

**MINUTES OF DEPARTMENTAL BOARD (DB) MEETING  
WEDNESDAY 29 AUGUST 2018  
THE BOARD ROOM  
WATER MANAGMMENT UNIT (LISBURN)**

**Members:**

Denis McMahon	Permanent Secretary
David Small	Deputy Secretary; Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group
Colin Lewis	Deputy Secretary; Central Services Group
Norman Fulton	Deputy Secretary; Food and Farming Group
Fiona McCandless	Deputy Secretary; Rural Affairs, Forest Service and Estate Transformation Group
Brian Doherty	Director of Corporate Services
David Reid	Director of Finance
Janine Fullerton	Strategic Business Partner, NICS HR
Sharon McCue	Non-Executive Board Member (NEBM)

**Apologies:**

Robert Huey	Deputy Secretary, Veterinary Service and Animal Health Group
-------------	--

**In Attendance:**

Jackie Robinson	Director of Animal Health and Welfare Policy (For Robert Huey)
Stephen Emerson	DAERA Senior Health and Safety Advisor (Item 2 iii)
Rosemary Agnew	Brexit Programme (Item 7 & DB Guest)
Michael Oliver	DB Guest

**Secretariat:**

Barry Yeo, Kathryn Clarke and Ashley Davidson

Item	Description	Action Owner
<b>Opening</b>		
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Secretary's Opening Remarks</b>	
	Secretary welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Jackie Robinson who is deputising for Robert Huey.  Secretary provided an update on the current Political position affecting NICS – Judicial review against the Secretary of State on whether an election should now be called.	
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Declaration Of interests</b>	
	No interests which relate to today's agenda declared. David Small declared an interest relating to a close relative's employment. Secretariat to be advised of details.	<b>David Small</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Previous Minutes</b>	
	Minutes from 27 June were agreed.	
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Matters Arising &amp; Action Points</b>	
	Actions from previous meetings were noted as cleared, being taken forward or will be addressed later in today's meeting. Incomplete actions were agreed as having been taken forward as far as possible by today's meeting	

	There were no additional matters arising.	
<b>Strategic Governance</b>		
<b>2.0</b>	<b>People</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Monthly Staffing Update</b>	
	<p>Janine Fullerton presented the paper to the Board. The Board commented on the significant improvement in the completion of agreed Personal Performance Agreements. Members agreed that as we now move into the time of year for In Year reviews it is important to maintain the momentum and to ensure that a 90% compliance rate is at least achieved by 31 October 2018.</p> <p>Janine provided additional updates on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Future organisational changes within NICSHR;</li> <li>2. DAERA statistics on G7 competition (Comparative data not yet available);</li> <li>3. Review of DAERA performance on recent G5 competition;</li> <li>4. L&amp;D initiatives, (Assistance to Study and Deputy Principal mentoring);</li> <li>5. Travel &amp; Subsistence policy review;</li> <li>6. GDPR training.</li> </ol> <p>The Board noted the content of the paper.</p>	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Absence Management</b>	
	<p>Brian Doherty presented his paper.</p> <p>The Board discussed the issues. These included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued liaison between DAERA and NICSHR Business partners;</li> <li>2. Some system and end user issues which could potentially distort figures;</li> <li>3. OHS improvements;</li> <li>4. Long term absence and importance of prompt referrals to help staff;</li> <li>5. Importance of Return to Work interviews; and</li> <li>6. Failure to correctly update Certification on the system.</li> </ol> <p>The Board agreed an urgent need to improve policy compliance, particularly with regard to the administration of sickness absence certification and Return to Work interviews. It agreed that its priority was to significantly reduce periods of sickness absences that were not supported by appropriate certification. It was agreed that Brian Doherty would write to all staff to reinforce that they have an obligation to do so, and that repeated failures will be reflected in performance assessments.</p> <p>More generally, the Board agreed to the recommendations.</p>	<b>Brian Doherty</b>

