

**CONFIRMED**

**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED & NINETY SECOND MEETING  
OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL HELD ON  
THURSDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 1.00PM IN COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS COUNCIL, EQUALITY HOUSE, 7-9 SHAFTESBURY  
SQUARE, BELFAST BT2 7DP**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**2873/17 PRESENT:**

Mr P Osborne [Chair], Mr R Campbell [Board Member], Ms L Keyes [Board Member], Mr N McKenna [Board Member], Ms S McClelland [Board Member] Mr D Mackay [Board Member], Ms R McGlone [Board Member]

**2874/17 APOLOGIES:**

Ms D Close [Board Member], Rev Dr N Hamilton [Board Member], Ms K Garbal [Board Member], Mr B McAllister [Board Member],

**2875/17 IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

**2876/17 OBSERVER:**

Mr J Warnock [TEO]

**2877/17 OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2878/17 STANDARD CHECKS:**

- 1(a) The Chair reminded Members of the requirement to declare any conflicts of interests 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.

**2879/17 3. MINUTES:**

Minutes dated 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2017  
(Paper CRC/192/09/17/01)

Minutes were approved and signed off

Minutes dated 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2017  
(Paper CRC/192/09/17/02)

Minutes were approved and signed off.

**2880/17 4. MATTERS ARISING:**

**(a) Minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (CRC192/09/17/01)**

The Chair referred to Page 2, Para. 7 of the Minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> June, regarding the role of CRC, Decade of Centenaries and Cohesion and Integration to be discussed before subsequent Board meetings.

It was agreed that this should take effect in the hour before the next Board meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017.

The Chair referred to Page 2, Para. 8 of the Minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> June, regarding the Boards visit to the Causeway Coast and Glens Council offices to hold its meeting in September.

It was noted that this visit had been arranged for today's meeting, but given the greater number required to attend an AGM, the Chair postponed the visit until the Board's next meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, with the proviso that there will be sufficient members attending.

**The Chair requested that members confirm whether they will be available to attend the meeting in November.**

**ACTION: CEO to contact members**

**(b) Peace Monitoring Report**

A Board member expressed concern about the contract for the next Peace Monitoring Report (PMR) noting that although a paper had been circulated to the Board by written procedure as allowed for in the articles of association, it might have been more appropriate to table a paper on the awarding of the

contract at a Board meeting, particularly as there may be issues about the timing of the report in the current context.

Mr. McKeown confirmed that he had intended to bring the paper on this financial award to the previous Board meeting in line with normal procedures for approvals above £10,000 but had overlooked it by mistake and therefore the written procedure had been used.

The CEO confirmed that this was the second of two reports under an existing grant contract from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust which had previously been discussed and agreed by the Board and the TEO.

The Chair advised that the remainder of those Board members who had responded had approved the award. He also advised that the report had in the past been an important factual document and that the timing of the report could be considered by the Advisory Group.

Board members confirmed that they were content to proceed.

### **(c) Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2017 (CRC192/09/17/02)**

The CEO referred to the minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> August and the action point in relation to a proposal for project and youth work costs to be considered eligible expenditure under the Community Relations Core Funding Scheme. She advised that she had updated TEO on the proposal on 23<sup>rd</sup> August and subsequently written to TEO seeking their approval for project and youth work costs to be included in the Core Funding Scheme but to date had not had a response.

The Chair requested that this be decided as soon as possible to avoid delays in opening the scheme for next year.

Mr Warnock, TEO responded that finding funds for projects associated with children and young people had its difficulties given that there are so many projects involving this category. TEO was currently carrying out work to assess the impact of including project costs in Core Funding against government's Programme Costs. Members recognised that with an emphasis on children and young people there was the potential for duplicate funding. Members stressed the importance of finding the right balance in addressing need.

Mr Warnock informed members that funding for projects was drying up elsewhere and it was therefore important for TEO to consider the practicalities and quantify the loss in moving to the inclusion of project costs in core funding.

**2881/17 5. CORRESPONDENCE:**

There was no correspondence

**2882/17 6. CHAIRS BUSINESS:**

The Chair provided Members with an update on some of the events he had attended and forthcoming events he planned to attend:

Attended events reported

- Feile Reciprocation Panel
- Belfast Lord Mayor's Installation
- Chaired John Hewitt Panel
- Mela launch and event
- Anti-Semitism lecture
- British Irish Association Conference
- T-BUC Engagement Forum
- Victims Commission / Srebrenica
- CR Week events
- Special Board Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> August

Upcoming events reported:

- CR Week Events
- Culture Night
- All Island Dialogue on Brexit
- Lecture on World War 1 – reconciliation
- Joe Law book launch

The Chair informed members that 2018 was the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. There followed a brief discussion on how Council could mark the occasion. It was agreed that CRC staff develop plans for a suitable event to mark the anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

**ACTION: CRC to plan suitable anniversary event.**

**2883/17 7. NICRC ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2017**  
(CRC192/09/17/03) refers

Mr McKeown, Director of Finance, Administration and Personnel, presented the 2016/17 Annual Report and Accounts.

