

Minutes of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council Meeting, held on  
Wednesday 3 December 2025 at 2.00 pm via MS Teams

**Present:** Bronagh Scott (Chair)  
Linda Kelly, Chief Executive  
Kieran McCormick  
Eilidh McGregor  
Nirmala Bhogal  
Sharon McRoberts  
Brenda Kelly  
Karen Diamond  
Siobhán Caslin  
Janine Stockdale

**Apologies:** Katrin Lehmann  
Ciara Scannell  
Gary Mitchell

**In Attendance:** Jill Jackson, Head of Corporate Services

**Secretariat:** Heather Mallon, Council Secretary

## **1.0 Welcome and Apologies**

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Ciara Scannell and Katrin Lehmann.

## **2.0 Chair's Business**

### **2.1 Welcome to any Members of the Public**

Chair noted that no members of the public were in attendance at today's meeting.

### **2.2 Council Members – Conflicts of Interest**

Members did not declare any conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda items to be discussed at today's Council meeting.

### **2.3 Register of Council Members' Activity**

Chair thanked those members who had submitted their updates for the Activity Register. She noted that a couple of updates appeared to be missing and stressed the importance of Council members submitting their returns when requested to ensure all activities were captured.

Members noted the Register.

### **2.4 Update on Review of Senior Roles**

Chair advised that she would provide a full update on this item at the confidential session after the meeting.

### **2.5 Review of Committee Membership**

Chair thanked members for submitting their preferences and advised that she had subsequently reviewed Committee membership. Chair advised that she had contacted the affected members with her proposed changes and that they had all confirmed their agreement to these.

Chair proposed that Mr Mitchell and Mrs Scannell move from the Professional Business Committee to Audit and Risk Committee and that Ms B Kelly move from Audit and Risk Committee to the Professional Business Committee. As Interim Chair of NIPEC, Mr McCormick has to move to Chair the Remuneration Committee and therefore Ms Caslin has agreed to step in as Interim Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Committee membership will be reviewed again in due course when the new appointments have been made.

Chair asked those present if they were happy to approve the changes proposed and members agreed.

Chair thanked those members who had agreed to make the moves and asked Ms Jackson to amend the Standing Orders accordingly. The amended Standing Orders would be brought to the March Council meeting for ratification.

**Action:** Ms Jackson to amend the Standing Orders and present at the March Council meeting for ratification.

## **2.6 Visit by Permanent Secretary - 11 March**

Chair advised that Mr Mike Farrar, Permanent Secretary had accepted her invitation to visit NIPEC. She invited Ms Jackson to provide Council with the details. Ms Jackson said that Mr Farrar's office had originally offered the date of 17 February but have since asked if this could be changed to 11 March between 2.00 pm and 3.00 pm. Ms Jackson was of the view that this would tie in well with the start of the March Council meeting and asked members if they were content for her to confirm these arrangements with the Permanent Secretary's office. Members confirmed their agreement to these arrangements.

***Action:** Ms Jackson to confirm arrangements with the Permanent Secretary's office with regard to his attending the March Council meeting.*

## **2.7 Update on meeting with CEO October 2025 to complete mid-year review of progress on objectives**

Chair reported that she had meet with the Chief Executive on 22 October to review the progress of her objectives and was pleased to report that progress was on track.

Chair advised that the Remuneration Committee had been trialling a new format for the Chief Executive's objectives which provided strategic oversight rather than delving too deeply into the detail. She was of the view that the format had made the mid-year review a much more streamlined process and the Chief Executive agreed. Members of the Committee had found the new format easier to follow and that it had provided them with a better oversight of the progression. Chair said that the format would likely continue to develop over time.

## **2.8 NIPEC Conference – 2 December 2025**

Chair expressed her disappointment at being unable to attend the NIPEC Conference due to illness. She had been receiving messages to say that it had been a fantastic event. Mrs Kelly advised that she was really pleased with how the day and gone and had been receiving some very positive feedback. Chair wished to highlight the tremendous efforts of Mrs McCusker, Ms Lockhart and the other staff members involved in putting on, what was by all accounts, an excellent event. Ms Jackson added that the Conference had been put together with a relatively low budget which made what was achieved all the more amazing.

