

Scottish Information Commissioner

Minute of Senior Management Team Meeting

Meeting;	Monthly Senior Management Team Meeting (MSMTM) May/June 2026
Date	11 June 2026
Present	Scottish Information Commissioner – David Hamilton (DH) (Chair) Head of Policy & Information – Claire Stephen (CMS) Head of Enforcement – Euan McCulloch (EM) Head of Business Support – Lynn Balfour (LCB) Business Support Manager – Tanya Gardner (TG) (Minute Taker)
Apologies	None

1. Minutes, action points update and matters outstanding

1.1 Review of previous minutes – 07 May 2026

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
The minutes of 07 May 2026 were approved.			Y - Publish in full

1.2 Matters outstanding

- | | | |
|--|----|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce Monitoring Strategy – to be circulated.• Records Management advice session – complete.• Domain names – CMS has taken advice and previous domain names will cease to be used. | DH | 21/06/26 |
|--|----|----------|

2. Finance

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
• Budget summary at 31 March 2026 circulated and approved for publishing. • Court of Session costs – impact of increasing costs on our drawdowns and cash in bank. DH will discuss at his meeting with SPCB. • Public Audit Committee – new members now in place.	DH	20/06/26	Y – Publish in full

3. Human Resourcing

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
- Recruitment – Start date confirmed for temp FOIO for Policy & Information team. Full staff team thereafter. - Office occupancy – discussion on - Civil Service Pension – acknowledgment of ongoing difficulties with new provider across civil service. - Hotdesking – Desk booking app has been rolled out and used by staff. Positive feedback.			

4. Operational Risk Register

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
- SMT reviewed and updates to the Register were made. - One risk closed - One risk updated - New risk added (Operational capital due to legal costs)	DH	11/06/26	N - Exemptions s30(b)(ii), s30(c)

5. Key Documents

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
- Records management session approved internal changes to key documents system. Will be replaced with a Policy Register. - Meeting to be arranged to discuss plan.	LCB	15/07/26	

6. Draft Annual Report & Accounts

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
- Draft circulated and discussed. New format based on feedback from 2024-25 audit. - Discussions on content – agreed some minor changes. Include more future planning context. - Points to consider for future reports including SU feedback; compliments reporting; complaints upheld and carbon mission targets.			

7. Operational Plan

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
2025-26 to be finalised and new plan for 2026-27 to be circulated.	CMS	15/07/26	

8. Applicant Feedback Survey report

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Discussed reporting format. Some metric data has been published, looking at improvements.			
Meeting to be arranged to discuss future formatting.	DH/EM	15/07/26	

9. Health & Safety report

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Report circulated for review and approved.			Y - Publish in full
Self-declaration to be introduced for drivers checks.	LCB	15/07/26	

10. Quality Assurance & Enquiries report

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Report circulated for review and approved.			Y - Publish in full

11. Statements of Expenditure - Section 31 of the PSR(S) Act report

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Report circulated for review and approved.			Y - Publish in full

12. Sustainable Development and Statement on Sustainable Growth – Section 32 of the PSR(S) Act report

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Report circulated for review and approved.			Y - Publish in full

13. Prescribed Persons (Reports on Disclosure of Information Regulations 2017) report

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Report circulated for review and approved.			Y - Publish in full

14. Christmas closure

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Agreed closure days for Christmas period. 23 December 2026 (pm), returning on 4 January 2027.			

15. Case Management Project

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Considered timeline risks			
C/F to next MSMTM.	TG	15/07/26	

16. Enquiries Handling Process

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Standalone meeting to be arranged to discuss.	LCB	15/07/26	

17. Records Management Consultancy

Discussion	Action By	Target Date	Publish (Y/N) Exemptions
Positive feedback from consultancy session. Consider costs for future support.	DH		

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Budget Analysis as at 31st March 2026

