportunities, including funding projects we otherwise couldn’t and testing methodologies for decarbonisation.</p> <p>MC raised concerns about potential overlap with DEARA’s activities, and PD assured the team that any overlap would be addressed. The group discussed how the scheme would operate, with PD providing technical details about potential projects.</p> <p>There was discussion about whether projects should come to ‘Project Sign-On’ individually or as a portfolio. PD clarified that no project would be below £1-1.5m, with a maximum of 4-5 projects at £2-2.5m each. It was agreed that projects should go through Major Project Sign-On either individual or as a portfolio if possible.</p> <p>In conclusion, MC stated that the Executive Team supports the proposal and recommends moving forward. It was agreed that the focus should be on the efficacy of the projects, not the budget, and the possibility of submitting as a portfolio is acceptable. The team was advised to consider full cost recovery and be mindful that this could be the first step in future Shared Island funding initiatives.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Social Enterprise Action Plan</u></b></p> <p>Ethna McNamee (EMcN) joined the meeting, via Teams, to discuss this item.</p> <p>KD referred to the recently published Social Enterprise Action Plan, which includes 14 actions, six of which have been assigned to Invest NI either as lead or co-owner. EMcN provided an overview of her involvement in the working group and the production of the action plan, noting that Social Economy businesses that are locally focused fall under the remit of Councils. Of the actions relevant to Invest NI, four were highlighted, with EMcN providing a summary of each.</p>	



	<p>The group discussed the action plan and EMcN confirmed that the resource implications for Invest NI are limited.</p> <p>KD inquired about the oversight/monitoring arrangements, to which EMcN responded that the Department will continue meeting (to update the action plan), with the next meeting scheduled for January. It was noted that Invest NI's involvement would not require a formal implementation plan. EMcN emphasised that the work was co-designed to positively contribute without significantly altering Invest NI's existing efforts.</p> <p>Finally, EMcN highlighted the importance of social value in public procurement, with PPN21 requiring at least 10% of the score for contracts over certain thresholds to be allocated to social value. She suggested that future conversations could explore how private sector companies might benefit from collaborating with the social enterprise sector.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Community Wealth Building Proposal</u></b></p> <p>Ethna McNamee (EMcN) and Des Gartland (DG) joined the meeting, via Teams, to discuss this item.</p> <p>AMcK referred to the tabled paper, which outlined that Invest NI has been approached to fund initiatives in Community Wealth Building. The paper presents options/recommendations for this new area of work.</p> <p>DG provided an update following a recent meeting, noting that the proposal has both social and economic aspects. However, there has been difficulty in clearly defining the projects within each area. The team has explored various channels within Invest NI and the Department for the Economy to identify mechanisms for delivering these projects, but progress has been slow.</p> <p>DG explained that due to the cross-departmental nature and the overlap between the social and economic dimensions, it is proposed to establish a Forum comprising Invest NI, DfE, DfC, and Councils. This Forum would meet in the New Year to allow all relevant partners to present their interests and any potential funding channel, which has been positively received.</p> <p>KD commented that the policy in this area is still nascent. The ideas being suggested are still very much in their early stages and there isn't any current funding for work in this area. There may be opportunities to connect the discussions around Community Wealth Building with Local Economic Partnerships.</p> <p>The group discussed the proposal and all expressed support for Option 1. BD noted a slight caveat, suggesting that some aspects of the proposed initiatives could potentially be supported by available funding. He sees a role for these projects within the funding framework and agreed to accept Option 1, with a "watching brief." AMcK confirmed that this will be addressed at the Local Enterprise Partnership level.</p> <p>KD concluded the discussion by confirming that the Executive Team accepts the recommendation of Option 1.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Digital Strategy Update</u></b></p>	

	<p>AMcK provided an update on the current digital strategy, noting ongoing discussions with the Board about the strategy being too internally focused. The Board has been suggested a more customer-centric approach.</p> <p>While the Digital Team welcomes the Board's input, they believe the Board's expectations are broader than what the team can deliver alongside other current projects. It was agreed to re-position the strategy as a customer-led agenda by forming a broader project team, including customer-facing parts of the organisation, the Comms Team, and the Digital Team.</p> <p>BD supported the approach and suggested incorporating customer journey mapping, mentioning that useful data from a previous project could be helpful. AMcK proposed this could be done as a "skunkworks" project.</p> <p>PH provided an update on the ongoing review of the internal and external websites. The group agreed on the way forward, and AMcK will produce an update paper. <b>Action: AMcK</b></p> <p>KD concluded by stressing that the strategy is not about replacing people with technology, but about balancing the use of technology with the personal touch that is essential for investment promotion and economic development agencies globally. It was agreed that a project team will be formed to move this forward. <b>Action: AMcK</b></p>	<p><b>AMcK</b></p> <p><b>AMcK</b></p>
10.	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>	
10.1	KD opened the floor for colleagues to bid farewell to members of the Executive Team departing from the organisation.	
	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b> 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025</p>	