

**MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 31st
OCTOBER 2019 11:45AM EQUALITY HOUSE, SHAFTESBURY SQUARE,
BELFAST**

- 2204/19 Present:** Chair Mr Martin McDonald, Ms Nisha Tandon, Ms Máire Braniff, Mr John McCallister, Mr Michael McDonnell, Mr Rory Campbell.
- 2205/19 Apologies:** Ms Claire Harris, Ms Audrey Simpson, Ms Sheila McClelland
- 2206/19 In attendance:** Ms Jacqueline Irwin (CEO), Mr Paul Jordan (Director of Funding and Development), Mr Gerard McKeown (Director of Finance, Admin, and Personnel), Mr Peter Day (Director of Community Engagement), Ms Hannah George (PA to CEO & Board).
- 2207/19 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*
- 2208/19 Minutes**
- The Minutes of the 207th Board meeting, held on the 19th September were reviewed.
- One amendment was made to the wording of the discussion on the LRA Report Implementation Group. Page 9 will be amended to read “The Chair recognises that there had been and are still some significant issues to be resolved”.
- On the completion of this amendment, the Board approved the minutes.
- 2209/19 Matters Arising**
- i) **Board Induction**
- The CEO informed Board members that the final training session for their Board induction, Equality Training with ECNI, has been booked for 5th November at 10am. One member of the Board is unable to attend, however, it was agreed that the training would go ahead if the majority of members were available.
- ii) **CRC Reserves**
- Mr G McKeown presented Board members with a paper on CRC’s reserves. He explained that at a previous Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting members discussed CRC’s reserves deficit, and asked for guidance on whether this breached charity trustees’ responsibilities.

Mr G McKeown informed members that TEO had completed a review of the Charity Commission's guidance and found that where there are restrictions on an organisation's ability to build up reserves, they would not be expected to do so. As CRC draw down funding based on need, it would not be possible to build up reserves.

Mr G McKeown proposed that CRC agree a form of words explaining this issue, and this will be added to future Annual Reports. In addition, a reserves policy will be drafted and a liquidity analysis and solvency analysis would be conducted for the next AGM.

Board members discussed the paper and were happy with the recommendations, however, they asked for the liquidity and solvency analysis to be conducted sooner rather than later.

The Board thanked Mr G McKeown and Mr A Cole for their speedy work on this.

ACTION: Liquidation and Solvency analysis to be conducted

2210/19 Chair's Business

The Chair presented a paper to the Board outlining a number of events he and other Board members attended following September's Board meeting.

The Board noted this report.

2211/19 CEO's Report

The CEO presented the Board with a report setting out updates on a number of issues. She made particular reference to the following:

- Strategic Plan: She thanked Board members for attending the planning session on the 18th October. She added that it was a very positive session with good discussions. The CEO noted that she had circulated a paper based on the discussion, for consideration later in the meeting.
- Governance: CRC's Charity Commission registration has been submitted and assigned a case officer. The Board will be kept updated on any progress made.

CRC have held discussions with TEO on the alignment of funding. Looking particularly at Core Funding, North Belfast, and Community Relations Cultural Diversity grant.

The Board stated that they would like to look at North Belfast in more detail in the future. It was proposed that future meetings of the North Belfast Shared Learning Forum and the Core Funding Shared Learning Forums would be shared with Board members, and that a presentation

would be prepared for a future Board meeting, inviting groups to discuss their work.

ACTION: Mr P Jordan to share details of future Learning Forums with Board members.

ACTION: A presentation on the North Belfast scheme would be prepared for a future Board meeting, inviting groups to discuss their work.

- Engagement: The CEO noted that Mr P Day would be presenting a review of Good Relations Week at today's Board meeting.

The next TBUC Engagement Forum will be taking place on the 11th February. This is likely to be held in Southern Area or the North Coast. The CEO added that these Forums are a good place for Board members to learn about the work of the sector and meet funded groups.

The Decade of Commemorations conference will be taking place on the 21st November in the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown. TEO will be attending and making introductory remarks.

