

# NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

## MINUTES OF A MEETING

22 MAY 2019

10.10 AM

PRESENT: Ms C McKinney, Chairperson presiding  
Mr M Graham, Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer  
Mr C Enright  
Mr K Henning  
Mr R Irvine  
Mr G Smyth

APOLOGIES: Mr P Martin

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Deeney, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer  
(Transformation, Performance & Governance)  
Mr A Walmsley, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer (Service  
Delivery)  
Mr L Crawford, Temporary Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer  
(Service Support)  
Mrs P White, Director of Finance  
Mrs E Magee, Interim Director of Human Resources  
Ms I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary

### **Item 1: Apologies:**

Apologies from Members 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 there were no apparent conflicts of interest.

### **Item 3: Minutes of Board Meeting – 26 March 2019**

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 22 March 2019, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a true record on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Mr Henning.

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

#### **Service Delivery Committee Meeting – 10 May 2019**

It was noted that a Meeting of the Service Delivery Committee had been held on 10 May 2019 and that the Minutes of this Meeting will be presented to the June Board Meeting.

**Mr Irvine, Chairperson of the Service Delivery Committee, proposed that the Committee's recommendation emanating from the Meeting, as detailed below, be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Henning.**

***Service Delivery Committee – Recommendation***

- **To approve the termination of NIFRS Health & Safety Strategy 2015-2010.**

**Resources Committee Meeting – 10 May 2019**

It was noted that a Meeting of the Resources Committee had been held on 10 May 2019 and that the Minutes of this Meeting will be presented to the June Board Meeting.

**Mr Henning, Chairperson of the Resources Committee, presented the recommendations emanating from the Meeting. He proposed that the Committee's, as detailed below, be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Irvine.**

***Resources Committee – Recommendations***

- **To approve the proposed HR Structure – Occupational Health, Wellbeing & Establishment subject to the review of the Station Commander post by 31 March 2020;**
- **With respect to Dual Availability of Standby and On Call employees to approve Option 2 as detailed in the Briefing Paper;**
- **Approval to offer employees the option of Pay in lieu of notice when ill health retirement is being considered;**
- **To approve Operations Policy No 8 – Operational Fleet and Equipment, subject to amendment.**

**Item 5: Chairperson's Business**

**Condolences**

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Board, expressed her condolences to the Brown family following the tragic death of Crew Commander David Brown.

The Chairperson stated that she had written to the family on behalf of the Board, She paid tribute to the work of the Family Liaison Team in assisting the family in such sad circumstances.

**Council Elections**

The Chairperson congratulated Councillors Enright, Irvine and Martin on their re-elections at the recent Council elections.

## **NIFRS Board Appointments**

The Chairperson noted that the process to appoint five new Members to the Board was underway. She noted that she would be working with the Board Administrative Secretary and Head of Performance, Planning & Governance over the summer on a forward plan which would include a new member induction programme.

She thanked Members for agreeing to double up on Committees to ensure quoracy given the deficit in membership at this time. She confirmed however that she would be reviewing Committees in terms of role and function and the very possible need to reframe them from early Autumn in line with the change management programme

## **DoH Representative**

The Chairperson informed Members that Ms Lynne Curran, DoH, was moving to a new post within the Department of Economy. She expressed her thanks to Ms Curran and extended best wishes to her in the new post.

## **Item 7: Standalone Strategic Items**

### **Finance Report**

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

The Director of Finance noted that the Report had previously been presented to the Resources Committee. She provided an overview of the key points within the Report acknowledging that it had been a challenging year for NIFRS but that a breakeven position had been achieved with respect to the Revenue budget. She highlighted the pressures faced by NIFRS during the year and the mitigations/measures taken to ensure that breakeven position was achieved.

The Director of Finance explained that accrual with respect to the ongoing negotiations around the role of the Firefighter was not considered appropriate and that this would be an issue for NIFRS in the next financial year. Members noted this and requested regular updates from the Director of Finance.

