



Board Meeting Minutes: 7 February 2023 (Public)
Location – Crowne Plaza, Newcastle Upon Tyne

MMO Board

Hilary Florek (HF) – Chair
Belinda Howell (BH)
David Lyall (DL)
Peter Judge (PJ)
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 Licensing, Marine Planning and Blue Belt
Selina Stead (SS) – MMO Chief Scientific Advisor
Clive Liggett (CL) – Head of HR (MMO3Cs only)

Defra

Mike Rowe (MR) – Director, Marine and Fisheries
Dianne Jeans (DJ) – Director, GCS Strategy and Transformation (Defra Group Corporate Services only)
Peter Trahar (PT) – Head of GCS Transformation Programme Office (Defra Group Corporate Services only)

Additional Attendees

Hannah Pinnock (HP) – Methods (MMO3Cs only)
William Palmer (WP) – Methods (MMO3Cs only)

Apologies

Ali Haynes (AH) – Board Secretariat
Steph Campbell (SC) – Director of Digital and Analysis

Board Secretariat

Joanne Simpson (JSi)
Julia Templeton (JT)

Governance

1. Welcome and Introductory Remarks/Declaration of Interests

- 1.1 HF welcomed attendees to the meeting, shared that PJ would lead on board governance matters, acting as a conduit between the board and MMO. HF placed on record the Board's gratitude to Simon Dixon (Interim Director of Digital and Analysis) who recently left MMO.
- 1.2 HF updated the board that the Ministerial Performance Review (MPR) would take place shortly.
- 1.3 No further declarations of interest were made, the MMO governance team would reach out to Board Members to formally declare their interests.
- 1.4 As TJ's reappointment to the Board had yet to be confirmed, he would attend as an observer and maintain the required confidentiality arrangements.
- 1.5 The minutes of the previous board meeting (19 October 2022) were adopted subject to changes highlighted by BH.
- 1.6 BR shared that the ARAC have been supporting the Executive to increase its risk appetite to allow the business to effect change. BR thanked the secretariat for its involvement in the minutes of the 11 October 2022 which were undergoing peer review at this time.

2. CEO Update

- 2.1 TMC provided the below updates;
- 2.2 Ministerial Performance Review (MPR) and MMO Delivery Assurance Board (MDAB) – the business approach to preparing for the MPR and upcoming MDAB advising the products being developed would be shared with MMO Board members.
- 2.3 Cost of Living/Industrial Action – the leadership team is alive to the difficulties facing its customers and people, advising finance colleagues are liaising with Defra to ensure alignment on messaging and support provision. As part of the MMO 3Cs programme, pay, progression and allowances are being reviewed, however it is recognised there is limited scope to improve these. MMO's largest union balloted members over pay, 10% of the workforce took industrial action on 1 February 2023, BCP arrangements were in place to ensure critical services would not be impacted.
- 2.4 Stakeholder Engagement – there has been a wide range of recent engagement, including a positive coastal visit and embedding of MMO's Catch App, with ivMS and licensing escalated as areas of concern.
- 2.5 Reputational Matters – TMC and TW recently met with Giles Watling, including discussion of his Private Members Bill – MMO will continue to meet with interested Ministers.
- 2.6 Climate Change Adaptation report – a draft report and action plan is in development with P&C colleagues. BH and BR advised they would be happy to review these documents ahead of submission to Defra. TW is championing MMO's Climate Ready Group who will input to this, SS also offered to contribute lessons learned from a Climate Principles Plan she had been involved with externally.
- 2.7 In relation to the cost of living, RW questioned whether MMO colleagues have noted any specific difficulties. TMC advised MMO continues to be flexible with blended working, MW advised that recent provisions have been introduced across MMO estates, these include tea, coffee and sanitary products; the Defra Executive Committee (ExCo) have considered further options including purchase of Annual Leave/Flexi; pay policy is a matter for ExCo to consider, with the MMO Board to approve any changes.
- 2.8 Crustacean Mortalities – HF agreed that PJ could observe the discussion, noting his interest in Teesside Dredging, as the paper set out that dredging was unlikely to have been a factor in the event. A summary was provided on the progress made, the Board considered their strategic role in relation to such events, alongside Defra, CEFAS and the underpinning science.
- 2.9 The discussion around MMO Sensitive Matters will continue at the next Board monthly call; an update on Retained EU Law will also be given. TW will provide a written update will be provided on the East Marine Plan.

Strategic

3. Defra view from The Bridge

- 3.1 MR gave an update from Defra, which included;
- 3.2 [Environmental Improvement Plan \(EIP\) 2023](#), which was published the week prior and requires five yearly progress reports against the 25 year environment plan. The plan sets out a target for MPA coverage by 2042, which Defra remain on track to deliver with thanks to MMO. The Climate Change Adaptation Report will become the strategic lens through which the SoS will monitor this, and further commitments including Net Zero and 30

by 30; the latter will include further work on biodiversity. Amendments to the Environmental Bill are currently at the Lords' report stage with a decision to be reached.

