

Met Office Board

Summary

1 October 2021

Held at the Met Office, Exeter

- There were no apologies.
- Rob Woodward (Chair) welcomed Catherine Stalker and Jane Hayes from Independent Audit, who would be observing the meeting as part of the Board Effectiveness Review.
- The Board agreed that Jordan Giddings (Non-Executive Director) take over the role of Chair of the Security Issues Committee.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2021 had been approved as a true record of the meeting.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) presented her report and the Board noted a number of points, including progress of the supercomputer programme and engagement with Microsoft; how the programme to develop tools and systems for operational meteorologists would be integrated into the supercomputer exploitation programme; and the success of the first summer heat warning the Met Office had issued.
- The Board discussed the role of Government Chief Scientific Advisers (CSAs). The Met Office's role supporting Government and the new National Situations Centre was considered.
- James Partington (NED, BEIS representative) outlined new responsibilities following the ministerial reshuffle. The 3-year spending review submission to the Treasury had been completed. He noted the Public Body Review Programme would start next year.
- The Board discussed the national challenges and risks around pay, particularly as the greater prevalence of hybrid working was offering more flexibility, when it was available, to potential applicants.
- Nick Jobling (Chief Financial Officer) presented the Finance Report. Recruitment challenges meant headcount was below forecast. He noted the likely profile of supercomputer payments and explained the accounting treatment.
- Paul Davies (Principal Fellow) joined the meeting to discuss the forecasting review of summer weather. In particular, the Board discussed the provision of warnings for extreme rainfall events, how 'nowcasting' could assist with this and how to ensure relevant and timely communication to local resilience forums. The Board considered what lessons could be learned from the reaction to recent extreme precipitation in Germany.
- The team leading preparations for the COP26 Conference made a presentation to the Board, outlining Met Office involvement and communication plans and explaining how these aligned with Government objectives. The Board requested a session in the new year to discuss the legacy that would be taken forward from the Conference.
- Ian Cameron (Markets Director) outlined progress on development of the Impacts and Benefits Strategy, explaining the approach to planning over three 'horizons' or timescales. As the strategy was finalised, metrics would be developed to assess impacts and how value was delivered to customers from government and industry as well as the public.
- Ian Cameron provided an update on the sales pipeline. He noted the focus on setting appropriate customer expectations and aligning new work with Met Office strategic priorities.
- The Board received an update on the Engagement Strategy that had previously been approved. Further work had been done on the value proposition and understanding why customers used Met Office services. The combination of pioneering science, trusted services and global impact were considered to make the Met Office unique.

- Significant effort had recently focused on demonstrating thought leadership in science and climate communications.
- Jon Petch (Chair, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Committee) and members of two of the diversity networks joined the meeting to provide an update on the Equality Objectives and provide some background on the diversity networks. The Board discussed how members could help champion the ED&I work.
- Tammy Lillie (People Director) provided the Board with an overview of management development and the introduction of the line manager responsibilities framework. She was looking to improve spans of control and the ratio of staff reporting to each line manager.
- Tammy Lillie explained that the people framework was designed to identify future skills the organisation would need, covering personal, corporate and professional effectiveness. The approach to talent management was discussed.
- The Board discussed the Met Office's Net Zero strategy and the scope for the Board to support the Met Office's leadership in this area.
- The Board approved its Terms of Reference, which included minor updates.
- Hunada Nouss (Chair, ARAC) provided an update on the meeting earlier in the week which had conducted deep dives into the risks around supercomputer delivery and longer-term benefits exploitation.
- Jordan Giddings provided a verbal update on the Security Issues Committee meeting in September.
- The next meeting was scheduled for 5 November 2021 in Glasgow.