

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

28 MAY 2024

1.30 PM

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

APOLOGIES: Mr T O'Hanlon

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Harper, Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mr M Deeney, Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mr B Stanfield, Interim Assistant Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Mrs T Ramsay, Director of People & Culture
Mrs P White, Director of Finance & Support Services
Miss D Reynolds, Head of Planning, Performance & Governance
Mrs E Downey, Business Assurance & Improvement Manager
Ms I Hill, Governance & Business Support Services Advisor
Mrs L'V Montgomery, DoH (*virtual*)
Mr C Semple, Watch Commander, Red Watch, Westland, 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.

Mrs Singleton stated that she is a member of the Local Government Staff Commission and declared an interest with respect to Item 4 – Area Council Alignment.

Item 3: Induction Presentation - DoH

The Chairperson welcome Mrs Montgomery, Director of Public Enquiries & Public Safety., Department of Health to the Meeting.

Mrs Montgomery commented positively on the appointment of 2 new Board Members, Laura Devlin and Cathal Mallaghan and also the appointment of Aidan Jennings to the role of Chief Fire & Rescue Officer.

Mrs Montgomery referred to the HMI Independent Inspection Report and explained that this forms the basis of an overarching Action Plan of oversight for DoH and also provides clear recommendations for DoH to lead on.

With respect to the Partnership Agreement which was recently approved, Mrs Montgomery stated this will be the basis for building mutually respectful and supportive relationships. It is a working document which provides a governance framework and through which the necessary assurances are provided. Referring to the delegated limits, Mrs Montgomery that DoH is supportive of increasing the revenue delegated limits and it is hoped to address these this calendar year.

Prior to commencing her presentation, Mrs Montgomery referred to the Code of Conduct and Accountability for Board Members and noted the importance of all Members having a copy of same.

At this point,
Mr Quinn and Ms Anley joined the Meeting

Mrs Montgomery then updated Members on the Department's role and the role of the Public Safety Unit team. She gave an overview of the accountability timeline which related to formal events between DoH, the Executive Leadership Team and the Board as appropriate. She noted that outside of these events there is regular contact with the Public Safety Unit.

Mrs Montgomery outlined the Departmental requirements for 2024/25 with respect to finance noting that the Department is aware of the financial challenges; Investment Directorate; service delivery; governance; transformational change; and collaboration, ie, shared services particularly with BSO and NIAS. She noted the strategic focus for the Board and outlined Board Members' roles and responsibilities pointing out that the Board is accountable to the Department (Minister). Mrs Montgomery stressed the importance of each Member being clear with respect to their role, the role of DoH, etc.

Referring to information flows, Mrs Montgomery emphasised these need to be continually reviewed and pointed out the need for openness and transparency within NIFRS and the Board as the Board provides strong leadership so that the organisation commits to continuous improvement and sets a clear strategic direction.

Mrs Montgomery noted the Board's role in overseeing and monitoring the effectiveness of the Service and maintaining high standards of corporate governance.

Mrs Montgomery commented that should any Member have any issues of concern, these should be raised through the Chairperson to deal with or be escalated as appropriate. She also referred to the Election Guidance recently issued and noted the importance of sharing this information.

The Chairperson thanked Mrs Montgomery for her presentation.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer referred to the consultations timeframe for CRMP and ERS and sought an update.

Mrs Montgomery noted the resourcing challenges within DoH hence the need to prioritise matters and the subsequent impact on progressing these. She explained the need for further discussion and consideration of timeframes given the election period. She advised caution with respect to launching a consultation during purdah.

Mrs Singleton referred to CRMP and ERS highlighting the time and volume of work invested in progressing these documents/proposals for consultation. She explained that the service delivery model is a priority and the promotion of improvements are core and that it would be welcomed if these could be facilitated. Mrs Singleton also referred to the Gateway Review 4 in respect of LDC Cookstown and the investment at Boucher and explained that an update to the Gateway Review was requested to ensure it facilitates an in-house review/departmental solution. She stressed that time is of the essence and sought assurance that DoH is keeping an eye on same.

