

SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 30 MARCH 2017 at 9.30AM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present: Lesley Hogg
Tara Caul
Brian Devlin
Gareth McGrath
Richard Stewart

In Attendance: James Gilsonan
Janet Hughes
Robin Ramsey
Sinéad McDonnell
Maria Bannon
David Johnston
Martina Dalton
Karl Hedley
Simon Burrowes

Opening/Review

The meeting commenced at 9.32am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Stephen Welch. Brian Devlin deputised.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2017 were published on 15 March 2017 together with all unrestricted meeting papers.

4. SMG Action Points

Progress on all action points was noted.

Robin Ramsey joined the meeting for agenda item 5.

5. Political Update

Following the failure of parties to nominate a First Minister and deputy First Minister and Executive Ministers by the 4pm deadline on 27 March 2017, Lesley Hogg confirmed that meetings were being arranged for Directors and Heads of Business (HoBs) to consider the political situation and implications for business areas.

Robin Ramsey left the meeting at 9.35am.

CORPORATE SERVICES

6. Management Accounts

Richard Stewart presented the monthly management accounts for February 2017 together with the final forecast for income and expenditure for the full year.

Richard highlighted areas of expected under/over spend against budget which have mainly arisen due to dissolution and the political circumstances.

Brian Devlin provided an update on anticipated capital expenditure in the Facilities Directorate and noted that the North Lift, following survey work, is no longer considered suitable for fire proofing. Work to fire proof the South Lift will continue. The external lighting project is due to complete in May 2017 rather than March 2017 due to programme slippage by the contractor.

Action: Brian Devlin to check the expenditure position on three capital items within the Facilities Directorate and update Richard Stewart accordingly.

Richard also asked Directors to ensure business areas receipted all goods and services that had been procured in the current financial year on Pecos by 31 March 2017.

7. Revised Draft Budget 2017/18

Richard Stewart presented the Revised Draft Budget 2017/18 for consideration.

Richard advised SMG that the paper was produced following a series of meetings with representatives from all business areas within the Assembly and stated that the detail within the paper is conditional on a fully functioning Assembly. Budgets, particularly for Members' costs, will need to be reviewed and updated frequently during the ongoing period of political uncertainty.

SMG agreed that the current list of proposed capital costs for 2017/18 would be considered in detail over the next few weeks in order to allocate budgets and so enable business areas to progress the appropriate authorisation and procurement early in the financial year.

Action: Richard Stewart to arrange a meeting with Directors and significant budget holders to consider the Capital Plan.

Action: Stephen Welch to prepare and present a Marketing Strategy and accompanying financial analysis to SMG prior to committing any further expenditure on marketing.

Action: Inform Commission Members of authorisation from the Department of Finance for cash payments and resource expenditure until the end of July 2017.

Sinéad McDonnell joined the meeting for agenda item 8 at 10.30am.

8. HR Management Information

SMG noted that the Staff in Post (SiP) figure on 1 March was 347.8 against an agreed staff complement (including complement plus) of 351.7.

Sinéad McDonnell provided an update on recruitment activity and sought direction from SMG on the priority of competitions on the Recruitment Schedule and a number of other staffing related matters.

Agreed: SMG approved the following amendments to the Recruitment Schedule: One IS post (AG7) to be added as priority following the departure of a member of staff; the removal of the IS post (AG8) which will be filled through the Clerical Officer competition; and one Systems Accountant (AG6) to be added since no one was appointed in the recent recruitment competition.

Agreed: Temporary promotion and agency worker assignments to be reviewed in light of the current political situation.

Agreed: The AG7 piloted post in the Business Office will be extended in line with other temporary promotion decisions.

Agreed: SMG also agreed to proceed with running internal competitions for generic grades AG5, AG6 and AG7 for the sole purpose of refreshing merit lists for temporary appointments.

Sinéad informed SMG that the current agency worker contract will be changing to a new CPD Framework contract. The new agency worker contract will enable the Commission to approach a number of employment agencies when the requirement for agency workers arises.

Sinéad McDonnell left the meeting at 11.04am.

The meeting was suspended until 11.10am

Maria Bannon joined the meeting for agenda items 9 and 10 at 11.10am.

9. Good Relations Action Plan 16/21- Six-monthly Update

Maria Bannon spoke to this paper.

SMG noted the progress in relation to the actions in the Good Relations Action Plan 2016-21 for the six-month reporting period.

