

<b>Date of Meeting:</b> 11 July 2024 at 10.00	<b>Location:</b> Swan Room & Video Conference (VC)	<b>THE</b>
<b>Committee:</b> Executive Team Meeting		<b>NATIONAL</b>
		<b>ARCHIVES</b>
<b>Present</b>	<b>Also in attendance</b>	
Neil Curtis (NC) – Chair – Chief Operating Officer	Clare Allison (CA) – Head of Legislation Services (for item 5)	
Emmajane Avery (EJA) – Director of Public Engagement & Sector Leadership	Darren Austin (DA) – Head of Procurement, Project Delivery and Contract Management (for item 5)	
Lucy Fletcher (LF) – Director of Public Access & Government Services	Asha Bagayat (AB) – Head of Governance (for item 3)	
Gemma Maclagan Ram (GMR) – Director of Research & Commercial Development	Head of Private Office (for items 3)	
Andrea Metcalf (AM) – Director of People, Inclusion & Change	Head of Strategic Operations and Volunteers (for item 6)	
	Media Manager (for item 3)	
	Helen Potter (HP) – Head of Information Rights Strategy (for item 7)	
	Strategy, Governance and Gazette Manager (for item 5)	
	Head of Heritage Science Conservation Research (for item 4)	
	Sam Whaley (SW) – Head of Strategy and CEO’s Office	
	Governance Coordinator (Minutes)	

## Minutes

### 1. **Apologies & Declaration of Interests**

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Jeff James.
- 1.2. There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. **Minutes, Actions Log & Matters Arising**

- 2.1. The Executive Team (ET) reviewed the minutes of the meetings held on 27 June 2024, which were approved with minor amendments.
- 2.2. ET reviewed and updated the Actions Log.

### 3. **Media Briefing**

The Media Manager joined the meeting.

- 3.1. The Media Manager presented the media briefing. The pre-election period had broadly been managed successfully and planning was now underway to work out which postponed activity could be rescheduled.
  - 3.2. The Media Manager briefed on upcoming filming and media coverage of The National Archives collections and activity due to be publicly announced, including Archives Revealed funding. The press event for the July file release was in planning.
  - 3.3. ET discussed the briefing.
  - 3.4. **Decision:** ET noted the briefing.
- The Media Manager left the meeting.

#### **4. Update on Access and Handling of Insecticide-treated Items**

The Head of Heritage Science Conservation Research joined the meeting.

- 4.1. GMR introduced the item, explaining that the item provided an update to a previous ET discussion on the topic following the latest findings from research conducted in Canada on insecticide-treated items. The National Archives had introduced various measures to mitigate any potential risks when handling documents identified as having been treated with insecticides, and GMR asked ET to discuss the possibility of reducing these measures given the new research findings, which showed that the levels of pesticide present in the documents would be considered safe within a domestic setting according to Canadian health and safety regulations.
- 4.2. The Head of Heritage Science Conservation Research advised that the team had been reviewing the implications of recent findings and current UK guidance. PhD research was also being conducted at The National Archives into non-invasive detection methods, so there would be future findings that could inform how documents identified as having been treated with insecticides are handled.
- 4.3. ET discussed the findings.
- 4.4. ET discussed engagement regarding any changes to current measures with trade unions and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office as the originator of the records.
- 4.5. **Decision:** ET approved the option to reduce the thickness of the nitrile gloves used to handle the documents, thus bringing handling measures in line with mould affected items that are produced in the same reading room area, to retain other current measures, continue to engage with Health and Safety England and to review measures in 12 months.

The Head of Heritage Science Conservation Research left the meeting.

#### **5. Legislation Procurement**

CA, DA and the Strategy, Governance and Gazette Manager joined the meeting.

- 5.1. JS introduced the item, explaining that the paper presented options for the

procurement of The National Archives' legislation publishing services. JS asked ET to consider a proposal future procurement.

