

DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING

- Minutes -

Wednesday 7 June 2023 at 10.00

5th Floor Meeting Room
Castle Buildings

Members:	Ronnie Armour (Chair)	Director, Reducing Offending and Director General, Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS)
	Deborah Brown	Director, Justice Delivery
	Sean Holland	Director, Access to Justice
	Glyn Capper	Acting Director, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS)
	Mark Goodfellow	Acting Director, Safer Communities
	Dr Joanne McDowell	Non-Executive Board Member
	Colin Kennedy	Non-Executive Board Member
Remotely:	Michael Moore	Boardroom Apprentice
Apologies:	Richard Pengelly	Permanent Secretary
In attendance:	David Lennox	Head of Corporate Engagement and Communications Division
	Maryann Smith	Head of Financial Services Division (Agenda item 5)
	Richard Logan	FSD (Agenda item 6)
	Brendan Devlin	Head of Governance Unit (Agenda items 7 to 10)
	Bill Smyth	Governance Unit (Agenda items 7 to 9)
	John Napier	Head of Information Services Division (Agenda items 11 and 12)
	Clare Dornan	Board Secretary

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Ronnie, as Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Richard. He noted that this was Michael's last meeting of the DoJ Board as his tenure expires in August. The Chair thanked Michael for his contributions and hoped that he has enjoyed the experience and wished him all the best in his future endeavours.
- 1.2 Ronnie mentioned that this was also his last meeting with the DoJ Board as he is moving to the Department of Education in July. He will be replaced by Beverley Wall who is

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joining from the Department for Communities (DfC) in August. Board members noted the valuable contribution that Ronnie had made not only to the Board but also to the Department over his career.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1. No additional declarations of interest were noted.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 Draft minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES

Permanent Secretary's Update

4.1 In Richard's absence the Chair reported that the local elections have taken place and the budget is now in place. The Head of the Civil Service (HOCS) continues to meet with Party Leaders and the Senior Management Team (SMT) had recently met with the Justice spokesperson in each of the political parties.

Update from Directors

4.2 Directors provided updates to include; the extension of Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable's contracts; briefing to the Party Leaders on Hate Crime and progress against the Marrinan Review; decision taken in a high profile Judicial Review (JR) to lodge an appeal on the Department's behalf, and the impact of the increasing prison population which is now in excess of 1870 and is projected to rise to 1900 by end of June.

4.3 Joanne provided an update on the business covered at a recent DoF Non-Executives Forum. The Chair welcomed this helpful update.

Action – Governance Team to request a copy of the agenda from DoF. In meantime Joanne would provide a copy of the agenda for the next meeting in September.

4.4 Deborah's update included; the Investment Strategy Northern Ireland (ISNI) included key projects and for DoJ this is Courts and Prisons and at this point no account taken of the budget pressures; budget update - there are a number of vacancies currently open and moving forward it is anticipated that a more structured approach to filling vacancies will be introduced; the Department is projecting pressures in PSNI and other NDPBs with the pressure in LSA managed through the profile of payments; the People Survey is up slightly although NICS rate has fallen with results expected in the Autumn;. Deborah

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thanked the business areas for the strength of the evidence they provided to help secure the budget.

5. FINANCE UPDATE

- 5.1 Maryann provided an overview on the Provisional Outturn for 2022-23 and an update on the 2023-24 budgetary position of the Department. To maximise use and effectiveness of the Departments budget the Senior Management Team and Finance Director made a number of decisions to use easements to fund additional spending. Doing so addressed pressures and reduced the impact of costs being carried into 2023-24. The Board also noted that the risk of overspend in 23/24 lie largely with PSNI.
- 5.2 The Board noted the contents of the paper and the current financial position and thanked Maryann and her team for the work done to mitigate the comprehensive challenges faced by the Department.

6. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

- 6.1 Richard Logan presented the paper and asked the Board to note the contents of the latest draft DoJ Annual Report and Accounts; consider if there are any changes or amendments to be made to the draft Accounts and in particular disclosures relating to Performance; and note the Remuneration Report disclosures for salaries and pensions of Directors and Non-Executive Board Members and guidance in Annex A.
- 6.2 The Department's Draft Accounts were submitted to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) on 31 May in line with the agreed timetable. For the first time, the Accounts include a consolidation of financial information for the Department's eight Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) including PSNI and Police Pension Schemes as well as the DoJ Core Department and its five Agencies. It is currently envisaged that the Accounts will be laid in the Assembly by the Summer Recess deadline of 7 July 2023. In addition there is a new requirement for the Accounts to be laid in the House of Commons and the Department of Finance (DoF) is currently finalising the administrative process for this.
- 6.3 Colin, as Chair of DARC, commended Richard and his team for such a positive outcome. The Chair also thanked Richard and all involved in the work to complete the Annual Report and Accounts and for ensuring that the Department was well placed to secure a good outcome.

