

**MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING,
17 JULY 2007,
ROBERTSON WING MEETING ROOM, GENERAL REGISTER HOUSE.**

Present: George MacKenzie, Peter Anderson, Dave Brownlee, Jim Grady, Louise Wilson (HR), Sandra Stewart (Finance), Jenny Cutts (secretary).

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 26 April 2007 were approved.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Louise Wilson was welcomed to the NAS Management Board as our new HR Business Partner, replacing Mary Robson.

2.2 Action point [2.1] of previous minutes was discussed. It was noted that only an outline cost of providing workplace facilities for Scottish Council on Archives was required.

2.3 Action point [3.1]. Dave Brownlee stated that the workforce planning template had been supplied.

2.4 The NAS Risk Register had been amended in accordance with action point [7] of previous minutes. It was noted that this would be discussed at the Audit Committee meeting to be held at 2pm 17 July 2007.

2.5 [8.3] The Information Systems Planning Group (ISPG) minutes were duly circulated. Dave Brownlee explained that the next ISPG meeting will be held on 26 July 2007 and could not have been held in advance of the Management Board meeting due to holidays. He reported that the proposal to trial a rota of early morning helpdesk cover would require 3 hours overtime each week. It was noted that the lack of early morning helpdesk cover is frequently raised by staff as a problem. It was agreed to try the proposed arrangement.

2.6 [8.3] George Mackenzie reported that SCAN Ltd is still under discussion and a meeting with the directors of SCAN Ltd will be held to discuss accounts.

2.7 [9.1] The collecting policy for private records was published on the NAS website.

3. Staffing

3.1 Workforce plan

3.1.1 The NAS workforce plan was explained to Louise Wilson. It was noted that it had been circulated to branch heads with a request for updates. The current recruitment exercises for A2 archive attendants, A2 Digital Image Unit staff, B1 ICT staff and B2 conservators, were discussed. It was noted that conservation staff must be recruited externally as there are no other conservators employed by the Scottish Executive. A very good response to the other advertisements had been received.

3.1.2 Louise Wilson explained that the review of HR resourcing policy included recommendations regarding recruitment. Management Group sign-off for the

recommendations is expected to be mid August 2007. It was explained that B1 and C1 assessment boards would be centralised but local assessment centres may also be conducted.

3.2 Attendance management

3.2.1 It was explained that difficulties in HR sickness absence monitoring had been experienced in the past but that these problems had subsequently been resolved. NAS were undertaking their own monitoring as a by-product of the flexible hours working system. Dave Brownlee reported that breached trigger points were now being followed up in a timely manner by HR. It was also noted that there has been a statistical improvement in NAS sickness absences.

3.2.2 There may be some instances where completed SL9 forms are not forwarded to HR, which would result in discrepancies between NAS sickness absence statistics and HR monitoring. It was noted that line managers should ensure that SL9 forms be sent to HR following return to work discussions.

3.3 Special Bonus Scheme

Dave Brownlee explained that this was the first year that NAS operated the Special Bonus Scheme (SBS) and that the number of special bonuses awarded has been recorded. George Mackenzie explained that expressions of thanks for recognition had been received from recipients which demonstrated the value of the scheme. It was reported that one batch of awardees had not received their bonuses and that HR had been alerted. Discussion concerning the continued operation of the scheme was held. It was agreed that we should continue with the established practice of asking all staff to vote on whether or not to operate a SBS in 2007-08, subject to the Scottish Executive continuing to offer special bonuses.

4. HR Update

4.1 HR Advisor's role

Louise Wilson was asked for her views on the role of HR Advisor to NAS. She explained her role in respect of supporting seven directorates and nine agencies under Directorate-General Economy and assisting with implementation of employee survey action plans and the workforce plan tool for all directorates. She explained her work concerning forward planning, aligning budgets and resources, cascading information about HR initiatives and assisting with any central HR 'blockages' or delays. It was agreed that the latter function would be very helpful for NAS.

4.2 People Strategy

Louise Wilson reported on the development of the Scottish Executive People Strategy. This concerns leadership, performance culture, engagement, skills for success and reward. The scope of this initiative has been agreed and research and benchmarking with other organisations will be undertaken. It is expected that consultation will take place during autumn 2007 and the initiative will be launched in December 2007. It was noted that the People Strategy is a comprehensive strategy under which a corresponding HR strategy will sit.

4.3 e-HR

It was noted that the e-HR project is on track and that 'conference room' pilots will be conducted to test the system design. The system will be launched initially to HR staff in September 2007 and to all employees by the beginning of 2008.

4.4 Resourcing Review

It was reported that the recommendations of the HR resourcing review were being discussed with the unions and that communications would be forthcoming concerning the outcomes. This will include measures to streamline the Scottish Executive recruitment process.

4.5 Skills for Success

It was further reported that Skills for Success had been rolled out to Senior Civil Servants and C Band staff and that feedback indicated simplification of the forms was required before rolling out to A and B band staff.

4.6 HR Shared Service Centre

Improvements in HR shared service centre processes in terms of processing delays and errors incurred through the involvement of various different teams were reported. It was explained that focussing on recruitment, induction and training of HR staff had resulted in progress, demonstrated by the increased number of HR calls successfully closed off by April 2007 in comparison with January 2007.

4.7 Performance Appraisal

The new Performance Appraisal system was in place for 2007-08. Louise Wilson explained that all 2006-07 reports had to be with HR by the end of June or problems with payment of August salaries may be encountered.

