SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 15 JANUARY 2010 AT 11.15AM
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Gareth McGrath** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Allen Witherspoon** **Hugh Widdis**
In attendance:	**Tony Logue (Agenda items 6, 7)** **Sinead Lappin (Agenda item 8)** **John Gibson (Agenda item 10)** **Simon Burrowes (Agenda item 14)** **Georgie Campbell (Agenda item 16)** **Ken Eccles (Agenda item 17a)** **Alan Murphy (Agenda item 17a)** **Jim Beatty**

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (11 December 2009)

These were approved without amendment.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising which would not be dealt with within this meeting's agenda or at future meetings.

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

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

ACTION: SMG MEMBERS

6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

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

- Good Relations Action Plan
- Roof repairs/reconstruction
- European Report – OFMDFM
- Members' Pay and Financial Support
    - NI Assembly Members Bill
    - Draft Independent Statutory Body Bill
- Response to Standards and Privileges Committee
- Sustainable Development Strategy
- Assembly Expo
- Assembly Exhibition
- Clerk's Monthly Report
- Evaluation of Assembly Roadshows
- NI Assembly Annual Report

7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

These were noted.

8 HR ISSUES

(a) Staff Complement

Following consultation with TUS, the proposed paper had been agreed with minor changes.

SMG discussed and agreed the paper subject to a change in the reference to financial responsibility. The amended paper will go before the ERG on 27 January 2010.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
SINEAD LAPPIN

(b) Internal Promotion

Following legal advice, SMG agreed that an external competition for Assembly Clerk (AG4) should be progressed.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
SINEAD LAPPIN

(c) Recruitment of Usher/Security staff – Affirmative Action Measures

Following consultation with the Equality Commission, a number of affirmative actions were proposed to negate imbalances in the current complement.

(a) SMG agreed the proposals, subject to advice being sought from Legal Services.

(b) The Commission to be informed of the planned affirmative action measures.

ACTION: (a) RICHARD STEWART
SINEAD LAPPIN

(b) TREVOR REANEY

9 PROCUREMENT – REVIEW OF LOCAL PRINTING

SMG noted the paper outlining ongoing problems with photocopying and the demands put on the current copiers.

It was agreed that:-

- 4 copiers should be replaced on a 1 year lease and
- A specialist consultant be appointed to report on a strategy for local printing. This is subject to a budget of less than £5k. Data gathering for the strategy to be undertaken in-house.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
JOHN GIBSON

10 ASSEMBLY EXHIBITION

Gareth McGrath updated SMG on the proposals. At present, work is proceeding on the permanent exhibition which will be displayed within the Senate lobbies.

It was agreed that the proposed wording on the exhibits would be referred to Legal Services to be checked for technical accuracy.

SMG agreed the proposed work and expenditure.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

11 STAFF SURVEY QUESTIONAIRE

Simon Burrowes spoke to his paper on the forthcoming Staff Survey.

SMG had several queries on the draft questionnaire and it was agreed that changes would be made before the questionnaire was issued.

ACTION: SIMON BURROWES

12 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The contents of the Corporate Risk Register dated 11 January 2010 were reviewed and amendments agreed.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

13 UPDATES

13.1 Business Continuity Plan

Ken Eccles presented his draft Incident Response Plan to SMG.

It was agreed that the Clerk/DG will act as Duty Director until a rota is prepared. Directors will consider a rota for each of their areas of business.

Marsh Ltd, Business Continuity specialists, will deliver a presentation on the issue to SMG on 22 January 2010. Members will receive a paper in advance highlighting areas requiring decisions during the presentation.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

13.2 Security Management

(a) **Convergence Project** – Allen Witherspoon updated SMG on recent developments. Five companies were invited to participate in the next stage of the project which will bring together security and building management functions. The process has been protracted but should be completed by the end of the Summer Recess 2010.

(b) **Security Delivery Project** – Work is continuing on this project which will deliver revised roles for security officers and ushers.

Although there have been some delays to date, progress is continuing.

13.3 Clerking and Reporting Update

John Stewart reported on the improvements brought about by changes in the way in which Hansard transcripts are managed. When the transcript is published, Hansard now informs committee staff, members and witnesses and any suggested changes are sent directly to Hansard who considers them in accordance with current guidance. Hansard then publishes the final transcript. This revised process has led to improved times for publication of the transcripts.

There are procedures to deal with exceptional circumstances.

13.4 Financial Report

Richard Stewart provided details on the current financial position following the surrender of resources to DFP in the December Monitoring Round. It is expected that underspending in Secretariat Salaries will be considerably reduced with the Fair Pay settlement. The substantial underspend in Secretariat GAE will be kept under review.

13.5 Independent Statutory Body Bill

Hugh Widdis provided an update on the current status of this bill which is now awaiting the Report Stage on 3 February 2010 in the House of Lords. The NI Assembly Members Bill will amend the NI Act 1998 to allow the Assembly to delegate its powers in relation to the setting of salaries, allowances and pensions of MLAs. This will enable the Assembly to confer these functions on an independent body of its own, should it choose to do so.

13.6 Information Management

Gareth McGrath confirmed that work on the development of an Information Management Strategy continued according to the project plan. He also confirmed that a draft Information Security Policy would be prepared by 31 January 2010.

13.7 Website Development Project

Gareth McGrath updated SMG on the project. Significant progress has been made and invitations to tender were recently published.

14 CORE BRIEF FEEDBACK REPORT

SMG noted the progress on delivering the Core Brief within the specified time limits. The issues raised during the deliveries will be considered.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that the following items from this week's agenda will be taken forward to the next SMG meeting:-

- Secondment Procedures
- Learning and Development Draft Action Plan
- Value for Money
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy

16 NEXT MEETING

The next meetings will take place in Room 29 at 9.30am on Friday 29 January 2010.