**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

Senior Management Team

# Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2020

## Present

Gill Leng Chief Executive

Meindert Boysen Director – Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (item 6.1 onwards)

Jane Gizbert Director – Communications

Felix Greaves Director – Science, Evidence and Analytics

Jennifer Howells Director – Finance, Strategy and Transformation

## In attendance

David Coombs Associate Director – Corporate Office (minutes)

Fiona Glen Programme Director and Deputy Centre for Guidelines Director

Alison Liddell Programme Director and Deputy Digital, Information and Technology Director

Jane Lynn Senior Financial Accountant (item 6.3)

Mark Perrett Lead Web Operations Engineer – Digital, Information and Technology (item 6.4)

Malik Pervez Associate Director – Infrastructure and Operations – Digital, Information and Technology (item 6.4)

Elaine Repton Corporate Governance and Risk Manager (item 6.1)

Victoria Thomas Head of Public Involvement

Rebecca Threlfall Chief of Staff

## Apologies (item 1)

1. Apologies were received from Paul Chrisp, Alexia Tonnel and Judith Richardson who were represented by Fiona Glen, Alison Liddell and Victoria Thomas respectively.

## Declarations of interest (item 2)

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

## Notes of the previous meeting (item 3)

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2020 were agreed subject to clarifying that Gill Leng left the meeting after item 6.3, and amendments to paragraphs 9, 20, and 39.

## Matters arising (item 4)

1. The actions from the meeting held on 3 November 2020 were noted as complete or in hand.
2. Jennifer Howells stated that she is meeting with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) later today and would raise whether it would be helpful to produce a paper on the financial position to support the discussions at the upcoming Annual Accountability Meeting.
3. SMT discussed the configuration and purpose of the new programme director forum. It was agreed that the first meeting tomorrow, which had been extended to include some of the directors’ first line reports who are not programme directors, should be used to discuss the purpose of the forum and the future attendees. It was agreed that SMT members should send any comments about the role and configuration of the group to Rebecca Threlfall to collate. SMT would then consider the group’s future role and membership in light of this feedback, and the outcome of the upcoming SMT away-day discussion on potential changes to the SMT meetings.

ACTION: SMT

1. SMT noted that the issues with Hirelab had been resolved and staff have been advised to report any future data breaches.
2. SMT discussed further the approach for the annual report and accounts, and whether to scale back the report to focus solely on the minimum statutory and regulatory disclosures. Gill Leng noted that the annual report can be an important resource that can be used to promote NICE’s work, and suggested exploring whether additional capacity could be commissioned to support this work if internal resource availability is a constraining factor. Gill asked the brand and marketing communications team to consider how the annual report could be used to achieve greater impact and stated that she would pick the issue up further with Jane Gizbert outside of the meeting.

ACTION: GL/JG

## Coronavirus (item 5)

1. There were no decisions from the gold group to confirm.

## Corporate risk register (item 6.1)

1. Elaine Repton presented the latest version of the corporate risk register following review by individual directors.
2. SMT discussed the key risks facing NICE, which were felt to relate to capacity, including the ability to deliver change alongside the existing commitments, and staff morale. SMT then reviewed the risk register and agreed:
* Risk 13/20 should be broadened to refer to the risk of insufficient resources to support the transformation agenda more generally, and not just in relation to digital resources.
* Risk 20/20 relating to the financial position in 2020/21 should be reduced given the year-end forecast underspend.
* Risks 15/20 and 23/20 which both relate to the London office move should be merged.
* Risks 11/20 and 12/20 should be reviewed to strengthen the current and planned mitigations to ensure NICE is able to play a leading role in technology evaluation.
* A new risk should be added about getting best value from the London and Manchester office space in light of the ‘new normal’ working arrangements.
* A new risk should be added about staff morale.
1. SMT considered the concurrent risks around COVID-19, winter pressures, and EU exit. It was agreed that NICE did not face specific additional risks from winter, and that COVID-19 was referenced throughout the risk register. It was agreed that risk 09/20 on EU exit should however be reviewed and updated to reflect the upcoming end of the EU-UK transition period.

