

## **Met Office Board**

### **Summary**

**30 March 2021**

#### **Meeting held remotely using MS Teams**

- Rob Woodward (Chair) opened the meeting which was being held virtually using MS Teams.
- Apologies were noted from Jane Lancaster (Prospect Observer).
- The Board welcomed Jordan Giddings and Christine Ourmières-Widener to their first meeting as Non-Executive Directors. Anusha Shah was due to join the Board in the new financial year.
- The Board welcomed Alina Dimofte, who was observing the Board as part of the Cabinet Office board diversity scheme.
- James Partington (BEIS Board member) informed the meeting that the Secretary of State and Prime Minister had just confirmed Rob Woodward's reappointment as Chair.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021 had been approved as a true record of the meeting.
- Rob Woodward noted the discussion the previous evening which had provided very useful context on the progress towards COP26 in Glasgow and he welcomed any feedback from the Non-Executive Directors.
- Stephen Belcher (Chief Scientist) updated the Board on the Met Office's Research and Innovation strategy, noting the Met Office Scientific Advisory Committee's (MOSAC) role in assuring the quality of the work. The strategy covered three elements namely, pioneering research, science to services, and national capability. Senior members of the science team then gave presentations about the Next Generation Modelling System (NGMS) programme, data science initiatives with the Joint Centre of Excellence in Environmental Intelligence (JCEEI) and work on the use of ensembles.
- Gilbert Brunet, Chair of MOSAC, joined the meeting from Australia and presented its annual report to the Board. Stephen Belcher responded to the points raised in the report, noting the assurance it had provided, especially in the areas of the NGMS programme and reforecasting.
- The Board approved the MOSAC report and thanked Gilbert Brunet for chairing the MOSAC meeting remotely across multiple time zones.
- Penny Endersby presented her regular report and the Board noted a number of points, including a major milestone in the NGMS programme and the Science Review Group report on climate science.
- Penny Endersby provided an update on the supercomputer procurement process. Government approvals were now in place and subject to final negotiations, the contract was expected to be signed in the first half of April.
- Penny Endersby noted the spending review settlement was expected imminently. The Board discussed the scientific community reactions to reductions in Official Development Assistance (ODA) as well as wider funding challenges for the organisation.
- The Board discussed the Met Office's strategic engagement with western European meteorological services and other aspects of international collaboration, particularly in the field of digital twins.
- Nick Jobling (CFO) presented the financial report. Three material factors were still to be finalised for the year end accounts, namely the potential transfer of the Exeter freehold to the Government Property Agency, the level of holiday pay accrual as holiday had been deferred during the pandemic and a potential reduction in the previous year's provision for a liability to the European Commission. Cash management was focused on the timing of the loan to fund the next EUMETSAT satellite payment.

- An additional Board meeting would be scheduled in April to approve the budget once the spending review settlement was confirmed.
- Hunada Nouss (Chair, ARAC) updated the meeting on the ARAC meeting the previous day, which had reviewed year-end reporting and the 2021/22 audit plan. A very positive result from the External Quality Assessment provided additional assurance about internal audit's work.
- James Partington provided an update from BEIS, noting the focus on science, innovation and growth.
- Aidan Green, lead on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) strategic action, joined the meeting to provide an update on the progress in delivering the action plan stemming from the ED&I strategy. He introduced Jon Petch who was taking over as Chair of the ED&I Committee.
- Tammy Lillie (People Director) presented a paper on total reward strategy, which outlined the principles proposed to recruit, develop and retain talented staff for the Met Office through a flexible, holistic approach to reward.
- Tammy Lillie outlined the action being taken in response to feedback captured through the annual civil service People Survey.
- Penny Endersby and Paul Chavasse (AD, OCEO) presented the strategy and roadmap for the Met Office to achieve 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions. The Board approved a Net Zero target of 2030.
- John Harrison (AD, Relationships) joined the meeting to provide an update on Public Weather Service Customer Supplier Agreement (PWS CSA). Final sign off would be requested from the Board at the additional April meeting.
- The Board approved the business case for the Newton Fund – Weather and Climate Science for Service Partnerships (WCSSP).
- The Board approved three science Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) covering i) Exploiting Data Sciences, (ii) Delivering High Quality Science and (iii) Increasing Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) Accuracy.
- Nick Jobling and Andy Cooper (Head of Plans & Performance) presented the updated proposals for the next year's KPIs following earlier sessions with the Non-Executive Directors. The final version would be presented at the additional Board meeting in April.
- Rob Woodward provided an update on the Security Issues Committee meeting earlier in March.
- Next meeting to be held on 27 May 2021.