

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 16 January 2024, 10.00 am
Teams Meeting



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Antony Clark
Kenny Oliver
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 19 December 2023 and confidential minutes of meeting on 19 December 2023

The draft minutes dated 19 December 2023 and confidential minutes dated 19 December 2023 were considered. Executive Team advised they would agree to the minutes subject to amendments suggested.

2. Staff Handbook – Grievance policy

Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group, joined the meeting.

Susan introduced the report, copies of which has been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the changes made to the policy following the previous discussion at Executive Team at the meeting of 27 September 2023.
- Note the report and further consultation undertaken with PCS.
- Approve, subject to any required amendments, the revised policy can be submitted to the Remco meeting of 19 March 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked Susan for the paper and noted that it was very helpful. Executive Team agreed that additional clarity and understanding is needed on the terminology and process.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content with the report subject to further refinement. Executive Team agreed that the updated report would be approved by Vicki in which Susan will then share the report with the Chair of the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (Remco) for comment prior to papers being distributed for Remco.

Action: Susan to look at the points raised by Executive Team in the context of ACAS guidance and best practice and update the policy accordingly and submit to Vicki for approval thereafter.

Susan Burgess left the meeting.

2023-24 Financial forecast

Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group, joined the meeting.

Stuart introduced the latest 2023/24 year-end financial forecast report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the financial forecast for the 12 months to March 2024.
- Note the areas of risk and range of potential outcomes.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that the main risk is the work in progress position which is being closely monitored. Stuart confirmed that assumptions have been made that most of the budgeted underspend will have been used by the end of the financial year.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report and requested that an update report be shared with Executive Team towards the end of February 2024.

Stuart Dennis left the meeting.

3. Consumer duty for public bodies

Martin provided an overview of the report, copies of which has been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note that a Duty to consider consumer outcomes, under the Consumer Scotland Act 2020 comes into effect from 1 April 2024.
- Agree that no further action is required at this stage.
- Note that we will monitor further consultation and guidance issued by Consumer Scotland and/ or the Scottish Government in advance of the Duty taking effect.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked Martin for a helpful and interesting paper. There was discussion around ISA 250A where there is a responsibility for the auditor to consider all direct and indirect regulation rules relating to the body and whether there is a

heightened risk of lack of compliance. Executive Team recognised that there may be an additional piece of legislation that sits around those bodies where we issue a regulatory opinion if the body has incurred material spend in relation to duties that are imposed on it through Consumer Scotland.

Following discussion, Executive Team are content to note the report and that no further action is required at this stage.

4. Procurement process and digital & data security requirement

Martin provided an overview of the report, copies of which has been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the report and discuss its content.
- Approve the proposals set out in paragraph 37.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked Martin for a clear and comprehensive paper. There was discussion around whether there is overlap with our scheme of delegation and standing financial instructions that might require Committee or Board consideration. Martin confirmed that the data protection agreement had been agreed at a lower level than the terms and conditions and that a recommendation has been made in the report to bring them both in line.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the proposals set out in paragraph 37.

5. 2023-24 Update on internal communications and engagement strategy

Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

Kirsty introduced the update on internal communications and engagement strategy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Review the communications and engagement activity (hereafter referred to as 'communications'), impact data and improvements delivered between May to December 2023 as part of the strategy.
- Discuss and feed back on the key considerations highlighted to enable development of the 2024/25 strategy and plan.
- Confirm any changes to approach for the remainder of 2023/24.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked Kirsty for a helpful and detailed paper. Executive Team requested feedback from the latest pulse survey in relation to staff preference for communications. Kirsty also explained that it would be beneficial to gather staff feedback ahead of developing the approach for the 2024/25 strategy with Executive Team agreeing that this could take place in the form of discussions with a cross-section of colleagues.

There was discussion on the all-staff event not taking place until 2025. Executive Team discussed exploring potential options to plug this timing gap by expanding the ways they can communicate and engage with staff on a regular basis through a range of available technology and tools and to make more use of existing channels.

Executive Team discussed the timing and positioning of sending out a clear assessment to all staff in relation to what has been delivered so far on the back of staff feedback from the Best Companies Survey 2023. Executive Team agreed that this should take place ahead of the Best Companies survey in February.

Following discussion, Executive Team are supportive of the recommendations made in the report.

Action: Kirsty to undertake a benchmarking exercise to explore other audit agencies arrangements in relation to employee engagement.

Action: Kirsty to follow up with Gordon/Michelle on the best way forward on issuing an all-staff communication at the end of January.

6. Draft Executive Team agenda: 24 January 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 24 January 2024 and agreed that the strategic session be an additional item on the agenda.

7. 2024 Executive Team planner and action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the 2024 Executive Team planner and action tracker.

Executive Team advised of updates to the outstanding items to be reflected in the tracker.

8. Any other business

There was no other business.

9. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

10. Executive Team Communications

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication as follows:

- 2023-24 Financial forecast
- Procurement
- Internal comms and engagement
- Public Audit Forum

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

11. Date of next meeting: 24 January 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 24 January 2024 10:00 am.

Minutes

Executive Team



Wednesday 24 January 2024, 10.00am
Teams Meeting

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Antony Clark
Kenny Oliver
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Amanda Kindness, Audit Services Business Manager, Audit Services
David Robertson, Digital Services Manager, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 16 January 2024.

The draft minutes dated 16 January 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Confidential item

This item was subject to a separate confidential minute.

3. Pentana cloud migration: discussion paper

Amanda Kindness, Audit Services Business Manager and David Robertson, Digital Services Manager, joined the meeting.

Amanda introduced the Pentana cloud migration discussion paper, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- To consider their preference for the way forward based on two possible options outlined within the Conclusions section, alongside ASGMT's recommendation.

During discussion, Executive Team raised concerns on the risks associated on the two possible options outlined in the report. Executive Team agreed that it is vital that they

understand the scale of the risks that Audit Scotland are exposed too in order to make an informed decision.

Executive Team had a discussion around the contractual arrangements for Pentana and the potential actions arising from that.

Following discussion, Executive Team requested a full risk assessment with recommendations on options be brought back to a future Executive Team.

Action: Amanda/David to pull together a full risk assessment and include as part of this paper an enhanced option¹ detailing what we currently have in place to mitigate risks and some example scenarios of controls and bring back to a future Executive Team meeting.

Action: Martin to review the current position of, and governance arrangements for, the management of contracts and feedback to Executive Team.

Amanda Kindness and David Robertson left the meeting.

4. Draft Executive Team agenda: 30 January 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 30 January 2024.

5. Any other business

There was no other business.

6. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

7. Date of next meeting: 30 January 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 30 January 2024 10:00 am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 30 January 2024, 10.00am
Teams Meeting

Present:

Stephen Boyle (Chair)
Vicki Bibby (Part attendance)
Kenny Oliver
Antony Clark
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager, Corporate Services Group
Nicola Constable, Executive Officer, Corporate Services Group
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
Sharon Kewley, Business Support Manager, Corporate Services Group
Mark MacPherson, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value
Allan Campbell, Secretary to the Accounts Commission, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group
Robert Cumming (External)

1. Minutes of meeting on 24 January 2024 and confidential minutes of meeting on 24 January 2024

The draft minutes dated 24 January 2024 and the confidential minutes dated 24 January 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to the minor amendments suggested.

2. MSP survey

Simon Ebbett, Mark MacPherson, Nicola Constable and Robert Cumming joined the meeting.

Simon introduced the MSP survey, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the findings.
- Discuss the implications for our parliamentary engagement strategy and our forward work programme.

During discussion, Executive Team recognised the positive results from the MSP survey and thanked the team for a very helpful and interesting report.

Executive Team noted that results were not reported for the Public Audit Committee (PAC) due to the committee not meeting the minimum number of people required. Executive Team was content that we have other channels to take feedback from PAC.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content to note the report.

Simon Ebbett and Robert Cumming left the meeting.

3. Parliamentary engagement update

Mark introduced the parliamentary engagement update, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the update on parliamentary engagement.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked the team for a very helpful and detailed paper.

Executive Team noted that there is a good framework in place for our engagement with the committees. Executive Team agreed that there is scope to reflect on the committees where we have had less involvement with and that it would be useful to have a discussion with committee clerks at potential opportunities before planning the next cycle of forward work programme.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the update on parliamentary engagement.

Nicola Constable and Mark MacPherson left the meeting.

4. Update on our participation in professional groups

Kenny Oliver introduced the update on our participation in professional groups, copies which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the content of the paper and ask any questions of clarification.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked Kenny for a useful paper. There was discussion on extending our reach to enable us to have more influence in areas such as audit and accounting developments.

Further discussion was around the clarity and understanding of our strategic objectives on these groups and how information is captured and fed back into Audit Scotland.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the content of the report and requested a periodic update be taken to future Executive Team meetings.

Action: Antony/Kenny to revisit the potential of Audit Scotland having representation on the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI).

Action: Kenny to further develop the next steps and bring an update to Executive Team.

5. Quality update

Kenny Oliver introduced the quality update, copies which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the paper and ask any questions of clarification.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked Kenny for a very helpful paper. There was discussion around the introduction of the revised ISA 600 and if there are any risks associated with it in terms deployment and potential impact on business delivery.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content to note the report and agreed that progress is being made against the planned quality improvement actions.

6. 2024-28 Health, Safety & Wellbeing strategy

Susan Burgess and Sharon Kewley joined the meeting.

Susan Burgess introduced the 2024-28 Health, Safety & Wellbeing strategy, copies which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the documentation and consultation completed to date.
- Approve the PID attached as an appendix to this report.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked Susan and Sharon for a helpful paper.

Executive Team agreed that it would be useful to provide some additional detail within the Project Initiation Document (PID) for further clarity to colleagues.

Further discussion was around the potential of introducing indicative costs in future PIDs before submission to Executive Team for approval.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the PID subject to the minor amendments discussed and requested further updates on progress at regular intervals.

Action: Martin/Kenny to explore the possibility of introducing a project cost element to the PID.

Susan Burgess and Sharon Kewley left the meeting.

7. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 8 February 2024

Allan Campbell joined the meeting

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the Accounts Commission meeting on 8 February 2024 subject to removing item 11 which has now been scheduled for the March meeting of the Accounts Commission.

Allan Campbell left the meeting.

8. Draft Executive Team agenda: 20 February 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 20 February 2024 subject to the following changes:

- Item 9 'Audit appointments' is deferred to Executive Team meeting on 27 February.
- Item 7 'Budget briefing' to be shared with Executive Team by correspondence.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

11. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

- MSP Survey
- Quality Survey
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing Strategy

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

12. Date of next meeting: 20 February 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 20 February 2024 10:00 am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 20 February 2024, 10.00am
Teams Meeting



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Antony Clark
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies: John Cornett

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation & Transformation, Innovation & Quality
Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager, Corporate Services Group
Nina Miller, Senior Auditor, Performance Audit & Best Value
Tricia Meldrum, Senior Manager, Performance Audit & Best Value
Elaine Boyd, Director of Corporate Services, Audit Quality & Appointments
John Gilchrist, Manager, Audit Quality & Appointments
Owen Smith, Senior Manager, Audit Quality & Appointments
Parminder Singh, Manager, Audit Quality & Appointments
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Allan Campbell, Secretary to the Accounts Commission, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 30 January 2024

The draft minutes dated 30 January 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to the minor amendments suggested.

2. Review of risk register

Martin gave an overview of the review of the risk register, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the updated risk register.
- Determine whether additional management action is required.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, the risk register be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 19 March 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked Martin for a thorough paper. Discussion took place around changes made since November 2023 including the controls we have in place and the current direction of travel. Executive Team agreed to the introduction of the new Artificial Intelligence risk and the possibility of introducing the Audit Modernisation Project as a risk. Executive Team agreed that while both these risks complement each other, it is important to keep them as two distinct and separate risks.

Further discussion was on our approach to charging and if we have a rigorous and standard process with clear expectations on what we want from organisations.

Executive Team discussed the future audit market and on how we capture the potential risks associated with this.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed, subject to the amendments discussed, the risk register be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 19 March 2024.

Action: Kenny to arrange a deep dive session on the future audit market at an Executive Team strategic session.

3. Risk deep dive

Gemma Diamond and Simon Ebbett joined the meeting.

Schedule of risks deep dives 2024

Martin introduced a draft schedule for the risk deep dives 2024, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the criteria used in developing the draft schedule.
- Discuss the proposed deep dive schedule for 2024 at paragraph 12.
- Agree that, subject to any required amendments, it be submitted to the Audit Committee for approval at its meeting on 19 March 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team considered the proposed deep dive schedule for 2024. Discussion focussed on the alignment and timings of the deep dive sessions.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed that subject to the required amendments discussed, it be submitted to the Audit Committee for approval at its meeting on 19 March 2024.

Impact and reputation

Martin gave an overview of the risk deep dive into two connected risks on the risk register, impact and reputation, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss the deep dive.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, it is submitted to the Audit Committee meeting on 19 March 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed to sharing the MSP survey results with Board members ahead of the more wide-ranging stakeholder engagement update in May.

Executive Team noted the content of the report focussed more on the work of Audit Scotland and agreed that the report could provide an opportunity for a wider conversation between Audit Scotland, the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed, subject to the required amendments discussed, it is submitted to the Audit Committee meeting on 19 March 2024.

Gemma Diamond and Simon Ebbett left the meeting.

4. Review of risk management framework

Martin introduced the revised risk management framework (RMF) for 2023-25, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the review of the RMF.
- Agree that the updated RMF, subject to any required amendments, is submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 19 March 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team reflected on risk categorisation and if all areas had been covered. Executive Team agreed that it would be good practice to reference 'The Orange Book', which provides guidance on the principles and concepts of managing risks, within the RMF as a useful tool.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed that the updated RMF is submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 19 March 2024.

5. Annual review of business continuity arrangements

Martin introduced the annual review of business continuity arrangements, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the annual review of our Business Continuity arrangements.
- Approve the Policy and Objectives attached as an appendix to this report.
- Note that the detailed incident recovery plans have been updated (these are available [here](#)).
- Note that further minor revisions to the plans may take place during the year as appropriate (to reflect updates to team composition or amendments to contact details).

- Agree, subject to any required amendments, that the Policy and Objectives be submitted to the Audit Committee for approval at its meeting on 19 March 2023.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed that the Policy and Objectives be submitted to the Audit Committee for approval at its meeting on 19 March 2024.

6. Service user engagement strategy

Gemma Diamond, Nina Miller and Tricia Meldrum, joined the meeting.

Gemma provided an update on the service user engagement strategy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the update on progress and the recommended approach to service user engagement set out in the paper.
- Consider the financial implications, their impact and how we intend to integrate this as part of business planning, prioritisation and audit modernisation.
- Agree the importance of cultural change and the role of Audit Scotland's leaders, as set out in paragraphs 26 - 29.
- Note the next steps set out in paragraphs 37 and 38.

During discussion, Executive Team reflected on the proposed approach of commissioning ad hoc procurement for specific audits and how we balance when this is/isn't appropriate.

Further discussion was on how we ensure that service user engagement is appropriately spread across audits and portfolios, and how this will become a key factor in planning the forward work programme. Executive Team acknowledged that this new strategic approach would bring a change in culture across the organisation and staff will need guidance and support.

Executive Team discussed the approach to research and development (R&D) and the potential costs that can be incurred. Executive Team reflected on the flexibility the new approach brings across the work programme in terms of balancing out to see where best to make the appropriate investment for both individual audits and R&D.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content to note the next steps set out in paragraphs 37 and 38.

Action: Gemma/Tricia/Nina to explore options for an 'insight' event with Cat Macaulay, Scottish Government, to hear about her experience and learning on service user involvement work and cultural change.

