

**MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS  
COUNCIL BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 10:30AM  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING SOFTWARE**

- 3849/23**      **Present:** Mr M McDonald (Chair), Ms N Tandon (Board Member), Ms M Braniff (Board Member), Ms C Harris (Board Member), Mr M McDonnell (Board Member), Mr R Campbell (Board Member), Mr J McCallister (Board Member),
- 3850/23**      **In Attendance:** Dr J Irwin (CEO), Mr P Jordan (Funding and Development Director), Mr P Day (Engagement Director), Ms J Adamson (Human Resources Manager), Ms H George (PA to CEO and Board).
- 3851/23**      **Observers:** Ms L Harley (Boardroom Apprentice)
- 3852/23**      **Apologies:** Ms A Simpson and Ms S McClelland
- 3853/23**      **Funded Group Resource**
- Mr P Day presented the Board with a video, produced by Mr M McGlade, showcasing the work of a group that received CRC funding. He confirmed that this was one example of many available to view on the CRC website.
- 3854/23**      **Standard Checks**
- (a)      *Members should declare any conflict of interests in any discussions where decisions were required.*
- (b)      *Members need to register any offers of gifts or hospitality since the last Council meeting*
- Board members had nothing to declare,
- 3855/23**      **Minutes**
- Members reviewed the minutes of the 233<sup>rd</sup> meeting of CRC's Board, which took place on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022. The Board approved these minutes.
- 3856/23**      **Matters Arising**
- Board members reviewed the update on the actions/matters which arose at the previous Board meeting.
- Two actions relating to Good Relations Week have now been completed. The tender exercise included requirements for the successful organisation to provide progress reports and an action plan to the Board. The successful organisation incorporated this into their bid and will begin work once the Board have reviewed and approved the purchase order at today's meeting.
- The Board thanked the Chair for this update and noted the report.

**3857/23 Freedom of Information Request**

The Board was provided with correspondence from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and related legal advice sought by CRC regarding the Freedom of Information Request which is being reviewed by the ICO.

The Board reviewed the advice and agreed that the information in the report was generally factual and publicly available, the report was commissioned a number of years ago and details in many sections would now be outdated. The Board, as the qualified member, agreed to seek an informal resolution with the applicant and to release the full un-redacted report reminding the applicant that the report has never been approved, remains a draft and no further work will be completed on it.

**3858/23 Partnership Agreement**

The CEO presented the Board with correspondence from TEO in relation to its CRC's Partnership Agreement with TEO and changes to the values section. The Board was provided with a paper setting out the changes. The CEO explained that the changes emanate from the fact that the Nolan Principles have been updated and replaced within the document.

The Board reviewed the updated Agreement and approved the document.

**3859/23 Correspondence from TEO re: Honours Nominations**

The CEO presented the Board with correspondence from TEO regarding the opportunity for CRC to nominate for a New Year's Honours.

The Board will review the documents and come back to the Chair if they have any proposed nominees.

**ACTION:** Board members to provide the Chair with names of New Year's Honours nominees.

**3860/23 Operational Plan**

The CEO presented the Board with CRC's first draft of the Operational Plan 2023-24.

The CEO highlighted some new areas of activity discussed previously by the Board including: work to link the finance systems and the grant management system; work under the Rural Needs Act; work related to measuring social value; supporting TEO to bring together a funders forum; continued work on sustainable development; and work with TEO on research.

The CEO advised that this draft has been forwarded to TEO for comment in line with the timetable in the Partnership Agreement. TEO responded to say that it had no proposed changes at this stage.

Mr M McDonnell suggested that there may be more benefit in reviewing the outcomes impact rather the inputs and outputs only. The CEO explained that within CRC's grants the outcomes impact is being measured, and she hoped the work on measuring social value will also assist the focus on outcomes.

The CEO noted that the section on the budget for 2023-24 will be completed when information is received from TEO. The Board approved the draft Operational Plan.

### **3861/23 Purchase Orders**

#### **i) Good Relations Week 2023 Support**

Mr P Day presented the Board with a purchase order for support services for Good Relations Week 2023. He informed the Board that ASG were the successful bidders during an open tender for this service. The total cost will be £27,389 and therefore requires Board approval.

