



Marine Management Organisation

Board Meeting Minutes: 20 May 2020

Held in: Microsoft Teams video conference

Board

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

In Attendance

Tom McCormack (TMc) – Chief Executive Officer
Michelle Willis (MW) – Director of Finance EU and Licensing
Phil Haslam (PH) – Director of Operations
Trudi Wakelin (TW) – Director of Marine Planning and Licensing
Andrew Wareing (AW) – Director of Business Development and Transformation
Selina Stead (SS) – Chief Scientific Advisor
James Roff (JR) – interim Director for Planning and Change
David Scutt (DS) – Head of Legal (Blue Belt - item 6 only)
Susan Wear (SW) – Head of Strategic Communications (MMO Story - item 10 only)
Claire Scutt (CS) – Board Secretariat
Sarah Cullen (SC) – Board Support

Defra – By Invitation

Neil Hornby - Defra Director, Marine and Fisheries

Apologies

None

Minutes

1. Welcome and introductory remarks: Hilary Florek

1.1 The Chair, Hilary Florek (HF) welcomed attendees to the meeting noted her formal thanks and those of the Board to Emma Moir (EU Exit Director) for her contribution to the MMO and welcomed James Roff, who would be covering the role of interim Director of Planning and Change, prior to Jenny Stewart taking up her role on 1 June 2020.

1.2 HF noted that MMO colleagues had been working at home during unprecedented times and a huge effort had been made to continue with business-as-usual work as well as all the efforts which had gone

into the launch of three Fisheries Response Funds. HF asked the CEO and Directors to pass on thanks to their teams on behalf of the Board.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 The Chair invited attendees to declare any new interests noting those previously declared.

2.2 Rob Wilson (RW) advised that he had been providing Covid 19 consultancy work to several organisations but no conflicts with MMO.

3. Minutes of 11 February 2020 meeting and actions arising from the meeting

3.1 The Chair noted the draft Minutes from 11 February Board meeting inviting attendees to raise any points of accuracy out of Committee.

4. Minutes of 9 April ARAC meeting

4.1 The Chair noted the Minutes of the 9 April ARAC meeting which were supplied to the full Board for Information.

5. Minutes of the 25 February Remuneration Committee meeting

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6. Performance, Finance and Risk

7.1 Michelle Willis (MW) introduced the year end finance, performance, risk and assurance pack commenting that the organisation had performed well to land the budget so tightly in a year which had involved a number of complexities.

7.2 MW advised that in relation to the MMO's performance the key performance indicators (KPIs) did not always reflect the substance of what had been achieved and MW took the opportunity to highlight some strong performance across a number of areas, namely, performance in the Marine Planning and Blue Belt Programmes as well as the significant increase in the organisation's control and enforcement capability. MW reflected that these achievements were all the more significant as they had been made in parallel with the MMO preparing to leave the EU, with a range of scenarios, on two separate occasions. Furthermore, the organisation had undergone a change in leadership over this period and were managing the business differently as a result.

7.3 TMc endorsed MW's comments, noting that the dashboard did not always provide the full context that further work would be carried out for the next financial year on profiling activity, linking to outcomes which would capture the strategic "so what".

7.4 David Lyall (DL) noted the positive performance and queried whether there was a better way to highlight what had been achieved. TMc confirmed he would welcome support or insight from DL into the work to enhance the reporting mechanism.

7.5 The Board discussed the organisation's performance on complaint handling and how MMO could demonstrate to customers that their complaints were being taken seriously. TMc reported that he had implemented a strong focus on complaint handling at ELT and advised all outstanding complaints were reviewed in forensic detail, with a full awareness of customers' concerns and the team were committed to responding to them within published timescales.

7.6 Robert Wilson (RW) agreed that it had been a very positive year for the organisation where a lot had been achieved, adding a word of caution on the KPIs that while they could be amended they should not be lost sight of or dismissed. TMc agreed, adding that the ELT 'owned them' and were working towards making them sharper.

7.7 RW also pointed out that the organisation was carrying a number of vacancies and this was not a sustainable situation. TMc confirmed that ELT were keen to build organisational capacity with less reliance on contingent labour and that recruitment would begin again in August 2020.

7.8 WR commented that the performance reports showed significant improvements adding that the business now appeared more sustainable and "knitted together" than it had been previously and advising that the challenge would be to boil down the story of the year for inclusion in the Annual Report.

7.9 MW drew the Board's attention to the end of year risk position and the outstanding top three risks: 1) Demands of meeting EU GDPR compliance (CR102), 2) Cyber security attack (CR091) and 3) Litigation costs (CR119). The organisation's strategic risks however these would be reviewed at a forthcoming workshop with members of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARAC).