Mrs Montgomery noted that DoH had participated in the Gateway Review and would welcome a solution with respect to Boucher. She explained the need to check back but added that there would be no issue if the matter needs to be revisited. Mrs Singleton suggested that given the time lapse it would be a good reason to revisit.

The Chairperson thanked Mrs Montgomery again for her presentation.

Item 4: Minutes of Board Meetings Meeting – 29 February 2024

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 February 2024, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and agreed as an accurate record, on the motion of Mr Lennon, seconded by Mr Kennedy.

Special Meeting – 15 March 2024

The Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 15 March 2024, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and agreed as an accurate record, on the motion of Mr Craig, seconded by Ms Smith.

Item 4: Standalone Strategic Items

NIFRS Strategic Plan 2024/25

Members noted the final draft NIFRS Strategic Plan 2024/25.

The Head of Planning, Performance & Governance explained that the Plan had been reviewed following presentation and discussion on the draft document at the Board Business Planning & Risk Management Workshop on 26 March 2024.

The Head of Planning, Performance & Governance referred to comments raised during Mrs Montgomery's presentation stating these will be reflected in the document.

The Chairperson noted that comments received from Members following the Workshop had also been considered.

The Board, on the motion of Ms Anley, seconded by Mr Craig, unanimously approved the draft NIFRS Strategic Plan 2024/25, subject to amendment.

Risk Management Workshop Update

Members noted that, further to discussions at the Board Business Planning & Risk Management Workshop on 26 March 2024, it had been agreed to retain the existing mathematical based 5 x 5 risk matrix as the basis of the NIFRS risk assessment process rather than adopt the DoH version.

The Head of Planning, Performance & Governance outlined the background to the matter and explained that this decision is bring forward for formal ratification.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Lennon, seconded by Ms Smith, unanimously agreed retain the existing mathematical based 5 x 5 risk matrix as the basis of the NIFRS risk assessment process rather than adopt the DoH version.

Area Council Alignment

The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer gave a presentation pertaining to the Area Council Alignment Restructure. He outlined the background to the project noting the project objectives and the timeline for the proposals for the Area Council alignment. He highlighted that the Area Council alignment would be through internal restructure with no additional funding or additional headcount required.

The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer noted the drivers for change and outlined the assumptions for the alignment proposal drawing attention to the establishment numbers and associated costs which are based on 2023/24 average – the new model will assume an average establishment level of 837. He also pointed out that the alignment proposal is underpinned by the continuation of the 4th Principal Officer.

It was noted that in early 2022, NIFRS conducted a public consultation exercise on the proposed realignment of our District structures to those of the Local Government District Councils. The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer explained that as part of the development work for the new CRMP, all of the consultation responses have been considered with the decision to progress with the realignment of our Area Command boundaries to those of the Local Government District Councils. He further explained that NIFRS will also have a single point of contact nominated for each Council, dedicated Community Risk Managers in each Area Command.

The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer outlined what NIFRS was trying to achieve, ie, alignment with Local Council boundaries and flattening of Area structure, noting the key benefits of same. He explained how this will be achieved with the District structure will being replaced with 12 Response Points; improved ownership and accountability of work streams; revised standby arrangements to take greater credence of Level 2 and Level 3; equalised distribution of FDS Officers on duty; establishment of a Protection Officers rota system and more effective use of Day Duty Station Commanders.

The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer gave an overview of which Councils fall into each Area and provided a synopsis of the Area management structure proposals and the FDS footprint proposals and also the accountability proposals. He referred to other considerations explaining that there are a total of 64 TPAs roles within the current structure and that the proposal supports the work of HR who progressing Station Commander, Watch Commander and Crew Commander processes. The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer updated Members on the current position with respect to the ongoing promotion processes for Station Commanders. He explained if NIFRS proceeds with the proposal, this will assist with the Watch Commander and Crew Commander processes.

The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer noted that the implementation of the restructure will need support and a period of embedding and explained that this will be facilitated through a specific management group with progress reported through ELT and the CRMP Project Board. He referred to the transition and assurance plan noting in particular it will be a phased approach over a 12 month period. He added that to ensure this change is managed effectively a clear communication strategy will underpin each phase.

