

### **Attendees**

Dame Susan Rice - Chair  
Professor Alasdair Smith - Commissioner  
Professor Francis Breedon – Commissioner  
Professor David Ulph – Commissioner

John Ireland - Chief Executive  
Claire Murdoch - Head of Social Security and Public Funding  
David Stone – Head of Economy and Tax  
James H White - Governance Manager, secretariat

### **Apologies**

Susie Warden - Head of Strategy, Governance and Corporate Services

## **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Dame Susan Rice opened the meeting. There were no declarations of interests or notification of any other business, and apologies were noted as above. The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2021 were agreed as an accurate record. There was no change to the action log reviewed at the previous meeting.

## **2. Chair's Update**

Dame Susan Rice reported that the recruitment process for her replacement and a new Commissioner was ongoing. Changing the Chemistry would be running a webinar on 1 November with Susan Rice and DG Scottish Exchequer; Francis Breedon indicated that he would be willing to participate in the webinar.

## **3. Chief Executive's Update**

John Ireland highlighted the written update circulated to Governance Board members. Senior Management Team is considering diversity and inclusion, and the Commission is making a number of innovations, including a workshop being held on 10 November about creating a culture of inclusion, with the aim of developing the Commission as a more inclusive workplace.

## **4. Audit and Risk Committee**

David Ulph reflected that colleagues from iTECS had attended the meeting to discuss how the network was developed to support a significant increase in homeworking post COVID-19 lockdown, and the steps being taken to improve the capacity, resilience and reliability of the network services.

The Committee had reviewed the risk cards, with staffing being upgraded by it to a likelihood of 5 and impact of 5 as it was recognised that this is the biggest challenge facing the Commission.

The Governance Board agreed the increased risk score for staffing, noting that there was little more that could be done to mitigate this risk and that it would continue to be monitored while it remained red.

Corporate systems was revised to a likelihood of 4 and an impact of 4, reflecting concerns about HR, but remaining at Amber.

In relation to Governor's House, the Committee noted the current restriction on staff numbers in the voluntary phase of working in Governor's House and that SMT were monitoring this, taking into account staff views and concerns.

David Ulph confirmed that he and John Ireland had been considering appointment of a second external Audit and Risk Committee member to provide additional perspective and challenge to the Commission.

It was agreed that an additional external Audit and Risk Committee member would be appropriate and that John Ireland and David Ulph would review options for taking this forward. It was agreed that these options should include use of various diversity networks rather than advertising.

**Action 1 - It was agreed John Ireland and David Ulph would review options for identifying an additional external Audit and Risk Committee member.**

## **5. Finance**

John Ireland highlighted the written finance update and mitigations for the underspend. He said that while there was scope for further refurbishment work on Governor's House that he felt it was now appropriate to tackle this on a room by room basis with redecoration being more akin to a rolling maintenance programme. Susan Rice said that it would be helpful if there was a clear programme for this. It was noted that work was still needed to bring the kitchen area up to an acceptable standard.

The Governance Board noted the paper, recommending that further refurbishment work would be undertaken as funds allowed, acknowledging that there should be an element of the budget for maintenance.

*Future funding request* – John Ireland noted the paper setting out the three year spending request and the rationale behind it, which aside from the ask for additional resources to support the fiscal sustainability work, were similar in scope to the previous year's request. Governance Board confirmed that it was content with the proposed future funding request, including the £50,000 contingency for parental and illness cover, and the overall approach to address future staffing needs.

**Action 2 - The Corporate Team would cost a rolling decoration / maintenance programme for Governor's House.**

## **6. Corporate Policies and Statutory Reporting**

*Records Management Plan* – The Governance Manager noted that the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland was reviewing the plan together with additional information provided to him.

*Public Services Reform Act Report for year ending 31 March 2021* - Governance Board approved the report for publication in tandem with the Annual Report and Accounts.

*Internal Scheme of Delegation* – Governance Board approved the scheme of delegation.

*Travel Policy* – Governance Board approved the travel policy.

*Health and Safety Policy* – Governance Board approved the health and safety at work policy; recognised it may need revision post COVID-19 pandemic.

*Fairness at Work* - Governance Board approved the policy.

## **7. Any other business**

There was no other items of business.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting, which had been scheduled for 16 November 2021, will be rearranged for a date to be confirmed in January 2022.

Scottish Fiscal Commission  
25 October 2021