Gemma Diamond, Nina Miller and Tricia Meldrum, left the meeting.

7. Consultation on audit fees and funding arrangements

Elaine Boyd, John Gilchrist, Owen Smith, Parminder Singh, Stuart Dennis, joined the meeting.

Elaine introduced the consultation on audit fees and funding arrangements, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss the content of this report.
- Agree the approach to conducting the consultation exercise with stakeholders, including which stakeholders we should consult with and the questions we will ask them.

Executive Team agreed that now was not the right time to launch a consultation. Further internal discussion and engagement should take place with SPCA, Accounts Commission, Scottish Government and Board to explore options on the most appropriate model for funding public audit in Scotland.

Further discussion was around how we manage concerns raised by audit bodies on increased audit fees, how we support our front-line staff and how we convey to audit bodies what we are doing to mitigate the issues.

Following discussion, Executive Team considered the report and agreed that further work is needed before launching a consultation.

Action: Vicki/Elaine to discuss next steps.

Action: Martin/Stuart/John to seek legal advice on how significant the risk is if a body refuses to pay their fees.

Additional audit fee payments

Elaine introduced the additional audit fee payments report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the report.

Executive Team discussed the disparity and inconsistencies that audit bodies can experience in terms of additional fee payments.

Following discussion, Executive Team considered the report and agreed that further discussion is needed.

Action: Vicki/Elaine to discuss governance and approval on additional fee payments.

Elaine Boyd, John Gilchrist, Owen Smith, Parminder Singh, Stuart Dennis left the meeting.

8. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 7 March 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the Accounts Commission meeting on 7 March 2024 subject to the following changes:

- Deferring the Audit Scotland Q3 report to April meeting.
- Private item to be added – approval of a Deputy Chair. This is contingent on the process being completed in time for March papers to be issued.

9. Draft Executive Team agenda and confidential draft Executive Team agenda: 20 February 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 27 February 2024.

10. 2024 Executive Team action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the 2024 Executive Team planner and action tracker.

11. Any other business

Executive Team discussed any other business:

- The UK Government has produced a consultation on proposals to address the backlog of audits in England. Executive Team agreed that Audit Scotland would not be submitting a response.
- Quality survey results are available, and Kenny will share themes with Executive Team and quality leads.
- Best value quality arrangements proposals to be shared with Executive Team at strategic session on 5 March 2024.

12. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

13. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

- Risk
- Business continuity
- Service user engagement
- Audit fees and funding arrangements

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

14. Date of next meeting: 27 February 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 27 February 2024 10:00 am.

Minutes

Executive Team



Tuesday 27 February 2024, 10.00am
Hybrid Meeting (EH1 and TEAMS)

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Antony Clark
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Elaine Boyd, Director of Corporate Services, Audit Quality & Appointments
John Gilchrist, Manager, Audit Quality & Appointments
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Susan Burgess, Head of HR, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 20 February 2024

The draft minutes dated 20 February 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to the minor amendments suggested.

It was noted that the following annual reports were approved by correspondence: Enhanced workforce data capture proposal, Disciplinary policy revision and Job evaluations-role profiles.

2. Audit appointment changes

Elaine Boyd and John Gilchrist joined the meeting.

Elaine gave an overview of the audit appointment changes, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Agree the appointment recommendations in the attached draft reports to the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission.

During discussion, Executive Team requested that the paper be strengthened to provide assurance that the appointments are meeting the current professional standards, and that going forward we document this more robustly.

Further discussion was on ISQM1 and matching resources with specialised audits and how it would be helpful to document that people have this experience rather than recording it as generic.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed the appointment recommendations in the draft reports to the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission

Action: John Gilchrist to liaise with John Cornett/Kenny Oliver to revise the paper prior to submission to the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission.

Elaine Boyd and John Gilchrist left the meeting.

3. Confidential item

This is subject to a separate confidential minute.

4. Internal audit report: Overall financial control

Martin introduced the internal audit report: Overall financial control, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report.

Executive Team thanked the team for their hard work in receiving a positive and exemplary report.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the internal audit report.

5. Confidential item

This is subject to a separate confidential minute.

6. Employee engagement surveys

Susan introduced the employee engagement surveys, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the paper prior to submission to the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee on 19 March 2024.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report.

7. Strategic resourcing and workforce plans update

Susan introduced the strategic resourcing and workforce plans update, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the paper prior to submission to the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee on 19 March 2024.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report.

8. Draft Remco agenda: 19 March 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the Remco meeting on 19 March 2024.

Susan Burgess left the meeting.

9. Draft Audit Committee agenda: 19 March 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the Audit Committee meeting on 19 March 2024.

10. Draft Board agenda: 27 March 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the Board meeting on 27 March 2024.

11. Draft Executive Team agenda: 12 March 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 12 March 2024.

Action: Niki to schedule Leadership Group (LG) agenda to Executive Team meetings prior to LG sessions.

12. Any other business

13. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

14. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

- Financial control report
- NHS overview report

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

15. Date of next meeting: 12 March 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 12 March 2024 10:00 am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 12 March 2024, 10.00am
Hybrid Meeting (EH1 and TEAMS)



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Kenny Oliver
Antony Clark
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Stephen Boyle

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 27 February 2024

The draft minutes dated 27 February 2024 and confidential draft minutes dated 27 February were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

It was noted that the following annual reports were approved by correspondence: Overview of annual assurance and statement of control process 2022-23, Implementation of internal audit recommendations progress report, Q3 Data incidents/loss and Accounts timeline and outline plan.

2. Operational budget

Stuart Dennis joined the meeting.

Stuart gave an overview of the operational budget, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss the 2024/25 operational budget.
- Note the reduction in employer pension contributions leads to a saving of £286k.
- Note the budget assumes a holiday pay accrual saving of £305k.

- Approve its presentation to Audit Scotland Board on 27 March 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team acknowledged the proposed reduction in employers contribution and agreed, in relation to transparency and demonstrating good use of public funds, a proposal letter is sent to the Scottish Commission for Public Audit (SCPA) before preparation begins for the Autumn revision of the budget.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report and approved its presentation to Audit Scotland Board on 27 March 2024 subject to minor amendments.

Action: John/Kenny to explore potential options on how our savings can be utilised in advance of sending the proposal letter to SCPA.

Stuart Dennis left the meeting.

3. Annual policy review of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests and Data Protection

Martin gave a brief introduction on the annual policy review of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests and Data Protection, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note Audit Scotland's Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Policy for a further year.
- Note Audit Scotland's Data Protection Policy for a further year.
- Note the update in relation to potential future changes to the Data Protection legislation.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, that the policies be submitted the Board for approval at its meeting on the 27 March 2024.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report and approved its presentation to Audit Scotland Board on 27 March 2024.

4. Confidential item

This is subject to a separate confidential minute.

5. Draft Executive Team agenda: 20 March 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 20 March 2024.

6. Any other business

Martin highlighted progress with the planning for implementation of the Estates Strategy with part of it to consider how we start to close down some of the areas within the Edinburgh office including the Executive Team space.

Executive Team was content with this progress.

7. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

8. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

9. Date of next meeting: 20 March 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 20 March 2024 10:00 am.

Minutes

Executive Team



Tuesday 26 March 2024, 10.00am
Hybrid Meeting (EH1 and TEAMS)

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Antony Clark
John Cornett
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Helena Gray

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation & Transformation, Innovations & Quality
David Robertson, Head of Digital Services, Corporate Services Group
Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager, Corporate Services Group
Allan Campbell, Secretary to the Accounts Commission
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 12 March 2024

The draft minutes dated 12 March 2024 and confidential draft minutes dated 12 March 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

The following was approved as correspondence: Internal audit progress report 2023-24, Review of cooperation between internal audit and external audit, Digital security update and Updated Risk Register.

2. Minutes of Strategic Improvement Programme Board meeting of 12 March 2024

The draft minutes dated 12 March 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

3. People strategy measures

Gemma Diamond joined the meeting.

Martin provided an update on the people strategy measures, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the proposal for a KPI against each key measure to allow the People Strategy to be updated and re-published.
- Consider the emerging approach to the utilisation rates across the organisation.

Executive Team discussed the proposed measures in detail and agreed that further work is required on clarity and being more specific on our targets and performance measures.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that there are no utilisation rates for Corporate Services Group and Innovation and Quality, and requested further benchmarking to be carried out to determine how other bodies measure the utilisation of their corporate support functions.

Following discussion, Executive Team considered the report and noted further work is required.

Action: Martin/Gemma to undertake a benchmarking exercise to determine what other audit bodies/public sector organisations are doing in terms of utilisation rates and turnover rates.

Gemma Diamond left the meeting.

4. UK General election preparation

Simon Ebbett joined the meeting.

Simon summarised the general election preparation work underway, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note and provide feedback on the scenarios set out in **paragraph 13**.
- Discuss the points raised in the Discussion section at **paragraphs 15-24**.
- Note the Next steps in **paragraph 25**.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed a very thorough and helpful report and were provided with assurance that we can act quickly when an election date has been confirmed.

Executive Team considered our level of engagement and agreed that it would be useful to make PAC and SPCA aware of our plans as the election date can potentially impact on other areas such public reporting.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report and the next steps.

Simon Ebbett left the meeting.

5. Performance appraisal and development update

Kenny gave an update on performance appraisal and development, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report and the update on our project work to enhance our approach to performance management and development at Audit Scotland.
- Note the assurance provided on Leadership Group development activities.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, that the policies be submitted to the Board for approval at its meeting on the 27 March 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the Myers Briggs Type Indicator workshop sessions that have taken place across the organisation and agreed that it would be useful to find out what themes are emerging.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report and agreed, subject to minor amendments.

6. Confidential item

This is subject to a separate confidential minute.

7. Executive Team annual self-evaluation exercise

Martin gave an update on the proposed approach for an annual self-evaluation process, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss the proposed approach.
- Agree that the self-evaluation process take place between w/c 01/04 – 30/04/24.
- Agree the survey questions set out in appendix 1.

Executive Team agreed that the self-evaluation is a useful exercise in giving us a base line and where we need to go next.

Further discussion was on the questionnaire and in particular the questions relating to communications.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed the self-evaluation takes place between w/c 01/04/24 – 30/04/24, subject to minor amendments on the questionnaire.

8. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 18 April 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the Accounts Commission meeting on 18 April 2024.

Action: Allan to discuss the balance of private to public business with Accounts Commission Chair and Controller of Audit.

9. Draft Executive Team agenda: 9 April 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 9 April 2024 subject to the following:

- Vicki sends her apologies for the meeting and will provide Stephen with her comments.
- Annual report on data incidents/loss to go by correspondence.
- Annual Review of performance management arrangements to go by correspondence.

10. Any other business

11. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

12. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

- General election preparation.
- Performance appraisal and development.
- Estates management – West Port update.
- Audit modernisation hub.

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

13. Date of next meeting: 9 April 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 9 April 2024 10:00 am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 09 April 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Stephen Boyle (Chair)
Kenny Oliver
Antony Clark
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Vicki Bibby

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Jillian Matthew, Senior Manager, Performance Audit and Best Value Group
Nina Miller, Senior Auditor, Performance Audit and Best Value Group
Ewan Walker, Senior HR Advisor, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 26 March 2024

The draft minutes dated 26 March 2024 and confidential draft minutes dated 26 March 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendments.

It was noted that the following annual reports were approved by correspondence: Internal audit report and strategic planning, six monthly updates on progress of ISQM1 and Internal audit follow up report.

2. Confidential item

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

3. 2024-25 Internal Audit Strategy and Plan

Martin provided an update on the 2024-25 Internal Audit Strategy and Plan, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider and approve the plan.

Executive Team noted the only change to the original Internal Audit Plan is the substitution of the Procurement review for a review of the Audit Modernisation Project.

Executive Team acknowledged that this is year three of the appointment of internal auditors Wylie & Bisset (W&B) and noted that there is the potential of a one-year extension option but would require consideration and agreement by Audit Committee.

Further discussion was on the timeframe and scope for the next round of audits. Martin confirmed that a detailed assignment plan is prepared ahead of each audit giving us the opportunity to comment.

Following discussion, Executive Team considered and approved the plan.

Action: Martin to submit a proposal paper to Executive Team outlining the one-year extension option for W&B.

4. Human Rights Bill proposal

Jillian Matthew and Nina Miller joined the meeting.

Kenny summarised the draft proposal, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Agree our proposed response to the questions from the Scottish Government Bill team on their proposals for scrutiny bodies in the Scottish Human Rights Bill, as set out in **paragraphs 14 to 21 on pages 3-4**

During discussion, Executive Team noted the uncertainty around what the Bill will mean for Audit Scotland in practice, and the implications if we need to build in additional scrutiny to our work.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed the proposed response and requested that they be kept informed going forward.

Jillian Matthew and Nina Miller left the meeting.

5. Audit Scotland's Social Responsibility Strategy

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Kirsty summarised the draft social responsibility strategy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss the proposed Social Responsibility Strategy covering the period 2023-28.
- Approve the strategy (attached as appendix 1), subject to any required amendments.
- Note the next steps for embedding the strategy in our corporate performance reporting framework.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that detailed benchmarking had taken place with other organisations on their approach to corporate social responsibility.

Further discussion was on the strategy residing within Organisation Improvement in Innovation & Quality and how this was the best fit as the team has oversight of most strategies and projects contained within the three pillars of the strategy.

Executive Team discussed the timeframe for publication of the strategy and agreed that, if feasible, the timing be brought forward.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the strategy, subject to amendments.

6. Audit Scotland Volunteering Policy

Ewan Walker joined the meeting.

Kirsty summarised the draft volunteering policy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Approve that colleagues will be entitled to take up to two days annually for volunteering activity as part of the overall benefits package provided by Audit Scotland.
- Approve the Volunteering Policy and associated reporting and governance processes, as a key lever of our Social Responsibility Strategy (SRS), also under review on 9 April by Executive Team.

Executive Team discussed the wider positioning of the volunteering policy with other policies such as the flexible working policy and the public duties policy.

Executive Team discussed their concerns on Audit Scotland's insurance cover while colleagues are engaging in volunteering activities and have requested additional assurance in this area.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the volunteering policy subject to amendments and appropriate assurances being obtained in relation to insurance.

Action: Kirsty to explore what insurance cover other organisations provide for volunteering purposes.

Ewan Walker left the meeting.

7. Draft Executive Team agenda: 16 April 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 16 April 2024.

8. 2024 Executive Team action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the 2024 Executive Team planner and action tracker.

9. Any other business

10. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

11. Executive Team Communications

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

- Social Responsibility Strategy/Volunteering Policy
- Human Rights Bill

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

12. Date of next meeting: 16 April 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 16 April 2024 10:00 am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 16 April 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Antony Clark
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation & Transformation, Innovation & Quality
Michelle Borland, Head of Organisational Improvement, Innovation & Quality
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
Paul O'Brien, Director of Quality & Support, Innovation & Quality
Owen Smith, Senior Manager, Corporate Services Group
Jennifer Doolan, Senior Auditor, Audit Services Group
Parminder Singh, Audit Quality & Appointments Manager, Corporate Services Group
John Gilchrist, Manager, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 9 April 2024

The draft minutes dated 9 April 2024 and confidential draft minutes dated 9 April 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendments.

It was noted that the following report was approved by correspondence: Public opinion survey 2024.

2. Engagement surveys: Update on Best Companies results and stress survey action plan

Gemma Diamond, Michelle Borland and Susan Burgess joined the meeting.

Kenny provided a summary of the 2024 Best Companies results and updates on progress with the stress survey action plan.

