

Board Meeting

Minutes of the **Natural England** Board meeting held on 17 April in Oxfordshire

Attending

Dr Tony Juniper	Chair
Prof Mel Austen	
Prof Lynn Dicks	
Catherine Dugmore	
Prof Clare Fitzsimmons	
Henry Robinson	
Kim Shillinglaw	
Dame Caroline Spelman	
Peter Unwin	
Lizzy Campbell (Apprentice)	

Executive Team

Marian Spain	Chief Executive (and ex-officio Board Member)
Kirsty Carter-Brown	Chief Officer, Business Management
Tim Hill	Chief Scientist
Navroza Ladha	Chief Officer, Legal, Governance and External Affairs
Alan Law	Chief Officer, Strategy

Guests

Claudia Chambers	Director, National Operations
Ilana Conn	Defra Group, Communications
Sean Cornall	Director, Assurance & Corporate Governance
Matt Heard	Director, Planning and Strategy
David Hill	Defra, Director General, Environment Rural and Marine
Jane Piccaver	Defra Group, Finance

Apologies

Lord Blencathra	Deputy Chair
Oliver Harmar	Chief Officer, Operations

Item 1 Welcome from the Chair and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Board, Executive and guests to the 121st Board meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Lord Blencathra and Oliver Harmer. Claudia Chambers was welcomed to the meeting as deputy for Oliver.
- 1.3 There were no changes to the Register Interests.

Item 2 Chief Executive's Report

Marian Spain presented an overview of the significant and timely issues that had arisen since the last meeting, and provided an update on:

- 2.1 **Timetable for the Annual Report and Accounts** – There is a tight timetable for the Annual Report and Accounts. Board will on 15th May be asked to approve the tone, content and key messages ahead of submission to the auditors for review on 20 May.
- 2.2 **Internal audits** - We have a high number of Internal audit reports that give “limited” opinion which is likely to be reflected in the Head of Internal Audit’s end-of-year opinion.

Item 3 Nationally Significant Infrastructure projects (NSIPs) charging

- 3.1 Alan Law introduced the item and the Board were asked to approve the establishment and implementation of a system of Full Cost Recovery on all of NE’s advice (both statutory and non-statutory) on Nationally significant infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). They were asked to confirm they were satisfied that NE is ready to implement these new charging powers.
- 3.2 The Board gave **approval** for the introduction to new charging regime to go ahead from May 1.
Action: Alan Law

Item 4 Scrutinise Business planning before signing off in May

- 4.1 Alan Law led this session and advised that this was to provide the Board with an update on 2024/25 business planning in advance of a more substantial agenda item at the meeting on 15 May when Board will be asked to sign-off the 2024/25 budget and Action Plan.
- 4.2 In discussion the Board asked for the following to be taken into consideration and incorporated in the next iteration of the business plan:
 - to highlight in May any potential impacts of proposed reductions to planning and licensing capability

- to report back in May on impacts of changes to projections for BNG registrations.
- to ensure revisit green finance component of business planning is supported.

Action Alan Law, Matt Heard