SMG considered the new action which had been added regarding a Civic Occasions Protocol and agreed to await the outcome of the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition.

Lesley Hogg also raised a concern in relation to the number of actions highlighted as ongoing. It was agreed that the update would record those actions that were completed during the six-month reporting period even if those actions were ongoing over the remainder of the five-year Plan period.

Action: Subject to the change agreed relating to ongoing actions, Maria Bannon to update some entries in the 'Progress Update' column of the Good Relations Action Plan prior to consideration by the Commission.

10. Progress update on the Gender Action Plan 2016-18

Maria Bannon spoke to this paper.

SMG noted the progress on the actions in the Gender Action Plan 2016-18.

Action: Maria Bannon to make minor amendments to the Gender Action Plan prior to forwarding to the Commission.

11. Draft Language Policy

Maria Bannon spoke to this paper.

SMG approved the Draft Language Policy.

Action: Maria Bannon to prepare this paper for the Commission with some minor amendments.

Maria Bannon left the meeting at 12.17pm.

David Johnston joined the meeting for agenda items 12 and 13 at 12.17pm.

LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE SERVICES

12. Review of the Corporate Risk Register

David Johnston spoke to this paper.

SMG were asked to consider the latest draft of the Corporate Risk Register.

Agreed: SMG agreed the contents of the current draft Corporate Risk Register, which will be reviewed by SARC on 17 May 2017.

13. Biannual Review of Directorate Risk Registers

David Johnston spoke to this paper. The previous review was in September 2016.

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.

Agreed: SMG agreed that the current risk clusters are reflected in the Corporate Risk Register.

David Johnston left the meeting at 12.24pm.

The meeting was adjourned until 1.04pm.

Martina Dalton and Karl Hedley joined the meeting for agenda item 14 at 1.04pm.

14. Introduction of the Critical Information Asset Register

Martina Dalton spoke to this paper.

SMG noted the Critical Information Asset Registers provided by all business areas within the Assembly which will be collated to form a Corporate Critical Information Asset Register.

Martina advised SMG that the corporate register would be reviewed on an annual basis with any updates reflected in the Information Assurance bi-annual compliance return.

Brian Devlin advised that there is a cross over between the Critical Information Asset Register and information held in the Disaster Recovery Plan. He suggested that when the annual review is being carried out that the IS Office is advised of any new critical assets relevant to the Disaster Recovery Plan.

Action: Martina Dalton to establish a mechanism for feeding Critical Asset Register updates into the Disaster Recovery Plan.

Martina Dalton and Karl Hedley left the meeting at 1.12pm.

DIRECTORATE UPDATE

Agenda item 17 taken before agenda item 15.

17. Directors' Updates

SMG noted the Corporate Services and Facilities directorate updates.

Simon Burrowes joined the meeting at 13.32pm.

15. Internal Communications Group (ICG): Staff Survey

Simon Burrowes spoke to this paper seeking approval from SMG on the proposed methodology and timeline for the 2017 Staff Survey.

Agreed: SMG agreed with the methodology and timeline.

Action: ICG to send a draft Staff Survey Questionnaire to Directors within two weeks.

Action: ICG to consider Staff Survey participation incentives for May SMG meeting.

Simon Burrowes left the meeting at 1.45pm.

Robin Ramsey joined the meeting at 1.45pm.

CORPORATE SUPPORT UNIT

16. Draft Commission Agenda

Robin Ramsey tabled a draft agenda of items for consideration by the Commission at its next and subsequent meetings prior to the summer recess.

Agreed: SMG prioritised agenda items for the next three Commission meetings.

Action: James Gilsenan to refresh the draft Commission Agenda for the next meeting as per SMG prioritisation.

DIRECTORATE UPDATE

17. Directors' Updates (continued)

SMG noted the Legal and Governance Services, Parliamentary Services and Corporate Support Unit directorate updates.

Robin Ramsey left the meeting at 2.23pm.

OTHER ITEMS

18. Items cleared by Correspondence

SMG Register of Interest.

19. AOB

Lesley Hogg confirmed that, following the recent Quadrilateral, the Clerks of the four parliaments had agreed to establish a director-level group to maintain an inter-parliamentary overview of the EU withdrawal process. The Scottish Parliament is initially taking the lead, and Gareth McGrath is liaising with Ken Hughes (assistant Chief Executive) with regards to the arrangements for the first meeting.

20. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 25 April 2017 at 1pm in Room 106.

The meeting ended at 2.30pm.