- 3.3 FMPs – these will be a key focus in 2023, ensuring the Fisheries Act provides for better management than its preceding CFP.
- 3.4 REUL – this has received its second reading in the House of Lords and is still progressing through parliament.
- 3.5 HF thanked MR for his openness and thanked MR for his update.

Finance, Performance and Business Planning

4. MMO Quarter 3 – Finance, Performance, Risk and Change

- 4.1 It was agreed paper MMO BM10004 and supporting annexes would be taken as read.
- 4.2 JS highlighted sustainable stocks, noting that 13 stocks are underperforming, BR questioned this. TD noted the limitations of data, there could be a number of reasons for underutilisation. MR added to the complexity of this, reporting is against TAC, fishers can opt not to fully utilise their quota to allow them to exchange for other stocks. Statistical views and trends provide the most value.
- 4.3 MMO Board discussed future options for offshore surveillance (OPV), highlighting that REM and the results of fisheries trials in the North Sea which provide findings and lessons learned.

5. Business Planning 2023/24

- 5.1 It was agreed paper MMO BM 10005 would be taken as read.
- 5.2 MW advised that the allocation is based on the SR21 settlement figure, inflation must be absorbed; this is capped at 3% across commercial arrangements, it has also been assumed that any REUL impacts will come with no additional money. Key savings made relate to vessel costs (2024/25). It was highlighted that the Corporate Plan will need to be updated with the aim of signing this off at April's Board meeting. Updates to the Corporate Plan should consider MR's 3 priorities; 30 by 30, EIP and Net Zero.
- 5.3 TMc summarised that multi-year settlements are helpful to business planning, and to MMO's relationship with Defra, supporting the business to build capacity and capability.

6. Defra Group Corporate Services

- 6.1 DJ and PT joined the meeting to provide an overview of Defra's corporate services arrangements and the opportunities MMO could consider.

7. Change Programme Approvals and Forward Look

- 7.1 JS discussed Mobile Working, which provides an application for enforcement colleagues to undertake inspections remotely, utilising EMFF funding. Phase one was successful, phase two goes live from 9 February and concerns vehicle inspections. JS sought approval from the Board to progress phase three, release three, which concerns other fisheries checks with a budget requirement of £0.4million. TMc noted returning to the Board on a phase by phase basis allows MMO to confirm successful delivery and issue approvals in a controlled way. The group discussed the delivery of previous phases and structure implemented.
- 7.2 HF confirmed the Board approval to proceed.

Decision 0702-01D: The Board approved Mobile Working Phase 3, with a budget requirement of £0.4million.

People

8. MMO Capability, Capacity and Culture

- 8.1 HR and Methods leads joined MMO Board to discuss the high-level approach to MMO3Cs, commitments per the three year corporate plan and health, safety and wellbeing implications. A presentation was provided.
- 8.2 Methods set out the key principles driving the delivery of MMO3Cs; learning from research, balancing planning and delivery, and involving colleagues. Methods have established impact statements which set out the desired effects of the programme, colleagues will be asked to engage to support the establishment of the actions and outcomes that enable these.
- 8.3 MMO recognised that pay progression remained a concern and set out the limitations set by HMT and Cabinet Office, MMO job adverts are to be changed so as not to provide a disingenuous picture of the employee offer.

Operational

9. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) Progress

- 9.1 PC highlighted the banning of bottom towed gear over reef in 13 MPAs, where the annual average landing value of catches is approximately £4million (EU and domestic).
- 9.2 PC highlighted the MMO's staged project delivery, which is currently running to time. SoS clearance was delayed, which meant that the consultation period had to be shortened. The project is currently out for consultation (stage two) and PC confirmed that engagement has been good; a Dutch PO is engaging, as are NGOs including Greenpeace. Meetings with UK and EU fishing groups are to be arranged.
- 9.3 The Board noted that they felt reassured by the paper and PC's update.
- 9.4 At the end of February, MMO will publish its consultation on Studland Bay Voluntary No Anchor Zone (VNAZ).

10. MMO Stakeholders

- 10.1 JS spoke to the paper MMOB 10009, which sets out MMO's plans to target activity and effort moving forward, including use of the Board as advocates for MMO, and undertaking stakeholder events. The Board agreed to this.
- 10.2 HF noted a need to reach a common understanding regarding discussion points for MMO and Board members when engaging senior officials and stakeholders. The group would benefit from an overarching perspective, understanding its changing relationships with other ALBs and getting to the people that interface with our stakeholders most frequently.
- 10.3 SS has engaged with local MPs as part of her university role, this was benefitted by "homework" undertaken to identify common ground, having well-constructed briefings which made links to individuals' various objectives to help prioritise strategic partnerships.
- 10.4 JS shared that MMO are identifying a set of strategic partners.

Closing Matters and Below the Line Papers

11. AOB, Forward Look and Date of Next Meeting

- 11.1 HF thanked attendees for their participation and closed the meeting.

Decision Log			
Ref	Decision	Date	Agreed by
Decisions resulting from the meeting of 7 February 2023			
0702-01D	The Board approved Mobile Working Phase 3, with a budget requirement of £0.4million.	07/02/2023	Board