**Summary of the NIEA Board Meeting**

**6 July 2021, via Webex Video Conference**

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

Members in Attendance:

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| Paul Donnelly | Acting Chief Executive, NIEA (Chair) |
| Helen Anderson | Director of Natural Environment Division, NIEA |
| Keith Bradley | Acting Director of Resource Efficiency Division, NIEA |

Other Attendees:

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| Hazel Bleeks | G7, Regulatory & Natural Resources Policy Division (deputising for Dave Foster, Director of Regulatory & Natural Resources Policy Division, EMFG) |
| John Mills | Director of EU Transition Division, EMFG |
| Colin Breen | Acting Director of Environmental Policy Division, EMFG |
| Owen Lyttle | Director of Marine and Fisheries Division, EMFG |
| Marcus McAuley | Acting Director Strategic Planning & Change Division, NIEA |
| Charlotte Stewart | Head of Governance and Corporate Services, Business Support Team, NIEA |
| Philip Walker | Head of Finance, Business Support Team, NIEA |
| Stephen Norrie | NIEA Board Secretariat |
| Paula Bratton | NICS HR – DAERA Business Partner, DoF |
| Eileen Curry | Head of MyNI Digital Marketing Team, EMFG  (attended for agenda item – EMFG/NIEA Communications Action Plan) |
| Laura Darragh | Senior Campaigns Manager, MyNI Digital Marketing Team, EMFG  (attended for agenda item – EMFG/NIEA Communications Action Plan) |
| Philip Gault | H&S Advisor, EMFG (attended for agenda item – Health & Safety Annual Review Report 2020-21) |

