

## **ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD**

(Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Minutes of a Board of Directors Meeting  
10.30, Wednesday 25 June 2019  
Hilton, Templepatrick

### **Present**

Mr J Perry	Chairman
Dr G Adams	Director
Mr A Bennett	Director
Ms C Magill	Director
Mr R Donnelly	Director
Mr D O'Hara	Director
Mr W Atkinson	Chief Executive
Mrs SJ Mowbray	Company Secretary/Head of Corporate Services
Mr S Jackson	Head of Manufacturing & Recycling
Mr D Cowan	Head of Employment Services

### **Apologies**

None

### **1. Conflict of Interest**

1.1.A perceived conflict of interest was noted for the SMT in relation to the pension benefit re-design.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2019**

2.1. Minutes from meeting on 30 May 2019 were approved.

2.2. Actions from previous meetings were noted as cleared:

### **3. Chairman's Business**

3.1. The Chairman updated members in relation to:

- A meeting for incoming and out-going Board members has been organised for 31 July to ensure a smooth handover;
- The Chairman is meeting a senior official within DfC later this week to provide update on any issues with Usel before his term ends;
- An update was provided regarding a meeting held recently at Cambrai Street to discuss a potential new site within the Greater Belfast area. The meeting was well attended by a number of key stakeholders;

- The Chair understands that the outcome from the Tailored Review has almost been finalised. The Board look forward to receiving the recommendations from the report;
- The Chairman, along with Mr Atkinson and new Chair, will attend a meeting with CEO of Mid & East Antrim Council to discuss any opportunities between Usel and the Council.

#### **4. Pension Scheme Update**

4.1. The Chair updated members in relation to:

- The business case for the pension benefit re-design is still with the Department and its actuary for consideration;
- The Board authorised appointing the professional Trustee prior to the business case being approved by the Department. The professional Trustee will provide assistance to the Board in the ongoing process.

#### **5. Chief Executive's Report**

5.1. The Directors reviewed the Chief Executive's Report which had been circulated with Board papers. The following was noted:

##### **Strategic Partnership Development**

5.2. Discussions with a private sector partner continues regarding how we shape a structured strategic partnership.

##### **Brand Identity**

5.3. The recycling operation has continued to grow and now includes the following range of activity:

- Mattress recycling
- Carpet recycling
- Carpet tile recycling
- Dry mix recycling
- Facilities management (pilot)

5.4. During the mattress recycling pilot period, a range of informal feedback was received regarding the lack of a clear identity for this area of the business. In order to address this stakeholder concern, the "U Recycle" identity was developed to sit within the wider Usel social enterprise group of activities.

5.5. This action prompted some feedback on the need for a separate identity for this area of the business. A formal survey of key stakeholders has been initiated, including one to one meetings.

5.6. This detail will then be used to formulate an approach to consolidate the current sub brand or undertake a full review and re brand of our recycling identity.

**AP: Undertake a “brand audit”. Also, need to include our brand awareness within recruitment communications etc.**

### **Stake Holder Engagement**

5.7. Confirmation has been received from the Department that Usel have approval to operate under a procurement derogation. This allows Usel to procure raw materials without the need to follow NI Public Procurement Policy. This approval requires Usel to provide assurance to DfC that we are following an agreed procurement procedure and that pre-agreed guidelines will be implemented.

### **Pay Remit**

5.8. Pay Remit for weekly paid staff has been submitted to the Department for approval.

### **Employment Support Programme**

5.9. An issue in relation to Employment Support programme participants was brought to Board’s attention. The Board were assured that appropriate HR and legal advice has been sought.

## **6. Chair of Audit & Risk Assurance Committee update**

6.1. The Chair of the ARAC provided a verbal update to the Board.

6.2. The ARAC recommended the Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19 for approval by the Board.

## 7. Head of Corporate Services' Report

### Finance

7.1. The Directors reviewed the summary financial position against budget, for **May**, and noted an operating surplus of £28k. Budget forecast for **May** was £18k surplus, therefore there is a positive variance of £10k.

7.2. YTD we have delivered a surplus of £74k. Budget forecast for YTD position, as at 31 May was a surplus of £38k. This is a positive variance of £36k.

