

SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

**FRIDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2014 AT 9.35AM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

APPROVED

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

In Attendance: Jim Beatty
David Johnston
Edmund Kelly
Martina Dalton
Sinead McDonnell
Tony Logue
Robin Ramsey

1 Welcome/Opening

(a) Apologies

There were no apologies.

(b) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

(c) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of 16 January 2014 had been approved and were published on 28 January 2014.

(d) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2 Action Points

- 2.1 The Action Points list was reviewed. Members were asked to advise Jim Beatty of any further updates/amendments.

3 Business Plans 2013/14

- 3.1 SMG considered the Monitoring of Business Plans return for q/e 31 December 2014. The significant progress was noted and it was agreed to refer the return to the Commission.
- 3.2 Richard Stewart said that guidance for completion of Directorate Business Plans for 2014/15 had been issued on 5 February 2014.

4 Strategic Work Strands

(a) Institutional Review

Gareth McGrath said that the Assembly and Executive Review Committee is continuing its inquiry into Petitions of Concern. The Committee on Procedures is also continuing with its inquiry into the participation of the Attorney General in the proceedings of the Assembly and the Review of the Business Week of the Assembly.

(b) Organisational Development Strategy

Richard Stewart said that the group taking this issue forward had met and identified some initial key information needed. All Directors were encouraged to assist group members as much as possible.

(c) Organisation Redesign

Trevor Reaney said that planned changes should be in place by 1 March 2014. A final meeting of the Project Board will be held before the end of March 2014.

5 Implementation Updates

(a) Co-ordination, Consultation, Communication and Engagement

Richard Stewart said that the 2014 pay claim from NIPSA had been received. As in previous years, discussions on the claim with TUS will be informed by wider macro-economic factors including any guidance that might be issued by Treasury.

(b) Financial Management Group

Richard Stewart said that the group plans to meet next week. The templates for the 2014/15 budgets had been issued to budget holders.

(c) IT Prioritisation Group

John Stewart said that there was nothing further to report at this stage.

6 Roof Project Update

- 6.1 Stephen Welch said the Project Team was meeting today to discuss the received tenders and how best to seek clarification from one of the companies involved.
- 6.2 The staff decant is progressing well – HR will move to Annexe C over the coming days. Some internal moves will be completed this weekend.
- 6.3 Trevor Reaney thanked the team for the excellent work to date.

7 Corporate Risk Register

- 7.1 David Johnston joined the meeting at 9.50am and advised SMG of recent changes to the Register. After a discussion, some further changes to the Register were identified. David will make the required amendments.
- 7.2 It was agreed to defer a decision on the revision of Risk 4 until SMG had discussed the recent breach of information. Hugh Widdis will advise David Johnston of the outcome – see Minutes Item 9.6.

8 Business Efficiency Project (BEP) Closure Report

- 8.1 Edmund Kelly joined the meeting at 10.00am and assisted John Stewart in presenting this report.
- 8.2 The Project Evaluation Report had been approved by the Project Board in early February 2014 and was referred to SMG for consideration. The report contained four recommendations:-
 - Development of a Continuous Improvement Programme
 - Post-project evaluation of all investment projects to highlight actual savings against predicted
 - Post-project periodic reviews to evaluate achievement of intended benefits and outcomes
 - BEP records and information to be formally assigned to another business area.
- 8.3 Hugh Widdis suggested that in furtherance of the second recommendation a separate paper should be brought to SMG proposing a model for consistent Post-Project Evaluation. John Stewart agreed to do this.

ACTION: JOHN STEWART

- 8.4 SMG discussed and agreed the recommendations within the report and it was agreed that ownership of the information and records will pass to HR Office.
- 8.5 At the start of the project in 2011, Trevor Reaney had issued a Financial Guidance Memo to staff regarding areas where potential savings may be made. It was agreed that this should be updated and re-issued.

ACTION: JOHN STEWART

- 8.6 On behalf of SMG, Trevor Reaney thanked everyone who had contributed to the significant success of this project. He noted that BEP had assisted in meeting budget and staffing targets; contributed to a change in culture regarding the use of resources; and provided an evidence base for future budget bids.

9 Revision of Information Assurance Policy

- 9.1 Martina Dalton joined the meeting at 10.31am and assisted John Stewart in presenting this paper.
- 9.2 John Stewart said that a data breach occurred on 24 January 2014. Following completion of an investigation a report was prepared which, among its recommendations, recommended a change to the Information Assurance Policy. The report and proposed change to the policy were before SMG today.
- 9.3 The data breach was not malicious and was contained in a timely way with the recipient of the information deleting it. Action has been taken to prevent a similar breach.
- 9.4 SMG queried the consistency of application of security markings within the Assembly and John Stewart said that he had asked Information Asset Owners to consider the preparation of business area guidance on how the Information Assurance Policy should be implemented.
- 9.5 The recommended change to the Information Assurance Policy was approved.
- 9.6 SMG reviewed Risk 4 of the Corporate Risk Register and agreed some amendments. Hugh Widdis will advise David Johnston of these changes.

