

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

11 APRIL 2017

12.25 PM

PRESENT: Ms C McKinney, Chairperson presiding
Mr G Thompson, Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mr C Enright
Mr K Henning
Mr R Irvine
Mr P Martin
Mr G Smyth

APOLOGIES: Mr J Barbour

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Ashford, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
(Operations)
Mr A Walmsley, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
(Community Protection)
Mrs L Cuddy, Director of Planning, Performance & Governance
Mrs J Kelly, Director of Finance
Mr D Moore, Director of Human Resources
Mr S Fitzsimons, Interim Head of Facilities & Assets
Ms I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary
Mr J Millar, DoH Observer

Item 1: Apologies

There were no apologies.

Item 2: Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson enquired as to whether any Members of the Board wished to declare any potential conflicts of interest with any of the business items on the Agenda. Members confirmed that there were no apparent conflicts of interest.

Item 3: Minutes – 24 January 2017

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24 January 2017, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a true record, subject to an amendment, on the motion of Mr Smyth, seconded by Mr Irvine.

The Chairperson noted that any matters arising from the Minutes would be picked up through the Meeting.

Minutes of Special Meeting – 10 March 2017

The Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on 10 March 2017, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a true record, subject to an amendment, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Martin.

The Chairperson noted that any matters arising from the Minutes would be picked up through the Meeting.

Item 4: Reports from Board Committees, including noting of Committee Minutes and adoption of Recommendations

Audit, Risk & Governance Committee – Minutes – 2 February 2017

The Minutes of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee Meeting held on 2 February 2017 were noted.

Mr Smyth, Chairperson of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, noted the recommendations emanating from the Meeting. He referred to the Internal Audits of Learning & Organisational Development; Risk Management and ICT Governance and advised Members that, whilst limited assurance had been provided with respect to Learning & Organisational Development and ICT Governance, significant work which had been progressed in these areas and this had also been recognised by Internal Audit. Members noted that satisfactory assurance had been provided with respect to Risk Management.

Mr Smyth drew Members' attention to an item within the Minutes concerning the provision of pension data to the Government Actuaries Department (GAD) and explained that this information had been manually collated by the Director of Finance's team and noted that, at this juncture, no issues had been highlighted regarding the quality of the data. He assured Members that NIFRS is keeping in close contact with GAD with regard to same. He also drew attention to the excellent progress which had been achieved with respect to the Business Improvement Projects and noted that this had been recognised by both Internal and External Audit.

Mr Smyth proposed that the Committee's recommendations, as detailed below, be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Enright.

Audit, Risk & Governance - Recommendations

- **Acceptance of the Audits of HR Directorate – Learning & Organisational Development; Risk Management and ICT Governance;**
- **Approval of the Quarter 3 Progress Update on the Corporate Business Plan (April-December 2016), along with Balanced Scorecard;**
- **Approval of the draft Gifts and Hospitality Policy subject to a minor amendment;**
- **Approval of the draft Security Policy subject to a minor amendment;**
- **Approval of the draft CCTV Policy;**
- **Approval of the 2016/17 External Audit Strategy.**

Resources Committee – Minutes – 23 February 2017

The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 23 February 2017 were noted.

Mr Henning, Chairperson of the Resources Committee, gave an overview of the recommendations contained within the Minutes.

Mr Henning proposed that the Committee's recommendations, as detailed below, be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Smyth.

Resources - Recommendations

- **Approval of the following in respect of Wholetime/Retained Employees – Competent Rate of Pay:**
 - **the employees listed in Section 2 of the Briefing Paper should be placed onto competent rate of pay based on the already completed SC81. The effective date should be the date of promotion;**
 - **this decision should be applied to the other employees who become competent during the relevant period;**
 - **this decision should be applied to the one employee identified by Retained Wages relating to the period 11.07.2012 to 10.07.2013;**
- **Approval of the Voluntary Transfer Policy & Procedure for Retained Firefighter to Watch Commander;**
- **Approval of the Management and Use of NIFRS Vehicles Policy and NIFRS Vehicle and Equipment Fuel Policy;**
- **Approval of the Crisis Communications Policy subject to the review of its Appendices under Data Protection;**
- **Approval to confirm voluntary severance for a member of Support staff as set out in the Briefing Paper.**

Service Delivery Committee – Minutes – 23 February 2017

The Minutes of the Service Delivery Committee Meeting held on 23 February 2017 were noted.

