

# SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 25 MARCH 2016 at 9.32AM  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

## APPROVED

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

**In Attendance:** James Gilsean  
Janet Hughes  
John Gibson  
Daíre Toner  
Sinead McDonnell

### 1. Opening/Review

#### (a) Apologies

Gareth McGrath. John Power deputised on his behalf.

Richard Stewart joined the meeting for Item 12 and subsequent items.

#### (b) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### (c) Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approved minutes of the meeting of 26 February 2016 were published on 11 March 2016. Unrestricted meeting papers have also been published.

### 2. SMG Action Points

2.1 Progress on all action points was noted.

*John Gibson joined the meeting for agenda items 3 and 4 and Daíre Toner joined the meeting for agenda item 3.*

### 3. Business Justification and Cases Policy and E-System

3.1 John Gibson spoke to this paper seeking agreement from SMG to policy revisions and a trial of the new electronic procurement system.

SMG agreed in December 2014 to move to an electronic procurement process and Daíre Toner then provided SMG with a demonstration of the proposed e-system.

3.2 Key points noted included:

The system directly reproduces the Procurement Policy.

The E-system is a wizard type system allowing work to be saved and returned to later.

Text is in the system rather than attached and consequently is fully searchable.

The audit trail provides authorisation details for each stage of the process.

3.3 Guidance will be produced and a programme of staff training will be rolled out at the end of April early May.

3.4 Trevor and John thanked Daíre and IS office colleagues for their work on the project to date.

**Agreed:** Amendments to the Business Justification and Cases Policy

**Action:** John to revise Business Justification and Cases Policy as agreed.

*Daíre Toner left the meeting at 10.08am.*

## 4. Matters Arising

### Procurement Sourcing and Governance

4.1 John Gibson spoke to this paper seeking a decision from SMG on the degree to which ETenders NI will be deployed throughout the Secretariat.

4.2 John discussed the impact of the three new systems/processes that had recently been implemented within the Secretariat, namely, Business Case and Justification, E-TendersNI and PECOS.

4.3 The intention is for the Procurement Office to use the new ETendersNI system for all non-delegated procurement activity. However, John sought guidance from SMG on its use for delegated procurements and provided 5 options for consideration:

Option A used for all expenditure

Option B used above a certain level of expenditure

- Option C      utilise the Procurement Office for admin support for sourcing events on ETendersNI
- Option D      ICT to develop an in-house solution
- Option E      procurement of a third party E-Sourcing solution that is more user friendly than ETenders.

4.4 SMG considered the proposed options. Tara Caul expressed a preference for Option C. It was agreed, however, after discussion that the ETendersNI system will not need to be used for procurement contracts below the £30,000 threshold. However, offices will always be required to produce evidence of Policy compliance for procurement exercises regardless of the value.

4.5 Following discussion, and agreement that clarification of the role of the audit office in the process was required, SMG agreed to a one year trial.

**Agreed:** SMG agreed a one year trial of the system proposed by Option B.

*John Gibson left the meeting at 10.24am*

## **5. End of Mandate Review**

5.1 Trevor Reaney recorded his appreciation of the efforts of all staff during the mandate and, particularly, during the very busy last period. Work had been completed in an exemplary manner.

5.2 Stephen Welch added that election planning work was proceeding to plan and that engagement with Party staff had been effective.

5.3 Trevor thanked Stephen and his team for all their work on election planning.

The meeting was suspended for 4 minutes at this point.

*David Johnston joined the meeting at 10.32am for agenda items 6 and 7.*

## **6. Biannual Review of Directorate Risk Registers**

6.1 David Johnston spoke to this paper. The previous review was in September 2015.

6.2 SMG were asked to review the latest Directorate Risk Registers and consider emerging "Risk Clusters" and whether any Directorate risks need to be reflected in the Corporate Risk Register. David added that he was content that identified changes were covered by the Corporate

Risk Register. An issue of priority was noted for one risk and further consideration will be given to it.

