

# NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

## MINUTES OF A MEETING

24 JANUARY 2017

2.00 PM

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Ashford, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations)  
Mr M Graham, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operational Support)  
Mr A Walmsley, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Protection)  
Mrs J Kelly, Director of Finance  
Mr D Moore, Director of Human Resources  
Ms P Wylie, Head of Corporate Communications  
Ms I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary  
Mrs L'V Montgomery, DoH Observer  
Mr J Millar, DoH Observer

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the Meeting and noted that a useful and beneficial Risk Management Workshop had been held that morning.

The Chairperson also introduced Mrs La'Verne Montgomery, Director of Corporate Management, DoH, to the Meeting.

### **Item 1: Apologies**

There were no apologies.

### **Item 2: Conflicts of Interest**

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.

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At this point,  
the Head of Corporate Communications joined the Meeting

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### **Item 3: Minutes – 22 November 2016**

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 22 November 2016, 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.

Matters arising out of the Minutes:

#### ***Conflicts of Interest***

The Chairperson noted that Members were currently in the process of updating their declaration of interests. She requested that the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer ensures that the process was also completed with respect to the Corporate Management Team.

#### ***Audit, Risk & Governance Committee – Minutes – 27 October 2016***

The Chairperson noted that the Business Improvement Day had taken place on 17 January 2017 and acknowledged the significant progress which had been achieved. She thanked the Corporate Management Team and all of those who had prepared and delivered the workshop on the day. She stressed the importance of Member scrutiny on progress to ensure that the organisation continued to move forward and meet its targets.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer commented on the significant progress achieved and highlighted that it was anticipated that a further 100 recommendations will be closed by 31 March 2017. Members welcomed this.

#### ***Chairperson's Business***

##### ***Accountability Meeting***

The Chairperson and Chief Fire & Rescue Officer reported positively on the Accountability Meeting which had taken place on 5 December 2017.

##### ***Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards***

The Chairperson commented on the excellent Awards Ceremony which had taken place on 2 December and stated that she was delighted to have been there representing NIFRS. She noted that the Chief Fire Officer of Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service had won the "Most Influential Women in Fire" Award category.

The Chairperson considered that NIFRS needed to be more proactive in showcasing its achievements as most certainly when she was in London for the Awards Ceremony there were many other award categories which NIFRS would have excelled in had the organisation entered.

#### ***Schedule of Future Meetings***

##### ***Come and Try Days***

The Chairperson commended the Director of HR and his staff on the excellent 'Come and Try' Days, an outreach activity for females. She had been delighted to attend the event in Eastern and show her personal support for the project.

### *Christmas 'At Home'*

The Chairperson noted the very successful 'At Home' event hosted and funded by herself and the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer on 16 December. The 'At Home' had been an opportunity to show appreciation to personnel for all their work during the year.

### **Minutes of Special Meeting – 16 December 2016**

The Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on 16 December 2016, 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 Irvine.

Matters arising out of the Minutes:

#### ***Logistics Support Centre***

Mr Irvine sought an update on the award of the main works tender for the Logistics Support Centre.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Graham updated Members noting that a positive tender report had been received from CPD Health Projects.

Members asked to be kept informed on developments on such an important Board led project.

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

##### **Service Delivery Committee – Minutes – 22 December 2016**

The Minutes of the Service Delivery Committee held on 22 December 2016 were noted.

Mr Barbour, Chairperson of the Service Delivery Committee, provided an overview of the recommendations emanating from the Meeting noting that the Local Performance Indicators had been discussed at the Risk Management Workshop that morning. He also drew Members' attention to the Minutes highlighting the wider health & wellbeing projects which was one example of the many activities being undertaken within the Community Protection Directorate.

Referring to the Command & Control Project, Mr Barbour informed Members that representatives of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service would be visiting NIFRS the next day.

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

#### ***Service Delivery – Recommendations***

- **Approval to rename the current Community Development Department at Headquarters and each Area Command to the Prevention & Protection Department with effect from 1 February 2017;**

- **Approval to rename the current Emergency Response Department at Headquarters to the Resilience Department with effect from 1 February 2017;**
- **Approval to introduce the revised Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) as the future Performance Indicators for the Community Protection Directorate from 1 April 2017; and that we report on year 1 performance against the revised LPIs (2016-2017);**
- **Approval to commence a review of NIFRS existing Business Continuity Management (BCM) Strategy;**
- **Approval to review NIFRS existing BCM methodology;**
- **Approval to develop a revised Business Continuity Management System (2017/18) and ensure it has capacity to adapt to future organisational structure changes;**
- **Endorse the proposed direction of travel as detailed in the Briefing Paper with respect to a revised Road Safety Strategy;**
- **Permit NIFRS to commence public consultation on the proposed consultation principles for a revised NIFRS Road Safety Strategy.**

#### **Resources Committee – Minutes – 22 December 2016**

The Minutes of the Resources Committee held on 22 December 2016 were noted. There are no recommendations emanating from the Minutes.

