

**Meeting of Wednesday 18 May 2022, Dundonald House**

**MINUTES**

<b>Members:</b>	<p>Katrina Godfrey (Chair)</p> <p>Tracey Teague (online)</p> <p>Robert Huey (online)</p> <p>Paul Donnelly</p> <p>Roger Downey</p> <p>Lynda Lowe</p> <p>Paula Bratton</p> <p>Bernie Stuart (online)</p> <p>Gillian Stirling (online)</p>	<p>Permanent Secretary</p> <p>Deputy Secretary Environment Marine and Fisheries Group</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, Veterinary Service Animal Health Group</p> <p>Chief Executive, NIEA</p> <p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Strategic Business Partner, NICS HR</p> <p>Non-Executive Member (NEM)</p> <p>NI Boardroom Apprentice</p>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<p>Fiona McCandless</p> <p>Norman Fulton</p> <p>Brian Doherty</p> <p>Sharon McCue</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, Rural Affairs, Forest Service, Estate Transformation Group</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, Food &amp; Farming Group</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, Central Services &amp; Contingency Planning Group</p> <p>Non-Executive Member (NEM)</p>
<b>In Attendance:</b>	<p>Ash Davidson</p> <p>Alison Caldwell (Deputising for F McCandless)</p> <p>Rosemary Agnew (Deputising for N Fulton - online)</p> <p>Paul McGurnaghan (Deputising for B Doherty – online)</p> <p>Iggy O'Doherty (online for Item 3)</p> <p>Hugh Tohill (online for Item 3)</p> <p>Mark Livingstone (online for Item 7)</p>	<p>Office of the Permanent Secretary</p> <p>Director of Estate Transformation</p> <p>Director of Transition Policy Division</p> <p>Director of Digital Services</p> <p>Director of Digital Shared Services and CSO, DoF</p> <p>Chief Strategy Officer, DoF</p> <p>Director of Operational Readiness/Food Supply Security</p>
<b>Secretariat</b>	Louise Mackey	Central Management Branch

Item	Description	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	
	Katrina welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
<b>1(i)</b>	<b>Declarations of Interests</b>	
	Nothing was declared.	
<b>2 (a)</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Board Meeting</b>	
	Members were content.	
<b>2 (b)</b>	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Board Meeting</b>	
	All previous action points are complete.	
<b>Items for Discussion</b>		
<b>3</b>	<b>Cyber Security Boardroom Toolkit</b>	
	<p>Paul McGurnaghan introduced Iggy O'Doherty and Hugh Tohill from the Department of Finance (DoF), who gave a presentation on the critical cyber threats to the Civil Service and the Department and the mitigations being put in place.</p> <p>There followed a discussion about the role of the Board in helping to ensure the security of the Department and also its Arm's Length Bodies. Iggy and Hugh highlighted the importance of testing and practice sessions and recommended that the Board make contact with the NICS Board and consider the prioritisation of services.</p> <p>Bernie asked if the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) was part of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP). Iggy confirmed that the BCP is a separate document covering all aspects of the Department's business and that the CAF will complement and work alongside it.</p> <p>Members reflected on the benefits of looking at and learning from real life incidents and showcasing case studies. The subsequent financial and resourcing costs involved in the investment in cyber security were discussed. The importance of staff completing the on-line cyber security training was highlighted.</p> <p>Paul McGurnaghan explained that his team are putting together a helpful abridged question and answer paper from the Boardroom Toolkit. It was agreed that there would be further discussion over the</p>	<b>Paul McGurnaghan/Brian Doherty</b>

