

## **NRS STRATEGIC BOARD MEETING**

31 January 2019

Lord Clerk Register Room,  
General Register House, Edinburgh

### **Present:**

Paul Lowe	Chief Executive (Chair)
Anne Slater	Director of Operations and Customer Services
Laura Mitchell	Deputy Keeper & Director of Information and Records Services
Linda Sinclair	Accountable Officer, Director of Strategy and Business Services
Amy Wilson	Director of Statistical and Registration Services
Steven Hanlon	Chief Finance Officer
Catherine McFie	Non-Executive Director
Mandy Gallacher	Non-Executive Director
Colin Ledlie	Non-Executive Director
Bill Matthews	Non-Executive Director
Gordon Shipley	Non-Executive Director
Laura Lucas	Chief Technology Officer
Shirley Cameron	Secretariat

**Apologies:** Sam Bedford, Director of IT Services

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Paul Lowe (PL) welcomed all Executive and Non-Executive Directors to the first meeting of the Strategic Board chaired by Paul.

Apologies were received and recorded for Sam Bedford with Laura Lucas (LL), Chief Technology Officer welcomed to the Board in his place.

### **2. Non-Executive Director Background**

The Chair invited Non-Executive Directors to share their background and experience with the Executive Directors for their interest and to help indicate the areas where NXDs would be best equipped to offer support to NRS.

Colin Ledlie (CL) has an actuarial background with interests in finance, assurance and risk. He currently holds three other non-executive positions, core skills are in risk management and governance.

Mandy Gallacher (MG) has a marketing and communication background with other previous experience in project and change management roles. Mandy has interests in Freedom of Information and people/workforce vision.

Bill Matthews (BM) background is in engineering. He also has experience as a portfolio manager and in music management. Bill has been involved in governance with the BBC trust. Interests are in PR, media, crisis management and complaints policy as well as genealogy.

Gordon Shipley (GS) has a military background, initially in a regiment and latterly involved in procurement. His experience is in programme management through work to deliver technology solutions for the 2012 Olympics buildings as well as a technology programme for the Emergency Services. Gordon continues to work within Government programmes as a contractor utilising his technical understanding and skills, managing large transformational programmes.

Catherine McFee (CM) has a background in IT. Other experience in programme and project management focused on capital and construction programmes for the public sector. Catherine also has skills in successful business case delivery, engagement and consultation as well as being an experienced Gateway reviewer.

Paul Lowe thanked the NXDS for sharing their background and commented that NXDs were in place to challenge the organisation while offering the benefit of their skills and experience to enhance the organisation. Directors were encourage to consider how this opportunity could be utilised to NRS's benefit.

### **3. Minutes of meeting held on 20 September 2018**

The minutes were accepted without amendment and would be published on the NRS website.

The Board considered the expectation, noted in the minutes, around a business case for the Digital Preservation Programme (DPP). Paul indicated that he was in the process of a deep dive evaluation of the programme, including catching up with the Gateway Review leader for input. Activity on the programme was currently paused but would be picked up in the future.

#### **3.1 Action Log Review**

SB2-31 May 2018 A4 & A5: Census 2021 presentation was included in the meeting. Further work on governance was on-going and would be circulated at a future date.  
Action: ongoing

SB2-31 May 2018 A6: Governance Boards Terms of Reference circulated to members on 25 January 2019. Action: closed.

SB2-31 May 2018 A8: Follow-up on ARC membership as currently levels on membership at ARC are viewed as not sufficient. CL and PL to catch up to consider approach and skills required. Action closed and new action opened.

**Action SB A18: The Chair of SB and Chair of ARC to discuss and consider NXD requirements and skills for ARC to ensure suitable quorate levels are attained. Owner: Paul Lowe.**

SB2-31 May 2018 A9: NHSCR Board normally attended by CM as NXD and critical friend. CM had expressed concerns around the Terms of Reference of the group and AW had planned to meet with NHSCR members and have a think again at that Board's function. PL would be visiting NHSCR in Dumfries and would consider next steps thereafter. Action: ongoing.

### 3.2 Declarations of Interest

Gordon Shipley was now working with the Government Property Agency.

Mandy Gallacher was due to start working with the Scottish Government Health Directorate.

