SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP
FRIDAY 1 MAY AT 9.30AM
IN ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Mr. Trevor Reaney; Mr. John Stewart; Mr. Richard Stewart; Mr. Stephen Welch; Dr. Gareth McGrath.**
In attendance:	**Mr Hugh Widdis;** **Mr. Tony Logue (agenda items 6, 7 and 8);** **Mr Brian Moreland (agenda item 9);** **Sheila McClelland (agenda item 12);** **Mr. Simon Kelly.**

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The minutes of the Secretariat Management Group (SMG) meeting held on 1 April 2009 were approved with amendment.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 SMG noted that the procurement control limits agreed at its previous meeting would be reviewed in light of HM Treasury's response to the Glover Report recommendation regarding contract opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: ONGOING

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

5.1 The SMG action points table was noted. SMG members undertook to forward any updates or amendments to Simon Kelly prior to the next meeting.

ACTION: ALL SMG MEMBERS
DEADLINE: 8/5/09

6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.1 Tony Logue provided an overview to SMG members of agenda items for the next Commission meeting, to take place on 21 May 2009, including:

- The Clerk/ Director General's Monthly Report;
- Accommodation Strategy;
- Evaluation report from the Engagement Road Shows;
- Budget 2009/10;
- SSRB;
- Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee – Terms of Reference.

6.2 Stephen Welch provided SMG with an overview of feedback received to the interim report on the accommodation review he gave at the most recent Commission meeting.

7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

7.1 SMG noted the FOI requests and Assembly Questions received since its meeting on 1 April 2009.

8 ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION OF S.75 DUTIES

8.1 Tony Logue provided an overview of his paper which gave an update on the policy audit and screening policy exercise in the NI Assembly.

8.2 He said that following the policy audit and screening exercise, five policies have been recommended for Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). They are:

- NI Assembly Procurement policy;
- Recruitment policy;
- Reward policy;
- Outreach and Engagement strategy;
- Good Relations policy.

8.3 Tony Logue said that it would be helpful to carry out a mop-up exercise to identify any policies not screened in initial audit exercise. He asked all Directors to review the list of policies at Annex A in the paper and forward any remaining policies to Equality Unit to be screened.

ACTION: ALL SMG MEMBERS

DEADLINE: 15/5/09

8.4 SMG agreed the list of policies recommended for EQIA.

8.5 There was some discussion on the timing of when these EQIAs would be carried out. All Directors undertook to consider the timing for any of their policies recommended for an EQIA and report back at the next meeting of SMG.

ACTION: ALL SMG MEMBERS
DEADLINE: 15/5/09

9 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

9.1 Brian Moreland provided SMG with an update on Internal Audit activity in the NI Assembly.

9.2 SARC meeting

9.2.1 Brian Moreland reported that the first meeting of the new Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee (SARC) had taken place on Thursday 23 April 2009. Issues discussed included:

- Draft SARC terms of reference;
- Internal audit activity report;
- Audit planning;
- NIAO strategy/ accounts completion;
- The NI Assembly Corporate Risk Register and Stewardship Statements;
- Audit recommendations.

9.2.2 Trevor Reaney said that the log of outstanding audit recommendations would now be a monthly SMG agenda item.

ACTION: SIMON KELLY TO PLACE ON AGENDA
DEADLINE: ONGOING

9.3 Information security

9.3.1 Brian Moreland noted that the Director of Resources would be the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) for the NI Assembly.

9.4 Use of Taxis

9.4.1 Brian Moreland reported that the overall use of taxis in the NI Assembly had dropped, but that there were still some instances of non-compliance with the revised guidance. SMG agreed that the use of taxis by staff must operate within the revised guidelines.

9.4.2 Stephen Welch reported that not all taxi books had been returned to the contract manager and undertook to update Directors on any outstanding taxi books in their Directorate.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH
DEADLINE: 15/5/09

9.5 Audit manager

9.5.1 Brian Moreland said that he was preparing a business case for an audit manager post and would be submitting this to SMG for approval at a future date.

