**TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE GENERAL CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND HELD AT THE CONSUMER COUNCIL, SEATEM HOUSE, 28 – 32 ALFRED STREET, BELFAST, BT2 8EN, ON TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2018.**

**284/1 ATTENDANCE**

Ms Sheila McClelland Chair

Mr Mick McAteer Deputy Chair

Ms Lynne Crowther

Mrs Mary Woods

Ms Noyona Chundur

Dr Joan Martin

Mr Sam Snodden

Mr David Galloway

Mr David Beattie

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr John French Chief Executive (Except agenda items 284/9.1 and 284/9.2)

Mrs Sinead Dynan Director of Regulated Industries (Except agenda items 284/9.1 and 284/9.2)

Dr Catriona MacArthur Director of Consumer Insight, Empowerment and Protection (Except agenda items 284/9.1 and 284/9.2)

Ms Joanne Akkaya Accounts Assistant (Except agenda items 284/9.1 and 284/9.2)

Ms Paula McCann Head of Finance (Agenda items 284/7.2)

Mr Douglas Hogg FCA Secondee (Agenda item 284/8.1)

Mr Andrew Reeves Insight Placement Student (Agenda item 284/8.2)

Mrs Dervla Kearney Head of Insight (Agenda item 284/8.2)

Miss Annie-Rose Communications Placement Student

Mulholland (Agenda item 284/8.2)

Miss Jenny Robinson Senior Transport Policy Officer (Agenda item 284/8.4 – 284/8.8)

Mr Richard Williams Head of Energy (Agenda item 284/8.5)

Miss Kellin McCloskey Head of Post (Agenda item 284/8.6

Mr Graham Smith Head of Energy (Agenda item 284/8.7)

Mrs Fiona Lavery Personal Assistant (Except agenda items 284/9.1 and 284/9.2)

**APOLOGIES**

Dr Sinead Furey

**284/2 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.

**284/3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the two hundred and eighty third meeting, which had been circulated, were proposed by David Galloway and seconded by Sam Snodden.

The Minutes were agreed and signed.

**284/4 Matters arising**

The Matters Arising were noted.

**284/5 CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS**

284/5.1 Review of Brexit Negotiations

The Chair informed Board Members that the Chief Executive would be providing evidence to The House of Lords EU Select Committee on Brext: UK-Irish Relations on Wednesday 31 January 2018.

The Chair also referred Board Members to the letter of response, that had been tabled, from Andrew Griffiths MP and Robin Walker MP following their receipt of the Brexit papers that had been produced by The Consumer Council.

284/5.2 Any Other Chair’s Business

284/5.2.1 The Chair stated that shortlisting of the 54 applications received for the replacement Members was on-going.

There was no other Chair’s business.

**284/6 Chief Executive’s Business**

284/6.1 The Chief Executive’s Report

The Director of Regulated Industries briefed Board Members on issues surrounding Energy, Postal Services, Transport, and Water and Sewerage.

After discussion it was agreed to confer with CMA regarding the absence of a regulation framework for utilities post Brexit.

The Director of Consumer Insight, Empowerment and Protection briefed Board Members on issues surrounding Communications, Consumer Insight, and Consumer Empowerment and Protection, and suggested that in future outcomes should be reported rather than outputs.

After discussion it was agreed that a proposal would be brought back to Board Members on reporting on outcomes rather than outputs for Consumer Protection.

Board Members noted the Chief Executive’s Report.

284/6.2 Forward Work Programme 2017-18 Progress Report (Quarter 3)

The Chief Executive presented the Forward Work Programme 2017-18 Progress Report for Quarter 3 to Board Members.

The Forward Work Programme Progress Report for Quarter 3 was approved.

284/6.3 The Consumer Council’s Statutory, Regulatory and Public Bodies Duties and Memorandums of Understanding

The Chief Executive presented the depth and range of The Consumer Council’s Statutory, Regulatory and Public Bodies and Memorandums of Understanding to Board Members.

Members approved this report.

284/6.4 Members’ Code of Conduct

The Chief Executive referred Board Members to the Members’ Code of Conduct.

