

CONFIRMED

**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY NINTH MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 27TH APRIL AT
1PM IN THE ANTE-ROOM, EQUALITY HOUSE, 7 – 9 SHAFTESBURY
SQUARE, BELFAST, BT2 7DP**

2855/17 PRESENT:

Mr P Osborne (Chair), Mr D Mackay, Ms D Close, Mr R Campbell, Mr N McKenna,
Mr B McAllister, Rev Dr N Hamilton, Ms S McClelland

2856/17 APOLOGIES:

Ms K Garbal, Ms R McGlone

2857/17 IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms J Irwin [CEO], Mr G McKeown [DFAP Director], Mr P Jordan [Funding and
Development Director], Ms D McGlade [Policy Director], Ms E Tomasso [Admin
Officer], Ms D MacBride [Cultural Diversity Director]

2858/17 OBSERVER:

Mr J Warnock [The Executive Office]

2859/17 STANDARD CHECKS:

- 1(a) The Chair reminded Members of the requirement to declare any conflicts of
interest in any discussions where decisions were required.
- 1(b) The Chair advised that Members need to register any offers of gifts or
hospitality since the last Council meeting.

Mr Osborne welcomed Mr J Warnock to the meeting.

The Chair requested that staff, with the exception of the CEO, leave for a short period
to allow a confidential discussion about the budget and the business plan.

A discussion took place and then Mr G McKeown Mr P Jordan, Ms D McGlade, Ms
E Tomasso and Ms D MacBride re-joined the meeting.

2860/17 MINUTES:

[Paper CRC/189/04/17/01 refers]

Minutes dated 16 March 2017. Two minor changes were requested to the minutes
and taken as read.

2861/17 MATTERS ARISING:

There were none.

2862/17 CORRESPONDENCE

[Paper CRC/189/04/17/02 refers]

A letter has been received from the Department outlining the cash position at the moment based on cash projections from January 2017. The allocation is not sufficient therefore discussions are ongoing with The Executive Office to increase the cash injection.

A template of a copy of the letter that TEO requested to be sent to groups outlining the current financial position was also attached.

The CEO reminded members that this correspondence only relates to the cash position and not the overall budget. The Budget projections were working on a 4% cut which would be discussed later in the meeting, however, it is imperative the funds are available so groups can spend the money on time and mitigate the possibility of an underspend in 6 – 8 months.

A concern was raised that no terms and conditions of funding were in the letter. It was confirmed that CRC has ensured that the groups are aware of their obligations in a letter of offer.

2863/17 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair provided members with an update on events he has attended and forthcoming events he planned to attend.

Events attended:

- 25th Anniversary of RCN – Mr Osborne spoke at this event
- Staff Meeting in April
- Michael Wardlow – Equality Commission
- Book launch for Avila Kilmurray on Community Activists
- Belfast Interface Project and 174 Trust – to discuss general funding
- Charter NI on Loyalism

Upcoming Events:

- Meeting with North Belfast Groups – 2 May
- Galvanising the Peace Group
- Dr Sheila Catz – Corrymeela
- Bosnia

Mr B McAllister, Board member, noted that Conciliation Resources have published a series of articles on Nepal – this should have a global interest and be pertinent to Northern Ireland.

A Board member noted regret that *Lost Lives* is now out of print and enquired whether CRC could look at republishing or getting an online version. It was agreed that this was more an area for the Victims Commission.

2864/17

OPERATIONAL PLAN

[Paper CRC/189/04/17/03 refers]

The CEO advised members that this was not the final draft of the plan as the Department are proposing a new format but it has not been received as yet.

As before there are 3 key areas – Funding, Engagement and Governance. The CEO outlined the areas of activity under each heading.

It was noted that there were changes required under Funding. Members were informed that recent contact with the TEO has resulted in the need for new CRCD application forms to be re-drafted to take account of the implementation of the Reduction in Bureaucracy policy. The Board were asked to consider that, if necessary, they would be content to sign-off the re-drafted materials by written procedure in order to reduce delays.

