

**MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING,
25 FEBRUARY 2009 AT 10:00am,
ROBERTSON WING MEETING ROOM,
GENERAL REGISTER HOUSE**

Present: George MacKenzie, Dave Brownlee, Jim Grady, Frank Manson (Non Executive Director), Michael Moss (Non Executive Director), Maureen McGeown (SG Finance); Louise Wilson (SG HR), Jenny Cutts (secretary).

Apologies: none

1. Minutes of last meeting

1.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 13 November 2008 were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 [2.1] The ScotlandsPeople Centre opened on 12 January 2009 and Café Connections on 13 January 2009. The café is also open to members of the public who are not ScotlandsPeople customers.

2.2. [5.2.1] Michael Moss noted the importance of developing an ICT Strategy. It was agreed that this would be considered as part of the strategic perspectives discussion.

2.3 [10] Michael Moss explained that he had been invited to meet with the Scottish Council on Archives but decided attendance would be inappropriate without Frank Manson receiving the same invitation. It was noted that one member of SCA staff was already working within General Register House and the SCA office will be ready to accommodate staff in March 2009. It was agreed that the Keeper would write to the Chair of the Scottish Council on Archives to initiate a dialogue including both NAS Non Executive Directors. Michael Moss added that the National Archives (TNA) are developing a strategy document that will be published for consultation soon and suggested that parallel strategy documents for archives in the other UK nations will be developed.

Action: George Mackenzie to write to the Scottish Archives Council.

2.4 [7.2] The Non Executive Directors reiterated the desire that a high level meeting take place between organisations with an interest in defining a compatible approach to electronic records. It was noted that the change of Culture Minister may have a bearing upon joint working initiatives. Senior management noted that there is already contact between NAS Information and Communications Technology Branch and National Library of Scotland (NLS) Trusted Digital Repository personnel.

3. HR update

3.1 Louise Wilson reported that the Band A review timetable has been pushed back due to outstanding job evaluation forms and that the unions supported this delay in order that the review is performed properly. Preparations for the Band C review will begin in March 2009.

3.2 The results of the Scottish Government Employee Survey have been presented to SG Strategic Board and the corporate report will be published to SG personnel on 26 February 2009. Senior management expect the NAS Employee Survey report today. It was noted that the comparatively lower response rate for the Agency is explained by the high proportion of A band staff in NAS as officers at this grade are traditionally less inclined to complete the survey.

3.3 Promotion Board applications and outcomes were described. An applications tracker system will be piloted for the upcoming Band C Board following further trials.

3.4 A notice on the Scottish Government intranet announced the dates of public and privilege holidays during 2009-2010. It was noted that NAS public holidays differ to those of the SG core. The Board confirmed that it is better for NAS public search rooms to continue to remain open on both the long weekend at the end of May and on St Andrews Day. Dave Brownlee explained that permission was obtained from Ministers to open the office on the St Andrews Day Holiday in 2008; over 100 visitors were accommodated and there was very little demand from staff wishing to take the day off. The intention to repeat this approach in subsequent years was expressed.

3.5 George Mackenzie reported that there remain difficulties in obtaining accurate and timely sickness absence statistics from Scottish Government HR. It was stated that the facility for NAS senior management to interrogate e-HR for this data would resolve this. Louise Wilson explained that plans to provide an e-HR reporting facility to managers are under development and that this facility is not available to any SG departments yet. This issue was further discussed and it was agreed to obtain sickness data from e-HR and provide this to NAS senior management on a quarterly basis. She explained that it will not be possible to provide this data on a monthly basis. Jim Grady expressed appreciation for this but noted that NAS is better able to validate local sickness absence information for accuracy than SG HR. Dave Brownlee explained how the NAS flexi update system is currently used by senior management keep track of absences but the facility to run e-HR reports is keenly anticipated.

Action: George Mackenzie and Dave Brownlee to discuss the details of sickness absence data provision with Louise Wilson.
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3.6 A review of the professional advisors team will be undertaken. It is expected that some HR professional advisors will be assigned solely to absence management.

4. Finance

4.1 Monitoring Report (circulated)

4.1.1 Dave Brownlee drew attention to major issues. The first is the revaluation of GRH. It was noted that SG Finance had provided budget cover for the impairment charges of £2.9m, following the revaluation of the building after completion of the major refurbishment works. The intention to capitalise staff costs used in the creation of assets, such as commercially available digital images, was explained. It is expected that the auditors will approve this measure as GROS routinely use this approach and it is in line with accounting practice.

4.1.2 It was reiterated that the loss of legal search income is expected to be £100,000 during 2009/2010. The current financial climate and downturn in the housing market has also

affected the decline in income. Additional sources of revenue including ScotlandsPeople Centre and online sales, ScotlandsImages and GRH venue hire were noted. It was accepted that these income lines will not compensate for the decline in legal search income.

4.2 Accounts

4.2.1 It was reported that the NAS Accounts 2008/2009 were laid before Parliament on time though a period of hiatus in this process was related to external audit. Frank Manson noted that such delays would be an issue for the Audit Committee to address.

