



Senior Management Team Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on 21 February 2024
14:00-16:00
via 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

Guest Attendees: Jane Thornton-Smith (JTS) Finance Officer

Apologies: Nick Hobbs (NH) Head of Advice and Investigations

1.	Welcome and apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Nick Hobbs, Head of Advice and Investigations.	
2.	Finance	
	<p>The Finance Officer joined the meeting for this agenda item.</p> <p>Finance update: The Finance Officer provided an overview of the SMT Finance Reports highlighting areas of overspend and underspend. The financial position is as expected. SMT reviewed and updated where necessary the anticipated spend for the remainder of the financial year.</p> <p>Draft credit card pre-authorisation process: Agreed that this would be deferred to the agenda for the next SMT meeting.</p>	

3.	Review of previous minute and actions	
	<p>The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.</p> <p>Actions carried forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMT to approve revised Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. - The Head of Corporate Services to develop Officeholders Code of Conduct for May SMT meeting - The Head of Advice and Investigations to send email correspondence regarding the Advice Line to the Head of Corporate Services. - The Head of Corporate Services to investigate Advice Line without a physical phone line. 	<p>SMT NVR</p> <p>NH</p> <p>NVR</p>
4.	Governance	
	<p>Annual planner: SMT reviewed the annual planner for 2023/2024. ACTION JC to prepare draft annual planner for delivery plan year 2024/2025 for SMT to review. This should include dates for review of corporate policies.</p> <p>Register of interests and conflict of interest policy: SMT reviewed the conflict of interest policy and noted some minor amendments were needed. ACTION Head of Corporate Services to produce an updated draft of the conflict of interest policy for ne SMT meeting.</p> <p>Workforce plan and medium to long-term financial plan: ACTION Head of Corporate Services to arrange a meeting of SMT to agree how to progress these projects for a workforce plan and a medium to long term financial plan.</p> <p>Scheme of delegation and contracts: SMT had been asked by the Commissioner to consider the process for contract award and engagement in terms of whether authority should be delegated to officer level staff or remain with SMT.</p>	<p>JC</p> <p>NVR</p> <p>NVR</p>

	<p>SMT’s recommendation is that the budget for the contract is not devolved and the contracting authority remains with a member of SMT. Members of budget holder’s teams can prepare the business case or specification, gather the information needed for the contract and draft the engagement letter. This is then signed off by a member of SMT as the budget holder Corporate Services are then provided with the contract for a final check where available and maintains a contract register. Once contract issued SMT can then delegate project management of the contract.</p>	
5	Management statistics by exception	
	None to report.	
6.	Delivery Plans and Projects Exceptions Reporting	
	<p>Strategy</p> <p>Positive response to strategic plan consultation which is generating lots of valuable work which we are hoping to expand into a larger number of qualitative reports. It is really positive that we will produce additional outputs but larger than anticipated so requires planning in terms of available resource.</p> <p>There remains a gap in resource in the team which is impacting on the work of the team.</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>No exceptions from Head of Communications.</p> <p>Advice and Investigations</p> <p>No update in the absence of the Head of Advice and Investigations.</p> <p>Corporate Services</p> <p>We have still not heard from the SPCB about our budget for the next financial year.</p>	
7.	Participation	
	We are closing the recruitment stage for our new Young Advisors. We have had 74 applications with a good geographic coverage, age range and range of different backgrounds and experiences. We are developing shortlisting criteria and a	

	selection process in conjunction with our current Young Advisors. The current thinking is that there will be around 20 Young Advisors in the group. The 23 March will be the first in person meeting at our offices. This is really exciting and positive.	
8	Policies for approval	
	None for this meeting.	
9	Health and Safety	
	Nothing to report.	
10	Wellbeing monitoring	
	SMT agreed to take under this agenda item a sense check on wellbeing, which could include considering staff surveys, stress at work action plans, reasonable adjustments, equalities, diversity and inclusion, and updates on government wellbeing initiatives.	
11.	AOB	
	ACTION: Governance meeting to discuss draft audit plan and proposed timescales. JC to add to agenda.	JC
	Date of next meeting: Wednesday 20 March 2024	
12.	Summary of actions:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMT to approve revised Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. - The Head of Corporate Services to develop Officeholders Code of Conduct for May SMT meeting - The Head of Advice and Investigations to send email correspondence regarding the Advice Line to the Head of Corporate Services. - The Head of Corporate Services to investigate Advice Line without a physical phone line. - Head of Corporate Services to produce an updated draft of the conflict of interest policy for next SMT meeting. - Head of Corporate Services to arrange a meeting of SMT to agree how to progress these projects for a workforce plan and a medium to long term financial plan. 	<p>SMT</p> <p>NVR</p> <p>NH</p> <p>NVR</p> <p>NVR</p> <p>NVR</p>

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