

MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY NINTH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 8 APRIL 2024 AT 10.00 AM IN THE PLANETARIUM BOARDROOM

Present: Mr J Briggs (Chair), Mr S Brown, Mr G Cox, Professor M Darnley*, Professor C Jackman*, Mr P Kennedy, Dr K Lemon*, Professor M Mathioudakis*, Mr E Rooney and Mr R Wilson
* via Zoom

In Attendance: Professor M Burton (Director), Mrs C Corvan (Head of Corporate Services), Dr M Sarzi* (Head of Research), Mr L Knox (Head of Finance and Income Generation), Mrs S Mackle (Education and Outreach Manager), Mr C McCrossan (Project Director), Dr S Dane (Boardroom Apprentice) and Mrs L Brown (Corporate Manager)

Apologies: Revd Canon M Hagan and Professor L Harra

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received as outlined above and it was noted that Dr Lemon would be joining the meeting at 11.00 am via Zoom.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

2.1 The Chair reminded members and officers of the need to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest associated with any item on the Agenda, either now or at the relevant point during the meeting. There were no declarations at this point.

3. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2023

3.1 On the proposal of Mr Brown, seconded by Mr Kennedy, the minutes of the meeting of 11 December 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 There were eight actions arising from previous meetings, six of which it was proposed to close.

4.2 Further to the paper, the Chair reported that it was also proposed to close the action relating to the Management Committee quorum as there had been no issue achieving a quorum in the past while.

4.3 The Committee was content with this and noted the one remaining ongoing matter.

4.4 There were no further matters raised.

5. NOTES OF MEETINGS OF FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2023 AND 23 JANUARY 2024

- 5.1 Notes of the Finance Sub-Committee meetings held on 19 December 2023 and 23 January 2024 had been previously circulated.
- 5.2 The Committee noted that the Sub-Committee had looked at difficult choices. Mindful of discussion at ARAC, Mr Rooney queried whether it would be required to meet again.
- 5.3 The Chair advised that the matter would be considered later in the Agenda.

6. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- 6.1 The Chair reported that at the Management Committee meeting in September a Liaison Committee had been established and advised that an initial meeting had taken place before Christmas. This would be dealt with further at the end of the meeting.
- 6.2 Two versions of the revised draft Partnership Agreement with DfC had previously been circulated. The Chair advised that there had been some small changes made to the document and some tracked changes and sought Management Committee approval.
- 6.3 Professor Burton stated that he only got to see the document when it was circulated for the meeting. Whilst overall he was content he had some issues and there were matters he would like to discuss with the Department, including the way in which it described his role. A briefing with DfC had been requested but had not yet taken place.
- 6.4 Mrs Corvan pointed out that there had been very minimal changes since it had last been presented and one of the updates had been following a meeting with Professor Burton.
- 6.5 The Chair sought approval to the Partnership Agreement, subject to a briefing for the Director and any other member of the Management Committee. Professor Burton suggested the briefing be extended to the Head of Research and Education and Outreach Manager.
- 6.6 As the Management Committee had previously considered the document and acknowledging that it contained detail that the Director would want to have correct, Mr Cox proposed that the Management Committee approve the draft Partnership Agreement, subject to clarification on the detail and that this be delegated to the Director, Head of Corporate Services and Chair of the Management Committee to finalise. **Action MC 8/4/24-01 - approval of revised draft Partnership Agreement subject to clarification on detail and delegation to the Director, Head of Corporate Services and Chair of the Management Committee to finalise.**
- 6.7 In response to a query from Mr Rooney it was noted that the Partnership Agreement would replace the MSFM.
- 6.8 Mr Rooney pointed out that the Department's comment regarding delegations would be important for the Management Committee.
- 6.9 A review of the Terms of Reference for the Board of Governors and Management Committee had been undertaken and, subject to any queries from members, the Chair recommended their approval for presentation to the Board of Governors.
- 6.10 Mr Rooney suggested that the Terms of Reference for the Management Committee be amended to recognise that the members of the Management Committee were now Charity Trustees.

