

**Minutes of Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting held on 20 April 2021 @ 10am**

**In attendance:** Kieran Donnelly, Chair (C&AG)  
 Rodney Allen (COO)  
 Patrick Barr (Director)  
 Neil Gray (Director)  
 Colette Kane (Director)  
 Suzanne Walsh (Director)  
 Tomas Wilkinson (Director)  
 Louise Donnelly (Secretary)  
 Joe Campbell (Audit Manager) – Agenda Item 6 and 7  
 Michael Heery (Senior Auditor) Agenda Item 10  
 Orla Kee (HR Manager) – Agenda Item 6  
 Richard Ross (Audit Manager) Agenda Item 5

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b> No apologies were noted
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declaration of Conflicts of Interest</b> There were no issues declared by members.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous meeting and Matters Arising</b> Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 March 2021 were agreed and the matters arising updated.
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Risk Management</b>  <b>COVID 19 Risk Register</b>                  The COVID 19 Risk Register was presented by Colette Kane, all changes made were highlighted in red for member’s convenience. Colette advised the Corporate Risk Register Working Group (CRRWG) had met the previous week and had considered the option of standing down the COVID 19 Risk Register and reinstating the Corporate Risk Register (CRR). SMT considered this possibility and after discussion agreed that next steps would be to present the current COVID 19 Risk Register at the next Audit and Risk Assessment Committee (ARAC) meeting scheduled for 4 May 2021. Following this meeting the CRRWG will facilitate the merging of the COVID 19 Risks into the CRR.</p> <p>Members were also asked to note the register has been updated to align to the new Corporate Strategic Priorities. The following key areas were also discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff utilisation whilst homeworking;</li> <li>• the office decant and relocation;</li> <li>• the Internal Audit review of HR; and</li> <li>• contract management.</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Finance Report</b>                  Richard Ross joined the meeting and provided an update on the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2020-21 Forecast</b>                      Members were asked to note the anticipated outturn position and the timeline for the production of the financial statements and associated audit.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Accommodation Project</b> The decant accommodation at Bradford Court is now open to staff on specified days. Work is continuing on transferring all remaining files from University Street to Bradford Court and on clearing the University Street building in advance of the contractors being appointed. Richard recorded his thanks to all staff involved in the successful decant exercise. The C&amp;AG also expressed appreciation to the team for the smooth transition to Bradford Court.</li> <li>● <b>IT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work is progressing on a number of potential projects including plans for a Time &amp; Space upgrade, MKI upgrade and Office 365 implementation.</li> <li>- An IT Health check was completed in March, the report from the exercise is due this week.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Corporate Report</b> Orla Kee and Joe Campbell joined the meeting.</p> <p><b>HR</b> Orla Kee provided an update on the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Recruitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The recruitment exercise for the Director post is ongoing with interviews scheduled to take place in May 2021.</li> <li>- Auditor recruitment is currently live with applications closing on Friday 23 April 2021.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Attendance Management</b> Members noted absence figures per employee in the rolling period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.</li> <li>● <b>Annual Leave uptake</b> Directors were asked to note the position with regard to staff annual leave balances.</li> <li>● <b>Training</b> Staff have recently completed a mandatory GDPR awareness e-Learning exercise.</li> <li>● <b>Employee Engagement and Wellbeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Optional Mindful Manager training for Audit Managers and Senior Management has been arranged for May 2021.</li> <li>- The Investors in People review has been completed and NIAO has been awarded the standard accreditation. Orla recorded thanks to all staff who participated in the review.</li> <li>- Independent Occupational Health Ltd have been appointed to conduct employee Health checks. Staff will be contacted week commencing 12 April 2021 to organise appointments.</li> <li>- A WellHub is under development and will be launched soon. It will provide significant additional information and access to support to staff in all areas of health and well-being.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Business Support</b> Joe Campbell provided an update on the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Complaints</b> Members were briefed on the status of cases and were satisfied with progress to date.</li> <li>● <b>Tendering Exercises</b> Members were updated on recent procurement activity.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governance</b> ARAC and Advisory Board meetings are scheduled for May and June 2021.</li> <li>• <b>Communications</b> The Communications team continue to support the office in the preparation and launch of published reports. On social media, there were many positive engagements , these included the Office’s participation in the Boardroom Apprentice Panel Day and the Agenda NI’s Procurement Conference. A special video was also produced to mark International Women’s Day.</li> <li>• <b>Internal Audit Reports</b> Members were briefed on the outcome of the following Internal Audit Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Business Transformation Project</li> <li>○ HR Health Check</li> <li>○ Training and Development</li> </ul> These reports will be presented to ARAC on 4 May 2021.</li> </ul>
7.	<p><b>COVID Stocktake Report</b></p> <p>A stocktake report detailing the Office’s response to the pandemic, providing information on support for staff and the impact on business and deliverables was presented by Joe Campbell. SMT endorsed the Report and asked that it be shared with staff.</p>
8.	<p><b>Operational Performance Report</b></p> <p>A report detailing key performance outturns for the public reporting and financial audit programmes from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 was presented by Rodney Allen. SMT noted the content.</p>
9.	<p><b>Impacts 2021</b></p> <p>A paper detailing the current impacts position was presented to SMT. The C&amp;AG agreed the financial impacts proposed. The C&amp;AG asked Directors to review the qualitative impacts position within their remit and he proposed going forward, that an immediate assessment should be conducted on all reports post publication to identify qualitative impacts as opposed to carrying this out as an end of year exercise.</p>
10.	<p><b>Future Management Information Presentation</b></p> <p>Michael Heery from the data analytics and visualisations team was welcomed to the meeting. Michael provided an overview to members on proposals on the way forward for presenting interactive management information to ARAC, Advisory Board and SMT. Michael advised further development and streamlining was required and suggested that once a template had been agreed an introductory session would be scheduled for each group.</p> <p>The C&amp;AG and members thanked Michael for the presentation, all agreeing they found it informative and worthwhile. A briefing session will be scheduled for the Advisory Board in four weeks’ time. Michael advised the report should be ready to go live by the end of June 2021.</p>
11.	<p><b>Three Year Public Reporting Plan</b></p> <p>Suzanne Walsh presented a report to update members on the draft three year public reporting plan. The C&amp;AG advised he would reflect on the content in the report and would schedule a meeting to discuss further.</p>

12.	<p><b>Technical Update</b></p> <p>Suzanne Walsh presented a report to update members on the following technical matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Team update; and</li> <li>• Data Analytics and Visualisation Team update.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that Barry Mitchell a member of the Data Analytics Team would brief members on the SBRI project at the May SMT meeting.</p>
13.	<p><b>SMT</b></p> <p><b>Review of Terms of Reference (TOR)</b></p> <p>Members reviewed the TOR, and confirmed they were content.</p> <p><b>SMT Self-Assessment</b></p> <p>A draft self-assessment questionnaire was agreed by SMT. All members are to complete the assessment before the next meeting when a report on the findings will be presented.</p>
14.	<p><b>Contract Management</b></p> <p>Tomas Wilkinson briefed members on recent developments regarding the contracting out of audits. SMT discussed possible options and agreed to monitor developments at OMT and report back to SMT in May.</p>
15.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meeting 11 May 2021 @10am.</li> </ul>