

No 259

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 23 MAY 2019

AT 11.30 A.M.

**THE ARMSTRONG RECEPTION ROOMS
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY**

Present

TRUSTEES

Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (in the Chair)
Dame Frances Cairncross DBE FRSE
Professor Sir John Holman
Hilary Newiss
Robert Noel
Simon Patterson
Professor Sir Robert Stephen John Sparks CMG CBE FRS

In Attendance

Sir Michael Dixon (Director)
Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)
Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications)
Clare Matterson CBE (Director of Engagement)
Professor Richard Herrington (Acting Director of Science)

Frances Allen (Board Secretary)
Chris Jones (Head of Department, Core Research Laboratories) for item 8
Keith Jennings (Head of Masterplanning and Projects) for items 8 and 10

CLOSED SESSION

The meeting commenced with a closed session of the Board, which was not minuted.

Preliminary

2061 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Prof Sir John Beddington CMG FRS, Anand Mahindra, Professor Dame Janet Thornton DBE FMedSci FRS,
and Dr Kim L Winser OBE

2062 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 19/18)

No changes to the Register of Interests were declared.

2063 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2019

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 19 February 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

2064 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2019 (TP 19/19)

Executive Leadership Development: The Director, Sir Michael Dixon, will circulate the consultant's account of work, together with his report, to the Board for the meeting on 2 July 2019.

Honorary Research Fellows: Dr Tim Littlewood (Director of Science) and Prof Richard Herrington (Head of Earth Science) will review the overall profile of the HRF scheme, engaging the help of the Science Advisory Committee, and report back to the Board in due course.

Corporate items:

2065 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Director of Science appointment: The Chair was pleased to announce that Dr Tim Littlewood (former Head of Life Science) has been appointed Director of Science for the Natural History Museum (NHM). The search, conducted by an executive search firm, had attracted over 50 high-calibre applications worldwide, which was a testament to the Museum's scientific standing on the international stage.

The Board was particularly grateful to Prof Richard Herrington (Head of Earth Science) for taking on the role of Director of Science on an interim basis when Prof Ian Owens announced his departure in the autumn of last year.

Trustee appointments: The Chair provided an update on the appointment process to recruit successors for Prof Christopher Gilligan (retired from the Board in May) and Prof Sir John Holman (who will retire in September). The Director agreed to circulate the role specifications for both appointments for Board information and input.

2066 DIRECTOR'S REPORT AND APPENDICES (TP 19/20)

Museum attendance: The Director was pleased to report that the Museum had received circa 5.34m visitors in 2018/19 – the second highest ever annual attendance (5.42m in 2013/14). It was believed that this could be due to a more targeted marketing campaign (including social media) and the work undertaken to streamline security at entry to the Museum. However, the NHM is reaching saturation point on annual visits and the early signs of levelling off are becoming apparent, following some variance due to different timing of Easter school holidays this year and last.

Board review process: The triennial external review of the Board will take place in the summer and the procurement process to select a consultant will commence in June. It is proposed that the review will be against the Cabinet Office governance self-assessment framework and will include an assessment of the performance and modus operandi of the Board committees.

Organisational changes: The Director outlined the organisational changes that are proposed in response to an external review of the Museum's marketing and communications operations. This in turn had led the Executive to develop a plan to make a number of senior appointments at Director level (although not members of the Executive Board) to form a wider leadership group. The creation of the group is designed to delegate more authority/responsibility in order to allow the Executive to devote more time to the larger strategic issues.

Ethical Policy review: A team of senior staff had reviewed the Museum's ethical policy framework and it is proposed to run an exercise at the Trustees' Strategy Day in September to road-test the revised policy. The Executive Board had undergone a similar hypothetical exercise, which had proven to be a useful process.

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: The new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, recently endorsed by the Executive Board, formalises a series of objectives to increase the visibility and understanding of diversity and inclusion, which is critical to the Museum's mission. By 2024, the intention is to:

- Achieve greater diversity in NHM workforce and leadership;
- Continue to provide opportunities for under-represented groups to develop their careers and plan for inclusive succession;
- Reduce the opportunity for bias throughout the employee life-cycle

The Board believed these objectives to be an essential part of the fabric of the Museum's future and made the appeal to the Executive Board to appoint a senior member of staff who could act as a champion and "go-to" individual for all diversity and inclusion issues.

2067 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2018 – MARCH 2019 (TP 19/21)

Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) presented the provisional outturn for the period April 2018 to March 2019, which reflected continuing strong performance for visitor-related income, Venue Hire, public events and a growth in the Membership scheme. There were, however, some financial challenges on the horizon, not least of which are the rising operating costs for the Estates Department and the increase in employer's pension contributions imposed by government.

