SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP
9.30AM ON FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER 2009
IN ANNEXE C, DUNDONALD HOUSE

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Gareth McGrath** **John Stewart (excl agenda items 15 – 19)** **Richard Stewart** **Allen Witherspoon*** *** substituting for Stephen Welch**
In attendance:	**Tony Logue (agenda items 6, 7, 9)** **Georgie Campbell** **Jim Beatty**

The Clerk/DG welcomed Allen Witherspoon and Jim Beatty to their first SMG meeting.

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Hugh Widdis.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (18 SEPTEMBER 2009)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed subject to one amendment.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Learning and Development Strategy (Item 10.2)

4.1.1 It was noted that the development of Directorate Training Plans was no longer required. Individual Directors may consider Directorate level plans for specific issues as business needs require.

4.1.2 The Clerk/DG asked Directors to ensure that all Personal Development Plans are copied to Training Branch to assist with the development of a Corporate Training Plan.

4.1.3 It was agreed that HR Training and Development Team should be asked to produce a paper in relation to the implementation of the Training and Development Strategy.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/SINEAD LAPPIN/ASHLEY MCILWRATH

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

5.1 All of the Action Points were reviewed and the list was updated.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY TO UPDATE LIST AND COPY TO SMG MEMBERS

6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.1 Tony Logue advised that the Assembly Commission would next meet on Tuesday, 20 October 2010 for discussion on a single item agenda with a subsequent meeting to discuss outstanding issues on Thursday, 5 November 2009.

6.2 The Commission will meet on Thursday, 19 November 2009 to discuss the following issues:-

- SARC Appraisal
- AIMS (Presentation by IS Office)
- Information Security Update
- Renewables Regeneration
- Clerk’s Monthly Report
- HR issues
- Website Business Case
- Accommodation
- Sustainability (Presentation by Facilities Directorate)

6.3 It was likely that the Commission would visit Dublin on Wednesday, 18 November 2009.

6.4 Trevor Reaney and Allen Witherspoon undertook to speak to Pat Ramsey MLA regarding the access arrangements during the Hilary Clinton visit.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/ALLEN WITHERSPOON

7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

7.1 The current FOI requests, including 96/09 which was recently received, and Assembly Questions were noted.

8 BUSINESS CASE TEMPLATE

8.1 Richard Stewart's paper of 24 September 2009 was agreed with a small amendment to paragraph 7.

8.2 It was agreed that the mechanism for major expenditure proposals should be discussed at the Clerk/DG's forthcoming meeting with the Department of Finance and Personnel.

ACTION: CLERK/DG

9 INFORMATION SECURITY UPDATE

9.1 The Clerk/DG said that the following work was ongoing:

- Information Management Strategy
- Information Audit
- Clear Desk Policy
- Investigation of recent security breach
- Implementation of recommendations in Internal Audit Review

He said that there is a need to develop a process to make information security more robust as it is a high risk area in view of the recent breach of information security.

9.2 It was agreed that:

- the Information Management Team should address information security of electronic and paper records
- there is a need for external validation of information security
- the need for specialist staff should be considered
- internal standards should be set
- the use of software to protect information should be investigated
- the Information Management Team should develop short term recommendations initially followed by medium and long term recommendations

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH/INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TEAM

9.3 It was agreed that Gareth McGrath should convene an early meeting with the ClerK/DG, the Director of Resources, the Head of IS and the Information Officer to determine the scope for external input.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

10 FINANCIAL UPDATE

10.1 Richard Stewart reported a significant underspend on GAE and a total budget underspend of £1.4m(7.1%) to the end of September 2009. It is expected that the December Monitoring Round will resolve any issues surrounding this.

SMG was advised that Janice Craig, Finance Office, is now responsible for budgeting and will meet with Directors over the coming weeks.

11 OUTSTANDING AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 This item was deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/BRIAN MORELAND

12 STAFF SURVEY

12.1 Georgie Campbell spoke to her paper on amalgamating the forthcoming staff survey with the internal communications audit. Both are required within the objectives of the Corporate Business Plan 2009/2010. The views of staff on a wide range of issues will be sought.

12.2 The proposal, as outlined, was approved subject to confirmation that the involvement of Research staff will not adversely affect the service to Committees.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH TO CONFIRM THE AVAILABILITY OF RESEARCH STAFF

13 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

13.1 Updates to the Corporate Risk Register were agreed.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO AMEND CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

14 STAFF COMPLEMENT

14.1 Richard Stewart spoke to his paper on the need to maintain the accuracy of the staff complement and the processes required to support this.

14.2 SMG agreed the contents of the paper.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

15 BUSINESS CASE FOR WEBSITE PROJECT/WEBSITE PROJECT TEAM UPDATE

15.1 Gareth McGrath outlined the proposed business case for the redevelopment of the Assembly website and following discussion, the paper was approved with some amendments.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH TO AMEND THE BUSINESS CASE AS AGREED AND SUBMIT TO THE COMMISSION.

16 FRONT OF HOUSE FUNCTION INCLUDING SWITHBOARD

16.1 Gareth McGrath spoke to this paper. He said that the costs will require further discussion.

16.2 SMG members agreed that work should commence as recommended and that this is brought back to SMG when detailed proposals are available.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

17 ACCESS VIA THE EAST DOOR

17.1 Allen Witherspoon spoke to his paper on proposals to alleviate pressures on entering the building through the East Door at certain times. Through making more use of the external search facility beside the lower car park, staff could choose to enter through either the East Door or the main doors. Those using the upper car park would still be required to be screened on entering the building.

17.2 SMG members approved the proposals.

ACTION: ALLEN WITHERSPOON

18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18.1 Information Kiosk

18.1.1 SMG members discussed the installation in the Great Hall of a touch-screen information kiosk which would provide a range of government-related information.

18.1.2 Whilst agreeing in principle, it was agreed that the facility should include information about the Assembly.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

18.2 Internal Promotions

18.2.1 Richard Stewart spoke to his paper on Internal Promotions. It was agreed to seek the views of Legal Services and TUS on the subject and to bring the matter back to SMG.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

18.3 Members Handbook

18.3.1 SMG members discussed the need to reprint the Members Handbook prior to the new mandate. It was agreed that justification was required before deciding on a reprint at the present time.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

18.4 Staff Appraisals

18.4.1 The Clerk/DG expressed his concern about the large number of outstanding staff reports. He asked Directors to ensure that all staff reports, PPAs, In-Year reports and PDPs are up-to-date.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

18.4.2 The Clerk/DG asked for a list of all outstanding staff reports following validation with Directorates

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

19 FUTURE MEETINGS

These will take place at 9.30am in Room 29 on -

Friday, 13 November 2009

Friday, 27 November 2009

Friday, 11 December 2009