	Annual approved budget	Year-End Actual Expenditure	Year-End Underspend / (Overspend)
Officeholder Staff Costs	150,515	150,514	1
Senior Management Staff Costs	359,535	294,791	64,744
Other Staff Costs	1,613,950	1,616,140	(2,190)
Contingency Staff	132,908	136,365	(3,457)
Total Staff Costs	2,257,000	2,197,811	59,097
Officeholder Travel & Expenses	4,000	4,882	(882)
Staff Travel & Expenses	3,000	1,694	1,306
Training	15,000	9,395	5,605
Recruitment	0	4,555	(4,555)
Healthy Living Initiative	1,200	1,478	(278)
Total Staff Related Costs	23,200	22,005	1,195
Rent	54,000	55,576	(1,576)
Rates	25,000	24,470	530
Utilities	15,000	11,430	3,570
Cleaning	24,000	22,589	1,411
Maintenance	18,000	13,952	4,048
Total Property Costs	136,000	128,017	7,983
Auditor - External	25,300	25,380	(80)
Financial Advisers	0	0	0
Legal Advisers	15,000	4,556	10,444
Other Fees incl HR support	21,000	25,594	(4,594)
Total Professional Fees	61,300	55,530	5,770
Advertising	0	0	0
Administration Costs	15,860	17,212	(1,352)
Hospitality	0	0	0
IT	123,590	139,510	(15,920)
Insurance	7,700	6,094	1,606
Library	0	0	0
Postage	500	496	4
Printing	5,000	718	4,282
Publicity & Promotion	23,200	6,543	16,657
Research	13,560	12,535	1,025
Telephones	10,090	8,475	1,615
Total Running Costs	199,500	191,584	7,916
TOTAL REVENUE COSTS	2,677,000	2,594,946	81,962
Capital Expenditure	20,000	17,306	2,694
TOTAL CAPITAL & REVENUE	2,697,000	2,612,252	84,656
Court of Session costs	0	111,677	(111,677)
TOTAL INCL COURT OF SESSION	2,697,000	2,723,929	(27,021)
Income received	0	-2,135	-2,135
APPROVED BUDGET / NET EXPENDITURE	2,697,000	2,721,793	(24,885)

Health and Safety

Meeting date: MSMTM 11 June 2026

Report by: Lynn Balfour, Head of Business Support and Liz Brown, Business Support Manager

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Senior Management Team (SMT):
 - on the health and safety work that has been carried out in 2025-26
 - provide assurance that the Commissioner is meeting statutory obligations in respect of employee health and safety, wellbeing and related training.

Recommendation and actions

2. I recommend that the SMT:
 - (i) notes the report
 - (ii) note the assurance provided alongside the recommended action on reviewing driving for work checks
 - (iii) agrees that this report is published in full.

Report

Health & Safety Work

3. During 2025–26, a range of routine health and safety checks and activities were completed to help maintain a safe working environment.
 - Eight risk assessments were reviewed, with no significant changes required
 - Six-monthly fire evacuation drills were carried out successfully
 - Statutory inspections were completed for fire-fighting equipment, portable appliances, fire alarms, emergency lighting and security systems (by qualified contractors)
 - Regular internal fire safety checks were undertaken, alongside ongoing building maintenance
 - DSE assessments were completed for new staff and staff moving desks, with adjustments made where needed
 - A standing desk was purchased to support staff wellbeing
 - No accidents were reported in the office during the reporting period
 - A review of sexual harassment legislation and associated risk assessment was completed
4. Driving for work checks were not undertaken during the year. While external advice had previously indicated that these checks should be carried out, an SMT decision was taken to discontinue this activity.

5. For remote working, DSE assessments were completed for all new starters, and any issues identified were addressed. No accidents were reported relating to home working during the reporting period.

Training

6. During the reporting period, a range of health and safety related training and awareness activities were delivered. This included mandatory training on sexual harassment prevention in the workplace for all staff along with targeted ACAS training for managers. Menopause awareness sessions were also delivered for both staff and managers. Members of the Business Support Team completed IOSH Managing Safely and Health and Safety in the Workplace modules to support their work.

Polices and guidance

Health and Safety Handbook

7. A comprehensive review of the Health and Safety Handbook was carried out and approved by the Senior Management Team in July 2025.

Employee Handbook

8. A full review of the Employee Handbook is due to take place in 2026/27 but updates were made in 2025/26 to ensure we captured any changes in employee relevant legislation.

