



**Senior Management Team Meeting**  
**Minutes of meeting held on 22 March 2023**  
 09:00-12:00, Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:**

Nicola Vallance-Ross (NVR)	Head of Corporate Services – Chair
Ezmie McCutcheon (EMc)	Head of Communications
Nick Hobbs (NH)	Head of Advice and Investigations
Gina Wilson (GW)	Head of Strategy
Judith Chisholm (JC)	Executive Assistant - Minutes

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies</b>	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Review of minutes from previous meeting and actions</b>	
	The minutes of the Senior Management Team meeting held on 27 February 2023 were approved.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Finance</b>	
	<p>SMT reviewed the Finance Reports. SMT noted additional expected spend before 31 March 2023 including a legal opinion, participation activity and early years work. It was also noted that £10k had been budgeted for an Incorporation event which did not go ahead due to strike action. SMT agreed that there is a requirement for new tech and the Head of Corporate Services will contact staff to assess requirements. The Head of Corporate Services and the Finance Officer would rephrase expected spend between now and year end and bring that back to SMT so that can see where at for end of financial year.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of Corporate Services to assess new tech requirements.</li> </ul>	NVR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of Corporate Services to rephrase expected spend between now and year end.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	
	<p>We have begun to pull together materials for the new Commissioner focussing on governance matters and high-level strategic documents. SMT will hold a separate meeting after Easter to discuss what first 100 days as Commissioner could look like. Strategy team are developing a transition report that will sit alongside the delivery plan. It will cover our thematic work setting out what work has been carried out and options moving forward. SMT noted that there are other aspects of the Commissioner's induction that they need to consider for example, comms, event with our Young Advisors and an external stakeholder event.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Delivery Plan and Projects</b>	
	<p><b>Corporate Services:</b></p> <p>The team has had two additional members of staff over the period which has been really helpful for delivery. Work is progressing to plan. There was additional work around recruitment, which has resulted in a slight delay to project work. In terms of audit timescales we are pushing for early September to try to avoid the audit falling in busiest periods for the Office.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b></p> <p>We have been recruiting for a new Participation Officer. There has been a lot of interest and enthusiasm for the role which is positive. The next phase of recruitment is candidates will visit a primary school as part of an assessment. There is an impact on the team of transitioning to the next</p>	

	<p>Participation Officer. We are in the process of pulling together participation resources and checklists to make the transition as smooth as possible.</p> <p>The Incorporation event was unfortunately cancelled due to strike action. Strategy are considering how to tie off our Incorporation work between now and the end of term of Commissioner.</p> <p>Strategy have been mapping out the pieces of work from the strategic plan that will be finished by the end of the Commissioner's term and those that will transition into the new term. Climate justice work is essentially complete. Mental health work is on track. In relation to Poverty the Commissioner has a couple of keynote speeches in diary to wrap up this work.</p> <p><b>Communications:</b></p> <p>The focus is to try to get the annual report completed by the end of the Commissioner's term. As part of this the team need to do online work with young advisors and find time in the Commissioner's diary, which is challenging.</p> <p>The Head of Communications has been involved with the recruitment for new Participation Officer and the Young Advisors recruitment for new Commissioner, which has taken up a lot of time and resource.</p> <p>Early years work is progressing. We are travelling to Inverness to work with a primary school to test out the pages and illustrations of the early years book. This will also be connected to finishing off the rights song. Early years book launch is 12 May.</p> <p>UN Geneva trip in May – we are planning to take two young advisors to work as creative communicators to report back to Scotland on the process of UN CRC reporting and create resources that will be helpful for the next reporting cycle. This will involve a lot of preparation work including running sessions in advance with the young advisors.</p> <p>SMT carried out a rapid children rights impact assessment in relation to travel options. SMT also considered budget implications. It was decided that air travel was the most suitable form of travel on this occasion.</p> <p>SMT noted that the dates for the UK Session have moved and that they may fall on 18 and 19 May, which is outside the term of the Commissioner. SMT decided that as accommodation and travel was booked prior to the change in dates those would not be moved but there would need to be a clear</p>	
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	<p>delineation between delegation of Office of Commissioner and Bruce Adamson as private individual during the Session.</p> <p>There is a large piece of work for the Communications team to review the website to update the content in light of incoming Commissioner.</p> <p>The Communications team have limited capacity to support other pieces of work due to staff capacity. The Head of Communications would discuss with Head of Strategy and Head of Advice and Investigations how may be able to support upcoming work.</p> <p><b>Advice and Investigations:</b></p> <p>The team are working in relation to poverty on rapid rights protection from disconnection of energy supply.</p> <p>We are looking to extend the Legal Officer's secondment to the end of the calendar year. We have received a request from Jersey's Commissioners Office to extend our Legal Officer's secondment and we are working through the details. We have agreed to an extension based on original secondment agreement.</p> <p>We are awaiting a response to our request for further extension for submitting our evidence to the UK Covid Inquiry.</p> <p>We are looking at seeking a legal opinion on intervention in criminal proceedings related to our Incorporation work.</p> <p>Progressing with a replacement for Filemaker and should have a specification to share with the Head of Corporate Services shortly.</p> <p>Mental Health Investigation- we are working out timing for launch of our report and working with Communications on the launch.</p> <p>Illegal Migration Bill – we are working with UK Commissioner colleagues on our responses.</p> <p>Asylum and Immigration – visit to a hotel for an assessment on health conditions. We have been advised that accommodation may be closing in the summer and moving to another hotel. We have instructed a sleep safety expert and hoping that the experts report could be turned into a report that isn't specific to Scotland but as a tool for others to challenge accommodation standards. We have received an enquiry from a family with three children who are living in an unsuitable environment. Visiting the family to see if we can take legal action to remedy.</p>	
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	Football – the Scottish Football Supporters Association (SFSA) report hasn't been published yet and looks like there is a delay. No date for publication available at the moment.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Participation</b>	
	<p>Key pieces of work covered by updates in meeting, namely, Young Advisors involvement in recruitment of the new Commissioner, work on participation resources and planning ahead for our Young Advisors to meet the new Commissioner.</p> <p>We are meeting with two young people from Young People's Voices via Scottish Refugee Council in relation to access to education and we are then supporting the young people at a meeting with Scottish Officials to express their views on forthcoming amendments to Regulations.</p> <p>The Seldom Heard Voices groups work is coming to a close having worked with the Scottish Refugee Council and Young Carers in Edinburgh and Inverness. We will look to work with Families Outside in the future.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Young People in Scotland survey results</b>	
	SMT considered the Young People in Scotland survey results. It was noted that there has been a significant drop off for children and young people's awareness of their rights in secondary schools. SMT plan to shape work that the Office can take forward to respond to this finding.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Policies for approval</b>	
	Due to pressures on time for the meeting it was agreed that the policies would be taken forward to the next SMT meeting. The policies will be shared with the auditors but the auditors will be made aware those are in draft.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Summary of Actions:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of Corporate Services to assess new tech requirements.</li> <li>- Head of Corporate Services to rephrase expected spend between now and financial year end.</li> <li>- SMT to meet after Easter to discuss the first 100 days of the Commissioner.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NVR</b></p> <p><b>NVR</b></p>