- 6.11 Referring to previous discussion at the Management Committee regarding delegation of some decisions to Sub-Committees Mr Rooney commented that the Terms of Reference for the Management Committee indicated that it would continue to make every decision. It was noted that this had not been progressed as there had been no consensus reached and that Delegation to Sub-Committees may be a matter for the Board of Governors.
- 6.12 The Committee approved the Terms of Reference for the Board of Governors and for the Management Committee, subject to the inclusion of the role of Charity Trustees. **Action MC 8/4/24-02 - approval to presentation of the Terms of Reference for the Board of Governors and Management Committee to the Board of Governors, subject to the inclusion of the role of Charity Trustees.**
- 6.13 The Committee also agreed to raise the issue of delegation with the Board of Governors and to seek its approval in principle. **Action MC 8/4/24-03 - Approval to enable delegation to Sub-Committees to be sought at Board of Governors.**
- 6.14 The Chair reported that interviews for three new members to replace Professor Harra and Messrs Brown and McGurgan were due to take place the following day. Sub-Committees in June would take place with reduced membership and appointments to them would be made at the June Management Committee meeting.
- 6.15 The Chair acknowledged the work of Professor Harra as Chair of REAC and Mr Brown as Chair of ARAC and the Redevelopment Sub-committee and advised that there would be functions during the 2-day June meeting to which they would be invited.
- 6.16 The Chair reported that the possibility of Mr Brown remaining for a period of time as a special advisor to the Archbishop in respect of redevelopment issues was being considered by DfC. Mr Kennedy welcomed this suggestion.
- 6.17 In terms of the Sub-Committees, the Chair thanked Mr Kennedy for agreeing to Chair ARAC; Dr Lemon for agreeing to undertake the role of Chair of REAC and Mr Rooney for agreeing to continue to Chair SPRC and recognised that the real work was undertaken at these meetings.
- 6.18 A paper outlining the proposed arrangements for the 2-day June meeting had previously been circulated. The Chair encouraged in-person attendance.
- 6.19 Professor Burton pointed out that the programme did not include an in-person REAC meeting and that REAC had agreed that it would hold an in-person meeting once each year. He added that there were several items that required REAC's input.
- 6.20 In response to a query from Mr Cox regarding a Management Committee quorum in June, it was noted that the new Management Committee members would be at that meeting.
- 6.21 The Committee noted that a number of operational meetings of the Astronomical Observatories of Ireland had taken place and all had been really positive. Governance structures were being developed and an Oversight Board, similar to that of the Board of Governors, was necessary. At its meeting in May the Board of Governors would be asked to nominate two members to this governing body and those members could be drawn from either the Board of Governors or the Management Committee but could not be members of the Operational Board.
- 6.22 The Chair briefly reported on a Chair's Initiative to explore how AOP could better relate to Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council; to Armagh; contribute more and if there were opportunities to develop. This was being facilitated by Mr Colin Stutt who had met with the Archbishop and would be meeting with Mr Wilson and others.

- 6.23 Confidential item removed
- 6.26 The Management Committee noted that AOP had been asked to participate in a video as part of Boardroom Apprentice's evaluation, held every three years. The Chair and Dr Lemon would be taking part in an on-camera interview on 3rd May.
- 6.27 The Chair stated that they were now entering a new phase, a redevelopment phase, and they would need to review structures and mechanisms and make appropriate changes. He acknowledged the work undertaken by all the staff and by Ms C Mullan. The matter would be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.
- 6.28 Mr Wilson referred to the significant work and progress over the past number of years and suggested that an opportunity be taken when the Management Committee and staff were together in June to reflect upon this and also look at the direction of travel ahead.
- 6.29 The Chair welcomed the suggestion. **Action MC 8/4/24-04 - Consideration to be given to providing an opportunity for reflection on the past number of years and to look forward to future direction as part of activities for the 2-day June meeting.**

7. REPORT FROM DIRECTOR

- 7.1 At the outset Professor Burton referred to the meeting of the North South Ministerial Council which was taking place that day in Armagh for the first time in a number of years and commented on very positive engagements with NSMC in moving some of AOP's projects forward.
- 7.2 Professor Burton's report, which had previously been circulated, included updates on The Astronomical Observatories of Ireland (AOI) Partnership; Winter Visitor Statistics; the Changing Publication Landscape; Grant Status; QUB Periodic Review; PhD Interviews; European Climate Assessment and Dataset (ECA&D); New Planetarium Shows; Capital Projects and Scientific Systems Software Support. Professor Burton took members through his report.
- 7.3 The Committee noted:
- recent activity associated with the Astronomical Observatories of Ireland Partnership which included;
 - formal recognition as a Shared Island initiative by the RoI Government;
 - preparation of a research strategy for AOP and DIAS – this had identified a strong research profile across the two organisations and that the research interests between the two institutions were different, presenting a challenge in finding a project for the Lindsay PhD scholarship;
 - the engagement of a UNESCO consultant to assist with finalising the application to the UNESCO RoI tentative list;
 - emergence of an AOI education and outreach programme;
 - development of a communication strategy for the AOI;
 - development of the governance structure for the AOI;
 - the winter visitor statistics and the continued growth in off-site engagement as a result of recent funding received;
 - the Planetarium had recently hosted an external conference by Queen's University;
 - a recent visit by the Scientific Instrument Society to AOP;
 - the impact on AOP of the changing publication landscape continued to evolve;
 - an AOP publication repository had been established;
 - the summary of grant applications and their status;

