

SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP PERFORMANCE FORMAT

**FRIDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2014 AT 9.32AM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

APPROVED

**Present: Trevor Reaney
Tara Caul
Gareth McGrath
John Stewart
Richard Stewart
Stephen Welch**

**In Attendance: Jim Beatty
Conor Coughlin
Robin Ramsey**

1. Opening/Review

(a) Apologies

Apologies were received from Hugh Widdis. Tara Caul deputised 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 November 2014 had been approved and published on 26 November 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. Strategic and Financial Planning 2015/16

- 3.1 Trevor Reaney said that the Commission was continuing to consider the draft 2015/16 budget. The Commission is due to next meet on 10 December 2015 when it will also consider correspondence from the Minister of Finance and Personnel relating to the budget.
- 3.2 Mr Reaney is finalising work on a Strategic Planning Initiative and plans to launch it prior to Christmas 2014. This paper will bring together a number of themes which will assist in planning for 2015 and beyond.

4. Business Continuity Management System (BCMS)

- 4.1 Conor Coughlin joined the meeting at 9.46am and assisted Stephen Welch in presenting this paper.
- 4.2. There has been considerable progress in taking forward BCMS over the past year with training delivered to both the Gold and Silver teams and joining an inter-parliamentary group dealing with BCMS. There were 4 issues for discussion before SMG:-
 - Annual Review – SMG agreed to an annual review in January 2015. The outcome of the review will come to SMG in March 2015.
 - Training – SMG agreed to further training and, if necessary, a procurement exercise to have this delivered.
 - Battle Box – SMG agreed to the suggested contents.
 - Operational Business Continuity – it was proposed to draft a template for use by business areas to assist them in identifying local requirements to assist managers in providing business continuity. The template will work across all areas and assistance/training will be provided where needed. It was agreed that additional information on what input would be required from Directorates would be brought to SMG.
 - ISO Accreditation – this will be explored further and will be brought to SMG in the future.
- 4.3 It was confirmed that copies of the full plans will be made available to Directors. Conor Coughlin left the meeting at 10.07.
- 4.4 Stephen Welch said that Facilities would continue to deliver BCMS in the immediate future. However, in light of growing workloads and pressures, he had to raise the issue of staffing. After discussion, it was

agreed that he would bring a paper to SMG on the matter when a decision was required.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH (3 ITEMS)

5. Equality Request for Staff Support

- 5.1 John Stewart said that the paper highlighted the growing workloads within the Equality Unit and the need for an additional staff resource for a limited period. This led to a discussion on how best to fill current and future vacancies across the Secretariat, the potential impact on services across the Directorates and the need for a consistent approach.
- 5.2 Trevor Reaney said that he expected Directors to consider all possible options for dealing with in-year staffing pressures (including prioritisation and review of service standards) before bringing requests for additional staff to SMG, in light of potential budget reductions in 2015-16. John Stewart recommended a course of action in relation to service standards in Information and Outreach Directorate and staffing needs in the Equality and Good Relations Unit. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next SMG meeting.
- 5.3 Tara Caul said that staffing support for IFRP was currently being considered. It was agreed that a paper setting out the case for the level of staffing required should be brought to SMG. It was noted that the Commission would require a briefing on IFRP resources as part of the budget planning for 2015/16.

ACTION: HUGH WIDDIS

6. Commission/SMG Business

- 6.1 Robin Ramsey joined the meeting at 10.50am and presented the agenda for the next Commission meeting for 21 January 2015. The proposed items are:-
- Clerk/CE's Update
 - Strategic Planning 2015 and beyond
 - Draft PSNI Search MoU
 - Audit of Inequalities
 - Equality Screening Report – Assembly Commission Questions
 - Draft Budget 2015/16
 - Legislative Strengthening Trust - MoU
- 6.2 SMG noted the Forward Work Plan to March 2015.

7. Directors' Updates

- 7.1 John Stewart briefed SMG on work on the Broadcasting Contract following the Commission's decision on 25 November. He said that a number of events had gone well and thanked everyone involved - NIABT visit to Brussels, Charity of the Year (Pop-Up Shops and Christmas Tree Lighting), two Knowledge Exchange Seminars, 'Let's Talk' (Youth), 'Get Involved' North Belfast, Five Nations Citizenship Conference and the NI Pensioners Parliament. John said that he had delivered a presentation at Queen's University on Engagement and had attended a reception at the US Consulate Belfast in honour of Senator Hart.
- 7.2 Richard Stewart said that the pay award was still under consideration by the Commission but was likely to be in line with the settlement in the NICS.
- 7.3 Gareth McGrath said that it was planned to take forward an ad hoc committee commencing in early 2015.
- 7.4 Tara Caul said the IFRP was about to launch a consultation exercise on Members' staff.
- 7.4 Stephen Welch said that the sale of Ormiston House had been completed. The roof project was progressing well, broadly in line with targets. There were some difficulties with the current mobile phone contract and he was in discussion with the Procurement Manager as to its future.

8. Items Cleared by Correspondence

- 8.1 The following items have been cleared by correspondence:-
- HR Management Information
 - Corporate Risk Register

9. Reflections on new SMG Meeting Cycle

- 9.1 Trevor Reaney said that the present system had been in place for seven months and invited views on its operation. The general consensus was in favour of continuing with the format although it was again emphasised that only appropriate issues should come before SMG.

10. AOB

10.1 No matters were raised.

11. Next Meeting

11.1 The next meeting will be held on Friday, 9 January 2015 at 9.30am in Room 106, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 11.25am.