

<b>Meeting</b>	OLC Board Meeting	<b>Agenda Item No. Paper No.</b>	2 132.1
<b>Date of meeting</b>	25 April 2024	<b>Time required</b>	30 mins

<b>Title</b>	<b>Review draft 2023/24 Annual Report and Accounts</b>
<b>Sponsor</b>	Laura Stroppolo, Head of Programme Management and Assurance/Blessing Simango, Head of Finance, Procurement and IT/Stephanie Godbold, Head of Communications, Engagement and Impact (interim)
<b>Status</b>	OFFICIAL
<b>To be communicated to:</b>	OLC Board

<b>Executive summary</b>
<p>The Head of Programme Management and Assurance, Head of Finance, Procurement and IT and Head of Communications, Engagement and Impact have progressed the 2023/24 external audit process and production of the OLC’s Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) for 2023/24. This paper provides a summary of progress to date.</p> <p><b>External audit process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LeO colleagues, as well as ARAC, have held detailed lessons learned discussions with external audit to mitigate the risk of late-stage queries arising as in 2022/23. Actions put in place include weekly progress meetings, and a further focus from LeO on ensuring source data is readily available in the format required by the audit team.</li> <li>• The Finance Team is finalising the audit schedules and supporting notes, so they are ready for review when the audit starts on 29 April 2024.</li> </ul> <p><b>Annual report and accounts document</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content was commissioned in early 2024, with associated assurance processes put in train. As in previous years, a document containing proposed key messages was shared with the Board for input – this year in lieu of a February workshop.</li> <li>• Pending further recruitment to the external affairs team, an external copywriter collated a first draft of the report based on this key message document and contributions from the executive team and other LeO colleagues.</li> <li>• This draft has now been reviewed and refined by the Head of Communications, Engagement and Impact, with input from the executive team, and is being shared with Board for their feedback. Any data and content outstanding at the point of sharing have been highlighted and will be completed as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Reflecting previous Board feedback on the need for strong visual elements within the report, LeO is this year using the in-house design agency for government and agencies, Design102, whose service also includes proofreading.</li> </ul>

<b>Governance and assurance</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ARA has a provisional laying date of Thursday, 27 June. This will follow ARAC and OLC Board approval which are scheduled for Thursday, 13 June.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommendation/action required</b>	
Board is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the update and provide any feedback/questions on or questions the audit and reporting process.</li> <li>Provide any feedback on the working draft of the ARA.</li> <li>Check their attendance at Board and Committee meetings, as set out from page XX of the draft ARA onwards</li> </ul>	
<b>Equality Diversity and Inclusion</b>	
<b>EDI implications</b>	<b>Yes</b>
The OLC's Annual Report and Accounts reviews the whole of the OLC's governance structures and the Legal Ombudsman's operations. EDI matters in respect of LeO's people and customers cut across the narrative, reflecting mandatory requirements and best-practice wherever possible. The ARA's final published form will be accessible pdf.	
<b>Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)</b>	
<b>Paragraph reference</b>	<b>Fol exemption and summary</b>
Attachments: Draft documents attached	Fol Exempt S.22 – information intended for future publication