The CEO met with Business in the Community on 25th September, opening the line of communication for work that will be important in the next strategic plan i.e. ensuring that good relations work is getting out into ordinary life.

- Staffing: The CEO stated that a meeting of the LRA Report Implementation Group took place on the 30th October 2019. An update on this will be presented to the Board later in the agenda.

The alignment of CRC's HR policies with NI Civil Service remains on hold at the request of the Union, pending the Pay Remits issue being resolved.

CRC's premises move to James House has been delayed, and will likely not be completed until late 2021 or 2022.

The Board thanked the CEO for her report.

2212/19

Draft Strategic Plan

The CEO thanked Board members for attending and contributing to discussions on the day.

She explained the amendments to the draft she had previously provided on 18th October which were based on the recommendations of Board members at the planning meeting. Subject to any further amendments during this meeting

the Plan will be brought to the Board for approval at the next meeting prior to public consultation.

The CEO talked Board members through the Plan, highlighting the following points:

- 'Making the Extraordinary Ordinary' is the suggested theme defining the next planning period.
- Pg 4 – introduction of the word interconnectedness – 'We advocate for acknowledgement of our interconnectedness' rather than 'interdependence'
- Pg 6 – CRC's vision ' A diverse, shared, and interconnected society'

The Board discussed the vision, and agreed to the current wording subject to final approval at the next meeting.

The CEO then drew members' attention to page 6: Values and Beliefs. A number of changes were made to the previous 'Values and Beliefs' section, including:

- Interdependence again replaced with Interconnectedness.
- Human Dignity has been added to the opening statement.
- Human Rights has been added to the section on 'Respect and Dignity'.
- The new category of 'The Common Good', which includes sustainable development and wellbeing.

The Board discussed the values and beliefs, making the following comments: 'Trusting' could be read in two ways under 'Respect and Dignity' and may need a slight rewording.

The CEO talked through the background material, the strategic priorities, and the section on delivery.

She noted that a change will be made to this draft to include 'cultural diversity' in the section on 'Supporting Effective Delivery and Learning.

The Chair thanked the CEO for putting the draft together.

The CEO advised members that she would be drafting an Operational Plan for 2020-21 in November/December 2019. The Board will receive a first draft of it at the next meeting. It will then be forwarded to TEO as a first draft in line with the MSFM.

A discussion followed on the measurement of outcomes, the position of good relations in society in general, and completing an annual stocktake. It was agreed that once a year the Board would review overall population outcomes, how the organisation is contributing, and possibly invite other organisations to present.

i) Evaluation of Good Relations Week 2019

Mr P Day presented the Board with JComms analysis of GR Week 2019. He highlighted the following points to Board members:

- GR week is CRC's opportunity to showcase the good relations work across Northern Ireland
- The Project Steering Group is made up of representatives from Libraries NI, Department for Communities, Department of Justice, Education Authority, and TEO.
- Every local authority engaged in events during the week and promoted the week in the lead up. Regional launches with photo opportunities took place and a number of Board members attended these.
- There were 210 events, 6,000 programmes printed, and 154 media pieces (100 of which were regional).
- 513 unique viewers tuned in to the Facebook live coverage of the TBUC Engagement Forum.
- The brochure had a reduced print run as the website was pushed more. Brochures were left in coffee shops and train stations in heavy footfall areas.
- The report demonstrates the social media site visits, showing that there were few visitors from west of the Bann.
- The video was very popular, with a number of sport and media stars talking about GR Week. JComms suggested investing more money next year in the website and social media.
- When groups were registering their events they were asked to give an approximate number of attendees, this allowed CRC to track that approximately 102,000 people attended GR Week events in 2019.

Mr P Day informed Board members that next year will be the 30th year of CRC, and the Engagement Team will now begin looking at themes for GR Week.

The Chair congratulated everyone involved in organising the week. He welcomed the participation of businesses in the video, and suggested that it would be useful to link with Business in the Community for next year's event. He suggested that the Evaluation Report be sent to TEO and CRC should consider requesting an increased budget for next year's GR Week.

