

Minutes of the board meeting held on Wednesday 14 August 2024 via MS Teams

Present

Alan Lovell	Chair
Judith Batchelar	Deputy Chair
Ines Faden Da Silva	Board Member
Robert Gould	Board Member
Brittany Harris	Board Member
John Lelliott	Board Member
Maya Leibman	Board Member
Lilli Matson	Board Member
Sarah Mukherjee	Board Member
Mark Suthern	Board Member

In attendance

Tamara Bruck	Executive Director, Strategy, Transformation and Assurance
Sebastian Catovsky	Defra, Co-Director Floods and Water
Sarah Chare	Executive Director, Local Operations
Caroline Douglass	Executive Director, Flood and Coastal Risk Management
Beth Lamb	Board Governance Advisor
Harry Leeder	Deputy Director, Governance and Engagement
John Leyland	Executive Director, Environment and Business
Corry McDiarmid	Board Governance Manager
Laura Milton	Director, Legal and Audit Services
Yasmin Smith	Board Governance Intern

Item 2

Julie Foley	Director, FCRM Strategy & National Adaptation
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Item 3

Chris Butler	Senior Developer/Designer, Management Insights Team
Gail Coton	Management Insights Manager
Martin Cummins	Performance Manager

Item 1: Welcome

Apologies

- 1.1 The board noted apologies from Stewart Davies, Philip Duffy, Anna Caffyn, Matt Cornford, David Hill and Nick Joicey.

Declarations of interest

- 1.2 No new declarations were raised.

Item 2: FCRM pipeline update

- 2.1 The board welcomed Julie Foley to the meeting. Julie provided an overview of the flood and coast pipeline development including targets for how the Environment Agency will plan its future pipeline, the scale of this work and ongoing conversations with the Government to this end.
- 2.2 The board queried how the government's house building targets were being considered, and discussed the importance of local area knowledge when it came to future pipeline planning.
- 2.3 The board questioned how risk would be assessed, specifically how nationally assessed risk would bring together local area views. The board discussed the data being used to drive this work and queried if it would be collected on a rolling basis or one-off.
- 2.4 The board asked to hear more on how the severe weather experienced in winter 2023/24 had been taken into consideration and whether plans were in place to bolster protection for agricultural land.
- 2.5 The board noted that there would be opportunity for further discussion on this matter at the upcoming December board meeting.

Item 3: Balanced scorecard QLIK demonstration

- 3.1 The board welcomed Chris Butler, Gail Coton and Martin Cummins to the meeting. The Deputy Director of Governance and Engagement introduced the item and Chris, Gail and Martin provided a demonstration of the balanced scorecard QLIK system.
- 3.2 The board queried how data input is being handled and whether there was potential for automation. The board also encouraged the team to think about data accuracy as well as the change they hoped use of this new application would drive.

- 3.3 The board acknowledged the progress made so far on the development of the application and encouraged the team to continue its development taking into account the comments from the discussion.

Item 4: Executive Director hot topics

Strategy, Transformation and Assurance (STA)

- 4.1 The Executive Director of STA provided an update on the action being taken internally as a result of localised violent disorder across England. The board were reassured that all the necessary measures had been put in place to support staff and encouraged the Executive Director of STA to keep this issue in focus. The board queried what had been learnt from the Environment Agency's response.
- 4.2 The board noted that the People Strategy had now launched and noted that the Executive Director of STA had met with Minister Hardy regarding equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 4.3 The board noted that the pay remit had now been received from His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) and negotiations had begun with the trade unions.

Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM)

- 4.4 The Executive Director of FCRM told the board that the flood and coastal erosion risk management annual report, which the Environment Agency are required to produce under Section 18 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2001, had now been submitted for Ministerial approval.
- 4.5 The board took updates on the opening of the new flood scheme in Jaywick, the appointment of a new Director in FCRM whose portfolio would include flood infrastructure, and the upcoming Flood Resilience Taskforce meeting due to take place in early September 2024.

Environment and Business

- 4.6 The Executive Director of Environment and Business provided an update on Ofwat's announcement of an investigation into water and sewage companies in England, how the Environment Agency is engaging with the Government on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and a growing media interest in 'forever chemicals'.
- 4.7 The board noted the update and asked what the Environment Agency is doing to respond to growing media interest in the impacts of sea foam. The board discussed the Environment Agency's communications plan and

noted that recruitment was underway for a Deputy Director of Communications.

Local Operations

- 4.8 The Executive Director of Local Operations updated the board on recent conversations with Minister Hardy regarding permitting. She also gave an update on a landfill issue in Lancashire and major pollution incident in Walsall.
- 4.9 The Executive Director of Local Operations also updated the board on the latest information regarding Walley's quarry.

Item 5: 2025-2026 board, committee and Executive Director's Team (EDT) meeting dates

- 5.1 **The board approved** the suggested meeting dates and locations for the 2025-2026 meetings.

Item 6: Any other business (AOB) and date of next meeting

AOB

- 6.1 No items of AOB were taken.

Date of next meeting

- 6.2 The board noted that the next meeting would be held on the 11 and 12 September in Reading and that there would be a strategy workshop on 17 October.

The meeting closed at 11:15am.