# **NORTHERN IRELAND TRANSPORT HOLDING COMPANY**

## Minutes of the Board Meeting

## 19 June 2024 | 9.30am | Boardroom, 22 Great Victoria Street, Belfast

## PRESENT: Michael Wardlow (Chair)

Chris Conway (*GCE*)

Marie Mallon (*MM*)

Sharon O’Connor (*SO*)

Mike Brown (*MB*)

Edward Wills (*EW*) (*via Microsoft Teams*)

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

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

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

Lisa Ross, *Executive Assistant (LR)*

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

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

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

Kerry Melville, *Boardroom Apprentice (KM)*

**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.

**4331** **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and noted apologies.

**4332** **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

**4333 MINUTES AND ACTION LIST**

The minutes from the 15 May 2024 meeting were approved. Actions 4308(v) and 4329 will remain open.

**4334** **SAFETY MOMENT**

MM shared a personal safety moment with the Board reflecting on the importance of overcoming human nature and complacency, and our instinct to take risks with our own health and safety.

**4335 CHAIR & BOARD BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that he had received Gifts and Hospitality Registers and Register of Interests for everyone for the period October 2023 – March 2024, and confirmed that he was satisfied that all was in order. SO confirmed that she had inspected the Chair’s Registers for the same period and confirmed that they were in order.

The Chair provided an update on discussions he had with DfI regarding the recruitment campaign to appoint three Non-Executive Members to the Board.

**4336 SAFETY**

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

1. Safety Performance Indicators: There were 4 statutory reportable incidents during this period. There was a SPAD event involving a train at Portadown Yard/Central Junction, with minor damage to the train and no injuries, and 2 minor reportable staff injuries.

IC provided a detailed update on the SPAD which occurred on 18 May. The SPAD risk ranking is low, with no injuries or damage to rolling stock. Investigations into the SPAD are continuing.

1. A successful SH&E Conference took place on 2 May. The theme of the conference was ‘Driving Positive Safety Culture’ highlighting the role of leadership to influence and inspire safe behaviours. The keynote speaker from PSNI spoke about the ‘Fatal 5’ and safety leadership in practice. The event included the roll out of a number of learning modules around safety principles and safety cultures.
2. GCE provided a brief on attendance at the DfI Committee for Infrastructure meeting on 29 May, where he and IC presented on Public Transport Safety in NI and Translink’s Safety Initiatives. The meeting was hosted at the Group offices at BGCS and included a viewing of the model and a visit to the viewing gallery.
3. MB commented on the Great Victoria Street/Grosvenor Road/Howard Street junction roadworks and raised concern on the misuse by car users of the yellow box junction, highlighting the need for better enforcement. GCE advised that he would raise this issue with senior PSNI representatives at the next BGCS Gold Group meeting.

**4337 GCE REPORT**

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

1. Service Operations: Period 2 bus punctuality levels reached target across all

divisions. Ulsterbus reliability achieved target for the period, however Metro and Glider missed target, impacted by traffic congestion and roadworks across Belfast.  In addition, Metro and Glider depots experienced some driver availability issues which impacted on reliability performance – this position has subsequently improved. Rail performance overall was strong in the period, with punctuality and reliability targets both met.

1. Infrastructure and Projects: The report highlighted that Lisburn Area Renewals site works will complete in July 2024.

GCE advised that a bid for June monitoring round has been submitted for £40m.

The Board discussed the recent media attention in relation to the perceived fare disparity between Translink and Irish Rail on the Enterprise service.

1. Commercial Operations: DC updated on the successful events surrounding the marking of the closure of Great Victoria Street Station. DC referred to the large volume of work currently taking place by the Passenger Information and Design Teams surrounding the communications for the changes to services on 1 July. DC advised on the new schedule and timetable for Metro corridors 3, 4 and 5 introduced on 13 May using data derived from the CitySwift project.

(iv) Legal & Governance:

Board noted the final Accounting Officer Annual Assurance Statement, and also the Annual Information Governance Assurance report for information.

1. Major Projects:

GCE provided a detailed update on BGCS track works. MM referred to Weavers Cross and the opportunities for social value projects and GCE confirmed that discussions had commenced with the surrounding communities and that the social value work already achieved during the construction of BGCS would continue into the WX regeneration project.

**4338 CFO REPORT**

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

1. 2024/25 Budget and Outline Corporate Plan:

CFO presented to the Board on changes/amendments made to the Corporate Plan, (revised to take account of initial DfI resource funding) and following DfI’s request for a revised Plan. The revised Plan was provided to DfI on 18 June, with the proviso that approval would be sought from Board. Board approved the approach taken and thanked the Finance team for all of their hard work.

**4339 CPCSO REPORT**

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

1. Employee Relations: With the exception of Train Drivers, all other staff groups have accepted the 2023/24 pay offer and the pay award has been implemented. Train Drivers had voted for further industrial action in a recent ballot, however, following discussions with Trade Union Officials, industrial action has been suspended. Talks are continuing with the Train Driver committee this week to seek to find a resolution of the pay dispute.

The Chair recognised the success of colleagues leading and involved in the wage negotiations and expressed the Board’s thanks to the team.

**4340 DFI CORRESPONDENCE**

The DfI correspondence was taken as read.

**4341 AD HOC PAPERS**

The Board noted and approved the Annual Report and Accounts which comprised:

* + Group Annual Report and Accounts
  + Trading Subsidiary Accounts for NITHC, Northern Ireland Railways Company, Ulsterbus, Citybus
  + Non-Trading Subsidiary Accounts for Flexibus Limited, NIR Networks Limited, Translink (NI) Limited
  + Letters of Representation in support of Financial Statements
  + Hi-Park Rental Calculation 2023/24
  + Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report 2023/24

The Board thanked the CFO and Finance Team for their diligent work in completing the accounts.

**APPROVAL:** The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts (as set out above).

**4342 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Minutes of the meetings of the POC held on 14 May, GRPC on 19 June, and BARC on 22 April and 17 June (summary) were noted and taken as read.

**4343** **AOB**

Suzanne Sinclair, Biodiversity Manager, presented on Translink’s new Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2030. The Board thanked Suzanne for a very interesting and informative insight into our commitment to sustainable travel and our important role in connecting people with our natural environment.

**4344** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

21 August 2024.

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

Chair