

Confirmed**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY FOURTH MEETING
OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL (CRC) HELD ON TUESDAY
12TH DECEMBER AT 1PM IN THE BOARDROOM, EQUALITY HOUSE, 7-9
SHAFTSBURY SQUARE, BELFAST, BT2 7DP**

- 2918/17 Present:**
Mr Peter Osborne (Chair), Ms Libby Keys (Board Member), Ms Delia Close (Board Member), Ms Sheila McClelland (Board Member), Mr Rory Campbell (Board Member), Ms Kasia Garbal (Board Member), Dr Rev Norman Hamilton (Board Member), Mr Don MacKay (Board Member)
- 2919/17 Internal:** Ms Jacqueline Irwin (CEO), Mr Gerard McKeown (DFAP), Mr Paul Jordan (F&D), Ms Deirdre MacBride (Director Cultural Diversity), and Ms Gemma Attwood (Policy Development Officer)
- 2920/17 Observer:** Mr Jamie Warnock (The Executive Office TEO)).
- 2921/17 Standards Check**
- 2(a) *Standard checks:
Members should declare any conflict of interests in any discussions where decisions were required.*
- 2(b) *Members need to register any offers of gifts or hospitality since the last Council meeting.*
- 2922/17 Apologies:**
Mr Noel McKenna
- 2923/17 Minutes:**
Page 5 paragraph 2905/17 Correct the spelling of Delia Close and Brendan McAllister.
- Page 6 paragraph 2906/17 a) add Noel McKenna, Kasia Garbal, Rev Norman Hamilton & Sheila McClelland to 'Membership of Funding Sub-Group'.
- Page 6 paragraph 2906/17 b) remove Rory Campbell & Delia Close from 'Membership of Funding Sub-Group'.
- Page 6 paragraph 2906/12 – Update date of assessment to 21st February 2018.

On condition of amendments made, the board minutes were approved.

2923/17 Matters arising
No matters arising

2924/17 Correspondence

a) Letter from Department on transfer of the Remaining operational responsibilities for the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme from TEO to CRC from 8th Jan 2018.

Ms Irwin notified the board that she had received a letter from the TEO regarding the transfer of the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme to CRC from 8th January 2018. It is in line with the agreed direction of CRC as a key delivery agent of the Together; Building a United Community Strategy. CRC has already taken a decision in principle to go ahead with this transfer.

In addition it was noted that the North Belfast Programme is a separate ministerial scheme and the responsibilities of the CRC, from a strategic perspective, will remain unaltered in relation to this programme.

Concerns were raised regarding how CRC could defend decisions made in connection with the Programme if they were not involved in the decision making process.

However, TEO confirmed that as long as CRC is not making such decisions, they will not be asked to defend them.

Action: To circulate correspondence from Dept re: transfer of North Belfast Programme to CRC.

Action: Paper/update on North Belfast Programme transfer for next meeting

In response to a query regarding the overall needs of North Belfast, Mr Paul Jordan spoke briefly the action B4 of the Executive Action Plan on Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime. This involves the mapping of the area, identifying gaps and how programmes can fill these gaps. Co-Operation Ireland has been awarded the TEO contract for this work.

b) Correspondence from Colin Murray–Cavanagh

The Chair presented correspondence he had received from Colin Murray -Cavanagh which asked if CRC would consider a request to draw up a Road Map and set of criteria that demonstrates an ethos and practice of inclusiveness” in respect of Integrated Education.

A discussion followed and it was highlighted that Mr Murray-Cavanagh had been in touch in September 2016 with a similar query and members were reminded of the response at that time.

Members agreed in principle, that if a formal request is made to CRC, it would be given consideration.

2925/17 Chair's business

The Chair provided Members with an update on some of the events he had attended:

- Gave a presentation to the Commission of Flags, Identity, Culture, & Tradition.

Action: Chair to send round copy of this presentation

- 9th November – meeting at TEO re: Cantrell Close/Crescent
- 20th November- meeting with Charity Commission
- Went to Sinn Fein hosted meeting with other arms-length bodies, clergy & civic society.

The Chair informed members that JComms has asked him to draft a New Year's statement.

A discussion followed as to whether the statement should focus on highlighting the effects of political instability in NI, or as an opportunity to draw attention to the good work that CRC and sponsored organisations do. Sheila McClelland stated that the work of CRC is needed now more than ever. Mr P Jordan suggested that the statement should purvey hope, and 20 years on from the Agreement, we have seen many positive effects on life in NI become normalised. Rory Campbell suggested that the statement should recognise the work of CRC funded groups which have played a major role in moving things forward.

Don MacKay asked whether CRC should make reference to the impact of legacy issues on good relations.

Action: Chair seek meeting with US Consul to discuss NI's current position.

2926/17 Policy Consultation: The Department of Communities (DfC) Housing Allocation

Ms Gemma Attwood presented members with a paper in response to a DfC Consultation on the Social Housing Allocation. The substance of the consultation is focused on stakeholders' views of the current housing points allocation system and suggests a removal of intimidation points altogether. However there was no indication of what the system to replace it will look like.

- Members agreed that an emphasis should be given to victims of intimidation and domestic abuse in CRCs consultation response
- They expressed concern about the removal of points for intimidation without the Department showing what structures and processes would replace it.

Action: Gemma Attwood to draft a consultation response highlighting the Members views and send round for application of written procedure.

2927/17 Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES)

Ms J Irwin updated members on the progress of CRC VES applications.

The Business Case has now been approved by Department of Finance (DoF) and the 2 members of staff who put in applications have been notified that their request has been accepted.

Ms Deirdre MacBride will be leaving at the end of the financial year – 31st March 2018.

