Report to:	QSMTM Q3 2022-23
Report by:	Helen Gardner-Swift, Head of Corporate Services (HOCS)
Meeting Date:	26/01/23
Subject/Title: (and VC no)	Human Resources Strategy Review 2021-22 and 2022-23 (up to Q3) (VC176439) Human Resources Strategy – planned review of key document
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	Draft Human Resources Strategy (VC138654)

Purpose of report

1.   The purpose of this Committee Report (CR) is to review the annual actions under the HRS for the period 2021-22 and 2022-23 (up to end Q3) and, also, to consider the review of the key document.

Recommendations and actions

2.   I recommend that the Senior Management Team (SMT)
   (i)   notes the annual actions under the Human Resources Strategy (HRS) for 2021-22 and 2022-23 (up to end Q3) as set out in the Executive Summary
   (ii)   approves the draft revised key document C5 Human Resources Strategy, in principle, and subject to further SMT comments
   (iii)   subject to (ii), agrees the key document actions set out in paragraph 17
   (iv)   agrees the publication arrangements as set out in paragraph 19.

Executive summary

3.   The HRS sets out what the Commissioner aims to achieve with, and for, staff at all levels and, in doing so provides a framework for the focus of how the organisation manages human resources (HR) and sets operational objectives and activity to develop people and talent.

2021-22– annual actions and 2022-23 (up to end Q3)

4.   There was continued progress against the HRS and the actions taken in respect of each part of the HRS are set out below.

Leadership

- recognising the need for strategy and vision, the Strategic Plan 2020-24 (SP) was taken account of in decision making
- governance requirements, including human resources governance, have been followed and the HOCS provided assurance on this and governance reporting requirements in 2021-22
- the SMT approved the Operational Plan 2021-22 and the Operational Plan 2022-23, which included operational objectives related to the management of human resources
- management training took place but there was no formal leadership training undertaken.

Developing and managing talent

- a Learning & Development (L&D) Plan was approved for 2021-22
  - training for managers and staff was provided online using approved training providers and platforms on:
    - health and safety
    - equality and diversity
    - data protection/UK GDPR
    - hybrid working
  - it was not possible to provide customer care training relating to managing difficult behaviour as a suitable trainer could not be found
  - individual learning and development were provided/undertaken as far as possible

- a Learning & Development (L&D) Plan was approved for 2022-23
  - up to the end of Q3, training was provided online using approved training providers and platforms on:
    - data protection/UK GDPR – all staff
    - menopause awareness – managers
    - cyber resilience – all staff
  - the following training is due to take place in Q4:
    - health and safety – all staff
    - equality and diversity – all staff
    - management training – managers
    - customer care training relating to managing difficult behaviour - if a suitable trainer can be found
    - induction training – new members of staff
  - individual learning and development will be provided/undertaken as far as possible

- updated performance and quality standards and targets were agreed (see below **Performance Management and accountability**)

- in 2021-22, there was one secondee and induction training was provided

- as we develop hybrid working, we will continue to support staff where possible through relevant training and development of skills.

Promoting workplace diversity and equality

- in the work of the organisation, there is due regard to the three aims of the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 which are:
  - to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
  - to advance the equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
  - to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- In 2021-22:
  - staff were asked to complete a confidential equality and diversity monitoring survey - completion of the survey was not compulsory and the return rate was 87%
  - managers and staff undertook mandatory equality and diversity training
  - the Equality Policy and guidance was reviewed as part of the work on the revised Employee Handbook
  - the recruitment and selection policies and procedures were reviewed and approved by the SMT

- all CRs included a consideration of equalities impact as a mandatory section

- all members of staff were provided with wellbeing guidance and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) continued to be in place for any member of staff to contact at any time for advice – the EAP service was enhanced in 2022-23

Workforce and resource planning

- a risk-based approach has been taken to mitigate the risk arising from our funding arrangements and this has included taking account of:
  - relationships with external stakeholders
  - having a work-force that concentrates a range of functions in fewer individuals
  - current and interim management structures
  - the ability to fund statutory, mandatory and strategically important functions
  - the impact of decisions, policies and business development on resources including, human resources and workloads.

