



Board Meeting Minutes: 16 May 2023 (Public)
Location – Broadway House, London

MMO Board

Hilary Florek (HF) – Chair
Belinda Howell (BH)
David Lyall (DL)
Peter Judge (PJ) (via MS Teams)
Robert Wilson (RW)
Terence Jagger (TJ)
Tony Delahunty (TD)
William Roberts (WR)

MMO Executive Leadership Team & Business Leads

Tom McCormack (TMc) – Chief Executive Officer
Jenny Stewart (JS) – Director of Planning and Change
Michelle Willis (MW) – Director of Finance and Resources
Pete Clark (PC) – Director of Operations
Trudi Wakelin (TW) – Director of Marine Development (Domestic and International)
Steph Campbell (SC) – Director of Digital and Analysis
Selina Stead (SS) – MMO Chief Scientific Advisor

Defra, by invitation

Mike Rowe (MR) – Director, Marine and Fisheries

Additional Attendees

None

Apologies

None

Board Secretariat

Patrick Schneiders (PS) - Observer
Julia Templeton (JT)
Ali Haynes (AH)

Governance

1. Welcome and Introductory Remarks/Declaration of Interests

- 1.1 HF welcomed attendees to the meeting and in particular welcomed Patrick Schneiders, Head of Governance and Accountability, as an observer to the Board meeting since joining the MMO in January.
- 1.2 Further to declarations of interest previously notified, HF declared that she had been appointed to the board of Advance Northumberland, an organisation promoting economic regeneration within the North East of England.
- 1.3 The minutes of the previous board meeting (7 February 2023) were adopted subject to amendments raised by BH and BR.
- 1.4 BR brought to the Board's attention that the ARAC's current priorities included Risk, the Internal Audit Plan, BR asked the board to consider future useful areas of focus.

2. CEO Update

- 2.1 The first quarterly Ministerial Deliver Meeting (MDM), at which the Minister will be in attendance, will take place on 12 June 2023. TMc and HF will present on MMO delivery, performance, trends and live issues.
- 2.2 It was reported that Defra's sponsorship team had provided a pack setting out the MMO's responsibilities and links with the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP).
- 2.3 TMc updated the Board that the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) had reviewed the pack and were preparing the first iteration for the MDM on the 12 June. This was populated with data including KPIs, delivery milestones etc. It was anticipated that a draft pack would be prepared by early June.
- 2.4 TMc reported that the pack had helped to set out where the ministerial interest lay in relation to the MDM meetings, and the specific piece drew out five priorities for the year ahead, which will be reflected in the Chair's letter; Developing and Maintaining all systems necessary for fisheries trade with the EU, Enabling the Fisheries Act within UK Waters, Governance Ocean Protection Commitments, Marine Development, and Marine Spatial Prioritisation. Board members were encouraged to review this pack.
- 2.5 PC confirmed that he was in conversation with colleagues at Defra about what a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) might look like and discussions were taking place about additional skilled resources required to support this work. A response will be developed for presentation and decision at the July Board meeting.
- 2.6 TW referred to recent engagement on Marine Licensing; a briefing pack including correspondence shared with MPs and the Minister's Office summarises the recent engagement undertaken, and drew out discussion which expressed support for regulatory reform. The opportunity had also been taken to remind MPs of the work the MMO had completed with regard to Marine Plans and how Marine Licensing and regulations aspects fitted within the broader strategic context.
- 2.7 TW reassured the Board that the choreography of the modelling of the delivery of marine planning and the FMP was in line with the programme of the planned marine and fisheries projects.
- 2.8 TMc provided an update on the Marine Licensing Recovery Plan and commended the work TW and her team had undertaken to reduce the number of cases from 200 to four.
- 2.9 TMc gave the Board a brief update on the Accelerated Marine Protected Area (MPA) Plan and highlighted that Defra colleagues were considering the possibility of bringing forward the Secretary of State actions on phase two of the marine areas, with a decision expected prior to the Summer recess. TMc assured the Board that the MMO would engage on that piece when it arrived.
- 2.10 MMO Board received an update from TMc on the iVMS project, confirming its support for current and planned actions.