Chair wished to thank Mr McCormick for stepping in at short notice to Chair the event in her absence and also Ms Stockdale who, although unwell herself, had made the effort to record dialogue to accompany her presentation.

Mrs Kelly advised that the Conference had been recorded and would be split into separate sessions. She undertook to let Council know when it was available to view.

**Action:** *Chief Executive to advise Council when recording of the Conference is available.*

## **2.9 HSC Chair's Meeting with Minister – 20 November 2025**

Chair advised that she had been unable to attend the meeting with the Minister and that Mr McCormick had kindly attended the meeting in her place. She asked Mr McCormick to provide members with an update. Mr McCormick reported that the main points of the meeting centred around clarifications on the staff pay award, which staff should receive in their February salary payment, along with their back pay. He advised that there had been some discussion on the omission of independent social care staff. He stated that the financial picture provided was quite bleak, with next year's budget being tighter still. The Minister had made a special request that every organisation try, as far as possible, to post a good news story by social media each week to help lighten the narrative. Mr McCormick commented that NIPEC were already good at doing this and commended the positive social media feed from the Conference.

**Action:** *NIPEC to continue to post regular good news stories on social media.*

## **2.10 Update on appointment of new Chair and Council Members**

Chair was pleased to report that she had received confirmation from the PAU that the Minister had agreed to reappoint Ms Diamond, Ms B Kelly, Ms Caslin and Mr McCormick for a further four years. Those members confirmed that they had received their official reappointment letters.

Chair was disappointed to note that the PAU did not intend to advertise for new Council members until the new financial year, despite them receiving more than adequate notice. Chair advised that there had been no update on remuneration for NIPEC Council members but assured members that it would be kept on the table. Historically NIPEC are the only Arms' Length Body whose board members do not get paid. Chair was of the view, however, that a position on the NIPEC Council provided a good insight into the role of a non-executive role as well as experience. Chief Executive assured members that the issue had been raised at last ground clearing meeting and that the CNO was keen to keep it on the agenda, acknowledging the lack of parity.

### **2.11 Welcome to incoming Interim Chair**

Chair wished to welcome Mr McCormick as the incoming Interim Chair and to thank him for agreeing to take on the role. Chair wished to personally thank him for the support he had provided her with over the last number of years and for stepping in for her when needed, sometimes at short notice.

## **3.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2025 had been circulated for approval. Chair asked if members had read the minutes and were happy to approve.

The previous minutes were approved.

## **4.0 Matters Arising**

### **4.1 Updated Action Plan (*Circulated for approval*)**

Chair invited Ms Jackson to take members through the open items on the Action Plan. Ms Jackson was pleased to report that the majority of items have now been completed. The first open item related to the records for the Muckamore Inquiry which remained unchanged from the last meeting.

With regard to the open action on revalidation/registration checks, this remains a work in progress but hopefully the system will be finalised over the next few weeks. Dates of birth are still required for some members but Ms Jackson would be in contact with those members in the near future. Chair was pleased with the progress of the Action Plan to date.

Council approved the updated Action Plan.

## **5.0 Correspondence**

- 5.1 Letter to All ALBs Chief Executives - Duty of Candour Legislative and Policy Developments – 21 October 2025 (For noting)**
- 5.2 CNO Letter to Cathy McCusker and Carole McKenna – 7 October 2025 (For noting)**
- 5.3 CNO Letter to Linda Kelly – 7 October 2025 (For noting)**
- 5.4 The Payment of Remuneration of Chairs and Non-Executive Members Determination (Northern Ireland) 2025 (For noting)**

Council members noted the previously circulated correspondence.

## **6.0 Operational Performance and Service Improvement**

Chair invited the Chief Executive to take members through this section of the Agenda.

### **6.1 Presentation by Chief Executive: Career and Development Model**

Chief Executive shared the link for NIPEC's new career's website, which had been launched at the Conference and encouraged members to try it out. She provided some background to the development of the website and took members through its various aspects and functions. Mrs L Kelly highlighted the feedback form on the home page and urged members to provide their feedback once they had the opportunity to explore the site.

