**Summary of the NIEA Board Meeting (with Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group Core Directors in attendance) 4 March 2020, Klondyke Building, Belfast**

Members in Attendance:

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| Tracey Teague | Acting Chief Executive, NIEA |
| Paul Douglas | Non-Executive Board Member |

Other Attendees:

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| Mark Hammond | Head of Natural Environment Operations Unit, NIEA(deputising for Helen Anderson, Director of Natural Environment, NIEA) |
| Theresa Kearney | Regulation Unit, NIEA(deputising for Director of Resource Efficiency Division, NIEA) |
| David Small | Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG) |
| Dave Foster  | Director of Regulatory & Natural Resources Policy Division, EMFG |
| John Mills | Director of Environmental Policy Division, EMFG |
| Claire Vincent | Acting Director of Marine & Fisheries Division, EMFG |
| Peter Aiken | Head of Business Support Team, NIEA and EMFG |
| Diane Richardson | NIEA Board Secretariat |
| Mary Drumm | NICS HR Business Partner(attended for agenda item – HR Update) |
| Eugene Kelly | Regulation Unit, NIEA(attended for agenda item – Illegal Waste Legacy Sites) |
| Colin Gillis | Head of Criminal Investigation Branch, NIEA(attended for agenda item – Illegal Waste Legacy Sites) |
| Alison Jeynes | Head of Radioactivity and Contaminated Land Branch, EPD(attended for agenda item – Illegal Waste Legacy Sites) |
| Laura Darragh | EMFG Communications Officer(attended for agenda item – Communications and Staff Engagement) |

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|  |  | **Action** |
| 1 | **Apologies and Conflicts of Interest** Apologies were noted from Helen Anderson. No new conflicts of interest were declared. |  |
| 2 | **Minutes and Matters Arising from Meeting on 5 February 2020**Tracey Teague chaired the meeting in her new position as Acting Chief Executive of NIEA (effective from 24 February 2020) and explained the structural changes which would now be in place for at least the next year. NIEA will now operate as a separate Group, no longer under the Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG) reporting structure. EMFG will continue |  |
|  |  | **Action** |
|  | to be headed by David Small whose remit will focus more on policy work, expanding to include an EU Transition Division. NIEA and EMFG will continue to work closely together and EMFG senior staff will continue to attend NIEA board meetings. The two Groups will also continue to share key resources in areas such as Health & Safety, Communications, Financial Management and Training.The following action points were agreed:* Inform 5 Agencies group and external stakeholders regarding change in NIEA Chief Executive role; and
* Prepare a note to NIEA and EMFG staff providing an update on the independent environment agency issue (which is unrelated to the structural changes between NIEA and EMFG).

The board agreed the minutes of the previous meeting. The action points and matters arising from this meeting were also discussed and it was agreed that the following action points should be carried forward:* Note to issue to EMFG and NIEA staff outlining actions taken since staff engagement Pulse Survey note in November 2019;
* Information note on Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) for Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) to be prepared for Permanent Secretary.
* Provide analysis and written update to David Small and Tracey Teague on contract agency staff and temporary promotion staff numbers.
* Contact Food and Farming Group to discuss inspectors and the potential for secondments.

The board noted that Martin McKendry had been due to attend this month’s board meeting to provide an update in CAFRE activities and linkages with NIEA and EMFG, but had sent apologies due to having to attend an event with the Minister.The following action point was agreed:* Discuss topics and arrangements for the next CAFRE session at the NIEA Board with Martin McKendry.
 | **David Small & Tracey Teague****Tracey Teague****Diane Richardson****Dave** **Foster****Peter** **Aiken****Tracey Teague****Tracey Teague** |
| 3 | **HR Monthly Report**Mary Drumm updated the board on the latest position in relation to recruitment competitions, filling of approved vacancies, temporary promotions, agency staff and sickness absence. Mary also confirmed that the new the NICS HR management reporting dashboard is being issued to the board each month (commenced in February 2020) which provides a summary of staff in post, sick absence and performance management compliance. |  |
|  |  | **Action** |
| 4 | **Illegal Waste Legacy Sites**Theresa Kearney updated the board on the risk based prioritisation of illegal waste sites; the methodology adopted was previously agreed by the NIEA Board in January 2018. Eugene Kelly and Colin Gillis joined the meeting for this agenda item and provided input to the discussion. Theresa’s presentation informed the board about the outcome of the Stage 1 screening and risk prioritisation exercise, the progress that had been made in addressing Internal Audit’s recommendations, the options for delivering additional tasks relating to Stage 1 along with an update on tarry waste sites in County Londonderry.The board noted the Stage 1 work to date and agreed the recommendations in principle, subject to further work being undertaken to define the proposed costs associated with the options for delivering the additional Stage 1 actions presented. The board also agreed that the Minister should be informed once these options were finalised. In addition the board agreed to support a 12-month tarry waste site monitoring programme.The following action point was agreed:* Further work to be taken forward in relation to costs and timing on options for additional Stage 1 work. Once options finalised a submission to be made to the Minister.
 | **Theresa Kearney** |
| 5 | **EU Issues Schedule**John Mills provided a summary of the latest position with regards to formal EU infractions, transpositions, compliance and reporting, and the board noted the current position.  |  |
| 6 | **Strategic Issues**Tracey and David provided a brief update on strategic issues relating to the Departmental Board Sustainable Agriculture discussion, Ministerial business and Green Growth strategy. |  |
| 7 | **Finance and Corporate Governance** The board discussed the various issues arising from the finance and corporate governance paper and the board: 1. Noted the spend to end January 2020;
2. Noted the key actions and dates associated with the DAERA and NIEA 2019/20 Annual Report & Accounts;
3. Noted the Group’s Full Time Equivalent staffing position at 1st February;
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|  |  | **Action**  |
|  | 1. Noted the updates on reporting the 2019/20 DAERA Business Plan targets;
2. Noted and discussed the proposed DAERA and NIEA 2020/21 Business Plan targets; and
3. Noted the update on the potential implications for Business Continuity Plans arising from the Covid-19 virus.

The following action points were agreed:* Combined EMFG and NIEA vacancies review session to be rearranged with Grade 3s and Directors before the end of March; and
* Where needed, draft DAERA Business Plan 2020/21 targets to be revised as discussed at the board meeting.
 | **Peter** **Aiken****Directors** |
| 8 | **Communications and Staff Engagement**Laura Darragh briefed the board on recent Communications activities as well as those planned for the coming weeks and the board noted the position. The following action points was agreed:* Prepare submission to the Minister to provide information about My NI digital communications;
* Prepare a joint note to EMFG and NIEA staff from Tracey and David to reflect the March NIEA board meeting and other current issues; and
* Contact Pauline Keegan regarding resourcing request for DAERA intranet site.
 | **Eileen Curry****Laura Darragh****Tracey Teague** |
| 9 | **Health and Safety Monthly Report**The board noted the latest health & safety report. |  |
| 10 | **Papers for Future NIEA Board Meetings**The board agreed the schedule of papers to be tabled at the April board meeting and discussed potential papers for future meetings. The following action points were agreed:* Contact AFBI to confirm attendance at NIEA Board has been replaced by site visit on 5 May; and
* Agri-environment policy development update to be tabled at the NIEA Board May 2020 meeting.
 | **Diane Richardson****Acting Grade 7 on Rotation** |
|  |  | **Action** |
| 11 | **AOB**The board discussed the “clean sheet” risk review being conducted by the DAERA Departmental Board and agreed that a similar review should be arranged for NIEA. | **Peter** **Aiken** |