

Met Office Board

Summary

5th June 2024

Held virtually and in person Exeter HQ, Met Office

- Rob Woodward (Chair) welcomed attendees and confirmed the meeting was quorate. Rob Woodward's contract had been extended to 30th September to allow the process to appoint a new Chair to be completed after the end of the election period.
- Rob Woodward confirmed that a preferred candidate had been identified for the appointment of the new Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair.
- The minutes of the meeting held on the 27th March 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) presented her report to the Board, noting:
 - The supercomputer implementation had been proceeding to plan since the last meeting.
 - The Public Weather Service Customer Supplier Agreement had been signed.
 - The final version of the London Economics report (including a revised evaluation of flood work and a better explanation of the core Met Office services) had been submitted to DSIT and DESNZ for final sign off.
 - PCE highlighted a number of programme successes: full-service acceptance and closure of the 'LEELA' lightning project; close down of old platforms for the space weather programme, after the launch of new systems, and being chosen to lead the next climate change risk assessment (CCRA4) technical report.
- Adam Jackson (DSIT representative) confirmed that during the general election it was essential to follow central guidance and not improperly influence the political campaigns. DSIT had started preparing advice and support for a new government, which was a significant task. New government and department priorities would be driven by two factors - manifesto commitments (when published) and the Civil Service advice on what to consider. There was now likely to be a multi-year spending review, but this was not yet certain. It was important to have information about major funding decisions available – EUMETSAT satellite programmes and climate services were examples.
- Hunada Nouss (ARAC Chair) provided an update on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee the previous day. The year end accounts had been reviewed by the Met Office finance team, National Audit Office and KPMG, prior to consideration by ARAC and the Board. The Corporate Risk Manager presented her report and overview of the current risk management process. A half yearly update on cyber risk was given. The Committee reviewed the updated audit plan and charter. The ARAC annual report reviewing the work of the committee of the last year was presented and accepted.
- Nick Jobling (Chief Financial Officer) introduced the finance report. The year end position had closed without any major surprises. The operating profit Key Performance Indicator (KPI) had been achieved as had KPI 4.2, with £6.2m efficiencies delivered through careful cost management. With a drop in March, headcount came in below forecast.
- Nick Jobling presented the Annual Reports and Accounts (AR&A). The finance team had discussed and worked through the issues with the Auditors. The external delay obtaining pension data was discussed. If there were only minor amendments following this meeting, then the AR&A could be signed off.
- John Harrison (Interim Markets Director) presented a paper on Climate Security. An overview was given on the paper that was approved by the National Security Council in March. Various areas of the Met Office had been involved and fed into the central government work and paper. The timeline and activities undertaken to get to this point were explained. The Board discussed the broad requirements for the work.
- Richard Bevan (Chief Technology Officer) and others presented the report on Generative Artificial Intelligence, highlighting that the Met Office had been working on this for the last year. How it worked was explained along with a demonstration of Copilot for Microsoft 365. The Board discussed the potential productivity improvements and business value. Ethical issues were discussed.

- Kirstine Dale (Chief AI Officer) – Presented the report on AI for Numerical Weather Prediction (AI4NWP). She provided an update of where the Met Office was and the proposed strategy in the context of wider industry developments. She articulated the continued need for supercomputer capability. The Board reviewed industry and Met Office developments noting the rapid and extensive work on AI for weather predictions undertaken by the tech companies.
- Paul Chavasse (Associate Director, Office of the Chief Executive Officer) presented the annual report on Net Zero, highlighting the achievement of the previous year's KPI. The same format would be followed for this year's KPI. There had been strong engagement from across the organisation to achieve the reduction in business travel. The Board discussed the challenges inherent in achieving the 2030 target and discussed the approach to offsetting and future funding.
- A verbal update was given on the Remuneration Committee.