Executive Team (ET) was invited to:

- Consider the results of the 2024 Best Companies survey and discuss whether any new actions or initiatives are required to respond to the results.
- Agree the approach and focus for discussing the Best Companies results with Leadership Group on 23 April 2024 and thereafter.
- Advise on where decision making lies for agreeing improvement actions and initiatives (with ET, with Leadership Group or within business groups).
- Note if there are any initial thoughts on whether we wish to continue to engage with Best Companies going forward.
- Note the 2023 HSE stress survey response and actions.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the positive progress with some workplace factors and acknowledged there is still room for improvement. One of the key findings was the disconnect in some areas and that further conversation is needed to explore this both corporately and within business groups.

Executive Team discussed the approach on sharing the results with Leadership Group at its meeting on 7 May 2024. Executive Team agreed that this session should outline the key messages and a further meeting be arranged for Audit Directors to discuss results and action needed.

Executive Team agreed to take ownership of the decision-making process in terms of agreeing improvement actions and initiatives.

Executive Team discussed their thoughts on using Best Companies in the future and agreed other options be explored.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the results and agreed the approach going forward.

Action: Gemma/Michelle to explore options on using a different provider to deliver employee engagement surveys.

Gemma Diamond, Michelle Borland and Susan Burgess left the meeting.

3. Quality update

Paul O'Brien, Owen Smith, John Gilchrist, Parminder Singh, Jennifer Doolan joined the meeting.

Kenny provided an update on the outcomes of recent cold file reviews; progress of the quality improvement action plan; and a summary of quality developments across the audit profession.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the paper and ask any questions of clarification.

Executive Team noted that the key findings in the report are centred around the audit on non-current asset valuations and acknowledged that I&Q are currently considering the implications of this matter on our audit approach and guidance required to auditors. This will include providing clarity on how we manage the expectation on asset valuation between Audit Scotland and ICAEW.

Following discussion, Executive noted the paper.

4. 2023-24 Audit Quality Transparency Report

Paul provided an overview of the content and main publication milestones of the Audit Quality Transparency Plan.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Comment on the draft Transparency Report.
- Approve the report's submission to the Audit Committee on 7 May 2024.

Executive Team discussed the approach we use in obtaining feedback from target audiences and agreed that there are some aspects that require further development.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the report's submission to the Audit Committee on 7 May 2024.

5. Confidential item

This item was subject to a separate confidential minute.

6. Draft Audit Committee agenda: 7 May 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of Audit Committee on 7 May 2024.

It was agreed to re-order agenda item 9 'Draft Audit Scotland Transparency Report', item 10 'QPAS report and item 11 'Audit quality improvement actions'.

7. Draft Remco agenda 7 May 2024 and confidential draft Remco agenda 7 May 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of Remco on 7 May 2024.

8. Draft Leadership Group agenda: 23 April 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of on 23 April 2024.

It was agreed to re-order item 2 'Operational planning process and 3 'Best Companies' and remove item 7 'Business continuity planning awareness session'.

9. Draft Executive Team agenda: 23 April 2024 and confidential draft Executive Team agenda 23 April 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of 23 April 2024.

It was agreed to remove confidential item 3.

10. Any other business

- Estates verbal update

Martin provided an update on the Edinburgh office. This was noted by Executive Team.

11. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

12. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

- Quality update
- QPAS/Transparency report
- Estates update

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

13. Date of next meeting: 23 April 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 23 April 2024 14:00 pm.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 23 April 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Antony Clark
Helena Gray
John Cornett
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Allan Campbell, Secretary to the Accounts Commission

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
Sharon Kewley, Business Support Manager, Corporate Services Group
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group
Debra Hadden, HR Advisor, Corporate Services Group (Observing)

1. Minutes of meeting on 16 April 2024

The draft minutes dated 16 April 2024 and confidential draft minutes dated 16 April 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendments.

It was noted that the following reports were approved by correspondence: Annual report on data incidents/loss, Non-audit services and Performance management arrangements annual report.

2. Confidential item

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

3. 2023-24 Health, Safety & Wellbeing: Annual report

Sharon Kewley joined the meeting.

Susan provided an update on the annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing report for 2023/24, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report and activity related to health, safety and wellbeing across the organisation over the course of 2023/24.
- Agree the report, subject to any required amendments, be submitted to the Remco.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed the decrease in annual leave carry forward highlighting that this is a positive step forward. Executive Team discussed the increase in absence rates from the previous year and the potential reasons for the increase.

A discussion took place on our future policy for providing equipment for colleagues to work from home in the context of hybrid working now being a mainstream approach to how Audit Scotland conducts its business.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the paper and agreed the report, subject to the required amendments, be submitted to the Remco on 7 May 2024.

Action: Further discussion required on what our future position should be on providing office equipment to colleagues at home.

Sharon Kewley left the meeting.

4. Staff Handbook: Flexible working and career break policy

Debra Hadden joined the meeting.

Susan provided an overview of the flexible working and career break policy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report and consultation undertaken with PCS.
- Approve, subject to any required amendments, the revised policy to be passed forward to the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee (Remco) for approval at its meeting on 7 May 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that one of the main legislative changes to the policy is the reduction in timelines for different stages of the process for considering requests for flexible working and career break.

Executive Team agreed that a consistent approach to the authorisation process to approve requests should be adopted across all business groups and to include this detail in the policy.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the report be submitted to Remco on 7 May 2024, subject to the required amendments.

Action: 30/04:.

Debra Hadden left the meeting.

5. Annual review: Counter fraud policy

Martin provided an overview of the counter fraud policy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the review.
- Agree proposed amendments to the policy.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments the policy is submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 7 May 2024 and the Board meeting of 21 May 2024.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed, subject to the required amendments, the report is submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 7 May 2024 and the Board meeting of 21 May 2024.

Susan Burgess left the meeting.

6. Review of Risk Register

Martin provided an overview of the updated corporate risk register, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team is invited to:

- Consider the updated risk register.
- Determine whether additional management action is required.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, it be submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration at its meeting on 7 May 2024.

Executive Team discussed the risks in detail and agreed refinements to the articulation of the delivery and the risk rating and direction of travel in relation to Artificial Intelligence, demonstrating efficiency and value for money and audit market capacity/ appetite.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the risk register, subject to the agreed amendments, for submission to the Audit Committee on 7 May 2024.

7. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 9 May 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Accounts Commission on 9 May 2024.

8. Draft Executive Team agenda: 30 April 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of 30 April 2024.

9. Any other business

10. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

11. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team agreed that this week's highlights for internal communication would focus on discussion from today's Leadership Group meeting.

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

12. Date of next meeting: 30 April 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 30 April 2024 14:00 pm.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 30 April 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Antony Clark (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

John Cornett
Vicki Bibby

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
Ian Metcalfe, Corporate Performance Officer, Corporate Services Group
Mark MacPherson, Audit Director, Performance Audit & Best Value
Nic Bryson, Executive Officer, Corporate Services Group
Gemma Diamond, Audit Director, Innovation & Quality
Michelle Borland, Head of Organisational Improvement, Innovation & Quality
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 23 April 2024

The draft minutes dated 23 April 2024 and confidential draft minutes dated 23 April 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendment.

It was noted that the following annual reports were approved: Audit Scotland Annual report.

2. Parliament Engagement Strategy

Mark MacPherson and Nic Bryson joined the meeting.

Mark provided an update on refreshed engagement strategy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Approve the revised strategy.
- Consider and offer views on proposed measures of success.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed the report should be explicit in our independence and ethics considerations. Executive Team agreed that it would be beneficial to explore what mitigations may be needed to provide assurance in the way we are operating in terms of our roles and engagement activities.

Further discussion was on how we can engage more widely with Parliament as a corporate body and how we continue to strengthen our relationship when a new Parliament term commences.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted and approved the strategy.

Action: Kenny/Mark/Nic to have a discussion on providing additional context around independence and ethics within the report.

Action: Kenny to review our parliamentary engagement to consider current and potential areas of mitigation around our independence.

Mark MacPherson and Nic Bryson left the meeting.

3. International engagement six-monthly update and new strategy

Gemma Diamond and Michelle Borland joined the meeting.

Gemma provided an update on the progress delivering our international strategy and introduced our draft international strategy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the summary of recent international engagement activity presented in Table 1.
- Discuss and feedback on the draft international strategy 2024-2028 and agree for it to be taken to Audit Scotland Board in May.
- Note the international engagement activity in the pipeline for the first six months of the new strategy.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the resourcing pressures highlighted in the report and noted that our operational planning process will support teams to identify specific actions that contribute to our international strategy.

Further discussion was on the new strategy being closely aligned to strategic priorities within the Corporate Plan and how this will help us to be proactive around areas of strategic interest.

Executive Team agreed it would be valuable to have a reference point to support our decision-making process to ensure international activity is conducted in an ethical way.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted and agreed the strategy, subject to the required amendments, be submitted to the Board on 21 May 2024.

Michelle Borland left the meeting.

4. Audit Modernisation proposal for SCPA

Kenny provided an overview of the approach and key messages for the informal session with the SCPA on audit modernisation, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss and provide comments on the questions raised in paragraph 9.
- Confirm the next steps outlined in paragraph 10.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that the presentation has the right level of detail and positioning. Executive Team noted that clarity is still needed on how the SCPA will run the session.

Further discussion was on striking the right balance between external and internal factors as well as the right level of detail needed in terms of efficiencies.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed the next steps in paragraph 10.

Action: Martin to look at previous budget proposals on when we have requested investment from the SCPA for the audit process.

Gemma Diamond left the meeting.

5. Annual Review of REMCO Terms of Reference

Susan Burgess joined the meeting.

Stephen advised of an interest in item 5. Following discussion Executive Team agreed that it was appropriate that Stephen could remain for item 5.

Susan provided an update of the changes to the annual review of the REMCO terms of reference, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider and to approve the changes proposed Agree proposed amendments to the policy.

Executive Team discussed the proposal of employee wellbeing and engagement becoming one item for the Remco agenda going forward and agreed that taking a holistic and high-level approach is the best option.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the changes for submission to the REMCO meeting of 7 May 2024.

Susan Burgess left the meeting.

6. 2023-24 Annual complaints report

Ian Metcalfe joined the meeting.

Martin and Ian provided an overview of the 2023/24 annual report on complaints received by Audit Scotland about its work, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team is invited to:

- Note the report.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, that this report be submitted to the Board meeting on 21 May 2024.

Executive Team discussed the categorisation of what constitutes a complaint and the best way to capture this intelligence for future reporting.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report, subject to the agreed amendments, for submission to the Board on 21 May 2024.

Action: Ian to explore the potential option of having a separate approach to recording and reporting feedback from Public Bodies.

Ian Metcalfe left the meeting.

7. Draft Executive Team agenda: 8 May 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of 8 May 2024.

8. 2024 Executive Team action Tracker

Executive Team reviewed the 2024 Executive Team planner and action tracker.

9. Any other business

Executive Team self-evaluation survey

Executive Team agreed that discussion on this item can take place at Executive Team Strategic session on 28 May 2024

Estates update

Martin provided an update on both the Edinburgh and Glasgow office. This was noted by Executive Team

10. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

11. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussion during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

12. Date of next meeting: 8 May 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 8 May 2024 at 10.00am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Wednesday 8 May 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Antony Clark
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Rebecca Smallwood, Correspondence Manager, Performance Audit & Best Value
Fiona Caffyn, Auditor, Performance Audit & Best Value
Gemma Diamond, Audit Director, Innovation & Quality
Michelle Borland, Head of Organisational Improvement, Innovation & Quality
Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager, Corporate Services Group
Paul O'Brien, Director of Quality & Support, Innovation and Quality
Nicola Paton, Digital Project Manager, Corporate Services Group
David Robertson, Digital Services Manager, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 30 April 2024

The draft minutes dated 30 April 2024 and confidential draft minutes dated 30 April 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendment.

It was noted that the following reports were approved by correspondence: Annual report on freedom of information & environmental information 2023-24 and annual report on information governance and security 2023-24.

2. Quarter 4 finance report

Stuart Dennis joined the meeting.

Stuart provided a verbal update on our year end position highlighting our overall underspend of £2m of which £1.9m of this is pension related and £120k of it is our actual operating underspend.

Executive Team noted that there is still income to be recognised which will have an impact on the underspend figure and that we have flexibility on how we would want to reflect this income in either the 2023-24 budget or carry it forward to 2024-25 budget.

Further discussion was on our contingency fund and how we position this going forward and if there is scope on using our Capital underspend to give us more flexibility in 2024-25.

Action: Vicki/Stephen/Stuart to explore options on the best way forward in how to reflect the additional income.

Stuart Dennis left the meeting.

3. 2023-24 Correspondence and whistleblowing annual report

Rebecca Smallwood and Fiona Caffyn joined the meeting.

Rebecca provided an update on the volume and nature of correspondence we received in 2023/24, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the contents of the 2023/24 Annual Report on Correspondence and Whistleblowing. This report will be taken to the June meeting of the Audit Committee before being published on our website.

Executive Team welcomed the report and thanked the team for their hard work in pulling it together.

During discussion, Executive Team acknowledged the work that is taking place to explore innovative ways to provide correspondents with more information on our role/remit at the time they provide us with information. The team are working with Digital Services to provide a digital solution which will help to capture information in one place whilst allowing us to filter out areas that are not within our remit as best as we can noting that there are a lot of grey areas.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted and agreed the report, subject to minor amendment, be taken to Audit Committee on 7 June 2024 before being published on our website.

Rebecca Smallwood and Fiona Caffyn left the meeting.

4. Stakeholder opinion and feedback

Simon Ebbett, Gemma Diamond and Michelle Borland joined the meeting.

Simon provided an overview of the results from stakeholder opinion and feedback activities undertaken, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the results of the 2024 public opinion survey, 2023 MSP survey, 2024 audited bodies' survey and 2023 local government survey.

- Provide feedback on the paper ahead of it being distributed to the Board this month.
- Review and give feedback on the discussion points and next steps.

During discussion, Executive Team was keen to establish if the results flagged up any surprises as well as noting that there are differences between the views of audited bodies and the public.

Executive Team discussed the frequency of producing the report and agreed to reduce the timing from annually to every second year which will be in line with reporting on the Public Audit in Scotland outcomes.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the Stakeholder opinion and feedback report ahead of the paper going to the Board meeting on 21 May 2024.

Simon Ebbett left the meeting.

5. Impact monitoring and evaluation report

Gemma introduced our third impact monitoring and evaluation report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the progress we have made implementing the impact monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework.
- Discuss the key findings of the impact report and consider any implications for our future improvement work and audit work.
- Agree to publishing a version of this impact report on the Audit Scotland website and referring it for discussion at a public session of the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee (PAC).

Executive Team welcomed the report and agreed our approach is giving us comprehensive and insightful information in a timely manner.

Executive Team agreed that, while some of the impact data is integrated within other reports, it would be useful to submit the report to Board meetings going forward. Executive Team is also supportive of sharing the report with a wider audience agreeing that information must be appropriate for the target audience.

Executive Team noted that, with Best Value (BV) now being integrated into the annual audit process, BV recommendations will also be included in the impact report going forward.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report and agreed a version of the report be published on the Audit Scotland website and it be submitted for discussion at a public session of the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee.

Action: Vicki/Gemma/Michelle to discuss programming future reports to Board meetings.

Gemma Diamond and Michelle Borland left the meeting.

6. Participation in professional groups update

Paul O'Brien joined the meeting.

Kenny provided an update on Audit Scotland's participation in external professional groups in the UK and internationally, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the content of the paper and provide comments.

