**Summary of the NIEA Board Meeting**

**8 September 2022, In-Person and via Webex Video Conference**

Members in Attendance:

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| Paul Donnelly | Acting Chief Executive, NIEA (Chair) |
| Richard Crowe | Director of Resource Efficiency Division, NIEA |
| Paul Douglas | Non-Executive Board Member |

Other Attendees:

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| Marcus McAuley | Acting Director Strategic Planning & Change Division, NIEA |
| Stephen Norrie | NIEA Board Secretariat |
| Philip Walker | Accountant, Business Support Team, NIEA |
| Charles Barnett\* | Head of Finance, Business Support Team, NIEA |
| Richard Gray\* | Head of Biodiversity, Natural Environment Division, NIEA ( deputising for Mark Hammond, Acting Director of Natural Environment Division ) |
| Benjamin Robson | NIEA Board Secretariat |

\*Attended via WebEx video conference

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1** | **Apologies and Conflicts of Interest**  Apologies from Mark Hammond, Charlotte Stewart and Jacqui Girvan. No new conflicts of interest were recorded.  Paul Donnelly welcomed all those able to attend in person and those via video conference, Richard Gray and Charles Barnett. Paul Donnelly also welcomed Benjamin Robson to the meeting. |  |
| **2** | **Minutes and Matters Arising from Meeting on 2 August 2022**  The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2022. Matters arising were discussed.  The following action points were carried forward:   * Possible future presentation to the Board on the work of the Environmental Crime Unit to be discussed with Amanda Logan   Given current resource and work pressures within ECU it was agreed this action point would be deferred for at least three months. | **Richard Crowe** |
| **3** | **HR Monthly Report**  Marcus McAuley presented the R HR Update paper to the Board. He updated the board on the latest position in relation to staff in post, recruitment competitions, filling of approved vacancies, temporary promotions, agency staff, performance management and absence management. The Board noted the latest position.  Marcus noted the significant progress in filling of vacant posts with offers also out to candidates in the Scientific Officer competition. Marcus noted that headcount ceiling limits were being reached in business as usual posts. He suggested that capability and flexibility needs considered going forward to consolidate and deliver business outcomes.  Paul Donnelly noted the Boards appreciation of good progression on the filling of vacant posts. A brief discussion was held on competitions related to scientific posts.  Paul Donnelly reiterated the importance of a continued focus on having PPA’s and PDP’s completed on the HR Connect system.  Richard Crowe noted that it’s not unusual for a period of six months to pass between offer letters to successful candidates and their start dates. A brief discussion was held on the Agencies ability to influence this going forward. Paul Douglas also noted that this can be frustrating and highlighted the importance of filling vacancies as quickly as possible. The Board concurred and agreed that further strategic discussion on this issue was appropriate in order that systems enable the business needs of NIEA to be met going forward.  The following action points were agreed:   * Clarify position in relation to HSO Competition * Examine NIEA options in relation to resourcing ( staff recruitment / retention / renewal ) | **Marcus McAuley / Mark Hammond / Richard Gray**  **BST Lead** |
| **4** | **Finance and Corporate Governance**  The board discussed the various issues arising from the finance and corporate governance paper and the board:   * Noted the in-year spend for both Resource DEL and Capital DEL for 2022-23; * Noted the outcome of the June Monitoring Round; * Noted the submission made in respect of the Ocober Monitoring Round; * Noted the current position relating to the relevant risk registers; * Notedthe update on the Klondyke Building Premises and Klondyke Daily Attendance and Radon Survey; * Notedthe update on Training, update on fleet management and the Environmental Economists; * Noted the update on Workforce Planning and update on New Ways of Working (NWoW); * Noted the purpose of the Board.   Philip Walker advised that year to date spend was broadly on track against profile given normal trends on spend by the Agency.  Philip Walker advised that budget bilateral meetings were ongoing with business units.  A paper was being prepared by Finance Team with respect to utlisiation of Carrier Bag Levy (CBL) income going forward. A brief discussion on use of CBL income followed. The Board is keen that the Environment Fund benefits from CBL allocations. Paul Donnelly also agreed that discussion with EMFG Deputy Secretary was appropriate with respect to the use of CBL income going forward.  