

# SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP POLICY FORMAT

WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2016 at 2.00PM  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**APPROVED**

**Present:** Trevor Reaney  
Tara Caul  
Gareth McGrath  
Sinead McDonnell  
Ken Eccles

**In Attendance:** James Gilsean  
Janet Hughes  
Karen Martin  
Martina Dalton  
Robin Ramsey

Meeting commenced at 2:02pm

## **1. Opening/Review**

### **(a) Apologies**

Stephen Welch. Ken Eccles deputised on his behalf.

Richard Stewart. Sinead McDonnell deputised on his behalf.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

Approved minutes of the meeting of 15 January 2016 were published on 1 February 2016. Meeting papers have also been published.

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

#### **Assembly ID/Security Passes**

Ken Eccles spoke to this paper, proposing some further categories of permanent pass holders for Parliament Buildings to be included within the Assembly's Security policy from the start of the next mandate.

Reference was also made to a previous paper presented to SMG in May 2015 when SMG reviewed the 14 categories of pass holders and agreed some changes.

SMG reviewed the issues raised in both submission papers regarding those persons holding Assembly passes who are not Assembly staff, MLAs, Party staff, NICS senior staff or contractors and further revisions to the categories were agreed.

**Agreed:** Pass holders to be listed by category / post held rather than by name.

**Action:** Paper to the Commission proposing revised list of categories of political and consular roles eligible for a permanent Assembly pass.

## **2. SMG Action Points**

- 2.1 Outstanding action points were reviewed and progress noted.

## **3. SP15+ Next Steps – progress report**

- 3.1 Trevor Reaney proposed, due to Richard Stewart's absence, holding a separate meeting to update Directors on SP15+ Next Steps.

## **4. Management Accounts – January 2016**

- 4.1 Trevor Reaney reminded SMG to ensure that all projects which business areas had committed to complete before the end of the financial year were on track to meet expenditure targets by the end of March 2016. The target is for an underspend of less than 1.5%.

## **5. Draft Disability Action Plan 2016 – 2021**

- 5.1 Trevor Reaney spoke to this paper.
- 5.2 Subject to minor amendments, SMG approved the Draft Disability Action Plan 2016 - 2021 for tabling at the next Commission meeting and seeking the Commission's approval for going out to a twelve week consultation.

## **6. Revision of the Assembly Commission Equality Scheme**

- 6.1 Trevor Reaney spoke to this paper.
- 6.2 SMG considered and approved the revised Equality Scheme for tabling at the next Commission meeting, subject to minor amendments.

## **7. Draft Good Relations Action Plan 2016 – 2021**

- 7.1 Trevor Reaney spoke to this paper.
- 7.2 SMG noted that the format of the Plan was dictated by the template issued by the Equality Commission.

**Action:** Draft Good Relations Action Plan 2016 – 2021 to be tabled at the next Commission meeting, subject to minor amendments.

*Karen Martin joined the meeting at 2.27pm for agenda item 8*

## **8. Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2018**

- 8.1 Karen Martin spoke to this paper.
- 8.2 Karen noted that no staff responses had been received to the consultation however, feedback had been received from the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Equality Commission.
- 8.3 Trevor Reaney thanked Karen for all her work on this action plan and all other staff involved in this and the three preceding agenda items.

**Action:** Gender Action Plan to be tabled at the next Commission meeting.

*Karen Martin left the meeting at 2.30pm.*

## **9. Staff Survey Action Plan – progress report**

- 9.1 James Gilsean provided an update on the staff survey action plan and the targets achieved to date.
- 9.2 Trevor Reaney advised SMG that John Power would be taking on the role of Internal Communications Champion.
- 9.3 Gareth McGrath informed SMG that resources had been identified to progress the new AsslSt project which, once completed, would allow for further actions contained in the Staff Survey Action Plan to be progressed.
- 9.3 Trevor Reaney thanked staff for their input to the action plan and proposed that SMG review the plan again at the end of the mandate.

## **10. HR Management Information**

- 10.1 Sinead McDonnell provided an update on the staff complement as at 1 January 2016 and advised SMG that officials were currently working on the complement figures for 1 April 2016.

*Martina Dalton joined the meeting at 2.58pm for agenda item 11*

## **11. ICO Complaint**

- 11.1 Martina Dalton spoke to this paper.
- 11.2 Martina provided background on a complaint which had been made to the Information Commissioner challenging a decision by the Commission not to provide information on party funding under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Commission's decision was made to ensure individuals could not be identified in the answer,
- 11.3 On 3 February, the Information Commissioner had suggested a compromise which Martina was content did not identify individuals.
- 11.3 SMG agreed that an update be brought to the next Commission meeting seeking agreement to accept the way forward proposed by the Information Commissioner.

*Martina left the meeting at 3.05pm*

## **12. Directors Updates**

- 12.1 Gareth McGrath reminded SMG that the last sittings of the current mandate were expected to be on 14, 15 and possibly 16 March with the first sitting of the next mandate expected to be on 12 May. The Opposition Bill was likely to receive Royal Assent after dissolution.

*Robin Ramsey joined the meeting at 3.07pm for agenda item 13*

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

- 13.1 Robin Ramsey tabled a draft agenda for the next Commission meeting on 3 March 2016. The proposed items are:-
- Clerk/CE's Update
  - Amendments to the FAPP Scheme
  - Flags
  - Draft Disability Action Plan 2016 - 2021
  - Assembly Commission Equality Scheme and Audit of Inequalities 2016 - 2021
  - Gender Action Plan consultation results 2016 - 2018
  - Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan 2016 – 2021

- ICO Complaint
- DDA Adjustments

- 13.2 SMG approved the draft agenda for the Commission meeting of 3 March 2016.
- 13.3 Robin reminded SMG that the Commission meeting on 3 March 2016 was scheduled to start at 6pm.
- 13.4 Robin also advised SMG that the Oral Questions to the Commission would be on the last sitting day of the Mandate (15 March 2016).

*Robin Ramsey left the meeting at 3.23pm*

#### **14. Directors Updates (continued)**

- 14.1 In Richard Stewart's absence, Trevor Reaney referred to the recent Commission and Independent Financial Review Panel (IFRP) joint press statement on Members' Expenses.
- 14.2 Tara Caul reminded SMG that the external recruitment process for the position of Examiner of Statutory Rules was ongoing, with interviews scheduled in two weeks' time.
- 14.3 Ken Eccles advised SMG that a Business Continuity Exercise would be held on 8 April 2016.
- 14.4 Ken also flagged up to SMG the pressures of resourcing the lower east car park on sitting days. A number of concerns regarding the car park had been raised recently.

**Action:** Facilities to consider use of agency staff to ease car park resourcing pressures up to end of Mandate.

#### **15. Items cleared by correspondence**

- 15.1 SMG noted that the following items had been cleared by correspondence since the last meeting:
- Corporate Risk Register
  - Draft Framework of Delegation
  - Business case for Enterprise Agreement
  - Business case re Employment and Procurement Law External Advisory and Litigation Services
  - Data Incident Investigation Report

**16. AOB**

None

**17. Date of Next Meeting**

17.1 The next meeting date will be held on Friday, 25 March 2016 at 9.30am.

The meeting ended at 3.31pm