



**Senior Management Team Meeting**  
**Minutes of meeting held on 14 June 2023**  
 09:00-12:00, Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:**

Nicola Vallance-Ross (NVR)	Head of Corporate Services – Chair
Ezmie McCutcheon (EMc)	Head of Communications
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. Apologies were received from Nick Hobbs, Head of Advice and Investigations.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Review of minutes from previous meeting and actions</b>	
	The minutes of the Senior Management Team meeting held on 19 April 2023 were approved.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Finance</b>	
	<p>SMT reviewed the March finance report. It was noted that this is subject to end of year audit final adjustments. Breakdown of underspend was noted. This will be reflected in detail in annual accounts performance narrative.</p> <p>SMT reviewed the April finance reports. Finances as expected.</p> <p>The Head of Strategy requested a detailed breakdown of the Strategy budget. ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to run an interim report with breakdown of Strategy budget.</p> <p>It was noted that this year there may be an overspend in the Communications budget due to additional costs associated with early years book, Scouts and Squirrels resources and in relation to publishing the strategic plan.</p> <p>Training budget also likely to have an overspend as focus on upskilling and increase in mandatory training.</p>	NVR

	ACTION: SMT to hold meeting in July to discuss budget phasing against expected spend for this year.	SMT
<b>4.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	
	<p><b>Retention process for former Commissioner's emails</b></p> <p>SMT noted that communications related to the Scottish Covid Inquiry must be retained and that there may be others related to, for example, human resources. ACTION: Head of Advice and Investigations and Head of Corporate Services to advise on files that must be retained.</p> <p><b>Strategic and operational planning</b></p> <p>Head of Strategy provided an update on operational plans for developing the strategic plan. The new Strategic plan has to be laid with Parliament by 1 April 2024. Due to uncertainty around incorporation of the UNCRC and the extent of our powers it is likely we will need to develop a revised strategic plan. Consultation with children and young people on our strategic plan is planned to commence on World Children's Day with an event. The consultation likely to continue to early March.</p> <p>The Acting Commissioner plans to start discussions with SPCB about the requirement in our Act for strategic plans tied to four-year cycles. That provision doesn't reflect the timings of appointment decisions for the Commissioners and likely to be a continuing issue.</p> <p><b>RAG report for Annual Report and Accounts</b></p> <p>SMT will develop a RAG report for project work to include in the annual report and accounts. Our influencing work to be included under a separate section. Deadline is mid-August for the draft annual report and accounts. Audit clearance meeting is mid-September. The auditors will provide their draft annual report by the end of September. The Advisory Audit Board is on the 27 October. Field audit dates are the last two weeks in August. Noted that Corporate Services will have limited capacity for any other project work during this period.</p>	

	ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to meet with each member of SMT to discuss projects and influencing work and develop narrative for performance reporting.	NVR
<b>5.</b>	<b>Delivery Plan and Projects</b>	
	<p><b>Corporate Services</b></p> <p>There has been an extension of the payroll contract by 12 months.</p> <p>We are waiting on indicative costs for HR platform.</p> <p>Procurement – developing a suite of templates and guidance for staff to use when procuring goods or services. The aim is for these to be completed by the end of August. All staff procurement training is taking place this week.</p> <p>Internal audit – part of requirements of SPCB for officeholders and from audit. We have appointed internal auditors and received a proposal document. It is likely that internal audit will commence in December or January.</p> <p>Head of Corporate Services noted that project work and improvement work would have been extremely challenging in last period without additional staff capacity in Corporate Services team.</p> <p><b>Strategy</b></p> <p>The team are about to finish some substantive pieces of work, for example, UN reporting which required a lot of resource.</p> <p>Period of significant change for the team which will take time and resource in terms of induction.</p> <p><b>Communications</b></p> <p>It was noted that the team currently lack resource for planned improvement work. The plan was to allocate time and resource to the audit of website, social media channels, social media policy and collating various Comms resources into one place for other members of staff to access and use more efficiently but due to capacity issues this has not been progressed.</p>	

	<p><b>Advice and Investigations</b></p> <p>No exceptions to report.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Participation</b>	
	<p>European Network of Young Advisors Forum 2023 – two young people going to Malta in July to take part in this.</p> <p>Young Advisors Groups – 12 active members at the moment. We need to consider how support our Young Advisors and approach new recruitment. Waiting for new Commissioner and new Participation Officer to start before begin to develop new ideas to refresh our model of the Young Advisors Group.</p> <p>Two young advisors went to UN in Geneva in May as roving reporters. Successful trip and positive experience for them and the office.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Policies</b>	
	<p>Child Protection and Safeguarding policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SMT reviewed the policy but due to time constraints on the meeting agreed to continue to review and approve by email. ACTION: SMT review and approve Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy by email.</li> <li>- Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer has arranged all staff training on the policy.</li> </ul>	SMT
<b>8.</b>	<b>Music in our office</b>	
	<p>It was agreed to postpone this agenda item to next meeting due to time constraints on the meeting.</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 12 July 2023</b>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Summary of Actions:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to run an interim report with breakdown of Strategy budget.</li> <li>- ACTION: SMT to hold meeting in July to rephase budget against revised expected spend for this year.</li> <li>- ACTION: Head of Advice and Investigations and Head of Corporate Services to advise on Commissioner emails that must be retained.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to meet with each member of SMT to discuss projects and influencing work and develop narrative for performance reporting in annual report and accounts.</li><li>- ACTION: SMT review and approve Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy by email.</li></ul>	
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