**Minutes of Senior Management Team Meeting held on 22nd January 2018**

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

P McCreedy (COO)

R Allen (Director)

N Gray (Director)

C Kane (Director)

D Lynn (Director)

T Wilkinson (Director)

D Anderson (Minute taker)

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| 1&2 | **Minutes of Previous meeting and Matters Arising**  Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 December 2017 were agreed and Matters arising updated. |
| 3  4 | **Finance and IT**  **2017-18**  RA noted the 2017-18 December Monitoring return was submitted to DoF on 13 December 2017. A number of reallocations were made within the budget lines and a small amount, (£42K) reallocated from revenue to capital. The ring fenced depreciation budget cover was reduced from £315k to £175k. RA updated members on the current position of the Spring Supplementary Estimate (SSE) recommending no release of resources with an acceptable level of underspend anticipated. SMT members were in agreement with the SSE submission.  **2018-19**  RA noted DoF has advised NIAO’s budget will not be reduced for the 2018-19 period. He also noted there was an opportunity to bid for additional resources from the Transformation Fund for another round of VES in the 2018-19 period, with bids to be submitted by 26 January 2018. Members noted that there continues to be uncertainty around the future audit requirements for the European Agricultural Fund and agreed this should be monitored closely given the potential significant impact on the Office’s income and expenditure. SMT agreed to discontinue Team 21 software support. RA informed members a business case had been prepared recommending the upgrade of Central Time to a new generation product with a staff scheduler incorporated. He explained this would require a direct award contract. Members were content in principle with this proposal.  **Risk Management**  CK presented a draft risk management strategy for consideration. The strategy reflected changes in structures and Internal Audit Recommendations.  CK asked for clarification on the Corporate Risk Register:   * Reassigning risk owners, whether SMT or OMT are content to be risk owners or can these risks be assigned to individuals. SMT agreed that risk owners need to be assigned to individuals but risk actions could be the responsibility of OMT/SMT. * Reputation risk was included to address concerns that our work will have no real impact given the current political situation. * Clarification on the terminology and the assignment of specific roles within the risk register. CK to confirm and update the register.   It was agreed the Corporate Risk Register would be circulated to staff. |
| 5  6 | **Performance Reporting**  R Allen presented the Corporate Report and noted:   * Staff absence levels remain significantly reduced from the same period last year; * The number of staff who have not had any absence in the current reporting period has increased by approximately 9%; * Acknowledgement and appreciation for the many years of dedicated service provided by those staff leaving NIAO on 31 January 2018; * There has been no change in the number of internal complaints received; * Two new external complaints have been received; and * One previous complainant, who exhausted our complaints procedure, has taken the case to NIPSO. We are currently compiling the information requested by the Ombudsman.   **Work Placement**  SMT agreed the proposals to provide a work place opportunity, on a paid three month basis, to a disabled person. N Connelly to proceed and liaise with the Cedar Foundation.  **Procurement**  SMT noted the following contracts have been awarded:   * Data Analytics; * Review of LPS Valuations; and * Printing and Publishing.   It was noted that a potential conflict of interest arose with a contractor. This matter has been resolved resulting in the contract being awarded to the firm who finished second in the competition.  DL noted he is undertaking a procurement exercise for consultancy support to assist with the development of a framework for the tendering of our Financial Audit Services assignments.  **Information Management**  SMT noted that various personal data exercises have been completed throughout the office with a further Data Protection e-learning exercise underway, which is due for completion on 31 January 2018. This supports the GDPR preparations of the office.  RA advised SMT the website will be updated by 1st February 2018 to reflect recent changes within senior management responsibilities. N Connelly and J Campbell will prepare a media release and communication strategy by 1st February 2018, for the COO appointment as Local Government Auditor.  **GDPR**  Members noted the current position with delivery of commitments in preparation for the introduction of GDPR in May 2018. Further policies will be provided for consideration at the SMT meeting on 27 March 2018.  **Schedule of Governance Meetings**  The schedule of future SMT and ARAC meetings was endorsed. D Anderson to add these to Directorate diaries.  **VES**  RA presented a case for taking the opportunity to bid for funding in the final year of the Transformation Fund. He explained a decision was necessary at this stage to enable a bid to be submitted, but the detail of any scheme would follow afterwards. Members discussed the principles of VES and the potential impact on further changes to the office staffing structure.  SMT agreed to bid for VES funding for the 2018-19 period. |