

# NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

## MINUTES OF A MEETING

2 JULY 2019

11.00 AM

PRESENT: Ms C McKinney, Chairperson presiding  
Mr M Graham, Chief Fire & Rescue Officer (Interim)  
Mr K Henning  
Mr R Irvine  
Mr P Martin

APOLOGIES: Mr C Enright  
Mr G Smyth

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Deeney, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer  
(Transformation, Performance & Governance)  
Mrs P White, Director of Finance  
Mrs E Magee, Acting Director of Human Resources  
Miss D Reynolds, Head of Planning, Performance &  
Governance  
Ms I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary  
Ms P McIlwrath, DoH Observer

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

Apologies from Members were noted.

The Chairperson thanked Members in attendance for making themselves available for the Meeting that day to ensure quoracy to proceed as it was now on the cusp of the holiday period. She noted that Members had already had a very demanding year with Meetings and workshops given the important work underway and the fact that the Board was working 5 Members under at this time.

### **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 – 22 May 2019**

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

Arising out of the Minutes:

The Chairperson noted that most matters arising would be dealt with under the substantive business.

## **Chairperson's Business**

### ***NIFRS Board Appointments***

The Chairperson noted that the recruitment process for NIFRS Board appointments was well underway and that 5 new Members were due to be appointed to the Board in the Autumn.

The Chairperson noted correspondence from Deputy Secretary J Johnston advising of a change to the Department's approach to the re-appointment of Chairs and Members to the Boards of DoH's Arm's Length Bodies for second terms. She also noted that his correspondence had been circulated to all Members for their information.

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

#### **Audit, Risk & Governance Committee – Minutes – 22 May 2019**

The Minutes of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee Meeting held on 22 May 2019 were noted.

**Mr Irvine, Member of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, proposed that the Committee's recommendations, as detailed below, be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Henning.**

#### ***Audit, Risk & Governance Committee – Recommendations***

- **Acceptance of the Audits of NIFRS PaLS Sourcing; Absence Management; and Procurement & Contract Management; and the Post Controls Assurance Standards (CAS) Review;**
- **Approval of the Year-End Follow-Up Report on Outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations;**
- **Approval of the revised Internal Audit Charter;**
- **Approval of the Internal Audit Strategy and Internal Audit Plan 2019/20;**
- **Approval of the Quarter 4 Progress Update on the Corporate Business Plan (April 2018 to March 2019), along with the Balanced Scorecard; and**
- **Approval of the Assurance Outcomes 2018/19 subject to amendment.**

#### **Audit, Risk & Governance Committee - Meeting – 20 June 2019**

Members noted that a Meeting of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee was held on 20 June 2019 and that the Minutes of this Meeting will be presented to the next Board Meeting.

**Mr Irvine, Member of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, proposed that the Committee's recommendations, as detailed below, be adopted by the Board. This was seconded by Mr Henning.**

### **Audit, Risk & Governance Committee – Recommendations**

- **Approval of the Year-end Follow-up on Outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations; and**
- **Approval of the NAO Audit Committee Checklist 2018/19.**

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

The Chairperson congratulated Michael Graham on his appointment as Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer and added that she and the Members looked forward to working with him.

### **Item 6: Standalone Strategic Items**

#### **Annual Report – Audit, Risk & Governance Committee**

Members noted the 2018/19 Annual Report of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, presented on behalf of the Committee Chairperson.

The Head of Planning, Performance & Governance gave an overview of the information presented highlighting that Internal Audit had provided an overall satisfactory assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of NIFRS' framework of governance, risk management and control.

Mr Irvine, Member of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, advised the Meeting that the External Auditors had certified NIFRS 2018-19 Financial Statements with an unqualified opinion. He explained that this year, given the substantial further progress made by NIFRS in addressing outstanding Internal Audit recommendations, the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) had decided to report progress on this issue within the Report To Those Charged With Governance (RTTCWG) rather than including a report with his audit opinion. Mr Irvine welcomed this positive response from the C&AG. He acknowledged this positive direction of travel by the Organisation but stressed the need for this positive progress to be sustained as there was more work to be done going forward.

The Chairperson thanked the Head of Planning, Performance & Governance and her team for all their work. She commended Mr Smyth, Chairperson of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee for his leadership of the Committee and thanked the Committee Members for their support and contribution throughout the year.

#### **Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2018/19**

Members noted the draft Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2018/19 which had been reviewed by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee on 20 June 2019. Members were informed that the Committee recommended approval of the draft document subject to minor amendments.

The Head of Planning, Performance & Governance presented the draft Annual Report highlighting the key areas reported within same. She noted that NIFRS is awaiting the finalisation of the C&AG's certificates for inclusion in the Report.

The Director of Finance referred to the Annual Accounts and drew Members' attention to an amendment to the narrative within the Accounts to reflect the tribunal outcome relating to Holiday Pay.

The Director of Finance highlighted that both sets of Accounts were unqualified. She provided a synopsis of the key areas of reporting within the Accounts. She noted that Board approval was being sought for the Chairperson and Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer to sign-off the Statement of Accounts 2018/19.

In response to a question from Mr Martin regarding the impact of the outcome of the tribunal relating to Holiday Pay, the Officers updated Members on the current position. Members noted the Officers update.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Martin, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved the draft Annual Report & Statement of Accounts 2018/19.**

### **Finance Report**

Members noted that there was no formal Finance Report for April/May financial performance due to the uncertainties in respect of budget allocations until the Breakeven Plan was agreed.

Members noted the 2019/20 Breakeven Plan. The Director of Finance gave an overview of the Plan noting that she and the Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer were meeting with DoH that afternoon to discuss the Plan in detail.

During discussion, the Officers provided further clarification/answered Members' questions relating to aspects of the Breakeven Plan. Members requested to be kept informed.

### **Learning & Development Centre Project**

The Learning & Development Centre Project Highlight Report was noted.

The Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer summarised the key areas from the Report noting that the handover of Phase 1 of the project would take place on 4 July with the official opening being scheduled for September.

The Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer explained that the RAG status of the project remained Amber due to the status of OBC2.

The Chairperson noted that Mr Henning represented the Board on the Project Board and brings updates to the Board.

### **Business Case for Generators**

Members noted the Executive Summary relating to the Business Case for Generators.

The Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer outlined the purpose of the Business Case.

**The Board, on the motion of Mr Martin, seconded by Mr Henning, unanimously approved the Business Case for Generators.**

**Item 8: Relevant Correspondence**

There was no relevant correspondence.

**Item 9: Documents for Sealing**

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

IBI Group (UK) Limited – for the provision of professional services – Refurbishment of Antrim Fire Station;

IBI Group (UK) Limited – for the provision of professional services – Appliance Room Floors – Springfield and Westland Fire Stations;

IBI Group (UK) Limited – for the provision of professional services – Replacement of Distribution Panel at Coleraine Fire Station;

IBI Group (UK) Limited – for the provision of professional services - Replace/Upgrade of Fire Alarms at various Stations (Phase 2);

IBI Group (UK) Limited – for the provision of professional services – Central Fire Station Fire Alarm system.

**Item 10: Schedule of Future Meetings**

The schedule of future Meetings, etc, was noted.

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to upcoming events, ie, the Trainee Graduation Ceremony on 10 July and the Official Opening of Phase 1 of the Learning & Development Centre on 10 September 2019.

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THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS  
AND THE MEETING ENDED  
AT 12.00 NOON

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