

Met Office Board

Summary

25 March 2020

Meeting held remotely using Skype

- Rob Woodward (Chair) opened the meeting which was being held virtually because of the COVID-19 lockdown. Two of the original items with guest presenters would be rescheduled.
- Apologies were noted from John Kimmance, James Partington and Nick Jobling. The Board thanked John Kimmance in his absence for his valuable contribution to the Met Office as his term had now come to an end.
- The Board welcomed Steve Marshall as Interim Director of Operations.
- The Board welcomed Andrew McKean as Interim CFO in Nick Jobling's absence and Paul Riches as BEIS representative standing in for James Partington.
- The Board welcomed Clare Wastenev (Head of Legal and Governance at the Coal Authority) who was joining the Board as an observer under BEIS' 'Open Boards Scheme'.
- As Robert Drummond was awaiting formal extension of his contract, he was attending this meeting as an observer.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2020 were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.
- The completed action plan from the 2018/19 Board Effectiveness Review was reviewed. The questionnaire for the 2019/20 Review would be circulated after the meeting.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) updated the Board on the Met Office's actions to address the COVID-19 situation which was being managed by the Major Incident Management Team (MIMT). Delivery of customer services had been maintained and all but a bare minimum of staff were working remotely. Staff welfare and comprehensive communications were priorities at this difficult time. The Board passed on its thanks to the MIMT and all staff for their response to the situation.
- Penny Endersby presented her regular report and the Board noted a number of points, including the positive reception of the supercomputer funding announcement; the early forecasting of storms Ciara and Dennis; the preparations for the bi-lateral meeting with ECMWF; and the organisation redesign, noting the proposed location of a number of functions.
- Andrew McKean presented the Finance Report, including the partial release of the FP7 provision and the potential impacts of COVID-19. Cash flow was considered.
- Paul Riches briefed the Board on activities at BEIS, noting the work to respond to the economic impacts of COVID-19.
- The report of the 24th Met Office Scientific Advisory Committee (MOSAC) was tabled. The role of applied science, the challenges of data assimilation and the scope of science assurance were discussed.
- Stephen Belcher (Chief Scientist) presented the Research and Innovation Strategy, noting the alignment with the corporate strategy and three broad themes focused on pioneering research, national capability and science to services. The Board endorsed the roll out of the strategy.
- Tammy Lillie (Interim HR Director) presented the quarterly People Report. The new values, which had been well received, were discussed. Absence statistics, including stress related absences, were considered and the Employee Assistance Programme discussed.

- Andrew McKean presented the draft 2020/21 budget. It had been prepared prior to the COVID-19 emergency. The Board agreed to provide conditional approval for it as a working draft subject to confirmation from Government and BEIS how to take it forward.
- Andrew McKean presented the final draft of the 2020-2025 Corporate Plan. As it was still subject to the summer 2020 spending review and did not yet reflect potential impacts from COVID-19 the Board endorsed the direction of travel but were not able to approve the plan at this point.
- Andrew McKean presented a draft of the KPI structure for 2020/21. The Board discussed the potential metrics, such as for forecast accuracy. The final proposed metrics would be presented at the next meeting.
- The Corporate Risk Report, which had been reviewed at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) the previous day, was presented.
- Penny Endersby presented proposals to establish an Environmental Policy Committee with objectives to set a science-based net zero target, oversee ISO 14001 compliance and engage with staff on environmental matters. The Board endorsed the structure of the Committee and its objectives.
- Hunada Nouss (Chair, ARAC) updated the meeting on the ARAC meeting the previous day, which had reviewed year-end reporting and the 2020/21 audit plan. Supercomputer procurement risks had been reviewed.
- Next meeting to be held on 21 May 2020.