SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2010 at 9.40am
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Gareth McGrath** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Stephen Welch** **Hugh Widdis**
Apologies:	**None**
In attendance:	**Jim Beatty** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6 and 7)** **Georgie Campbell (Agenda Items 9, 10 and 11)**

1 Apologies

1.1 None.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting (15 October 2010)

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 15 October 2010 were approved with some amendments.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 Any matters arising will be discussed within today's items.

5 SMG Action Points

5.1 Directors were asked to send updates on the list of Action Points to Jim Beatty.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

6 Future SMG/Commission Business

6.1 The business to be discussed at the Commission meeting on 23 November 2010 will be as follows:-

- Pay and Grading Review
- NIA Spending Review

6.2 A further meeting of the Commission has been scheduled for 7 December 2010. The business to be discussed will be as follows:-

- Draft Language Policy
- Members Survey 2011
- NIA Spending Review
- Roof Repairs
- Revised ID Pass System
- MoU with Pensions Trustees

7 Current FOI Requests/Assembly Questions

7.1 The FOI requests and Assembly Questions were noted.

8 Spending Review Update

8.1 Discussion on this issue was deferred.

9 Staff Survey

9.1 Georgie Campbell told SMG that following the consultation exercise, she had received 130 actions/comments on issues within the Staff Survey. These had been divided into two papers and SMG was asked to decide how they wished to progress.

9.2 It was considered that Directorates were already taking forward issues from the Survey and that the future focus should be on the outstanding key issues.

9.3 It was agreed that Georgie Campbell would prepare an action plan with no more than ten issues and circulate this to Directors to consider. When agreed, these would be taken forward within business plans.

Richard Stewart would bring the matter to a future ERG for consultation with TUS.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

10 Corporate Risk Register

10.1 It was noted that a separate risk in respect of Procurement has to be added to the Register.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

10.2 SMG reviewed the Risk Register and updated appropriately.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

11 Corporate Business Plan 2011/12

11.1 Georgie Campbell explained that the current business plan runs up the end of March 2011 and reminded SMG of the decision to roll forward the existing Corporate Plan for 2011/12. The new Commission would commence preparation of the next Corporate Plan following the elections in May 2011.

11.2 It was agreed that Georgie Campbell would prepare a draft business plan for the period April 2011 to March 2012 which was based on the 2010/11 plan. The draft would be based on the existing strategic priorities. This would be circulated to SMG for comments and amendments prior to wider consultation as set out in the paper

11.3 As part of the consultation exercise, Georgie Campbell will arrange to meet with HoBs to seek views on the draft plan.

11.4 A revised Corporate Business Plan will be brought back to a future SMG meeting.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

12 Procurement Issues – Update on Internal Audit Report Actions

12.1 Discussion on this item was deferred as Richard Stewart said that he was preparing a paper which would include a fundamental look at the processes. This would be brought to the next SMG meeting.

12.2 Stephen Welch raised the use of the new Business Case proforma as it had been agreed at a previous SMG meeting that these would be reconsidered. Richard Stewart is currently reviewing the forms.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

13 HR Policy Work Plan

13.1 Richard Stewart explained that the paper set out a focussed approach on taking forward the development and production of HR policies where SMG would set the policy direction before consultation with TUS and staff. A few policies would require Commission approval.

13.2 SMG discussed the paper which included one table on key steps and time table and another listing all polices to be reviewed/developed. There were concerns about the number of key steps, their contents and the proposed timing and it was felt that not all were appropriate to polices being reviewed. It was agreed that this table would be replaced with one showing the key steps for developing new policies and another for the current policies being reviewed.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

14 Recruitment Review

14.1 Richard Stewart said that the Commission had agreed to issue letters of appointment to those where the selection process had been completed.

15 Assistance to Study

15.1 Richard Stewart explained that the paper represented the outcome of a review of the Assembly's current policy. This had identified several areas which required amendment, including, limiting the number of courses per individual, recoupment of assistance where the course is not completed and retaining staff for a minimum period after providing assistance for essential qualifications.

15.2 SMG discussed how these proposals could be put into effect, for example, recoupment of assistance after an individual resigns.

15.3 It was agreed that Directors would consider the paper in light of today's comments and pass any views to Richard Stewart.

ACTION POINT: DIRECTORS

16 Upgraded Internet Connection

16.1 Richard Stewart led the discussion on the Business Case for upgrading the Assembly's internet connection to provide a better managed and quicker service. The speed of download delivery, 20mb, was queried and it was agreed that this should be confirmed as a consistent download speed.

16.2 Subject to the download speed being confirmed, the Business Case was approved.

ACTION POINT: RICHARD STEWART

17 Updates

(a) Directors

SMG noted Hugh Widdis' paper on the Measurement of Effectiveness.

John Stewart said that there were now 35 bills in the Assembly with 3 more Executive bills, 5 Private Member's bills and 1 Commission bill still to come. It was possible for all to be cleared before dissolution but there was considerable pressure on plenary time after Christmas. Committees were working to progress the bills which was putting additional pressure on staff to clear all other business. Mr Stewart asked for this to be noted by other Directors. Question Time will revert to 2.00pm on Tuesdays.

Stephen Welch said that video conferencing facilities were now available in Room 54 and encouraged usage. Mr Welch mentioned the potential impact on directorate business in light of the outcome of the elections to the TUS Committee.

(b) Website Project

Gareth McGrath reported that there were 3 aspects to the project and that the Design was due to be completed in January 2011 but that Content Management and Web Hosting were behind schedule. It was planned to continue with the existing website until the May 2011 elections and the new website will be introduced after then.

(c) Information Management

Gareth McGrath reported that it was intended to submit draft strategy documents and an outline training plan to SMG in the near future. A number of library stores had been sorted and closed.

(d) Performance against 2010/11 Corporate Plan

SMG considered the outcome of the latest review of the Corporate Plan. Some specific areas were discussed, namely, the outcome of the Public Attitudes Survey (2.2), the development of a continuous business improvement approach (4.2) and the management of budgets (4.8).

(e) Team Briefing Feedback

The report was noted.

(f) ICWG Update

This item was deferred to the meeting of 3 December 2010.

18 AOB

18.1 Tony Logue told SMG that it was intended to issue a staff survey as part of the Good Relations Audit. It is also planned to organise a number of focus group meetings to take this forward.

19 Staff Bonus Nominations

A staff bonus nomination was discussed. Decision was deferred pending the receipt of further information.

20 Date of Next Meeting

20.1 The next meeting will be held on Friday, 19 November 2010 at 9.30am in Room 106.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.40pm.