

**THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTH MEETING OF THE GENERAL CONSUMER COUNCIL
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND HELD
ON FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER AT 10.00AM VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL**

305/1

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

Mr John French	Chief Executive (Except agenda item 305/10.1)
Mr Scott Kennerley	Director of Illegal Money Lending and Financial Services (Except agenda item 305/10.1)
Mrs Carmel McConville	Director of Brexit (Except agenda item 305/10.1)
Mrs Dervla Kearney	Director of Consumer Insight, Empowerment and Protection (Except agenda item 305/10.1)
Mr William Warke	Director of HR and Business Transformation (Except agenda item 305/10.1)
Mr Graham Smith	Head of Water (Except agenda item 305/10.1)
Mr Matthew Stevenson	Senior Policy Officer, Communications (All agenda items 305/10.1)
Miss Paula McCann	Head of Finance (Agenda items 305/8.1 - 8.2)
Mrs Fiona Lavery	Personal Assistant (Except agenda items 305/10.1)

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

BY INVITATION

Mr Neil Gibson	Economist, EY
Ms Tanya Hedley	Director of Networks, The Utility Regulator
Mr John Mills	Head of Network Price Regulation, The Utility Regulator
Ms Barbara Stevenson	Communications Manager, The Utility Regulator
Ms Michelle Larmour	Cherton Secure Ltd Associate
Mr Mark Gilmore	Cherton Secure Ltd

305/2

PRESENTATION BY THE UTILITY REGULATOR

The Chair welcomed Ms Tanya Hedley, Director of Networks, Mr John Mills, Head of Price Regulation and Ms Barbara Stevenson of The Utility Regulator to the Board to discuss the Consultation on PC21 Determination, along with Mr Neil Gibson, Economist from EY.

Ms Hedley started the presentation with a brief introduction to PC21 and the Price Control process, and Mr Mills discussed the financial issues such as Operational Expenditure, Capital Expenditure, Financial Investment and Tariffs.

Having answered Board Members' questions, it was agreed that The Consumer Council response to the Consultation on the PC21 Determination would be brought back to Board for approval and forwarded to The Utility Regulator before 16 December 2020.

Ms Hedley and Mr Mills thanked Board Members for allowing them to attend the Board Meeting and they left the meeting at 11.15am.

305/3

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.

305/4 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 September 2020, which had been circulated, were agreed as a true and correct record.

The Minutes were agreed and signed.

305/5 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

305/6 **CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS**

305/6.1 **Review of Brexit Negotiations**

Board Members discussed the Brexit Policy Meeting that was held on Thursday 15 October 2020.

In response to Board Members' queries, the Director of Brexit stated that a Consumer Insight report would be produced to be approved by Board to report on Brexit implications, and that budget planning tools would be promoted.

305/6.2 **Covid19 Lobbying Table**

The Chief Executive presented the Covid19 Lobbying Table for Members' information.

Board Members noted the Covid19 Lobbying Table.

305/6.3 Any Other Chair's Business

There was no other Chair's Business discussed.

305/7 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

305/7.1 Corporate Plan 2021 – 2026

The Chair welcomed Ms Michelle Larmour and Mr Mark Gilmore of Cherton Secure Ltd to the meeting.

Mr Gilmore referred to the Draft Corporate Plan for 2021-2026 that had been circulated to Board Members on Thursday 15 October, and reminded them of the process that had taken place to date with consultation with external stakeholders, Board Members and staff, and workshops at Director level.

In response to Board Member, Noyona Chundur, Mr Gilmore stated that he would forward on the list of external stakeholders that had been consulted.

Board Member, Noyona Chundur stated that the Plan needed to be in clear alignment with, and have outcomes linking back to, the Programme for Government. She also stated that there had to be prioritisation as budgets were under increasing pressure, and that there should be a blend in the use of the terms "consumer" and citizen". She also queried how the strategic aims would have a tangible impact on consumers.

Board Member Mick McAteer concurred with these comments, and stated that he would provide further comments off-line.

The Chair stated that further comments should be forwarded to the Chief Executive who would forward them on to Cherton Secure.

Ms Larmour and Mr Gilmore left the meeting at 11.45am.

305/7.2 The Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive and the Directors presented the Chief Executive's Report.

Board Members noted the Chief Executive's Report.

305/7.3 Forward Work Programme Progress Report for Quarter 2 2020/21

The Director of Consumer Insight, Empowerment and Protection presented the Forward Programme Progress Report for Quarter 2 2020/21 for Members' approval.

Board Members approved the Forward Work Programme Progress Report for Quarter 2 2020/21.

305/8 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

305/8.1 Management Accounts for month ending 30 September 2020

The Head of Finance presented the Management Accounts for the month ending 30 September 2020 to Board Members.

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

305/8.2 Papers to be approved or noted following the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 8 October 2020

Board Member, Noyona Chundur presented the papers to be noted and approved following the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 8 October 2020. She stated that an action arising from the committee meeting was for the Director of HR and Business Transformation to complete an oversight of training and expertise of all Board Members.

Board Members noted and approved the papers.

305/9 **POLICY/STRATEGY**

305/9.1 EU Exit quantitative research on consumer perceptions about the end of the transition period

The Director of Brexit presented the research report prepared for The Consumer Council by Ipsos MORI. She informed Members that the same survey would be repeated in February or March 2021 to draw comparisons with the current situation.

Board Member, Sinead Furey suggested that quotes by gender and socio-economic status should be included.

After discussion it was agreed that this report should be added to The Consumer Council website and further socialised.

It was also agreed that the Covid19 Information Page would be replicated to give information on Brexit issues.

305/9.2 Satisfaction Report for September 2020

Board Members noted the Satisfaction Report for September 2020.

305/10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Officers, with the exception of the Chief Executive and the Director of HR and Business and Transformation were asked to leave the meeting at this point as the meeting continued confidentially.

Board Member Noyona Chundur left the meeting at 12.45pm.

305/10.1 Review of the Meeting

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

Board Members were content with the content of the Board papers and the quality of contribution to the meeting.

305/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Friday 13 November 2020 at 10am via Zoom Conference.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 1.00pm.

Signed _____

Date _____