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

APPROVED

Present:	**Mr. Trevor Reaney; Mr. Richard Stewart; Mr. Stephen Welch; Dr. Gareth McGrath; Mr John Stewart**
In attendance:	**Mr. Hugh Widdis;** **Mr. Tony Logue; (agenda items 6, 7 and 8)** **Ms Martina Dalton; (agenda item 8)** **Mr Brian Moreland; (agenda item 9)** **Ms Sinead Lappin; (agenda item 10)** **Ms Alison Ross; (agenda item 10)** **Ms Marie Maguire, TSO; (agenda item 11)** **Mr Leslie Stannage, Leslie Stannage Design; (agenda item 11)** **Ms Georgie Campbell.**

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (15 MAY 2009)

3.1 The minutes of the Secretariat Management Group (SMG) meeting held on 15 May 2009 were approved without amendment.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 All “matters arising” will be dealt with under substantive agenda items.

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

5.1 Newspapers (Action point 21)
Stephen Welch said that he would consult with Gareth McGrath to try to find ways to reduce the need for newspapers. Directors were

requested to further review their newspaper requirements with a view to reducing the number requested.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

5.2 Events Booking Deposit System (Action point 34)
It was agreed that this Action Point should be amended to state that guidance should be prepared re the implementation of the recommendations in relation to the deposit system for booking events which had been agreed by SMG on 1 May 2009.

ACTION: SIMON KELLY

6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.1 Commission meeting on 18 June 2009
Tony Logue described the programme for the Commission meeting on 18 June. He confirmed that all outstanding items will be on the agenda for the meeting. Agenda items will include:

Childcare for constituency staff
Review of Members Financial Services Handbook
Policy on portraits
Evaluation Report from the Engagement Roadshows
Clerk's Monthly Report
Corporate Identity Policy

6.2 Print contract
Gareth McGrath undertook to ascertain whether the award of the print contract requires Commission approval.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

6.3 Childcare for constituency staff
Richard Stewart undertook to ascertain if childcare allowance had been paid to constituency staff in the past.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

7.1 SMG noted the FOI requests and Assembly Questions received since its meeting on 15 May 2009.

8 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

8.1 Information Management Project Team Terms of Reference

8.1.1 The Clerk/DG said that whilst he agreed that the Secretariat should move to an electronic records management system as soon as possible, he was concerned about the capacity of staff to deliver this. Others also expressed this concern. Martina Dalton said that there will be a need for a Project Team supported by Designated FOI Officers (DFOs).

8.1.2 It was suggested that this is a "Programme" rather than a "Project" and it was agreed that Martina should prepare a detailed phased timetable for implementation indicating the resources required to deliver each phase. This should include the provision of training on project management for those involved.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE

8.2 Information Audit

It was agreed that an information audit should be carried out. It was further agreed that:

- The audit should be sequenced in order to make it manageable;
- Directors would discuss the audit requirements with their DFOs and that this would be followed by individual face to face briefings by CSCU staff;
- There is a need to ensure consistency of responses
- In order to capture corporate knowledge, existing DFOs who are about to return to the NICS should be involved in this exercise before their departure.

ACTION: DIRECTORS/TONY LOGUE

8.3 FOI Leaflet for Members

8.3.1 It was agreed that SMG members should forward any comments on the proposed leaflet to Martina Dalton.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

8.3.2 It was agreed that Assembly Members and other third parties should be given four working days to consider the decision to provide information of which they are the subject.

8.3.3 It was agreed that the final draft should issue to Assembly Members.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE

9 LOG OF OUTSTANDING AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Brian Moreland said that the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee (SARC) wishes to monitor progress in relation to the implementation of accepted recommendations from Audit Reports. Each recommendation will be colour coded green, amber or red to denote whether it has been implemented, is in the process of being implemented or has not been implemented. Brian advised that in determining target dates for the implementation of audit recommendations, managers should agree target dates which are achievable. Should these target dates prove to be problematic, Internal Audit should be informed.

9.2 The Clerk/Director General said that outstanding audit recommendations will be submitted to SMG each month to coincide with the review of the Corporate Risk Register.

ACTION: BRIAN MORELAND/SIMON KELLY

9.3 The presentation of those recommendations which have been implemented and are colour coded green, are to be reviewed to ensure that an appropriate level of detail is provided.

ACTION: BRIAN MORELAND

10 AUDIT MANAGER

A late Paper was submitted in relation to the appointment of an Audit Manager. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next SMG meeting.

ACTION: SIMON KELLY TO NOTE

11 HR ISSUES

11.1 HR Strategy

The Clerk/Director General and Directors congratulated Richard Stewart and Sinead Lappin on an excellent document. They agreed that it was a significant step forward. During discussion a number of changes were suggested to the draft document.

It was agreed that following the completion of these changes and having taken account of TUS comments, Heads of Business should be briefed on the draft Strategy, prior to it being issued to staff for comments. The Clerk/DG offered to convene and lead the briefing session for Heads of Business.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO ARRANGE

11.2 Separation Project Team Update

The Clerk/Director General said that this issue would be addressed at the informal meeting to discuss the Separation Project which will follow this meeting.

11.3 Job Evaluation Steering and Review Group and related policies

SMG approved the Risk Register subject to the format being consistent with the Corporate and Directorate Risk registers.

ACTION: ALISON ROSS

The Project Team has been appointed and efforts to obtain the early release to the Project Team are ongoing. The importance of early release was emphasised. The Project Plan was discussed and it was agreed that this should be reviewed in light of comments from SMG for submission to the next SMG meeting.

ACTION: ALISON ROSS (SIMON KELLY TO NOTE)

11.4 Recruitment Programme

Sinead Lappin will bring a revised Recruitment Schedule to the next meeting of SMG. It was noted that the overall staff complement is now 419.1, following preparation of budgets for 2009/10. The Clerk/DG indicated that efficiencies may still be possible within this overall figure.

ACTION: SINEAD LAPPIN (SIMON KELLY TO NOTE)

12 CORPORATE IDENTITY POLICY

12.1 Leslie Stannage and Marie Maguire presented proposals for a Corporate Identity for the Assembly which was aimed at “recapturing” the flax flower image and ensuring consistency of use. The Guidelines were very comprehensive and detailed and addressed all possible uses of the Assembly’s identity including internal and external publications, stationery, signage, display materials etc. It also addressed sustainability issues. The Guidelines are aimed for use by the Printed Paper Office who will advise staff on their interpretation as appropriate. SMG welcomed the professional approach to the use of the corporate identity.

12.2 SMG discussed a number of presentational points related to the proposal. It was agreed that these issues would be dealt with when the proposals were presented to the Commission on 18 June 2009.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

12.3 It was agreed that following the presentation to the Commission, the proposals should be presented to the Chairperson's Liaison Group.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

13 MEDIA HANDBOOK

13.1 Gareth McGrath said that the production of the Handbook had involved wide consultation, including with OFMdFM. There would be a meeting that afternoon with media representatives to resolve one final issue ("speculative doorstepping"). Following this, the new arrangements would be trialled, starting on 8 June 2009. Relevant staff, including doorkeepers, will be fully briefed on the new arrangements. It was noted that contact would be made with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Chairpersons' Liaison Group prior to the trial regarding concerns which they had raised.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 Procurement Procedure

Following a general discussion it was agreed that all future contract tender documentation should include a statement to the effect that a tiebreaker such as "best and final offer" may be requested.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

15 FUTURE MEETINGS

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

- **Friday 12 June 2009 in Annexe C;**
- **Friday 26 June 2009**