5. Corporate Plan 2008-2009 progress reports

5.1 Records Services Division (July-September)

5.1.1 George MacKenzie reported aspects of the records services division progress reports which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He observed that in general terms progress was good and expressed the view that objectives could be tightened. It was agreed that a summary report for each division be distilled from the more detailed branch reports for presentation to the Management Board.

5.1.2 Salient aspects discussed included the proposed reduction of the '30 Year Rule' to 15 years and implications for NAS. The responsibility of Inquiries to consult the Keeper regarding their records was explained. NAS has recently been contacted for advice by five public inquiries. The Review of Public Records Legislation was discussed and possible outcomes considered.

5.2 Corporate Services Division (July-September)

5.2.1 Dave Brownlee reported key issues noted in the corporate services division progress reports. It was noted that some strands of the strategic perspectives discussions are the alignment of onsite/online public services, the future of West Register House and alternative access arrangements for maps and plans.

6. Audit Issues

6.1 No audit issues were raised. The Audit Committee meeting was scheduled for 26 February 2009.

7. Electronic Records and Digital Policy

7.1 It was noted that the Digital Data Archive scoping study will investigate joint working. Electronic records issues and digital policy will be addressed as part of strategic perspectives consideration.

8. Risk Register

8.1 It was noted that a radical revision of the NAS Risk Register is intended. A dedicated Away Day will be arranged for this purpose. It was agreed that this should follow the corporate planning 2009/2010 process and be led by Management Board with appropriate input from colleagues and auditors. Frank Manson argued that proportionate risk

management is more important than identification and enumeration of all potential risks in this process. It was suggested that the risk register be limited to the most important risks only and that this is determined by likelihood. An event will be convened in May or June 2009.

9. Strategic Perspectives

9.1 A discussion of the strategic perspective documents was held. It was reported that a study of onsite/online public services has been commissioned and will be undertaken by the current Head of Reader Services. This will consider a wide range of issues, including the possible use of West Register House as a specialist access point for maps and plans, future use of GRH search rooms, further joint working opportunities and provision of copies to customers.

9.2 Michael Moss offered the view that collecting institutions resolve selection policy conflicts in order that competition and duplication are avoided. George MacKenzie added that spending on the private collections already in NAS custody must be addressed.

9.3 The role and status of the Scottish Council on Archives was discussed. It was not known whether the Council is required to produce a Charter.

9.4 The idea of exploiting professional advisory services was discussed. Re-charging may be increased to exceed cost recovery. Frank Manson suggested that educational institutions and clan societies in North America may pay for licensing agreements for appropriate resources.

9.5 Ideas for better utilising the GRH shop were mentioned.

9.6 The reassessment of free search room advisory services was discussed. The provision of these services is very resource intensive. Comparisons with ScotlandsPeople Centre assisted searches were made. The Keeper asserted that any such charges must be simple to administer in order that it is not an expensive process. Standard charges are preferable. It was noted that the free advice currently provided extends to the identification of relevant records and research is not carried out on behalf of remote customers. Michael Moss drew attention to training days for readers offered by The National Archives.

9.7 Plans to operate with a vacant Deputy Keeper post were outlined. It was confirmed that this post would be restored in time. A proposed merger between Private Records Branch and Outreach Services Branch was also discussed. It is intended that Accommodation Services Branch and Finance and Administration Branch will also be merged following Branch Head retirement. A facilities management contract will be shared with GROS.

9.8 George MacKenzie emphasised the necessity of increasing electronic records capacity. Dave Brownlee added that once the DDA2 study report is received, our plan would be to approach the Scottish Government for provision of additional resources to enable NAS to select, preserve and make accessible its electronic archives. The NAS will not have the capacity to deal with the challenges of managing electronic records on its own.

9.9 The digitisation programme was considered. It was recognised that the creation of metadata to accompany the digital surrogates produced is the most expensive and difficult aspect in this. The policy on reader self-service copying using digital cameras was debated. It was agreed to look at different models for comparison.

9.10 The location of Online Resources Team is under consideration. Branch Heads have produced a discussion document, which recommends that the current structure should remain in place for the time being.

9.11 Frank Manson emphasised the need for Ministerial decision concerning future accommodation and suggested that senior civil servants be made aware of the crucial nature of this issue.

10. Data Protection Code

10.1 The draft Data Protection Code of Practice on Administrative Information was approved. In addition, it was reported that a query from the Information Commissioner's office concerning research access to personal information contained within the archives was currently being considered by the Data Protection Officer and Senior Management Branch.

11. Any other business

11.1 It was noted that the NAS Away Days would be held on 9, 11 and 12 March 2009 and will include sessions by the Non Executive Directors. Presentations, group exercises, Keeper's summary and an open forum form the rest of the programme.

12. Date of next meeting

Jenny Cutts will canvass dates for the next meeting.

Jenny Cutts
5 March 2009