Concern was expressed that the Annual Report and Accounts had only been circulated to members on 20<sup>th</sup> September. Mr McKeown reminded members that the draft report had been provided in August. However, in relation to the final version, the Northern Ireland Audit Office had only provided its Audit Report the previous day, 20<sup>th</sup> September. Mr McKeown assured the Board that the DFAP team had proactively addressed the NIAO queries throughout the process.

He highlighted the key points of difference in the final draft of the accounts, which included reporting on a data breach in the governance statement. He also noted that the NIAO had given an unqualified report on the CRC financial statements which was to be found on pages 67/68.

Mr Campbell proposed and Ms McClelland seconded the proposal that the Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 be approved. Members agreed.

The Chair thanked members and commented that he was concerned about the difficulties encountered in acquiring a quorum for this AGM and other Board meetings. He advised that the issue would be further addressed later in the meeting.

**2884/17**      **8. VOLUNTARY EXIT SCHEME**  
(CRC/192/09/17/04) and  
(CRC/192/09/17/17) refer

Ms J Irwin outlined the progress on the Board's request to TEO to consider the application of a Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) to CRC staff. On foot of a TEO request, she had written to all the CRC staff and had received 11 responses indicating a wish to be considered under the Voluntary Exit Scheme. Subsequently, at the request of the TEO, CRC drew up a Business Case to take account of exits only at the level of Director in line with the CRC Staff Review undertaken by TEO. However, the VES is pending Board approval before being considered by DoF.

Two staff at the level of Director have request to be considered in the VES. It was noted that those who would be successful in their applications will leave the organisation on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Successful applicants will require 3 months' notice and therefore a response to their applications will need to be made no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017. The Chair again clarified this was a voluntary scheme and that staff members are not forced to partake of the VES. Members expressed concern that the Scheme may have resource issues for CRC. The CEO advised

that the VES was not resourced from CRC expenditure but was funded by the NICS.

Members expressed concern about the morale of staff if the TEO bid to the DoF relating to the CRC VES was not successful. Mr. Warnock advised that there were no guarantees in relation to the application as it was a competitive process and decisions were made on a financial basis in line with the purpose of the scheme.

Members approved the business case to proceed with the application to the scheme.

Members noted concern about the impact of the VES process on the organisational structure and capacity to deliver its plans. Members were advised that subject to approval by the Department of Finance of the VES and it proceeding to conclusion with the departure of the two applicant staff members a second Business Case was being prepared to take forward areas of work to be carried out in the future. The second Business Case for the staff post will only be relevant if the VES is successful for the two applicants. Board members approved and requested a regular update on the timetable for implementation of the scheme.

**ACTION: Regular update on VES to continue to be provided to the Board.**

The CEO and board members thanked Mr McKeown for the considerable amount of additional work he had undertaken in completing the proposal for the Scheme.

**2885/17**      **9. OPERATIONAL PLAN:**  
[Paper CRC/192/09/17/05 refers]

The CEO updated members on the draft Operational Plan which has completed its consideration by TEO officials and been agreed.

The plan was approved by the Board.

The plan will now await approval by Ministers.

**2886/17**      **10. FUNDING SCHEME 2018/19**  
(Paper CRC/192/09/17/06(a) (b) and (c) refer

Mr Jordan, Funding and Development Director, outlined 3 issues in relation to 2018/19 Core Funding as follows:

- agreeing Strategic priorities
- developing new application and guidance notes and scoring matrix and
- assessment process and review panel

He highlighted some of the key elements relating to the new application form and guidance notes which he had included in the papers. He pointed out that the scoring matrix which had also been suggested by Members, was now part of the process.

Mr Jordan informed Members that in due course he would be initiating an outreach programme to raise awareness of the information required on the new application forms.

The Board approved the new applications and related materials for 2018/19.

With regard to Board members participation in the assessment of applications, it was agreed that Mr Jordan contact members to establish whether or not they wish to take part in the process or alternatively to be available for the review procedures.

**ACTION: Mr Jordan to contact members regarding participation in the 2018/19 Core Fund processes**

**2887/17      11.      THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE BOARD REVIEW:**

- Copy of response from Charity Commission NI [Paper CRC/192/09/17/18 refers]

Mr G McKeown, Director of Finance, Administration and Personnel, updated members on the Section 96 application to the Charity Commission NI. A response had been received from the Charity Commission consenting to CRC's application in relation to amendments to its Articles of Association.

**2888/17      12.      FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES:**

- (a) Financial Projections to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018  
[Paper CRC/192/09/17/07) refers

Mr G McKeown, presented members with the financial projections to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018. He highlighted some of the key aspects of the revised budget for 2017/18.

He said that initially CRC was to prepare for a 4% reduction on the 2016/17 allocation. This was subsequently modified to reflect a budget allocation based on 2.5% reduction. Taking into consideration in-year expenditure and additional funding made available from the TEO and in-year savings, there is an additional financial resource of £135K for 2017/18. He outlined how this additional resource would be allocated as shown in the Appendix to his paper. Members noted that an amount of £10K from this allocation could be used to fund an event associated with the anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

The Chairman was concerned that a figure of £9K had been allocated for professional support. He took the view that this did not represent value for money in comparison to in-house work. He also raised a query about expenditure of £14K for data management. Mr McKeown explained that these funds were required for the implementation of General Data Protection Regulations next year and involved the recruitment of a temporary employee for work on both data and information management.

The Chair asked if members were content with Pathfinder funding of £60,000K. Mr Jordan said that he had spoken to a variety of interested groups to ensure there was sufficient resource to cover the anticipated level of need.

The Board approved the budget paper.

#### (b) Pay Remit

Mr G McKeown updated members on progress in relation to approval of the pay remit.

Members expressed the hope that this matter would be concluded as soon as possible.

#### (c) Health and Safety Update

Mr G McKeown informed members that there had been no Health and Safety incidents since the last Board meeting. He said all staff were continuing to complete Health and Safety training online.

#### (d) ECNI Section 75 Annual Report [Paper CRC/192/09/17/08] refers

The CEO updated Members on the implementation of the CRC Equality Scheme and the annual progress report on Section 75. Members approved the report.

(e) Sick Absences

(Paper CRC/192/09/17/09) refers

Members noted the sick absence statistics covering the period from April – August 2017.

**2889/17      13.      REPORT FROM AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE:**

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Mr R Campbell, provided a verbal update on the Audit and Risk Committee meeting which took place on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017. He highlighted the following points:

a) The NIAO Report tabled at the ARAC was read in the context of the CRC Annual Report and Accounts year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The NIAO Report raised a number of matters including a data breach, CRC Pensions, payment of childcare vouchers and the liquidation of a core funded group. These had all been accepted by the Committee.

b) Risk Register  
(Paper CRC/192/09/17/10(b) refers

The CEO gave an overview of the full Risk Register and highlighted items in the areas relating to VES, the data incident, contact with groups and governance issues. She noted that two red risks remain, 'political' and 'resources'. She also noted that TEO had advised that it did not believe that they presented a threat at that level. However, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had discussed this and remained content with the assessment.

Mr Campbell proposed that the red risks should be retained because of the uncertain climate.

The Board approved retaining the current status of the red risks on the Register.

- c) Minutes from the 13<sup>th</sup> April Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting  
[Paper CRC/192/09/17/ 10(a) refers

Members received the ARAC Minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017 for information.

**2890/17      14.      POLICY PAPERS**

There were no Policy papers.

**2891/17      15.      MEDIA GRANT SCHEME 2017/18:**  
[Paper CRC/192/09/17/11 refers]

Ms D MacBride, Director of Cultural Diversity, gave an overview of the 2017/18 Media Grant Scheme. She outlined the process for acquiring the grant including the purpose, process and panel composition. Members noted the Review Panel's disappointment regarding the quality of some of this year's application project. They were also made aware of CRC's list of approvals and rejections.

Members were informed of a number of reasons for the rejection of projects such as (a) does the project have relevance to T:BUC (b) has it been completed in time and (c) the degree of expertise used in the project. The applicants are notified by telephone and in writing of the outcome of their applications. Members noted the information on a number of approvals and rejections and that all applicants are entitled to appeal the CRC decisions.

The Board approved the recommendations for funding.

**2892/17      16.      CEO'S REPORT:**  
[Paper CRC/192/06/17/12) refers

The CEO provided an update to members on her CEO Report which was circulated with the Board papers.

In relation to the T:BUC Engagement Forum which had taken place earlier in the week, Ms Irwin recorded her thanks to staff. She also thanked everyone who had been involved in any way with Community Relations and Cultural Awareness Week, particularly JCOMMS for their support and assistance in the run up to the week. Ms Keys commented that she had received a number of comments that the T:BUC Engagement Forum had



Due to the fact that some members were reaching the end of their first term in November the Chair said that he had been speaking to some people and would be writing to those Members whose term was due to finish in order to determine if they wished to carry on into a second term.

**ACTION: Chair to write to relevant Members in relation to their second term on the Board.**

**2895/17      19.      DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 at 1.00pm (Ballycastle).

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 1.00pm.