

DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING

- Minutes -

Wednesday 27 March 2019 at 10.00 am

Castle Buildings Conference Room

Present:	Peter May Deborah Brown David Lavery, Anthony Harbinson Clarke Black Heather Baily	Permanent Secretary (Chair) Director, Justice Delivery Director, Access to Justice Director, Safer Communities Independent Board Member Independent Board Member (by conference call items 1-9)
In attendance:	Fergal McCallion Sinead Simpson Declan McGeown Joanne McDermott Clare Dornan	NICSHR Head of Corporate Engagement and Communication Division (CECD) Representing Director Reducing Offending and Head of NI Prison Service CECD representative (item 5) Strategic Engagement Unit (Secretary)
Apologies:	Ronnie Armour	Director, Reducing Offending and Head of NI) Prison Service (NIPS)

The meeting commenced at 10.00

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 The Chair welcomed Deborah Brown, Director of Justice Delivery to the meeting and Heather Baily who joined the meeting via conference call.

1.2 Apologies were received from Ronnie Armour and Declan McGeown was welcomed in his place.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. The Board noted the update on actions and that they were either completed or in hand.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 The Chair asked for any declarations of interest or any changes required to the register. None were raised.

4. UPDATES

a) Critical issues

4.1 The Chair provided an update on –

- Brexit – political direction remains uncertain. The Department's readiness for a “no deal” is also in place. 12 April is the next political deadline and some further clarity is expected at that point. The Board noted that the Department would have been ready for the original deadline of 29 March if needed.
- “No deal” Brexit is also linked to an increased probability of the introduction of direct rule. This position has been acknowledged recently by the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Members. Preparations within the Department are in hand to identify key staff for a direct rule private office and develop a 1st day brief. There is an opportunity to develop further thinking at the SCS Strategy event on 10 April.
- SCS Strategy – next event on 10 April and the Executive Team held a strategy event on 11 March. Key issues were identified as well as steps to be taken ahead of the April event. These included initial work on -
 - Mission
 - values and behaviours
 - Relationships
 - Wellbeing (actions to support people in difficult working environments)
 - Building and strengthening the Department's leadership team
- Digitisation of Legal Services Agency (LSA) – the decision to postpone implementation of the Legal Aid Management System (LAMS) by 3 months has been made by DoJ Permanent Secretary as requested by key stakeholders. The system

will now go live on 1 July 2019. The Board noted that LSA were technically ready to meet the original go live date.

b) BREXIT

4.2 Covered under critical issues.

c) Resourcing issues/Finance update.

4.3 The Board discussed the financial position as at 28 February – noting that budgets continue to be monitored, to ensure the Department can live within the 2018-19 budget. Following the Secretary of State's budget announcement on 28 February letters were issued to all Accounting Officers advising them of their opening 2019-20 allocation.

Decision - The Board agreed to a DoF proposal to remove the June in-year monitoring round. This would contribute to the re-prioritisation of work across the Department.

Action – Director Access to Justice to confirm that the Northern Ireland Court and Tribunal Service (NICTS) underspend of £0.8m is related to judicial pay/pensions.

Action – Director Justice Delivery to prepare a short paper to April/May Board on injury on duty (IOD) cases.

Action – Director Justice Delivery to update the tables in the Finance Report to ensure they cover the most significant issues.

5. UPDATE ON THE DOJ PEOPLE PLAN TASK AND FINISH GROUP

5.1 Joanne McDermott joined the meeting at this point to present her paper on the recommendations from the DoJ People Plan Task and Finish (T&F) groups.

5.2 The Board noted that the high level of engagement and participation in the T&F groups and that there had been representation from across the Department and the Agencies as well as being comprised of various grades.

5.3 The Board noted that the T&F groups had been established for a short period and that these would naturally cease with the development of action plans from each of the groups. They also noted that it was important that any future groups had representation from Agencies as well as the DoJ Core and that there was an opportunity to seek new membership for groups.

5.4 The Board noted the recommendation for the establishment of 2 fora to progress the work identified on internal communications and on organisational and personal development.

5.5 The possible governance arrangements for the Fora were also discussed.

Decision - The Board agreed to -

- The creation of an Internal Communication Forum and an Organisational and Personal Development Forum.
- Diversity and inclusion to be an integral part of the Organisation and Personal Development Forum.
- The Fora to have Senior Civil Service (SCS) Chairs.

Action – The Director Justice Delivery to consider the appropriate governance arrangements for the Internal Communication and the Organisational and Personal Development Fora and make recommendations to the Board.

Decision - The Board also agreed to recommendations for immediate action including:

- Develop new DoJ Corporate induction pages
- Develop of a template for line managers on local induction – tailored by business areas
- Develop a programme of Divisional/Agency visits
- Develop a schedule of lunchtime talks
- Promote existing employee benefits – to include Carers' Guide
- Promote the role of the Harassment Contact Officers
- Establishment of a Criminal Justice Equality Diversity and Inclusion Network

5.6 The Board noted the recommendation about recognition of 25 years' service, agreed that long service is something that needs to be recognised but concluded that the recommendation as it stands is not something that the Board could approve.

Action – The T&F group dealing with staff recognition to provide a range of options for recognising long service. (Head of CECD)

Action – Head of CECD to offer to attend Directorate/Divisional team meetings to provide updates on the DoJ People Plan Task and Finish Groups.

