

# SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP (SMG)

**TUESDAY, 22 MAY 2018 at 9.30AM  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

## **APPROVED**

**Present:** Lesley Hogg  
Tara Caul  
Richard Stewart  
Brian Devlin (deputising for Gareth McGrath)

**In Attendance:** Frances Leneghan  
Janet Hughes  
Robin Ramsey  
Paula McClintock  
Sinead McDonnell  
Martina Dalton  
Angela Kelly  
Alice McKelvey  
David Johnston  
Chris Taylor

### **Opening/Review**

The meeting commenced at 9.33am.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Dr Gareth McGrath, Director of Parliamentary Services, who is currently on a short-term secondment with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Mr Brian Devlin deputised.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 25 April 2018 together with unrestricted papers were published on 18 May 2018.

#### **4. SMG Action Points**

The outstanding action points were reviewed and progress was noted.

## **Insurance cover for unintentional data breaches**

Tara Caul, Director of Legal Governance and Research Services, requested clarification be sought from the Assembly's insurance company in relation to the updating of the Assembly's policy to reflect the new Data Protection Act 2018.

**Action:** Head of Finance to contact the insurance company to clarify the position with regards the Assembly's insurance policy and the new Data Protection Act 2018.

*Robin Ramsey joined the meeting at 9.45am for agenda items 5 and 6.*

## **5. Political Update**

Lesley Hogg, Clerk/Chief Executive noted the Secretary of State's desire for the talks process to re-commence.

SMG also noted that the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee had today published a report entitled 'Devolution and Democracy in Northern Ireland'.

## **CORPORATE SUPPORT**

### **6. Draft Commission Agenda**

SMG reviewed the draft Commission agendas for the next two Commission meetings.

Proposed items for the meeting on 30 May 2018 include:

- Clerk/CE Report
- Correspondence received
- Broadcasting and Related Services Contract Variation
- Proposed Amendments to the Assembly Commission's Events Policy
- 2018/19 Budget
- Assembly Allowance
- Inappropriate Behaviours Procedures
- Security Recommendations arising from the Internal Audit Review of Usher Services
- Five-year Review of Disability Action Plans 2013-2018
- Good Relations Action Plan 2016-2021: March 2018 six-monthly monitoring update
- Service Level Agreement between the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (NIAC)

Proposed items for July meeting (date to be confirmed):

- Clerk/CE Report

- Decade of Centenary Events to be marked during the Mandate
- Salary Benchmarking Report
- Broadcasting and Related Services Contract Variation
- GDPR Update

Robin Ramsey provided SMG with an update on Corporate Support Unit activities over the last month and thanked Frances Leneghan and Janet Hughes for the extensive work carried out in relation to GDPR and returns for the Annual Resource Accounts.

*Robin Ramsey left the meeting at 10.06am.*

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

*Paula McClintock joined the meeting at 10.06am for agenda item 7.*

### **7. Management Accounts**

Paula presented the Management Accounts for April 2018.

Paula reminded SMG that the budget figures were based on the Reduced Continuing Activities budget and that once normal Assembly business resumed there would be a need to recalculate the Fully Operational budget.

Paula highlighted an increase in requirement of £28,000 on non-Members' costs due to price increases on utility bills.

Paula also advised SMG of additional Capital expenditure of £15,000 which was required to cover the cost of the project for the Parliament Buildings Security System. As it was early in the financial year SMG agreed to retain an over commitment as opposed to bidding for additional funds in the June monitoring round.

Paula confirmed that the Finance team was continuing to work with Contract Managers and Heads of Business (HoBs) to improve the quality of Data Authorisation System (DAS) records.

Paula advised SMG that monthly meetings with members of the Finance team, Directors and HoBs would be re-commencing in June, with DAS reports also being considered at this time.

Brian Devlin, Head of IS, requested additional capital of £7,900 to cover the cost of two new servers. SMG were content to approve the additional capital bid to cover the cost of the two servers.

