Governance Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 30 June 2026

09:30 – 12:30

Hybrid

Attendees:
Nicola Killean – Commissioner – Chair
Gina Wilson – Head of Strategy
Ezmie McCutcheon – Head of Communications
Nick Hobbs – Head of Legal
Judith Chisholm – Executive Assistant - minutes

Apologies: Nicola Vallance-Ross – Head of Corporate Services

Guest Attendees: None

Agenda Item	Notes and actions	Action owner
1. Meeting Start • Welcome and apologies (NK) • Declaration of interests (ALL) • Minutes of previous meeting and actions (ALL) • Review of actions (ALL)	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from the Head of Corporate Services. No declarations of interests. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved. Agreed actions to be reviewed at end of the meeting.	
2. Updates • Commissioner Update • SMT Update	**Commissioner update:** Highlights: This has been another busy and productive quarter. The team have been working really hard	

	with a combination of completing 2025-26 delivery plan work while also planning new projects for the next two years. - Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill was passed by Parliament. - Legal function review undertaken and completed with recommendations. - Social media ban response and coverage. There was a lot of robustness and rigour that went into the Children's Rights Impact Assessment. This received a lot of media coverage and although the decision was to implement the ban we will continue to highlight alternatives. - Forward planning work for the new delivery plan, including consultations with teams and all staff planning day as well as SMT and Commissioner planning sessions. - The Storylines education films have been released. - Shoogle Lab: sessions delivered with children and young people and education leaders. - e-Sgoil – a great level of engagement from children and a quality assembly in terms of how we approached the topic of discrimination. - 35-hour working week now been implemented for all staff. Challenges: - Capacity: this continues to be a challenge. - Looking ahead to new Parliament and Scottish Government priorities. There is a concern that they will deprioritise issues that are important in relation to children's rights. Overall the team has done an outstanding job given the pressure that it has been under in terms of capacity.	

	SMT update: **Head of Comms:** Highlights: - Media work in relation to the social media ban. - Storylines project completed and videos launched - Briefing to MSPs for before end of parliamentary term - Working with new Young Advisors starting who have a lot of energy and enthusiasm and a wide range of interests. Challenge: - Ongoing capacity issues in the small team combined with the capacity constraints across the office. **Head of Legal:** Highlights include: - Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Act 2026 passing. This is an important issue which has involved a lot of work as an office - Legal function review of the last 18 months and going out to recruitment - Outsourcing Edinburgh Agency work with three providers now on list - Stringfellow case continues and procedural hearing in August. - Protected expenses order case – it is a narrow case but an important issue. - Police use of force investigation is near completion. Challenges: - Capacity continues to be a challenge in the team.	

	- Political environment and operating around public sector reform. **Head of Strategy:** Highlights: - New Young Advisors are a highlight. We have held two in-person sessions and online sessions. There are a diverse group with a wide range of interests. - Pilot for digital engagement group with children and young people. If this is a success, then intend to expand it. - New Parliament – monitoring this to get an idea of shape of new communications and priorities. Programme for Government is not due until September. - Child Rights Impact Assessment in relation to the proposal for an online ban for social media. - Consultation work is ongoing. It is a very busy period with the Scottish Government trying to get everything out before the end of the previous Parliament. - Engagement work around the cost of being a young person. - Policy work in relation to the UNCRC is ongoing including around the Children's Scheme, the Norrie Review and Scottish Government priority review. - SMT have been doing a lot of work around budget planning not just for this year but future projections to align with our statutory functions. Challenges: - Capacity remains an issue. - New Parliament is a highlight but also a challenge given the public sector reform agenda. This is helpful but will take a lot of focus to engage and add value to it.	

	Commissioner noted capacity issues and that SMT are managing this as best as possible. Looking at delivery planning and be grounded in what can deliver which is hard given our ambitions which will benefit children and young people's rights.	
3. Strategic Plan	**Performance against Delivery Plan 202426:** SMT and Commissioner reviewed status. All teams have provided updates but noted that some Corporate Services sections have not yet been completed in absence of Head of Corporate Services. Commissioner is proud of what has been delivered against the delivery plan 2024-26 together with all of the reactive work that we have delivered. **ACTION:** Head of Strategy to complete the Delivery Plan Quarterly Updates 2024-26 paper for sign off by end of July. **ACTION:** SMT to review delivery plan 2024-26 to see if there are items that are not yet completed from 2024-26 and should move across to the new delivery plan. If decision is not to move them across then that should be noted with an explanation of the reason for the decision. **Delivery plan 2026-28:** The Head of Strategy provided an update on the new delivery plan. There are two interlinked documents namely the simplified external version of our outcomes that we will publish. There is also an internal version of the delivery plan that will contain the details of our objectives, outcomes and activities/outputs which we will track internal progress against. This document will be brought	HoS SMT

