NERC Management Board (NMB) Meeting
Summary of discussions
23 January 2018
BEIS Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street, London

Members present:
Professor DJ Wingham, Mr PJ Fox, Professor T Wheeler, Ms A Robinson, Mr R Gledhill, Mr P Hayden.

Apologies: Dr P Heads.

Other attendees: Ms H Jevon (Associate Director Operations and Research Careers item 2), Dr S Gardner (Head of Innovation Programmes item 4), Dr S Laurie (Associate Director Innovation and Impact), Professor J Ludden (Centre Director, BGS item 5), Dr L Fellman (Associate Director National Capability Commissioning and Capital item 5), Mrs C Turner (Director Finance, item 11 and 12), Miss N Probert (Risk & Assurance Manager, item 11 - 13).

Secretary: Mrs SJ Morrell.

Chief Executive Update

The role of Chair was shared between Mr Fox and Professor Wingham for this meeting. Mr Fox opened the meeting and welcomed members.

Postgraduate Training Budget: future portfolio structure

The Board was informed that the proposed structure of the four funding streams was more strategic and would be easier for the community to understand NERC’s training opportunities. This would include a Studentship Opportunities stream, which would enable NERC to respond to emerging opportunities or under-represented areas.

NMB noted and agreed to the proposed structure and the change to the budget allocation within it to be implemented in 2019/20.

RRS Discovery Project Closure

NMB were advised that the remaining actions for the closure were covered and the benefit realisation review had taken place.

Environmental Data Service: progress update

NMB received detail on what the service would provide and how it would be achieved, together with a timeline of activities. Further clarity was requested and it was agreed that the item be presented to
NMB at its May meeting, to provide a more holistic view including risks and a timeline that was not so pressurised. In the meantime the discovery phase should continue.

**BGS Commissioning**

NMB discussed the commissioning and evaluation arrangements and asked for amendments to the MoU. It was noted that the revised MOU and the commissioning and evaluation arrangements would be presented at the GRO Assurance Committee on 26 February 2018, prior to their decision on ‘go live’.

**Governance, Responsibility and Ownership (GRO) Project update**

NMB received an update on Governance, Responsibility and Ownership project. It was noted that both CEH and NOC were in the second stage of the programme. NERC Council had approved the BGS Governance MoU in December 2017. The GRO Assurance Committee would review the latest documentation and the outcome of the Board recruitment in February 2018, prior to its ‘go live’ decision.

**Update on Futures work including zero plastic waste**

NMB were provided with an update on the current plastics activity and next steps. This included detailed UKRI and NERC opportunities, NERC engagement aims and the timetable for the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Wave 3 run by UKRI and the proposition for ‘zero plastic waste’ as a focused bid for this next wave.

It was agreed that a balanced view of plastics should be adopted, as R&D was needed to ensure we could retain the benefits of plastics, while tackling the issue of plastic pollution and waste and the environmental impact. NMB noted that there was some work being done on the analysis of the supply chain to guide business engagement on who to approach for business partners.

The Board also provided constructive challenge on the idea of a Green Finance proposition and requested further work would be carried out to develop the ideas and challenges to help shape the concept and business engagement.

The paper on the Zero Plastic Waste concept was noted.

**Head Office Plan 2018/19 and 3rd quarter 2017/18 exceptions report**

NMB were advised that the first workshop had been held. The items highlighted for action had either been closed or work was progressing.

**Report from November 2017 National Capability Partners Forum (NCPF)**

NMB were informed that this was the first meeting in its new format, which participants felt was more effective. After a couple more meetings, the topics and frequency of meetings would be reviewed.
The meeting had included discussions about research and innovation priorities, the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) and how to engage senior staff more effectively in the future.

**UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)**

The Board were provided with updates from recent meetings.

**Report from Centre Assurance Boards (CABs)**

NMB were advised that all Centres were showing a balanced position for this financial year and informed of the issues shared by the Centres as well as those raised by individual Centres.

**Standing items**

NMB also noted a couple of standing items including the monthly finance update, the risk register review and the rolling programme of business.

**Date of next meeting**

The next NERC Management Board meeting will be held on 20 February 2018.