ACTION: ER

## Internal audit report: committee recruitment (item 6.2)

1. David Coombs presented the draft internal audit report on committee recruitment and the proposed management response. The opinion overall is moderate assurance with 6 recommendations for improvement.
2. SMT discussed the report and recommendations. SMT members noted the need for a proportionate response to the recommendations that take account of the level of risk. It was agreed that Jennifer Prescott and Christine Carson, with input from the Health and Social Care directorate, should be asked to liaise with Elaine Repton to identify the basic elements of a standard induction programme for committee members, to which committee-specific elements could be added by the relevant teams. This would replace the need for a task and finish group. Subject to this amendment and other minor amendments, SMT agreed the management response.

ACTION: ER/DC

1. It was agreed that the Transformation Unit should be asked to support this work and also consider how it fits into the wider work around consistent implementation of policies and processes.

ACTION: JH

## Finance accounting performance (item 6.3)

1. Jane Lynn presented the report for the Audit and Assurance Committee that detailed the financial accounting performance, including payments, debt recovery, write offs and losses to 30 September 2020.
2. SMT reviewed the report and noted that at the end of this reporting period all statutory targets for paying invoices are being met and aged debt continues to be low risk. SMT discussed income generation from both research grants and NHS England. On the former, Jennifer Howells advised that she has reconfigured her vacant deputy role to create greater capacity for income generation and bidding for external funding. On the latter, it was noted that Gill Leng and Meindert Boysen will discuss the funding for HealthTech Connect at their next 1:1.

ACTION: GL/MB

1. SMT supported the report for submission to the Audit and Risk Committee.

## Annual IT security and resilience report (item 6.4)

1. Alison Liddell presented the annual IT security report for the Audit and Risk Committee and noted there had not been any cyber security incidents in this reporting period. Alison highlighted the plans for the year ahead, including the development of cyber security training and a review of the infrastructure arrangements.
2. SMT discussed the report, including the increasing use of Microsoft 365 (M365) and Software as a Service (SaaS) tools. It was noted that the Digital Workplace project, which is looking at the deployment of M365, will consider how these tools can be used to support collaboration with external organisations. SMT discussed the governance around cyber security and noted the new arrangements in place in the Digital, Information and Technology (DIT) directorate to create a separation of duties. It was noted that the designation of the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) will be considered further as part of the organisational design work, and it would also be helpful to consider how the SIRO, currently the Finance, Strategy and Transformation Director, gains assurance over cyber security, including the interface between the Information Governance Steering Group (IGSG) and cyber security.

ACTION: JH/AL

1. Subject to minor amendments to the cover paper, SMT agreed the report for submission to the Audit and Risk Committee.

## Developing and updating COVID-19 guidelines: new opportunities (item 6.5)

1. Fiona Glen presented the update on the joint work between the Centre for Guidelines and Science, Evidence and Analytics directorate, with the aim of using the long COVID guideline as an opportunity to develop and test new ways of working to develop dynamic, living guidelines. Fiona highlighted the intention to target external funding sources, including the forthcoming NIHR funding call for research into the longer-term effects of COVID-19 in non-hospitalised individuals.
2. SMT supported the proposals and direction of travel set out in the paper. The challenges of bidding for external funding were noted, and there was a suggestion to consider the scope to utilise the 2020/21 underspend to invest in additional capacity to support this work in the short-term. The need to ensure the work outlined in the paper is coordinated with the activities underway in the DIT directorate to support the transformation programme, including for example on comment collection, was also noted.

ACTION: FG/AL

## EU exit (item 7)

1. Meindert Boysen highlighted the winter readiness assessment that NICE is required to submit to DHSC later today.

## London office move (item 8)

1. Alison Liddell stated that it now appears that NICE will need to plan on the basis that the data centre cannot be relocated to the new Stratford office in the near future. SMT members asked whether it would therefore be appropriate to bring forward plans to move to cloud-based hosting sooner rather than later. In response, Alison stated that while this is the longer-term direction of travel, it is important to first complete the review of infrastructure arrangements to determine the most cost-effective way of moving to the cloud.

## Any other business (item 9)

1. None.