Chief Executive advised that NIPEC were continuing to work with the Department and universities on the continued development of the site and very much hoped that this work would form part of the role of the new Band 7s. NIPEC were also planning to take forward the provision of careers' clinics. Chief Executive was very proud of the new website and the work that NIPEC and Trust staff had put in to develop it. Mrs L Kelly asked if members had any queries or comments to make.

Chair congratulated Mrs L Kelly on the superb new website and was delighted to see the results of the hard work and collaboration that had gone into it. She asked if organisations will use the website when advertising for posts and Mrs L Kelly replied that they would use the resources to inform job descriptions and role profiles. She added that the next stage was to prepare and provide standardised job descriptions which would be available to all Trusts. Mrs Kelly said that there was also a section planned with blank templates and guidance to support organisations and specific service areas in developing their own career pathways, with input from NIPEC when required.

Ms Diamond thought that the website was a fantastic resource with an amazing amount of detail and congratulated everyone involved. Dr Bhogal commended the new website and enquired if the development of additional pathways could have an impact on the work already completed. Mrs L Kelly confirmed that the resources should assist in standardisations, some older pathways would be required to be brought up to date. Dr Bhogal asked if the upcoming changes in the NMC would have an effect. Mrs L Kelly advised that NIPEC had already taken those changes relating to the development of Advanced Practice Principles into account but if there were any changes to the actual standards then, yes, the pathways would have to be updated.

Ms Davidson said that the website looked fantastic and wished to congratulate all involved. She asked if NIPEC had reached out to schools' career departments. Mrs L Kelly advised that there were plans in place to do so in NIPEC's engagement plan through job fairs etc. She stated that the Trusts were inviting NIPEC to attend their careers' fairs to showcase the career pathways but the preference would be for each Trust to maximise the website now the resources have been developed.

Ms B Kelly agreed that the new website was a great piece of work and it was clear to see the effort that had gone into its development so far. She was confident that it would only get better over time. Mrs B Kelly queried the placement of midwifery along with woman's health in the education commissioning section of the website as they were very different disciplines. Chief Executive agreed that further consideration required to be given to this but for now they had used the areas as mapped out by the Education Commissioning Group. She added that at present the career pathway information was a little light on the midwifery side but the Department had wanted to wait until the Renfrew Report had been published and priority actions agreed prior to agreeing a career pathway for midwives. This year the focus would be on a neonatal pathway and an advanced practice role for midwives at the request of the CMO.

Ms Stockdale said that this made sense as a lot of work was already being done around advanced practice midwifery. She was of the view that it could be worth NIPEC targeting the Directors of Education at the universities as they would soon be holding their open events and undertook to share these contacts with Mrs L Kelly.

**Action:** Ms Stockdale to share contact information for Directors of Education with Mrs L Kelly.

## **6.2 Chief Executive's Report (*Circulated for noting*)**

Chief Executive referred to her report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and those present confirmed they had read same. This report highlighted some of the key aspects of the Chief Executive's work and NIPEC's priorities since the last Council meeting.

Mrs L Kelly advised that NIPEC was continuing to work with the NMC on their Fitness to Practice improvements and was also progressing work on the adoption of the NMC's Advanced Practice Principles. The Chief Executive is co-chair of the Regulation, Education and Research workstream for Shaping our Future. These represented three large pieces of work.

Mrs L Kelly reported that NIPEC continued to support the CNO Group in various pieces of work, the most significant of these at present being the delegation work. Chief Executive had been chairing a sub-group and would be preparing a report over the Christmas period.

With regard to lessons learnt, Chief Executive advised that whole team had been invited to make submissions and the Senior Communications Officer had provided some interesting insights into the ongoing work on delivering NIPEC's communications objectives. A further lesson learnt had been provided by Fiona Bradley, Senior Professional Officer around the increase in requests from our stakeholders to meet with them, talk and promote NIPEC products and resources. NIPEC has essentially become a victim of its own success and the senior team have consequently developed a decision tree to assist them in determining which events required a presence.

Mrs B Kelly left the meeting at this point (15:07 hrs).