	summer with a view to having a longer, bespoke board session in the autumn.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Estate Strategy and Annual Asset Management Plan</b>	
	<p>Katrina introduced Alison and thanked her and her team for their work on the 3 documents involved.</p> <p>Alison spoke to the paper and informed members that the Asset Management Plan (AMP) is completed on an annual basis and after receiving Permanent Secretary and Board approval it will be submitted to the Strategic Investment Board. She advised that there was a recognised need for a longer-term Estate Strategy for the Department and that Stage 1, developing a framework, was the first stage in this. She explained that over the next few years there will be an asset review on all of the Department's sites and properties which will inform a more detailed long term strategy for the Department. Alison also presented an Estate Sustainability Action Plan covering the Department's built estate which had been produced through the Estate Sustainability Forum.</p> <p>Alison informed members that the Estate Transformation Guiding Principles had been updated in conjunction with the Estate Transformation Oversight Board and reflected engagement with stakeholders.</p> <p>There followed a discussion about the importance of effective sustainable estate management, especially in the context of Climate Change and Green Growth; publication of the documents; costs; and resourcing of future projects/work which need to be undertaken.</p> <p>Katrina agreed that the three documents need to be living documents and will evolve as our operating context changes. The Board agreed to approve the AMP; the Estate Strategy – Stage 1 framework document; and the Estate Sustainability Action Plan.</p>	
<b>Items for Agreement</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Finance Update</b>	
	<p>Roger spoke to the paper.</p> <p>He highlighted that the overall 21/22 DEL Provisional Outturn was 99.9%. He thanked the Financial Planning Team and the Department's Business Areas for this result.</p> <p>Roger explained that work is progressing well on the 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts.</p>	

	<p>Regarding the 22/23 Budget, Roger advised that the Department of Finance has written to Finance Directors with proposed Resource DEL and Capital DEL envelopes to facilitate financial planning for 2022-23 in the absence of an agreed Budget.</p> <p>Members also discussed the practicalities of making early payments to farmers after the Minister's recent announcement.</p> <p>Members noted the paper.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b>HR Management Information</b>	
	<p>Paula spoke to the paper, explaining the HR management information as at 31 March.</p> <p>There followed a discussion about staff non-compliance in procedures, how work is prioritised and also the morale of staff. Paula confirmed the details of non-compliant staff have been provided to Grade 3s. Members discussed the possible need to change the targets as a result of the new ways of working.</p> <p>Katrina asked whether there might be value in placing a list of current and future competitions on the Intranet for staff so that they could see what progress was being made in response to concerns about the pace of filling vacancies.</p> <p>Tracey highlighted that the Staff Engagement and Leadership Forum event will take place 6 July and invited Katrina to attend.</p> <p>Members discussed the benefits of student placements within the Department.</p> <p>Members noted the paper.</p>	<b>Paula Bratton</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Permanent Infrastructure at Northern Ireland's Points of Entry</b>	
	<p>Mark Livingstone spoke to the paper.</p> <p>He explained that contingency facilities have been implemented at each of the NI Sea Ports required to facilitate SPS checks for goods moving into and through Northern Ireland. Implementation of the permanent facilities and complete IT systems are being taken forward and the design and full business case will need further consideration.</p> <p>Members noted the paper.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Corporate Risk Register and 21-22 Business Plan Year End</b>	
	Roger spoke to the paper.	

	<p>He highlighted that all current risks are amber and that 15 of the 18 Business Plan targets have been achieved. The remaining 3 have been carried forward.</p> <p>Katrina reflected the importance of ensuring that business plan targets carried forward are resourced.</p> <p>Members noted the paper.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<b>ARAC Update</b>	
	<p>Bernie spoke to the paper.</p> <p>She highlighted the importance of ARAC being informed of whistleblowing cases in a timely manner and the importance of the whistleblowing register being complete.</p> <p>Members agreed that there needed to be better understanding of the links between complaints, whistleblowing and concerns raised via HR processes including tribunal claims to ensure that all concerns were properly investigated.. Katrina informed colleagues that DoF was finalising new guidance on Raising Concerns and that the external review following the DAERA tribunal case would also be important in identifying lessons for the future..</p> <p>Bernie advised the Board that ARAC are continuing to look at their role in considering and giving assurance on the Corporate Risk Register.</p> <p>Bernie said that ARAC continues to review cyber security in Assurance Reports.</p> <p>Members noted the paper.</p>	
<b>Closing Items</b>		
<b>10</b>	<b>Forward Look Agenda – June 2022</b>	
	The forward look agenda was agreed subject to any developments that needed to be added nearer the time.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Any other Business</b>	
	No issues were raised.	
	<b>Close</b>	
	<b>Next Meeting: Wednesday 22 June 2022, at 10.00am. Venue to be confirmed.</b>	