Senior Management Team Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 17 February 2026

14:00 – 17:00

via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

- Nicola Vallance-Ross, Head of Corporate Services - Chair
- Ezmie McCutcheon, Head of Communications
- Nick Hobbs, Head of Legal
- Gina Wilson, Head of Strategy
- Judith Chisholm, Executive Assistant - minutes

Guest Attendees:

- None

Apologies: None

Agenda Item	Notes and actions	Action owner
1. Welcome and apologies	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.	
2. Approval of minutes	Approved.	
3. Review of actions	Action log reviewed and updated. Actions on track.	

4. Finance	Date in diary for SMT to discuss financial position in detail again before deadline for surrender of any additional funds to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body. SMT reviewed the finance report for this meeting. Noted that some planned expenditure from Strategy line would now move into new financial year. Head of Legal provided an update on potential expenditure in relation to a case and planned expenditure. Noted that those changes do not require a rephasing of the budget, but SMT will keep Head of Corporate Services updated.	
5. Governance	**Continuous improvement risk management:** SMT agreed to develop a risk statement as part of ongoing governance improvement. Current risk register been reviewed by member of Advisory Audit Board informally to provide feedback. **ACTION:** Head of Corporate Services will send each member of SMT a risk appetite form and will bring a proposal to SMT on a draft risk statement. Agreed that next SMT agenda should focus on risk. **ACTION:** SMT agenda in March to focus on risk statement and risk register as part of continuous improvement for risk management. **Internal audits draft reports:** SMT reviewed the draft reports from internal auditors in relation to each of cyber-security and HR. SMT had comments on one of the recommendations from HR audit as relevance not clear. **ACTION:** Head of Corporate Services will feedback SMT comments to the auditors. Otherwise agreed recommendations and management responses. **ACTION:** Head of Corporate Services to revert to the internal auditors and request final reports. Final reports to be issued to Advisory Audit Board for Spring meeting.	

6. Delivery Plan and Projects Exceptions Reporting	**Exceptions reporting:** **Comms**: team's capacity has been impacted due to long-term absence. Priority has been given to urgent projects and others have had to be rephased. **Corporate Services:** **IT Project:** no options appraisal yet as still elements of scoping the project. The Information Officer has been reviewing and phasing out information from Sharepoint and Teams. Our Records Management Plan has been reviewed by Information Officer and only significant change is the IT project so will update and resubmit it in light of that. Next steps is to update Information Management Plan and get options appraisal to SMT in terms of providers, pros and cons and costs. **ACTION:** Head of Corporate Services to prepare Options Appraisal for IT transition to SMT to review. **Strategy:** - Remain down a significant amount of capacity in strategy team. **Legal:** - Capacity remains an issue. - Prioritisation scheme – not taking on new work but been a challenge to develop new framework and options paper around existing commitments which take time to phase out, and need to ensure team members can take leave entitlement before the end of financial year.	

7. Policies for Noting or Approval	Capitalisation threshold revision approved by SMT.	
8. Participation	Excellent response to YAG recruitment with lots of applications. Some of our Young Advisors are meeting in person with the team to review the applications and make recommendations / decisions. Young Carers group are coming to our offices for a session as part of our education priority work. Education visits to Fife LA schools about to begin and Commissioner is also attending 'Duck Day' at Windsor Park school for deaf children and young people.	
9. Annual Planner	SMT reviewed the annual planner. Noted that some contracts are no longer applicable and review dates for some policies should be amended. **ACTION**: Executive Assistant and Finance Officer to review and update annual planner with contracts and revised dates for policies. Agreed that the deadline for completion of team member's Contribution Management Plans should remain as 31 March 2026.	
10. Health, Safety and Welfare	No updates for this meeting.	
11. Private session	-Update on progress with move to 35 hour working week by 1 March 2026 - HR Internal Audit – recommendation and agree process for monitoring 1:2:1s	

12. Date of next meeting	Next meeting: March 2025	