

**NRS Executive Management Board (EMB)**

14 May 2019

Room 1/G/9

Ladywell House, Edinburgh

**Present:**

Paul Lowe	Chief Executive (Chair)
Sam Bedford	Director of IT Services
Laura Mitchell	Director of Information & Records Services and Deputy Keeper
Linda Sinclair	Director of Strategy & Business Services & Accountable Officer
Anne Slater	Director of Operations & Customer Services
Amy Wilson	Director of Statistical Services, Census SRO
Steven Hanlon	Chief Financial Officer
Shirley Cameron	NRS Governance Administration (secretariat)
David Craig	Census 2021 Programme Director (item 4)

**Apologies:**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Paul Lowe (PL) welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were received

**2. Minutes and Actions**

Minutes of 19 March 2019 were accepted. Updates for the following actions were noted:

EMB 130: Digital Preservation analysis was on-going with PL, who would consider the next steps in conjunction with Laura Mitchell and IT Architecture. Action on-going

EMB 156: Census Vision, carried forward to 25 June meeting of EMB. Action on-going

EMB 157 – EMB161: Actions closed as completed.

EMB 162: Census assurance action planning was being considered by the Census Assurance Team. Update to be circulated ahead of meeting on 25 June. Action on-going.

EMB 163 – EMB 166: Actions closed as completed.

EMB 167: Review of staffing requirements and pressures was ongoing with a deadline of 31 May 2019 set for completion of activity. Action on-going.

EMB 168: Action closed as completed.

EMB 169: Work was ongoing to include procurement and commercial management information. Action on-going.

EMB 170: Action closed as completed.

The EMB action tracker would be updated accordingly.

**3. Overview from the Chair**

Paul Lowe (PL) reflected on the month since the last meeting. Priorities and focus had been on the 2021 Census Programme and 2019 Rehearsal with assurance

activity continuing. The NRS estate was a further area of significant focus along with budget and financial management matters.

#### **4. Census 2021 Programme**

##### **4.1 Census 2021 Rehearsal and Recovery**

Papers circulated to EMB included a presentation from the Census Programme Board on 1 May together with an executive summary of the discussion from that meeting.

Amy Wilson (AW) presented the papers to EMB for discussion as follows:

- Provided an update on the current position on rehearsal planning and position. The rehearsal would be an opportunity to learn and was a major step to the delivery of the Census in 2021.
- The Programme status was currently self-assessed as Red.
- A change in approach for the rehearsal was reported to deliver the 2021 Census capability both operationally and to meet user needs by adopting an incremental delivery approach over a longer rehearsal period.

Discussion included:

- Consideration of EMB oversight, escalation to EMB and the Census Programme Board relating to decisions, risk management and emerging issues impacting the programme as well as oversight of the opportunities to learn lessons and apply these.
- Resources, skills and understanding required for planning and developing the approach as well as transitioning and managing live operation. Acknowledging the differences.

The Board also discussed the outlined revised approach, the risks and the opportunities the longer rehearsal timescales could provide :

- Release 1, timetabled for October 2019 – A field operation covering agreed locations in Scotland covering around 70,000 households, testing on-line completion systems as well as paper questionnaire approaches. Challenges discussed included the online collection instrument, changes to the field follow-up approach and the provision of a reduced helpline facility for the public.
- Release 2, timetabled for Dec 2019 – would not be a public facing test and would relate more to systems and operational testing and learning.
- Further testing of capabilities during 2020

The Board considered the approach and after detailed discussion considered further information would be required to bottom out the plans presented with information requested by the end of the week/early next week (by 20<sup>th</sup> May). The EMB asked for greater clarity of the scope and plans around the rehearsal approach. The Board considered that if Release 1 of the plan was not achieved

this would impact the downstream testing through other phases of rehearsal. Delivery was viewed as a corporate risk to manage with the potential impact to the NRS reputation.

David Craig tabled a paper outlining the scope of the proposed phases of delivery, as developed to date, to aid discussion around the approach to rehearsal slides. The Board discussed the scope approach and commented that although thinking had been done, more work would be required to give EMB assurance that the scope for the phases was fully scoped, planned for and was deliverable. Any changes to the scope of the rehearsal would need to be considered in line with the funding from SG, with a reduction in scope potentially impacting on the budget allocation.