Chair said that it was apparent that NIPEC had put a lot of effort into the delegation work and hoped the organisation would get the recognition it deserved. Mrs L Kelly stated that it was very clear that NIPEC cannot complete the work with healthcare input alone. Input from social care was required and she would be making this recommendation to the CNO Group.

With regard to the meeting of the Delegation of Healthcare Intervention for School Children with Complex Needs Project Working Group Meeting referenced on page 7 of the Chief Executive's Report, Ms McGregor advised that this meeting had not happened. Mrs L Kelly said that the summary had been taken from the CNO Business Meeting Brief provided by the Department of Health. She would note that this had not occurred.

Chair thanked Chief Executive for the presentation of her Report and Council members noted same.

**6.3 NIPEC Professional Work Plan 2025-26 – Business Plan objectives progress Monitoring Report from 1 April to 30 November 2025 (*Circulated for consideration*)**

Referring to the Professional Work Plan previously circulated, Chief Executive reported that there were now 24 projects running, which was a decrease from the 26 reported last quarter. Two projects, Shaping our Future and Ethnically Diverse, were now categorised as Continuous & Recurrent Work. A couple of projects had not progressed as planned, one of which was due to a lack of capacity within the team and the other was due to a lack of stakeholder engagement. Minimal work, however, was required to bring these two projects to a conclusion and they would be completed within this financial year. Some projects were entering the final stages and the Delegation project had moved from a weighting of 5 to a weighting of 9 to reflect the extra effort required towards the end. Overall, Mrs L Kelly was content that the Work Plan was moving in the right direction. She advised that the team had really seen the benefits of the new Dashboard coming to the end of the year in providing a quick overview. Chair said that it was good to see the Dashboard reflecting the progress of the various projects.

Council members approved the updated Professional Work Plan.

**6.4 Copy of the Consultation Activity Report (*Circulated for noting*)**

Chief Executive advised that a number of consultations had been received since the last meeting and these had all been allocated to an appropriate SPO for processing. Chief Executive noted that the review of 'We Matter' Learning Disability Service Model was led by NIPEC on behalf of CNMAC.

Council members noted the Consultation Activity Report.

**6.5 Special Thanks to Outgoing Chair**

Chief Executive wished to take the opportunity to personally thank Chair for all her support, leadership and friendship over the last number of years. She was sorry not to have had the opportunity to have recognised Chair's contribution at the Conference as planned, although highlighted that the Minister had made special mention of her. Mrs L Kelly stated that she was sad to see Chair leave and her expertise and presence would be sorely missed and wished her the very best in her next chapter. She recognised that Mr McCormick would do a sterling job as Interim Chair. Chair appreciated Mrs L Kelly's kind words and said that she was sad to be leaving but knew it was the right time for both her and Council. She added that she had thoroughly enjoyed her time working alongside Mrs L Kelly and Ms Jackson.

**7.0 Corporate Control & Finance**

Chair invited Ms Jackson to take members through this section of the Agenda.

**7.1 Report from Standing Committees**

**7.1.1 Unconfirmed minutes of the A&R Meeting held on 14 October 2025 (*Circulated for Noting*)**

Ms Jackson asked members to note the approval of the Mid-Year Assurance Statement which had been submitted to Department in October 2025. This formed the basis of the Ground Clearing meeting in early November with the CNO and her officials and due to there being no significant issues raised, the mid-year accountability review had been stood down.

Mr McCormick wished to signpost members to the section of the minutes relating to the Risk Register, where it had been agreed that Risks 3 and 5 could now come off. This would be discussed later in the agenda.

**7.1.2 Confirmed minutes of the P&BC Meeting held on 4 September 2025 (Circulated for Noting)**

Ms Jackson stated that the minutes of 4 September had been approved at a meeting of the Committee held on 28 November. The minutes of this meeting had not yet been approved but Ms Jackson asked Dr Bhogal whether she had anything she wished to highlight to the Council from 28 November meeting.

