

Natural England Board



Title: **Confirmed minutes of the eightieth Natural England Board meeting on 20 June 2018**

Members attending	Senior Leadership Team
Andrew Sells (Chairman)	Tim Hill, Chief Scientist
Julia Aglionby	Alan Law, Chief Strategy and Reform Officer
Lord Blencathra	Julie Lunt, Chief Officer Legal and Governance
Catherine Dugmore	James Diamond, Director Operations
Teresa Dent	Amanda Craig, Director Operations
Professor Sue Hartley	Guests
Joe Horwood	Abdul Razaq, NE Director Finance and Business Partner (Items 4 and 11)
Simon Lyster	Aidan Lonergan, Area Manager West Anglia (Item 4)
Henry Robinson	Ian Fugler, Director Transformation and Business Planning (Item 7)
Marian Spain	Rob Cooke, Director EU Exit (Item 9)
Michael Winter	Graham Tibbetts, Principal Adviser Engagement
James Cross, Chief Executive and ex-officio Board member	Secretariat
Apologies	Emily Finnie. Board and Executive Services Team (Secretariat)
Andy Clements	

Welcome from the Chairman and Declarations of Interest

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

In response to the Chairman's invitation for any perceived or potential declarations of interest in respect of the Board agenda, in addition to the recorded registers of interest, the following were received:

- Henry Robinson as trustee for the Fleet Estate and as a director of a company applying for a wildlife licence in respect of item 4.
- Simon Lyster as a long standing friend of an individual challenging Natural England by way of a judicial review covered at item 4.
- Julia Aglionby with respect of her usual involvement in Countryside Stewardship
- Michael Winter for item 4 with respect of his membership of a review group.

Action: Julie Lunt to present proposals for publication of Board member's Register of Interest to the July Board.

1. Confirmation of the March Minutes and Matters Arising (NEB M78 01)

1.1 The minutes of the March Board meeting were confirmed with no amendments.

Action: Legal and Governance Team to produce confirmed March Board minutes.

1.2 The Board noted actions from the last meeting were completed or in progress with any updates to the Board to be given at the appropriate agenda item with the exception of the following:

- Action Point 5: A settlement had been reached for the Personal Injury claim but the H and S team were working with the Health and Safety Executive on their approach to cattle in fields.
- Action Point 8: A Memorandum of Understanding was a work stream in the CS/ES Transition Programme which would be overseen by ARAC.

2. Feedback from the Ministerial Performance Review and discussions with the SoS (NEB 80 01)

2.1 James Cross reported on the implications of the Ministerial Performance Review held on 4 June 2018. The Board had been consulted over immediate measures taken in response to the SoS's requests and now:

2.1.1 Formally ratified the role of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) in continuing oversight of Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmental Stewardship (ES) delivery on behalf of the Board.

2.1.2 Formally ratified the decision to create an ES surge capacity from existing staff to assist on ES delivery

2.1.3 Commented on the actions planned to respond to the other issues raised by the SoS at the MPR.

3. Feedback from the Board Strategy Session and Next Steps (NEB 80 02)

3.1 James Cross invited the Board to consider a summary of priority issues for Board overview and engagement along with the metrics that would be used to measure performance. The Board noted the proposed priorities were the product of its strategy session in May and the Ministerial Performance Review. In general discussion the Board:

3.1.1 Supported the principle that the priorities should focus on Natural England's core business and especially those areas of business that were unique to Natural England and which no one else could provide. It was suggested that Board members could be assigned to each priority in an advocacy role and the Board Sub-Committee structure could provide a framework for this.

3.1.2 Considered that such prioritisation fitted its focus on the strategic perspective for Natural England and would identify what it needed assurance on. Advice was offered that it might be necessary to revisit sub-committee structures and also to build in the findings from the UKGI review when available to provide the necessary governance to enable the Board to fulfil its scrutiny role

3.1.3 Explored the implications of the balance to be struck between immediate and longer term priorities and advised of the need to manage the risk of devoting attention to ES/CS at the

expense of other business.

