

**MINUTES OF LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
OF THE DEPARTMENTAL BOARD (DB)**

**Ref:**                    **SINV-0431-2018**

**Date & Time:**        **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018 @ 10am**

**Location:**            **Loughermore, Ballykelly House**

**In attendance:**

Dr Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary

Norman Fulton, Deputy Secretary; Food & Farming Group  
Fiona McCandless, Deputy Secretary; Corporate Services, Rural Affairs & Forest Service  
Brian Doherty, Director of Corporate Services  
Tracey Teague, Director of Resource Efficiency  
Colin Hart, Director of Enzootic Disease & Animal Welfare  
Martin McKendry, Director of CAFRE  
Kathryn Clarke, Permanent Secretary's Office  
Oliver McWilliams, Leadership & Engagement Task & Finish Group  
Claire McAllister, Leadership & Engagement Task & Finish Group  
Leahann Donnelly, Leadership & Engagement Task & Finish Group  
David McCombe, Leadership & Engagement Task & Finish Group

Ashley Davidson, Minutes

**Purpose of Meeting:**

1. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss progress with the Department's Leadership & Engagement activities and for presentation of the DAERA Leadership & Staff Engagement Task & Finish Group Report.

**Summary of Meeting:**

2. Following introductions, Secretary provided an update on the SCSG Programme on DAERA Development. This is a series of 5 facilitated meetings running up to March 2019. The first meeting was on 24 October with the next meeting scheduled for 20 November. These meetings are being used as a forum to develop the wider DAERA organisational structure and consider fundamental elements of the Department such as strategy, pay & reward etc. Updates from the SCSG Programme will appear in Team Brief and a formal report will be drafted on conclusion of the Programme.
3. Secretary provided an update on the DAREA Story and Vision. The story has been developed using the contribution of more than 800 staff from across the Department and

it has been circulated to all staff seeking comments. The intention is to use the DAERA Story to shape the up-coming Senior Leadership Convention.

4. Brian Doherty provided an update on the development of a more experiential DAERA Induction Programme. Following the example set for CAFRE induction, Media Services are developing a storyboard to assist in producing a short 3 - 5 minute video covering key aspects of the Department. A first-cut of the storyboard should be ready by the end of November. The intention is that the video will bring the vision of a 'Living, working, active landscape' to life for all employees. The first cut of the video will be brought to this Committee for consideration when available.

Corporate Services will look to give the current DAERA Induction more prominence on the intranet as it is extensively used as a reference point by staff.

5. Fiona McCandless gave an update on progress on the Senior Leadership Convention which is due to take place on 4 December. A small group has been established to co-design this event and develop the agenda for the day. Key issues for discussion on the day will include:

- People strategy
- Update since April Senior Leadership Convention
- Brexit priorities across the Department
- Real life examples of what 'Living, Working, Active' means to staff
- Presentation of Leadership & Staff Engagement Task & Finish Group Report

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to decide on whether this should be a full or half day event following a meeting with Anne McMurray (facilitator) tomorrow (9/11/18).

After further discussion the Committee agreed that non-managerial Vets (analogous to Grade 7) should be invited to the event. It will be for VSAHG Senior Management to consider attendance based on business need.

A note is to be drafted for SCSG to alert them to the event.

Consideration is to be given to obtaining feedback from the event and how Senior Leaders would like these events to be delivered in the future (eg through Survey Monkey).

6. Kathryn Clarke gave an update on the DAERA Awards which will launch at the November Departmental Board meeting. David Reid is responsible for taking this event forward and it is due to take place on 5 March. Award categories will mirror the NICS Award categories with an additional Professional & Technical Category. Grade 5s have been selected to Head the judging panels. A paper setting out the content for the day will go to TMT in the first instance followed by a Paper to this Committee before going to DB closer to the event.
7. Tracey Teague provided background detail to the Report from the DAERA Leadership & Staff Engagement Task & Finish Group. This report identifies key actions which the Department can take forward in order to improve leadership and engagement with staff. The Group commenced the task in June and Tracey highlighted that there is a strong sense of ownership of this report from the Group.

Members of the Task & Finish Group gave the Committee an overview of the 6 month journey undertaken to produce this report. The Group highlighted a vision of a fully engaged workforce and pointed to the report as providing a potential road map to assist with realising this vision. The Group highlighted the high level of engagement they had experienced from staff at all grades across the Department and asked the Committee to note the high level of expectation from staff that this report would be acted upon.

The Task & Finish Group asked the Committee to take ownership of the report and put in place an implementation/delivery plan for the necessary outcomes.

The Committee thanked and congratulated the full Task & Finish Group on the excellent report and agreed to:

- accept the report;
- draft a note to recognise the work of the Group and advising of the Committee's support for the recommendations;
- ask the Task & Finish Group to continue with a new Terms of Reference to co-design the delivery/action plan and act as a reference group for the Committee;
- invite representation from the Task & Finish Group to attend Leadership & Engagement Committee meetings; and
- take early action in terms of staff wellbeing by immediately tackling the comments on concerning levels of bullying by highlighting the support available outside the line management chain from Harassment Contact Officers (HCOs) and Mediation Services.

The Task & Finish Group thanked Tracey Teague for her guidance, leadership and enthusiasm during the process of developing the report.

8. The next meeting of the Leadership & Engagement Committee is on Monday 3 December 2018 at 2pm in Dundonald House.

### **Summary of Actions (to be completed by next meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December unless stated otherwise):**

1. **Brian Doherty** to arrange for DAERA Induction to be placed more prominently on the intranet
2. **Fiona McCandless** to draft note to advise SCSG of Senior Leadership Convention
3. **Fiona McCandless** to give consideration to the use of survey monkey for staff feedback following the Senior Leadership Convention, including seeking feedback on how senior management would like future events to be delivered;
4. **Brian Doherty** to draft a note to all staff recognising the work of the Task & Finish Group, the Committee's support of the findings and recommendations within the report and advising that the Group will remain intact as a reference group for the Committee
5. **Brian Doherty** to develop note to all staff highlighting the importance of a safe working environment for everyone and restating staff access to mediation services and Harassment Contact Officers and providing a link to the relevant NICSHR Policies. This note is the first step in implementing the work of the Task & Finish Group and so a sub-committee of the Group are to be involved in the co-design of the note to ensure the note gives the right message to staff.
6. **Task & Finish Group** to consider its future role in terms of acting as a reference group for the Leadership & Engagement Committee and its role in ensuring the Committee convert the report into an action plan. T&F Group to provide names for attendance at

future Leadership & Engagement Committee meetings to Ashley Davidson by Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

7. **Tracy Teague** to meet with Pauline Keegan to discuss how to implement the recommendations of the Task & Finish Group's report.