7.10 MW was pleased to point out that the organisation had no outstanding internal Audit recommendations following a rigorous effort by ELT to ensure that audit recommendations were dealt with as a priority.

7.11 MW advised that the timeline for the annual report and accounts had altered due to Covid 19 with the laying of accounts now postponed until September. MW advised that she create a 'straw man' to promote discussion on the annual report which she would circulate for feedback.

8. Defra Priorities and Planning

8.1 NH updated the Board on current priorities within Defra advising that Covid 19 had, as expected, made a huge impact resulting in approximately 1,000 members of staff being diverted to support activity at the peak in areas such as food supply and feeding the vulnerable.

8.4 NH updated attendees that the Fisheries Bill should be presented to the House of Lords in June before a return to Parliament to ensure it is in place for 31 December. Furthermore, a review into Highly Protected Marine Areas was due to be published.

9. Draft Business Plan and Budget 2020/21

9.1 MW introduced the pack and explained how it set out the background, how the MMO delivers into the wider Marine and Fisheries/Defra Delivery agenda along with the SR19 settlement which detailed how the organisation would be funded in the coming year.

9.2 MW drew the Board's attention to the slides which set out the budget at a high level and the expenditure and revenue settlement. There had been a 2.5% efficiency challenge across the Defra group which MW explained had been ring fenced out of the settlement. MW pointed out the slides which related to 'risks' and 'opportunities' and updated on EU Exit funding which she reported was broadly the same as in the previous year and Blue Belt Funding of which a proportion had already been received with the balance to be received in the Autumn.

9.6 TMc highlighted the MMO Services as follows: 1) *Enabling sustainable marine development* 2) *Delivering sustainable fishing opportunities* 3) *Protecting marine habitats and wildlife* 4) *Administering marine support funds to provide grant funding to the fisheries sector* 5) *Providing regulatory support and*

assurance 6) *Supporting global marine protection through the Blue Belt Programme*. TMc advised that the focus was on an overarching theme and impact of the service and how it all knitted together and this was the impact MMO were trying to get to with the key performance indicators.

9.8 The Board discussed in more detail with key points arising that; it was hugely important to think about strategic outcomes, what was being measured, how we tie this in with UN sustainable development goals as an example and the huge value of data and how it plays a strategic role in what we do.

10. MMO Story

10.1 TMc introduced the paper and noted three main aims of the session; to sight the Board the roll out, to discuss the Board role in stakeholder engagement and finally to seek feedback and gain support from the Board given the impact of Covid 19 which would result in 'bridging years' rather than a 'single bridging year'.

10.2 Susan Wear (SW) updated that the strategic work which had previously been undertaken had provided the narrative to plan the future. Covid 19 had helped the MMO to re-emphasise our ambitions and the plan was to bring the story to life with the Stakeholder Focus Group in early July presenting an opportunity to launch to an external audience. SW advised that ELT had sessions on the MMO Story with the Senior Leadership Team in the following week.

10.3 PJ suggested that the Story may be too modest in some areas and SW agreed that the narrative should highlight the fantastic assets within the MMO on the Coast, with Marine Planning and data to name a few.

10.4 TMc agreed with the approach and commented that the MMO story represented a journey for the organisation and presented an opportunity to show at our 10-year anniversary we are confident, outward looking and have big ambitions. TMc reflected on the fact that in normal circumstances we would have had an All Colleague Conference in April to launch the Story and discuss the ten big ambitions we would test in our bridging year

10.5 RW commented that there had been tremendous progress and to bear in mind that the MMO Story was a journey with staging posts and not a single event to 'launch'. It should therefore be rolled out to the organisation and to stakeholders.

10.6 BH agreed that the ELT should get on with the MMO Story however more clarity may be required on MMO's stakeholder framework as this is a complex landscape. SW advised that work had been undertaken on the stakeholder framework but this not yet shared. TMc agreed to discuss this out of committee with HF.

10.11 HF noted that the role of Board members feeding in their expertise was important and suggested identifying a small strategic steering group to do this.

11. AOB and Review of Meeting

11.1 HF asked for feedback on the meeting given that it was the first meeting to be held using MS Teams. HF noted that she had not been able to access the 'chat' conversation but thought that dividing the meeting into shorter segments with breaks in between had worked well in this format. It was noted that Microsoft were working on a version of Teams which would increase the number of attendees that could be viewed on screen.

11.2 HF advised that the next Board meeting would be held by video conference on the 2 July.

11.3 HF thanked attendees for their participation and closed the meeting.