

Met Office Board

Summary

29 September 2023

Held in person the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Poole

- Rob Woodward (Chair) welcomed attendees and confirmed the meeting was quorate. Andy Samuel was welcomed to his first Board meeting as a Non-Executive Director. Apologies from Anusha Shah (Non-Executive Director) and Jane Lancaster (Prospect Union representative) were noted.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) presented her report to the Board, noting:
 - The pay remit had finally been agreed. However, the Met Office was not competitive in all areas of recruitment and she was concerned about the damage the protracted process had done to staff morale
 - A positive meeting with the Minister, when Sir Paul Nurse's landscape review had been discussed
 - Generally more positive progress on the supercomputer implementation; discussion was taking place on benefit realisation and on the approach to the second generation of the programme
- Charlie Ewen (Chief Data and Information Officer) explained the data supply issue the Executive had been looking and would investigate further.
- The Board discussed the increasing need for GPUs to work on AI. A collaboration agreement with the Turing Institute on AI for numerical weather prediction was due to be signed soon.
- Adam Jackson (DSIT Director) reported the positive news that the Horizon and Copernicus agreements had been completed. Plans for the forthcoming AI summit at Bletchley Park were discussed. Potential approaches and planning for the spending review were considered.
- Jamie Chestnutt (Director of Engineering and Supply, RNLI) and two of his colleagues joined the Board meeting. Rob Woodward thanked them for joining the dinner the evening before to discuss communicating safety information and tackling misinformation, where both organisations faced similar challenges. Jamie Chestnutt outlined the RNLI's mission, the scope and scale of its work and its strategic objectives. The Board discussed the services the Met Office provided to RNLI, including the development of beach forecasts, and how the relationship could be strengthened going forward.
- Simon Brown (Services Director) and Simon Vosper (Science Director) presented a seasonal weather update for the past 6 months. Seasonal performance and accuracy metrics were on track, though this would become more difficult to maintain as upgrades to the model were paused for the implementation of the new supercomputer. The Board discussed how the role of Operational Meteorologists added value for customers beyond the model output.
- Nick Jobling (Chief Financial Officer) introduced the finance report. He explained the adjustments relating to backdated pay and the 'cost-of-living' payment, noting the need to still meet the profit target to pay the DSIT dividend and the profit component of Corporate Performance Pay.
- Nick Jobling introduced and the Board approved a business cases for the Core Network Refresh, to extend the asset life of this infrastructure for at least 5 years.
- The Board reviewed the provisional business case for the Arctic Meteorology Capability programme. The final case would be circulated ex-committee.
- Hunada Nours (Non-Executive Director, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair) gave an update on the meeting the previous day. There had been deep dives on the capacity and capability risk and on the Met Office's change landscape and programme interdependencies.
- Jordan Giddings (Non-Executive Director, Security Issues Committee (SIC) Chair) gave an update on the meeting of the SIC earlier in the month. The Board requested a discussion at a full Board meeting in due course.

- Stephen Belcher (Chief of Science & Technology) introduced the concept of Capabilities that the Executive had been using for strategic prioritisation and planning discussions. Aidan Green (AD, Enterprise Design) explained how by providing a common language to describe what the Met Office did as an organisation, they could help identify interdependences and support strategic planning. The work was at an early stage and would be reviewed as it progressed.
- Penny Endersby explained the position with redrafting the Met Office Framework Document. The Board discussed the scope to introduce some additional freedoms and flexibility in the new version, particularly to help tackle challenges around recruitment and retention.
- The Board's Terms of Reference were reviewed and approved.
- Rob Woodward thanked the RNLI for hosting the Met Office Board and for the fascinating tour of their facilities over the lunch break. The next meeting was scheduled for 30 November 2023 in Exeter.