

NRS STRATEGIC BOARD MEETING

20 September 2018

Room 1/G/8

Ladywell House, Edinburgh

Present:

Anne Slater	Acting Chief Executive (Chair)
Sam Bedford	Director of IT Services
Laura Mitchell	Deputy Keeper + Director of Information and Records Services
Linda Sinclair	Director of Strategy and Business Services
Amy Wilson	Director of Statistical and Registration Services
Steven Hanlon	Chief Finance Officer and Accountable Officer
Simon Hazlewood	Secretary (temporary)
Catherine McFie	Non-Executive Director
Mandy Gallacher	Non-Executive Director
Colin Ledlie	Non-Executive Director
Bill Matthews	Non-Executive Director

Apologies:

Gordon Shipley	Non-Executive Director
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1. Welcome, Introductions and Declaration of Interests

1.1 Apologies were received and recorded for Gordon Shipley. No interests were declared by members.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 31 May 2018

2.1 The minutes of 31 May 2018 were accepted without amendment.

3. Actions Log

SB2 - 31 May 2018 – A2 & A3. See update on Digital Preservation Programme in section 5. Closed

SB2 - 31 May 2018 – A4, A5, A6. LS confirmed that there were still some elements of governance and oversight relationship between NRS corporate governance and the Census 2021 programme to be finalised and that an updated version would be provided for the December meeting.

SB2 - 31 May 2018 – A7. LS confirmed that an NRS Business Strategy was in draft and following a recent review session by the Executive Management Board (EMB) each Director had been tasked with bringing an articulation of the vision for their

respective business areas to a further EMB session in December. LS confirmed that as part of developing the long term business strategy NRS would be considering both the ongoing re-structuring of resources and the forward budget assumptions so that a cohesive long term business plan would be in place by end March 2019. In tandem with this work NRS retained a focus on delivering current year business priorities as defined in the [NRS annual plan commitments for 2018-19](#). Closed

SB2 - 31 May 2018 – A8. See update on Audit & Risk Committee in section 7. Closed

SB2 - 31 May 2018 – A9. AW confirmed that she would confirm timing of the next NHSCR Board meeting with CM by next week.

SB2 - 31 May 2018 – A10. Standing agenda item on Forward look will be added to agenda for December meeting.

SB2 - 31 May 2018 – A11, 12 & A13. Agreed as closed.

3.1 The Board agreed with CM's suggestion that the current governance arrangements for capturing and reviewing progress of actions could be improved, particularly around applying target dates and ensuring updates are circulated in advance of the meetings to save time.

New action (A14): Secretary to update Actions Log to include target dates for each action and provide progress summaries on each in advance of meetings so that Board time is only required where issues exist.

4. Finance

4.1 SH confirmed that NRS financial position was broadly in line with expectations for the first 4 months with a current underspend of £0.4m against profiled budget, and a current forecast overspend of £0.05m.

4.2 Work continued to manage risks associated with staff costs, Census and digital preservation programmes, IT related external services support and income.

4.3 SH confirmed that NRS had a pipeline of capital projects to pursue although spending plans were not yet well developed. CM asked what would happen if capital spend was not achieved. SH confirmed that a number of capital projects had started and that he would bring further detail on this element of the budget to the next meeting.

New action (A15): NRS Chief Financial Officer to include focus on capital projects budget in report to December 2018 meeting.

5. Digital Preservation Programme

5.1 LM confirmed that following a Gate 0 review the programme status was Red, with work for NRS focussed on:

- Re-baselining the programme in terms of viability, governance and control arrangements.
- Continuing to progress the high level design of the Minimum Bit Preservation (MBP) project.

5.2 MG asked what the impact was expected to be on the original programme delivery timeline and LM confirmed that overall this had not slipped. In terms of tranches of work, the first builds a MBP, with enabling access to records the next tranche. The re-baselining work would provide the full end to end view of the programme following which NRS would consider, as an organisation, the future digital archiving approach

5.3 CL asked if there were any root cause issues in not having a centralised programme management function for NRS. AS confirmed that the Gateway Review indicated that NRS lacked programme and project management skills as an organisation. In recognising the need to further strengthen in this area, AS confirmed that NRS had adopted a centralised and dedicated PMO function for the Census programme and that this could help to understand how that might work in a wider NRS context.

5.4 Looking at the re-baselining plan CM noted that it may be overly ambitious to expect a new external supplier team to develop a new business case for the programme within 4 weeks. LM responded that while this would be a high level strategic outline case, she would ask her team to confirm the 4 week expectation. AS made the point that NRS had only committed to continuing with the MBP project and that the re-baselining work was about helping NRS understand where to go with the wider programme.