- 5.2. ET discussed the proposal.
- 5.3. JS advised that the Lawmaker product would impact the nature of the work in the longer-term.
- 5.4. SW left the meeting.
- 5.5. DA noted that new procurement regulations would come into effect from October 2024 and would therefore affect any future procurement exercises.
- 5.6. ET also discussed the timeline for future procurement process and considerations regarding longer-term income from publishing.
- 5.7. **Decision:** ET approved option 3 and to review procurement going forward.  
  
CA, DA and the Strategy, Governance and Gazette Manager left the meeting.

## 6. Update on Volunteering

The Head of Strategic Operations and Volunteers joined the meeting.

- 6.1. EJA presented the item. The Head of Strategic Operations and Volunteers was bringing an update on volunteer activity after the scheme had been refreshed four years previously, running through developments to the scheme over recent years and asking ET to consider possible ways that the scheme could evolve going forwards. Volunteers had had a significant impact on catalogue enhancement.
- 6.2. SW rejoined the meeting.
- 6.3. ET discussed how space at Kew could be used for volunteers and how technology could open up opportunities for different kinds of volunteering activity in the future, which may engage different groups of people.
- 6.4. ET also discussed looking at models from around the sector, as well as connecting with wider Civil Service volunteering networks.
- 6.5. **Decision:** ET noted the update.
- 6.6. **Action:** ET to suggest ideas for developing volunteering activity and send to the Head of Strategic Operations and Volunteers.
- 6.7. **Action:** Raise space at Kew for volunteers at the next Estates Strategy Committee meeting.

The Head of Strategic Operations and Volunteers left the meeting.

## 7. FOI Compliance Challenges and Potential Mitigations

HP joined the meeting.

- 7.1. LF introduced the item, explaining that the paper presented an update on continuing challenges relating to FOI requests and the scale of resource required to address the current volume of requests being received. LF asked ET to consider various possible ways to address demand.
- 7.2. HP gave an update regarding the practice recommendation issued to The National Archives by the Information Commissioner in 2023. It was anticipated that there would be further communication from the Information Commissioner following the submission of the report for Q4 in July 2024.
- 7.3. ET discussed how the Public Records Act 1958 makes provision for the ongoing maintenance of the public record and the institution that looks after it.
- 7.4. ET also discussed legislation relevant to the right to access public information and costs associated with providing public services.
- 7.5. **Decision:** ET noted the update and endorsed the further exploration of options for addressing challenges arising from the current volume of FOI requests.
- 7.6. **Action:** LF and GMR to review how updates to the Fees Order should be progressed.
- 7.7. **Action:** LF and HP to meet with colleagues to refine an options appraisal during the next two weeks.

HP left the meeting.

## 8. **Cascade**

- 8.1. ET reviewed the information from the meeting to cascade to their teams.

## 9. **AOB**

### Internet at Kew

- 9.1. NC said that internet connectivity issues had increased in recent weeks and while engineers tried to fix the issue there would be intermittent disruption today and tomorrow.
- 9.2. ET discussed public and staff communications regarding the issue.

### Day One Briefing for Ministers

- 9.3. ET discussed how Directors would be involved in early engagement with new ministers.

## 10. **For information and noting items**

- 10.1. ET noted the Corporate Reporting Schedule and the Forward Agenda and the Estates Strategy Committee Minutes from March and April 2024.

**There being no further business, the meeting was brought to a close at 12.52.**

## Executive Team Meeting Minutes

**Date of Meeting: 18 July 2024 at 10:00**

**Location: Swan Room & Video Conference (VC)**

Present	Also in attendance
Jeff James (JJ) – Chair – Chief Executive & Keeper	Governance Manager and Advisory Council Secretary (Minutes)
Emmajane Avery (EJA) – Director of Public Engagement & Sector Leadership	Head of Development and Strategy (via VC for item 3)
Neil Curtis (NC) – Chief Operating Officer	Head of Document Services (for item 3)
Lucy Fletcher (LF) – Director of Public Access & Government Services	Corporate Performance Manager (via VC for item 2)
Gemma Maclagan Ram (GMR) – Director of Research & Commercial Development	Corporate Security Adviser (via VC for item 3)
Andrea Metcalf (AM) – Director of People, Inclusion & Change (via VC)	Marie Twomey-McLeod (MTM) – Head of Finance (for item 2)
John Sheridan (JS) – Digital Director	Juergen Vervoorst (JV) – Head of Collection Care (via VC for item 3)