The Board approved this purchase order.

#### **ii) Accommodation**

The CEO presented the Board with a purchase order for the rental accommodation cost of CRC's office in Equality House. These purchase orders are produced quarterly as the energy costs fluctuate during the year. The total for this purchase order is £24,256 and therefore requires Board approval.

The Board approved this purchase order.

#### **iii) Accountancy Assistance**

The CEO presented the Board with a purchase order for accountancy support from Cavanagh Kelly to produce CRC's Annual Report and Accounts and assist the Finance Manager to deal with queries during the audit. This was procured through an open tender process. The total for this purchase order is £11,760 and therefore requires Board approval.

The Board approved this Purchase Order.

#### **iv) 2021/22 External Audit Fee**

The CEO presented the Board with a purchase order for the Northern Ireland Audit Office's review of CRC's 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts. This purchase did not require a price check or open tender as it is a requirement for this review to be undertaken by NIAO. The total for this purchase order is £23,000 and therefore requires Board approval.

The Board approved this purchase order.

**3862/23 Correspondence**

The CEO presented the Committee with CRC's budget approval letter from TEO for the financial year 2022/23.

The Board noted this correspondence.

**3863/23 Chair's Update**

The Chair informed the Board of a number of meetings and events he attended following the previous Board meeting.

The Chair attended a meeting with the CEO and HR Manager on the 10<sup>th</sup> January to approve the recruitment of the new DFAP Director.

The Chair sat on the Good Relations Award decision panel on 30<sup>th</sup> January, along with a number of other Board members.

The Chair attended a meeting with the CEO and the PA to the CEO on 3<sup>rd</sup> February to discuss the next steps regarding CRC's Bonfire Report Freedom of Information Request.

The Chair attended CRC's staff meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February.

The Chair attended a prep session for the Core Fund Decision Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> February, as well as the decision meeting itself on 21<sup>st</sup> February. The Chair thanked the staff and Board for their work on the Core Fund decisions.

The Chair informed the Board that the member of staff currently on career break has sought to extend that break by another year. As this was time sensitive the Chair approved the extension on behalf of the Board. This was straightforward as Ms D O'Loan has agreed to say on as the Core Funding Officer over this period.

The Board thanked the Chair for this update.

**3864/23 CEO's Report**

The CEO provided the Board with her report and highlighted a number of matters.

i) Operational Plan

As CRC's operational plan has been approved by the Board with no amendments from members or from TEO the draft approved by the Board today is the final version before the budget information is added when available.

ii) Staffing

The CEO informed the Board that CRC's new DFAP Director will be starting work on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 on a part time/phased basis until she becomes full time in July 2023.

The CEO informed the Board that CRC's Finance Manager resigned on 7<sup>th</sup> February giving one weeks' notice. CRC have already found a temporary agency worker who is a qualified accountant with ALB and public sector financial procedures experience who will begin full time work on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

The CEO thanked the DFAP Team and Ms H George for their work over this period.

### iii) Funding

The Core Fund Decision meeting took place on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023. The CEO thanked the Board and staff for their work on these assessments. As usual there were more fundable applications than resources available. CRC will continue to raise this with TEO.

### iv) Engagement

The CEO informed the Board that the next TBUC Engagement Forum would be taking place on 7<sup>th</sup> March in person. All Board members are welcome to attend.

Good Relations Week will be taking place on 18<sup>th</sup> September to the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The work of the Decade of Centenaries Roundtable has come to an end. The resources created as part of that project are all available on the website. All members of the Roundtable will be contacted and thanked for their contribution.

### v) Internal Audit

CRC's internal auditors are currently reviewing 'Finance and Complaints Handling', and 'IT and Service Continuity Plan'. In March an audit of 'Grants Administration' will take place.

### vi) Agile Working

The CEO informed the Board that the Covid-19 measures in place in Equality House have now all been lifted. CRC continues with its agile model of working with staff regularly attending the office for team meetings and other pieces of work.

The Board thanked the CEO for this update and noted the report.

Mr P Day presented the Board with a paper setting out each Good Relations Award category, the winners, and the runners up.

The awards will be presented at the Engagement Forum on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Mr P Day thanked Board members for sitting on the decision panel in February.

