

NICS BOARD
26 AUGUST 2016, GLASSHOUSE, STORMONTCASTLE
MINUTES

PRESENT: Sir Malcolm McKibbin (Chair), Derek Baker (for Andrew McCormick) Brenda King, Noel Lavery, John McGrath (for Peter May), Leo O'Reilly, Richard Pengelly, Nick Perry, David Sterling, Paul Sweeney, Hugh Widdis, Olive Maybin (Secretariat)

IN ATTENDANCE: Katrina Godfrey (for items 3 and 4), Colin Lewis

1a. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Peter May and Andrew McCormick.

1b. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed without amendment.

1c. Matters Arising

The Board noted the good progress on matters arising.

1d. Declaration of Interests

There were no new declarations of interest.

2. Brexit

Sir Malcolm updated the Board on developments. He reported that the First Minister and deputy First Minister had written to the Prime Minister on 10 August setting out their key priorities and reiterating the need for full involvement and representation in a meaningful and inclusive negotiation process. He advised that Board that David Davis, Secretary of State for Exiting the EU would meet the First Minister and Finance Minister on 1 September.

The Board noted the appointment of a Brexit Minister and a Cabinet Sub-Committee by the Scottish First Minister. The Board also noted the ongoing engagement with Whitehall and Irish Government officials.

Following discussion it was agreed that:

- Sir Malcolm would consider inviting Noel Lavery to the fortnightly VCRs with the Cabinet Office and NIO. He would also seek an update from Andrew Elliott on the various potential models for the UK-EU post-Brexit relationship.

[HOCS]

- Permanent Secretaries would advise Sir Malcolm of any specific issues relating to dissatisfaction with information sharing which he would raise with the Cabinet Office and NIO.

[Permanent Secretaries]

- Permanent Secretaries would forward nominations to the Border Issues working group to David Sterling by lunchtime on 26 August.

[Permanent Secretaries]

The Board noted the appointment of Paul Brush to the Grade 5 Brexit post on temporary promotion.

3a. Programme for Government

Katrina Godfrey reported progress to the Board on the alignment of primary indicators and delivery plans to the PfG outcomes. The Board welcomed the progress and the strong collaboration between departments on many of the key issues.

Following discussion it was agreed that:

- Permanent Secretaries with responsibility for PfG outcomes would be known as Outcome Owners.
- Permanent Secretaries would reflect on the allocation of outcomes and the mock up including primary contributing indicators and provide comments to Katrina by close of play on 1 September.

[Permanent Secretaries]

- Katrina would seek assistance to quality assure the delivery plans.

[Katrina Godfrey]

- Hugh Widdis would consider a legal issue in connection with the PFG.

[Hugh Widdis]

- Sir Malcolm would update the First Minister and deputy First Minister or Special Advisers on progress and the tight timeframes.

[HOCS]

The Board also agreed that the next consultation should reflect/seek ideas on actions that could be proactively taken forward by external stakeholders to help support the achievement of outcomes.

[Katrina Godfrey]

3b. Budget

David Sterling updated the Board on the in-year position and the indicative October monitoring position. The Finance Minister was currently considering a draft Budget paper which David would circulate to the Board once it had been cleared by his Minister.

[David Sterling]

3c. Refresh of the Economic Strategy

Derek Baker reported that the Department was currently awaiting delivery plans from other departments. Consideration was also being given to the impact of Brexit. He was content that the draft refresh was on track for public consultation in September subject to Executive approval.

3d. Investment Strategy

Sir Malcolm advised that the draft ISNI was on track for public consultation in September depending on Executive approval. A copy of the draft ISNI will be circulated to Permanent Secretaries in the next week.

[SIB]

3e. Social Strategy

Leo O'Reilly updated the Board on progress relating to the draft Social Strategy. The Board noted that the initial emphasis would be on anti-poverty, deprivation and social exclusion with a commitment to further co-design on a number of related themes.

4. NICS of the Future

a. G3 Leadership Programme

Katrina provided an update on the feasibility study being conducted by Sir Peter Housden and Irene Hewitt of the Centre for Effective Services. The Board noted the positive feedback to date and Sir Peter's intention to present the findings to a workshop of Permanent Secretaries and Grade 3s on Friday 9 September. There would be a further presentation to PSG on 23 September and the NICS Board on 30 September.

b. Action Plan

Katrina presented the draft NICS of the Future action plan which reflected comments which had been received from Permanent Secretaries. The Board agreed that further consideration would be given to the plan in the context of the Grade 3 work plan at the end of September. Katrina would also consider issues raised by the Board around scope, capacity, timing, and communications.

[Katrina Godfrey]

The Board confirmed the following gender diversity targets:

- at least 45% female representation in the SCS by 2020; and
- at least 40% female representation at Grades 2 and 3 (combined) by 2023.

5. Governance

Cross-cutting Reform programme

David Sterling presented a progress update including projects submitted for consideration and associated bids for new and existing projects. The Board noted progress to date; agreed the suggested modifications; agreed six new projects for inclusion in the programme subject to funding; noted bids and agreed the

reallocation of funds ahead of October Monitoring; and noted comments on OECD and capital pressures.

6. Corporate HR Report

Colin Lewis presented the report for the Board's consideration.

He reported that the Civil Service Commissioners were seeking an annual statement from each Permanent Secretary giving assurance that their department had complied with the Recruitment Code. This was agreed and Colin agreed that Corporate HR would prepare a template for the Board's consideration.

[Colin Lewis]

The Board noted the visit on 20-21 October of Rupert McNeil, Chief People Officer for the Home Civil Service. Permanent Secretaries would advise Colin Lewis if they wish to meet Mr McNeil during his visit.

[Permanent Secretaries]

The Board noted that the NI Audit Office would publish its final report on Public Sector Voluntary Exit schemes in October.

Colin confirmed that he would bring the first NICS pay bill and workforce monitoring report to the Board's September meeting.

[Colin Lewis]

7. AOB

Leo O'Reilly agreed to liaise with Chief Executive Forum/SOLACE regarding an agenda and date in late November for a meeting.

[Leo O'Reilly]

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Friday 30 September 2016 in the Glasshouse.

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31 August 2016