Executive Team noted our representation on UK-based professional groups and agreed that next steps are to explore our wider organisational positioning to determine what we want to achieve from our participation.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed the Innovation and Quality Business Group will continue to lead engagement in this area and that wider strategic issues are brought back to Executive Team for consideration as and when appropriate.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the report doesn't capture the full range of ongoing activity with other UK agencies all of which are reported in different ways. Members also agreed that it would be useful to report the International Strategy and the update on our participation in professional groups at the same time to give a fuller picture of activity.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the update on participation in professional groups.

Action: Kenny/Paul to ensure future iterations of this paper reflect discussions held from professional group meetings as well as potential future discussions.

Paul O'Brien left the meeting.

7. Information Security Management policy

David Robertson and Nicola Paton joined the meeting.

Nicola provided an overview of the Information Security Management Policy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the refreshed policy and provide approval prior to submission to the Board for final sign off.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed the report and thanked the team for their hard work.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the refreshed policy and approved submission to the Board for final sign-off.

8. Review of Information Acceptable Use policy

David provided an update on the review of the Information Acceptable Use policy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the review of the Information Acceptable Use Policy
- Approve the policy attached as an appendix to this report.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the Information Acceptable Use policy.

David Robertson and Nicola Paton left the meeting.

9. Draft Audit Committee agenda: 7 June 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of 7 June 2024.

10. Draft Board agenda: 21 May 2024 & 7 June 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agendas for the meetings of 21 May 2024 and 7 June 2024.

11. Draft Executive Team agenda: 22 May 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of 22 May 2024.

12. Any other business

13. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

14. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussion during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

15. Date of next meeting: 22 May 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 22 May 2024 at 10.00am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Wednesday 22 May 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Antony Clark

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
David Loudon, HR Assistant Manager, Corporate Services Group
Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager, Corporate Services Group
Allan Campbell, Secretary to the Accounts Commission
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 8 May 2024

The draft minutes dated 8 May 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendments.

It was noted that the following reports were approved by correspondence: Annual reports on FOI/EI 2023-24 and information governance and security.

2. Minutes of Strategic Improvement Programme Board on 14 May 2024

The Executive Team agreed to keep the SIP minutes confidential because of the various procurement options for the Audit Modernisation Project.

3. Budget assumptions and timetable

Stuart Dennis joined the meeting.

Stuart provided an update on the budget assumptions and timetable, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Approve the initial assumptions to be used in the draft budget submission.
- Approve the 2025/26 budget timetable.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that the contingency fund should be managed for unplanned financial challenges and that recurring costs should be clearly outlined as part of the budget setting process.

Executive Team agreed that spending for the Audit Modernisation Project, including related learning and development costs, should be recorded separately in the core budget.

Executive Team discussed the budget timetable and recognised the reasons for the tight deadlines in September and agreed it would be helpful to discuss this with the Board.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the initial assumptions to be used in the draft budget submission and agreed the 2025/26 budget timetable be submitted to Board on 7 June 2024 for discussion.

Action: Further work to be done to gather information on contingency fund spend in 2024-25 to identify recurring costs for the 2025-26 budget setting process.

Action: Niki will speak to the Board Chair about adding the budget timetable to the agenda for 7 June meeting.

Stuart Dennis left the meeting.

4. Review of risk register

Martin provided an update on the review of the risk register, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the updated risk register.
- Determine whether additional management action is required.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, the register to be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting on 7 June 2024.

Executive Team discussed the risks, especially "A3: failure to meet audit target dates," and decided to keep it as a single risk but with more explanation to reflect our current situation with the firms.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed the report, subject to minor amendments, to be submitted to Audit Committee on 7 June 2024.

5. Governance statement and certificate of assurance

Martin provided introduced the governance statement and certificate of assurance, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the certificates of assurance.
- Determine whether to raise any issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Audit Committee or the Audit Scotland Board at their meetings on 6 June 2023 with the Annual Accounts and governance statements.
- Recommend the Chief Operating Officer, issues an Audit Scotland certificate of assurance to the Audit Committee and Board as part of the annual assurance process.

During discussion, Executive Team questioned if the Accounts Commission was captured as part of the assurance process and requested that we investigate this further.

Following discussion, Executive Team recommended the Chief Operating Officer, issues an Audit Scotland certificate of assurance to the Audit Committee and Board as part of the annual assurance process.

Action: Martin to investigate whether the Accounts Commission is included in the annual assurance process.

6. 2023-24 Internal audit annual report

Martin introduced 2023-24 internal audit report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team welcomed the report and was satisfied with the strong result.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the internal audit annual report.

7. Quarter 4 performance reports

Susan Burgess, David Loudon and Stuart Dennis joined the meeting.

Corporate Performance Report

Martin Walker introduced the quarter 4 corporate performance report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Review the performance in Q4 as set out below and in appendix 1.
- Consider the issues affecting performance, the actions identified and whether any additional management action is required.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that some of the objectives have no target data. Executive Team also agreed that further changes are needed in the graphical presentation and that language should be consistent with other reports.

Following discussion, Executive Team were content to note the Quarter 4 Corporate Performance Report, subject to minor amendments.

Finance Report

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the audited financial results for the twelve months to 31 March 2024.

Following discussion, Executive team noted the audited financial results for the twelve months to 31 March 2024.

People Report

Susan Burgess introduced the quarter 4 people performance report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the exit interview feedback from colleagues attached at appendix one.
- Note the report and workforce infographic attached at appendix two.
- Consider and discuss the key findings in relation to Q4's workforce infographic and ensure key messages and actions are shared with the wider leadership team for Q4.
- Note the progress update on the people strategy actions at appendix three.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that further intervention is needed to address the issues and uptake figures on mandatory training.

Following discussion, Executive Team were content to note the quarter 4 people report, subject to amendments.

Susan Burgess, David Loudon and Stuart Dennis left the meeting.

Annual Report

Simon Ebbett joined the meeting.

Simon Ebbett provided a verbal update on the RAG table which forms part of the annual report.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that the RAG table is unable to contain the appropriate level of context, making it difficult for readers to understand. Members also agreed that 'our story' is so diverse that it is difficult to convey the different and varied nature of our performance in a singular way. Executive Team agreed that transparency and clarity is already featured in the report.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed to omit the table from the 2023-24 annual report and continue to explore how best to include this information in future reports.

Simon Ebbett left the meeting.

8. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 13 June 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of 13 June 2024.

9. Draft Leadership Group agenda: 28 May 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meetings of 28 May 2024 and agreed to omit the Best Companies discussion from the agenda.

10. Draft Executive Team agenda: 4 June 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of 4 June 2024, and agreed that a paper on Career Development Gateway is added to the agenda.

11. Any other business

12. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

13. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussion during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

14. Date of next meeting: 4 June 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 4 June 2024 at 10.00am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 4 June 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Antony Clark
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Michelle Borland, Head of Organisational Improvement
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation & Transformation
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 4 June 2024

The draft minutes dated 4 June 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendments.

It was noted that the following reports were approved by correspondence: Internal audit recommendations progress report, Digital resourcing and I&Q role profile evaluations.

2. Employee performance appraisal and development project update

Gemma Diamond and Michelle Borland joined the meeting.

Gemma provided an update on the progress of the employee performance appraisal and development (EPAD) project, including findings from background research, and emerging proposals for our future approach. copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the progress made with the EPAD project to date.
- Approve spend of up to £17,000 from the management contingency fund to support the development of iTrent as the technical solution for our EPAD approach.
- Discuss and agree whether the EPAD project should be added to the Strategic Improvement Programme (SIP).

Executive Team thanked the team for a comprehensive paper.

Executive Team discussed using iTrent as the technical solution for the new EPAD approach and were content to see that the system provides a greater degree of automation and can link with other systems. Executive Team noted that iTrent offers a performance management module where we can explore opportunities to tailor the module to our requirements.

Further discussion focussed on the performance cycle and the process of reviewing and assessing individuals progress on their objectives through six-monthly review dates as well as implementing appropriate performance management measures to support this process. Executive Team noted that this should facilitate the availability of timely management information regarding the performance across the organisation.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the update and approved the spend of £17,000 and that the EPAD project be added to the Strategic Improvement Programme (SIP).

Gemma Diamond and Michelle Borland left the meeting.

3. Confidential item

4. Fraud response plan

Martin provided an update on the Fraud Response Plan (FRP), copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the review and updates to the Fraud Response Plan.
- Agree the revised Fraud Response Plan, attached as an appendix to this report.

Executive Team noted the update and agreed the revised Fraud Response Plan.

5. Draft Executive Team agenda: 4 June 2024

Executive Team reviewed the proposed agenda for the meeting of 18 June 2024.

6. Any other business

Estates update: Martin to provide an update to Executive Team by email.

7. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

8. Executive Team Communications

Helena and Antony to provide Kirsty with the key highlights for internal communication:

9. Date of next meeting: 18 June 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 18 June 2024 at 10.00am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 18 June 2024, 10.00am
EH1

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Antony Clark

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Michelle Borland, Head of Organisational Improvement, Innovation and Quality
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
Paul O'Brien, Director of Quality and Support, Innovation and Quality
Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 18 June 2024

The draft minutes dated 4 June 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Best Companies 2024 – Business group feedback and best practice

Michelle Borland and Susan Burgess joined the meeting.

Kenny Oliver provided an update on business group feedback and best practice, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the feedback from business groups on the Best Companies results (Appendix One) and the common themes emerging from this (paragraph six).
- Note the additional information Best Companies has provided to help us interpret our results (paragraphs 11-14).
- Discuss and agree whether any further action is required at an organisational level to respond to the business group level conversations and best practice identified by Best Companies. Suggestions for ET consideration are included in paragraph 16.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that it was useful to review feedback from Business Group discussions alongside the best practice examples provided by Best Companies. Executive Team noted that while Best Companies' information complements and strengthens internal data, more work is needed to merge themes from both sources.

Further discussion focussed on whether the detailed feedback from each business group accurately represents what is happening in those areas and how best to address the recurring themes that are highlighted.

Executive Team discussed how best they can communicate and engage with business groups as well as how business groups can interact with each other.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content to note the report and agreed on the suggestions included in paragraph 16 of the report.

Action: Kirsty/Simon to review and rebalance ET and LG comms and engagement strategies to respond to feedback.

Action: Executive Directors to consider and take forward how their business groups develop their own communications plans to improve visibility of their objectives (what and why), activities and challenges to build awareness and understanding.

Action: Michelle to consider how we share best practice on cross-team working more widely.

Action: Mark/Michelle to review progress with One Organisation Working outstanding actions and overall principles/aims (this is already timetabled to come back to LG later this year).

Action: Kenny/Michelle/Gemma to consider what can we do through EPAD project to support a culture of self-reflection at all levels – tying in with values and behaviours.

Michelle Borland and Susan Burgess left the meeting.

3. Audit quality update

Kenny Oliver provided an update on audit quality, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the paper and ask any questions of clarification.

During discussion, Executive reflected on the updates from UK PAF agencies regarding their recent quality reviews and if there are any findings that would support auditors to secure continuous improvement in quality.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content to note the audit quality update.

4. Guidance on planning 2024-25 annual audits

Paul O'Brien joined the meeting.

Paul O'Brien provided an overview on the guidance on planning 2024-25 annual audits, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to comment on the proposed:

- Target audit completion dates for 2024/25 annual audits.
- Annual audit activities for 2024/25.
- Programme and format for the Annual Audit Planning Conference.

During discussion, Executive Team reflected on the audit completion dates and the proposed milestones for producing the 2024-25 planning guidance.

Further discussion was on the alignment between the work programme and what we are asking of auditors through the planning guidance and the assurance that the two are connected and not simply having a list of dates without a clear purpose.

Executive Team discussed the draft format for the annual planning conference and requested some minor amendments.

Following discussion, the Executive Team was content to note the report, subject to minor amendments.

5. Annual review of Executive Team terms of reference

Martin Walker provided an update on the annual review of the Executive Team term of reference, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the review.
- Agree the revisions to the Terms of Reference referenced in paragraph seven below and attached as appendix 1.

Executive Team agreed that this item be deferred until after the joint Executive Team/Leadership Group discussion takes place.

6. Review of Leadership Group terms of reference

Martin Walker provided an update on the annual review of the Leadership Group term of reference, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the review.
- Discuss the next steps.

Executive Team agreed that this item be deferred until after the joint Executive Team/Leadership Group discussion takes place.

7. Draft Leadership group agenda: 25 June 2024

Executive Team noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Leadership Group on 25 June 2024 is still in discussion.

8. Draft Executive Team agenda: 2 July 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 2 July 2024.

9. Executive Team action planner

Executive Team reviewed the action tracker.

10. Any other business

Estates update

Martin provided an update on the both the Edinburgh and Glasgow office. This was noted by Executive Team.

11. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

12. Executive Team Communications

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

13. Date of next meeting: 2 July 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 2 July 2024 at 10.00am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 2 July 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Antony Clark
Helena Gray

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation and Transformation, Innovation and Quality
Rachel Browne, Audit Director, Audit Services Group
Carol Calder, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value
Laura Spencer, Senior HR Advisor, Corporate Services Group
David Loudon, HR Assistant Manager, Corporate Services Group
John Gilchrist, Manager, Corporate Services Group
Joe Chapman, Policy Manager, Performance Audit and Best Value
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 18 June 2024

The draft minutes dated 18 June 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Corporate forums terms of reference

Gemma Diamond and Rachel Browne joined the meeting.

Martin Walker provided an overview on the first tranche of draft terms of reference for the new corporate forums, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the draft terms of reference appended to this report:
 - Operational planning (appendix 1).
 - Quality and ethics committee (appendix 2).
 - Green future (appendix 3).

- Agree the terms of reference, subject to any required amendments.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that the terms of reference for the corporate forums do not need their approval unless there is a change to the delegated authority, in which case it would then go through the formal approval process. However, in terms of read across, for the remaining draft terms of reference, they agreed these be reviewed by correspondence over the course of the next few months.

Executive Team also discussed that, as a good practice, each corporate forum group should review their terms of reference annually.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content to note the draft terms of reference appended to this report and agreed that the remaining terms of reference will be sent to them by correspondence when ready.

Action: The remaining terms of reference to be sent by correspondence to Executive Team when ready.

Action: Gemma Diamond to review the existing process to prevent duplication between the Terms of Reference (ToRs).

3. Hotlist

Carol Calder joined the meeting.

Carol Calder provided an update on the Hotlist, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the issues identified and agree any required actions.
- Agree to close those items noted for closure.

During discussion, Executive Team thanked the team for a helpful and comprehensive paper.

Executive Team discussed the issues in detail noting that the strain and pressure on public services is evident and that inevitably this raises the risk profiles of audited bodies and that we should consider our own risk analysis.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content to note the Hotlist update and agreed to close those items noted for closure.

Action: Carol to send an update to Leadership Group on today's discussion at Executive Team.

Carol Calder left the meeting.

4. Carers leave and Special leave policy proposal

David Loudon and Laura Spencer joined the meeting.

Laura Spencer provided an update on the carers leave and special leave policy proposal, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report.
- Confirm whether they wish to approve the recommendation for five days of paid carers leave (pro rata for part time colleagues).
- Consider and approve the amalgamation of some of our existing leave policies into one single, Special Leave policy.
- Approve the tracked changes proposed to the existing policy wording.

During discussion, Executive Team discussed the reasons for having two separate policies covering emergency leave and carers leave and noted the specific circumstances of when each one would be used.

Further discussion was on the potential of consolidating policies and agreed, that going forward, we should look for opportunities to combine logically related policies.

Following discussion, Executive Team was content to approve the five days of paid carers leave.

David Loudon and Laura Spencer left the meeting.

5. Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act – Statements on exercise of public functions

Martin Walker provided an update on the draft Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act statements on efficiency, effectiveness and economy, sustainable economic growth and public relations expenditure, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Review the draft statements.
- Subject to any amendments, approve the statements for publication on the Audit Scotland website.

During discussion, Executive Team discussed the recurring and non-recurring costs and requested clarification in this area.

Further discussion was on sharing services and resources within the public sector with Executive Team agreeing to retain the listed examples in the report.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the statements for publication, subject to clarification on paragraphs 9 and 10.

Action: Martin to seek clarification on recurring and non-recurring costs and feedback to Executive Team.

Action: Martin to seek advice on producing an Accounts Commission an annual statement.

6. Internal Audit and Legal Services procurement contracts

Martin Walker provided an update on the internal audit and legal services contracts, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Internal audit procurement

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the options available and the risk benefit assessment (paragraphs 12- 13 below).
- Approve the recommendation to extend the internal audit services contract for a further year – as provided for under the current agreement (option 2).

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the recommendation to extend the internal audit services contract for a further year.

Legal services procurement

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the options available and the risk benefit assessment (paragraphs 15- 17 below).
- Approve the recommendation to extend the legal services framework agreement for a further year – as provided for under the current agreement (option 2).

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the recommendation to extend the legal services framework for a further year.

7. Confidential item

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

8. Stress survey approach

Kenny Oliver provided an overview of the approach to the stress survey roll out for 2024, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Agree the proposed approach to roll out our stress survey for 2024, subject to any feedback during the meeting.
- Consider circulating the paper to the wider Leadership Group following Executive Team for their information.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that the stress survey is fundamental in providing insight into how people are feeling in the organisation. They considered the potential to change the presentation/pitch of the survey however decided to keep it unchanged for this year with a view to look at this in the future with the wider staff engagement package.

Further discussion was on combining the communications for the launch of Best Companies with the stress survey.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed to the proposed approach to roll out the stress survey and for sharing the paper to the wider Leadership Group.

9. 2023-2024 to 2026-2027 Audit Scotland appointment changes

John Gilchrist joined the meeting.

John Gilchrist provided an update on the Audit Scotland appointment changes, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Remove the appointment of Carole Grant to the audits of:
 - Scottish Public Pensions Agency.
 - NHS Superannuation Scheme (Scotland).
 - Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme.
- Appoint Michael Oliphant to the above audits.

With effect for the audits of financial years 2023/24 to 2026/27.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the proposed audit appointment changes which will be considered separately by the Auditor General for Scotland.

John Gilchrist left the meeting.

10. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 8 August 2024

Joe Chapman joined the meeting.

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Accounts Commission on 8 August 2024.

Vicki confirmed that a paper on audit modernisation will go to the Accounts Commission informal meeting on 8 August 2024 and all members of the Executive Team will attend.

Joe Chapman left the meeting.

11. Draft Leadership Group agenda: 23 July 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Leadership Group on 23 July 2024.

Executive Team noted that there is an additional Leadership Group meeting on the 1 August 2024 to discuss 'How we work together'.

12. Draft Executive Team agenda and confidential draft Executive Team agenda: 30 July 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 30 July 2024 and requested an additional item for private discussion.

13. Any other business

- Estates update

Martin provided an update on the both the Edinburgh and Glasgow office. This was noted by Executive Team.

- Active August programme

Executive Team noted that communications for the Active August Programme will commence soon.

Executive Team members agreed to take part in the programme.

14. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

15. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

16. Date of next meeting: 30 July 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 30 July 2024 at 10.00am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 30 July 2024, 10.00am
EH1

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
John Cornett
Antony Clark
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
David Loudon, HR Manager, Corporate Services Group
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation and Transformation, Innovation and Quality
Carol Calder, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value
Blyth Deans, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value

1. Minutes of meeting on 2 July 2024

The draft minutes dated 2 July 2024 and confidential draft minutes of the 2 July 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Gender pay gap report and Equal pay statement 2024

Susan Burgess and David Loudon joined the meeting.

Susan provided an overview on the draft Gender pay gap report and our Equal pay statement, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the Gender pay gap and findings.
- Note the Equal pay statement and findings.
- Approve the reports for external publication, subject to a final editorial review, any required amendments and inclusion of updated graphics by the communications team.

Gender pay gap report

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that Audit Scotland is in a good position and progressing in the right direction.

Executive Team agreed that it would be beneficial to see an example which includes gender pay gap data reflecting the upcoming people changes at the Leadership Group level within Audit Scotland.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report subject to minor amendments and agreed that Vicki approve the final draft.

Action: Susan/David to prepare a mock-up which incorporates gender pay gap data, taking into account the upcoming people changes within the organisation and share with Executive Team.

Equal pay statement

During discussion, Executive Team acknowledged that staff could declare their data voluntarily but recognised the impact that this can have when collecting data to help represent a balanced and fair picture. Executive Team discussed how we can best raise awareness and promote staff to complete the declaration.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that, moving forward, we should openly recognise our ambitions in areas needing improvement and actively acknowledge our efforts to address these issues.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report subject to minor amendments and agreed that Vicki approve the final draft.

Action: Explore ways to encourage staff across Audit Scotland to complete the declaration form.

3. Staff handbook policy review

Susan provided an update on the changes to the secondment policy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the changes proposed in the Secondment policy.
- Approve the changes subject to members' feedback.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that information on international secondments is not included in the current secondment policy due to specific considerations. A separate policy or process will be required to address these areas.

During discussion, Executive Team requested that all policy updates be shared with the People Leads prior to submission to Executive Team.

Further discussion focused on management and budgeting arrangements and the allocation of responsibilities during the secondment period. Executive Team requested additional information be included in the policy to clarify these aspects.

Executive Team discussed the benefits of outward secondments and recognised the constraints within our ethical policy. Members agreed that measures would need to be taken

to mitigate these constraints, ensuring adherence to ethical standards while allowing colleagues to benefit from outward secondment opportunities.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report subject to minor amendments and agreed that Vicki approve the final draft.

Susan Burgess and David Loudon left the meeting.

4. Scrutiny strategic discussion

Gemma Diamond, Carol Calder and Blyth Deans joined the meeting.

Antony provided an overview on the arrangements for local government scrutiny co-ordination and ongoing scrutiny development work within the Strategic Public Sector Scrutiny Network (SPSSN), copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider whether the responsibility for local government scrutiny co-ordination should in future transfer from PABV to the Accounts Commission support team and Controller of Audit (paras 13 - 16).
- Note the ongoing work within the SPSSN to identify opportunities for developing and testing a new model or models of more place and person-centred scrutiny (paras 19 - 21).

During discussion, Executive Team examined how the roles of Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission have evolved over recent years and reflected on the challenges linked to Audit Scotland's national scrutiny leadership role.

Further discussion was on the coordination and responsibilities of local government scrutiny and the key leadership role in relation to this work.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed that responsibility for local government scrutiny co-ordination should transfer from PABV to the Accounts Commission support team and Controller of Audit, with Audit Scotland staff supporting the work.

Carol Calder and Blyth Deans left the meeting.

5. Confidential item

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

6. Draft Executive Team agenda: 13 August 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 13 August 2024.

7. Any other business

- Estates update

Martin provided an update on the both the Edinburgh and Glasgow office. This was noted by Executive Team.

8. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

Executive Team Communications

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication. Martin will pick this up with Simon.

9. Date of next meeting: 13 August 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 13 August 2024 at 10.00am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 13 August 2024, 10.00am
EH1



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
John Cornett
Antony Clark
Nicola Bryson (Minutes)

Apologies:

Helena Gray

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Patrick McFall, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group
Gordon Gillen, Social Media Manager, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 30 July 2024

The draft minutes dated 30 July 2024 was considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to minor amendment.

The draft confidential minutes dated 30 July 2024 was considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, and also noted a minor amendment to the minutes dates 2 July 2024.

It was noted that the following reports were approved by correspondence: Menopause policy, Occupational health and wellbeing policy, Asbestos policy and Q1 Data loss/Incidents.

2. Minutes of Strategic Improvement Programme Board: 6 August 2024

The draft minutes dated 6 August 2024 was considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to minor amendment.

3. NCS Bill Call for views

Antony introduced the draft response to a call for views by the Scottish Parliament's Health Social Care and Sports Committee relating to the National Care Service Bill, copies of which has been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider and provide comment on the draft response.

- Agree to delegate final approval of the response on behalf of the Executive Team to the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS).
- Note that a further call for views, on IJB finance, has been drafted and appended for information and agree to delegate approval for this response to the AGS.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the significant strategic issue of this calls for view and noted the excellent draft responses by the team drawing on our audit work.

Following discussion, Executive Team provided comment of minor amendments to the drafts that Antony will feedback and sign off for both responses.

4. Annual review of corporate governance policies

Martin provided an overview on the annual review of corporate governance policies, highlighting any changes are minor in nature, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the annual review of the corporate governance documents.
- Approve the suite of corporate governance documents to go to Audit Committee on 03 September 2024.

Standing orders

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the revised document subject to minor amendments which Martin will make.

Scheme of delegation

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the revised document subject to minor amendment on who appoints the Controller of Audit.

Financial regulations

During discussion, Executive Team highlighted the possible inclusion of the role of SCPA in our budget process.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the revised document subject to minor amendment which Martin will make.

Members code of conduct

During discussion, Executive Team requested a review of the wording in relation to the Other Appointments and Conflicts of Interest paragraphs to provide examples on practical application.

Following discussion, Executive Team have delayed approval of the document until revised wording is provided by Kenny and Martin and noted that any changes to this document may need to be reflected in the Accounts Commission member code of conduct document.

Action: Martin and Kenny to review wording of paragraphs 40/41 and update Executive Team for final Audit Committee paper approval.

Action: Martin to follow-up reflection of any changes to the Accounts Commission members code of conduct document.

Staff code of conduct

During discussion, Executive Team highlighted the paragraphs on fair and reasonable treatment at work requesting the wording to be clearer on what is required by colleagues.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the document subject to revised wording by Martin and that an urgent cross reference has been conducted to the new ethical standards policy by I&Q.

5. Review of records management policy

Martin provided an overview on the annual review of the records management policy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the updated records management policy.
- Subject to amendment, recommend the policy for approval by the Board at its meeting on 24 September 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that functionality testing is still outstanding due to resource challenged but this will be completed in the next few months.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the revised policy subject to minor amendments

6. Media leads and publication days

Patrick introduced the media leads and publication days paper, which sets out the current and proposed approach to allocating media leads and publication dates, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- To consider recommendations (para 13-19) for AGS and Accounts Commission approval.

During discussion, Executive Team acknowledged the choices of colleagues available to lead media and convey the key messages of our reports without diluting the AGS reputation or loss of impact. Executive Team are also re-assured that training and refreshers are in train for all colleagues undertaking media delivery.

Further discussion focused on the Controller of Audit voice and emphasised this should be agreed with the Accounts Commission.

Following discussion, Executive Team welcomed the useful paper and are satisfied with the recommendations on allocating media leads and publication days, with special thanks to the Communication Advisers on all their work to support media days.

7. Draft Audit Committee agenda: 3 September 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Audit Committee on 3 September 2024

8. Draft Executive Team agenda: 20 August 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 20 August 2024, with minor amendment.

9. 2024 Executive Team action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the action tracker.

10. Any other business

Estates update

Martin provided an update on the both the Edinburgh and Glasgow office. This was noted by Executive Team and agreed a further communication update to be provided to colleagues.

Action: Martin to update colleagues on approximate opening dates

Twitter/X

Stephen highlighted an initial email conversation with the Accounts Commission Chair and Head of Communication on the use of the X social media platform. Executive Team agreed a more in-depth discussion may be required in due course.

11. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

12. Executive Team Communications

Gordon joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

Gordon left the meeting.

13. Date of next meeting: 20 August 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 20 August 2024 at 10.00am.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 20 August 2024, 10.00am
EH1 & Hybrid



Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Helena Gray
Antony Clark
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

John Cornett

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Owen Smith, Senior Manager, Corporate Services Group
Paul O'Brien, Director of Quality & Support, Innovation & Quality
Gill Miller, Senior Manager, Innovation & Quality
John Boyd, Audit Director, Audit Services
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Sarah Watters, Secretary to the Accounts Commission
Joe Chapman, Policy Manager, Performance Audit and Best Value
Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 20 August 2024

The draft minutes dated 20 August 2024 was considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendment.

It was noted that the following reports were approved by correspondence: Implementation of internal audit recommendations progress report, IA progress report, Induction policy and the Digital audit role profiles report which Executive Team noted and were content with the response from the Head of Human Resources.

2. Additional fees

Owen Smith and Stuart Dennis joined the meeting.

Owen introduced the paper on additional fees, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider and provide comment on the draft response.

- Agree to delegate final approval of the response on behalf of the Executive Team to the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS).

During discussion, Executive Team discussed potential trigger points that would necessitate Board approval in accordance with the financial regulations. Executive Team acknowledged that the existing threshold controls outlined in the Scheme of Delegation could potentially serve as effective proxies in this context.

Further discussion was on managing cashflow risks as a result of delayed invoice payments and non-recoverable fee charges.

Executive Team agreed that receiving a quarterly update on our current status, as well as insights into the firms and the sustainability of the model, would be highly beneficial.

Following discussion, Executive Team were content with the recommendations subject to additional work being undertaken to provide further detail and assurance on additional audit fee arrangements.

Action: Stuart to provide Vicki with a monthly cashflow update.

Action: Martin to verify that we are comfortable with the sign-off thresholds within the financial regulations.

Action: Stuart/Martin/Owen to consider adding a section on non-recoverable fees to the reporting process.

3. Statutory reporting & budget approval

Paul O'Brien, Gill Miller and John Boyd joined the meeting.

Gill introduced the statutory reporting and budget approval report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Approve the proposals in relation to roles and responsibilities (paragraph 8 of this paper).
- Approve the proposals for statutory reports fees and agree the most appropriate budget arrangements to cover Audit Scotland's costs (paragraphs 9-12 of this paper).
- Note other changes to the statutory reporting guidance (paragraph 13 of this paper).
- Offer any comments or reflections on the new guidance (attached separately).

During discussion, Executive Team discussed the roles and responsibilities for leading and preparing reports and agreed that more emphasis should be given on the involvement of the Performance Audit and Best Value role.

Further discussion was on the need for transparency in reporting chargeable costs and non-chargeable costs

Executive Team discussed the proposal to ask audited bodies to cover the costs and agreed that, pending discussions between the Controller of Audit and the Chair of the

Accounts Commission, the Accounts Commission would assume responsibility for the costs associated with follow-up work requests.

Following discussion, Executive Team were engaged and welcomed the progress but the item needs to come back for approval following further engagement.

Action: Helena and Jo Armstrong to have a discussion regarding charging additional fees for follow up work requests from the Accounts Commission.

Action: Gill to undertake further work to update the guidance on fees to aid clarity and consistency going forward.

Action: Gill/PABV/ASG to monitor statutory reports costs to inform decisions on future budgets and fees.

Gill Miller, John Boyd and Owen Smith left the meeting.

4. 24-25 Guidance on planning annual audits

Paul provided an update on the guidance on planning annual audits, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider and approve for consultation the draft of the guidance on planning 2024/25 annual audits provided at Appendix 1.
- Agree the proposed programme and format for the Annual Audit Planning Conference at Appendix 2.

During discussion, Executive Team discussed how Audit Scotland intends to provide best practice examples and noted that, due to timing constraints, they would not be available at the same time as the planning guidance however would be ready in time for the annual audit.

Executive Team agreed that to improve rigor and identify early warning signs, it would be helpful to include regular reporting on potential audit delays.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the draft planning guidance and the proposed programme and agreed that any minor changes be approved by John Cornett.

