

Met Office Board

Summary

2 February 2023

Held virtually via Microsoft Teams, BEIS London & Met Office Exeter

- Rob Woodward (Chair) welcomed attendees and confirmed the meeting was quorate. The meeting was being held on a hybrid basis, given travel disruption, and the Board would now visit Leeds in July. He welcomed David Sandford who had been nominated as the BEIS Non-Executive Director on the Board. He congratulated Anusha Shah on her appointment as President Elect of the Institution of Civil Engineers.
- Rob Woodward reported on the new Non-Executive Director selection process. There had been a very high-quality field of applicants and ministerial approval was now being sought.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) presented her report. She noted the excellent results from the annual staff People Survey and the achievements celebrated at the annual Awards for Excellence. These positive events were balanced by the potential for future industrial action, for which resilience arrangements were being considered.
- Penny Endersby reported on the supercomputer programme and the challenges being encountered. The Next Generation Modelling System (NGMS) programme was making excellent progress.
- The Board discussed a number of issues relating to the future development of NWP (numerical weather prediction), the related tools being developed including ensembles and machine learning, and collaboration with European and other partners.
- Nick Jobling (Chief Financial Officer) presented the Finance Report. The Board discussed the potential impact of different possible timings of the pay award, as well as confidence levels around the payment of the dividend.
- The Board discussed the lessons learned and the actions emanating from the independent review of the supercomputer procurement process.
- David Sandford provided an update on the priority activities at BEIS. A significant amount of time was being devoted to resolving the approach to European science programmes. There was also a major focus on energy security where the Met Office's contribution had been very much appreciated.
- Elizabeth Harris (Programmes Director) and Mark Hunt (Associate Director of Future Technology) provided an update on the proposed business case for the supercomputer exploitation programme. While it would be possible to adopt a basic but affordable approach to delivering the stated benefits, this would not address the strategic issues around post processing nor resolve legacy technology issues. It might be possible to acquire a commercial off-the-shelf solution to address these and it had been decided to defer the business case until this option had been investigated and could be considered alongside the other options for the exploitation programme.
- Ian Cameron (Markets Director) and members of his team provided an update on the approach to stakeholder management. The Board discussed the benefits of the approach in extending the reach of the Met Office and how they could support the initiative.
- Simon Brown (Services Director) and Will Lang (Head of Situational Awareness) presented a paper on the National Security Risk Assessment (NRSA) Report. The Met Office was 'owner' of 4 risks and had a stake in over 30 others. The Board discussed how these risks were addressed in practical terms and how the Met Office could reach as many communities as possible.
- Stephen Belcher (Chief of Science and Technology) and Simon Vosper (Science Director) gave a verbal report on the MOSAC (Met Office Science Advisory Committee) and SRG (Science Review Group) meetings which had just concluded. There had been positive endorsement of the NGMS programme and interest in how it could support climate modelling. Machine learning and AI had also been considered.

- A paper on the Met Office Academic Partnership (MOAP) had been tabled. Simon Vosper explained how the partnership funding and arrangements worked, providing background for the meeting at Leeds University now rescheduled for later in the year.
- Tammy Lillie (People Director) presented the half-yearly People Report. The Board discussed a number of issues in the report, including staff turnover rates particularly in technology, absence rates and mental health issues, and diversity data.
- The outcome of the Board Effectiveness Review was presented to the meeting. Feedback on the functioning of the Board was again positive. Included in the actions were considerations for the Strategy Day in June.
- Penny Endersby provided an update on the Executive's recent strategy workshops. These had focussed on the longer-term 'Horizon C'. The Board were requested to feed back their thoughts so they could be incorporated into preparations for the Strategy Day.
- The next meeting was scheduled for 30 March 2023.