Ref.	Assigned to	Documents Required	Status	Comments
				30/04/2021 · 31/05/2021 · 01/06/2021 · 30/06/2021 · 31/07/2021 · 31/08/2021 · 30/09/2021 · 31/10/2021 · 30/11/2021 · 31/12/2021 · 31/01/2022 · 28/02/2022 · 31/03/2022 · 30/04/2022 · 20/05/2022 · 30/06/2022 · 31/08/2022 · 30/09/2022 · 31/10/2022 · 30/11/2022 · 31/12/2022 · 31/01/2023 · 28/02/2023 · 31/03/2023	

Staff and resources

Ref.	Assigned to	Documents Required	Status	Comments
S1		We will aim to ensure that we have the staff required with the relevant skills, knowledge, experience and values to acquit our functions; we will review our current structure and staffing arrangements and identify those areas that require to be revised in order for us to work most effectively		
i		Fill all vacancies currently being carried as a matter of priority. Include increased capacity to support SMT and rise in investigatory work for MSP and councillor complaints.		
ii	AO	Draft business case for SPCB to cover: Additional IO post, Additional CSO post, Full time hours for PAO post	Completed	
		Case drafted		
		Case agreed		
iii	AESC/SIO	Recruit to IO posts	Completed	
		Two IO vacancies filled		
		An additional IO appointed		
iv	AESC	Cover for PAM role as currently fulfiling role of AESC as well as MSP complaint handling	Completed	
		PAO temporary promotion to PAM role for one year		
v	AESC/PAM	Backfill PAO role thorugh recruitment, secondment or agency	Assigned	
		PAO appointed for one year		Unable to fill via recruitment or secondment due to uncertainty over ESC return date or ESC appointment date. This remains the position at March 2022. C/F
vi	AESC/AO	Recruit to additional CSO post to provide support for AESC and SMT	Completed	
		CSO appointed		
vii	AO/SIO/PAM	Induct all new staff into their roles	Completed	
		Induction successfully completed		
viii	AESC/SMT	Complete draft action plans for all activity for next two years based on biennial business plan – map staff/resources/available skillsets to all activities. Staff members and teams mapped to individual actions – ensure resilience/double cover as failsafe for staff departures and/or incapacity	Completed	
		Action plans drafted for two years completed		
		Actions mapped to avaliable staff, building in resilience and cross-office working		Note - further workforce planning required at end March due to workload and available resources. All activity currently planned is mapped to available staff at March 2022.
		Assess operational efficiency of new staff complement against office needs at time and for future	Assigned	
		Assessment conducted		
		Reassess office needs to produce a final workforce plan	Assigned	
		Final workforce plan produced		AESC has asked SMT to bring this work forward to March/April due to increased workload and limited capacity as well as parliamentary and public interest in the work of the office.
ix	AESC/SMT	Performance reviews conducted for all staff and actions for year ahead agreed	Completed	
		All staff introduced to linkages between strategic business and action plans as well as financial implications of activities		
		Performance reviews conducted and individual action plans agreed		

Ref	Owner	Description	Status		Notes

S2 | | We will aim to ensure that all staff are trained and developed to fulfil their roles effectively, including on the revised Codes of Conduct for Councillors and Members of Public Bodies, good practice in complaint handling and equality diversity and inclusion in all of our practices | | |

i | AESC/SMT | Formal training and development plans to be agreed with all staff in order for them to meet their individual objectives (see S1). Highlighted training includes presentation at hearings, management and governance, MSP complaint-handling, health, safety and wellbeing risk assessments, investigating complaints of harassment, Plain English and attention to detail. Incorporates C4i. | Assigned | | Thus far, all relevant staff have received training in presentation at hearings, management and governance, MSP and other complaint-handling (investigatory staff), supporting people party to harassment complaints, handling complaints about us, Plain English and attention to detail.