## 4. Overview from the Chair

Paul Lowe (PL) summarised his initial observations following his first few weeks in NRS. He reflected around the old and respected brands NRS had been built from and the impact the digital world might have on NRS activities. He observed there was a lot of activity with good opportunities and challenges. Initial focus had been around Census, Archives, IT, the NRS building estate as well as colleagues and staff of NRS.

PL further reflected that further work around the NRS purpose had started and would be developed with the senior management team overtime.

He would also look to explore other opportunities NRS might accomplish and indicated that they was a wealth of possibilities NRS could do to improve the impact on society. PL was looking forward together to working together to build the journey for NRS.

## 5. Board Business

### 5.1 Finance – 2018-19 Budget

Steven Hanlon (SH) presented the paper which was taken as read. Work was continuing to evaluate the 2018-19 budget following a reported over commitment identified from the Census Programme. Analysis continued to understand the pressure and impact, with further reporting of findings to be presented to the Executive Management Board in February.

The Board was invited to note the capital budget (2018-19) year to date position. Risks to the position related to the management of revenue /capital split for investments that included both revenue and capital costs.

### 5.2 Finance – 2019-2020 Budget

SH reported that the expectation would be a budget with the same level of funding as for 18/19 with the requirement to absorb any increase in salary costs and new operating costs.

Census 2021 Programme funding continued to be discussed with Scottish Government Ministers.

### 5.3 NRS Performance Dashboard

Linda Sinclair (LS) presented the slides to the Board. The approach was new and indicated a baseline for future reporting to the Strategic Board. LS invited comment from members around content and approach.

Topics covered by the report and discussed included :

- Head count of NRS, movement of profile and range of professionals.
- Sickness absence: reporting was delivered by the wider Scottish Government system.
- People Survey results: engagement index against SG and wider UK Government. NRS Executive Management Board (EMB) had reviewed the results. Initiatives were being considered such as staff engagement network and business improvement programme. Expected benefits would improve processes and efficiency, communications and organisational development.
- Performance: Annual Plan Commitments. Reported on the progress to date for 2018/19 by RAG status reporting and considered improvements in reporting for future years.
- Performance: Key Performance Indicators were being developed and would be managed by Customer and Operations Board (COB).
- Performance: Portfolio. The RAG status of Programmes and Projects was reported and discussed. Oversight would be by the Digital and Strategy Board (DSB)
- Risks: Reported to provide the Strategic Board with more transparency around Census risks. The Board discussed the risks reported, with NXDS providing guidance on specific risks, including Census and Estates.

The Board noted and discussed the absence of reporting on an NRS Strategy. PL indicated that work to develop would be taken forward with the NRS senior team and would look to engage with non-executive directors and stakeholders as appropriate.

Anne Slater (AS) reported that the Customer and Operations Board had held two meetings. Reporting would relate to existing services and KPIs were being developed around these.

Amy Wilson (AW) indicated that following a recent Gateway Review of the Census 2021 Programme, an action plan had been produced and was being implemented. There would be a follow-up Gateway Review and a Digital First assessment. Other steps included close working with the Scottish Government Digital Directorate, recruitment of specialised resources, specifically a commercial manager, inclusion of

an SG finance business partner in the programme, and recruitment of an experienced public sector accountant.

## **6. Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)**

Colin Ledlie (CL) introduced the update from 13 December 2018 meeting. Minutes of that meeting were accepted as the update and were taken as read.

The Strategic Board noted the content of the ARC Forward Look document and specifically, the planned scrutiny around Census and Estates. CL reported the intention to develop a schedule of topics to focus scrutiny at the next meeting and invited topics Strategic Board members would like ARC to focus on.

After discussion, PL indicated that Census 2021 Programme assurance would be an important aspect for both ARC and The Strategic Board and the NRS senior team were considering how, corporately, to govern assurance around the programme. An externally facilitated workshop was planned as a starting point to consider the structures, membership, assurance and external engagement required for appropriate governance for Census.

PL considered there would be a function for ARC in scrutinising and challenge for aspects of the Census Programme in ensuring that programme risk was in line with the NRS corporate sense of risk.

PL considered there could be a role for the Strategic Board in the Census 2021 Programme with opportunities for the Board to consider strategic plans alongside reviewing action already taken.

## **7. Business Reports**

### **7.1 Census 2021**

Amy Wilson (AW) presented an update on Census activity and plans.

