

Board Meeting 24 June 2026

**TOURISM NI
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
HELD AT THE SEAMUS HEANEY HOMEPLACE, BELLAGHY
ON WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2026**

Participating:

- Ms Ellvena Graham OBE (Chairman)
- Ms Aileen Martin
- Ms Áine Gallagher
- Mr Ciaran O'Neill
- Mr Colin Johnston
- Mr John Hood
- Ms Karly Greene
- Ms Linda MacHugh
- Mr Michael Counahan

In attendance:

- Ms Laura McCorry, Chief Executive
- Mr Adrian Doherty, Director of Corporate Services
- Mr David Roberts, Director of Strategic Development (items 2(ii) - 2(iv))
- Ms Eimear Callaghan, Interim Director of Marketing (item 2 (ii))
- Mr Jim Daly, Executive Support Team

1. Introduction / Standing Items

The Chairman welcomed participants to the meeting. There were no apologies. Participants were asked to declare any interests in respect of agenda items. No declarations were made.

1 (i) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed minutes of its meeting held on 20th May 2026 and proposed a minor amendment to reflect endorsement of the Impact Framework, as part of the discussion of the draft Operating Plan.

1 (ii) Matters Arising – Actions from previous Board Meeting

The Board noted the status of actions and agreed that those recorded as complete could be removed from the list.

2. Items for Discussion

2 (i) Chief Executive's Report

The report was taken as read.

The Board discussed recent civil disturbances and the establishment of a crisis response group by TNI. Noting the benefit of this approach for visitors and the industry, the Board recommended the inclusion of Translink and PSNI, should TNI need to mobilise this group in the future.

The Board discussed the contingency capital allocation noting it as insufficient. The Chair advised the Board she has written to the Minister to request a meeting.

The Board extended its congratulations to Eimear Callaghan on her appointment as Director of Client Engagement and offered commendation to Suzi McIlhatton for her recent appearance before the Economy Committee.

It was noted that DfE had postponed the launch of its new Skills Plan. The CEO agreed to ask DfE to share the final version of the plan with the Board (**ACTION: LMCC**).

The Board requested that the list of events being supported through the International Tourism Events Fund be shared with the Board (**ACTION: JD to add to Decision Time**).

2 (ii) Tourism NI Business Support Programme

Eimear Callaghan joined the meeting for the next item.

The Board was presented with a paper seeking input on the proposed strategic direction of the Business Support Programme. Members broadly endorsed the direction of travel, agreeing that the number of programmes should be streamlined and that interventions should take a more targeted approach. Noting the need for alignment with the ongoing client segmentation work, it was agreed that a final paper be brought to the board in due course reflecting their feedback and the outcomes of the segmentation work. The Board also requested a programme evaluation approach that links to Tourism NI's impact framework.

Eimear left the meeting and David Roberts joined the next item.

2 (iii) Managed Professional Services Business Case

A business case seeking Board approval for a new Managed Professional Services contract from 2026 to 2030 was presented. Noting the reservations of the Finance and Casework committee with the proposed approach, the Board did not endorse the paper as presented. Members asked that further consideration be given to the delivery options, including a hybrid model that could include a better balance of in-house capability, the use of secondments as appropriate or the deployment of ad hoc expertise from another ALB or Department. Members also encouraged a reduction in reliance on consultants in order to help manage costs and build in-house expertise (**ACTION: DR**).

David Roberts left the meeting.

3. Reports

3 (i) Chairman's Report

The Board noted the Chairman's report on engagements since the last meeting. The Chairman gave an update on a gala dinner held by Vinci Airports at Hillsborough Castle, which was also attended by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

A report was also given on a partnership meeting with the Department, which had focused on the financial constraints facing the Department.

Members proposed that consideration be given to a benchmarking exercise that mapped investment in tourism against our competitive set (**ACTION: ELT**).

Commented [EC1]: i can brief Dot on this - will require David too

3 (ii) Sub-Committee Updates

The Chair of the Finance and Casework Committee gave an update on the meetings held on 20th May and 9th June as per the reports submitted to the Board.

4. Papers for Noting

4 (i) Market Outlook

The Board noted the latest report on visitor trends.

4 (ii) Draft Agenda for August Board Meeting

The Board noted a draft agenda for its next meeting.

5. Any Other Business

The Chairman noted this was the final meeting for Aileen Martin and Áine Gallagher. On behalf of Tourism NI, she thanked them for their contribution to the Board's work over the last three years. Aileen was thanked for her contribution to the Marketing Sub-Committee and her participation on the Travel Trade group. Áine was thanked for her chairmanship of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Chairman offered them both the Board's warmest wishes for the future.

As there were no other matters for discussion, the Chairman thanked participants and brought the meeting to a close to permit a presentation by Mid Ulster Council on its tourism development activity in the area.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next Board Meeting is due to take place on Thursday 20th August 2026 at Tourism NI Headquarters, Belfast.