

Met Office Board

Summary

29 & 30 March 2022

Hybrid meeting held in person at Met Office, Exeter and remotely using MS Teams

- Rob Woodward (Chair) welcomed attendees and confirmed the meeting was quorate.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting.
- The extension of the contract for the existing supercomputer had been approved ex-Committee on 17 March 2022. The minutes of this were approved.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) presented her report. She noted:
 - The outcome of the spending review, thanking the Met Office and BEIS teams involved.
 - The recent 5 major weather warnings, which had all been assessed as excellent.
 - The publication of the second stage of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), which had a significant contribution from the Hadley Centre.
 - The relatively limited impact of recent higher levels of COVID19; office attendance was now increasing again.
 - The new Government requirements on Functional Standards which ARAC would review in more detail.
 - The Arm's Length Body Review which the Met Office has been selected to undergo.
- She updated the Board on the latest position with the supercomputer contract as well as explaining the layers of engagement with Microsoft across the office. The Executive Board had had a deep dive into the Supercomputer Exploitation Programme (SEP) which would be covered further at the Board Strategy Day.
- Ian Cameron (Markets Director) provided an update on the Impact and Benefit Strategy, explaining how it had evolved since the previous year's strategy day and been used to flesh out planning over the three time 'horizons'. Further work would be done to clarify the market positioning flowing from the strategy. The Board discussed how it linked to the corporate KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and Strategic Actions.
- Nick Jobling (Chief Financial Officer) and Andy Cooper (Head of Plans & Performance) presented the latest version of the Corporate Plan which would be submitted to BEIS. There was a focus on investment in people which needed to be considered in the light of public sector pay remit constraints. The Board requested submission of a final version of the Corporate Plan at the next meeting.
- Nick Jobling presented a draft of the proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the coming financial year, explaining how they related to the three strategic anchors. The Board approved the structure of the KPIs and the approach to Corporate Performance Pay. The Board requested submission of the final version of the KPI metrics at the next meeting.
- Nick Jobling and Andrew McKean (AD, Finance) presented the Met Office Budget for the 2022/23 financial year. They explained how inflation impacts (e.g., from electricity costs to pay and national insurance) were being absorbed. The assumptions for supercomputing programme funding and Microsoft payments were discussed. The Board agreed to defer formal approval of the budget until clarification was available on the treatment of support for the existing supercomputer and on the consistency of budget pay assumptions and civil service pay remit guidance.
- James Partington (NED, BEIS representative) briefed the Board on the focus of activities at BEIS, particularly the work to complete a challenging spending review process. He updated the Board on the discussions around association to the European Horizon science programmes. If association could not be achieved alternative plans and funding were being developed.
- Nick Jobling presented the Finance Report and updated the Board on likely profit levels, subject to final adjustments. The cash position had increased following receipt of the additional £40m loan for the EUMETSAT satellite programme.

- The Board considered and approved the business case to go out to tender for a new Digital Services Delivery Partner to support the Met Office website and mobile applications for 2 years. The Board were alerted to the need to approve 3 business cases ex-Committee once funding was formally confirmed. These were:
 - WCSSP [Newton Fund – Weather and Climate Science for Service Partnerships] – this would be for additional funding on top of the Board’s earlier approval.
 - Memorandum of Understanding for the Hadley Centre Climate Programme (HCCP) to align with the 3-year £62.5m funding settlement.
 - The Future of Operational Meteorology (FoOM) business case to improve tools and automation for operational meteorologists.
- Papers on the Quality Management System and on Business Continuity Management were tabled for information.
- Jordan Giddings (Chair, Security Issues Committee) provided an update from the recent meeting which had been held at the UK Hydrographic Office. The Committee had discussed issues relating to the situation in Ukraine. Business plans and future strategic opportunities had also been considered.

Business on 29th March closed at this point and the meeting reconvened on the morning of 30th March.

- Rob Woodward welcomed Gilbert Brunet (Chair, MOSAC (Met Office Scientific Advisory Committee)) who joined the meeting from Australia. Gilbert Brunet summarised the discussions and output from the MOSAC meeting held earlier in the year. He noted the exceptional strength of the Met Office in research and development and the ambition of its overarching goals. Stephen Belcher (Chief of Science and Technology) outlined the Met Office’s response to MOSAC. The Board discussed the progress of the strategic Next Generation Modelling Programme, noting the work required to ensure the cost of compute was competitive. The Board accepted MOSAC’s report and approved Stephen Belcher’s response.
- The Board discussed the SRG (Science Review Group) Report, which reviewed the Hadley Centre Climate Programme on behalf of BEIS and Defra. It had covered COP26 and future implications for Met Office science. The innovative partnership with Microsoft had been discussed as well as the need for other partnerships going forward. Stephen Belcher’s response was being finalised.
- Stephen Belcher presented an update to the Research and Innovation Strategy. The Board discussed how this interlinked with the other two anchor strategies as well as potential audiences for the strategy.
- Albert Klein Tank (AD, Climate Science) presented a paper on the legacy from COP26. More than any previous conference, science had been at the heart of COP26. Social media engagement had been good. It had been a great team effort to achieve this. It would be a challenge sustaining the momentum, but plans were in hand to address this and the UK maintained presidency through COP27 in Egypt. There were benefits in the way the weather and climate agendas were starting to come together.
- The next meeting was scheduled for 1 June 2022.