

Minutes of Senior Management Team Meeting held on 19 November 2019 at 10am

In attendance: Kieran Donnelly, Chair (C&AG)
Pamela McCreedy (COO)
Rodney Allen (Director)
Colette Kane (Director)
Denver Lynn (Director)
Tomas Wilkinson (Director)
Joe Campbell for agenda item 7
Francis Casey for agenda item 7 and 8
Louise Donnelly (Secretary)

Apologies: Neil Gray (Director)

1.	Apologies Apologies were noted on behalf of 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 15 October 2019 were agreed and matters arising updated.
4.	Risk Management Corporate Risk Register (CRR) Colette Kane reported the Corporate Risk Management Working Group (CRMWG) met on 24 October 2019. Changes proposed to the CRR were highlighted in red for members' convenience. Following discussion SMT agreed to review the wording of the risk trigger for Risk 1. Minor amendments were also agreed for Risks 2 and 3(b), these changes have no impact on the risk ratings.
5.	Finance Report 2019-20 Rodney Allen briefed members on the budget position ahead of the December Monitoring round. Members will be advised of the final budget position before the 4 December Monitoring deadline. Accommodation Project The design lead contractor has been appointed and a key decision on the future work style/layout of the office was required by SMT to inform the next stage of the design team's work. Members considered the paper 'NIAO Accommodation Project – Work Styles' circulated to staff on 15 November 2019. The three options proposed were discussed and feedback from individual members of staff and trade union side was also taken into consideration. After deliberation SMT decided to proceed using the option of a Flexible Layout. SMT acknowledged the importance of promptly communicating this decision to staff.
6.	Corporate Report Rodney Allen briefed SMT members on the following key points:

	<p>HR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment Recruitment is ongoing for the 2020 intake of Graduate Trainee Accountants and the competition closed on 8 November 2019. Recruitment for the Director posts is progressing. Recruitment for Auditors will launch in December. • Attendance Management Members noted the overall days absence per employee in the rolling period 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2019 and the positive absence figures reported. • Employee Engagement and Wellbeing Two on-site flu vaccination clinics have taken place. SMT also welcomed the re-start of Involve to Evolve and sessions concerning the mental health of employees will be prioritised as part of the HR health and wellbeing strategy for the next quarter. <p>Business Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints - Members were updated on the current position with each of the small number of complaints. • Governance – The first meeting of the Remuneration Committee will be held on 25 November 2019.
7.	<p>Communications and Engagement Strategy</p> <p>Joe Campbell and Francis Casey joined the meeting and provided an overview of the Communications and Engagement Strategy to members. The development of the Strategy links with the Strategic Corporate Framework and the Public Reporting Programme. SMT endorsed the Strategy subject to minor recommendations relating to internal communications.</p>
8.	<p>Auditee Survey</p> <p>Francis Casey briefed members on the results of the recent Auditee Survey. SMT welcomed the positive returns received. Going forward an action plan will be developed to ensure that all feedback from the survey is actioned and reported accordingly.</p> <p>The results of the Survey will be communicated to staff at the Staff Briefing scheduled for 18 December 2019.</p>
9.	<p>Contracting Arrangements with Partner Firms – Assessment Report</p> <p>Contracts were let in January 2019 covering the next five years of audit following a comprehensive procurement exercise. Denver Lynn provided an update on the contracting arrangements to date and a paper and timeline detailing the process was provided to members.</p> <p>The next steps in the process have been identified and SMT will continue to monitor developments.</p>
10.	<p>Quality Control Arrangements</p> <p>Specification for External Quality Review</p> <p>A draft specification was presented to members by Tomas Wilkinson, after discussion the draft specification was approved by SMT. Members also noted terms of reference for Internal Audit to consider our ISQC1 arrangements.</p>

11.	Data Analytics Tomas Wilkinson briefed members on developments to date. A decision on progression to Phase 2 is expected on 28 November 2019.
12.	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The C&AG noted that due to his retirement this was Denver Lynn’s last meeting. He expressed thanks to Denver for his thirty plus years of valuable contribution to the work of the Office. Date of next meeting – There is no meeting scheduled for December. The next meeting will held at 2pm on 10 January 2020.