

Confirmed Minutes

Title of Meeting: **Board Meeting (Business)**

Date of Meeting: 09 July 2014

Board Members: Mike Brooker
Ruth Hall
Madeleine Havard
Peter Matthews (Chair)
Andy Middleton
Nigel Reader
Emyr Roberts (Chief Executive)
Lynda Warren
Paul Williams
Hywel Davies

Executive Team in attendance: Graham Hillier
Liz Davis
Ceri Davies
Clive Thomas
Kevin Ingram
Niall Reynolds
Tim Jones
Catherine Smith

Secretariat: Kelly Goswell
Geralene Mills

Item 1

Welcome

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies

2. Apologies for absence noted from Trefor Owen, Executive Director for National Services and Harry Legge-Bourke.

Declarations of Interest

3. There were no declarations of interest in relation to items on the agenda.

Ratification of Minutes

4. The minutes from the Board meeting on 14th May were agreed as a true record of the meeting and approved subject to the following amendments:

- Stocktake on Flood Risk Management post Winter 2013/14 – Action Point – Action to be reworded to ‘Madeleine Havard as Flood Risk Management Champion and Nigel as Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair deputed to meet with Jeremy Parr to scope the nature and extent of the review and to agree the route for scrutiny’
- Stocktake on Flood Risk Management post Winter 2013/14 – Para 16 – addition of ‘balance of language needed needs to be understandable and not overly technical’
- Recreation and Access strategic Statement 2014/15 (NRW B B 42.14) – Para 37 – context of ‘challenge’ timeframe.
- Update from the Chairman – Knowledge – Correction of Siwem to Ciwem.
- Update from the Chairman – Environment – Addition of ‘Montgomeryshire’.

Review of Action log

5. The Action log was reviewed with the following updates:

- Action 1 – The Chairman joined some of the Executive Team for a meeting on Customer Care and confirmed the Customer Care Strategy paper will be presented to the Board in October.
- Action 2 – Discharged. Details circulated of intensive courses, a number of Board Members attending courses including the Chairman who will be attending Nant Gwrtheyrn for a week long course.
- Action 3 – Discharged.
- Action 4 – Discharged
- Action 5 – Discharged
- Action 6 – Agenda item at Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting on the 11th July.
- Action 7 – Discharged. Briefing note circulated.
- Action 8 – Discharged.
- Action 9 – Discharged.

2. Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report – 2013/14 (NRW B B 49.14)

6. The Executive Director for OD and People Management presented the paper to the Board.
7. The paper detailed Natural Resources Wales' progress in achieving our ambition to work as an effortlessly bilingual organisation. In the first year the foundations have been established, with a good understanding of baseline skills and the development of a strong commitment to learning and enabling people to learn with support mechanisms now in place.
8. The Board supported the progress highlighted in the paper with the following noted:
 - The importance of the Welsh Language service was confirmed as a key component of excellent customer care
 - The introduction of standards by the Welsh Language Commissioner will be an important next step. There is a meeting scheduled in September to set the standards, and the framework will be established with a 3 year horizon of work.
 - The integration with the People Strategy was noted and commended
 - The Welsh Language was noted as being an important natural resource in its own right
 - The Learning and Development programme in Natural Resources Wales has helped profile and support the importance of the Welsh language.
 - The role of the Board and Leadership Teams to be featured in the final report.
9. The Board extended their thanks to the team, noted the progress made and approved the draft report.

3. Complaint Handling Annual Report – 2013/14 (NRW B B 50.14)

10. The Director of Governance presented the paper to the Board.
11. The paper gave a high level summary of complaints and commendations received by Natural Resources Wales. The wider customer care effort that is undertaken by the business on a daily basis was highlighted as being a vital component of ensuring that general enquiries and routine provision of services do not lead to formal complaints.
12. It was confirmed that as a result of the complexity of the transitional approach to complaint handling based on a combining of predecessor body processes, the development of a fit for purpose approach for Natural Resources Wales had been prioritised during the year. The new process is simpler and more clearly adopts the Public Service Ombudsman's model policy.

13. The Board discussed the paper with the following key points:

- The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee have offered support in-year and are content with the improvements that have been delivered
- Better categorisation of complaints by business area and issue will help in the analysis and improvement stage
- Feedback from complaints is helpful and needs to be considered alongside feedback more generally
- Some wording improvements to the external facing guidance were suggested and accepted
- Clarification that there is an 'acknowledgement' stage before the 'response' stage would be helpful
- It was suggested some casework examples that have resulted in resolution and improvements could be published on the website to help give confidence to customers that they will be listened to.

14. The Board noted the progress made during the year and approved the draft report.

4. Finance Update – 2014/15 (NRW B B 52.14)

15. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented the paper to the Board.

