# SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

## FRIDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2009 AT 10.00AM
## ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**APPROVED**

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|---|---|
| **Present:** | **Trevor Reaney**<br>**Gareth McGrath**<br>**John Stewart**<br>**Richard Stewart**<br>**Allen Witherspoon**<br>**Hugh Widdis** |
| **In attendance:** | **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6, 7, 8)**<br>**Martina Dalton (Agenda item 8)**<br>**Gerardine Berryman (Agenda item 9)**<br>**Georgie Campbell**<br>**Sinead Lappin** |

## 1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

## 2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

## 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (27 NOVEMBER 2009)

These were approved without amendment.

## 4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising which would not be dealt with under the substantive agenda items.

## 5 SMG ACTION POINTS

5.1 The Clerk/DG asked Directors to let Jim Beatty have updates relevant to their action points.

**ACTION: SMG MEMBERS**

## 6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.1 The issues currently scheduled for the Commission meeting on 21 January are:

- Good Relations Action Plan
- Indicative costs for roof reconstruction
- European Report – OFMDFM
- Members' Pay and Financial Support
    - NI Assembly Members Bill
    - Commission Report on Members' Pay
- Response to Standards and Privileges Committee
- Sustainable development
- Assembly Expo
- Draft Charities Policy
- Clerk's Monthly Report
- MLA/Staff protocol
- NI Assembly Annual Report

6.2 The Clerk/DG asked that the NI Assembly Annual Report be circulated to SMG members for comments prior to its submission to the Commission.

**ACTION: TONY LOGUE**

6.3 The Clerk/DG said that he will include an update on the work of the Information Security Working Group in his overview to the January 2010 Monthly Report.

**ACTION: TREVOR REANEY**
**JIM BEATTY TO NOTE**

## 7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

These were noted.

## 8 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY PRESENTATION

8.1 Martina Dalton summarised the contents of the Project Initiation Document for the development of an Information Management Strategy including the details of Phase 1 of the Project. She undertook to check on the appropriateness of the timing of the various training elements of the Project.

8.2 The Clerk/DG said that the target date for the completion of the approval of the Information Security Policy should be brought forward to 31 January 2010. He suggested sourcing examples of best practice eg Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and using these to help with the development of the Assembly's Security Policy. He emphasised the need for the early completion of this document.

**ACTION: MARTINA DALTON**

8.3 The Clerk/DG asked that a paragraph be inserted into the paper relating to the approach to communications throughout the proposed process. Tony Logue said that pages would be added to AssISt relating to Information Management.

**ACTION: MARTINA DALTON**

8.4 Martina said that she was in the process of trialling the Information Audit in Finance Branch. The purpose of the Audit is to determine the amount of file storage required throughout the organisation. When finalised, it will be issued to all Business Areas for completion.

8.5 John Stewart said that the establishment of a new Committee might present an opportunity to pilot an electronic filing system.

8.6 The PID was approved for presentation to the Commission subject to the amendment of the timescale on page 6 and the inclusion of a paragraph relating to communications.

## 8A INFORMATION SECURITY REPORT

8A.1 The Clerk/DG briefed SMG on the report on the investigation into the breach of information security regarding Members' expenses. It was confirmed that the final draft of the Information Security Report would remain confidential and that its circulation would be restricted to SMG members.

8A.2 The Clerk/DG asked the Directors of Resources and Engagement to discuss the recommendations in the draft Report with the Head of Internal Audit following which a revised draft should be prepared.

**ACTION: RICHARD STEWART; GARETH MCGRATH; BRIAN MORELAND**

8A3 Directors were asked to consider the storage and handling of sensitive information held in their Business Areas which may be vulnerable to leaks and to put measures in place to avoid this happening.

**ACTION: DIRECTORS**

8A The Clerk/DG stressed the importance of information security and the need for full cooperation in relation to measures to enhance current arrangements.

## 9 LIBRARY CURRENT AWARENESS SYSTEM

9.1 A presentation of the new Research and Library Information System for Assembly Members and Secretariat staff was made to SMG members by Gerardine Berryman and was very favourably received.

9.2 Gerardine was asked to consider the inclusion of categories of information relating to:

- The work of the Commission
- Devolution structures across the UK

**ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH/GERARDINE BERRYMAN**

## 10 KEY UPDATES

### 10.1 Clerking and Reporting Directorate

- An information session will be held for Departmental Assembly Liaison Officers (DALOs) on Monday 14 December.
- There will be a meeting of the Assembly Executive Review Committee (AERC) during w/c 14 December with further meetings after Christmas.
- Consideration should be given to election planning.

