



**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Board Strategy Workshop
held at AFBI Newforge (HQ),
on Tuesday 24 April 2018 at 10.00am**

Present – Board Members

Mr Colm McKenna, Chair	Dr Michelle Costello-Smith	Ms Joan Houston
Mr Colin Coffey, Deputy Chair	Ms Theresa Cullen	Mrs Maureen McKeague
Mrs Roberta Brownlee	Mrs Fiona Hanna	Mrs Sharon Smyth
Mr Ian Buchanan	Dr Richard Horton	Mr Richard Solomon
Ms Kate Burns		

In Attendance - AFBI Executive

Mrs Josephine Kelly, Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs Division
Dr Stanley McDowell, Director of Veterinary Sciences Division
Dr Elizabeth Magowan, Director of Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division
Mr Glenn Montgomery, Head of Governance & Performance
Mr Richard McCormick, Head of Corporate Communications
Dr Eileen Stewart, Head of Emergency Planning, Safety & Estate (Item 8)
Mr James Adams, AFBI Secretariat

Boardroom Apprentice

Ms Jennifer Ritchie

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Board held a Closed Session

1. Welcome and Introduction

ACTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Workshop and apologised for the short delay as a result of the closed session.

2. Apologies

An apology was received from Dr Sinclair Mayne, Chief Executive Officer.

3. Conflict of Interests/Register of Interests Declaration

There were no conflicts of interest to be recorded.

4. Draft Minutes of AFBI Board Strategy Workshop held 5 February 2018 **ACTION**

In discussing the draft minutes from the AFBI Board Strategy Workshop held on 5 February 2018 the following was proposed:

Item 6 - Update on Progress with VSD New Build, last paragraph: that enhanced detail regarding the discussion on veterinary services province-wise should be reflected in the minutes. A form of words will be provided to the Chair for his consideration and will be inserted in the draft minutes for approval.

**FH/
Sec**

5. Action Sheet from AFBI Board Strategy Workshop held on 5 February 2018

In noting the progress against actions as per the action sheet, the Chair asked the Executive to provide additional information in relation to actions that are in progress including projected completion dates.

Exec

6. AFBI Board Business – AFBI Policies

6.1 Draft AFBI Data Protection Policy

The Board reviewed the Draft AFBI Data Protection Policy and agreed following the presentation on EU General Data Protection Regulations at Item 12 to give the policy due consideration and provide feedback to enable a revised policy to be presented at the AFBI Board Meeting on 15 May 2018.

Board

7. Emerging Findings from DAERA Review of AFBI

Mr Montgomery gave a presentation in relation to the progress of the DAERA Review of AFBI. It was noted that due to rescheduling of Project Board meetings it had not been possible for the Project Lead to attend the meeting. However, it is planned that the Project Lead will attend the May meeting of the AFBI Board and Mr Montgomery assured attendees that the Executive continue to meet with the Project Lead on a monthly basis to discuss progress.

After setting the context for the review, Mr Montgomery outlined the progress to date of the following seven work-streams:

- Form and Function
- Online Questionnaire
- Request for written evidence
- PSRE Focus Groups
- Review of the AFBI Funding Model
- Review of Board Effectiveness

In discussing the emerging findings and AFBI's response to these findings in February 2018, it was recognised that substantial progress had been made since then. By way of illustration Mr Montgomery informed the Board that significant evidence had been provided in areas such as strategic planning, strategic partnerships, data management and EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance.

The Chair sensed that fostering the relationship with AFBI Sponsor Branch (ASB) has led to improvements and it is important to enhance this relationship further and build a good relationship with the new DAERA Permanent Secretary.

The Board thanked Mr Montgomery for the update and welcomed a number of the findings, as well as the progress made to date and looked forward to a presentation to the Project Lead at its next meeting.

8. Hillsborough Farm Infrastructure Update

Dr Magowan commenced the presentation by providing the Board with background to the AFBI Hillsborough site and the establishment of the Farmed Estate Accommodation Masterplan.

Actions to date have included the development of a high level master plan produced in 2014 which raised awareness of need. A draft Farmed Estate Accommodation Masterplan was agreed between Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) and AFBI in January 2018 and a feasibility report is due from CPD in early May 2018. CPD have also produced option reports on Ingress/Egress routes to AFBI Hillsborough site and siting of proposed AFBI HQ at Hillsborough.

In highlighting the key considerations in the masterplan the following points were noted:-

- It should reflect AFBIs long term aspiration of being an industry leading research facility;
- Creation of a farmed estate which provides AFBI with modern, fit for purpose, and state of the art facilities which are robust, space efficient, sustainable and flexible;
- To minimise both maintenance and running costs thus reducing whole life costs;
- A corporation of infrastructure upgrades e.g., slurry management
- Compliance with statutory requirements;
- Bio-security option to seal off farm in the event of an incident;
- Continuity of business during construction period.

In response to a query on expansion contingency, Dr Stewart confirmed that buildings can be reconfigured for other usage and that there is space for further development.

In discussing the next steps which include the development of an AFBI/Hillsborough Farmed Estate Strategic Outlined Case (SOC), by the summer 2018 it was noted that the SOC will reference the AFBI HQ relocation but that the SOC is in essence about the farm facilities.

The Chair raised concerns that we are at the SOC stage and asked that this could be fast-tracked to seek DAERA agreement. The Chair asked Dr Magowan to discuss with EMT what actions need to be undertaken to fast track the SOC given it's a key priority for AFBI.