- the commendations and recommendations from the QUB periodic review of the AOP-QUB PhD programme;
- offers to two new PhD students had been accepted;
- capital projects.

Dr Kirstin Lemon joined the meeting at 11.00 am during the delivery of Professor Burton's report.

7.4 Confidential item removed

7.7 During discussion on the changing publication landscape Mr Cox commented that publication of papers was connected to maintaining a critical mass of research; Professor Mathioudakis stressed the importance of papers being published and it was noted that there was provision within the budget for the financial year, albeit that there was a projected budget deficit. Dr Sarzi pointed out that AOP students were registered with Queen's University and could use their Queen's affiliation to publish papers, it would be first-author papers from staff and PDRAs that would incur the costs per paper.

7.8 With regards to AOP having been commissioned to develop two new Planetarium shows, the Chair commented that this was something the Management Committee would welcome and for AOP's reputation it was really good.

7.9 Professor Burton briefly elaborated on the contribution made by Research Assistant Tom Watts to software support for scientific systems and the need to find a mechanism to support such ICT provision to ensure a thriving research environment.

7.10 The Chair thanked Professor Burton for his report and reiterated his earlier comment regarding AOP entering a new phase which necessitated a challenging look at how AOP operated, what was important and to merge that into a new offering.

The Chair acknowledged that Dr Lemon had joined the meeting during the delivery of Professor Burton's report.

7.11 With reference to the QUB review Dr Sarzi commented that what was most reassuring and valuable was that over the course of the five years AOP had maintained a vibrant research environment in which students felt very welcome and could thrive. With COVID and remote working this had not been a foregone conclusion. He thanked Corporate and Finance for their support for the students and the Education Team for involving the students in outreach and education. In addition he thanked the Research and Observatory staff. He considered it was a big achievement that the students were very happy and had no doubt this was part of why AOP was able to attract students, suggesting word was spreading that AOP was a welcoming and special place.

7.12 Mr Wilson sought more detail on Professor Burton's comments regarding the ICT Infrastructure. In response Professor Burton said they needed to find ways of utilising skill-sets across the organisation to help provide the robustness and a greater IT presence. He explained that AOP needed a greater internal IT presence to support its diverse IT needs and the existing IT staff were stretched looking after corporate needs.

7.13 Mrs Corvan added that cyber-security risk took a lot of looking after for the whole organisation and was a high priority. There was one person leaving and whilst they would be replaced it would create a hiatus. The challenge was how to expand and grow and provide the support for development software and for the arrangements that needed to be in place to support Research. She said the organisation was lacking the skills in this area and did not have the resources to bring in an expert. The post lost in the savings plan had upped the challenge and would have a big impact. How do you continue to grow in a very constrained resource environment.

7.14 The Chair commented on the theme running through the meeting in terms of what a new and evolving AOP would look like and what skills and resources would be needed.

Mr C McCrossan joined the meeting at 11.20 am.

7.15 Mr Rooney referred to the new planetarium shows being produced and asked if a viewing for the Management Committee could be incorporated into the programme for the June meeting. He felt the commissions were quite a credit. It was noted that there was a market space for small content shows and something could be explored. **Action MC 8/4/24-05 - Viewing of the Planetarium Show to be incorporated into the schedule for the 2-day June meeting.**

7.16 With the aid of PowerPoint and screen share, Professor Burton gave a presentation on the UNESCO World Heritage aspirations beginning with the definition from UNESCO's website: 'Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration.'. He briefly explained the concept of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV); authenticity and integrity and the assessment criteria. Whilst OUV was not defined by UNESCO a successful application was deemed by the World Heritage Committee to have OUV.

