

Meeting of Thursday 19 December 2019 in Room 229, Dundonald House

MINUTES

Members:	Denis McMahon David Small Robert Huey Brian Doherty Fiona McCandless Sharon McCue Bernie Stuart Sean McGrade Roger Downey	Permanent Secretary Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group Deputy Secretary, Veterinary Service and Animal Health Group (Items 1 -5) Deputy Secretary, Central Services & Contingency Planning Group Deputy Secretary, Forest Service, Rural Affairs & Estate Transformation Group (Items 1-2) Non-Executive Member (NEM) Non-Executive Member (NEM) Director of Corporate Services (Acting) Director of Finance (Acting)
Apologies:	Norman Fulton	Deputy Secretary, Food & Farming Group
In Attendance:	Rosemary Agnew David Reid Paul McGurnaghan Gerry Hackett David Torrens Garry Corscadden Kathryn Clarke	Director, Brexit Division (deputising for Norman Fulton) Director, Finance Division Director, Digital Services Division (Item 2 only) Head, Information Systems Unit (Item 2 only) G5, NIFAIS Programme Director (Item 2 only) G7, NIFAIS Programme Manager (Item 2 only) Head, Office of the Permanent Secretary
Secretariat	Emma Murphy	Central Management Branch

Item	Description	Action
1.	Secretary's Opening Remarks	
	The Secretary welcomed Members and guests, and thanked all for attending.	
1(i)	Declaration of Interest	
	No interests relating to the agenda were declared.	
Items for Discussion		

2.	NIFAIS	
	<p>Robert Huey introduced his paper, noting the background to the project and the progress made to date.</p> <p>Members discussed the detail of the papers in depth, informed by the expertise of the guests in relation to the technical aspects of the project. Members noted the current position in terms of project delivery, and discussed expectations moving forward.</p> <p>It was noted that responsibility for the project would move from VSAHG to CS&CP Group.</p> <p>Following the departure of the guests, Members discussed next steps, and it was agreed that Secretary would write to Brian Doherty as the new Senior Responsible Officer.</p> <p>Fiona McCandless left the meeting at this point.</p>	Secretary
3.	Finance Update: Budget Position	
	<p>Roger Downey spoke to his paper, noting the budget position for the current year and the work that had been undertaken in respect of the 2020/21 Budget.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper, and thanked the staff within Finance Division for their diligence in the management of the Department's finances.</p>	
4.	PfG Outcome 2 Update	
	<p>David Small spoke to his paper, providing an update on the current position for those indicators led by DAERA. He noted positive progress in respect of Waste, and particularly Household Waste Recycling; anticipated improvement in respect of Biodiversity (recognising that the baseline position was poor); and a poorer position in respect of Greenhouse Gas and Water.</p> <p>There was a general discussion on the need to ensure interventions were targeted appropriately, and it was noted that this would be picked up at the January DB discussion.</p> <p>The paper was noted.</p>	
5.	Risk Register: VSAHG	
	<p>Robert Huey provided a summary of the VSAHG Risk Register, noting that it represented a collation of key risks arising from the Divisional Registers and was subject to regular discussion at the VSAHG Board.</p> <p>Members noted the Risks highlighted, and commended the Group on</p>	

	<p>the clarity of the Register.</p> <p>As a general point, it was agreed that all Risk Registers, where appropriate, should include reference to any Internal Audit findings until the Internal Audit process has concluded.</p> <p>The paper was noted.</p> <p>Robert Huey left the meeting at this point.</p>	
Items for Agreement		
6 (a)	Whistleblowing Update	
	<p>The paper was noted.</p> <p>Sharon McCue noted that ARAC received regular reports in relation to Whistleblowing cases and would be undertaking further analysis.</p>	
6 (b)	DAERA International Action Plan	
	<p>The Board noted that the Finance Director had not had the opportunity to consider the paper before it was submitted and that the paper did not record the costs associated with the delivery of the plan. It was noted that in the main, costs were considered to be business as usual, however Members considered that this should be reflected in the document.</p> <p>Members commended the content and direction of the plan, and agreed that it should be accepted subject to further clarity on the issue of costs. It was agreed that Robert Huey would write to Roger Downey to clarify the cost position.</p>	Robert Huey
7 (a)	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
	The minutes of the November DB meeting were agreed.	
7 (b)	Matters Arising from Previous Board Meeting	
	None.	
7 (c)	Forward Agenda	
	The paper was noted.	
8.	Any Other Business	
	Secretary and David Small outlined the recent decision to create a temporary Grade 3 post to cover the role of Chief Executive of the NIEA to allow David to concentrate on wider EMFG / Brexit issues. The post holder will join the Departmental Board on appointment.	

	Brian Doherty noted the recent NICS Board decision to delegate approval for Grade 5 posts to Departments, and that a paper would be developed outlining a process within DAERA to enable the approval of such posts.	
	Close	
	The meeting ended at 3.40pm.	
	Next Meeting: 10.00am, Thursday 30 January 2020	