

Minutes of Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting held on 21 December 2021 @ 10am

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

Rodney Allen (COO)

Patrick Barr (Director)

Colette Kane (Director)

Brian O'Neill (Director)

Suzanne Walsh (Director)

Tomas Wilkinson (Director)

Louise Donnelly (Secretary)

Christine Burns (Audit Manager) – agenda item 7

Joe Campbell (Audit Manager) - agenda item 11

Apologies: Neil Gray (Director)

No.	Topic
1.	Apologies Apologies were recorded from Neil Gray.
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 16 November 2021 were agreed and the matters arising noted as updated.
4.	Contract Management Tomas Wilkinson advised that contracts have been signed by all parties concerned and that correspondence has been issued to the previous contractor. The C&AG commended the work of the Team involved in this procurement exercise.
5.	Charge Out Rates 2022-23 Brian O'Neill presented a paper detailing the compilation of the 2022-23 charge out rates and the underlying assumptions. After consideration and discussion members agreed the charge out rates that will apply in 2022-23.
6.	Management Information Report The interactive performance report detailing key performance outturns for the public reporting and financial audit programmes to December 2021 was presented. Brian O'Neill had recently provided an update to the C&AG on the position in relation to backlog accounts.
7.	BTP Phase 2 - Data Analytics Update Christine Burns was welcomed to the meeting and provided a presentation prepared by herself and Daniel McFaul to update members. SMT welcomed the presentation, all agreeing they found it informative. Discussion followed concerning the strategy and future resourcing of the Data Analytics Unit. It was agreed the Operational Management Team (OMT) will give this further consideration.

No.	Topic
8.	<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 and the January monitoring round submission. 2022-23 Budget - The Northern Ireland Assembly Audit Committee agreed the draft budget for 2022-23 on 1 December 2021. Refurbishment of 106 University Street – Work continues on the refurbishment, the project remains ahead of schedule with no significant issues to date. HR Recruitment – Graduate Trainee Accountants have been appointed and will take up post in September 2022. An Auditor recruitment exercise will commence in January 2022. Attendance Management - Members noted absence figures per employee in the rolling period 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021. Business Support Members were updated were on Information Management, Governance, Communications and Assembly Support. Complaints – one complaint is currently being investigated.
9.	<p>Technical Report</p> <p>Suzanne Walsh provided an update on the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISQM – work is progressing well, quality objectives, along with an initial risk assessment, will be presented to OMT in the New Year. John Selwood has been appointed to deliver technical training on ISA 315 and ISA 240. This has been procured with Audit Wales and training will be jointly delivered to both organisations in February 2022.
10.	<p>Risk Management</p> <p>Corporate Risk Register</p> <p>The revised Risk Register was presented by Colette Kane, all changes were highlighted in red for member's convenience. The Corporate Risk Register Working Group met on 23 November 2021 and considered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Appetite Cyber Risk Staff Engagement <p>Members agreed the current analysis and assessments. The C&AG made the following observations for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk of NIAO not reaching full staff complement within the target time-frame due to a competitive labour market. The risk that our trainees are falling behind in their on-the-job training and development following almost two years of COVID related disruption. <p>Colette noted the observations made and agreed raise and consider at the CRRWG meeting scheduled for January 2022.</p>

No.	Topic
	A short presentation to all staff on risk appetite will be scheduled for the next Staff Brief.
11.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Branding Exercise</p> <p>Joe Campbell joined the meeting and presented a paper to update members on progress to date. Members noted the content of the report and following discussion agreed the next steps in the process, including the development of preferred options and also the importance of some additional informal engagement with key stakeholders on proposals made in the report.</p> <p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>18 January 2022 @ 10am.</p>