### 1. Apologies & Declaration of Interests

- 1.1. No apologies for absence were received.
- 1.2. There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. Business Priorities 24-25 Q1

MTM and the Corporate Performance Manager joined the meeting.

- 2.1. NC introduced the item and asked ET to review and agree the objective ratings.
- 2.2. The objectives were reviewed and their RAG ratings agreed.
- 2.3. ET clarified that where RAG ratings related to activity that was not scheduled to have started yet, they should, ordinarily, be marked as green on the report.
- 2.4. NC confirmed he was in discussion with IT regarding objective 4.
- 2.5. **Action:** EJA to clarify visitor numbers and consider amendments to the timeline for the refresh of Archives Unlocked.
- 2.6. **Action:** JV to draft the Organisational Sustainability Strategy and discuss with SW.
- 2.7. **Decision:** ET approved the Q1 Business Priorities 2024-25, to recommend to The National Archives Board for write-round approval in August 2024,

subject to minor amendments.

MTM and the Corporate Performance Manager left the meeting.

### **3. Safe Room and Exhibiting Treasures Considerations**

The Head of Development and Strategy, Head of Document Services, JV and the Corporate Security Adviser joined the meeting.

- 3.1. ET agreed to discuss both the Safe Room and Exhibiting Treasures papers under one item. The papers presented proposals relating to the storage and potential display considerations for collection items that could be considered iconic items or 'treasures'.
- 3.2. ET discussed the criteria for determining whether collection items could be defined as 'treasures'.
- 3.3. ET discussed proposals for exhibition spaces under the Public Engagement Strategy. It was felt that the potential offer needed further development, which would require greater clarity around both the permanent and temporary storage of collection items.
- 3.4. ET agreed that governance could be strengthened regarding access protocols.
- 3.5. ET discussed how policies relating to 'treasures' should reflect The National Archives' approach to collections storage and access from both a policy and a practical perspective.
- 3.6. **Decision:** ET endorsed the proposals regarding a review of access protocols, the criteria presented in the paper for defining 'treasures' and the proposal to create a 'treasures' list.
- 3.7. **Decision:** ET agreed to continue assessing the storage (permanent and temporary) and access of iconic collection items on a case-by-case basis until relevant policies were in place.
- 3.8. **Action:** EJA to draft costed proposals for the exhibition spaces, including relevant exhibition data from comparable organisations.

### **4. Cascade**

- 4.1. ET reviewed the information from the meeting to cascade to their teams.
- 4.2. **Action:** Head of Governance to consider sharing the Business Priorities Q1 report with the Senior Leadership Team after it has been presented to the Board.
- 4.3. **Action:** Governance Coordinator to share the comments on Convene on the Safe Room and Exhibiting Treasures papers with the paper authors.

### **5. For information and noting items**

- 5.1. ET noted the Forward Agenda.

**There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 12.45.**



## Executive Team Meeting Minutes

**Date of Meeting: 25 July 2024 at 10:00**

**Location: Swan Room & Video Conference (VC)**

### Present

John Sheridan (JS) – Chair – Digital Director

Neil Curtis (NC) – Chief Operating Officer

Lucy Fletcher (LF) – Director of Public Access & Government Services (via VC)

Gemma Maclagan Ram (GMR) – Director of Research & Commercial Development

Andrea Metcalf (AM) – Director of People, Inclusion & Change (via VC)

### Also in attendance

Asha Bagayat (AB) – Head of Governance

Helen Farmer (HF) – Head of Private Office (via VC)

Hannah Lee (HL) – Head of HR and Business Partnering (Via VC)

Governance Coordinator (Minutes)

### 1. Apologies & Declaration of Interests

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Dr Jeff James CBE and Emmajane Avery.
- 1.2. There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. Minutes, Actions Log & Matters Arising

- 2.1. The Executive Team (ET) reviewed the minutes of the meetings held on 11 and 18 July 2024, which were approved with minor amendments.
- 2.2. ET reviewed and updated the Actions Log.