ACTION: BRIAN MORELAND
DEADLINE: 31/5/09

9.6 NI Assembly Corporate Risk Register and Stewardship Statements

9.6.1 Trevor Reaney recommended that three risks which were originally intended to be placed in the Corporate Risk registers- and which were subsequently to be inserted into the Directorate Risk Registers- now be removed. SMG agreed this approach.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL
DEADLINE: 8/5/09

9.7 Risk of Fraud

9.8 SMG discussed the issue of the inclusion of a fraud risk within the Risk Register system. It was agreed that the Director of Resources should consider this issue further and return to SMG with recommendations.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 15/5/09

9.9 SMG agreed that a risk of fraud workshop should be organised for autumn 2009. Gareth McGrath undertook to take this issue forward.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH
DEADLINE: 31/10/09

10 HR ISSUES

10.1 Staffing complement

10.1.1 Richard Stewart provided an overview of the paper on the NI Assembly draft staffing complement for 2009/10.

10.1.2 SMG discussed the proposed staffing figures for each Directorate, and some amendments were suggested, which Richard Stewart undertook to make. He further undertook to issue the updated paper to SMG members.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 15/5/09

10.1.3 It was agreed that a list of anticipated staffing pressures and easements should be created for 2010/11.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 15/5/09

10.1.4 It was agreed that all future staffing business cases should be submitted to SMG for approval.

ACTION: ALL SMG MEMBERS TO NOTE
DEADLINE: ONGOING

10.2 Procurement Office staffing

10.2.1 Richard Stewart provided an overview of the paper regarding staffing resources in the Procurement Office.

10.2.2 SMG discussed the business case for two additional staff members in the Procurement Office, and agreed the recommendations in the paper.

10.3 Separation project

10.3.1 Richard Stewart provided an update on the formation of the Separation Project Team. He reported that the team leader was now in post, and it was hoped that the other team members should be in place by late May/ early June 2009. Trevor Reaney emphasised the need to have the full team in place as soon as possible.

10.3.2 Richard Stewart asked that all Directors submit their nominations for the Job Evaluation Steering Group to him as soon as possible.

ACTION: ALL SMG MEMBERS
DEADLINE: 8/5/09

10.3.3 Trevor Reaney said that it would be helpful for SMG to discuss the Separation Project "deliverables" with Head of Human Resources and the Separation Project team leader.

ACTION: ALL SMG MEMBERS
DEADLINE: 31/5/09

11 FINANCE ISSUES

11.1 Interim end-year financial report

11.1.1 SMG noted the paper providing an overview of the NI Assembly's provisional performance against budget to 31 March 2009.

11.2 Budgets for 2009/10

11.2.1 SMG discussed the NI Assembly budgets for 2009/10.

11.2.2 Richard Stewart said that once the staffing complement figures for 2009/10 are finalised, he will be issuing the NI Assembly budgets for 2009/10 to the Commission for information.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 21/5/09

12 DEPOSIT SYSTEM FOR EVENTS BOOKINGS

12.1 Sheila McClelland provided an overview of the paper proposing the introduction of a deposit system for catering and hospitality charges for booked events in Parliament Buildings.

12.2 SMG discussed the issue and agreed the recommendations in the paper.

12.3 SMG agreed that Facilities Branch should draw up detailed guidance for Eurest regarding this events bookings deposit system.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH
DEADLINE: 31/5/09

13 BUSINESS CASE TEMPLATE

13.1 Richard Stewart provided an overview of the paper outlining business case templates for Secretariat expenditure proposals.

13.2 There was some discussion on the paper, including the proposed expenditure levels that would attract a business case, and the level of detail required at a particular level of expenditure.

13.3 Some additions and amendments were suggested to the paper. Richard Stewart undertook to make these amendments and resubmit the paper to a future meeting of SMG for further consideration.

ACTION: ***RICHARD STEWART***
DEADLINE: ***12/6/09***

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 Outreach Activities Family Fun Day 2009

14.1.1 Sheila McClelland provided an overview of the paper outlining plans for a joint initiative with the NI Executive to hold a Family Fun Day 2009 event in the Stormont Estate on 25 May 2009.

14.1.2 SMG noted the proposals and wished the event every success.

14.2 MPV update

14.3 Stephen Welch provided an update on the provision of an additional evening MPV service for staff, and options for its future operation.

14.4 There was some discussion on the issue and John Stewart undertook to consult with Hansard staff regarding the ongoing usefulness of this service.

ACTION: ***JOHN STEWART***
DEADLINE: ***15/5/09***

15 FUTURE MEETINGS

These will take place at 9.30am in Room 29 (unless stated otherwise):

- Friday 15 May;
- Friday 29 May;
- Friday 12 June in Annexe C;
- Friday 26 June.