**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020

## Present

Andrew Dillon Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation

Paul Chrisp Director – Centre for Guidelines

Jane Gizbert Director – Communications

Gill Leng Director – Health and Social Care (part of meeting)

Alexia Tonnel Director – Evidence Resources

Catherine Wilkinson Acting Business Planning and Resources Director

## In attendance

Sarah Acton Senior HR Business Partner (for item 6.2)

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Nick Crabb Programme Director – Science Advice and Research

Jeanette Kusel Director – NICE Scientific Advice (for item 6.3)

Michelle Rowlands Estates and Facilities Manager (for item 6.1)

Mark Salmon Programme Director – Evidence Resources (for item 6.3)

Sarah Woodhead Apprenticeships and Training Coordinator (for item 6.2)

## Apologies (item 1)

1. None.

## Freedom of Information and publication scheme (item 2)

1. The final minutes will be made available on the NICE website subject to the redaction of any exempt material.

## Declarations of interest (item 3)

1. The previously declared interests were noted. There were no conflicts of interest relevant to the meeting.

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 4)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## Matters arising (item 5)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 7 January 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.

## Manchester office improvements (item 6.1)

1. Michelle Rowlands presented the paper that set out options for improvements to the Manchester office, which had been developed by a professional space planner, Atkins. The proposals follow workshops with a staff working group, who were able to share ideas and input into the project plan.
2. SMT reviewed the options for reconfiguring the office and supported option 2 - a hybrid of new rectangular desks and the existing curved workstations. It was noted this option offers better value for money than replacing all of the existing curved workstations, and delivers objectives such as increased lockers and collaboration space. The proposals also reconfigure the Hodder, Calder and Weaver meeting rooms to provide the facility of a third large meeting room. In response to questions from SMT, Michelle confirmed that the collaboration spaces will have white boards, with furniture used to provide screening from the main part of the office. She confirmed that parts of the office will be designated for quiet working.
3. Michelle outlined the proposed changes to the back reception to provide more lockers and to create a well-being zone, with Unison offering to sponsor the facilities. SMT noted and supported the proposals, which will require discussion with the landlord.
4. Michelle explained the proposed changes to the main reception, noting these aim to enhance the experience of people visiting the office. SMT welcomed the desire to improve the reception, but there were concerns about the temperature for people waiting in reception and whether more could be done to improve throughflow at busy times. In response, Michelle and Catherine stated that the scope for improving the heating and air conditioning will be explored, and highlighted that the need to retain appropriate security measures affects the options available for where visitors can wait. It was agreed that the proposals and potential options for the main reception should be discussed further.

ACTION: GL/CW/MR

1. SMT noted the concerns raised by NICE’s and the CQC’s unions about the lack of gender-neutral toilets. In order to comply with legislation and Stonewall best practice SMT agreed to designate the existing male toilets on the staff side of the office as unisex/gender neutral. Separate male and female facilities would remain in the meeting room area.
2. SMT discussed the next steps. Catherine explained that capital funds to undertake the works have been requested from the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). While she felt DHSC would be supportive, the level of funds provided may require the works to be phased over 2 years. SMT agreed that once the funds have been confirmed, the plans should be communicated to staff, noting the level of staff involvement in developing these. Given the changes to the toilets do not require capital funds, it was agreed these could take place as soon as possible accompanied by a clear explanation as to the rationale.

ACTION: CW/MR

1. Alexia Tonnel highlighted the need to carefully consider the timescale for the works to the main office, in the context of the other significant challenges facing the IT/DS team this year. Michelle stated that subject to confirmation of the capital funds, the aim would be to start with the reconfiguration of the main reception and carry this out in August when there are less visitors. SMT noted this would then enable the works on the main office to take place after the bulk of the work on the London office move had completed.

## Using the apprenticeship levy to support leadership development (item 6.2)

1. Sarah Acton presented the paper that set out the proposal to continue to use the apprenticeship levy to offer leadership and management qualifications to staff, following the current pilot.
2. Meindert Boysen and Paul Chrisp provided positive feedback in relation to participants on the current pilot. Nick Crabb asked whether the proposal to not offer the level 3 Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) course would remove the opportunity of an apprenticeship from band 5 and 4 staff. Sarah Acton stated that the proposal is to not actively promote the level 3 course as most of the applicants for this course in the pilot were more suited to the ILM level 5. If staff apply and are not suitable for the level 5 course then HR and the apprenticeship training provider can consider whether alternative courses, such as the ILM level 3 are suitable. It was noted that it would be helpful to highlight this in the communications to promote the course.
3. Subject to the above comment, SMT approved the proposals.

