

NRS Executive Management Board

19 March 2019

Room 1/G/9

Ladywell House, Edinburgh

Present:

Paul Lowe	Chief Executive (Chair)
Laura Mitchell	Director of Information & Records Services and Deputy Keeper
Amy Wilson	Director of Statistical Services
Linda Sinclair	Director of Strategy & Business Services & Accountable Officer
Anne Slater	Director of Operations & Customer Services
Steven Hanlon	Chief Financial Officer
Shirley Cameron	NRS Governance Administration (secretariat)
David Craig	Census 2021 Programme Director (item 4)
Simon Hazlewood	Head of Performance Management (item 8)
Pauline McMillan	Corporate Resilience and Business Continuity Lead (item 7)

Apologies:

Sam Bedford Director of IT Services

1. Welcome and Introductions

Paul Lowe (PL) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Sam Bedford.

2. Minutes and Actions

Minutes of 19 February 2019 were accepted. Updates for the following actions were noted:

EMB 148: Action closed

EMB 130: Digital Preservation Programme. Discussion and review were ongoing. For future meeting. Action on-going.

EMB 154 & EMB 155: Both had been completed and reflected by the day's agenda. Action closed.

The EMB action tracker would be updated accordingly.

3. Overview from the Chair

Paul Lowe (PL) reflected on the month since the last meeting. Priorities and focus had been on the 2021 Census Programme and 2019 Rehearsal and a body of assurance activity in relation to this. The NRS estate was a further area of significant focus along with 2018-19 and 2019-20 budget and financial management matters. PL further noted that this was the first of the newly reconfigured EMB meetings, which had been extended to permit greater Census input and discussion.

4. Census 2021 Programme

4.1 Overview and Census Vision

Amy Wilson updated EMB on development of the Census 2021 vision. It was noted that there had been a discussion about this at the recent EMB Census workshop. Points discussed included:

- Challenges of constructing a holistic vision for inside and outside of NRS and whether more than one vision was required.
- Noted that NRS were delivering the Census with input and direction from Ministers and the Parliament.
- The governance approach and outputs from workshops held in conjunction with EMB were being progressed
- Public engagement and Census branding.
- Current NRS customer survey included opportunity for Census insights.
- NRS as the successor organisation to the General Register Office of Scotland and the National Archives of Scotland leading Census for first time as a conjoined organisation.
- The importance of information guardianship, reputation management and historic ownership of data.
- Census vision was discussed as a means to build pride, generate enthusiasm, understanding and consistency.
- Celebration of Census 2021, Census legacy and release of census information from 1921 at the same time.

EMB agreed that the programme would construct several vision options, informed by prior inputs from EMB and others for consideration at the next meeting.

Action: EMB 156: Census Vision to be tabled at the next EMB. Owner Amy Wilson.

4.2 Programme Status

David Craig provided an update on the status of the programme. He confirmed to EMB that the status had changed from amber to red. This was reflective of a number of factors. A recovery plan was being put into place.

Topics discussed included:

- A review of the end-to-end operation to aid understanding across the programme.
- Discussion around funding, 2019 Census Rehearsal scope and contract opportunities.
- Opportunities for increasing corporate support to the Census.

EMB noted the proximity of the rehearsal and the priority to test relevant services and systems. It was agreed that a walk through focusing on Census rehearsal should be arranged urgently. It was agreed to re-purpose the Census Programme Board meeting on 04 April 2019 for this purpose and that EMB and key Programme staff would be invited.

Action: EMB 157: EMB members to be invited to Census Rehearsal Walkthrough on 4 April. Owner: Amy Wilson

4.3 Legislation

Amy Wilson provided an overview of Census legislation plans and current activity covering:

- Historic overview of the 1920 Census Act and the legislative framework.
- The passage of the Census Amendment Bill (about to enter stage 2) and downstream work to progress the Census Order and Regulations.
- Census confidentiality and the provisions in the Act was discussed.
- Further question development and stakeholder engagement was discussed, noting different stakeholder views on how a sex question might be framed and how a question on transgender status might be set.
- Opportunities to strengthen policy / Bill resource was discussed.

It was noted that rehearsal questions would be put to the Cabinet Secretary shortly for agreement. These would not reflect the final question set which would be agreed by Parliament post rehearsal as part of the subordinate legislation process.

Action EMB 158: To consider how additional resources can be put in place to support the programme in relation to legislation process. Owner: Amy Wilson and Linda Sinclair

Action EMB 159: Directors to highlight to Amy any offers of help, contacts or ideas to access skilled resources and support around policy development resources. Owner: All Directors

Action: EMB 160: Draft an information note for EMB on legislation timetabling and issues. Owner: Amy Wilson

4.4 Gateway Health Check Review – Action Planning

The Board held a follow up discussion on the Gateway Health check report on Census programme governance. Work was continuing to prepare a response to Scottish Government Programme and Project Management Centre of Expertise (PPM CoE), as well as deliver a more detailed internal improvement plan.