Paula informed Directors that due to the number of re-deployments it was becoming increasingly difficult to get timely and informed returns from some business areas and she asked Directors to ensure that requests for financial returns were given priority and submitted by the

deadlines stated. Lesley Hogg asked Paula to escalate any difficulties experienced with business areas in relation to the submission of returns to the relevant Director.

Lastly, Paula informed SMG that the June Monitoring Round will be due on 7 June and that consideration would need to be given to any amounts to be surrendered.

*Paula McClintock left the meeting at 10.41am.*

*Sinéad McDonnell joined the meeting at 10.41am for agenda items 8, 9, 10 and 11.*

## **8. HR Management Information**

Sinéad McDonnell advised SMG that this month's HR management information also included the biannual update on case management and annual equality information in relation to community background, gender and age of Commission staff.

SMG noted that the Staff in Post (SiP) figure on 1 May 2018 (including agency and seconded staff) was 319.2.

Sinéad informed SMG that the internal competition for a temporary Application Development Manager had ended, with the successful candidate taking up their post on 12 March 2018.

Sinéad referred SMG to the additional information added to this month's report in relation to merit lists, as requested by SMG at its April meeting and confirmed that discussions had taken place with the Equality Commission seeking their advice in relation to the possibility of extending our current merit lists in light of the ongoing political situation.

**Action:** Sinéad to provide a business justification, for consideration at the June SMG meeting, recording the Equality Commission's advice and guidance in relation to extending the period of existing merit lists in light of the ongoing political situation.

Sickness absence information was provided and it was noted that for the period April 2017 to March 2018, the average days lost to sickness absence per FTE member of staff was 10.5, which represents a decrease of 0.2 when compared with the period March 2017 to February 2018, but an increase of 1.3 when compared with the same period last year.

SMG reviewed the annual equality information and noted the case management activity during the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

## **9. Annual Review of Learning and Development Activities in 2017/18**

SMG welcomed the good progress made during 2017/18 in relation to the implementation of Learning and Development (L&D) activities for Commission staff.

Sinéad informed SMG that the target of an average of 2.5 days training per staff member for 2017/18 was met across all directorates with an overall average of 4.1 days training per staff member.

SMG was provided with a comprehensive report detailing the learning activities progressed during 2017/18 under the following four main themes: Corporate Training, Personal Development, Health and Wellbeing and Further Education.

Following review of the report, SMG agreed to give further consideration to the proposed L&D Plan for 2018/19. Sinéad also informed SMG that she was undertaking a review of the themes under which L&D activities were reported on.

**Action:** Sinéad to arrange a meeting with Lesley Hogg and Directors to give further consideration to the proposed L&D Plan for 2018/19.

SMG also agreed that a 6 monthly update on L&D activities would be helpful going forward and also suggested updating AsslSt with a summary of staff training that has been carried out and short articles about staff who have achieved degrees, diplomas etc. through the Assistance to Study Programme.

SMG members asked Sinéad to pass on their thanks to the L&D team for the excellent work that has been done during 2017/18.

## **10. Development of a Healthy Living Scheme for Assembly Commission staff**

Sinéad presented a proposal on the development of a Healthy Living Scheme for consideration by SMG.

Following discussion, while the principle of such a Scheme was supported SMG expressed a number of concerns with the current proposal. SMG therefore agreed that a short survey be issued to staff to gather details on the types of wellbeing activities that they would be interested in participating in.

**Action:** HR to arrange for a short survey to issue to staff.

SMG also noted innovative approaches adopted by other bodies and agreed that these should be considered in more detail.

**Action:** Sinéad to bring a further paper to SMG at a future date with proposals, following analysis of survey responses and consultation with other public bodies.

## **11. Inappropriate Behaviours**

SMG considered a draft Commission paper in relation to work that is being undertaken in other legislatures regarding the subject of inappropriate behaviours by elected Members and proposals that the Commission may wish to consider.

Tara Caul highlighted the importance of HR consultation with Legal Services in relation to the proposals outlined in the paper.

Following discussion, SMG was content for the paper to be presented at the May Commission meeting subject to a minor amendment.