Internal Audits

9. During the reporting period, two internal audits were undertaken in relation to building security and reasonable adjustments. Both audits provided positive assurance overall, identifying areas of good practice as well as a number of constructive recommendations aimed at strengthening existing arrangements and supporting continuous improvement. Management has considered these findings and is progressing actions where appropriate.

Wellbeing

10. A wellbeing resources note has been reviewed, is filed in VC, and can be viewed by all members of staff.
11. Line Managers are expected to discuss wellbeing with team members during 1:1 meetings
12. The monthly managers' meeting is a forum to discuss health and safety topics.

Employee Assistance Programme

- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to all members of staff
- Line managers should sign post staff to the EAP where appropriate.

Year Ahead

13. Looking ahead, planned health and safety activity for the coming year will include a review of the organisation's risk assessment procedures and templates to ensure they remain proportionate, effective, and aligned with current requirements and good practice. There will also be a continued focus on strengthening business continuity planning arrangements to support organisational resilience and preparedness.

Assurance

14. Taking the above into account, I am satisfied that appropriate arrangements were in place during the reporting period to support employee health and safety, wellbeing, and related training within what remains a low risk working environment. Planned health and safety activity, training, and compliance measures were undertaken throughout the year and no significant issues were identified.
15. It is, however, recommended that the current position in relation to driving for work checks is reviewed, with consideration given to reinstating these checks as part of the organisation's ongoing health and safety assurance arrangements.



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Paper: Q4 Enquiries Quality Assurance

Meeting date: Via email June 2026

Paper prepared by: Lynn Balfour (Head of Business Support)

Purpose of paper

To provide assurance on the quality of responses to enquiries received in 2025-26 as required by the Governance Reporting Arrangements.

Recommendation and actions

- The Senior Management Team (SMT) notes the contents of this paper and the assurance provided.
- The SMT consider whether this paper should be published in full.

Executive summary

The Commissioner has a statutory duty to promote good practice and to provide advice on the operation of FOI. This power is exercised through an enquiries service for the public and public authorities. Anyone seeking advice on FOI or our regulatory role may contact us, and most enquiries are received from members of the public. The Commissioner recognises the importance of maintaining strong performance and high quality service delivery.

This paper provides assurance on the quality of responses to enquiries, in accordance with the Governance Reporting Arrangements.

Assurance was sought from all heads of department on the quality of enquiry responses, based on a random sample of enquiries selected proportionately across all teams. Heads of department were asked to consult relevant line managers and, where appropriate, undertake the review themselves, with reference to the following:

- whether the enquiries procedures have been followed
- whether responses to enquiries were accurate
- whether any areas of good practice were identified

Assurance

I have reviewed the responses received from heads of department and those with line management responsibilities and can confirm the following:

- Overall assurance is positive, with enquiry handling judged to be of a good standard.
- Responses were accurate, timely and helpful, with strong customer service evident across the teams.
- Recording and case management were generally completed correctly, including synopses, coding and outcomes. A small number of minor recording issues were identified, but these were limited and have been addressed with direct follow ups with staff concerned.
- Examples of good practice were noted, including follow up written advice and recording of potential compliance issues.
- Positive feedback from enquirers was evidenced across the teams.
- No significant concerns were raised. However, it was suggested that, given the increased volume and complexity of enquiries, additional and/or refresher training on enquiry

handling, particularly at the initial stage, together with a review of internal processes, may be beneficial.

On the basis of the above, I am satisfied that the enquiries procedures have been followed and that the responses reviewed were accurate. I am therefore able to provide assurance that the enquiries service is operating effectively and to a high standard.

Additional observations

Follow up actions:

- The high quality of the enquiries service will be recognised in an all staff communication.
- A discussion to be had amongst the SMT about the possibility of additional and/or refresher training on enquiry handling, together with a review of internal processes

Risk impact

This assurance paper supports the control measures in place to reduce the risk of failing to engage appropriately with stakeholders and the public and therefore contributes to the mitigation of that risk.



