



**Governance Meeting**  
**Minutes of meeting held on**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**

09:30-12:00  
via Microsoft Teams

**Present:**

Bruce Adamson (BA)	The Commissioner
Nicola Vallance-Ross (NVR)	Head of Corporate Services
Ezmie McCutcheon (EMc)	Head of Communications
Nick Hobbs (NH)	Head of Advice & Investigations
Gina Wilson (GW)	Head of Strategy

**Apologies:**

Judith Chisholm (JC)	Executive Assistant
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<b>Chair:</b>	Bruce Adamson (BA)
<b>Minutes:</b>	TBC

	Details	Action By
	Start: 09:30	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies</b>	
1.1	Meeting started, welcome and apologies.	
1.2	Declaration of Interests None to declare.	
1.3	Minutes & actions from previous meeting. Previous meeting held on 19 <sup>th</sup> of May 2022 – none to bring forward.	

<b>2.</b>	<b>Commissioner Update</b>	
	<p>Commissioner reflected that Office has been busy this quarter with significant gaps in staffing, particular in administrative support.</p> <p>Commissioner updated the Governance Group on the work undertaken in the previous quarter.</p>	
	<b>Senior Management Team Update</b>	
	<p><u>Strategy Team</u></p> <p>Head of Strategy updated the Group on the work of the Strategy Team with note of gaps in project support/project admin. The Group discussed the impact of this on the wider work of the office and agreed that a temporary role (Project Assistant, Grade 3) may be possible within this financial year. The Head of Corporate offered to put together a financial forecast of the cost for this. The Group agreed that this could be funded through efficiency savings and not a call on contingency.</p> <p><u>Advice and Investigations, Communications and Corporate Services</u></p> <p>Each SMT member gave an update on the work of their teams. The Head of Corporate noted that due to significant projects (within information governance) and overall reduction in the team due to sickness absence and a resignation, that there would be large gaps in capacity in the Corporate Services. It was agreed that there would be a longer handover with a member of the team of around 4-5 months depending on how long it would take to make an appointment. The Head of Corporate agreed to provide a financial forecast for this too and it was decided that the funding for this would be through efficiency savings, not contingency.</p>	NVR
		NVR
<b>3.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	
3.1	<p><u>PCS Notice of Trade Dispute</u></p> <p>The Head of Corporate briefed the Group on the Notice of Trade Dispute received. The Group discussed response from the office, noting that agreement was not within the role of the Accountable Officer for the office but also that some of issues raised (such as pay awards) had already concluded for the office.</p>	NVR

	<p>The Commissioner discussed the democratic right of strike action and to provide those staff who are not members of the Union an alternative place of work so that they are not in the situation of having to cross a picket line.</p> <p>The Head of Corporate discussed that the Business Continuity Plan would need revised in addition to the risk register to update on a potential reduction of capacity in the event of strike action.</p>	NVR
<b>4.</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>	
4.1	<p><u>Annual Report and Accounts – Update</u></p> <p>Head of Corporate Updated the Group on the delays in Audit this year due to staffing issues with the Auditors. All public bodies have been affected and this has meant that the draft accounts have also been delayed. Head of Corporate queried the timings around the Annual Report as the Draft Accounts are used in this document. Head of Corporate confirmed they would be ready by the deadline of 31/10/22.</p>	
4.2	<p><u>Finance update</u></p> <p>Head of Corporate provided the Group with the most recent finance updated. Underspend noted and decision on staffing pending.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Children &amp; Young People’s Participation</b>	
5.1	<p>Group discussed additional recruitment of between 10-15 young people for the Young Advisors. Additional targeted recruitment will fulfil the requirements of a diverse and representative group.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Continued professional development &amp; training</b>	
6.1	<p><u>Senior Management Team Executive Coaching (provided by Know you More)</u></p> <p>The Senior Management Team updated the Commissioner on the progress of Executive Coaching. All members found there to be useful learning and it was agreed that it would continue post May 2023.</p>	
6.2	<p><u>HR- Contribution Management Sessions</u></p> <p>Group agreed that 6 monthly meetings would take place as normal in the month of September and the sessions for SMT would be planned for</p>	BA

6.3	<p>October. The Commissioner to arrange these sessions with members of SMT.</p> <p><u>Mandatory all staff training – progress update and mapping</u></p>	
6.4	<p>Head of Communications update the Group on scheduled BSL Awareness training in addition to supporting neurodivergent young people training.</p> <p><u>Recruitment</u></p> <p>Head of Corporate detailed that an appointment had been made of a new Finance and Administration Assistant, the announcement will come to staff once clearance is complete.</p> <p>Group reflected on earlier discussions of a 6 month post (Grade 3) Project Assistant and overlap in Finance Officer recruitment of 4-5 months (Grade 4) and discussed whether this was sufficient to manage the workload of the office. Group reflected that once these posts were recruited that it would come back to these discussions and re-appraise any capacity issues.</p> <p>Group agreed formally that the office would be temporarily suspending undertaking reactive policy work (consultations).</p> <p>Head of Corporate discussed widely publicised skills gaps and difficulties in recruitment and retention of staff post pandemic.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Commissioner Transition</b>	
	<p>The group discussed the current Commissioner’s departure date of 17/05/23 and the hope that the recruitment of a new Commissioner would involve children and young people.</p> <p>The Commissioner stated that he would contact the SPCB to encourage the involvement of children and young people in the recruitment.</p> <p>The Group discussed the process for induction and the sought the Commissioner’s views on what would be useful incorporating into the current induction.</p> <p>The Commissioner stated that it would be useful to have appointments already lined up for the next incumbent upon which they can decide whether to follow through with the structured induction once in post. The Commissioner and Head of Corporate discussed whether an induction around Governance would be useful, the Commissioner didn’t think it</p>	BA

	<p>would be useful to have a specific Governance induction session and suggested that Governance updates on Accountable Officer responsibilities should be on an as and when basis.</p> <p>The Group discussed the business continuity plan if there is a requirement for an interim Commissioner. The current Governance Framework names the Head of Advice and Investigations as the Interim Commissioner.</p> <p>The Head of Corporate and Head of Strategy agreed to meet to discuss the induction plan.</p>	GW and NVR
<b>8.</b>	<b>Actions</b>	
	<p><b>NVR – Costings to be sent to Governance Group of one 6 month grade 3 post and one 5 month grade 4 post.</b></p> <p><b>NVR – send correspondence to PCS re Trade Dispute letter</b></p> <p><b>NVR and SMT – Update Business Continuity Plan</b></p> <p><b>NVR and SMT – Update Risk Register (staff capacity if strike)</b></p> <p><b>BA – schedule the CMP of SMT for October 2022</b></p> <p><b>BA – Contact SPCB around involving children and young people in the recruitment of a new Commissioner</b></p> <p><b>GW and NVR – schedule time to build induction for new Commissioner</b></p>	

Meeting ended: 12:50pm

Date of next meeting: November 22, 2022 at 9:30am