*Sinéad McDonnell left the meeting at 11.59am.*

*The meeting suspended at 11.59am and resumed 1.13pm.*

## **12. Assembly Allowance**

SMG considered a draft Commission paper providing background information on the Assembly Allowance as requested by the Commission at its last meeting.

SMG was content for the paper to be presented at the May Commission meeting.

## **PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES**

### **13. Broadcasting and Related Services Contract Variation**

SMG considered a draft Commission paper seeking approval of a further variation to the Broadcasting and Related Services Contract.

Following discussion, SMG agreed that in light of the nature of the variation to the contract, SMG approval was sufficient and that the Commission would be informed of the variation at its May meeting.

**Action:** Lesley Hogg to liaise with Procurement Office and arrange for a contract variation to be issued to the contractor.

### **14. Members Survey 2016-17 Action Plan – 6 monthly update (May 2018)**

SMG noted the six-monthly update on the implementation of the Members Survey 2016-17 Action Plan and fact that outstanding actions could not be progressed until the Assembly resumes normal business.

**Action:** Lesley Hogg to provide the Commission with an update at its May meeting.

**Action:** Gareth McGrath to provide SMG with a further 6 monthly update at the November SMG meeting.

## **LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND RESEARCH SERVICES**

*Martina Dalton and Angela Kelly joined the meeting at 1.31pm for agenda items 15 and 16.*

### **15. Policy for Managing and Processing Images**

Martina Dalton advised SMG that a separate meeting had taken place since the draft policy was presented at the April SMG meeting, with those staff members most involved with managing and processing images, to discuss the draft policy in more detail.

Following this meeting, some further revisions were made to the draft policy and Martina highlighted the changes to SMG.

SMG considered the revisions to the policy and were content to approve the revised draft.

**Action:** Martina Dalton to arrange for the policy to be communicated to all Information Asset Owners and Heads of Business and then published on AssISt and issued to staff via Postmaster.

### **16. GDPR Progress Report**

SMG noted the excellent progress made against the GDPR implementation plan since the update provided at the April SMG meeting.

*Alice McKelvey joined the meeting at 1.37pm.*

Alice provided SMG with details on the status of all Assembly contracts in relation to compliance with GDPR. It was highlighted that contractual variations have not yet been agreed in a small number of contracts (highlighted in Appendix 2 of the submission) but that work is ongoing in this regard.

SMG acknowledged the vast amount of work that had been undertaken by staff within the Information Standards Office and Legal Services Office in relation to the implementation of GDPR and in particular congratulated Martina Dalton and Karl Hedley for their efforts.

SMG also greatly appreciated the work done in respect of GDPR by staff throughout the Secretariat.

**Action:** Further update paper including an update on Action Logs to be presented to SMG at its June meeting.

*Martina Dalton, Angela Kelly and Alice McKelvey left the meeting at 2.07pm.*

*David Johnston joined the meeting at 2.07pm for agenda item 17.*

## **17. Annual Review of Risk Management Strategy**

SMG reviewed the contents of the Risk Management Strategy and approved two proposed amendments, i.e. to move from the current monthly review of the Corporate Risk Register by SMG to a quarterly review and to copy the monthly Directorate Risk Registers to the Assembly's Governance Officer for review.

**Action:** David Johnston to update the Risk Management Strategy in line with the proposed amendments approved by SMG.

*David Johnston left the meeting at 2.11pm.*

## **18. Head of Internal Audit – Temporary Promotion Arrangements**

SMG considered a request from Tara Caul to implement a temporary promotion arrangement to fill the Head of Internal Audit post on a short-term basis.

SMG approved the request to fill the post on a temporary basis.

**Action:** Tara Caul to liaise with HR and arrange for an Internal Recruitment Notice to issue.

## **19. Assistant Assembly Clerk (AAC) – Governance Officer post**

SMG considered a request from Tara Caul to increase the staff complement for the AAC – Governance Officer post.

SMG agreed to proceed with Tara's recommendation to fill the post at 1 FTE AG6 complement.

SMG also agreed that given the current political instability, the post should be advertised internally on a temporary basis for up to 1 year, subject to review.

