

Meeting of Wednesday 19 July 2023, Board Room, Clare House

MINUTES

Attendees:	Katrina Godfrey (Chair) Sharon McCue Bernie Stuart Norman Fulton Brian Doherty Robert Huey Tracey Teague John Joe O'Boyle Paul Donnelly David Simpson Paula Bratton Briege Lafferty Carla McElrone	Permanent Secretary Non-Executive Member (NEM) Non-Executive Member (NEM) Deputy Secretary, Food & Farming Group Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services & Civil Contingency Group Deputy Secretary, Veterinary Service Animal Health Group Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group Chief Executive, Forest Service Chief Executive, NIEA Director of Corporate Services Strategic Business Partner, NICS HR Deputy Finance Director Board Room Apprentice
Apologies:	David Reid Roger Downey	Deputy Secretary, Rural Affairs, Forest Service, Estate Transformation Group Director of Finance
Additional Attendees:	Hugh Quinn (Item 5) Michael Cooke (Item 7) Aisling Quinn (Item 7) Joan Fleetham (Item 7)	Strategic Planning, DAERA Director of Business Partnering, DoF Director of HR Policy, People & Organisational Development, DoF HR Policy Lead, People & Organisational Development, DoF
Secretariat	Shauna Rodgers	DALO

Item	Description	Action
1	Welcome	
	Katrina welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed David to his first Board meeting. Katrina also acknowledged this was Carla's last meeting.	

1(i)	Declarations of Interests	
	Members confirmed they had no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to the agenda items.	
2 (a)	Minutes of Previous Board Meeting	
	The minutes from the May meeting were agreed.	SECRETARIAT
2 (b)	Matters Arising from Previous Board Meeting	
	No matters arising from the May meeting.	
3	Strategic Issues	
	<p>Katrina set out the strategic context in which the Department was currently operating, focusing on the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political situation; • Budget – update including noting there was conflict in relation to two legislative requirements in this space; • Covid Inquiry – Module 1 concluded; • Defra have taken responsibility for SPS inspection facilities and seconded 32 members of DAERA staff to carry out this work. 	
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION		
4	Finance Update	
	<p>Briege Lafferty presented the paper and provided an update including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First internal monitoring round has taken place; • Second round will provide a better understanding, due in September; • Update on Annual Report and Accounts – draft accounts presented to ARAC Committee on 27 June; • Update on potential Revenue Raising/Budget Sustainability Measures; • 450 registered vacancies withdrawn, new process will be put in place to fill priority vacancies within budget/funding streams. <p>The Board noted the paper and the update provided by Briege and thanked all involved in the process for their efforts.</p>	

5	DAERA Business Plan 2023/24	
	<p>Hugh Quinn joined the meeting.</p> <p>Briege introduced the paper highlighting that the Top Leadership Team had prioritised the Department’s priorities, and identified those priorities which are no longer deliverable as a result of the 2023/24 resourcing position.</p> <p>Members approved the DAERA Interim Business Plan. Members also agreed that Annex F should be kept under review and that the “<i>all resource dependent</i>” line in Annex G should be expanded.</p> <p>Norman Fulton to consider resourcing for the Climate Action Plan statistical requirement in conjunction with Tracey Teague.</p> <p>Katrina asked members to give final consideration to the draft plan and in particular to tie down the wording of the actions. Final revisions to be forwarded to Hugh.</p> <p>Hugh left the meeting.</p>	<p>Brian/Fiona</p> <p>Norman/Tracey</p> <p>Grade 3s</p>
6	People: Capacity & Capability	
	<p>Brian introduced the paper, providing an update on the Department’s Capacity and Capability Action Plan. Highlighting that 70% of staff development is via on the job learning, 20% via mentoring schemes and 10% from formal training interventions.</p> <p>Brian informed Members that DAERA has secured IIP reaccreditation.</p> <p>Brian also advised that the recent People Survey Results were now available at a high level and a paper will be brought to the September board meeting.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p>	
7	Deep dive – Performance Management	
	<p>Michael Cooke, Aisling Quinn and Joan Fleetham joined the meeting and provided a presentation in relation to Performance Management. DoF colleagues emphasised the importance of continuous review throughout the year, not just at mid and end year review stages.</p> <p>The Board discussed the importance of the distinction between compliance and quality in this space. Members recognised that this was a cultural issue and that communications in this space was vital.</p>	

	<p>Members also recognised the importance of setting smart objectives from the outset.</p> <p>Paula agreed to develop a communications piece in conjunction with DoF People & Organisational Design colleagues for t consideration by Brian/Fiona.</p> <p>Tracey highlighted that Professional & Technical staff had their own challenges in this space. She also queried if the process had been tested on new SOs and DPs to see if they had any new ideas or suggestions. Michael agreed to look into this.</p> <p>Michael, Aisling and Joan left the meeting.</p>	<p>Paula/DOF P&OD colleagues</p> <p>Michael Cooke</p>
PAPERS TO NOTE		
8	ARAC Update	
	<p>Sharon McCue provided an ARAC update, advising that ARAC had been considering the accounts at the last meeting. She also added that a letter of comfort has been prepared.</p> <p>Sharon expressed her thanks and appreciation to all those involved, recognising that there was no significant under, or overspend.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p>	
9	Raising a Concern – Annual Update	
	<p>Briege presented the paper. It was noted that the training was ahead of schedule and the next focus would be around embedding and follow up.</p> <p>A discussion followed around the wording “wrongdoing of staff” and whether this was the correct terminology. Bernie suggested that the wording “wrongdoing of staff” be rephrased and Briege agreed to consider the Audit Office wording.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p>	Briege
10	Decisions Made in the Absence of Ministers	
	<p>Brian presented the paper noting that 20 decisions had been taken during this period. Brian also advised that the new process put in place is working well.</p> <p>A discussion followed in relation to cross cutting issues with other Departments. Katrina advised that on occasion cross cutting decisions are being taken but added that this was challenging as one Department must take the lead in taking decisions.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p>	

CLOSING ITEMS

11	AOB	
	Members thanked Carla for her contributions and wished her well in her endeavours. Brian advised that a Health and Safety paper will be brought to the September Board meeting.	
	Close	
	Next board meeting: Thursday 28th September 2023, at 10.00am (Manor Suite, Greenmount)	