

**MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING,
11 MAY 2009 AT 2:00pm,
LORD CLERK REGISTER'S ROOM,
GENERAL REGISTER HOUSE**

Present: George MacKenzie, Dave Brownlee, Jim Grady, Frank Manson (Non Executive Director), Michael Moss (Non Executive Director), Jenny Cutts (secretary).

Apologies: Beatriz Sanchez (SG Finance); Louise Wilson (SG HR)

1. Minutes of last meeting

1.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 25 February 2009 were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 [2.3] A meeting of the Scottish Council on Archives and the Society of Archivists, Scotland has been scheduled to take place on 16 May 2009. It was also noted the the SCA personnel are well established in their office within General Register House.

2.2 [3.5] Discussions with Scottish Government HR regarding sickness absence statistics were held. Data are now being made available to us, albeit these only cover the period up to 6 months before the current date, which is in line with reports produced for departments within the core Scottish Government. At present e-HR processes mean they are unable to produce more up-to-date statistics.

3. Monitoring Report

3.1 The NAS financial monitoring report to 31 March 2009 was circulated. Dave Brownlee noted performance against operating and capital budgets. The approach of capitalising salaries where staff are engaged in producing assets such as digital surrogates enabled the Agency expenditure to come in just under operating budget. It was noted that Scottish Government provided a non-cash resource of £2.9m to cover the impairment charge arising from the GRH refurbishment; on the other hand the £500k surrendered during 2007-2008 was not recovered.

3.2 The 2009-10 budget was discussed. Senior Management and Finance and Administration Branch are working on this. It was noted that Branch bids currently exceed overall provision and this gap has to be managed out..

3.3 The wider Scottish Government financial situation was discussed. The Scottish Government policy that there are no compulsory redundancies was noted and it was acknowledged that even where posts may be identified as surplus, NAS must continue to

pay salaries until staff members are transferred to a suitable alternative post within Scottish Government.

4. Corporate Plan 2008-2009 progress reports

4.1 A summary of quarterly progress reports was produced for circulation. The Keeper presented highlights of branch activities and explained points in greater detail.

4.2 The Public Records Legislation Review is in its final stage. The consultant's report was considered by the Advisory Group in February 2009 and the Keeper's report is in progress. A discussion of potential outcomes ensued. George Mackenzie explained that meetings with HMIE and Audit Scotland indicate that scrutiny bodies do not share the views of the archival community. Legislative options and recordkeeping issues were discussed.

4.3 Revision of the section 61 Code of Practice on records management which pertains to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002 has been initiated. Terms of the review have been agreed with the Scottish Government Freedom of Information Unit and is likely to proceed this year.

4.4 The Digital Data Archive (DDA) is due to go live and resources have been committed to a future DDA scoping study to report later this year.

4.5 Government Records Branch are leading a Military Appeals Tribunal project producing catalogue data and digital surrogates for public access. Material has also been identified for use by Scottish schools as part of the Scottish History Higher curriculum.

4.6 Court and Legal Records Branch reviewed series of records to establish scope for reducing holdings and a report was submitted to senior management for consideration in March 2009.

4.7 The Tartan Register commenced on 5 February 2009 containing 5,769 pre-existing registered tartans. A fashion design competition based on registered tartans has been launched.

4.8 Private Records Branch developed policy towards major private collections that may be vulnerable and negotiated agreement with Libraries Archives Canada for the export of the Canadian papers of the 8th Earl of Elgin. Guidance on the use of name authority records was produced and circulated to cataloguing staff.

4.9 Reader Services Branch introduced a new style of Reader Tickets that feature photographic identification and reported that legal productions dropped by 12% during the last quarter.

4.10 Other activities noted were the NAS Sustainability Policy, ScotlandsPeople financial systems, the "From the Vaults: Whisky and the Scots" exhibition and extensive conservation of Crail burgh court records work undertaken in support of a PhD programme.

4.11 It was agreed that the Management Board highlights document be published on the intranet for the benefit of NAS staff.

5. Corporate Plan 2009-2010

5.1 Michael Moss suggested that the NAS Corporate Plan should emphasise the financial constraints under which NAS were operating. Any reduction in staffing levels would necessitate important activities, such as the digitisation programme, being curtailed. Frank

Manson agreed that the NAS Corporate Plan should make explicit the financial pressures faced. Attendees agreed that it would be useful to communicate these funding pressures to the Scottish Council on Archives.

5.2 A draft NAS Corporate Plan 2009-2010 was circulated and discussed. The Non Executive Directors suggested that this draft evolve into a more unified view of NAS. Frank Manson considered that the branch objectives be grouped around corporate aims with these in turn being linked to the Scottish Government's national outcomes. Michael Moss agreed that this would flag up more directly how NAS was contributing to the achievement of the Scottish Government's overarching purpose. Frank Manson added that this approach would better enable links to be made between budgetary constraints and the effects upon NAS activities.