7. DRAFT ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP ASSURANCE STATEMENT

- 7.1 Bill Smyth presented the paper for the next 3 agenda items. The Board was asked to review and note the contents of the Draft Annual Stewardship Assurance Statement which will be presented to the Departmental Accounting Officer for approval.
- 7.2 The Board noted that there were no surprises in the Draft Annual Stewardship Assurance Statement and were content that this was recommended to the Accounting Officer for approval.

8. DEPARTMENTAL COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT

- 8.1 Bill advised that details of complaints recorded by the Core Department (and its Agencies) are reported to the Departmental Management Board on a bi-annual basis. He highlighted the number and types of complaints that have arisen. The Board noted that the numbers of positive feedback cases would also be provided at the next update. The Board noted the contents of the report.

Action – The next complaints report is to include comparative data to highlight any trends. (Bill Smyth).

9. DEPARTMENTAL RAISING A CONCERN ANNUAL REPORT

- 9.1 Bill asked the Board to note the details of concerns recorded by the Core Department (and its Agencies) reported to the Departmental Management Board. The Board discussed the different options available for dealing with concerns raised and noted that the same issue can result in different channels being pursued and this can result in a lot of time and effort to investigate each case.
- 9.2 The Board noted the contents of the report and thanked Bill for his work in providing a range of assurance on governance issues to the Board.

10. BUSINESS PLAN AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 Brendan presented the paper that provided the end of year on performance against the annual business plan targets for 2022/23 – this has also been included in the Annual Report and Accounts. A number of common themes have arisen against those targets partially achieved and include the absence of a NI Executive, staff vacancies and budgetary constraints.

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- 10.2 The Board asked that it is made clear that the non-achievement of targets is not a reflection on individuals but is as a result of external factors.
- 10.3 The Board approved the year end performance against the Business plan.
- 10.4 The Board were also provided with the Department's Risk Management documents, including the Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management Issues Log at 31 March. The Board noted the red risks – budget, capability & capacity and Climate Change action.
- 10.5 The Board approved the Risk Register and Risk Management issues log and thanked Brendan for his work in this area.

11. OUTLINE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

- 11.1 John presented this paper and the paper for the following agenda item. He advised that the paper set out the general direction of travel for the Department and that this was following the lead set by DAERA who are the lead Department on the implementation of the strategy. John highlighted that the two big issues facing the Department are managing the estate and reducing the carbon footprint all set against a position of no additional budget having been made available for this.
- 11.2 The Board noted the draft DoJ Outline Sustainability Strategy 2023-2027 and supporting Action Plan.

12. INFORMATION RISK OWNERS COUNCIL (IROC) ANNUAL REPORT

- 12.1 This report is for the Board to note and outlines the work of the Information Risk Owners Council (IROC) for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The update provided information on the challenges and risks the Department faced, specifically in relation to Shared Services and the increased risk of cyber-attacks and the actions taken by IROC to mitigate the impact.
- 12.2 The Board noted the content of the report and thanked John and his team for the work being done to provide assurance, through IROC, in relation to information management.

13. DARC ANNUAL REPORT

- 13.1 Colin presented the report to the Board and advised that he was content that the DARC had fulfilled its roles and responsibilities. He thanked his fellow NEBM and DARC colleagues for their support.

13.2 The Board noted the content of the DARC Annual Report and the Chair thanked all DARC members for the work and assurances provided.

14. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS UPDATE

14.1 Clare provided a verbal update on the current progress in relation to the review of effectiveness and advised that the final report would be available for the Board's consideration at the September meeting.

15. SUMMARY REPORT – DECISIONS MADE UNDER THE NI (EXECUTIVE FORMATION ETC.) ACT 2022 - DECISIONS IN MARCH AND APRIL

15.1 Two lists of decisions made under the NI (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2022 were submitted to the Board for information (March and April). The Board noted the content.

16. AOB

16.1 No other business was raised.

17. KEY MESSAGES

17.1 The Board agreed that the key messages should focus on the following:

- The meeting has had a focus on governance and assurance at year end.
- The good position of the department in relation to the content of the Annual Report and Accounts and is on target to be published within the required timeframes.
- Good overall year-end position on the achievement of the performance against the BP targets.
- The non-achievement of some business plan targets is not a reflection on individuals but is as a result of external factors.
- Assurances provided in relation to complaints, raising a concern and the year-end Stewardship statements.
- Additional assurances provided by the IROC and DARC Annual Reports.

Date of the next meeting is 27 September 2023