

The logo features a black circle with a white smiley face at the bottom. The text 'CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S Commissioner Scotland' is written in white inside the circle. The circle is set against a light blue background with two darker blue triangular shapes pointing towards it from the top and bottom.

**CHILDREN &  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S**  
Commissioner  
Scotland

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# Governance Meeting Minutes

**26th November 2020**

## **1. OPENING FORMALITIES**

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**1.1 The meeting was opened at 11:30**

## **2. MEETING ADMINISTRATION**

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### **2.1 Attendance**

Bruce Adamson (BA)	Commissioner (Chair)
Nick Hobbs (NH)	Head of Advice & Investigations
Ezmie McCutcheon (EM)	Head of Communications
Gina Wilson (GW)	Head of Strategy
Lindsay Steedman	Executive Assistant (Minutes)

### **2.2 Apologies**

Nicola Vallance-Ross (NRV)	Head of Corporate Services
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### **2.3 Appointments**

2.3.1 The Head of Communications was appointed Meeting Monitor.

2.3.2 The Executive Assistant was appointed as minute taker.

### **2.4 Declaration of Interests**

2.4.1 None were declared.

### **2.5 Minutes of the last meeting**

2.5.1 The minutes of the Governance meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020 were approved.

2.5.2 The Action Log was reviewed and updated, with outstanding items allocated to their corresponding agenda item.

### **2.6 Previous meeting's monitor report summary**

2.6.1 NH reported that the meeting kept well to time. Discussions included children and young people and the YAG. There was good discussion around bringing YAG into governance and decision making. All were able to express views freely.

### **2.7 Adoption of Agenda**

2.7.1 Additional item added under AOB. BA is now Chair of ENOC with discussion required regarding additional duties, responsibilities and planning.

## **3. COMMISSIONER UPDATE**

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3.1.1 BA reported the last few months have been busy, highlights being:

3.1.2 ENOC Conference;

3.1.3 Work on Incorporation;

3.1.4 CRC Reporting;

3.1.5 Annual Report and Audit;

3.1.6 Staff needs were identified with regard to wellbeing and action taken to provide Resilience Training.

3.1.7 BA noted his thanks to SMT for the additional responsibilities taken on by them in NVR's absence.

- 3.1.8 BA advised he had received his Performance Review from the Parliament's Independent Assessor and this will go back to Parliament and is complete.

## **4. INFORMATION FROM THE SMT**

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### **4.1 SMT Quarterly report**

- 4.1.1 GW gave a verbal report.
- 4.1.2 There were 3 new staff appointments in the last quarter, Policy and Engagement Officer, Communications and Media Officer, temporary Executive Assistant.
- 4.1.3 With regard to policies, a Data Impact Assessment was conducted which requires additional planning and some of the budget underspend may be used to deliver on this.
- 4.1.4 There was a strong focus on wellbeing CPD and ensuring staff are aware that they can access and use resources.
- 4.1.5 Annual report process is complete and published.
- 4.1.6 SMT will recommend that a portion of the underspend due to Covid-19 should be returned to Parliament.
- 4.1.7 GW drew attention to the fact that there were a number of actions from the Audit which require planning to be delivered prior to March.
- 4.1.8 The office will not reopen in January 2021 and this should be communicated to staff.
- 4.1.9 Delivery planning for next year is starting now also around what consultation and engagement work can be done between now and the end of March. This should take experiences from a particular groups of children and young people of the impact of Covid-19 so this can be included in next year's delivery plan.

### **4.2 Finance Quarterly report**

- 4.2.1 BA spoke to the report.
- 4.2.2 There is an anticipated underspend which needs to be quantified as soon as possible to SPCB.
- 4.2.3 GW noted it would take 2 weeks to cost this underspend and consider re-allocation.
- 4.2.4 GW advised there will be discussion with NVR regarding costing for additional temporary staff.
- 4.2.5 Agreed that SPCB will be notified before Christmas.

## **5 EDUCATION**

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### **5.1 Training needs**

- 5.1.1 BA confirmed that two of his contacts have agreed to give human rights training.
- 5.1.2 Human rights training would include the whole office in aspects but BA to discuss with GW to assess specific expert requirements for other staff.
- 5.1.3 GW reported that GM is preparing a plan for internal processes and data protection with upskilling designed and developed for staff. This plan should be in place within the next 2 months.
- 5.1.4 BA confirmed his strong support of a bespoke plan for this organisation and all training should align with policies, with external support.
- 5.1.5 EM confirmed there was a lack shared knowledge regarding FREM and there has been discussions about internal training with the Finance Officer.
- 5.1.6 BA added that a clear processes should be set out, together with keeping records and information now which is easily available for use in future.

## **6 GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

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## **6.1 Annual review of Register of Interests**

- 6.1.1 NH suggested mitigation around risk should be added to the policy document.
- 6.1.2 EM advised completion of the Register should be added to the onboarding process for new staff.
- 6.1.3 Agreed the document requires improvement and all staff require to update it.