The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer outlined the Project Team/resources and stated that it is intended these resources will allow a thorough internal stakeholder engagement process to be carried out to identify all relevant tasks and ensure the most effective internal and external transition occurs. Members noted that each task/project identified for action will follow strict project management principles.

Members noted the Project Plan and the Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer provided an overview of the phases, deliverables and timescales and also the risks.

During discussion, Members expressed concern with regard to the impact on progressing the realignment to completion if there is a gap in resources and/or finances. The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer stated that he believes that there are enough resources to progress the realignment emphasising that this will be a key enabler to drive stability and provide clearer lines of communication and accountability.

During further discussions, Members, whilst acknowledging the realignment is an essential building block for CRMP and is based on current headcount, expressed concern with regard to potential costs and current budget pressures. Members also expressed concern with regard to the lack of detail with respect to costs of the realignment. The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer explained that the organisation proposes restructuring to support alignment restructure and also explaining the current position with regard to ridership factors. He stated that the realignment structure was not a cash releasing structure but a redistribution of funds.

The Director of Finance & Support Services provided further clarification with respect to costs explaining how the budget is currently built and noting the assumptions applied. She also noted the work undertaken with respect to costs from a headcount perspective and breakeven position. She noted the 837 average headcount position and also noted the impact of attaining stability within the organisation.

Mrs Singleton stated she was content with the rationale for the realignment and stressed the need to closely monitor costs to ensure breakeven. She pointed out the need for regular updates on progress of the project, its costs, and any issues during embedding. She enquired whether the 4th PO position is a pre-requisite to the success of the project.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer updated Members on the current position with respect to the 4th PO role noting that a submission had been forwarded to DoH and that he was continually raising the matter with DoH and would do so again at the Ground Clearing meeting the next day. He stated that he believed this role was key to the delivery of the Area realignment project.

Mr Quinn welcomed the move to realignment. He referred to the average headcount of 837 commenting that this was not the operating figure for the future and stressed the need to take into account CRMP/ERS on the final structure.

During further discussion, Members welcomed the Area Alignment structure and the Officers answered Members' questions/provided clarification with respect to various aspects of the information presented.

The Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer outlined next steps and gave a brief synopsis of work progressed to date. He stated that it was anticipated that implementation would commence in the summer.

The Chairperson noted that the Area Council Alignment presentation was for the information of the Board to raise awareness as ELT have the delegated authority to progress. He noted that the Board is supportive of the realignment and also noted Members' comments with respect to monitoring costs and the provision of progress reports.

The Meeting adjourned at 3.20 pm for a comfort break

The Meeting reconvened at 3.30 pm

LDC Cookstown – Affordability Report

The LDC Cookstown Affordability Report was noted.

The Director of Finance & Support Services outlined the purpose of the Affordability Report and gave an overview of the information presented. She noted that the report will provide a specific focus on 2024/25 affordability as the immediate financial pressure. She explained that further refinement is required to understand the revenue pressures beyond 2025/26 but it is not anticipated that these pressures will be less than the immediate identified for 2024/25 but they should be better informed by an agreed trainer establishment and live use of the site. The paper supports further discussions with DoH with regard to immediate and recurrent additional allocation to enable the successful delivery of LDC Cookstown.

The Director of Finance & Support Services drew Members' attention to page 7 and provided a synopsis of the challenges with respect to the significant under-establishment in trainer numbers to deliver training to national standards. She explained that following analysis the affordability assumption for a further 6 trainer posts is recognised as a pressure. It was noted that the training deficit had been highlighted as a key issue in the recent HMI Independent report.

The Director of Finance & Support Services also noted the absence of key Support posts which are not within approved structures and explained that in the absence of new funds/increased funding NIFRS is not able to fill these posts and outlined the impact of same. She also referred to a Business Development post and their role, which will need a small team, which is not included in discussions with DoH but added that this will form part of the wider piece in the financial plan.

Referring to the Non-Pay Costs, the Director of Finance & Support Services drew attention to 2 key areas providing an outline of the issues with respect to rent/rates for the Boucher site and catering at the new College.

