

NRS Executive Management Board (EMB)

5 November 2020

Held by Conference call

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
Steven Hanlon	Chief Financial Officer
Tracy Richardson	NRS HR Advisor (Item 5)
Shirley Cameron	NRS Business Manager (secretariat)
Paula Gellatly	Minutes Support

Apologies: Anne Slater Director of Operations and Customer Services

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

2. Minutes and Actions

2.1 The minutes from the meeting held on 18 August 2020 were accepted.

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

2.3 EMB noted that decisions had been made in correspondence, these were noted as follows:

- EMB-D113 – Information Security Committee ToR approval
- EMB-D114 – Business Continuity Plan approval
- EMB-D115 – Budget – proposed ABR response approval

3. Census 2021 Programme update

3.1 Paul Lowe provided an update on the re-planning exercise being completed by the programme following the Ministerial decision to move Census day from March 2021 to March 2022.

3.2 Following earlier rounds of engagement with suppliers, they were currently being asked to submit updated costings for the revised plans by 19 November 2020.

Engagement sessions were taking place to support suppliers in this process, with arrangements in place for additional sessions, if required.

3.3 It was anticipated that the plan, including costings, would be presented to EMB at the end of November and then to the Census Programme Board on 15 December for approval.

4. Business Area updates – Directors

4.1 Oral updates were provided by each Director.

4.2 Director for Statistical Services - Pete Whitehouse

- The Registrar General Annual Report (RGAR) had been published, accompanied by a successful media event. There had been good engagement with the media and wide coverage of different elements of the review. Paul Lowe noted his thanks to everyone involved in the production of the review this year for the excellent end product.
- The NRS Covid-19 analysis was continuing to evolve. Data was being published weekly by NRS with more detailed analysis also now being published on a monthly basis. Increasing demands for further and more detailed data analysis were being received.
- Further publications were noted as follows:
 - On 24 November NRS would publish analysis in relation to deaths due to specific causes including alcohol and suicide.
 - Analysis of drug related deaths would be published on 15 December 2020.
 - The baby names publication would be in March 2021 and would now be covered in one annual publication.
 - Experimental Population estimates, based on administration data, were planned to be published on 17 November. It was noted that research which had informed this publication was a major step in improving population measurement in the future.
- NRS continued to work with the Scottish Government to understand and improve the provision of data on ethnicity and equality.
- Paul Lowe noted the thanks of EMB in recognition of the work of the team over the last 6 months in very challenging times.

4.3 Director for IT Services - Laura Lucas

4.3.1 The focus had been on delivering IT priorities as well as remediating historic issues to enable NRS to develop and progress strategic plans.

- Census - a number of initiatives were underway to deliver data security and provide assurance in relation to digital first approaches.
- An accessibility review of the NRS corporate website was in progress.
- Disaster recovery services were in place. An update on approaches would be provided to NRS Audit and Risk Committee in 2021.

- Proof of concept for an application solution in relation to digital archiving was progressing and was expected to deliver wider benefits to NRS.
- Cyber Essentials Plus annual reaccreditation had been achieved. Paul Lowe noted the thanks of EMB to the IT Directorate on this achievement.
- Improvements to location monitoring of systems and applications were noted.
- Recruitment of key IT roles had progressed with Matt Sinclair and John Mooney successful in promotion to C2 Chief Technology Officer and C1 Technology Programme Manager, respectively.
- It was noted no support would be available for the provision of equipment for home working by IT Services during the period 15 December to 12 January 2021.

EMB action 255: Corporate Planning - IT Services Disaster Recovery to be added to the Audit and Risk Committee Cadence for spring 2021. Action Owner: Shirley Cameron

4.4 Director for Information & Records Services – Laura Mitchell

- Covid-19 impacts:
 - Resumption of critical services for access to physical records was being considered and supported via the Covid-19 Building Authorisation process.
 - Also under consideration was options for external stakeholders who require adhoc or emergency access to the records held by NRS.
- Strategic archiving workshops had been planned.
- Web crawling was planned to continue until March 2021. A reassessment of the requirement in January 2021 would inform any extension to the contract.
- Archive re-accreditation, following the six years renewal period was being progressed. The deadline, extended due to Covid-19, would be August 2021. The application would require input from across all NRS business areas, Laura Mitchell and her team would liaise further with other business areas in preparation for the review.
- NRS had sponsored the 'best student award' at the Digital Preservation Awards.
- Work was being undertaken to reschedule the Declaration of Arbroath exhibition with National Museums of Scotland. More information on dates for the exhibition would be publicised when arrangements were in place.