3.1.4 Acknowledged that the Board priorities would be the focus of its business over the coming year and asked for priorities to be presented as themes: outcomes (1-4); how we run the business (5 and 6) and the longer term strategic forward look (7). Presentation in the form of a score card with the opportunity to drill down on outcomes that were not 'green' would be helpful while for the strategic theme discussion papers would be needed. It was suggested that the Board should take an overview of its priorities in parallel with the Corporate Risk Register.

3.2 The Board agreed the Board priorities and metrics at Annex 3 subject to taking account of the following points raised in discussion. The Board:

3.2.1 Deliver environmental value through more efficient CS and ES

- Noted the metric for new Higher Tier Agreements was for this financial year and was what we were resourced to deliver.
- Recognised the immediate priority to monitor service standards since demonstrating ES/CS improvements was a prerequisite for our input to future scheme development in the longer term.

3.2.2 Enable sustainable development to contribute to environmental gains

- Explored the implications of Biodiversity 2020 not being included in the list of KPIs here. This featured as a red risk in the Action Plan and it was recommended that the Board needed to receive reports on how this risk was being managed.

3.2.3 Deliver government's Blue Belt Policy Commitments.

- This was an example of a priority where historically little Board time has been devoted because it was going well. However Board oversight was needed and the metrics covered both a strategic theme and an in year target.

3.2.4 Grow the connection between environment, health and prosperity

- Advised that the fourth metric which was strategic in nature should be included under theme 7, and the same applied to the last bullet in theme 2.

3.2.5 Develop an effective workforce

- Asked for diversity, and health and safety metrics to be added. Also complaints which could be used as a measure of our reputational standing and accessibility.

3.2.6 Deliver public service value for money to the Defra group

- Advised that that UKGI's work would be relevant here.

3.2.7 Strategic forward looking themes for the Board.

- Considered this to be the key theme where the Board should be working towards spending the majority of its time in the future.
- Asked for this theme to be listed first in the hierarchy in recognition of its importance.

3.3 James Cross summed up the discussion. The next steps would be for the executive to:

- Work on the presentation of business to future Board meetings.
- Develop the strategic forward looking theme.
- Involve ARAC Board members in the development of supporting systems of control and governance.
- Develop plans for a Board strategy session in November at which time it would also be appropriate to review the new arrangements.

Action: James Cross with the rest of SLT to introduce the new arrangements for Board business.

3.4 Following the announcement of his intention to retire in January 2018, the Chair outlined arrangements for appointment of his successor and a Deputy Chair.

4. Chief Executive's Report (NEB 80 03)

4.1 James Cross introduced his Chief Executive's report and welcomed Abdul Razaq and Aidan Lonergan.

4.2 The Board noted Abdul Razaq's update on the 2018/19 budget for Natural England in the context of the Defra position and noted the budget was not balanced and the plans to address this principally through an assignment programme of staff to EU funded roles. In discussion the Board:

- Acknowledged the current 'red' status of Natural England's budget position until such time as the plan to mitigate the risks was executed, and supported the Chief Executive's intention to deliver a balanced budget while recognising the implications for delivery.
- Recognised risks associated with managing any further in year pressures and with the requirement for an efficiency programme which needed to be considered in terms of its strategic implications.
- Expressed concern about the need to focus savings in areas which were not ring fenced or European funded such as Biodiversity 2020.
- Acknowledged that the executive was aware of risks associated with the assignment process in respect of loss of corporate knowledge and capacity to manage and that this would be taken into account in assignment decisions. However it was recognised that once the exercise was completed there could be a need to reconsider the organisation's priorities.
- Noted a full finance report would be presented to the July Board meeting which members' requested should include a reforecast of the 2018/19 budget.

Action: Abdul Razaq to present a finance report to the July Board including a reforecast of the 2018/19 budget.

4.3 Aidan Lonergan gave a presentation on West Anglia Team with examples of highlights being an SSSI extension and joint working with the EA including their funding a post, and with the biggest challenge being leading staff in the light of uncertainties presented by the budget allocation and assignments. The Board: acknowledged the Area Manager's objective of retaining the best team after assignment and the importance he placed on the role of Team Leaders and Managers in providing leadership and ensuring capacity was retained while at the same time looking for further efficiencies in licencing and planning, making use of the opportunities presented by the income target, and re-profiling protected sites and biodiversity work. The Board thanked Aidan and wished him well in managing the challenges he had identified.

