

**NRS Executive Management Board (EMB)**  
**07 December 2021**  
**Held via MS Teams**

**Present:**

Paul Lowe	Chief Executive (Chair)
Linda Sinclair	Director of Corporate Services and Accountable Officer
Laura Lucas	Director of IT Services
Laura Mitchell	Director of Information & Records Services and Deputy Keeper
Pete Whitehouse	Director of Statistical Services
Carla McHendry	Delivery Director
Claire Gillespie	Chief Finance Officer
Tracy Richardson	NRS HR Business Advisor (Item 3)
Eleanor Stratford	Head of NRS Customer Engagement & Communications (Item 4)
Shirley Cameron	NRS Head of Business Management (secretariat)
Laurens Bonny	Business Support Officer (secretariat)

**Apologies:**

Anne Slater	Deputy SRO Census Programme and NRS Director Operations
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**1. Welcome, Introductions and apologies – Paul Lowe**

1.1 Paul Lowe welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as listed. No new declarations of interest were recorded.

1.2 Paul Lowe thanked EMB members and their teams for their hard work during the uncertain and unprecedented challenges of the previous year. He hoped everyone would be able to take a break over the festive period to recharge their batteries.

**2. Minutes and Actions – Paul Lowe**

2.1 The minutes from the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were approved and would be published on the NRS website.

2.2 A review of actions was undertaken. The action tracker would be updated accordingly.

2.3 No decisions had been made in correspondence since the previous EMB meeting.

**3. HR Management Information Report – Tracy Richardson**

3.1 Tracy Richardson highlighted key points from the report regarding staff turnover, recruitment time scales, sick absence rates and leave balances. Staff that have returned to work at NRS buildings had received an updated 'return to workplace letter'. Linda Sinclair asked if a table with breakdown by staff type could be provided covering 2020 to date.

3.2 It was noted that changes to the SG promotion policy meant that from 13 December 2021 onwards promotion recruitment would no longer require a Lead Panel Member.

3.3 The HR team had received training on the new recruitment system. Carla McHendry asked that going forward, internal vacancies were added to the Vacancy Board on Connect and included in the weekly communication summary.

**Action EMB 290: to provide a table with breakdown by staff type from 2020 to date. Owner – Tracy Richardson**

#### **4. Communications Report – Eleanor Stratford**

4.1 Eleanor Stratford updated the Board on the key communications priorities for the upcoming year, indicating the main focus of the early months of 2022 would relate to the census collection activity. An update on the roles of Communication Team staff would be added to Connect shortly. A Customer Survey was planned to run online in January 2022.

4.2 The End of Year Review draft would be circulated in correspondence to EMB members for review and comment.

#### **5. Census 2022 Update – Paul Lowe**

5.1 Paul Lowe provided a general update on census activity.

5.2 The Auditor General would appear before the Scottish Parliament's Public Accounts Committee on 09 December 2021, following the publication of a section 22 report in terms of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, relating to the NRS annual report and accounts 2020/21. NRS had received a clean and unmodified opinion from the audit. The report provided an update from Audit Scotland relating to the delivery of the census programme.

#### **6. Scottish Covid-19 Public Inquiry – Paul Lowe**

6.1 Paul Lowe noted a recent article published on SG Saltire relating to a Scottish Covid-19 Public Inquiry. Details on the approach to be taken were not yet available. Laura Mitchell would monitor further communications and provide updates to EMB as required.