Scottish Information
Commissioner

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Duties to provide information on certain expenditure

Statement published by the Scottish Information Commissioner as required
under section 31 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

For the year to 31 March 2026

Public Relations

External PR	£18,832.17
Internal PR (cost of staff time)	£42,466.69

Overseas Travel

Payee	Description	Total £
Commissioner	International Conference of Information Commissioners – Berlin, Germany	£696.18
Commissioner	Open Government Partnership Conference – Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain	£837.47
Depute Head of Policy & Information	International Conference of Information Commissioners – Berlin, Germany	£707.69
Depute Head of Enforcement	Conference Munich, Germany	£603.33

Hospitality & Entertainment

None

External Consultancy

Payee	Description	Total £
Anderson Strathern	Legal support	£56,056.80
Audit Scotland	External Audit Fees	£24,680.00
Brodies	Employment Advice	£3,435.60
Brodies	Legal support	£22,250.80
Burness Paull	Legal support	£29,055.80
Faculty Services	Legal support	£2,100.00
Julie Murphy	Financial support	£2,000.00
Scottish Government	Procurement Advice - Shared Service	£2,766.00
Worknest	Employment Law Support Services	£7,112.70
Worknest	HR Consultancy Ad-hoc	£984.00
Wbg	Internal audit fees	£8,766.00

Members or employees who received remuneration in excess of £150,000

None

Payments with a value in excess of £25,000

Individual payments in excess of £25,000

Payee	Description	Total £
Computer Application Services Ltd	Case Management software & licences	£40,948.74

Multiple payments - cumulative total exceeds £25,000; individual payments not exceeding £25,000

Payee	Description	Total £
Brodies	Legal Consultancy & Employment	£25,686.40
Burness Paull	Legal Consultancy	£29,055.80
Anderson Strathern	Legal Consultancy	£56,056.80
Thorntons (on behalf of Landlord)	Office Rent	£57,076.15
Microsys	IT Support, Equipment & Software	£48,360.23



Scottish Information
Commissioner

Statement on sustainable growth

2025–26

Introduction

1. The Commissioner is committed to supporting sustainable growth by improving the environmental sustainability of our operations. Under our [Environmental Policy](#), we work to reduce pollution, use resources responsibly, lower our environmental impact and support biodiversity.
2. Under section 32(1)(a) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, we must publish an annual statement setting out the steps taken to promote and increase sustainable growth through our functions. This document sets out how the Commissioner supports that duty through environmentally responsible operations and sustainable business practices during 2025-26.
3. The Commissioner's primary function is to enforce and promote Scotland's freedom of information legislation. As a small, single-site organisation, our direct influence on sustainable growth is modest, but we can still make a meaningful contribution by reducing our carbon footprint, using resources efficiently and embedding sustainability considerations in the way we work.

Carbon footprint

4. Since the 2007-08 baseline was established, our CO₂ emissions have shown a sustained downward trend, reflecting continued progress in reducing the environmental impact of our operations.
5. While our scale limits the extent of our direct impact, we remain committed to continuous improvement in managing and reducing our carbon footprint. We will continue to embed low-carbon and resource-efficient practices across our operations, including:
 - maintain flexible hybrid working to support remote working
 - maintain our paper free policy
 - use telephone and video conferencing instead of in-person meetings where appropriate
 - choose environmentally friendly cleaning products where possible
 - include environmental considerations in procurement where practical
 - encourage low energy IT practices, such as switching off unused equipment
 - consider energy efficiency improvements in the building when maintenance or replacement is due
 - monitor utility use to identify avoidable consumption

Summary of Performance 2025-26

Area	Performance 2025/26
Total CO ₂ Emissions	Total CO ₂ emissions have continued their long-term downward trend, demonstrating sustained progress in reducing the environmental impact of our operations. The organisation will seek to maintain operational CO ₂ emissions at or below current levels while identifying opportunities for further reductions where practicable.
Building Energy	Emissions from gas and electricity consumption reduced slightly again this year, reflecting continued focus on energy efficiency despite increased staffing and greater in-person use of the building.
Business Transport and Travel	Business travel increased as more meetings and events took place in person. Train remained the main mode of transport, supporting our aim to prioritise lower-carbon travel wherever practical. Flights were limited to domestic and European journeys where no reasonable alternative was available, helping to keep travel-related emissions as low as possible.
Recycling (paper)	Paper consumption continued to decline. Paper waste sent for recycling increased slightly, reflecting a targeted records disposal exercise.

