

NRS STRATEGIC BOARD MEETING

20 June 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
Laura Lucas	Interim Director of IT 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
Shirley Cameron	Secretariat

Apologies: Gordon Shipley, Non-Executive Director

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 Paul Lowe (PL) welcomed Laura Lucas as interim Director of IT Services.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Gordon Shipley.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 31 January 2019

The minutes were accepted subject to a minor correction and would be published on the NRS website.

2.1 Action Log Review

SB2-31 May 2018 A4: Census 2021 governance: A revision of governance arrangements was continuing, with external expertise aiding the review. It was expected that an update would be circulated ahead of the next Strategic Board meeting.

Action: ongoing

SB2-31 May 2018 A5: Closed as related to A4.

SB2-31 May 2018 A9: NHSCR Board: A paper had been provided to aid discussion which indicated a change to the focus to a stakeholder group. Following a short discussion around membership and Terms of Reference of the revised group, Catherine McFie and Paul Lowe agreed to a further discussion. Action: closed

Action SB A19: NHSCR governance to be discussed by NRS Chief Executive and Catherine McFie, NXD.

SB2-31 January 2019 A18: Recruitment of additional Non-Executive Directors: an advert was due to be issued shortly with an expectation of new Non-Executive Directors to be invited to the Audit and Risk Committee on 28 November 2019. Action: on-going

2.2 Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were noted.

3. Corporate Overview – Linda Sinclair

3.1 The paper presented was a new approach for NRS, providing a summary corporate view of the health of the organisation for Strategic Board to consider. Paul Lowe (PL) thanked all directors for input.

3.2 The Board welcomed the approach which provided a snapshot of different aspects of business and accorded a red/amber/green (RAG) status view. The report would be the basis for Board scrutiny and conversation at future meetings. Movement of RAG status would be reported by inclusion of an up or down arrow against the status for future reports.

3.3 The inclusion of a forward look of potential business presentation topics for discussion at future meetings was welcomed. One additional topic regarding a deep dive on archival storage, including digital storage would be added to the forward look and planned in for a future meeting.

Action: SB5 – A20: Forward look: deep dive item on archival storage, including digital storage to be added with items timetabled for future meetings.

4. Finance Report – Steven Hanlon (SH)

4.1 The paper set out the provisional financial outturn for the financial year 2018-2019, subject to minor and audit adjustments. The 2018-2019 outturn on Total Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) was an underspend of £830k with Capital DEL outturn underspend at £77k.

4.2 The Board was invited to note the budget plans for financial year 2019-2020, including an assumption of a funding pressure of £5,9m for the Census 2021 Programme. SH updated the Board to advise that Scottish Ministers had recently confirmed the funding of this pressure.

5. Census 2021 Programme – Amy Wilson

5.1 Amy Wilson (AW) presented an update on Census 2021 activity and plans.

5.2 Topics covered included:

- Programme Overview: overall programme status reported in May 2019 was red. An NRS Recovery Plan had been developed to address this status.
- Programme Overview: Programme budget for 2019-202 was £18.6m including a pressure now funded by Scottish Ministers.
- Programme Recovery Plan: six main topics were planned to be addressed by the recovery plan.
 1. Rehearsal Scope should ensure it delivers key learning objectives.
 2. Increase confidence in delivery and achievability of the approach to Rehearsal.
 3. Financial resources are optimised to a Budget that supports delivery.
 4. Resources critical to the Programme are available and staff wellbeing factored in.
 5. Governance and controls reflect Gateway recommendations with financial control demonstrated.
Planning is realistic with sufficient detail to enable control.
- Actions to Support and Strengthen Programme: included strengthening the programme governance with the Registrar General, Paul Lowe chairing a revised Census 2021 Programme Board. Other actions included enhanced visibility with Scottish Government assurance; a programme governance review as well as the NRS Operations Director leading the Census 2019 Rehearsal operational planning and capability.
- Rehearsal Approach: an overview of the revised approach, moving from a single collection rehearsal event to a phased rehearsal period. Commencing in October 2019 (live Rehearsal period) and running into 2020.

5.3 The Board discussed the presentation as follows:

- Resource issues: NRS corporately had been considering how to support the programme and manage existing issues.
- Achievability of the recovery plan: was a priority for NRS with the focus on delivery of the live rehearsal period followed by a phased approach to test other aspects in different ways. The aim continued to be to build on the Rehearsal learning to achieve a successful Census in 2021 which, due to legislation, remained a fixed date.
- Rehearsal approach: the other UK census bodies were also conducting activities during October 2019 and opportunities to learn from these would be explored.
- End-to-end testing: work was continuing to map out the business processes from start to finish for the rehearsal. A cycle of technical testing of component deliverables had been planned and was underway with milestones built into delivery.

- Communication and engagement with rehearsal areas: as the rehearsal was not a national campaign, a focused localised approach was being developed to encourage engagement and completion. Completion would be voluntary.

5.4 The Board also discussed the following:

- Census Legislation: stage 3 of the Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill was passed on 12 June.
- Census online collection instrument (OCI): Non-Executive Directors were invited to consider if they would be interested in a demonstration.
- Rehearsal evaluation: the approach was being developed.

Action: SB5 – A21 : Census online collection instrument (OCI) - Non-Executive Directors to advise Amy Wilson if interested in a demonstration.

6. Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) – Colin Ledlie

6.1 Colin Ledlie (CL) introduced the update from 28 May 2019 ARC meeting. Minutes of that meeting and the NRS Governance report were accepted as the update and were taken as read.

6.2 The Board were asked to note the Internal Audit assurance opinion. The opinion for 2018-2019 reporting year was 'limited assurance', a reduction from the 'reasonable assurance' opinion from 2017-2018 reporting year. CL reported that ARC had discussed the opinion change.

7. Date of Next meeting

7.1 The date of next meeting of the NRS Strategic Board was noted as 3 October 2019.

End