

NATURAL ENGLAND BOARD

Meeting 4
18 April 2007



Paper No: **NEB P07 15**

Title: **Board Appraisal**

Sponsor: **David Young – Executive Director, Strategy and Performance**

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to outline the purpose and approach to Board appraisal and propose a process by which the Board will assess its collective performance and that of individual Board Members.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Endorse the purpose and approach to Board appraisal.
2. Approve the process for assessing Board performance.
3. Endorse the framework for assessing Board Member performance objectives for 2007/8.

Background

At the February 2007 meeting, the Board discussed a draft framework for setting the performance objectives for individual Board Members for 2007/8, and how Board Member performance may be assessed. The Board agreed that it was important that Natural England put in place a process for the appraisal of the work of the Board as a whole, and individual Board Members. The Board asked the Governance Task Group to review the draft framework and develop a process for further consideration by the Board.

Purpose and approach

Throughout Natural England, the purpose of appraisal is to recognise achievement and improve performance. Our approach to performance management is based on regular open and honest dialogue with colleagues. Paperwork is kept to a minimum and is used only to support the dialogue.

Board appraisal

It is proposed that the Board holds an annual 2 hour session to discuss its own collective performance over the previous year and set objectives for the Board for the coming year. This would normally be held in April following approval of the Corporate Plan. Throughout the year the Board would continue its current practice of reviewing performance at the end of each meeting, see Annex 1.

This year it is proposed that the Board appraisal session occur in conjunction with the June Board meeting. It is proposed that this would be externally facilitated by a specialist in corporate governance

and board performance, and would include a process to obtain 360° feedback for use at both an individual and collective level.

Individual Board Members

Using the common framework (Annex 2) individual Board Members would meet the Chair in April each year to discuss performance for the previous year and set objectives for the coming year. A self assessment from the Board Member would be provided to the Chair in advance, along with individual 360° feedback, which would also be provided to the individual Board Member. The outcome of the meeting would be an agreed set of personal goals for each individual Board Member for the coming year.

This year it is proposed that the individual 360° feedback is collected through the same process to obtain 360° feedback on the collective performance of the Board. Since it is important that feedback is based on evidence and experience of working together, it is proposed that the facilitator collect feedback from colleagues who have been working together in the Board Outcome Groups, along with input from the Chair, in consultation with the Chief Executive and with input from appropriate members of the Executive.