1. **Welcome/Apologies**

Hugh Widdis welcomed Members to the meeting. He noted apologies from Paul Wickens and Julie Thompson and advised that Margaret McGurk and Seanin Ferguson were deputising for Mark Bailey and Michele Woods respectively.

Hugh introduced John Smyth, the new non-executive member on the Board, and welcomed Bill Pauley to his first meeting since re-joining the Department. He also advised that Johanna Lawther was attending the meeting in her role as the Internal Communications representative.

No conflicts of interest were registered.

2. **Matters Arising from Previous Meeting**

Board Members noted that the minutes of the meeting on 25 September 2017 had been agreed by correspondence and discussed progress against the action points arising from this meeting.

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

Hugh Widdis provided Members with an overview of the recent Permanent Secretary Stocktake (PSS) and NICS Board meetings.
4. **Corporate Performance Report (Quarter 2, 2017-18)**

Seanin Ferguson referred Members to the Corporate Performance Report, which detailed progress at the end of September 2017 in relation to the 25 Departmental targets for 2017-18.

Members noted that most of the targets were on track for achievement and focussed their attention on the targets with an amber or red status. They discussed the reasons for slippage in these areas and the actions being taken to address this. They also agreed changes to the status and ratings of the risks on the Corporate Risk Register.

5. **Finance Update – Sept 2017**

Seanin Ferguson provided an overview of the Departmental finance position at the end of September 2017. She advised that annual forecasts were currently showing a small over-commitment in both current and capital expenditure. However, it was expected that these pressures would be managed internally as the year progresses, so remedial action was not currently required.

She asked Directors to continue monitoring their budgets closely and advise Finance Division if any significant variations from forecasts were expected.

**Action: DB Members**

6. **HR Information and Analysis**

Margaret McGurk advised that she had recently taken over as the HR Business Partner for DoF. She referred Members to the latest HR Report and highlighted key details from it. She also updated members on the latest compliance statistics for In-Year Reviews and asked Directors to encourage the completion of these reports in their areas.

Board Members discussed the level of sick absence in the NICS in comparison to GB Departments and the wider public sector in NI. They noted the importance of training and support for line-managers to ensure that procedures are applied properly and acknowledged the key role that OHS often has in this process. It was agreed that CPD would look at procuring additional professional services in this area to supplement the work of OHS and ensure that cases are handled in a prompt manner.

**Action: DB Members**

J Minne & D Armstrong

The Board meeting was adjourned at 2.05pm to enable Board Members to meet Enterprise Shared Services staff and hear about some of their work. This included discussions on the Open Data project and an information session in relation Digital Inclusion.
The meeting reconvened at 2.55pm and Board Members recorded their appreciation for the very interesting and informative sessions that had been arranged by ESS staff. They also agreed to promote the Open Data project in their areas and encourage the release of suitable datasets.

Action: DB Members

7. **EU Future Relations – Update**

Bill Pauley advised that DoF was leading on two of the EU Future Relations workstreams – ‘legislation’ and ‘future funding’. He updated Members on progress with this work and also provided an overview of the ongoing exercise to develop Day 1 Delivery Plans.

Board Members noted the update.

8. **Staff Brief Articles**

Board Members noted the proposed articles for the next Staff Brief and suggested some additional content.

Johanna Lawther agreed to issue a copy of the Staff Brief publication schedule to Board Members.

Action: J Lawther

9. **Communications Update – Media Analysis**

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

10. **DARC Minutes – 28 June 2017**

Board Members discussed the minutes of the June Departmental Audit and Risk Committee (DARC) meeting. They agreed that while Whistleblowing reports are taken very seriously by line-management in DoF, in some situations follow-up actions could have been more comprehensive.

It was agreed that DARC would investigate the possibility of agreeing Minutes via correspondence so that in future they would be available for Board review in a timelier manner.

Action: J Smyth

11. **DARC Fraud & Whistleblowing paper**

Board Members noted the latest Fraud and Whistleblowing Report.
12. **Code of Conduct For Board Members**

   This paper had been issued under correspondence arrangements and was cleared by the Board without comment.

13. **DoF Public Task Statement**

   This paper had been issued under correspondence arrangements and was cleared by the Board without comment.

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**Martin Monaghan**

3 November 2017