16. The Board discussed the paper with the following noted:

- The finalised year end position was £1.2M carryover.
- The Wales Audit Office audit on the 2013/14 accounts is progressing well.
- The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee have held an assurance session on both the annual report & accounts and Nigel Reader in his role as Board accounting expert has been involved throughout the process
- It was agreed that specific questions on the Capital programme would be considered under agenda item 5

17. The Board noted the paper.

Action: Secretariat to recirculate the Finance briefing note

5. Flood Risk Management Capital Programme & Presentation (NRW B B 53.14)

18. Jeremy Parr and Melissa Mahavar-Snow were welcomed to the Board Meeting and made a presentation on the Flood Risk Capital Programme.

19. The Board discussed the paper and presentation and the following was noted:

- The risk calculation for the Crindau project was explained
- The funding gap over recent years has been acknowledged and discussed by the Flood Risk Management Committee
- The Communities Board group offered to support in helping to ensure that deprived and under privileged communities are considered
- As the Crindau scheme is over £5m it will now be forwarded to WG for their approval, as per the Financial Scheme of Delegation.
- Flood Risk management decisions need to be explicitly made in the context of Natural Resource Management and area planning.
- The work with the Crown Estate on sand injection was discussed.
- It was agreed that assessing the direct benefits of a preventative programme such as flood risk management was difficult

20. The Board noted the capital programme plan and agreed that the review of the role of Flood Risk Management Committee should be taken forward and the team will initially discuss the scope with Madeleine Havard and Nigel Reader.

6. Evidence Strategy (NRW B B 54.14)

21. The Executive Director for Knowledge, Strategy and Planning introduced the paper to the Board seeking approval for the Evidence Strategy and delivery plan.

22. The Board noted the paper with the following key points highlighted:

- The improved clarity and definitions from the earlier draft were welcomed
- The readability of the strategy and the clear objectives were complimented
- The dependency on ICT to help deliver key actions, especially for data management, was discussed
- The benefits of working with partners and actively sharing data and information were agreed

23. The Board endorsed the strategy and looked forward to its dissemination and implementation.

7. Enterprise Framework Annual Report – 2013/14 (NRW B B 51.14)

24. Dave Edwell was welcomed to the Board Meeting and introduced the paper.

25. The Board discussed the paper and the following key points were noted:

- The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee endorsed the progress and supported the direction of travel.
- That appropriate commercial activities actively help us achieve our purpose and in some instances can achieve benefits for the environment as well
- How enterprise can be delivered by NRW as another component of Natural Resource Management was discussed
- The Enterprise Group offered its continued support for helping to consider the ‘pipeline’ projects

26. The Board endorsed the annual report and looked forward to future progress.

8. Interim Statement on Natural Resource Management including State of Nature Fund Presentation (NRW B B 55.14)

27. Joanne Sherwood was welcomed to the meeting and introduced the paper to the Board.

28. The Board discussed the paper and suggested:

- Section 7 of the paper to be appended as an annex
- The Statement needs to be clear as to why it is interim
- Although the readability of the Statement was commended the Board asked for further ‘everyman’ explanation. For example, simple definitions of river ‘basin’ and river ‘catchment’ should be provided.

29. The Board endorsed the paper and extended thanks to the team their ongoing work.

30. Joanne the proceeded to make a presentation to update the Board on the State of Nature Fund.

31. The Board wished Joanne well in her new role as the Director of the RSPB in Northern Ireland.

9. Proposed Regulatory Principles (NRW B B 56.14)

32. The Executive Director of Knowledge, Strategy and Planning introduced the paper to the Board and asked for endorsement of the regulatory principles set out in 'Our approach to Regulation to support Natural Resource Management'.

33. The Board discussed the paper and provided the following feedback:

- The principles will require a new way of working which will be a significant cultural change for some within the organisation
- Embedding the new way of working and principles will require a major effort to cascade the information and to support staff during the change. The role of the proposed toolkit was highlighted specifically in this context
- That a clearer Introduction to the paper be developed before publishing on the website

34. The Board endorsed the principles and welcomed their dissemination and adoption.

10. A Consultation on Natural Resources Wales' Salmon Stocking, Third Party Salmon Stocking and the Future of Natural Resources Wales' Hatcheries (NRW B B 57.14)

35. The Executive Director for Knowledge, Strategy and Planning presented the paper to the Board for information and indicated that a proposal for decision will be presented at the October Board Meeting.

11. Management of the NRW Estate to Enhance Pollinator Activity in Wales (NRW B B 58.14)

36. The Executive Director for Operations North and Mid Wales presented the paper to the Board and asked for approval for a number of recommendations to enhance management of Natural Resources Wales' estate for pollinators.

37. The paper was discussed and the Board made the following suggestions:

- That our information should be shared with other 'estate managing' organisations
- That an action plan, with timelines, should be developed to ensure delivery

38. The Board approved the recommendations and endorsed the paper.

12. Update from the Chairman (verbal)

39. The Chairman gave an update of meetings attended and reported on activities under the four pillars of Natural Resource Management.

