

SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP PERFORMANCE FORMAT

FRIDAY, 1 JULY 2016 at 1.00PM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present: Lesley Hogg
Tara Caul
Gareth McGrath
Richard Stewart
Stephen Welch

In Attendance: James Gilsean
Rose Morwood
Brian Devlin

Opening/Review

The meeting began at 1.05pm.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approved minutes of the meeting of 3 June 2016 were published on 24 June 2016. Unrestricted meeting papers have also been published.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. SMG Action Points

Progress on all action points was noted.

Assembly 21

6. Assembly 21 and Corporate Strategy

Richard Stewart provided a verbal update on Assembly 21. Following discussion, it was agreed that there would be no Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) in the current financial year. Richard noted that potential funding will be available during both the 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial years.

Action: Richard Stewart to notify the Department of Finance that the Assembly Commission will not run a VES during the 2016-17 financial year.

Richard advised SMG that feedback from members of ALF and also from other staff members was currently being collated and condensed so key themes can be presented to the Commission.

Richard suggested that a stand-alone Commission session be arranged to consider Corporate Strategy.

Action: Richard to distribute the summary of staff feedback to SMG

Action: Richard to update Lesley on the timeline for Corporate Strategy development.

7. Management Accounts May 2016 and Year End Projections

Richard Stewart presented the May 2016 Management Accounts.

Richard noted:

The need for business areas to complete their monthly returns every month in order to inform financial planning; and

That the current underspend on staffing will reduce once current competitions are complete and staff are in post.

SMG discussed the figures and Directorate-specific concerns regarding planning for the rest of the year. It was agreed that a number of actions would follow to assist in the 2016-17 budgeting exercise.

Agreed: SMG agreed to review the principles regarding devolved staff budgets.

Action: SMG will consider the list of draft capital business cases in order to allocate the capital budget. Full business cases will still be required prior to expenditure commitment.

Action: Lesley and Richard will consider changes to the Management Accounts report and engage with Directors on specific budgeting figures.

Action: Richard to distribute staff vacancy list to SMG for consideration alongside budget figures.

Action: Directors to review year end outturn forecasts and then SMG will decide if any budget reallocations are to be made.

Other Items

8. HR Management Information

Richard Stewart reminded SMG that this information was an agenda item every three months and was distributed by correspondence in other months.

9. Standards of Conduct Policy: Political Activity

Richard Stewart sought direction from SMG on whether the Political Activities section of the Standards of Conduct Policy should be changed. There followed a discussion considering the issue of impartiality and the rights of individuals for political expression.

Agreed: This will be revisited in September at SMG and subsequently the Commission.

Action: Richard Stewart to collate additional information from other jurisdictions.

Brian Devlin joined the meeting for agenda item 10 at 2.40pm.

10. Business Case: (AG5) Business Relationship Manager post in IS Office

Brian Devlin spoke to this paper seeking approval for the permanent filling of the post of Business Relationship Manager. This post will ensure that a number of significant projects, including but not limited to, IP telephony and changes to the annunciator system are completed more efficiently. The new post is designed to act as liaison between the IS technical staff and the 'customer'. This role exists in other jurisdictions.

Agreed: The business case was approved.

Brian Devlin left the meeting 2.57pm.

11. Legal & Governance Directorate Staff Complement

Tara Caul spoke to this paper seeking approval to increase the complement for the Legal and Governance Services Directorate by one AG7 post. The post is required to ensure that statutory duties continue to be met within the required timeframes, and to ensure there are adequate contingency arrangements in place particularly for dealing with FoI requests.

Richard Stewart left the meeting at 3pm.

Agreed: The business case was approved.

12. Internal Communications Group: Staff Survey 2016

Tara Caul spoke to this paper seeking approval from SMG on the proposed methodology and timeline for the 2016 Staff Survey.

Agreed: SMG agreed the survey should proceed following the proposed timeline.

Action: James Gilson to bring the updated 2014 Staff Survey Action Plan to SMG on 2 September 2016.

13. Innovation Fund – discussion

It was agreed to defer this discussion until a framework is agreed following the proposed finance meetings between Lesley Hogg and Directors.

14. Commission/SMG Business

This item was postponed until the SMG meeting on 2 September 2016.

15. Directors' Updates

Stephen Welch noted:

Work continues on the wall to the rear of Parliament Buildings
Work on the new café / shop is ahead of schedule
Members' Bar alterations will begin in the first week of recess
Ramp plans are awaiting final approval
Work on lifts and doors expected to commence at the end of July
A satisfactory fire safety assessment has been completed

Tara Caul noted:

The Head of Legal Services post has been offered to a candidate.
There has been a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Agreed: At future SMG meetings, Directors' Updates will be circulated in advance as part of the pack. This should include key issues/events since the last SMG update and a look ahead to key issues/events scheduled for the next month.

16. Items cleared by correspondence

Bribery Risk Assessment **Approved**

Support Services Contract 2017 / Outline Business Case **Noted**

External Lighting, Parliament Buildings – Business Case

Action: Stephen Welch to draft revised lighting paper to the Commission.

17. AOB

17.1 Update on Directorate Business Plans

Action: James Gilsean to circulate completed Directorate Business Plans to SMG.

17.2 EU Referendum Result

Tara Caul and Gareth McGrath informed SMG of actions undertaken by their respective Directorates since the result of the EU Referendum was announced on Friday 24 June 2016. It was noted that a cross-jurisdiction clerking team was being put together to consider issues arising.

Both Directorates will be represented on an internal working group which will consider the implications of the result for the Assembly.

SMG members were directed to The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report into Northern Ireland and the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union. The report identifies the potential impact of a Brexit in key areas such as the economy, agriculture and the border with the Republic.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday, 2 September 2016 at 9.30am in Room 106.

The meeting ended at 4.10 pm.