



## STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE (SPF)

**Date:** 2 April 2026  
**Time:** 9.30 am  
**Location:** Board Room, NIAS HQ

Attendance	
<b>Chair:</b>	Paul Corrigan
<b>Attendees:</b>	Phelim Quinn (Non-Executive Director)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Leahann Donnelly (Interim Director of Finance) Seamus Mullen (Interim Director of PPCS) Neil Sinclair (Interim Director of Operations) Stacey Beggs (Temporary Board Secretary)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Jim Dennison (Non-Executive Director)

Minutes of Meeting		
Agenda Item	Summary of the discussion	Actions Agreed
1.	<p><b><u>Apologies &amp; Remarks</u></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The Committee <b>NOTED</b> apologies from Mr Dennison.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Procedure: Declaration of potential conflict/pecuniary interest/confidentiality of information/quorum</u></b></p> <p>The Chair asked those present to declare any potential conflicts of interest now or as the meeting progressed.</p> <p>No declarations of conflict of interest were made. Confidentiality requirements were reiterated and the meeting was confirmed as quorate.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Previous Minutes – 5/2/26</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 February 2026 were <b>APPROVED</b> on a proposal from Mr Quinn and seconded by Mr Corrigan.</p>	
4.	<b>Matters Arising</b>	





<p>Members discussed demand patterns (including repeat calls and call-answer pressures) and requested that presentation be refined in the new reporting format for clarity.</p> <p>The Committee noted Belfast Trust’s contribution to improved handover performance and discussed the wider system challenge, including the ethical and clinical risks associated with sustained handover delays.</p> <p>The Committee discussed demographic demand pressures (including increasing numbers of people aged over 80) and the need to ensure commissioning and establishment reflect population need.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that the professional operational viewpoint should be clearly articulated in forthcoming regional meetings, and that the Interim Director of Operations should be involved in meetings with the Chief Executive and Chair to represent operational impact and risk.</p> <p><u>5.2 Finance Report (Month 11):</u> The Committee <b>NOTED</b> the month 11 finance report, the enhanced level of directorate variance analysis, and the work underway with operational teams to understand independent sector usage, vacancies and overtime.</p> <p>The Committee acknowledged significant improvements in the quality of financial reporting and transparency, while noting concern regarding month-on-month volatility and the need to embed stronger challenge between finance and budget holders.</p> <p>The Committee discussed year-end expenditure profiling, use of slippage to support priority areas (including mandatory training compliance), and continued grip and efficiency oversight.</p> <p>Members highlighted the importance of learning lessons for 2026/27 budget-setting and calendarisation.</p> <p>It was agreed that an email update would be provided to members once month 12 journals are posted and initial year-end headlines are available.</p> <p><u>5.3 Business Case Register:</u> The Committee <b>NOTED</b> the business case register (18 open cases) and discussed the need to progress and</p>	<p><b>Ms Donnelly</b></p>
---	---------------------------



	<p>close historic/retrospective cases, particularly estates-related cases predating the current team.</p> <p>Management advised processes have been strengthened and cases will be progressed for approval as soon as possible.</p> <p><u>Forward Work Plan 2026/27 and Strategy Development Update:</u> The Committee <b>NOTED</b> the forward work plan and the strategy development progress, including completion of multiple roadshows/engagement sessions and positive feedback.</p> <p>Members discussed ensuring the strategy appropriately reflects NIAS as an ambulance service trust, while noting the need for alignment with future Chief Executive oversight. The update will remain a standing item.</p>	<p><b>Mr Mullen</b></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b><u>Estates Update</u></b></p> <p>The Committee <b>NOTED</b> the estates update and the work underway to develop an independently evidenced, optimised station footprint model aligned to the operational model.</p> <p>Management advised that the draft estates strategy had not yet been brought to the Committee pending completion of the optimisation work (ORH) and DoH notifications.</p> <p>The Committee noted ORH is approximately halfway through, with completion anticipated by end May, and that overlay work should not materially change the core strategic principles.</p> <p>The Committee noted engagement with PSNI and NIFRS to explore joint long-term estate planning and collaboration, with further discussions expected in late April.</p> <p>The Committee noted progress on HART relocation and confirmation of funding to support a comprehensive HART location solution.</p> <p><u>Next Steps</u> Interim Director of PPCS: Provide an estates strategy/optimisation presentation to SPF in June 2026, with onward escalation to Trust Board thereafter.</p>	<p><b>Mr Mullen</b></p>

<p>7.</p>	<p><b><u>EPCR Replacement</u></b> The Committee received an update on EPCR replacement planning, noting the current contract end date (November 2027) and the indicative scale of costs.</p> <p>Members discussed key risks including business case approval timelines, dependencies with regional digital solutions (including the absence of an Encompass solution), resource constraints (including availability of technical expertise), and the likelihood of requiring a DAC/extension if approvals are delayed.</p> <p>Management outlined mitigation activity including securing specialist input (interim/consultancy), exploring options for additional project accounting capacity, and simplifying specifications to ensure integration requirements are captured.</p> <p>Members noted the financial implications of potential short-term contract extensions and the need to reflect these risks in budget profiles and planning assumptions.</p> <p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b> Interim Director of Operations (SRO) – Provide a further EPCR replacement progress update to SPF within the next six months, including risk mitigation and timeline/approval status.</p>	<p><b>Mr Sinclair</b></p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>The Committee <b>NOTED</b> discussion on additional costs associated with event cover and the importance of applying a consistent approach to requesting funding/recharge for additional support.</p> <p>Management advised that emergency planning arrangements are now more formalised, with clearer expectations communicated to event organisers and partner trusts.</p> <p>The Committee noted engagement with SHSCT and WHSCT to recharge for additional support and that NIAS will seek appropriate charging where additional resilience cover is required.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><b><u>Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>4 June 2026</p>	



**Action Summary:**

Director of Operations – Identify an operational budget holder/manager to attend a future SPF meeting to explain budget principles, controls and hotspot management; ensure directors provide written matters arising updates in advance.

Interim Director of Finance – Circulate a month 12/year-end headlines email update once journals are posted (mid-April) and preliminary position is available.

Interim Director of PPCS – Provide an estates strategy/optimisation presentation to SPF in June 2026, with onward escalation to Trust Board thereafter.

Interim Director of Operations (SRO) – Provide a further EPCR replacement progress update to SPF within six months, including risk mitigation and approval status.

Interim Director of PPCS – Progress closure of historic business cases, prioritising estates-related cases.

SIGNED:

DATE:

18/6/26