4.5 Corporate Services Directorate - Linda Sinclair

- The Census Finance Manager, Michelle Cummings was leaving NRS. Linda noted her thanks for all her work.
- The Estate team continued to focus attention on the Covid-19 secure buildings work. Other projects and work, in addition to this, were noted as:
 - West Register House - Covid 19 had impacted the overall programme which was now projected to finish in February 2021.

- General Register House, Adam Dome - This was highly specialised work, expected to continue until 2022.
- Planned resourcing activity continued.
- Corporate Governance arrangements had been strengthened by the inclusion of corporate decision making in relation to procurement approvals.
- The NRS HR Advisor team continued to provide support to occupational risk assessments for staff in relation to Covid-19. Activity to support recruitment was ongoing and it was noted that it could take up to 6 months to on-board a new role.
- Development of the NRS Strategic Direction continued with engagement across all Directors. A paper would be present to EMB in due course.

4.6 Delivery Directorate - Carla McHendry

- An item related to the Delivery directorate was included for separate update and discussion. See item seven.

5. Covid Update

5.1 Overview & Building Access – Linda Sinclair

5.1.1 Linda introduced the topic and explained an update would be provided to the Strategic Board at their meeting on 12 November.

5.1.2 As part of the Covid-19 incident management response, NRS had initiated a Covid-19 Secure Buildings Working Group. Meeting fortnightly, the group was reviewing the approaches required to reintroduce critical services into NRS buildings while ensuring health and safety of staff was maintained.

5.1.3 The Scottish Government had introduced a five tier framework to support the Covid-19 response for application at local authority level. NRS was considering the impact of this against plans and the existing SG roadmap. A paper would be provided to an Incident Management Team meeting during November 2020.

5.2 Customer and Operation Board – Linda Sinclair

5.2.1 Linda reported, on behalf of Anne Slater, that the Customer and Operations (COB) Board had reviewed the critical services and would continue to do this in consideration of the NRS approaches to the management of Covid-19.

EMB Action 256 : Corporate Planning - Arrange an IMT in November to discuss and approve any amendments to the current processes following the new Scottish Government Framework. Action Owner: Shirley Cameron

5.2.2 Linda Sinclair noted her thanks for the hard work undertaken across NRS.

5.3 Health & Safety – Occupational risk assessments – Tracy Richardson

5.3.1 Tracy provided an overview of the number of staff with essential staff status which authorised access to NRS buildings. An update on the process to undertake refreshed occupational assessments was provided. EMB agreed the importance of the assessment process and of recording accurate and up to date information.

5.4 Wellbeing and Working from Home Group – Carla McHendry

5.4.1 Carla invited EMB to note the paper which had also been provided to the NRS Partnership Board. The main points were noted as:

- The group had been considering approaches to support staff working remotely during the winter months. Themes would include best practice for winter working and loneliness.
- A virtual induction process for new staff joining NRS was being produced, complimented by a buddy system.
- A home working module for essential skills was also being considered to support staff working from home.

5.5 Paul Lowe noted his thanks to the Wellbeing and Working from home Group.

6. Health and Safety Management Plan (A30561102) - Linda Sinclair

6.1 Linda Sinclair introduced the paper. The key points noted were as follows:

- A draft health and safety management plan had been developed with external support, incorporating the key recommendations from the baseline assessment into health and safety management in NRS. The assessment had been reviewed by the Health and Safety Steering Group in February 2020.
- Following the appointment of an Interim Health and Safety Advisor, the plan had been revisited. Greater granularity on deliverables, together with named action owners and target dates were now provided.
- Work was already underway to implement the plan.
- A revision to the Health and Safety Committee ToR was provided for review and approval. It was noted that in the interim the functions of the committee were being undertaken by IMT. It was intended to stand up the corporate committee in April 2021.

EMB Action 257: CEO and Directors were invited to:

- **Approve the NRS Health and Safety Management Plan 2020-21**
- **Approve the reviewed terms of reference for the Health and Safety Committee.**

Action Owners: EMB Members

EMB Action 258: Health & Safety Committee ToR - Linda Sinclair and Carla McHendry to add reference regarding the Wellbeing and Home Working Group.

Action Owners: Carla McHendry and Linda Sinclair

7. Delivering Change in NRS (A30629407) - Carla McHendry

7.1 Carla introduced the paper and highlighted recent activity including:

- Working with other business areas to support the Digital Archiving work to develop strategic options paper.
- Undertook initial exploratory discussions on Archive Accreditation and PSRA processes
- Held initial discussions with Statistical Services colleagues to discuss strategy.
- Resourcing requirements for the Delivery Directorate were continuing to develop. A pragmatic approach to resourcing would be taken and recruitment would be aligned with Census 2022 and other business areas where possible. Job descriptions were being prepared for approval/grading.

