

# **EIGHTY SECOND SNH BOARD MEETING, 11 FEBRUARY 2003, BATTLEBY**

## **CONFIRMED MINUTES**

### **Members Present**

John Markland, Chairman  
Michael Scott, Deputy Chairman  
Peter Chapman  
Keith Geddes (for items 1 to 8 only)  
Isabel Glasgow, Chairwoman, West Areas Board  
Alice Lambert  
Peter Mackay, Chairman, Audit and Risk Management Committee  
Jeremy Rowan Robinson, Chairman, East Areas Board  
Sue Walker

### **In Attendance**

Ian Jardine, Chief Executive  
Andrew Bachell, Director  
Ian Edgeler, Director  
John Thomson, Director  
Jeff Watson, Director  
Colin Galbraith, Head of Scientific and Advisory Services  
Jane Clark, Head of National Strategy  
Iain Rennick, Head of Secretariat, Press and PR  
George Anderson, Head of Press and Public Relations  
Pam Gaiter, Board Secretary  
Alan Mowle (for items 6, 8 and 9)  
Roger Burton (for item 7)  
Rob Threadgould (for item 7)  
Julie Forrest (for item 10)  
Arthur Keller (for item 10)

### **Apologies**

Kevin Dunion  
Janet Sprent, Chairwoman, Scientific Advisory Committee  
Simon Fraser, Chairman, North Areas Board

**\*\*\*CLOSED SESSION\*\*\***

**ITEM 1: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS)**

1. No interests were declared in relation to the items for discussion in the closed session of the meeting.

**ITEM 2: MINUTES**

2. The minutes of the closed session of the 81<sup>st</sup> SNH Board meeting, held on 17 December 2002, were agreed as a true record.

**ITEM 3: CURRENT ISSUES**

*Uist Wader Project*

3. It was likely that a cull would be undertaken in April 2003. It was recognised that there would be opposition to this action and that SNH would be under intense pressure to consider making all the captured animals available for relocation. There was doubt that any relocation plan would be credible and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, SNH would continue to maintain the view that relocation was inadvisable, and on the basis of current scientific evidence, probably inhumane.

*Relocation*

4. Further information had been provided to the Executive on the costs of various options. The Chairman and Chief Executive had met Ross Finnie who had seemed particularly concerned about the impact that further dispersal of functions may have on delivery SNH's functions.
5. A meeting between Ross Finnie and Union representatives had also been held. The Scottish Executive had since requested further information about the possibility of gradual dispersal. SNH had responded to say that this could be done. However, whilst the Executive may wish to set targets, it must be left to SNH to decide how to do it and within which timescales. Ministers would meet during February to discuss the various options.
6. There was concern amongst Board members that gradual dispersal would be bad for staff morale, would be difficult to manage and may lead to reduced efficiency. The consequences of such a move had been made clear to the Minister and to Scottish Executive officials.
7. It was highly unlikely that approval would be given for a new integrated headquarters within Edinburgh.

8. The news of the outcome of the review would be given to staff at face to face meetings if sufficient advance notice of the decision was given. Otherwise, information would be disseminated via a Management Notice.

#### *SACs*

9. In accordance with the Board decision in December, consultation on six sites had now commenced. The sites were not underpinned by SSSIs at this stage. Consultations on the remaining four sites would commence in April 2003.

#### *Areas Board Appointments*

10. All references had been followed up and all but one appointment had been confirmed. The remaining appointment was subject to the outcome of appointments to the main Board.

#### *Working Time Directive*

11. The Board would receive a report on changes required by the Directive at a future meeting.

**AP 05/03 (11 February): Personnel (Ian Edgeler)** to prepare a report informing the Board of SNH's future approach to the employment of staff on Fixed Term contracts in light of recent legislative changes.

### **ITEM 4: HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE INVESTIGATION (SNH/03/1/7)**

12. The paper covered a letter from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to the Chief Executive outlining the action which had been taken by HSE Inspectors in the investigation into the death of Mr David Macrae. Two Improvement Notices were attached to the letter. The Board discussed the following points:
  - a block of risk assessments would be drawn up and submitted to the HSE by the end of February. Advice would be sought from Lothian Healthcare Trust on the required levels of health surveillance. A health surveillance action plan would then be drawn up. The Audit and Review Unit would undertake a systems audit on the Health and Safety Guidance and compliance with it;
  - a research review, funded by SNH and SEERAD, had been commissioned from Aberdeen University and Central Science Laboratories. DEFRA was likely to fund UK wide research later in the year;

- the Audit and Risk Management Committee had spent time discussing the issue and were supportive of the action taken by SNH. It was important that SNH was not drawn into provision of advice on public health issues. Other partners must be engaged and encouraged to lead;
  - it was not yet clear if there would be a Fatal Accident Inquiry;
  - it was important that other zoonoses were identified and taken seriously in terms of risks to staff. A list of known zoonoses had been prepared and consideration was being given to the risks associated with them. Advice would be sought from SNH's health advisors on staff who had possibly been exposed to zoonoses in previous years.
13. The Board agreed that it was satisfied that sufficient steps had been taken in response to the Health and Safety Improvement Notices.

#### **ITEM 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

##### *Board Dinner*

14. Board members were reminded that a dinner would be held on the evening of 17 March to mark the retirement from the Board of Peter Mackay and Kevin Dunion.

**John Markland**  
**Chairman**