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NIEA Board 28 May 2026 - Minutes (endorsed)

Meeting details				
Title	NIEA Board			
Reference	NIEA-NIEA Board-May 2026			
Date (Time)	Thursday 28th May 2026 at 10:00am			
Venue	NIEA Lisburn Glenelly Boardroom with MS Teams			
List of Attendees				
Name	Initials	Business Area	In Attendance (Y/N)	Deputy sent
NIEA Board Members				
NIEA Chief Executive				
Richard Crowe	RC	Chief Executive	Yes	N/A
G5 Directors				
Liz Loughran	LL	Natural Environment Division (NED)	Yes	N/A
Brian McVeigh	BMcV	Water Regulation and Enforcement Division (Water RED)	No	Yes
Alistair Beggs	AB	Waste & Industrial Pollution Regulation and Enforcement Division (WIPRED)	Yes	N/A
Non-Executive Board Members				
Stephen Welch	SW	Non-Executive Board Member	Yes	N/A
Veronica Morris	VM	Non-Executive Board Member	Yes	N/A
Formal / Other Attendees				
Teresa O'Neill	TO'N	Central Services Unit (CSU)	No	No
Anne McDowell	AMcD	NIEA Corporate Services Branch (CSB)	Yes	N/A
Janice Riddell	JR	NIEA Chief Executive's Office (CEO)	Yes	N/A
Charles Barnett	CBa	NIEA Financial Reporting Branch (FRB)	Yes	N/A
Phillip Walker	PW	NIEA Budgetary Reporting Branch (BRB)	Yes	N/A
Peter Fallon	PF	DAERA Health & Safety – Item 6 only	Yes	N/A
Janice Harris	JH	Operational Review Programme – Item 10 only	Yes	N/A
Aideen McChesney	AMcC	Operational Review Programme – Item 10 only	Yes	N/A
Cara Lavery	CL	Operational Review Programme – Item 10 only	Yes	N/A
Tanith Jamison	TJ	Operational Review Programme – Item 10 only	Yes	N/A
Secretariat				
David Coulter	DC	NIEA Corporate Services Branch (CSB)	Yes	N/A
Deputies				Deputised for
Keith Bradley	KB	Water Regulation Unit (WRU)		BMcV

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Agenda Item	Key Points Discussed	Action Points
Welcome and Apologies		
1	• RC welcomed all attendees to the meeting. • AMcD advised of apologies from BMcV and TO'N. KB was deputising for BMcV. • As Chair RC placed on record his gratitude to David Reid for his service and commitment to the Agency. Members acknowledged his substantial contribution and extended their best wishes for the future. • RC also thanked members for their welcome, acknowledged the strong foundations built by his predecessor and recognised the Board's important role in providing strategic direction and leadership. He is keen in his new position as CEx to strengthen public understanding of the positive role the Agency plays in NI society.	
Conflicts of Interest		
2	• No applicable conflicts of interest.	
Minutes & Action Points from the last meeting 26 March 2026		
3	• Meeting attendees agreed & endorsed the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2026. • The Action Points stemming from the previous meeting are recorded in the Action Points document available at CM reference: AE1/26/1152831. • 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 meeting, available at CM reference: AE1/26/1639501. • AP7 and 8 – AMcD advised on progress of draft action plans for the Board and the Chair's evaluation 2025-26. • AP9 AMcD to liaise with JH on the NIEA Framework document as this will be the subject of one of the ORP Projects. **NAP 26-2-01** • AP11 AMcD highlighted skills matrix returns are due by 4th June 2026 • AP12 AMcD advised on successful pilot induction process for the new ARAC member Alfie Wong. AMcD will continue to work with Martin Girvan on future information events for the current NEBMs,	3 Carried Forward Action Points (CFAPs) and 4 New Action Points (NAP)

	including meeting with members of the senior management team. **NAP 26-2-02:** AB, BMcV and LL to assist with identifying senior staff to include. **Action Points** • AMcD to liaise with JH on the NIEA Framework document as this will be the subject of one of the ORP Projects. • AMcD to arrange NEBMs (and ICMs) to meet Unit and/or Branch Heads as part of engagement events (**CFAP 26-1-12)**. AB, BMcV and LL to assist with identifying senior staff to include. • The committee asked that a member with independent financial skill be sought. AMcD to issue a skills matrix to determine the level of expertise required.	NAP 1 NAP 2 NAP 3
NIEA Resources and People Committee Update		
4	VM summarised the key items from the meeting on 28 May 2026 which included: • Indicative budget levels • Aged debt • Progress in filling vacancies • Independent financial representation to be considered for the Committee **NAP 26-2-03** • Feet strategy • Progress on End of Year Reviews, Personal Development Plans and Personal Performance Agreements. RC advised that these will be discussed and monitored at his weekly leadership team meetings. In addition, he had written to all NIEA staff recently to highlight and encourage staff to engage in these important processes promptly.	
Agenda Item	**Key Points Discussed**	**Action Points**
NIEA ARAC Update on the Annual Report and Accounts Meeting		
5	SW and CBa advised that ARAC met on 21 May 2026 to consider the draft Annual Report & Accounts prior to submission to NIAO. • ARAC members are content with the continued treatment of the Mobuoy illegal waste dump as a contingent liability. RC reported on the recent meeting with elected representatives at a public consultation event. SW and VM requested an invite to any future events. **NAP 26-2-04** • SW and VM noted that that the committee were content with the rest of the annual report and accounts with nothing major identified.	