Mr Henning, Vice-Chairperson of the Service Delivery Committee, noted the recommendations emanating from the Meeting.

Mr Henning proposed that the Committee's recommendations, as detailed below, be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Enright.

Service Delivery – Recommendations

- **Approval of the proposed Key Areas of Assessment for the follow-up visit of the Peer Review Team;**
- **Approval of the following proposals:**
 - **the introduction of the concept of Community Risk Management (CRM) within NIFRS from 1 April 2017;**
 - **the introduction of the proposed CRM methodology based on the risk-based NIFRS CRM quadrant model from 1 April 2017;**
 - **to target Prevention activities within the top 20 Super Output Areas (high risk) with the aim of reducing community risk over a 3-year period.**

Remuneration Committee – Minutes – 24 January 2017

The Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting held on 24 January 2017 were noted. It was further noted that the Board, at its Meeting on 24 January 2017, adopted one of the recommendations as contained within the Minutes.

Remuneration Committee – Minutes – 10 March 2017

The Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting held on 10 March 2017 were noted.

The Chairperson brought forward the Committee's recommendations as contained within the Minutes.

Ms McKinney proposed that the Committee's recommendations, as detailed below, be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Martin.

Remuneration Committee - Recommendations

- **Approval to confirm voluntary severance for a member of Support Staff as set out in the Briefing Paper;**
- **Approval of the following in respect of Wholetime/Retained Employees – Competent Rate of Pay:**
 - **the employees listed in Section 2 of the Briefing Paper should be placed onto competent rate of pay based on the already completed SC81. The effective date should be the date of promotion;**
 - **this decision should be applied to the other employees who become competent during the relevant period;**
 - **this decision should be applied to the one employee identified by Retained Wages relating to the period 11.07.2012 to 10.07.2013.**

Item 5: Chairperson's Business ***IoD Awards***

The Chairperson referred to the recent Institute of Directors NI awards for which Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Thompson had been shortlisted in the Public Sector Director of the Year category. She informed Members that Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Thompson had been highly commended for his contribution to the organisation in his role as Director of Operations and extended congratulations on behalf of the Board.

The Chairperson noted that Messrs Henning and Smyth had attended the awards Ceremony.

The Chairperson also extended congratulations to the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer on recently passing his IoD examinations.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Appointments

The Chairperson referred to the success of Michael Graham and Alan Walmsley in the recent appointments process and congratulated them on their substantive appointment to the role of Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer.

**Item 6: Standalone Strategic Items
Standing Order 2.6**

It was noted that, under Standing Order 2.6, Members had unanimously agreed to approve the following:

- Business Case for CCTV Systems on Air Ladder Platform Fire Appliances;
- Business Case for Client Hardware Replacement Project; and
- Pay Remit covering the 1% pay award for Non-Uniformed Directors.

The Board, on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Martin, unanimously agreed to formally approve the above.

Desertcreat

Members noted the Project Highlight Report for NIFRS Learning Support Unit at Desertcreat.

The Interim Head of Facilities & Assets gave Members a presentation outlining progress to date with regard to the Phase 1 Early Works at Desertcreat which is for critical training infrastructure and includes a tactical firefighting facility, a support building incorporating classroom and support facilities and the development of an access road to the site. He also updated Members on the current position with respect to the transfer of land.

The Interim Head of Facilities & Assets gave Members an overview of the site layout and building provisions and noted the timelines for both Phase 1 Early Works and Phase 2 Main Works.

The Interim Head of Facilities & Assets updated Members on other areas of progress including the establishment of a Project Working Group and noting that meetings had already taken place.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Ashford informed Members that the Desertcreat Programme Board had also met and noted that Mr Henning was the Board representative on the Programme Board. He updated Members on the current position with regard to branding at the site and advised Members that Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham would be the Project Lead going forward.

During discussion, the Officers answered Members' questions relating to aspects of the project.

