

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

27 JUNE 2017

2.40 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

APOLOGIES: Mr P Martin
Mr G Smyth

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)
Mrs J Kelly, Director of Finance
Mr D Moore, Director of Human Resources
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 – 23 May 2017

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 23 May 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.

Matters arising out of the Minutes:

Provision of Specialist Operational Training

The Director of HR updated Members on the current position with respect to the Business Case for the provision of Specialist Operational training explaining that NIFRS is responding to further queries from DoF. He stated that he had anticipated approval a few weeks ago and highlighted the impact of developing the Business Case on progressing training.

The Chairperson noted that other matters arising out of the Minutes were either included substantively on the Agenda or would be raised under Chairperson's Business.

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

Audit, Risk & Governance – Meeting – 20 June 2017

It was noted that a Meeting of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee had been held on 20 June 2017 and that Minutes of the Meeting will be presented to the next Board Meeting for noting.

Mr Barbour, Vice-Chairperson of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, gave a brief overview of the Business discussed which included consideration of a proposal that NIFRS produce 2 sets of Annual Report & Accounts from 2017/18 and the draft Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2016/17. He noted that the Committee's recommendations with respect to these items would be considered later on the Agenda.

Mr Barbour reported that the Committee had also considered the revised Q4 Business Plan Reporting Summary (April 2016 to March 2017). He explained that the section entitled 'Quarter 4 DoH Progress Reporting' was updated following discussions at the recent Ground Clearing Meeting when DoH asked NIFRS to reconsider the year end outcome ratings in 2 areas. Mr Barbour outlined his concern with regard to the red RAG rating for Service Delivery which was attributed to the current political position.

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

Audit, Risk & Governance - Recommendation

- **Approval of the Revised Business Plan Reporting Summary – Q4 – April 2016 to March 2017.**

Mr Enright referred to the Comptroller & Auditor General's Report incorporated within the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts and explained that Members of the Committee had robustly challenged the lack of recognition of NIFRS' significant progress during the year in addressing outstanding recommendations.

The Director of Finance informed Members that the Comptroller & Auditor General's Report had been amended slightly and highlighted same.

Mr Enright stated that he felt the changes reflect the work which has been progressed.

The Chairperson thanked the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee for raising and addressing those points. She noted that the Comptroller & Auditor General had certified NIFRS 2016-17 Financial Statements with an unqualified opinion without modification and congratulated the Director of Finance.

Service Delivery Committee – Meeting – 22 June 2017

It was noted that a Meeting of the Service Delivery Committee had been held on 22 June 2017 and that Minutes of the Meeting will be presented to the next Board Meeting for noting.

Mr Barbour, Chairperson of the Service Delivery Committee, reported that the key item of business discussed had been the Grenfell Tower incident and NIFRS' response. He noted that an Information Briefing Session for Members regarding the Grenfell Tower and NIFRS' response had been held immediately prior to the Board Meeting.

Mr Barbour updated Members on the Business discussed which included:

- Emergency Medical Response Pilot update - positive feedback received with respect to the Pilot highlighted.
- NIFRS Emergency Response Standards (ERS) – Members updated on the current position.
- Community Protection Directorate Report – Mr Barbour advised Members that resourcing within Community Protection and the impact of same was a key issue.
- Marauding Terrorist Firearm Attacks (MTFA) – Members noted that this matter would be discussed later on the Agenda.
- Operational Support Directorate Report – noted that an update on the Command & Control Project had been presented and highlighted that a key issue was the timeline for the award of the Contract by December 2017.

Mr Barbour referred to the Committee's discussion regarding NIFRS' response to the Grenfell Tower incident. **Mr Barbour recommended that the Committee's proposal that the Board raises officially the legislative position, highlighting the gaps in terms of enforcement, with DoH be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Irvine.**

The Chairperson stated that, if Members were content, the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer would urgently draft a letter on behalf of the Board.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer explained that the purpose of the correspondence would be to reinforce letters previously submitted by Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Walmsley. Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Walmsley provided a synopsis of the content and purpose of these letters.