Action: Paul/Martin/Owen to explore the possibility of implementing regular reporting on audit delays.

Paul O'Brien left the meeting

5. Review of risk register

Martin provided an update on the review of the risk register, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the updated risk register.

- Determine whether additional management action is required.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, the register to be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting on 3 September 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that the risk deep dive on 'Failure of people/ capacity/ health, safety and wellbeing' originally planned for 24 September will be rescheduled.

Further discussion focussed on including additional details on Digital Services recruitment before the report is submitted to the Audit Committee on 3 September.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed the register be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting on 3 September 2024, subject to the required amendments.

Action: Martin to re-arrange the risk deep dive scheduled for 24 September.

6. Internal audit report: Stakeholder Engagement

Simon Ebbett joined the meeting.

Martin introduced the internal audit report: stakeholder engagement, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report.

Executive Team welcomed the strong level of assurance on our effectiveness of the methods used to communicate with key stakeholders and thanked the team for their hard work.

Further discussion centred on the Executive Team's strategic sessions, with members agreeing to Simon's request to participate quarterly to discuss communications and engagement.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the internal audit report.

Action: Incorporate Simon into the appointment schedule for the Executive Team's strategic sessions on a quarterly basis.

Simon Ebbett left the meeting.

7. Internal audit report: Business Continuity

Martin introduced the internal audit report: Business Continuity, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report.

Executive Team welcomed the substantial level of assurance surrounding the arrangements in place for business continuity and was supportive of the recommendations made in the report.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the internal audit report.

8. Draft Accounts Commission Strategy Seminar agenda: 11 September 2024

Sarah Watters and Joe Chapman joined the meeting.

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Accounts Commission on 11 September 2024.

Action: Joe will consult with the Chair of the Accounts Commission to gather her insights on involving members of the Performance Audit and Best Value team in discussions regarding the sponsor role.

9. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 12 September 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Accounts Commission Committees on 12 September 2024, subject to minor amendments.

Sarah Watters and Joe Chapman left the meeting.

10. Draft Leadership Group agenda: 27 August 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Leadership Group on 27 August 2024.

Vicki confirmed that quarterly performance reports will be presented at Executive Team meetings. She has requested the attendance of people leads, and any other resource leads should attend as necessary.

11. Draft Executive Team agenda: 10 September 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 10 September 2024.

12. Any other business

13. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

14. Executive Team Communications

Simon joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

Simon left the meeting.

15. Date of next meeting: 10 September 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 10 September 2024 at 9.00 am in Edinburgh.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 10 September 2024, 9.00am

EH1 & MS Teams

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
John Cornett
Kenny Oliver
Helena Gray
Alison Cumming
Nicola Bryson (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Ian Metcalfe, Corporate Performance Office, Corporate Governance
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
David Loudon, Human Resources Assistant Manager, Corporate Services Group
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation and Transformation, Innovation and Quality
Michelle Borland, Head of Organisational Development, Innovation and Quality
Sarah Watters, Secretary to the Accounts Commission
Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager, Corporate Services Group
Graeme Forrester, Head of Performance and Corporate Governance, Corporate Governance (observer for item 3)

1. Minutes of meeting on 20 August 2024

The draft minutes dated 20 August 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendment.

It was noted that the following reports were approved by correspondence:

- Digital security update.
- HR policies: Alcohol & drugs, Workforce parties and events, Public duties, Whistleblowing.
- Six-monthly updates on ISQM1 progress.
- Lone working.
- LPF Policy Statement.
- Proposed Forum meeting dates 2025.

2. Minutes of SIP PB meeting 4 September 2024

The draft Strategic Improvement Programme Board minutes dated 4 September 2024 were considered. Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minor amendment.

3. Quarter 1 Performance reporting

Martin Walker, Ian Metcalfe, Susan Burgess, David Loudon, Gemma Diamond, and Graeme Forrester joined the meeting.

Q1 Corporate performance report

Martin Walker introduced the Q1 Corporate performance report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Review the performance in Q1 as set out in appendix 1.
- Consider the issues affecting performance, the actions identified and whether any additional management action is required.
- Approve, subject to any required amendments, the report be submitted to the Audit Scotland Board meeting on 23 September 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the main highlights of audit delivery, recruitment activity and mandatory training.

Further discussion focused on the requirement for refinement in the next iterations to be able to assess performance around clearer connection between delivery and financial work in progress, quarterly forecasting, firms audit delivery and versions for different stakeholders.

Following discussion, Executive Team welcomed the ongoing developments of the reporting and approved the paper for the Board subject to minor amendments.

Q1 People report

Susan Burgess introduced the Q1 People report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

It is proposed that Executive Team:

- Note the exit interview feedback from colleagues attached at appendix one.
- Note the report and workforce infographic attached at appendix two.
- Note the Disability Confident Working Group survey results and report attached at appendix three.
- Consider and discuss within business group management teams the key findings in relation to Q1's workforce data and ensure any key messages and actions are shared within management teams.
- Note the progress update on the people strategy actions at appendix four.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the main focus on sickness absence, flexi and holiday balances for further monitoring and the positive progress with mandatory training and 3D completion.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the Executive Directors are actively pursuing plans on the flexi and holiday balance with their reports and the progress of the people strategy actions.

Ian Metcalfe, Gemma Diamond and Graeme Forrester left the meeting

4. Lease car policy

Martin provided an update on the Lease car policy, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the changes proposed in the Car Lease policy.
- Approve the changes subject to members' feedback.
- Approve the policy for onward review by Remco.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the updated statistics of colleagues on the lease car scheme.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the proposed changes for onward review by Remco and agreed further cost modelling options on the policy to be reported back in line with the next round of pay negotiations.

Action: Cost modelling options to be produced and reported back to Executive Team.

Susan Burgess and David Loudon left the meeting.

5. Diversity, equality and inclusion strategy project: Emerging strategy and consultation plans

Gemma Diamond and Michelle Borland joined the meeting.

Gemma provided an update on the DEI strategy and the equality outcomes for consultation, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Review and feedback on the emerging strategy content included in Appendix two. Key questions we plan to use in consultation are included on the lead slides for section. We recognise there is a lot of information in the slides and invite Executive Team to focus feedback on the draft equality outcomes (slides 12-15) and areas of focus for mainstreaming equality and human rights (slides 18-21).
- Agree that the content in Appendix two can be used to consult on the strategy with the Audit Scotland Board on 24 September 2024 and with the Accounts Commission on 10 October 2024.

- Note the plans for wider consultation on the strategy with colleagues internally and external stakeholders.

During discussion, Executive Team clarified the disability statistics from the internal survey results, noted our benchmarking needs to be clearer and progression on the ethnicity outcome and the external environment.

Further discussion focused on positioning the strategy within our audit work to allow auditors to be better supported while being flexible and broad enough to encompass all equality characteristics coming through legislation and duties.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed the content in appendix two, subject to minor amendment, and noted the plans for wider consultation on the strategy with more opportunity to discuss with Executive Team as it progresses.

Vicki Bibby, Gemma Diamond and Michelle Borland left the meeting.

6. Confidential item

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

7. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 10 October 2024

Sarah Watters joined the meeting.

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Accounts Commission on 10 October 2024.

Sarah Watters left the meeting.

8. Draft Audit Scotland Board agenda: 24 September 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Audit Scotland Board on 24 September 2024.

9. Draft Leadership Group agenda: 25 September 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Leadership Group on 25 September 2024.

10. Draft Executive Team agenda: 1 October 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of Executive Team on 1 October 2024.

11. Executive Team action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the action tracker and agreed that each owner to review and update each action to make the tracker more manageable.

Action: Executive Team to review and update actions accordingly.

12. Any other business

CDG

Executive Team briefly discussed the current CDG process and applications prior to the conclusion of the upcoming review.

13. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

14. Executive Team Communications

Simon joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

Simon left the meeting.

15. Date of next meeting: 1 October 2024

The next meeting of Executive Team will take place on 1 October 2024 at 10.00am in Edinburgh.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 1 October 2024, 9.30am

EH1 & MS Teams

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
John Cornett
Kenny Oliver
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Alison Cumming

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services Group
Wojciech Kuzma, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Services Group
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
David Loudon, Human Resources Assistant Manager, Corporate Services Group
Michael Oliphant, Audit Director, Audit Services
Carol Calder, Audit Director, Performance & Best Value
Paul O'Brien, Director of Quality & Support, Innovation and Quality
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation and Transformation, Innovation and Quality
Michelle Borland, Head of Organisational Development, Innovation and Quality
Owen Smith, Senior Manager, Corporate Services Group
John Gilchrist, Manager, Corporate Services Group
Parminder Singh, Audit Quality & Appointments Manager, Manager, Corporate Services Group
Jennifer Doolan, Senior Auditor, Corporate Services Group
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services Group

1. Minutes of meeting on 10 September 2024 and confidential minutes of meeting on 10 September 2024

The draft minutes dated 10 September 2024 and confidential draft minutes dated 10 September 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

It was noted that the following reports were approved by correspondence:

- Travel expenses policy.
- AS Comms & Engagement Strategy.
- I&Q establishment change.

2. Budget discussion

Stuart Dennis and Wojciech Kuzma joined the meeting.

Vicki expressed her gratitude to the team for providing the excellent and valuable papers that facilitated the budget discussion with the SPCA during the meeting on 30 September 2024.

Vicki provided an update confirming that the session was both engaging and productive. We effectively conveyed our budget to the SCPA, clearly outlining our key points and provided them with a better understanding of our big issues.

The Executive agreed to the possibility of holding an informal meeting with the SCPA annually to discuss our budget.

Vicki confirmed that the SCPA will provide written confirmation of the discussion. The Executive Team noted that this will be a public document.

Stuart Dennis and Wojciech Kuzma left the meeting.

3. Staff Handbook policy review

Susan Burgess, David Loudon, Gemma Diamond, Michael Oliphant and Carol Calder joined the meeting.

Susan introduced the annual review of a variety of policies, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report and consultation undertaken with PCS and People Leads.
- Consider the changes proposed in each policy.
- Consider the newly proposed Acting Up and Additional Responsibility Allowance Guidance.
- Approve, as appropriate, the introduction of new policy matter and revisions to existing policies in this tranche.

Hybrid working policy

During discussion, the Executive Team expressed their support for the policy changes and requested that a clearer explanation of the term "hybrid" be incorporated into the policy.

Following discussion, the Executive Team approved the Hybrid working policy, subject to the requested amendments.

Flexi time policy

During discussion, the Executive Team agreed that timesheets should be updated weekly and requested that this requirement be incorporated into the policy.

Further discussion focused on the procurement on a new Resourcing and Information Management System and the potential implications of the new 35-hour week when it comes into effect.

Following discussion, the Executive Team approved the Flexi time policy, subject to the requested amendments.

Action: John/Susan to monitor and evaluate the impact of the new 35-hour week in relation to the new Resourcing and Information Management system.

Sickness absence policy

During discussion, the Executive Team discussed the notification of sickness absence procedures and explored the various options to support colleagues when they are unwell.

Following discussion, the Executive Team requested amendments and for the Sickness absence policy to return to the Executive Team for review.

Action: Susan to review the Sickness absence policy and circulate by correspondence to the Executive Team for approval.

Acting up and additional responsibility guidance and Starting salaries guidance

Following discussion, the Executive Team approved the Acting up and additional responsibility guidance and the Starting salary guidance, subject to the requested amendments.

Susan Burgess, David Loudon, Gemma Diamond, Michael Oliphant and Carol Calder left the meeting.

4. Audit Quality Framework

Owen Smith, John Gilchrist, Parminder Singh and Jennifer Doolan joined the meeting.

Owen introduced the Audit Quality Framework, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Comment on the draft AQF at Appendix A.
- Consider the revised Audit Quality Indicators (AQIs) and explanations for changes at Appendix B.
- Note that under the Partnership Working Framework the AQF is jointly approved by the Auditor General for Scotland, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland's Board. The Audit Committee also has a role overseeing audit quality under its terms of reference.
- Endorse the draft AQF 2024 for presentation to the:
 - Audit Committee on 5 November 2024

- Accounts Commission on 7 November 2024
- Auditor General via correspondence after the Audit Committee
- Board on 26 November 2024.

During discussion, the Executive Team welcomed the changes made to the report and focused their discussion on the AQIs and target thresholds used to measure performance, specifically the rationale behind the 80% target for grades one and two.

Further discussion was on the justification for distinguishing between internal and external quality reviews. The Executive Team noted that from a quality perspective, it would be more effective to present the comprehensive results of all reviews conducted within a cycle as a unified report.

Further discussion focused on the AQIs from stakeholder surveys. While the Executive Team acknowledged the value of the information provided, members challenged whether these indicators accurately reflect the quality of audit and, while there was agreement that measuring this information is important, should it be positioned differently.

Following discussion, the Executive Team agreed that further conversations are necessary and once those are complete, a further discussion with the Executive Team is to take place prior to submission to the Board.

Action: Owen to engage in separate discussions with both the Auditor General and the Controller of Audit regarding their identified issues.

Owen Smith, John Gilchrist, Parminder Singh and Jennifer Doolan left the meeting.

5. Participation in professional groups update

Paul O'Brien joined the meeting.

Paul provided an update on Audit Scotland's participation in external professional groups, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the content of the paper and provide comments.
- Provide thoughts on wider strategic matters that could be brought to any of these groups in the coming 6 months.
- Indicate expectations around travelling for in person meetings of professional groups.

During discussion, the Executive Team emphasised the importance of knowing what our 'big issues/topics' are and our collective position around them prior to participating in these groups. This would equip us with the necessary insights to attend the right groups and to effectively influence both agenda and discussion.

Further discussion focused on how we best use this information as reference material in having other strategic conversations throughout the year to help us identify potential gaps.

Following discussion, the Executive Team were content to note the report.

Action: Paul to facilitate a session with ET to obtain agreed positions on strategic issues that will be taken to professional groups, and then use the 6 monthly updates to provide feedback on these.

Action: Paul and Helena to discuss how the Accounts Commission can be sighted on this activity and when/if it would be appropriate for them to contribute their views.

Paul O'Brien left the meeting.

6. International engagement: Six monthly update

Gemma Diamond and Michelle Boreland joined the meeting.

Gemma provided an update on the progress made on delivering our International strategy 2024-2028, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the summary of recent international engagement activity presented in Table 1.
- Discuss and feedback on planned international activity during the remainder of 2024-25 and in future years of the strategy.

During the discussion, the Executive Team agreed that this report accurately represents our new strategy and demonstrates our commitment to exercising selectivity when necessary.

Following discussion, the Executive Team were content to note the report.

Action: Vicki will follow up with the Chief Operating Officer group to explore how we can stay informed about key international areas highlighted at INTOSAI meetings and update Gemma and Michelle thereafter.

Gemma Diamond and Michelle Boreland joined the meeting.

7. Draft Executive Team agenda: 8 October 2024

The Executive Team reviewed the agenda for the meeting of the Executive Team on 8 October 2024 and noted the following changes:

- Remove draft budget submission and Zero waste appointment.
- Include a discussion update on code.
- Invite people leads for the Stress survey results.

8. Any other business

9. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

10. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

The Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

Kirsty left the meeting.

11. Date of next meeting: 8 October 2024

The next meeting of the Executive Team will take place on 8 October 2024 at 10.00am in Glasgow.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 8 October 2024, 10.00am

Glasgow & MS Teams

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
John Cornett
Kenny Oliver
Alison Cumming
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services Group
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation and Transformation, Innovation and Quality
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services Group
Michael Oliphant, Audit Director, Audit Services
Mark MacPherson, Audit Director, Performance and Best Value
Paul O'Brien, Director of Quality & Support, Innovation and Quality

1. Minutes of meeting on 1 October September 2024

The draft minutes dated 1 October 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to minor amendments.

