

# SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 7 MARCH 2014 AT 9.32AM  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

## APPROVED

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

**In Attendance:** Jim Beatty  
David Johnston  
Brian Devlin  
Tracey Wilson  
Tara Caul  
Cathy McGowan

## 1 Welcome/Opening

### (a) Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Stewart. Sinead McDonnell attended on his behalf.

### (b) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### (c) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of 14 February 2014 had been approved and were published on 24 February 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 Directors are currently preparing draft Business Plans for 2014/15. Trevor Reaney asked to have these forwarded to him by Friday, 14 March 2014 as per the guidance.

### **4 Strategic Work Strands**

#### **(a) Institutional Review**

Gareth McGrath said that the Assembly and Executive Review Committee and the Committee on Procedures are completing their current work and plan to publish reports.

#### **(b) Organisational Development Strategy**

Sinead McDonnell said that the Project Team had met on 4 occasions and were currently consulting on a draft strategy.

#### **(c) Organisation Redesign**

Trevor Reaney said that a draft summary report would be brought to the Project Board before the end of March 2014. He advised that he would circulate the draft to Directors.

**ACTION: TREVOR REANEY**

#### **(d) Review of Strategic Work Strands**

Gareth McGrath and John Stewart spoke to their paper on this issue. It was proposed that the current work strands would finish in April 2014 and that these would be replaced by the three strands recommended in the paper.

SMG discussed the paper including the titles of the strands and their contents. It was agreed that following amendments to the paper, Trevor Reaney would issue a note to all Heads of Branches about the proposals; Directors would consult with their Heads of Branches and pass any comments to John Stewart or Gareth McGrath who would bring an amended paper to the next SMG meeting.

**ACTION: (a) TREVOR REANEY, (b) DIRECTORS,  
(c) JOHN STEWART/GARETH MCGRATH**

## **5 Implementation Updates**

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

Sinead McDonnell said that a meeting with TUS to begin discussions on this year's pay award would be held on 11 March 2014.

### **(b) Financial Management Group**

Sinead McDonnell said that budget submissions for 2014/15 were due in the Finance Office by close of play today.

### **(c) IT Prioritisation Group**

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

## **6 Directorate Risk Registers**

- 6.1 David Johnston joined the meeting at 10.02am and said that it had been agreed that SMG would review Directorate Risk Registers twice a year. A Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee (SARC) meeting was planned for 10 April 2014 and these registers would be considered at that meeting.
- 6.2 SMG reviewed the registers and the identified risk clusters and agreed to refer the registers to SARC.

## **7 Corporate Risk Register**

- 7.1 David Johnston said that there had been no changes to the Risk Register since the last SMG meeting. After a discussion, some further changes to the Register were identified. David will make the required amendments.

## **8 Roof Project Update**

- 8.1 Stephen Welch told SMG that some initial issues with Annexe C had now been resolved and a minibus was operating within a fixed timetable. Further staff are due to move to Knockview Buildings and moves within Parliament Buildings are continuing.
- 8.2 The contractor tendering process was ongoing and it was planned to bring a paper to the Commission w/c 18 March 2014 for approval to appoint a contractor.

## **9 Information Systems Strategy**

- 9.1 Brian Devlin joined the meeting at 10.40am and spoke to this paper.
- 9.2 A draft IS Strategy had been approved by SMG at its meeting on 13 December 2013 subject to a wider staff consultation. This has now been completed and resulted in two minor amendments to the Strategy.
- 9.3 Some further responses had just been received but SMG approved the draft Strategy as it now stands. The draft will only return to SMG if any changes are considered significant.

## **10 Extension of Print/Associated Services**

- 10.1 John Stewart spoke to this paper. On 5 November 2013 SMG had considered a one year extension available within the current contract to allow the Assembly sufficient time to consider options on the way forward. The paper before SMG set out more detailed proposals on costs and potential savings.
- 10.2 SMG discussed and noted the proposals. The contractor will be informed of the decision.