### 3. Strategic Workforce Plan

HL joined the meeting.

- 3.1. AM presented the item. The draft Strategic Workforce Plan aimed to outline current on-going issues and identify longer-term needs concerning the workforce. It was an agile document that would be regularly updated. It attempted to strike a balance between articulating organisational values and a pragmatic and financial approach, aligning with the People Strategic Plan. AM asked Directors to review the plan and invited feedback.
- 3.2. ET discussed the Plan, agreeing that the data provided on the workforce was very useful.
- 3.3. **Decision:** Directors agree that the immediately critical areas were digital resourcing, Freedom of Information request resourcing, cyber security, the Parliamentary Archives relocation and succession planning.

HL left the meeting.

- 3.4. ET also discussed the possible impact of external factors and bad actors, as well as the extent to which the scope of the Plan includes the interaction between workforce and operations and processes.
- 3.5. AM advised that the new ERP system would produce more detailed analysis of the workforce in time – particular in terms of inclusion, demographics and career trajectories in different areas of the business – which would enhance the plan going forwards.
- 3.6. **Decision:** ET noted the Strategic Workforce Plan.
- 3.7. **Action:** AM to discuss the draft Strategic Workforce Plan with Directors and incoming CEO & Keeper and bring a revised version to a future ET meeting.

#### 4. Executive Team Terms of Reference

- 4.1. NC introduced the item, explaining that the Terms of Reference (ToR) were being updated to provide clarity regarding the committees that are sub committees of the ET, to which ET has delegated certain areas of decision making, and which are sub bodies, without delegated decision-making authority.
- 4.2. AB added that the ToR should outline the processes by which the Keeper gained assurance.
- 4.3. ET discussed the rationale for assigned certain sub committees delegated decision making and which are sub bodies currently do not have decision-making authority.
- 4.4. AB advised that a Governance Handbook was in production, which would outline which powers were delegated to areas of the organisation by the Keeper and which were delegated by ET.
- 4.5. **Decision:** ET approved the ET ToR, subject to minor amendments.
- 4.6. **Decision:** ET agreed to publish the ET ToR on The National Archives' website.
- 4.7. **Action:** AM to provide further text regarding People, Inclusion and Change considerations for the ET ToR.
- 4.8. **Action:** AB to circulate revised ET ToR and work with Directors to consider the status of current sub bodies.

#### 5. Cascade

- 5.1. ET reviewed the information from the meeting to cascade to their teams.

#### 6. AOB

##### Memoranda of Understanding

- 6.1. ET noted the Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Commission AIUla.

##### Vote of thanks to the Governance Coordinator

- 6.2. The chair recorded the thanks of ET for the Governance Coordinator as this was the last meeting providing support. She had done an outstanding job at managing meetings, navigating minutes, as well as co-ordinating agendas, papers and logistics.

Vote of thanks to CEO & Keeper

- 6.3. The chair recorded the thanks of ET to the outgoing CEO & Keeper of Public Records, Dr Jeff James CBE, who was stepping down on 28 July 2024. JS commended Dr James for his leadership, his encyclopaedic knowledge of the archives, his ambition for the institution and for the wider archives sector and, indeed, for archives worldwide. ET agreed that he had led ET with integrity, compassion and distinction. ET wished Dr James well for the future.

**7. For information and noting items**

- 7.1. ET noted the Corporate Reporting Schedule and the Forward Agenda.

**There being no further business, the meeting was brought to a close at 11.50.**