7.17 There were 10 criteria (6 cultural and 4 natural) and 3 of the cultural criteria were relevant:

- (ii) to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iv) to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (vi) to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;

7.18 Professor Burton briefly elaborated on the outstanding characteristics of the application relevant to each of the criteria:

- (ii) the development of the clock-driven Equatorial Telescope in Armagh & Dunsink
Birr: the 3-foot and 6-foot telescopes
- (iv) The Telescope Dome – Dunsink and Armagh
- (vi) The Whirlpool Nebula – an enigma that led to the concept of other galaxies

7.19 The application, which would be made by The Astronomical Observatories of Ireland, would outline the key stages represented in the development of Astronomical Observatories and Telescopes and the key contributions to changing humanity's perception about our place in the cosmos.

7.20 The Chair commented that continuing AOP's relationships with Birr and Dunsink; the AOI and the Council was fulfilling its duty to pass on the heritage.

7.21 Mr Wilson queried whether it would be better to focus on one of the relevant criteria or all three. He also referred to Armagh's uniqueness as the Observatory sat within the wider story of Robinson and queried whether the other two Observatories had that uniqueness. In terms of the latter, Professor Burton explained that it would be part of the story, but the focus had to be on the OUV.

7.22 In terms of Mr Wilson's query regarding criteria, it was noted that this was where input from the expert was needed on the right approach and it was important to have the right stakeholders at that meeting.

7.23 In response to a query from Mr Brown regarding the people associated with the Observatories historically, Professor Burton explained that the feedback received indicated that the application should tell the story that linked the three sites up front, rather than through an historical narrative and that the linking of the sites was through the Leviathan, which was an intangible item and harder to tell the story. This was why advice was needed and a UNESCO expert (Dr Amanda Chadburn) engaged.

The meeting was temporarily adjourned at 11:45 am and resumed at 11:50 am

8. Confidential item removed

9. UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC)

9.1 Mr Brown reported that a tri-lateral meeting with auditors and the Department had taken place that morning, at which no issues had been raised.

9.2 At the ARAC Bi-Annual Members' Discussion on 19 March the time constraints of ARAC meetings had been discussed and it had been agreed to hold ½ day workshops on key risks; there was a need for training and to ensure that members had the right competencies across the Committee.

9.3 ARAC had considered four papers from Internal Audit:

- Audit Report in respect of Health & Safety and Safeguarding provided satisfactory assurance and contained two Priority 2 and one Priority 3 recommendations;
- Internal Audit Follow Up 2023-24 showed five recommendations being carried forward into 2024-25 – two were being implemented and three had not yet reached the date for implementation;
- Annual Internal Audit Report 2023-24 provided satisfactory assurance;
- Annual Internal Audit Plan 2024-25 identified IT Systems and Security; Human Resource Management, Financial Controls and follow-up on prior year recommendations. The Plan was flexible should priorities change in-year.

9.4 ARAC had received a briefing from the ICT Manager on ICT progress and it was agreed that ICT Risks should continue to be captured in a specific ICT Risk Register, which it recommended to Management Committee.

9.5 The Corporate Risk Register identified 9 risks across 5 risk categories. Of the 9 risks once treated, 3 remained extreme, 3 high and 3 moderate. There had been no changes to the risk analysis of any of the risks, either current or treated, since last considered. ARAC recommended approval of the Corporate Risk Register.

9.6 Mr Brown reported that ARAC had considered the draft Bi-Annual Assurance Statement and Board Annual Assurance Statement and recommended both for Management Committee approval.

9.7 ARAC had considered and noted the:

- Draft Governance Statement 2023-24;
- NIAO Audit Strategy 2023-24;
- Finance Report Period 11 (February);
- Draft ARAC Annual Report 2023-24; and
- ARAC Annual Work Programme.

9.8 In respect of policies, ARAC was content to recommend approval of the:

- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Risk Management Policy;
- Reserves Policy;
- Financial Policies and Procedures; and
- ESG Position Paper.

9.9 With reference to the Whistleblowing Policy, Mr Cox pointed out that there was a requirement within the Partnership Agreement to report to DfC and suggested that this should be reflected within the Policy.

9.10 The Management Committee accepted the report from ARAC and approved the Internal Audit Plan 2024-25; ICT Risk Register; Corporate Risk Register; draft Bi-Annual Assurance Statement (October 23-March 2024); draft Annual Board Assurance Statement; Whistleblowing Policy, subject to the inclusion of reference to obligations under the Partnership Agreement; Risk Management Policy, Reserves Policy and Finance Policy and Procedures.

10. UPDATE FROM THE STAFFING POLICY AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (SPRC)

10.1 A special meeting of the SPRC had taken place in January to consider PDRA pay scales and the quarterly meeting had taken place on 3 April.