ACTION: SA/SW

## AI lab: proposal to establish a Radical Regulatory Incubator (item 6.3)

1. Mark Salmon and Jeanette Kusel presented the paper that outlined proposals for NICE’s involvement in the regulatory aspects of the AI lab. Mark noted NICE’s role in 3 outline business cases that were submitted before Christmas. The first was prepared by CQC/MHRA in partnership with NICE relating to the establishment of a multi-agency advice service on AI. The second and third were specific to NICE and related to developing methods to inform the evaluation of AI technologies, and further exploring the deployment of AI technologies to improve NICE’s evidence management, surveillance and guidance update activities. A roundtable convened by NHSX on 28 January will assess the bids, and if they are supported, it will be necessary to develop more detailed and costed business cases.
2. SMT expressed support in principle for the bids, noting several matters will require further consideration including the arrangements and expectations at the end of the initial 3 years of funding. The link between the 3 bids was noted, in particular the need to develop methods and processes and resolve science policy issues on AI in order to provide the proposed advisory service. Catherine Wilkinson noted the need to gain agreement from the DHSC to use capital funding on these activities, and to understand the restrictions on how the capital funds can be used under ESA10.
3. Andrew Dillon asked for a briefing note in advance of his attendance at the roundtable on 28 January.

ACTION: MS/JK

## Internal audit plan and charter (item 6.4)

1. David Coombs presented the draft internal audit plan and charter for 2020/21. The plan had been developed following the head of internal audit’s discussions with individual directors, associate directors in the Business Planning and Resources Directorate, and the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The charter has been produced by internal audit as a requirement of the public sector internal audit standards.
2. SMT reviewed the internal audit plan and agreed the following changes:
   * There should be a review of income management relating to cost recovery for the technology appraisal and highly specialised technologies programmes. This would ideally take place in the latter part of the year and inform the first review of pricing. It would replace the proposed audit on payroll, as the function had previously been reviewed and received positive assurance.
   * There should be a rolling programme of audits on contract management, with a focus on a specific contract each year. It was noted that the external assessment centre contracts have been subject to recent scrutiny and therefore it might be more useful to review another contract in 2020/21.
   * The proposed audit on the guidelines strategy should be broadened to look at NICE Connect, with a focus on the guidelines strategy and any other issues arising from the NICE Connect audit in the 2019/20 plan.
   * The focus for the audit on the combined digital and IT function would depend on the timing.
3. SMT agreed the proposed internal audit charter which will be presented to the ARC on 22 January along with the amended audit plan for 2020/21.
4. Catherine Wilkinson highlighted the increased audit fee for 2020/21 in terms of the daily rate. This, and the level of transparency over the pricing, will be discussed further with the head of internal audit and chair of the ARC. Information is also being collated from other DHSC ALBs about their internal audit provision.

## Draft corporate business plan 2020/21 (item 6.5)

1. David Coombs presented the draft corporate business plan for SMT’s review prior to sharing with the DHSC sponsor team for comment.
2. SMT reviewed the draft plan and agreed several minor amendments including to reorder the first and second strategic ambitions. Subject to these changes, the business plan was agreed for submission to the DHSC as an initial draft. It was agreed that feedback should be requested in time to inform the next iteration of the plan that will be submitted to the February Board Strategy meeting.

ACTION: DC

1. It was noted that Meindert Boysen had drafted a letter to John Stewart seeking confirmation of the work NHS England/Improvement will commission from NICE in 2020/21. It was agreed that it would be helpful to finalise and send this letter as soon as possible.

ACTION: MB

*Gill Leng left the meeting*

## EU exit (item 7)

1. No further update.

## NICE Connect project (item 8)

1. Alexia Tonnel noted the positive discussions at the planning event with senior staff. Key issues discussed included the initial priorities for the transformation and potential ‘quick wins’.

## London office move (item 9)

1. Catherine Wilkinson noted that she is attending the Audit and Risk Committee next week to discuss the move and had circulated the proposed presentation developed by the project manager for SMT’s comment. She stated that the new project manager is making very positive progress. The biggest concern is the IT and IT infrastructure which the project manager is discussing with the other ALBs as a matter of urgency. Catherine noted that changes to the toilets have been agreed with the DHSC to address the concerns raised by NICE and the other ALBs.
2. Andrew Dillon asked that Catherine lets him or Gill Leng know if any matters relating to the IT need escalating to the Chief Executives of the other ALBs.

## Chair and Chief Executive appointments (item 10)

1. Andrew Dillon stated that the interviews for the Chief Executive are still scheduled for 27 January, but remains a risk these may have to be deferred if the chair appointment has not progressed. He and Tim Irish have written to the Secretary of State about both appointments.

## Weekly staff SMT updates (item 11)

1. SMT agreed the staff updates.

ACTION: DC

## Other business (item 12)

1. Catherine Wilkinson highlighted 2 issues raised at the recent JCC meeting. Firstly, the union raised the issue of communication with staff about EU exit and specifically the implications for NICE of a ‘no deal’ exit. Secondly, there was a request for the staff to have the ability to co-opt a non-executive director. In relation to the first point, Andrew Dillon stated that he would provide an update on EU exit to the next all staff meeting. On the second point, he stated that the appointment of the NEDs is a matter for the DHSC and it would be more appropriate for the union to take the matter up with them.

ACTION: AD