4.4 The Board noted the updates on issues reported in Annex 1 and in discussion:

4.4.1 Offered congratulations to the Team on Marine Conservation Zone achievements and asked for this good news story to be promoted.

Action: Alan Law to convey the Board's congratulation to the Team for their MCZ achievements.

Action: Graham Tibbetts to work up a proposition for a good news story on MCZs.

- 4.4.2 Noted the position on recruitment to Secretary of State vacancies on National Park authority and AONB Conservation Boards, and advised other ways needed to be found for engaging with these key partners in a more creative way and that the Glover Review provided a mechanism for this.
- 4.4.3 Noted the proposals for Board member engagement and while recognising the opportunities presented by London meetings for engagement with Defra, requested full advantage be taken for meetings held outside London for both site visits and meeting staff. The Chairman also invited Board members to join him on his Chairman visits.
- 4.4.4 Received an update on UK Government Investment's (UKGI) review.
- 4.5 The Board noted the update on legal issues in Annex 2.
- 4.6 The Board commended the Chief Scientist's Report at Annex 3 and:
- Offered congratulations on the framing behaviours toolkit and would like to see this promoted more widely.
 - Were impressed by the integrating biodiversity report.
- 4.7 The Board noted the update on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at Annex 4 and asked Julie Lunt to bring a full report to the July Board meeting with a request that this include an analysis for homeworkers too.

Action: Julie Lunt to bring a report on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to the July Board meeting.

- 4.8 In response to James Cross's invitation to review the Corporate Risk Register at Annex 5 the Board:
- Suggested it would be helpful to align the corporate risks with the themes for Natural England's seven key priorities.
 - Recommended that the risk of lack of capacity and skills in the workforce and the potential impact on delivery should be included.
 - Queried the 'amber' rating for Biodiversity 2020 and suggested the wording should be revisited too, along with a correction to the current reporting that the pressure on extinctions was reducing.
 - Considered presentation externally of the trajectory for monitoring work needed further consideration.
 - Recommended that the risk to animal health of increasing wild boar numbers needed to be recognised and welcomed Tim Hill's offer to take this concern to the next Defra Biosecurity meeting.
 - Agreed bTB licensing should be rated 'amber' in the light of the increased number of legal challenges.

5 House of Lords NERC Select Committee Report (NEB 80 04)

- 5.1 Alan Law introduced the paper and the Board welcomed Jonathan Burney for this item. The Board noted the summary of key conclusions from the Select Committee report and the Government's response. In responding to the need to advise Defra in preparation for the House of Lords debate on the report, the Board:

- 5.1.1 Advised on the scope of the briefing to Defra which could be wider than the points raised by the Committee and in which credibility of our offer could be enhanced by including examples of our work on the ground.
- 5.1.2 Welcomed the examples of positive feedback about Natural England from stakeholders in the oral evidence sessions.
- 5.1.3 Acknowledged the accommodation reached in relation to communications and that while there would be no reinstatement of a Natural England website, there was recognition of our independence afforded by our NDPB status.
- 5.1.4 Explored the possible mechanisms for Natural England having a distinct voice in its work with Defra Communications and received assurance on the consistency of messages.
- 5.1.5 Agreed Jonathan Burney and Lord Blencathra should engage over Natural England's briefing to Defra for the anticipated debate in the House of Lords.

Action: Jonathan Burney to work with Lord Blencathra on Natural England's briefing to Defra for the anticipated debate in the House of Lords

- 5.2 Beyond the House of Lord Debate, the Board supported the key priorities for Natural England as set out in 5.2 including advising Defra on easier charging powers and on making the most of public bodies' duties to further biodiversity.

6. Communications – ways of working NEB 80 05)

- 6.1 Julie Lunt introduced the overview of ways of working with Defra Group Communications. The Board:
 - 6.1.1 Noted progress to date in terms of the draft protocol and more detailed ways of working and welcomed the proposed communications protocol at Annex 1.
 - 6.1.2 Acknowledged that there would be resistance to its suggestion for creation of an intelligent client unit.
 - 6.1.3 Noted the Chairman and Chief Executive would be meeting with the Defra Director of Communications to confirm the way forward which would then inform the development of the Protocol and Ways of Working which would be brought back as part of the Defra Group Partnership Agreement for Board approval.

