



APPROVED MINUTE OF MEETING

[Note: This public minute excludes words or sentences removed in the interests of effective conduct of public affairs.]

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE – BOARD MEETING 17 AUGUST 2023 JAS P WILSON DALBEATTIE

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| <p>Board Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Viv Cockburn Helen Forsyth Emma Guy Kirsten Hannay Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive Duncan McConchie Paul Winstanley Alistair Cameron Jeremy Sainsbury</p> <p>SOSE Senior Leadership Team Anthony Daye, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Engagement Bryan McGrath, Director of Place and Enterprise</p> <p>Apologies Board Members: Professor Sara Carter Lindsay McDowall</p> <p>Apologies: Dr Martin Valenti, Director of Net Zero, Nature and Entrepreneurship</p> | <p>Corporate Office Heather Unsworth, Executive Assistant Linsey McGillivray, Board Secretariat Fiona Sköller, Corporate Support Administrator</p> <p>SOSE Attendees (via MS Teams) Kate Musgrave, Head of Enterprising Communities Sara Kenhard, Business Development Specialist</p> <p>SOSE Attendees in person Paul Wheelhouse, Head of Energy Transition Rob Davidson, Strategy Manager, Community Wealth Building Lucy Filby, Head of Land and Forestry Transition</p> <p>Scottish Government (in person and via MS Teams) Scottish Government Officials – Regional Economic Development Division</p> <p>Guests Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy (in person)) Director Infrastructure and Environment, Scottish Borders Council (via MS Teams)</p> |
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WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed Board members and colleagues to the meeting and apologies were noted as above. The meeting was declared as quorate.

PREPARATION FOR NEIL GRAY MSP CABINET SECRETARY FOR WELLBEING ECONOMY, FAIR WORK AND ENERGY

2. The Chair advised each member of the Board of a topic that they would speak about for two minutes each to the Cabinet Secretary.

NEIL GRAY MSP CABINET SECRETARY FOR WELLBEING ECONOMY, FAIR WORK AND ENERGY

3. The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy to his first meeting with the SOSE Board and hoped it would be the first of many. The Chair informed that recruitment was underway for two new Board members with experience of land use and education/skills. Each Board member spoke to the Cabinet Secretary on particular issues as undernoted:
 - **Cycling** and the economic opportunity for the region.
 - **Visitor Economy** and the importance for the region.
 - **Housing** and the focus on the housing challenge in the South of Scotland and the work being taken to address it.
 - **Place Planning** and the importance and potential of place planning for our communities.
 - **Third Sector** and reflections on Third sector post-covid and the importance of its contribution to the region as an integral part of communities and economic development.
 - **Land Issues** including Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP), Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere (GSAB) and Scottish Government's commitment to designate a new national park.
 - **Energy** and the potential for community benefit.
 - **Innovation** and advanced manufacturing.
 - **Skills** and the focus on the importance of addressing regional needs and opportunities.
 - Work to support a **Just Transition**.

4. The Cabinet Secretary responded to the presentations given by members of the Board.
 - He was encouraged by the work and diversity of skills and experience demonstrated. The expertise around the table gave him confidence SOSE were leading in the right direction, responding to the needs in the South of Scotland and it gave him confidence SOSE and he would work well together in terms of achieving the best for the South of Scotland.
 - Congratulations were given to the South of Scotland for the recent success of the UCI World Champion Cycling events which was well earned recognition and would continue to drive the visitor economy to the South of Scotland.
 - The housing challenge was one shared nationally and the economy needed to be innovated to attract investment, to have housing in the right place at the right time to ensure labour and ensure growth and opportunity.
 - Place planning was fundamental in terms of ensuring towns continued to thrive whilst understanding history, culture, identity and provision of support to harness work in those communities.
 - Energy had already played a significant role in the South of Scotland economy with onshore wind and there were links to manufacturing opportunities for surplus of renewable energy and green hydrogen.
 - The discussion about land was encouraging to the Cabinet Secretary and he understood the key challenge to keeping people in the region, providing opportunities to encourage people to stay and to have good jobs, training and housing.
 - Access to labour was a challenge to employers Scotland-wide and the Cabinet Secretary identified the power of work being done in response to the Withers report. SOSE was encouraged to push the proposal for a rural visa pilot.

Approved at meeting on 12.10.23

5. The Cabinet Secretary agreed to take away as a commitment to get transport, housing and energy policy teams to interact with SOSE to ensure they understood what the South of Scotland was trying to achieve.
6. The Cabinet Secretary spoke of public sector reform and the direction of travel and important interaction, that local government colleagues were involved, and more power was given to Regional Economic Partnerships and Enterprise Agencies to deliver what was required in communities and Business Gateway provided great support. Scottish Government would work in consultation with SOSE, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Scottish Enterprise (SE).
7. The Chief Executive appreciated hearing of the post-Covid landscape and of Scottish Government's tailoring regionally. SOSE's relationship with the Sponsor Team was praised as partners and sounding boards and it was a trusted and transparent relationship.
8. The Director of Economic Development informed of a developing programme of public services reform on the way SOSE worked with Business Gateway and it would add to presentation in future years about how SOSE shaped the national agenda.
9. The SOSE Chair formally thanked the Cabinet Secretary for his attendance at SOSE Board and hoped he found discussion interesting and enjoyed his visits to three local businesses following the meeting.
10. The Cabinet Secretary found the discussion useful, and it was helpful to get a feeling about local issues and get a sense from the wider Board in terms of what is going on.