	Recycling facilities and signage were also improved to support effective waste segregation and reduce contamination.
Water (use and waste)	Water related emissions have remained unchanged reflecting stable water consumption levels and the relatively minor contribution of water use to the organisation's overall carbon footprint.

Key Metrics Comparison (Total CO₂ Emissions)

The total emissions target of 40.5 tonnes of CO₂ emissions was set in 2015 and has remained unchanged since then. Actual emissions have averaged approximately 20 tonnes over the last three years, consistently achieving levels around 50% below the target.

Area	2007-08 Baseline	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Building Energy (gas and electricity)	48.3	17.4	18.00	17.43
Business Transport and Travel	9.48	2.52	1.43	1.86
Recycling (paper)	0.59	0.63	0.63	0.89
Water (use and waste)	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
Total CO2 emissions	58.49	20.67	20.18	20.30

Supporting Data Tables

The following tables provide the detailed data underpinning the headline performance summary and year-on-year comparison set out above.

Building Energy		2007-08 Baseline	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Emissions (tonnes CO2)	Gas	31.20	13.92	14.96	15.33
	Electricity	17.10	3.48	3.04	2.10
Energy consumption (kWh)	Gas	151214	6632	7172	6716
	Electricity	32772	14922	13026	11852

Business Transport and Travel		2007-08 Baseline	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Emissions (tonnes CO2)	Flights	7.23	2.16	0.64	1.09
	Bus	0.00	0	0	0.04
	Car	1.33	0.18	0.43	0.37
	Train	0.88	0.18	0.33	0.31
	Taxi	0.041	0	0.03	0.03
Mileage (Miles)	Flights	38024	17382	3987	8711
	Bus	0	29	25	206
	Car	4101	600	1477	1339
	Train	9169	3092	5548	5843
	Taxi	0	20	130	121

Recycling (paper)		2007-08 Baseline	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Emissions (tonnes CO2)	Paper waste	0.59	0.63	0.63	0.89
Paper Weight (kg)	Paper waste	465	500	500	705

Water (use and waste)		2007-08 Baseline	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Water use (tonnes CO2)		0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Water Waste (tonnes CO2)		0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06

Strategic Outlook and Priorities

The organisation remains committed to maintaining a low operational carbon footprint and to pursuing further reductions in emissions where these can be achieved in a proportionate and cost-effective manner. Performance will continue to be monitored through the annual reporting cycle, with due regard to operational priorities and external factors that may influence year-on-year results.

While greenhouse gas emissions increased marginally during the reporting period, this should be considered in the context of the organisation's relatively small operational footprint, where modest changes in activity levels can have a proportionately greater effect on annual totals. The increase was primarily attributable to higher levels of business travel and increased occupancy of office space over the year. This does not indicate any diminution in the organisation's commitment to environmental sustainability. The organisation will continue to monitor performance closely and to identify practical, proportionate opportunities to enhance resource efficiency and further reduce environmental impact.

The Prescribed Persons (Report on Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2017

Report by the Scottish Information Commissioner 2025-26

The Scottish Information Commissioner (the Commissioner) is the independent public official responsible for promoting and enforcing Scotland's freedom of information law:

- The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - is an Act of the Scottish Parliament which gives everyone the right to ask for any information held by a Scottish public authority
- The Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 - comes from a European Directive on access to environmental information. The EIRs give everyone the right to ask for environmental information held by a Scottish public authority (and some other bodies)
- The Commissioner can also receive applications about the view and discovery provisions of the INSPIRE (Scotland) Regulations 2009. These regulations also come from a European Directive and create a right to discover and view spatial datasets (e.g. map data) held by Scottish public authorities.

The main functions of the Commissioner are: investigating appeals, promoting the public's right to know, promoting good practice to public authorities and intervening when public authority practice is not compliant with freedom of information law.

Under section 43F of the Employment Rights Act 1996, whistleblowers may qualify for employment protections if they disclose information to a "prescribed person". The Commissioner is a "prescribed person" and must report annually on the number of relevant workers' disclosures under The Prescribed Persons (Reports on Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2017 (the Regulations).

For the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 there were no relevant disclosures from workers falling within the Regulations.

Contact us

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