

**NRS STRATEGIC BOARD MEETING**

Thursday 23 March 2023

10:00-12:00

MS Teams

**Attendees**

Janet EgdeU (Chair)	NRS, Interim Chief Executive
Bill Matthews	NRS Non-Executive Director
Anne Moises	NRS Non-Executive Director
Laura Lucas	NRS, IT Director
Laura Mitchell	NRS, Director of Information & Records Services & Deputy Keeper
Linda Sinclair	NRS, Director of Corporate Services & Accountable Officer
Anne Slater	NRS, Director of Operations and Customer Service & Deputy Registrar General
Claire Gillespie	NRS, Chief Financial Officer
Lesley Smillie	NRS, Census Director team (Item 4)
Shirley Cameron	NRS, Head of Business Management
Donna Wotherspoon	NRS, Business Management (Secretariat)

**Apologies:**

Gordon Shipley	NRS Non-Executive Director
Carla McHendry	NRS, Delivery Director

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

**2. Meeting held on 15 December 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 35:** To include NRS Estate Strategy on agenda for meeting on 23 March 2023 and **Action SB 36:** To include NRS Strategic Direction & Priorities as a standing item at future meetings. As both items were on the current agenda the actions were 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:

- NRS had responded to the Public Audit Committee regarding the Auditor General's section 22 report on the Census Programme.
- All major programmes were progressing.
- Estate and IT project updates were noted.
- Continued resource pressures were noted along with challenges in relation to physical archive storage.
- A balanced financial position was predicted for financial year 2022/23.
- Key Performance Indicators for 2022/23 would be available for the next meeting.

3.3 There was a discussion on the impact the COVID-19 pandemic and Census had had on organisational capacity, the complexity and size of upcoming programmes of work, and the opportunity offered to consider alternative operating models and partnership working.

### **4. Census 2022 Update**

4.1 Leslie Smillie gave an update on the current status of the programme, including activity relating to the formal closure of the Collect phase, ongoing lessons learned activity, and planning for dissemination of Outputs.

4.2 Census would maintain programme governance as it moved forward; the latest Technical Assurance Review had been completed, and the team continued working with the International Steering Group and the Office for Statistics Regulation.

4.3 It was noted that a number of non-compliance cases had been reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, who would make any decision on prosecution action.

4.4 There was some discussion on media opportunities around the release of output data, and the use of stories to garner attention.

### **5. NRS Strategy Development**

5.1. A number of papers were shared with the meeting.

5.2 Linda Sinclair presented a refreshed Strategy paper, updated in conjunction with NRS Directors and service leads. A key point was the balance of affordability while delivering solutions for critical challenges and maintaining core services.

5.3 A Portfolio document was presented which provided further detail on the portfolio of programmes contained within the Strategy paper. Bill Matthews reflected on the breadth of work required, which he felt demonstrated the importance of NRS

in supporting Scotland. There was discussion on plans to disseminate the strategy to staff and stakeholders, and also on the question of partnership working and sustainable resourcing.

5.4 Anne Slater shared a Customer update, which detailed the process of gathering understanding of NRS's customers and sector context. She shared initial highlights from the 2023 customer survey, which showed overall high levels of customer satisfaction and improvements in a number of areas. Future work on staff engagement, benchmarking, and organisational accreditation was highlighted.

5.5 Linda Sinclair presented an Estates Strategy document which had been developed to cover staff, customer, and storage considerations. Delivery would focus on the themes of service delivery, redesigned ways of working, NRS's brand and identity, efficiency and value, safety and inclusivity, and environmental sustainability. In discussion the work already underway was noted and the challenges in working with budget constraints and listed buildings recognised.

## **6. Audit & Risk Committee: 28 February 2023**

6.1 Bill Matthews gave an update on the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) meeting held on 28 February 2023.

6.2 He noted that the new external auditors, Grant Thornton, had attended, and that Internal Audit had fed back on report delivery. He also noted that ARC looked forward to further updates on embedding risk management, and had noted the work of the Finance team in achieving a balanced budget this year.

## **7. AOB**

8.1 Janet Egdell advised that the next meeting would be attended by both the new Director for Census Statistics and the Statistics Director, the role having been split as the team worked through Census Outputs.

8.2 It was further noted that the meeting on 31 May 2023 would be the last attended by Bill Matthews. There was a discussion on the recruitment of additional Non-Executive Directors to ensure constructive challenge and support.

8.2 Janet Egdell thanked everyone for their time and the useful discussions.

**Action SB 37:** To ensure progression of upcoming Non-Executive Director vacancies in advance of the next meeting. **Owner:** Janet Egdell

## **8. Date of Next Meeting: 31 May 2023 and Close**

9.1 The date of the next meeting was noted as 31 May 2023.

**END**