

THIRTY FIRST MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSION NI Government 24 July 2024

Attendees

Commissioners: ^{1.1} [REDACTED]

Nominated Commissioners: ^{1.2} [REDACTED]

Commission Unit: ^{1.3} [REDACTED]
^{1.4} [REDACTED]

Standing Observers: ^{1.5} [REDACTED]
^{1.6} [REDACTED]

^{1.7} [REDACTED]
^{1.8} [REDACTED]

Apologies: ^{1.9} [REDACTED]
^{1.10} [REDACTED]

Actions:

Action	Owner	Deadline
1. Short paper on the standing position in relation to the conversation on OS (Ordnance Survey) plans to move the national grid to ITM, and potential alignment with PBs (Partner Bodies) and DA (Devolved Administration).	^{1.11} [REDACTED]	September board meeting- date TBC
2. If ^{1.12} [REDACTED] is unable to join the BoC meeting to provide an update on her meeting with the Minister, an update note should be provided to the Board.	^{1.13} [REDACTED]	August 2024

3. Arrange a joint strategy session with the GC board and the Geo6.	2.1 [REDACTED]	September 2024
4. For the next board meeting, we should have a refined set of project outcomes, articulating more precisely what the overall purpose and what the impact is in each of our projects? If there is historical data, use this to show what has been achieved already? Provide context, where possible.	2.2 [REDACTED]	October 2024
5. Review the wording of the Strategic objectives/narrative.	2.3 [REDACTED]	September 2024
6. Add narrative in the draft Terms of Reference (7b) in relation to external facing expectations for the Commissioners.	2.4 [REDACTED]	August 2024
7. Add narrative in the draft Terms of Reference (7b) about Commissioners working in an advisory capacity outside of meetings.	2.5 [REDACTED]	August 2024
8. Return to detailed programme following completion of the zero-based review.	2.6 [REDACTED]	September 2024

1. Welcome, Minutes and Matters Arising

The Chair welcomed both the attendees in the room and online. Apologies were received from 2.7 [REDACTED] 2.8 [REDACTED] 2.9 [REDACTED]. Minutes from April Board Meeting were approved with no further comments.

2.10 [REDACTED] was unable to attend the meeting in person as she had been called to a meeting with the new Minister. She will join at the end of the meeting, if able to and provide an update.

ACTION- If ^{3.1} [REDACTED] is unable to join the BoC meeting to provide an update on her meeting with the Minister, an update note should be provided to the Board at the next meeting.

The Chair informed the board that following an announcement on 23 July 2024, DSIT (Department for Science, Innovation & Technology) will be carrying out a zero-based review of all boards. SU said that this announcement may frame some of the discussions at the meeting.

SU outlined the agenda and said JC would be providing an update on the government plans and then move to discuss the portfolio review and strategic narrative. Any input from the nominated commissioners would be discussed as we progressed through the agenda.

2. Report from the Commission

JC noted that the portfolio paper was now slightly out of date but would provide an updated overview.

JC said Peter Kyle has been appointed as Secretary of State for DSIT and has been clear on his ambitions for the department to take a more central role. Peter Kyle has shared his 3 core objectives for the department to improve people's lives by maximising the potential of science and technology through:

- **Accelerating Innovation-** Accelerate innovation, investment and productivity through world-class science, research and development.
- **Technology For Good:** Ensure new and existing technologies are safely developed and deployed across Britain, with the benefits more widely shared.
- **Modern Digital Government:** Drive a modern digital government which gives citizens a more satisfying experience and their time back.

JC said we now have a full Ministerial team; confirmed on the 19 July 2024: Sir Patrick Vallance KCB, Sir Chris Bryant MP, Feryal Clark MP and Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Chris Bryant joint with DCMS (Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) and Baroness Jones joint with DBT (Department for Business and Trade) (Department for Business and Trade)). The Secretary of State will sit across all departmental business and ensure that we are driving progress on our three core objectives.

- **Sir Chris Bryant MP** will be the Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms (with a brief including telecoms, space and the data bill – and remember he is shared with DCMS)
- **Lord Vallance** will be Minister for Science, Research and Innovation (with a brief including R&D expenditure, UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) and the Regulatory Innovation Office)
- **Baroness Jones** will be Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Future Digital Economy and Online Safety (with a brief including implementation of the online safety act, digital markets and online safety, and remember she is shared with DBT)

- **Feryal Clark MP** will take on the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State portfolio for AI and Digital Government (with a brief including digital public services, digital identity, AI opportunities and AI legislation).

JC said we do have fewer ministers, and all have larger briefs. All the ministers have taken quite a different approach to what we have experienced before with early meetings being focused on delivery and decision making. They have been clear they want to right people in the room to have the conversations.

