

**MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 19th
SEPTEMBER 2019 12:30PM EQUALITY HOUSE, SHAFTESBURY SQUARE,
BELFAST**
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2176/19 **Present:** Chair Mr Martin McDonald, Ms Nisha Tandon, Ms Claire Harris, Ms Audrey Simpson, Mr John McCallister, Mr Michael McDonnell, Mr Rory Campbell.

2177/19 **Apologies:** Ms Máire Braniff, Ms Sheila McClelland

2178/19 **In attendance:** Ms J Irwin (CEO), Mr P Jordan (Director of Funding and Development), Mr G McKeown (Director of Finance, Admin, and Personnel), Mr P Day (Director of Community Engagement), Ms H George (PA to CEO & Board).

2179/19 **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*

No declarations were made.

2180/19 **Minutes** CRC/207/09/19/01i

The draft minutes of Monday 10th June Board Meeting were agreed as being a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

It was agreed that future Board meeting minutes would be circulated no more than 10 days after the meeting.

2181/19 **Matters Arising**

- i) Induction training
The CEO updated Board Members on the induction training process, stating that the Board have received On Board training, and are awaiting Equality training from ECNI. Finding a date appropriate for all Board members and the external trainers has been difficult. Ms H George will circulate further dates in October, and if no date suits all members, then the training will take place on a date that suits the majority.
The CEO had hoped that all the induction training would be completed before this meeting.

2182/19

Chair's Business

CRC/207/09/19/01ii

The Chair presented Board members with a paper setting out the events and meetings he had attended since becoming Chair.

He made particular reference to the TBUC Engagement Forum. He congratulated staff involved in organising the event.

The Chair asked Board Members to indicate to Ms H George any events and meetings they attend as a representative of CRC for future Board meetings.

ACTION: Ms H George to request information from Board members in advance of each Board meeting.

2183/19

Annual Report and Accounts

CRC/207/09/19/02

Mr G McKeown presented Board Members with a copy of CRC's 2018/2019 Annual Report and Accounts, drawing member's attention to the following:

- The Governance Statement was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on Thursday morning and is set out on page 23-42
- Pg 8-9 sets out the strategic context, the Strategic Plan, and the Business Plan.
- Pg 9-10 is the summary of the risks around policy and the risk environment
- Pg10 Sets out CRC's performance during the year. Amongst other things it shows that CRC granted £2.5m to organisations, held three TBUC Engagement forums, and published the fifth Peace Monitoring Report. It also stated that CRC launched its online grants management system.
- Pg 12 gives more detail on CRC's performance
- Pg 13 shows CRC's 21 Business Plan targets, and that all were achieved.
- Pg 18 has a more detailed performance analysis of these targets.
- Pg 43 displays the Remuneration Report, the Assembly Accountability Report, where auditors generally sign off accounts.
- Pg 56 sets out CRC's detailed financial statements
- Pg 57 shows the balance sheet, the reserves report, and the restricted pension reserves. Mr G McKeown explained that The Executive Office and DoF, as of April 2019, presented CRC with a written guarantee that they would underwrite this liability. The Audit and Risk Committee had requested that a note be added to the Report explaining this.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee formally recommended the Board accept the Annual Report and Accounts with the added note on the liability guarantee.

The Board discussed CRC's negative reserves and whether this would affect the charity registration process. They expressed concern about CRC being able to cover their financial obligations.

It was agreed that CRC would commission a piece of work, seek legal guidance to determine whether the negative reserves impact on Board

members duties as trustees of the charity and ALB, and work with sponsor body to get a guarantee in writing.

ACTION: The Chair stated that he would be in touch with TEO to discuss this.

The Board agreed the 2018/19 Annual Report and Accounts.

2184/19 Risk Strategy and Risk Register CRC/207/09/19/03

The CEO presented the Board with the updated Risk Strategy and Register which had been presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee earlier. She informed members that the Audit and Risk Committee recommended the new Board hold a Risk workshop looking at the organisations risks and how they are mitigated.

She explained that the Risk Strategy and full Risk Register are reviewed annually normally at the AGM, and talked Board Members through the Risks. In relation to the Red and Amber Risks she noted:

Political – Red - categorised as a red risk due to the uncertainty in Northern Ireland. She added that TEO view this Risk as ‘Amber’.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee agreed to keep this risk as red pending the risk workshop with Board members taking place.

