

NICS Board Meeting
Executive Room, Stormont Castle
Friday 25 February 2022
Minutes

Board Members	
Jayne Brady (Chair)	Mark Browne
Alex Gordon	Hugh Widdis
Peter May	Mike Brennan
Katrina Godfrey	Tracy Meharg
Colum Boyle	Richard Pengelly
Anthony Harbinson	Julie Harrison
Denis McMahon	
In attendance	
Jill Minne	Chris Matthews for agenda item 3
Chris Stewart for agenda item 3	
Roisin Coleman (Secretary)	Mairead Rooney (Secretariat)

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

Jayne Brady welcomed Julie Harrison to her first NICS Board meeting, members offered their congratulations to Colum and Julie on their recent success in the Permanent Secretary Competition.

2. (a) Minutes of the meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January were agreed.

(b) Matters arising

Updates on matters arising were noted.

It was agreed, as newly appointed Permanent Secretaries will be in post in April, to schedule Grade 3 discussion for the June meeting.

Action: Jill Minne & HOCS office.

Jill Minne will issue paper detailing Grade 3 baselines to board members.

Action: Jill Minne.

Colum Boyle provided an update on the 'Raising a Concern Policy & Speak up Champions' , it is due to be considered further at the GD3 task & finish group meeting scheduled for early March.

(c) **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **NICS Board Renewal Plan – Update**

Chris Matthews presented the update paper on NICS Board Renewal Plan:-

- **Chief Science and Technology Advisor (CSTO).** Appreciation was expressed to colleagues for comments and feedback previously provided. The updated draft business case, which will be submitted to the TEO major business case committee next week, clarifies that the key deliverables for NICS, as part of the role of the CSTO are in relation to preparation of NICS for impact of transformational technologies (e.g. AI and automation) and on R&D.
- **Improving the use of Data.** A new position paper, produced from first guiding principles, around the proposals for a Chief Data Officer is currently being considered by the HOCS group on science and technology. It will be shared with the Board for comment in due course.
- **NICS Board Facilitation & Cultural Insights**
NICS Board Facilitation will be added as agenda item of Board meeting in March, given recent recruitment of new Permanent Secretaries, it is anticipated that sessions will take place in late April.

Jayne Brady reported that work was ongoing in relation to draft specification for NEDs which will be shared with colleagues for comment in due course.

4. Jayne Brady referred to the HR report, she noted the increased staff complement, and referenced the progression of NICS apprenticeship scheme, recording her appreciation to NICS HR resourcing team for all their efforts. She invited Jill Minne to present the Strategic HR report

(a) Strategic HR Report

Jill Minne provided an update on key issues within the Strategic HR Report.

5. **AOB**

Jayne provided an update on recent meetings attended, thanking colleagues and their teams for support provided.

Departmental responses have been received on draft ToR for the UKG Covid Inquiry.

Jayne gave an update on her engagement with DA's and UKG in relation to emerging situation in Ukraine. It was agreed that an update on Ukraine situation would be added to agenda for next week's PSS meeting.

Action: HOCS Office/Karen Pearson

Mike Brennan raised on issue on a legal case around RHI tariffs and the potential impact that may materialise in relation to budgetary pressures for 22/23. Colum Boyle, Hugh Widdis and Mike Brennan to consider and explore options available.

Action: Colum Boyle, Hugh Widdis and Mike Brennan

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Friday 25 March 2022.