Plans agreed for current staff
Plans agreed for new staff following probationary period

ii | AESC/AO/SMT | Training secured from relevant sources | Completed | | Training was secured and run in March and April on sexual harassment investigations and EDI with a focus on trans issues.
Appropriate training researched, costed and obtained

iii | AESC/SMT | Training rolled out | Completed | |
Staff trained to fulfil role with individual and office-wide records maintained | | | See S2

S3 | | We will regularly survey staff and act on the results of such surveys with a view to | | | Flexible working preferences survey

i | PAM | Surveys designed to cover: flexible working preferences, views on the organisation, wellbeing levels | Assigned | |
Surveys designed - flexible working
Surveys designed
SMT agree content - flexible working
SMT agree content
Surveys finalised - flexible working
Surveys finalised

ii | AESC/SMT | Survey results reviewed at SMT meetings | Assigned | |
Conclusions drawn - flexible working
Conclusions drawn
Practices revised - flexible working
Practices revised

S4 | | We will introduce a suite of new and revised policies that have staff wellbeing at their heart. We will ensure that staff are trained to fulfil their role in a way that is respectful of all indivduals who contact us, regardless of their backgrounds | Completed | |

All staff introduced to and consulted on our values as an office to ensure understanding of and adhereance to these in all of our work | Completed | |
Staff introduced to values
Staff asked to provide views in formal and informal settings
Staff demonstrate understanding of and adherence to our values

i | PAO/AESC/SMT | All HR related policies revised or updated to take account of our revised operational context (including pandemic) and to secure staff wellbeing | Completed | |
Suite of draft policies produced alongside reasons for introduction of new policies or amended existing ones | Completed | |

ii | PAO | Staff consulted on all policies | Completed | |
Policies issued for views

iii | PAM | Revised policies in place | Completed | |
Results of consultation fed back to staff
Policies introduced
Policies published

iv | AO/SIO | Secure confidential counselling services for staff who wish to use them | Completed | |
Confidential counsellng service in place
Staff provided with means to access service

MSP , Councillor and Public Body Complaints

Ref	Owner	Description	Status	Notes
C1		We will consult all relevant stakeholders on our current complaint handling procedures and revise them and publish them in the form of an investigations manual which takes account of the views received. Parts of the manual will be produced in Easy Read, BSL and other languages to ensure accessibility	Assigned	
C2		We will adapt our procedures to take account of stakeholder views and engender trust in the way that we work		
i	AESC/SIO	Upgrading and updating of procedural documentation (templates, factsheets, flowcharts, checklists etc) for MSP, councillor and board member complaint handling	Assigned	
		Interim changes to admissibility forms to be agreed with Standards Commission as a starting point (urgent)		
		Template letters revised to align with organisation's values (urgent)		
		All documentation updated, adopted and published, in the form of a draft investigations manual for consultation		Draft manual at V5 at year end.
ii	SIO/IOs	Adopt new procedures for interim period	Completed	
		Procedures adopted and staff trained on use		
iii	SIO	Issue manual to key stakeholders for comment	Assigned	
		Draft manual published on website		Draft manual at V5 at year end. Deadline for production extended by AESC.
		Stakeholder views invited		Draft manual at V5 at year end. Deadline for production extended by AESC.
		Responses incorporated		Draft manual at V5 at year end. Deadline for production extended by AESC.
iv	AESC/SIO	Develop an action plan documenting an appropriate suite of arrangements in anticipation of amending legislation (sexual misconduct plus removal of the time bar) coming into force	Completed	
		Initial liaison with relevant parties		
		Development of outline proposal		
		SPCB interaction as necessary		Revised to parliamentary interaction in relation to support for parties to complaints of this nature. AESC highlighted with SP in October. No substantive response received at the year end.
i	AESC	Map key stakeholders	Completed	
		Full list of stakeholders established		
ii	AESC	Make initial informal contact	Completed	
		Initial discussions conducted by way of remote meetings		
iii	AESC	Contact formally by way of introduction ot AESC and plans for office	Completed	
		Email to all stakeholders with copy of strategic plan		
iv	AESC/SIO	Consultation with key stakeholders on prospective changes	Completed	
		Stakeholder views collated and analysed		
v	AESC	Stakeholder view lead to adaptation and adoption of final revised strategic plan	Completed	
		Views on broad proposals incorporated into revised strategic plan		
		Reasons for adoption or rejection of suggested changes recorded		
C3		We will pubish our procedures as revised so that everyone knows what to expect		
i	SIO	Publish revised investigations manual	Assigned	Draft manual at V5 at end Feb 2022. Deadline for production extended by AESC. Final consultation version should be published by end March 2022. Revised date for incorporation of responses TBC
ii	HCS/CST	Have parts of manual that are of interest and relevance to the public translated into BSL, Easy Read and other languages		