JC said the Geospatial Commission have been allocated 3 special advisors: Nicola Barlett, Billy French and Darren Murphy.

JC outlined some of the early actions following the Kings speech

- There are 3 potential DSIT Bills in the Government's legislative agenda with science, innovation and technology at the heart of the King's Speech. One of these now include NUAR (National Underground Asset Registers).
- The department has increased by a third with GDS (Government Digital Service), CDDO (Central Digital and Data Office) and i.AI joining DSIT.
- SoS (Secretary of State) has produced top 20 things he is focused on delivering.
- The SoS commissioned a zero-based review on Advisory Boards where we will feed into this review with high level questions initially. JC said we should not pre-empt the outcome of the review but wanted to inform the board that this is planned.

JC confirmed to the board that ^{4.1} [REDACTED] has been appointed substantively as Director of the Geospatial Commission. SU congratulated ^{4.2} [REDACTED] on behalf of the board.

JC informed the board that Arron Egan had joined the Geospatial Commission as the Deputy Director for Commercial, Partnership & Sponsorship.

The board discussed whether there would be a coordination piece to join departments and how the data science work may be brought into DSIT. JC said that an SCS away day was being held on 24 July and answers to these questions may follow. Peter Kyle did commit to these areas in his statement, so it will be useful to look at the GC network as well as other relationships across government to map all of these out. SU asked JC what involvement they would like Commissioners to have in the review going forward. JC said at this point, we do not know but will of course speak to Commissioners as soon as any more information is available.

3. Report from the Nominated Commissioners

^{4.3} [REDACTED] confirmed the Geo 6 group had met prior to the board and a report had been shared from this meeting. DH said this was the first meeting of the Geo6 since Sarah Hodgetts had been permanently appointed and said the relationship with the GC is travelling in a much better and joined up direction of late and there was a lot of positivity about that.

DH said we are in an interesting environment which is an exciting opportunity. Partner Bodies offered any support that is required. Partner Bodies feel we would all benefit from a joint strategy session with senior members.

5.1 [REDACTED] said it feels like there is an opportunity for GC to drive and bring in and empower people.

SU agreed that the idea of a strategy meeting feels right, and a date will be scheduled for this. SU said we need to have a practical discussion about this and work out what narrative we use to describe this.

ACTION- Arrange a joint strategy session with the GC board and the Geo6.

JC said DSIT have been described as a delivery unit. We have not always been effective in areas where we have no levers, so the intention now is to focus on those areas where we have the levers to make the most impact.

5.2 [REDACTED] (LH) asked about the work on Land Use taskforce and said a meeting was taking place with environmental ministers. LH asked whether this is still on the table or not? JC said that 5.3 [REDACTED]

were speaking to Ministers that afternoon. GC said commitments made under the previous government; we are no longer bound by but will highlight if we still think this is important. 5.4 [REDACTED] (AN) said Dame Kate Barker is undertaking a commission in

relation to a return to strategic planning which has a geospatial element. AN said there would be a crucial role for the Geospatial Commission there. It is important we need to be pushing GC as a central part of the solution. <https://radixuk.org/news/new-barker-review-initial-recommendations/>

The board discussed Land Use- Use Cases and agreed where horizontal action could be beneficial. SU said he would like to apply the test of whether we can make a real world difference to all projects within the Portfolio.

4. GC Portfolio

SU referred everyone to the Portfolio board pack and said there were two projects he would like to start with. NUAR due to its red rating and Population Movement Data due to its amber rating.

NUAR- Chris Chambers (CC) said the project was upgraded to red because to achieve the full benefits of NUAR we require legislation. This was progressing through report stage, but as the election was called; the bill was dropped. The programme then had to run red, purely because the benefits would not be achieved without legislation. When the new government arrived, NUAR was included in the Digital, Information and Smart Data Bill (DISDA) and is going through the first parliament session. This has therefore moved the project back to amber. CC said he has picked up with devolved administrations and will continue to have discussions with them. CC also informed the board that NUAR had also recently had an Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) review which resulted in a red rating because of the legislation issue. CC said however that all other areas were scored amber/green which was very positive. CC said we

must now go through both houses for primary and secondary legislation which could take approx.12 months but said it was positive that the Secretary of State has seen the benefit in NUAR. It was acknowledged there is a wider set of risks for any bill and engagement with devolved admins is crucial.

Population Movement Data- We have onboarded KPMG with a focus being on time as we have 9 months until the funding runs out as the shared outcomes fund is timebound. The team are working hard to move as quickly as possible to secure access to data. The project has been recorded as amber for a timing purpose to ensure we complete all the actions in the time.

The chair asked for comments on any of the other projects.