In considering the affordability of LDC Coosktown, the Director of Finance & Support Services explained that the projected revenue costs for 2024-25 are estimated to be circa £873k greater than current LDC revenue commitments. She noted that the current LDC commitment is for LDC Coosktown Phase 1 only and for the LDC Boucher site. She further explained that there are a number of contributing factors to this increase some of which are not in NIFRS control (eg, extra-ordinary inflation, changes in operational guidance and National best practice) and some assumptions which could have benefitted from additional due diligence or wider horizon scanning.

The Director of Finance & Support Services noted that NIFRS has relied heavily on in-year allocations to break even each year and this remains the position for a flat-cash budget for 2024/25. She stated that NIFRS cannot absorb any of the indicative revenue pressures from within its existing budget and will require support if LDC Cookstown is to operate as planned. She added that NIFRS will need support until third party income can be secured.

The Director of Finance & Support Services explained that as we use the site in the first year, we will develop a better understanding of the costs and using and maintaining the site.

Mr Kennedy acknowledged that it could be 2/3 years before if we have potential revenue generation and questioned if the cost assumptions were conservative.

Mr Lennon advised that the affordability piece was fundamentally important for the organisation and pointed out the need to plan for a reasonable period and a minimum level of funding to operate and reach efficient operation of the site.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer referred to the Gateway Review and its link to the Affordability piece. He referred to recommendations 1 and 2 within the Review which speaks to Mr Lennon's comments and has been shared with DoH. He accepted that there is a clear piece of work to be undertaken to develop the timetable and LDC cost structure and to produce a target operating model which is clear on the options, funding, staffing and overall timescale to achieve optimum full utilisation of LDC Cookstown. He also noted the position with respect to other training needs to be included, eg, leadership; attendance management; other OD courses. The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer explained the need to identify the bare minimum and to establish timetables for Year 1 and Year 2 based on worst case scenario.

During discussion, Ms Anley stated that she believed prioritising the Business Development Team was key to selling the commercial side of LDC and would be a beneficial investment. Ms Smith sought clarification regarding a Plan B should there be no additional funding.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer emphasised that NIFRS was going to LDC Cookstown highlighting that the move from Boucher was underway. He noted that the handover of the academic building was completed with sectional handovers of the remainder of the site progressing over the next number of months. He updated Members on the current position with regard to the water rescue training facility.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer, whilst highlighting the level of 3rd party interest already in the site, explained again the need to know our own running costs for the site in order to facilitate 3rd party income generation. He reiterated the the Business Development team is not within structure and explained the need for seed funding to progress.

The Director of Finance & Support Services outlined a proposal presented to the Permanent Secretary with regard to the issue to help manage the pressures, ie, asking DoH to underwrite the total amount required.

Mrs Singleton commented on the Gateway Review and the need for a target operating model given the uncertainty around starting target for training needs/training days, etc. She pointed out the need for NIFRS to have an understanding of its training needs such as NOG and stated that she would be seeking assurance that the NOG Alignment Action Plan has been factored into the number of training days. She concurred with the need for a Business Development Team and reiterated the need as a Board for a concrete starting point which can be reviewed/escalated.

Mrs Singleton referred to the HMI's comments regarding the lack of operational intelligence in the Board and suggested that advice be sought from an external consultancy or potentially someone such as Ali Hay to look at the operational aspect.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer acknowledged Members' comments and pointed out that the Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer will be tasked with that piece of work. He also acknowledged comments regarding seeking assurance from an independent 3rd party and that he was content to have a 3rd party review. He referred to the Gateway Review Team and noted the scope of the review and that the final report had just been received. He reiterated that the Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer will pull together the pieces of work required. He also outlined the position with regard to the delivery of training courses currently.

Ms Anley referred to HMI Independent Review commissioned by DoH and that their recommendations provided a 3rd party element. Mr Lennon enquired as to whether the HMI Team would be returning within 6 months.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer noted that he had met with the HMI in January to discuss and consider the Action Plan. He explained that DoH were progressing recommendation 11 regarding periodic independent inspections and that training was a key area. He stated that the onus is on NIFRS to develop an operating model urgently.