In agreeing to the development of the SOC the Board asked for a one page document which highlights what has been agreed with the department and what

EM/ES

areas are currently outstanding. There was also a request that the board be updated on the position of the VSD main building outline business case (OBC).

SMcD

9. AFBI Business Development Strategy and Branding

Mrs Kelly and Mr McCormick gave a presentation on AFBI's Business Development Strategy and Branding. Mrs Kelly introduced the presentation and highlighted the non-grant in aid position over the medium term as well as the level of certainty in relation to projected income.

The Business Development Strategy aims to assist AFBI in focusing on high value projects and an analysis of time and effort being put into research bids will help AFBI gain an understanding of our capacity to grow. The most significant opportunity for increases in non-GIA income rests with major research contracts as it is anticipated that there is limited scope for growth in commercial testing, livestock and produce and royalty income.

In terms of the structures and systems in place, Mrs Kelly advised that this is being reviewed given the increased workload arising from AFBI's success in generating non-Grant-in-Aid income which includes the need to process and monitor grant claims. The Chair stated that it is important the right structure and systems are in place in this area and would encourage the development of the business development report and business support for scientific staff. The Chair also requested that report be brought to the Board Strategy Workshop as soon as possible so that the Board has oversight of how AFBI plans to implement the strategy.

JK

Mr McCormick then highlighted a number of key activities being undertaken by Corporate Communications including the audit and upgrade of the AFBI website, high level engagement with senior media, revision of protocols regarding AFBI use of social media and stronger engagement with industry.

In response to a query on the time-line for the development of a new AFBI website, Mr McCormick advised that this should take approximately six months to design and upload content.

Mr McCormick advised that he will also distil the AFBI Corporate and Business Plan into key communications. Dr Horton asked if there were any high-profile communications that the Board should be aware of. Mr McCormick mentioned the importance of the independent AFBI stand at this year's Balmoral show, and the upcoming Home Ground episode which will feature AFBI Bushmills site, as well as staff from Fisheries and Aquatic Eco-Systems Branch and is due to air in May 2018.

Dr Costello-Smith also asked that Mr McCormick attend the AFBI Science Strategy Committee on the 14 June 2018 and the Secretary agreed to arrange.

Sec

10. Update on AFBI/QUB Alliance

The Chair updated the board on developments around the establishment of a strategic alliance with QUB. There have been a number of ongoing discussions with key stakeholders and the commissioning of an external resource to assess governance models is due to go out for public tender shortly.

It is hoped that the business case will receive approval from the Department next week and it is planned that the strategic alliance will be launched at this year's Balmoral Show. In discussing the timetable over the next few months it was noted that this will take commitment from senior AFBI and QUB staff. The Chair urged all those involved to ensure that this is brought to fruition.

It was suggested that this subject could be considered on the agenda of the June Strategic Workshop including proposed KPIs.

CEO

As an aside, an AFBI Board member advised the Board about a message on social media. Mr McCormick agreed to follow up on this and update the CEO.

RMcC

11. Presentation of Certificate to Long Service Staff

Prior to a break for lunch the Chair presented Long Service Certificate to Mrs Elaine Davis in recognition of over forty years' dedicated service in the provision of Library services at Newforge Lane.

It was noted that throughout this period Mrs Davis had always provided an enthusiastic and informative service to all library users and she will be greatly missed by many staff within the Institute. The Board thanked Mrs Davis for her service and wished her well in her retirement.

12. EU General Data Protection Regulations – AFBI Preparations for Compliance

Mr Montgomery and Mrs Cooper gave a presentation on AFBI's preparation for compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Mrs Cooper highlighted that GDPR will ensure that common sense processing of personal information is adhered to. It will also lead to improved transparency by organisations and provide new and strengthened rights for individuals. The level of enforcement will be also be enhanced and the ability of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to hand out greater financial penalties for those who fail to comply have been significantly increased.

In outlining the six GDPR principles which includes the introduction of a new accountability requirement, Mrs Cooper highlighted AFBI's preparation for compliance which include the following:

- AFBI has been represented on the NICS GDPR Working Group and the NICS/GDPR Training Sub-Group;
- An AFBI GDPR Working Group was also established in June 2017 and implementation plan to ensure compliance has been put in place with regular progress reports provided to the Executive;
- AFBI mirror the progress made within the wider NICS;
- Relevant policies and procedures have been revised;
- Information governance roles and responsibilities have been defined;
- AFBI information asset register has been developed;
- An AFBI Retention and Disposal schedule has been drafted;
- Staff have been provided with necessary training and have been made aware of implications through a number of communications.

Legislation will come into force on 25 May 2018 and beyond this date a number of activities such as cleansing of data, identifying and amending existing contracts, monitoring of compliance and consideration of an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) will continue to be undertaken to ensure compliance.

The Board asked if the introduction of GDPR would make processes such as tendering exercises more time consuming to undertake. It was noted that for the majority of staff it will be business as usual after GDPR implementation although an extra layer of care is required in the handling of personal information. The Board was assured that such information obtained through procurement exercises would only be held by AFBI if there was a legal obligation to do so as in some cases liability will pass on to the processors of the information.

The Board thanked Mr Montgomery and Mrs Cooper for the comprehensive presentation.

13. Any Other Business

There were no additional items of business.

14. Date of Next AFBI Board Meeting & AFBI Board Workshop

Date of Next AFBI Board Meeting – Tuesday 15 May 2018 at AFBI Newforge and AFBI Board Workshop – Monday 18 June 2018 venue TBC.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson)

Date: _____