SU raised PAF and the acquisition of Royal Mail. He then noted that the USO framework may not require Royal Mail to take the responsibility for PAF. Have we as the GC considered seeking commitments as part of the NSIA process. JC confirmed he had spoken to postal policy, UKGI and No.10, but then the election was called so this has now been moved to the list of things to focus on. We will continue to raise this. DBT have been FOI's several times so incoming Ministers will be aware of this area.

SU asked the board if there was anything on this list of Projects, we would wish to offer up in the zero-based review e.g. could we do less but better? SU asked for any views or do we leave for now. AN said it would be good to get a sense check from Sarah following her meeting with Minister today. We have done a lot of streamlining of work already, so felt it was a good mix of projects.

The board discussed being more precise about what we want to achieve and include this in the project summary, stating what the problem statement is and what the impact is, linking it to the 5 missions/manifestos and including a value statement.

ACTION- For the next board meeting, we should have a refined set of project outcomes, articulating more precisely what the overall purpose and what the impact is in each of our projects. If there is historical data, use this to show what been achieved already. Provide context, where possible.

The board discussed if there was anything further that they would add to the portfolio list. The board agreed 'What 3 words' and 'Small Island Developing States'. SU said there should always be a funnel that starts broad, but filters project's out. The big question is where we filter out the ones to focus on and progress them to material spend. LH said energy should be a focus and to keep a close eye on Chris Stark in relation to net zero and consider what the benefits of the transition are for citizens.

The board agreed to continue with the current set of projects for now, subject to a subsequent prioritisation exercise.

5. GC Strategic Objectives

7.1

provided an overview of the strategic objectives on slide 3 of the board pack. BC said this was an attempt to pull together the meeting held a few weeks ago with Commissioners but was subject to review as ministerial priorities for the GC become clear. The key parts focus on 3 objectives.

- Put geospatial data at the heart of government, supporting the delivery of public services and priority policy missions to ensure better outcomes for citizens
- Enable geospatial data to be a supply-side driver of economic growth
- Realise efficiencies in the use of geospatial data to drive public value

BC asked the board if the slide reflected the conversations had at the meeting and if it felt right for where we currently are if the minister asked us what our strategic narrative is.

The board discussed the wording of the objectives and agreed it should still have what our geospatial priorities are, so it relates people as well as the efficiency of the Geo enterprise. The board also discussed procuring the right data at the start, so this can be turned into something and joined together to consider how data goes from collection to how it is shared and used. We need a diagnosis as to what is being done at each stage. DR highlighted the issues around local authority resourcing as the Geo6 are reliant on that data. Local Authorities will be dependent on the incoming governments aspiration in this area.

ACTION- Review the wording of the Strategic objectives/narrative.

6. Charter and Framework

BC provided an overview of the Charter and Framework paper and said the team have tried to describe in paper the pivot to a more traditional advisory board. This would mean the board would move to a meeting every 2 months for 2 hours. The Chair noted Gabriel Straub' comments on the paper. The board agreed with GS comment on Commissioners speaking on behalf of the Commission and representing the Commission externally events.

ACTION- Add narrative in the Charter and Framework (7b) in relation to external facing expectations for the Commissioners.

ACTION- Add narrative in the Charter and Framework (7b) about Commissioners working in an advisory capacity outside of meetings.

The board discussed frequency of the board meetings and an alternative proposal that they would meet virtually for 1 hour a month (months 1 & 2) and the third month they would meet for 2 hours in person. There was general agreement about the need for more focused board meetings, and support for the Executives proposals. Further discussions on the detail of this to be agreed.

The board agreed with comments made by AN and GS in that Commissioners have a role in representing the board externally.

ACTION- Return to detailed programme following completion of the zero-based review.

7. Devolved Administration Update

8.1 [REDACTED] (Wales) said now there is a Labour government in Wales and UK we may see more alignment e.g. Green Energy Company.

8.2 [REDACTED] (NI) said a decision on PSGA (Public Sector Geospatial Agreement) (NI) would be helpful so we can inform people of this.

8.3 [REDACTED] (Scotland) said the conversations at the meeting have been extremely helpful and that NI and Scotland appear similar in what they are working on and appear to be aligning. The Programme for Government work is where Scotland are focusing on in the next 12 months.

8. Any Other Business

The Chair thanked everyone for attending both in person and online.

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Redaction Summary

Page 1

Redaction 1.1

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 1.2

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 1.3

Exemptions/exceptions:

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Redaction 1.11

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- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 1.12

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 1.13

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Page 2

Redaction 2.1

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 2.2

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 2.3

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- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 2.9

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 2.10

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Page 3

Redaction 3.1

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Page 4

Redaction 4.1

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 4.2

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 4.3

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Page 5

Redaction 5.1

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- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 5.2

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 5.3

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 5.4

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Page 7

Redaction 7.1

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Page 8

Redaction 8.1

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

Redaction 8.2

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information

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