10.2 Mr Rooney reported that SPRC had agreed that PDRA pay scales should be aligned to NICS pay structures. Two PDRA positions had been advertised and one offer had been made, to commence in June. The second position was being re-advertised as none of the applications had met the criteria.

10.3 SPRC had considered a Business Case for Special Payments and Allowances, which included the proposal in relation to Relief Weather Reading Allowances that had been considered in December 2023. This would be submitted to the Department for approval.

10.4 Mr Rooney reported that SPRC had been made aware of the 2023 pay offer of 5% increase including a £1,500 non-consolidated payment, which had not yet been accepted by the Trade Unions. Funding was available to pay it up to 31 March 2024, however, there had been no allowance made in the current year's budget.

10.5 SPRC had reviewed the updated Skills Gap paper, which identified 9 posts.

10.6 Mr Rooney reported that SPRC had reiterated the need for AOP to have an updated stand-alone Research Strategy to help support the sustainability and growth of Research.

10.7 There had been no staff engagement survey carried out in 2023 and SPRC had encouraged staff to conduct one as soon as possible. It was hoped that the results would be reported to the June meeting.

10.8 SPRC had received a note on a recent UKRI Global Talent Visa Workshop at which AOP had been represented.

10.9 Updates on Diversity Mark and Project Juno actions had been provided. In terms of agreed actions, there was a commitment under the Diversity Mark Charter for AOP to have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and work was progressing with a view to having this by the end of the year. Dr Sarzi would be meeting with the Institute of Physics Project Juno representatives to discuss its new inclusion model. SPRC had been asked to consider the appointment of a Diversity Champion and Sinead Mackle had agreed to take on this role.

10.10 SPRC had considered four policies – the Code of Conduct for Staff and Students; Board of Governors and Management Committee Code of Conduct; Learning and Development Policy and Special Bonus Scheme. There had been no changes to any of these policies.

Professor Burton temporarily retired from the meeting at this juncture.

10.11 Mr Cox asked if the Management Committee could agree a date for completion of the Research Strategy, through the most appropriate Committee. Mr Rooney explained that it had been raised at SPRC in the context of the strategic workforce planning for the organisation and the critical mass of researchers needed at AOP and SPRC felt there needed to be an over-arching strategy document that supported the Corporate Strategy.

10.12 The Chair thanked Dr Lemon for taking on the Chair of REAC and advised that Professor Burton had indicated at the start of the meeting that REAC would like to have a meeting before the 2-day meeting in June. He said it would be useful to be in a position to give a date for completion of the Research Strategy to the Management Committee in June.

Professor Burton re-joined the meeting at this juncture.

10.13 The Chair updated Professor Burton on the discussion that had taken place in his absence.

10.14 Professor Burton referred to the strategy document being produced in conjunction with DIAS as part of the AOI and Mr Rooney clarified that what was also required was an AOP-specific Research Strategy.

10.15 The Chair asked Dr Lemon to take the matter forward through REAC.

11. PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24

11.1 The Corporate Plan Non-KPI Objectives; KPIs for the period April 23-Feb 24 and a Finance Report for the eleven months to February 2024 had previously been circulated.

11.2 Mr Knox reported that whilst all expenditures for the financial year just ended had not yet been finalised, he anticipated a break-even position. He expressed serious concern about the new financial year which was showing approx. £150,000 deficit and did not include any allowance for costs associated with the redevelopment project. It was hoped that a budget would be agreed by the end of April, however, the best case scenario was the same allocation as 2023-24.

11.3 Discussion ensued regarding the uncertain and challenging financial situation. It was noted that during 2023-24 AOP had absorbed costs as a result of the positive performance of the Planetarium. For 2024-25 pressures included a loss in a major grant; potential publication costs and the NICS pay offer.

11.4 In response to a query from Mr Cox regarding the identification of contingencies that they could deploy to make the savings, Mrs Corvan confirmed that there had been discussions in this regard but the options were not palatable. Additionally, she pointed out that making savings could put at risk other things e.g. income might not increase if the offering was reduced. It was noted that there had been no in-year resource funding during 2023-24 and indications were that the likelihood of in-year funding during 2024-25 was low, but this could change. The Committee noted that there were also uncertainties within the budget such as publication costs.

11.5 Professor Burton commented that if AOP was required to make the savings they would be talking about shutting the organisation down.

