



Marine Management Organisation

Board Meeting Minutes: 4 April 2019
Held in: Lancaster House, Newcastle

Board

Hilary Florek (HF) – Chair
Terence Jagger (TJ) – Board member
William Roberts (WR) – Board member
Robert Wilson (RW) – Board member
Tony Delahunty (TD) – Board member
Belinda Howell (BH) – Board Member
Peter Judge (JD) – Board Member
David Lyall (DL) – Board Member

In Attendance

John Tuckett (JT) – Chief Executive Officer
Phil Haslam (PH) – Director of Operations (item 5 onwards)
Trudi Wakelin (TW) – Director of Licensing
Andrew Wareing (AWa) – Director of Business Development and Transformation
Michelle Willis (MW) – Director of Finance EU and Licensing
Terry Robertson – Director of Strategic Development and Planning
Selina Stead (SS) – Chief Scientific Advisor
Gill Stephenson (GS) – Head of Communications (item 10 onwards)
Gary Saunders (GSa) – Head of HR (item 11 only)
Kate Hargreaves (KH) – Chief Staff Officer to the CEO
Claire Scutt (CS) – Board Secretariat
Sarah Cullen (SC) – PA to CEO

Defra – By Invitation

Neil Hornby (NH) – Defra, Director, Marine and Fisheries

Apologies

Bill Dickson (BD) – Board member

1. Welcome and introductory remarks: Hilary Florek

1.1 Hilary Florek (HF) welcomed attendees to the meeting, particularly Neil Hornby (NH) and invited NH to brief the Board on his role. HF noted apologies from Bill Dickson.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 The Chair invited attendees to declare any new interests noting those previously declared. Rob Wilson (RW) advised that he had a part time CEO role on a Drug Policy Reform Group. Tony Delahunty (TD) confirmed that a Defra project with Gloucester University which he had been working on had now come to

an end.

3. Minutes of the 5 February Board meetings and actions update

3.1 The Chair invited attendees to raise any points of accuracy in respect of the 5 February meeting minutes. No points of accuracy were raised in relation to the Minutes.

3.2 The Board noted that all actions from 5 February meeting were complete.

4. Matters arising from 21 March 2019 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

4.1 The Board noted the summary of business which had been circulated by the ARAC Chair in advance of the meeting.

4.2 William Roberts (WR) drew to the Board's attention the very high standard of interim accounts as well as the analytical review which had been described as exemplar by the National Audit Office (NAO).

4.3 WR advised that a number of audit reports had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Committee had not had sufficient time or capacity to deal with these. These reports would therefore be considered outside of Committee and the Committee would develop an approach with the Executive Team to avoid this happening in the future.

4.4 WR updated that a number of key external risks were discussed at the meeting John Tuckett (JT) advised that he would provide further information on these projects.

4.5 The ARAC Committee had discussed the process for the Annual Report and Accounts. TJ requested early sight of the Annual Report to allow Board members to feed in their comments.

4.6 On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked the ARAC for the update.

Action: Annual Report to be circulated to Board members at the earliest opportunity for comment

5. Financial and Business Planning for 2019/20

5.1 Terry Robertson (TR) introduced the paper noting that a lighter touch had been used to roll over the business plan from 18/19 to 19/20. TR noted that the Business Plan has been aligned to Defra Marine and Fisheries and was based on current planning assumptions; should changes occur, the plan would be updated and presented to the Board for approval.

5.2 Michelle Willis (MW) noted that the plan had used the strategic objectives to draw out projects, for example, Marine Licensing projects would be tracked and would evolve over the coming year as they move into business as usual activity.

5.3 MW updated that MMO budgets were a feature of the constraints of the business plan noting there had been funding pressures and that this was the final year of SR15. MW further advised that the Tranche 4 bid had been successful.

5.4 MW advised that one of the challenges in the coming financial year would be staff pay, noting a current staff attrition rate of 8-9%. To mitigate this, MW commented that the Executive team have looked at a process to make savings on travel and subsistence as well as in other areas.

5.5 The Board engaged in discussion on the detail of the paper, specifically on the supporting financial tables. MW agreed to discuss the finances in more detail with WR outside of the Board meeting.

5.6 Terence Jagger (TJ) requested that the outputs and KPI's were reviewed to ensure that they are aspirational and stretching for the organisation.

5.7 WR queried the deadline for the Business Plan and JT advised that this was the first occasion that he could recall that a version of the Business Plan with some financial assumptions had been ready in the first week of the financial year. TR advised that the Business Plan would be published internally and on the Defra website.

5.8 HF asked for Board to confirm their approval for the Business Plan. The Board confirmed their agreement to the broad direction of travel noting this was an early iteration of the plan.

