

# **SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP PERFORMANCE FORMAT**

**FRIDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2015 at 9.30  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

## **APPROVED**

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

**In Attendance:** James Gilsenan  
Janet Hughes  
Robin Ramsey  
Sinead McDonnell  
David Johnston  
Brian Devlin  
David Lynn

### **1. Opening/Review**

#### **(a) Apologies**

No apologies were received.

Trevor Reaney welcomed James Gilsenan and Janet Hughes to their first SMG meeting.

#### **(b) Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **(c) Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Approved minutes of the meeting of 28 October 2015 were published on 3 December 2015.

#### **(d) Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **2. SMG Action Points**

- 2.1 Outstanding Action Points were reviewed. Members were asked to advise James Gilsenan of any future changes.

## **3. Corporate Strategy – Measure of Success**

- 3.1 Trevor Reaney referred to the Corporate Strategy 2012-2017 as amended in 2015 and asked for comments regarding progress against the Measures of Success. Overall, good progress was noted against the measures, particularly during a time of budget reductions.
- 3.2 *Against Staff to undertake an average of 2.5 learning and development days per year* SMG noted that this target is unlikely to be met due to the pressures of work following staff leaving under the Voluntary Exit Scheme but also a large volume of informal and on the job training going unrecorded. Directors are to remind staff of the need to record this type of training.
- 3.3 *Against Member satisfaction rate above 80%*, SMG agreed to consider a rolling style of Members' survey for use from the start of the next mandate to replace the current snap shot model

### **ACTION: DIRECTORS**

## **4. Corporate Risk Register**

- 4.1 David Johnston joined the meeting at 9.41am to brief SMG on proposed additions and amendments to and deletions from, the Corporate Risk Register.
- 4.2 Following discussion, the proposed changes were agreed for review by SARC on 16 December 2015.
- 4.3 SMG agreed to add the root cause *lack of Executive prioritisation of legislation* and elevate the root cause *End of 2011-16 mandate and increased business during final session* under Risk 3.
- 4.4 SMG agreed to review the Risk Register format during the 2016 Dissolution period.

*David Johnston left the meeting.*

## **5. Management Accounts**

- 5.1 Richard Stewart spoke to his paper and informed SMG that he did not anticipate an under-spend greater than -1.5% of budget by financial year end.

*Gareth McGrath left the meeting at 10.25am*

*Gareth McGrath re-joined the meeting at 10.33am*

- 5.2 SMG reviewed the accounts and agreed to draft contingency plans for any currently unscheduled capital projects that might be undertaken before financial year end should funds allow.

### **ACTION: DIRECTORS**

## **6. Good Relations Monitoring Report**

- 6.1 Richard Stewart spoke to his paper, reminding SMG this was an in-year monitoring report only.
- 6.2 SMG agreed to look at decoupling the recruitment of Good Relations Champions from the redrafting of the Commission Handbook to allow the selection and training of Champions to begin.

### **ACTION: JAMES GILSENAN**

- 6.3 Richard also informed SMG of the very positive feedback from the Equality Commission following recent engagement of the Assembly's approach to and progress on equality issues. SMG recorded its appreciation of the work of Maria Bannon and Roisin Mooney of the Equality Unit.

*Stephen Welch left the meeting at 10.45am.*

## **7. SP15+ Update**

Richard Stewart provided a verbal update on SP15+

Richard informed SMG that the Speaker was meeting with the Finance Minister on 15 December 2015 to discuss both the methodology for setting the Assembly budget going forward and the quantum of that budget.

The deadline for bids to fund a Voluntary Exit Scheme in 2016-17 is 4 December and the Assembly will make a provisional bid pending the outcome of the budget being finalised for the same period.

There will be a paper by Christmas on the issue of encouraging and facilitating effective and meaningful delegation from Directors to Heads of Business to encourage creative and innovative responses to the current resourcing pressures.

*Stephen Welch re-joined the meeting at 10.51am.*

*Richard Stewart left the meeting at 10.51am.*

## **8. Shared Services – IS provision**

Brian Devlin joined the meeting at 10.50am and spoke to his paper on IS Shared Services. The paper provided a financial and service level comparison between continuing to meet IS functions in house and moving services to IT Assist.

*Richard Stewart re-joined the meeting at 10.54am.*

Brian noted the complications of extricating and individually costing aspects of the services currently provided. Furthermore, IT Assist does not have the provision currently to offer some services currently available to service users including the servicing of constituency offices and support during late sittings.

Analysis of the two options for future IT provision demonstrated a clear cost advantage to maintaining the current in-house proposition. Service levels in the IT Assist proposition would lead to a reduction in response times to the full range of requests.

SMG approved the paper recommending that IT services stay in-house, with a few minor amendments, for consideration by the Commission. As a result, and subject to the Commission's acceptance of the recommendation, SMG also agreed that IS Office could proceed to full Business Case for the proposed Desktop PC Replacement.

## **9. Microsoft Licensing**

Brian Devlin spoke to his paper on the requirement for the Commission to appoint a new Large Account Reseller (LAR) as a partner under the Microsoft licensing rules in advance of a full business case for licencing in July 2016.

This is a zero cost exercise to comply with Microsoft's unique licensing methodology.

