

NRS Executive Management Board (EMB)
19 September 2019
Room 1/G/8
Ladywell House, Edinburgh

Present:

Paul Lowe	Chief Executive (Chair)
Laura Lucas	Interim 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
Pete Whitehouse	Director of Statistical Services,
Steven Hanlon	Chief Financial Officer
David Craig	Census 2021 Programme Director (Item 3 & 4)
Shirley Cameron	NRS Business Manager (secretariat)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Paul Lowe (PL) welcomed Pete Whitehouse to the meeting. Pete had been appointed as Director of Statistical Services replacing Amy Wilson, following her promotion to a role in the Scottish Government. Apologies were noted from Amy Wilson.

2. Minutes and Actions

2.1 Minutes of 13 August 2019 were accepted. These would now be published on the NRS website and publicised on Connect.

2.2 Updates for the following actions were noted:

EMB 183: Census Programme Independent Information Assurance Review: Following review at the Programme Assurance Forum in October, a paper would come to the November EMB meeting.

EMB 185: The Public Sector Equality Duty report: A requirement to update this report bi-annually was understood and would be taken forward by January 2020. Action on-going.

The Board also discussed the merit of developing a corporate calendar of key policy and corporate governance events.

Action EMB 190: Corporate Calendar : Investigate and develop corporate calendar. Owner: Linda Sinclair

All other actions were noted as completed. The EMB action tracker would be updated accordingly.

2.3 A discussion at the Executive Management Team meeting on 3 September 2019 had resulted in agreement of a business case seeking approval for AV/Collaboration equipment in a number of meeting rooms. Actions identified had been completed and EMB confirmed approval to proceed with option 3. The Digital and Strategy Board would have oversight of the project.

Decision EMB-D97: Business case for AV/Collaboration equipment for NRS meeting rooms. Approved.

3. Census 2021 Programme update

3.1 The Census Programme Board was held on 17 September 2019. A summary paper describing the outcomes, key points and actions was provided for EMB as a basis for discussion.

3.2 Outcomes/key points were discussed as follows:

- Overview of Census – was noted.
- Programme Director's Report – indicating a deep dive of risk at the next meeting and improvements to the risk reporting approach to reflect risk movement.
- Readiness for Rehearsal – covered a discussion on the identified go/no go criteria for the rehearsal and a discussion around the learning objectives from the rehearsal.
- Programme plan – noted the requirement for the Programme Board for a baselined critical path plan to allow subsequent tracking by board members.
- Finance – noted the programme costs reviewed as part of the Spending Review forecast and the risk that the Scottish Government single year settlement approach raises for contracts committed across multi years.
- Three phases to National Statistics Accreditation – was noted.
- Legislation update – was noted and considered future opportunities to inform the Programme Board around progress of legislation and question testing.
- Procurement – requirements were being produced and route to market identified, with a risk around timescales and market responses discussed.
- IT - covered a discussion around development work towards 2021 and a risks related to cyber security .

3.3 EMB also reviewed the actions arising from the programme board and a draft agenda for the next meeting. The Census 2021 Business Case would be presented at a programme board meeting later in the year. Options for resource to progress this work were discussed.

3.4 EMB noted their thanks to Simon Hazlewood for producing the paper quickly and in a format which enabled structured and focussed discussion. The format would be welcomed for reporting Census Programme Board activities for future EMB meetings.

4. NRS Finance

4.1 Steven Hanlon presented the finance update for the period to the end of month 5. It was noted that pressures on the revenue budget were being managed down and that the projected overspend previously indicated had reduced significantly overall, although pressures were noted in some areas. The Board noted potential for overspend to reduce further in year and discussed merits of collating spending options that could be triggered later in the year should this be needed.

Action EMB 191: Budget – NRS Directors to consider 2019-2020 revised spending opportunities in-year, in conjunction with NRS Finance. Owner: All Directors

4.2 A paper reporting the NRS Spending Review submission, setting out the NRS spending priorities over the four years from 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 was presented. The Board noted the contents.

5. NRS File Plan – Options Appraisal

5.1 EMB were asked to consider the NRS approach to the continued use of ERDM as part of the Scottish Government file plan. An issue had been raised by the Scottish Government in relation to information governance compliance and ownership of data, as a result of the NRS shared use of the SG file plan solution.

5.2 EMB discussed the paper as follows:

- Data compliance and ownership of NRS data.
- Impact to existing data and existing working arrangements.
- System usage across NRS and SG.
- Audit of existing content, time and ongoing management issues.
- Restrictions in place for existing records and files.
- System costs and staff time for migration.
- Challenges across MACCS and FOI systems and understanding of impact.

5.3 EMB agreed further consideration of the options would be required. EMB agreed that a decision would be required quickly based on the articulation of the issues.

