

# Minutes

## Executive Team

Tuesday 16 January 2024, 10.00 am  
Teams Meeting

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### 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

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### 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 option<sup>1</sup> 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

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### 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

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### 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)

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### 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.

## 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)

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### 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.

## 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)

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### 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:

- Six monthly updates on progress of ISQM1.
- Internal Audit report and strategic planning.  
Executive Team expressed their thanks to the team working on strategic planning.
- Internal Audit follow up.

## 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

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### 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.

## 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

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### 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.

## 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

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### 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.

## 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

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### 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 by correspondence:  
Whistleblowing, Gifts & Hospitality and Bribery and the role profile evaluation Leadership Group Support Assistant

## 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.