

SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

**FRIDAY, 18 JANUARY 2013 AT 9.30AM
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)
Sinead McDonnell (Agenda items 11 – 14)
Tony Logue (Agenda item 15)

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 5 December 2012 had been approved and published on 19 December 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 December 2012 will be considered at its next meeting on 8 February 2013.
- 5.2 Work is beginning shortly on the development of 2013/14 Business Plans.

6 Strategic Work Strands

6.1 Business Efficiency Update

Eddie Kelly, BEP Team leader, joined the meeting at 9.43am and spoke to his paper on the issue. The Project Board met on 7 December 2012 and agreed the final reports on the HR and Hansard reviews. Draft reports on Building Services, Communications & Information Standards and Legal Services were also agreed and feedback from stakeholders has been requested. Further reviews have begun and scoping documents have been drafted for discussion with the business areas.

Stephen Welch asked SMG to note that he had concerns about some of the recommendations in the draft BEP report on Building Services.

Meetings with TUS are on-going on a number of reports including Security and Ushering.

6.2 Institutional Review

Gareth McGrath provided an update on progress. The Assembly and Executive Review Committee is preparing a 'Call for Evidence on D'Hondt, community designation and the creation of an opposition.

An update was also provided on the review of the committee system, a recommendation from a previous AERC report. The terms of reference for the review will be presented to the Chairpersons Liaison Group in mid-February 2013. A secretariat project board has also been established.

6.3 Organisational Development

The Clerk/DG drew attention to the recent ALF sessions on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and asked Directors to encourage teams who have gone through the process to meet and continue discussions around preferred work styles. The Clerk/DG referred to the pause which he had put on progressing an Organisational Development (OD) strategy. He outlined to SMG his proposed way forward. He considered that the OD strategy should be a short overarching document with practical actions being addressed through other strategies and business plans, mainly but not exclusively through the People Strategy. The OD strategy would define a desired 'future state' for the organisation; assess the 'current state' and identify what more needs to be done to move us to the next phase of our desired 'future state'. A group would be established to take this forward.

6.4 Organisational Redesign

The team undertaking the Organisational Redesign Project (Ken Hughes and Dianne Bevin) are continuing to analysing the outcomes of the information gathered. 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.

LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE

9. Corporate Risk Register

- 9.1 David Johnston joined the meeting at 10.15am and briefed SMG on recent changes to the register.
- 9.2 SMG identified some further changes and David will incorporate these Into the Register.

FACILITIES

10. Staff Survey 2012

- 10.1 Stephen Welch spoke to his paper on this issue. A staff survey was carried out in February 2012 and initial findings were presented to SMG on 3 May 2012. Four broad categories of results were identified:-
- Inappropriate Behaviours
 - Team Spirit/Morale
 - Leadership/Management and
 - Internal Communications
- 10.2 On 26 July it was agreed that an Employee Relations Group would establish a sub-group to assist in developing an Action Plan. In addition, the Assembly Leadership Forum considered the development of an Action Plan at its meeting on 23 November 2012. A draft Action Plan was before SMG for consideration at today's meeting.
- 10.3 SMG recognised the need to address the issues raised within the survey. However, more detailed information would be required in respect of some issues. To assist personal development, SMG discussed tasking the Assembly Leadership Forum with taking forward much of the draft Action Plan.
- 10.4 SMG acknowledged the good work done in taking the survey outcome so far. Stephen Welch will continue to manage the process.

CORPORATE SERVICES

11. Social Media Policy

- 11.1 Sinead McDonnell joined the meeting at 11.00am and spoke to the paper on this issue. Over the past years there has been a significant rise in the numbers using social media sites, eg, Facebook and Twitter, and while considered as a useful communication tool, there is a growing risk of users failing to appreciate the potential impact of what they may view as their private online activity.
- 11.2 It was proposed that the HR office should develop a written policy on the acceptable use of social media for consideration by the Commission. This policy would be based on a number of key principles:-
- Clear, common sense guidelines
 - Address the needs of staff using social media on behalf of the Assembly
 - Responsibilities for implementing the policy

- Explaining how disciplinary rules and sanctions will be applied and
- Explain how the Assembly Commission will monitor IT usage including social media interaction

11.3 SMG considered if amending the current Dignity At Work Policy would meet the need but it was agreed that a separate policy would be best.

11.4 It was agreed that HR should take forward the draft policy. It was also agreed that expert advice should be sought from outside the Assembly, eg, the NICS and arrangements made for a presentation/discussion on the subject.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

12. Secondment Policy

12.1 Sinead McDonnell spoke to this paper. To support achievement of the People Strategy 2012 – 16 and to ensure that all secondments are consistently and properly managed, HR has proposed the development of a formal policy.

12.2 It was recognised that secondments can bring significant benefits for individuals and the organisation and HR has identified a number of key principles to be considered in developing the policy.

12.3 SMG approved the key principles and agreed that development of a Secondment Policy should be progressed.

13. Drugs and Alcohol Policy

13.1 Sinead McDonnell spoke to this paper. The Assembly Commission has an existing policy based on the NICS policy but over the years this has not met some circumstances, eg, the policy does not provide practical guidance where a member of staff is sent home if under the influence of alcohol or drugs. HR has proposed the development of a revised policy which meets the need of staff and managers.

13.2 HR has identified a number of key principles which were approved by SMG. It was also agreed that HR should progress the development of the revised policy.

14. HR Management Information

15.1 Sinead McDonnell and Richard Stewart spoke to this paper. The cumulative average working days lost per employee for the period November 2011 to October 2012 is 10.8 days. This remains above the benchmark figure of 7.5 days and is an increase on the previous

figures. HR identified no specific cause for the increase in October but expected that the figures would improve with the return of some staff from long term absences.

- 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 December 2012, the average training days were 2.1 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 joined the meeting at 11.30am. SMG noted the future work plans and considered the agenda for the next Commission meeting:-

- Clerk/DG Update Report
- Monitoring of Corporate Strategy
- Workplace Pension Reform – Auto Entitlement
- Review of FAPP – Governance Arrangements
- Assembly Business Travel
- The Use of Art/Artefacts
- Exhibitions Programme of Events 2013
- Interim Commissioner for Standards – Response to Recommendations
- NIABT – Memorandum of Understanding
- Streaming All Party Group events on Assembly Website
- Youth Assembly
- BEP – Clerking and Reporting

16.2 It is planned for the Commission will meet on Wednesday, 30 January 2013.

16.3 SMG noted the planned visit by the Commission and Directors to the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday, 23 January 2013 for three days.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

17. Directors' Updates

17.1 There were no updates to report

18 Items dealt with by Correspondence

18.1 There were no items dealt with by correspondence.

19. AOB

19.1 Stephen Welch raised the issue of the introduction of new printers and the recovery of consumables. It was agreed that the Assembly should exchange new consumables for any that Members have paid for in the past.

19.2 Gareth McGrath said that it was planned to bring a paper on the findings of the recent Members Survey to the Commission in February.

19.3 The Clerk/DG said that the Business Continuity Team had met on 11 January 2013 and was progressing the required plans.

19.4 Richard Stewart said that Management Accounts would be presented to the Commission at its meeting on 30 January 2013. TUS had accepted the proposed two year pay deal and this would now be implemented.

20. Next Meeting

20.1 The next meeting will be at 9.30am in Room 106 on Friday, 8 February 2013.

The meeting adjourned at 12.05pm.