

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

11 OCTOBER 2017

2.25 PM

- PRESENT: Ms C McKinney, Chairperson presiding
Mr G Thompson, Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mr C Enright
Mr K Henning
Mr R Irvine
Mr G Smyth
- APOLOGIES: Mr J Barbour
Mr P Martin
- IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Graham, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
(Operational Support)
Mr M Rafferty, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
(Operations)
Mr A Walmsley, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
(Community Protection)
Mr A Mills, Interim Director of Finance
Mr D Moore, Director of Human Resources
Ms I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary
Ms M McCaughley, Boardroom Apprentice
Mr R Hyland, Boardroom Apprentice
Mr J Millar, DoH Observer

The Chairperson extended a warm welcome to Michelle McCaughley and Ryan Hyland, NIFRS Boardroom Apprentices.

The Chairperson reminded everyone of the need to observe confidentiality in all matters relating to the Board.

Item 1: Apologies

Apologies were noted.

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 – 27 June 2017

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 27 June 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 Enright, seconded by Mr Henning.

Matters arising out of the Minutes:

Chairperson's Business
Board Vacancies

The Chairperson informed Members that the competition to fill Board vacancies was now 'live' and closes on 26 October 2017. The vacancies being advertised are 2 x Lay Members; 1 x District Councillor Members; and 1 x Trade Union Member.

Boardroom Apprentices

The Chairperson acknowledged that the Boardroom Apprentices were in attendance at their first Board Meeting.

Minutes of Special Meeting – 20 July 2017

The Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on 20 July 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 Irvine.

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

Audit, Risk & Governance Committee – Minutes – 20 June 2017

The Minutes of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee Meeting held on 20 June 2017 were noted. The recommendations contained within the Minutes were adopted by the Board at its Meeting on 27 June 2017.

Mr Smyth, Chairperson of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, thanked Messrs Barbour and Enright for reporting on the business discussed.

Audit, Risk & Governance Committee – Meeting – 14 September 2017

It was noted that a Meeting of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee had been held on 14 September 2017 and that Minutes of the Meeting will be presented to the next Board Meeting for noting.

Mr Smyth, Chairperson of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, gave an overview of the business discussed at the Meeting including Corporate Business Plan, Risk Register and Business Improvement Projects updates.

In particular he referred to the outcomes of the 4 Internal Audits noting that satisfactory assurance had been provided in 3 out of the 4 Audits – the Audit of Contract Management was limited. He informed Members that the Committee had been assured that the timeframe for addressing the recommendations from this Audit will be met. Mr Smyth also assured the Board that the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee will continue to monitor and focus on addressing audit recommendations.

Mr Smyth noted Mr B O'Neill, NIAO, was changing roles and expressed his appreciation for the work and support he had given to NIFRS.

The Committee's recommendations, as detailed below, were adopted by the Board on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Enright.

Audit, Risk & Governance Committee - Recommendations

- **Acceptance of the Audits of Procurement & Management of Contracts; Management of Fuel Usage; Insurance & Claims Management; and Non-Pay Expenditure; and**
- **Approval of the Quarter 1 Progress Update on the Corporate Business Plan (April to June 2017) along with the Balanced Scorecard.**

Service Delivery Committee – Minutes – 22 June 2017

The Minutes of the Service Delivery Committee Meeting held on 22 June 2017 were noted.

Service Delivery Committee – Meeting – 17 August 2017

It was noted that a Meeting of the Service Delivery Committee had been held on 17 August 2017 and that the Minutes of the Meeting will be presented to the next Board Meeting for noting. There were no recommendations emanating from the Meeting.

Mr Henning, Vice-Chairperson of the Service Delivery Committee, gave a brief report on the business discussed at the Meeting.

Resources Committee – Minutes – 22 June 2017

The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 22 June 2017 were noted. It was also noted that the recommendations contained within the Minutes were adopted by the Board at its Meeting on 27 June 2017.

Resources Committee – Meeting – 17 August 2017

It was noted that a Meeting of the Resources Committee had been held on 17 August 2017 and that the Minutes of the Meeting will be presented to the next Board Meeting for noting.

Mr Henning, Chairperson of the Resources Committee, gave an overview of the business discussed and 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.

