SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2009
AT 10.00AM IN ROOM 29,
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Mr. Trevor Reaney; Dr. Gareth McGrath; Mr. John Stewart; Mr. Richard Stewart; Mr. Stephen Welch.**
In attendance:	**Mr. Tony Logue (agenda items 5 and 6);** **Ms. Georgie Campbell (agenda items 7 and 8);** **Mr Hugh Widdis (Agenda items 1 to 6; 10)** **Mr. Simon Kelly.**

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received.

1.2 It was agreed that a "Declaration of Interests" standing agenda item should be included in all future SMG agendas.

ACTION: SIMON KELLY TO NOTE
DEADLINE: ONGOING

1.3 Hugh Widdis declared an interest re agenda item 6, as a member of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 The minutes of the Secretariat Management Group (SMG) meeting held on 18 February 2009 were approved without amendment.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Trevor Reaney reported that he would be providing the Clerk/ Director General's Monthly Report to the Commission in its revised format at the start of the new financial year. Directorates would be expected to return their future submissions in line with the new format.

4 SMG ACTION POINTS

4.1 The SMG action points table was noted and some amendments were suggested, which Simon Kelly undertook to make.

ACTION: SIMON KELLY
DEADLINE: 5/3/09

5 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.1 Tony Logue provided an overview to SMG members of agenda items for the Commission meeting of the 10 March 2009, including:

- Review of the Assembly Corporate Plan 2008/11;
- SSRB recommendations;
- NI Assembly Pension Scheme;
- Information Assurance- Protective Marking;
- Defensive Venue Searching.

5.2 Trevor Reaney and Tony Logue undertook to liaise to finalise the draft SSRB paper to be submitted to this meeting.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/ TONY LOGUE
DEADLINE: 4/3/09

5.3 SMG noted the Commission action points list.

6 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS

6.1 SMG noted the FOI requests received since its meeting on 4 February 2009.

6.2 It was agreed that future FOI updates for SMG should include the names of the applicants and be marked “Restricted”.

ACTION: MARTINA DALTON
DEADLINE: ONGOING

6.3 Tony Logue presented the list of Assembly Questions received since the last SMG meeting.

6.4 It was agreed that the list of Assembly Questions should be included in future SMG packs. Any subsequent updates will be provided via email prior to the meeting.

ACTION: SIMON KELLY
DEADLINE: ONGOING

6.5 There was some discussion on feedback received following the recent section 75 training sessions. Trevor Reaney said he would be submitting a paper on the ongoing implementation of section 75 duties in the NI Assembly to a future SMG meeting.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/ TONY LOGUE
DEADLINE: 18/3/09

7 REVIEW OF CORPORATE PLAN 2008/11

7.1 Georgie Campbell provided an update on the revised Corporate Plan for 2008/11. She reported that the plan had been issued to TUS and staff for comment, by close of play on Wednesday 4 March 2009.

7.2 Georgie Campbell said that comments had already been received from TUS and provided an overview of these to SMG. She explained that following the deadline for submission, the Clerk/ Director General will consider all comments from TUS and staff.

7.3 SMG reviewed the draft revised Corporate Plan 2008/11 and associated Corporate Business Plan for 2009/10.

7.4 Richard Stewart undertook to prepare information on NI Assembly capital expenditure estimates for inclusion in the Plan, and forward it to Georgie Campbell.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 5/3/09

7.5 It was agreed that only one general reference should be made to the implementation of Engagement Strategy recommendations. Gareth McGrath undertook to identify all other references to the Engagement Strategy in the draft Plan and highlight them to Georgie Campbell.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH
DEADLINE: 5/3/09

7.6 There was some discussion on what consultation should be undertaken for the Plan. Trevor Reaney and George Campbell agreed to consider this issue and provide wording for inclusion in the corresponding cover paper that will be submitted to the Commission.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/ GEORGIE CAMPBELL
DEADLINE: 5/3/09

7.7 There was some discussion on the need for equality screening for the plan. It was agreed that following consideration by the Commission, the plan would be screened in accordance with section 75 requirements. Georgie Campbell undertook to make reference to this in the cover paper that will be submitted to the Commission.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/ GEORGIE CAMPBELL
DEADLINE: 5/3/09

7.8 Georgie Campbell undertook to make all the suggested amendments, and to mark these changes on the draft printed version. The updated draft would then be submitted to the Commission meeting on 10 March 2009.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL
DEADLINE: 5/3/09

8 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER- MONTHLY REVIEW

8.1 SMG noted the Corporate Risk Register (CRR), updated following discussion at the SMG meeting on 4 February 2009.

8.2 It was agreed that the CRR will be updated in April 2009 to reflect the new Corporate Objectives in the revised Corporate Plan 2008/11.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/ GEORGIE CAMPBELL
DEADLINE: 1/4/09

8.3 Georgie Campbell said that she has received all Directorate Risk Registers (DRRs), which she had re-formatted to ensure consistency of approach. She asked all Directors to review their reformatted DRRs and provide comments to her by 31 March 2009.