2.3	<b>Health and Safety Update (Q1)</b>	
	<p>David Small presented the update to DB addressing some key points contained within the report, i.e.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Programme of work remains on target;</li> <li>2. Internal Audit;</li> <li>3. Fire Risk assessment updates;</li> <li>4. Recruitment of H&amp;S advisors;</li> <li>5. Near miss reporting;</li> <li>6. Reporting to HSE (NI) i.e. RIDDOR;</li> <li>7. Premises Officers responsibilities in relation to Fire Risk;</li> </ol> <p>Stephen Emerson addressed member's queries. The Board also agreed, with Stephen, on the preferred methodology on informing and clearing with Board Members of changes to Departmental H&amp;S arrangements, i.e. by correspondence paper.</p> <p>The Board re-iterated the importance of H&amp;S compliance and sought assurance that the positions of H&amp;S advisors are being filled and that the duties and responsibilities to DAERA staff and visitors are being maintained in the interim.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the paper.</p>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Resources</b>	
3.1	<b>Budget position 2018/19</b>	
	<p>David Reid presented his paper to the Board, starting with advising the Board that the 2017/18 statutory financial statements have been certified with no qualifications. The Board wish to place on record their thanks to all concerned for the significant attention that is being given generally across the Department to matters of governance and accountability.</p> <p>Turning to in year budgetary management (2018/19), David noted that the October Monitoring process was now well underway, Indication are that there are potential easements on Capital and Resource spend. David asked members to ensure that profiled expenditure is closely monitored and Finance Division notified of any changes as soon as known. Members were asked to examine all aspects of business to ensure all planned spend is met from current available resource and capital budgets whilst assuring themselves of financial responsibilities/regularities.</p> <p>David provided an update on planning for 2019/20 and beyond. There continues to be planning and liaison with DoF officials. The Budget exercise for this continues with DAERA input.</p> <p>The Board discussed the yearly trend detailing TB compensation expenditure.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the paper.</p>	

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Business Delivery</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Corporate Scorecard Update 2018/19 (Q1)</b>	
	<p>David Reid presented his paper to the Board noting progress to date. The board discussed targets which are not reporting as “on target” and any remedial action in place to address.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the paper and agreed the development of the revised Dashboard for future reporting to both Board and for informing staff.</p> <p>The Board agreed a change to the frequency of reporting. Quarter 2 progress to be reported to DB Delivery Committee followed by reporting to the October DB meeting.</p>	
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Corporate Risk Register (CRR) Update</b>	
	<p>The Board noted the contents of the paper and the use of a revised CRR template.</p> <p>Sharon McCue sought assurance that the issue of cyber security was being addressed. Colin Lewis advised that the Board receives regular updates from Digital Support Division. A presentation to ARAC to be arranged on this issue.</p> <p>Secretary commended all staff involved in producing the current CRR template.</p>	<b>Secretariat</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Departmental Board Governance</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Revised DAERA Board Operating Framework (BOF)</b>	
	<p>Brian Doherty presented his paper. The BOF has been revised to reflect a number of changes to DB since last reviewed in March of this year. This includes set up of new committees and membership.</p> <p>Colin Lewis indicated that we need to reflect the existence, role and responsibilities of the Paying Agency Accreditation Committee in some way, whether or not it is considered a specific committee of the Board. The Board agreed that this should be considered and referenced in an appropriate way within the operating framework.</p> <p>The Board discussed the importance of THE new member induction process which should be reviewed to accommodate the arrival of a new DAERA Non-Executive Member effective from 1 September.</p>	<b>Brian Doherty</b>
<b>Strategic Issues</b>		
<b>6.0</b>	<b>AFBI Review</b>	
	<p>Norman Fulton presented the paper to the Board. The aims of the review were to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the need for AFBI, it’s function and form;</li> <li>2. Consider efficiency and effectiveness and to identify improvements; and</li> </ol>	