The CEO added that TEO's comms teams have not engaged fully in the past with these events, due to the lack of Ministers, but that TEO officials are discussing communications and this may change in the future.

The Chair suggested that CRC brief the editors of local papers ahead of GR Week next year, engaging with them proactively on events at the local level

i) Community Engagement Sector Update

Mr P Day presented the Board with his sector update, highlighting the following points:

- 11th February TBUC Engagement Forum – it will likely focus on the transformative power of sport.
- 14th January -Shared Learning Forum. The previous meeting focused on communicating impact of groups’ work, at which JComms and NVTV delivered presentations.
- CRC hosted three Core Funding information sessions.
- 21st November Decade of Commemorations conference, Glenavon, Cookstown.
 - o Session one will look at the world/Europe/Ireland divided.
 - o Session two will involve workshops and panel discussions with feed in from PRONI, Museums NI, Nerve Centre, and other groups.
 - o There will be a marketplace with 16 exhibitors.
 - o NIScreen are working on a 30min film and the Nerve Centre are creating an animation on partition.
 - o There are 150 places with 2/3 already booked.

ACTION: Peter Day to send link to the event to Board members

2213/19 Finance and General Purposes

i) Management Accounts

Mr G McKeown presented Board members with the Management Accounts up to March 2020. He stated that all expenditure was in line with the 1.5% tolerance, and that all purchases and expenditure was in line with CRC and Department of Finance guidelines.

The Board thanked Mr G McKeown for drafting the Management Accounts to year-end.

ii) Pay Remit

Mr G McKeown update the Board on the latest developments on the Pay Remit. He explained that the 16/17 and 17/18 remits are currently with the Department of Finance. All staff received a letter confirming how much money is outstanding to them as of September 2019.

iii) Electronic Papers

Mr G McKeown presented the Board with a paper on replacing hard copy Board papers with electronic copies. He explained the two options open to Board members;

- 1) All Board members will be issued with CRC email addresses which can be accessed through the OWA site. Papers will be emailed to Board members through this account. Any Board members who do not have access to a tablet computer will be issued with one.
- 2) CRC will procure online cloud based meeting management software. CRC will have the capital to fund it this year, but it will cost £18k over the next 6 years.

The Board agreed that the first option was preferable.

iv) Sickness and Absence Report

The Board were presented with a CRC's Sickness and Absence Report. Ms J Adamson stated that no members of staff are currently off on long term sick leave, and overall sick leave is down significantly to 1.6% when long term sick is removed.

v) LRA Report Update

Ms J Adamson presented the Board with a paper updating members on the progress made in implementing the LRA Report plan. She highlighted the following:

- The LRA Implementation Group met on Wednesday 30th October to address outstanding issues.
- CRC is currently working on a tender document to go out to third party organisations. The third party organisation appointed will create a Dignity at Work Charter in consultation with staff on dignity and equality issues.

The Chair added that he had attended the Implementation Group meeting and agreed to the following actions:

- The minutes of September's Board meeting to be amended to reflect that there are still issues to be addressed. It was noted that the Chair wanted to assure the Union and staff that the Board see the importance of resolving these issues. The Chair added that, at the Implementation Group meeting, staff advised that there was still inappropriate behaviour that had occurred since the last meeting. He added that he hoped this was not the case when the next meeting occurs.

- CRC understands that staff may be worried about making individual complaints, and is researching whether a collective complaint can be made. Ms J Adamson is looking into this. The CEO added that, where there were quite serious issues not being brought forward that leaves a vulnerability for the individual but also for the organisation, and hopefully if staff can make collective complaints, they will not feel isolated.
- The Chair intends to meet with the Senior Management Team.

ACTION: Chair to meet with Management Team.

The Board thanked Ms J Adamson for the work she has put into the Implementation of the LRA Report.
The Board stated that the staff are CRC's greatest resource.

2214/19 Funding and Development

i) Core Funding Arrangements 2020/21

Mr P Jordan presented Board members with a paper on the arrangements for the 2020/21 Core funding decision meetings.

He explained that Board members would sit on a decision panel and review the applications and recommendations for the Core funding scheme. He explained that two Board members would not attend the main decision meeting, and would instead sit on the Review Panel.