Public Appointments

Ref		Description	Status	Notes
A1		We will publish for consultation a draft revised Code of Practice for appointments with a greater focus on outcomes, accountability and transparency and an emphasis on learning lessons	Completed	

				Status		Notes
i	AESC/PAM	Publish analysis of consultation responses on prospective Code of Practice revisions alongside a draft of the revised Code for consulation	Completed			
		Lay draft and consult Scottish Ministers, Scottish Parliament and key stakeholders on proposals from July 21-Sept 21				
		Analyse responses by November 2021				Deadline extended for further consultation with SG. Analysis completed in February 2022.
A2		We will take account of all stakeholder views in order to finalise the Code				
i	AESC	Publish results of analysis	Completed			
		Results published and provided to all stakeholders				Deadline extended for further consultation with SG. Analysis completed in February 2022. Publication delayed until March 2022.
ii	AESC	Introduce revised Code	Assigned			
		Publish and provide to Scottish Parliament				Deadline extended for further consultation with SG. Analysis completed in February 2022. Publication delayed until March 2022.
iii	HCS/CST	Have parts of Code that are of interest and relevance to the public translated into BSL, Easy Read and other languages				
A3		We will provide guidance and support to everyone engaged in the appointments process with a view to their implementing the new Code's provisions effectively				
i	AESC/PAM	Draft statutory guidance	Assigned			
		Publish				Deadline for Code extended for further consultation with SG. Guidance publication delayed until March 2022
ii	AESC/PAM	Run training for PAAs, PAT and panels on new Code's application	Assigned			Now scheduled for spring and summer of 2022 - C/F
iii	AESC	New Code comes into effect	Assigned			Now scheduled for autumn 2022 - c/f in consultation with SG
		Continual training and guidance developed to support revised Code				
		Committee engagement on transparency and reporting				
iv	APAM	Continue to feed into lessons learned for the Scottish Government by running applicant surveys on a round by round basis and providing reports of feedback, whenever a request to run a survey is made	Completed			
		Reports produced after appointment rounds				Ongoing
A4		We will seek support to revise and republish Diversity Delivers to include new recommendations for the achievement of greater board diversity	Completed			
i	AESC	Consult informally from September 2021				
ii	AESC	Issue formal request October 2021				
	AESC/PAM	Commence research into good practice and what the content of the revised strategy should include				

Governance and Accountability

				Status		Notes
G1		We will put new and more effective governance measures in place, inclusive of independent elements, to ensure for ourselves and to assure others, by way of public reporting, that we are achieving our objectives in line with our purpose and our values and in line with the resources made available to us				
i	AESC/SMT	Full review of governance arrangements	Assigned			
		Appointment of internal auditor				Appointment delayed as Section 22 Report not published until Dec 2021
		Review of Advisory Audit Board remit and membership				AAO provided paper to AAB on governance considerations in May 2021. Discussions on this, including how and the extent to which the SPCB may be involved, are ongoing as at March 2022.

