

DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING

- Minutes -

Wednesday 29 November 2017 at 10.00 am

5th Floor Meeting Room, Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate

Present:

Nick Perry	Permanent Secretary (Chair)
Clarke Black	Independent Board Member
Heather Baily	Independent Board Member
David Lavery	Director, Access to Justice
Anthony Harbinson	Director, Safer Communities
Mark Goodfellow	Strategic HR Business Partner, NICSHR
Lianne Patterson	Director, Justice Delivery
Ronnie Armour	Director, Reducing Offending and Head of NI Prison Service

In attendance: Adrienne Finney (Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed to amend paragraph 10.3 to reflect the status of the LSANI Annual Account.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Critical Issues

The political situation remains unchanged and the Department is continuing to closely monitor emerging issues that cannot progress without ministerial approval and may, in the short to medium term, become critical.

4.2 Brexit

David Lavery and colleagues from Access to Justice, and Anthony Harbinson, Safer Communities, represented the Department of Justice at BREXIT discussions with the European Commission in Brussels on 15 November. David thanked colleagues from across the Department and agencies who provided valuable background briefing, often at short notice, contributing to the success of the meeting.

4.3 Resourcing Issues

The Department is aiming for a break-even position but have a large emerging pressure in Compensation Services due to potential high value cases. The Strategic Resources Committee (SRC) is meeting on Wednesday 6 December to discuss the in-year position and potential budget scenarios for 2018/19 and 2019/20. FSD continue to work closely with DoJ colleagues and DoF on the scenario planning exercise. The next stage will be a consultation on Monday 11 December to discuss the potential challenges in the 2018/19 financial year.

5. GOVERNANCE

5.1 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Records and Information Management Team (RIMT) provided an update on progress towards implementation of GDPR by May 2018. It was reported that Information Asset Registers have been submitted to RIMT and a quality assurance exercise is in progress.

The policy for Data Protection Impact Assessments has also been approved. Home Office guidance applying to specialist areas has been issued and workshops will be held in January 2018, with a second round of awareness sessions for staff in January/February 2018. A GDPR pilot is underway and lessons learned will be issued to business areas.

5.2 FOI and DPA Annual Report 2016

The Board noted the content of paper BP(17)60, tabled by RIMT, providing details of DoJ's compliance performance in 2016 for the processing of both Freedom of Information and Data Protection requests, for information and governance.

5.2 HR Analysis Report

The Board noted the content of paper BP(17)61, tabled by NICSHR, providing HR management information and analysis. The Board discussed the analysis and trends within the report and were encouraged by the continued downward trend in sick absence. It was agreed the additional detail provided useful absence management information. An update on Departmental recruitment and promotion was provided which outlined several internal and external recruitment and promotion competitions. The Board were asked to continue to critically review Temporary Promotions, in particular those exceeding 12 months duration.

Ronnie Armour thanked staff in NICSHR for their support in developing the NIPS Leadership Development Programme for Governors. He also confirmed NIPS will be undertaking a substantial review of operational grades in 2018. A paper will be presented to the Board on completion of the review.

5.3 HR Managing Sick Absence

The NICS Director of Employee Relations provided a useful insight into the challenges faced by Departments and managers and the actions being taken centrally to provide support and solutions to those challenges, with the continuing support of OHS and Welfare. A project team has been established to gain a better understanding of the causes of mental illness and develop mental health and wellbeing strategies to support staff and managers. A

programme of standardisation to align ER processes for all NICS departments is currently being developed and a NICS wide internal mediation service will be introduced in 2018. Heather Baily welcomed the report and highlighted the importance of taking a strategic approach to achieve real change.

5.4 Finance Update

The Board noted the content of paper BP(17)62, tabled by FSD, providing the forecast outturn position at 31 October 2017.

5.5 Mid-Year Stewardship Statements

The Board noted the content of paper BP(17)63, tabled by ISD Standards Unit, providing details of key issues of concern and Priority 1 Exceptions within their Directorates and sponsored bodies as well as proposed remedial action. The Stewardship Statements will be presented at the November meeting of the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee (DARC).

6. STAFF ENGAGEMENT

6.1 People Survey 2017

The People Survey closed on Tuesday 21 November. The overall DoJ response rate was 51.1% placing DoJ in a better position within the NICS from the previous survey in 2015. The Permanent Secretary asked Board members to extend his thanks to staff for taking the time to complete the survey, with particular thanks to NIPS staff many of whom do not have online access due to their location. It is anticipated a detailed report on the results of the survey will be provided by NISRA in March/April 2018.

7. STRATEGY

8.1 People Strategy

NICSHR confirmed the framework for the People Strategy 2018/20 is being developed by the NICS Board and will be completed by December 2017. The NICS Board has also committed to the development of related Departmental Action Plans by March 2018. It was agreed the Staff Engagement Forum will be a useful resource to gauge staff opinion at the implementation stage.

8. BOARD BRIEF

The Board were content with the Board Brief, BP(17)64.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is Wednesday 20 December 2017 at 10.00 am in Castle Buildings.