5.3 George Mackenzie accepted these comments, but noted that the Scottish Government's Purpose and framework of indicators must be applied carefully. Particular issues must be raised with the Scottish Government concerning requirements and resources for the Digital Data Archive and potential reduction of the 30 Year Rule. Michael Moss added that new records legislation with consequences for enforcement may also present a resourcing pressure. Dave Brownlee explained that the branch key objectives have already been considerably reduced following bi-lateral discussions with Branch Heads.

5.4 It was agreed that NAS senior management recast the draft Corporate Plan with involvement from Branch Heads. Frank Manson addressed the benefits of identifying the required and available resources for each element and suggested that a management commentary describing the effects of budget reductions would also be valuable.

5.5 The Non Executive Directors expect that the Plan will be made available to all stakeholders and feedback be incorporated into the Corporate Plans of subsequent years.

5.6 Cabinet pressure to manage down budgets for the period after 2010 was noted.

6. Performance Indicators

6.1 George Mackenzie noted initial research undertaken by the Keeper's Office into the measurement of performance, value or impact of archives. A number of research initiatives have been identified but a clear approach has not yet emerged. Michael Moss pressed for the registration of NAS' online users as a necessity for gathering qualitative feedback. He noted that the British Library model is informative and that many websites where online document ordering is available require customer log-in and thereby produce user information. Frank Manson noted that consultants may be engaged to produce highly detailed web user data though this is an expensive option.

6.2 Frank Manson asked whether indicators may be identified that demonstrate fulfillment of Scottish Courts records requirements. George Mackenzie explained that detailed retransmissions statistics are kept. He explained that the satisfaction of legal professionals in this respect reflects only part of NAS' contribution to the administration of justice, as the selection of legal records for permanent preservation is not presently assessed. He added that a dialogue with the Scottish Government concerning the selection and preservation of the government's electronic records must also be pursued.

6.3 Issues concerning customer satisfaction were discussed. It was recognised that there are many different types of NAS customers, uses of the records and consequential impacts.

6.4 Attendees accepted that development of Performance Indicators is a long term issue and will be informed by upcoming activities such as the public services study and planned ICT Innovations work.

6.5 Dave Brownlee agreed that the issue of NAS web-user registration will be raised with the Information Systems Planning Group.

7. Staff Survey

7.1 Senior management responses to the 2008 NAS Staff Survey were discussed. It was explained that following the 2006 Staff Survey, the Development Centre head chaired meetings which involved a variety of NAS personnel. Some of the key results were noted. It was agreed that we needed to try and find out what lay behind some of the results. For example, a low score regarding training and development was returned, but the reality is that very few Personal Learning Plans are completed and passed to the Development Centre, and that training has always had committed budgetary support.

7.2 It was accepted that a low survey response rate should also be considered when interpreting the results and that there may be divergent reasons for the answers given. Senior management expressed commitment to addressing the survey results and have identified some measures to take forward, including finance and management seminars, visibility of senior management and enabling greater contact between members of staff and the Non Executive Directors.

8. Future meetings and related activities

8.1 Positive feedback was received regarding the Non Executive Director sessions featured in the 2009 NAS Away Days. It was agreed that similar open forum sessions be offered to all staff and that these may be arranged to coincide with future Management Board meetings. Visits to different branches will also be scheduled. Michael Moss said that he was impressed with the high attendance levels for the Away Days and the participation and interest of staff members of all grades and job types at these events.

8.2 George Mackenzie explained that the Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution has been invited to visit and the Non Executive Directors will be included in this meeting.

9. Audit Issues

9.1 Frank Manson explained that the Audit Committee will require to address the issue of the Scottish Government's self-assessment audit checklist.

9.2 The increase of Audit Committee membership was raised. It was felt that a membership of four and quorum of two would be satisfactory and ideas for potential additions were discussed. Frank Manson considered that one Agency Finance Director and another senior individual from a cultural organisation would extend and maintain the current balance of skills and experience. It was agreed that the National Library of Scotland's Shared Services director be invited to attend the next Audit Committee meeting as an observer.

9.3 It was reported that the external auditors are reviewing IT security. Dave Brownlee clarified that the auditors are building on the previous IT audit rather than repeating work already undertaken. The Non Executive Directors enquired about development of the NAS ICT Strategy. The GROS experience of developing an ICT Strategy indicates that this process can be very expensive and very time-consuming. George Mackenzie recognised that it would be more expedient to enact an interim study in order that strategic decisions

may be made along those lines. Frank Manson suggested that this approach be outlined in the Corporate Plan. It was recognised that senior management must consider findings of the DDA scoping study, the public service study and Innovations planning.

10. Risk Register

10.1 It was noted that no recent changes have been made to the NAS Risk Register and reiterated that reconsideration of this document is necessary. A separate session focussing on reviewing all aspects of the risk register will be convened. It was noted that formulation of the Corporate Plan will first be addressed and that this will inform the risk register.

11. Any other business

11.1 Michael Moss suggested that NAS contact the National Archives (TNA) regarding guidance on the records management code relating to the Freedom of Information Act, 2000.

11.2 The Non Executive Directors expressed an interest in meeting Scottish Council on Archives personnel.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 10 August 2009.

Jenny Cutts
13 May 2009