

# **SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2012 AT 9.36AM  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

## **APPROVED**

**Present:** Trevor Reaney  
Gareth McGrath  
John Stewart  
Richard Stewart  
Stephen Welch  
Hugh Widdis

**In attendance:** Jim Beatty  
Eddie Kelly (Agenda item 6)  
David Johnston (Agenda item 9)  
Susie Brown (Agenda item 12)  
Brian Devlin (Agenda item 13 & 14)  
Tony Logue/Robin Ramsey (Agenda item 16)

## **1 Apologies**

1.1 There were no apologies

## **2 Declaration of Interests**

2.1 None

## **3 Minutes of Previous Meeting/Matters Arising**

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 9 November 2012 had been approved and published on 22 November 2012.

3.2 All issues within Matters Arising will be dealt with through the Action Points or discussed as substantive agenda items.

## **4 SMG Action Points**

4.1 The Action Point list was reviewed. Members were asked to advise Jim Beatty of further updates and amendments.

# **CORPORATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

## **5 Business Plans 2012/13 – updates on Directorate Business Plans**

- 5.1 SMG noted that a paper on performance against targets within Directorate Business Plans for the quarter ending 30 September 2012 was due to be considered by the Commission at the meeting on 11 December 2012.

## **6 Strategic Work Strands**

### **6.1 Business Efficiency Update**

Eddie Kelly, BEP Team leader, joined the meeting at 9.40am and updated SMG on the BEP progress. The Project Board meeting which was due on 16 November 2012 has been deferred to 7 December 2012.

There are 5 areas within the current tranche of reviews – it is planned for draft reports to be concluded by March 2013.

It was noted that the Clerk/DG had issued an update on the BEP to all staff last week.

### **6.2 Institutional Review**

Gareth McGrath provided an update on progress. The AERC has now tabled a second report which looks at the principles regarding the reduction in the number of Departments. The Committee will consider draft Terms of Reference for its next review.

### **6.3 Organisational Development**

The Clerk/DG is considering how best to take this issue forward.

### **6.4 Organisational Redesign**

The team undertaking the Organisational Redesign Project (Ken Hughes and Dianne Bevin) have concluded their planned interviews and are analysing the outcomes. It is planned to have a report in February 2013.

## **7. Co-ordination**

- 7.1 SMG noted that there were no outstanding issues regarding co-ordination on the implementation of the Corporate Strategy.

## **8. Consultation, communication and engagement**

- 8.1 SMG noted the on-going consultation, communication and engagement work in respect of the Corporate Strategy.
- 8.2 SMG acknowledged the need to keep staff up-to-date with the work, recommendations and implementation of the BEP. The Clerk/DG will consider how best to keep staff and SMG members informed.

## **LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE**

### **9. Corporate Risk Register**

- 9.1 David Johnston joined the meeting at 10.17am and briefed SMG on recent changes to the register.
- 9.2 SARC had met on 4 December 2012 and considered the Risk Register. They acknowledged the progress made and especially noted the positive trend in follow-up audits.
- 9.3 Hugh Widdis reminded SMG that an internal audit of risk management processes will be carried out before March 2013 by an external provider. He asked that in advance of that, all Directors should satisfy themselves that risk management is embedded within their directorates.

### **10. Roof Project – New Groups**

- 10.1 Stephen Welch spoke to his paper. The first phase of the project has now been completed and a Project Board has been established to take forward Phase 2. It is proposed that a Project Support Group should be established to work in conjunction with the Project Manager and the Design Team throughout the duration of the project.
- 10.2 It is recognised that communication will be key to the success of the project and that the requirements of all stakeholders are considered, especially with regard to the likely noise and disruption which will occur. It was suggested that a senior member of staff from Clerking and Reporting should chair the group. Directors were asked to consider this proposal and report alternative suggestions to the Keeper of the House by Friday, 7 December 2012. and SMG agreed this.

- 10.3 SMG also considered and agreed the draft Terms of Reference.
- 10.4 Richard Stewart questioned the tabling of the Project Board composition element of this paper at this meeting as he is preparing a paper for SMG on the composition of Project Boards. The request for this paper arose from experience from the Roof Project and it was his view that the Project Board required someone with detailed procurement experience. The paper will issue to SMG members for comment in the near future.

## **11. Assembly Visitor Conduct and Behaviour Policy**

- 11.1 Stephen Welch spoke to this issue. In wishing to continue to welcome visitors to Parliament Buildings, the Office of the Keeper has drafted this policy which sets out accepted standards of behaviour, responsibilities and guidance for both visitors and staff. The draft policy outlines the position in relation to number of matters, eg, uniforms, flags and music.
- 11.2 Extensive internal and external consultation has taken place and the draft policy reflects the outcome of the consultation.
- 11.3 SMG agreed the draft policy.

