

NATURAL ENGLAND BOARD



Meeting 3
21 February 2007

Paper No. **NEB M07 01**

Title: **Unconfirmed Minutes of the Second Natural England Board meeting – 5 December 2006**

5 December 2006, 10.30am – 15.45pm

Members attending

Christopher Pennell
David Hill
David Macdonald
Doug Hulyer
Helen Phillips (CEO)
Lynn Crowe
Martin Doughty (Chair)
Melinda Appleby
Merrick Denton-Thompson
Michael Depledge
Pam Warhurst
Peter Allen
Peter Fane
Poul Christensen (Deputy Chair)
Roger Clarke
Sarah Burton
Tony Hams

Executives

Adrian Belton
Andrew Wood
David Webster
David Young
Guy Thompson

Secretariat

Becky Rooley
Liz Newton

Prior to the Board meeting, a Board briefing session was held at which Board Members were updated on Natural England's work in the following areas:

- Governance Task Group
- Coastal access

1. Welcome from the Chair

- a) The Chair welcomed Andrew Wood, Acting Director of Science, Evidence and Policy.
- b) Declarations of interests were as noted in the Board Register of Interests.

2. Board Engagements

The Board:

- a) Noted the report which includes engagements for Chair, Deputy Chair, and Board Members, and a forward look for Chair and Deputy Chair.
- b) Noted that Regional Directors provide the information for this report, and that they will liaise with Board members to develop the content.

3. CEO Report
 - a) The Board noted:
 - i) The summary of the current strategic issues
 - ii) Our performance in delivery against the Strategic Direction
 - iii) Our assessment of the current financial position for Natural England and proposals for the management of the 2006/07 budget.
 - b) The Board agreed the recommendations.

4. Natural England Biodiversity Strategy

The Board:

- a) Noted progress on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and England Biodiversity Strategy, and Natural England's role in their delivery.
- b) Agreed that a strategic review is required for this area of work, and that focus should be given to developing corridors and the climate change agenda.
- c) Noted that the aim is to get a complete set of MOUs, and that these serve a genuine purpose in working with partners.
- d) Noted that the project is critical for shaping Natural England's role in the leadership of this work, in managing expectations, and in simplifying bureaucracy.
- e) Noted that increasing marine capacity is a recruitment priority in the Science and Evidence, and Policy teams.
- f) Agreed that the Board Strategic Outcome 1 group will discuss how this work should be taken forward.

Action: Strategic Outcome 1 group

- g) Requested information on the nine landscape scale delivery projects.

Action: Exec Board

5. Climate Change

The Board:

- a) Discussed the proposed scope of Natural England's climate change policy. Key points were:
 - i) The paper should include encouraging people to consider their contribution to climate change, and what they can do to address mitigation.
 - ii) There is less clarity on what people can do to address adaptation, National England could lead the visioning for this.
 - iii) More research, and modelling is needed to increase the knowledge base for understanding what we can do towards adaptation; relating global trends to localised areas.
 - iv) Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the fact that we only have a short window of opportunity to address climate change, beyond which it will be too late.
 - v) Greater emphasis should be placed on how we are going to communicate our policy so that it has an impact on how people behave.
 - vi) Natural England could have a role in bringing different people and organisations together on difficult issues eg renewable energy.
 - vii) Working with DCLG on the role of spatial planning should focus on creating networks with existing sites so that species can move. Other key partners in spatial planning, such as Regional Assemblies, and Regional Development Agencies should be referred to.

- viii) Greater emphasis should be placed on the marine environment particularly as coastal habitats will be impacted first, and the potential role of the marine environment in carbon capture.

6. Corporate Plan

The Board:

- a) Noted the key strategic issues to be factored into the development of natural England's Corporate Plan 2007 – 2010. Key discussion point was:
 - i) Ensure that the people, coast, access, and health are strong themes.
- b) Approved the process and timeframe for the development of the Corporate Plan.
- c) Endorsed the proposal to update Natural England's Strategic Direction.