- 11.6 Further discussion ensued during which Mr Cox referred to the difference between planning and deployment and felt that they would be remiss in their duties if they did not have a prioritised list of options. Mr Wilson commented that the natural starting place was to review statutory versus discretionary and thereafter to consider quality. Mrs Corvan explained that part of the difficulty was that discretionary spend related to the public side of the organisation and that was supporting the organisation. Reducing opening hours would reduce income. It was also pointed out that for some of the decisions it would be long-term before savings would be realised.
- 11.7 The Chair referred to the Finance Sub-Committee and suggested that it continue to meet to prioritise options as had been suggested by Mr Cox. Mrs Corvan felt it would be better waiting until after the budget had been set. In agreeing with Mrs Corvan, Mr Kennedy felt they could not substantively make decisions until the allocation was known.
- 11.8 It was agreed that a meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee be convened when the 2024-25 budget was known. **Action MC 8/4/24-06- Finance Sub-Committee to be convened.**
- 11.9 Professor Burton, aided by Mrs Mackle, briefly elaborated on the KPIs that would not be met.
- 11.10 The Committee approved the Non-KPI Objectives, KPIs April 23 -February 24 and Finance – Period 11 report.

12.0 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25

- 12.1 The draft Business Plan 2024-25 had previously been circulated.
- 12.2 With reference to the KPIs contained within the draft Business Plan Mr Rooney pointed out that many of them had rolled over from previous years, even though they were being exceeded. He queried whether a more in-depth look at the Business Planning process was needed, pointing out that the Assurance Statement said that the Management Committee set challenging targets for performance. He also commented that there were annotated queries within the document. He considered that the KPIs did not reflect the ambitious, interesting and challenging work discussed earlier in the meeting, adding that the only new KPI related to 365 days of weather reading.
- 12.3 Taking on board Mr Rooney's comments the Chair sought the Management Committee's view on whether to prepare a revised Business Plan or to set the target that the next Business Plan must reflect the redevelopment ambition and all the difficulties and challenges that would come with that.
- 12.4 Mrs Corvan referred to the paper considered by the Management Committee in December on the performance against the Strategy and said she would have liked to have developed a new Business Plan based on this, however, the Business Plan had already been substantially completed when she had returned to work. She pointed out that it would soon be time to start work on the next Strategy, adding that the time for preparing a refreshed Business Plan had passed as resources were now stretched and attention needed to focus on dealing with the funding.

Professors Jackman and Mathioudakis retired from the meeting at 1.00 pm.

- 12.5 The Chair acknowledged the need for a new Business Plan that reflected on the redevelopment issues, pointing out that there was a need to review everything, not just resources, but also structure, as more of the same would not work.
- 12.6 The Management Committee approved the draft Business Plan presented and agreed to move towards developing a new Business Plan and Corporate Strategy.

- 12.7 In response to a query from Mr Wilson as to how to build time into the cycle of meetings to review the Governance, Business Planning process and Corporate Strategy etc, the Chair said they would have to change the cycle of meetings, members would be required to be available for more meetings and it would require a major review of how they operated.
- 12.8 Mr Kennedy advised that ARAC had agreed to hold a ½ day Risk Management workshop and suggested setting aside a full day, with a ½ day of business planning.
- 12.9 The Chair undertook to give consideration to the matters discussed and work with officers to produce a paper. **Action MC 8/4/24-07 - Chair to work with officers to produce a paper regarding a review of Governance, Business Planning process and Corporate Strategy etc.**

13.0 CORRESPONDENCE

- 13.1 Letter dated 18 December 2023 from Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute requesting AOP to consider a change of the current licence under which data was contributed to the European Climate Assessment & Dataset (ECA&D) to one that provided open and unrestricted access to AOP's data set for the Copernicus Climate Change Services (C3S).
- 13.2 Mr Cox pointed out that under the Licence Agreement Intellectual Property Rights would be retained by AOP; there were no GDPR concerns as it did not relate to special category data and commercial use was prohibited. He suggested that it was acceptable to sign.
- 13.3 The Management Committee approved signing of the Licence Agreement for the use of data and/or products for the Copernicus Services. **Action MC 8/4/24-08 - Approval to sign Licence Agreement.**

14.0 AOB

14.1 The Committee noted the:

- dates of the meetings for 2024 – Monday 24 and Tuesday 25 June, Monday 30 September and Monday 16 December;
- availability of training as outlined in the report;
- PR Coverage Reports December 2023-February 2024.

AOP officers and Dr S Dane, Boardroom Apprentice retired from the meeting at 1.10 pm.

15.0 Confidential item removed

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and participation.

The meeting concluded at 1.30 pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

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(Chair)

Dated: