

**MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY
RELATIONS COUNCIL BOARD HELD ON FRIDAY 17th SEPTEMBER 2021
VIA VIDEO CALLING SOFTWARE**

Forth fourth

3624/21 Present: Chair M McDonald, Mr R Campbell, Mr M McDonnell, Ms N Tandon, Ms S McClelland, Ms A Simpson

3625/21 In Attendance: Ms J Irwin (CEO), Mr P Jordan (Director of Funding and Development), Mr P Day (Engagement Director), Ms J Adamson (HR Manager), Ms E Tomasso (Information Officer), Ms H George (PA to CEO and Board).

3626/21 Apologies: Ms M Braniff (Board Member), Mr J McCallister (Board Member), Ms C Harris (Board Member), Mr G McKeown (DFAP Director).

3627/21 Observer: Mr D Johnston (Boardroom Apprentice)

3628/21 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*

Mr R Campbell informed the meeting that his law firm currently represent the organisation who provide CRC's grant management system. A conflict around disclosure of a technical, non-material breach has occurred, which Mr R Campbell felt obligated to share. The organisation are restricted from making the disclosure until the contract processes are complete.

3629/21 Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes of the two hundred and twenty-second and the two hundred and twenty-third meeting of CRC's Board, which took place on 4th June and 23rd August respectively. The Board agreed that they are an accurate account of the meetings.

3630/21 Matters Arising

The Chair presented the Board with an update on the matters arising from previous meetings.

All actions and matters arising following the previous meetings are now complete.

The Chair reminded Board members to share tips and suggestions with CRC, from any events they attend which are being held in a blended manner.

3631/21 Correspondence on CRC's 2020/21 Business Plan

The CEO presented the Board with correspondence from The Executive Office, which provided written approval of CRC's 2020/21 Business Plan.

TEO have advised CRC that approval of the 2021/22 Business Plan will hopefully be issued this month.

The Board noted this correspondence.

3632/21 Correspondence regarding CRC collaborating with other funders

The CEO presented Board members with correspondence from The Executive Office. Following a meeting, CRC wrote to The Executive Office asking for feedback on any potential difficulties were CRC to collaborate with another funder. TEO responded positively, but highlighting that there may be budget implications for CRC.

The Board noted this correspondence.

3634/21 Correspondence regarding 2022 Honours Nominations

The CEO presented the Board with correspondence from The Executive Office informing CRC that there is an opportunity to nominate a member of the public to receive an honour in 2022.

The Chair asked the Board to consider if they have any suggestions for a nominee, and to let the Chair know. The Finance and General Purposes Committee will consider this correspondence during the October meeting.

The Board noted this correspondence.

3635/21 Chair's Update

The Chair updated the Board on a number of events and meetings he attended since the previous Board meeting.

The Chair and the CEO met with the International Fund for Ireland on 3rd August.

A meeting of CRC's LRA Implementation Group took place on 10th August to discuss the Dignity at Work Policy. Ms J Adamson will update the Board on this later in the meeting.

The Chair informed the Board that he would be holding a meeting with CRC non-management staff, to discuss the Dignity at Work Charter. This meeting will be taking place in October.

Following the receipt of a Freedom of Information Request, the Chair and the CEO have held a number of meetings, including an Extraordinary Meeting of CRC's Board on 23rd August. The response to this FOI has been sent and shared with TEO. This item has also been added to CRC's Risk Register.

The Chair has attended a number of photocalls to promote Good Relations Week including one in Lisburn on 31st August and Carrickfergus on 3rd September. In addition, an interview for NTV was recorded on the 8th September with Springboard representatives in attendance. The Chair recorded a podcast with

Northern Ireland Youth Forum on 14th September. The Chair discussed the Boardroom Apprentice Scheme with the Youth Forum and will send them on details of the programme.

The Chair reminded the Board to complete their appraisals and Board evaluation forms and return these to Ms H George as soon as possible.

ACTION: Board Members to complete their appraisals and Board evaluations as soon as possible.

The Board thanked the Chair for this update.

3636/21 Chief Executive's Update

Ms J Irwin updated the Board on a number of items.

i) Covid-19

The CEO informed the Board that CRC's Continuation Plan continues to work well. Ms J Adamson will be presenting the Board with a paper on CRC's Blended Working Plan at today's meeting.

CRC continue to follow all Public Health and Departmental Guidance related to Covid-19.

ii) Planning

As stated earlier in the meeting, CRC's 2020/21 Business Plan has been approved by The Executive Office. Approval of the 2021/22 Plan is still outstanding.

With regards CRC's Operational Plan, the Board previously asked for a 'Score Card' to be produced, setting out the outcomes and the achievements made. The CEO informed the Committee that she and Mr G McKeown have been working on producing this 'Score Card' which will be presented with the next quarter update at the F&GP meeting.

iii) Meetings

The CEO met with Ms A Brown, DoJ Tackling Paramilitarism, on 9th September. The CEO was asked to consider taking on a Chair's position in the new cross cutting group on 'Attitudinal Change'. The CEO is awaiting information on the role and still considering this invitation. She will provide the Board with more information in due course.

The CEO updated the Board on a meeting she attended with the Northern Ireland Office regarding their plans for future funding.

iv) Funding

The CEO advised Board members that a meeting of the Funding Sub-group had taken place on 23rd August to consider the Welcome Statement's for next year's Core Fund which will open for applications in September. She noted that a paper on the topic would be discussed later in the Board meeting.

v) Engagement

The CEO thanked Mr P Day and his team for their work on Good Relations Week 2021. Over 250 events have been organised so far, including entries from all local authorities and Core Funded groups.

The Engagement Forum will be taking place on Tuesday 21st September, with international input. Board members are welcome to attend this and other events during the week, details of which are available on CRC's website.

vi) Board and Committee meetings

The CEO informed attendees that the next meeting of CRC's Board will be the Annual General Meeting, which will receive the Annual Report and Accounts.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will meet that morning to review the Annual Report and Account and the Report to those Charged, and make a recommendation to the Board.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee will meet that week, on Wednesday 27th October to review the Quarterly Returns.

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

3637/21

CRC Development Paper

The CEO informed the Board that during CRC's Accountability and Liaison meeting with The Executive Office on the 4th August, TEO asked CRC to consider any development ideas for the organisation.

In preparation for the discussion with TEO, the CEO presented a paper for Board consideration, proposing ideas for development in the areas of: Finance; Engagement; and Governance.

The Board proposed the following additions:

- Add details of the work being conducted by the Funding Sub-Group, particularly around data analysis and identifying gaps
- Make reference to the discussion with TEO on potential for CRC to collaborate with other funders
- Add the importance of the development work CRC undertakes with small groups in Northern Ireland
- Add details of the development work CRC could do with the District Councils across Northern Ireland
- The paper to mention that additional resources would be necessary to carry out this work.

The Board thanked the CEO for her paper, and welcomed the ideas. The Board approved the proposal, and commended the direction of travel set out in the paper.

3638/21 CRC's Section 75 Annual Progress Report

The CEO presented the Board with CRC's Section 75 Annual Progress Report. The Report includes CRC's: Disability Action Plan update; Operational Delivery Plan 2021/22; Performance Review 2020/21; and Equality and Good Relations Training Plan.

The Board ratified this Report. The CEO will now inform the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland of this decision.

ACTION: CEO to inform the Equality Commission of the Board's ratification of the Section 75 Annual Progress Report.

3639/21 Blended Working Plan

Ms J Adamson presented the Board with a paper setting out CRC's Blended Working Plan. This paper was developed in collaboration with all staff.

Section A sets out the project themes coming from the discussions with the Management Team and the Staff Team. These themes include: maintaining CRCs culture; trust; performance management; the importance of consultation; layout and facilities; technology; area based meetings; and performance reporting.

Section B of the paper sets out the objectives of the plan, including an analysis of the possible risks of these objectives and the mitigating actions.

CRC is currently working on an Agile Working Policy which will accompany this Plan, and an office layout redesign to enable agile working.

Ms J Adamson assured the Board that the implementation of this Plan is dependent on Public Health and Departmental guidance.

This paper will now be subject to consultation with the trade union.

The Board thanked Ms J Adamson for presenting this Plan and noted the paper.