The date circulated in the paper did not suit the Chair, so Mr P Jordan suggested the 21st February 2020. The Board agreed this date, and were ask to hold it in their calendars.

Mr R Campbell stated that he would like to sit on the Review panel.

Mr J McCallister, Ms M Braniff, Ms N Tandon stated that they were happy to take part in either of the meetings, whatever Mr P Jordan needed.

Mr P Jordan added that, in case of conflict of interests, Board members would be notified ahead of the meetings of the organisations who have made applications. If a Board member has a conflict of interest, they would not be permitted to engage in that particular application discussion at the meeting. He added that, if a Board member is directly involved in an organisation that made an application for Core Funding, they would not be permitted to take part in any of the decision processes.

ACTION: Once the Core Funding application process closes, Mr P Jordan will share a list of

all applications with Board members, for them to review and declare any conflicts of interest.

The Chair asked if Board members could receive details of the aims and criteria etc of the Core Funding Scheme.

ACTION: Mr P Jordan to send Board members details of the Core Funding Scheme.

ii) Funding and Development Sector update

Mr P Jordan presented Board members with an update on the Funding and Development directorate, making particular reference to the following:

- Grant Management System is up and running
- CRC held three Core Funding information sessions for prospective applicants
- CRC have received 11 media grant applications, which have now been reviewed.
- CRC have received 7 Pathfinder bids. Funding has been awarded to East Belfast Mission and Irish School of Ecumenics.
- The Core grant scheme is in the second half of the year and CRC are making sure that groups have fully spent their projected expenditure and that they are on target.
- CRCD scheme has been extended to 17th January 2020.
- CRC will be taking part in three funding fairs in November and December;
 - o 27th Nov Cookstown
 - o 28th Nov Ballymena
 - o 2nd December Ballynahinch
- The North Belfast groups will be meeting on the 7th November, and site visits will be conducted to vouch and verify their claims.
 - o Ms M Higgins from Belfast City Council will be attending the North Belfast Shared Learning Forum meeting to speak on the issues around the interfaces in North Belfast and how the organisations can work on this together.
 - o CRC will be meeting with Mr A Cole, TEO, at the end of November to discuss joined up work.

A discussion followed on the Community Relations Cultural Diversity grant scheme.

Mr P Jordan informed the Board of the CRCD rate of acceptance, and that when an application is made, rather than reject a proposal, CRC staff would advise groups on how to make their project better and more in line with CRCD grant work. Projects funded through this grant include single identity cultural work, history visits, art projects, and hard-hitting legacy work.

The Chair suggested that the Board need to look at the CRCD Scheme to put a strategic direction in place. He noted the importance of flexibility in the scheme, but that the scheme could be more strategic than reactive.

The CEO welcomed this suggestion and a further discussion will be planned.

Mr R Campbell asked for it to be noted that he had completed pro bono work for the Horn of Africa group who had received CRCD funding.

2215/19 Audit and Risk Assurance

i) Update on Audit and Risk Committee from Mr R Campbell, Chair.

Mr R Campbell gave the following update to Board members:

- The Committee reviewed the Risk Register and decided that there had been no significant change to justify changing the 'Political' risk's classification. Therefore this risk remains 'red'.
CRC will hold a risk workshop following the Strategic Planning process.
- The Committee was presented with a paper on mitigating controls in place around the conflict of interest of staff involved in the Pay Remit process. He recommend the controls be approved by the Board.
- Minutes of the 19th September meeting. The Board noted these minutes. Mr R Campbell asked for an amendment to be made around the cyber crime prevention organisation training.
- Mr R Campbell added that he wished to stand down as ARAC Chair, but agreed to stay on until the end of the financial year.

ii) Mitigating Controls

Mr G McKeown provided Board members with a paper setting out the controls in place to ensure no conflict of interest in relation to the Pay Remit Process.

The Board approved the recommendations.

2216/19 AOB

No other business

2217/19 Date of Next Meeting

13th December 11am – Bangor – a festive lunch will be provided.