## **INFORMATION AND OUTREACH**

### **12. Youth Assembly Update**

- 12.1 Susie Brown joined the meeting at 10.42am. A Youth Panel had presented draft proposals to the OFMDFM Junior Ministers and the Minister for Education in March 2011 and the Ministers supported the establishment of a Youth Assembly. The proposals were subsequently agreed, in principle, by the Assembly Commission.
- 12.2 SMG was asked to consider how a pilot Youth Assembly should best be taken forward. A significant issue is funding and this has been estimated in excess of £100,000 for two years. SMG discussed the role of Departments in funding and it was agreed that rather than ask Departments for direct funding, the Assembly would consider bidding for all of the funding with the support of the Departments. The Assembly would then oversee a tendering exercise to deliver the pilot.
- 12.3 It was agreed that a paper should be brought to Commission meeting in January 2013.

**ACTION: JOHN STEWART**

### **13. Electronic Devices**

- 13.1 Brian Devlin joined the meeting at 11.25am and assisted John Stewart in presenting this paper. This issue had been discussed at the last Commission meeting but a decision was deferred pending further information and testing.
- 13.2 ISO has received a new ACER tablet which operates on Windows 8 and is currently testing this against other tablets. Performance and feedback to date has been very positive and the ability to attach a keyboard is considered very useful.
- 13.3 It is planned to bring this issue to the next Commission meeting on 11 December 2012 and some talks will take place with Commission members beforehand. The need to comply with long established procurement best practice was noted.

### **14. WLAN – Business Case/Printers**

- 14.1 Brian Devlin explained that part of taking forward the electronic committee packs project entailed the delivery of reliable wireless network coverage to all of Parliament Buildings. The business case set out a number of options for SMG to consider.
- 14.2 The costs are in the region of £114,000 over four years and will require a survey of the building. Disruption will be kept to a minimum as it is planned to maintain the old network until it is replaced.
- 14.3 SMG agreed the business case with the proposed option 5.
- 14.5 The issue of replacing current printers had been discussed at a previous SMG meeting. At that time, the replacement included £40,000 upfront for a four year maintenance package.
- 14.6 It is now possible to pay for the maintenance package on an annual basis which allows the ISO to proceed with the printer replacement programme within existing funds. SMG agreed for the ISO to proceed with the replacement.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **15. HR Management Information**

- 15.1 Richard Stewart spoke to this paper. The cumulative average working days lost per employee for the period October 2011 to September 2012 is 10.5 days. This remains above the benchmark figure of 7.5 days and

is an increase of 0.1 days on the September 2011 to August 2012 figure of 10.4 average working days lost per employee.

- 15.2 SMG noted the effect of long-term sickness on the figures and discussed current and potential actions to reduce absences.
- 15.3 The Corporate Strategy 2012/16 requires the HR Office to monitor the average number of training days with a target of 3 training days on average to be taken by staff members across each year. At the end of November 2012, the average training days were 1.8 per staff member.
- 15.4 A number of training events are planned for the next months and it is expected that the average training days per staff member will rise accordingly.

## **16. Future Commission/SMG Business**

16.1 Tony Logue and Robin Ramsey joined the meeting at 11.55am. SMG noted the future work plans and considered the agenda for the next Commission meeting:-

- E-Committee Project/Tablets & IT Refresh
- Clerk/DG Key Update Report
- Workplace Pension Reform – Auto Enrolment
- Review of FAPP – Governance Arrangements
- Proposals for Electronic Access Control
- Assembly Business Travel
- Monitoring of Corporate Strategy
- The Use of Art/Artefacts
- Interim Commissioner for Standards: Response to Recommendations
- NIABT: MoU
- Streaming All Party Events on Assembly Website

16.2 The Commission will meet on Wednesday, 30 January 2013.

## **ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

### **17. Directors' Updates**

- 17.1 Gareth McGrath asked SMG to note that the Committee Office considered its current work levels to be similar to those at the peak of the last mandate and that this was impacting on a number of business areas.
- 17.2 Hugh Widdis asked SMG to note that the Legal Services Office was experiencing similar upward pressure for similar reasons and also the

increase in legislation-driven demand. He also noted the publication of the Leveson report and that proposals for legislation on press regulation might arise.

## **18 Items dealt with by Correspondence**

18.1 The following item was dealt with by correspondence:-

- Rowel Friers Caricatures

18.2 It was agreed that only those items where the papers had already been circulated would be considered as appropriate within this item for future SMG meetings. The following items are still to be circulated:

- External Litigation – Business Case
- Procurement Resources

## **19. AOB**

19.1 There were no issues under this heading.

## **20. Next Meeting**

20.1 The next meeting will be at 9.30am in Room 106 on Friday, 18 January 2013.

*The meeting adjourned at 12.20pm.*