**Minutes of Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting held on 18 January 2022 @ 10am**

**In attendance:** Kieran Donnelly, Chair (C&AG)

Rodney Allen (COO)

Patrick Barr (Director)

Neil Gray (Director)

Colette Kane (Director)

Brian O’Neill (Director)

Suzanne Walsh (Director)

Tomas Wilkinson (Director)

Louise Donnelly (Secretary)

Christine Williams – (Strategic Investment Board) agenda item 8

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| **1.** | **Apologies**  No apologies were recorded. |
| **2.** | **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**  There were no issues declared by members. |
| **3**. | **Minutes of Previous meeting and Matters Arising**  Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 December 2021 were agreed and the matters arising noted as updated. |
| **4.** | **Guide to Processing Correspondence**  Brian O’Neill provided an overview to members on the updated guidance issued to all staff on 29 December 2021. Members were asked to review the current system in place for categorising raising concerns cases. The C&AG emphasised the need for empathy, curiosity and face to face engagement in case handling. After discussion it was agreed to streamline the current categorisation process. SMT welcomed the updated guidance and asked that consideration be given to direct access to the raising concerns database to complete reviews and update cases when required. |
| **5.** | **Net Zero (Internal) Update**  A paper to update members on progress made by the Internal Climate Change Programme Team was presented by Brian O’Neill. Members were advised that in order to produce a more accurate calculation of the Office’s carbon footprint, in addition to in-office savings, staff will be encouraged to complete a questionnaire to help gauge wider net savings.  **Net Zero (External) Update**  Patrick Barr updated members advising that an internal reference group had been established to explore auditing opportunities. Next steps for the group is to produce a Terms of Reference and develop a focus paper that will be presented to SMT in the coming months. |
| **6.** | **Internal Audit Reports:**   * **Project Governance** * **Staff Welfare Remote Working**   Members noted the two reports received and the “satisfactory” assessments provided with no points raised. The reports will be presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) at their meeting scheduled for 25 January 2022. |
| **7.** | **Management Information Report**  The interactive performance report detailing key performance outturns for the public reporting and financial audit programmes to January 2022 was presented. To ensure the accuracy of the report, all agreed there was a need to reiterate the importance of keeping all relevant information on Time and Space up to date. Brian O’Neill advised that as a result of recent software upgrade on Time and Space, guidance and training will be scheduled for staff in the coming months. |
| **8.** | **BTP Phase 2 – Accommodation Project Update**  Christine Williams was welcomed to the meeting and provided an update to members and advised the project was currently on time and on budget. SMT welcomed the update and the photographs shared, it was agreed that a site visit would be scheduled soon.  Rodney Allen thanked Christine for her contribution and noted the positive project governance report.  Brian O’Neill provided an update to members on progress to date in obtaining tenants for the building. |
| **9.** | **Corporate Report**  Brian O’Neill provided an overview on the current position with regard to Finance, HR and Business Support:  **Finance**   * **2021-22 -** Members were asked to note the current budgetary position * **IT -** IT health checks are scheduled for the first week in February. * An upgrade of MKI has been completed. * The first stage of installing the new version of Time and Space has been completed.   **HR**   * **Recruitment –** An Auditor recruitment exercise is currently underway. * **Attendance Management -** Members noted absence figures per employee in the rolling period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021. * **Annual Leave –** In the interests of health and well-being, an email has been issued to remind staff of the importance of taking annual leave. * **Performance Management -** End of year reviews are to be completed by 31 January 2022.   **Business Support** An update was provided on Information Management, Governance, Communications and Assembly Support, members were asked to note the position concerning two complaints currently being investigated. |
| **10.** | **MLA Survey and Report**  Members noted the report and results presented, the C&AG welcomed the report and all agreed the results would contribute to continued engagement with MLA’s and Assembly Committees, discussing the importance of this with a newly elected mandate in the months ahead. |  |
| **11.** | **Technical Report**  Suzanne Walsh provided an update on the following key areas:   * **QCR** – Aim to conclude by the end of January * **ISQM** – work is progressing well, quality objectives, along with an initial risk assessment will be presented to OMT next week. * Technical training will be delivered on ISA 315 and ISA 240. This has been procured with Audit Wales and training will be jointly delivered to both organisations next month. * A request for directors to consider which engagements require EQCR director appointments will be issued shortly. |  |
| **12.** | **Risk Management**  **Corporate Risk Register**  The revised Risk Register was presented by Colette Kane, all changes were highlighted for member’s convenience. The Corporate Risk Register Working Group met on 10 January 2022 and considered the two potential risk triggers raised by the C&AG at the December SMT. Members noted the amended risk triggers, any existing controls and proposed actions. The revised register will be presented to ARAC at their meeting scheduled for 25 January 2022.  **Staff Engagement**  The CRRWG are considering producing a short video for all staff on the risk management process to help encourage engagement. |
| **13.** | **Annual Programme of Work**  The annual work programme was considered and endorsed by Members. |
| **14.** | **Papers noted:**   * ARAC Draft Agenda – 25 January 2022 * PWC Report – Millennials at Work – Reshaping the Workplace |
| **15.** | **AOB**   * **Date** **of Next Meeting** 15 February 2022 @10am. |