Dr Bhogal advised that she was meeting with the Chief Executive in the New Year to review the papers to be brought to the Committee ahead of their presentation to Council to ensure the Committee were getting the right papers at the right time. She also informed members that the notes from the elevator pitch workshop session were with Ms McGregor for review. It had been agreed at the November meeting that, once reviewed, these notes would go to Mrs L Kelly to bring to the Senior Team to assist them in the development of elevator pitch ideas.

Members noted the minutes.

**7.2 Finance**

**7.2.1 Financial Summary of Expenditure, Month 07 (Circulated for noting)**

Ms Jackson reported that she was presently working on month 8 and the current position was that NIPEC was projecting a yearend surplus of £10k. The budget remains very tight in year and continues to be closely monitored. Ms Jackson advised that the senior team have agreed to place an embargo on any events or non-essential spend between January and March 2025 and will continue to monitor the situation. She asked if members had any comments or questions.

Ms McGregor asked for clarification around the forecast for the financial year of -£62k. Ms Jackson explained that this was the forecast against what was originally budgeted. She assured Ms McGregor that NIPEC were currently predicting a surplus of around £10k and were on track for financial breakeven. Ms Jackson added that NIPEC would not be permitted to enter a deficit.

Chair assured Council that Ms Jackson and the Chief Executive keep a close eye on the budget and stated that Ms Jackson does her role remarkably well. Ms Jackson thanked Chair and said that she was always open to talk through the budget. She said that hopefully members had found this year's workshop session on the budget helpful and offered to arrange a refresher session if members would find this useful. Chair thought that this was a good idea and Ms Jackson undertook to arrange for the New Year.

Council members noted the update.

***Action:** Ms Jackson to organise a refresher training session on the budget for Council members.*

#### **7.2.2 Savings Exercise 2025-26 and financial planning 2026-27 (Verbal update)**

With regard to the savings exercise for 2025-26, Ms Jackson advised that NIPEC were asked if they could offer any savings, however, at the same time were asked to accrue for the Senior Executive Pay Award 2025-26, which was higher than expected. NIPEC had responded that the organisation could absorb the Senior Executive pay rise but would not be able to retract any monies in addition.

Ms Jackson wished to ask Council to note that, at the Ground Clearing meeting, the CNO had asked if NIPEC could live with a 10% cut in its allocation in 2026-27, as had been discussed by the Permanent Secretary's review groups looking at efficiencies. The response had been that NIPEC could not take a 10% cut in allocation without suppressing at least one post. Ms Jackson added that the CNO did seem to understand NIPEC's position. She asked if members had any comments or questions.

Chief Executive stated that this position demonstrates just how small NIPEC's budget is. Mr McCormick enquired if there had been any formal correspondence about a potential cut of 10% or if it was purely speculation at this stage. Ms Jackson confirmed that there had been no formal correspondence as yet but the figure of 10% had been muted around the Department, prompting the CNO to ask how NIPEC would manage. Ms Jackson was cognisant of the fact that the overall health budget for the next financial year would be reduced by £100m as a result of the recent Agenda for Change pay rise.

Mr McCormick stated that if NIPEC were formally notified of a 10% budget cut, he would call for an extraordinary Council Meeting and prepare a strongly worded letter to the Department. Ms McRoberts suggested that a document be pulled together outlining the impact different percentages of cuts would have on NIPEC and have it ready to go to Sponsor Branch. Ms Jackson agreed with this suggestion and said that it would not take long to collate. She added, however, that with the essential existing BSO SLA and costs for James House, there was not a lot that could be done without affecting posts.

Chief Executive also agreed that this was a good idea. She stated that NIPEC would not be able to undertake the work being asked of them by Sponsor Branch with a 10% cut. Ms Diamond agreed that the Work Plan would be significantly impacted. Ms McGregor also concurred that it would be useful to have an impact document prepared. She was of the view that it was important to understand what the removing of posts would look like as it was hard to make the argument to retain posts when other organisations were having to give them up.

Dr Bhogal asked if Ms Jackson had any idea of a likely timescale for any cuts. Ms Jackson advised that it would not be in the current financial year. Dr Bhogal suggested that the matter be given further consideration at the February meeting of the Professional Business Committee. Mrs L Kelly said that the draft Business Plan would be presented at that meeting which would help better inform discussions.

