

## NIEA Board 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026 - Draft Minutes (endorsed)

| Meeting details      |                                            |                                                                                     |                            |               |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Title                | NIEA Board Meeting                         |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| Reference            | NIEA-Board-March 26                        |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| Date (Time)          | Thursday 26th March 2026. 10:00am – 2.30pm |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| Venue                | NIEA Lisburn Boardroom                     |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| List of Attendees    |                                            |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| Name                 | Reference                                  | Position                                                                            | In Attendance (/Apologies) | Deputy sent   |
| NIEA Board Members   |                                            |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| David Reid           | DR                                         | Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)                       | No                         | LL            |
| Liz Loughran         | LL                                         | Director of Natural Environment Division (NED)                                      | Yes (Chair)                | N/A           |
| Richard Crowe        | RC                                         | Director of Water Regulation and Enforcement Division (Water RED)                   | No                         | Yes           |
| Alistair Beggs       | AB                                         | Director of Waste & Industrial Pollution Regulation & Enforcement Division (WIPRED) | No                         | No            |
| Stephen Welch        | SW                                         | Non-Executive Board Member                                                          | Yes                        | N/A           |
| Veronica Morris      | VM                                         | Non-Executive Board Member                                                          | Yes                        | N/A           |
| Formal Attendees     |                                            |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| Anne McDowell        | AMcD                                       | Head of NIEA Corporate Services Branch                                              | Yes                        | N/A           |
| Janice Riddell       | JR                                         | Head of Chief Executive’s Office                                                    | Yes                        | N/A           |
| Phillip Walker       | PW                                         | Head of NIEA Budgetary Reporting Branch                                             | Yes                        | N/A           |
| Presenters           |                                            |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| Peter Fallon         | PF                                         | H&S Advisor, DAERA Health & Safety Coordination Branch                              | Yes                        | N/A           |
| Janice Harris        | JH                                         | Head of Operational Review Programme Unit                                           | Yes                        | N/A           |
| Cara Lavery          | CL                                         | G7, Operational Review Programme Unit                                               | Yes                        | N/A           |
| NIEA OMM Secretariat |                                            |                                                                                     |                            |               |
| Ciara O’Kane         | CO’K                                       | SO, NIEA Corporate Services Branch (CSB)                                            | Yes                        | N/A           |
| Deputies             |                                            |                                                                                     |                            | Deputised for |
| Deirdre Quinn        | DQ                                         | Head of Water Science & Evidence Unit                                               | Yes                        | RC            |

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| Agenda Item           | Key Points Discussed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Action Points                                                                                                             |
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| <b>Standing items</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                           |
| <b>1</b>              | <b>Welcome and Apologies Conflicts of Interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LL welcomed all attendees to the meeting.</li> <li>• LL advised of apologies and deputies. It was agreed that the quorate was met, however if any significant decisions needed to be made they would be taken by a fuller complement of Board members at a later date via correspondence.</li> <li>• No applicable conflicts of interest.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | None for this Agenda item                                                                                                 |
| <b>2</b>              | <b>Conflicts of Interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new conflicts of interest were recorded.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | None for this Agenda item                                                                                                 |
| <b>3</b>              | <b>Minutes &amp; Action Points from the last Board Meeting (28<sup>th</sup> January 2026)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIEA Board attendees agreed and endorsed the Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026.</li> <li>• The Action Points (stemming from the January 2026 Board meeting) are recorded in the Action Points document.</li> <li>• Updates were provided on a number of Action Points, and any Carried Forward Action Points (and new Action Points) shall be discussed at the next Board meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2026.</li> <li>• Three of the four Carried Forward Action Points are agenda items for the NIEA Resources Committee scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026.</li> <li>• JR will discuss the fourth Carried Forward Action Point with LL and progress it as soon as possible.</li> </ul> | <b>Yes</b><br><br>4 Carried Forward Action Points (CFAPs) - see Action Points document for full details and assigned SROs |
| <b>4</b>              | <b>NIEA Resource Committee Update Paper</b><br><br>VM presented the NIEA Resource Committee Update Paper.<br><br>The Board noted the paper.<br><br>Discussion followed, including the work of NIEA Financial Reporting Branch to get aged debt cleared. LL asked PW if the aged debt was increasing or decreasing compared to last year; PW to check.<br><br>Board members expressed concern over the high number of sick days taken over a short space of time and recommended that the reasons why are looked into. PW said he had prepared a paper for the NIEA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Yes</b>                                                                                                                |