After discussion, the Members’ Code of Conduct was approved and it was agreed that it should be circulated annually.

284/6.5 Any Other Chief Executive’s Business

The Chief Executive referred to the Response to the Northern Ireland Budgetary Outlook Briefing Paper which had been tabled for Board Members’ information.

**284/7 Finance and Governance**

284/7.1 Corporate Risk Register Progress Report Quarter 3

The Chief Executive informed Board Members that the Corporate Risk Register Progress Report for Quarter 3 had already been approved by the Audit and Risk Committee.

This report was also approved by Board.

284/7.2 Management Accounts for the month ending 31 December 2017

The Head of Finance presented the Management Accounts for the month ending 31 December 2017 and highlighted the key issues arising.

After discussion, Board Members approved the Management Accounts for the month ending 31 December 2017.

**284/8 POLICY/STRATEGY**

284/8.1GB vs NI Insurance Market

The FCA Secondee presented the drafted research paper on GB vs NI Insurance Market to Board Members and highlighted concerning practices in the home, motor, travel and health insurance markets in NI.

Board Members congratulated the FCA Secondee on his paper and the evidence gathered, and after discussion, it was agreed that the paper would be published on line, and that a meeting would be held with the CEO of the FCA to discuss all of the research papers.

284/8.2 Consumer Council Cost Index

The Insight Placement Student presented the Consumer Council Cost Index to Board Members.

Following discussion, Board Members concurred that the report was very good, and agreed that it should be promoted, and findings shared with others who could endorse it in the public domain.

284/8.3 Consumer Parliament

The Director of Consumer Empowerment and Protection updated Board Members on the proposed programme for the Consumer Parliament event on 23 March 2018.

After discussion, it was agreed that staff should be encouraged to attend the event, but that a skeleton staff should remain at the office for cover.

284/8.4 Translink and Stenaline Access Audit Reports

The Senior Transport Policy Officer presented the findings of the Access Audits for Translink and Stenaline.

The Director of Regulated Industries informed Board Members that The Consumer Council received a Belfast Healthy Cities Award for this work.

Board Members congratulated the team on their achievement and this report was approved.

284/8.5 Energy Business Case

Noyona Chundur left the meeting at this point.

The Head of Energy presented the Energy Business Case, which had been tabled, to Members and informed them that in order to fulfil its role to represent consumers on energy issues, The Consumer Council was requesting funding of £453,874 from the Department for the Economy (DfE) for the 2018-19 programme.

After discussion, the Energy Business Case was approved subject to slight project changes.

284/8.6 Postal Services Business Case

The Head of Postal Services informed Members that the Postal Services functions of the Consumer Council are funded by Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). She stated that in order to secure adequate resource for the Postal Services role, The Consumer Council was requesting £289,494 from BEIS.

Having discussed the report, Members approved the Postal Services Business Case.

284/8.7 Water Business Case

The Head of Water stated that The Consumer Council’s Water functions were funded by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). He stated that in order to execute the water roles and responsibilities, The Consumer Council was requesting funding of £302K from DfI for 2018/19.

After discussion, Members approved the Business Case for Water.

Members, David Beattie, David Galloway and Mary Woods left the meeting at this point.

284/8.8 Transport Funding

The Director of Regulated Industries presented the paper on funding for transport work and requested approval for engagement with the relevant departments to discuss appropriate funding for the statutory Transport remit.

After discussion, the Transport Funding paper was approved.

**284/9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

284/9.1 Proposed survey of Board Members

The Board considered the proposals made by officers but agreed to defer consideration of the approach to be taken re acquiring the view of Board Members.

284/9.2 Review of the Meeting

Officers left the meeting at this point.

The Board Members considered the meeting. They stated that late and tabled papers should be avoided where possible as lead in time is necessary to ensure adequate time for reading, as consideration was necessary to adequately provide the challenge function.

Officers returned to the meeting at this point.

**284/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 27 March 2018 at 10am in Seatem House, Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN subject to building work.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 1.15pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_