3. Summary of MMO Sensitive Matters

- 3.1 Discussion was had in relation to MMO's Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) trials.

4. MMO Quarter 4 – Finance, Performance, Risk and Change

- 4.1 MW summarised that overall, the organisation had performed well with the resources that it had.
- 4.2 MMO Board and ELT reflected on ways in which the reporting of finance, performance, risk and change could be optimised. JS noted that at present, performance reports align services to MMO's strategic goals and outcomes. The narrative on impacts and outcomes is in development and will provide stronger alignment to MMO strategic goals.

Strategic

Defra view from The Bridge

- 4.3 MR gave an update from Defra, which included;
- 4.4 Plans to consult on a number of draft FMPs ahead of the Summer recess.
- 4.5 Preparation of the Chairs' letters, to which Defra will take a "no surprises" approach.
- 4.6 MPAs as a key focus of the EIP.
- 4.7 An update on the approach to the Retained EU Law (REUL) Bill.
- 4.8 HF thanked MR.

5. Business Planning 2023/24, including Internal Audit

- 5.1 MW highlighted the budget assumptions put in place to deal with indicative budgets, including £2.4m efficiency savings, fuel and other pressures relating to a second commercial vessel.
- 5.2 MW reported on indicative expectations for the financial year 2024/25 in the context of MMO's three year settlement, in particular she drew the Board's attention to the additional planned spending review (SR) and DDTS automation savings.
- 5.3 MW highlighted that additional funding had been identified for nationally significant infrastructure projects.
- 5.4 MW highlighted that improvements to the Marine Case Management System (MCMS) are expected to exceed the allocation. Additional funding has been requested for this work.
- 5.5 MW reiterated that these assumptions would be mapped across to the Corporate Plan with consideration to be given to any slippage from 2022/23. This work will be completed over the coming month.
- 5.6 BR drew the Board's attention to the requirement for further in-year transfers, highlighting this as an area of focus for the ARAC.
- 5.7 MMO Board confirmed its understanding of MMO's budget for 2023/24.

Decision 1605-01D: The Board confirmed it was content in its understanding of MMO's budget for 2023/24.

6. MMO Corporate Plan Update

- 6.1 JS highlighted that MMO have committed to review the Corporate Plan annually and republish. Presently, Director and Service Leads are identifying new additions to the Corporate Plan.
- 6.2 Board members confirmed that they could comment on the draft Corporate Plan by the end of June 2023.

7. Fisheries Export Service (FES) – Path to Business Case Completion

- 7.1 A wide ranging discussion was had with MMO Board regarding the Fisheries Export Service and the further investment needed. ELT provided a commitment to put in place a number of workshops to bring a shared understanding of FES ahead of submitting a business case for further investment in the digital system.

People

8. MMO Capability, Capacity and Culture Programme

- 8.1 MW reported that the next People Survey was due in the Autumn, at the same time as the Civil Service People Survey. MW clarified that as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), MMO cannot participate in the wider Civil Service People Survey, as such it has developed its own staff survey. The last survey was undertaken in July 2022. It was agreed that the next MMO staff survey should take place in the Autumn period, this would allow a period of six months after colleague engagement and inputs to the Three C's Programme, as well as planning for fuller participation following the summer leave period.
- 8.2 MW agreed to bring a more detailed update on the 3Cs programme to the September 2023 meeting.

Closing Matters and Below the Line Papers

10 AOB, Forward Look and Date of Next Meeting

- 10.1 HF noted that the next Board meeting is 14 June, the location will be in Newcastle and hybrid facilities will be offered.
- 10.2 HF thanked attendees for their participation and closed the meeting.

Decision Log			
Ref	Decision	Date	Agreed by
Decisions from meeting held on 16 May 2023			
1605-01D	The Board is content for the Global Programme to operate at risk, while confirmation of funding from Other Government Departments is outstanding	16/05/2023	All MMO Board Attendees