



No declarations of conflict of interest were made.

## 2.2 Quorum

The Chair confirmed the Committee as quorate.

## 2.3 Confidentiality of Information

The Chair emphasised the confidentiality of information.

## 3 Previous Minutes – 19/6/25

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 June 2025 were **APPROVED** on a proposal from Mr Dennison and seconded by Mr Quinn.

Mr Quinn pointed out that Mr Seamus Mullen was listed as an apology at the last meeting but was mentioned in the minutes as commenting. Ms Beggs agreed to check and confirm.

**ACTION: Ms Beggs**

Mr Dennison highlighted an action on page six regarding the Fleet business case that should be listed within the matters arising document. Ms Donnelly confirmed that this action is being addressed within the agenda items today.

## 4 Matters Arising

The Committee **NOTED** the updates to the matters arising contained in the papers.

At the last meeting it was agreed that there should be a deep dive into Service Delivery. Mr Sinclair has discussed service delivery with Ms Paterson and agreed it would be useful to consider this in one picture including different areas of operational practice, recruitment plan and DCA Cover etc.

Mr Corrigan suggested that the meaning of service delivery is in relation to how NIAS operate, i.e. the operational model and there is more that the team need to consider before meeting to do a deeper dive. Mr Corrigan also suggested in terms of governance going forward, they need to consider where it sits within the Committee structure and schedule a deep dive overview at an appropriate

forum. Mr Sinclair reminded the Committee that the Chair had requested at the last Trust Board meeting for him to attend the upcoming NED Workshop to provide more detail on ORH and Service Delivery. Committee members were concerned that this may not be the most appropriate forum as it is a development day for NEDs and there may not be sufficient time to focus on the time needed for a deep dive into service delivery. The Committee also pointed out that it would be beneficial for them to have this deep dive ahead of the Strategy Planning Day on 24 October. Ms Beggs and Mr Sinclair agreed to confirm with the Chair if it is still the intention for this to be included at the NED Workshop.

**ACTION: Ms Beggs/Mr Sinclair**

Mr Corrigan confirmed that it has been agreed with Dr Graham that cyber security should be reported via the GARAC Committee.

## 5 **Performance Report**

Mr Henry presented the Performance report which outlines the Trusts Corporate scorecard for approval by SPF before submission to Trust Board. The report outlines the key performance metrics up to and including the 31 July 2025. The executive summary provided advises the key performance indicators and actions being taken to address performance.

Mr Henry emphasised that response times remain a significant challenge and in particular Category two response times were of specific concern as they are up from 51 minutes in July to 66 minutes currently.

In terms of handover delays, there were over 9,000 hours lost due to handovers exceeding 15 minutes, a 1.2% reduction from June 2025. Despite the reduced patient conveyances, 16% of arrivals waited over two hours at ED. It is an increasing deteriorating picture, and a significant piece of work is being undertaken with colleagues across the region to bring this in to focus, which has ultimately led to a commitment to a 2-hour handover position this year.

In relation to the clinical performance Hear and Treat decreased to 5.8% in July 2025. The total AQI Hear and Treat rate was 8.4% for July 2025. Clinical See and Treat decreased to 10.8%, the total AQI See and Treat rate was 25.2% for July 2025. Mr Henry said

that there is ongoing work in the background to improve the performance, including mental health support being broadened in the hub.

The Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest has improved from 21.6% to 24.4%.

Mr Henry advised that complex case calls are 8% of all control room calls which has decreased from 14%. The team are considering capacity to improve response strategies to enhance performance.

In terms of workforce, sickness absence continues to meet the target and from July 2025 the monthly sickness absence rate has decreased to 9.21% from 9.30% in June. There has been a marked improvement in comparing the July year on year positions, where July 2024 was 10.49%. The largest category for sickness absence within the trust is for mental health reasons, with stress being the prevalent reason. All teams continue to maintain progress to meet the target.

Mr Sinclair added that the team are working tirelessly to address category two response times and are monitoring performance weekly which is reported to SMT via an operational performance update. Mr Walker said that they are implementing a new 'Performance Cell' Group to understand what the measures and variables are that are pushing out these response times and creating a concerning picture.

