Board Meeting

Minutes of the Board meeting held on 16 May 2018 in Nobel House, London.

**Present**

- Emma Howard Boyd  Chair
- James Bevan  Chief Executive
- Richard Macdonald  Deputy Chair
- Peter Ainsworth  Board Members
- John Varley  Board Members
- Gill Weeks
- Joanne Segars
- Maria Adebowale-Schwarte
- Lynne Frostick
- Robert Gould
- John Lelliott
- Karen Burrows
- Caroline Mason
- Judith Batchelar

**In attendance**

- Harvey Bradshaw  Executive Director Environment and Business
- John Curtin  Executive Director Flood and Coastal Risk Management
- Toby Willison  Executive Director Operations
- John Leyland  Chief of Staff
- Peter Kellett  Director of Legal Services
- Bob Branson  Director of Finance
- Sam Lumb  Deputy Director Governance and Engagement
- Rob Creed  Governance and Engagement Manager
- Beth Axtell  Board and Executive Secretariat Adviser
- Kevin Austin  Deputy Director, Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Environment
- Andy Croxford  Deputy Director, Europe Unit
- Alice Waterson  Deputy Director, Climate Change
- Heather Smith  Defra Group Finance Director
- Liz Parkes  Deputy Director, Climate Change
- Mark Ellis Jones  Manager, Climate Change & Energy
- Jens Evans  Senior Advisor Change & Energy
- Sustainable Business and Development
- Gillian Pratt  Deputy Director, Future Regulation
1. Apologies for absence

1.1 John Varley gave apologies that he would need to leave at 2pm and Peter Ainsworth had given apologies for the morning and would be joining the Board meeting at 12.30pm.

1.2 Emma Howard Boyd formally welcomed Judith Batchelar and Caroline Mason to their first Board meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 Richard Macdonald reminded the Board of his new role with the Farming Inspection and Regulation Advisory Group.

3. Minutes of the Board Meeting on 14 March 2018 and matters arising

3.1 The Board approved the minutes of the 14 March meeting.

3.2 The Board noted the action list and completed actions.

3.3 Harvey Bradshaw gave an update on micro plastics, he informed the Board that a detailed update would be taken to the E&B Committee.

3.4 Bob Branson informed the Board that EDT will be discussing incorporating plastics in the environment in the Corporate Scorecard.

4. Chair and Chief Executive’s Updates

Chair’s Update

The Board noted the ministerial meetings, other key meetings, appointments and Area visits detailed in the Chair’s update paper, and approved the stepping down of Emma Howard Boyd from the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Committee.

Chief Executive’s Update

In addition to the items in the paper James Bevan updated the Board on the Government consultation on the new environmental watchdog and environmental principles.

The Board discussed the update on National Salmon and Sea Trout Protection Byelaws and the deferring of the bylaws until the 2019 season.

The Board asked that they continue to receive reports/updates on innovative finance issues.

Action: James Bevan
Item 5  Committee meetings – oral updates and forward look

Pension Committee and Pensions Board

5.1 Joanne Segars informed the Board that the Committee had a funding update and had carried out a deep dive into scheme evaluation. They had also considered the stability of suppliers following the bankruptcy of Carillion.

5.2 Joanne informed the Board that that the Committee had received a presentation from Brunel and had held a positive discussion with them.

5.3 The Board approved the appointment of Phil Lodge as an Executive member of the Pensions Committee.

5.4 The Board delegated approval of the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts to the Audit and Risk Committee following scrutiny from the Pensions Committee.

Flood and Coastal Risk Management Committee

5.5 Lynne Frostick informed the Board of the development of a coastal asset database and the work identifying ownership of orphaned assets.

5.6 Lynne Frostick also informed the Board of plans for a new Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management strategy.

5.7 John Lelliott informed the Board that the Crown Estates have mapped their coastal assets and this may be of use in developing the coastal assets database.