Action: Martin to send compiled responses on the remaining Corporate Forum TORs to the Executive Team for review.

2. Confidential item 1

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

3. Confidential item 2

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

4. Confidential item 3

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

5. Confidential item 4

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

6. Engagement with NAO: Verbal update

Vicki provided a brief update on her meeting with the Chief Operating Officer group.

7. Draft Executive Team agenda: 15 October 2024

The Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Executive Team on 15 October 2024 subject to minor amendments.

8. ET Action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the action tracker.

9. Any other business

10. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

11. Executive Team Communications

There was no communications update for this meeting.

12. Date of next meeting: 15 October 2024

The next meeting of the Executive Team will take place on 15 October 2024 at 10.00am in Edinburgh.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 15 October 2024, 10.00am

Edinburgh & MS Teams

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Alison Cumming

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services
Michael Oliphant, Audit Director, Audit Services
John Gilchrist, Audit Quality & Appointments, Corporate Services
Jennifer Doolan, Senior Auditor, Corporate Services
Graeme Forrester, Head of Performance & Corporate Governance, Corporate Services
Simon Ebbett, Head of Communications, Corporate Services

1. Minutes of meeting on 8 October 2024 and confidential minutes of the meeting on 8 October 2024.

The draft minutes dated 8 October 2024 and confidential minutes dated 8 October 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to minor amendments.

The following were noted for approval: Terms of reference for: People, development and wellbeing group, Audit Modernisation project board, Information Governance and management group, Performance, financial and risk management group, Equalities and human rights strategic group, Audit approach board and Staff Handbook policies: Holiday policy, Season ticket policy, Relocation policy and Right to disconnect policy.

2. Health, Safety & Wellbeing plan 2024-28

Susan Burgess and Michael Oliphant joined the meeting.

Susan introduced the paper on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the documentation, research and consultation completed.

- Note the priority actions identified - based upon the current position and recent people data available including survey results, absence rates etc.
- Approve the plan, subject to any changes discussed during the meeting, and recommend it to the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee (Remco) on 11 November 2024. The draft plan is attached as appendix one.

During discussion, Executive Team agreed that creating a diagram to illustrate the connections between our People Strategy, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan, and our other policies would be beneficial.

Further discussion focused on key performance measures, highlighting the importance of incorporating baseline data and targets to enhance context. Additionally, Executive Team identified the need for extra indicators to provide a clearer assessment of our performance in this area.

Executive Team also acknowledged the value of exploring how to effectively present our key performance measures using a balanced scorecard.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the plan, subject to minor amendments, and recommended it to the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee on 11 November 2024.

Action: Martin/Susan to develop a diagram illustrating the connections between our People Strategy, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan, and our other policies.

Action: Susan to incorporate additional data for key performance measures and identify further indicators to include in the report prior to submission to Remco on 11 November 2024.

Susan Burgess and Michael Oliphant left the meeting.

3. 2024: Draft Audit quality interim report

John Gilchrist and Jennifer Doolan joined the meeting.

John introduced the draft Audit quality interim report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to note:

- The good quality of Annual Audit Plans (AAPs) prepared by auditors.
- That AQA has provided feedback to auditors to improve AAPs.
- That auditors have done well to improve the proportion of audits delivered or expected to be delivered by target dates from 46% for 2022/23 audits to 58% for 2023/24 audits.
- That AQA continues to engage with auditors to support improved delivery to target dates.
- That Prior Period Errors identified during 2022/23 audits in valuation of property and pensions are areas where the FRC has been increasing scrutiny and driving developments in audit practice in recent years. This has led to differences in approach

between auditors and different views on how it is applied in the public sector, so a greater than normal increase in PPEs on this rotation is to be expected.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed a very positive report which reflects the good progress achieved.

Further discussion was on enhancing the information presented in the report for better understanding.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report.

Action: John to work with the Communications Team to further refine the report.

John Gilchrist and Jennifer Doolan left the meeting.

4. External auditor's independence, objectivity and value for money

Graeme Forrester joined the meeting.

Graeme introduced the external auditor's report on independence, objectivity and value for money, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the terms of this report.
- Note that a report in these terms is scheduled to be submitted to Audit Committee on 11 November 2024.
- Note that the Audit Committee will be invited to:
 - Review the external auditor's independence and objectivity.
 - Appraise the effectiveness and value for money of the external audit service.

During discussion, Executive Team considered the independence of the external auditor's audit team and agreed that it would be useful for Alexander Sloan to provide us with details on how they maintain the auditor's independence.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report, subject to minor amendments, and that it be submitted to Audit Committee on 11 November 2024.

Action: Martin/Graeme to follow up with the external auditor to obtain details about how they ensure auditor independence.

5. Review of risk register

Graeme introduced the paper on the risk register review, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the updated risk register.
- Determine whether additional management action is required.

- Agree, subject to any required amendments, that it be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 11 November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team considered the improvements made in some of the risk areas and agreed that scores should not be reduced until we see consistent progress. However, the narrative should recognise the positive progress achieved and that we are welcoming the direction.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed, subject to minor amendments, that it be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 11 November 2024.

6. Risk deep dive

Susan Burgess joined the meeting.

Graeme introduced the paper on the risk deep dive, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss the risk deep dive.
- Agree that, subject to any amendments, it be presented to a joint session of the Audit Committee and the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee on 11 November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team considered the performance measures and agreed that additional measures be included, along with trend data, for a more comprehensive assessment.

Further discussion focussed on the session's format and the best way to manage the session, and identifying the key areas and questions that we want to address throughout the session.

Executive Team noted there has been regular joint engagement with PCS as part of the process.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed that, subject to minor amendments, it be presented to the joint session of the Audit Committee and the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee on 11 November 2024.

7. Draft Audit Committee agenda: 11 November 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Audit Committee on 11 November 2024, subject to minor amendments.

8. Draft Remco agenda: 11 November 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Remco on 11 November 2024.

Susan Burgess and Graeme Forrester left the meeting.

9. Draft Executive Team agenda: 22 October 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Executive Team on 22 October 2024, subject to minor amendments.

10. Any other business

11. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

12. Executive Team Communications

Simon joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

Simon left the meeting.

13. Date of next meeting: 22 October 2024

The next meeting of the Executive Team will take place on 22 October 2024 at 10.00am in Edinburgh.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 22 October 2024, 10.00am

MS Teams

Present:

Kenny Oliver (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Alison Cumming
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Vicki Bibby
John Cornett
Helena Gray

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services
David Loudon, HR Assistant Manager, Corporate Services
Michael Oliphant, Audit Director, Audit Services
Carol Calder, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value
Graeme Forrester, Head of Performance & Corporate Governance, Corporate Services
Jack Nixon, Executive Assistant, Corporate Services
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services

1. Minutes of meeting on 15 October 2024

Executive Team agreed to defer approval of the minutes until the Executive Team meeting on the 29 October 2024, due to annual leave.

2. People Strategy update

Susan Burgess, David Loudon, Michael Oliphant and Carol Calder joined the meeting.

Susan introduced the paper on the People Strategy update, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the progress being made against the actions identified in the People Strategy.
- Agree the 10 proposed recommended priorities for 2025-26 in Appendix 2.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, the report be submitted to the RemCo meeting of 11 November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed the clear and comprehensive report and agreed that it illustrates the good progress made.

Further discussion focused on the proposed priority actions for 2025-26 and if there is an opportunity to explore and prioritise which actions we want to pursue which hold the greatest importance to us.

Executive Team discussed the Target Operating Model recognising that there is a combination of activities that will continue to drive this forward. Members also noted the collaborative and supportive role off the Innovation and Quality business area as the responsible owner and that the report should also capture the responsibilities of the wider organisation in this context.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report, subject to minor amendments, and agreed that it be submitted to the RemCo meeting of 11 November 2024.

Michael Oliphant and Carol Calder left the meeting.

3. 2023-24: Annual Diversity and Equality report

Susan introduced the 2023-24 Annual Diversity and Equality report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to note:

- Note and comment upon the DEI report.
- Approve the DEI report, subject to any changes noted during discussion, prior to being shared with the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) for its information on 11 November 2024
- Note the ongoing development of a new Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed the report and agreed that there is strong evidence highlighting its importance to us, while also recognising that there are areas where further growth is needed. Members agreed that this presents an opportunity to share the report with our leadership teams for further development and action.

Further discussion was on the ongoing efforts to achieve gender equality at senior levels and reflecting both the progress we've made in this area and what we still want to achieve in the report.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report, subject to minor amendments, and agreed that Kenny approve the final draft prior to the report being submitted to the RemCo meeting of 11 November 2024.

Susan Burgess and David Loudon left the meeting.

4. Internal Audit progress report

Graeme Forrester joined the meeting.

Graeme introduced the Internal Audit progress report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to note the results of the internal report.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed the internal audit findings and in particular the strong assurance for both the audit modernisation project and staff wellbeing.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report.

5. Internal audit recommendations progress report

Graeme introduced the Internal audit recommendations progress report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the progress on the implementation of outstanding audit recommendations.
- Agree that the report, subject to any required amendments, be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 11 November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team discussed the slippages to some of the implementation dates and explored ways to reassure the Audit Committee that we are addressing these concerns with due diligence. Executive Team recognised that providing more detailed narrative on cyber security could help to resolve these issues and offer the Audit Committee members greater assurance.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed that the report, subject to minor amendments, be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting of 11 November 2024.

6. 2024/25 Quarter two: Data incident/loss report

Graeme introduced the 2024-25 Quarter two data incident/loss report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note this report.
- Note that it will be considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 11 November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that there had been nine incidents in quarter two and were assured that none of the incidents were required to be reported to the Information Commissioner office (ICO).

Further discussion focused on the incidents of lost ID cards and the importance of reinforcing to staff that these cards are vital work equipment alongside the message to staff to remain vigilant with Audit Scotland equipment when in public settings.

Executive Team also considered the need to review the protocol and process for Audit Scotland's ID badges in comparison to practices in other organisations.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the report, subject to minor amendments, prior to submitting it for consideration by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 11 November 2024.

Action: Martin/Sharon to review the protocol and process for Audit Scotland's ID badges and update Executive Team by correspondence.

7. Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Graeme introduced the Audit Committee Terms of Reference, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Review the Terms of Reference.
- Note that the Terms of Reference will be presented to the Audit Committee on 11th November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team considered the formal procedure for designating one of the members to preside over the upcoming Audit Committee meeting in the absence of an appointed Chair and noted that the procedure will be recorded in the minutes.

Further discussion was on revising the narrative to include some flexibility on the timeframe for co-opted members.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted that the Terms of Reference, subject to minor amendments, will be presented to the Audit Committee on 11th November 2024.

Graeme Forrester left the meeting.

8. Confidential item

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

9. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 7 November 2024

Jack Nixon joined the meeting.

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Accounts Commission on 7 November 2024.

The Auditor General accepted the invitation to be present for the discussion on the Integration Joint Board reporting: 2025 scope.

Jack Nixon left the meeting.

10. Draft Leadership Group agenda: 29 October 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Leadership Group on 29 October 2024.

Action: Niki to remove the absence reasons on the LG agenda planner and will no longer record this information going forward.

11. Draft Executive Team agenda: 29 October 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda, subject to minor amendments, for the meeting of the Executive Team on 29 October 2024.

12. Any other business

Martin has been informed of an Extinction Rebellion protest scheduled in Glasgow on Tuesday, October 29. The building landlord has confirmed that the building will remain open; however, if the situation escalates, the building may be closed for safety reasons. The Executive Team has agreed to relay this information to all staff.

13. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

14. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication.

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

15. Date of next meeting: 29 October 2024

The next meeting of the Executive Team will take place on 29 October 2024 at 9.00am in Edinburgh.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 29 October 2024, 09.00am

Edinburgh & MS Teams

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Alison Cumming
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services
Neil Cameron, Head of Professional Support and Learning, Innovation and Quality
Paul O'Brien, Director of Quality and Support, Innovation and Quality
Graeme Forrester, Head of Performance and Corporate Government, Corporate Services
Ian Metcalfe, Corporate Performance Officer, Corporate Services
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation and Transformation, Corporate Service
Mark MacPherson, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value
Carol Calder, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value
Michael Oliphant, Audit Director, Audit Services

1. Minutes of meeting on 15 October 2024 and minutes of the meeting on 22 October 2024 and confidential minutes of the meeting on 22 October 2024

The draft minutes dated 15 October 2024 and minutes of the meeting on 22 October 2024 and confidential minutes dated 22 October 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to minor amendments.

The following were noted for approval: Internal audit report: staff wellbeing and Internal audit report: audit modernisation project.

2. Confidential item

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

3. Quarter 2 Performance reporting

Graeme Forrester, Ian Metcalfe, Stuart Dennis, Michael Oliphant, Mark MacPherson, Susan Burgess, Gemma Diamond and Carol Calder joined the meeting.

Q2 Corporate performance report

Graeme Forrester introduced the Q2 Corporate performance report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Review the performance in Q2 as set out below and in appendix 1.
- Consider the issues affecting performance, the actions identified and whether any additional management action is required.
- Approve that, subject to any required amendments, the report be submitted to the Audit Scotland Board meeting on 26 November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed the report and noted the positive progress made.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved that, subject to minor amendments, the report be submitted to the Audit Scotland Board on 26 November 2024.

Action: Niki will ensure that People Leads and Resource Leads have access to the complete set of performance reports (Corporate, Finance, and People) before future ET meetings.

Q2 Financial performance report

Stuart Dennis introduced the Q2 Financial performance report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the financial results for the six months to 30 September 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that our full year forecast is less than budget and that a review of the forecast will be undertaken in consultation with budget holders following the closure of quarter 2.

Further discussion was on the requirement to start considering the 2025-26 budget, along with the associated risks and uncertainties.

Executive Team reviewed the cash flow situation, highlighting the outstanding debt related to fee payments. They agreed that a monthly report detailing these outstanding costs would be beneficial to assess whether any intervention is necessary.

Following discussion, Executive Team were content to note the report.

Action: Stuart to provide ET with a monthly list of debt payments.

Action: Stuart to provide ET with the revised forecast prior to submitting our budget to the Board on 26 November 2024.

Q2 People report

Susan Burgess introduced the Q2 People report, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the exit interview feedback from colleagues attached at appendix one.
- Note the report and workforce infographic attached at appendix two.
- Consider and discuss the key findings in relation to Q2's workforce data and ensure any key messages and actions are shared within business group management teams.

During discussion, Executive Team noted that sickness absence remains a concern and that training will be implemented to managers in due course, with the aim of equipping them with the essential tools and support to effectively address these challenges.

Executive Team noted that work will be taking place with the NAO to explore the issues that they are experiencing with sickness absence. The aim is to understand their strategies for addressing these issues and to identify any best practice that we can learn from.

Following discussion, Executive Team were content to note the report.

Graeme Forrester, Ian Metcalfe, Stuart Dennis, Michael Oliphant, Mark MacPherson, Susan Burgess, Gemma Diamond and Carol Calder left the meeting.

4. Draft Executive Team agenda: 12 November 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Executive Team on 12 November 2024.

