THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
26 FEBRUARY 2020, EXECUTIVE ROOM, STORMONT CASTLE

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mark Browne (Chair), Karen Pearson, Brenda King, Chris Stewart, Peter Toogood, NR

IN ATTENDANCE: NR
NR
NR Secretary)

1a. Apologies

David Sterling, Andrew McCormick.

b. Minutes of 26 January 2020 meeting

The minutes were agreed with amendments.

c. Matters Arising

Board members provided an update on matters arising.

d. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

2a. Legislative Programme

Brenda King spoke to the paper circulated and provided an overview of current Assembly and Westminster Bills and secondary legislation. Brenda noted progress on the DSO drafting of secondary legislation following a recent programme of training.

3 a Programme for Government and NICS of the Future

Chris Stewart advised that Ministers have now agreed a two-stage approach to PFG; to develop a one-year programme initially followed by a multi-year programme aligned with a budget. Chris noted the challenges around priorities, finance and civic engagement NR advised of the

importance of registering the risks associated with PFG in terms of measuring outcomes and of public expectation. Denis undertook to engage with the Departmental Audit and Risk Assessment Committee.

[ACTION: NR

3b. Strategic Review of Civil Contingencies across Northern Ireland

Chris Stewart provided an overview of the paper circulated, recording the importance of a review of current arrangements given the changes in the strategic landscape that now impose new risks and considerations for civil contingency preparations. Following discussion, NR noted the timely nature of the proposed review, the importance of engagement with key stakeholders and the recording of all associated risks.

4. Intergovernmental and International Relations & EU Exit

Karen Pearson provided an update on the EU Exit Sub-committee and noted her forthcoming TEO committee attendance with Andrew McCormick.

5. Budget/Finance

Peter Toogood provided details of the paper circulated, noting the impact on the financial position due to the return of Ministers, unfilled vacancies and the demands of emerging areas of work within stringent timeframes. Peter also noted that work on the forthcoming 19/20 Annual Report will be commissioned shortly and urged co-operation from all divisions on its compilation.

6a. NICS HR

NR introduced this item, spoke to the paper provided and outlined the refreshed management information packs. Following discussion, NR undertook to provide stats on the status of performance reviews by directorate. **[ACTION:** NR

On the topic of current levels of sickness absence, NR recorded his view on the importance of supporting good mental health at work. NR

will liaise with Peter Toogood to discuss the potential for supportive events such as lunchtime seminars. **[ACTION: NR and Peter Toogood]**

6b. NICS Talent Management Toolkit – Guidance on holding Development Discussions

NR updated the Board on this new HR initiative designed to aid both line managers and their staff in having mutually beneficial conversations on talent management and development. The Board discussed the merits of this proposal and agreed that it should be rolled out across all grades with appropriate and ongoing communication to embed this cultural change.

[ACTION: NR and Peter Toogood]

Governance Issues

7a. Forward Planner

Board members noted the forward planner.

NR recorded the need to agree an external review of TEO board effectiveness in line with audit recommendations. This should be tabled at the March board meeting. **[ACTION: Secretariat]**

7b. Papers issued between meetings

Board members noted a paper issued since the last meeting.

8. Date of next meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 25th March 2020.

NR

27 FEBRUARY 2020