## **11. Replacement of existing Broadcasting Archive System**

- 11.1 Tracey Wilson joined the meeting at 11.15am and spoke to this paper.
- 11.2 The Assembly has retained significant archive material in a range of forms since 1998 which is no longer cost effective or practical. The proposal to adopt advanced television compression techniques and disk storage solutions will not only bring financial and storage benefits but will allow greater access in other formats. SMG was told that the old tapes will be transferred later this year when the facility is in place.
- 11.3 SMG considered the proposal and approved the Business Case.

## **12 Staff Survey**

- 12.1 Tara Caul joined the meeting at 11.27am and spoke to this paper.
- 12.2 The Internal Communications Group plans to issue a Staff Survey in 2014 and has prepared a draft methodology and action timeline. The Equality Unit has been consulted and has not identified any issues of concern. TUS are represented on the Group.

- 12.3 It is proposed to issue a draft survey to Heads of Branches for consultation and to issue the survey to all staff before the end of September 2014. A final draft will be referred to SMG for approval.
- 12.4 SMG noted the plans and it was agreed that Sinead McDonnell will provide some guide questions regarding unacceptable behaviours to the Group for consideration.

**ACTION: SINEAD MCDONNELL**

### **13 Commission/SMG Business**

- 13.1 Cathy McGowan joined the meeting at 11.35am and presented the agenda for the Commission meeting planned for 2 April 2014. The agreed items are:-

- Clerk/CE's Update
- Ormiston House
- Assembly Commission – Corporate Governance Arrangements
- BEP Closure Report
- Recognition of Individuals Policy
- Artefacts within Parliament Buildings
- Flags – EQIA
- Improving Governance with Partner Bodies
- Service Level Agreement - IFRP

### **14 SMG Evaluation**

- 14.1 Trevor Reaney had circulated a paper on this issue prior to the meeting and asked Directors to provide their comments in writing.

**ACTION: DIRECTORS**

### **15. Directors' Updates**

- 15.1 Sinead McDonnell informed SMG of the continuing roll-out of the iTrent system with the leave and attendance section now available. Training on using this is scheduled for later this month. Richard Stewart is attending the Inter-Parliamentary Contact Group meeting today in Parliament Buildings.
- 15.2 Stephen Welch asked for all staff to be reminded of the need for continued vigilance when receiving mail. The sale of Ormiston House is proceeding. The Assembly will begin a new mobile phone contract with EE in April 2014 – the contract includes the provision of new handsets.

- 15.3 Gareth McGrath said that broadcasting facilities have been provided for Committee meetings in Room 21. A joint committee will be formed for scrutiny of the forthcoming Mental Health Bill.
- 15.4 Hugh Widdis said that Tara Caul had been selected by Boston College following an open and competitive process to participate in its Rule of Law programme. The Silk Commission latest report has been published. In a Supreme Court hearing of the Welsh Agricultural Sector Wages Bill, some interesting points were made by the justices about the nature of 'relating to' or 'dealing with' transferred matters and the judgement may impact on our processes.

## **16 Items cleared by correspondence**

- 16.1 SMG noted that no items had been cleared by correspondence since the last meeting.

## **17 AOB**

- 17.1 Brian Devlin updated SMG on the current position in relation to the ongoing loss of internet facilities within Parliament Buildings. The IS Office has used a number of methods to restore a partial service but there are ongoing discussions with the provider about the restoration of a full service as soon as possible.
- 17.2 The loss has highlighted issues within the procurement process and Sinead McDonnell pointed to the need to amend the Corporate Risk Register to reflect the current position. Hugh Widdis will discuss this issue with David Johnston.

**ACTION: HUGH WIDDIS**

- 17.3 Sinead McDonnell asked about the designation of an Assembly charity. This issue is with the Commission for decision.

## **18 Next Meeting**

- 18.1 The next meeting will be held on Friday, 11 April 2014 at 9.30am in Room 106.

*The meeting adjourned at 12.12am.*