

NRS Executive Management Board (EMB)
6 February 2020
Room 1/G/8
Ladywell House, Edinburgh

Present:

Paul Lowe	Chief Executive (Chair)
Laura Lucas	Director of IT Services
Laura Mitchell	Director of Information & Records Services and Deputy Keeper
Linda Sinclair	Director of Corporate Services & Accountable Officer
Pete Whitehouse	Director of Statistical Services,
Carla McHendry	Delivery Director
Steven Hanlon	Chief Financial Officer
Anna Krakowska	Head of Strategy and Planning (Item 5.2 & Item 6)
Esther Roughsedge	Statistical Promotion and Analysis (Item 5.1)
Shirley Cameron	NRS Business Manager (secretariat)

Apologies:

Anne Slater	Director of Operations & Customer Services
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1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 Paul Lowe (PL) welcomed Carla McHendry to the meeting. Carla had been appointed as Delivery Director, a new post for NRS and was looking forward to developing this aspect of the business.

2. Minutes and Actions

2.1 Minutes of 19 December 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: ONS had been consulted. For further discussion. Action: Ongoing

EMB 185: The Public Sector Equality Duty report: A draft report was being considered by Directors with sign-off expected at EMB in March 2020. Action : Ongoing

EMB 190: Corporate calendar to include policy and other obligations. Action : Ongoing

EMB 200: Corporate Risk NRS 18: action to review risk. Action: Ongoing.

EMB 201: Circulation of Census governance meetings minutes to Executive Management Team (EMT) to be arranged. Action: Ongoing

EMB 202: Development of Census Decision log for routine circulation to EMT. Ongoing

EMB 205: Census Director team to engage with SRO and NRS Directors relating to responsibilities roles and structure. It was noted that a paper had been circulated at a previous meeting which would require further consideration. Action: Ongoing.

EMB 206: Census programme: Glossary of Terms for Executive Management Team and stakeholder engagement. Action: Ongoing.

EMB 213: Declaration of Arbroath: marketing considerations. Action was closed and replaced with action EMB 225.

Action EMB 225: Declaration of Arbroath marketing: To provide EMB with an overview of the likely demand and impact on material already made available from NRS and to consider opportunities for marketing around the facsimiles of DOA. Owner: Laura Mitchell

EMB 220: Census governance: BMU to circulate the approved minutes once available. Action: Ongoing.

EMB 221: Contingency and communication actions relating to the St Andrews House evacuation were on going.

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

2.3 EMB noted that a decision had been made, in correspondence, to finalise the NRS internal budget for 2019-2020. The decision had been added to the EMB decision log.

Decision EMB-D102: EMB approved the proposed SBR budget finalising the NRS internal budget for 2019-2020

3. Census 2021 Programme update

3.1 The Executive Management Team were now meeting weekly to discuss Census matters. Paul Lowe invited NRS Directors to raise points for an open discussion. Points were raised and discussed as follows:

- Confidence in delivery – Paul Lowe indicated fundamental design decisions and actions required to deliver procurement activity successfully and to time would require effort which may be an issue in relation to staff capacity to deliver. Steven Hanlon noted any delays to timetable would likely impact on the in-year budget for 2019-2020 underspend.

- Resource - Opportunities to access resource via the support contracts in place, both to review existing contract resource and to consider additional resources were discussed. Resource to strengthen governance, leadership and Programme Management Office(PMO) would continue to be required, alongside capacity to develop the Census 2021 Business Case and deliver digital assurance requirements. Laura Lucas indicated IT Services were considering strengthening resource in the PMO space and would engage with existing PMO resource for input. Further consideration around the future PMO approach for NRS would be considered strategically, with findings evolving through the development of the Delivery Director scope, by Carla McHendry.
- Budget – Engagement with the Scottish Government, Finance Team would continue to highlight budget pressures and movement, between and across financial years. Opportunities to maximise appropriate budget expenditure would be considered.
- Culture – EMB noted that the changes and stresses within the programme over recent months could impact staff and it was recognised and acknowledged by EMB that people working within the programme were working extremely hard to achieve the outcomes required, with some instances of significant personal pressure recognised and appreciated.
- Resource and contingency scenarios – A discussion around resource capacity to deliver key operational requirements within the programme recognised that there tended to be a higher reliance on a small number of individuals. Further understanding around flexibility, resilience, gap management and budget spend in relation to operational scenario planning could go some way to understand and manage pressures. It was also noted that staff remained able to access the Employee Assistance Programme and that options around resilience training and opportunities would be explored.
- Gaelic requirements – EMB discussed the provision of Gaelic language support and translated material as part of operational delivery in relation to legal obligations and financial constraints. It was agreed that further visibility of plans would be welcomed.
- EMB noted their thanks to all members of the Census programme for their continued hard work. EMB were very grateful for the team effort required to develop the Census design, enable procurement alongside the activity required to develop and manage the legislative process and stakeholder engagement. EMB further reflected on the progress in the programme in the last year and noted the improvements, progress and team which had been driving these changes and delivery.