Mr Corrigan referred to the fact that the specific reason of poor performance is unknown. Mr Sinclair alluded to multiple factors contributing to poor performance including hospital handovers, staffing and ASOS but the team are reviewing to consider why there has been an upward trajectory in the last few months and if there are human behaviours in practice contributing to this.

Mr Corrigan pointed out that it may be challenging for NIAS if hospital turnaround times improve but category two response times continue to not improve.

Mr Corrigan queried if there has been any impact or evidence that Trusts are trying to improve hospital handovers and Mr Dennison suggested December being the target for stabilisation of turnover times. Mr Quinn asked how this is being managed and overseen, in terms of a provider collaborative formal approach on a regional

basis. He further suggested NIAS may need to seek regional oversight once the internal 'housekeeping' is complete.

Mr Sinclair confirmed that no impact is evident yet. There was a workshop held in Stormont with Trusts and Stakeholders three weeks ago and there was an agreement that this would be implemented from 1 September, however, there hasn't been much progress with this from SPPG and DoH. There needs to be clear guidelines for all staff involved and Mr Sinclair is concerned that if there isn't a tangible change there will be further Industrial Action.

Mr Sinclair reiterated that Trusts are waiting for hard guidelines and protocols and that there were guidelines developed by NIAS and other versions however there is no implementation as yet. Mr Corrigan suggested that the protocol should be very clear and state as part of those instructions that crews will hand over the patient at two hours. Mr Quinn suggested that SPPG need to drive this to progress implementation and that perhaps this should be raised at the next Committee in Common (CiC), as it is a significant impact.

Mr Corrigan recalls previous discussions and that his understanding is that SPPG were focused on this and were going to build it in as part of matrix and performance reviews and hold Trusts to account. Mr Quinn said Someone from SPPG is to attend the next CiC; some of the CiC described commissioning as questionable and informal.

Mr Corrigan referred to the Performance Report being in the same format as the one that goes to Trust Board and sought clarity on how this is different in terms of how the Committee deal with the report compared to Trust Board. The Committee agreed that there is more opportunity at SPF for scrutiny and discussion on the metrics than at Trust Board.

Mr Quinn referred to earlier comments and reiterated that there should be a deeper dive into the variables for Category two response times, however, NIAS need to have a look into the housekeeping element first. Mr Sinclair referred to Mr Walkers earlier comment that the Performance Cell Group is meeting weekly and suggested that they present to the Committee once established.

**ACTION: Mr Sinclair**

Mr Quinn referenced the measures for Hear and Treat / See and Treat continue to take a dip and it would be useful for the Committee to understand the measures. Mr Sinclair agreed to provide further detail on these as well as an update from the Performance Cell Group.

**ACTION: Neil Sinclair**

Mr Quinn raised concern with the vacancy rate within Operations and Mr Sinclair confirmed that he hopes to address this and provide a rationale within the ongoing reviews.

Mr Corrigan raised concern regarding the two-hour starting point and it should be emphasised that two hours is not the end goal. He queried what the timescales are for the different milestones and if the Committee would have oversight of the trajectory of improvement. Mr Sinclair responded that it is simple to retrieve the information but reiterated at the minute they need to know the trajectory. Mr Sinclair is concerned with the Category two response times, particularly coming into winter and there will be more pressure on the service.

Mr Sinclair referred to questions being asked by a coroner in court this week about the hospital handover status and the coroner recalled that the two hour back stop was implemented in 2022 and is concerned that this previous protocol has made no difference since. Mr Sinclair highlighted that NIAS need to push back to sponsors that something needs to happen as soon as possible.

Mr Corrigan queried that due to the current media attention is it possible that there is a danger that call handlers could become more risk adverse and lean more towards categorising calls to category one rather than two.

