**Minutes of Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting held on 15 December 2020 @ 10am**

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

Pamela McCreedy (COO)

Rodney Allen (Director)

Patrick Barr (Director)

Neil Gray (Director)

Colette Kane (Director)

Suzanne Walsh (Director)

Tomas Wilkinson (Director)

Louise Donnelly (Secretary)

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| **1.** | **Apologies**  No apologies were noted. |
| **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 17 November 2020 were agreed and the matters arising updated. |
| **4.** | **Risk Management**  **COVID 19 Risk Register**  Colette Kane advised members there had been no changes to the COVID 19 Risk Register since the last SMT in November. The register will be presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) at their meeting in January 2021.  Discussion followed concerning the continued liaison with the Treasury Officer of Accounts (TOA) and Departments on the impact of COVID 19 on the summer recess 2021 deadline and the statutory timetable for the end of year accounts. An update and further consideration will be included on the January agenda. |
| **5.** | **Finance Report**  Rodney Allen briefed members on the following key points:   * **2020-21 Budget and subsequent years** Members were asked to note the current budget position. Members were also advised that the Assembly’s Audit Committee had approved our requested revenue and capital resources for 2021-22. * **Accommodation Project**   The next meeting of the Project Board is scheduled for 17 December at which the Stage 4 design will be presented by the design team. A decant working group has been created to oversee and manage the decant from University Street. The group has communicated with staff, setting out the timeline of the move and key deliverables. There will be regular staff engagement throughout the decant process. The expectation is that we will be fully decanted by the end of April 2021.   * **IT**   A small team of staff are currently testing Office 2016 as part of the preparation for a move to Office 365 and MS Teams. It is expected that Office 2016 will be rolled out to all staff by the end of January 2021. |
| **6.** | **Corporate Report**  Rodney Allen briefed members on the following key points:  **HR**   * **Recruitment**   + Auditor posts have been successfully filled and the new recruits will take up post in January and February 2021. The next Auditor recruitment exercise is due to commence on 18 January 2021   + The GTA recruitment exercise closed on 13 November 2020 with interviews scheduled from 16 – 18 December 2020. * **Attendance Management**   Members noted absence figures per employee in the rolling period 1 December 2019 to 30 November 2020. Members also noted the position regarding staff annual leave balances.   * **Performance Management**   Invitations to complete the end of year reviews have been issued to staff and members were requested to encourage timely completion.   * **Employee Engagement and Wellbeing**   The employee opinion survey closed on 25November. There was a high completion rate with 99 completed questionnaires. Results are anticipated before Christmas.  Mental Health Wellbeing days have been scheduled for January 2021 to provide staff with an opportunity to take some time out to focus on their mental health and well-being.  **Business Support**   * **Complaints** Members were briefed on the status of cases. * **Tendering Exercises**   Members were updated on recent procurement activity.   * **Governance**   The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) has not met since the last meeting of SMT. The next meeting is scheduled for 19 January 2021. The Advisory Board will meet again on 9 February 2021.   * **Communications** The Communications team continue to support the office in the preparation and launch of published reports. Members commended the team on the excellent support provided during the recent busy period recognising the implications and difficulties encountered when working remotely at home. |
| **7.** | **Operational Performance Report**  A report detailing key performance outturns for the public reporting and financial audit programmes from 1 April 2020 to 30 November 2020 was presented. Support with the production of the report will be provided by the Data Visualisation team as part of the ongoing development of the content. |

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| **8.** | **Business Transformation Programme (BTP) Position Paper**  Pamela McCreedy updated the team. Target dates have been agreed for outstanding tasks with continued commitment to monitor and progress longer term projects. A further update will be provided to the Advisory Board at the next meeting scheduled for February 2021. |
| **9.** | **Accessibility Report**  A report was presented by Rodney Allen outlining the recommendations and proposed actions following a recent accessibility audit of our website. After discussion SMT agreed the actions outlined in the report. |
| **10.** | **Technical and Data Analytics Update**   * QCR’s progressing well with few delays * Results from the Independent external reviews by ICAEW will be reported to SMT in January. * The team are currently progressing recent updates to NAO FAM, an update to templates will be completed early in 2021. * Technical training planned for early 2021. * ISQCM ISA 315 * SBRI progressing well with check-in meetings scheduled in January * Continued communication with public reporting teams to encourage early engagement in the production of reports. * Business case in progress to procure a solution to help roll out data analytic techniques to all staff and reduce dependency on the data analytics team. * Continued communication and engagement with technical teams in the other audit agencies. |
| **11.** | **Papers noted:**   * Draft Advisory Board Minutes of meeting held on 3 December 2020. |
| **12.** | **AOB**   * The C&AG thanked the team and all staff for an excellent years work in very challenging circumstances. * Next meeting 12 January 2021 |