

# SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP (SMG)

WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2017 at 1.00PM  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

## APPROVED

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

**In Attendance:** James Gilsenan  
Janet Hughes  
Robin Ramsey  
Paula McClintock  
Ken Eccles  
David Johnston  
Brian Devlin  
David Perry  
Christine Watts  
David Lynn  
Sebastien Mingout

### Opening/Review

The meeting commenced at 1.07pm. Robin Ramsey joined the meeting at the start.

#### 1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting together with unrestricted papers were published on 20 June 2017.

#### 4. SMG Action Points

The outstanding action points were reviewed and progress was noted.

A revised action in relation to the Good Relations Action Plan 2016/21 six-monthly update was agreed.

Discussion took place regarding personal data/photographs on AssISt and where responsibility lies for updating data in relation to staff and Member leavers and joiners.

**Action:** Legal Services to advise SMG in relation to the use of personal data and photographs on AssISt.

**Action:** Directors to ask Heads of Business (HoBs) to check with their staff that personal records on AssISt are accurate.

**Action:** James Gilsenan to clarify where responsibility lies for updating general staff information (e.g. for leavers and joiners) and MLAs on AssISt.

## **5. Political Update**

In light of the approaching talks deadline of 29 June 2017, Lesley Hogg advised SMG that a pre-Plenary Planning Meeting had taken place recently with a further one scheduled for next week.

Lesley also confirmed that the voluntary short-term loans of staff were being progressed but that no new opportunities would be sent out to staff until the outcome of political talks was known on 29 June 2017.

Gareth McGrath will provide an update on the Exit EU Working Group and the EU Withdrawal Scrutiny Process at the next SMG meeting.

Robin Ramsey provided the monthly Corporate Support Office update. The other Directorate updates were covered at agenda item 15.

*Robin Ramsey left the meeting at 1.55pm.*

*Paula McClintock joined the meeting at 1.55pm for agenda item 6.*

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **6. Management Accounts – May 2017**

Paula McClintock confirmed that the Audit Office was finalising its review of the draft 2016/17 Resource Accounts and that these were presented to the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee (SARC) on 20 June 2017 for approval prior to signing by the Accounting Officer and laying in the Assembly.

Paula presented the Management Accounts for the reporting period May 2017.

SMG noted the current forecasted outturn and Paula highlighted the variances between SMG's agreed opening budget figures and the actual expenditure.

Lesley Hogg proposed that over the next few months she would like the Finance Team to start incorporating accruals in the Monthly Management Accounts which will reduce the number of variances.

**Action:** Finance Office to incorporate accruals in future Monthly Management Accounting Reports.

Paula advised SMG of an upcoming change in the process regarding prepayments. Members of the Finance team will discuss with HoBs in more detail during their monthly meetings.

SMG noted the status on capital projects as at the end of May 2017 and were reminded of the need for business cases to go to SMG for approval, where appropriate, prior to completing authorisation on the Decision Authorisation System (DAS).

**Action:** Directors to provide appropriate direction to HoBs to ensure that outstanding business cases listed in the May Capital Report are brought to the next SMG meeting to enable them to be progressed on a timely basis

*Paula McClintock left the meeting at 2.24pm.*

## **7. HR Management Information**

SMG noted that the Staff in Post (SiP) figure on 1 June was 331.9 against an agreed staff complement (including complement plus) of 351.7.

Richard Stewart provided SMG with an update on current recruitment competitions as per the Recruitment Schedule and advised that a number of staff had taken up short term positions with Departments within the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and other Public Bodies.

*Ken Eccles joined the meeting at 2.28pm for agenda items 8 and 12.*

## **8. Review of the Assembly Commission's Security Clearance Policy**

Ken Eccles spoke to this paper seeking views from SMG to some proposed changes to the Security Clearance Policy prior to consulting with Trade Union Side. Ken advised that Human Resources (HR) had been working in conjunction with Usher Services to revise the policy.

Ken confirmed that a compliance audit conducted by AccessNI earlier in the year reported three recommendations, two of which have been

implemented. The remaining recommendation regarding the drawing up of a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders requires consideration by SMG.

**Action:** Ken and the Head of Human Resources to amend paragraph nine of the draft policy to clarify duration of clearance.

**Action:** Tara Caul, Ken Eccles and Martina Dalton to review retention and disposal of relevant information.

**Action:** Richard Stewart and Head of Procurement to check current Terms and Conditions agreed with contractors to clarify responsibility for notifying security vetting status to the Commission and also consider whether clearance should be refreshed after a specified period if this is not already incorporated.

**Agreed:** SMG were content, subject to review of the retention and disposal arrangements and some minor amendments, for the proposed Security Clearance Policy including the additional annex on the recruitment of ex-offenders, to go to Trade Union Side for consultation and subsequently to the Commission to note.