This was agreed.

It was also agreed that the Chair would write to Dr M Browne, TEO, in relation to delays finalising the District Council Support element of the plan.

A small number of changes were proposed to the document:

Pg. 7 E1.2 – this should now read:

Summary report of each meeting produced and agreed by Chair of T:BUC Engagement Forum.

Pg. 10 E4.2.1 – should be changed to CR/CA

Pg. 12 E6.1 should add *mainstream media* – after twitter.

Pg. 13 G1.2 – speech marks should be put around “*Sponsor Team*” as the general public will not be familiar with the TEO structure.

The CEO confirmed that CRCA week date is now set for 18 – 24 September 2017. The theme is ‘*Safe Space – Shared Place*’. JComms are assisting CRC in running the week. There has been a much broader advisory group set up including other ALBs and Departments, which will plan the week.

It was requested that the Aims at the beginning of the document be slightly amended to include:

To promote Good Relations within the citizens and communities of Northern Ireland.

The Programme for Government should also be added in alongside T:BUC, as some community relations work sits slightly outside of T:BUC.

The changes were agreed and pending receipt of the new TEO format the document will hopefully be presented in its final version at the next Council meeting.

2865/17

THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE BOARD REVIEW:

[Paper CRC/189/04/17/04 refers]

The Charities Commission have raised a set of queries in relation to the Section 96 application and CRC's Response paper [Annex B] was presented to the Board for approval.

There was some discussion about the Response Paper and revisions to responses were agreed. The Board stated that the plan for remuneration to members recognises the high levels of responsibility that the position holds. Also the Board emphasised the need for reporting the process which led to this decision i.e. the TEO report on Governance.

Some changes were requested to the document:

Pg. 1 – last paragraph – last sentence should read

Trustees are required to have a high level of competency in a number of areas including community relations, good governance, financial controls and the Northern Ireland political system.

Pg. 2 – Add in a point stating that there is currently the potential for 24 Trustees.

Pg. 4 – net difference should be changed to additional cost.

The Board also requested that the BIS report was included with the response as an attachment. The final response will be circulated to the Board for written approval prior to being sent on to the Charities Commission. The Board agreed to respond quickly given the timeframe of the CCNI.

ACTION: DFAP Director

2866/17

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

- Draft 2017 – 2018 Budget
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/05 refers]

This Budget has been prepared following the most recent draft of the Operational Plan in consultation with the Management Team of CRC.

The Budget shows that CRC is currently planning a cut of 4%.

Maintaining the principle that the cut in grants be no greater a percentage, the Grant Budget reduction is set at 3.9%. The Board also agreed to maintain the principle of not filling vacant posts to assist with balancing the budget. Although the organisation continues to keep vacant posts unfilled the Salary figure has increased for a range of reasons – e.g. pressure of salary costs, pension contribution. A meeting with the TEO will be arranged to talk about the pension cost increases required by NILGOSC.

The Budget is extremely tight and if the cut is more than 4%, CRC will move beyond operational capacity.

It is possible at the moment that the cut may not be as big as 4% which could potentially mean that £50,000 may go back in the budget.

The Board was asked to consider the draft budget, note and approve it to allow the organisation to set a working budget.

There was some discussion about the costs of rent for CRC as this year's rent is increasing and there is currently a rent review underway in Equality House.

The Board approved the document as a working draft budget.

- Summary Update on Year End
[Paper CRC/189/01/17/06 refers]

The Board was concerned about the underspend for the North Belfast Scheme and asked for clarification. The Director of Funding and Development advised that there was no concern with this scheme as it was initially over-projected.

- Gifts and Hospitality
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/07 refers]

It was noted that 3.7 has been changed to reflect CRC's business and the requirement to hold seminars, conferences etc.

Members were advised that in point 3.19 the threshold has been reduced to £10.

The Policy was approved.

- HR Updates

Health and Safety - there were no issues reported. All members of staff are scheduled to complete training this month.