6. Estates Capital Work

6.1 LS provided some background on the ongoing issues with management of capital works/spend and the very reactive nature in NRS over last few years which had left a backlog legacy of issues. Work had been done in the last year or so to identify and get projects in place to address these. One issue had been the shortage of project management skills and resource but progress had been made in that area with a permanent project manager now appointed. An interim programme manager resource had also been secured to pull all capital estates projects together into a single programme and manage accordingly.

6.2 LS confirmed that the WRH Stone Repair and TTH – Sprinkler Replacement projects were the priority. On the latter NRS were behind schedule and it was unclear if completion would be achieved by the end of 2018-19 financial year, resulting in an underspend of up to £500k. NRS would look at how that budget could be utilised elsewhere. Late running of the project would also likely introduce a pressure for the 2019-20 budget.

6.3 LS confirmed that the other capital projects were smaller and would mainly fall into 2019-20. NRS would need to ensure it had appropriate programme management resource in place and a wider supporting governance infrastructure.

6.4 CM asked about the apparent lack of business cases for these projects and stressed the need to ensure NRS had clarity on the costs and benefits of each to inform decision making. BM advised that NRS should have justification for expenditure that would be auditable.

6.5 LS confirmed that some are like for like replacements so may not need a full business case. NRS wanted to first look at delivery projects for 2018-19. AS recognised that this was one of the backlog legacies, that NRS was starting to make progress in this area now and the new programme manager role would be crucial in moving NRS forward in this respect.

6.6 CL and CM asked in turn about building assessments and whether the recent security review NRS had commissioned had linked into this work. LS confirmed this was the case.

7. Audit and Risk Committee update

7.1 CL confirmed that the recent committee meeting had focussed on the NRS Annual Report and Accounts and the committees' own annual report. There had also been a very useful deep dive on Census risks with a focus on improvements in programme governance and risk management which the committee welcomed and would follow up on again in due course.

7.2 CL confirmed the committee had agreed a refreshed terms of reference to reflect new SG guidance for audit and assurance committees. CL also confirmed that with the committee membership now reduced to three, the quorum was now down to two members which NRS would need to consider for succession planning.

8. NRS Next Stages

Transition

8.1 LS provided a summary overview across the six main elements of the NRS Next Stages project as follows:

- Operating Model commitments – work to develop the annual plan for 2018-19 and the 5 year business strategy had progressed, the new C2 post to progress channel management/ customer engagement strategy had been recruited. Draft continuous improvement toolkit had been developed. Workforce planning review was underway.
- New organisational structure – effort at Director level had resulted in successful recruitment of a high number of Band C posts to the new structure.

- Governance implementation - EMB was the overarching board, directing and approving other boards and approving delegated decisions making. Information would be shared with staff. The Digital and Strategy Board would re-cast the NRS portfolio of programmes and assess the governance around investment decisions. The Customer and Operations Board would look at operational performance (KPIs and service map for NRS) and the associated performance dashboard (see update at section 10).
- Communications - possible leadership event in due course to embed understanding around new boards and where decisions making lies.
- Ways of working - step changes had been made and more would be done to set out and engage on what it means across the organisation.

8.2 MG asked about resource capacity to continue progress across these areas. LS responded to say two new C1 roles were being recruited with new B band posts identified also. AS added that other Directors also had a duty to implement and manage the new structure locally. Adding capacity through short term professional expertise to help put the right processes and controls in place, such as risk management, could be considered and the option would be kept under review.

8.3 AS accepted MG's suggestion that NRS consider whether it would be appropriate to commission an external assurance process to help NRS understand whether the benefits of the Next Stages Project are realised.

9. Procurement and Estates structures

Procurement

9.1 LS set out a proposed new structure for Procurement and Commercial Services in response to a variety of factors including requirements to build commercial expertise and better supplier integration across the Census Programme. The OCIO review of Census procurement recommended a dedicated commercial/procurement lead within the programme to look at systems integration approach and a permanent C2 post will be advertised in next two weeks with a temporary C1 role for the duration of the Census lifecycle.

9.2 AS confirmed this would be a different approach from the 2011 Census with dedicated additional resource which recognised the different commercial approach taken for 2021.

Estates

9.3 LS set out a proposed new structure for Estates Services which included a combination of short term C1 and B3 interim manager roles and permanent posts to take forward the capital projects programme, alongside a new structure for business as usual estates services. LS added that NRS had recognised the need to become a more intelligent client.

9.4 Looking across both Procurement and Estates MG asked about affordability for the new roles identified. LS confirmed that affordability would be a consideration although NRS needed to ensure it had appropriate resource for immediate priorities was in place..

10. NRS Performance Indicators

10.1 LS introduced NRS thinking on the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and opened up the topic for board discussion.

