DoF Departmental Board Meeting

Conference Room, Colby House

Wednesday 13 December 2017, 10.00am – 12.05pm

Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Members / Deputies</th>
<th>In Attendance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hugh Widdis</td>
<td>Martin Monaghan (minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claire Archbold</td>
<td>Anne Armstrong</td>
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<td>Des Armstrong</td>
<td>Gary O’Rourke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Bailey</td>
<td>Fiona Sawey (for item 1 only)</td>
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<td>Colum Boyle</td>
<td>Gillian Potter (for item 1 only)</td>
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<td>Jill Minne</td>
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<td>Michele Woods</td>
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<td>Siobhan Carey</td>
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<td>Bill Pauley</td>
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<td>Julie Thompson</td>
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<td>Paul Wickens</td>
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<td>Liz Ensor</td>
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<td>John Smyth</td>
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1. **NICS e-Library**

Hugh Widdis introduced Fiona Sawey and Gillian Potter to Members and advised that they would be giving a presentation on the NICS e-library.

Fiona and Gillian informed Members that the e-library service launched in July 2016 following an amalgamation of libraries and staff in the NICS. The e-library provides a range of services including an information and enquiry facility, a lending service and access to electronic databases and e-books. This includes access to newspapers via the Nexis service and popular journals like Public Administration and Harvard Business Review via various journal databases.

Board Members discussed the potential benefits of the services on offer and the possibility of forming linkages with the CAL website. It was agreed that Members would highlight the e-library service in their areas and invite the e-library team to present at SMT meetings, where relevant. It was also agreed that the Internal Communications Team would take forward some publicity activity to highlight the facilities available from the e-library service to DoF staff.

**Action:** DB Members

G O’Rourke

2. **Welcome/Apologies**

Hugh Widdis welcomed Members to the meeting. He noted that Paul McGinn had sent his apologies and that Claire Archbold was attending to represent DSO. Hugh
also welcomed Michele Woods to her first meeting as acting Director of Finance & Corporate Services and Gary O'Rourke as the Internal Communications representative.

No conflicts of interest were registered.

3. **Matters Arising from Previous Meeting**

Board Members noted that the minutes of the meeting on 30 October 2017 had been agreed by correspondence and discussed progress against the action points arising from this meeting.

4. **Update from PSS/NICS Board**

Hugh Widdis provided Members with an overview of the recent Permanent Secretary Stocktake (PSS) and NICS Board meetings.

Members discussed strategic workforce planning within the Department.

5. **Finance Update – Oct 2017**

Michele Woods provided an overview of the latest DoF financial position. She stressed the importance of monitoring budgets closely during the final quarter of the year and advising Finance Division of any significant variation from the forecast position.

Members discussed the information provided and agreed that future budget forecasts should build on the lessons learned in previous years to incorporate more accurate forecasting and contingency planning.

**Action: DB Members**

6. **HR Information and Analysis**

Mark Bailey referred Members to the latest HR Report and highlighted key details from it. He reinforced the need to keep a strong focus on absence management and engagement. Board Members discussed the absence management process and Mark agreed to provide further information in relation to the inefficiency process at the next meeting.

Mark also provided details of ongoing work to ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for dealing with staff concerns about issues of misconduct. He noted that there were several mechanisms by which staff could raise such concerns and advised that he would work with the Internal Communications Team to ensure staff were aware of these.

**Action: M Bailey**

G O'Rourke
7. **EU Future Relations – Update**

Bill Pauley provided an update on the EU Future Relations ‘legislation’ and ‘future funding’ workstreams.

Claire Archbold provided some further information in relation to the ‘legislation’ workstream and encouraged Members to consider their requirement for legal advice at an early stage.

8. **GDPR Action Plan Update**

Michele Woods updated Members on the Department’s GDPR Action Plan. She asked Members to maintain the focus in delivering the Action Plan and to report progress on the actions attributed to them.

Michele noted that the development of departmental / business area privacy notices had commenced and that work to determine the impact of GDPR on current and future contracts was progressing well. She advised that it was now mandatory to conduct privacy impact assessments on any new projects or policies that involve the processing of personal data and she asked Members to ensure that these were being taken forward in their areas.

Michele also thanked Members for their support and attendance at the recent GDPR seminar. She advised that the presentations from the event were available for dissemination among staff.

**Action: DB Members**

Board Members discussed the impact of GDPR on their areas and the level of work that was required to ensure compliance with the new requirements. They also noted a risk in relation to the potential for additional costs associated with amending existing contracts to make them GDPR compliant.

9. **Communications Update – Media Analysis**

Anne Armstrong referred Members to the Communications Update and Media Analysis.

**CORRESPONDENCE PAPERS**

10. **Code of Conduct For Board Members**

This paper had been issued under correspondence arrangements and was cleared by the Board with minor amendment.
11. **AOB**

Des Armstrong advised that the NIAO Good Practice Guide: Managing the Risks of Bribery and Corruption had highlighted some areas that were relevant to public procurement and supplier relationships. He advised that most of the controls listed in the NIAO report were already covered by existing DoF policy. However, in order to effectively manage the operational and reputational risks on public procurement, CPD had proposed some further recommendations.

Board Members discussed the recommendations and agreed that they should complement the current guidance on Gifts & Hospitality, where possible. They also agreed that when this work is completed, CPD should communicate the recommendations to other NICS departments.

**Action: D Armstrong**

Hugh Widdis advised that the Department had released a statement on the Northern Ireland public sector pay policy for 2017/18 earlier that morning.

The Board meeting finished at 12.05pm and Board Members took the opportunity to meet some NISRA staff and hear about their areas of work. This included a tour and demonstration of the systems in the General Register Office and a Q&A with the team responsible for the NICS Staff Survey. Board Members were very appreciative of the efforts of the NISRA staff in arranging the two very interesting and informative sessions.

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**Martin Monaghan**

14 December 2017