7. Countryside Stewardship/Environmental Stewardship Operational Update (NEB 80 06)

- 7.1 James Diamond gave an update on Environmental Stewardship (ES) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) operational performance and Ian Fugler an update on planned CS improvements and transition arrangements.
- 7.2 In reviewing operational performance the Board, while recognising the serious situation remained and that there were still reputational issues to manage around promptness of payments and dispatch of agreements and application packs, nonetheless welcomed the report with encouraging news on progress and asked for its thanks and appreciation to be passed on to all those working to deliver ES and CS. In discussion the Board:
 - 7.2.1 Recognised the impact on ES of past prioritisation on CS, but that ES was now: back on profile with claims; advance payments would be completed by mid-August; and, final payments completed by mid-October. The news on ES payments for 2018 was also positive.

- 7.2.2 Recommended good communications were important in keeping everyone engaged, and noted this was recognised and being addressed by the CS/ES Programme Board.
- 7.2.3 Noted the current position on delivery of CS with:
- Improvements to 2017 payments achieved through the introduction of fast track and bridging payments which it was reassured to note had been signed off by the Permanent Secretary and SoS.
 - An extension of the claim deadline for 2018 agreements to 15 June, and an extension being sought for requests for the 2019 application pack.
- 7.2.4 Highlighted the potential risks to environmental outcomes, NE's capacity and the impact on cash flows for agreement holders, associated with the increasing number of HLS expiries in coming year. While noting that 95% of those leaving HLS had entered CS, the Board requested a trajectory on future HLS expiries and our capacity to help identify the strategic implications.

Action: James Diamond/Ian Fugler to provide the Board with trajectory on future HLS expiries and our capacity to help identify the strategic implications

- 7.3 The Board in reviewing the planned CS improvements and the preparation for staff transition to the RPA:
- 7.3.1 Noted the raft of activity in reviewing CS in relation to current work processes, evidence capture and business rules and recognised the notable level of collaboration and appetite for risk in the improvements programme.
- 7.3.2 Advised on the presentation of improvements in terms of environmental outcomes and communications to the SoS the following month and emphasised the importance of demonstrating evidence for meeting deadlines and delivery and transparency over the associated risks.
- 7.3.2 Considered simplification should not compromise delivery for the natural environment and recognised while that this was a challenge in terms of our strategic ambitions CS allowed delivery of environmental outcomes and by increasing confidence it was hoped that there could be transfer from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2.
- 7.3.3 Recognised the importance of the planned Memorandum of Understanding or Partnership Agreement with the RPA in confirming NE's retention of responsibility for delivery of environmental outcomes.

8. Uplands Programme Update (NEB 80 07)

- 8.1 Amanda Craig updated the Board on progress being made in the delivery of Natural England's Uplands Delivery Programme and set the context for this work in relation to the forthcoming Government update to the European Commission.
- 8.2 The Board offered congratulations to Area Teams for the good progress being made with landowners for the immediate voluntary cessation of rotational burning on blanket bog, and:
- Noted the reasons for geographical variations in the receipt of signed voluntary commitments and the measures put in place to address this.
 - Noted the options for action with those who refused to sign a voluntary agreement and the focus in the short term for making progress with commitments that had not yet been returned.

- 8.3 The Board noted progress being made by Area Teams on the delivery of long term plans in the uplands and the ongoing work to refresh our delivery plans and management of strategic risk and:
- Were pleased to see engagement of the Chief Scientist in conversations with stakeholders as an example of interaction between science and practitioners achieving desired outcomes.
 - Agreed the proposed trajectory for long term plans should come to the Board.
 - Noted the new evidence based advice issued to Area Teams and the intention to share this externally and advised that it should be made clear that this advice was not prescriptive so as to avoid any misinterpretation.
- 8.4 The Board supported the continuing need for the Upland Working Group to oversee and steer this programme which presented many opportunities to demonstrate the outcomes approach. It recognised this was a reversal of the decision at its last meeting when it had been agreed that the group should be wound up but the provision the group provided for detailed scrutiny and raising of risks to the Board was considered important at this stage of the programme.
- 8.5 The Board agreed the updated Terms of Reference subject to adding an extra section identifying what the UWG should report to the Board and recognition that the Board retained collective responsibility.

