



**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Board Strategy Workshop
held at Fane Valley HQ, Glenavy Road Business Park, Moira
on Monday 18 June 2018 at 9.30am**

Present – Board Members

Mr. Colm McKenna, Chair	Ms Therese Cullen	Mrs Maureen McKeague
Mr Colin Coffey, Deputy Chair	Mrs Fiona Hanna	Mrs Sharon Smyth
Mr Ian Buchanan	Dr Richard Horton	Mr Richard Solomon
Ms Kate Burns	Ms Joan Houston	

In Attendance – AFBI Executive

Dr Sinclair Mayne, Chief Executive Officer (Chair)
Ms Josephine Kelly, Director of Finance & Corporate Affairs Division (FCAD)
Dr Elizabeth Magowan, Director of Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division (SAFSD)
Dr Stanley McDowell, Director of Veterinary Sciences Division (VSD)
Dr Eileen Stewart, Head of Emergency Planning, Safety & Estate Branch (Item 8.4 & 9)
Mr Connor McGimpsey, AFBI Health & Safety Manager (Item 9)

Mr James Adams, AFBI Secretariat and Co-ordination Unit

AFBI Board Apprentice

Ms Jennifer Ritchie

Visitor

Mr Trevor Lockhart, Chief Executive Officer, Fane Valley (Item 4)
Mr Glen Speer, Business Development Director, Fane Valley (Item 4)

1. Chairman's Introduction and Update

ACTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed members that he wished to hold a short closed session prior to lunch and asked members to note that the extraordinary meeting of the AFBI Board will be held on Tuesday 26 June 2018.

It was noted that this was the last meeting for the current AFBI Board Apprentice, Ms Jennifer Ritchie. The Chair informed the Board that a new apprentice will be joining the AFBI Board from September 2018 and asked members to consider taking on the role of the '*Board Buddy*' as Mr Coffey would no longer be able to fulfil this role given his appointment as the Deputy Chair.

Board

2. Apologies

ACTION

Apologies were received on behalf of AFBI Board members Dr Michelle Costello-Smith and Mrs Roberta Brownlee.

3. Conflict of interest / Register of Interests Declaration

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

4. Presentation on Background of Fane Valley by Chief Executive

The Chair warmly welcomed the Chief Executive Officer and Business Development Director of Fane Valley to the meeting and thanked them for agreeing to host the AFBI Board Strategy Workshop. The Board looked forward to gaining an insight into Fane Valley operations and its key interactions with AFBI. Mr Lockhart stated that he was delighted to host the AFBI Board meeting and thanked members of the AFBI Board and Executive for the opportunity to present to them today.

Mr Lockhart explained that Fane Valley is a farmer's co-operative, has been in existence for 115 years and is 100% farmer owned with approx. 1200 stakeholders. Fane Valley has interests in numerous agri-food areas such as red meats, feed compounding, agricultural supplies, and livestock identification and operates across the UK, Ireland and Europe. In detailing the activities of the individual Fane Valley Companies, Mr Lockhart touched on areas of potential growth, exploration of new markets and the need to ensure transparency in relation to consumer health. In terms of current relationship with AFBI, the Board noted a number of ongoing interactions with AFBI in the areas of grass breeding agronomy of oat production as well as usage of the Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) analysis service.

The Chair thanked Mr Lockhart for the very enlightening presentation and was pleased that several elements resonated with AFBI's own strategies in terms of focused services, maximising value and growth as well as wider social factors under a one-health agenda.

Following a question and answer session the Board and Executive looked forward to informal follow-up discussions with Mr Lockhart and Mr Speer later today around interaction with AFBI and how science can assist Fane Valley in the delivery of its objectives.

5. Revised Draft Minutes of AFBI Board Strategy Workshop held on 5 February 2018

The revised draft minutes of the AFBI Board Strategy Workshop held 5 February 2018 were approved as an accurate reflection of the business conducted at the meeting.

6. Draft Minutes of AFBI Board Strategy workshop held on 24 April 2018

The draft minutes of the AFBI Board Strategy Workshop held 24 February 2018 were approved as an accurate reflection of the business conducted at the meeting.

7. Action Sheet from AFBI Board Strategy Workshop held on 24 April 2018 ACTION

The Board noted progress against the actions as per the action sheet and that the majority had been completed or formed part of today's agenda.

8. AFBI Board Business

8.1 Protection of Information during Relocation Policy

Mrs Kelly presented a paper entitled '*AFBI Policy & Guidance - Protecting Information during Relocation*' which has been developed in line with Principle (f) of the General Data Protection Regulations (article 5).

The key messages outlined in the policy relate to the following:-

- Designation of key roles – the policy outlines the requirement of a number of key roles such as Relocation Officer, Receiving Officer, and Information Asset Owner;
- Assurance Statement – the policy requires that the information owner signs and submits an assurance statement to AFBI's Senior Information Risk Owner detailing that appropriate checks have been in place and all information has been accounted for;
- Relocation Procedures – the guidance contains a useful relocation inspection check list to ensure that all procedures have been followed and the risk of a data breach is minimised.

The Board sought assurance from the Executive regarding the monitoring and implementation of the policy. The Executive advised that the policy and supplementary information will be placed on the AFBI Intranet, cascaded down to staff via Heads of Branch who will be held accountable for the policy's implementation.

The Board was content to approve the Protecting Information during Relocation policy.

8.2 Overview of Whistleblowing

Following discussion at the Board's meeting in May 2018 Mrs Kelly presented a paper which provides an overview of AFBI's current whistleblowing arrangements.