A further Gateway assurance review would be required and was being considered for May 2019. The aims would be to:

- Evaluate the improvements driven by the recommendations already made; and
- To obtain an assessment of the readiness to deliver the rehearsal in October 2019.

Action: EMB 161: David Craig to advise EMB of the date of the next Gateway review. Owner: Amy Wilson and David Craig

4.5 Methods Report

Amy Wilson explained the report had been an assurance assessment commissioned by the Scottish Government Digital Director.

Paul Lowe advised that he viewed the report as an opportunity to further shape the programme, based on assurance from a different perspective. The primary purpose of the programme remained the delivery of a successful Census for Scotland.

Recommendations around differing approaches would be considered in conjunction with other assurance reports (Gateway) and technical assurance. It was agreed that the findings from the Methods report should also be incorporated into the internal improvement plan for Census.

Action: EMB 162: Internal action plan to take account of both Methods assurance report and Gateway Health Check Assurance recommendations as single integrated approach. Owner: Amy Wilson

4.6 Rehearsal 2019

Amy Wilson provided an overview of census rehearsal plans and PowerPoint slides reviewed by the Census Programme Board were provided for information. The rehearsal would be in October 2019 covering 80,000 households in three local authority areas, Dumfries and Galloway, Glasgow and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

EMB discussed the plans as follows:

- Aim and key rehearsal objectives.
- Rehearsal scope .
- Plans for using lessons learned from rehearsal
- Need for further testing potentially both public and private post rehearsal
- Support hubs and plans to provide support to the public for rehearsal activity.
- Rehearsal plans across the UK, other countries approach where there may be an impact across NRS plans for delivery.

EMB noted that at the current time a clear rehearsal scope and plan were not available. Amy Wilson confirmed that considerable work was ongoing in the programme to finalise these. This would be explored further at the rehearsal walkthrough.

Action: EMB 163: To inform EMB of the different rehearsal approaches across UK, and where differences may have an impact to rehearsal delivery. Owner: Amy Wilson

EMB had a discussion in relation to Census matters that would be discussed at the next meeting these included:

1. Operational Plan for rehearsal
2. EMB roles and responsibilities and support.
3. Budget and spend profile.
4. Governance.
5. Joint Programme Board/EMB session on rehearsal.
6. Legislation.
7. Improvement plan

5. Finance

5.1 2018-2019 Budget Position

Steven Hanlon (SH) presented the budget position as at the end of month 11 (February 2019) 2018/19. The overall combined underspend was now projected at £0.44m, subject to adjustments at year end. Options to minimise capital overspend were being considered. An exercise to obtain the final forecast of the year had been commissioned. Directors were invited to ensure that they have oversight of and sign off of returns for their business area.

Action: EMB 164: Directors asked to reaffirm and sign-off of end of year submissions from their Business Area. Owner: All Directors

5.2 2019- 2020

SH reported that some progress had been made in reducing the budget over-commitment. Achieving a balanced budget would however require further work. Achieving this would however require difficult choices to be made. The Board discussed the following:

- Figures excluded Census budget which was subject to a separate paper and separate budget provision.
- Unfilled Target Operating posts and other staffing pressures.
- Limited budget contingency.
- Savings of around £0.8m had been identified already, more would be required to balance the budget.
- Savings had not been identified in relation to non-staff costs to date and further work on this was required. These budgets principally sat within Estates and IT and Finance would engage with both areas.

Decision EMB-D81: Due to budget pressures, EMB agreed to the principal of funding posts as detailed in the report as follows:

‘The staff budget proposed now includes only occupied posts, posts currently in recruitment and backfill for existing posts. New posts not already filled or in recruitment have been moved out of budgets and onto a list of pressures, to be taken forward as and when they are demonstrated to be both a priority and affordable’.

It was agreed that Finance would confirm to Directors where they currently had post funding.

It was also agreed that a follow up communication to Directors setting out the position would be issued as would a follow up noted for all staff.

Action: EMB 165: To advise Directors of the posts where funding is in place.
Owner: Steven Hanlon

Action: EMB 166: To issue a follow-up communication to Directors, setting out the position regarding staffing finance. Owner: Paul Lowe and Linda Sinclair.

Action: EMB 167: All Directors to review the Finance report relating to staff posts and collate their list of staffing pressure requirements to Finance. Action: All Directors

Action: EMB 168: Staff communication to be drafted around decision taken, to reaffirm approach regarding pressure posts and recruitment, for PL review. Action: Linda Sinclair and Steven Hanlon

5.3 Capital Budget

EMB discussed the proposal to manage the NRS capital budget allocation as a central budget for 2019-2020. Any proposal would be considered in the context of the business case and other business priority requirements.

Decision EMB-D82: Capital budget will be managed centrally 2019/20 with capital requirements for expenditure to be reviewed and prioritised by EMB.

5.4 Census Finance

Steven Hanlon presented a paper providing an overview of the Census Programme financial position as at the end of month 11 (February 2019) 2018/19.