Mr Henning, Chairperson of the Resources Committee, summarised the key business discussed which included updates on the Counter Fraud & Probity Project Plan; Wholetime Recruitment Project Plan; and the draft 3-year NIFRS Financial Strategy for Revenue Resources.

The Director of HR referred to the number of risks which had been highlighted with respect to the Wholetime recruitment project and explained that these had now been resolved. He noted the Wholetime Firefighter post had been advertised that day.

#### **Remuneration Committee – Meeting – 24 January 2017**

It was noted that a Meeting of the Remuneration Committee had been held immediately prior to the Board Meeting.

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At this point,  
the Corporate Management Team left the Meeting

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The Chairperson reported on the key business discussed which related to Pay Remits for Uniformed and Non-Uniformed Directors. She noted that the Head of Finance had been in attendance and had provided the Committee with an indepth brief. She further noted that the Head of Finance had assured the Committee that the Pay Remits were affordable.

The DoH observers advised Members of a difficulty with the Pay Remit for Non-Uniformed Directors as DoH had not, as yet, received the Job Evaluation Business Case. Therefore, the Board would not be in a position to approve this particular Pay Remit.

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At this point,  
the Head of Corporate Communications left the Meeting

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The Chairperson clarified her understanding of the current position with respect to the Support Directors' Job Evaluation Business Case. Members expressed concern that this Business Case approved by the Remuneration Committee, and subsequently the Board, had not been submitted to DoH and the impact of the Board not now being able to progress the matter as a result.

The Chairperson suggested that the adoption of the Remuneration Committee's recommendation with respect to the Non-Uniformed Pay Remit be deferred and that the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer, through the appropriate personnel, be requested to follow this through on their behalf. **This was agreed.**

**The Chairperson proposed that the Remuneration Committee's recommendation to approve the Pay Remit for Uniformed Directors be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Barbour.**

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At this point,  
the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer rejoined the Meeting

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The Chairperson outlined the position with respect to the Pay Remit for Non-Uniformed Directors explaining that the DoH representatives had advised that the Job Evaluation for Support Directors had not been received and yet it was the Board's understanding that the Business Case had been submitted.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer stated that it was also his understanding that the Business Case relating to the Job Evaluation for Support Directors had been submitted to DoH and explained that he would need to clarify the matter. **Members agreed.**

The Chairperson also explained that the Board would have to defer its decision regarding the Pay Remit as a result of this.

Mr Smyth asked that it be noted there had been a breach in the process due to the Board not being aware nor briefed accordingly with respect to the status of the Job Evaluation for Support Directors. Members agreed that they were most willing to have taken the business through for consideration on that day but this had not been possible due to matters outside their control.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer would clarify the position and also develop a separate Pay Remit specific to the Non-Uniformed Directors' pay increment. The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer to seek advice as appropriate.

The Chairperson and Members sought assurances from the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer that this occurrence would not happen again as Members relied on information being complete when business is brought to them for consideration. The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer assured Members that he would follow up on the matter immediately on their behalf.

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At this point,  
the Officers rejoined the Meeting

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## **Item 5: Chairperson's Business**

### ***Correspondence from Department of Finance***

Members noted correspondence from the Department of Finance relating to key lessons learned from the NIAO report and PAC hearing into the Northern Ireland Events Company.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer updated Members on initial discussions with the Chairperson regarding the correspondence. He explained that a formal assessment against the key lessons learned would be conducted and presented to the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee.

The Chairperson referred to the current composition of the Board highlighting that it had been down a number of Members for a considerable period of time. She reiterated difficulties with ensuring quoracy of meetings and pointed out this was a risk for the Board. In response to a question from the Chairperson, the DoH observers updated Members on the current position with respect to recruiting Members to the Board.

Mr Enright acknowledged the skills of Members and the Board's competence in dealing with and progressing issues. He referred in particular to the Risk Register and pointed out that there were a number of issues which had sat with DoH for a period of time. He suggested the need to move risks relating to DoH to their respective Risk Register.

Mr Irvine noted that the Board had 4 vacancies currently. He commented on the level of business being conducted by the Board, not just with respect to Board and Committee Meetings but in dealing with other issues; and the awareness of Members that they must, even if their diaries had other commitments, attend to ensure quoracy and assure business is moved forward. He highlighted the level of commitment given by Members and stressed the need for the issue of Board membership to be addressed. He stated that Members looked to DoH and the Minister to assist.

