



**Minutes of the Council meeting held at MacNeice House, Belfast
Wednesday 9 July 2008 at 5.30pm**

PRESENT

Rosemary Kelly (Chairman), Eithne Benson, Kate Bond, Raymond Fullerton, David Irvine, Tony Kennedy, Ian Montgomery, Sharon O'Connor, Joe Rice, Brian Sore, Peter Spratt, Janine Walker

IN ATTENDANCE

Roisin McDonough (Chief Executive)
Paul Burns (Director of Corporate Services)
Lorraine McDowell (Director of Operations)
Claire Robinson (Executive Assistant to the Council)

APOLOGIES

Damien Coyle (Vice Chairman), Bill Montgomery, Paul Seawright, Philip Hammond (Director of Arts Support), Nick Livingston (Director of Strategic Development) and Noirin McKinney (Director of Arts Development)

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1.1 11 June 2008*

The minute of the previous meeting was approved by Council and signed by the Chairman.

1.2 17 June 2008

The minute of Council's private session held on 17 June 2008 was approved and signed by the Chairman.

2 MATTERS ARISING

2.1 11 June 2008

Pages 3 & 4, Item 5 – Presentation

The Chairman of the Culture & Arts Committee and Festival Advisory Board had been inaccurately recorded as John O'Kane. This would be corrected to James O'Kane.

Page 4, Item 6.5 – CAL Committee

The Chief Executive advised Council that she had met with David McNarry, Vice Chair of the CAL Committee.

Page 5, Item 8.3 – Exchequer Accounts 2007/08

Paul Burns, Director of Corporate Services told Council that the Exchequer Accounts for 2007/08 had been laid before the Assembly on 3 July 2008.

Page 6, Item 8.5 – Communications Report

Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations updated Council on the response from the Pride of Ardoyne Band to an article published in the Irish News.

2.2 17 June 2008

There were no matters arising from the minute.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were noted for Tony Kennedy in relation to the Market Place Theatre and Kate Bond with regard to the Dance Strategy.

4 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

4.9 Chairman's Priorities

The Chairman highlighted priority items for the meeting as the Capital Infrastructure Report. She also highlighted that item 6.7 Business Planning & Performance Measurement would be returned to at a future Council meeting with a recommendation from the Policy & Planning Committee.

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman referred to matters discussed at the Council's recent private session and indicated that she would discuss the way forward with the Chief Executive.

With regard to the issues raised in the Staff Survey which Council had discussed at length, the Chief Executive agreed that staff should be made aware that Council and the executive were giving considerable thought to the Staff Survey and would return to them with a formal response on the matter. A combined response would be considered by the Staffing & Remuneration Committee.

The Chairman had also chaired the panel which had appointed Billy Lyttle, as the new co-opted member to the Finance Committee along with the Vice Chair, Damien Coyle and Paul Burns, Director of Corporate Services. A short biography of the new member was provided.

She confirmed that all appraisals had been completed and sent to DCAL. The Chair's Review had also been completed and discussed with the Deputy Secretary, Edgar Jardine, who had also signed off on the Chair's appraisal of the Chief Executive and the recommendations of the Remuneration Committee.

Since the last meeting the Chairman had attended a meeting of a leadership group for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad chaired by Minister, Gregory Campbell, MP MLA. She outlined the membership and purpose of the group and highlighted the potential benefit to Northern Ireland. She also noted the need for Council to be kept up to date on progress in this area.

The Chairman had also attended the last in a series of BBC Audience Council consultation evenings.

She referred to the second review of public service broadcasting presently being carried out by Ofcom and noted that the Communications Manager, Grainne McCann had submitted material to the early part of the review, and that a meeting had been scheduled for the end of September to discuss the final submission. She also emphasised the need to ensure a strong turnout at any meetings which might be arranged by Ofcom in Northern Ireland.

The recent bill on equality and rights for older people was mentioned and the Chairman requested an update on the current position on this.

4.2 Meetings and Events to 10 September 2008*

Meeting dates up to the 10 September were noted. Lottery & Grants Committee would meet on 2 September 2008 and Finance & Capital Committee on the 4 September 2008. A meeting of Committee Chairmen was also scheduled prior to Council meeting on 10 September 2008 at 3.30pm.

4.3 Attendance Record*

The attendance records were noted.

4.4 ACNI Board's Annual Work Plan 2007/08*

The 2007/08 work plan was noted. The new work plan for 2008/09 would be considered later in the meeting.

4.5 Complaints and Reviews Update*

No complaints and reviews had been received since the Council meeting in June.