ACTION: HUGH WIDDIS

10 Redeployment Policy

- 10.1 Sinead McDonnell joined the meeting at 10.56am and spoke to this paper.
- 10.2 In September 2013 SMG had approved an extension of the Redeployment Protocol to include AG5s and asked HR Office to consider extending this further to higher grades. While agreeing to the proposed change in principle, it was the view of the HR Office that this was not the appropriate time to introduce a further change.
- 10.3 SMG discussed the recommendation and agreed to revisit the issue by no later than 31 March 2015.

11. HR Management Information

- 11.1 Sinead McDonnell spoke to the paper on this issue. A Corporate Strategy objective is to have an average of three days training per member of staff per year. The current figure completed is 1.9 days. It is believed that some staff complete training, particularly informal, without updating the online register and Directors were urged to encourage their staff to record all training.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

- 11.2 In 2010, SMG agreed an absence benchmark of 7.5 average working days lost per annum per employee. The cumulative average working days lost per employee for the period January 2013 – December 2013 was 8.8 days, which represents a decrease of 2.2 days compared with the January 2012 – December 2012 figure of 11.0 days. Trevor Reaney acknowledged the efforts of all involved in improving the absence levels.
- 11.3 SMG noted that 381.5 staff are currently working within the Secretariat of which 367.2 are permanent staff.

12 Gender Equality Survey 2014

- 12.1 Tony Logue joined the meeting at 11.15 and spoke to this paper.
- 12.2 On 24 April 2013 the Commission agreed that the preparation and implementation of a Gender Action Plan should be included in the Organisational Redesign implementation plan.
- 12.3 A Gender Action Steering Group has met on a number of occasions and developed a questionnaire to be issued to Assembly Secretariat staff. The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit further data on

whether any actual or perceived barriers exist in relation to gender equality within the organisation.

- 12.4 If any equality issues are identified from the results and a gender action plan is required, a further paper will be tabled to SMG outlining potential future steps.
- 12.5 SMG was reassured that as the questionnaire is part of the development of proposals in this area it could only have a positive impact on equality. SMG discussed the questionnaire and agreed to its issue.

13 Commission/SMG Business

- 13.1 Robin Ramsey joined the meeting at 11.20am. Tony Logue presented the agenda for the Commission meeting planned for 26 February 2014. The agreed items are:-

- Clerk/DG's Update
- Employers and Public Liability Insurance
- Commission Handbook
- Roof Project (if tender evaluation available)

- 13.2 A session on Governance will be held before the meeting.

14 Directors' Updates

- 14.1 John Stewart briefed SMG on delays in sourcing Acer tablet devices for staff working with the Assembly Commission, SARC and SMG, IT penetration testing, support for the office decant and internet connections to Parliament Buildings. John said that technical problems with the website would be resolved when specialist technical support is in place in March. Work is progressing on preparation of a Digital First Strategy and Engagement Strategy. Handover meetings have taken place in relation to Events Office, Information Standards and the Education Service as part of implementation of the Organisational Redesign Report.
- 14.2 Gareth McGrath said that planning has begun for the next Members' Survey and the Project Team will meet next week.
- 14.3 Richard Stewart said that Finance had already moved to Annexe C and the HR Office would join them soon. He asked for colleagues to be aware that the change of location may impact on meeting arrangements and other contacts.
- 14.4 Trevor Reaney reminded Directors of his recent note on referring papers coming to SMG for equality screening, where required.

14.5 During recent Horizon Scanning discussions, six areas for further action were identified:-

- Strategic Work Strands – review for 2014/15
- Values – further focus to be given to Organisational Development Strategy
- Delegation – review with the aim of increasing levels of delegation
- SMG – review of role and composition
- Ormiston – handling of disposal
- Positive Working Relations Initiative – progress to next step

15 Items cleared by correspondence

15.1 SMG noted that the following items have been cleared by correspondence:-

- (a) Audit Services for Political Parties Scheme
- (b) Transport for Decanted Staff
- (c) Health and Safety Management Report
- (d) Good Relations Screening paper

16 AOB

16.1 No items were raised.

17 Next Meeting

17.1 The next meeting will be held on Friday, 7 March 2014 at 9.30am in Room 106.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30am.