

**THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH MEETING OF THE GENERAL CONSUMER
COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND HELD
ON FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER 2020 AT 10.00AM VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL**

307/1

ATTENDANCE

Ms Sheila McClelland	Chair
Mr Mick McAteer	Deputy Chair
Mrs June Butler	
Ms Noyona Chundur	
Ms Lynne Crowther	
Dr Sinead Furey	
Dr Joan Martin	
Mr Gerry McCurdy	
Mr Alan O'Neill	

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs Carmel McConville	Interim Chief Executive (Except agenda item 307/9.1)
Mr Scott Kennerley	Director of Illegal Money Lending and Financial Services (Except agenda item 307/9.1)
Mr William Warke	Director of HR and Business Transformation (Except agenda item 307/9.1)
Mrs Lisa Braniff	Senior Officer, Finance (Agenda Item 307/7.1)
Mr Richard Williams	Head of Transport (Agenda item 307/8.2)
Mrs Fiona Lavery	Personal Assistant (Except agenda items 307/9.1)

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

307/2

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Chair advised Board Members that any conflict of interest relating to agenda items should be recorded at the beginning of Council meetings. Should a Board Member have a conflict of interest

they should leave the meeting at that particular agenda item and the minutes would reflect this.

She explained the Chair would have the ability to define a conflict of interest and requested Board Members' compliance if this arose.

No Board Members declared a conflict of interest on any agenda item.

307/3 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2020, which had been circulated, were agreed as a true and correct record.

The Minutes were agreed and signed.

307/4 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

307/5 **CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS**

307/5.1 Any Chair's Business

There was no other Chair's Business discussed.

307/6 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS**

307/6.1 Update of Brexit Negotiations

The Interim Chief Executive reminded Board Members that the outcome of the current Brexit negotiations was still unknown and ongoing. She stated that where possible, social media was being updated with confirmed guidance, for example guidance on travel to the Republic of Ireland, and guidance on travel with pets.

307/6.2 Corporate Plan 2021-2026

The Chair thanked Board Members, Noyona Chundur and Mick McAteer and the Wider Leadership Team for their work on the Draft Corporate Plan.

The Interim Chief Executive stated that following discussion at the previous Board Meeting, the Corporate Plan would cover the period 2021-2024. She informed Board Members that the Wider Leadership Team had liaised with stakeholders and collated knowledge and intelligence and incorporated it into the plan.

After discussion, Board Members confirmed that they were satisfied with the content of the plan, and it was agreed that the Interim Chief Executive would incorporate all the additional comments into the document, which would then be reviewed by the new Chief Executive over the Christmas period.

It was also agreed that Board Members would give the document a final review before going into the public domain for consultation.

Board Members agreed that the vision of The Consumer Council should be: “To be the go-to organisation for accurate and insightful consumer intelligence in Northern Ireland, informing decision making, and making a difference for consumers”. They also confirmed that they were content with the current Mission Statement.

307/6.3 Draft Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022

The Chair stated that the Forward Work Programme 2021/2022 would be delivered by the business cases that had already been approved by Board, and that it would come to Board after Christmas.

307/6.4 The Chief Executive’s Report

The interim Chief Executive presented the Chief Executive’s Report, and informed Board Members that a mail out campaign would take

place in the New Year detailing the areas in which The Consumer Council could help consumers.

Board Members noted the Chief Executive's Report.

307/7 **FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

307/7.1 **Management Accounts for month ending 30 November 2020**

The Chair welcomed the Interim Head of Finance to the meeting who presented the Management Accounts for the month ending 30 November 2020 and highlighted the key issues for Board Members' information.

Board Members approved the Management Accounts for month ending 30 November 2020.

307/8 **POLICY/STRATEGY**

307/8.1 **Transport Business Case**

The Head of Transport presented the Transport Business Case setting out the proposals for projects and ongoing work for 2021/2022. He stated that the budget required would come from core budget for delivery of Transport policy and research work.

In response to Board Member Mick McAteer, the Interim Chief Executive stated that value for money for airport advertising would be reviewed and re-evaluated next year.

In response to Board Member Gerry McCurdy, the Interim Chief Executive stated that external expertise was being procured for the Communications Strategy and that a paper would be brought back to Board.

It was agreed that the tender document would be forwarded to Board Member Noyona Chundur.

The Head of Transport answered the Chair's queries, and following discussion, Board Members approved the Transport Business Case.

It was also agreed that a more standardised format of all Business Cases would be brought to Board next year.

307/8.2 Empowerment, Protection and Insight Business Case

The Interim Chief Executive presented the Empowerment and Protection Business Case to Board Members and stated that the budget required would come from core budget for delivery of outreach and educational work.

In response to Board Member Mick McAteer's enquiry with regards to external funding to lead insight projects, Board Member Noyona Chundur suggested submitting signature projects, in collaboration with the universities, for sponsorship from the Department for the Economy.

After discussion, Board Members approved the Empowerment, Protection and Insight Business Case, and agreed to proceed with reviewing the resources needed following submission of signature projects for sponsorship with the Department for the Economy.

307/8.3 Financial Services Business Case

The Director of Financial Services presented the Financial Services Business Case and outlined the proposal for Illegal Money Lending projects and ongoing work for 2021/22. He stated that in order to execute the Illegal Money Lending roles and responsibilities, The Consumer Council was requesting funding of £685,863 from HM Treasury.

In response to Board Member Mick McAteer, it was agreed that the point "to advocate on behalf of consumers" should be brought more to the forefront, and that an attempt should be made to acquire more funding for work on Financial Services.

Board Members approved the Illegal Money Lending Business Case subject to the amendment the bullet point “to advocate on behalf of consumers”.

307/8.4 Alternative Lending Pilot Proposal

The Director of Financial Services reminded Board members of the presentation on Alternative Lending Pilot Proposal at the Policy Meeting on 17 December, and sought approval to continue to pursue funding for the Alternative Lending Pilot.

After discussion, Board Members agreed that funding should be pursued for the Alternative Lending Pilot.

307/9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

All officers with the exception of the Interim Chief Executive and the Director of HR and Business Transformation left the meeting at this point.

307/9.1 Review of the Meeting

The Interim Chief Executive and the Director of HR and Business Transformation left the meeting at this point.

The Chair sought feedback on the meeting, papers and presentations. The Board members were very content and commended the Interim Chief Executive in having continued to run the organisation and deliver high quality papers throughout her time in the post.

307/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Friday 12 February 2021 at 10am via either Zoom Conference or physical venue, subject to COVID-19 restrictions.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 12.45pm.

Signed _____

Date _____