



Senior Management Team Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on 19 April 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
Judith Chisholm (JC)	Executive Assistant - Minutes

1.	Welcome and apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from the Head of Strategy.	
2.	Review of minutes from previous meeting and actions	
	The minutes of the Senior Management Team meeting held on 22 March 2023 were approved.	
3.	Finance	
	SMT finance reports to follow as working on year-end reconciliation of spend. The finance reports will be circulated outside the meeting and if the members of SMT have any queries those can be discussed with the Head of Corporate Services. SPCB have confirmed that it is not looking for any further surrender of funds so we can carry over the balance of the bank account.	
4.	Governance	
	The Commissioner has agreed the process for approval of policies related to the records management project. Those can be approved by the Head of Corporate Services rather than SMT. We are also updating the governance process for credit card reconciliation. SMT to discuss developing a recommendation for the new Commissioner in relation to the scheme of delegation for projects and delegated budgets.	

5.	Delivery Plan and Projects	
	<p>Corporate Services:</p> <p>Ongoing projects.</p> <p>1) Records management submission to the Keeper: project working group of Head of Corporate Services, Information Officer, Finance and Admin Assistant and Executive Assistant.</p> <p>The Records Management project is about what the organisation is planning to do in future in relation to information governance in addition to our current policies, where we hold information, how we execute SharePoint and the other software we use to hold information. The group are also working on retention schedules and destruction policies.</p> <p>The outcome of this project is a form of Information Governance audit by the Keeper and there will be recommendations from that. The submission is due at the end of May. It is anticipated that the response from the keeper with any improvement actions is around two – four months after the original submission.</p> <p>2) We have awarded a low cost contract to an external organisation to prepare a recommendations report around how we use SharePoint and Microsoft Teams.</p> <p>The key elements of their proposal include an audit of how we use SharePoint, meeting with our IT providers and interviews with staff. It is a small project with maximum spend of £3k. Following this there will be another phase of work required to execute the recommendations. The Records Management Plan reflects that the contract award is for a critical friend, not as a formal audit.</p> <p>3) One of the recommendations of 2020 – 2021 audit was that the organisation should appoint an internal auditor. We have entered a joint contract with SPSO and SHRC. Internal audit will be about more than finance and will include overarching governance processes, comms and procurement. Timing will be mid-October at the earliest. Useful tool as test processes more holistically. The kick off meeting for internal audit services is W/C 24th of April 2023.</p> <p>4) HR project: this includes updating HR policies including all employee contracts to reflect changes in law. It is essentially an administrative process</p>	

to update on basis of new legislation and does not change existing terms and conditions. The aim is to complete this process in June. Policies will be recommendations for approval to SMT in line with new governance arrangements on policy approval at this meeting.. Head of Corporate Services confirmed that the Employee Handbook has been signed off by the Commissioner and work is ongoing to update all the policies referred to in the Handbook.

Strategy:

In the absence of the Head of Strategy the Head of Advice and Investigations gave an update.

We are producing transition reports for pieces of work that will carry on over the summer or potentially into the remit of the new Commissioner. Advice and Investigations and Strategy will populate it over the coming weeks to record and reflect ongoing work to inform the new Commissioner as part of their induction bundle.

Incorporation – the First Minister’s speech on priorities was light on detail relating to incorporation. We are still hearing informally that the Scottish Government would like to reintroduce the Bill before Parliamentary recess. Scottish Government officials will report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in May and we would expect that will include an update on incorporation. We are also doing a piece of work on the Commissioner’s power to intervene in criminal proceedings.

CRC reporting – We are going to the UN in Geneva in May for the UK examination.

Illegal Migration Bill – we have prepared a supplementary report, which is a report from the four UK Commissioners offices. We are developing a joint submission to put targeted and challenging questions to the UK Government.

Communications:

Final weeks of the Commissioner’s term and lots of exciting projects to deliver in that period.

The launch of the early years book is progressing well. This will be sent to the printer shortly to be ready for 12 May 2023. The launch is in Inverness at a nursery where the children and staff have helped develop the book.

	<p>Corporate Services are supporting on dissemination of the book to local authority nurseries.</p> <p>15 May 2023 is the launch of the rights challenge badge for Squirrels and Beavers. We are working to adapt the Scouts and Cubs resources for the younger age group. This work is proceeding at pace.</p> <p>UN Geneva trip in May – two of our Young Advisors are coming with our delegation to act as roving reporters. Two of the representatives of the Scottish Government that will attend the CRC and make representations have agreed to do a mock session with the young people for preparation on 12 May 2023. This session is also a chance for our Young Advisors to meet other young people that will be in Geneva.</p> <p>We continue to work on opportunities for legacy pieces for the Commissioner.</p> <p>The Mental Health Investigation launches on 9 May 2023.</p> <p>The Commissioner is speaking at a poverty conference in May, which is another good opportunity for comms.</p> <p>Media relations are ongoing as usual.</p> <p>In terms of capacity of the team the Media and Comms Officer has been focussing on the annual report. This has worked well and learning there for future work. Considering resource required to support all the projects in May as those will require digital media support.</p> <p>Advice and Investigations:</p> <p>A lot has already been covered in the strategy and comms updates.</p> <p>The advice and investigations and strategy teams have been reflecting on child protection. We are developing a proposal for a policy paper and / or investigation to pull together concerns and cases and the work that has been done over the last 12 months.</p>	
6.	Participation	
	<p>We have already mentioned the UN Geneva work with two of our Young Advisors. There is the opportunity for our Young Advisors that were involved in the recruitment of the new Commissioner to attend the Scottish Parliament</p>	

	<p>debate for the appointment of the new Commissioner. There are potentially opportunities relating to the launch of the Mental Health Investigation report to go and present the report to MSPs, representations of the Scottish Government and local authorities post-publication. The appointment process for the new Participation Officer joining is progressing well. There are opportunities for the Young Advisors to attend the Advisory Audit Board in October which we will explore nearer to the time. SMT will focus on opportunities and involvement of the Young Advisors Group in their planning meeting for what the first 100 days of the new Commissioner's term could look like.</p>	
7.	Annual Planner	
	<p>Everything is on track.</p> <p>The Commissioner is required to sign off Contribution Management Plans ahead of his departure from office as part of the handover to the new Commissioner.</p> <p>SMT agreed to meet to update and sign off the 2023-24 delivery plan in line with movements within projects.</p> <p>BSL Plan 2024-2028 was added for 2023-24, including consulting with young people.</p>	JC
8.	Summary of Actions:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of Corporate Services to circulate finance reports - Executive Assistant to arrange with Commissioner Contribution Management Plan sign off for the Senior Management Team. 	<p>NVR</p> <p>JC</p>