**EQUALITY and DIVERSITY STEERING GROUP (EDSG)**

**AGENDA**

**Tuesday 12 March 2019 at 1.00 pm**

**Ballykelly House – Steinbeck Suite**

**Tea & coffee on arrival**

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| 1. Welcome 2. Action points from Equality and Diversity Steering Group meeting on 03 October 2018 3. Equality and Diversity Working Group Update 4. Equality Update including DAERA Safeguarding Policy | Denis McMahon  Jackie Robinson / Sean McGrade  Angela McAllister |
| 1. Champions Updates –  * Diversity & Inclusion Champion * Racial Equality Champion * Children’s Champion | Jackie Robinson  Jackie Robinson  Martin McKendry |
| 1. AOB |  |

**DAERA Minutes/Notes of Equality & Diversity Steering Group (EDSG)**

**Ref: SINV/0348/2018**

**Date & time: 12 March 2019 1.00pm**

**Location: Steinbeck Suite, Ballykelly and Video Conferencing from Klondyke & Dundonald House**

**In attendance:**

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| **DAERA** | **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** |
| Dr Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary | (Names of attendees) (include title)  Norman Fulton Deputy Secretary, Food & Farming Group (FFG), (via VC)  Brian Doherty Deputy Secretary, Central Services & Contingency Planning Group (CSCPG)  Fiona McCandless Deputy Secretary, Rural Affairs, Forest Service & Estates Management Group (RAFSEMG)  David Small Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group (EMFG), (via VC)  Martin McKendry Director of CAFRE, (via VC)  Jackie Robinson Director of Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division (AHWPD)  Martin Walsh NI Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) |
| (Name of Officials, include Title/Business Area)  Sean McGrade Director, Corporate Services Division  Angela McAllister Head of Equality, Diversity and Public Appointments Branch (EDPAB) |
| Minutes:  Russell McCurry Deputy Principal, Equality, Diversity and Public Appointments Branch (EDPAB) |
| Apologies:  Robert Huey Chief Veterinary Officer, Veterinary Service & Animal Health Group (VSAHG)  John Joe O’Boyle Chief Executive, Forest Service (FS) |  |

**Summary of Meeting:**

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| **Item** | **Description** | **Action Owner (where appropriate)** |
| **1.0** | **Welcome** |  |
|  | Introductions were made by all attendees at the meeting. |  |
| **2.0** | **Action Points from EDSG meeting held on 03 October 2018** |  |
|  | No outstanding actions carried forward from previous meeting, all actions completed. |  |
| **3.0** | **Equality and Diversity Working Group Update** |  |
|  | An EDWG meeting was held on 29 January 2019. This was the first meeting of the re-structured group which represents more diversity across grades. The meeting was positive and the group agreed to the proposed calendar of diversity events – LGBT week; Racial Awareness week and Autism Awareness week to be held between March and June 2019.  It was noted that these events are important in awareness raising but it is necessary to build on this and embed diversity and inclusion within DAERA. There was discussion around the results from the recent People Survey, especially around bullying and how the Diversity Action Plan, when developed, might help deal with this issue.  A proposal to conduct a Cultural Audit was introduced and will be further discussed at other Board Committees. |  |
| **4.0** | **Equality Update including DAERA Safeguarding Policy** |  |
|  | Equality Update:  Angela McAllister informed members that 24 policies were screened within the last quarter and feedback from the Equality Commission is that a number of these are of a very high standard, especially from Agri-Food Brexit policy areas. Members acknowledged this significant achievement and Denis McMahon also recorded that he had received very positive feedback from a meeting with the Equality Commission about DAERA’s proactive and genuine approach to its statutory duties and thanked EDPA Branch for enabling this throughout the Department.  Angela McAllister outlined a proposal from the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI) in relation to a ‘DAERA Train the Trainer’ programme. The aim of this resource is to demonstrate the commitment of DAERA as an exemplar organisation to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all its staff, service users and stakeholders. At a practical level the resource will assist trainers within DAERA to deliver a range of training on equality, disability and diversity. Members were supportive of this initiative and agreed that Angela McAllister should take this forward **(AP1)**.  DAERA Safeguarding Policy:  A draft safeguarding policy/guidance paper was discussed, which aims to provide the overarching policy and legislative framework on safeguarding under which local operational safeguarding procedures will sit.  A number of suggested revisions were discussed in relation to: reporting to Departmental Board; revisions to the introductory text to include country parks and inland fisheries; designated safeguarding officers and deputies; regulated activity.  Angela McAllister agreed to review Annex B to include a process to report to the Departmental Board in line with Whistleblowing reporting **(AP2)**.  It was agreed that Brian Doherty, Group Director of Central Services & Contingency Planning Group would be DAERA’s designated safeguarding officer and Angela McAllister will prepare proposals for deputy officers across business areas proportionate to their likelihood to come into contact with safeguarding issues **(AP3)**. Following agreement to the deputy designated officer nominations, Brian Doherty will establish a safeguarding sub group **(AP4)**.  There were concerns around the assumption in the draft document that DAERA is not engaged in “Regulated Activity” and Martin McKendry agreed to check this from a CAFRE perspective **(AP5)** and Angela McAllister will check with all other business areas and in particular with Forest Service and the NIEA **(AP6)**.  Denis McMahon formally recorded the Group’s appreciation for the high quality draft document presented for discussion. | **AP1** Angela McAllister  **AP2** Angela McAllister  **AP3** Angela McAllister  **AP4** Brian Doherty  **AP5** Martin McKendry  **AP6** Angela McAllister |
| **5.0** | **Champions Updates** |  |
|  | Diversity & Inclusion and Racial Equality Champion:  Jackie Robinson updated the group on DAERA’s Diversity calendar of events. These included: Time to Talk; the LGBT workshops; and the upcoming racial equality and autism awareness events.  The first LGBT workshop took place in Ballykelly on 11 March and the members of the group that were in attendance: Fiona McCandless, Brian Doherty and Jackie Robinson gave very positive feedback. Jackie Robinson emphasised the need for senior staff and line managers to encourage staff attendance at these awareness raising events and ensure, where possible, they can be released to attend.  It was noted that JAM (Just-A-Minute) cards are being introduced across NICS and Angela McAllister has been nominated as the DAERA contact, initially, and will attend a forthcoming meeting where the NICS roll-out schedule will be discussed. Sean McGrade advised members he had heard of a potential issue with implementation in DAERA, potentially in relation to accessing on-line training. Sean McGrade agreed to clarify this and update the group **(AP7)**.  Martin Walsh commended DAERA on its diversity work and advised that NIPSA are very supportive of this activity and willing to lend their support going forward.  Children’s Champion:  Martin McKendry presented the paper on the ‘Establishment of the DAERA Children’s Champion Sub-Group.’ The sub-group will take forward the department’s input into the Department of Education’s Children & Young People’s Strategy and will report to the EDSG.  The proposal for the next 6-9 months is for the sub-group to develop the overall strategy and action plan for DAERA.  Members noted DAERA’s considerable potential to make a meaningful contribution to this strategy. | **AP7** Sean McGrade |
| **6.0** | **AOB** |  |
|  | Angela McAllister reminded the group of forthcoming staff engagement sessions to develop DAERA’s draft Diversity Action Plan and members reaffirmed their commitment to help facilitate these. |  |