Action: Amanda Craig to update the Uplands Working Group Terms of Reference.

9. EU Transition Update (NEB 80 08)

- 9.1 Rob Cooke introduced the paper and gave a further update on progress with agriculture, environmental regulations including environmental principles and the governance consultation, marine and fisheries and Day 1 Readiness.
- 9.2 In relation to the introduction of a new environmental land management scheme, the Board:
- Explored the implications valuing payments on the basis of natural capital and recognised the challenges involved and that it was anticipated that there would need to be a transition to any new arrangements.
 - Advised of that valuation had to be WTO compliant and that the longer term solution could be to base valuations on cost of delivery while not losing sight of the principle of achieving environmental outcomes. A combination of science and compliance was needed.
 - Advised of the need for adequate time for IT lead in for any new scheme and recognised the tension between having a simple and easy to use system which could also provide the reporting information on environmental outcomes and meeting HMT requirements.
 - Noted the position on the development of metrics, and advised evaluation of any pilot schemes was essential in honing further development of the scheme which could be a role for Natural England
 - Noted NE expertise offered to Defra and received information on the timing of scheme design which were constrained by the implementation period and the scoping of payment rate methods which would need to be justified after the current commitment to the next election.
- 9.3 The Board:
- Noted Natural England had not been invited to give oral evidence into the HoC Environmental Audit Select Committee's inquiry into the Government's proposals on Environmental Principles and Governance.
 - Considered that that while it was not for NE to advise Defra on the design or powers of any new body, we should offer our assistance to ensure that it would help in the delivery of environmental outcome and did not create unnecessary bureaucratic burdens.
 - Considered that it was a Board responsibility to respond to the consultation and asked for

this to be on its July agenda.

Action: Rob Cooke to bring Natural England's response to the Environmental Principles and Governance consultation to the July Board.

10. Proposed Organisational Changes (NEB 80 09)

- 10.1 James Cross updated the Board on proposed changes to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the revised management arrangements and governance accountabilities for SLT and Directors.
- 10.2 In discussion the Board:
- 10.2.1 Noted the drivers for change and progress to date with the process involving SLT engagement with Directors and Area Managers in developing solutions for revised Director accountabilities and governance arrangements to better facilitate integrated delivery.
- 10.2.2 Advised that reference to a 'Change' corporate governance group should be reconsidered.
- 10.2.3 Noted next steps involved recruitment to the two Chief Officer roles and finessing the system of internal control.
- 10.2.4 Recommended that links needed to be made between Chief Officer roles and the seven Board priorities discussed earlier in the meeting. Further clarification was requested on this and the links with Director lead roles. It was agreed that the new arrangements would be mapped and provided to the next Board meeting with Terms of Reference including systems of control and governance arrangements.

Action: James Cross to provide further information on the system of governance for the organisational changes to the July Board meeting.

11. 2017/18 Annual Report and Accounts (NEB 80 10)

- 11.1 Catherine Dugmore introduced the item and at her invitation Abdul Razaq set out the process for finalising the Annual Report and Accounts and took the Board through the Analytical Review which explained the variances between 2016/17 and 2017/18. The Board:
- Commended the analytical review and thanked Abdul Razaq and his team for the excellent document.
 - Welcomed the clear audit opinion Natural England was due to receive for 2017/18 which was a significant achievement and credit to the Finance Team.
 - Considered that ARAC had discharged its responsibility fully and effectively.
 - Endorsed ARAC's decisions and recommendation to the Accounting Officer on the signing of the Annual Report and Accounts.
 - Agreed that under delegated authority from the Board that James Cross should sign the final version of the Annual Report and Accounts on the advice of the Finance Director and the ARAC Chair.
 - Acknowledged the Annual Report and Accounts as an important communications tool.