- the Commissioner was allocated:
  - in 2021-22 a funding budget of £1,903,00, of which £1,497,816 amounted to staff costs
  - in 2022-23 a funding budget of £2,150,00 of which £1,744,034 amounted to staff costs

- salary costs, the biggest single element of our budget, are derived from the SPCB's terms and conditions. Both the 2021-22 and 2022-23 salary budgets were set using guidance from the SPCB and pay awards were also in accordance with the SPCB's pay awards

- recruitment for a secondee was carried out in 2021-22

- the office premises re-opened on 3 May 2022 and a hybrid working trial is in place

- recruitment for freedom of information officer posts (4) and administration posts (2) has been carried out in 2022-23

- the SMT monitored and reviewed key workforce statistics, such as staff in post, staff turnover and absence and sickness levels

Communication

- we aim to have an organisation where regular, open and constructive communication is used, encouraged and embedded in our policies and practices, where possible, and recognise the importance of good staff relations and effective communication with staff

- there have been regular team meetings and quarterly all staff meetings - as hybrid working is in place all have taken place virtually using MS Teams

- all members of staff can access the agendas, papers and minutes of the meetings of the SMT (information is only withheld from staff where the relevant exemption(s) in the FOI Act or the EIRs would apply if a request were to be made for the information or where a duty of confidence is owed to a third party)

- staff were also asked to complete a well-being survey as part of the work relating to the re-opening of the office premises and hybrid working

- general all staff communications were sent by email.

Performance management and accountability

- staff governance and management policies and systems are in place to ensure the performance and development framework is applied consistently to all levels in the organisation and the HOCS provided assurance on this for 2021-22
- the Performance and Development Framework was reviewed as part of the work on the Employee Handbook and this work was completed in Q2 2021-22
- the Performance and Quality Framework 2021-22 and the Performance and Quality Framework 2022-23 were approved by the SMT and a proportionate performance management system has been/is in place

COVID-19 pandemic

5. Our priority as an organisation has been to continue to provide services and guidance within available resource while safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of staff.

6. We have worked to maintain operational and to keep all teams, supported and connected and have emphasised physical and mental wellbeing in regular updates provided to all members of staff. The office premises re-opened on 3 May 2022 and a hybrid working system is in place and under trial. The trial is expected to last approximately 12 months.

Audit 2021-22

7. The HRS provides for proportionate and risk-based workforce planning although we do not have a stand-alone document entitled "Workforce Plan". There is also a proportionate and effective management reporting system to enable the SMT to monitor and review key workforce statistics.

8. Following the audit of the Annual Report 2020-21, the auditor recommended that the Commissioner should develop a formal stand-alone workforce plan, in addition to the work force planning that is undertaken under the HRS. The auditor was of the view that this may assist in the Commissioner in delivering their functions over the medium to long term. A project relating to the development of a Workforce Plan was included in the Operational Plan 2022-23. The auditor repeated this recommendation following the audit of the Annual Report 2021-22.

9. A "Workforce Plan" is being considered and developed in 2022-23, in conjunction with a review of the HRS with the aim of this being put in place in 2023-24.

Review of HRS

10. The planned review of the HRS key document, due to be undertaken in August 2022 (but delayed due to the impact of other work priorities) has now been carried out and a copy of the revised draft is attached to this CR. The wording has been updated and additional references have been included relating to:

- the Equality Policy and the Equality Act 2010
- a Workforce Plan

- quarterly All staff meetings
- staff access to the agendas and minutes of SMT meetings

Risk impact

11. The HRS supports achievement of our HR governance objectives and, also, mitigates the risk of not managing HR in support of strategic aims and objectives.

12. Ensuring that HR will continue to be managed, as far as possible, in line with the HRS (and any revised HRS) mitigates the risk of not following appropriate human resource policies.

Equalities impact

13. There is no direct equalities impact arising from this report. However, in undertaking HR management, managers should have regard to any relevant equalities issues that arise, and their impact on a member of staff, and seek guidance (as necessary) from their Head of Department or from the HOCS.

Privacy impact

14. There are no direct privacy impact issues arising from this report.

Resources impact

15. HR will continue to be managed, as far as possible, in line with the HRS. The additional resource relating to the development of a Workforce Plan will be carried out within the existing resource.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

16. HR will continue to be managed, as far as possible, in line with the HRS, to ensure, that as far as possible, we are following an HRS which supports strategic aims.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

17. If approved and when finalised for publication:
    - the revised Human Resources Strategy will be:
        - a Key Document and published within Class 5 of the Guide To Information
        - reviewed every 3 years or as required
    - the Responsible Manager will be the HOCS
    - the approver will be the SMT

Consultation and Communication

18. Publication of QSMTM Q3 minute

Publication

19. This CR should be published as follows:

- the CR should be published in full
- the revised Key Document, the Human Resources Strategy, is withheld on the basis that Section 27 of FOISA applies and the Key Document will be finalised and published in full on our website as soon as possible