

Minutes of The National Archives' Board		THE	
		NATIONAL	
Held on 20 March 2023 at 11:00 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 (via VC)
Mark Richards (MR) Non-executive Board Member
Ros Scott (RS) Non-executive Board Member (via VC for items 1-5 only)
Emmajane Avery (EJA) Director of Public Engagement
Neil Curtis (MC) 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 (via VC)
John Sheridan (JS) Digital Director

Also present:

Asha Bagayat (AB) Head of Governance (Minutes)
Jack Butterworth (JB) Head of Grants & Funding (via VC for Item 5)
Alex Forbes (AF) Head of Government Services, Strategy and Engagement (Item 10)
Marie Twomey-McLeod (MWM) Head of Finance (Items 3-4 via VC)
Sam Whaley (SW) Head of Strategy and CEO's Office
Learning and Engagement Advisor (Item 6)
Internal Stakeholder Communications Manager (Item 6)
Two consultants from Campbell Tickell observing the meeting

1.0 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 AW welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially the two consultants from Campbell Tickell observing the meeting as part of the external board effectiveness review process.
- 1.2 There were no apologies for absence. Apologies for leaving early were noted from RS, owing to a diary clash.
- 1.3 AW reported that from 1 March 2023 he had been appointed as an external member of the Council of Cambridge University. There were no further declarations of interest.

2.0 Archives for Everyone 2023-27 Business Plan & Priorities

- 2.1 Following discussion at the last meeting, the Board received an updated draft of the Business Plan for discussion and approval, for onward consideration by Ministers, with the aim of

receiving Ministerial approval and subsequently publishing the plan early in the new financial year.

2.2 There was a discussion on measures and prioritisation, and the need to have costed plans to deliver the ambitions set out in the four year plan. There was general agreement that budget and resource planning was important and it was noted that management would be preparing a business priorities 2023-24 paper for endorsement at the next Board meeting; the challenges and uncertainty resulting from having only two years left of the current funding settlement and awareness that delivery of some of the ambitions, such as the EU Reform Bill, would require supplementary funding were also acknowledged. Ministers had been sighted on the financial requirements for delivering the government's policy intents and this would also be reiterated in the submission accompanying the business plan to ministers. Comments were also made on publishing the historical record in digital form, and on collaboration with higher education and across other national networks to amplify The National Archives' reach.

2.3 The Board:

- (i) Noted that good progress had been made on the business plan;
- (ii) Subject to minor changes, approved the draft for consideration by Ministers; and
- (iii) Noted that the draft in-year business priorities for 2023-24 would be brought to Board for discussion and approval in April 2023.

Action by: SW/NC

3.0 Budget 2023-24

3.1 The Board received a paper summarising the Budget for 2023-24 and allocations that would enable us to manage our inflationary pressures and best support business priorities.

3.2 In introducing the paper, MTM noted that business units have been asked to maintain their baseline budget at the same rate as 2022-23, but noted that additional requests were anticipated, which would add to financial pressures. She also explained that an uplift had been added to the budget based on the expected pay award to staff and inflationary pressures on managing the Kew site, i.e. utilities, and following a question, provided assurance on business continuity planning. There was some good news and following discussion with HM Treasury on the management of additional income generated in 2022-23, combined with other savings, an additional £1m was in the budget for 2023-34.

3.3 There was a discussion around the risks to the budget, particularly on recruitment bias, vacancy provision and income streams. Assurances were provided that recruitment calculations were being scrutinised and managed more closely and the approach set out was endorsed by the Board. In relation to the risks to income, budget constraints faced by higher education institutions and changes in demand from international markets were noted. However, there were also emerging opportunities, which had not yet been accounted for in the budget that were expected to come to fruition.

3.4 Confidence levels in the savings forecasted from the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project and the intersection between recruitment and workforce planning and the assumptions made around these in the budget were also queried. It was confirmed that macro workforce

planning was underway and that this would be reflected in the 3+9 financial forecast report.

3.5 The Board:-

- (i) Reviewed the budget;
- (ii) Noted the risks and received assurance that these were being managed;
- (iii) Agreed that workforce planning and recruitment realism needed to be considered to deliver a more affordable budget;
- (iv) Endorsed the budget for 2023-24; and
- (v) Looked forward to seeing the outputs of the various activities mentioned above reflected in the 3+9 financial forecast report at the June Board meeting.

Action by: NC/MTM

4.0 January Management Accounts

4.1 The Board received the January Financial Reports, which presented that the full year forecast was in line with the budget through careful management and control mechanisms being put in place on some revenue and capital spending activities. No significant underspends were emerging. The February Management Accounts presented a similar picture and would be circulated to Board out-of-committee.

4.2 The Board:

- (i) Received and endorsed the January Financial Report; and
- (ii) Noted that the February Management Accounts would be circulated out-of-committee.

Action by: NC/AB

Post Meeting Note: The February Management Accounts were uploaded to Convene on 27 March for Board's out-of-committee consideration. No comments were received and the item have been recorded as received and endorsed by the Board.

5.0 Outward Grants Approach and Programme 2023-24

5.1 The Board received a paper setting out the basis for The National Archives to make grants to the archives sector and, following consultation in 2022, was invited to endorse a new Grants Policy and approach and the outward grant-making programme for 2023-24, which had been agreed by the Executive Team.

5.2 The Board generally welcomed the paper, which clarified our grant-making landscape and brought to the forefront the size of some archives, which were at a disadvantage when making grant applications due to lack of resource, skills and capacity. The grants programme for 2023-24 and support to the sector was welcomed.

