

**NRS Executive Management Board (EMB)
10 December 2020
Held via Teams**

Present:

Paul Lowe	Chief Executive (Chair)
Anne Slater	Director of Operations and Customer Services
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
Steven Hanlon	Chief Financial Officer
Angela Sim	NRS Accountant
Shirley Cameron	NRS Business Manager (secretariat)
Paula Gellatly	Minutes Support

Apologies: None

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

2. Minutes and Actions

2.1 The minutes from the meeting held on 5 November 2020 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. EMB members noted that the following decisions had been made in correspondence:

- D116 Health & Safety Management plan & implementation
- D117 NHSCR governance approach
- D118 EMB Terms of reference – annual review
- D121 Biodiversity Duty Reporting – NRS report

3. Census 2021 Programme update

3.1 Paul Lowe reported that the planning exercise had concluded. This had been required following the Ministerial decision to move the census date from March 2021 to March 2022. The plan would be presented at the Census Programme Board (CPB) on 15 December 2020 for approval.

3.2 A joint Gateway review and SG Technical Assurance Framework(TAF) review had recently been completed. The final reports would be shared with EMB members on receipt of final versions.

3.3 NRS would be required to formally respond to the findings of the reports as well as consider actions relating to recommendations.

4. Business Area updates – Directors

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

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

4.2 Laura provided an overview of business activities for IRS.

4.3 The annual publication of historic Cabinet Office files would be released on 1 January 2021. An on-line press event would be held ahead of the release date. Laura explained that for the first time all material being published was born digital. Plans to communicate the release and enable public access were in hand.

4.4 Discussions were ongoing with National Museums of Scotland in relation to a future display of the Declaration of Arbroath, following the cancellation of this last year as a result of the pandemic.

4.5 Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation was noted as a priority.

Corporate Services Directorate - Linda Sinclair

4.6 Linda Sinclair provided a summary of activity across Corporate Services.

4.7 Work to support the delivery of Census replanning in relation to procurement, commercial management and financial planning was on-going.

4.8 Covid-19 impacts continued to be a priority. NRS Estates continued to manage NRS buildings including supporting accommodation and cleaning to enable safe delivery for NRS business critical services from buildings. A Covid Secure Buildings Working Group had been established which included input from NRS HR, Health and Safety, Estates and Business representation.

4.9 Development of NRS Strategy continued. A contract to support NRS digital strategic development approaches had been renewed.

Delivery Directorate - Carla McHendry

4.10 Carla provided an overview of activity since the last EMB meeting.

4.11 The development of the NRS Strategy was continuing, in conjunction with Linda Sinclair.

4.12 Work to support the development of a digital archiving strategic options paper was continuing. Workshops had been held to gather requirements.

4.13 The Wellbeing and Working from Home Group continued to be led by Carla and remained a key focus during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.14 The delivery of the People Action Plan would accelerate in 2021 with the appointment of an organisational development lead in December 2020.

4.15 Recruitment activity to support other Directors had provided valuable experience, with recruitment for the Delivery Directorate team due to commence in early 2021.

4.16 Work to align the DSB portfolio view with strategic priorities would be taken forward in 2021.

Director for Statistical Services - Pete Whitehouse

4.17 Pete advised that the publication into drug related deaths in 2019 had been prepared and would be published on 15 December 2020.

4.18 Engagement with SG in relation to opportunities to improve use of data relating to ethnicity continued.

4.19 NRS continued to take part in UK population discussion groups. On-going engagement would be important to mitigate the impact of differing census dates across the UK on data publications.

Director for IT Services - Laura Lucas

4.20 The annual IT Services report had been provided under item 6 on the agenda.

4.21 Laura advised that provision of laptops for new staff was continuing. A potential temporary delay of stock relating to Brexit challenges had been identified and would be monitored. As a fall back there was scope in short term to repurpose some existing returned lap top stocks.

4.22 Laura shared a diagram depicting the complexity of systems and support provided by IT Services in the production of Covid-19 Stats.

4.23 Other activity included planning and action related to the data centre project, with delivery in Spring 2021.

4.24 There was ongoing recruitment for IT vacancies to support the census programme and wider NRS.

Operations and Customer Services – Anne Slater

4.25 Anne reported that Covid-19 continued to impact delivery of services from buildings, although delivery was continuing remotely, where possible. The delivery of business critical services, including providing urgent legal documents to support the property market, the probate sector and court services, and official birth, death and marriage certificates to enable citizens to obtain passports, employment and register with GPs, as well as the processing of Adoption Orders continued. Plans to restart other business critical services were being investigated in line with Government guidance and Covid restrictions.

4.26 A release of records through the ScotlandsPeople website would see enhanced access to birth, death and marriage records as well as Kirk Session records from pre 1855. The release would happen following final testing. System search enhancements were also being planned and work to understand audiences was underway.

4.27 Census operational activity was on-going. Main activities were noted as: communication activity, branding and visual identity; field operations user acceptance testing planning; support for field force through digital communication approaches and field staff equipment.

