**Minutes of Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday 7th November 2017**

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

 P McCreedy (COO)

 Janet Sides (AAG)

 Louise Mason (AAG)

 R Allen (Director)

 N Gray (Director)

 C Kane (Director

 S McKay (Director)

 T Wilkinson (Director)

 R Ross (Audit Manager) – Agenda item 3

J Campbell (Audit Manager)

 D Anderson (Secretary)

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| 1&2 | **Minutes of Previous meeting and Matters Arising**Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 October 2017 were agreed and Matters Arising updated. |
| 3 | **Finance****3.1 Finance Report****2017-18**Members were informed of the Office’s current financial position for 2017-18; they were encouraged to identify all procurement opportunities for the remainder of the year to ensure delivery on a timely basis.**2018-19**Consideration was given to 2018-19 finances, including the potential options for income from the European Agricultural Fund and expectations of savings by the Assembly Audit Committee.  |
| 4 | **HR**SMT welcomed the improved position on staff absence at the half way point in the year. It was noted that levels were almost 69% lower than the same period last year, with decreases in both short term and long term absence. Members also noted the 7% increase in the number of staff who had not had any absence in the reporting period in comparison with the same period last year. |
| 5 | **Procurement**Members were briefed on the progress of the following procurement competitions:* Values and Corporate Plan Consultancy – quotations had been obtained and assessed and the contract would be awarded soon;
* Design and Print contract - out to tender with responses due on 24th November;
* The Media Consultancy contract - extended for a further 6 months;
* Financial audits – competition complete and contracts awarded subject to standstill period.

Following the financial audit competition, it was agreed that our current approach would be reviewed taking account of the position in other audit agencies. Members were asked to seek feedback from the firms in relation to our tender process. It was agreed that D Lynn will prepare a paper for SMT on the way forward. |
| 6 | **Governance*** Members reviewed the draft assurance statement which will be considered at the next meeting of the Audit Committee which is scheduled for 23rd November 2017.
* C&AG will meet the Chair of the Audit Committee and Chair of Advisory Board to discuss their terms of reference.
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| 7 | **Accommodation**A summary report was presented to SMT from the NIAO accommodation group. The group concluded that the preferred options were either minimum or substantial refurbishment and subletting of existing premises and that these options should be explored further.  |
| 8 | AOBNothing to report. |