The Chairperson stated that both she and the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer had raised the issue of membership and were raising it again and seeking DoH assistance as Members have demonstrated their commitment to NIFRS. She acknowledged the significant progress achieved by the organisation. She commended Members for their commitment and all their work and emphasised the need for more equally competent Members to be appointed to the Board.

#### **Item 6: Standalone Strategic Items Revised Data Protection Policy**

Members noted the revised NIFRS Data Protection Policy & Procedure.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ashford explained that the Policy had been refreshed and had been brought into line satisfying the requirements of BSO and Good Management Good Records (GMGR).

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ashford answered Members' questions regarding the information presented.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Barbour, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved the revised Data Protection Policy.**

#### **Finance Report**

A Briefing Paper updating Members on the financial position as at 31 December 2016 was noted.

The Director of Finance gave an overview of the December financial position noting an overspend of £90k. She also highlighted that the key risks were Wholetime overtime and Premises Costs, including Estates maintenance.

The Director of Finance assured Members that NIFRS is committed to achieving a break-even position by the end of the financial year, however, the budget pressures mentioned have made this objective a considerable challenge but significant progress has been made. She also assured Members that the Corporate Management Team continues to closely monitor the budget.

Mr Irvine acknowledged that the Board recognises that there have been pressures and budget difficulties and commented positively with respect to NIFRS' budget management.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer and the Director of Finance answered Members' questions relating to aspects of the information presented.

With respect to the Capital budget, the Director of Finance updated Members on the financial position as at 31 December and highlighted the key risks. She assured Members that the Capital budget is closely monitored to ensure NIFRS utilises as much of the budget as possible.

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

The Director of Finance noted the current position with regard to an Employer's Liability Claim and the approval received for an Employer Settlement Claim in respect of an injury claim.

### **Losses and Write-Offs**

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

The Director of Finance outlined the background to a further loss arising as a result of an HRMC inspection. She explained that, as Departmental approval had already been given to enable payment to be made to HMRC by the required deadline, retrospective Board approval was being sought to write-off this additional loss.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Smyth, unanimously agreed to retrospectively approve the write-off of a further loss arising as a result of an HRMC inspection.**

### **Business Cases**

#### ***Provision for End of Life Vehicles for RTC Training***

Members noted the Executive Summary for End of Life Vehicles for RTC Training.

The Director of HR gave an overview of the purpose of the project and also updated Members on progress with respect to RTC Training.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Barbour, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for End of Life Vehicles for RTC Training.**

#### ***Continuation of Lease Agreement – Office Accommodation - Cookstown District Command***

#### ***Continuation of Lease Agreement – Office Accommodation – Downpatrick District Command***

#### ***Continuation of Lease Agreement – Office Accommodation – Northern Area Command Community Protection Department***

Members noted the Strategic Outline Cases (SOC) for the continuation of the lease agreements for office accommodation for Cookstown and Downpatrick District Commands and Northern Area Command Community Protection Department.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Graham gave an explanation as to the need for the SOCs.

During discussion, Members expressed concern with regard to the accommodation for Downpatrick and Ballymena being currently out of lease. The Director of Finance and Assistant Chief Fire Officer Graham noted that NIFRS was currently making irregular payments but explained the process which is underway to address the current position and also noted that DoH was aware of the matter and that discussions have taken place.

The Chairperson commented that, as a Board, it appreciated that 2 of the Strategic Outline Cases presented deal with current ongoing irregular payments and that the development of the SOC's forms part of the process to realign payments and to bring NIFRS into line with current policy.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Barbour, unanimously agreed to approve the Strategic Outline Cases for the continuation of the lease agreements for office accommodation for Cookstown and Downpatrick District Commands and Northern Area Command Community Protection Department.**

### ***BA Replacement Radios***

The Executive Summary for Replacement BA Radios was noted.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Graham outlined the purpose of the project and answered Members' questions relating to the information presented.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Martin, unanimously agreed to approve the Business Case for Replacement BA Radios.**

### **Item 7: Relevant Correspondence**

There was no routine correspondence.

### **Item 8: Documents for Sealing**

Members noted the undernoted documents for sealing:

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

Donnelly Bros Fiat – supply and delivery of 2 small Vans, 3 Communication Technician Vans and 7 medium Vans;  
Emergency One (UK) Limited – supply and delivery of WRL Appliance for Rathlin Island; and  
McKenzies (NI) Limited – lease for temporary premises – Larne Fire Station.

### **Item 9: Schedule of Future Meetings**

Members noted a schedule of future Meetings.

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THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS  
AND THE MEETING ENDED  
AT 3.40 PM

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