

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

11 JANUARY 2024

3.05 PM

PRESENT: Mr J Colville, Chairperson
Mr A Jennings, Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Ms B Anley
Mr J Craig
Mr J Lennon
Mr T O'Hanlon
Mr J Quinn
Mrs H Singleton
Ms L Smith

APOLOGIES: Mr C Enright
Mr R Irvine
Mr P Kennedy

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Harper, Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mr M Deeney, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mrs P White, Director of Finance & Support Services
Miss A Maguire, Personal Assistant (*virtual*)
Ms A McLaughlin, Personal Assistant, Observer (*virtual*)
Mr C McCrory, LDC Cookstown Project Director
Mr P Rogers, Area Commander (Learning & Development)
Mr R O'Reilly, Station Commander (LDC Cookstown Project)
Mr M Wray, Capital Projects Manager
Ms O Millican, Facilities Management Project Manager
Mrs J Hutchinson, Senior Management Accountant
Ms A Flanagan, DoH Observer

Item 1: Apologies

Apologies from Members 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. There were no apparent conflicts of interest declared.

Item 3: Standalone Strategic Items Business Cases

LDC Cookstown Facilities Management Business Case

Members noted the Executive Summary relating to LDC Cookstown Facilities Management Business Case.

Mr McCrory, LDC Cookstown, Project Director, gave an overview of the Business Case including options and costings.

Members noted the current arrangements for Boucher Crescent and LDC Cookstown Phase 1 are managed by the Facilities and Assets Department through the following contracts - Term Service Short Contract 2021-2026; and Individual NIFRS PaLS Facilities Service Contracts. They further noted these contracts cover maintenance services across the entire NIFRS Estate including Cleaning, Waste Management, Grounds Maintenance, Firefighting Equipment and Lifts.

Members noted new bespoke contracts, which are not covered by the TSSC or PaLS contracts, include Flood Water Rescue Facility, Gas Props, BA Compressor and Security Services.

Mr McCrory outlined that Option 2 - make use of existing contracts already in place across NIFRS estate and procure new contracts for bespoke services. This option comfortably meets all the objectives set out in the Business Case, has the lowest total cost, lowest NPC per non-monetary benefit, achieves the highest benefits score and has the lowest risk ranking.

Mr McCrory and Officers answered Members' queries/provided clarification on the information presented including extension of the Term Service Short Contract; landscaping; scope of Site Manager role; and electricity costs.

LDC Cookstown On-Site Catering Provision Business Case

Members noted the Executive Summary relating to LDC Cookstown On-Site Catering Provision Business Case.

Mr McCrory gave an overview of the Business Case including options and costings. Members noted that Option 2b is the preferred option – to appoint a third party caterer. Members noted that the preferred option is based on market testing.

Mr McCrory answered Members' queries/provided clarification on the information presented including confirmation of a contingency if market testing for a catering provider is unsuccessful; average costs over the 10 year period; and confirmation that LDC staff/other agencies using the LDC facilities would be able to avail of the catering provision as well as the students.

The Chairperson noted that the Board, on advice from the Director of Finance & Support Services, is being asked to approve the Business Cases subject to affordability.

The Director of Finance & Support Services gave a high level overview of a scenario planning exercise, commissioned by DoH, which had been undertaken around 2%, 5% and 10% reductions. She gave an overview of what savings could be achieved with 2% reductions made. She noted that given the current pressures, it would be difficult for NIFRS to deliver against any reductions. One of the breakeven measures is that LDC Cookstown will not open.

The Director of Finance & Support Services highlighted a pressure of £4m against the flat budget. She outlined that the costs of the 2 afore-mentioned Business Cases are included in the £4m pressure and, at this stage, LDC Cookstown is not affordable. She highlighted that the attrition for next year would not cover the pressures, however, there are some breakeven measures.

The Director of Finance & Support Services answered Members' queries with respect to affordability and scenario planning.

The Director of Finance & Support Services outlined that an affordability addendum would be prepared and appended to the LDC Cookstown Full Business Case.

The Board, on the motion of Ms Smith, seconded by Mr Quinn, unanimously approved the LDC Cookstown Facilities Management Business Case, subject to affordability.

The Board, on the motion of Ms Anley, seconded by Mr Craig, unanimously approved the LDC Cookstown On-Site Catering Provision Business Case, subject to affordability.

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At this point,
Mr McCrory, Station Commander O'Reilly, Mr Wray and Ms Millican
left the Meeting (3.55 pm)

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Item 4: Reports from Board Committees, Noting of Committee Minutes and Adoption of Committee Recommendations

Remuneration Committee - Meeting - 11 January 2024

Members noted that a Meeting of the Remuneration Committee had been held on 11 January 2024 and the Minutes of the Meeting will be presented at a future Meeting of the Board.

Members noted the Meeting had been scheduled to consider Pay Remits for Support Staff; and Support Directors' Pay. They further noted that the Support Staff and Support Directors' Pay Remits, reflecting the nationally agreed uplifts for the periods 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, are due for submission to DoH.

The Director of Finance & Support Services confirmed that funding has been committed from DoH to cover these pay remits.

The Board on the motion of Mr Craig, seconded by Mr Lennon, unanimously agreed to adopt the following recommendation emanating from the Meeting.

Remuneration Committee – Recommendation

- ***Approval of the Support Staff; and Support Directors' Pay Remits, for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, and onward submission of the documentation to DoH for final approval***

Item 5: Any Other Business

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer informed Members that HMFSI Robert Scott would be visiting NIFRS on 12 January 2024 and he would be meeting with the Board Chairperson and members of the Executive Leadership Team for an update on progress around the Action Plan and the next steps.

Mr Craig referred to the progress of LDC Cookstown and paid tribute to all those involved in the project and for keeping the project on track and within budget. Members concurred.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING TERMINATED
AT 4.03 PM
