**MINUTES OF DEPARTMENTAL BOARD (DB) MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 19 DECEMBER 2018   
MOLEWORTH PLACE, COOKSTOWN**

**Members:**

Denis McMahon Permanent Secretary

Robert Huey Deputy Secretary, Veterinary Service and Animal Health Group

David Small Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group

David Reid Director of Finance

Brian Doherty Director of Corporate Services

Fiona McCandlessDeputy Secretary; Corporate Services, Rural Affairs & Forest Service

Norman Fulton Deputy Secretary; Food and Farming Group

Gail Downey Strategic Business Partner, NICS HR

Sharon McCue Non-Executive Member (NEM)

Bernie Stuart Non-Executive Member (NEM)

**In Attendance:**

Jim Crummie Director, Forest Service Plant Health Directorate

Lynda Lowe Head of Financial Policy Branch

(deputising for David Reid until his arrival)

Louise Millsopp Head, Agri Food Support Branch (afternoon only)

Eileen Curry Stakeholder Engagement & Digital Experience Manager, EMFG (Item 9)

Owen Lyttle Head of Waste Policy, EMFG (Item 9)

**Secretariat:**

Kathryn Clarke, Ashley Davidson and Emma Murphy

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| **Item** | **Description** | **Action Owner** |
| **Opening** | |  |
| **1** | **Secretary’s Opening Remarks** |  |
|  | David Small advised that the Secretary and David Reid would be arriving late, and that he would Chair the meeting until the Secretary’s arrival. |  |
| 1 (i) | **Declaration Of interests** |  |
|  | No interests which relate to today’s agenda declared. |  |
| 1 (ii) | **Previous Minutes** |  |
|  | The Board agreed the content of the minutes of the previous meeting. |  |
| 1 (iii) | **Matters Arising & Action Points** |  |
|  | Action points have been updated to reflect Members comments. |  |
| **Strategic Governance** | |  |
| **2** | **People** |  |
| **2 (i)** | **Monthly Staffing Update** |  |
|  | Gail Downey presented the paper to the Board which noted:   1. The resourcing position across DAERA with regard to Brexit and other priority posts; and 2. Compliance across business areas with regard to sickness absence certification and performance management;   The Board noted the paper and discussed:   1. Work being undertaken under the remit of the Resourcing Sub-Committee on the issue of long-term TPs; 2. DoF work on the shape of future competitions; 3. Progress on the filling of Brexit related posts since the previous meeting; 4. The ongoing NICSHR review of fixed-rate allowances; 5. Industrial Tribunal litigation in relation to holiday pay.   It was noted that a paper on Brexit related vacancies would be a regular discussion item at TMT, and it was agreed that the DB paper on staffing should include an update on same moving forward.  It was agreed that the regular DB paper would be revised to provide a fuller picture in terms of vacancies and recruitment | **Brian Doherty /**  **Gail Downey**  **Gail Downey** |
| **2(ii)** | **H&S Quarterly Update (Q2)** |  |
|  | David Small presented the paper, providing background to the recommendations on co-ordination and management of H&S within DAERA, and proposals to build resilience.  The Board noted the paper and agreed:   1. That the central co-ordination role should move to Central Services; 2. That a review should be undertaken to look at the structure and grading of H&S roles across the Department; 3. That following that review, work would be undertaken to identify ways to build resilience, including the provision of NEBOSH training to further staff.   The Board agreed that governance arrangements in respect of H&S were not changing, and that Groups continued to have a corporate responsibility for the issue within their business areas.  The Board noted that the immediate staffing pressures in relation to H&S were being resolved by:   1. Engagement with NICSHR to organise a TP to cover the H&S Co-ordinator role; 2. Declan Woods would be released from VSAHG to assist FFG in the short term; 3. A competition to fill the FFG Advisor post for the longer term. | **Brian Doherty**  **David Small**  **Robert Huey**  **Norman Fulton** |
| **3** | **Resources** |  |
| **3(i)** | **Budget Position** |  |
|  | Lynda Lowe provided an update on expenditure and on the recent stocktake with DoF. She advised that any easements would be declared at Stage 2 of January Monitoring. She asked that any emerging issues be flagged to Finance Division as soon as possible.  The Board noted the paper.  Secretary provided an update on the meeting with NIO. |  |
| **4** | **Business Delivery** |  |
| **4 (i)** | **PfG Update** |  |
|  | David Small presented the paper and noted that a mid-year report on Outcome 2 had been provided to TEO for publication via their website.  The Board noted the paper. |  |
| **4 (ii)** | **Business Continuity Planning** |  |