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1** | **Apologies and Conflicts of Interest**    Apologies from Tracey Teague, Paul Douglas (Independent Board Member), Kevin Hegarty, Arron Wright and Dave Foster. No new conflicts of interest were recorded.  Paul Donnelly, new Acting Chief Executive NIEA, conducted a round table introduction for all attendees as he was chairing his first meeting. Paul was pleased to take up his new post and looked forward to working with the Board going forward. |  |
| **2** | **Minutes and Matters Arising from Meeting on 6 July 2021**  The board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021 and discussed matters arising.  The following action points were carried forward:   * Visit to CAFRE Glenwherry Farm arranged for 2 July 2021 has been postponed and will be rearranged. * Home working: Seek update on current position re home working policy.   Marcus provided an update and advised that DoF were finalising a draft document that would provide a skeleton framework for Departments to use. Marcus is sitting on the New Ways of Working Group and will provide further updates going forward.   * AD Plant Update: Submit a short update paper to the board via correspondence by 6th July providing clarity on the NIAO recommendations and DAERA legislative requirements.   Keith provided an update that work continues on this and will report back to the Board in due course.   * Management Information Reporting:  1. NIEA Board terms of reference to be circulated to the board. 2. Review feedback and present recommendations to the Board in August.  * AOB (June): Any further comments on the Quarterly Report on the EU Issues Schedule to be submitted to Stephen Norrie by 21 July 2021. | **NIEA Secretariat**  **Marcus McAuley**  **Brian McVeigh / Keith Bradley**  **Marcus McAuley**  **Directors** |
| **3** | **HR Monthly Report**  Paula Bratton 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 pay award. The board noted the latest position.  There is an expectation that supply from the current EOII / EOI competition will begin in August. Assessments in the ongoing SO/DP competition have yet to restart.  Some Directors raised the issue of supply at certain grades and that re-grading of posts was also a bottleneck. Paula Bratton agreed to report this back and agreed that effective workforce planning was a key issue going forward to help address resource needs for cross-cutting business issues.  Paula also advised the Board that the Assistance to Study scheme is open for applications and a new Links Training interface is available.  The following action point was agreed:   * List of MFD posts out for grading to be sent to Paula Bratton | **Owen Lyttle** |
| **4** | **Finance and Corporate Governance**  The board discussed the various issues arising from the finance and corporate governance paper and the board:   * Noted that it is proposed to begin a review of its Terms of Reference in the autumn subject to other priorities and circumstances at that time; * Notedthe outcome of June Monitoring; * Notedthe commissioning of the October Monitoring Round; * Notedthe update on the Information Gathering Exercise(2022-26); * Noted the position regarding the NIEA Annual Report & Accounts 20-21; * Notedthe current position relating to the relevant risk registers; * Notedthe current position relating to progress of DAERA 2021/22 Business Targets and EMFG/NIEA/Green Growth 2021/22 Group Targets; * Notedthe Workforce Planning update; * Noted the update on the Klondyke Building Premises & Klondyke Daily Attendance; * Notedthe update on Training; * Notedthe update on End of Year Reviews and PPAs; * Agreed to progress recruitment of Environmental Economist posts.   Philip Walker advised the Board that the NIEA Annual Report and Accounts had been signed off and would be laid at the Assembly in the next day. Paul Donnelly thanked all staff involved in the work involved with preparation and production of the Report.  Charlotte Stewart advised the Board that Risk Registers had been updated to reflect concerns in relation to staff burn-out. Work continues on the NIEA Business Plan which is being finalised and due to be presented to the AERA committee once cleared by Minister.  Charlotte advised the Board of the need to actively manage all vacancies to ensure headcount ceilings are not breached.  She also advised that the planned summer pilot for limited staff return to the Klondyke was going ahead and that the first floor of the building was dedicated to RED staff who were taking part.  The new Training Plan has been commissioned with returns requested by the end of July.  The new Economist posts have been graded at Staff Officer and Deputy Principal level.  Marcus McAuley registered thanks to all staff involved in the work to prepare and produce the NIEA Annual Report & Accounts.  Marcus advised the Board that Paul Donnelly is the Accounting Officer for this year and that the Board would monitor Business Plan targets and Strategic Risks.  Marcus also reminded the Board that for any special exercises involving Temporary Promotions, any period extending beyond 12 months would mean that position would become permanent.  The following action point was agreed:   * Key Performance Indicators, associated with Key Performance Targets in the draft NIEA Business Plan 2021-22, wording to be reviewed and discussed at August Board Meeting. | **Anderson / Keith Bradley** |
| **5** | **EMFG/NIEA Communications Action Plan**  Eileen Curry and Laura Darragh presented the board with a paper on EMFG/NIEA Communications - High Level Review and Strategic Marketing Approach and a slide presentation to aid discussion.  The Board thanked Eileen and Laura for their presentation and paper. The Board were invited to:   1. Agree to and fully support the over-arching strategic marketing approach for the current year (until end March 2022), which is ‘Northern Ireland Climate Action’; 2. Agree to the ‘status quo’ delivery option for this current year; 3. Agree to decide by December 2021 what the strategic marketing approach to be adopted from Spring 2022 should be; 4. Agree to consider the preferred recommended option for the longer term delivery of EMFG and NIEA marketing and communications (internal and external); 5. Make DAERA Central Services aware of this report, which highlights the need for consideration of the structure and resourcing options.   Eileen advised the Board that the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the review of MyNI, which was to take place later in the year, would issue for comment via correspondence.  The Board agreed to consider the MyNI TOR via correspondence and discuss further at the August board meeting.  Following discussion on the paper presented the Board agreed to proposals 1 and 2 in the short term but that further consideration should be given to the longer term options 3 to 5. Decisions on these proposals would be made by December following further discussion.    The following action point was agreed:   * Circulate MyNI Terms of Reference Correspondence paper by 7/7/2021. | **Board Secretariat** |
| **6** | **Covid 19 Update**  Paul Donnelly 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 position. |  |
| **8** | **EU Transition Update**  John Mills updated the board on ongoing environmental issues related to EU exit. The importance of making bids for resources was noted given the anticipated workload going forward. The Board noted the latest position. |  |
| **9** | **Consultations**    The Board noted the Consultations currently listed. |  |
| **10** | **Health & Safety Monthly Report**  The board discussed the monthly health & safety report and noted the latest position. |  |
| **11** | **Health & Safety Annual Review Report 2020-21**  Hazel Bleeks and Philip Gault presented the paper. The Board discussed the Health & Safety Annual Review Report and;   1. noted the progress of Health & Safety management within EMFG; 2. considered the EMFG Health & Safety Annual Review; and 3. approved the EMFG Health & Safety Programme of Work for 2021/22   The Board expressed thanks to all staff in the H&S team for ensuring the focus on health and safety work and training of all staff was maintained in what was a very difficult year.  Philip Gault confirmed the H&S Programme of Work for 2021/22 was based on current staff resources but that it was hoped a current vacant post would be filled going forward. |  |
| **12** | **Papers for Future NIEA Board Meetings**  The board agreed the schedule of papers to be tabled at the August board meeting and discussed potential papers for future meetings. |  |
| **13** | **AOB**  Stephen Norrie advised the Board that due to a full and busy agenda the Communications update would be provided via correspondence.  The following action point was agreed:   * Circulate Communications update via email   Paul Donnelly expressed thanks to all staff for their continued hard work and flexibility in busy and difficult times and highlighted the importance of taking annual leave over the summer holiday period. | **Board Secretariat** |