AFBI's Whistleblowing Policy sets out how AFBI staff can raise concerns about certain matters having a public interest occurring within AFBI. The policy also sets out procedures for management should an incident of potential whistleblowing be brought to their attention.

The Board was assured that AFBI's whistleblowing arrangements reflect the most recent NI Civil Service, NI Audit Office and Public Concern at Work guidance. The Board indicated that it was content and noted that the AFBI Whistleblowing Policy will be presented to the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee for consideration.

8.3 Board Effectiveness

ACTION

The Chair informed the Board that he had further reviewed the comments provided in relation to the '*AFBI Board Performance – Self-assessment Exercise 2017/18*'. While the Chair was mindful of the need to address a small number of areas, overall, the Board was content with the results of the exercise and noted the results will be shared with DAERA.

8.4 Estate Strategy Proposals

Dr Stewart presented a comprehensive paper on AFBI's Estate Strategy Proposals and provided the Board with a detailed overview of activity on a site by site basis.

During the discussions the Board raised concerns regarding the time-line for the relocation of AFBI Headquarters and the potential for delays due to the wider DAERA Science Transformation Programme.

The Board noted that the AFBI Research Vessel also forms part of the AFBI Estate and was concerned regarding the timeframe for the approval of the business case for the replacement of the AFBI Research Vessel '*Corystes*'. The Chair agreed that the matter will be raised with the Department.

Chair

9. **Health & Safety (H&S) & Dangerous Goods Safety Advisor (DGSA) Update**

9.1 AFBI H&S Board Paper

Dr Stewart presented the '*AFBI H&S Reviews: 3-Year Compliance Plan*' which outlines the key points from the external H&S Review of AFBI and the DGSA audits as well as a snapshot of progress to date in relation to action plans arising from the reviews.

9.2 AFBI H&S Review Report – March 2018

The Board noted the AFBI H&S Review Report - March 2018, details of which will be covered in the presentation to follow.

9.3 AFBI Dangerous Goods Safety Advisor (DGSA) Annual Report 2017

The Board noted the AFBI DGSA Annual Report 2017, details of which will be covered in the presentation to follow.

9.4 AFBI Corporate H&S Policy Section 1.0 – Statement of Intent

The Board noted that the Corporate AFBI H&S Policy is being reviewed and up-dated in its entirety and that section 1.0 of the updated policy 'A Statement of Intent' is presented today for Board approval.

Following discussion the Board was content to approve the AFBI Corporate H&S Policy: Statement of Intent.

Dr Stewart and Mr. McGimpsey provided the Board with a presentation on the next steps following AFBI's H&S Review and DGSA Audits. Areas discussed are detailed below:-

- AFBI Health and Safety Management Profile (HASMAP) compliance
- AFBI DGSA Audit Summary
- AFBI Corporate Risk Register – CR8
- Outline of Corporate H&S Policy and supplementary policies in development
- H&S Committee Structure
- Training and Awareness
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH) / Risk Assessments
- Audits & Inspections
- Accident & Incident Arrangements

To provide the Board with further assurance, Dr Stewart outlined the ongoing Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) schedule which included statutory, legislative and H&S maintenance across the AFBI Estate.

The Board noted a number of ongoing efforts to standardise risk assessments, develop an electronic system to manage CoSHH Assessments and the further dissemination of Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) training. However, the Board raised serious concern regarding AFBI's current levels of compliance as highlighted in the H&S Report and sought assurance that urgent, high priority areas e.g. first aid kits are being prioritised and taken forward as a matter of urgency. The Board also requested that the resulting HASMAP and Action Plans are strictly time bound with clear completion dates set.

The Chair suggested that updates on the H&S actions and recommendations be provided to the Board at its December 2018 meeting.

Exec

10. Strategic Alliance with Queen's University – Presentation

Dr Mayne gave a presentation on the current progress in relation to the Strategic Alliance with Queen's University. Key points from the presentation are highlighted below:-

- The Alliance was officially launched at the Balmoral Show on Friday 18 May 2018;
- External support has been procured to look at the appropriate governance arrangements for the Alliance. They will be conducting a number of engagements with AFBI Board members, AFBI staff and visiting a number of key stakeholders;
- A joint Strategic Oversight Group to be established;
- Series of Collaborative Working Groups led jointly by AFBI and Queen's to be established this month;

- KPI's for the Alliance will be set and tracked by the Strategic Oversight Group. **ACTION**

The CEO also provided the Board with a number of examples of AFBI involvement in projects which are a direct result of the establishment of the alliance.

In response to a query concerning other educational institutions, the CEO confirmed that discussions had been held with several key stakeholders who recognised the reasons for adopting such an approach. The CEO also informed the Board that a clear message had been provided to stakeholders that this is not an exclusive situation for either party and should any mutually beneficial opportunities arise which involves AFBI working with other educational institutions, they will be fully explored.

11. Date of next meeting

An extraordinary meeting of the AFBI Board will be held on Tuesday 26 June 2018 at 6pm.

The next AFBI Board meeting will be held on Thursday 13 September 2018 AFBI Newforge.

The next AFBI Board Workshop will be held on Wednesday 24 October 2018.

Closed Session

The Board held a brief closed session.

At the conclusion of the meeting and prior to lunch, the Chair marked the occasion of Ms Ritchie's completion of the Board Apprentice scheme by congratulating her on her successful application and hoped that she had found the experience to be valuable and worthwhile. Ms Ritchie stated that she had enjoyed her experience with the AFBI Board and thanked Board members, in particular Mr Coffey, for their support during the year.

The Board wished Ms Ritchie every success for the future.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson)

Date: _____