SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

11 SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 11.00AM
IN ROOM 106,
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Mr. Trevor Reaney; Dr. Gareth McGrath; Mr. John Stewart; Mr. Richard Stewart; Mr. Stephen Welch;**
In attendance:	**Mr. Tony Logue; Mr Simon Burrowes; Ms. Georgie Campbell; Ms Nuala Dunwoody; Mr. Simon Kelly.**

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 The minutes of the SMG meeting held on 2 September 2008 were approved without amendment.

Matters arising

2.1 Annual Report

2.1.1 Tony Logue gave an overview of his paper on the draft NI Assembly Annual Report, covering the period between 8 May 2007 and summer recess 2008.

2.1.2 Tony Logue reported that the annual accounts prepared to accompany this report had already been approved by the Interim Management Board.

2.1.3 Tony Logue said that the next steps required in the preparation of the annual report were:

- To agree the content of the draft report;
- To agree to the use of professional designers to design the document;
- To consider the potential audience for the report;
- To consider the publication of a shorter brochure style document for circulation to the general public.

2.1.4 Tony Logue gave an overview of the three options in the paper for the format of the Annual Report.

2.1.5 Trevor Reaney noted the usefulness of the Annual Report as an historical document, but said that the full version of the document had a limited audience. He suggested a more concise version could be circulated to the general public; a smaller number of the full document would be printed, and it could also be placed on the NI Assembly website for public viewing.

2.1.6 Gareth McGrath noted that a lot of work had already been done on the document and that due to time constraints, it was necessary to proceed with completing the document using the existing text.

2.1.7 SMG agreed that two documents- the full document and smaller brochure- should be prepared; these documents should be issued together. It was also agreed that a professional designer should be employed to work on the documents. It was further agreed that the draft versions of these documents would be submitted to the Commission at its meeting on 21 October 2008.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE/ GARETH MCGRATH

2.1.8 It was agreed that consideration would also be given to the distribution of the brochure to a wider audience, subject to costs.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE/ GARETH MCGRATH

2.1.9 It was agreed that the information on the Ormiston House project in the draft Annual Report would be amended.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE/ STEPHEN WELCH

2.1.10 It was agreed that limited financial information would be included in the smaller brochure, in a visual format.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/ TONY LOGUE/ GARETH MCGRATH

2.1.11 It was agreed that an update on the Annual Report would be provided to Commission at its next meeting, on 23 September 2008.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE/ GARETH MCGRATH

2.2 Recognition of staff contribution/ retirements.

2.2.1 SMG discussed the protocol for recognising staff retirement in the NI Assembly.

2.2.2 It was agreed that the security pass policy for outgoing staff should be reviewed.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH

2.2.3 SMG also acknowledged the need for consistency when recognising staff contribution to special events and noted the existence of the NI Assembly staff bonus scheme.

2.3 Commission off-site meeting

2.3.1 Tony Logue undertook to prepare a paper on the progress of action points arising from Commission off site meeting, held on 6 June 2008, and to submit it to the SMG meeting on 17 September and the Commission meeting on 23 September 2008.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE

3 FUTURE COMMISSION BUSINESS

3.1 Tony Logue provided an overview to SMG members of the future work programme for the Commission, and reported that agenda items at the Commission meeting of the 23 September would include:

- The Commission Members' Handbook;
- Ormiston House (verbal update);
- Audit of Existing Accommodation Usage (verbal update);
- Report on the Chamber Upgrade;
- Update on the Broadcasting Equipment Replacement Project;
- Provision of information to the Electoral Commission;
- September Monitoring round.

3.2 Trevor Reaney reported that the previous format of the Clerk's Monthly Report to the Commission would be maintained for his first report to the Commission in October 2008. However, he requested that Directors to exercise editorial control in their Directorate's contribution to this report.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

3.3 Richard Stewart said that he would be submitting a paper on delivery of a procurement service to the NI Assembly, to the SMG meeting of 2 October 2008 and to the Commission at its meeting on 7 October 2008.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

4 ACTION POINTS

4.1 It was agreed that all Directors should review their respective action points and deadlines and submit them to Simon Kelly by Friday 12 September 2008. The amended table will then be discussed at the next SMG meeting on Wednesday 17 September.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

5 PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

5.1 SMG noted the paper on the provision of Information to the Electoral Commission and agreed the proposals therein.

5.2 It was agreed that this paper should be submitted to the Commission meeting on 23 September.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/ TONY LOGUE

6 BROADCAST EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

6.1 SMG noted the paper on Broadcast Equipment Replacement Project.

6.2 SMG noted the revised project costs.

7 SEPTEMBER MONITORING ROUND

7.1 Richard Stewart provided an overview to SMG of his paper on the September monitoring round return to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

7.2 Trevor Reaney suggested an amendment to paragraph 9 of the paper, which Richard Stewart undertook to make.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

7.3 SMG noted and agreed the figures and recommendations in the paper, and agreed that that the return should now be submitted to DFP.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

7.4 It was agreed that Financial Monitoring in the NI Assembly should be discussed at the next SMG meeting.

8 INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

8.1 In-house magazine

8.1.1 Simon Burrowes provided an overview to SMG of his paper on the proposed in-house staff magazine; he also provided a summary of the background and formation of the Internal Communications Working Group (ICWG), and its work to date.

