

Minutes of The National Archives' Board		THE
		NATIONAL
Held on 26 May 2022 at 13:30 at The National Archives, Kew and via Video Conference (VC)		ARCHIVES

Present:

Andrew Wathey (AW - Chair) Chair of The National Archives' Board
Sonia Cargan (SC) Non-executive Board Member
Rommel Pereira (RP) Non-executive Board Member
Mark Richards (MR) Non-executive Board Member (via VC)
Ros Scott (RS) Non-executive Board Member
Emmajane Avery (EJA) Director of Public Engagement
Neil Curtis (NC) Chief Operating Officer
Lucy Fletcher (LF) Director for Public Records Access and Government Services
Jeff James (JJ) Chief Executive and Keeper
Valerie Johnson (VJ) Director of Research and Collections
Gemma Maclagan Ram (GMR) Commercial Director
Andrea Metcalf (AM) Director of People, Inclusion and Change
John Sheridan (JS) Digital Director (via VC)
Aaron Smith (AS) Corporate Services Director

Also present:

Asha Bagayat (AB) Head of Governance (Minutes)
Alex Forbes (AF) Head of Government Services (for item 9 via VC)
Sonia Ranade (SR) Head of Digital Archiving (for item 3)
Corporate Information Analyst (for item 2)
Sam Whaley (SW) Head of Strategy and CEO's Office (via VC)
Editorial Assistant (via VC for Item 8)

1.0 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 There were no apologies for absence.
- 1.2 RS declared an interest in the Parliamentary Archives partnership project (Item 6) as a former member of the Parliamentary Restorations and Renewal Committee. AW noted that his relationship with Northumbria University had recently changed as he has retired from his position as Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive and was now an emeritus professor. There were no further declarations of interest.

2.0 Strategic Discussion: Strategic Approach to Physical Storage

- 2.1 The Board received a paper and presentation providing an overview of The National Archives' medium and long-term physical storage challenges, putting these in the context of wider strategic opportunities and The National Archives' direction of travel.

2.2 A detailed strategic discussion ensued.

2.3 The Board:

- (i) Welcomed the clarity of the paper, and thanked KT for her presentation setting out our long-term physical storage needs;
- (ii) Noted the overview and the outline direction of travel, encouraging the development of a clear longer-term vision for storage, in the context of which short and medium term plans could be shaped;
- (iii) Endorsed the recommendations underpinning the development of our strategic approach to our physical storage challenges; and
- (iv) Noted that a progress update on the medium term storage solutions would be presented at its December meeting.

Action by: LF

3.0 Digital Strategy

3.1 The Board was invited to comment on the draft Digital Strategy – the *Living Digital Archives* - one of the main strategies that will sit underneath *Archives for Everyone*. The intention of the strategy is to be ambitious with a multi-year programme that will be reflected in the next four-year business plan. The cover paper also highlighted people considerations, particularly the challenges of recruitment and retention of specialist digital skills, which will impact our capability to deliver the strategy.

3.2 A detailed strategic discussion ensued, noting the importance of: (i) ensuring that significant digital government records are captured, preserved and made accessible and (ii) clear plans that government could fund into the future on a sustainable basis, appropriately positioned within TNA's full range of priorities.

3.3 There was also a detailed discussion of options for recruitment and retaining specialist digital skills and undertaking value chain mapping. An update on discussions with the Cabinet Office on using the Digital, Data and Technology Framework, the impact of the latest government announcement relating to headcount and staffing cuts, and the importance of strategic workforce planning to deliver the programme was noted.

3.4 The Board:

- (i) Welcomed and endorsed the draft Digital Strategy; and
- (ii) Noted that further work on scenario and workforce planning to underpin plans with clearly defining steps, timescales, costs, and outcomes, would be developed and looked forward to receiving an update towards the end of the year.

Action by: JS/AM

4.0 Update from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

4.1 The Board received a verbal update from RP on the morning's ARC meeting, noting that the Committee had received a briefing and assurance around The National Archives' cyber risk

exposure and control mechanisms and also a progress update from the National Audit Office on the final auditing of the Accounts. The Board also received the Annual Report of the Chair of the ARC, providing an overview of the Committee's performance and areas of review during 2021-22, to support the finalisation of the accounts and governance statement.

4.2 The Board:

- (i) Received and noted the verbal update from that morning's ARC meeting; and
- (ii) Noted and endorsed the Annual Report of the Chair of the ARC and received assurance from the work of the Committee during 2021-22.

5.0 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts

5.1 The Board was invited to review and comment on the latest draft of the Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 and noted the outstanding work and queries to the accounts. The Board also received an update on the production timetable.