Resources Committee – Meeting – 22 June 2017

It was noted that a Meeting of the Resources Committee had been held on 22 June 2017 and that 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 recommendations emanating from the Meeting. He noted that the Committee had also discussed resourcing issues within the Community Protection Directorate in light of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

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

Resources Committee – Recommendations

- **Approval of the proposed Operational Support Structural Review subject to consultation;**
- **Approval of the revised Creditors' Policy (amended to reflect current practice and recent staff appointments within Finance);**
- **Approval of the revised HR Strategy 2014-2019 and high level Action Plan;**
- **Approval of the following HR policies, subject to consultation:**
 - **Operational Workforce – Development and Competence Policy; and**
 - **Family Liaison Policy.**

Item 5: Chairperson's Business

Board Governance Self-Assessment Tool 2016/17

The draft Board Governance Self-Assessment Tool 2016/17 was noted.

The Board, on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Barbour, unanimously approved the draft Board Governance Self-Assessment Tool 2016/17.

Key Lessons Learned from the NI Event Company

The Chairperson noted that the key lessons learned from the NI Event Company had been previously discussed by the Board. She explained that the key issues identified by NIAO in respect of the NI Events Company had been considered by management and Members noted the updated report which had been circulated for information.

The Board, on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved NIFRS' updated report on the review of Key Lessons learned from the NI Events Company.

Spirit of NI Awards

The Chairperson referred to the Spirit of NI Awards and informed Members that Crew Commander Terry Canning from Omagh Fire Station had won the 'Spirit of Sport' Award. She noted that Crew Commander Canning had been nominated for the award in recognition of his actions at the Boston Marathon.

The Chairperson reported on her attendance at the Awards Night, accompanied by Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham.

The Chairperson informed Members that she had written to Crew Commander Canning extending her congratulations on behalf of the Board.

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind Campaign

The Chairperson paid tribute to the tremendous charity work of Firefighter McKee highlighting the success of his most recent awareness event as part of a Healthy Body, Healthy Mind campaign. She explained that the event had been undertaken in partnership with NI Chest, Heart & Stroke and Mindwise.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer gave an overview of the awareness event which had taken place at Belfast City Hall the previous weekend. He also noted future events planned to raise awareness. He commended Firefighter McKee and those who lend support for their wonderful work.

The Chairperson noted that she had also written to Firefighter McKee and his colleagues.

Board Vacancies

The Chairperson referred to the issue of vacancies on the Board which had been ongoing for some time and advised Members that DoH had indicated that it was anticipated that a competition to fill Board vacancies will be launched after the summer.

Accountability Meeting

The Chairperson informed Members that the Accountability Meeting with the Permanent Secretary was being held the following Monday.

Grenfell Tower Tragedy

The Chairperson stated that everyone's thoughts are with the families who have been bereaved and with those impacted by the Grenfell Tower tragedy and also with the London Fire Brigade Commissioner and personnel who attended the incident.

Resignation

The Chairperson informed Members of the resignation of the Director of Finance. On behalf of the Board, she commended Mrs Kelly for all her work and extended best wishes to her as she takes up her new role.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer paid tribute to Mrs Kelly and commended her for her work. He also extended best wishes to Mrs Kelly.

Boardroom Apprentices

The Chairperson advised Members that the launch of the Boardroom Apprentice Programme had taken place at Stormont on 20 June 2017 and explained that the programme aims to provide practical experience, training and support to individuals who wish to become board members with public and third sector organisations. She informed Members that NIFRS will be hosting 2 Apprentices and further details would follow.

Mr Irvine commented on the potential impact of the Apprentices on progressing Board vacancies/appointments going forward.

The Chairperson assured Members that the Apprentices would be Board-level observers. She added that she was looking forward to the launch of the appointments process for Board Members after the summer.

Item 6: Standalone Strategic Items

Management Statement & Financial Memorandum (MSFM)

Members noted the revised Management Statement & Financial Memorandum (MSFM) which had been reviewed in tandem with DoH colleagues.

It was further noted that, under Standing Order 2.6, Members had unanimously approved the revised document, however, DoH had subsequently requested further minor amendments.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Barbour, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved the revised Management Statement & Financial Memorandum.

Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2016/17

Members noted the draft Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2016/17 which had been reviewed by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee on 20 June 2017. Members were informed that the Committee recommended approval of the draft document.

The Director of Finance noted further changes had been made to the draft document and these had been tracked. She summarised the salient points from the draft Annual Report & Statement of Accounts. She drew attention in particular to the Pensions position and noted that the Report by the Comptroller & Auditor General, circulated separately for the information of Members, would be incorporated within the final document.