Item 6  Regular Finance Items

6.1 Schemes of Delegation
Bob Branson introduced this paper. The Board noted the changes to delegations and limits within the Financial Scheme of Delegation approved by the Chair under Standing Order 4.1.

6.2 Finance Report
Bob Branson presented the Finance Report. The Board noted the financial position at the end of March 2018.

6.3 Annual Report and Accounts
The Board commented on the improvements in the display of information and suggested that the sustainable development goals be signposted.

6.4 Bob requested that any further comments on the annual report be provided direct to him by the end of the month.

6.5 The Board delegated approval of the Annual Report and Accounts to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Action: All

6.6 The Board thanked Bob and his team for their continued hard work in preparing the report.
Item 7  Creating a better place: Our ambition to 2020

7.1 Sam Lumb introduced this item. The Board reviewed and approved the changes to the Action Plan for the Environment Agency. The Board asked that progress be shown in the metrics rather than just giving a snapshot.

Action: Sam Lumb

Item 8  Agriculture

8.1 Harvey Bradshaw introduced Kevin Austin, Andy Croxford and Alice Waterson and outlined that a post EU exit world provides a unique opportunity to redesign the policy framework for the agriculture sector and significantly improve its environmental footprint.

8.2 Kevin Austin provided an overview of the Future Agriculture Programme, a summary of progress and ambitions moving forward.

8.3 The Board discussed the opportunity, priorities and risks.

Item 9  Defra Group Finance

9.1 The Board welcomed Heather Smith who gave an update on Defra group finance.

9.2 Heather detailed her priorities for Defra group finance and reassured the Board that they should see a sustained level of service as a result of transformation.

9.3 The Board discussed ensuring efficiencies are made without a change in service and highlighted incident management as a particular need.

9.4 The Board also discussed efficiencies to approvals and the sign off process, the importance of culture, wellbeing and resilience in corporate services.

9.5 The Board discussed the merits of Natural Capital accounting.

Item 10  National Adaptation

10.1 Harvey Bradshaw introduced Liz Parkes, Mark Ellis and Jens Evans. The Board considered the risk that climate change presents to the Environment Agency's objectives and strategy, and what the influencing role of the Environment Agency is.

10.2 Liz Parkes asked the Board to consider resilience especially on flooding, coastal change, water management and freshwater ecosystems, and to note that the Environment Agency already plans for climate change in its work and the progress made in delivering planned adaptation.

10.3 The Board approved a refreshed approach to adapting to climate change, including climate proofing future plans to address the risks from +4°C global temperature rise. The Board also approved the approach of working with Defra on the forthcoming National Adaptation Programme, including engaging the Secretary of State on the importance of climate resilience.
**Item 11  Navigation Strategy**

11.1 Harvey Bradshaw introduced Gillian Pratt.

11.2 The Board discussed the Environment Agency’s role in Navigation and plans to meet future funding challenges.

11.3 Emma Howard Boyd highlighted that the Board lead for navigation will be vacant when Peter Ainsworth steps down from the Board at the end of August 2018. Emma invited the Board to discuss the role with Peter and to let her know if they were interested.

*Action: All Board members*

**Item 12  Administered Internal Drainage District – Annual Accounts 2017/18**

12.1 Toby Willison presented this item to the Board.

12.2 The Board approved the Annual Governance Statements for the year ending 31 March 2018, and authorised the Chair to sign the annual governance statement on their behalf.

12.3 The Board approved the Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2018 and authorised the Chair to sign the accounting statements on behalf of the Board.

12.4 The Board noted the progress on divesting the Environment Agency responsibilities relating to the Internal Drainage Districts in the South East and transferring the flood risk management and land drainage activities to local communities.

**Item 13  AOB and date of next meeting**

13.1 The Board noted that the next meeting is the Board Planning meeting at the Thames Barrier on 20-21 June. Emma Howard Boyd and Beth Axtell outlined the plans for the two day event.

**Item 14  Review of the meeting**

14.1 The Board reviewed the meeting.