Ms Dympna McGlade will be leaving at the end of January, subject to finalising her annual leave arrangements.

Sheila McClelland inquired as to whether CRC ring fenced VES to Director grade only.

Ms J Irwin confirmed that TEO had instructed CRC on ring fencing VES to this grade in line with the staffing review. Members discussed whether a review of the other staffing levels would have to be completed before any consideration could be given to including other grades in future VES.

The CEO also noted the need to raise staff morale, perhaps through a trust building event.

Action: Future VES requirements to be discussed with TEO.

2927/17 Establishment of post of Community Engagement Programme Director

Mr G McKeown and Ms J Irwin presented a business case on the establishment of a new post: Community Engagement Programme Director.

The new position will take on the forward facing elements of Policy, Communications and Cultural Diversity at DP level. The position includes responsibility for continuing the work on the TBUC forum.

The recruitment process will take place in the current financial year, and hopefully the post will be filled by April 2018.

This new post will cost £47,000 per annum and increase each year in line with pay scales.

Members sought reassurance that, by combining these roles, work and responsibilities would not be too onerous or passed on to other staff members. However, it was explained that due to a reduction in staffing levels in CRC, parts of these roles have fallen away with time.

- Members approved this business case.
- Members recorded their appreciation of Dympna McGlade and Deirdre MacBride for their work and many years of service with the CRC, and members wished them well for the future.

Action: Mr G McKeown to forward business case to TEO for approval.

Action: Chair to attend the next staff meeting.

2928/17 The Executive Office Board Review

Following a discussion at the previous board meeting, Ms J Irwin presented a paper on the proposed options available for the appointment of Community Relations Council Board Members in the absence of ministers. She noted that as requested the paper had been previously discussed with TEO

A discussion followed and concern was expressed regarding option 6 which proposed TEO officials take board positions if the number reduces below quorum. Members expressed concern at the probability of TEO officials sitting on the CRC Board and believed that this could pose a conflict of interest. Also, if there is no continuity in the attendance of officials, this pattern could undermine the accountability for decisions made.

Action: CEO to request clarification from TEO on their interpretation of term 'in extremis'.

Action: CEO to seek legal advice/review of the options presented and their alignment with the current articles.

Action: CEO further meeting with TEO to discuss

Action: Present this paper at the ARAC for opinions on Risks.

Action: Revisit in January 2018

2928/17 Finance and General Purposes

a) Financial Projections to 31st March 2018

Mr McKeown presented CRCs projected expenses which he stated were on target.

Chair thanked Mr Gerard McKeown for the finance team's work.

b) Pay Remit

Mr G McKeown made members aware that the Pay Remit is still with the Department of Finance.

c) Health and Safety

No health and safety incidents reported.
Mr G McKeown informed the board that there was an incident on the 1st floor which triggered evacuation of Equality House.

d) Sickness Absence Report

Members noted the sickness absence report for the period of April 2017 – November 2017.

2929/17 Audit and Risk Assurances Committee report

The Chair of the ARAC provided a verbal update on the previous meeting of the committee. The minutes of the 31st October meeting were circulated.

2930/17 CR Award

Ms J Irwin presented the timeline for the CR Awards, nominations to run throughout January 2018, with the presentation being linked to the David Steven's Memorial Lecture in March.

Members were content with this timeline

The Chair and Members commended the outstanding speaker at 2017 David Steven's Memorial Lecture.

It was suggested and agreed that Rev Norman Hamilton, Ms Delia Close and Libby Keys sit on the decision panel for the CR Awards.

Action: CRC to run nomination process throughout January and link announcement to Memorial Lecture in March 2018.

Action: Board Members to consider and suggest ideas for a speaker at this event.

Action: Memorial lecture date to be confirmed at the next meeting.

2931/17 CEO Report

The CEO presented her report to the Board, highlighting some of the meetings and events she had attended and giving updates on other areas of business. This included:

- An upcoming meeting with Mark Browne TEO on the 13th Dec regarding budgets which she will brief members on in the future.
- Ms Irwin attended a meeting, along with the Chair, at TEO regarding Cantrell Close
- She provided an update on the Bonfires Scoping Study – it is being held up by a late response from one Council.
- Ms J Irwin expressed her thanks to Deirdre, Ellana & Lesley for their work on the 'Decade of Anniversaries' event.

- She welcomed Hannah George to the position of PA to CEO, Chair and the Board at CRC, and Lesley Johnston, who will be working as Project Officer for 2 years, covering another members of staff's career break.

2932/17 Sector Reports

The following papers were noted for the member's information:

a) Communications

Report noted

b) Funding and Development

Report noted

c) Cultural Diversity

Ms D MacBride shared with members a request from Karen Logan of the Ulster Museum, asking whether CRC would be receptive to a request to borrow the 'Weave of Diversity' for their Troubles Gallery. Members agreed in principle, and once a formal request has been made in writing, they would be open to lending the Weave of Diversity to the Ulster Museum for a period of time.

Ms D MacBride updated members on the progress of the BBCs work on 'Referendum Shorts' in conjunction with the CRC and NIScreen. BBC are due to sign off on the short films in January, and CRC will have some say in the final decisions.

d) Policy

Report noted

2933/17 AOB E-card 'Season's Greetings'

Members raised a query regarding the wording of the 'Season's Greetings' ecard sent to members and the mailing lists.

It was explained that the wording was taken directly from the previous year's card. CRC will review the wording of its cards for the following year.

Action: Wording of other organisations Christmas card for next year to be reviewed.

2924/17 Proposed dates of next meetings

Thursday 25th January 2018 11am – Seamus Heaney Home Place

Thursday 8th March 2018 at 1pm

Action: CEO invite Community Relations Officer from Mid-Ulster Council to Jan 2018 meeting