**Summary of the NIEA Board Meeting**

**4 November 2020, via Webex Video Conference**

**(Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group Senior Management in attendance)**

Members in Attendance:

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| Tracey Teague | Acting Chief Executive, NIEA |
| Tim Irwin | Acting Director of Resource Efficiency Division, NIEA |
| Paul Douglas | Non-Executive Board Member |

Other Attendees:

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| Sara McGuckin | Head of Natural Science, NIEA (deputising for Helen Anderson, Director of Natural Environment Division) |
| David Small | Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group (EMFG) |
| Dave Foster  | Director of Regulatory & Natural Resources Policy Division, EMFG |
| John Mills | Director of EU Transition Division, EMFG |
| Claire Vincent | Acting Director of Marine & Fisheries Division, EMFG |
| Owen Lyttle | Director of Environmental Policy Division, EMFG |
| Arron Wright | Director of Green Growth Division, NIEA Group |
| Peter Aiken | Head of Business Support Team, NIEA |
| Mary Drumm | NICS HR Business Partner(attended for agenda item – HR Update) |
| Eileen Curry | Head of MyNI Digital Marketing Team, EMFG(attended for agenda item – MyNI Project Update) |
| Karl Beattie | Head of Environment Bill Team(attended for agenda item – Environmental Governance) |
| Diane Richardson | NIEA Board Secretariat |
| Stephen Norrie | NIEA Board Secretariat |

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1** | **Apologies and Conflicts of Interest** Apologies were received from Helen Anderson. No new conflicts of Interest were recorded. Tracey Teague advised the Board that the DAERA Major Emergency Response Plan had been initiated since the last board meeting. Stephen Norrie was introduced as the new Board Secretariat, replacing Diane Richardson. |  |
| **2** | **Minutes and Matters Arising from Meeting on 4 November 2020** |  |
|  |  | **Action** |
|  | The board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October and discussed matters arising. The following action points were agreed: * The board was reminded that Martin McKendry, CAFRE Director, had extended an invitation to visit CAFRE, Glenwherry Hill Farm. A reminder email will issue for expressions of interest pending further arrangements;
* Confirmation that Ministerial submission on Anaerobic Digestion plants will be cleared and submitted to the Minister by 6 November 2020;
* Policy colleagues to meet with NIEA colleagues to discuss the Derogations process and arrange a submission to the Minister;
* Discuss the Health & Safety incident relating to Peatlands at a meeting on 10 November and consider action needed;
* Prepare Ministerial submission on the DEFRA “State of the Environment” Report and take forward considerations regarding whether a State of the Environment Report for Northern Ireland could be re-introduced.
* Following the meeting with Finance Division at end of September, issue a note to Financial Planning Branch on workforce planning issues; and
* Update the DAERA intranet to reflect EMFG and NIEA split (ongoing work in progress)
 | **NIEA Secretariat****Tim Irwin****Dave Foster****Mark Hammond****Tim Irwin****Peter Aiken****Diane Richardson / Stephen Norrie** |
| **3** | **HR Monthly Report**Mary Drumm updated the board on the latest position in relation to recruitment competitions, filling of approved vacancies, temporary promotions, agency staff, performance management, absence management, and the latest information from NICS HR regarding Covid 19 recovery. The board noted the latest position and the following action points were agreed:* Final version of DAERA vacancy tracker to be sent to the Business Support Team; and
* Provide clarity on the process for filling priority vacancies, for those priority vacancies currently on the tracker and those subsequently identified as critical.
 | **Mary Drumm****Paula Bratton** |
|  |  | **Action** |
| **4** | **Finance and Corporate Governance** The board discussed the various issues arising from the finance and corporate governance paper and the board: 1. Noted the net Resource and Capital spend to end of September compared to budgets;
2. Noted the October Monitoring Round position;
3. Noted the January Monitoring Round position;
4. Noted the NIEA 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts Update;
5. Notedthe Quarter 2 update on the NIEA/EMFG targets in the DAERA 2020/21 Business Plan and the update for all the targets in the NIEA 2020/21 Business Plan;
6. Noted the assurance to be provided on business area Business Continuity Plans
7. Notedthe key issues flagged in the NIEA and EMFG Quarter 2 Stewardship Reports;
8. Notedthe Workforce Planning update and;
9. Noted the updates on Fleet Management and Training.