		Task	Status		Comments
		Review of whistle-blowing policy			Policy was updated following staff consultation in June 2021. Further review depends on establishment of reporting routes when concerns about ESC
ii	AESC/AO	Assess external arrangements folllowing publication of wider scope review report and recommendations	Assigned		
		Engage with SPCB and parliamentary commitees			SPCB infomal engagement began by due date. Formal engagement commenced in Feb 2022 due to delayed s 22 report. Still ongoing at March 2022. AESC gave evidence to SPPA Committee in Feb 2022 and Local Govt, Housing and Planning Cttee in March 2022
		adopt reciprocal measures			See entry immediately above. O/S at year end - C/F
iii	AESC/SMT	Re-establish SMT meetings	Completed		
		Re-establish meetings and standard agenda items			
		Agree adendas for year ahead to cover off additional items in policies etc.			Delayed to Nov 2021
		Publish minutes			
		Consider meeting publicly on quarterly basis			Delayed to Jan 2022
iv	AESC/AO	Revert to prior arrangements for risk assessment - updated to reflect the fact that substantive risks to ESC's operation were not identified and addressed	Completed		
		Adopt risk management policy			
		Populate risk register			
		Include risk as item for SMT quarterly meetings			
		Consult AAB and internal auditors on arrangements on an ongoing basis			
v	AESC/SIO	Commission an external independent review of all decisions made on complaints from August 2020. Report on findings	Assigned		
		Seek approval for contingency funding for review			Discussions with SPCB on issue began formally in February 2022 and are ongoing. O/S at year end - C/F
		Commission review			Discussions with SPCB on issue began formally in February 2022 and are ongoing. O/S at year end - C/F
		Report on findings			Discussions with SPCB on issue began formally in February 2022 and are ongoing. O/S at year end - C/F
vi	AESC/AO	Review current schemes of delegation and revise to address contingencies such as avaliability of ESC/AESC to make decisions	Assigned		
		Review scheme of delegation and identify areas where ESC/AESC authority required			
		Put alternatives in place to deal with contingency of no ESC/AESC avaliability to make decisions			
vii	AESC/SMT/SPCB	Consider whether standing orders can be revised to ensure collaborative decision making between ESC/SMT and wider organisation and preclude management override of controls	Assigned		
		Revise standing orders to give SMT a clear governance role set out in terms of reference for ESC and SMT members			See above at G1 v. re discussions with SPCB. O/S at year end - C/F
		Ensure ESC bound by SMT decisions in legislation and/or by some other contractual			See above at G1 v. re discussions with
viii	AO/AESC/SMT	Review and formalise the budget process to ensure formal approval obtained from SMT as a whole on an annual rolling basis including recommending the budget for submission to the SPCB	Completed		
		Review and revise current budget process			
		Agree revised process with SMT			
		Schedule consideration of budget against agreed business plan annually			

ix	AESC/AO	Prepare a medium-term financial plan to include alternative scenarios of expected income and expenditure in future years, associated assumptions for each scenario and quantifying the funding gaps. Take account of the impact of leaving the EU, the Covid-19 pandemic and other expected changes	Assigned			
		Scan horison for range of scenarios and their potential impact on ESC operation		🟥		
		Quantify potential impact of each on avaliable resources				
		Draft financial plan showing variances by senario(s) and their potential impact on the office's ability to fulfil its functions				
G2		We wil adopt quality assurance monitoring of key performance indicators, such as timescales for investigation stages, including surveys of the views of those with whom we come into contact, and report publicly on the results. We will use those results to				
i	SIO	Draft performance management framework. Reintroduce previous KPIs and consult on these and other new ones to track progress of investigatory work.	Assigned			
		Reintroduce prior KPIs by reference to annual reports		🟥		O/S at year end pending consultation on the investigations manual - C/F
		Design new KPIs related to stakeholder views on our performance				O/S at year end pending consultation on the investigations manual - C/F
		Consult stakeholders on appropriateness and relevance				O/S at year end pending consultation on the investigations manual - C/F
		Analyse responses and adapt KPIs as appropriate				O/S at year end pending consultation on the investigations manual - C/F
ii	PAM/SIO	Include a survey that both complainers and respondents can complete on an anonymous basis to give views on how we investigate complaints	Assigned			
		Design and roll out survey		🟥		
		Set baseline based on initial results				
iii	SIO/SMT	Previous KPIs and new ones adopted and published	Assigned			
		Adopt KPIs		🟥		
		Put tracking measures in place and assess for eficacy/accuracy				
		Report on progress internally against KPIs quarterly and externally annually				
iv	AO/SIO	Ensure statistics for previous two years are accurate and comparable with those produced under previous ESC	Completed			
		Statistics verified internally and produced for inclusion in annual report and accounts for 2021/22		🟩		
G3		We will report publicly on the difference that the new Code of Practice is making to the appointments process, for good or bad, with a view to improving on practices. We will do so by publicising instances of good practice or innovative practice and learning as well as areas for improvement				
i	AESC	Engage with the Scottish Parliament's subject committee about appointments practices with a view to making improvements and increasing transparency	Assigned			
		Agree suitable reporting arrangements		🟧		Discussions commenced with SPPAC clerks from May onwards and the Cttee's views were also sought in relation to Code revisions. These will continue, including on reporting - C/F
		Submmit periodic reports		🟥	🟥	See above as well as Code consultation analysis and revised Code. O/S at year end - C/F
ii.	APAM	Publish good practice case studies on website	Assigned			
G4		We will work in partnership with the Scoittish Government, the Scottish Parliament, the Standards Commission for Scotland and other stakeholders to promote good practice and to ensure that lessons are learned from the outcomes of our investigations. Our ongoing engagement with our stakeholders will be regular and meaningful.				