	• CBa asked the senior management team and NEBMs to note that their salary and pension is reported in the annual report and accounts. **Action Point** • SW and VM requested an invite to any future public consultation events.	NAP 4
Health & Safety Report		
6	Peter Fallon joined the meeting and provided a summary of the tabled paper. • Landfill Inspection. Report was finalised and issued to management. • An audit of Crawfordsburn Country Park is in progress. • The details of four incidents were discussed. SW asked if the same PPE footwear was involved in the two reported slipping incidents. It was confirmed that no issues with the PPE had been identified in these instances. LL stated that management are diligent in ensuring correct PPE is always used.	
Agenda Item	**Key Points Discussed**	**Action Points**
NIEA Corporate and Business Planning		
7	• AMcD advised that the draft Business Plan for 2026-27 was submitted to the Permanent Secretary for review. The absence of a budget will delay submission of the plan to the AERA Committee.	
NIEA Risk Register		
8	• AMcD presented the draft version of a new Risk Register. This version had been presented to the Risk Management Group on 19 May 2026. This version will be presented to the ARAC on 19 June 2026. • SW confirmed that senior responsible owners should be assigned to the six high-level risks.	
Update from NIEA Planning Management Meeting (including NIEA Planning Improvement Plan)		
9	LL presented the planning paper. • Planning Management Board was reporting evidence of improvement in performance. • There was a risk that the budgetary position would lead to a slowdown in the intake of new staff. This could impact on the gains already made. • 98% of consultations received in current year were in target. • It was anticipated that the backlog will be cleared by September 2026, but there may be some slippage due to summer leave.	

	• Progress continues to be monitored closely at weekly performance meetings. • RC noted that this was very clearly a ministerial priority and he commended the good response of staff and the huge amount of work that TO'N and her team were putting into ensuring processes were effective.	
Supporting Staff Recommendations from the NIEA Resources and People Committee		
11	Note: This item was brought forward in the Agenda. VM summarised support identified by the Resources and Peoples Committee. • Various of systems are already in place to support staff, such as the well-being articles in the staff newsletter. • Feedback from OHS will help inform what else we can do as an agency to better support staff and identify opportunities where the agency can take a different approach. • A more disciplined approach is required to be taken in Workforce Planning.	
Update on ORPT		
10	JH, CL, AMcC and TJ joined the meeting to give a presentation on progress of ORP projects and reports. The Board recognised the good progress with ORP and provided commitment to support the ongoing delivery	
BREAK FOR LUNCH		
AOB including Budget; and Fleet Strategy (Action from April Resources and People Committee)		
12	**A.O.B** **BUDGET** • PW discussed the budgetary position within NIEA due to operating with an interim budget. Every department has been given a contingency planning envelope and work is ongoing. The Board asked to be kept updated with emerging updates regarding the budget. • RC in his role as Principial Accounting Officer highlighted steps being taken to maintain service delivery and progress key priorities, including the management of recruitment competitions and vacancies to ensure organisational resilience and capacity.	

	• RC stressed the importance of clearly articulating Agency priorities to support decision-making and ensure that resources are directed towards the areas of greatest significant importance. **FLEET STRATEGY** • CBa presented the draft Fleet Strategy. He summarised the background; its creation was a result of a recommendation with the Internal Audit review of NIEA Fleet Management. Consideration will have to be given to: • Better management of the resource already place, including bringing management and ownership of the current fleet into a central team. • Introduction of a booking system to ensure better utilisation of the fleet as a shared service across the agency. • Reduction of the fleet size to make it more modern and responsive to the needs of the agency and ensure efficiencies are realised. • The Board welcomed the paper and agreed to note and adopt the NIEA Fleet Strategy.	
Date of Next Meeting, and Approval of Items for Strategic Discussion at the next Board Meeting		
13	**Agenda item suggestions for the next meeting - scheduled for 25 June 2026** 1. Lough Neagh Update *(Craig Hartin, Lough Neagh Delivery and Governance Branch, DAERA)* 2. Audit Report on Health & Safety, Landfill *(AB, Action from March NIEA Board Meeting)* 3. Framework Review *(AMcD, if further discussion required)* 4. Priority Capital Projects *(VM, Action from January Board Meeting)* RC will decide topics at a later date.	
	Minutes written by: David Coulter (DC) NIEA Board Secretariat **Date**: 04 June 2026	