### 10.2 Resources Directorate

- A note will issue to staff on 11 December re Fair Pay.

### 10.3 Facilities Directorate

- A “soft market test” is taking place to gauge interest in the Ormiston site. The Directorate is continuing to pursue development options. It is the intention to submit a pre planning application before Christmas. A Tree Preservation Order has been received in relation to the site.

- The timetable for the development of the Business Continuity Plan was outlined. Directors were asked to cooperate to ensure that this tight timescale could be met.

- A draft Lost and Found Policy was circulated and described. It was agreed that this would be deemed to have been approved by SMG should no contrary comments have been received by close of play on 11 December 2009.

- It is proposed to cease the use of the term "Doorkeeper" and instead to refer to "Security and Usher Services". The Acting Director of Facilities undertook to consult on the use of the term "Usher".

  **ACTION: ALLEN WITHERSPOON**

## 11 FINANCE ISSUES

**11.1 December Monitoring Round**
The Director of Resources presented his paper on the December Monitoring Round 2009/2010. He said that £1m is being held for capital expenditure. Finance Branch will shortly be seeking a definitive list of planned capital expenditure projects from Directors.

## 12 STAFFING UPDATE

**12.1 Recruitment Schedule**
Sinead Lappin presented her paper on the Recruitment Schedule. She referred to the six posts to be advertised within the next 2/3 weeks and asked Directors to ensure that the relevant paperwork is being progressed by their staff.

**ACTION: DIRECTORS**

SMG agreed that:

- The competition for Principal Doorkeeper should be removed from the Recruitment Schedule;

- Competitions for Principal Security Officer, Senior Security Officer and Deputy Security Officer should be added to the Recruitment Schedule;

- The period of notice for test and interview dates should be reduced from 2 weeks to 1 week provided the proposed interview dates are included in the Information Pack, and,

- Line Managers will be instructed by Directors to release staff involved in competitions without delay.

  **ACTION: DIRECTORS**

## 13 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ANNUAL REPORT

13.1 Sinead Lappin summarised the contents of the Equal Opportunities Annual Report. During the discussion which followed:

- Sinead Lappin said that it is intended to review the role of the Harassment Contact Officers (HCOs).

- Sinead Lappin will investigate the "other reasons" for not using the HCO service (P5).

  **ACTION: SINEAD LAPPIN**

- It was stressed that all outstanding training should be progressed.

- The exclusion of informal complaints (eg those raised with the HCOs) from Complaints Monitoring was queried. Sinead Lappin undertook to consider this.

  **ACTION: SINEAD LAPPIN**

- It was agreed that a definition of "Dignity at Work" should be included in the section relating to Complaints Monitoring.

  **ACTION: SINEAD LAPPIN**

## 14 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The contents of the Corporate Risk Register dated 16 November were reviewed and amendments agreed. Particular attention was given to the comments made by the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting on 2 December.

**ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO AMEND CORPORATE RISK REGISTER AS AGREED**

## 15 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The December 2009 Health and Safety Management Report was presented by Allen Witherspoon and its contents were noted by SMG members.

## 16 CHARITIES POLICY

16.1 This was approved for submission to the Commission.

## 17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**17.1 Election Planning and Accommodation**
The Clerk/DG said that he would arrange to meet with Directors the following week to discuss these issues. He asked the Acting Director of Facilities to circulate Floor Plans to Directors.

**ACTION: DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES**

**17.2 Meeting during w/c 4 January 2009**
The Clerk/DG said that he will be inviting Directors to a half day meeting during the first week in January to discuss:

- Corporate Plan stocktake
- Governance issues
- Budgets for 2010/11
- Long term financial planning

**17.3 Correspondence**
It was confirmed that there is no corporate policy on handling correspondence (eg acknowledgements; response times). The Clerk/DG asked Georgie Campbell to take this forward.

**ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL**

## 18 STAFF BONUS NOMINATION SCHEME

18.1 It was agreed that the continuation of the Staff Bonus Scheme in its current form should be considered in the context of the development of revised Terms and Conditions.

**ACTION: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES**

18.2 A discussion took place in relation to nominations under the Staff Bonus Scheme. This is the subject of a separate note.

## 20 NEXT MEETING

The next meetings will take place in Room 29 at 9.30am on:

Friday 15 January 2010
Friday 29 January 2010
Friday 12 February 2010
Friday 26 February 2010
Friday 12 March 2010
Friday 26 March 2010
Friday 9 April 2010
Friday 23 April 2010
Friday 7 May 2010
Friday 21 May 2010
Friday 4 June 2010