**Action:** Facilities Directorate to review identified risk rating.

## **7. Review of Corporate Risk Register**

7.1 David Johnston spoke to this paper.

7.2 SMG was asked to consider the latest draft Corporate Risk Register, which incorporates recent changes and agree any subsequent amendments.

7.3 A review will be undertaken during Dissolution to reflect a number of factors including the cessation of end of mandate pressures and the forthcoming IPSA review of the revised Members' Handbook.

**Agreed:** SMG agreed the draft Risk Register subject to amendments required to reflect the end of the current mandate / start of the 2016-21 mandate.

**Action:** Legal and Governance Services to review the Corporate Risk Register during Dissolution.

*David Johnston left the meeting at 10.42am.*

## **8. Directors' Updates**

8.1 Stephen Welch advised SMG of the increase in catering tariffs by 1.3% (in line with CPI) with effect from 1 April as agreed by the Commission in February 2015.

8.2 Some minor works to rooms within the buildings may take place during Easter Recess and suspension to facilitate the move of the Assembly shop. Drainage work continues to the rear of Parliament Buildings.

8.3 Tara Caul informed SMG that Angela Kelly had been appointed as Examiner of Statutory Rules. SMG extended its congratulations to Angela.

8.4 Tara updated SMG on an ongoing judicial review case.

*Sinead McDonnell joined the meeting at 10.46am for agenda items 9, 10 and 11.*

## **9. Review of Vacancy Management Policy**

9.1 Sinead McDonnell spoke to this paper seeking SMG's approval of the following policies for inclusion in the Staff Handbook:

- Revised Vacancy Management Policy

- Revised Deputising & Temporary Promotion Policy
- Revised Redeployment Policy

**Agreed:** Following discussion, SMG agreed on some revision to the policies and asked HR Office to consider other proposed amendments by a member of staff. It was also noted that HR Office would consult again with Trade Union Side (TUS) on the proposed revisions with the intention to publish the policies into the Staff Handbook and communicate them to staff. It was agreed that if the revisions to the policies are significant, then HR Office would bring them back to SMG at another meeting.

## **10. HR Management Information**

10.1 Sinead McDonnell spoke to this paper.

10.2 SMG noted the Staff Complement/Staff in post information.

## **11. Development of a Shared Parental Leave Policy**

11.1 Sinead McDonnell spoke to this paper seeking approval from SMG to issue the Shared Parental Leave Policy to all staff and for its inclusion in the Staff Handbook. The changes reflect statutory legislation.

11.2 SMG approved the proposed policy.

*Sinead McDonnell left the meeting at 11.12am and Richard Stewart joined the meeting for the remaining agenda items.*

## **12. Commission/SMG Business**

12.1 Trevor Reaney advised SMG that the first, introductory, meeting of the new Commission was likely to be during the first week of June. However, the current members of the Commission remain in office and their input will be required on a number of issues prior to the end of their appointment.

## **13. Directors' Updates (Continued)**

13.1 Richard Stewart advised SMG of the need to implement the recent IFRP Determination and that an email would issue to Members today advising them of the changes.

13.2 Richard thanked John Power for his offer of assistance in drafting a revised Members' Financial Handbook.

## **14. SP15+**

- 14.1 Richard Stewart referred to his paper on the Commission's approach to Strategic Planning for 2015/16 and beyond.
- 14.2 An off-site Corporate Planning Day will be organised with the new Commission Members with a view to providing a draft Corporate Strategy for consideration by mid-October. Once the draft Strategy has been agreed a formal consultation exercise will take place with the Final Strategy being signed off in advance of 17/18.

## **15. Management Accounts – February 2016**

- 15.1 Richard Stewart provided figures on the Management Accounts for February 2016.

SMG noted the accounts.

## **16. AOB**

- 16.1 Trevor Reaney advised SMG that Janet Hughes is now a permanent member of Corporate Support.

## **17. Date of Next Meeting**

- 17.1 The next meeting will be held on Friday, 15 April 2016 at 9.30am in Room 106.

The meeting ended at 11.36am