Mr Sinclair responded that human factors may cause this to happen and that this is a new request in terms of coroners asking for call handlers to attend court. There is an audit system in place now and random audits are taking place, therefore any specific trends should be identified. Mr Sinclair said it is unfortunate names of staff are publicised in papers and reassured the Committee that NIAS are doing everything in terms of welfare for the staff.

Mr Henry referred to regional oversight of Category two's and advised the Committee that there are channels NIAS flag handover times to Trusts as adverse and suggested that NIAS change this 'flag' to every handover that exceeds two hours. It is done on a weekly basis and wouldn't be a significant change for the team to implement but would improve focus on the two hours. This is reported as an adverse incident rather than an SAI, and Mr Corrigan welcomes the term 'breach' in relation to them being referred to as breaching a guideline.

Mr Henry confirmed NIAS can arrange this in house to show evidence of breaching the two hours without seeking regional approval, and if there is a particular case with profound delay it is treated as an SAI.

Mr Dennison asked if the Committee could see these figures cumulatively Trust by Trust and Mr Quinn agreed that in terms of informatics that would be useful.

Mr Arandia said that the Performance Cell will be reviewing all the variables in the next few weeks and months to identify any other methods of measuring. Mr Quinn said that from an oversight perspective the Committee need to express their concern in the deterioration of category two responses and seek early information and route analysis from the Performance Cell and this information should be coming to the next Performance Report at the next Trust Board meeting.

Mr Corrigan supports the proposal from Mr Henry regarding how NIAS report and categorise breaches and build in a metric into the performance report of breaches going forward.

**ACTION: Mr Henry**

Mr Quinn acknowledged the improvement of the cardiac arrest figures and reiterated that he would like to see more detail at the next meeting regarding Hear and Treat/See and Treat.

**ACTION: Mr Sinclair**

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

## **6 Budget Report and Finance Update**

## **7 Capital Budget Forecast and Expenditure**

## **8 Overtime Expenditure**

Ms Donnelly presented items 6, 7 and 8 collectively together and advised that at the previous SPF Committee, members requested a more detailed Finance Report than that presented to SMT on a Monthly basis. The month four report, therefore, includes additional information on Capital as well as detailed Directorate budget information. In addition, a slide has been included regarding the contingency.

Ms Donnelly confirmed for Mr Corrigan that the update that went to the last Trust Board Meeting was up to month three and this update is up to month four. Unfortunately, month five is still a work in progress exacerbated by IT issues this week which has set the team back a day or two.

### **Exec Summary**

As at July 2025, the Trust has received a funding allocation from SPPG of £115.953m (inclusive of £0.104m from PHA and net of £2.475m of savings).

At this stage of the financial year there is an assumed funding number of £15.405m. This funding includes £14.336m in relation to the Workforce Plan, which will be included in the confirmed funding allocation once the Business Cases have been approved. The remaining assumed funding allocation relates to Ulster University students and Cyber Staffing.

The projected other income figure, which mainly relates to recharges to other Trusts, income from Road Traffic Accidents and income on disposal of fixed assets is £2.128m.

As such, Directorate budgets have been updated to reflect total funding of £133.485m. This is an increase of £0.076m on the month three allocation of £133.410m. The increase in funding relates to the Open golf recharge.

As the year progresses, the total funding position may change once final allocation and income figures are confirmed. As per discussions with SPPG monies are still a work in progress for business cases.

## Expenditure

Ms Donnelly pointed out that it is important to note variance is driven by the quality of profiles provided and the Finance team continue to meet with each directorate to review their plans to ensure they are robust, and when there are variances, they are discussed with the appropriate directorate business partners so they are aware of the variance and slippage.

Mr Corrigan pointed out that that there is a £220K underspend currently at month four, if this continues there may be a significant underspend and queried if there are projects that require funding arising in the second half of the year.

Ms Donnelly advised that the finance team are undertaking scenario planning, and the feedback to date is that NIAS are going to break even. NIAS Finance will also complete an expenditure review and forecast exercise at the six-month stage to ensure that NIAS remains on track to achieve break even.

Ms Donnelly has spoken with Mr Sinclair and they predict that overtime costs are due to reduce due to a new cohort of paramedics joining next month and therefore the independent costs should reduce also.