Resources Committee – Recommendations

- **Approval of the next phase of the rolling RDS recruitment programme with flexibility for the Director of HR and Lead Operational Officer to amend intake for individual Stations as required depending on the establishment, strength and availability levels at the time of appointment; commencement of a new 'Daytime Plus' Pilot in Banbridge and Ballyclare Stations; and the extension of 'Daytime Plus' in additional appropriate Stations as identified by the Director of HR and the Lead Operational Officer.**

- **Approval of the Learning & Development Structure Review of Support Staff;**
- **Approval of the Operations Directorate Interim Structure Proposal; and**
- **Approval of Phase 1 of the Management Structure Review of the Prevention & Protection Department.**

Item 5: Chairperson's Business

World Mental Health Day

The Chairperson informed Members of an event held at Central Fire Station to support World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2017 and raise awareness of mental health and stress management.

Members were informed that the theme this year was 'Mental Health in the Workplace'. Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Walmsley reported positively on the event and noted the local charities who had lent their support to the event.

CIPR Awards

The Chairperson extended best wishes to the Head of Corporate Communications and her team for the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRide Awards which were taking place on Friday evening. The Corporate Communications Team has been shortlisted in the Best Public Sector Team of the Year category.

Boardroom Apprentices – Induction Sessions

The Chairperson informed Members that induction sessions for the Boardroom Apprentices had commenced. She expressed her appreciation to Area Commander Jennings for the session held at Eastern Area Command and to Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham and his team in respect of the Apprentices' visit to the Regional Control Centre.

Board Meeting – November

The Chairperson referred to the need to reschedule the November Board Meeting to 5 December as she and the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer would be in London on 28 November. She explained that she has been shortlisted by The Guardian in the UK Public Services Awards in the Leadership category and noted that NIFRS is the only public service organisation from Northern Ireland to make the shortlist.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer and a member of the Corporate Management Team would be attending the Awards along with her and commented that all are delighted to be attending to represent NIFRS.

Pension Issues Report

An update report to the Scheme Manager (ie, NIFRS Board) on Pension Issues as at October 2017 was circulated for the information of Members.

The Director of Finance provided a synopsis of the issues highlighted and updated Members on the current position. He explained that an Action Plan was being developed to address these issues and ensure resources to progress same.

Mr Millar, DoH Observer, advised Members that the Department of Health is the responsible authority for Pension legislation. He pointed out that, as the Scheme Manager and Scheme Administrator, NIFRS is therefore liable for any penalties.

NIFRS Scheme Advisory Board Representatives

The Chairperson informed Members that NIFRS is required to nominate someone to fill the Employer's Representative Member vacancy on the Pension Scheme Advisory Board following the resignation of Mrs J Kelly.

The Chairperson proposed Mr A Mills, Director of Finance. This was seconded by Mr Enright.

Item 6: Standalone Strategic Items

Standing Order 2.6

Under Standing Order 2.6, Members unanimously agreed to approve the recommendation of the Learning & Development Programme Board regarding the appointment of the preferred Contractor for Phase 1 of the NIFRS Learning & Development Centre at Desertcreat.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Smyth, formally adopted the Learning & Development Programme Board's recommendation.

Mr Irvine asked that the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer and Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham bear in mind the overall organisational approach in the design to ensure the project is future-proofed.

The Chairperson noted that Mr Henning represents the Board on the Learning & Development Programme Board.

Peer Review Report

Members noted the report on the Peer Challenge follow-up visit.

The Chairperson welcomed the very positive report. She referred to the Governance/Leadership section of the report and drew Members' attention to the opening statement which related to the NIFRS Board.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer outlined the background to the Report explaining that this had been a follow-up visit to the original Fire Peer Challenge conducted in 2015 and noted the areas which had been considered by the Team during their visit. He stated that the Team had reported positively on their visit and also acknowledging NIFRS had embraced the LGA Peer Review process and addressing of recommendations. He highlighted the Team had stated that NIFRS can demonstrate significant improvement and a positive direction of travel since July 2015 and was using the process to feed into its transformational change journey.

Finance Report

A Briefing Paper updating Members on the financial position as at 31 August 2017 was noted.

