**Minutes of Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting held on 16 February 2021 @ 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)

 Orla Kee (HR Manager) – agenda item 10

 Tanya McNally (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Tomas Wilkinson

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| **1.** | **Apologies**Apologies from Tomas Wilkinson 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 12 January 2021 were agreed and the matters arising updated.  |
| **4.** | **Risk Management****COVID 19 Risk Register**Colette Kane advised the Risk Register had been updated to reflect comments made at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting held on 19 January 2021 and new actions, all changes were highlighted for members’ convenience. Project risk registers were also discussed and it was agreed no risks at project level needed to be escalated at this time. After discussion members concluded that merging the COVID 19 risk register and the Corporate Risk Register was dependent on the transmission of the COVID 19 virus over the coming months, all developments will continue be monitored and kept under review by the Corporate Risk Register Working Group (CRRWG) and the Operational Management Team (OMT). |
| **5.** | **Finance Report**Rodney Allen provided an update on the following key areas:* **2020-21 Forecast**

Members were asked to note the current budget position. * **Accommodation Project**Discussions around the preferred decant option are at an advanced stage. A draft lease has been received and is currently being reviewed by our legal team. The Accommodation Project Board will meet again on the 10 March 2021.
* **IT**

All staff now have access to Microsoft Teams. A small working group has been established to explore additional functionality within this platform. |
| **6.** | **Draft Annual Business Plan 2021-22** The draft Annual Business plan for 2021-22 presented by Pamela McCreedy was endorsed by SMT, the Plan will be now be presented to the Advisory Board at their next meeting scheduled for 18 May 2021.The C&AG recorded his thanks to all staff involved in the production of the Business Plan. |
| **7.** | **Corporate Report**Rodney Allen provided an update on the following key areas:**HR*** **Recruitment**
* The Auditor recruitment exercise is progressing and interviews have been scheduled for the end of February 2021.
* Graduate Trainee Accountant recruitment is complete and those appointed will take up post in September 2021.
* The Chief Operating Officer recruitment is progressing with first and second stage interviews scheduled for March 2021.
* **Attendance Management**

Members noted absence figures per employee in the rolling period 1 February 2020 to 31 January 2021.* **Annual Leave uptake**

Members noted the position on annual leave balances at 1 February 2021 and agreed the importance of everyone taking leave in the interests of health and wellbeing during lockdown and the pandemic. Directors were asked to note the position with regard to staff carry-over leave balances. * **Employee Engagement and Well-being**
* ***Employee Opinion Survey:***  Workshops were facilitated in January 2021 to follow up on the findings of the survey, a presentation on the results and progress of the workshops was provided to all staff at a briefing held on 26 January 2021.
* Wellbeing days took place for staff in January 2021 and a further two days have been scheduled for February 2021. SMT welcomed the positive feedback from staff who have participated to date.

**Business Support** * **Complaints**

Members were briefed on the status of cases. SMT were satisfied with progress to date.* **Staff Engagement**

Feedback from the recent staff survey was discussed and decisions were made on the name of the Office building, boardroom, training room, café and well-being area.  |
| **8.** | **Governance Report**Rodney Allen presented the report to SMT, after consideration members endorsed the report for onward progression to the Advisory Board at their next meeting scheduled for 18 May 2021. It was agreed the report would be submitted to the NI Assembly’s Audit Committee. |
| **9.** | **Operational Performance Report**A report detailing key performance outturns for the public reporting and financial audit programmes from 1 April 2020 to 31 January 2021 was presented by Pamela McCreedy. Members discussed the position and implications for the period ahead. The C&AG asked directors to progress the clearance of backlogged audits.  |
| **10.** | **HR Roadmap Update**Orla Kee joined the meeting to provide and gave members a presentation on the current position with delivery of the HR Roadmap in the People Strategy. Members noted the progress being made and agreed it would be useful to have regular updates.  |
| **11.** | **Technical Update**Suzanne Walsh provided an update on technical matters including the summer recess timetable, the QCR process and the technical training plan. |
| **12.** | **Charge out Rates**Rodney Allen presented a paper detailing options for setting the 2021-22 charge out rates and the underlying assumptions. After consideration and discussion members agreed charge out rates that will apply in 2021-22.  |
| **13.** | **MLA and Raising Concerns Update**Pamela McCreedy presented a report informing SMT on progress regarding the handling of cases in relation to MLA correspondence and Raising Concerns cases. SMT were satisfied cases are being actioned in a timely and efficient manner. |
| **14.** | **SBRI**Suzanne Walsh presented a paper that outlined progress made on the SBRI project to date.  It was agreed that NIAO should submit an application to SBRI to support further progression in 2021-22.   |
| **15.** | **Papers Noted*** ARAC Draft Minutes – 19 January 2021
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| **16.** | **AOB*** Next meeting 16 March 2021 @ 10am
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