	<p>3. Consider governance arrangements</p> <p>The Board discussed the findings and recommendations of the review.</p> <p>The Board agreed the recommendations of today's paper to disseminate the findings, subject to some suggested wording changes which the Board members agreed would lead to a bit more clarity on the report's recommendations. Secretary asked members to submit suggestions to Norman Fulton no later than close of play Thursday 30 August. Mr Fulton to take back to the review team.</p>	<b>Norman Fulton</b>
7.0	<b>DAERA Business Continuity Planning (BCP)</b>	
	<p>Brian Doherty presented his paper. He noted the differences in BCP arrangements across DAERA highlighted by the scoping report. Brian's Board paper sets out an implementation plan which will standardise DAERA BCPs.</p> <p>The Board agreed the recommendations.</p>	
8.0	<b>BREXIT</b>	
	<p>The Secretary welcomed Rosemary Agnew, who has replaced Graeme Wilkinson as Programme Director, to the Board meeting. Rosemary provided the Board with an update on Brexit developments to include the following key points;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Negotiations;</li> <li>2. Technical Notices recently issued by UK Government;</li> <li>3. Legislation to include Agricultural Bill, SI implementation;</li> <li>4. Contingency Planning (DAERA's Contingency planning has commenced with the formation of a Task and Finish Group);</li> <li>5. Day 1 preparedness; and</li> <li>6. Future Policy Whitepaper at Consultation with Stakeholders.</li> </ol> <p>The Board noted the update paper.</p>	
9.0	<b>BREXIT Financial Issues Update</b>	
	<p>David Reid presented the paper. David highlighted funding requirements for the Department going forward.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the paper.</p>	
10.0	<b>DAERA Departmental Data protection Policy Statement</b>	
	<p>Colin Lewis presented his paper. The changes are in line with recent legislative changes i.e. GDPR, and DPA.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noted the appointment of the DAERA Data Protection Officer; and</li> <li>2. Approved the updated statement for publication.</li> </ol>	

11.0	<b>NIFAIS Update</b>	
	<p>Jackie Robinson presented the paper to the Board. Jackie noted that;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. User Assurance Testing was underway; and</li> <li>2. Next Gateway Review is in January</li> </ol> <p>The Board noted the progress of the project.</p>	
12.0	<b>Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Equality Champions.</b>	
	<p>Jackie Robinson presented her paper.</p> <p>Jackie has taken on the dual role of Diversity and Inclusion Champion as well as Racial Equality Champion. Jackie provided members with an update on her plans for the role of Champion The Board welcomed the update from Jackie adding that the Board is keen to ensure that DAERA is proactive to ensure the Department is welcoming to everyone and treats all with the same level of dignity and respect. Fiona McCandless added that although Jackie is the Departmental Champion that everyone has a role and responsibility. Janine Fullerton offered NICSHR assistance and were keen to “join up” on this issue.</p> <p>The board noted it strongly endorses the work to date, asking updates are brought back to DB at regular intervals as well assuring DB is available to the Champion as required.</p> <p>The Board agreed to the recommendations i.e.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the role of the champion and how it was developing; and</li> <li>2. Confirmed support to the Champion in these roles.</li> </ol>	
<b>Closing Issues</b>		
13.0	<b>DB September Forward Agenda</b>	
	Agenda for September was agreed.	
14.0	<b>Internal Communication messages for Team Brief</b>	
	<p>Items agreed for inclusion in next available team brief were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People (Absence Management and Mid-year Reviews);</li> <li>2. Health and Safety Update;</li> <li>3. Budget Position;</li> <li>4. AFBI Review;</li> <li>5. Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Equality;</li> <li>6. DAERA August DB meeting in Water Management Unit (Lisburn).</li> </ol>	
15.0	<b>AOB</b>	
	none	
<b>Papers for DB Members to note only</b>		
16.0	<b>Transposition of the Circular Economy Waste Package</b>	
	The Board noted the contents of the paper.	
17.0	<b>LMC Annual Report and accounts 2016/17 and 2017/18</b>	
	The Board noted the contents of the paper.	

18.0	<b>Close</b>	
	Secretary thanked everyone for their participation and closed today's meeting	

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday 26 September 2018**  
**Venue: Crawfordsburn Country park**