4.6 Freedom of Information (Fol) Update*

Two Fol requests had been received. The Director of Operations, Lorraine McDowell outlined the requests and advised Council that the relevant information had been provided.

4.7 Action List arising from Council meeting of 11 June 2008*

The action list was noted. Information on Youth Lyric and OMAC was provided in the papers for the meeting.

4.8 Register of Hospitality and Events*

Council members were asked to continue to provide details of attendance at relevant arts events for the register as it provided a rounded view of Council's activities.

5 PRESENTATION – Consultants Update on Ormeau Baths Gallery FOI Exemption Section 43: Commercial Interest

6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT *

The Chief Executive spoke to the report circulated.

6.1 Venice Biennale

Interviews for the curator had taken place and Karen Downey, Manager of Belfast Exposed Exhibitions had been appointed. The chosen artist was Susan MacWilliam. The appointment had been well received by the sector. The Chief Executive said that the venue for the exhibition had not yet been confirmed but she was hopeful that it would be the same as in the previous year.

6.2 Re-imaging Communities

The Chief Executive indicated there was nothing further to disclose. She referred to the management of the transition to the next stage of the programme and indicated she was awaiting meetings with Minister Ritchie and the Good Relations Panel.

6.3 Cultural Olympiad & Legacy Trust

Council noted the applications received for consideration and approval by the Legacy Trust.

6.4 Youth Lyric Update

The update on Youth Lyric was noted. The Chief Executive highlighted the possibility of links between Youth Lyric and the Lyric Theatre being re-established. The Arts Development Officer for Dance would approach both parties on the issue and report back to the Council.

6.5 Grand Opera House

FOI Exemption Section 43: Commercial Interest

6.6 Creative Industries Seed Fund

The interim report circulated was noted by Council. The Chief Executive said that a full report on the second aspect of the work, development of operational framework, would be taken to the Policy & Planning committee for consideration and recommendation before being brought to Council.

6.7 Business Planning & Performance Measurement

It was agreed that this item would be considered by the Policy & Planning Committee before coming to Council at a future meeting.

6.8 Other Business

The Chief Executive updated Council on a recent meeting with John D'Arcy, Chairman and Steven Hadley, Chief Executive of Audiences NI (ANI). She indicated that response to their recent tour of the province had been positive, that membership had increased and that there were currently no issues on financial viability. She proposed that ANI should address Council at its October meeting once the new Chairman was in place and the new business plan had been finalised.

6.9 Meetings & Events

The meetings and events attended by the Chief Executive since the last meeting were noted.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive for her report.

7 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

7.1 Consultant's Report on Dance Strategy*

Kate Bond left the meeting during discussion of the Dance Strategy. Joe Rice left the room. Council was advised that the Policy & Planning Committee had considered the Dance Strategy at its meeting on the 12 June 2008. The report was discussed and clarification on the implementation process and associated costs was requested. Reference was made to partnership working and the exclusion of education in this area. The potential for partnership within education in the future was noted. Joe Rice rejoined the meeting.

The Chief Executive responded to queries and referred to the appendix which highlighted the recommended actions and resource implications. She indicated that the appropriateness of actions and achievability of the proposals within resources available had been assessed and it was currently anticipated that expenditure would not exceed the funds originally allocated. Funding for the project would be ring fenced. She said that once the consultant's report had been approved by Council the executive would develop implementation proposals. These would be taken through the Policy & Planning committee prior to coming to Council at its October meeting.

Council agreed in principal to the recommendations on condition that any changes relating to resources would be brought back for consideration. **The recommendation of the Policy & Planning Committee was acknowledged and the consultant's report on the Dance Strategy was approved.**

Kate Bond rejoined the meeting. Brian Sore left the meeting.

7.2 Advocacy/Media Strategy*

Council was advised that the Policy & Planning Committee had considered the Advocacy & Media Strategy at its meeting on the 12 June 2008. The documents were considered and Council concurred with the recommendation of the Committee. Comments made regarding resources available to carry out the work required were noted. The Chief Executive said that the work in this area was ongoing and would be undertaken over the coming year with the assistance of the newly appointed Public Affairs Officer. She believed resources available were adequate but agreed to monitor the situation. Brian Sore rejoined the meeting.

The Chairman praised the Communications Manager on the quality of work produced and commended the communications team. Peter Spratt raised some concern about the staffing levels in the Communications team and the Chairman noted the work load in developing new messages for 2008/09 on top of re-branding which might be affected. The importance of engagement with the sector and encouraging their support was also emphasised.