7.2 Paul Lowe welcomed the update, indicating that the development of the delivery capability would be beneficial as NRS develops ambitions for the future of the organisation both now and beyond Census 2022.

8. Finance Report (A30542786) Steven Hanlon

8.1 Steven Hanlon introduced the paper which provided the position to the end of period six 2020-2021. EMB members were invited to note the report.

8.2 In summary the reported noted:

- The projected overspend identified previously had reduced. Interventions were in place to manage towards a balanced position by year end.
- A capital budget underspend would be managed in conjunction with Scottish Government.
- A capital spending review exercise had concluded and confirmation of capital budget allocation for the next 5 years was expected shortly.

9. Risk Management:

9.1 Information Risk – Deep Dive (A29979781) – Laura Mitchell

9.1.1 Laura introduced the paper which provided an over view of the four NRS corporate risks relating to information.

9.1.2 The paper provided a summary of the status and detail of the planned mitigating action for each risk.

- NRS6 - Information security, currently reporting RED with mitigation plans well underway
- NRS7 - Maximising the use of the information held by NRS. This was under ongoing review with Anne Slater. A question was raised whether this risk should be split into two separate risks which would manage a risk that NRS cannot provide information that is requested.

- NRS8 – Reviews physical records and storage capacity risks. It was noted that there were a number of projects and mitigating actions planned to manage this risk, although these would have resource implications. The wording of the risk would be reviewed to widen the risk to consider risks to physical records.
NRS20 – Considers digital archiving approaches and it was noted the delivery of the IT Common Operating Programme had significantly improved the position.

9.1.3 Actions arising from discussion were noted as follows:

EMB Action 259: Corporate Risk NRS7: Consider if this risk should be split into two risks. Laura Mitchell to consult with NRS Risk Manager to action an update to the corporate register. Action Owner: Laura Mitchell

EMB Action 260: Laura Mitchell to reword NRS8 and arrange a session with NRS Risk Manager and Laura Lucas to understand additional risk acceptance following feedback from ONS under NRS8. Action Owner: Laura Mitchell

9.2 Business Area COVID Risk ([A29979682](#)) – Linda Sinclair

9.2.1 Linda introduced the paper and provided a summary of the key points.

9.2.2 Paul Lowe asked whether a risk should be included to encapsulate the complexity of trying to manage concurrent big issues and continue to manage the business. Linda Sinclair confirmed there was a risk on the Corporate register than incorporated this risk.

9.2.3 Pete Whitehouse asked whether a risk to reflect the changing demands being placed on NRS, arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, should be considered. This would reflect the increasing and changing requests received from stakeholders across NRS.

EMB Action 261: Covid-19 Risk - Pete Whitehouse to discuss the Corporate Risk register with NRS Risk Manager to ensure all risks within his business area were captured. Action Owner: Pete Whitehouse

10. Standing items:

10.1 Procurement: Request for approval in correspondence of NRS Annual Procurement Report. 2019-20 and the NRS Procurement Strategy (Revised 2020-2023) **A30618870** – Linda Sinclair

10.1.1 Linda Sinclair indicated the reports would be provided for approval in correspondence to EMB, ahead of the next planned meeting.

10.2 Digital and Strategy Board (DSB) decisions – ([A30640464](#)) – Carla McHendry

10.2.1 The paper was noted. Paul Lowe reported that he found the update very useful and that the approach could be used for future reporting from DSB.

11. AOB

11.1 Laura Lucas advised that IT Services would be pausing the delivery of IT equipment to staff working at home over the Christmas period.

11.2 There was a discussion in relation to Christmas leave. It was agreed that work should be undertaken to maximise opportunities for leave, while recognising that certain core commitments would need to be met over the period and cover and contingency arrangements would need to be considered. It was agreed that further analysis would be undertaken and that this would be discussed at the next IMT meeting.

EMB Action 262: Linda Sinclair to speak to Anne Slater regarding Operations and Customer Services requirement over the Christmas break. Action Owner: Linda Sinclair

EMB Action 263: Commission information from each Director on business critical work that would be required over the Christmas period, to inform leave discussions and building opening arrangements. Action Owner: Linda Sinclair

12. Date of Next Meeting - 10 December 2020 - cadence business planning (A28181247)

12.1 The date of the next meeting was noted.

End