|  | Brian Doherty presented the paper, noting that the Corporate BCP had been revised and aligned to the Major Emergency Response Plan.  The Board discussed the revised BCP and asked that it be revisited to reflect concerns raised on:   * the issue of a default location * the importance of IT services in support of communications.   The Board agreed that it would be useful to undertake a tabletop exercise (at the January DB meeting) ahead of the anticipated NICS wide business continuity exercises. | **Brian Doherty**  **Brian Doherty** |
| **5** | **DB Governance** |  |
| **5 (i)** | **ARAC Update** |  |
|  | Sharon McCue presented the paper noting that it followed the verbal update to the previous DB meeting. She highlighted the new agreed arrangements for monitoring and formal follow-up of Internal Audit recommendations.  The Board noted the need for a joined up approach across the Department in terms of engagement with ALBs. |  |
| **Strategic Issues** | |  |
| **6** | **NIFAIS Update** |  |
|  | Robert Huey provided an update to the Board, highlighting:   1. A number of indicators that will be observed over the next few months to monitor any improvement in delivery; 2. That Deloitte are developing an alternative plan; and 3. That the Gateway Review taking place in early February provides a key point in determining how to proceed with the programme.   The Board noted the paper and that a further verbal update will be made to the next meeting. |  |
| **7** | **TB Update** |  |
|  | Robert Huey presented the paper to the Board, giving an update on:   1. TB Disease incidence remaining at 9.5%; 2. Progress on the development of the Outline Business Case; 3. Resource requirements arising from disease incidence.   The Board noted the paper. |  |
| **8** | **Brexit** |  |
|  | Norman Fulton presented the paper, highlighting the progress of both primary and secondary legislation.  He provided a further update since the paper, highlighting:   1. recent Cabinet decisions on funding allocations across Whitehall; 2. imminent publication by Whitehall of information packs offering advice to businesses; 3. information released by the EU in respect of its contingency planning; and 4. NICS plans in terms of contingency.   The Board noted the paper and verbal updates. |  |
| **9** | **Presentation on MyNI** |  |
|  | Eileen Curry and Owen Lyttle made a presentation to the Board on MyNI, an online engagement tool, which has been used by EMFG to engage directly with the public.  Eileen advised that the NICS Board had recently agreed to a two year extension of the project and it was hoped to develop a further 12 campaigns across the NICS.  The Board noted the need for consideration as to where ownership of the Department’s involvement with MyNI should sit, and noted that a paper was being prepared on the issue for consideration in the near future.  The Board commended Eileen and her work in relation to MyNI, noting the impact of the campaigns on behaviours and attitudes amongst Departmental stakeholders and the general public. |  |
| **Closing Items** | |  |
| **10** | **DB January Forward Agenda** |  |
|  | The Agenda for January was agreed with the following amendments:   1. Quarterly Reports on the Departmental Business Plan Targets and the Corporate Risk Register would be moved to February to allow information for months 1-9 to be included; 2. Board Operating Framework would be incorporated into a wider item on Corporate Governance Framework; 3. Addition of a paper considering work that can be deferred and / or delayed; 4. The NIFAIS Update would be a short verbal update ahead of the Gateway Review; 5. International Trade and Relations would be removed; 6. Regulatory Transformation Programme would be moved to February; 7. Science Transformation Gateway would be removed; 8. Summary Responses for Agricultural Framework would be added. |  |
| **11** | **Internal Communication Messages for Team Brief** |  |
|  | Items for inclusion in the next available Team Brief were:   1. H&S Co-ordination arrangements 2. Budget position 18/19 3. Brexit 4. TB Eradication Outline Business Case 5. Presentation on MyNI 6. ARAC update 7. Presentation of certificates to Forest Service Plant Health Staff |  |
| **12** | **AOB** |  |
|  | Secretary noted the need for DB to meet with the AFBI Board in the near future as part of the normal ALB Governance arrangements. Diary dates are to be arranged.  Brian Doherty noted that Ronan Henry would be moving to another PIO post in the new year, and that Joanne McCauley (currently acting PIO in DoH) would be taking up the PIO post.  The Board recorded their thanks to Ronan for his work as Departmental PIO.  David Reid noted that Roger Downey would be acting as Deputy Finance Director. | **Brian Doherty** |
|  | **Close** |  |
|  | Secretary thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting. |  |

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday 30 January 2019**

**Room 229, Dundonald House**