Mr Sinclair confirmed that independent services don't respond to emergencies and that they respond to calls via NEAC. Mr Sinclair said that a recruitment plan was signed off by SMT yesterday which should reduce scheduled care and increase to full capacity.

The Committee pointed out that in the last five years, the quantum of independent capacity has become embedded, and they queried how NIAS can reduce this. Mr Sinclair suggested that NIAS should govern this and Mr Dennison queried if the costs are less in doing so and Mr Sinclair confirmed NIAS are figuring this out as part of the demand and capacity review. NIAS would prefer to manage this in house, as it worked well in Scotland however, they acknowledge they need to be transparent to identify if it is the right thing to do.

Mr Quinn fed back that it is a really useful report and that the latter slides provide more insight into the rationale. He highlighted that in terms of vacancies NIAS are projecting an underspend but he queried if recruitment is accelerated, what impact that would have for the whole time equivalent and Mr Sinclair confirmed 50.

Ms Donnelly added that NIAS have a funded establishment and the slippage in the pay bill is being utilised for overtime and IAS. Ms Donnelly explained that the finance team have restricted capacity at present but hope to review the wider picture piece with Mr Sinclair in the next few weeks. Budgets in HSC wide are allocated to funded establishment figures and will always have a variance due to the system limitations.

Mr Quinn acknowledged the impact that will have on NIAS and stated that the figures are stark and appreciates it is a balancing act.

Mr Sinclair plans to revise the focus on recruitment and workforce planning and is aware there is one course coming through in NI which engages with paramedics across the UK.

#### Slide 8 – Overtime expenditure

The Committee noted that NIAS are still over budget due to vacancy levels and Mr Corrigan acknowledged how the process works, and budget setting is based on establishment, however, he said that Directors should know what their staff in post is and if they have vacancies. Ms Donnelly further explained that when NIAS put budgets on the system they are limited by how payroll budgets are built on the system. Ms Donnelly plans to meet with Mr Sinclair to understand how they can present the information better to make it more meaningful.

Mr Corrigan suggested that Directorates need to explain why there are variances on budgets and that budgets appear to be based on funded establishment rather than reality, and this should be monitored on a monthly basis. Mr Abernethy said the finance team review payroll individually in detail and Mr Quinn suggested that it is a presentational issue. Ms Donnelly agreed with this as they are challenged with the system and opportunities to present information in a more meaningful way. The quality of profiles does make a difference to the picture when presented in graphs and Ms Donnelly agreed that the Finance team will pull together and share with the Committee.

**ACTION: Ms Donnelly**

Mr Corrigan added that overtime is going to become off the scale and therefore the team need to ensure there are tight controls to manage it as staff get used to it and it becomes a cultural thing.

Mr Dennison queried if NIAS challenge the system when submitting budgets and Ms Donnelly confirmed they have raised this challenge as they are building budgets on the current staff position. They have been advised that they can only make manual adjustments due to the way the system is designed which would entail them continually making budget adjustments. The Committee agreed that the system is not fit for purpose and Mr Henry advised this is the system used across all Trusts. Mr Corrigan pointed out that it has a larger impact on NIAS as they are smaller than the other Trusts.

Ms Donnelly referred to the second bullet point which notes the exclusion of the expenditure for BHSCT as there is an agreement for NIAS to recover these costs.

Mr Arandia explained that Trusts make their own bookings, but BHSCT have asked NIAS to do this for them and confirmed there is no impact financially.

Mr Corrigan said this is part of a bigger picture and NIAS need to investigate the wider detail including who is responsible to discharge a patient who requires an ambulance. IAS spend is only part of the picture and the independent sector is increasing with more demand in their service. Mr Henry confirmed that it is the other trusts responsibility to discharge a patient via transport.

Mr Quinn queried what NIAS are commissioned to provide and Mr Corrigan said this is unknown, historically NIAS provided non-emergency transport for various services and at some point, there was an arrangement for other trusts to contact NIAS.

