Office for Environmental Protection

Minutes

Meeting of the Board
Wednesday 6 May 2026
MS Teams

Members

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

OEP Attendees

REDACTED	Principal Analyst (item 26.21)
Mike Fox	Head of Communications and Strategic Relations
Professor Cathy Maguire	Head of Assessments (item 26.21)
Professor Robbie McDonald	Chief Insights Officer
REDACTED	Principal Analyst (item 26.21)
Richard Greenhous	Chief of Staff
Angel Lai	Head of Finance and Corporate Services
Andy Lester	Head of Business Strategy and Planning
REDACTED	Board Secretary and Private Office Manager
Kate Tandy	Acting General Counsel

26.20 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Caroline May.

There were no declarations of interest.

26.21 EIP Northern Ireland Report

The Board was presented with the draft Northern Ireland Environmental Improvement Plan progress report for discussion, ahead of being considered for approval the Board meeting on 19 May.

The Board commended the team's work, giving a range of feedback as to how it could be more impactful in a Northern Ireland context. The Board discussed the need to present the Northern Ireland context clearly, noting the focus on nutrients and wider nature recovery.

It suggested that the report could be made more accessible through clearer signposting of the evidence and, where appropriate, visual material or a shorter summary.

Members reflected the challenge of balancing environmental ambition with the political and practical constraints within which implementation is taking place. The Board discussed the tone of the report, noting the importance of being clear about the scale of the challenges while avoiding an overly negative presentation which could suggest there is no prospect for improvement. Members emphasised that the report should seek to inspire action, identify conditions for success, and explain what effective implementation could look like. It was also suggested that the report should acknowledge positive efforts where appropriate.

The Board asked that recommendations be clearly linked to the analysis and framed positively, with a clear pathway to delivery for DAERA and the wider Executive. The Board asked whether the recommendations could help DAERA to prioritise. It was noted that specific recommendations have been included to provide DAERA with clear and achievable actions.

Members also suggested that the report should be clear where recommendations are likely to be standing recommendations, repeated year on year.

26.22 AOB

There was no other business.