



OFFICIAL DAERA MINUTES

MEETING TITLE	Finance and Major Projects Committee (FMPC)	
DIVISION/BRANCH REFERENCE	FMPC 32/24a	
VENUE	Clare House and MS Teams	
DATE/TIME	11 September 2024 14.30-16.30	
LIST OF ATTENDEES	<p>FMPC MEMBERS Shane Lynch Fiona McCandless</p> <p>Julie Thompson</p> <p>David Reid</p> <p>Roger Downey</p> <p>OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE Alison Caldwell David Simpson</p> <p>John White Briega Lafferty Nuala Hennessy Nichola Patton Beverley Bhatia</p>	<p>Non-Executive Board Member (Chair) Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning & Corporate Services Group</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group (joined meeting at 3pm)</p> <p>Chief Executive, NIEA (joined meeting at 3pm)</p> <p>Finance Director</p> <p>Director of Estate Transformation Director of Corporate Planning & Governance</p> <p>Assistant Director of Rural Affairs Division Finance Deputy Director (via MS Teams) Head of In Year Financial Planning Head of Future Years Financial Planning In Year Financial Planning (Secretariat)</p>
KEY POINTS DISCUSSED		
MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS OF PREVIOUS MEETING		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members agreed minutes of 15 May 2024 Finance and Major Projects Committee meeting. Action points from 15 May 2024 meeting confirmed as complete. 		
IN YEAR 2024-25: URGENT INFORMATION GATHERING EXERCISE		
<p>Roger Downey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> advised members that DoF commissioned an 'In Year 2024-25 Urgent Information Gathering Exercise' in August; summarised the DAERA return submitted to DoF on 30 August 2024; confirmed that the Minister of Finance had advised that the forecast overcommitments from departments had increased to £767m; and added that a bi-lateral Ministerial meeting took place with the Minister of Finance on 9 September 2024 to discuss the issues DAERA faces in 2024-25. 		

OCTOBER MONITORING ROUND

Nuala Hennessy:

- advised that whilst the October Monitoring Round has not yet been formally commissioned by DoF, the internal DAERA exercise has been completed in preparation for it;
- confirmed that following the June Monitoring Round, DAERA received additional allocations for bTB compensation and Lough Neagh;
- highlighted Resource DEL and Capital DEL pressures and easements identified within the Department and made recommendations thereon;
- added that pressures have been flagged to DoF in the monthly Outturn and Forecast Outturn exercise; and
- advised that all recommended bids align with the Draft Programme for Government (PfG) targets.

Fiona McCandless added that the recommended bids not only align with the Draft PfG but also to DAERA's Business Plan.

Members discussed the Resource DEL and Capital DEL easements as well as the proposed Resource DEL and Capital DEL bids.

Members **agreed** that proposals within the paper be forwarded to the Permanent Secretary and the Minister for consideration.

Action Point - Check that Monitoring Round proposals are included in FMPC Terms of Reference.

CAPITAL PROPOSALS TO 2034-35

Roger Downey:

- presented the paper on DAERA's Capital Spend Proposals for the 10-year period ending 31 March 2035;
- advised that a number of assumptions were made to determine the funding that is likely to be available to fund projections;
- confirmed that the Animal Health Sciences Building (AHSB) Full Business Case has been approved by DoF and proposed that a recommendation should be made to the Permanent Secretary and the Minister to invite tenders from prequalified Integrated Supply Teams to allow the project to progress to the Technical Design and Construction stage;
- highlighted the high-level risks of not proceeding with the project; and
- sought agreement that the presented analysis be refreshed when additional decisions need to be made on Major Capital Projects and that the latest analysis is shared with the Casework Committee.

There were significant discussions between members on the Animal Health Sciences Building and costs involved in taking the project to the next stage.

Members **agreed** to recommend to the Permanent Secretary and Minister that the Animal Health Science Building should go to tender. Members also **agreed** that the analysis should be refreshed when additional decisions need to be made, and that the latest analysis is shared with the Casework Committee.

Action point – Confirm that the FMPC Terms of Reference capture on-going monitoring of capital expenditure requirements over the next 10 years.