The paper also indicated the work on-going on financial planning and control. A ‘task and finish group’ had been established in the programme to identify improvements to the programme’s financial monitoring and control.

Full programme costs remain anticipated to be £97.5M. Costs absorbed by NRS were around £1.5m.

Build on the Census Finance report for next EMB as follows:

Action: EMB 169: Summary report on procurement and on-going commercial management activity to be added to the Census Finance report. Owner: Amy Wilson

6. Business Planning

6.1 2018-2019

Linda Sinclair (LS) reported that the Strategy and Planning Team were working on the year-end report and these would be circulated to and agreed by EMB before publication.

6.2 2019-2020

LS reported that the approach would be to roll forward business plan, for 19/20 and progress work during 19/20 to formulate a new corporate strategy.

6.3 Strategic

Paul Lowe reported that he was comfortable that EMB agree to the development of a strategy over the coming year. The approach should be to build in engagement with colleagues, and others to build ownership.

7. NRS Business Continuity Control – Organisational Resilience Strategy

Pauline McMillan (PMcM) provided an overview on the principles of organisational resilience and business continuity. The draft resilience strategy was discussed with the following points covered:

- The establishment of a Business Continuity group
- Maturity model approaches and self-assessment
- EMB commended business services for rolling out the group call notification system and noted ongoing work to promote this and encourage uptake.
- Skills, training, incident management team approach.
- Communications

LS advised EMB that the work was a starting point and subject to approval, the strategy would be built on, including developing a plan and communication plan. EMB members were invited to provide comments to PMcM.

Action: EMB 170: Directors invited to provide comments on Organisational Resilience Strategy to Pauline McMillan by close 29 March. Owner: All Directors

8. Workforce Planning Review

In response to an Internal Audit recommendation to review Workforce Planning arrangements, an evaluation for a potential framework had been commissioned by EMB. The outcome of the research had been prepared and was presented to EMB by Simon Hazelwood. Papers circulated were titled:

- Workforce and Succession Planning Framework
- Workforce and Succession Planning Framework - Key changes and roles and responsibilities
- Workforce and Succession Planning Framework - implementation project

A presentation summarised the papers and stepped through the proposed approach. The Board discussed the following topics:

- Comments already received would be addressed.
- Implementation approach and transition planning, possible pilot and project board approach.
- Opportunities around skills identification, staff development and future requirements.
- Engagement with staff.
- Statistical reporting opportunities, analyst support capacity.
- Data collected and GDPR implications.
- Implications of change on NRS corporate approach to managing finances.

EMB agreed there was a requirement to manage Workforce Planning more efficiently. First steps in moving forward with the work would be an analysis exercise with results to be reported to EMB. Further work around the clarity of the proposed project in relation to purpose, roles and responsibilities as well as milestone decision points for EMB would also be required. There would be a need to consider confidentiality and GDPR implications in any reporting and data analysis, as well as the impact any change in approach will have on financial planning approaches.

Decision EMB-D83: Workforce Planning approach to build in management of finance considerations to strategy and process, in conjunction with Finance.

Decision EMB-D84: Workforce planning review. Principal, no change to existing financial controls without EMB agreement.

9. Estates Update

Linda Sinclair provided an update on the progress of:

- West Register House building works procurement progress.
- Thomas Thomson House building use, analysis and works.
- General Register House Adam Dome closure plans.
- Ladywell House changing occupations.

10. Risk Management: 16+ review & Deep Dive Planning

The Board agreed to provide any comments via email on this occasion.

11. Governance Update

The Board agreed to receive a governance update via email on this occasion to cover.

- Audit & Risk Committee 28 February 2019
- Joint Partnership Board 19 February 2019
- Digital & Strategy Board 21 May 2019
- Customer & Operations Board 28 February 2019

12. AOB

12.1 Change to Telephony System – Switches

Anne Slater raised an issue around notification of a change to telephony switches which could have impacted service delivery to the public, without the completion of a business impact analysis (BIA).

After discussion, EMB agreed that BIA would be required to be completed in this type of instance where an impact to a service was likely. The governance route would be via notification to the Customer and Operations Board for consideration and decision. It was also noted that the Strategy and Planning team were not resourced to complete BIAs on behalf of NRS and that completion was the responsibility of the business area initiating the change.

Decision EMB-D85: For changes impacting existing services. Time for Business Impact Analysis (BIA) should be built into plans. BIA to be scrutinised by Customer and Operations Board. BIA to be led by the business area initiating the work.

12.2 Procurement – Business Conduct Approach

Linda Sinclair informed EMB of work ongoing by Procurement colleagues to develop guidelines around a Business Conduct Approach for working with suppliers. The aim would be to help drive a consistent approach to engagement and working with suppliers and to support staff. EMB would be asked to comment on the draft documentation before coming back to EMB for approval.

13. Date of Next Meeting

14 May 2019 (10.00 to 16:00), Ladywell House Edinburgh .

End