The Chairperson thanked the Interim Head of Facilities & Assets for his attendance.

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At this point,
the Interim Head of Facilities & Assets and Mr Enright left the Meeting (12.55 pm)

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Finance Report

A Briefing Paper updating Members on the financial position as at 28 February 2017 was noted.

The Director of Finance noted that NIFRS is now operating in the 2017/18 financial year yet NIFRS was still not aware of its budget allocation. She explained that NIFRS is working with DoH regarding same. Referring to the Capital budget, the Director of Finance informed Members that NIFRS had been allocated an indicative budget of £13 million. She welcomed this capital investment.

The Director of Finance gave an overview of the February financial position reporting an underspend of £23k but highlighting that the current key pressures are Wholetime overtime, Premises costs, including Estates maintenance, and Ill-Health lump sum payments. The Director of Finance stated that a fuller report on the budget will be presented to the Resources Committee.

Referring to the Capital budget, the Director of Finance updated Members on the Capital financial position as at 28 February and highlighted the key risks. She stressed the need to ensure capital projects are progressed in a timely manner.

The Director of Finance updated Members on the current position with regard to Pension matters particularly in relation to Pensions administration and the provision of the annual pension data to the Government Actuaries Department (GAD).

At this point,
Mr Enright re-joined the Meeting (1.00 pm)

The Director of Finance answered Members' questions in relation to the information presented.

Members noted that NIFRS financial positions were monitored closely by the Corporate Management Team.

Scale of Charges

Members noted a revised Scale of Charges reflecting the annual increase.

The Director of Finance gave an overview of the information presented explaining that the percentage increase is based on Table 36 (All Costs) from the Office of National Statistics.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Enright, unanimously –

Resolved: “to approve the revised Scale of Charges for 2017/18 effective from 1 April 2017”.

Business Cases

CPD Civil Engineering

Members noted the Executive Summary for CPD Civil Engineering.

The Director of Finance outlined the purpose of the Business Case and answered Members' questions.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Smyth, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for CPD Civil Engineering.

Provision of External Audit Services to Audit the Financial Statements of NIFRS

The Executive Summary for the provision of External Audit services to audit the Financial Statements of NIFRS was noted.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Martin, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for the provision of External Audit Services to Audit the Financial Statements of NIFRS.

Spectrometers

Members noted the Executive Summary relating to the Contract amendment for the acquisition of infra-red Spectrometers.

The Director of Finance explained that approval of the Contract amendment would enable a Contract to be signed by NIFRS which inserts a cap of £1,000,000 into the Indemnity Clause of the Terms and Conditions as noted in the Executive Summary and to include a general cap on contractual liability and exclusion of indirect and consequential loss as is customary for the supply of commercial products. Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Walmsley outlined the purpose of the equipment.

During discussion, the Officers answered Members' questions relating to aspects of the information presented.

The DoH Observer referred to a comparative analysis exercise undertaken by the Home Office last year which found significant differences in terms of cost for common items across the English Fire Services. He stated that he was happy to share the data with NIFRS.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Martin, seconded by Mr Irvine, resolved to approve the Contract amendment for the acquisition of infra-red Spectrometers.

Item 7: Relevant Correspondence

The following correspondence was noted –

- Letter from Director of Corporate Management, DoH, regarding Conflicts of Interest and drawing attention to the Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability for Board Members previously circulated.

Item 8: Documents for Sealing

Members noted the undernoted documents for sealing:

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

Diocese of Down and Connor Trustee – Deed of Variation – Lease for premises at Portaferry;

Lowry Building & Civil Engineering Limited – Construction of Logistics Support Centre.

The Chairperson noted that it was Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Ashford's last attendance at Board Meeting prior to his retirement in May. She paid a special tribute to his dedication, service and commitment and on behalf of the Board thanked him for his support and professionalism and for all his work. The Chairperson extended best wishes to Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Ashford for a long and healthy retirement.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Ashford responded to the Chairperson's comments and thanked Members for their support and loyalty. He presented the Chairperson with a gift for the Board.

Item 9: Schedule of Future Meetings

Members noted a schedule of future Meetings.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING ENDED
AT 1.25 PM