The Chief Executive indicated that new messages for 2008/09 were being considered at present and that proposals would be brought to Council as soon as possible.

Council accepted the recommendation of the Policy & Planning Committee and approved the Advocacy/Media Strategy.

7.3 Capital Infrastructure Report*

Paul Burns left the meeting. The Chairman highlighted the executive's recommendation as outlined in the paper circulated.

FOI Exemption Section 43: Commercial Interest

Paul Burns rejoined meeting.

7.4 Council/Committee Dates & Work Plan for 2008/09*

The Chairman referred Council to the paper circulated. It was noted that the Acquisitions Committee would meet on 29 May 2009 and not 25 March 2009 as listed. The Chief Executive commented on the proximity of the Council meeting and Performance Review in March 2009 in relation to the preparation and circulation of papers. Council was made aware that there would be no formal Council meeting as was usual at the end of Performance Review, only matters of urgency would be addressed.

Council approved the meeting dates and work plan for 2008/09.

8 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & NOTING

8.1 Delegated Decisions*

The delegated decisions for SIAP, Travel Awards and Awards for All were noted by Council.

8.2 Budget Update*

Paul Burns, Director of Corporate Services, referred to the notes of the monthly management accounts for the period ended 30 June 2008. He indicated that the exchequer accounts for 2007/08 had been completed in line with the early closure requirements set by DFP and DCAL and had received a clean audit from the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The delay anticipated in laying the accounts before the Assembly's summer recess had not occurred and the accounts had gone to the Assembly on 3 July 2009. He also said that the early closure of the accounts had been beneficial in giving a much clearer picture of the year's finances to date. No issues arose and Council accepted the accounts.

Brian Sore, Chairman of the new Finance and Capital committee accepted the Director of Corporate Services offer to meet with committee members to discuss the accounts and other financial issues.

8.3 EFQM Assessment Report*

Paul Burns, Director of Corporate Services, gave background to the EFQM assessment process and indicated that the organisation had achieved the bronze award. He said that a review process and an action plan had been put in place and work towards the silver award was underway. Council acknowledged the achievement, noted that the next level was well within reach and encouraged further action to attain the silver award.

8.4 Artists Response to Troubles Update*

In the absence of the Director of Arts Development, Noirin McKinney, the Chief Executive summarised the work undertaken to date and took questions on the progress report circulated.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive for the update. Council voiced its concern that the report did not contain any information which addressed the questions raised in the wide ranging discussion of the project which Council had had at its meeting in January 2008. The subject had been discussed in depth and the view taken that the project had the potential and capacity to provide something quite visionary. The Chairman indicated that without clear focus, a schedule of development and a fully costed business plan it would be difficult to justify future funding. She reiterated Council's request that a fully developed business plan be presented for approval.

9 COMMITTEES

9.1 Acquisitions Committee – verbal update of meeting on 20 June 2008

In the absence of the Committee Chairman, Bill Montgomery an update of pertinent points from the meeting was presented by Peter Spratt. He drew Council's attention to the recommendation of the Committee to uplift the current budget and outlined the reasons behind the request. He indicated that a formal paper would be prepared and circulated to Council for consideration at its September meeting. In addition, he asked for Council's approval to appoint a new co-opted member to the committee following the resignation of Karl Harron. The committee had selected a potential candidate from the formal list of advisors and proposed that Colin Darke be approached.

Council was content that in line with best practice the new co-opted member had been selected from the list of advisors and approved the selection of Colin Darke.

It awaited the formal paper requesting a budget uplift for the Acquisitions Committee.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Visit of Minister Gregory Campbell

The Chairman made Council aware that the Minister's diary secretary had confirmed that new DCAL Minister, Gregory Campbell MP MLA had agreed to visit the Arts Council on Wednesday 10 September 2008. Details of the programme for the visit would be circulated at later date.

10.2 Business Cards for Council Members

The Chairman noted that business cards would be ordered for Council colleagues who completed and returned the appropriate form to the Executive Assistant.

10.3 Media Press Coverage

East Antrim papers and Londonderry Centinel would be included in any future media press coverage.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Council would be held in MacNeice House on **Wednesday 10 September 2008** at 5pm.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

RESERVED MATTERS:

FOI Exemption Section 43:

Commercial Interest

Item 5, pg 3; Item 6.5, pg 4; Item 6.8, pg 4
Item 7.3, pg 5

Signed: _____
**Rosemary Kelly
(Chairman)**

Date: _____
10 September 2008