8.1.2 Trevor Reaney stated that he had met with the ICWG on Tuesday 9 September 2008. He said that he had found the meeting very useful and had asked ICWG members to consider what methods could be employed to provide short term and immediate communications in the Assembly, in particular during the period between the publication of the in-house magazine and the Core Brief.

8.1.3 The proposals in the in-house staff magazine paper were agreed.

8.1.4 It was agreed that the draft of the first edition of the in-house staff magazine be circulated to all Directors.

ACTION: SIMON BURROWES/ GEORGIE CAMPBELL

8.2 Team briefing

8.2.1 Simon Burrowes provided an overview to SMG of his Team Briefing paper.

8.2.2 SMG discussed the issue of the provision of team briefing in the NI Assembly.

8.2.3 Trevor Reaney stated that it is vital that all team briefing takes place on a face-to-face basis.

8.2.4 Gareth McGrath suggested an amendment to paragraph 10(c) of this paper, which Simon Burrowes undertook to make.

ACTION: SIMON BURROWES

8.2.5 Georgie Campbell provided an overview of the system for delivering the Team Brief in the NI Assembly.

8.2.6 It was agreed that all Directors should exercise editorial control in their Directorate's contribution to the Team Brief.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

8.2.7 It was noted that there may be some overlap between the Team Brief and the staff magazine, but that the two approaches were intended to be complementary.

8.2.8 It was agreed that Georgie Campbell would draw up a timetable for publication dates of both the Team Brief and Staff magazine, and that these dates should be staggered over the year.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

8.2.9 SMG agreed the recommendations in the Team Briefing paper. It was further agreed that these proposals would be reviewed regularly and alternatives suggested in the longer term if necessary.

8.2.10 Trevor Reaney stated that the Clerk-Director General's Office will be the main point of co-ordination for this activity.

8.2.11 Simon Burrowes asked that all Directors review their current Directorate representatives on ICWG, and suggest replacements for these staff members if necessary.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

9. HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

9.1 Richard Stewart provided an overview of the paper on Temporary Promotions.

9.2 It was agreed SMG would consider these proposals further and that the issue of Temporary Promotions would be discussed at the meeting arranged between SMG and the Head of Personnel in week commencing 15 September 2008. Other issues for discussion at this meeting would include:

- Ongoing reviews of business areas/structures;
- The recruitment schedule- priority posts;
- Lateral transfers;
- How to notify staff of new starts in the organisation;
- Equal pay.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

9.3 Richard Stewart requested that Directors should forward any further suggestions for issues for discussion at this meeting to him as soon as possible.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

10. ADMINISTRATIVE PREPARATIONS FOR THE DEVOLUTION OF POLICING AND JUSTICE

10.1 Nuala Dunwoody provided SMG with an overview of her paper on the administrative preparations required for the devolution of Policing and Justice powers to the NI Assembly and Executive.

10.2 SMG agreed the proposals in the paper, including that a cross-Directorate group on the administrative provisions for Devolution of Policing and Justice be established, chaired by John Stewart and supported by Nuala Dunwoody. There would be at least one representative from each Directorate on the group.

ACTION: JOHN STEWART/ NUALA DUNWOODY

11. CURRENT FOI REQUESTS

11.1 SMG noted that no FOI requests had been received since its last meeting on 2 September 2008.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Co-ordination of events and facilities

12.1 Trevor Reaney asked that all Directors review the current arrangements for the co-ordination of events and facilities in their Directorates. SMG will then consider how events and facilities can be co-ordinated across Directorates.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

Suppliers' Information Event

12.2 Richard Stewart gave an overview to SMG on proposals for a Suppliers' Information Event to be held in Parliament Buildings in October 2008.

12.3 It was agreed that SMG members would consider these proposals further and finalise decisions on this issue at the next SMG meeting on 17 September.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.1 Future meetings will take place at 9.30am in Room 29 (unless stated otherwise) on the following dates:

- Wednesday 17 September (at 2.30pm)
- Thursday 2 October;
- Wednesday 15 October (at 10am).