

NRS STRATEGIC BOARD MEETING

Thursday 15 December 2022

10:00-12:00

MS Teams

Attendees

Paul Lowe (Chair)	NRS, Chief Executive
Bill Matthews	NRS Non-Executive Director
Gordon Shipley	NRS Non-Executive Director
Anne Moises	NRS Non-Executive Director
Anne Slater	NRS, Director of Operations and Customer Service & Deputy Registrar General
Laura Lucas	NRS, IT Director
Pete Whitehouse	NRS, Director of Statistical Services
Laura Mitchell	NRS, Director of Information & Records Services & Deputy Keeper
Linda Sinclair	NRS, Director of Corporate Services & Accountable Officer
Carla McHendry	NRS, Delivery Director
Claire Gillespie	NRS, Chief Financial Officer
Lesley Smillie	NRS, Census Director (Item 4)
Shirley Cameron	NRS, Head of Business Management
Donna Wotherspoon	NRS, Business Management (Secretariat)

Apologies:

None

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

2. Meeting held on 13 October 2022

2.1 Minutes from the last meeting were approved and would be published on the NRS website.

2.2 Review of Action Log

2.2.1 Action SB 34: Terms of Reference: for Non-Executive Directors to meet and discuss opportunities. A meeting had been held and ideas captured for further discussion with the SG Director of Culture and Major Events. The Terms of Reference were accepted as updated and the action closed.

2.3 Declarations of Interest

2.3.1 No new declarations of interest were noted.

3. Corporate Overview

3.1 Linda Sinclair provided a corporate overview and introduced her paper.

3.2 The following topics were covered:

- The Census Programme TAF review completed in early October with Amber/Green status.
- Financial position of NRS noting a balanced budget achieved for financial year 2021-2022, with the Annual Report and Accounts laid in the Scottish Parliament at the end of November. Audit Scotland had undertaken a follow up report to the Section 22 on the census. Spend was on track for 2022-2023 at the mid-year review.
- Release of the 1921 Census on ScotlandsPeople had been successful.
- Estates and IT projects updates were noted.
- Customers Services were performing well.
- Resourcing pressures were noted along with challenges in relation to future storage capacity for physical archives.

3.3 Bill Matthews congratulated NRS on the release of the 1921 Census. It was noted the website functioned well throughout the spike in usage around the release date of 30 November 2022, also that income had risen as a result of the release.

3.4 Gordon Shipley enquired about a long-term estate strategy. Linda Sinclair noted this was in hand. There was discussion around opportunities to engage with other organisations on the use of estate assets.

Action SB 35: To include NRS Estate Strategy on agenda for meeting on 23 March 2023 Owner: Secretariat

4. Census 2022 Update

4.1 Leslie Smillie gave an update on the current status of the programme and the work under way to learn lessons from Census 2022 as well as the activity underway for the initial planning for Census 2031.

4.2 The Programme had been focusing on the close down of Collect activities. For Disseminate and Outputs the focus was on planning for first Outputs and on the delivery of the Data Processing System. It was noted that NRS had secured agreements to access the administrative data required from various organisations and was ingathering this now for processing. It was also confirmed that the data processing system had gone live successfully and initial pre-cleansing activities were underway.

4.3 A summary of the emerging key lessons from the collect phase of Census 2022 was noted.

4.4 An update on the initial considerations relating to Census 2031 design was noted, work was being undertaken on approach and design options, along with

outline business case development, for future consideration by Scottish Government and Ministers.

4.5 Gordon Shipley approved of the programme approach to work on Census 2031.

4.6 There was discussion of the possible approaches being taken in other countries to future population data collection exercises, noting that seeking meaningful data was not just a Scottish challenge.

4.7 Anne Moises commended the early start on planning for 2031.

5. Terms of Reference review

5.1 This was covered under item 2.2.

6. NRS Strategic Direction & Priorities

6.1 Linda Sinclair shared the Strategic Direction and Priorities paper.

6.2 Carla McHendry offered insight on the inputs to the paper, the current candidate work for the corporate change portfolio and the process moving forward, which she was content to share at a future meeting.

6.3 It was noted that the paper was a high-level summary and that more detail was available. There was discussion on the setting of priorities and on the use of a corporate Programme Management Office to support delivery. The interlinked nature of each Directorate's projects was highlighted in brief business area updates.

Action SB 36: To include NRS Strategic Direction & Priorities as a standing item at future meetings Owner: Secretariat

7. Audit & Risk Committee: 29 November 2022

7.1 Bill Matthews gave an update on the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 29 November 2022.

7.2 He noted that the new external auditors, Grant Thornton, had attended. He further noted there had been discussion on the handling of Risk as a substantive item at future ARC meetings.

8. AOB

8.1 Paul Lowe advised Strategic Board members that after four years in post he would be leaving NRS on 21 December 2022. A replacement CEO would be appointed by SG in the new year. Paul thanked all board members for their support and guidance during the past four years and wished all members and NRS well for the future.

8.2 Bill Matthews, Gordon Shipley and Anne Moises individually thanked Paul for his contribution to NRS, managing it through COVID-19, Census, and a cultural journey.

9. Date of Next Meeting: 23 March 2023 and Close

9.1 The date of the next meeting was noted as 23 March 2023.

END