

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

27 MAY 2008

2.00 PM

PRESENT: Mr W F Gillespie, Chair presiding
Mr C Lammey, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
Mr J Beattie
Mr P Bradley
Mr J Campbell
Mr S Clarke
Mr K Harper
Mr A Hatch
Mr R Pollock

APOLOGIES: Mrs B Gilliland
Mr J McKeever
Mrs P Tally

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr L Jones, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mr P Craig, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Development)
Ms A Conley, Director of Human Resources
Mr T McGonigal, Director of Finance & Performance Management
Mrs C McNally, Corporate Communications Manager
Miss G Bryce, Research Officer
Mrs I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary

1 Apologies

Apologies were noted.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 April 2008, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a true record, on the motion of Mr Hatch, seconded by Mr Campbell.

Arising from the Minutes:

Draft Investment Strategy 2008-2018 and Draft Budget 2008-2011

The Chair referred to the Revenue funding for NIFRS and enquired as to whether a formal allocation letter had been received from the Department.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that a formal allocation letter had not, as yet, been received. He explained that the Service Support Committee had considered draft Budget Allocations based on the DHSSPS CSR figures and this would be dealt with later in the Agenda.

Equality & Diversity Forum

The Chair sought an update on progress with respect to the Equality & Diversity Forum now that the Constitution had been agreed and a Chair appointed.

The Director of Human Resources advised Members that she and the Equality Manager were scheduled to meet with Mr McKeever, Chair of the Forum, on 5 June 2008. She explained that they would be discussing the Agenda and date for the first meeting of the Forum.

3 Remuneration Committee Meeting – 22 January 2008

4 Remuneration Committee Meeting – 26 February 2008

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 22 January 2008 and the draft Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2008 were circulated for the information of Members.

Mr Bradley referred to the Terms of Reference for the engagement of Consultants to undertake a review of the Principal Officers' Remuneration and explained that he felt such documentation should be circulated to all Board Members in order to keep everyone informed of such matters.

During discussion on the matter, the Chair stated that the work of the Remuneration Committee would be inhibited if Board approval had to be sought for all documentation considered by the Committee. He explained that such documentation was available to Members on request.

Mr Bradley requested a copy of the Terms of Reference for the engagement of Consultants to undertake a review of the Principal Officers' Remuneration.

5 Service Support Committee Meeting – 31 January 2008

Members noted the Minutes of the Service Support Committee Meeting held on 31 January 2008 which had been ratified by the Committee at its Meeting on 19 May 2008 subject to an amendment suggested by Mr Bradley.

6 Service Delivery Committee Meeting – 29 April 2008

Members noted the draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Service Delivery Committee held on 29 April 2008.

Mr Harper, Chair of the Committee, referred to the Business of the Meeting and highlighted that a revised Health & Safety Policy Statement & Guide had been approved. Members noted that a copy of the Statement & Guide had been circulated in the paperwork for the Service Delivery Committee Meeting.

He referred to the IRMP Action Plan 2007/08 and explained that the Committee had felt it appropriate for the full Board to receive the presentation given by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer in respect of 2 of the projects.

Arising out of the Minutes:

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan 2007/08

Members noted that Project 3 of the IRMP Action Plan 2007/08 instigated a review of the locations of Fire Stations and resources in the Belfast area. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer gave Members a presentation outlining progress to date along with a brief overview of the interim findings of the review. He explained that it was recommended that no changes are made to the Station or appliance dispositions until the 'Other Buildings' and the 'Special Services' Risk Assessments are completed and the Emergency Response Standards for Road Traffic Collisions are set.

Referring to the Meeting of the Service Delivery Committee scheduled to take place in June, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that any recommendations brought to the Committee would be subject to public consultation following Board approval.

The Officers answered Members' questions regarding the information presented.

With respect to Project 4 of the Action Plan relating to the review of second pumping appliances at 12 Station locations across Northern Ireland, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the review had created a significant amount of work for the staff involved, both in terms of consultation with the personnel and the analysis of the issue. He gave Members a presentation on progress to date along with an overview of the report findings. It was noted that the findings of the review were currently being finalised and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the finalised report, along with recommendations, would also be considered at the June Meeting of the Service Delivery Committee. Members noted that these recommendations would also be subject to Board approval and public consultation.

The Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer answered Members' questions regarding aspects of the information presented.

7 Service Support Committee Meeting – 19 May 2008

The draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Service Support Committee held on 19 May 2008 were circulated for the information of Members.