10.2 KPIs would be set at both organisational and operational level to provide NRS with depth of insight across the business. The Customer and Operations Board (COB) working group had developed an NRS service map of all current services, arranged into high level service groups to provide an at a glance of NRS services. These services had been assessed as x-large, large, medium or small (with some consideration of resource to deliver, impact of service, service traffic, and income).

10.3 Currently, four KPI themes have been identified:

- Corporate Health – focussing on finance, people, sustainability, and information security.
- Customer Service – focussing on customer satisfaction and service turnaround targets.
- Service reliability – focussing on availability of web based services and key systems.
- Information processing – focussing on intake, processing and preservation of information.

10.4 A delivery performance dashboard was being developed around these KPIs with a focus on x-large and large rated services which would provide COB with insight on operational level trends. Services rated medium to small would predominantly be tracked locally within business area governance.

10.5 MG asked about developing KPIs in the absence of the NRS business strategy, making the point that it was normal practice to take a strategic view on target outcomes for the organisation and to look to identify KPIs against these.

10.6 LS confirmed that work had focussed on current services in place and that DSB would focus on strategic outcomes for the organisation once the business strategy was in place and a change portfolio had been established to deliver it. LS added that it was expected that the change portfolio would include the development of new services and that consideration of KPIs for these would be part of preparations to go live.

10.7 CM confirmed her view that NRS should set KPIs against longer term goals and aspirations, while CL's view was that NRS would learn over time what was important to measure and there would be a small number of key activities already

known to focus on. BM added that NRS could most likely identify what these were, very quickly.

10.8 In terms of linking KPIs to strategic outcomes for the organisation LS suggested that linking performance measurement into the operating model aspirations could be another option to consider, adding that the customer services strategy would help define long terms goals against which to set customer based performance targets.

11. Census 2021

Progress update

11.1 AW gave a general update on current and immediate activity, including publication of Census plans, introduction of legislation, ongoing engagement with Ministers, stakeholders and the Scottish Parliament Committees. Two further procurements were in progress for print and paper capture and the work load manager, both of which were significant components for delivery. A Digital First Assessment had also been carried out, looking at how digital delivery could be fit for purpose for Census. CM asked about the timing of the design decisions yet to be taken and how these fitted with the delivery of the Census plan, including the rehearsal in 2019. AW outlined some examples of design decisions which would inform delivery.

11.2 BM asked whether the programme was sufficiently geared up to deal with the incoming communications pressures. AW confirmed new C1 Communication and Stakeholder Engagement resource had been recruited and, with further capacity via the new NRS C2 Customer Engagement and Communications Manager, the programme would be in a better position. AW also recognised the challenges of primary legislation delivery in NRS, with limited experience and skills in the organisation to deliver this and was looking at what support would be required going forward for the legislative process.

Success factors

11.3 AW then set out the background to the development of the programme objectives and associated measures. The starting position for the delivery of a good Census would be that it was trustworthy, high quality and delivering public value. As such the programme had examined the high level objectives and mapped against these three elements to see how they would deliver against these criteria. The expectation was that this would evolve over time and could be used to consider the trade-offs between cost and quality and how the programme achieves the optimum balance.

11.4 AW talked the Board through the objectives in the document. As well as looking at trustworthy, quality and value, it was recognised that the objectives would be delivered over time – before, during and after the Census. The slide pack sought to identify what was expected to be delivered, when to measure whether the

programme was on track and how the programme would measure the delivery of the objectives.

11.5 CM asked about the contingency to online delivery and AW confirmed this would be paper. The dual running approach would add cost and complexity but was necessary.

11.6 MG asked about the trade-off between trustworthiness, quality and value. AW explained that there was a balance across the three requirements and this would need to be kept under review. MG also suggested that there was a need to manage the communication around lead time for publication of results, given the perception that the results were collected online and users could therefore have turnaround expectations. AW agreed and noted that messaging would be included in plans to be published.

11.7 There was some discussion surrounding the response rates and comparisons with other countries, and AW indicated there was scope for comparisons.

11.8 AW confirmed the slide pack was a starting point and that further comments were welcome. She also committed to coming back to the Board with updates on progress.

11.9 CM noted the updates on the Census and DPP and indicated that it would be helpful to see a dashboard on where they were in terms of delivery against target timelines. AS noted the comments and reflected on the work to recast the portfolio indicating that NRS would develop a dashboard setting out progress and status control against the portfolio.

New Action (A16): LS to develop a one page dashboard on position of the portfolio of programmes and projects.

New Action (A17): AW to circulate to strategic board members the current programme board dashboard for the 2021 Census

12. Date of next meeting

12.1 The next meeting of the NRS Strategic Board was planned to be held on 13 December 2018 in Ladywell House, Edinburgh.