Other discussion by the Board included:

- Governance structure and decision making. Weekly check point meetings across programme were in place.
- Delivery teams working together with the aim of improving understanding between and across teams. More reactive information gathering and running up to critical decision points.
- Discussion around the size of rehearsal, location and evaluation approach would remain as originally planned. Areas to include Glasgow, Dumfries and Galloway and the Western Isles.
- The assumptions and risks reported were discussed. It was noted the risk around delivery of the rehearsal could impact the delivery of the 2021 Census. It was also noted that key actions would need to be progressed in short timescales to ensure 2021 critical activities were completed.
- Opportunities to learn from the rehearsals carried out by the other UK countries would be considered.

**Action EMB 171:** 2021 Census: to provide scope and detailed plan for Release 1, together with a high level summary of the overall approach. Owner : Amy Wilson /David Craig. Timescale: By Monday 20th May.

#### 4.2 Census Rehearsal Operational Update

Anne Slater (AS) provided an overview of Census rehearsal plans and current activity covering:

- Resourcing – action to recruit key operational skills was progressing.
- Opportunities to engage and to utilise peer knowledge across the rehearsal activities planned across the UK.
- Work was progressing to scope requirements for field force, contact centre solution and workload management solution.

#### 4.3 Legislation

AW reported that the Census Amendment bill had passed Stage 2 of the Parliamentary process. Stage 3 was planned for June 2019. Once Stage 3 was completed, work would focus on the Census Order and Regulations approval process, described as ‘an informal super informative’ process.

The Board heard about plans for sharing Census questions with the Scottish Parliamentary Committee as part of a wider engagement process. Work would continue in the run up to recess with attendance at the Committee away day planned in August.

AW explained the plans for further question testing.

Resources were also being strengthened around policy and legislation.

EMB recognised and congratulated the team for achieving the Stage 2 outcome. AW reflected on the positive outcome from engagement and responses received.

#### 4.4 Budget

The paper circulated had been a snapshot at a point in time. The proposed changes to the rehearsal approach had still to be reflected in costs.

The existing Census finance model had been evaluated. It had been decided to apply a simpler model and work was in progress to put that in place.

The Task and Finish Group’s work was continuing and would report to the SRO and Accountable Officer.

### 5. IT Services – Common Operating Platform(COP) Programme Update

Sam Bedford (SB) provided EMB with an update on the work to achieve a common operating platform for NRS.

EMB considered the presentation and discussed the following:

- Digital Preservation Programme out of scope for COP.
- Impact for Census Rehearsal
- SAS migration opportunities and impact on 2021 Census.
- Content on NASNet owned by individuals impacting on work to close off the system.
- Sign off by data owner and opportunities for due diligence on decisions, particularly impacting on data and security.

**Action EMB 172:** Common Operating Platform: To engage with data owners to ensure appropriate sign-off happens and is reported to EMB. Owner: Sam Bedford.

EMB also discussed the support contract in place to manage the transition work as well as to support the NRScotland environment. With NRS colleagues trained it was expected that transition to in-house management would happen before October 2019.

Updates for COP would be reported into the Digital and Strategy Board.

## 6. Finance

### 6.1 2018-2019 Budget Position

Steven Hanlon (SH) presented the budget position as at the end of month 12 of 18/19, before year-end adjustments have been completed. A further paper was tabled which took account of financial adjustments and reported the variance of £830K , underspend, against the initial Budget Bill allocation, with VAT and audit adjustments only likely to impact the figure.

Drivers for the changed position since the report at end of period 11 had been:

- Income, mostly for Extracts, had been higher than anticipated.
- Capital overspend did not materialise.
- No reported overspend on any of budget lines.

### 6.2 2019- 2020

SH reported that some progress had been made in reducing the budget over-commitment since the last report.

Update on budget for 19/20

- Provisional allocations for Goods and Services, Other Staff Costs and Income budgets had been distributed to business areas for review and validation.
- Lists of posts had been shared with business areas to validate which posts should be funded in budgets and which should be treated as pressures following the criteria agreed at the March meeting of the EMB.
- Future pay deal budget pressures had been modelled.

The over commitment was expected to be manageable. It was noted that the proposed budget did not include the pressure posts. Savings were predicted to be made from vacant staff posts.