Emma Guy left the meeting.

BETTER BENEFIT FROM ONSHORE WIND

11. A paper had been circulated updating the Board on SOSE initiated work to ensure communities across the South of Scotland were able to Better Benefit from Onshore Wind and sought the Board's endorsement of the proposed way forward. Discussion was around:
 - Partnership approach with local authorities.
 - Opportunity to agree with Councils and developers the way forward to maximise benefits to communities.
 - Having a developers' forum.
 - Funding and future strategy to enable communities to invest better.
 - The potential for linkage between place planning and community benefit.
 - SOSE's role.

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| Decision | The Board endorsed the way forward – the approach and partnership with local authorities. |
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HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

12. A presentation was provided, giving an update on the Beacon Business Net Zero Accelerator Pilot which was a 12-month carbon reduction programme which began in December 2022. Board discussion was around:
 - The ability to make the six businesses on the programme carbon champions in terms of their supply chain (and ensuring they have carbon reduction plans).

Approved at meeting on 12.10.23

- Accessibility for micro-businesses and the challenge to fund their opportunity.
- Embedding and future conditionality of Net Zero.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

13. There were no declarations of interest. (Jeremy Sainsbury had previously declared interest in the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere (GSAB). This was noted not to present a conflict.)

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTION LOG

14. The minute of the meeting held on 08 June 2023 had been circulated along with the action log.

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| Decision: | The minute of the meeting held on 08 June 2023 was approved. |
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BOARD INTERNAL MATTERS

15. This item was discussed in private with Board members, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Scottish Government colleagues and SOSE colleagues. The note of the previous private internal matters discussed on 08.06.2023 was approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

16. The Chair gave a summary of the SOSE Summer Tour 2023 detailing the 15 venues visited including 13 bespoke events and 3 days at the two agricultural shows. There was agreement on three priority issues of housing, transport and skills and recognition of the need to do more to retain young people in the region. There was interest in the Regional Land Use Framework, Net Zero, arts, culture and the challenges around tourism.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

17. The Chief Executive reported on:
 - Internal work within the organisation
 - A cultural piece with Peachy Mondays.
 - Cultural change for frontline staff.
 - Roadshows.
 - Business Gateway.
 - UCI coverage – thanks for the Communications Team.
 - Tripartite collaboration with both Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway Councils.
 - Homes For Good – recruitment of its first South of Scotland staff member.
 - Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23 – thanks to the Finance Team.
 - Communication Strategy draft – thanks to the Strategy and Engagement Partnership Team.
18. There was discussion on:
 - Fair Work conditionality – SOSE were working with HIE and SE and were continuing to gather evidence to take back to Scottish Government.
 - Entrepreneurship Workshops – it was commented that promotion on the workshops could be more inspirational to reflect great guest speakers.
 - Action Plan and Operating Plan – to begin to start reporting on targets.
 - Staff Engagement Survey – would be discussed at a future Board.

Approved at meeting on 12.10.23

- Redundancies and employment issues – detailed report to be provided regularly.

MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS - GALLOWAY AND SOUTHERN AYRSHIRE BIOSPHERE

19. The Board had a useful discussion on the Biosphere and will return to it in the future.

VISION FOR LOWOOD/TWEEDBANK - SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

20. A representative from Scottish Borders Council gave a presentation on the plans for Lowood/Tweedbank. Board members were interested in the plans for the Care Village and the housing strategy for the 300 houses (speaking to potential developers). SOSE's role was to provide support around the business infrastructure workshops and SBC would be developing a case for capital investment as the development ramps up.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS

The Board considered one funding application.

"Details of projects funded, and their values are published by SOSE on a quarterly basis once all relevant contractual terms have been agreed. Please refer to the [SOSE website](#) for information on the Grant Funding that we have distributed.

FINANCE UPDATE REPORT AND SOSE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022-23

21. Auditors relayed there had been a very positive, good, constructive relationship with SOSE colleagues. The Audit and Risk Committee had approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23.
22. The Board formally praised the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, his team and the wider teams for the work pulling together the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23.
23. The finance update report was discussed.

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| Decision: | The Board approved SOSE's Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23. |
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HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

24. The Board members noted the report and the exemplary approach to Health & Safety.

A.O.B.

25. The Board formally noted appreciation to Professor Sara Carter for her time and effort as a Board member and for her intellect and succinctness.

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

26. The below papers were provided for information:
- Minute of Economics Committee 04.05.23
 - Minute of Audit & Risk Committee 01.03.23
 - Board Forward Plan

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Approved at meeting on 12.10.23

27. 12 October 2023 - venue tbc.