	to the Governance meeting for reporting on progress. The outcomes will link into our impact framework and reporting requirements including in line with the Financial Reporting manual (FReM). Budget and projections will also be linked to our statutory functions. The updated delivery plan to be communicated by each member of SMT to their individual teams with focus on planned work and any work being progressed already, for example, the cost of living as a young person project. **ACTION:** Head of Comms and Head of Legal to review the interlinked documents that relate to the new delivery plan and provide any comments. **ACTION** – SMT to update teams on new delivery plan and key project areas SMT are liaising with Finance and Projects Officer in terms of budget phasing for this financial year as well as projections in line with our statutory functions to inform the SPCB budget submission. **Horizon Scanning:** Three key things: - New Parliament - Statement from Chief Social Work Officers on acute shortage of suitable homes and carers for children who are unable to remain in the care of their family: We have met with the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise who advisedthis is one of their top three priorities. We are engaging with Scottish Government's Child Protection Team and will monitor the adequacy of the Scottish Government's response to the situation. - Public sector reform agenda over next five years.	HoC / HoL SMT

	- Delivery plan needs to reflect and balance forward planning and space for reactive work. **Legal function review:** The Head of Legal provided an update on the outcome of the review of learning from first 18 months / two years that our new powers had been in force and what could be in place to deliver the function even more effectively. We have already begun using those powers to deliver real impact on issues such as restraint in mental health settings, best interests in eviction actions, access to justice in the tribunal system, and children's rights in criminal law proceedings. There have been a lot of positives over the period to take learning from but also lessons to learn particularly around resourcing and complexity/risk of cases. Paper was circulated in advance. The paper was noted, and the progress that has been made since the review started, including the appointment of agencies on a legal framework, updating the scheme of delegation, and opening of recruitment for the vacant role. Next steps are noted including to build discussions about financing of the function into the budget submission planning.	
4. Monitoring	**Finance:** Finance and Projects Officer had provided an update narrative and June financial report. SMT had separate budgeting discussion on 29 July 2026 and have sent phased budget for next six months which will help to inform our budget submission. **External audit:**	

	Audit Scotland plan was presented at the Spring AAB meeting and agreed to by Commissioner. **Internal audit:** SMT and Commissioner to discuss subject of next internal audit. This is not required to be confirmed with the internal auditors until September. **Risk register:** The Governance Group reviewed the risk register, made slight updates to mitigation and agreed that it captures the main risks of the organisation. SMT doing further work on business continuity plan with more detailed section on staffing capacity / resilience / succession planning and skills mapping in next delivery plan year. Links to risk register mitigations. **Register of interests:** No updates to record.	
5. Annual planner	Reviewed and agreed that all on track. A few points to note: - Our Employer's Liability and Public Liability Insurance has been renewed. - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is due for review. Agreed to forward on to our employment advisors for review. **ACTION**: Head of Legal to share our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy with our employment advisors for them to review. - Agreed to move the mid-year Contribution Management Plans.	HoL
6. Human resources and organisational development	**HR platform:**	

	Approved in principle subject to checking what other HR platforms systems have been considered, in relation to procurement policy **IT project update:** Update on the project had been provided by Finance & Projects Officer. Noted in response to points highlighted: - Unknown implications if move premises. - Timescales are difficult and agreed need to renew contract with existing provider until March 2027. - Thread: Head of Legal to prioritise meeting with other Heads of Legal to discuss potential alternative case management systems. - Data cleanse process is helpful and should continue - List provided of software currently using that is not compatible but need list of potential alternatives that are. - Business continuity – continue to look at need for new laptops and mobile phones for staff. **ACTION:** Focus with Head of Corporate Services on preparing a fuller options appraisal for the IT project that also addresses the points highlighted by the Governance meeting on the update report. **Shared SMT training update:** - Plan in place for training for year ahead. **Actions review:** - Reviewed the actions and revised timescales for some actions given capacity constraints and priority.	HoCS
12:30	**Meeting close**	

Summary of actions from meeting	1) Head of Strategy to complete the Delivery Plan Quarterly Updates 2024-26 paper for sign off by end of July. 2) SMT to review delivery plan 2024-26 to see if there are items that are not yet completed from 2024-26 and should move across to the new delivery plan. If decision is not to move them across then that should be noted with an explanation of the reason for the decision. 3) Head of Comms and Head of Legal to review the interlinked documents that relate to the new delivery plan and provide any comments. 4) SMT to update own teams on new delivery plan and key project areas 5) Head of Legal to share our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy with our employment advisors for them to review. 6) Focus with Head of Corporate Services on preparing a fuller options appraisal for the IT project that also addresses the points highlighted by the Governance meeting on the update report.	