Mr Greenwood was also pleased to report that the Museum had been awarded funds from DCMS for capital expenditure to be phased over two years. The specific remit of the fund was for critical fire/life safety work and for critical estate infrastructure work focused on protecting collections. The award will allow the Museum to undertake fire precaution work at South Kensington and to invest in repairing the roof and façade of the Ornithology Building at Tring.

Items for Approval:**2068 COLLECTIONS PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 19/22)**

Chris Jones (Head of Department, Core Research Labs) and Keith Jennings (Head of Masterplanning and Projects) provided an update on the progress with the Collections Programme and the next step towards a decision on a preferred partner to be taken at the 2 July Board meeting. This timeline was crucial if the NHM is to submit a funding bid to Government as part of forthcoming government spending review.

Mr Jones reiterated that the aims of the Programme, which were to: (a) improve physical conditions for NHM collections; (b) improve access to the collections and (c) advance scientific knowledge and the cultural and wider objectives of Government. The Board was reassured that the care and protection of the collections was at the heart of the decision-making process.

This paragraph has been withheld under Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act.

The Board felt that there was still uncertainty about what parts of the collection will be moved offsite and this appeared to be creating a sense of concern and nervousness amongst scientific staff. Mr Jennings recognised that this presented a fundamental change for the institution and so a professional change manager will be appointed to the programme to help and communicate the process to staff. In light of the uncertainty, it was agreed that a comprehensive "science plan" needs to be developed as soon as possible to identify what collections will be relocated. The plan will also inform how the space vacated by collections at South Kensington could be maximised and feed into the masterplan.

SUMMARY:

1. The Board supported the concept of a Science Research Centre, given that soundings from Government indicate that investment in a science infrastructure is more persuasive than offsite deep storage of collections. Plan B should still remain under consideration.
2. *This paragraph has been withheld under Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act.*
3. The management team should feel free to discuss any issues (urgent or otherwise) with the Chairs of the Board and Property Committee.

2069 NEW MUSEUM STRATEGY (TP 19/23)

The Director updated the Board on the development of the new Museum strategy and sought approval so that internal and external launches can be planned. The Director explained that, after undergoing extensive internal consultation and discussion, the latest version of the strategy has been sent to a number of external *critical friends* to garner feedback (the Board was directed to responses in *Appendix 2*). Overall the responses were generally supportive with many respondents welcoming the Museum's more proactive approach in addressing global challenges.

The Executive Board believed that the strategy has progressed sufficiently as a high-level road map that can inform the development of an operating plan and indicate the funding that will be required to deliver the strategy's ambitions. With the internal launch of the new strategic framework aimed for early summer, the NHM

is in the 'transition year' (between the last year of the current and the beginning of the new framework). The rest of the year will be spent developing and embedding a number of elements which underpin the strategy (including KPIs and internal governance structures). In parallel, a perception audit will be undertaken in June using market research to establish baseline data.

The Board agreed that the latest iteration is a great advancement, but the general view was that it was still too long and could be reduced by 20% without losing impetus. The three themes (*Origins, Discovery and Human Futures*) come across as too narrow and more thought is needed on whether these should be included. Conversely, some elements were missing, notably "Oceans" and the Museum's two major projects – Collections Programme and Gardens Programme – are very hard to find in the document. Another omission, and an intrinsic part of the Museum's future, is the Science Research Centre, which should be linked to the Collections Programme. How this is reflected in the final document needs consideration.

It was agreed the Executive Board would reflect upon the recommendations made by the Board and *critical friends* and incorporate these into a final iteration to be sent to the Chair by the end of June. This version should also include input from the incoming Director of Science to ensure that the science perspective is well articulated. The final document will be presented to the Board in July for Board endorsement. The operating plan can be completed after the summer break.

Updates:

2070 NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM GARDENS PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 19/24)

Clare Matterson, Director of Engagement, provided an update on the Gardens Programme, which has been retitled *The Urban Nature Project: communities acting for local wildlife*. A lot of work has taken place to redefine the project and develop a strong and clear narrative of what the project is about. The refreshed vision now gives a more defined sense of a broad project in which a number of objects can sit, including the national programme on sustainability and local activities in South Kensington. The Urban Nature Project tells the story of profound and extraordinary change over time on our planet, enabling everyone to connect to nature, place themselves in that story and be a part of national action for future sustainability.

2071 UPDATE ON FOLLOW UP TO THE 2018 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY (TP 19/25)

The Director presented an update on actions taken in response to the 2018 Employee Engagement Survey. The Board was reminded that the three key areas that warranted further exploration were:

- Leadership
- Consultation and collaboration
- Respect and safety

The Executive Board had agreed to adopt a "top down" and "bottom up" approach to develop action plans to foster improvement. Each Executive Board member has produced a "top down" plan for their respective Directorate based on local results and these had been presented to staff at an NHM update.