Actions arising from discussion:

Action EMB 226: Census Programme staff resilience: To explore opportunities for personal resilience training and support available, via EAP or other routes. Owner: Linda Sinclair

Action EMB 227: Census Programme, Gaelic language requirements: Andy Robertson, Linda Sinclair and Anne Slater to discuss the provision of Gaelic language support and translated material as part of operational delivery, in relation to legal obligations and financial constraints. Owner: Linda Sinclair

3.2 Census 2021, Outputs Contingency Planning.

3.2.1 Pete Whitehouse presented the paper which invited EMB to note the work being done to support Census data quality and to provide initial options for discussion to mitigate for a low response rate. EMB were also asked to advise on whether resources should be allocated to develop the necessary administrative data required.

3.2.2 The Board discussed the paper as follows:

- The baseline approaches to use and gather administrative data by NISRA and ONS were at a different stage of maturity from NRS. Legislative powers were already in place to enable NISRA to gather and use administrative data. ONS had in place a wider programme to maximise use of available social survey and administrative data.
- The Board agreed that further investigation to inform ambition, scale, cost and timing would be required. It was noted, however that there was an expectation that option 1, 'do no additional methodological work' was unlikely to be an option the Board would approve.

3.3 The Board noted that there were 'harder to count groups' in the Census and measures were being explored to mitigate an under representation from these groups.

3.3.1 The Board agreed no decision would be taken on the options until further investigation had been concluded.

Action EMB 228: Census Outputs Contingency: To inform EMB of the approaches being taken by ONS and NISRA which might impact on any approach taken by NRS. Owner: Pete Whitehouse

Action EMB 229: Census Outputs Contingency: To further investigate options for gathering administrative data, in relation to ambition, scale and timing, to inform options for NRS. Owner Pete Whitehouse.

4. NRS Finance

4.1 Steven Hanlon presented the finance update, reporting the position to the end of period 9 of 2019/2020. It was noted that the revenue budget was reporting an underspend of £0.6m. This related to movement in the core NRS budget into a small underspend position. Progress continued to be made to deliver the portfolio of identified projects for capital expenditure, a risk of slippage had been emerging and opportunities to mitigate the risk of underspend on capital were being considered.

4.2 The Board heard that Scottish Parliament had still to pass the 2020/2021 budget bill and that the budget for NRS had still to be confirmed. Planning work was proceeding and a paper would be provided at EMB in March for consideration. It was noted that the budget for 2020/2021 was expected to start the

financial year close to a balanced position. Consideration and management of funding pressures, as these arise, would be required.

5. People Survey 2019 and Staff Engagement Network - analysis

5.1 People Survey

5.1.1 Esther Roughsedge had been asked to provide further analysis from the result of the People Survey 2019. A paper and a presentation were provided to aid discussion. Topics covered and discussed were as follows:

- People Survey results compared with other delivery organisations. The overall engagement index indicated NRS had a similar engagement index result to other delivery organisations such as SAAS, Registers of Scotland and Disclosure Scotland.
- The NRS employee engagement index by grade, where the Board noted the engagement index from A4 and B3 grades was the lowest.
- Results relating to engagement scores by time in the organisation. A lower result for people who have worked in NRS for more than five years was noted.
- The Board also reviewed the engagement index for each business area in NRS and as a comparison between 2018 and 2019 survey results. It was noted that the engagement index had increased in every business area between 2018 and 2019. It was also noted that the largest increase in engagement index between the two years had been from IT Services.