The Director of Finance explained that Board approval was being sought for the Chairperson and Chief Fire & Rescue Officer to sign-off the Statement of Accounts 2016/17.

Mr Irvine referred to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure which showed a surplus against RRL of £12k and commended the Director of Finance on an excellent turnout given the pressures during the year.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Barbour, unanimously approved the draft Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2016/17.

Preparation of 2 sets of Annual Report & Accounts

Members noted a Briefing Paper outlining a proposal that NIFRS prepare 2 sets of Annual Reports & Accounts.

The Director of Finance explained it is proposed that from 2017/18 NIFRS produces 2 sets of Annual Report & Accounts to show the operational activity and the Pension Scheme Accounts separately. She noted that the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, at its Meeting on 20 June 2017, had considered the proposal and recommended approval of same.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Barbour, seconded by Mr Enright, unanimously approved that from 2017/18 NIFRS produces 2 sets of Annual Report & Accounts to show the operational activity and the Pension Scheme Accounts separately.

Finance Report

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

The Director of Finance gave an overview of the information presented explaining the current position with respect to the revenue budget for 2017/18 and noting the revenue financial position was showing an overspend as at 31 May 2017.

The Director of Finance highlighted the key pressures to the budget which included overtime, pay awards and recruitment. She also drew Members' attention to the number of mobilisations in April and May and the impact on Retained attendance payments. She pointed out the need to closely monitor same.

The Director of Finance referred to the Pension update and outlined the current position with respect to the contract for the purchase of a Pension's software system. A paper relating to the contract amendments being requested by the service provider was circulated for the consideration of Members. She gave an overview of the amendments relating to liability and damages.

The Director of Finance highlighted the potential impact on NIFRS of any further delays in procuring a Pension's software system.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Enright, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved the amendments requested by Capita to the Terms and Conditions, as set out in the Annex to the Briefing Paper, in relation to liability and damages; and for the Senior Team to continue with negotiations in relation to the Terms and Conditions using Annex 1 as the baseline.

Business Cases

Provision of Firefighting Foam

Members noted the Executive Summary for the provision of Firefighting Foam.

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

The Board, on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for the provision of Firefighting Foam.

Provision of Laundry & Repair of Structural Fire Kit

The Executive Summary for the provision of laundry and repair of Structural Fire Kit was noted.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham gave an overview of the purpose of the Business Case. He answered Members' questions relating to same.

The Board, on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for the provision of laundry and repair of Structural Fire Kit.

Provision of Service, Maintenance & Repair of Road Traffic Collision Equipment

Members noted the Executive Summary for the provision of service, maintenance and repair of Road Traffic Collision Equipment.

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

The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Barbour, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for the provision of service, maintenance and repair of Road Traffic Collision Equipment.

Marauding Terrorist Firearm Attacks Incidents

Members noted the Executive Summary relating to marauding terrorist firearm attacks (MTFA) incidents.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Walmsley outlined the background to the Business Case and its purpose explaining that approval was being sought for NIFRS to establish and manage a MTFA provision to the same level of readiness as other UK FRS in line with the model derived from the national risk assessment. Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Walmsley highlighted that the MTFA will have a resource implication.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Barbour, unanimously resolved to approve the Business Case for Marauding Terrorist Firearm Attacks Incidents.

Service Level Agreement – Pension Service

A Briefing Paper relating to a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between NIFRS and the Business Services Organisation (BSO) for the provision of a Pension Service was noted.

The Director of Finance gave a synopsis of the background to the pension provision and explained the need for a revised SLA covering the professional pension administration service and standards which are to be delivered for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019.

The Board, on the motion of Ms McKinney, seconded by Mr Enright, unanimously approved NIFRS entering into a Service Level Agreement with BSO for the provision of a Pension Service for a 2-year period, commencing on 1 July 2017.

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 referred to the Board Business Improvement Day scheduled to take place on 22 August 2017 and proposed that this be moved to 29 August 2017.

Members agreed to this.

Referring to her email relating to hosting Meetings at venues around Area Commands, the Chairperson noted that the September Board Meeting would be held in Headquarters and that a schedule of venues for subsequent Meetings will be circulated in due course.

With respect to the timings of Board Meetings, the Chairperson explained that due to the potential for workshops, Meetings would continue as is, ie, Tuesdays at 1.30 pm.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING ENDED
AT 3.35 PM
