

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

6 DECEMBER 2021

3.30 PM

PRESENT:
(in the room) Ms C McKinney, Chairperson presiding
Mr P O'Reilly, Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mr J Craig
Mr C Enright
Mr K Henning
Mr R Irvine
Mr T O'Hanlon *(via video link)*
Mr J Quinn *(via video link)*
Mrs H Singleton *(via video link)*
Ms L Smith

APOLOGIES: Ms B Anley

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Gallagher, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer (Service
(in the room) Delivery)
Mr A Jennings, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer (Service
Support)
Mrs P White, Interim Director of Finance *(via video link)*
Mrs D O'Connor, Interim Director of Human Resources
Miss A Maguire, Personal Assistant
Miss A McLaughlin, Personal Assistant *(Observer)*
Mrs R Morgan, DoH Observer *(via video link)*
Mr P Marriner, Deloitte *(via video link)*
Mr C McCrory, LDC Cookstown Project Director
Mrs J Ramsay, Head of Facilities & Assets
Mr P Scannell, Strategic Investment Board Energy Management
Unit
Mr B Smyth, Construction & Procurement Delivery, Department
of Finance *(via video link)*

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

Item 1: Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Item 2: Conflicts of Interest

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: Finance/HR Service Delivery Model

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Paul Marriner, Deloitte, to the meeting and invited him to deliver his presentation in relation to the Finance/HR Service Delivery Model, where it was noted that Members are being asked to consider an option for the future Finance and HR Service Delivery Model and to agree a preferred option.

Mr Marriner outlined the option road and noted the shortlisted options. Members noted the analysis of the 3 remaining options in terms of strategic fit, cost, value and risk.

Mr Marriner outlined the considerations if the BSO option is taken forward, including what NIFRS should expect as a customer and what BSO should expect as a provider.

The Chairperson opened the floor for questions/comments.

Members raised queries and comments with respect to the options and noted that if NIFRS opts for a shared service that it must bring benefit to the organisation. Members also requested for a cost benefit analysis to be provided.

The Interim Director of Finance noted Members' queries and comments. She stated that a detailed cost benefit analysis had been provided to Members within the Business Case in November 2020, and noted that the costs would now be refreshed in light of the additional option.

The Interim Director of Finance referred to the additional option - Option 4 – BSO provides ERP only – and noted that this option gives a compromised position. She stated that this option had not been presented to the Board at its meeting in July 2021 as BSO had not been willing to take this option forward at that time.

Members agreed with the approach in principle subject to the provision of refreshed costs and benefits analysis. **Action – Interim Director of Finance to provide Members with refreshed costs and benefits analysis for the shortlisted options for the Board Meeting on 22 February 2022.**

At this point,
Mr Marriner left the Meeting.

At this point, Mrs Morgan joined the meeting (virtually),
Mr C McCrory, Mrs J Ramsay, Mr P Scannell (in the room) and Mr B Smyth
(virtually)

Item 4: LDC Cookstown Full Business Case

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings introduced Mr C McCrory, Project Director of LDC Cookstown; Mrs J Ramsay, Head of Facilities & Assets; Mr P Scannell, Strategic Investment Board Energy Management Unit; and Mr B Smyth, Construction & Procurement Delivery, Department of Finance.

The Chairperson welcomed the guests and asked each of them to provide a brief overview as to how they are involved in the LDC Cookstown project and their roles. Messrs McCrory, Scannell, Smyth and Mrs Ramsay provided Members with an overview of their role with respect to the LDC Cookstown project.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings provided a high level summary with respect to the Full Business Case, and noted that the project is currently at the third Gateway Review stage.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings informed Members that 6 bidders had been invited to tender. He outlined that the Tender Report approved by the LDC Cookstown Programme Board of the preferred bidder had been the most economic bid and that Member approval is sought for the contract award to proceed with the identified bidder to construct a new NIFRS Learning & Development Centre at Cookstown at a capital cost of £42.6 million.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings highlighted that it is hoped for construction to commence in May 2022, with expected completion in May 2024.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings referred to capital affordability and noted that the overall capital cost of the project at FBC is now £42.6m (£33.1m construction cost) compared to £42.2m (£31.6m construction cost) at OBC2. However, the capital cost is well within the affordability tolerances set out in the approved Outline Business Case (OBC 2). Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings outlined that LDC Cookstown remains the best value option for NIFRS training. Mr Henning, as Board Member representative on the LDC Cookstown Project Board, concurred with respect to LDC Cookstown being the best value and practical option for NIFRS training.

Members noted the full capital position and revenue position.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings noted a risk around the divestment of LDC Boucher and provided Members with an update on progress to date. He highlighted that there are 2 interested parties in the site.

With respect to sustainability, Members noted the project has 6 stated objectives which are used as the core measure of project delivery and for measuring project success. The sixth objective is related to energy sustainability - to provide accommodation which incorporates the highest standards of sustainable building though the achievement of BREEAM Excellent and which complies with all relevant legislation and standards.

At this point,
Mr Quinn joined the Meeting (virtually)

Members acknowledged the work of the Officers in getting the project to this stage.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings answered Members' queries with respect to the information presented.

With respect to Mrs Singleton's query in relation to a residential facility for those Firefighters who are on, for example, a 3 day course and who do not live close to the facility, and whether there will be an increase in accommodation costs, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings noted that there is a small overnight residential pod. Mr McCrory outlined that within the FBC overnight accommodation costs have been included for 25% of trainees. He highlighted that discussions are also ongoing with Loughrey College with respect to a partnership agreement and that a meeting would be held in January 2022 to explore this option further.

With respect to Ms Smith's query in relation to divestment and whether the procurement cost is protected against cost inflation, Mr Smyth noted that a clause had been included in the Tender documents to reflect any extraordinary inflationary increases.

Members raised concerns with respect to the energy efficiency options and sought assurances that the value for money exercise takes into account the Government's position re sustainability and carbon footprint, and sought assurances that the Project Team would review the energy proposals.

At this point,
the Interim Director of HR left the Meeting.

Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings acknowledged Members' viewpoints with respect to energy efficiency and noted that the options would be reviewed by the Energy Management Unit and Design Team with respect to future-proofing sustainability and an options paper would be presented to the next LDC Cookstown Programme Board meeting for consideration.

Mr Scannell assured Members that LDC Cookstown is an excellent building in terms of energy performance, however, he acknowledged the suggestions outlined by Mr Enright.

At this point,
the Interim Director of Finance left the Meeting.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer also acknowledged Members' viewpoints. He highlighted that an Environmental Strategy would be developed once the Director of Corporate Services is appointed. **Action – Environmental Strategy to be developed once the Director of Corporate Services is appointed.**

With respect to early compensation events, it was noted that these would be reported to the LDC Cookstown Programme Board. Members agreed that they would want to be kept informed on this project going forward whether through Committee or the full Board.

With respect to provision of accommodation which facilitates joint training opportunities and community engagement, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer Jennings provided an update with respect to proposed third party income with interested parties.

Following discussion, the Board, on the motion of Mrs Singleton, seconded by Mr Quinn, approved for the contract award to proceed with the identified bidder to construct a new NIFRS Learning & Development Centre at Cookstown at a capital cost of £42.6 million, subject to receipt of assurances that feedback would be reported to the Board in relation to early compensation events, energy sustainability - recommendations for further energy savings and collaborative working with other Services in relation to third party income.

One Member (Mr C Enright) dissented to the proposal.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their contribution to the Meeting and noted it had been a very useful and informative Meeting.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING ENDED
AT 5.45 PM