**Action:** Tara Caul to liaise with HR and arrange for an Interest Circular to be issued in accordance with the Internal Recruitment Policy.

SMG recorded their thanks to the current Governance Officer, David Johnston for the excellent work done in relation to the Corporate Risk Register.

*Martina Dalton and Angela Kelly re-joined the meeting at 2.25pm for agenda item 20.*

## **20. Revised Data Protection Policy**

Martina presented a revised draft of the Data Protection Policy which had been updated in light of GDPR.

SMG considered and were content with the proposed revisions to the Policy.

**Action:** Martina Dalton to arrange for the revised policy to be published on AssISt and issued to staff via Postmaster.

*Martina Dalton and Angela Kelly left the meeting at 2.32pm.*

## **21. Personal Data Breach Report**

SMG noted the data breaches outlined in the report and were content that appropriate action had been taken to address them.

Tara Caul advised SMG that it was essential for the Assembly Commission to operate a robust Data Breach Management Plan and Data Policies which were compliant with the requirement of GDPR and any new Data Protection Act 2018. The Data Breach Management Plan Revision was noted.

It was agreed that in order to comply with Regulation 33 of the GDPR, that all data breaches would now be reported formally to SMG by the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO).

It was noted that the Data Breach Management Plan was being revised accordingly and would be reissued by 25 May 2018.

SMG also agreed that an urgent procedure would need to be implemented to deal with any data breaches from 25 May 2018 onwards to ensure compliance with GDPR.

It was agreed that as this was a new process, an interim arrangement would be put in place whereby in the event of a data breach the SIRO would convene a short meeting with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors to consider the incident and that the process would be kept under review as further guidance or clarification emerges.

## 22. Bring Your Own Device Policy

SMG considered three options in relation to the BYOD Policy in light of GDPR and expressed a preference for option 2 to '*Revise the present BYOD policy and permit Assembly Commission staff to use personal mobile devices for Commission business and to connect to the Commission email system as set out in the revised draft policy which contains enhanced security requirements*', but agreed that further consultation was required.

**Action:** Tara Caul to arrange a meeting with the Assembly Commission's Information Standards Officer and the Head of IS to discuss the matter in more detail.

## DIRECTORATE UPDATES

### 23. Directors' Updates

SMG noted the Directorate updates and recorded their thanks to the IS Office in relation to their efforts in managing the recent cyber-attack, with special recognition to Stuart Porter for his excellent work.

## OTHER ITEMS

### 24. Items cleared by correspondence/meeting

Corporate Risk Register.

Directorate Risk Registers:  
Parliamentary Services and Corporate Services

*Chris Taylor joined the meeting at 1.00pm.*

### 25. AOB

#### AssISt Upgrade

Chris Taylor provided SMG with an update on AssISt, following implementation of Phase 1 of the upgrade project.

Chris advised SMG that the Communications Office would be taking this project forward by undertaking a review of the purpose of AssISt, the platforms available and the relevance and management of content to inform future development.

**Action:** Chris Taylor to present a paper to a future SMG meeting on the best way forward.

*Chris Taylor left the meeting at 4.23pm.*

## **SMG/Commission Submission Cover Paper – Equality/Section 75 Implications**

Richard Stewart, Director of Corporate Services, highlighted the importance of giving due consideration to the section on the SMG/Commission submission cover papers in relation to Equality/Section 75 Implications.

**Action:** Directors to liaise with their HoBs to ensure that due consideration is given to the Equality/Section 75 Implications section when preparing SMG/Commission submissions.

### **Staff Return Day**

SMG discussed a Staff Return Day in June, consisting of a corporate event in the morning followed by a charity event in the afternoon. Date to be confirmed.

### **26. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday, 19 June 2018 at 9.30am in Room 106.

### **27. Proposals for Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

Tara Caul informed SMG that she would be bringing a further paper on GDPR to the next SMG meeting.

Lesley Hogg informed SMG that a further variation paper on the Broadcasting and Related Services Contract would be brought to the next SMG meeting.

The meeting ended at 4.32pm.