## **FACILITIES**

Change to agenda order, item 12 taken ahead of item 9.

### **12. Assembly Security Management Systems (SMS)**

SMG noted the position with regards the present Security Management System (SMS).

Ken Eccles updated SMG on the findings of a recent review of the SMS by a specialist Security Consultant and sought approval on the following proposals:

- To proceed with the necessary software upgrade but keep the other measures recommended in respect of the current SMS under review; and
- To invest in a capital works programme over the next two to three years to fund the procurement and commissioning of a new fully Internet Protocol (IP) based SMS.

**Agreed:** SMG were content with the above proposals.

*Ken Eccles left the meeting at 3.03pm.*

## **LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE SERVICES**

*David Johnston joined the meeting at 3.03pm for agenda item 9.*

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

David Johnston spoke to this paper.

SMG considered the latest draft of the Corporate Risk Register which will be reviewed by SMG again in September 2017 and by the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee (SARC) in October 2017.

**Agreed:** SMG agreed the contents of the current draft Corporate Risk Register, subject to some minor amendments.

**Action:** David to liaise with James Gilson re the Business Continuity element of Corporate Risk 2.

*David Johnston left the meeting at 3.12pm.*

## **FACILITIES Continued**

*Brian Devlin and David Perry joined the meeting at 3.15pm for agenda item 10.*

### **10. Provision of a Secure Remote Access Solution (Replacing UAG/Swivel Services)**

Brian Devlin outlined the business and economic case for the replacement of the Assembly Secure Remote Access solution.

The advantages and disadvantages of three business options were proposed, with a recommendation to proceed with option 3 i.e. to go to Market to replace UAG and Swivel with a fully supported replacement solution.

**Agreed:** SMG were content to proceed with the recommended option.

**Action:** Brian Devlin to proceed with the tender exercise.

*Brian Devlin and David Perry left the meeting at 3.27pm*

*Christine Watts joined the meeting at 3.28pm for agenda item 11.*

### **11. Annual Management Review**

SMG noted the annual review of the NI Assembly Commission's Environmental Management System and reviewed the Action Plan.

**Agreed:** HoBs to remind staff of the importance of adhering to the Assembly's Recycling Policy.

Christine advised SMG that a further paper in relation to the use of thermal mugs and Eco Week would be presented to SMG later in the year.

*Christine Watts left the meeting at 3.38pm*

*David Lynn and Sebastian Mingout joined the meeting at 3.38pm for agenda item 13.*

### **13. Revenue Generation Plan – Marketing Strategy**

Sebastien Mingout spoke to this paper seeking approval from SMG on the Marketing Strategy for the Revenue Generation Plan.

Sebastien informed SMG that the Strategy comprised of six strands and provided detail on each.

SMG raised some concerns in relation to strand three 'Weddings'.

*Gareth McGrath left the meeting at 4.34pm*

**Action:** David Lynn and Sebastien to provide SMG with a breakdown of the incremental costs in relation to a summer and winter wedding e.g. heating and lighting costs etc as well as separating out the marketing costs for weddings with a comparison against the net revenue received.

**Action:** James Gilson to review previous SMG/Commission papers in relation to weddings at Parliament Buildings and circulate to SMG.

**Action:** CCSU to set up a separate meeting to further consider the Marketing Strategy paper.

*David Lynn and Sebastian Mingout left the meeting at 4.45pm*

## **CORPORATE SUPPORT**

### **14. Draft Commission Agenda**

SMG were content with the draft agenda, no further additions or amendments.

## **DIRECTORATE UPDATES**

### **15. Directors' Updates**

SMG noted the Directorate updates.

*Gareth McGrath re-joined the meeting at 4.55pm*

Tara Caul asked that Directors be mindful of Freedom of Information (Fol) requests and also to ensure that their staff are aware of and understand the new Risk Management Guidance which will be issued shortly.

**Agreed:** Directors to monitor their business areas AsslSt pages.

**Action:** Gareth McGrath to provide an outline plan and timeline for Phase 2 of the AsslSt project.

**Action:** Directors to ensure business areas are keeping AsslSt pages up to date.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **16. Items to be Cleared by Correspondence**

None

### **17. AOB**

Gareth McGrath advised SMG that work to develop a new Engagement Strategy had commenced. An update on progress towards the development of the new Strategy would be brought to the next SMG meeting.

Richard Stewart advised SMG that he would be presenting a paper at the next SMG meeting regarding an upcoming review of Corporate Support Systems.

Tara Caul advised SMG on the requirement under the General Data Protection Regulation for there to be a Data Protection Officer and confirmed that once discussions had been held with Human Resources a paper would be brought to SMG for consideration in August.

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

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 5.12pm.