

**THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING  
28 AUGUST 2019, EXECUTIVE ROOM, STORMONT CASTLE**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** David Sterling (Chair), Brenda King, Chris Stewart, Mark Browne, Karen Pearson, Denis Power, Peter Toogood, Sarah Wilson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Roisin Coleman (Secretary) John Mills (item 7a only)

**1(a). Apologies**

Apologies received from Andrew McCormick.

**(b). Minutes of 31 July 2019 meeting**

The minutes were agreed.

**(c). Matters Arising**

Board members reviewed the matters arising.

**(d). Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**2(a). Political Update**

David Sterling provided views on the current political situation including the prorogation of parliament, engagement with Whitehall colleagues and the local talks process.

**(b). Legislative Programme**

Board members noted the paper provided by Brenda King.

### **3. Programme for Government and NICS of the Future**

Chris Stewart advised that end of year reports for last year have now been completed and that the new reporting year has been commissioned to maintain momentum towards an outcomes based approach for a returning Executive.

### **4 Intergovernmental Relations, International Relations & EU Exit**

Karen Pearson provided an overview of the paper circulated.

### **5. Budget/Finance report**

Peter Toogood updated the board on the current financial position and pressures to be managed and advised that these would be considered as part of the monitoring exercise which was due for submission to DoF in September. As part of this process, the financial impact of the current political context would be considered.

In the context of the cuts to the Department's revenue budget over the past 2-3 years, Peter highlighted that TEO has absorbed pressures relating to a range of Executive commitments and central initiatives for which it has received no baseline funding. The Board agreed that this would need to be addressed in future budget allocations.

### **6. NICS HR**

Sarah Wilson provided a verbal update on departmental HR issues including ongoing recruitment competitions, resourcing of overseas offices, employee relations, industrial action and Brexit and C3 requirements.

### **7. Future Generations Group (on Climate Change)**

John Mills delivered a presentation on climate change which set out the background on current policy, statutory requirements and the way forward for Northern Ireland in terms of mitigations and adaptations for reducing emissions. It was noted that it may be useful to consider building in climate change messages to T:BUC activities. It was also noted that a briefing may be of interest to local political parties.

**[TO NOTE: Mark Browne and Chris Stewart]**

## **8. Governance Issues**

### **(a) Annual Section 75 Report**

The board:

- i. Approved the 2018/19 Annual Section 75 Progress Report to the Equality Commission, attached at Annex A of the paper circulated;
- ii. Approved the draft reply to Dr. Evelyn Collins regarding the Progress Report attached at Annex C; and
- iii. Undertook to consider additional measures to mainstream ECNI's 'Demonstrating Effective Leadership' guidance.

It was also agreed that Dr Evelyn Collins would be invited to meet with the board to help promote the effective implementation of equality and good relations duties.

**[ACTION: SECRETARIAT]**

### **(b) Forward planner**

Board members reviewed the forward planner.

### **(c) Papers issued between meetings**

There were no papers issued since the last meeting on 31 July 2019.

**(d) FOI Quarterly Update**

The Board noted the paper circulated.

**9. Date of next meeting**

The next Board meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September.

**ROISIN COLEMAN**

**10 September 2019**