EMB discussed how pressures, including critical posts would be managed and how decisions are taken forward. Other points raised and discussed included:

- Census budget would be managed within parameters.
- Capital budget of £1.3m was proposed to be held and managed centrally. Substantial claims on the budget had been identified.
- Discussion around timing of decision for TTH and Adam Dome works.

- An opportunity for a prioritisation matrix to inform discussion when money allows to allocate against priorities.
- Recurring and one-off spend implications.
- Difference between capital and revenue options.
- Emergency situations impacting on expenditure in the financial year.
- Shovel Ready projects opportunities.
- Allocation process and capital budget threshold decision.
- Income generation.
- Efficiency savings of 3%.
- Prioritisation of resourcing, understanding of holistic view to make decisions.

**Decision : Capital budget threshold decision points:**

- **£20K SH in conjunction with Director**
- **DSB over £20K to £500K, reviewing and**
- **Escalating to EMB over £500k.**

EMB accepted the budget approach and accepted that by going into the financial year with an over committed budget position there was an acceptance of risk which would be monitored and reported to EMB by the Chief Financial Officer and was expected to be managed down in-year to a balanced budget position.

**7. Risk Management: 16+ review**

Linda Sinclair (LS) invited EMB to review the current position of risk to validate scores with the following changes noted:

NRS1 – Strategy - 16

NRS2 - People – Reduce from 20 to 16

NRS4 – Estates & Environment: Due to on-going issues - unchanged at 20

NRS5 – Costs of Estates Management - unchanged at 16

NRS8 – Storage – Risk to be revised to be split across the 2 key areas – physical and digital – score reduced from 20 to 16 across both with a plan to action to be developed.

NRS9 – Finance - Revise risk to split across the 2 key areas – sustainability of finance and balancing the budget – retain score to 16 across both.

NRS10 – Commercial – no change identified with the plan for a reduction once action comes to fruition.

EMB agreed to review risk by deep dives at EMB as well as other corporate governance bodies.

## **7 Business Planning**

### **8.1 2018-2019**

Linda Sinclair (LS) reported that the Strategy and Planning Team were working on the year-end report and these would be circulated to and agreed by EMB before publication on the NRS Website and Connect.

### **8.2 2019-2020**

LS would recirculate the plan for updates and once agreed by EMB the plan would be published on the NRS Website and Connect.

### **8.3 Strategic**

LS had provided options to PL for consideration.

## **8. Estates Update**

LS provided EMB with an update on Estates works as follows:

- West Register House (WRH) repairs to external stonework commenced. Communication would be issued. Consideration of engagement activity with the local community and opportunities to signpost activity, purpose, social payback element were being considered.
- Internal audit review.
- Thomas Thomson House (TTH): sprinkler system and other matters being addressed.
- General Register House (GRH): scaffolding had been erected in the Adam Dome. PL had been impressed with the management of the installation where good levels of collaboration had resulted in no impact to public services. He asked for his thanks to be relayed to those involved.
- Ladywell House (LWH) lease. Going through formal process of signing.
- LWH – tenants leaving and opportunity for Census to utilise space.
- Resource issues, long term facility management.
- Pipeline of projects, what's coming through and planning.

PL commented that it had been noted that the volume of work being taken forward by the Estates team was significant, given the size of the team and appreciated the challenges this activity would bring.

## **9. Governance Update:**

### **9.1 Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) 28 May 2019**

Update to ARC would include Census Programme, annual report and accounts, As well as internal and external audit annual reports.

## 9.2 Digital and Strategy Board 21 May 2019

Last met on September 2018. DSB would next meet with EMB members and was expected to transition into the active board with representation from across business areas at the following meeting.

## 9.3 Customer & Operations Board 25 April Update/Escalation

No escalations to EMB from COB were reported.

## 10 AOB

10.1 LS reported an opportunity for procurement training on EPC/GPC for authorised card users.

10.2 SB raised a point around a change to the framework for Interim Managers which was discussed. Agreed action would be taken by Procurement colleagues, with requests for extension to be considered by the Workforce Planning Group. LS would arrange for an update to be issued to clarify the process.

## 10.Date of Next Meeting

25 June 2019 (10.00 to 16:00), Ladywell House Edinburgh .

End