4.8 Workforce Planning Tool Workshops

It was clarified that workshops regarding use of the workforce planning tool were not presently open to Agencies, though it was noted that this tool may be over complicated for a small department such as NAS. The nature of NAS workforce plan was explained including the monthly ticklist return to SE and an annual reconciliation exercise. It was also noted that problems in processing cost centre changes following staff movement have long been experienced, but it is expected that the e-HR system will improve matters.

5. Finance

5.1 Dave Brownlee reported that the 2006-07 accounts are awaiting finalisation and that Derek Glover, Accountancy Services, will have completed these in time for the auditors visit commencing 23 July 2007. It is anticipated that there will be a net underspend greater than we have been estimating during the course of the year, although this remains subject to audit adjustment. Transfer of GROS funds regarding work on New Register House for the Scottish Family History Project has not yet taken place.

5.2 It was considered whether a baseline adjustment for 2007-08 may be required and noted that a succession of special circumstances and 'one off' costs have made this difficult to determine. The timing of the autumn budget revision was discussed. The NAS 2006-07 outturn will be known by then and 2007-08 financial information should also be factored into the submission to be made in September 2007. It was noted that work towards preparing the Business case for additional accommodation will require resource expenditure as well as capital.

5.3 Sandra Stewart explained that the spending review 07 had not been commissioned yet but that a commissioning minute would be issued soon to Andrew Goudie, Director-General Economy. There will be a four week turnaround period and this will build on existing submissions. It was noted that NAS spending review 07 template and financial requirements

2007-08 should be submitted separately. It was also noted that the NAS budget is too small to feature in Cabinet papers.

5.4 Clarification regarding spending the £2.2 million allocated from Scottish Executive for digitisation and educational projects by the end of 2007-08 was sought. Sandra Stewart explained the preference that this money be spent by the end of the financial year rather than run into 2008-09. It was further explained that the tendering process for the valuation rolls project was underway and that tenders include both capacity for handling the work over a short timescale and capacity to extend contracts if further funding became available.

5.5 It was noted that SFHS building programme was overrunning and that the work would not all be completed by the end of 2007-08. Amendments will be factored into supplementary bids.

5.6 The restructuring of the Scottish Executive was considered as regards the relationship between Finance and NAS. It was agreed that NAS should continue to be dealt with by Sandra Stewart's team (Finance Administration) for continuity and in order to remain administratively close to GROS. Sandra Stewart explained that she also informs the finance team who deal with Europe, External Affairs and Culture Directorate as regards NAS finance for their reference and to avoid duplication.

6. Corporate Plan 2007-2008 progress reports

Progress reports were circulated and highlights discussed. It was agreed that standard templates should be issued to branch heads to report progress, in order to encourage succinct reports on key business objectives. It was noted that an additional comments section could be used for reporting on any other salient business relating to other objectives and that branch heads should be made aware that it may be more appropriate for them to report in person to Management Board concerning issues arising of this nature.

Action Point: Senior Management Branch to issue corporate plan progress report templates to branch heads.

7. Future Governance

7.1 An update on the appointment of NAS non executive directors was given. It was reported that 24 applications had been received, and that the sift would take place on 8 August and interviews on 6 and 7 September 2007. It was further explained that restructuring the NAS Management Board and Audit Committee to incorporate non executive directors (NEDS) was particularly important as the relationship with Europe, External Affairs and Culture Group was not as strong as that previously held with the former Legal and Parliamentary Services Department. George Mackenzie reiterated that the aim of appointing NEDS was to incorporate external scrutiny, challenge and cooperation, and strengthened decision making in NAS.

7.2 The configuration of audit committees membership and officers in attendance was considered. It was noted that Scottish Executive guidelines assert that all audit committee members should be external to the organisation and that officers of an organisation would be 'in attendance' at meetings rather than committee members. George Mackenzie explained the merits of appointing two non executive directors in the first instance with the option to add more subsequently as required. Membership of the NAS Audit Committee would be discussed at the subsequent Audit Committee meeting to be held at 2pm 17 July 2007. It was

noted that both the Keeper and NAS Accountable Office could not be members of the audit committee as they are in effect called to account before the committee.

7.3 Consideration was given to the continued presence of Registers of Scotland representation at the NAS Audit Committee, following replacement of Alison Chisholm as Chair by the non executive director with financial or management experience.

7.4 It was agreed that the non executive directors' first Management Board meeting would be that held in January 2008, but that the papers for the October 2007 meeting should be copied to them for reference.

8. Accommodation

8.1 Future accommodation business case

It was reported that Caledonian Economics have been engaged to help prepare the NAS future accommodation business case for submission to Ministers by November 2007. George Mackenzie explained that the imminent need to replace or upgrade West Register House has now come to the fore and the problem of running out of space in TTH is no longer the primary concern. It was noted that the business case would not be prepared before spending review 07 submission in September 2007, but that spending review figures depend upon Ministerial agreement concerning future accommodation plans.

8.2 Scottish Family History Centre

It was reported that the Scottish Family History Centre is expected to be ready for opening in April 2008.

9. Any other business

9.1 Ministerial Visit

The Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, Linda Fabiani will visit NAS on 1 August 2007. Plans are underway to host this visit and Dave Brownlee will liaise with her private office for further arrangements. It was noted that the visit will include a tour of NAS public services, a briefing session with Senior Management, an exhibition of documents and a 'hardhat' tour of the SFHS building works. It was agreed to invite the Minister to the opening of the Union of Parliaments exhibition at Holyrood.

9.2 Register of Tartan

George Mackenzie explained that work to establish a Register of Tartan was in progress and a Steering Group set up. It was suggested that associated operating costs, shared with the Court of the Lord Lyon, may facilitate the creation of an extra post in NAS.

10 Date of next meeting

Dates will be canvassed for the next meeting, to be held during October 2007.