Action: MW agreed to discuss the finances in more detail with WR outside of the Board meeting

Action: TR/MW to review the outputs and KPI's to ensure that they are aspirational and stretching

6. Performance, Finance and Risk Pack

6.1 The Board noted the Performance and Finance Report until the end of February 2019. JT pointed out that MMO were on track to meet a significant proportion of their key performance indicators which was a huge achievement given the politically uncertain environment.

6.2 JT highlighted some risks of meeting KPIs as a result of resources being redirected to other activity.

6.3 JT also drew the Board's attention to the summary provided on the status of Change Programmes.

6.4 MW advised the Board of the financial position for the period ending 28 February 2019. MW explained that income was higher than the forecast agreed as part of the Mid-Year Review.

6.5 RW raised the pressure on staff in relation to workload as well as carrying staff vacancies, also noting the attrition rate of 9%.

6.6 The Board also discussed enhancing stakeholder engagement and TW advised that the Marine Licensing team were exploring how they could increase engagement with hard to reach groups.

6.7 The Board went on to discuss the issues highlighted for their information specifically noting updates on the demersal landing obligations, the Strategic Working Group and the Blue Belt programme.

6.8 TJ raised the fact that he had recently chaired a break out session at a Natural Capital Conference advising that the work of the MMO was well regarded by attendees.

6.9 AW was grateful for the opportunity to comment on the huge portfolio of activity on-going with the Marine Pioneer project and reinforced that Aisling Lannin (AL) was currently the sole resource working on this project. AL was communicating her learning and it was hoped that with access to funding some additional resource could be added to strengthen this team.

6.10 WR commented that he had attended one of the recent Marine Planning Workshops and had found the whole day to be engaging and informative.

6.11 The Board were asked to formally endorse the annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing report, noting a decrease in reported incidents across the organisation. Secretariat took an action to ask the Health Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner to attend the next available meeting and to be invited to update at Board meetings on a regular basis. The Board confirmed their formal endorsement of the report.

6.12 Finally, TR gave an update on the outputs from the Strategic Working Group who had held their first meeting in March and had subsequent meetings arranged in May, June and July. The group had agreed a

terms of reference and a route forward. At their next session they would be discussing a strategic analysis of the organisation. The Board requested some definitive timings to be provided at the next update.

6.13 TR presented the Corporate Risks and Issues to the Board drawing the Board's attention to the fact that the top 3 risks identified were new and inviting any questions.

6.14 The Board engaged in discussion on the 'People' risk and noted the Financial Risks for 2019/20.

Action: Secretariat to ask the Health Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner to attend the next available meeting and to be invited to update to Board meetings on a regular basis.

Action: The Board requested some definitive timings for the outputs of the Strategic Working Group to be provided at the next meeting

7. Communications Update

7.1 Gill Stephenson (GS) attended the meeting to provide an update on Communications.

7.2 GS advised that a key success for the team had been working with the Defra Strategic Communications team. This close alignment had resulted in positive customer feedback despite changing sands.

7.3 GS commented that the next few weeks would be pivotal providing further details on key projects. GS updated that two long standing team members had recently left the MMO Communications Team on promotion and she expected these roles to be filled by June of this year.

7.4 HF offered congratulations to GS who would shortly embark on maternity leave. The Board commented that they were grateful for the update and pleased that Communications had a prominent position on Board agendas.

8. People Survey Follow up

8.1 Gary Saunders (GSa) attended the meeting to provide an update on how the results of the 2018 People Survey were being taken forward.

8.2 GSa confirmed that the Top Place to Work Forum (TPTWF) were doing some further research on the staff feedback and individual teams had taken forward initiatives to tackle issues highlighted by their staff. In terms of corporate responses, Dignity at Work training for all staff had been rolled out as well as a new Learning and Development policy having been introduced.

8.3 The Board asked how they could support the Executive in dealing with the responses. Suggestions included spending time with staff before or after Board meetings, participating in meetings e.g. TPTWF and arranging an event so staff can find out more about the work of the Board.

8.4 TD raised the fact that on matters of Pay and Reward, some staff in particular geographical areas did not feel valued. MW advised that the Pay Remit was set by Cabinet Office however the Remuneration Committee would be exploring available options at their next meeting in May.

9. Board and Committee Forward Look

9.1 The Board noted the forward look of business.

10. Next meeting: Board meeting 18 June 2019 – Newcastle

10.1 HF confirmed the next formal meeting of the Board would be in July and a Workshop and Team Building session would be held on 18/19 June in Newcastle.

11. Any other business and close of meeting

11.1 HF thanked all attendees for their contributions and closed the meeting.