ACFRO Deeney explained the need to treat the move to LDC Cookstown as Year 0 as sectors of the College are still to be handed over which presents challenges for profiling the use of the site. He stressed that training will continue to be delivered within the current arrangements.

LDC Cookstown – Gateway Review 4

Members noted the Report on the LDC Cookstown Gateway 4 review.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer noted that the Meeting had talked to the paper under the previous item of business.

The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer noted the positive comments of the Assessors conducting the Gateway Review. He explained that the Stage Gate Assessment was Amber and noted the recommendations emanating from the Review explaining that these will actions will be taken forward by the Deputy Chief Fire & Rescue Officer. He noted that the predominant work will be around recommendations 1 and 2 which relates to the operation of LDC and the target operating model.

Finance Report

Members noted the Finance Report updating Members on the financial position for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The Director of Finance & Support Services gave an overview of the salient points with respect to the Revenue budget. She noted the additional budget allocations which DoH had made in-year and summarised the financial performance to date highlighting that it reflects a breakeven position (subject to audit) at the year-end.

The Director of Finance & Support Services gave an overview of the variances within Revenue expenditure.

Referring to the Capital budget, the Director of Finance & Support Services noted that the final allocation of £8.2m was fully utilised in the year. She drew attention to the Command & Control and Red Fleet projects which are creating significant risk for the capital budget explaining that concerns had been raised with DoH. She explained that general capital of £7m has been confirmed for 2024/25 (excluding the above projects). She further explained that once the Business Cases for these projects were approved it was anticipated that funding will be released.

The Director of Finance & Support Services reported positively with respect to Prompt Payment compliance and noted the current position with regard to Business Case approvals.

The Chairperson commended the Team on achieving a break-even position. The Director of Finance & Support Services reiterated that this position was subject to audit.

Health & Safety Update

Members were informed that the Service Delivery Committee, at its February Meeting, received an update on the work of the Contaminants Working Group. At the Committee's request, a video was presented to all Members to provide some awareness and understanding of contaminants and the speed of transmission.

ACFRO Stanfield stated that the video highlighted the importance of raising awareness and understanding of contaminants and the speed of transmission. He stressed that it requires a cultural change which will take time. He also noted work ongoing within Fleet & Engineering and Facilities & Assets to look at future decontamination of BA sets and equipment, including new BA set wash facilities. Members further noted that PPE Guidance for Operational Personnel had been updated with enhanced PPE laundry and maintenance procedures for contaminated PPE, and with enhanced procedures for Flexible Duty System Officers.

ACFRO Stanfield acknowledged that the Fire Brigades' Union was at the forefront of raising awareness and understanding of contaminants.

Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs)

The Strategic Performance Report for the period up to 31 March was noted.

Item 5: Chairperson's Business Committee Membership

Members noted that, with the recent retirement of Mr Cadogan Enright and Mr Robert Irvine from the NIFRS Board, we have 2 vacancies on the Service Delivery Committee, one vacancy on the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, and one vacancy on the Remuneration Committee. Members further noted that a Member of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee cannot be a Member of the Remuneration Committee.

The Chairperson stated that a key need was to fill the 2 vacancies on the Service Delivery Committee.

Following discussion, the Board, on the motion of Mrs Devlin, seconded by Mr Kennedy agreed that vacancies be filled as follows:

- **Mr J Lennon to move from People & Culture Committee to Service Delivery Committee;**
- **Mrs L Devlin be appointed as a Member of the Service Delivery Committee and the Remuneration Committee; and**
- **Mr C Mallaghan be appointed as Member of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee and People & Culture Committee.**

Board Task & Finish Group

The Chairperson noted the position with respect to the work progressed through the Task & Finish Group.

Item 6: Reports from Board Committees, Noting of Committee Minutes and Adoption of Committee Recommendations

Remuneration Committee – Minutes – 11 January 2024

The Minutes of the Remuneration Committee Meeting held on 11 January 2024 were noted. Members further noted that the recommendations contained therein were adopted by the Board at its Special Meeting on 11 January 2024.

Remuneration Committee – Meeting – 23 April 2024

Members noted that a Meeting of the Remuneration Committee Meeting had been held on 23 April 2024 and that the Minutes will be presented to a future Board Meeting.

