



## Minutes

Meeting of the Board  
Tuesday 11 November 2025  
MS Teams

## Members

Malcolm Beatty OBE	Board Member
Professor Liz Fisher	Board Member
Richard Greenhous	Chief of Staff
Julie Hill MBE	Board Member
Professor Dan Laffoley	Board Member
Dr Paul Leinster CBE	Board Member
Caroline May	Board Member
Natalie Prosser	Chief Executive
Dame Glenys Stacey	Chair

## OEP Attendees

Peter Ashford	General Counsel
Mike Fox	Head of Communications and Strategic Relations
REDACTED	Principal Investigations Manager (item 25.60)
Angel Lai	Head of Finance and Corporate Services
REDACTED	Finance Manager (item 25.62)
Andy Lester	Head of Business Strategy and Planning
Professor Cathy Maguire	Head of Assessments (item 25.61)
REDACTED	Principle Lawyer (item 25.60)
Professor Robbie McDonald	Chief Insights Officer
Craig McGuicken	NI Lead (item 25.60)
REDACTED	Human Resources Manager (item 25.62)
REDACTED	Board Secretary and Private Office Manager
Helen Venn	Chief Regulatory Officer

## Observers

David Lambert	Boardroom Apprentice
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### 25.59 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Richard Greenhous was absent for the end of item 25.60 and beginning of item 25.61.

The Board noted the conflict of interest of all employed Members and OEP attendees in respect of item 25.62.

## **25.60 Investigation Proposal – An investigation into Public Authorities’ Compliance with Environmental Legislation Governing Nutrient Discharges into Belfast Lough**

*This section has been redacted as it relates to information recorded for the purposes of OEP’s functions relating to investigations and enforcement.*

## **25.61 England EIP progress report – for feedback**

The Board noted that, whilst at a high level there are no substantive new findings in relation to progress in improving the environment in this year’s report compared to the previous year’s, it remains essential that the report reiterates the key messages in a manner that maintains their impact. The Board further noted the anticipated introduction of the revised Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP25) this calendar year.

The Board discussed the need to highlight nature and biodiversity prominently in this year’s progress report. It noted the importance of emphasising the impact of existing government work, identifying areas for improvement, addressing ongoing challenges, assessing overall progress, and reflecting on the extent to which previous OEP recommendations have been recognised and actioned.

The Board discussed that the report may contribute to government perceptions regarding the relationship between environmental protection and economic growth. The Board asked the team to consider if the report should highlight why failures to safeguard the environment could result in tangible negative economic consequences.

The Board recognised the critical role of agriculture in delivering positive outcomes, noting that sustainable farming practices, such as Nature Friendly Farming, can benefit both food production and nature.

The Board requested that the team consider the criteria for successful implementation of the EIP. It was agreed that effective actions and good practice should be consistently highlighted, and that the desired outcomes of these efforts should be clearly articulated.

## **25.62 2025/26 Pay Remit**

The Board was presented with proposals in respect of the pay remit for all employees. It noted that the Executive had made no recommendation on senior staff pay, owing to the conflicts of interest.

The Board was informed that all options presented within the paper were consistent with the relevant Cabinet Office guidance and maintain a form of parity with the Defra 2025/26 pay remit offer. The Board was also given the detail of each option including the financial figures and implications associated with each proposal.

The union’s feedback was incorporated into the process, as detailed in Annex B to the paper. This feedback was collected earlier in the year and had informed the options developed.

The Board noted the analysis in relation to senior staff pay set out in paragraphs 14 to 19 of the paper. It decided to make a consolidated pay increase to senior staff of 3.25% noting that this was consistent with the Senior Civil Service Pay Remit.

The Board agreed with the recommendation of the paper to agree to Pay Remit Option B for staff in grades AO to G6, as proposed at paragraphs 37 – 42 of the paper. The Board

also agreed the series of communications to staff described at paragraphs 50 - 53 of the paper. It noted that implementing this decision is subject to consultation with the recognised union (Prospect) in line with our Partnership Agreement. The decision will be submitted to the Secretary of State for information in line with our draft Framework Document.

### **25.63           Any Other Business**

The Board received an update regarding the Chair recruitment process, noting that there are currently delays and that interim arrangements are being considered by Defra and DAERA in preparation for Dame Glenys' departure at the end of January 2026.

Additionally, the Board was informed of further delays in completing the audit for the Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25.