- Resources – Amber - This risk remains amber due to the delay in the pay remit and the issues related to the 6% pension uplift. The Board approved this Risk remaining amber.
- New policies – Amber - This risk was categorised as amber in the past due to the delayed Board appointment process. The CEO recommended that, now that there is a new Board in place, this Risk be reduced to ‘Green’ and any remaining issues on staffing be moved to the ‘Resources’ risk. The Board approved the changed from amber to green.

Ms F Dennison & Mr D McNally joined the meeting

2185/19 Core Funding Paper CRC/207/09/19/14i

Mr P Jordan presented the gap analysis and strategic planning for 2019/2020 Core Fund Scheme.

He explained that the Gap Analysis looks at the areas CRC’s funding impacts geographically and thematically. He explained that as the Core grant delivers funding to cover posts, it enables groups to develop and deliver programmes by funding key posts within an organisation.

Part of the analysis looks at how CRC encourages groups to address need, and how it fits and matches with grant support from TEO as well as other CRC grant programmes and other Good Relations funders.

Last year's core grants applications packs came with a 'Welcome Statement', expressing CRC's interest in receiving applications from certain council areas and on certain themes. Applicants were encouraged to consider submitting applications based on children and young people, and in the area of Lisburn and Castlereagh. This resulted in a number of applications focused on this area.

Mr D McNally and Ms F Dennison delivered a presentation to Board Members detailing the findings from the gap analysis, making particular reference to the following:

- Mr D McNally started by explaining that this gap analysis is a work in progress, as the current funding year is only in its sixth month, and the first project reports have not been received yet.
- He stated that £1,262,884 was awarded to Core grants for the year 2019/20. This went to 30 groups and funded 61 posts working on 99 projects in 333 locations across NI. The work impacted 34,200 people.
- Mr D McNally explained that there was a decrease in project numbers from the previous year due to two fewer organisations being funded. However, he added that the number of projects reducing is not necessarily a bad thing as this could be a result of organisations being more strategic in their workplans.
- Mr D McNally presented Board members with a map showing where Core Funded work is taking place.
- The Board asked for more information around the number of applications. Ms F Dennison informed the Board that for the 19/20 funding year CRC received 46 Core funding applications. Of these 12 were immediately rejected due to incomplete applications, the other applications were assessed and 18 received funding. The total funding requested was £2m. Mr D McNally added that last year seven organisations came out of the programme and five came in. This reflects the year on year cuts to the budget.
- Mr P Jordan stated that there are other opportunities for organisations that are carrying out important work but which submit incomplete applications to apply for funding through the pathfinder scheme.
- Mr D McNally stated that CRC is engaging with TEO, sharing information, and doing joint mapping exercise to identify gaps and overlapping areas. He added that he would normally speak to other funding bodies too, and stated that even more engagement with TEO and other funders is needed.
- The impact of this funding is assessed through surveys and scorecards and this information is shared with other funders on a regular basis.

John McCallister left the meeting

Mr P Jordan talked the Board through the prospective welcome statements for the 20/21 Core Funding Scheme based on the TBUC themes:

- Our Children and Young People– Welcome applications focusing on young people in South Belfast, Causeway Coast and Glens, Fermanagh

and Omagh, Mid and East Antrim, Mid-Ulster, and Newry, Mourne & Down.

- Our Shared Community - Welcome work focused on development of shared spaces in rural communities.
- Our Safe Community – Welcomes applications addressing community safety work that is directly related to achieving good relations outcomes.
- Our Cultural Expression – Welcomes applications focused on dealing with legacy of the past, and welcomes applications in Ards and North Down, Belfast, Lisburn and Castelreagh, Mid & East Antrim, and Mid-Ulster.

The Chair thanked the funding team for their presentation.

A discussion followed on the relationship between CRC funding and the Minority Ethnic Development Fund. Ms J Irwin explained that CRC does not have responsibility for funding minority ethnic development as this would fall under the Minority Ethnic Development Fund's remit, administered by TEO. The CRC Community Relations/Cultural Diversity fund would often fund project work in the ethnic minority area as the composition of the community has changed.

The Board discussed how capacity building would be useful in the ethnic minority area. The Chair noted that he would be discussing this with TEO. Members then asked what CRC are doing on disability. Mr G McKeown explained that CRC's Disability Action Plan which was coming up later on the agenda, sets out how CRC aims to engage people with disabilities through funding, engagement and recruitment.