NIEA FINANCE UPDATE

David Reid:

- provided an update on NIEA’s financial position;
- detailed pressures and easements identified in NIEA’s October Monitoring Round return; and
- confirmed that NIEA staff are actively engaging with DAERA Finance Division staff on easements.

AFBI FINANCE UPDATE

David Simpson:

- confirmed that AFBI’s 2023-24 Annual Report and Accounts were laid in the Assembly on 5 July 2024;
- provided detail on AFBI’s October Monitoring Round return to DAERA;
- advised that a Casework Committee meeting is scheduled for 7 October to discuss the AFBI Finance System Solution business case; and
- highlighted the Research Vessel replacement costs within AFBI’s Major Programmes and Projects 10-year profile.

Roger Downey commented that it was a significant achievement for AFBI to have their Annual Report and Accounts signed off before summer recess.

CITY & GROWTH DEALS

John White:

- provided an overview of the City & Growth Deals Programme;
- confirmed that DAERA is the Accountable Department for three projects under the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal being delivered by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CCAGC);
- advised that CCAGC are aiming to have draft Outline Business Cases (OBCs) with the Department towards the end of this year with final OBCs being submitted in March 2025; and
- added that no concerns had been raised by the oversight group.

PEACE PLUS

John White:

- provided an update on the PEACEPLUS Programme;
- detailed the applications received under the five Investment Areas for which DAERA is the Accountable Department;
- confirmed that DAERA will be required to bid to DoF for the funding in line with the agreed allocated budget; and

- advised that Rural Affairs Division has established a PEACEPLUS Oversight Group.

There were discussions regarding the arrangements for Casework Committee meetings and Fiona McCandless reminded members that the meetings should be scheduled in a timely manner.

Members discussed the reporting of PEACEPLUS to the committee and requested that an **Action Point** would amend the FMPC workplan to include an update twice per year.

ESTATE TRANSFORMATION UPDATE

Alison Caldwell:

- reminded members that following the Departmental Board Review, the Estate Transformation Oversight Board (ETOB) would no longer be a sub-committee of the Departmental Board and instead would now provide updates to the FMPC;
- advised that historically an annual Asset Management Plan was produced by the Department which set out the key estate targets for a 5-year period;
- confirmed that following the need to have a more proactive, longer-term outlook in terms of capital investment planning, a Long-Term Estate Strategy framework document was agreed by Departmental Board;
- updated members on DAERA's key estate projects;
- advised that the Strategic Review of AFBI Land and Property Holdings has concluded and confirmed that the Departmental Board will be briefed at an upcoming meeting; and
- summarised the ETOB work programme for the previous 12 months.

There were discussions between members on the long-term estate planning. Members also discussed the role of the ETOB and Alison confirmed that it is now a working group.

It was agreed that an **Action Point** should amend the FMPC workplan to include the Estate Transformation update twice per year.

CASEWORK COMMITTEE UPDATE INCLUDING TERMS OF REFERENCE

Nichola Patton:

- provided an update on the four business cases considered since the last update in May 2024;
- highlighted a summary of business cases with estimated Casework Committee dates; and
- detailed the amendments made the Casework Committee Terms of Reference.

Shane Lynch raised an Internal Audit recommendation to create a business case checklist which should set out legislative and delegated authority, Roger Downey advised that it is being developed. **Action point** to provide an update to the next FMPC meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Papers to note on Update on Staff Cost Budget Management; and Science Transformation Programme Closure Report; and
- The next meeting is scheduled for 13 November 2024.

Shane Lynch closed the meeting at 16.30.

ACTION POINTS/OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE/TARGET DATE:

- Check that Monitoring Round proposals are included in FMPC Terms of Reference. To be completed by 30 September 2024 – Financial Planning Branch
- Check that the FMPC Terms of Reference capture on-going monitoring of capital expenditure requirements over the next 10 years – To be completed by 30 September 2024 – Financial Planning Branch
- Amend the FMPC workplan to include PEACEPLUS update twice per year - To be completed by 30 September 2024 - Financial Planning Branch
- Amend the FMPC workplan to include Estate Transformation update twice per year - To be completed by 30 September 2024 - Financial Planning Branch
- Create a Casework Committee business case checklist which should set out legislative and delegated authority – To be completed by 13 November 2024 – Roger Downey

**Minutes written
by:** Beverley Bhatia

Date: 12 September 2024