

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

25 SEPTEMBER 2018

2.15 PM

PRESENT: Ms C McKinney, Chairperson presiding
Mr G Thompson, Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mr C Enright
Mr K Henning
Mr R Irvine
Ms A Jones
Mr K Millar
Mr J Quinn
Mr G Smyth
Mr W Webb

APOLOGIES: Mr J Barbour
Mr P Martin

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Deeney, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
(Operations)
Mr M Graham, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer (Service
Support)
Mr A Walmsley, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
(Community Protection)
Mr D Moore, Director of Human Resources
Mrs P White, Director of Finance
Mrs J Ramsey, Head of Facilities & Assets
Mr C Doyle, Capital Build & Asset Manager
Mr G Somerville, Group Commander (Protection)
Ms I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary
Ms L Curran, DoH Observer
Mr C McCrory, Strategic Investment Board

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the Meeting particularly Ms L Curran, DoH Observer.

The Chairperson reported positively on a meeting held that morning with Mr S Routh-Jones the new Fire & Rescue Adviser. She thanked Mr Routh-Jones and DoH for facilitating the meeting.

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: NIFRS Learning & Development Centre at Desertcreat

The Chairperson welcomed Mr C McCrory, SIB, who will be giving a presentation relating to NIFRS Learning & Development Centre at Desertcreat.

Mr McCrory gave a detailed presentation updating Members on progress with respect to Phase 1 of NIFRS' Learning & Development Centre at Desertcreat. He noted that progress was on programme and it was anticipated that handover will be in February 2019. Mr McCrory also noted the key milestones with respect to Phase 2 of the project.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham outlined the governance structure for the project.

The Director of HR referred to the 'Arrive to Perform' Training Model mentioned during the presentation and gave Members a brief overview of the proposed model noting that a more comprehensive presentation will be delivered at a future Meeting.

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

The Chairperson thanked Mr McCrory, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham and the Director of HR for their presentation.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham stated that a key part of the project was engagement with key stakeholders and informed the Meeting that a 'meet and greet' session was being held on site on 22 October 2018.

The Chairperson advised Members that Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham was leaving to meet with the Fire & Rescue Adviser. She referred to his attendance at the Primark fire in Belfast and paid tribute to him and his colleagues for all their work and professionalism in a difficult situation.

At this point,
ACFRO Graham and Mr McCrory left the Meeting

Item 4: Fire Safety Enforcement

The Chairperson welcomed Group Commander Somerville to the Meeting. She noted that Group Commander Somerville would be delivering a presentation with respect to NIFRS' capability for Fire Safety enforcement.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Walmsley noted that the presentation had previously been delivered to the Service Delivery Committee and also the Strategic Leadership Team.

Group Commander Somerville noted the NIFRS Board's responsibility under The Fire and Rescue Services (NI) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations 2010 and premises covered by the legislation. He highlighted the level of Fire Safety Guidance published by NIFRS and noted the statistics pertaining to audits conducted since the introduction of the Regulations in 2010 and numbers of enforcing Officers. Group Commander Somerville also gave a brief overview of NIFRS risk-based inspection programme.

Group Commander Somerville gave an overview of the risk assessment of NIFRS' Fire Safety audit capacity, its impact on other workstreams and also outlined the actions being progressed to mitigate the risks identified.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Walmsley provided further assurance to Members with respect to NIFRS' risk-based approach to its inspection programme emphasising that the programme is reviewed annually. He reiterated his concerns with regard to the lack of Auditing Officers and noted again the actions being progressed to mitigate the risks. He referred to the need for a career progression pathway within Community Safety and advised Members that it is hoped to present a proposal to the next Meeting of the Service Delivery Committee.

The Chairperson expressed concern regarding the risk to the NIFRS Board of the current position and acknowledged the work ongoing with the Director of HR with respect to the development of a career progression plan. She pointed out the need for this plan to also be presented to the Board.

During discussion, the Officers answered Members' questions relating to the presentation. Mr Irvine, Member of Service Delivery Committee, noted discussions at a recent Meeting of the Committee and assured the Board that the Committee is closely monitoring the matter and that Members will be kept informed.

In response to a question from the Chairperson, the Officers confirmed that DoH has been appraised of the current position.

The Chairperson thanked Group Commander Somerville for his attendance.

Item 5: Minutes – 26 June 2018

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 26 June 2018, 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.

The Chairperson noted that matters arising from the Minutes would be picked up substantively through the Agenda.

Item 6: Reports from Board Committees, including noting of Committee Minutes and adoption of Recommendations

Audit, Risk & Governance Committee – Minutes – 19 June 2018

The Minutes of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee Meeting held on 19 June 2018 were noted. It was also noted that the recommendations contained therein were adopted by the Board at its Meeting on 26 June 2018.

Service Delivery Committee – Minutes – 19 June 2018

The Minutes of the Service Delivery Committee Meeting held on 19 June 2018 were noted. It was also noted that the recommendation contained therein was adopted by the Board at its Meeting on 26 June 2018.

