

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.