CRC and TEO worked with partners across the sector to encourage applications from everyday life, including: sports; health; housing; and education.

Next year CRC will engage more with the business sector and local authorities on the awards.

The Board reviewed and approved the awards.

### **3866/23 Engagement Sector Update**

Mr P Day updated the Board on the work of the Engagement Team.

The Engagement Forum is taking place on 7<sup>th</sup> March. The theme of this event is TBUC plus ten, looking back on ten years of the policy and the work it has done. There will be presentations on the 2021 census statistic, stories of change and transformation and a panel discussion. 150 individuals have registered to attend, with a waiting list of 32.

The tender exercise for Good Relation Week 2023 is complete and ASG have been successful in their bid. A Steering Committee meeting will take place in March where a theme will be discussed.

The CEO suggested that later in the year the cross-community work of the Omagh sports centre which was recently the venue of a tragedy could be profiled, and the positive work of the organisation could be showcased.

### **3867/23 Funding and Development Sector Update**

Mr P Jordan updated the Board on the work of the Funding and Development Team.

The Community Relations Cultural Diversity Grant has now closed to applicants. 104 bids were made to the scheme. The scheme will open again in the new financial year and CRC will receive applications from groups hoping to hold events during Good Relations Week.

The Core Fund programme applications were reviewed and decisions were made on 21<sup>st</sup> February. Mr P Jordan thanked the Board and his team for their work on these reviews. Any feedback from the meeting will be reviewed at a future Funding Sub-Group and taken to the Board for decision later in the year. 33 assessable applications were received. 13 applications are fundable, with another 2 in reserve. A number of applications passed the fundable threshold, however, due to lack of resources they could not all be awarded a grant. An event for Core groups will be held and Board members will be invited to attend.

CRC Project Officers continue to liaise with the District Council Good Relations Officers and are working on a template for sharing information on issues in local areas.

The North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme groups continue to work together. Next year's business case will be for 2 years, but work will still be reviewed annually.

The Media Grant has closed to applicants. Three bids were successful. The work will be completed in April 2023 and launched later in the year.

The Board thanked Mr P Jordan for this update and noted the report.

**3868/23 Dignity at Work**

Ms J Adamson provided the Board with a paper updating on the implementation of the Dignity at Work Policy.

The Chair attended CRC's February Staff Meeting.

An updated action plan will be drafted when the new DFAP Director is in place and team building sessions will be planned.

The Board thanked Ms J Adamson for this update and noted the report.

**3869/23 Staffing Update**

Ms J Adamson presented the Board with a report updating on CRC's current staffing situation.

The Board noted the report.

**3870/23 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Mr J McCallister updated the Board on the last meeting of the Committee.

i) 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023 Meeting Update

The Audit Committee were informed that CRC's Finance Manager has resigned. CRC have already recruited a temp, who will begin at CRC in March.

CRC are currently undergoing two internal audits 'IT and Business Continuity' and 'Finance and Complaints'. A review of 'Grants Administration' will take place in March.

The CEO presented a paper to the Committee providing assurances of CRC's financial processes for the current year.

The recommendations made during the 2021/22 external audit have now been added to CRC's register of recommendations. CRC is investigating the upgrade of the SAGE financial system.

ii) Risk Register

Mr J McCallister presented the Board with CRC's Risk Register.

'Implementation of DoF Guidance' remains rated red as there has been no further developments.

'Staff Morale', 'Freedom of Information Request', 'External Audit Fee', 'NILGOSC Pension tribunal' all remain amber.

'DFAP Staffing' remains rated red and will be reviewed once new staff have begun work at CRC.

iii) 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 ARAC Minutes

Mr J McCallister presented the Board with the minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> December Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Board thanked Mr J McCallister for this update and noted the minutes.

**3871/23 Any Other Business**

Ms H George reminded the Board that their Evaluations and Appraisals are due in, and asked for them to be returned before the end of the month.

**ACTION:** Board members to complete and return their Board Evaluations and Appraisals.

**3872/23 Date of Next Meeting**

7<sup>th</sup> April 10:30am - in person  
19<sup>th</sup> May 10:30am - in person  
21<sup>st</sup> July 10:30am - in person