The Board asked for the following issues to be added to the Strategic Plan discussions:

- MEDF and what CRC would do relative to this fund
- Disability.

Mr R Campbell joined the meeting.

Ms F Dennison and Mr D McNally left the meeting.

2186/19 CEO's Report

CRC/207/09/19/04

Ms J Irwin took Board Members through her CEO's report which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. She detailed the structure of the report:

- Strategic Planning
- Policy area under which CRC works: TBUC
- Engagement with Government Departments
- Local Government Engagement
- Events CRC have run
- Meetings with CRC funded orgs and project partners
- Other meetings
- Governance issues
- Internal Projects
- Staffing

- Premises – the CEO noted that CRC is due to move to James House in the next few years along with other ALBs based in Equality House and elsewhere. The new premises will operate as an agile working space.

The Chair added that the CEO’s report is crucial and that the current format is helpful in relations to the wider reports on the Board agenda.

He added that he would be interested in seeing the reintroduction of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to the organisation’s governance structure, which could look at the accounts, equality, staffing and such matters in greater detail. This would free the Board up to discuss the other matters. It was explained that CRC used to have a Finance and General Purposes Committee but it had been removed following a recommendation in the TEO governance review. The Chair added that this could be discussed on the strategic plan day.

Ms J Adamson joined the meeting

2187/19 Strategic Plan

CRC/207/09/19/05

The CEO presented to the Board a proposed timeline for work on the Strategic Plan. The timeline proposed:

- One or more planning sessions in October, speakers could be invited
- Draft taken through Equality Impact Assessment
- First draft taken to October Board meeting
- TEO reviews draft
- Public consultation between 16th Dec 2019 and 16th March 2020
- Any changes proposed by TEO or public consultation will come back to the Board
- Final draft brought to 16th April Board meeting
- Final draft sent to TEO for Ministerial sign off or other arrangements in the absence of Ministers.

The Chair welcomed the beginning of the Strategic Plan session. The planning session will be informed by how the previous Strategic Plan worked, and possibly a swot analysis.

It was agreed that TEO and the Head of the Civil Service be invited to attend the planning meeting.

The Board agreed the timeline, but noted that the consultation may be subject to delays due to purdah, in the event of an election.

ACTION: Ms H George to circulate potential dates in October. If it is difficult to find two consecutive dates that suit, then one date will be confirmed.

2188/19 Section 75 Annual Report CRC/207/09/19/06

The CEO informed Board Members that the Section 75 Annual Report, included in Board packs, was sent to ECNI on the 30th August. The appendices references are available for Board members and most were included in the induction pack which had been circulated to members.

The Board approved the report.

2189/19 Charity Registration CRC/207/09/19/07

Mr G McKeown presented Board Members with a paper outlining the background to CRC's Charity Registration. He stated that CRC were called to apply for registration in September 2016. The process was paused due to the outstanding changes required to CRC's Articles of Association following the TEO Governance Review of CRC.

The Board discussed whether CRC's status as an ALB clashes with its charity status. The CEO explained that as CRC is already operating as a charity, the Charity Commission will decide whether the organisation is a charity or not as part of the registration process.

The Board agreed that they had read and understood the 'Public Benefit Requirement Statutory Guidance' and the 'Charity Commission's Guidance on Working with Vulnerable People and Children. The Board agreed the Charitable Purposes Statement and Public Benefit Statement. They signed the 'Trustee Declaration'.

The Board authorised CRC staff to complete the submission to the Charity Commission by 3rd October 2019.

2190/19 Management Accounts CRC/207/09/19/08

Mr G McKeown presented Board Members with CRC's Management Accounts.

He stated that spending was within budget and all procurement was done in line with CRC and Department of Finance guidelines.

The Board noted these accounts.

Audrey Simpson left the meeting

2191/19 Pay Remit CRC/207/09/19/09

Mr G McKeown presented the Board with a paper on CRC's Pay Remit process.

He explained that CRC staff are awaiting approval of the 16/17 and 17/18 pay remits. He advised that the business case was reconfigured to emphasis the equality and age issue, in discussion with TEO. One of the conditions of the 15/16 Pay Remit was that the outstanding processes had to be completed by

March 2020. TEO are preparing a timeline which will be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

2192/19 Electronic papers CRC/207/09/19/10

Mr G McKeown presented to the Board a paper on the proposed implementation of an electronic Board papers system.