5. NRS and Brexit - Linda Sinclair and Paul Lowe

5.1 Linda Sinclair provided an update on the potential impacts following Brexit on 31 December 2020. A full assessment had taken place pre-Covid with procurement and commercial aspects noted as the main areas impacted, potentially relating to extended supply timelines and possible cost increases. Directors were asked to note potential impacts when planning and to consider impacts relating to budgets already allocated for spend by end of financial year 2020-2021.

6. IT Services Report - Laura Lucas

6.1 Laura Lucas introduced the paper which provided an annual report on the activities of IT Services covering:

- Covid Response – volumes of equipment, solutions and support provided to for NRS services, Covid-19 data provisions for stakeholders and to staff .
- IT Service Delivery – reporting availability of services for previous 12 months as 99.78% availability.
- Cyber Security update
- Project Delivery – providing an overview of completed and on-going projects to provide NRS with enhanced and more stable infrastructure and applications.
- Project Delivery Census – continuation of design, build of solutions and capabilities to support Census 2022 delivery.
- Permanent Recruitment

6.2 The Board thanked Laura for the helpful update and relayed their thanks to the IT Services team for their achievements over the year.

6.3 Laura also provided an overview of the importance of testing, mainly relating to the Census programme. Included was an update on the testing approach being adopted to provide understanding of why and how testing would be achieved, as well as the reasons for the testing approach.

7. Archive Accreditation - Carla McHendry

7.1 Carla McHendry introduced the presentation and accompanying paper EMB were being asked to:

- Approve archive accreditation as a strategic priority initiative for NRS
- Agree the proposed approach to securing archive accreditation
- Commit to providing expertise and resources to complete required content

7.2 Laura Mitchell explained the proposed approach to securing archive service accreditation in 2021. The deadline for submission was noted as 1 August 2021.

7.3 It was noted that NRS had a Sector lead role for archiving in Scotland and was a founding partner in the UK-wide archive accreditation scheme. NRS had representation on the archive accreditation assessment panel and governing committee along with The National Archives, Public Records Office Northern Ireland, Welsh Government, The Archive and Records Association, Scottish Council on Archives and Archives & Records Council Wales. The governing committee defined good practice and agreed standards for archive services across the UK. and supported sector development.

7.4 In addition to overseeing the archive accreditation of other bodies, NRS was also required to secure archive re-accreditation status. Full re-accreditation was required every 6 years with mid-point checks every 3 years. NRS was required to submit to the full 6 year archive accreditation, the first since NRS's initial accreditation.

7.5 The accreditation submission would cover three key assessment areas:

- Organisational health – governance, finance, staffing, buildings.
- Collections – acquisition, cataloguing, collections care, disaster recovery.
- Stakeholders and their experiences – access, education, learning, websites, reach and impact.

7.6 EMB discussed the proposed approach and noted the key benefits and risks relating to accreditation. Workshops with key NRS stakeholders would be initiated in early 2021 and Directors would be invited to identify appropriate representation from their business areas.

7.7 Following a short discussion, EMB agreed that archive accreditation was a strategic priority for NRS and to proceed with accreditation approach as detailed. EMB members were invited to raise any additional points in correspondence.

EMB Decision 023: Archive Accreditation – Approval as an NRS strategic priority and agreement of the proposed approach and resource commitments required to develop and deliver the accreditation submission.

EMB Action 265: Archive Accreditation – Provide any additional comments on the Archive Accreditation approach in correspondence to Carla McHendry and Laura Mitchell. Action Owner: EMB Members

EMB Action 266: Archive Accreditation - Carla McHendry to contact each Director to identify colleagues required to attend the workshops. Action Owner: Carla McHendry

8. NRS Finance report - Steven Hanlon

8.1 Steven Hanlon introduced the report which provided the NRS financial position to the end of period seven 2020-2021.

8.2 In summary, the report noted:

- A small projected overspend increase primarily as a result of reductions in forecast income. Interventions were in place to manage towards a balanced position by year end.
- The Census budget would be rebalanced once the replanning exercise required following the Ministerial decision to move the Census to March 2022 was concluded and approved.

9. Standing items

9.1 Procurement request for approval – none were presented.

10. AOB

People Survey 2020 - Paul Lowe

10.1 EMB noted that early analysis of the People Survey 2020 results indicated improvements from the results of the previous survey in 2019. Paul Lowe thanked EMB and their teams, noted this as a significant achievement during the management of impacts of a global pandemic and complex Census programme. The People Survey 2020 results would be part of the next EMB agenda and a report would provide further data analysis on comparisons with Scottish Government and other comparable government bodies.

EMB Action 267: EMB forward look – People Survey 2020 results analysis to be added to the agenda for 4 February EMB. Action Owner: Shirley Cameron

11. Date of Next Meeting 4 February 2021

11.1 Executive Management Board - Covid-19 cadence - business planning - Paul Lowe

11.2 Executive Management Board – Draft Corporate Governance Framework Cadence – 2021-2022 - Shirley Cameron

**EMB Action 268: EMB members to feedback via correspondence on the business planning and Corporate Governance Framework to Shirley Cameron.
Action Owner: EMB Members**

End