- Pay Remit

The 13-14 outturn year is currently with The Executive Office and is close to approval which means that work on the 14-15 year will be moved forward this month.

- Sickness Absence Update Paper
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/08 refers]

The Board had requested an addition to this paper with staff attendance also noted, this was included in the paper for this meeting.

The Chair of the Committee updated on two investigations into funded groups. In relation to the first case, the Department's Fraud Investigation Oversight Group has advised that there is nothing more for CRC to do on this. It is anticipated by TEO that this investigation should be closed soon, communicated to CRC in the most recent Accountability meeting.

In relation to the second case a group was declared insolvent in March 2016 and following regular communication with the Administrator CRC is still waiting to vouch their final claim. There is a meeting of Creditors with the Administrator on 26th May 2017 and hopefully there will be further information thereafter.

Risk Register – there are currently two risks that have been escalated from Amber to Red. The Political uncertainty is still ongoing so continues to be recorded as red. The Resource risk has been mitigated somewhat by the Executive Office but CRC cannot be assured that the risk has diminished so this remains at red until the budget for the year is agreed.

Mr R Campbell left the meeting.

2868/17 GRANTS UPDATE 2016/2017
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/10 refers]

There is still uncertainty around budgets and the grant schemes for 2017/18.

2016/17 grants verifications for the last financial year are still ongoing.

The Department are making changes, requirements which will be reflected in CRC's application forms and guidance notes – these will be brought to the Board when complete.

Core Funded Groups have been notified of the outcomes of the Board decisions on funding. The successful groups have been asked for projected expenditure for the first 4 months of this financial year.

The Core Funding Appeals deadline is 22nd May with the Appeals Panel to meet on 30th May.

North Belfast Good Relations Funding Scheme – verifications are ongoing. An end of year event showcasing the work will take place on Tuesday 2nd May.

Mr N McKenna left the meeting.

2869/17 CEO'S REPORT
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/11 refers]

The CEO referred to her report and updated members that the Mid-Ulster Council has now confirmed its training date for 18th May.

She noted that the Good Relations Officers annual conference had been postponed by TEO and will take place on 16th May.

There was some discussion about CRC's role in providing recommendations from the T:BUC Engagement Forum and concern that these are not getting to Ministers. Members were reminded that CRC has made recommendations to the Executive Office, Ms McGlade will re-circulate the advice paper to the Board.

ACTION: Policy Director

It was noted that The Executive Office are currently looking at T:BUC structures. It was emphasised that this is essential as forum delegates may see this as another 'talking shop' with no real outcomes and stop attending.

The CEO expressed her thanks to Ms B McKinley who has resigned to take up a new post and the Board wished her well in her new position.

A Roundtable on Reconciliation was held on 26 April which Ms J Irwin and Ms D McGlade attended. The Board will be kept informed of any further progress and Ms McGlade will send key bullet points of the meeting to Board Members. Notification of future meetings will be sent to the Board as members may wish to attend (subject to the convenor's being content).

ACTION: Policy Director

2870/17

SECTOR REPORTS

- Policy
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/12 refers]

Ms McGlade updated members on the scoping exercise on Reconciliation which had been planned. CRC will wait until later in the year to see if any changes need to be made to the proposed work coming out of the roundtables convened by TEO.

Bonfires – A small scoping study is currently underway in conjunction with SOLACE and Board Members will be updated on this at the next meeting.

CRC has been present at consultation meetings of the Commission on Flags, Identity and Culture.

Ms D McGlade will send information to Council on meetings with Fresh Start Groups.

ACTION: Policy Director

- Communications
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/13 refers]

This report was noted.

- Funding and Development
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/14 refers]

This report was noted.

- Cultural Diversity
[Paper CRC/189/04/17/15 refers]

An online survey has been undertaken on the Decade project.

The Toolkit is being reviewed for possible revisions.

It was decided that general work normally covered in Sector Reports would be discussed by the Board at the next meeting for 1 hour before the formal Board meeting starts.

2871/17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

2872/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 8th June 2017 @ 11.00am