Mr Arandia explained that the challenge with independent services is not only NIAS, and it has been discussed with the DoH that this is a challenge with all Trusts and they are trying to work on a non-emergency solution for all Trusts. There was engagement three years ago, but nothing has materialised. Mr Corrigan said that Ms Charlton has provided updates at another Committee and alluded to the DoH carrying out a review to re-set who is eligible for this.

#### Slide 10 – independent expenditure for emergency and non-emergency

The Committee suggested detailing percentages into this graph.

**ACTION: Ms Donnelly**

Slide 11 – capital

Mr Corrigan welcomes the level of detail contained in this slide and highlighted one issue is ensuring NIAS can spend within the financial year, as time goes on this needs to be managed and consideration into other potential projects being ready to commence.

Ms Donnelly said that due to governance there needs to be business case approval to spend money and this process can result in delays. They are therefore trying to identify the best way forward which they are currently considering for fleet.

Monthly capital budget meetings occur and these meetings hold budget holders to account. In the event there is slippage, there are expenditure opportunities in Estates and IT at short notice, and Ms Donnelly confirmed that if there was a risk with a large amount of money there would be engagement with Committees.

Mr Quinn referred to a recent staff survey and was surprised at comments regarding the conditions of ambulance stations and he queried where and how decisions are taken in relation to Estates development in terms of their working conditions. Ms Donnelly responded that this would be linked to the Estates Strategy and built into a business case which Mr Mullen is currently reviewing. Mr Abernethy added that some stations may not be owned by NIAS and Mr Quinn said that NIAS have a responsibility for staff working conditions. Ms Donnelly said NIAS need to be proactive with Trusts and make them aware of the issues and how they can be resolved.

The Committee confirmed that there should be a deep dive into Estates at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Mr Mullen**

Ms Donnelly confirmed that Estates is within the planning and performance budget and there is an ask for an additional £100K which will be requested via SMT for minor schemes, however, if it turns out to be capital, NIAS can raise a bid via monitoring rounds. In terms of fleet, Finance is working with Mr Coulter.

Mr Arandia said there is going to be a workshop on 13 October regarding creating a strategy and plan which will be timely for this to

be reported on at the next SPF meeting to get a deeper dive into fleet and estates.

Ms Donnelly referred to slide 14 (key performance targets) and that NIAS are due to break even, the team continue to look at the savings plan in more detail and will continue to review and monitor.

Ms Donnelly highlighted the slide regarding contingency and that NIAS need to have a plan to spend this which will be part of the six-month review. Mr Corrigan welcomes the upfront and transparent information regarding contingency allocation.

Ms Donnelly referred to Annex A which is a Directorate Report, broken down into divisions and she explained that each budget holder and AD have full visibility on their costs to ensure they have robust plans in place. Mr Corrigan is pleased with this report as it gives the Committee assurance that this level of detail is there and it is being monitored and each directorate is sighted on what they need to do.

Mr Corrigan said the Committee are content on the structure of the report, there is a lot of detail and they may continue to tweak going forward but they are broadly content.

The Committee **NOTED** the report

## **9 Business Case Approval Limits Proposal**

Ms Donnelly presented the proposed new Business Case Approval Limits which the Committee requested to provide clarity in terms of the governance for the processes and limits for business cases.

Ms Donnelly explained that they propose to align the thresholds with the DoH business case thresholds and are broken down by Minor (signed off by SMT), Moderate (requiring scrutiny at SPF), and Major (required to go to Trust Board). The Committee are asked to agree the recommendations in order for this proposal to go to the next Trust Board meeting.

Mr Dennison is unsure if it is within the Committees remit to approve the proposal and Mr Corrigan suggested that the Committee recommend the proposal for Trust Board to approve.

The Committee sought clarity in relation to major business cases and if the Board would be able to scrutinise them, Ms Donnelly confirmed they would be submitted to Committee level first before going to Trust Board.

Mr Quinn confirmed he is content to recommend the proposal to Trust Board and Mr Corrigan agreed.