Chair was cognisant that this was clearly an emotive issue. She said that it was important to be prepared but not to pre-empt. Chair thanked Ms Jackson for her update and said that it was apparent just how financially difficult the next period was going to be.

Council members noted the update.

### 7.2.3 **Bank Mandate Form**

Ms Jackson informed Council that it was time to renew the details of NIPEC's business account and asked if members were content to give their approval for her to proceed and send details to the Bank of Ireland. She confirmed that Chief Executive and Mr McCormick have signed the appropriate form.

Council members gave their approval for Ms Jackson to proceed as outlined.

## 7.3 **Corporate Risk Register 2025-26, Version 5 (*Circulated for approval*)**

Ms Jackson referred to the Corporate Risk Register previously circulated and advised that it had been reviewed and approved by Business Team at their last meeting. As previously mentioned, this was discussed at length at the Audit & Risk Committee meeting in October with a view to removing two of the risks.

Mr McCormick confirmed that there had been a lengthy discussion on Risks 3 and 5 and the Audit & Risk Committee were content that all possible measures open to the organisation had been taken to mitigate these risks. He therefore asked Council for their formal agreement to both risks being removed from the Register.

Chair stated that she was content for Risks 3 and 5 to be removed, adding that Risk Registers were intended to be dynamic. Chief Executive was happy for these risks to be removed also, particularly as Risk 4 covered much of Risk 3 anyway. She gave her assurance that protecting against a cyber-attack would remain a priority for the organisation and that the risk could be added back on again if the risk heightened.

Council members agreed to the removal of Risks 3 and 5 from the Risk Register and approved Version 5 of the Register.

**7.4 Draft Council Assurance Framework (*Circulated for approval*)**

Ms Jackson enquired if members had read the cover sheet giving a summary of the purpose of the Assurance Framework and members confirmed that they had. Ms Jackson asked if members had any comments or questions on the draft Framework but no questions were forthcoming. She asked if members were happy to approve the draft Assurance Framework and to have the layout of the Corporate Risk Register amended accordingly.

Members approved the draft Council Assurance Framework and agreed to the layout of the Risk Register being amended.

**7.5 KPIs 2025-26 (*Circulated for noting*)**

Ms Jackson referred to the KPI Activity Report previously circulated. She drew attention to the fact that all performance indicators were currently within the set target.

Council members noted the KPI Activity Report.

**7.6 NIPEC Policies: (*Circulated for approval*)**

**7.6.1 Update of Policies to reflect UK GDPR/DPA 20187.6.2**

Ms Jackson reported that Audit had highlighted that not all policies were reflecting the updated legislation. She confirmed that all policies had now been updated accordingly.

Members approved the update.

**7.6.2 Hybrid Working Policy (*for approval*)**

Ms Jackson advised that the Hybrid Working Policy, previously circulated, had been reviewed in November 2025 and had been approved by Business Team on 11 November 2025.

Council members approved the reviewed policy.

## **7.7 Options Paper on Software Platforms for Sharing of Board Papers**

Ms Jackson was keen to get members' views on the options for the distribution of information to Council members ahead of meetings. She advised that NIPEC will be out of contract with Decision Time with effect from 14 January 2026, although this could be extended for one more year. This presents an opportunity for Council to examine other available options and agree a way forward. Ms Jackson reported that the total spend on Decision Time licenses to date was just over £27k, which equates to a cost of £700 per meeting.

Ms Jackson advised that the current options are Option 1: Maintain the Status Quo and renew the Decision Time licence for a further period to be agreed; Option 2: Introduction of a SharePoint Site for Council papers; Option 3: Search for Alternative Options; and Option 4: Revert to Using Personal Emails to distribute papers and documents.

There was a lengthy discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of each option. It was generally agreed that Decision Time was the most user-friendly option, although some members were of the view that the cost outweighed the benefit while some members held the opposite view. In the main, members did not want to return to the system of emailing papers, not least because the sharing of documentation by personal emails had been previously identified as a potential risk.

Members had some trepidation about the introduction of a SharePoint site but by and large were of the view that it was worth trialling it.