Referring to the Capital budget, the Director of Finance informed Members that a breakeven position had also been achieved.

### **NIFRS Financial Strategy & Breakeven Plan 2019-20**

Members noted the draft Financial Strategy & Breakeven Plan 2019-20 which had been reviewed by the Resources Committee at its Meeting on 10 May 2019.

The Director of Finance explained that the Plan provides a high level overview of the financial challenges facing NIFRS in 2019/20 and includes detail around the options to deliver within the budget set by DoH. She further advised that Board approval was being sought for the one year Strategy.

The Director of Finance advised Members that NIFRS is facing a £3.2m pressure. She noted the work ongoing with DoH in respect of budget pressures to determine if any additional funding will be available. Members requested regular updates over the time ahead to ensure they were fully apprised of all developments in terms of additional funding.

The Chairperson noted that discussions were ongoing regarding the budget and enquired if management was liaising with the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU).

The Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer stated that the FBU had written to him formally regarding the Organisation's proposed actions. He noted that a meeting was scheduled with the FBU that afternoon and with DoH the next day to discuss the Breakeven Plan to address the £3.2m budget pressure. The Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer was requested to provide Members with regular updates on this matter.

The Chairperson noted that any revisions of the one year Plan must then be presented to the relevant Standing Committee and ultimately the full Board for approvals.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Ms McKinney, unanimously approved the NIFRS draft Financial Strategy & Breakeven Plan 2019-20.**

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At this point,  
ACFRO Walmsley joined the Meeting

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### **NIFRS IT Strategy 2019-2022**

Members noted the draft IT Strategy 2019-22 which had been reviewed by the Resources Committee at its Meeting on 10 May 2019.

The Director of Finance explained that the Strategy was being presented for Board approval and gave an overview of its purpose and the key strategic aims. She accepted that the Strategy was ambitious but noted the caveat that the Strategy was subject to funding.

During a wide ranging discussion, the Officers answered Members' question relating to the information presented. Mr Enright referred to the Line of Business Review and suggested the need for this to be progressed in parallel to the Strategy for the infrastructure. Members noted the responses from the Officers.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Deeney updated Members on a recent meeting with the IT Manager. He assured members that they would be kept fully informed.

Members noted that the relevant Committee will be kept fully informed of progress against the Strategy and that the full Board would then input into the discussions when deemed appropriate.

**Following further discussion, the Board, on the motion of Mr Enright, seconded by Mr Smyth, unanimously approved the draft IT Strategy 2019-22 subject to an amendment to reflect transformation.**

### **Death-Benefit Payment**

A Briefing Paper regarding the payment of pension death benefit was noted.

The Director of Finance gave a detailed overview of the information presented.

**Following discussion, the Board, on the motion of Mr Henning, seconded by Mr Irvine, unanimously approved Option 1 as contained in the Briefing Paper.**

### **Business Cases**

#### ***Lease – Larne Temporary Fire Station***

#### ***Lease – Office Accommodation – Downpatrick District Headquarters***

Members noted the Strategic Outline Cases relating to a new lease agreement for Larne temporary Fire Station and the continuation of the lease of office accommodation for Downpatrick District Command Headquarters.

The Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer noted the purpose of the leases and answered Members' questions relating to the information presented.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Irvine, seconded by Ms McKinney, unanimously approved the Strategic Outline Cases for a new lease agreement for Larne temporary Fire Station and the continuation of the lease of office accommodation for Downpatrick District Command Headquarters.**

### **Item 8: Relevant Correspondence**

There was no relevant correspondence.

### **Item 9: Documents for Sealing**

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

BI Electrical Services (NI) Limited – Replace/Upgrade of Fire Alarms at Various Locations;

Newry, Mourne & Down District Council – Sub-Lease – Office Accommodation Downpatrick District Command.

**Item 10: Schedule of Future Meetings**

The schedule of future Meetings, etc, was noted.

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THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS  
AND THE MEETING ENDED  
AT 10.40 AM

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