Action EMB 192: NRS File Plan - Laura Mitchell Linda Sinclair and Laura Lucas to further consider solutions for resolution of compliance issues with NRS ERDM/Objective file plan continued use, in conjunction with Scottish Government Information Governance. Owner: Laura Mitchell

6. IT Network Improvement Project – Outline Business Case and Letter of Intent

6.1 Laura Lucas presented the paper which outlined a project to improve the performance and reliability of the network infrastructure, while reducing yearly costs.

6.2 The Board were asked to note: the capital investment ask in FY 19/20, as a Digital and Strategy Board tolerance decision. The Board were also asked to grant authorisation for the Interim Director of IT to enter into a “commitment letter” with the SWAN authority to investigate the preferred procurement option.

6.3 The Board approved the outline business case and agreed that the letter of intent, ‘commitment letter’ should be signed by the Chair.

Decision EMB-D98: IT Network Improvement Project to authorise the Interim Director of IT to enter into a “commitment letter” with the SWAN authority to investigate the preferred procurement option.

7. Internal Audit Contingency – opportunities

7.1 The Board was asked to consider an opportunity provided by Internal Audit to make use of a contingency built into the 19-20 audit plan.

7.2 Following a short discussion, the Board agree that scrutiny of the IT Services procurement approval process would provide an opportunity for suitable assurance.

Decision EMB-D99: Internal Audit plan 2019-2020 – a review of IT Services Procurement approval process would be added to the Internal Audit plan.

8. Security

8.1 The Board had agreed to the inclusion of a standing item around, physical, digital and information security. Work was on-going to consider the governance required to co-ordinate the differences for management, reporting and monitoring purposes. EMB noted the benefit of having a coordinated approach.

8.2 Updates provided related to:

- recruitment of a resource to drive improvement to physical security; and
- cyber essentials / essentials plus renewal was being progressed by IT Services

9. Corporate Risk Management: 16+ Update

9.1 Linda Sinclair introduced the paper and EMB members were asked to:

- Consider the refreshed risk set, controls and action planned.
- Consider and agree ownership of risks NRS 15 and 18.
- Consider how Census risks should be reflected in the update.
- Advise if all significant corporate risks were covered within the risk register.

9.2 The Board welcomed the refreshed format. The Board discussed the report as follows:

- EMB would scrutinise corporate risk and, in relation to the Census Programme only the risk contained on the Corporate Risk Register and matters escalated to them by the programme board.
- EMB requested that 'red' risks were used to inform a programme of 'deep dive' activity for EMB and Audit and Risk Committee.
- Requested that a summary table, reporting movement of risk and tracking over time, should be included in future updates.
- Discussion about the concept of involving Non-Executive Directors in wider assurance considerations.
- Consideration of a risk workshop with EMB.
- Review of corporate risk alongside directorate risks, to ensure alignment and escalation opportunities.
- Risk appetite considerations.

Action EMB 193: Corporate Risk Register – Directors to review the risk register for appropriateness, mitigation and contingency action, as well coverage of risk and escalation opportunities/requirements from Directorate risk registers. Owner: All Directors

10. People Survey

10.1.1 Linda Sinclair provided an update on the current plans for the survey which would commence in early October 2019. A programme of internal communications would help to highlight the survey and encourage colleagues to participate.

10.1.2 Action outlined included communication around:

- Estates action,
- Health & Safety action
- Article from Trade Union's perspective
- Charitable donations
- Improvements to governance / transparency
- Instructions on completion of the survey as well as publication of completion rates during the survey.

11. Forward Look

Linda Sinclair asked EMB to consider the draft agenda. Directors were asked to feed in additional items to the Business Management Unit within one week.

Action EMB 194: Directors to provide comments on agenda items for EMB meeting on 17 October to BMU. Owner: All Directors

12. Governance Update

12.1 The NRS Strategic Board was due to meet on 3 October 2019, a draft agenda was discussed.

12.2 The NRS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) had met on 5 September 2019. Items had included approval of the NRS Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2020 as well as a deep dive discussion relating to the Census 2021 Programme.

12.3 The NRS Digital and Strategy Board was now due to transition to a fully operational board, with the first meeting planned for 25 September. Linda Sinclair would chair the Board.

12.4 EMB agreed to a proposal to amend the terms of reference for the Customer and Operations Board to change the meeting frequency to once every two months. The next meeting would be on 24 October 2019.

Decision EMB-D100: The frequency of the Customer and Operations Board would be every 2 months. The terms of reference would be amended.

12.5 The Thomas Thomson House working group had now met twice. Laura Mitchell and the group were considering the coordination of improvement works.

13. AOB

13.1 Steven Hanlon indicated that the Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2020 was currently with the Minister and was expected to be laid in Scottish Parliament by end of September 2019. Once that had happened the report would be published on the NRS website and shared with NRS Non-Executive Directors and staff.

14. Date of Next Meeting

17 October 2019

End