Mr Dennison queried if waiting for Committee approval would slow down the process for business cases and the Committee agreed to add a line in to suggest that if a business case required swiftly, SMT will have the authority to approve in the first instance with a note to the DoH that it still requires Committee approval, which has been the current process for the fleet business case.

The Committee also suggested seeking approval outside of the Committee via correspondence if required and Ms Donnelly suggested adding this into the proposal.

Mr Dennison asked if the Committee are being asked to approve business cases today and Mr Corrigan suggested they approve them on the basis of the proposal going ahead. The Committee agreed to the business cases in principle, subject to further Trust Board approval of the business case threshold limits  
Ms Donnelly confirmed she will change the proposal as agreed and submit to Trust Board for final approval with the intention of reviewing in time to ensure it is working.

**ACTION: Ms Donnelly**

Mr Henry advised that the ToR and standing orders will need to be revised to reflect the changes.

**ACTION: Mr Henry/Mr Mullen**

## **10 Business Case Register**

Ms Donnelly explained that they are providing a business case register in response to feedback at a previous SPF meeting to give the Committee more information on business cases which provides governance and assurance to the Committee.

Business cases are a standing agenda item at directorate meetings and Mr Corrigan suggested that they need to be a standing item at SPF meetings and welcomes this useful information.

**ACTION: Ms Beggs and Ms Donnelly**

Mr Corrigan suggested that this needs to tie in with approval levels and therefore business case owners should be encouraged to align this into timeframes for SPF Committee dates and it should therefore be shared at Directorate meetings. Mr Henry suggested having an SOP and flowchart once this has been agreed.

**ACTION: Mr Henry/Ms Donnelly**

Mr Corrigan referred to Annex B and that there were five business cases and now four and asked if any had been missed as he would like these to go to Trust Board for overview.

Mr Quinn queried if there are any others that have been missed and Ms Donnelly said she would check and confirm.

**ACTION: Ms Donnelly**

Mr Corrigan suggested that as this approval process starts to roll out, Directorates will realise they need to be transparent and that an SOP will assist in notifying the business case register.

The Committee **NOTED** the Business Case Register.

## **10.1 Interim Fleet Business Case**

The Chair welcomed Mr Bryan Snoddy to the Committee. The Business Case has been submitted to the DoH in August and it was discussed at the last Trust Board.

The DoH were happy to receive the business case early due to the circumstances.

Mr Snoddy explained that this is an interim business case for one-year (25/26) and they intend to convert the chassis in 26/27 and that the £8.5 million is split over two financial years.

NIAS would like to replace a fifth of fleet over a five-year cycle and also maintain ambulances to ensure sufficient cover.

Mr Snoddy said that in terms of the quantity needed, there will be in excess of 85 in March over seven years old and by the end of July there are 410 vehicles going out of service. Out of those 410, 190 are sitting outside of their normal replacement time.

Mr Corrigan queried if there is a manufacturer that provides both elements (buying and converting chassis) instead of doing over a two-year period. Mr Snoddy confirmed that there isn't and that they buy the cab from Mercedes which is then converted. He explained that the reason for two years is due to the timeline for supply, it is typically 12 weeks/3 months' lead time for supply and in most cases, this is extended. The team were only given the go ahead in the summertime and therefore require approval as soon as possible in order to meet the goal of the end of March. When NIAS submit their order, they are given a production slot but the manufacturer may not start production until month or two which extends the 12 week/3 month lead time. This has been a cycle for the last few years and there is a risk they may not get it done in the current financial year.

Mr Snoddy confirmed that RRV vehicles and cars are much quicker to order and that NIAS have never leased due to the risks if they break down or get written off, however, they keep this under review.

In relation to revenue for the disposal of vehicles, Mr Snoddy confirmed the vehicles have a five-year lifespan and NIAS receive some money through them via auction, however, older vehicles get less, and he emphasised that the market for older ambulances is minimal.

Mr Dennison queried if any of the independent services would be interested in buying them and Mr Snoddy confirmed that NIAS used to give them first sight but a lot of them are buying vehicles from other places in the UK.