Action – Head of CECD to consider further how to communicate and showcase the work being progressed by the DoJ People Plan Task and Finish Groups, including a dedicated page on the intranet.

5.7 The Board noted the work currently on-going with NICSHR.

5.8 The Board thanked CECD representative and the team of people who had volunteered for the Task and Finish Groups and recognised that a huge amount of work had been done.

Action – The Chair to write to all the members of the Task and Finish Groups to thank them for their participation and contribution.

6. 2019/20 DRAFT CORPORATE AND BUSINESS PLAN

6.1 The Head of CECD presented the draft Corporate and Business Plan. The Board agreed the approach as outlined. The Board requested the following actions

Action – Targets to be more specific and include dates and to be allocated to be allocated to a lead person (Head of CECD)

Action – Objectives to be written more broadly to reflect work across the business areas. (Head of CECD)

Action – Head of CECD to ensure reference is included in the Business Plan to stakeholder /joint working.

Action – Board to consider final draft at April meeting (Secretary).

6.2 The Board thanked head of CECD for all her work on the Corporate and Business Plan to date.

7. DEPARTMENTAL RISK REGISTER

7.1 The Secretary presented the paper to the Board and invited them to consider the Departmental Risk Register with a view to 19/20 business year. The Board also considered

the top risks as perceived by each of the DoJ Agencies and considered in turn which risks being escalated to the Departmental register.

7.2 The Board discussed the relationship between the Agency Risk Register and the Departments Risk Register. They noted that the Board focus is considering how serious the risk is of materialising and those risks considered appropriate for inclusion in the Departmental Risk Register should be re-worded to reflect the overall risk to the Department.

Decision - NIPS and YJA – both organisations escalated “Death in Custody” risks – the Board agreed that this should be included on the Departmental Risk Register – this will also consider any risk associated with PSNI for a death in police custody. The risk is to be re-worded to reflect the overall Department’s risk which will incorporate the risks being managed in the Agencies and PSNI.

Action - The Board requested a paper on the Death in Custody risk to demonstrate the controls that are in place within NIPS, YJA and PSNI. This will be submitted to April Board. (Director of Safer Communities to co-ordinate)

Decision –The Board considered that in light of the recent decision to postpone the introduction of Legal Services Agency (LSA) new system LAMS (Legal Aid Management System) this risk would be escalated to the Departmental Risk Register in the meantime.

Decision - The Board considered the risks escalated from FSNI and NICTS and concluded that these are already adequately reflected in the two risks on finance and people in the Departmental Risk Register.

7.3 The Director of Justice Delivery also suggested that a workshop to include Agency representation and business areas be held to address risk appetite and to develop proposals on a Departmental risk appetite.

Decision – The Board agreed that a workshop with Grade 5s and Chief Executives should be arranged to progress the development of a Departmental Risk Appetite statement. (Director Justice Delivery)

8. HR UPDATE

8.1 The NICSHR Representative highlighted a number of staffing items from the paper. These were –

- No further lists from the Deputy Principal (DP) competition. This competition is now closed;
- An external recruitment competition for both DP and Staff Officer (SO) grades is to launch soon
- Progress on prioritised posts – Assistant Scientific Officers (ASO) posts in FSNI full complement of staff currently in post and will be losing 4 ASOs to Water Service who recently held a promotion competition to Scientific Officer.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY ACCIDENT REPORTING

9.1 The paper was submitted to the DoJ Board for note. The Board considered the paper and noted that it contained a lot of information. They also noted that the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (NI) 1997 (RIDDOR) incidents appeared to be the most serious. The Board sought more information about what types of incidents these were, where they had occurred and what happened as a result of them being recorded and investigated.

Action – Director of Justice Delivery to provide further detail in relation to incidents reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (NI) 1997 (RIDDOR).

10. UPDATE FROM THE DEPARTMENTAL AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

10.1 Clarke Black, Chair of the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee (DARC), provided a verbal update from the most recent meeting. He advised that both the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and the Internal Audit audit plans are on progress to be achieved. These are providing a strong level of assurance.

10.2 Clarke also provided a short summary of the meetings with Chairs of DARCs across the Justice family. The meeting had been welcomed and were seen as an opportunity for improved consistency and direction.

10.3 The Board were asked to note that the Director of Justice Delivery is pulling together a Risk Assurance Map that will feed into the Departmental Risk Register.

Action – Director Justice Delivery to circulate refresher information on the roles and responsibilities for the Agencies DARC to Chairs.

11. DECISIONS MADE UNDER THE NI EXECUTIVE ACT

11.1 The Board noted the paper.

12. DOJ BOARD BRIEF

12.1 The Board agreed the content of the DoJ Board Brief.

13. KEY MESSAGES

13.1 The key messages were agreed as -

- Continued readiness for Brexit and re-introduction of direct rule.
- The work of the DoJ People Plan Task and Finish groups.

14. AOB

14.1 The Director of Justice Delivery advised that a new code of practice for arms-length bodies (ALBs) had been published and that Partnership Agreements were being developed to replace MSFMs to replace partnership agreements. A paper is being developed on the Department's approach and will capture the various justice ALBs together with their status and assurance levels. This will then inform the partnership agreements.

The meeting ended at 12.15