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|          | <p>Resources Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026; this paper looks into the reasons of sickness absence amongst NIEA staff.</p> <p>VM suggested at the NIEA Resources Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026 that the Committee should be renamed to NIEA Resources and People Committee. VM asked the NIEA Board Members if they agreed with the name change; members agreed. Therefore, the NIEA Resources Committee will now be named the NIEA Resources and People Committee.</p> <p><b><u>Action Points</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board Members and Secretariat to note the NIEA Resources Committee is now named the NIEA Resources and People Committee.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>AP 26-1-1</b> |
| <b>5</b> | <p><b>NIEA Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Update Paper</b></p> <p>SW presented the NIEA Audit and Risk Assurance Update Paper.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p> <p>SW reported that good progress was being made to develop the Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27.</p> <p>SW attended the DEARA sponsored ARAC Chairs Meeting on 3rd March 2026 and observed that 'Health and wellbeing' and 'Resources' were common key risks across the attendees' organisations.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                  |
| <b>6</b> | <p><b>Health and Safety Report</b></p> <p>PF presented the NIEA Board Health and Safety Update Report.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p> <p>PF informed the Board that Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) were in contact with NIEA in 2023 in relation to an anonymous complaint. NIEA provided HSENI with information to deliver a response to the complainant. HSENI requested further information from the complainant, no response was given and subsequently HSENI closed the case. HSENI have recently been in touch with DAERA Health &amp; Safety Coordination Branch to advise that the complainant has since made further contact requesting an update. Board Members asked if PF could provide further information.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Coordination Branch (HSCB) is currently finalising the Landfill Inspection Operations health and safety audit report. The report examines operational health and safety controls, procedural compliance, and opportunities for improvement across landfill</p> | <b>Yes</b>       |

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|          | <p>inspection activities. The Board requested AB to talk them through the audit report</p> <p>Since the last Board update, two incidents have been reported to HSCB.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A staff member sustained finger injuries after a depot yard gate, blown by wind, trapped their small and ring fingers between the lock bar and gate.</li> <li>2. A staff member slipped on black ice in the Water Chemistry Unit car park, resulting in a cut to the hand.</li> </ol> <p>HSCB requested paperwork on a path inspection where someone fell in Crawfordsburn Park; HSCB will update the relevant Business Area and provide advice if required.</p> <p><b><u>Action Points</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PF to ask his Senior Management Team for more information about the complaint lodged with HSENI and forward appropriate information to the NIEA Board.</li> <li>• AB to talk Board through the audit report (H&amp;S landfill).</li> </ul> | <p><b>AP 26-1-2</b></p> <p><b>AP 26-1-3</b></p>                   |
| <b>7</b> | <p><b>NIEA Corporate and Business Planning</b></p> <p>AMcD presented the business planning update.<br/>The Board noted the update.</p> <p>NIEA Corporate Services Branch are awaiting business areas to give an update on their 12-month position on the NIEA Business Plan 2025/26.<br/>NIEA Corporate Services Branch are progressing the development of the NIEA Business Plan 2026/27. Business Areas are currently considering feedback from DAERA's Grade 3s. A draft plan will be reviewed by NIEA CEO and Directors on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.</p> <p><b><u>Action Points</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMcD to issue the NIEA Business Plan 2025/26 12-month position to SW and VM once available.</li> <li>• AMcD to send SW and VM the Draft NIEA Business Plan 2026/27 after CEO and Directors have reviewed it.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                         | <p><b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>AP 26-1-4</b></p> <p><b>AP 26-1-5</b></p> |