SMG approved the procurement of a compliant contract for the management of the Assembly's next Microsoft Enterprise Agreement. It was noted however that the procurement advice attached to the paper

should be updated to ensure that it reflects the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which came into force in February 2015.

*Brian Devlin left the meeting.*

## **10. IP Telephony**

Stephen Welch spoke to this paper recommending that the current telephony arrangement with BT and Vodafone remain in place until either a new VoIP solution is procured or the Assembly system is reintegrated in to the new NICS VoIP network.

SMG approved a twelve month extension to the current telephony maintenance agreements and for scoping a new VoIP telephony system to begin in 2016.

## **11. Election Planning**

Stephen Welch spoke to his paper briefing SMG on election planning work undertaken to date.

Stephen informed SMG that a cross-directorate planning group had been constituted and that work was underway to co-ordinate pre- and post-election planning activity and to ensure value for money in this activity.

At a meeting on 18 November, an election planning action list was agreed. Furthermore, RaISe will pull together qualitative data from engagement with MLAs to inform the plan.

SMG noted the update and agreed that engagement with Party Support staff would add value to the exercise.

*At 12 noon, Stephen Welch left the meeting. David Lynn joined to deputise. Sinead McDonnell joined the meeting for items 13, 14 and 15.*

## **12. HR Management Information**

Sinead McDonnell spoke to her paper and reminded SMG that HR Management Information would be discussed quarterly at SMG, and not monthly as before as a result of SP15+ pressures. This, and future, papers will include case management information which was recommended in a recent internal audit report.

Sinead informed SMG that the Learning and Development average currently stood at 0.7 days per member of staff for this reporting year and that it was important for staff to log informal training, but also to

avail of other training opportunities that exist. She noted that the Masterclass series covering a wide range of issues had been well attended. Directors were asked to advise their staff to log informal training interventions on their iTrent account.

Secretariat staff sick absence shows an increase of 0.9 days lost per annum per staff member bringing the average days lost per staff to 9 days per annum. SMG agreed that this figure was to be monitored particularly closely with staff facing end of mandate pressures.

SMG recorded thanks to HR for the difficult work undertaken on case management.

### **13. Vacancy Management**

Sinead McDonnell requested that SMG approve the following three re-drafted policies for a four week formal consultation. Trade Union Side have already had informal input.

- Draft Vacancy Management Policy;
- Draft Deputising and temporary Promotion Policy; and
- Draft Redeployment Policy.

SMG agreed that the draft policies should go to consultation with all staff.

### **14. Staff Survey Action Plan – Unacceptable Behaviours**

Sinead McDonnell spoke to the tabled paper regarding the findings of the Staff Survey 2014 on the subject of unacceptable behaviours. The Staff Survey 2014 Action Plan issued in October 2015 tasked HR with working to gain a better understanding of what the reported unacceptable behaviours involved to assist in formulating solutions.

SMG agreed that letters be issued by Directors to their staff seeking additional feedback from those who reported unacceptable behaviours in the 2014 Staff Survey. Sinead confirmed that TUS had been consulted on this approach and was content.

*Sinead McDonnell left the meeting.*

### **15. SYSCO (support for SUN accounting system) Single Tender Action (STA)**

Richard Stewart spoke to this paper explaining that whilst SUN continues to be the accounting software of the Assembly, SYSCO is the only supplier in Northern Ireland for supporting the SUN package.

Now that support is on a generic basis, it is necessary for a formal agreement to be reached with SYSCO to formalise the arrangements to suit the Assembly's requirements.

SMG agreed to the single tender action business case for annual licensing and maintenance of the SUN Systems accounting software for a period of two years.

## **16. Directors' Updates**

SMG noted the Internal Communications Group (ICG) update from Trevor Reaney. The Internal Communications Strategy and the role of ICG is under review and a new Chair of ICG is to be appointed.

Gareth McGrath informed SMG that two additional members of staff are being brought into the Bill Office to help mitigate end of session pressures. Also, a Women in Politics paper is being drafted for the Speaker.

Tara Caul informed SMG that the Head of Internal Audit has drafted the Internal Audit Programme for 2016/2017 for Trevor to approve in advance of the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee (SARC) meeting in December.

David Lynn explained that the electric car chargers behind Parliament Buildings are now live and that work was underway to establish the cause of a leak on the third floor and to investigate the cause of leaking water in the retaining wall behind Parliament Buildings.

## **17. AOB**

There was no AOB.

## **18. Date of Next Meeting**

### **SMG will meet on 15 January 2016.**

As the Commission meets on 20 January 2016, Directors were asked to ensure that any Commission papers requiring prior clearance by SMG were distributed in good time by correspondence.

There will be an additional Directors meeting to consider Shared Services business cases.

## **19 Items cleared by correspondence**

19.1 SMG noted that the following items had been cleared by correspondence since the last meeting:-

- Revenue Generation
- Longer Term Building Improvements
- Business Case Review - Insurance

*Robin Ramsey joined the meeting for item 20.*

## **20. Commission / SMG Business**

Given that the Commission met on 2 December, Robin reminded SMG that there are only three scheduled meetings of the Commission between the New Year and Dissolution.

He also informed SMG that work on the Perspectives On... series looking at the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme was ongoing as was work on the representation of women in the artwork within Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting ended at 12.30*