Ms Caslin was concerned about the loss of Decision Time as soon as January 2026 and Ms Diamond queried whether BSO PALS would be able to negotiate a better contract with Decision Time. Ms Stockdale suggested that MS Teams was another option worth exploring and enquired as to what other options were available. It was generally considered that any other options explored had to be available under the Crown Commercial Framework. Dr Bhogal was concerned about losing access to Council documents and comments if the contract with Decision Time was ceased. Ms Jackson assured her that all documents were saved on the NIPEC server. Dr Bhogal enquired as to what would happen to the existing documents on the site once the contract finished and Ms Jackson advised that Decision Time would have to adhere to strict information governance guidelines under the Crown Commercial Framework.

After some further discussion, it was agreed that the licence for Decision Time would be extended for a further year. This would allow Council adequate time to test SharePoint, for the exploration of other options and to see if PALS could negotiate a better contract with Decision Time. In response to a query from Mr McCormick, Ms Jackson advised that Decision Time required a three month notice period and therefore Council would need to decide on the way forward at the September Council meeting. Mr McCormick offered to sit in on any discussions with BSO ITS on the development of the SharePoint site as required.

**Action:** Ms Jackson to arrange for the contract with Decision Time to be extended for a further year.

**Action:** Ms Jackson to request that BSO ITS proceed to develop a SharePoint site which can then be trialled.

**Action:** Ms Jackson to approach PALS to determine if a better contract can be negotiated with Decision Time.

**Action:** Ms Jackson to prepare a further Options Paper in time for the September 2026 Council meeting.

## **7.8 Business Assurances**

### **7.8.1 BSO Legal Services (DLS) Service Level Agreement (Verbal Update)**

Ms Jackson advised that she had shared a copy of NIPEC's Service Level Agreement with BSO for the provision of Legal Services to provide assurance to Council on the range of professional services BSO DLS provide and the experience of their specialist legal team of solicitors.

Members noted the update.

### **7.8.2 DoH Circular dated 16 October 2025: Revised HSC & NIFRS Delegated Limits (Circulated for noting)**

Ms Jackson stated that the Audit and Risk Committee were responsible for ensuring assurances are appropriate, however, thought that it may be useful to share the revised HSC Delegated Limits with Council for information. She advised that these should be covered going forward by the new corporate risk register and the three lines of defence approach to assurances.

## 7.9 **Business Continuity Plan**

Ms Jackson referred to the draft Business Continuity Plan previously circulated and explained that this document is required to come to Council annually. There had been a significant overhaul of the document last year and Mrs McEaney has continued to update this and has made a few additions.

Ms Jackson confirmed that ITS now have personal contact details for her, however, she needs to meet with BSO BC Manager to seek assurance that contact details are available for all ALBs in the event of an outage. This issue was discussed at the ALB Forum on 22 October and a meeting is to be arranged between all the regional bodies and BSO Corporate Services to discuss a more joined up approach.

Ms Jackson asked if members had any comments or queries and a couple of changes to key contact personnel were highlighted.

Members noted the Report.

***Action:** Mrs Mallon to advise Mrs McEaney of changes to key contact personnel.*

## 8.0 **Safety and Quality**

### 8.1 **DoH Covid-19 Public Inquiry Group**

Chair invited Ms Jackson to provide the Council with her update on the Covid-19 Public Inquiry Group. Ms Jackson reported that there had been no further developments since the email from the Covid-19 Inquiry Central Co-ordination Team circulated to Council members on 18 November 2025 advising of the planned publication of the report on the Inquiry website on 20 November 2025.

Chair thanked Ms Jackson for her updates.

## **9.0 Any Other Business**

Chair wished members the very best of luck moving into the future. She expressed the view that they had very much consolidated as a board and was sorry not to be going forward with them. She stated that HSCNI were very lucky to have NIPEC and she very much hoped it would go from strength to strength.

Chair concluded business and thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting. Chair requested that members stay behind for a short, confidential briefing.

## **10.0 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting**

The next public meeting date of NIPEC Council is **11 March 2025 at 2.00pm** and will be held **in Room 1.7, First Floor, James House.**