Service Delivery Committee – Minutes – 16 August 2018

The Minutes of the Service Delivery Committee Meeting held on 16 August 2018 were noted. There were no recommendations emanating from this Meeting.

Resources Committee – Minutes – 19 June 2018

The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 19 June 2018 were noted. It was also noted that the recommendations contained therein were adopted by the Board at its Meeting on 26 June 2018.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Irvine, adopted a further recommendation, as detailed below.

Resources Committee – Recommendation

- **Approval of the Project Plans for Community Firefighter and RCC recruitment.**

Resources Committee – Minutes – 16 August 2018

The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 16 August 2018 were noted.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously agreed to adopt the Committee's recommendations, as detailed below.

Resources Committee – Recommendations

- **Approval that the transactional process and pension payments be brought into the scope of outsourcing of the Pensions function to BSO;**
- **Approval of the draft NIFRS Petty Cash Policy;**
- **Approval of the proposed amendment to the HR and Corporate Communications structure;**
- **Approval to confirm voluntary severance for Employee 1 within a Support Directorate as set out in the Briefing Paper;**
- **Approval of a Flexible Retirement request; and**
- **Approval of the Manual Technician Structural Review.**

Change in the Order of Business

It was agreed to take Item 8: Standalone Strategic Items – Finance Report – as the next Item of Business.

Item 8: Standalone Strategic Items

Finance Report

A Briefing Paper updating Members on the financial position was noted.

The Director of Finance summarised the overall position and forecast with respect to NIFRS revenue budget as at 31 August 2018 reporting a year-to-date surplus of £253k and highlighting the key budget pressures. She also highlighted an emerging pressure relating to agreed pay awards and noted that this risk has been highlighted with DoH.

Referring to the capital budget, the Director of Finance gave a brief overview of the position as at 31 August 2018.

The Officers answered Members' questions relating to the information presented.

At this point,
the Director of Finance left the Meeting

The Meeting adjourned at 4.00 pm
and reconvened at 4.05 pm

Item 7: Chairperson's Business

Primark Fire

The Chairperson expressed her appreciation to the Firefighters and Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Graham and Area Commander Jennings following NIFRS attendance at the Primark fire in Belfast. She paid tribute to the tremendous work of NIFRS in very difficult circumstances.

Hyponatraemia Report

The Chairperson advised Members that Mr Smyth and the Head of Planning, Performance & Governance are representing NIFRS on workstreams emanating from the Report.

Mr Smyth reported on the remit of the workstreams and updated the Meeting on progress.

Launch of the Co-Production Guide

The Chairperson reported on her attendance, accompanied by Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Deeney, at the Department of Health's launch of the Co-Production Guide.

End of Tenure - Mr J Barbour

The Chairperson explained that unfortunately Mr Barbour had been unable to attend his last Meeting today and added that there will be an opportunity to make a presentation at a future date. She noted that, at the last Meeting of the Service Delivery Committee, she had made a presentation to Mr Barbour in recognition of his service and contribution to the Service Delivery Committee and the organisation.

Mr Irvine, on behalf of the Service Delivery Committee, expressed appreciation to Mr Barbour for his leadership as Chairperson of the Committee.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer paid tribute to Mr Barbour's contribution to NIFRS as a Board Member and also as a representative of the Fire Brigades' Union.

Newry Business Awards

The Chairperson extended her congratulations to Watch Commander R Campbell, who was the winner of the 'Unsung Hero' category at the Greater Newry Area's inaugural Business Employee Awards.

Area & District Review

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Deeney updated Members on the current position reporting on a meeting of the Working Group and the work being progressed particularly in relation to the Report's Executive Summary. He noted that a Meeting to discuss further the Area & District Review (ADR) Report with Board Members was scheduled for 25 October.

During discussion, Mr Henning, Chairperson of the Working Group, outlined the proposed way forward and the outcome with respect to the Report's Executive Summary. The Chairperson welcomed the progress and suggested that the Working Group convene a meeting in advance of 25 October.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer accepted the need for a timeline for submission of the ADR Report but pointed out that the Report still sat with the HSC Leadership Centre. He stated that should any issues be raised by the Leadership Centre he would report these to the Chairperson.

The Chairperson, whilst appreciating that the report was currently with HSC, requested a date for the ADR Report to come forward to the Board as it was essential this matter was closed off at Board level without any further delay. She emphasised that ADR, which should be presented with the recommendation of the Corporate Management Team, must come before the Board at its October Meeting and only a very compelling reason would convince her that this could not be achieved.

The Chairperson commended Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Deeney for all his work in leading this matter and added her thanks to the Working Group and also the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer and the Corporate Management Team.

Purpose & Values

The Chairperson updated Members with regard to her meetings with the Director of HR following discussions at the Board Workshop relating to NIFRS Purpose and Values. The Chairperson noted that she had spent some time with the Director of HR on the Values and advised colleagues that she was content with the refresh of the document.

The Director of HR explained re-engagement with staff on the revised Purpose and Values had commenced.