The Director of Finance gave an overview of the information presented updating Members on the current position with respect to the review budget for 2017/18 and the updated draft Savings Plan. He noted that the revenue financial position was showing a projected pressure of £1.8m and highlighted the impact of any time delays in implementing the Savings Plan proposals.

Referring to the capital financial position, the Director of Finance noted the financial position as at 31 August 2017 and emphasised the key focus was ensuring the budget is spent.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham answered Members' questions relating to slippage in the Logistics Support Centre and Command & Control projects.

Mr Irvine referred to Estates projects and enquired if issues with the Property Services Division (PSD) had been resolved. Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham updated Members on the current position and noting that a meeting with CoPE to discuss the way forward was scheduled for that Friday. He also noted that NIFRS is not committing to any further projects with PSD.

Mr Irvine referred to the Audit recommendations relating to the matter and stressed the need to ensure these issues are addressed. He stated that the imminent meeting with CoPE was key and suggested that Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham present a paper to the Service Delivery Committee outlining his thoughts on the matter and the way forward.

Losses and Write-Offs

Members noted a Briefing Paper relating to losses and write-offs.

The Director of Finance outlined the background to an ex-gratia payment resulting from a County Court judgement in respect of a Retained recruitment exercise. He explained that, as Departmental approval had already been given to enable payment, retrospective Board approval was being sought to write-off this loss.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously resolved to retrospectively approve an ex-gratia payment resulting from a County Court judgement in respect of a Retained recruitment exercise.

Business Cases

Strategic Outline Case – Review of Yearly Break Clause – Lease Agreement with Belfast International Airport

Members noted the Strategic Outline Case relating to the review of the Yearly Break Clause in respect of the Lease Agreement with Belfast International Airport.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham gave Members an overview of the purpose of the Outline Case.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Enright, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously resolved to approve the Strategic Outline Case for the review of the Yearly Break Clause of the Lease Agreement with Belfast International Airport

Strategic Outline Case – Renewal of Lease – Larne Temporary Fire Station

The Strategic Outline Case for the renewal of the lease for Larne temporary Fire Station was noted.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham explained the purpose of the Outline Case.

The Board, on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Enright, unanimously resolved to approve the Strategic Outline Case for the renewal of the Lease for Larne temporary Fire Station.

Mobile Data Terminals Equipment and Peripherals Refresh

Members noted the Executive Summary of the Business Case for Mobile Data Terminals equipment and peripherals refresh.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham gave an explanation as to the purpose of the project. He answered Members' questions relating to same.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Enright, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for Mobile Data Terminals Equipment and Peripherals refresh.

Provision of Internal Audit Services for 2017/18

The Executive Summary for the provision of Internal Audit Services for 2017/18 was noted.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Rafferty noted the purpose of the Business Case explaining that it was a renewal of the Contract with BSO Internal Audit.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Smyth, seconded by Mr Enright, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for the provision of Internal Audit Services for 2017/18.

Replacement of Defective Alerters

Members noted the Executive Summary for the replacement of Defective Alerters.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham outlined the purpose of the Business Case.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Smyth, seconded by Ms McKinney, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for the replacement of defective Alerters.

Provision of Structural Fire Trousers and Tunics

The Executive Summary for the provision of Structural Fire Trousers and Tunics was noted.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham gave an overview of the purpose of the Business Case.

The Board, on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Smyth, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for the provision of Structural Fire Trousers and Tunics.

Provision of Helmets and Associated Parts

Members noted the Executive Summary for the provision of Helmets and associated parts.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham provided an explanation as to the purpose of the project.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Smyth, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for the provision of Helmets and associated parts.

Item 7: Relevant Correspondence

There was no relevant correspondence.

Item 8: Documents for Sealing

There were no documents for sealing.

Item 9: Schedule of Future Meetings

Members noted a schedule of future Meetings.

The Chairperson reminded Members of the Area & District Review Focus Group being held on 19 October 2017.

It was noted the NIFRS Employee Awards Ceremony would be held on 21 November 2017.

The Chairperson referred to the Board Meeting on 5 December and informed Members that Information Management training was scheduled to take place prior to the Meeting.

The Chairperson reminded Members to complete and return their Board Effectiveness Survey as soon as possible.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING ENDED
AT 3.20 PM