2018/19 Action Plan and forward look (NEB 80 11)

- 11.3 Julie Lunt introduced the paper and the Board:
- Noted the Action Plan for 2018/19 has been finalised and submitted to Defra and that copies would be circulated to Board members.
 - Noted the proposals for the 2019/20 business planning round were due to start imminently.

Action: Legal and Governance Team to circulate the final 2018/19 Action Plan to Board members.

12. Fenn's Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR Compulsory Purchase Order (NEB 80 12)

12.1 Amanda Craig introduced the paper seeking authority from the Board to make a compulsory purchase order in relation to land at Whixall Moss, Shropshire.

12.2 The Board:

12.2.1 Noted the context for the proposal in relation to delivery of a LIFE project on the site.

12.2.2 Received assurance from Henry Robinson's and Julie Aglionby's reports from visiting the site.

12.2.3 Resolved to make the Natural England (Land North West of Morris' Bridge Whixall Moss) Compulsory Purchase Order (No.1) 2018 in accordance with the draft Order and Map attached to the paper and for the reasons set out in the accompanying Statement of Reasons and, in the event that there are no objections and the Order is passed back to Natural England to confirm this, to delegate powers of confirmation to Head of Legal Services and thereafter proceed with the vesting of the land.

13. Health and Safety Update (NEB 80 13)

13.1 James Diamond introduced the Health and Safety update. The Board:

- Noted the incident statistics and trends.
- Noted the revised H&S KPI for improvement of near hit: accident reporting ratio by 10%.
- Noted the development of a new H&S Strategy to support the ongoing development of our H&S culture and noted this would be presented to the Board later in the year.
- Acknowledged the overlap with wellbeing work and was reassured to note that the two groups worked together closely. Julie Lunt reported that she would be presenting an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report, including wellbeing, to a future Board meeting.

14. Board Committee and Sub-Group Updates

14.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Update (NEB 80 14) and ARAC Annual Report for the Board 2017/18 (NEB 80 14A)

14.1.1 Catherine Dugmore introduced the update from the April and May ARAC meetings, the updated ARAC Terms of Reference, and ARAC's Annual Report which reported how ARAC had concluded its advice on the Annual Report and Accounts to the Accounting Officer and summarised the Head of Internal Audit's Annual report with a 'moderate' opinion. She drew the Board's attention to ARAC's request for information on handling General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) risks in the light of the 'limited' assurance rating for compliance and this position was shared.

14.1.2 The Board:

- Noted the minutes of the April and May ARAC meetings.
- Agreed the updated ARAC TOR including inviting other Board members to attend ARAC meetings on a rotational basis.
- Noted the ARAC 2017/18 Annual Report.

Action: Legal and Governance Team to invite Board members to attend ARAC meetings on a rotational basis.

14.1.3 Catherine Dugmore reported that she had been invited to sit on the Defra ARAC and gave an update on the June meeting and the request for a Safe Payments Lessons Learned closure report from Natural England at its autumn meeting.

14.2 Remuneration Committee (RemCom) (NEB 80 15)

14.2.1 The Board noted the minutes of the March and May Remuneration Committee meetings.

14.2.2 The Chair took an action to appoint a new RemCom Chair.

Action: Chair to appoint a RemCom Chair.

14.3 Natural England Science Advisory Committee (NESAC) Update (NEB 80 16)

14.3.1 Tim Hill introduced the NESAC update drawing the Board's attention to NESAC's challenge, support and advice role most recently in relation to the 25 Year Environment Plan (25YP), piloting biometrics, and Ecological Networks handbook. In discussion the Board:

- Commended NESAC's work on the 25YP in identifying Natural England's USP and advised that there was potential for greater transparency of our science work and that consideration should be given to a Board session on science in relation to delivery and partnerships.
- Advised that it would be important to evaluate the impact of the Ecological Networks handbook.

14.4 Board Innovation Group (BIG) (NEB 80 17)

14.4.1 Simon Lyster introduced the update from the Board Innovation Group. The Board:

- Noted the minutes of the April BIG meeting.
- Noted that BIG had undertaken an effectiveness review which would be discussed at its July meeting with the intention of identifying future BIG priorities for Board endorsement.
- Requested information on the science behind the new licences.

