

## **Met Office Board**

### **Summary**

**25 July 2023**

**Held in person at the University of Leeds**

- Rob Woodward (Chair) welcomed attendees and confirmed the meeting was quorate. Apologies from Stephen Belcher (Chief of Science and Technology) and Simon Brown (Services Director) were noted.
- Rob Woodward thanked the Vice-Chancellor and her colleagues from the University of Leeds for their hospitality at dinner the previous evening and for hosting the Board and Committee meetings with such excellent facilities.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting, as were minutes from the virtual meeting held to approve the annual report and accounts on 13 July 2023.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) presented her report to the Board, commenting on the following issues:
  - A number of visits from Ministers, the FCDO and the Turing Institute,
  - The European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) Council,
  - Options for the Met Office to develop their AI expertise, including with European partners and with Microsoft,
  - The excellent outcome from the ISO audit which would ensure 3-year recertification, and
  - The flurry of Freedom of Information and other requests about climate data.
- Penny Endersby noted the investigation of a commercial ‘off-the-shelf’ solution for post processing had been completed. While there might be other potential future benefits, this would not have addressed the post processing need. The Board discussed the Supercomputer Exploitation Programme which was being split into its separate components, helping the relevant subject matter experts oversee the relevant work. The Board noted that some partners could start implementing operational upgrades, while the Met Office awaited the new supercomputer platform before installing its next ‘parallel suite’ upgrade.
- The Executive were keen to work with the union to resolve the pay remit issues. Jane Lancaster (Prospect Union representative) outlined the concerns members were raising and where she thought there was scope for negotiation.
- Adam Jackson (DSIT Director) reported on the positive engagement at the IMOSG (Interdepartmental Met Office Strategy Group) meeting. DSIT was focused on preparations for the AI summit in the autumn.
- Charlie Ewen (Chief Data and Information Officer) and Mark Hunt (Associate Director, Future Technology) reported on the current progress and challenges with the supercomputer implementation programme.
- Jo Newman, Deputy Director in the Cabinet Office Complex Transactions Team, joined the meeting to discuss current issues relating to the supercomputer contract and how to address potential technology developments in the future. She considered the contract structure was very good. She emphasised the importance of specifying outcomes rather than solutions to suppliers.
- Nick Jobling (Chief Financial Officer) introduced the finance report which incorporated the first forecast for the year. He explained the uncertainties around the treatment of the ‘cost-of-living’ payment, as well as the milestone and service payments for the supercomputer.
- Nick Jobling explained the proposed option arrangement relating to the Cardington research site. Board approval would be required prior to the public hearing of the local plan.
- Simon Vosper (Science Director) and Jason Lowe (Principal Fellow, Applied and Climate Science) provided the Board with background on the Met office Academic Partnership (MOAP), highlighting the benefits it delivered.
- John Marsham (MOAP Joint Chair, University of Leeds) and several of his colleagues joined the meeting to explain Leeds’ research programmes funded through the MOAP partnership. He outlined the benefits that had

successfully been delivered. The Board had a wide-ranging discussion on how to develop the MOAP programme in future.

- Christopher Walsh (Head of Warnings and Guidance) presented the seasonal weather review, highlighting some of the key forecasting successes and issues over the spring season.
- Tammy Lillie (Chief People Officer) presented the people report for the second half of the year. The Board discussed staff turnover levels, equality, diversity and inclusion data, the excellent work on educational outreach and staff to line manager ratios.
- Penny Endersby provided a summary of the Board Strategy Day, noting the action to develop a roadmap for capabilities and outcomes.
- Catherine Bremner provided a verbal summary of the Remuneration Committee meeting the previous day. The Committee had reviewed the objectives for corporate performance pay and for Executive Director performance.
- Rob Woodward thanked the University of Leeds for hosting the Met Office Board. The next meeting was scheduled for 29 September 2023 at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Poole.