7.3. It was noted that income and expenditure lines were within 10% variance tolerance.

7.4. Any additional clarification requested by Board members was provided.

7.5. The draft Annual Report and Accounts for Year Ended 31 March 2019 were presented for approval.

### HR

7.6. The average absenteeism rates for 2019-20 are as follow:

	<b>May 2019</b>	<b>YTD Average</b>
<i>Absenteeism rates - short term-National Average 3% dependant on demographics</i>	1.84%	1.65%
<i>Absenteeism rates - long term (+4 weeks)-National Average 2.5% dependant on demographics</i>	3%*	2.85%

7.7. No other substantive issues to note.

7.8. Usel are continuing to engage with its out-sourced HR business partner as required and monitor the contract spend each month.

### ICT & Compliance

7.9. In addition to delivering the ICT Strategy, recent activity included:

- Invest NI – support letter received from DfC and now awaiting final outcome letter from Invest NI;
- Quarterly Business Survey now completed (DoF) for the organisation;
- Second months submission on the new digital mileage system has been completed. ICT and Finance will complete a full detailed review of the first three months of submissions;

- Infrastructure and setup for the new Cafe at City Hospital Mental Health Unit including the app ordering system. This will be launching on 1st July 2019;
- New clock-in facility at our Ballymena site, which will launch on 20th June 2019 due to the increased number of staff based on the premises;
- GDPR refresher exercise will take place in July and August for those who have undertaken the training more than 1 year ago. This process has been simplified for those who have already undertaken a full GDPR training session.
- New email cyber security/phishing tool purchased to test the robustness of the organisation in the event of a cyber email attack. This will be rolled out of the next two months and will allow the organisation to establish target user specific cyber training.

7.10. There were no incidences of ICT Breaches to report.

### **Business Development and Marketing**

7.11. In addition to delivering the Communication Plan, recent activity included:

- Interreg proposal with Mid and East Antrim Council;
- PR for The Open and the new Café at the Mental Health Unit, City Hospital;
- Attendance at the Social Investment Scotland Retail Academy with the KTP graduate;
- Launch of IFA Academy.

#### **U Matter:**

- Focus on Mens Health Week;
- Established a “Get Fit, Keep Fit” walking club.

7.12. Communications to staff continues to operate in line with plan. No issues or concerns have been raised.

### **Business Improvement**

7.13. Recent activity included:

- A range of new initiatives have been implemented using 5S methodology, with the following results:
  - Divans output – increased from baseline of 140 units in April, to 250 in May;
  - Drawer divans – time taken to produce has reduced from 7.5 hours to 2 hours;
  - Preparation of covers for divan bases – increased from 4 prepared per hour, to 40 per hour

- New process controls have been introduced in relation to product safety.

## **8. Adult Safe Guarding Issues**

8.1. No new issues to report.

## **9. Draft Competency Framework**

9.1. The draft competency framework was presented to the Board.

9.2. The Board approved the framework and proposed implementation process.

## **10. Balanced Scorecard 2019-20**

10.1. The 2019-29 Balanced Scorecard was presented to the Board and was noted.

10.2. Performance against Q1 will be presented in August Board.

## **11. Health & Safety**

11.1. Health & Safety forum continues to operate on monthly basis.

## **12. Risk management**

12.1. The Board noted the changes to the risk register.

## **13. Policies for Approval**

13.1. The following policies were presented for approval:

- Draft Succession Policy

13.2. The following policies were submitted for approval in August's Board:

- H&S Committee – Terms of Reference
- Recruitment and Selection Policy V2
- Flexible Working Policy

## **14. Any Other Business**

14.1. The Board resolved that the Danske bank User Authorisation form presented for Mr W Leathem should be entered into. The resolution was duly passed in accordance with Usel's Memo and Articles of Association and remains in full force and effect.

14.2. The Chair of the Board acknowledged Gavin Adams and Aidan Bennett's contribution to Board achievements during their tenure. He thanked

them for the role they had played in the Company's development over the last few years. The Chair also expressed appreciation for their personal support during their time on the Board.

#### **15. Date of Next Meeting**

15.1. 31 July 2019