Action: Tim Hill to send the latest draft of the synthesis of the evidence behind our strategic approach to great crested newts to Joe H, with a follow up conversation on the next steps to publishing.

Action: Legal and Governance Team to bring forward the BIG update on the July Board agenda.

14.5 Landscape Group (NEB 80 18)

14.5.1 The Chair introduced this item and the Board noted the minutes of the Landscape Group meeting on 8 May and that a meeting had been held on 13 June.

14.5.2 The Board explored the Group's role and Natural England's position in relation to the Glover Review and in discussion:

- Considered we should continue with work to simplify the landscape designation process and at the same time play into the Glover Review.
- Acknowledged the risks associated with the different timescales with the Glover Review not reporting until this time next year, but recommended if the risk of raising expectations and pre-empting the Glover Review could be managed there could be benefits from piloting use of third parties to provide information for designations.
- In the light of delays in the Suffolk AONB designation recommended greater resilience in

capability was needed.

- Recognised the opportunities presented by the Glover Review for promotion of environmental quality in existing protected landscapes with validation provided by NESAC.

14.8.3 In conclusion the Board discussion demonstrated a clear expression of appetite for continuing the review of Natural England's approach to statutory landscape designation and the opportunities presented by the Glover Review. The Board suggested the Senior Leadership Team should work up priorities for future work based on its steers.

16. Board Diary (NEB 80 19)

16.1 The Board noted the dates and locations of 2018 and 2019 Board meetings.

17. Any Other Business

17.1 The Board received noted that a Parliamentary Question on monitoring condition on SSSIs had been received earlier that day.

Actions log

No	Agenda Item/Paper	Ref	Action	Owner
1	Confirmation of the February Minutes and Matters Arising (NEB M78 01)	1.1	Produce confirmed March Board minutes.	Legal and Governance Team
2	Feedback from the Board Strategy Session and Next Steps (NEB 80 02)	3.3	Introduce the new arrangements for Board business.	James Cross with the rest of SLT
3	Chief Executive's Report (NEB 80 03)	4.2	Present a finance report to the July Board including a reforecast of the 2018/19 budget.	Abdul Razaq
4	Chief Executive's Report (NEB 80 03)	4.4	Convey the Board's congratulation to the Team for their MCS achievements.	Alan Law
5	Chief Executive's Report (NEB 80 03)	4.4	Work up a proposition for a good news story on MCZs.	Graham Tibbetts
6	Chief Executive's Report (NEB 80 03)	4.7	Bring a report on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to the July Board meeting.	Julie Lunt
7	House of Lords NERC Select Committee Report (NEB 80 04)	5.1.5	Work with Lord Blencathra on Natural England's briefing to Defra for the anticipated debate in the House of Lords.	Jonathan Burney
8	Countryside Stewardship/Environmental Stewardship Operational Update (NEB 80 06)	7.2.4	Provide the Board with trajectory on future HLS expiries and our capacity to help identify the strategic implications	James Diamond/Ian Fugler
9	Uplands Programme Update (NEB 80 07)	8.5	Update the Uplands Working Group Terms of Reference.	Amanda Craig
10	EU Transition Update	9.3	Bring Natural England's response to	Rob Cooke

	(NEB 80 08)		the Environmental Principles and Governance consultation to the July Board	
11	Proposed Organisational Changes (NEB 80 09)	10.2.4	Provide further information on the system of governance for the organisational changes to the July Board meeting.	James Cross
12	2017/18 Annual Report and Accounts (NEB 80 10)	11.3	Circulate the final 2018/19 Action Plan to Board members.	Legal and Governance Team
13	Board Committee and Sub-Group Updates	14.1.2	Invite Board members to attend ARAC meetings on a rotational basis.	Legal and Governance Team
14	Board Committee and Sub-Group Updates	14.2.2	Appoint a RemCom Chair	Chair
15	Board Committee and Sub-Group Updates	14.4.1	Send the latest draft of the synthesis of the evidence behind our strategic approach to great crested newts to Joe Horewood, with a follow up conversation on the next steps to publishing.	Tim Hill
16	Board Committee and Sub-Group Updates	14.4.1	Bring forward the BIG update on the July Board agenda	Legal and Governance Team