Mr R Campbell declared an interest, stating that he represents an organisation which provides software for document and paper sharing.

The Board discussed the options and stated that the purchase of a tablet for all Board members may not be necessary, as some already possess devices. They stated that a secure software system that can be accessed from their own personal devices using passwords would be better, and to provide tablets to those that would need them, only.

ACTION: Mr G McKeown to look into app and cloud based software.

2193/19 Health and Safety CRC/207/09/19/11

The Board noted this report

2194/19 Sickness and Absence Report CRC/207/09/19/12

The Board noted this report

2195/19 Labour Relations Agency report. CRC/207/09/19/13

Ms J Adamson presented the Board with a paper with an update on the progress made so far in relation to the report recommendation after the first meeting of the LRA project working group in July. She stated that:

1. Progress has been made in regards training for staff and managers. She is working to source training to address the needs identified in the report. This will cover diversity and equality, engagement, change management, conflict resolution, stress management and resilience
2. The chair has met with the official Unite rep on a one to one basis as part of his induction.
3. Staff had created a protocol regarding behavior and working in an open plan office. This will be an item at the monthly staff meeting to ensure it is kept under review.
4. A series of informal catch up meetings are planned to occur every six weeks for staff, the chair will be invited to attend these.

5. Pay remit issues are being addressed.
6. During the meeting in July the union talked about producing a list of what they called “inappropriate behaviors” they believed were taking place in CRC. CRC have not yet received this list.
7. CRC is due to hold another meeting with Unite union on 26 September 2019 to review progress on the LRA Report.

It was noted that the new Board is welcome to provide any additional advice or recommendations beyond what the previous board approved.

The Chair added that he has decided to take a close involvement with this and had met with staff, the CEO, and the Union. The Chair recognises that there had been and are still some significant issues to be resolved

The CEO provided the Board with background information about a number of issues that have contributed to the current situation and added that union reps had since reported that things have changed for the better. The Chair felt the organisation was in a position to move forward now after many delays that were beyond its control. The Board will be kept updated.

Ms C Harris left the meeting

2196/19 HR Alignment

Mr G McKeown presented Board members with a paper updating them on the consultation process working to align CRC’s HR Policies with NICS. This process has stalled as the Union had stated it would not continue while the Pay Remits are outstanding.

2197/19 Funding Authorisation Levels CRC/207/09/19/14ii

Ms P Jordan presented Board members with the current processes used in CRC to approve grants. The Board will continue with the current process and any processed changes would be brought to a future meeting.

2198/19 Funding and Development Sector update CRC/207/09/19/15

Mr P Jordan presented the Board with a paper updating members on developments in his department.
The Board noted this report.

2199/19 Community Engagement Sector update CRC/207/09/19/16

Mr P Day presented the Board with a paper updating members on developments in his department. He thanked Board members for attending events during Good Relations week. He highlighted a number of items from the report:

- An evaluation of GR Week will be presented at the next Board meeting.
- CRC will be running a number of Information sessions regarding the Core funding scheme.
- A number of Shared Learning events will be taking place over the next few months.
- He noted that a Decade of Anniversaries conference will be taking place on 21st November.
- CRC have put together a timetable of events which will be taking place between October 2019 and March 2020.
- The CRC website has been revamped, and news bulletins continue to be sent out.

2200/19 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Mr R Campbell, the Chair of ARAC updated members on the recent meeting, making particular reference to the following:

- TEO have given written assurance that they would underwrite CRC's pension liability. A note has been added to the Annual Report and Accounts on this.
- CRC will be seeking advice as to whether they should work on building up the financial reserves.
- As part of the Charity Registration process CRC will be seeking advice on whether there is a conflict between charity status and ALB status, with regards trustees responsibilities to both.
- CRC is currently investigating a funding issue regarding a group. CRC are following all the processes to vouch the remaining grant.
- The Report to those Charged with Governance was presented to the Committee.

Mr G McKeown added that as reported earlier in the meeting the Audit Committee approved the Annual Report and Accounts, with the addition of an explanation of the pension liability guarantee.

2201/19 The Minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 29th May 2019 CRC/207/09/19/17

The Board noted these minutes.

2202/19 Any Other Business

The Chair stated that, at future meetings, he would like 5-10 minutes of reflection at the end of the meetings to evaluate them.

2203/19 Date of Next Meeting

31st October 11am
13th December 11am