

Met Office Board

Summary

30 November 2022

Held at Microsoft, Paddington, London

- Rob Woodward (Chair) welcomed attendees and confirmed the meeting was quorate. He welcomed Damitha Adikaari (Director - Science & Innovation for Climate & Energy (SICE), BEIS) and Felicity Howe from the BEIS Sponsorship Team.
- He noted that Adam Jackson was the new Director with responsibility for the Met Office at BEIS and David Sandford would take up the Deputy Director role in the new year. The short-listed candidates to replace Catherine Quinn (NED) would be interviewed in January.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting.
- Rob Woodward provided an update on the progress of the Board effectiveness review. He also reported on the succession planning session the previous day and noted the discussion the Non-Executive Directors would be having after the main meeting.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) presented her report. She provided a progress report on the supercomputer programme, noting:
 - Factory acceptance testing was complete;
 - One core was in situ in the UK, with the second being shipped;
 - The major data transfers were going well; and
 - The development module was working fully.
- A smaller contingent than last year had attended COP27 in Egypt, but there had been constructive engagement with Minister Chris Skidmore. Anusha Shah (NED) provided feedback from her visit to COP27.
- Penny Endersby reported on the forecasts the Met Office were providing to BEIS to help assess energy demand. Consistent messaging was key, as well as an understanding of the limitations of medium-range forecasts.
- The independent lessons learned review for the supercomputer procurement was still not quite complete, but it had concluded process controls were robust and procurement rules had been properly followed. The lessons to be taken forward would be discussed at the next meeting.
- There had been a very positive assessment of the Met Office's Arm's Length Body review submission by the BEIS review board. This would now be forwarded to the Secretary of State and the Cabinet Office.
- Felicity Howe provided an update on the BEIS Sponsor Team and the new ministerial appointments. She complimented the work that had gone into the Arm's Length Body review. She confirmed a statutory instrument had been laid in Parliament to make the Met Office a Category 2 responder.
- Nick Jobling (Chief Financial Officer) presented the Finance Report. He outlined the progress made to address the potential profit gap since the previous meeting. The Board discussed the likely impact of inflation and the current economic circumstances.
- Rob Woodward welcomed Vice Admiral Duncan Potts (Chair, Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG)) to the meeting. He outlined the focus of the PWSCG over the last year. The PWSCG were keen to achieve the maximum trust in the Met Office's communications and to extend their effective reach as far as possible; this had led to a focus on the Citizen Engagement Strategy.
- Dave Britton (Associate Director, Communications and Engagement) and members of his team provided an update on the engagement strategy the Board had agreed in 2020. They then outlined the impressive work done to develop the Met Office's social media presence, which was helping extend the reach of both weather and climate communications.

- Tammy Lillie (People Director) presented the half year update on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. The Board noted their support and requested the chance to meet another staff network lead at a future meeting.
- Damitha Adikaari explained his role and that of the SICE team at BEIS, which included the governance of the Met Office Hadley Centre Climate Programme. He also outlined the priorities of the new government relating to energy, climate and net zero. The Board discussed what could be done to capitalise on the capabilities of the Met Office more widely across government.
- Jason Lowe (Principal Fellow Applied & Climate Science) and Melissa Welsh (Head of UK Government Business) joined the meeting to provide an update on Climate Services. The Board discussed what opportunities might develop, how they could be funded and where the Met Office should seek to tackle them in partnership with other parties.
- Hunada Nouss (Chair, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)) reported on the ARAC meeting the previous day. There had been a deep dive into cyber risk.
- ARAC had also reviewed the organisation's risk management processes and approved the annual risk appetite statement. The Board endorsed the risk appetite.
- Mark Hunt (Associate Director of Future Technology) presented the supercomputer implementation report. As noted earlier, good progress had been made, though he flagged the potential resource squeeze coming up.
- Mark Hunt then provided an update on the supercomputer exploitation programme and outlined the key considerations leading up to the completion of the business case at the end of the financial year.
- The Board welcomed guests from Microsoft to the meeting including Clare Barclay, UK CEO, and joining from the US, Max Welling, Distinguished Scientist, Christopher Bishop, Technical Fellow and Director, and Erin Chapple, Corporate Vice President Azure Core. They gave presentations on:
 - The current position of the supercomputer programme;
 - The research Microsoft were doing on machine learning and artificial intelligence, especially in the field of natural sciences: and
 - The Azure cloud computing platform and how their customers were using this.Rob Woodward thanked them for a fascinating presentation and also for their generous hospitality in making Microsoft's excellent facilities at Paddington available to the Board.
- The Board reviewed the following papers:
 - The interim position of the Thought Leadership KPI, which was approved;
 - The MOD Visual Weather business case, which was approved;
 - An update on the lessons learned from the summer heatwave;
 - A review of autumn seasonal forecast accuracy; and
 - An update of the Markets Horizons Framework after the previous meeting.
- The next meeting was scheduled for 2 February 2023 at Leeds University.