

**NRS STRATEGIC BOARD MEETING**

Thursday 13 October 2022

10:00-12:00

MS Teams

**Attendees**

Paul Lowe (Chair)	NRS, Chief Executive
Bill Matthews	NRS Non-Executive Director
Mandy Gallacher	NRS Non-Executive Director
Gordon Shipley	NRS Non-Executive Director
Anne Moises	NRS Non-Executive Director
Anne Slater	NRS, Director of Operations and Customer Service
Laura Lucas	NRS, IT Director
Pete Whitehouse	NRS, Director of Statistical Services
Laura Mitchell	NRS, Director of Information & Records Services & Deputy Keeper
Linda Sinclair	NRS, Director of Corporate Services & Accountable Officer
Claire Gillespie	NRS, Chief Financial Officer
Lesley Smillie	NRS, Census Director (Item 4)
Elizabeth Hurst-High	NRS, Corporate Planning Lead (Item 7)
Gemma Barker	NRS, Business Support Manager
Graham Thomson	NRS, Business Management (Secretariat)

**Apologies:**

Carla McHendry      NRS, Delivery Director

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as listed.

1.2 It was noted that Bill Matthews had replaced Colin Ledlie as Chair of the NRS Audit and Risk Committee after the September meeting. It was confirmed that Colin Ledlie and Catherine McFie had stepped down as Non-Executive Directors and the Board recorded their thanks to both for their contributions to the work of NRS.

1.3 Anne Moises was welcomed as a new Non-Executive Director member of the Strategic Board. It was noted that Anne already served as a Non-Executive Director on the Census Programme Board.

**2. Meeting held on 25 November 2021**

2.1 Minutes from the last meeting were approved and would be published on the NRS website.

## **2.2 Review of Action Log**

2.2.1 Action SB 33: Forward look: to identify a future agenda slot for an update on the NRS Statistics strategy. The action was closed with an item to be included in the agenda for the March 2023 meeting.

## **2.3 Declarations of Interest**

2.3.1 Anne Moises declared that she undertook work as an independent gateway reviewer. This was not expected to conflict with NRS business and she confirmed that she would not conduct gateway reviews in respect of NRS.

## **3. Corporate Overview**

3.1 Linda Sinclair provided a corporate overview and introduced her paper.

3.2 The following topics were covered:

- Work on the 1921 Census
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- Storage Decant
- Estates and IT projects
- Financial position of NRS noting a balanced budget achieved for financial year 2021-2022.
- People survey

3.3 Bill Matthews commended the organisation for keeping business running during both Covid and Census. Bill Matthews highlighted the forward look and asked how NRS would operate post census. Paul Lowe acknowledged the opportunities that NRS had moving forward across the organisation.

3.4 Mandy Gallacher echoed the points made by Bill Matthews and observed opportunities to review NRS KPIs and to consider additional strategic and outcome based measures. Linda Sinclair confirmed that NRS were taking forward work that would incorporate strategic KPIs.

3.5 Gordon Shipley asked how performance would be reflected in the People Survey. Paul Lowe advised that results would be analysed once the survey was concluded. The Board would be given updates on the People Survey results and the actions from it at a future meeting.

## **4. Census 2022 Update**

4.1 Paul Lowe gave an update on recent activity. He provided an update on the level of response achieved in the main census. It was noted that the extension had resulted in an increase in the National response rate from 79% to 89.2%. It was also noted that the Local Authority response rate target of 85% was met in all but 2 of the 32 Local Authorities, with returns in these at 83.3% and 84% respectively. Nineteen Local Authorities had exceeded a 90% response rate.

4.2 In light of public speculation about the response rate Paul noted that he had established an International Steering Group (ISG) of Census, coverage survey and administrative data experts, to provide him with external advice on the effectiveness of NRS's plans to produce high quality census outputs. The ISG had met regularly and had confirmed to Paul that the 89.2% response rate provided a "solid foundation" to move forwards. Since then, NRS had concluded the census coverage survey. With advice from ISG, NRS would be making a change to the census design, to use administrative data not just for quality assurance purposes but also to offset gaps in data gathered. NRS had now secured agreement to the various sources of administrative data identified as being important to this work and there was a strong level of confidence that high quality outputs would be produced. This was endorsed by evidence provided to the Parliament's census Inquiry, including from Professor Sir Ian Diamond, the UK National Statistician.

4.3 Lesley Smillie introduced the report and provided an update on Scotland's Census 2022.

4.4 Anne Moises commended the report and questioned the risks of census archiving and decommissioning and how that ties in with general digital archiving. Paul Lowe confirmed that this was an established programme workstream and that further information on this could be provided at a future meeting. Laura Lucas offered to have a further discussion with Anne Moises on approach.

4.5 Gordon Shipley asked about the follow up action taken against people who did not complete the Census. Paul Lowe noted that the Cabinet Secretary had updated Parliament that action would not be taken in respect of non-completion. Where appropriate however cases of hard refusal to complete would be considered for follow up action, one option for suitable cases would be to submit these to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service for prosecution consideration.

4.6 Mandy Gallacher asked about the social phenomenon issue and enquired about the Third Section |Influence (TSI) for future collect stages. Paul Lowe advised that TSI's were used in the Census and the expectation that this would continue for the future census.

## **5. Terms of Reference review**

5.1 Paul Lowe presented the new draft of the Strategic Board Terms of Reference.

5.2 Lessons learned/census futures would be brought back into future strategic board meetings.

5.3 Bill Matthews advised that it would be useful for Non-Executive Directors to spend time together to define the role of the Strategic Board. Paul Lowe welcomed this idea.

5.4 Laura Lucas suggested that it would be helpful to have a list of the statutory based services NRS provided. Paul Lowe agreed with this suggestion and would take forward some work to produce a high level outline of this.

5.5 Paul Lowe invited suggestions to drive the Terms of Reference forward.

**Action SB 34: BM to meet with Non-Executive Directors to discuss the ToR and future opportunities and report back to Paul Lowe. Owner: Bill Matthews/Secretariat**

## **6. Forward Business Planning**

6.1 Linda Sinclair shared the Strategic Board Forward Business Planning paper.

6.2 The paper was taken as read and no questions were raised.

## **7. Equalities**

7.1 Elizabeth Hurst-High presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update paper and asked the Strategic Board to note this update and the work of the group.

7.2 Paul Lowe thanked Elizabeth and her team for their work.

## **8. Audit & Risk Committee: 15 September 2022**

8.1 Bill Matthews gave an update on the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 15 September 2022.

8.2 Bill Matthews confirmed the NRS Annual Reports and Accounts was the focus of the last ARC meeting and these were signed off. Audit Scotland activity relating to a follow-up to the Section 22 letter issued in 2021 was discussed.

8.3 Bill Matthews commended NRS for an unmodified audit opinion from Audit Scotland for 2021-2022 financial year.

## **9. AOB**

9.1 Paul Lowe announced Mandy Gallacher would be stepping down as a Non-Executive Director of NRS. Paul noted his thanks to Mandy for all her hard work and invaluable contributions over the years to the NRS Strategic Board and previously to the NRS Audit and Risk Committee, as well as to the wider National Records of Scotland community and wished her well for the future.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting: 15 December 2022 and Close**

10.1 The date of the next meeting was noted as 15 December 2022.

**END**