

Minutes of Executive Team meeting held on Thursday 12 May 2016

In attendance: K Donnelly, Chair (C&AG)
 Janet Sides(AAG)
 L Mason (AAG)
 E Bradley (AAG)
 Brandon McMaster (Director)

Secretariat: Joe Campbell (Audit Manager)
 Louise Donnelly (Senior Divisional Secretary)

1.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 April 2016 were agreed subject to minor amendment.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters arising Matters Arising were updated.</p>	
3.	<p>Finance A meeting was scheduled for 23 May to discuss the draft annual report and accounts. J Campbell to confirm the completeness and accuracy of the senior management/non-executive members' expenses report.</p>	J CAMPBELL
4.	<p>Governance and risk</p> <p>The Executive Team considered the Corporate Risk Register, examining in particular progress against actions to improve controls. It also examined/noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Cluster Assurance Statement • Annual Assurance - Outsourced activities • Anti Fraud, whistleblowing and complaints statement: it was agreed that a review of the anti-fraud policy, the fraud response plan and the complaints policy should be conducted. • HR Annual Report and Assurance Statement • H&S Annual Report 	J CAMPBELL B McMASTER
5.	<p>Business Plan The Executive Team was briefed on progress in the development of the business plan. Its format will negate the need for cluster operational plans. A meeting to discuss the draft plan will be scheduled.</p>	J CAMPBELL
6.	<p>Performance The new performance monitoring reports for operational audit and corporate support activity were welcomed by the Team.</p> <p>Operational audit: In reviewing the report, a number of actions were agreed: a budget should be in place for all public reports including general reports drawing on financial audit and good practice guides; there was a need to consider the reallocation of resourcing between financial audit and public reporting; and consideration would be given to establishing a</p>	E BRADLEY L MASON

	<p>workshop for staff to share their experiences in expediting studies. In relation to the reporting timeframe, the Executive Team agreed that MLA/whistleblowing returns would be considered biannually.</p> <p>Corporate support: it was agreed that the report provided a much clearer picture of expenditure on corporate support activities relative to the overall cost of Office operations but that further fine tuning of the statistics would be required to best meet the needs of the Team.</p> <p>Freedom of Information/Data Protection annual report A summary report of information requests received and responded to during 2015-16 was reviewed by the team.</p> <p>Impacts Return J Campbell briefed the Team on progress on the annual impacts return, highlighting that the monetary figure for quantifiable financial impacts was considerably lower than that for 2014-15. The Team discussed the likely factors that may have given rise to this, and reiterated the requirement, at study selection stage, for potential financial impacts to be identified, including how they would be achieved; these should be monitored as each study progresses.</p> <p>ISQC1 Monitoring Report The ISQC1 paper was considered in conjunction with the operational audit and corporate support cluster performance reports. A common theme in both was compliance with policy and guidance.</p> <p>It was agreed that compliance across all aspects of Office operations should be reinforced. This included policy and procedures relating to: flexi-leave; central time; holiday pay accrual input (including annual leave requests); 60 day closure of accounts on MKI; sick leave; impact monitoring; and staff performance reporting.</p> <p>This will be addressed through Directors' brief.</p>	<p>J SIDES</p> <p>E BRADLEY</p> <p>C&AG</p>
7.	<p>Equality Programme for 2016-17 The Executive Team was briefed on the Equality programme for 2016-17.</p> <p>European Agricultural Funds Update The Executive Team welcomed the report and recognised the good work being conducted in this area.</p> <p>Revised Executive Team Schedule Agreed.</p> <p>MLA Survey The Executive Team noted the results of the second survey. It was agreed that the Stakeholder Engagement Group would develop a schedule for submission to the Executive Team in September, setting out its plans to enhance engagement in the Assembly.</p>	<p>L Mason</p>