# **NORTHERN IRELAND TRANSPORT HOLDING COMPANY**

## Minutes of the Board Meeting

## 21 February 2024 | 9.00am | William Clegg Room, Malone House, Barnett Demesne, Belfast

## PRESENT: Michael Wardlow (Chair)

Chris Conway (*GCE*)

Edward Wills (*EW*)

Marie Mallon (*MM*)

Sharon O’Connor (*SO*)

Mike Brown (*MB*)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ronan Doherty, *Acting Chief Financial Officer* (*CFO*)

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

Priscilla Rooney, *General Counsel & Company Secretary* (*GC*)

David Cowan, *Director of Commercial Operations* (DC)

John Glass, *Director of Infrastructure and Projects* (JG)

Ian Campbell, *Director of Service Operations* (IC)

**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.

**4277** **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed members and the Senior Leadership Team to the meeting and noted no apologies.

**4278** **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

**4279 MINUTES AND ACTION LIST**

The minutes from the 17 January 2024 meeting were approved and actions to remain open.

**4280** **SAFETY MOMENT**

The CFO shared a personal safety moment with the Board reflecting on the potential safety risks caused by wet conditions, and lack of focus.

**4281 CHAIR AND BOARD BUSINESS**

The Chair noted the return of the Executive and the appointment of the new Minister for Infrastructure, John O’Dowd.

The GCE advised members that the Group awaited the allocation of funding coming from the Department, for the employee pay award but, in the meantime, the team would continue to liaise with DfI in respect of an early resolution in the hope of averting further planned strike action.

**4282 SAFETY**

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

1. Safety Performance Indicators: There were no major injuries in the period and passenger injuries remain below target, both of which reflect a downward trend in the last quarter. Statutory Reportable Events increased this period however 4 were minor employee injuries leading to 3 day absence and the other a staff assault. The Board were assured by the positive downward trend in injuries during the period.

EW gave the Board an update on the Safety Oversight Committee meeting, advising that IC provided an overview on safety incidents and improvement initatives across the organisation, and was encouraged at the level of activity going on across the Group in this regard.

GCE also advised the Board on the recent renewal of the Rail Safety Certificate from DfI/ORR and CRR, which certified the safety of the railway for the next 5 years.

**4283 GCE REPORT**

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

1. Financials: Group received an additional allocation from DfI of £0.9m in resource funding and £5.5m in capital funding related to flood remediation. The Chair commented this was positive action which reflected the confidence the Department has in the Group.
2. Passenger Journeys: Journeys were 1.5m below budget, largely due to industrial action in December and January. The Board discussed the ‘tail effect’ of industrial action and the CFO reinforced that this was the case as it impacts passengers view on the dependability of the service and on a wider scale, it impacted the local economy as footfall was significantly down.

EW opened discussion on the Metro bus delays which he experienced that morning. IC assured him that the Group had a team dedicated to reviewing the reliability and punctuality of Metro, alongside an external review of proposals to improve the timetable which would focus on ‘on time’ performance and fleet reliability. SOC noted the considerable challenges for Metro bus drivers in terms of the lack of bus priority. IC updated the Board on the ongoing Strategic Partnership Board with DfI, which was a forum to discuss these types of issues.

**ACTION:** GCE to share a summary of the Metro Performance plan to the Board.

**4284 CFO REPORT**

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

1. Period 10: The Group’s operating loss for the period is £0.2 better than LBE 2. This includes savings in costs primarily due to the industrial action offset by commercial income and an increase in the DfI concession income drawn down. The CFO also noted that the Group successfully appealed a rating reassessment of ratings values across its park and ride sites.

**4285 CPCSO REPORT**

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

1. Employee Relations: Trade Unions met with the Minister for Infrastructure, the Permanent Secretary and DfI. The Minister gave his assurance that resolving the public sector pay issues was his priority. The Group await confirmation of the allocation from DfI.

**4286 DFI CORRESPONDENCE**

The DfI correspondence was taken as read.

**4287 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Minutes of the meetings of the POC held on 16 January 2024 was noted and taken as read.

MB updated the Board on the POC meeting held on 20 February, in particular:

* Strategic Outline Business Case relating to the Portrush line.
* The next meeting of the POC was to be held at Weavers Cross Project office as its focus would be on the completion of Grand Central Station.
* MB joined GCE and DC on a call with the Ticketing solutions supplier, Flowbird, to emphasise the criticality of ensuring the challenges in the project were expedited and promptly managed, and to agree a timeframe for meeting milestones.

**4288** **AOB**

The Board annual Strategy Day to begin shortly after the Board meeting and Kerry Melville (the boardroom apprentice) was attending.

**4289** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

20 March 2024



**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **DATE**: \_\_\_\_\_18/4/2024\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chair