

**Minutes of Board Meeting No. 108 held on Monday 13 November 2023
at Marlborough House, Craigavon.**

Present:

Gerard McCurdy - Chair (Chief Commissioner)
Kieran Donaghy, Charity Commissioner
Patricia Kelly, Legal Commissioner
Alan Hunter, Charity Commissioner
Hugh McKeag, Charity Commissioner
Terence McGonigal, Charity Commissioner

In Attendance:

Frances McCandless, Chief Executive
Punam McGookin, Head of Charity Services
Rossa Keown, Head of Compliance and Enquiries
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services
Maeve Curley, Boardroom Apprentice
David McGurk, Minutes

Fundraising regulator presentation to follow meeting:

Gerard Oppenheim, Chief Executive
Lisa Caldwell, board member for Northern Ireland
Celia Currie, Stakeholder & Engagement Manager

Apologies:

None

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Minutes of Board Meeting 107, Monday 25 September 2023

Following discussion, the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 25 September 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record as proposed by Terence McGonigal and seconded by Kieran Donaghy. The Chief Executive outlined progress on action points since the last meeting and it was agreed to remove Action Point 106(2).

AP1: Minutes of Board Meeting No 107, Monday 25 September 2023 to be published on CCNI website.

AP2: Minor amendment to action points.

2. Conflicts of Interest

None were noted.

3. Chair's Business, Correspondence and Meetings

The Chair updated the Board on his recent meetings and correspondence and noted that following the meeting there would be a presentation from the

Fundraising Regulator. The Chair gave an update on a recent meeting with the Department regarding sponsorship of Arm's Length Bodies and the Board noted correspondence received from the Department.

4. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive introduced her report and provided an update on the budget position in the current and next financial years. The Board approved the Terms of Reference for the Performance and Development Committee as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Patricia Kelly. Commissioners noted the impact of budget reductions on staffing levels. The Chief Executive highlighted the Board Effectiveness review arrangements which were noted by the Board and the date for the Annual Public Meeting on 31 January 2024 was agreed by the Board.

5. Policies and Processes

a. 2023-26 Strategic Plan amendments

The Chief Executive introduced the plan highlighting various amendments including reflecting the Partnership and Planning Strategic group workshop outcomes. The updated draft strategic plan was agreed, subject to minor amendments, for submission to sponsor department for approval as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Terence McGonigal.

AP3: Updated draft strategic plan to be submitted to sponsor department for approval.

b. First draft of the 2024-25 Business Plan

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the plan highlighting the links with the revised strategic plan and areas for further development which the Board noted. Minor amendments were identified and the board agreed to proceed on this basis as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Terence McGonigal.

c. Fundraising Regulator consultation response

The Head of Charity Services introduced the response and outlined the importance of the Code of Fundraising Practice and highlighted the challenges to charities. The Board noted this and approved the response to the Fundraising Regulator as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Alan Hunter.

AP4: Response to Fundraising Regulator consultation to be issued.

d. Comms and engagement update

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper and outlined a range of activities noting the budget reductions made in-year due to wider budget pressures, which the Board noted.

6. Reports from Committees

Human Resources Committee

a. Minutes of meeting No 38 – 14 June 2023

Kieran Donaghy gave an overview of the most recent Human Resources (HR) Committee meeting and, following discussion, the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 14 June 2023 were approved for publication, as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Hugh McKeag.

AP5: Minutes of HR Committee No 38 – 14 June 2023 to be published on the website.

b. HR Committee Review of Terms of Reference

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the review paper and, following discussion the updated HR Committee Terms of Reference were agreed, as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Kieran Donaghy.

c. People Strategy 2023-26

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the report and the Board noted the work in developing the People Strategy 2023-26, which was agreed as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Hugh McKeag.

d. Review of Hybrid Working Policy

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the report outlining various staff survey results and discussion ensued with the Board noting the results and that the policy would to be finalised in December and in the meantime the pilot will continue, as proposed by Terence McGonigal and seconded by Alan Hunter. A review of the lone worker policy will also be progressed.

AP6: Hybrid working policy to be brought to December Board.

AP7: Lone worker policy to be updated.

e. Review of Safeguarding Policy

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the review and highlighted work to date. Following discussion, the Board agreed the committee's recommended approach to disclosures as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Alan Hunter. The finalised policy will be considered at the HR Committee meeting in December.

AP8: Finalised safeguarding policy to be considered at the December HR Committee meeting.

f. Review of Accommodation Needs

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper highlighting aspects including accommodation assumptions and lease scenarios. The Board agreed to the proposed approach and to the paper being shared with sponsor department as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Terence McGonigal.

AP9: Review of accommodation needs to be shared with sponsor department.

g. Schedule 1 Decisions

Note of Schedule 1 Committee – 22 September 2023

Decisions were noted.

Note of Schedule 1 Committee – 13 October 2023

Decisions were noted.

Commissioner registration decisions 25 September 2023

Decisions were noted.

Commissioner registration decisions 18 October 2023

Decisions were noted.

