



OFFICIAL DAERA MINUTES

MEETING TITLE	Finance and Major Projects Committee (FMPC)	
DIVISION/BRANCH REFERENCE	FMPC 25/25a	
VENUE	Clare House and *MS Teams	
DATE/TIME	11 September 2025 14.00-16.00	
LIST OF ATTENDEES	FMPC MEMBERS Shane Lynch Mark O'Donnell David Reid* Julie Thompson Roger Downey OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE Declan McCarney Nuala Hennessy Melvyn McCurdy* Gemma Robinson Emma Lynch* Beverley Bhatia JOINED FOR AGENDA ITEM Sheila Walker	Non-Executive Board Member (Chair) Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning & Corporate Services Group Chief Executive, NIEA Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group Finance Director Deputy Finance Director Head of In Year Financial Planning Head of Programme and Project Support Head of Future Years Financial Planning Future Years Financial Planning In Year Financial Planning (Secretariat) Deputy Director Rural Affairs
KEY POINTS DISCUSSED		
INTRODUCTION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shane Lynch welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that this would be his last meeting as FMPC Chair.• No Conflicts of Interest were declared.		
MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS OF PREVIOUS MEETING		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members agreed the minutes of the 15 May 2025 FMPC meeting.• Action point from the 15 May 2025 meeting confirmed as complete.		

OCTOBER MONITORING ROUND 2025-26

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;
- added that DoF has commissioned an exercise seeking details and changes to Northern Ireland Protocol and Windsor Framework requirements for 2025-26;
- confirmed that Finance Division is engaging with both the Windsor Framework Implementation Team and SPS Strategic Delivery Office to ensure these requirements are finalised in advance of the DoF deadline of 19 September; and
- highlighted Resource DEL and Capital DEL pressures and easements identified within the Department and made recommendations thereon.

There were significant discussions between members regarding the Resource DEL pressures for bTB compensation and Epizootic Disease Contingency Planning. Members stated that whilst they welcomed the update from Veterinary Service and Animal Health Group (VSAHG) at the FMPC meeting in May 2025, bTB compensation costs continue to increase.

Members requested that VSAHG provides a separate paper on anticipated 2025-26 bTB compensation costs to the Permanent Secretary and the Minister in tandem with the October Monitoring Round submission to them – **Action point**

BUDGET EXERCISE 2026-2030

Gemma Robinson:

- presented the paper on DAERA's current Budget 2026-29/30 position;
- advised that DoF had commissioned an information gathering exercise to inform the Executive's consideration of Budget 2026-29/30 (the Budget) that will set Resource DEL budgets for 2026-27 to 2028-29 and Capital DEL budgets for 2026-27 to 2029-30;
- confirmed that Finance Division met with the Permanent Secretary and the Minister in August and early September, to refine and agree DAERA Resource DEL and Capital DEL bids;
- detailed the bids submitted to DoF on 8 September; and
- added that it is anticipated that the Draft Budget will be announced in November/December.

Members discussed Resource DEL pressures and the contingencies in place if bids are not met.

CITY & GROWTH DEALS

Sheila Walker:

- provided a background to the City & Growth Deals Programme;
- reminded members that DAERA is the Accountable Department for three projects under the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal;

- advised that in February 2025, DAERA assumed the role of Accountable Department for one project under the Mid South West Region Growth Deal;
- confirmed that all four projects are now at OBC development stage with external consultants appointed and technical design teams established; and
- detailed proposed timings by which Deal Signings are expected.

Declan McCarney added that whilst City & Growth Deals business cases below £20m do not need to be submitted to DoF, those over £10m would be considered by the Casework Committee.

Members queried the CAFRE Robotics Automation and Packaging Innovation Centre (RAPIC) project and how it linked to the CAFRE Redevelopment project. Sheila Walker advised that this would be Phase 3 of the CAFRE Redevelopment project with most spend expected from 2029. However, some spend would be achieved earlier through purchase of capital equipment.

PEACEPLUS

Sheila Walker:

- provided updates on the PEACEPLUS Investment Areas for which DAERA is the Accountable Department;
- advised that Letters of Offer are issuing with some delays, which are currently being worked through;
- highlighted a summary of each project; and
- confirmed an update on all PEACEPLUS Investment Areas was sent to the Minister on 2 June 2025.

CASEWORK COMMITTEE UPDATE

Nuala Hennessy:

- provided an update on the two business cases considered by the Casework Committee since the last update in May 2025 – Farming for Sustainability and Farm Sustainability Payment;
- highlighted a summary of business cases due to be considered by the Casework Committee in 2025-26 and beyond; and
- confirmed that the Casework Committee Terms of Reference have now been reviewed and agreed by members.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Chair Shane Lynch raised the need to include an annual agenda item for ‘Deep Dive into Major Programme or Project’. Members discussed how projects are currently monitored including Project/Programme Boards and Post Project Evaluations. Further consideration is needed to establish the purpose of the Deep Dive - **Action Point**
- Declan McCarney updated the Committee on SIB’s new DataMap reporting tool for the NICS Board.
- Roger Downey informed the Committee on the development and timescales of DAERA’s 5-year Budget Sustainability Plan

- The next meeting is scheduled for 13 November 2025.

Shane Lynch closed the meeting at 15.50

ACTION POINTS/OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE/TARGET DATE:

- Provide a separate paper on anticipated 2025-26 bTB compensation costs to the Permanent Secretary and the Minister in tandem with the October Monitoring Round submission to them – Veterinary Service Animal Health Group 30 September 2025
- Establish the purpose of Deep Dive into Major Programme or Project - Programme and Project Support Branch – Agenda Item at November FMPC

**Minutes written
by:** Beverley Bhatia

Date: 12 September 2025