Topics covered and discussed included:

- Legislation and Engagement: AW reported the status of The Census Bill's progress in the Scottish Parliament. Currently at Stage 1, a debate was expected to be held in Parliament by March 2019. Engagement was continuing across a number of stakeholder groups.
- Key systems and services: Systems development progress was continuing, with systems integration testing (SIT) of the core 'collect' system expected to commence in March 2019. Other solutions were also being developed for SIT notably around, print, logistics and paper capture.
- The Common Operating Platform (COP) Programme, an internal NRS IT change programme, was expected to deliver a processing environments for the rehearsal and live service as part of its first phase delivery.
- Rehearsal Planning: An overview of the current activity to finalise plans and scope of the rehearsal in October 2019 was presented.

- Overview of next period and key challenges: Funding of the Census continued to be a challenge discussed with Ministers. Steps had been taken to change the scope of the rehearsal while uncertainties around future funding were understood. Opportunities to rehearse de-scoped aspects would be considered and could form the basis of an ARC deep-dive follow-up report.
- Opportunities for resource collaboration or sharing were being explored across SG and OGD to reduce impact and costs.
- Programme Plan on a Page: presented for information.

Census planning would continue to be the main focus of NRS governance over the coming years and suitable time at NRS management boards would ensure that suitable scrutiny and support was put in place for the Programme.

## 7.2 Estates Update

Linda Sinclair provided an update on the current challenges being experienced in relation to Estates as follows:

- Work was in progress to build capability as well as capacity of resource to support Estates work.
- A project to complete remedial stonework at West Register House was expected to be let shortly. Project monitoring was being put in place.
- Capital works on Thomas Thomson House were expected to start in the next financial year. Phases of works was expected to continue into future years.
- Work to evaluate the condition of the ceiling in the Adam Dome was likely to result in the closure of the Dome for at least one year.
- Facilities management improvements were being considered.
- Space planning: Immediately and relating to Census and IT in Ladywell House was being considered. Longer term approach across the whole estate was to be evaluated in the future, and to tie in with an overall business strategy.

Gordon Shipley(GS) initiated a discussion in support of commercial capability. LS indicated there was an issue in understanding requirements and writing these to achieve appropriate contracts and renewals.

GS reminded the Board of a risk from a previous financial year which had related to archival storage space and asked if this was still valid. Laura Mitchell explained that there was still a pressure on space, however the SG project which had been the lead leverage behind the pressure was currently paused. Other pressure may come from the need to decant records from the Adam Dome during the planned works there.

The Board also discussed the impact of the neighbouring St James Centre redevelopment works in relation to the current condition of General Register House. In conclusion, it was agreed to review the legal agreement in place with the St James Centre developers which had been put in place to protect NRS while the neighbouring works were completed.

Catherine McFee (CM) suggested that governance around estates projects could be improved by the production of robust business cases which could be used for the identification of costs, options, value for money and longer term planning around estates. PL agreed there was a requirement for an Estates Strategy and that options and an approach would be considered.

### 7.3 Governance

Linda Sinclair (LS) presented the NRS Governance Report and explained it was provided on a quarterly basis to ARC.

The Board discussed information overlaps and duplication of activity between ARC and the Strategic Board, as well as the differences in memberships between the two groups and concluded that the report, presented at ARC, could provide a useful audit trail to provide assurance to Strategic Board members.

The Board considered the paper would be useful addition to the artefacts shared with the Strategic Board and it was agreed to circulate future reports as part of the ARC update for information.

## 8. Board Discussion

### 8.1 Communication and Engagement

Anne Slater (AS) reported an increase in resource capacity and capability in the Communication and Engagement function. Anne explained that internal and external engagement had been brought together in one function. Areas being developed include:

- Chanel strategy for internal and external communication
- Social media reviews, building audience segmentation data
- Review of internal communication and improvements to Internal tool 'Connect'.
- Increased visibility and transparency of Executive Management Board, including a weekly blog from CEO. Evidence from feedback indicated that this was being well received.
- An independent customer survey covering the services NRS delivers was being commissioned. The aim to provide customer satisfaction data to inform customer strategy approaches as well as to consider opportunities for measuring the success of these.

## 9. Strategic Board Forward Look

PL invited thoughts from members on the approach for the meeting. Thematic deep dives, workshops and making use of the NXD specific skills and experience were all options for consideration.

## 10. AOB

Gordon Shipley raised a point to consider around funding opportunities and sponsorship.

**11. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the NRS Strategic Board was planned to be held on **20 June 2019**.

End