## **6.2 Budget Submission**

- 6.2.1 BA spoke to the budget.
- 6.2.2 It was broadly in line with previous years.
- 6.2.3 It has been submitted with some minor clarifications.
- 6.2.4 It would be put to SPCB before consideration by the Finance Committee.
- 6.2.5 GW noted the timing of the budget was challenging due to delivery planning dates.
- 6.2.6 NH suggested alternatively a 2 year delivery plan with a process to revise and there was discussion around this and agreed this would be useful.

## **6.3 Annual Accounts signed off by AAB**

- 6.3.1 BA confirmed the Annual Accounts were signed off at AAB meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November and were also signed off for laying.
- 6.3.2 Discussions at the AAB meeting had been useful and supportive.

## **6.4 Audit Outcomes**

- 6.4.1 BA reported that we have an unmodified audit with several management improvements to be taken as a result.
- 6.4.2 There is a clear plan in place for improvement and BA thanked SMT and Corporate Services for their support with the process.
- 6.4.3 GW queried how much support AAB were able to give and BA confirmed there was no limit and SMT were encouraged to make use of the expertise of the AAB.

# **7 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION**

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## **7.1 Young Advisers Group**

- 7.1.1 GW fed back on the work of the Young Advisers group (YAG) over the last quarter.
- 7.1.2 Members of the YAG have been notably engaged and were involved in the following:-
- 7.1.3 Supporting BA in delivery of the Doughty Street lecture;
- 7.1.4 Speaking at UN Human Rights Council Social Forum;
- 7.1.5 Cancellation of SQA exams informing work on incorporation
- 7.1.6 GW advised consideration was being given to thanking the YAG.
- 7.1.7 GW also suggested discussions on whether they wish to continue as members between Jan-March 2021 could be held at their Christmas party in December.
- 7.1.8 BA added the high-level involvement of YAG at North Sea and Northern Alliance.

## **7.2 Additional Participation Opportunities**

- 7.2.1 GW advised SMT will be engaging with young people who have been impacted by Covid-19.
- 7.2.2 Discussion on recruitment of new YAG members and the importance that there are more applicants and that they are from a diverse group, with the following suggestions:-
- 7.2.3 Request feedback and evaluation from YAG members in a safe and honest way.
- 7.2.4 Draw on former YAG members' experiences, but not always from a high level.
- 7.2.5 Short video messages on what YAGs have gained from being members.
- 7.2.6 Physical events with former and new YAGs with mentoring.
- 7.2.7 Events/roadshows around the country.
- 7.2.8 Support with application process or consider no application process.
- 7.2.9 Agreed the recruitment process should be longer, begin prior to Christmas and be completed with the new YAG starting in April 2021.

## **8 MONITORING**

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### **8.1 Contribution Management Plans (CMP) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all staff**

- 8.1.1 SMT confirmed that all discussions with staff had taken place and were reflected in the CMPs.
- 8.1.2 NH advised that some internal development had been unable to be carried out due to the difficulties “shadowing” while working from home.
- 8.1.3 CPD budget is currently underspent and EM noted the emphasis in CMP to consider CPD in all forms, not just those with financial spend. SMT to consider arranging training across teams and the office as a whole.

### **8.2 Risk Register**

- 8.2.1 BA confirmed that following the AAB there had been some minor amendments to the Risk Register with advice to add the impact of Covid-19 had on different styles working.

### **8.3 Risk Management Policy**

- 8.3.1 GW reported that SMT are reviewing the Risk Policy Update Log and the Risk Management Policy is included within this.

## **9 OTHER GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES**

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### **9.1 New and Revised Policies**

- 9.1.1 EM noted that the Equality Report needs to be added to the policy review document and made a priority.

## **10 AOB**

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### **10.1 ENOC**

- 10.1.1 BA confirmed that he is now taken over as Chair of ENOC.
- 10.1.2 Support of the Network will be required from our office and particularly required are skills across finance and governance.
- 10.1.3 GW noted that there may be other resource required from the EU on EU specific work.

### **10.2 Christmas and New Year Holidays**

- 10.2.1 Discussion around arrangements for office closure and staff leave over Christmas and New Year with a view to ensuring that staff are able to rest over this period.
- 10.2.2 The office will be closed from 24<sup>th</sup> December until 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and staff will be strongly encouraged to take this period as annual leave.
- 10.2.3 Leave will be encouraged until 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021.
- 10.2.4 It was agreed arrangements would be notified to staff at the next Huddle meeting and any queries directed to Line Managers.

## **11 MEETING FORWARD PLANNING**

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### **11.1 Planning – see current year’s annual planner**

- 11.1.1 January - Audit planning.

### **11.2 Date of next meeting**

20<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## **12 MEETING MONITOR’S REPORT**

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**12.1** EM reported that the meeting provided strategic leadership and very much looked ahead in terms of finance and structure around workload. Diversity and viewpoints were encouraged by the Chair. The meeting kept to time and did not stray from the agenda. Discussions included children and young people's perspective with reference to participation. It was suggested that their perspective should be included more. Collective decisions were made.

**13. CLOSE**

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**13.1** There being no further discussion the Commissioner closed the meeting at 14.30

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Title	Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
Name	Bruce Adamson
Signature	
Date	5 May 2021