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|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AMcD to ask Lough Neagh Governance Team in DAERA Core (EMFG) to present to NIEA Board an overview update on the progression of the Lough Neagh Action Plan.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>AP 26-1-6</b> |
| <b>8</b>  | <p><b>NIEA High Level Risk Summary / NIEA Risk Register</b></p> <p>AMcD presented a summary of the NIEA Risk Register and issues log. Updates to the risk register and issues log were highlighted to the Board Members.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p> <p>It was noted that the Dalradian Goldmine Local Public Inquiry would commence week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026. LL informed the Board that the resources allocated to the Inquiry and business as usual work was being managed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>No</b>        |
| <b>9</b>  | <p><b>Update from NIEA Planning Management Meeting (including NIEA Planning Improvement Plan)</b></p> <p>LL presented an update of the NIEA Planning Management Meeting and implementation of the NIEA Planning Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new focused team has been established within the Natural Environment Division. This team will be led by Teresa O'Neill, Grade 6, with responsibility for implementation of all five work strands. Work strand two is due to start in a number of weeks.</li> <li>A Business Analyst is supporting the team's decision making with statistical analysis of the team's data.</li> <li>Three externally facilitated sessions were delivered to the team.</li> <li>A targeted approach to both backlog and new cases received is being applied.</li> </ul> | <b>No</b>        |
| <b>10</b> | <p><b>Update on the Operational Review Programme Team</b></p> <p>JH presented the Update on the Operational Review Programme Team Paper.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p> <p>ORP Project 5 – NIEA Strategic Plan was discussed. Work has been progressed as far as it can by the Project Team; input from NIEA Board</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>No</b>        |

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|                                   | <p>is required. SW noted that ORP Projects 2-4 provide a good solid foundation for ORP Project 5 to be based on. The Board noted the good work that had been produced by the team of Project 5 to date. JH informed the Board that engagement had been made with the Department of Finance with the intention of an external facilitator assisting in the finalisation of Project 5. The external facilitator will deliver a joint workshop between the NIEA Board and ORP Project Team to ensure there is clear understanding of the work needed to finalise the NIEA Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Decision: Board content to take JH's recommendation and contract an external facilitator.</p> |                                                                |
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| Agenda Item                       | Key Points Discussed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Action Points                                                  |
| <b>Strategic Discussion Items</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                |
| <b>11</b>                         | <p><b>Chair's Evaluation</b></p> <p>Board Members and their deputies were given a summary of the Chair's evaluation survey results by AMcD. All other attendees, except the Secretariat (CO'K) left the room for this agenda item.</p> <p>The key points of a short action plan were agreed.</p> <p><b><u>Action Points</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMcD to send a draft action plan to Board Members by correspondence.</li> <li>• AMcD to share the agreed action plan to DR and DAERA's Permanent Secretary, Katrina Godfrey.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>AP 26-1-7</b><br/><b>AP 26-1-8</b></p> |
| <b>12</b>                         | <p><b>Board Effectiveness Review</b></p> <p>Formal attendees JR and PW returned to the room.</p> <p>AMcD gave Board members and formal attendees a summary of the Board Effectiveness evaluation survey results.</p> <p>The key points of a short action plan were agreed.</p> <p><b><u>Action Points</u></b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                |

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|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMcD to issue the NIEA Framework document with tracked changes to Board Members for consideration.</li> <li>• AMcD to issue Gift and Hospitality Register quarterly to VM and SW for their completion and return.</li> <li>• AMcD to issue a skills matrix to all Board Members and Formal Attendees.</li> <li>• AMcD to liaise with Martyn Girvin, Head of the new NIEA Strategic Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Branch to arrange engagement events for Board Members.</li> </ul> | <b>AP 26-1-9</b><br><br><b>AP 26-1-10</b><br><br><b>AP 26-1-11</b><br><br><b>AP 26-1-12</b> |
| <b>13</b> | <b>AOB</b><br><br>None.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>No</b>                                                                                   |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Date of Next Meeting, and Approval of Items for Strategic Discussion at the next Board Meeting</b><br><br>To be discussed with CEO.<br><br>Possibly Lough Neagh Governance Team in DAERA Core (EMFG) to present to NIEA Board an overview update on the progression of the Lough Neagh Action Plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>N/A</b>                                                                                  |
| <b>15</b> | <b>Close</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>N/A</b>                                                                                  |
|           | <b>Minutes written by:</b> Anne McDowell (AMcD), deputising for NIEA Board Secretariat<br><br><b>Date:</b> 22nd April 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                             |