5.3 The Board:

- (i) Welcomed the paper;

- (ii) Fully supported proposals, which helped build capacity and put organisations in good stead to apply for grants;
- (iv) Endorsed the refreshed approach to grant-making and the programme for 2023-24; and
- (v) Looked forward to receiving updates on future developments as they arise via the Executive Team update report.

Action by: VJ/AB

5.4 At the conclusion of this item, RS gave her apologies and left the meeting.

6.0 Staff Survey Results and Update on Wellbeing Framework

6.1 The Board received the 2022 Civil Service People Survey results and its associated draft action plan for review and comment. The survey provided a measure of how staff were experiencing the organisation as we moved closer towards a new 'normal' in terms of how we work together and from where. The Board also received a presentation providing an update on corporate wellbeing initiatives. The wider landscape included high inflation, calls for industrial action. This, combined with a lower than inflation pay award, was noted to have had an impact on the results and the take up of wellbeing initiatives run by The National Archives.

6.2 Comments were made more generally around hybrid working, including insights from other organisations, and what our appetite was around this and implications upon resourcing.

6.3 There was a discussion on the drivers of the leadership and managing change score, noting that there was an opportunity to undertake communications around our vision, cohesion and delivery with the publication of the new four year business plan, as well as looking at leadership development to ensure management were focusing on the right things and had the appropriate skills.

6.4 In respect of the draft action plan, the Board felt that 10 items were too many and noted that the approach was to deliver the plan thematically over multiple years as a rolling programme and that it would be periodically reviewed to support course correction.

6.5 The Board:

- (i) Noted the results of the survey and the wellbeing update;
- (ii) Endorsed the draft action plan and proposed delivery approach;
- (iii) Welcomed the suggestion that each director lead on one of the items in the action plan;
- (iv) Agreed the Executive Team should have a conversation around hybrid working; and
- (v) Welcomed an update on the action plan at its May meeting; the NEBMs offered their support to directors.

Action by: AM

7.0 Executive Team Updates

7.1 The Board received a report on Executive Team activities.

- 7.2 LF provided a verbal update on our compliance with Freedom of Information (FOI) requirements and the action plan agreed with the Information Commissioner's Office. She highlighted that the FOI Centre team would require sustained investment and growth to respond to the volume and demands upon the service.
- 7.3 NC provided a verbal update on TikTok, following an announcement made in Parliament of a ban on the application on government devices. Activity had been suspended as we awaited further guidance from the Cabinet Office.
- 7.4 SW provided a verbal update on discussions relating to a potential partnership project and noted that a paper will be brought to the April Board meeting on the matter.
- 7.5 The Board noted the updates.

8.0 Non-executive Board Member Verbal Updates

- 8.1 Non-executive Board Members (NEBMs) each provided a verbal update on their recent activity, including insights from other organisations.
- 8.2 All NEBMs noted engagement with the external board effectiveness review process.
- 8.3 RP provided an update on the Internal Audit contract.
- 8.4 AW noted attending an event at Mercers Hall and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) RICHeS event on significant new funding for heritage science on 10 February, and also participating in regional conversations relating to the potential partnership project referenced in 7.4 above.
- 8.5 The Board noted the updates.

9.0 Audit and Risk Committee Chair's Update

- 9.1 RP provided a verbal update on the 2 February Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting. He noted the Committee had a productive discussion around risks, noting that, apart from the EU Reform Bill and income, the corporate risks were generally stable. ERP was a standing agenda item and whilst there were resource and workload pressures, the Committee received assurance that the project was moving forward and testing was imminent. The meeting also received the NAO audit plan and took the opportunity to reinforce its message of no late surprises as the Annual Report and Accounts timetable was tight. Other items included an update on procurement and FOI compliance.
- 9.2 The Board:
- (i) Noted the Chair's verbal update; and
 - (ii) Received and noted the draft minutes of the 2 February Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

10.0 Transition to the 20 Year Rule

- 10.1 December 2022 marked the end of the government's transition to a '20-year rule' for transferring records to The National Archives. The Board received a report on the key findings of the annual Information Management Report (IMR), which surveyed compliance by public record bodies with the Public Records Act (PRA) and provided an assessment of the extent to which the government has met the policy intent of the 20-year rule. The report also proposed options to mark the end of the transition.
- 10.2 The Board welcomed the paper and whilst it noted that the government had not met its policy intent, the majority of records were lawfully retained via an application to the Secretary of State for DCMS' Advisory Council on National Records and Archives, whom The National Archives expressed its thanks to.
- 10.3 Challenges from the custodianship and storage of born digital records and their implications for the public records system and potential early transfer to The National Archives respectively were noted.
- 10.4 The Board:
- (i) Noted the government's performance against the policy intent of the transition to the 20-year rule;
 - (ii) Endorsed the 'Keeper's report on the transition to the 20-year rule', noting that this will form the basis of any communication we undertake to mark the end of transition;
 - (iii) Agreed the communications approach set out in the report; and
 - (iv) Agreed to be kept updated on an annual basis on the government performance against Public Records Act responsibilities.

Action by: LF/AB

11.0 Minutes, Matters Arising and Action Log

- 11.1 Subject to minor amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2023 were approved as a correct record.
- 11.2 The Board reviewed the Actions Log and agreed to close Item 1, noting that Convene would be the official way to share documents with NEBMs.

12.0 Any Other Business

Forward Work Programme

- 12.1 The Board reviewed the Forward Work Programme for Board meetings and agreed to a tour of the Clore Learning Centre following the April meeting and for JS to bring a paper on Digital publication of analogue/historical records to its May meeting. The Board also welcomed a conversation on monitoring the delivery of the four year plan.

Action by: AB

Items for information

- 12.2 The Board received and noted two items for information: Summary briefing for Ministers on The National Archives and the February Talk Issue.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 14.17