5. Any other business

6. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

7. Executive Team Communications

8. Date of next meeting: 12 November 2024

The next meeting of the Executive Team will take place on 12 November 2024 at 10.00am in Edinburgh.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 12 November 10.00 – 12.30

Edinburgh & MS Teams

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Helena Gray
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Alison Cumming
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services
Gemma Diamond, Director of Innovation and Transformation, Corporate Service
Rebecca Seidel, Senior Manager, Performance and Best Value
Michelle Borland, Head of Organisational Improvement and Quality, Innovation and Quality
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources
Sarah Watters, Secretary to the Accounts Commission
Mark MacPherson, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value

1. Minutes of meeting on 29 October 2024 and confidential minutes of the meeting on 29 October 2024

The draft minutes dated 29 October 2024 and confidential minutes dated 29 October 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

The following were noted for approval: 2024 Local Government Survey.

Action: Kenny to share the EPAD paper by correspondence for ET approval.

2. 2025-26 Final Budget

Stuart Dennis joined the meeting.

Stuart introduced the 2025-26 Final budget, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss, review and provide comment on the draft 2025/26 Budget Proposal.
- Note the proposed 2024/25 audit fee increase by sector.

- Note that further refinement of the proposal will take place following today's meeting.
- Discuss the implications of a partial or flat cash settlement and/ or options for savings should the SCPA not support the proposal.
- Agree the SCPA budget proposal is, subject to agreed amendments, submitted to the Board for approval at its meeting on 26 November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team considered the different funding streams and agreed that it would be useful, from a presentational perspective, to highlight the key messages with a table showing all the adjustments. Members also acknowledged that the cover report needs additional work to better clarify the information being conveyed.

Following discussion, Executive Team agreed that some adjustments are needed to the report and then shared with Executive Team by correspondence for approval, before submission to the Board at its meeting on 26 November 2024.

Action: Stuart/Vicki/Martin to reposition some of the narrative in the cover report and to highlight the key messages and figures.

Action: Stuart/Vicki to re-look at providing two options on the employers NI narrative with an appropriate recommendation for Board approval.

Action: Kenny to provide a simplified narrative on the Audit Modernisation section of the budget proposal paper.

Action: Alison to provide additional information for the 'our work 2025/26' section of the budget proposal paper.

Stuart Dennis left the meeting.

3. 2023-24 Climate change annual report

Gemma Diamond and Rebecca Seidel joined the meeting.

Gemma Diamond introduced the Climate change annual report for 2023-24, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Approve the Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24.
- Note that the annual report will be considered by the Board at its meeting on 26 November 2024 for final approval, prior to publication on 29 November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team welcomed the report and thanked the team for all their hard work in this area.

Further discussion was on how the Executive Team and the Leadership Group can reinforce their awareness and the importance of climate change and to include this in future conversations. Executive Team acknowledged that leading by example is vital when considering their own activities towards climate change and agreed that role modelling behaviour is part of this change. Members also agreed that climate change should be built into our core business with policies appropriately aligned with our strategic direction and welcomed the suggestion of a wider strategic session to see how we take this forward.

Following discussion, Executive Team approved the Climate change annual report and noted that it will be considered by Board on 26 November 2024.

Action: Gemma/Rebecca to organise a Climate change strategic session.

Rebecca Seidel left the meeting.

4. Employee engagement and wellbeing surveys: Progress against improvement activity and future options

Susan Burgess and Michelle Borland joined the meeting.

Kenny Oliver introduced the options for future engagement surveys, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the progress we have made against improvement activity identified through the 2023 Best Companies survey and the 2023 Health and Safety Executive wellbeing (formerly stress) survey.
- Note the improvement activity identified following the 2024 Best Companies survey and the 2024 Health and Safety Executive wellbeing (formerly stress) survey.
- Review the proposed options for future surveys in paragraphs 15-17 and agree how to proceed.

During discussion, Executive Team considered the reporting frequency and the pros and cons around this and the messages it can send to the organisation without the clear articulation to why we would move away from annual reporting. Members recognised that by undertaking annual surveys we may not be giving ourselves sufficient time to fully understand what the data is telling us in order to implement the right actions.

Further discussion was on the impact of our manager training and how effectively it is being applied and if there is more we can do around this in terms of evaluating the results to strengthen our approach in learning and development.

Executive Team recognised that while it appears we are making progress on our improvement activities it may be too early to assess their true impact. We also need to understand what it is we are trying to achieve. This would help us identify the appropriate survey that can provide the data we need before we decide on a new provider.

In principle, Executive Team is supportive of the two-year cycle however acknowledged that we would need to present a proposal to Remco in March 2025. In the meantime, the aim is to run the Best Companies survey early 2025 and give careful consideration on how we frame the communications and engagement to staff.

Following discussion Executive Team noted the report.

Action: Kenny/Michelle to present a proposal to RemCo in March 2025 to transition to a two-year cycle.

Gemma Diamond and Michelle Borland left the meeting.

5. Quality update

Kenny Oliver introduced the Quality update, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the information provided in this paper and to ask any questions of clarification, and note that a version of this paper will be presented to the Audit Scotland Board at its meeting on the 26th November 2024.

During discussion, Executive Team noted the progress made in addressing the actions and the large number of quality monitoring activities being undertaken to support audit teams and colleagues.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the paper and that a version of this paper will be presented to the Audit Scotland Boards at its meeting on 26 November 2024.

6. Confidential item

This item is subject to a separate confidential minute.

7. CSG review

Martin Walker gave a verbal update on the current position of the CSG review. Some of the initial scoping work has been completed which sets out the operating context with the focus being around efficiency and effectiveness.

Action: Martin to schedule bringing the scoping paper back to Executive Team before the Christmas break.

8. Draft Accounts Commission agenda: 12 December 2024

Sarah Watters joined the meeting.

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Accounts Commission on 12 December 2024.

Sarah Watters left the meeting.

9. Draft Board agenda: 26 November 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Board on 26 November 2024.

10. Draft Leadership Group agenda: 27 November 2024

Mark Macpherson joined the meeting.

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Leadership Group on 27 November 2024 and provided some possible topics to include.

Action: Niki to ensure that the Leadership Group agenda is not submitted to Executive Team meetings going forward.

Mark MacPherson left the meeting.

11. Draft Executive Team agenda: 3 December 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Executive Team on 3 December 2024

12. Executive Team action tracker and confidential action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the action tracker.

13. Any other business

14. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

15. Executive Team Communications

Simon Ebbett joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussion during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

Simon Ebbett left the meeting.

16. Date of next meeting: 3 December 2024

The next meeting of the Executive Team will take place on 3 December 2024 at 10.00am in Glasgow.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 3 December 10.00 – 12.00

Glasgow & MS Teams

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Alison Cumming
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

Helena Gray

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services
Graeme Forrester, Head of Performance and Corporate Governance
Susan Burgess, Head of Human Resources, Corporate Services
Carol Calder, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value
Simon Ebbett, Head of Communications, Corporate Services
Kirsty Gibbins, Communications Adviser, Corporate Services

1. Minutes of meeting on 12 November 2024 and confidential minutes of the meeting on 12 November 2024

The draft minutes dated 12 November 2024 and confidential minutes dated 12 November 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to minor amendment.

The Career Development Gateway was noted for approval.

2. SIP minutes of meeting on 19 November 2024, confidential SIP minutes of meeting on 19 November 2024 and confidential SIP minutes of meeting on 27 November 2024

The draft minutes dated 19 November 2024, confidential minutes dated 19 November 2024 and confidential minutes dated 27 November 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Executive Team Terms of Reference

Susan Burgess and Graeme Forrester joined the meeting.

Martin Walker introduced the Executive Team Terms of Reference, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the annual review of the Terms of Reference.
- Agree the proposed amendments as set out in paragraphs 7 to 13 below.
- Agree, subject to any required amendments, the updated Terms of Reference attached as an appendix to this report.

During the discussion, the Executive Team noted that the recent changes to the Leadership Group's focus and agenda planner do not affect the Executive Team's terms of reference. Executive Team also noted that the Leadership Group's terms of reference are currently being reviewed.

Further discussion focused on the Recruitment Board's terms of reference, noting that that the board will review recruitment requests based on our future target operating model as well as the current position. Executive Team noted this could lead to some requests being delayed or declined.

Executive Team also requested refinements to the wording in relation to budgetary and future operating model considerations, the phrasing of sections in relation to quorum arrangements for Executive Team, the SIP Board and the Recruitment Board and the conduct of business via correspondence.

Following discussion, the Executive Team approved the updated Terms of Reference subject to minor amendments.

4. Recruitment and selection policy

Carol Calder joined the meeting.

Susan Burgess provided an overview of the Recruitment and selection policy, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Consider the changes proposed in the policy at appendix one.
- Note the consultation undertaken.
- Approve the revised policy and changes.

During discussion, the Executive Team discussed the proposal to extend the timeframe for candidates who are deemed appointable for future vacancies and invited to attend a repeat selection centre from six to 12 months. Members raised concerns regarding the 12-month timeframe particularly in relation to performance management. It was agreed that applying the 12-month timeframe solely to Bands 1 and 2 would be more appropriate, especially in the absence of the CDG approach.

Executive Team discussed our position on internal and external recruitment and agreed that, to ensure consistency, transparency and fairness both should be subject to the same approach.

Further discussion focussed on the conversion of fixed-term contracts to permanent ones and whether this practice complies with employment law.

Following discussion, the Executive Team requested that the paper be further revised to incorporate the feedback provided. It should be reviewed by PCS before being presented again to a future Executive Team meeting or by correspondence for approval.

Action: Susan/John to discuss performance management in relation to internal candidates.

Susan Burgess and Carol Calder left the meeting.

5. 2024-25 Audit Scotland annual report and accounts

Simon Ebbett joined the meeting.

Simon Ebbett introduced the Audit Scotland annual report and accounts, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the findings from the review of the 2023/24 ARAC.
- Note and give feedback on the suggested amendments to the 2024/25 ARAC incorporating the findings from the review.
- Note and give feedback on paragraph 18, specifically how the review and approvals process could be smoother from ET's perspective.
- Note the timeline in the 'Next steps' section below.

During discussion, the Executive Team agreed that the revamped report is clear and concise. Members suggested producing a bite-sized version for the website that highlights key facts to engage a wider audience.

Further discussion focussed on benchmarking against other organisations to critically evaluate what we are trying to achieve through this process and incorporate these insights into next year's approach.

Following discussion, the Executive Team noted the report and agreed that updates be brought back to future Executive Team meetings for review.

Action: Simon and Niki to coordinate the scheduling of report updates to Executive Team meetings according to the timeline.

Simon Ebbett left the meeting.

6. Draft Executive Team agenda: 17 December 2024

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Executive Team on 17 December 2024 and requested the following items are added to the agenda:

- Recruitment and selection policy
- Internal audit report: Corporate governance
- Internal audit report: Performance management

7. Executive Team action tracker and confidential action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the action tracker and requested that a further update is brought back to the next Executive Team meeting on 17 December 2024.

8. Any other business

9. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

Graeme Forrester left the meeting.

10. Executive Team Communications

Kirsty Gibbins joined the meeting.

Executive Team reflected on the discussion during the meeting and agreed on the key highlights for internal communication:

Kirsty Gibbins left the meeting.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Executive Team will take place on 14 January 2025 at 10.00am in Edinburgh.

Minutes

Executive Team

Tuesday 17 December 10.00 – 12.00

Edinburgh MS Teams

Present:

Vicki Bibby (Chair)
John Cornett
Stephen Boyle
Kenny Oliver
Alison Cumming
Helena Gray
Niki Ross (Minutes)

Apologies:

No apologies

In attendance:

Martin Walker, Director of Corporate Support, Corporate Services
Gill Miller, Senior Manager, Innovation and Quality
Paul O'Brien, Director of Quality and Support, Innovation and Quality
Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Services
Graeme Forrester, Head of Performance and Corporate Governance, Corporate Services

1. Minutes of meeting on 3 December 2024

The draft minutes dated 3 December 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting subject to minor amendment.

2. Confidential SIP minutes of meeting on 3 December 2024.

The draft minutes dated 3 December 2024 were considered. The Executive Team agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting. In addition, members agreed that the SIP minutes would now be formally approved at both Executive Team and SIP meetings.

3. Statutory reporting

Paul O'Brien and Gill Miller joined the meeting.

Gill Miller introduced the statutory reporting, copies of which had been previously circulated.

The Executive Team was invited to:

- Discuss the proposed arrangements for statutory reporting fees, highlighting any unidentified challenges to be addressed.
- Discuss PABV staff costs related to statutory reporting and determine whether these should be included in any statutory reporting fees charged to audited bodies.

- Agree to temporarily remove the fee information from the statutory reports guidance so we can issue the guidance without further delay while we finalise the fee arrangements.
- Note the main changes to the guidance since its last review.
- Subject to the above, approve the statutory reporting guidance for launch.
- Agree our related communication plans.

During discussion, the Executive Team thanked the team for a comprehensive and valuable report. Members agreed to consider the guidance and the fee information separately.

Guidance

The Executive Team discussed the guidance consultation process and considered whether to broaden its scope to include public bodies and the Public Audit Committee. They concluded that, given the operational nature of the guidance, a formal consultation exercise was not required. However, they emphasised the importance of effective communication to ensure that public bodies clearly understand the expectations related to statutory reports.

Further discussion highlighted the significance of developing communication and training plans for the guidance, as well as exploring the possibility of a joint session between Audit Services and Performance Audit and Best Value.

Fees

During discussion, the Executive Team acknowledged that while, we can legally, charge for additional work, effective communication and consultation with the Accounts Commission and the Board would be essential. Members agreed that a more robust process is necessary to better understand the costs associated with statutory reporting, highlighting the importance of strong governance and scrutiny in this area.

Further discussion focused on the concept of 'additionality' concerning extra costs and how this can be applied consistently in a transparent and justifiable. Members highlighted the need for firms to clearly understand their statutory reporting responsibilities. They also recognised the importance of considering opportunity costs associated with statutory reporting, as this may impact delivery and other aspects of our work, raising the question of whether such costs should be factored into our fees.

Following discussion, the Executive Team approved the statutory reporting guidance, subject to minor amendments, and agreed to temporarily remove the fee information prior to issuing. The Executive Team requested that further work is required in how we take the fees forward and asked for an update to be presented at an Executive Team meeting in January 2025.

Action: Gill/Paul/Owen to work with Alison/John to define the criteria for additional costs and the governance surrounding this.

Paul O'Brien and Gill Miller left the meeting.

4. Confidential item

This item was subject to a separate confidential minute.

5. Internal Audit report: Performance Management

Graeme Forrester joined the meeting.

Graeme Forrester introduced the Internal Audit report on performance management, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report.

Executive Team noted the strong level of assurance on our performance management framework and the performance reporting for the organisation and the effectiveness of the framework in place and thanked the team for their hard work.

During discussion, the Executive Team noted that the Corporate Governance Team have been asked to assess the current approach to corporate performance reporting to explore opportunities for refinement.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the internal audit report.

6. Internal Audit report: Corporate Governance

Graeme Forrester introduced the Internal Audit report on corporate governance, copies of which had been circulated previously.

Executive Team was invited to:

- Note the report.

Executive Team welcomed the strong level of assurance on our corporate governance arrangements and the appropriate arrangements in place and thanked the team for their hard work.

Following discussion, Executive Team noted the internal audit report.

7. Draft Executive Team agenda: 14 January 2025

Executive Team reviewed and noted the proposed agenda for the meeting of the Executive Team on 14 January 2025 and requested an update on budget forecast is added to the agenda.

8. Executive Team action tracker

Executive Team reviewed the action tracker.

Graeme Forrester left the meeting.

9. Any other business

The Executive Team agreed that the Accounts Commission agenda for 16 January be sent by correspondence week commencing 16 December 2024.

10. Review of meeting

Executive Team reflected on the discussions during the meeting.

11. Executive Team Communications

There was no communications update.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Executive Team will take place on 14 January 2025 at 10.00am in Edinburgh.