# **Minutes**

## Extraordinary Meeting of the Board

## Wednesday 16 October 2024 10am

## MS Teams

# Members

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| Malcolm Beatty OBE | Board Member |
| Julie Hill MBE | Board Member |
| Professor Dan Laffoley | Board Member |
| Dr Paul Leinster CBE | Board Member |
| Professor Richard Macrory CBE | Board Member |
| Natalie Prosser | Chief Executive |
| Dame Glenys Stacey | Chair |
| Helen Venn | Chief Regulatory Officer  |

# OEP Attendees

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| --- | --- |
| Peter Ashford | General Counsel (items 24.91 to 24.94) |
| REDACTED | Finance Manager (Item 24.93 and item 24.94) |
| Mike Fox | Head of Communications and Strategic Relations (items 24.91 to 24.94) |
| Richard Greenhous  | Chief of Staff (items 24.91 to 24.94) |
| Andy Lester | Head of Business Strategy and Planning (items 24.91 to 24.94) |
| Angel Lai | Head of Finance and Corporate Services (items 24.91 to 24.94) |
| Professor Robbie McDonald  | Chief Insights Officer (items 24.91 to 24.94) |
| REDACTED | Human Resources Manager (Item 24.94 and 24.95)  |
| REDACTED | Board Secretary and Private Office Manager |
| Ellie Strike | Head of Regulatory Programmes |

24.91 **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

No apologies for absence were received.

Helen Venn and Natalie Prosser declared an interest in respect of items 24.94 and 24.95. Helen Venn was recused from item 24.95 owing to this interest.

The Board noted the conflict of interest of all OEP attendees in respect of items 24.94 and 24.95. All OEP attendees other than the Human Resources Manager and Board Secretary and Private Office Manager left the meeting for item 24.95.

24.92 **Investigation into the adoption of an EIP in Northern Ireland**

*This section has been redacted as it relates to information recorded for the purposes of OEP’s functions relating to investigations and enforcement.*

24.93 **Annual Report and Accounts**

The paper and report were presented. It was confirmed that there had been no material changes to the report since it was last considered by the Board in August.

The Board were informed that the audit was still to be completed but all items noted as outstanding were not considered likely to result in material adjustment or change to disclosures in the final accounts.

The Board were made aware of the risks highlighted in the report of the National Audit Office. *This section has been redacted as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.*

The Chair of the audit and risk assurance committee and the accounting officer advised recommended the Annual Report and Accounts to the Board.

The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts, substantially in the form set out subject to any non-material amendments arising out of the ministerial review and finalisation of the external audit.

The Board agreed to delegate the approval of any non-material amendments to the Annual Report and Accounts and approval of the Letter of Representation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair.

If material changes to the report were required in the finalisation of the audit, or from the review of the Comptroller and Auditor General the Board agreed that the ARAC Committee Chair, Chair and Accounting Officer would meet to agree the necessary steps to be taken for approval.

24.94 **Pay remit**

The Board were presented with proposals in respect of the pay remit for employees at grade six and below and in the senior civil service. It noted that the Executive had made no recommendation in this regard, owing to the conflicts of interest.

It noted that the proposals in respect of staff at grade six and below was to increase the minimum salary for each OEP grade to match that of Defra employees. The Defra pay remit decision was known. The Board considered that there is a need to match the pay now as it will become harder in the future if the gap keeps widening, as it would with the further application of percentage-based awards.

The Board discussed the percentage of staff who are currently at the lower limit of each pay grade and highlighted the need discuss pay progression in the OEP at a future meeting. ACTION Chief of Staff

*This section has been redacted as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.*

The Board agreed to implement the Senior Pay Review Body recommendation for staff in SCS grades. It agreed the proposals made in respect of the pay remit for staff in grades EO to G6 and noted that it will be subject to consultation with the recognised union (Prospect) in line with our Partnership Agreement and submitted to the Secretary of State for information in line with our draft Framework Document.

24.95 **Executive Director performance and bonus moderation**

The Board reviewed the paper which set out the proposed performance and corresponding bonus payments for each Executive Director.

After discussing the Board’s interactions with the Executive Directors, they agreed with the recommendations of the paper and the specified marking and bonus amounts.

24.96 **Any other business**

The minutes from the 26 September Board meeting were approved.