13. Update from the Chief Executive (verbal)

40. The Chief Executive began his report by updating the Board on Health, Safety and Wellbeing:

- Committee plans to meet 10th July 2014
- Handover process is in place for the Executive Director of OD and People Management who retires at the end of July
- Diving review has been conducted with positive feedback
- Minor increase in stress reported with training initiated for managers to help support their staff
- The resignations of Leadership Team members Adrian Williams, Joanne Sherwood and Dai Jones were noted
- Management Team appointments currently underway

41. The Chief Executive updated on the progress of the Total Rewards Package:

- The Trade Union Ballot closed on the 8th July 2014 with a 'yes' vote across all Unions and a high turnout reported.
- The Package requires formal Ministerial approval in order to move on to the implementation stage
- An email to inform all staff has been circulated

42. The Chief Executive offered congratulations and thanks to the Executive Director of OD and People Management and her team for helping the organisation to achieve this important milestone, and the partnership work with the Trade Unions and their active participation was welcomed.

43. The Director of Governance circulated a finalised Corporate Dashboard for 2014/15 to the Board which has been developed with the input of the Board Performance Task & Finish Group since the May Board meeting discussion. The Dashboard has also been reviewed against the remit letter.

44. The first Performance Report for the Dashboard will be considered at the October Board meeting.

45. The Chief Executive detailed some meetings he has attended:

- Meeting with new Chief Executive of Plant Life
- Meeting with new Chief Executive of Coleg Cenedlaethol Cymru
- Met with Katie-Jo Luxton from RSPB Cymru
- Speaker at the British Hydropower Association
- Executive Team Visit to the Royal Mint in Llantrisant.
- The Executive Team had met the Crown Estate management team.

46. It was noted that the Chairman and Chief Executive visit separately in order to meet more people and will start being more proactive in publicising meetings.

14. Report from Committees

Remuneration Committee

47. The Remuneration Committee Chairman confirmed that the minutes from the meeting of 6 June 2014 were included in the Board papers for ratification purposes.

48. Key points noted at the meeting included:

- Pension Scheme – The EA’s Head of Pensions and the EAPF’s actuaries, Hymans Robertson, have accepted an invitation to the next meeting of the Remuneration Committee in September.
- Discretionary Policies within Local Government Pensions were discussed and agreed with minor amendments
- A Pensions Sub-Group of the Remuneration Committee would be set up comprising Nigel Reader and Ruth Hall
- The Organisational Development Plan was discussed and the finalised plan will be incorporated in to the Business Plan and will include a strong emphasis on Customer Care and the Leadership Development Programme
- The Executive Team remuneration was agreed as fair and comparable
- The Chief Executive’s remuneration was agreed.
- The Transition Advisory Group discussed risks around the IT transition
- A Whistle blowing issue was considered and the Chief Executive had replied to the complainant with a report prepared by the Chief Information Officer.

49. An interim Remuneration Committee Meeting was held on the 8th July to discuss the travel and subsistence of the Board and Committee Members, and was approved subject to some minor amendments. The Committee was also updated on the transition plan for the retirement of the Executive Director of OD and People Management

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

- 50. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chairman confirmed that the minutes from the meeting of 6 June 2014 were included in the Board papers for ratification purposes.
- 51. The meeting had focused on the first reading of the Annual Report & Accounts and the Committee had endorsed the work to that date.
- 52. A successful meeting of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chairs was hosted by Natural Resources Wales on 22 May, which had focused on updating on NRW and the Future Generations Bill.

Flood Risk Management Wales

- 53. Madeleine Havard confirmed a meeting was held on June 20 2014 in Llanelli which included a site visit to Rainscape projects.
- 54. Both the Chief Executive and Harry Legge-Bourke attended FRMW as Madeleine Havard was unable to attend.
- 55. Madeleine Havard noted that the working of FRMW would be reviewed over the next few months.

Protected Areas Committee

- 56. Lynda Warren reported chairing the Committee as Andy Middleton was unable to attend the most recent meeting. The Committee had considered papers on climate change, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest notification.

15. Updates from Board Groups (written)

- 57. The written reports were noted for information.

Charge Review Board Sub-Group (NRW B B 59.14)

- 58. The Board agreed the proposed Terms of Responsibility for the Charge Review Board Sub-Group subject to an amendment to clarify that the listed board members would form the actual group and that the group would be supported by the named executive and chaired by Nigel Reader

16. Forward Look and Proposed Board Dates

- 59. The proposed dates for 2015/16 were presented.

60. It was suggested that the Chief Executive and Chairman's diaries should be published as part of the Forward Look as Board Members may be able to offer advice in advance. The Chair observed that there may be challenges in doing this as diaries changed rapidly and frequently.

Action: Diaries to be added to the Forward Look where possible

17. Any Other Business

61. The Chairman noted the departure of Liz Davis as Executive Director for OD and People Management who will be retiring at the end of July. The Chairman and Board thanked Liz for her work for Natural Resources Wales and the wider public service over the last 40 years and offered best wishes for the future.
62. The Chairman closed the meeting.