The Chairperson noted the key business discussed at the Meeting.

The Board, on the notion of Ms Anley, seconded by Mr Lennon, unanimously agreed to adopt the following recommendations emanating from the Meeting.

Referring to the pay remit, Mr Quinn commented on the difficulties previously with timelines for payment of pay increases and stressed the need to press for a timely progression of the pay remit.

Remuneration Committee – Recommendations

- **Approval of the Operational Directors' Pay Remit, for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024, and onward submission of the documentation to DoH for final approval;**
- **Approval of the re-graded roles which have been formally job evaluated in line with current policy;**
- **Approval of job evaluation outcomes of new posts to support progression of recruitment;**
- **Approval to proceed with job matching process that is extant in current policy, namely Organisational Change Policy, and on a temporary basis until formal approval is sought from the Department of Health for the amendment to grade.**

People & Culture Committee – Meeting – 23 May 2024

Members noted that a Meeting of the People & Culture Committee had been held on 23 May 2024 and the Minutes of the Meeting will be presented at a future Meeting of the Board.

Ms Smith, Chairperson of the People & Culture Committee, gave a brief synopsis of the key business discussed at the Meeting and brought forward the recommendations emanating from same.

Ms Smith noted that the Committee recommended approval of the draft People Strategy 2024-29 subject to some minor amendments. She gave an overview of the key objectives and themes within the Strategy.

The Board, on the motion of Ms Anley, seconded by Mr Kennedy, adopted the Committee's recommendation to approve the draft People Strategy 2024-29 subject to minor amendments.

Ms Smith gave a brief synopsis of the Finance restructure proposal which the Committee had also recommended for approval.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Kennedy, seconded by Ms Anley, adopted the Committee's recommendation to approve the Finance restructure proposal.

Action: People Strategy 2024-29 to be circulated to the full Board for information.

Audit, Risk & Governance Committee Meeting – 24 May 2024

Members noted that a Meeting of the Audit, Risk Committee Meeting had been held on 24 May 2024 and the Minutes of the Meeting will be presented to a future Meeting of the Board.

Mr Kennedy, Chairperson of Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, gave an overview of the key business discussed at the Meeting. He referred to the Risk Register and explained that the Committee recommends approval of a revised format for the Risk Register with an agreed presentational style to be used for 2024-25 updates subject to minor amendments.

The Board, on the motion of Ms Smith, seconded by Mr Lennon, unanimously agreed to adopt the Committee's recommend to approve the revised format for the Risk Register with an agreed presentational style to be used for 2024-25 updates subject to minor amendments.

Mr Kennedy noted that the Risk Register had been discussed at the Board Risk Management Workshop along with the Risk Appetite Statement. He explained that the Committee was now recommending approval of the final Risk Appetite Statement.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Craig, seconded by Mr Lennon, agreed to adopt the Committee's recommendation to approve the Risk Appetite Statement.

Referring to the 2023/24 Audit Plan Progress Report, Mr Kennedy informed the Board that the Committee recommended acceptance of the following Internal Audit Reports:

- Audit of Payroll
- Audit of Board Effectiveness;
- Audit of Multi Agency Response;
- Audit of Health & Wellbeing; and
- IT Line of Business Report.

The Board, on the motion of Mrs Singleton, seconded by Ms Smith, unanimously agreed to adopt the Committee's recommendation to accept the above Audit Reports.

Mr Kennedy highlighted that the positive outcome of the BSO's Internal Audit External Quality Assessment 2023/24. He also referred to the Head of Internal Audit's Year-End Assurance Report noting that Limited assurance had been provided but highlighted her comments which recognised the progress attained.

Item 7: Relevant Correspondence

The following was noted:

Correspondence from the Permanent Secretary with regard to election in the lead up to the forthcoming UK General Election scheduled to take place on 4 July 2024.

ACTION: Guidance to be circulated to all Members.

Item 8: Documents for Sealing

The following was noted:

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

The Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government – Lease relating to Bangor Fire Station.

Item 9: June 2024 Key Dates

A provisional schedule of key dates for June 2024 was noted.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING TERMINATED
AT 5.05 PM