Mr Hatch expressed concern in relation to Minutes being circulated during the Board Meeting and suggested that in future such documentation be circulated to Members immediately prior to the commencement of the Board Meeting. Mr Bradley concurred.

Mr Hatch, Vice-Chair of the Service Support Committee, gave Members a brief synopsis of the Business of the Meeting and highlighted in particular the positive presentation which the Committee had received in respect of Attendance Management. He also referred to the Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return and informed the Meeting of Mr Bradley's concerns regarding the timeframe and submission of the Report to the Equality Commission.

Mr Bradley, whilst acknowledging that the Monitoring Return was a factual report, pointed out that it was the responsibility of the Service Support Committee to consider, ratify and approve the report prior to its submission to the Equality Commission. He read an extract from the constitution of the Equality & Diversity Forum which alluded to the Board's responsibilities, through the Service Support Committee, in respect of the approval and ratification of statutory reports to the Equality Commission.

He paid tribute to the work carried out by the Equality Unit but pointed out that an undertaking had been given at the January Meeting of the Service Support Committee that such statutory reports would be presented to the Committee prior to submission to the Equality Commission.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that since the Service Support Committee Meeting he had acknowledged that it would have been right and appropriate that the Return should have been seen by the Committee but the timing of the Meeting had not aligned with the submission date for the Return. He explained that the Voluntary Undertaking and Annual Progress Reports were currently being compiled and would be forwarded to Members when complete. He stated that Members would be given the opportunity to comment on the Reports at the June Board Meeting prior to the submission of the Reports to the Commission by 1 August and 31 August respectively.

Arising out of the Minutes:

Finance and Budget 2008/09

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Service Support Committee had considered a Paper detailing the draft Budget Allocations for 2008/09 for NIFRS.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Hatch, seconded by Mr Campbell, unanimously –

Resolved: “to approve NIFRS draft Budget Allocations for 2008/09”.

8 National Joint Council Matters

Report on Meetings

The Chair explained to Members that, while there have been no formal meetings of the National Joint Council since the last Meeting of the Board, negotiations were continuing with respect to the July pay settlement. He also explained to Members that further proceedings with respect to the issue of Pension Rights for Retained personnel had been stayed until September.

Members were reminded that the next NJC meeting would be held in Belfast on 10 June 2008 with NIFRS hosting a reception for both Sides of the NJC at the Training Centre on the evening of 9 June.

9 Chair's Business

The Chair gave Members a synopsis of his activities since the last Meeting. He referred to the visit of the NI Assembly Health Committee on 22 May 2008 and expressed his appreciation to those who had attended and also to the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig for their excellent presentations.

He informed the Meeting that he had received a letter from Michelle O'Neill MLA, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee, expressing her appreciation, on behalf of the Committee, for NIFRS hosting a visit by the Committee and for the use of the Boardroom for their Committee Meeting.

LIFE Scheme Graduation

The Chair extended an invitation to all Members to attend the 50th LIFE Scheme Graduation in Enniskillen on 6 June 2008.

10 Chief Fire Officer's Report

Operational Activities

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer gave Members a brief outline of the operational activities of NIFRS during the month of April. The Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer answered Members' questions regarding the information presented.

The Chief Fire Officer circulated NIFRS Board Monthly News Brief outlining a number of key highlights for the information of Members.

Management Accounts

Members noted that, due to the finalizing of the year end accounts, normal Management Accounts would not be available until the next Meeting of the Board.

11 Relevant Correspondence

The following relevant correspondence was noted –

Letter of appreciation from the NI Assembly Health Committee, as previously reported under Chairman's Business.

12 **Sealing of Documents**

Members approved the undernoted documents for Sealing:

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

Donnelly Fleet – Purchase of 7 Renault Traffic Crew Cab Vans;

The National Trust – Memorandum of Sale for the former Fire Station Building at Rathlin Island;

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government c/o Maritime and Coastguard Agency – Occupational Agreement for New Rathlin Station;

MSM Promotions – Lease of Unit 20, City Business Park, Dunmurry, Belfast; and

Standard Life Trustee Company Limited, AIB Group (UK) plc and MSM Promotions – Licence to Underlet Unit 20, City Business Park, Dunmurry, Belfast.

13 **Meetings of the Board and its Committees**

Members noted a list of Meetings, etc, scheduled for the month of June 2008

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING TERMINATED
AT 3.25 PM