**Action EMB 291: to monitor updates on the approach of the Scottish Covid-19 Public Inquiry and provide updates to EMB as required. Owner – Laura Mitchell**

#### **7. Business Area Updates**

7.1 EMB noted the NRS Equality Mainstreaming Duty Report options paper and agreed the approach to publish the NRS Equality Mainstreaming Duty Report and Equality Outcomes with interim outcomes by 28 February 2022. The agreed approach would be required to be accepted and confirmed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

**Decision EMB-D147: EMB approved to publish the NRS Equality Mainstreaming Duty Report and Equality Outcomes with interim outcomes by 28 February 2022. Approach to be accepted and confirmed by EHRC.**

7.2 Oral updates were provided by each Director. Key themes reported were:

Corporate Services Directorate - Linda Sinclair

7.3 The main priorities included the Section 22 report, Workforce Planning & Resourcing, Governance, Covid Response and Budget. Work on Strategic Performance was being

progressed. The internal audit on Programme and Project Management was progressing and scoping for the Q4 audit on Recruitment and Workforce Planning would start shortly.

Director for IT Services - Laura Lucas

7.4 Laura Lucas shared NRS had achieved Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation. The Board congratulated Laura and her team for achieving re-accreditation. Work on the MoveIt project was progressing. Other priorities included recruitment.

Director of Statistical Services – Pete Whitehouse

7.5 Activity was ongoing in regards to population statistics, an area ONS was further developing. Discussions were being held on the future of Covid-19 reporting.

Delivery Director – Carla McHendry

7.6 The Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation project would be closed down and a lessons learned paper would be drafted. A quarterly report on projects would also be brought to EMB meetings. Recruitment activity in the team had progressed and an update would be shared via email.

7.7 Work on Corporate Strategy was progressing.

**Action EMB 292: to circulate DEA lessons learned paper to EMB. Owner – Carla McHendry**

**Action EMB 293: to circulate recruitment activity update to EMB. Owner – Carla McHendry**

Director for Information & Records Services (IRS) – Laura Mitchell

7.8 Work was underway to enable the restart of transmissions from depositors and on future storage requirements. Staff from the UK Infected Blood Inquiry team had attended the search room to consult records. Preparations for the Cabinet Papers release was on track with a press event scheduled on 17 December 2021. A submission was being finalised for the archive accreditation process.

7.9 NRS was successful in its bid for a 13<sup>th</sup> century charter.

Operations and Customer Services – Anne Slater

7.10 Directors noted the written update on OCS activity submitted by Anne Slater.

7.11 Activity relating to the restart of NRS services was continuing. The 1921 census transcription contract procurement process had concluded. Implementation planning and engagement on ScotlandsPeople had started. An update on activity relating to remote registration was noted.

**8. NRS Finance Report – Claire Gillespie**

8.1 The financial mid-year review showed the performance to date was in line with the forecast and a £0.5m pressure was reported. Work remained ongoing to achieve a balanced budget by the end of the financial year.

8.2 Following the 2022/23 budget ministerial statement at the end of the week and receipt of formal NRS budget allocation, the budget commissioning process would be instigated. A paper with the outcome would be brought back to EMB.

**9. NRS Security – Laura Lucas, Laura Mitchell and Linda Sinclair**

9.1 An update on Information, IT and Physical security activity was provided, including discussion on removable storage media and DEA accreditation renewal time scales.

9.2 Estates, following start of a new security lead last month, were carrying out a full review of operational security to create/update guidance, operating procedures and identify further requirements.

**Action EMB 294: to follow up DEA Accreditation renewal date with the UK Statistics Authority. Action Owner – Laura Mitchell.**

**Action EMB 295: to bring report on Physical Security to a future EMB meeting. Action Owner – Linda Sinclair.**

**10. Procurement approval decisions for EMB – only if required – Linda Sinclair**

10.1 No business was noted

**11. For Noting – NRS Governance – Linda Sinclair**

11.1 Linda Sinclair advised that she would report quarterly on the Health and Safety Committee meetings. She updated EMB on progress including the creation of a H&S dashboard, discussions on First Aid and Fire Warden cover at buildings and reporting on legionella and fire safety.

11.3 The agenda for the NRS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) on 09 December 2021 was noted. Future ARC meetings would focus on financial, risks and assurance aspects of the Census Programme.

**12. Any Other Business**

12.1 No business was noted

**13. Date of Next Meeting – 27 January 2022**

**End**