ACTION: ALL SMG MEMBERS
DEADLINE: 31/3/09

9 HR ISSUES

9.1 Internal promotion/ lateral movements

9.1.1 Richard Stewart reported that he had received advice from Legal Services on internal promotion and lateral movements in the NI Assembly. He said that the issue will be discussed at the next Employee Relations Group (ERG) meeting on 13 March 2009, and following further discussion, he will submit a final draft of the internal promotion/ lateral movements paper to SMG.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 1/4/09

9.2 Pay and grading

9.2.1 Richard Stewart reported that pay and grading will also be discussed with TUS at the next ERG meeting. He sad that any agreement arising from this discussion will help to commence the evaluation of pay and grading in the NI Assembly.

9.3 Separation Project

9.3.1 Richard Stewart said that all four members of the Separation Project Team will be identified by Friday 6 March 2009.

9.3.2 He said that a paper on the draft terms of reference for the Separation Project Team will be submitted to SMG for its consideration on 18 March 2009, and then to the Commission meeting on 24 March 2009. Further discussion was required at SMG and the Commission on an overall strategy to guide the Separation Project Team's work.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 18/3/09

9.4 Allocation of new staff

9.4.1 Richard Stewart provided SMG with an overview of the current procedure for the allocation of new staff to posts in Directorates. He said that staff who are successful in competitions for posts they are temporarily filling will generally stay in their current Directorate. The skills of external successful candidates and business need will be taken into account when considering where to place all other new staff members.

9.4.2 There was some discussion on the issue and it was agreed that the current procedure should be enhanced to include a round table discussion by Directors. It was agreed that this meeting would be held in relation to the next intake of new staff.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: ONGOING

10 LEGAL TITLE AND INSURANCE OF PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

10.1 Richard Stewart provided an overview of the paper on the legal title and insurance of Parliament Buildings.

10.2 Richard Stewart said that currently Parliament Buildings is covered by the self insurance policy for government buildings, as outlined in Managing Public Money. It was agreed that Richard Stewart would seek confirmation of this self-insurance status in writing from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 18/3/09

10.3 Richard Stewart said that at present, while DFP owns the Stormont estate, Parliament Buildings is held in trust for the NI Assembly. There was some discussion on whether the NI Assembly should seek the transfer of the legal title of Parliament Buildings. It was agreed that this issue should considered as part of Separation Project.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
DEADLINE: 31/3/10

11 CORPORATE IDENTITY

11.1 Gareth McGrath presented a number of documents to SMG members demonstrating the proposed new Corporate Identity for NI Assembly publications.

11.2 SMG said that they were content with the approach and the suggested templates. Gareth McGrath undertook to produce a Corporate Identity policy for submission to SMG and the Commission.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH
DEADLINE: 1/4/09

11.3 Gareth McGrath and Stephen Welch undertook to liaise re ensuring the consistency of signage in Parliament Buildings with new Corporate Identity.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH/ STEPHEN WELCH
DEADLINE: 1/4/09

12 NI ASSEMBLY TELEPHONY SERVICE

12.1 Gareth McGrath gave an overview of his paper on the telephony service currently provided for the NI Assembly, and options for the future provision of operator services.

12.2 The issue was discussed and some amendments to the paper were suggested, which Gareth McGrath undertook to make. It was agreed that this paper provided a good basis for moving forward with the issue. It was further agreed that this issue should be progressed as part of the Separation Project.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/ GARETH MCGRATH
DEADLINE: 31/3/10

13 DEFENSIVE VENUE SEARCHING

13.1 Stephen Welch provided an overview of his paper on defensive venue searching.

13.2 SMG agreed to the recommendations in the paper, and that it should be submitted to the Commission meeting on 10 March 2009.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH
DEADLINE: 10/3/10

14 UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 SMG noted the table providing an update on the implementation of Review recommendations.

14.2 Trevor Reaney said that he hoped to submit a paper signing off the Review recommendations to the Commission meeting on 24 March. The paper will also outline what outstanding recommendations will be incorporated into the revised Corporate Plan for 2008/11.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY
DEADLINE: 24/3/09

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 WWF Earth Hour

15.1.1 Stephen Welch provided an overview of his paper outlining plans for the NI Assembly to participate in the World Wildlife Fund's "Earth Hour" event on Saturday 28 March 2009.

15.1.2 There was some discussion on the issue and SMG agreed to the proposals in the paper.

15.2 Special Bonus Scheme

15.2.1 It was agreed that a meeting would be held week commencing 9 March 2009 to discuss nominations for the special bonus scheme.

ACTION: SIMON KELLY TO ARRANGE
DEADLINE: 9/3/09

15.3 NI Assembly Roadshow Website

15.3.1 There was some discussion on the content of the NI Assembly Roadshow website. Gareth McGrath undertook to review how information on the site is currently presented.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH
DEADLINE: 18/3/09

16 FUTURE MEETINGS

To take place at 10.00am in Room 29 (unless stated otherwise):

- Wednesday 18 March;
- Wednesday 1 April.