3640/21 LRA Implementation Update

Ms J Adamson presented the Board with an update on the progress made on the recommendations set out within from CRC's LRA Implementation Plan.

The LRA Implementation Group met on 10th August to discuss the Dignity at Work Policy. The Group agreed that a member representing the non-union staff will now join the meetings.

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

3642/21 Pay Remit

Ms J Adamson updated the Board on CRC's Pay Remit process.

All outstanding Pay Remits have been submitted to The Executive Office or approval.

A number of queries were submitted for the 2018/19 2019/20 Pay Remits, to which the DFAP team have responded.

CRC awaits a response from TEO.

3643/21 Community Engagement Update

Mr P Day presented the Board with an update on engagement issues.

The Engagement Team are focused on Good Relations Week 2021. Over 250 events have been submitted for the week, including events hosted by new stakeholders including Disability Sport, Rainbow Project, and the Human Rights Commission.

CRC is hosting an event every day during Good Relations Week, including: North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Grant Awards; TBUC Engagement Forum; Equality and Good Relations Health Forum; DOJ Communities in Transition Event; Decade Roundtable; and joint event with The Executive Office.

The majority of the events will be held online during the week.

Mr P Day thanked the Chair and Board members for their assistance promoting Good Relations Week. He thanked the staff team and the CEO for their help putting the Week together.

The TBUC Engagement Forum will be taking place on 21st September 2pm-6pm. 239 individuals have registered to attend this event, which will have international contributions from Boston College, the US Consul General, and the NI Bureau in Washington.

The Chair will be attending the TBUC Engagement Forum, the Integrated Education film launch, the Newry and Mourne Intercultural Forum, and the NI Youth Forum Research Launch.

The Board commended the Engagement Team for their work on Good Relations Week and noted the report.

3644/21 Core Funding

Mr P Jordan presented the Board with a paper with proposal to update the Core Funding Scheme.

The Funding Sub Group met on 23rd September to review the proposed 2022/23 Welcome Statements.

The Sub Group agreed that the following areas of greatest geographic need: Ards and North Down; Belfast (East and South), Fermanagh and Omagh, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim; Mid-Ulster; and Newry, Mourne & Down. The Group agreed that the Welcome Statements would ask for applications from the following thematic areas: Our Safe Community; and Our Shared Community. It is proposed that these Welcome Statements be adopted for all funding schemes.

The Sub Group had asked for the scoring to be reviewed. Mr P Jordan talked the Board through the proposed changes to the scoring matrix, suggesting that 'Methodology' receive 4 more points, and 'Value for Money' receiving five extra points.

The Board reviewed and approved the changes to the scoring matrix and the Welcome Statements for the 2022/23 funding year.

3645/21 Media Grant Update

Mr P Jordan informed the Board that the Media Grant Reference Group met on 24th August to review the proposed application and grant documents.

Northern Ireland Screen will be providing an accompanying grant to cover the mentoring costs of a production company, working with the grantee.

Mr R Campbell is currently reviewing a draft Memorandum of Understanding between CRC and NI Screen.

The Grant will open once the MOU is agreed.

3646/21 Funding and Development Update

Mr P Jordan updated the Board on developments in the funding directorate.

The Community Relations/Cultural Diversity Grant has been open for a number of months and has funded 75 grant applications so far. The spending for this grant is on target.

CRC has made a bid for extra funding in the October Monitoring Round, and will be informed of the outcome of this application in due course.

Mr P Jordan reminded the Board of the Temperature Check meetings held prior to the summer, and the work funded groups did to ensure that there were no further disturbances over the summer period.

The Core Funding Scheme's application period will open on the 27th September. CRC will hold a number of information sessions throughout October for potential applicants.

The Funding Team and the DFAP team held a number of meetings with the Core Funded Groups, showcasing the `new vouching and verification procedures.

CRC have approved two Pathfinder applications, with another two applications due to be submitted in due course.

A support meeting for the North Belfast Grantees took place on 8th September, and an awards event will be held on 20th September. All Board members are welcome to attend.

3647/21 Any Other Business

None

3648/21 Next Meeting

29th October 1:30pm AGM