

Note of the Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday 8 September 2015

Present:

Jim Martin	Ombudsman (Chair)
Niki Maclean	Director
Paul McFadden	Head of Complaints Standards
Emma Gray	Head of Policy and External Communications

In attendance:

Rachel Nicholson	Executive Casework Officer
Fiona Paterson	Senior Personal Assistant (Secretary)

1. The meeting opened at 10:30 with no apologies.
2. The note of the meeting held on 2 July 2015 was agreed and the outstanding actions list was reviewed.

3. Internal Audit

The SMT noted paper prepared for the AAC meeting by the Internal Auditor, including the Assurance for 2014-15 with the overall assessment being satisfactory, noting a sound framework of control providing a reasonable assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of SPSO objectives. The SMT also reviewed the 2015-16 final reports for Business Continuity and Risk Management, both receiving a good rating from the Auditor.

4. Financial Monitoring Report

The Director tabled the Annual Accounts 2014-15 and the external Auditor's draft annual report. The SMT noted that the independent auditor issued an unqualified report on the 2014-15 financial statements.

The SMT discussed the one significant finding from the report, which was regarding the challenge to the organisation to balance expenditure and staffing levels against a reduced budget, especially when there is potential for increasing workload. Financial outturn against budget was reviewed by the Auditor who noted that there was no evidence that the processing of complaints were not being met in 2014-15. The Auditor will continue to monitor this in future years.

The SMT also noted the year-to-date financial expenditure against the budget for 2015-16, including the unbudgeted liabilities of which the SPCB have been notified. At this point it is predicted there will be an overspend of £35k against budget on general business areas. The additional expenditure for lift repair work and re-aligning the payscales will form the basis of a contingency fund request to the SPCB.

5. Risk Register 2015-16

The SMT reviewed in detail the risk interrogation paper, which addressed rising caseloads, the only significant risk to the performance of the SPSO. This will be tabled for the AAC.

6. Performance Report – Corporate Services

The SMT noted the report for issuing to the Audit and Advisory Committee including the Q1 2014-15 performance summary and staff survey results.

The SMT noted the additional information on recruitment and resourcing, IPA tenders and 2015-16 pay award.

The SMT approved the procurement and installation of the proposed new scanner in the front office on a lease basis.

The SMT approved moving the default SPSO email addresses to the new GSI format for the benefits outlined in the Information Sharing paper.

The SMT approved publishing the Climate Change Duties Report as statutorily required.

7. Performance Report – Casework

The SMT noted the report for issuing to the Audit and Advisory Committee including the Q1 2014-15 performance summary.

Additionally, the SMT noted the year-to-date performance paper and discussed the workflow and projections. The SMT were updated on progress of the efficiency project actions.

8. Performance Report – Policy Group

The SMT noted the report for issuing to the Audit and Advisory Committee; including the update on activities in the policy, external communications, CSA and training areas of the business.

9. Performance Report – Service Improvement

The SMT noted the report for issuing to the Audit and Advisory Committee., including the Q1 2015-16 report on organisational learning from customer service complaints for publishing.

The meeting closed at 12:30

Decision taken outside the recorded meeting:

15 September 2015:

Two Comms contracts due for retender – Graphic Design and Web support were approved by the SMT for issue at the end Q3 with a start date of 1 April 2016, for operational reasons (relating to the new SWF review function).