The Executive Board had also decided that it would like to gain more insight into the reasons underpinning the low scoring in these three key areas and this was achieved via a series of workshops, facilitated by The Survey Initiative (the external consultants who had conducted the survey). A total of 83 staff (deliberately no senior management were represented) attended nine workshops to explore staff opinion in each of these topics, review the development areas and provide ideas for improvement. The comments and suggestions were captured in an anonymised report prepared by The Survey Initiative. One interesting message that emerged from the report was that staff feel remote from the Board of Trustees and were unsure of the Board's purpose, so the question was posed, is there a need to develop ways of Trustees achieving greater exposure to NHM staff?

The survey and workshops had also highlighted that there is a weakness in middle management and, although training is provided, too many individuals feel they can cherry-pick what training they think they need. This leads to ineffective management and instances of managers not applying policies and procedures (such as overtime, promotion etc) consistently. This is vexing for the Executive Board and underlines the need for firmer top down action, together with a review of the Museum's policies and procedures to ensure all managers follow the same process/rules.

The comments arising from the workshops provided a real insight into the views of staff in each of the three topics and gave the real flavour of the experiences that staff are having and demonstrated why there is a need for change. As a result of the workshops a steering group was established to work with Internal Communications and HR to take forward some of the ideas and use the report to develop a Museum-wide action plan. A social charter will also be created, which will enshrine those behaviours expected from individuals working in a shared and safe environment and where bullying and harassment is not tolerated.

In conclusion, the reality is that the Executive Board has to find a more effective way of interacting with staff and become more transparent in communicating what is going on in the Museum, how actions affects individuals, what decisions are being made and why have they been taken etc. This requires a culture change and the Director believed that the new Museum strategy and articulation of values presents an opportunity for such a change. In addition, the new organisational changes and expanded leadership group will invite more staff to play a role in the decision-making process.

The Board applauded the Executive Board for being so candid in providing feedback. The results suggest that there does seem to be a fractured culture at the NHM and perhaps this is where efforts on aligning culture with the values of the new Museum strategy should be concentrated.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee – Hilary Newiss – will review the risk levels with the Interim Director of HR who is scheduled to attend the next ARC meeting. The recommendation was made the Director of HR (when appointed) should become an Executive Director and a member of the Executive Board. The Board asked the Executive Board to consider this suggestion.

2072 PUBLIC PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 19/26)

Clare Matterson, Director of Engagement, provided an update on the Public Programme phased over three years. This is a diverse and exciting programme working on a new model. The subject matters deliver the Museum's vision and mission and are linked to key work in Science. Each year has a theme as follows:

- 2019 : Space
- 2020 : Biodiversity
- 2021 : Dino-takeover

The Board expressed enthusiasm for the programme and were looking forward to the forthcoming programme events.

Annual Reports for noting:

The Board of Trustees noted that all reports specified below that have been submitted and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee at the meeting on 2 May 2019.

2073 HEAD OF RISK & ASSURANCE – ANNUAL ASSURANCE TO THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER AND THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE 2018/19 (TP 19/27)

Noted

2074 ANNUAL REVIEW OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY 2018/19 (TP 19/28)

The Board noted a nil return.

2075 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19 (TP 19/29)

Noted

2076 ANNUAL SECURITY REPORT 2018/19 (TP 19/30)

Noted

Committee reports:

2077 REPORT ON THE SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 APRIL 2019 (TP 19/31)

The Board noted the contents of the minutes.

2078 REPORT ON THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2019 (TP 19/32)

The Board noted the contents of the minutes.

2079 REPORT ON THE COMMERCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 MAY 2019 (TP 19/33)

The Board noted the contents of the minutes.

2080 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 MAY 2019 (TP 19/34)

The Board noted the contents of the minutes.

2081 REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 MAY 2019 (TP19/35)

The Board noted the contents of the minutes.

2082 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Annual Trustees' Dinner: The theme of this year's dinner is *Are We Alone? To the Moon, Mars and Beyond*. Ms Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications) outlined the strategic ambition of the dinner and provided an update on the guest list

2083 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 19/36)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

2084 EVENTS DIARY (TP 19/37)

The Board of Trustees noted the contents of the report.

2085 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

2019:

- 4 June : Annual Trustees' Dinner
- 2 July (Annual Staff Summer party in the evening)
- 24 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 19 November

2020:

- 18 February 2020
- 19 May 2020
- June (actual date to be confirmed): ANNUAL TRUSTEES' DINNER
- 7 July 2020 (Annual Staff Summer party in the evening)
- 15 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 17 November