7. Report from the Audit Committee

The Board noted:

- a) That the Founding Bodies have provided satisfactory stewardship statements. RDS statement was delayed, and has been signed by Jeff Robinson only, not Helen Gosh. The Board requested that Helen Phillips write to Helen Gosh.

Action: Executive Board

- b) That the Terms of Reference for internal audit were approved by the Audit Committee.
- c) That the NAO identified 15 areas of risk.
- d) That the audit committee discussed the risk management framework, and have asked for:
 - i) a bottom up risk assessment in addition to the existing top down assessment;
 - ii) a disaggregation of the top risks, to see the detailed components, and their counter measures.
- e) That the audit committee members will undertake induction training in February.
- f) That the recruitment of the fifth member of the Audit Committee is being initiated.

8. Board remuneration

The Board:

- a) Agreed that a case would be put to Defra for remuneration for Board members for the initial months as Natural England; to reflect the extra time commitments as a result of setting up, and the composition of the Board (Audit Committee missing one member).

9. Scheme of Delegation

The Board:

- a) Agreed that this will be a standing item at future meetings to agree variations, and to note items approved by the Chair.
- b) Asked for confirmation as to whether items approved by the Chair need retrospective confirmation by the Board.
- c) Requested that Part 5 and Part 8 are aligned.
- d) Requested confirmation as to why byelaws on SSSIs have a different level of delegation to byelaws on EU sites.

Action: Executive Board.

10. Confirmation of minutes

The Board confirmed the minutes of 17 October 2006.

ACTIONS FROM BOARD MEETING 5 DECEMBER 2006

Agenda item	Action Owner	Action	Deadline	Status
2 – Board Eng	AB	Speak to RD's to ensure they provide input to Sam Somers for Chair's report	For Feb meeting	
3 – CEO report	Board Services	Every third Board workshop will be a performance drill down		
3 – CEO report	Exec Board	Risk management item to be included in Feb agenda	For Feb meeting	
3 – CEO report	DY/AB	Regional 'round-up' to be part of performance reporting. To be discussed with RDs at teleconf	For Feb meeting	
3 – CEO report	Exec Board	Give thought to how dashboard can be brought in to report	For Feb meeting	
4 – Biodiv Strategy	Outcome 1 group	To discuss how the England Biodiversity Strategy work should be taken forward		
4 – Biodiv Strategy	AW	Provide Board members with information on the nine landscape scale delivery projects		
5 – Climate change	DY	Paper on climate change policy to June Board.	For June meeting	
6 – Corp plan	Exec Board	Different papers for each Board Outcome Group – focus on outcome policy and priorities	For Jan BOG meetings	
6 – Corp plan	Exec Board	Discuss priorities at Exec Board 11 Dec, and at ELG 12 Dec	11- 12 Dec	
6 – Corp plan	AW / HP / MT	Meeting with BOG staff to discuss content and handling of papers	Prior to Jan BOG meetings	
7 – Audit Comm	DW	Letter from Helen Phillips to Helen Gosh re RDS Stewardship Statement. Sequence this appropriately with contact with the Founding Bodies CEOs.		
7 – Audit Comm	LN	Think about who goes to the MRD programme session.		
8 - Remuneration	LN	Progress case to Defra		
8 - Remuneration	LN / DW	Seek intelligence on how this		

		works elsewhere.		
9 - SOD	Board Services	This will be a standing item at future meetings		
9 - SOD	LN	Confirm whether items approved by the Chair need retrospective confirmation by the Board.		
9 - SOD	LN	Align Part 5 and Part 8.		
9 - SOD	LN	Confirm why byelaws on SSSIs have a different level of delegation to byelaws on EU sites.		
Additional	Board Services	Clearing Board member national invitations		
Additional	Regional Directors	Clearing Board member regional invitations		