The following action points were agreed:* Establish a Finance sub-committee for the NIEA Board;
* Provide proposals on next steps regarding the Fleet Management Project:
* Provide updates on the DAERA Quarter 2 Business Plan progress report covering the 6 EMFG/NIEA targets in the DAERA Business Plan; and Provide narrative updates in relation to the RED and NED targets in the NIEA Quarter 2 Business Plan progress report for targets associated with Covid recovery, river bodies and planning consultations.
 | **Peter Aiken****Peter Aiken****Tim Irwin / Sara McGuckin** |
|  |  | **Action** |
| **5** | **MyNI Project Update**Eileen Curry presented the board with an update on the MyNI pilot project highlighting the campaigns, digital marketing and stakeholder engagement. The board acknowledged the positive outcomes of the work to date and the potential for MyNI as a vehicle for communicating the need for behavourial change by stakeholders and citizens. The board noted the update and agreed that an extension to the pilot to provide further proof of concept would be beneficial going forward before any firm decisions could be made on the permanent nature of a MyNI Team. The following actions were agreed;* Provide a further MyNI update to the NIEA Board in May 2021
* Discuss potential assistance with the DAERA EU Exit Communications team in relation to EMFG’s EU Exit Comms requirements

The board agreed that while MyNI could also assist with communications in relation to EU exit, it was also important to have dedicated resource within the EU Transition Division to focus on coordinating communication efforts. The following actions were agreed:* Confirm if the proposed DP post for EU Exit Comms coordination is included in the DAERA vacancy tracker; and
* Progress securing a dedicated DP post for EU Exit Comms coordination.
 | **Eileen Curry****Eileen Curry****Peter Aiken****John Mills** |
| **6** | **Environmental Governance**Karl Beattie from the Environment Bill Team presented the board with an overview of the Environmental Governance discussion document. The discussion document covers the ‘core’ elements of the Environment Bill, namely: environmental improvement plans; a policy statement on the application of environmental principles after the end of the transition period; and the establishment of the Office for Environmental Protection to replace the environmental oversight role of the European Commission. The discussion document is due to issue for public consultation in the near future. The board noted the content of the discussion document and potential implications for the Agency going forward. The following action point was agreed:* Issue a copy of Karl Beattie’s slides to the Board.
 | **Diane Richardson** |
| **7** | **Covid 19 Update**Tracey Teague updated the board on issues being dealt with by NIEA and EMFG in response to the ongoing Covid-19 situation and the board noted the latest position. |  |
| **8** | **EU Transition Update**John Mills updated the board on key issues around legislation and regulation in preparation for EU exit and the need for good communications in relation to all internal and external messaging. The board noted the update.  |  |
| **9** | **Health & Safety Monthly Report**The board discussed the monthly health & safety report and noted the latest position. The following action was agreed;* NED to follow up outstanding Health & Safety Audit recommendation and provide update.
 | **Sara McGuckin** |
| **10** | **Paper by Correspondence (Water Quality Inspectors)**Tim Irwin advised the board that the paper was in progress with a number of issues requiring clarification. The following action was agreed:* Circulate paper to the Board once issues clarified.
 | **Tim Irwin** |
| **11** | **Communications and Staff Engagement*** Diane Richardson provided a brief update on staff communications activities and the board agreed the approach to the EMFG/NIEA staff webinar in December.
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| **12** | **Papers for Future NIEA Board Meetings**The board agreed the schedule of papers to be tabled at the December board meeting and discussed potential papers for future meetings.  |  |
| **13** | **AOB**The board discussed a recent Internal Audit Report focusing on Marine Enforcement and specifically one recommendation around an Enforcement Report. The following action was agreed: * Share the draft audit recommendation (and draft management response) in relation to an Enforcement Report with Tracey Teague, Tim Irwin and Mark Cherry.
 | **Claire Vincent** |