

Minutes of Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting held on 19 October 2021 @ 9.30am

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)

No.	Topic
1.	<p>Apologies No apologies were recorded.</p>
2.	<p>Declaration of Conflicts of Interest There were no issues declared by members.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of Previous meeting and Matters Arising Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 September 2021 were agreed and the matters arising noted as updated.</p>
4.	<p>Contract Management Tomas Wilkinson advised that today (19 October 2021) was the closing date for receipt of tenders, and members will be updated in due course, including any other actions considered necessary after evaluation of the bids.</p>
5.	<p>Climate Change – Net Zero - External Report Patrick Barr presented a paper detailing the current landscape in Northern Ireland in terms of net zero carbon emissions, the potential audit role for NIAO, engagement to date with Departments and other audit agencies and what we need to consider next.</p> <p>After discussion the following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An internal reference group is to be established of staff from across the office to discuss NIAO approach and regularly review progress; • An online reading room is to be created with appropriate materials for staff to access; and • Looking ahead to consider implications for financial audit and public reporting.
6.	<p>Management Information Report A link to the interactive performance report detailing key performance outturns for the public reporting and financial audit programmes to October 2021 was presented. Backlog accounts were discussed, an updated report will be compiled separately and provided to the C&AG on the current position.</p>
7.	<p>Annual Business Plan – performance against KPI’s</p>

No.	Topic
	Brian O'Neill provided an update on performance to date. Members were asked to note the positive mid-year position and the further work needed to meet the KPIs for the year.
8.	<p>Business Transformation Programme (BTP) – Update</p> <p>Rodney Allen updated members on the current position of Phase 2 of the Office's BTP. Twelve work streams are in place across the five pillars of transformation. Project initiation documents for two work streams are outstanding but should be complete soon. Members were asked to note the position for each of the work streams. Various discussion points were raised and progress noted in many action areas.</p> <p>A paper on actions related to Investors in People will be presented to SMT in November.</p>
9.	<p>Corporate Report</p> <p>Brian O'Neill provided an overview on the current position with regard to Finance, HR and Business Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance 2020-21 - Members were asked to note the current budgetary position following the October monitoring round. • Refurbishment of 106 University Street – Work continues on the refurbishment, the project is currently on schedule and with no significant issues to date. The target completion date is 18 July 2022. • HR <p>Recruitment – A further Auditor recruitment exercise will commence in the coming months.</p> <p>Attendance Management - Members noted absence figures per employee in the rolling period 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021.</p> <p>Annual Leave uptake - Members noted the position on annual leave balances at 30 September 2021.</p> <p>Employee Engagement and Well Being – Flu vaccinations have been scheduled for staff for November 2021.</p> • Business Support Members were updated were on the Branding Exercise, information Management, Governance, Communications and Assembly Support. Complaints – A new complaint has been received and is currently being investigated.
10.	<p>Technical Report</p> <p>Suzanne Walsh provided an update on the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISQM – work has commenced to facilitate implementation of the new ISQM for NIAO. • ISA 315 – work is in progress to address the requirements of ISA 315 • QCR - Following Advisory Board consideration of proposed changes to the process, Members were content to endorse the proposal that all cold reviews should in future be conducted wholly independently by an external review body.
11.	<p>Risk Management Corporate Risk Register</p>

No.	Topic
	<p>Colette Kane advised the Corporate Risk Register Working Group (CRRWG) had met on 6 October 2021 to consider the matters raised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) at their last meeting. All changes were highlighted in red.</p> <p>Risk Workshop Changes suggested at the Risk Workshop held on 18 October 2021 will be considered by the CRRWG at their next meeting and presented to SMT in November. The C&AG recorded his thanks to Colette and the CRRWG for their input to the Risk Workshop, all agreed they found it very informative and worthwhile, with everyone welcoming the positive interaction.</p>
12.	<p>Wellness Principles Brian O’Neill presented a paper detailing wellbeing principles created to support all staff. Members were delighted with these principles which were warmly endorsed. Members were reminded that a health and wellbeing survey is currently underway, and an action plan will be generated based on feedback from the survey. It is hoped three wellbeing champions will be appointed before the end of December 2021.</p>
13.	<p>Papers to Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft ARAC Minutes of meeting – 21 September 2021
14.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting 16 November 2021 @10am.