Business Cases

Planned removal of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMS) at various locations throughout NIFRS Estate

Members noted the Executive Summary relating to the planned removal of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMS) at various locations throughout NIFRS estate.

The Head of Facilities & Assets gave an explanation as to the purpose of the Business Case and also updated Members on the position.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Smyth, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously approved the Business Case for the planned removal of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMS) at various locations throughout NIFRS estate.

Breathing Apparatus CBRN Refresh

The Executive Summary for the Business Case relating to a Breathing Apparatus CBRN refresh was noted.

The Head of Facilities & Assets noted the purpose of the project.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously approved the Business Case for a Breathing Apparatus refresh.

Casualty Care Initial and Recertification Training

The Executive Summary of the Business Case for Casualty Care Initial and Recertification Training was noted.

The Director of HR outlined the purpose of the Business Case.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Smyth, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved the Business Case for Casualty Care Initial and Recertification Training.

Provision of Counselling, Mediation and Wellbeing Absence Support Services

Members noted the Executive Summary relating to the Business Case for the provision of Counselling, Mediation and Wellbeing Absence Support Services.

The Director of HR noted that the purpose of the Business Case is to renew the contract to provide support services to NIFRS managers and employees.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Smyth, unanimously approved the Business Case for the provision of Counselling, Mediation and Wellbeing Absence Support Services.

Procurement of Design Team Expertise through the NIFRS/NIAS Emergency Services Framework to support the delivery of Capital Projects

The Executive Summary relating to the Business Case for the procurement of Design Team expertise through the NIFRS/NIAS Emergency Services Framework was noted.

The Head of Facilities & Assets explained that the Business Case will allow NIFRS to avail of a range of Design Team services from the recently procured Emergency Services Design Team Framework and will support the delivery of capital projects.

The Head of Facilities & Assets answered Members' questions relating to aspects of the information presented.

The Board, on the motion Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Smyth, unanimously approved the Business Case for the procurement of Design Team expertise through the NIFRS/NIAS Emergency Services Framework.

Replacement of Priority 1 Fire Alarms

Members noted the Executive Summary pertaining to the Business Case for the replacement of Priority 1 Fire Alarms.

The Head of Facilities & Assets noted that the Business Case addresses the need within NIFRS to replace and upgrade Fire Alarms for identified Priority 1 Stations and explained how the project will be taken forward.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved the Business Case for the replacement of Priority 1 Fire Alarms.

Headquarters Infrastructural Upgrades and Regional Control Centre Refurbishment

The Executive Summary relating to the Business Case for Headquarters Infrastructural Upgrades and Regional Control Centre refurbishment was noted.

The Head of Facilities & Assets outlined the background to the Business Case and gave an overview of the purpose of the project.

The Head of Facilities & Assets answered Members' questions relating to aspects of the information presented.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Millar, unanimously approved the Business Case for Headquarters Infrastructural Upgrades and Regional Control Centre refurbishment.

Interim Catering Provision

Members noted the Executive Summary in respect of the Business Case for an interim catering provision.

The Director of HR noted the purpose of the Business Case.

Mr Quinn expressed his disappointment that option 4 – employ catering staff and provide food at all training locations – had not been considered further. He referred to the health and wellbeing of staff and the need to consider a longer-term solution.

The Director of HR noted options being considered going forward.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Millar, unanimously approved the Business Case for an Interim Catering Provision.

Larne Fire Station Refurbishment

The Executive Summary relating to the Larne Fire Station Refurbishment Business Case was noted.

The Head of Facilities & Assets gave an overview of the proposed refurbishment project.

The Officers answered Members' questions relating to various aspects of the information presented.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Enright, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously approved the Larne Fire Station Refurbishment Business Case.

Emergency Response Gear Drying Equipment

Members noted the Executive Summary pertaining to the Business Case for Emergency Response Gear Drying Equipment.

The Head of Facilities & Assets gave a brief overview of the purpose of the project.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Smyth, seconded by Ms Jones, unanimously approved the Business Case for Emergency Response Gear Drying Equipment.

Replacement of Network Switches

The Executive Summary pertaining to the Business Case for the Replacement of Network Switches was noted.

The Director of HR gave an explanation as to the purpose of the project.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Enright, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved the Business Case for the Replacement of Network Switches.

Item 9: Relevant Correspondence

There was no relevant correspondence.

Item 10: Documents for Sealing

Members noted the undernoted document for sealing:

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service and Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
with –

Kennedy Fitzgerald Architects and IBI Group (UK) Limited – Emergency Services
Design Team Framework.

Item 11: Schedule of Future Meetings

The schedule of future Meetings, etc, was noted. The Chairperson asked Members to also hold 25 October 2018 for a potential Special Board Meeting.

The Chairperson referred to the schedule for senior management’s visits to Cadet branches and encouraged colleagues to avail of the opportunity to attend and experience first-hand the positive work of the Scheme. She also encouraged Members to attend the Autumn Station Inspections.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING ENDED
AT 4.55 PM