5.2 The Board:

- (i) Noted that comments made in Convene will be incorporated into the next draft of the Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22;
- (ii) Agreed to submit further comments by the end of 1 June 2022;
- (iii) Noted that the final typeset designed version will be circulated to the ARC and then onwards to Board for write round approval, once the Audit Completion Report has been received;
- (iv) Received assurance that production was on-track; and
- (v) Subject to (i) and (ii) agreed to submit the latest version to the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for sign off of the narrative and noting of the accounts.

Action by: AB/NC

6.0 Executive Team Updates

6.1 The Board received a report on Executive Team activities.

6.2 Following the government's recent announcement to reduce the number of Civil Servants by around 20% by 2025, HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office have requested that headcount scenarios be submitted by 30 June. Subject to receiving the full brief, the Executive Team will be working on this and intend to convene a special briefing for the Non-executive Board Members ahead of submission.

6.3 A query was raised around the general ALB sponsorship environment and the relationship of the latest headcount announcement with the Public Bodies Reform Programme and the requirement of reviews to identify 5% saving in Resource Department Expenditure Limits (RDEL).

6.4 It was agreed that the Sales Monitoring Service Annual Report 2021-22 would be shared with Board out-of-committee via Convene.

7.0 Non-executive Board Member Verbal Updates

- 7.1 Non-executive Board Members (NEBMs) each provided a verbal update on their recent activity, including insights from other organisations.
- 7.2 RP noted insights from other organisations relating to national cyber security risks and vigilance and good practices around this. He also noted that Ollie Ringguth, Senior Security Advisor, had been quoted in the Government and Security Annual Report 2021-22.
- 7.3 SC noted her involvement in the recruitment of the new Head of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity.
- 7.4 MR noted insights from other organisations on sensitives around engagement programmes relating to contested heritage.
- 7.5 AW noted his meeting with George Freeman, MP and Dame Ottoline Leyser, Chief Executive of UKRI, extending invitations to them to visit Kew and also his introductory meeting with Sir Anthony Seldon, Chair of The National Archives Trust.

8.0 Corporate Reports

Strategic Intent Business Priorities 2022-23

- 8.1 The Board received the Strategic Intent business priorities for 2022-23, noting that we have retained five of the previous two year objectives (2020-21 and 2021-22). Planning was also underway to compile our new four-year business plan.
- 8.2 The Board:
- (i) Noted and endorsed the Strategic Intent business priorities for 2022-23 and agreed for them to be published on the website; and
 - (ii) Welcomed sight of the complete outputs, outcomes and metrics for the seven objectives to enable performance management.

Action by: NC

9.0 Information Management Report 2022

- 9.1 The Board received a report on the key findings of the annual Information Management Report (IMR), which surveys compliance by public record bodies with the Public Records Act (PRA). The data from the survey undertaken at the end of 2021 is of particular interest, as it reflects government compliance at the close of year nine of the ten-year transition period to the 20-year rule for transferring records to The National Archives (departments had previously transferred after 30 years).
- 9.2 The Board:
- (i) Welcomed the update and noted the report;

- (ii) Noted where The National Archives has prioritised activities to support government departments on compliance with the Public Records Act;
- (iii) Noted the value of the annual IMR to inform our medium-long term storage needs; and
- (iv) Noted that proposed options to mark the end of the transition to the 20-year rule at the end of December 2022 will be developed over the summer and shared with the Board.

Action by: LF/AF

10.0 Board Effectiveness Action Plan 2022-23 and Next Steps

10.1 Following discussion of the results of the 2021-22 Board Effectiveness Self Assessment Survey at its 22 February meeting, the Board was presented with an Action Plan focused on activities and initiatives to improve its effectiveness in 2022-23. The paper also provided an update on compliance with the Code of practice for corporate governance in central government departments and new Cabinet Office guidance in relation to board reviews.

10.2 The Board:

- (i) Reviewed and agreed the 2022-23 Board Effectiveness Action Plan;
- (ii) Noted the update on recent Cabinet Office guidance relating to boards and reviews of arm's length bodies; and
- (iii) Agreed to undertake an externally facilitated Board effectiveness review before the end of the financial year to bring us into compliance with relevant guidance.

Action by: AW/JJ/AB

11.0 Minutes, Matters Arising and Action Log

11.1 Subject to minor amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2022 were approved as a correct record.

11.2 The Board reviewed the Actions Log. A verbal update on the Framework Document was noted. RP and MR agreed to commence the email trial ahead of the next Board meeting.

12.0 Any Other Business

Forward Work Programme

12.1 The Board reviewed the Forward Work Programme for Board meetings.

Items for information

12.2 The Board received and noted one item for information: Summary of the Queen's speech and potential impact for The National Archives and praised the quality of the briefing.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 16.28