5.1.2 Paul Lowe noted that the survey had provided information to enhance corporate understanding of NRS, with evidence to target and develop an action plan for NRS. He further observed that corporately NRS had the strongest engagement score in its 9 year history. He noted it was encouraging to see progress in many themes and across many business areas, in some cases progress was significant. He thanks Directors and management teams for their work to improve the situation while recognising more still needed to be done.

5.1.3 Directors were given the opportunity to obtain further analysis of their respective business areas by contacting Esther Roughsedge.

5.1.4 EMB would consider the development of an action plan at the next opportunity.

5.2 Staff Engagement Network

5.2.1 Anna Krakowska had been asked to provide an update on the activity from the Staff Engagement Network (SEN).

5.2.2 To date 65 colleagues had signed up for SEN. Steps to consider additional ways of reaching colleagues, in addition to email, Yammer and Connect activity were discussed.

5.2.3 Views from SEN on People Survey results were noted by EMB. Topics had been identified and were presented for discussion, as follows:

- Improvement and managing change topics.
- Learning and development, with suggestions for EMB discussion, EMB considered that there was more to be done in relation to marketing the breadth of opportunity open to people alongside the interesting and valuable activity NRS offers. EMB were supportive of work to support wider opportunities in relation to themes such as career talks, mentoring and coaching.
- Communication suggestions were discussed and EMB noted that a SEN event on 19 February 2020 had been planned to celebrate the achievements of the group in its first year, as well as considering what 2020 would bring for SEN. All staff had been invited to attend. EMB also noted the suggestion for improvements/rebuilding of the intranet to improve information sharing/availability as well as internal branding and marketing improvements.
- Leadership. SEN had suggested there may be interest in staff attendance at corporate governance boards, to observe. EMB were broadly supportive, subject to design of an approach to ensure confidentiality was achieved where appropriate, that a programme was developed and piloted with appropriate guidance and process provided to colleagues. A further suggestion for NRS corporate governance meetings to be held in different locations would be explored.
- Culture and Values suggestions from SEN were noted. Points about promotion of diversity were discussed and the creation of a diversity calendar.
- Bullying and Harassment points were noted. The Board heard that work had been progressing around culture and values work that would assist,

5.2.4 Paul Lowe commented that SEN had raised different concepts with their work, some of which would be considered and taken forward. The report was welcomed as comprehensive and useful to have a shared view. The Board thanked Esther Roughsedge and Anna Krakowska for their work.

Actions arising from discussion:

Action EMB 230: Corporate Governance: To consider approach for a possible pilot exercise in relation to staff observers at NRS Corporate Governance meetings. Owner: Shirley Cameron

Action EMB 231: Corporate Governance: To consider the opportunities for corporate governance boards to be held in locations across the NRS estates network. Owner: Shirley Cameron

6. Health and Safety Review

6.1 The paper had been circulated and Directors were invited to feed in comments to the BMU. Directors additionally, were asked to for names from each area to provide representation for the Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR pointed towards a Non-Executive Director as the Chair and this was being considered.

Action EMB 19: Health and Safety Committee ToR: Directors to feed in names for business area representation to the BMU. Owner: All

7. Strategy Development

7.1 Linda Sinclair provided an update on the NRS Strategy development activity. A workshop had been held in December, attended by NRS Directors and the output of this had been collated into an early revised strategy. An externally facilitated workshop was being planned to develop this further.

8. TTH Working Group

8.1 Laura Mitchell reported an update notice was about to be provided to staff.

9. Forward Look

Linda Sinclair asked EMB members to consider topics for future meetings. Carla McHendry would provide an update on her initial work at the next meeting. The People Survey themes reported would be a continuing item at the next Board for directors to discuss next steps.

10. Governance Update

10.1 The updates were noted.

11. AOB

11.1 It was noted the SG had introduced MiCase as a replacement system for MACCS, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Parliamentary Questions case management. NRS Information Governance Team were looking at the system to consider any enhancements required to deal with NRS specific requirements, including FOIs handled by NRS with a 30 day deadline.

12. Date of Next Meeting

26 March 2020

End