# **NORTHERN IRELAND TRANSPORT HOLDING COMPANY**

## Minutes of the Board Meeting

## 18 October 2023 | 9.30am | Weavers room, The Belfast Transport Hub

## PRESENT: Michael Wardlow (*Chair*)

 Chris Conway (*GCE*)

 Gordon Milligan (*GDCE*)

Edward Wills (*EW*)

Marie Mallon (*MM*)

Sharon O’Connor (*SO*)

**APOLOGIES:**  Mike Brown (*MB*)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Shauna McAuley, Acting General Counsel & Company Secretary(*GC*)

 Ronan Doherty, Acting Chief Financial Officer (*CFO*)

Jacqui Kennedy, Chief People and Corporate Services Officer (*CPCSO*)

Kerry Melville (*KM*) Boardroom Apprentice

**GROUP STATEMENT:** The Directors of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company are also the Directors of all other companies within the Group. As such they are mindful of their responsibilities and statutory duties to each. These minutes record the business of the Group meeting at which matters, factors and decisions relating to individual companies were raised and addressed.

**4235** **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted an apology from MB.

**4236** **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

**4237 MINUTES AND ACTION LIST**

The minutes from the 20 September 2023 Board meeting were formally approved and actions noted as complete with the exception of the Board members receiving the executive summary of the Section 75 report. This will be provided in advance of the next Board meeting.

**4238** **SAFETY MOMENT**

A safety moment was shared by DGCE reflecting on the fact that when someone has been involved in an accident resulting in serious injury or death, it is not just the victim that that is impacted but also others in the family home and beyond. DGCE reminded the Board of the domino effect of such incidents and the need to reach out with care and compassion to those touched by such incidents.

**4239 CHAIR AND BOARD BUSINESS**

The Chair discussed the need to return completed Register of Gifts and Hospitality and Register of Interests for review. In the absence of a Senior Independent Director, SO agreed to review the Chair’s registers as chair of BARC.

The Chair noted that he and the GCE met with the new Permanent Secretary for DfI. They updated him on the work being carried out by Translink and the challenges faced in the current climate, in particular the funding challenges. The GCE has also met with the political parties at the most senior level to ensure they are aware of the challenges and potential for strike action.

**4240 SAFETY**

The report was taken as read with the DGCE highlighting the following salient points:

1. Safety Performance Indicators: Positive trends are emerging with the reduction in staff and passenger injuries and the number of vehicle collisions stablising. A focus remains on training to reduce injuries and collisions further with a specific focus on driver training.
2. Significant/Noteworthy events: 1 low risk SPAD occurred which has been investigated and lessons learned. The Group have noted an increase in e-scooter related incidents.
3. A new suite of climate strategy KPIs have been established which track environmental performance against target in line with the Group’s climate strategy.

**ACTION:** A presentation to the Board will be arranged demonstrating the new climate strategy KPIs.

**4241 GCE REPORT**

The Board took the paper, KPIs, and Major Project Summary as read with the following matters highlighted:

1. Service operations: Punctuality of bus services continue to show positive trends although driver resource and bus availability did cause resulting delays for reliability on Metro and Glider. Punctuality for rail services continue to trend above target with flooding from Storm Agnes on the Irish Rail network causing the main issues for the period.
2. Infrastructure: Platform extensions continue to progress well as do the other major projects. DfI have however sought a reduction in the in-year budget and the business is looking to make cuts where possible.
3. Commercial operations: Translink were the official transport provider for the successful One Young World Summit. Separately, the PSNI and Translink have begun a campaign to promote safer transport particularly over the Halloween period. The GCE also drew the Board’s attention to the positive responses from the Lady Chief Justice and PPS in relation to our concerns to them regarding assaults on staff members. It has been agreed that a meeting will take place with the PPS in relation to the ongoing prosecutions. The Board welcomed the steps taken by Translink and the positive engagement from the Lady Chief Justice and PPS.

**4242 CFO REPORT**

The CFO’s report was taken as read with the following highlighted:

1. The Group’s operating loss for period 6 is adverse to budget but overall performance is in line with LBE1. Cash reserves will end the year at historical low levels and additional revenue generation activities are being implemented where possible including fare standardistion which is due to come into effect this week and a night time service in Belfast in the Christmas period.
2. Capital Expenditure: DfI have sought cuts to the 2023/24 budget and spend is being managed tightly. Difficulties however are being encountered due to the levels of already committed spend.
3. Provisions: The Board reviewed and discussed the provisions update, covering the period from 26 March 2023 – 24 September 2023.

**APPROVAL:** The Board approved the latest position on provisions and confirmed that the amounts provided represent a reasonable estimate of the probable funds outflow arising from the various categories of provision, based on the information provided to them.

**4243 CPCSO REPORT**

The CPCSO report was taken as read with the following significant matters noted:

1. Pay remit: The pay remit paper has been submitted to DfI. Translink have had a number of discussions with DfI in relation to the paper and further queries have been raised by DfI which will be responded to. DfI have also acceded to the request of the unions to meet with them to discuss the lack of a pay remit. Strike action however is anticipated.
2. Learning & Development: As part of our retention, talent and success planning, a management development programme has been established for MPT bands which includes the provision of external support from the Ulster University.
3. A cultural network event is being held on 25th October to celebrate cultural diversity within Translink.

The Board considered and discussed the retention rates within Translink. Concern was raised regarding the competition on salaries particularly from the private market and absence of a pay remit.

**ACTION:** CPCSO to provide the Board with absence figures excluding long term sickness absence.

**4244 DFI CORRESPONDENCE**

The DfI correspondence was taken as read.

**4245 INFRASTRUCTURE PRESENTATIONS**

The Director of Infrastructure presented to the Board on the ongoing Major Infrastructure Projects and a Programme over Grand Central Station, pre and post opening.

**4246 ADHOC PAPERS**

The Board considered the Draft Mid-year Assurance Statement prepared by the GCE as Accounting Officer. The Board considered at length the concerns raised by GCE as the Accounting Officer and his duty regarding managing risk and finances in light of the significant budgetary constraints and cash reserve position.

**4247 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The minutes of the POC of 19 September 2023 were taken as read.

Separately, an overview was provided in relation to the Safety Oversight Committee meeting on 17 October 2023 including the roll out of a new QR code which has been developed to enable staff members to report any concerns. The use of the code is being encouraged throughout Translink. New measures have also been established to provide a further level of control and oversight regarding the renewal and maintenance of medicals and licences for relevant employees.

**4248** **AOB**

Dfi bi-annual accountability meeting followed the Board meeting.

**4249** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

15 November 2023

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **DATE**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Chair