Mr Quinn queried why NIAS are requesting for one year if they know at the end of the five-year period that the lease was coming to an end, and could this have been planned more in advance.

Mr Snoddy said that five years ago they wouldn't have been aware of the service requirements now. They did commence reviewing this, but ORH hadn't started reporting, therefore, it wasn't that they waited but that there were things to confirm before proceeding. Department approval for a larger case requires 9 months and NIAS thought they wouldn't get a 5-year business case on time and therefore thought it would be best going with an interim one. The team are currently working on the larger case.

Mr Snoddy confirmed for the Committee that they will consider electric / sustainable vehicles and address fully within the five-year case. Mr Quinn suggested that the Strategy will also need to reflect this in terms of sustainability and Mr Snoddy agreed that the fleet business case should follow the organisational strategy. The first round of queries has come back and they are hoping to get those returned in the next weeks, however, in the meantime, work continues on the five year case which will be shared with the SPF Committee.

## **10.2 Global Rostering System (GRS) Business Case**

Mr Sinclair advised the Committee that the GRS is a key system to manage staff rostering and rota management. This continuity of service is the first and foremost business need and it is critical to ensure that scheduling solutions are in place for all operational service lines and includes access for approximately 1500 current users in NIAS to be able to access rotas and work schedules, with capacity for service expansion.

A business case has been developed and approved in principle at SMT on 18 August 2025. Due to the critical nature of this system and timeline pressures, this was shared with SPPG on 21 August 2025 following SMT, noting that the SPF committee approval would be required. The Committee are asked to approve Option 2b to migrate all current users of GRS to GRS Cloud with 24/7 support for Priority one issues only. Total revenue costs are £970,500, resulting in additional revenue funding of £851,200 over a four-year period. Mr Sinclair pointed out the challenge with the increase in financial costs and that NIAS are trying to find formal routes on whether they get funding for this, however, there is a timeline issue of next week as the provider may move to another price. It is a challenging picture, and this should have been set up earlier, however once funds become available it should be straightforward to set up a framework.

Mr Corrigan queried if all ambulance services across the UK are doing this, and Mr Sinclair confirmed that Total Mobile is a Belfast based company and all services have already moved over to the cloud service from this provider.

Mr Corrigan asked, in terms of finances, if this is for additional money over and above the base. Ms Donnelly confirmed that there is that risk and they are reviewing and chasing due to the time pressures. Given the value of this business case NIAS need them to fund, and if they don't NIAS will need to re-prioritise the budget as this is an extremely important service for NIAS. Ms Paterson is aware of the financial challenges and has discussed the options at SMT about sacrificing money to re-allocated.

Mr Quinn asked how long they can wait for approval and Mr Sinclair confirmed that they will amend the offer in a weeks' time which SPPG are aware of. Ms Donnelly added that NIAS are tied as they have to comply with the process and if they enter that contract without approval there is a risk of irregular spend. Ms Donnelly has been putting pressure on finance contacts as well as Mr Sinclair liaising with SPPG.

Mr Corrigan confirmed that the Committee is content to retrospectively approve as it has already gone to SPPG, and Ms Donnelly agreed to provide an update at the next Committee.

**ACTION: Ms Donnelly**

### **10.3 Intelligent Routing Protocol (IRP) - Business Case**

Mr Sinclair advised the Committee that the IRP system reroutes calls to another service (with capacity), at times of pressure, which has been in place since 2022.

In June 2025 NHS England withdrew funding for the IRP and AACE coordinated a proposal for cost-sharing among UK ambulance services to sustain IRP. All UK ambulance services except West Midlands agreed to join. The Committee are asked to approve the business case for the preferred option (4) to participate in the IRP Collaboration.

Ms Donnelly is engaging with SPPG to secure funding for next year and Mr Sinclair, along with Mr Carson are identifying other methods to increase staffing and build national links to become more efficient and governed internally.

Mr Corrigan pointed out that the Committee don't have any other option to proceed, which clarifies NIAS are funding the revenue cost out of contingency but the business case with SPPG is next year.