7. Charity Services Report

The Head of Charity Services introduced her report and highlighted a number of key aspects. The development of a new research strategy was discussed and Commissioners agreed to postpone any decision on a new strategy until the 2024/25 budget is known, with a mention to be included in the draft 2023/26 Strategic Plan tied to additional resources, as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Patricia Kelly. The Board agreed to leave in place current arrangements for legal advisors to be on call for Schedule 1 meetings as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Hugh McKeag. This will be reviewed again in March 2024.

AP10: research strategy to be included in the strategic plan tied to additional resources.

AP11: Legal advisors on call for Sch 1 decisions to be review in March 2024.

8. Compliance and Enquiries Report

The Head of Compliance and Enquiries introduced his report and gave an update on various cases and the current reduced levels of staff resourcing. The Board noted the current rate of filing annual reports and accounts by charities had increased to 75%.

9. Corporate Service Report

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the report and gave an update on various issues including work to recruit a new Finance and Admin Manager in the tight labour market. It was agreed the Chair would write to sponsor department highlighting issues with pay and retention associated with this post, which exposed the Commission to risk, as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Kieran Donaghy. The Board noted the update on the recent visit to the Charity Commission for England & Wales and the budget position and related bids to address pressures related to inescapable spend.

AP12: Chair to write to sponsor department regarding recruitment and retention of Staff Officer Accountant post.

10. Issues for next meeting

The Chair noted the following items to be included at the next meeting on 18 December 2023:

-Final draft 24/25 Business plan

- Legal update
- November A&RA Committee items
- Review of hospitality register

11. AOB

The Board agreed the agenda for this meeting was manageable and worked well.

Meeting ended at 12.15pm

Representatives from the Fundraising Regulator joined the meeting and gave a presentation and discussed their work.

Register of Outstanding Action Points

Board Meeting and Action Point Number	Date Raised	Agenda Item	Action	Owners	Status (target)
108(1)	13/11/2023	1	Minutes of Board Meeting No 107, Monday 23 September 2023 to be published on CCNI website.	Comms	Complete
108(2)	13/11/2023	1	Action Points on Minutes from Board Meeting No 107 to be updated.	HCorpS	Complete
108(3)	13/11/2023	5a	Updated draft of the Strategic Plan to be submitted to sponsor department for approval	HCorpS	Complete
108(4)	13/11/2023	5c	Consultation response to Fundraising Regulator to be issued.	HChS	Complete
108(5)	13/11/2023	6a	Minutes of HR Committee No 38 – 14 June 2023 to be published on the website.	Comms	Complete
108(6)	13/11/2023	6d	Hybrid working policy to be brought to December Board.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
108(7)	13/11/2023	6d	Lone Worker policy to be updated.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
108(8)	13/11/2023	6e	Finalised Safeguarding policy to be considered at the December HR Committee meeting.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
108(9)	13/11/2023	6f	Accommodation Needs to be shared with sponsor department.	HCorpS	Complete

108(10)	13/11/2023	7	Research strategy to be included in the strategic plan tied to additional resources.	HChS	Complete
108(11)	13/11/2023	7	Legal advisors on call for Sch 1 decisions to be reviewed in March 2024	HChS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
108(12)	13/11/2023	9	Chair to write to sponsor department regarding recruitment and retention of Staff Officer Accountant post	CEx/ HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(3)	25/09/2023	3	Performance and Development Committee to be set up.	CEx	Complete
107(6)	25/09/2023	5b	Amended Records Management Policy to be submitted to PRONI for sign off.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(7)	25/09/2023	5c	Further data sharing paper to November Board meeting.	HChS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(9)	25/09/2023	5d	Personal specification and job description to be drafted for Senior Legal post.	HChS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(10)	25/09/2023	5f	Legal team to pursue Board's preferred option in conjunction with sponsor department.	Legal	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(13)	25/09/2023	6d	Updated Information Security policy and information manual to be implemented.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(14)	25/09/2023	6e	Updated Governance Framework to be published on website and implemented.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(17)	25/09/2023	7	Amended Legal manual to be implemented and reviewed in one year.	HChS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
105(5)	15/05/2023	5b	Monitoring and Compliance Manual to be updated with four new compliance failure themes and related scenarios	HC&E	Ongoing (Q4 23/24)

104(2)	27/03/2023	3	Litigation to be progressed in line with legal advice.	CEx	Ongoing (Q2 23/24)
104(4)	27/03/2023	3	Commission to write to Assembly Communities Committee members regarding future plans.	Comms	Ongoing (Q4 23/24)
104(10)	27/03/2023	5c	Further training on equality for staff and Commissioners to be arranged.	HCorpsS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
102 (10)	19/12/2022	5f	Action plan including disposal schedule to be implemented.	HCorpS	Underway (Q4-23/24)
100(10)	26/09/2022	6d	Risk Workshop to be planned for later this year or early next year.	HCorpS	Underway (Q3 - 23/24)
98 (7)	16/05/2022	5e	Training in complaint handling to be arranged.	CEx/ HCorpS	Trauma element Complete
94 (3)	15/11/21	5a	Corporate Social Responsibility policy to be developed as part of the next strategic planning process.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q1-25/26) when premises known
90(8)	17/05/21	5d	Impact of the Stakeholder Forum to be measured via the Research Strategy.	HChS	Ongoing (Q4-23/24)
90(10)	17/05/21	6b	Information on other regulators' risk register approaches to be collated for Board risk workshop.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q4 - 23/24)