					Notes
i.	AESC/SMT	Meaningful re-engagement the Scottish Ministers, MSPs, public body board members, local authority councillors, monitoring officers and representative organisations such as COSLA, SOLAR and SOLACE to inform and shape our work and our performance			Talks initiated in April and have been ongoing (refer to SMT minutes for detail).

Other Corporate activity

O1		We recognise that public sector resources are limited and understand that we must review, scrutinise and report publicly on our work to ensure best value and continous			
i	AESC/SMT	Draft strategic plan for 2021-24	Completed		
		Draft plan			
		Seek formal/informal feedback from staff and stakeholders			
		Redraft based on feedback			
		Incorporate wider scope review			
		Publish for formal consultation			
ii	AESC/AO	Draft biennial business plan for 2021-23	Completed		
		Draft plan			
		Revise plan to take account of responses to strategic plan			
		Schedule annual consideration of biennial plan on an ongoing basis			Delayed until March 2022
iii	HCS	Annual Report and Accounts design formatting and online presentation project	Completed		
		Finalise online ARA template			
iv	AESC/SMT	Decision on office accomodation needs	Completed		
		Finalise extension of MoTO			
v	AESC/HCS	Review contractual arrangements for CMS	Completed		
		Finalise contract extension			
vi	AESC/SMT	Develop plan for exit of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions and implement lockdown exit plan	Assigned		
		Plan developed			All planning has been done in the course of SMT meetings and has followed SG guidance and in consultation with staff (see SMT minutes and all staff meeting minutes for detail).
		Plan implemented			All planning has been done in the course of SMT meetings and has followed SG guidance and in consultation with staff (see SMT minutes and all staff meeting minutes for detail).
vii	AO	Risk assessment of EU exit on current and future activities	Completed		
		Update previous risk assessment			Not done at year end in that previous PESTL analysis not updated - C/F
		Feed potential impacts into budget projections			Based on previous projections
viii	HCS	Review of records management arrangements in prepartion for resubmission of our RMP to NRS	Assigned		
		See RMP Review Project Plan			
ix	AO/PAM	Review and revise all outstanding policies that are currently beyond their published review date	Assigned		
		Review policies			
		Update as appropriate			
		Publish as updated			
x	AO	Review entire website to ensure up to date	Assigned		
		Assess all pages			Review underway at March 2022. Not completed at year end
		Address broken links			Review underway at March 2022. Not completed at year end
		Remove or update outdated items			Review underway at March 2022. Not completed at year end
		Assess material published against publication scheme			Review underway at March 2022. Not completed at year end

xi	AESC/SMT	Prepare for publication of wider scope review report	Assigned		
		Respond formally to findings			
		Prepare lines for media and stakeholder enquiries			
		Prepare for prospective committee appearance			AESC gave evidence to SPPA Committee in Feb 2022. C/F other sessions into 2022/23
		Implement agreed recommendations			See above for progress against all recommendations. Some to C/F at year end.