The case has already been submitted to SPPG and retrospective approval is sought from the Committee.

The Committee **APPROVED** the IRP Business Case retrospectively.

## **11 Strategy Development Update**

The Committee **NOTED** the Strategy Development Update from Mr Charlie Thompson iterated by Mr Henry.

There was a survey released to staff towards the end of July about how the new Strategy could encompass to explore their awareness and engagement, and high-level feedback was that staff would like to be actively involved, as well as better communication and engagement. This feedback will be used to guide the strategy going forward and there will be a mapping exercise to identify other groups and organisations to develop with.

There is a Board Strategy Day scheduled on 24 October for all Board members to get together and take forward before the end of the financial year.

Mr Quinn is part of the Strategy Development Steering Group and said that the key issues arising are the capacity for the Organisation to meet the timelines and ability for the Organisation to engage with stakeholder groups, both internal and external, in a meaningful way.

There are three pillars to inform strategy development including benchmarking with other services, here and abroad. There is a significant exercise to make the work required more meaningful and inter strategy analysis that has come back to the steering group. The Steering Group are ensuring that the Trust Board have a well refined picture and Mr Quinn is concerned about the timeline not being realistic. It has been asked if the Organisation can operate without a Strategy and Mr Dennison said it is a self-imposed deadline and it is not unusual for them to be extended. Mr Quinn added that it will be staged with checkpoints for a review of the strategy. Mr Arandia said that it should be a vision for where NIAS want to be in 10 years with more tangible and measurable plans to align with demand and capacity.

Mr Henry reminded the Committee that the highest level of risk is in strategy development and there might be a bit more flex about extending the strategy.

Mr Quinn is concerned due to the lack of the substantive post of Chief Executive and that plans to recruit for this post was due to be at the end of June and then extended to the end of Summer.

Mr Corrigan asked Mr Quinn for clarity on the role of the SPF Committee in terms of oversight of strategy and acknowledges NIAS are in a transitional period. Mr Quinn confirmed that the Committee has a performance oversight of the development of the strategy and Trust Board needs to sign it off which is briefed by the SPF Committee.

## **12 Committee Forward Workplan**

The Committee **NOTED** the Forward Work Plan.

The Chair acknowledged that a focus on the service delivery model wasn't covered today and that there should be an overview on fleet and estates at the next meeting. Mr Henry agreed to liaise with Seamus Mullen and Mr Coulter to ensure this is provided at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Mr Henry/Mr Mullen**

The Chair emphasised that the Committee need papers in advance and that documentation is a good explanation of what the organisational approach to fleet and estates is, laying out the key information, as it has been blindsided and needs to be robust in terms of information so this Committee can feedback that they have a good line of sight. He asked to ensure the relevant staff have expectations and papers include fleet expenditure. Ms Donnelly agreed to consider and provide information of costs for NIAS to run fleet.

**ACTION: Ms Donnelly**

The Committee enquired if there is a separate forum on delivering value and Mr Arandia confirmed that this programme no longer exists, however, it is part of the monthly report and doesn't require a separate item.

The Committee suggested more detail in relation to Category 2 responses and the Chair agreed for this to be discussed at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Mr Sinclair**

Mr Corrigan referred to earlier conversations about the new Performance Cell Group and suggested that Mr Sinclair provides an update at Trust Board and the next SPF meeting on progress of this group.

**ACTION: Mr Sinclair**

The Committee agreed for an update on H&T and S&T to be shared at the next SPF Committee.

**ACTION: Mr Sinclair**

### **13 Any Other Business**

Ms Beggs will be issuing a feedback survey regarding the new Committee structure to NEDs, which can be discussed at the NED Workshop on 9 October.

Mr Henry is discussing the Self-Assessment tool with the DoH this afternoon to determine if it is a mandatory requirement going forward.

### **14 Next meeting:**

27 November 2025 at 09.30am

**THIS BEING ALL THE BUSINESS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11:40AM**

**SIGNED:**



**DATE:** 27-11-25