Commissioning of the final Monitoring Round is expected in the near future.  Paul Donnelly reiterated the importance of a focus on budget spend, particularly capital spend, as the year progresses.  Marcus McAuley reiterated the role of the NIEA Board and that the NIEA Framework document, currently in preparation, will provide the vehicle by which the Board can focus on governance issues and resources going forward. Marcus also advised the Board that Risk Management was a matter for the NIEA Senior Management Team and that the first meeting of the Risk Management Group meeting was scheduled for 9 September 2022.  The Board noted that rather than a draft NIEA Business Plan for 2022-23 it had been decided to revert to a Balanced Scorecard approach. The draft Balanced Scorecard 2022-23 had been circulated and Paul Donnelly requested final changes be made by Directors to enable a final version to be signed off. This Balanced Scorecard would also form the basis for business planning thinking and discussion within Directorates going forward into next year.  Richard Crowe suggested that papers for Board Meetings in future should be circulated one week in advance of meetings. It was agreed Board Secretariat will action. Marcus McAuley provided an update on New Ways of Working (NWoW) and pointed to the guidance available on-line as we move forward, living with Covid. He also encouraged Managers to have Workstyle Agreements discussed and agreed no later than the deadline of 5 December 2022.  The Board briefly discussed the future proposed move to Clare House and Marcus McAuley highlighted the need for business units to carefully consider their future storage needs. Matters arising with respect to the proposed move will be brought back to the Board as and when required.  Paul Donnelly passed on the Board’s thanks and appreciation to the Klondyke Premises Team for the sterling work put in to maintain the building throughout the pandemic and for all the preparations and changes required to prepare the building for the return to the office under NWoW.  The following action points were agreed:   * Examine the potential use of CBL income going forward * Final changes to draft NIEA Balanced Scorecard to be applied by 16 September 2022 * Future Board papers to be circulated at least one week in advance of NIEA Board Meetings * Arrange a meeting to discuss NIEA Framework Document to include discussion on resourcing options for NIEA | **Paul Donnelly**  **NIEA Directors / BST**  **Board Secretariat**  **Paul Donnelly / Directors** |
| **7** | **Consultations**  The Board noted the Consultations Master List. |  |
| **8** | **Health & Safety (H&S) Monthly Report**  Marcus McAuley presented the H&S monthly update paper to the Board, noting that this paper focused specifically on NIEA issues only. He also advised the Board that the current EMFG/NIEA Health & Safety (H&S) Adviser, Philip Gault, was retiring, and that he would be replaced in due course. The Board noted the position. |  |
| **9** | **Communications & Staff Engagement**  Stevie Norrie provided a brief update on staff communications activities:  This included an update on the DAERA Story booklet to describe the varied nature of DAERA’s work. This booklet will be issued within regional newspapers on 28 / 29 September 2022. A digital marketing campaign will follow the distribution of the leaflet which will allow further opportunities for sharing of key messages.  A number of changes to internal communications will be implemented following the review of internal communications within DAERA.  Laura Darragh is preparing a paper on Communications needs across NIEA and EMFG.  Laura Darragh continues to attend meetings of the Inter Agency Communications Group on COP15.  The next staff webinar is scheduled for 27 September.  Marcus McAuley reiterated the need to carefully consider communications needs going forward given the limited staff resource. |  |
| **10** | **Papers for Future NIEA Board Meetings**  The board agreed the schedule of papers to be tabled at the October Board meeting and discussed potential papers for future meetings. |  |
| **11** | **AOB**  Paul Donnelly expressed his thanks to all staff for their continued hard work given current challenging times and work pressures.  Paul Donnelly expressed thanks and best wishes to Marcus McAuley for his upcoming retirement.  The Board agreed the October meeting should take place at Water Management Unit offices at Lisburn and again will be a mixture of in-person and video conference. |  |