SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

Friday, 15 October 2010 at 9.42am
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)** **Brian Moreland** **Simon Burrowes**

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 None.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (17 Sept 2010)

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 17 September 2010 were approved with some amendments.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Minutes of 17 September, Section 3.5 – it was noted that, following the circulation of a memo by Sinead Lappin, it was agreed that the focus should be on a revised Performance Management System with the development of competencies postponed.

4.2 Minutes of 17 September, Section 9.1 - a new corporate risk for procurement to be created.

4.3 Minutes of 17 September, Section 11.3 – Stephen Welch emphasised the need to maximise framework contracts when taking forward procurements and the need to agree firm dates on the way forward. It was agreed that a wider discussion was needed on a range of issues and that this would be done in the context of the Genesis meeting on 20 October 2010.

4.4 Minutes of 17 September, Section 12.3 – SMG discussed the need to have all involved parties signed up before referring a Business Case to SMG for approval or whether this should wait until after SMG had approved the proposal. It was agreed that Richard Stewart should reconsider the process in light of the discussions and prepare a paper on the best way forward.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

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 18 October 2010 will be as follows:

Commission Report: Financial Support and Pensions
Equality Papers
ISB Progress
Pay and Grading Review
Accommodation Update
Changing Places' Facility – Update
Clerk's Quarterly Report
Corporate Governance Framework
September Monitoring Outcome
Assembly Members Pension Scheme – Resolution
Political Leadership Programme

7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

7.1 The FOI requests and Assembly Questions were noted.

Richard Stewart joined the meeting at 10.30am.

8 BCP WAY FORWARD – OPTION 1

8.1 Stephen Welch led a discussion on this paper which had been prepared following the Commission's decision not to proceed with establishing a permanent business continuity relocation site – option 1. The paper identified some issues arising from this decision relating to the re-establishment of IT services and the procurement of a suitable location within an acceptable timeframe.

8.2 SMG discussed a range of preferred outcomes and the minimum timeframes required.

8.3 It was agreed that Richard Stewart would seek clarification on the issue of the loss of either or both of the computer rooms. It was also agreed that Stephen Welch would prepare a paper for the Commission to highlight the issues surrounding the resumption of Assembly business under Option 1. This paper would be circulated to SMG members for comment prior to submission to the Commission.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
STEPHEN WELCH

9 'CHANGING PLACES' COSTING SCHEDULE

9.1 Stephen Welch's paper set out the proposed timetable and costs for the installation of a 'Changing Places' type facility in Room 33A. This was agreed.

10 CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE SECURE USE OF MOBILES ACCESSING THE ASSEMBLY'S NETWORK

10.1 Richard Stewart said that the increase in the number of staff using mobile phones to access to the Assembly's network increased the risk of sensitive information being compromised. To counter this risk, it was proposed to introduce a new Code of Practice for mobile phone users.

10.2 SMG was reluctant to endorse another Code of Practice and it was agreed that the best way forward would be to incorporate this as an amendment to the existing Secretariat Code of Practice. A revised paper will be brought back to SMG.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

11 UPDATES

11.1 Directors Update

11.1.1 Gareth McGrath said that the Research Office was considering preparation of a research paper for MLAs on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in early November 2010.

11.1.2 Stephen Welch said that some issues had been raised about the noise from delivery vans outside the new Committee Room 29.This was being investigated. HR staff will move to Parliament Buildings during the Halloween Recess and it was agreed that a plan should be drawn up for the remaining staff in Annexe C to be moved as soon as possible. This will be presented at an early stage.

11.1.3 John Stewart said that there are now 28 live bills within the Assembly and 3 further Executive bills will be introduced during the final session. It is likely that longer/additional sittings will be required after the Christmas Recess to deal with the various stages of the bills.

11.1.4 Richard Stewart said that the final report of the Pay and Grading Review is expected soon.

11.2 Health and Safety Quarterly Report

11.2.1 This will be circulated to SMG members.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH

11.3 Outstanding Audit Recommendations

11.3.1 Brian Moreland said that good progress had been made to clear the outstanding Recommendations.

11.3.2 He had found it helpful to have a specific contact and liaison point within the Engagement Directorate and was content that recommendations were either met or the implementation dates had been revised.

11.3.3 Brian had also met with the Resources Directorate and was concerned that some recommendations were unlikely to be achieved within the foreseeable future.

11.3.4 Stephen Welch said that there were 2 outstanding recommendations relevant to his Directorate but there were some issues in agreeing completion dates and these would be addressed.

11.3.5 Brian said that the assurance level within the Speaker's Office had been raised from satisfactory to substantial.

11.4 Review of Staff Magazine

11.4.1 Simon Burrowes said that 6 recommendations had arisen from the questionnaire review and all had now been completed. He said that 70% of staff had said that they preferred to receive a hard copy of the magazine.

11.4.2 SMG discussed the need to continue publishing a hard copy of the magazine in light of the spending review and decided that this should stop in the near future. The magazine will then be produced in electronic form only.

12 AMPS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

12.1 Richard Stewart said that this paper sets out what the Commission will do on behalf of the Pension trustees but also clarifies what is expected of the latter.

12.2 After a discussion it was agreed that the MoU should be put in to place pending a formal review of administration of the schemes.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Some SMG members raised issues with the current Questions, Comments and Suggestions to the Clerk/DG. They welcomed questions relating to the work of the Assembly and suggestions on how to make improvements but felt that some questions were beyond the purpose of the scheme.

13.2 After discussion it was agreed to carry out a review of the process to date and to refer the findings back to SMG.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

The meeting was adjourned at 12.15pm.

The meeting reconvened on Tuesday, 19 October 2010 at 2.35pm.

Trevor Reaney, Gareth McGrath, John Stewart, Richard Stewart, Stephen Welch and Hugh Widdis present.

13.3 SMG continued with its review of the minutes of the meeting of 17 September 2010 and agreed some further amendments.

13.4 It was agreed that in order to make the Minutes more informative, they should reflect more of the opinions expressed in discussions.

13.5 Stephen Welch raised the need for everyone to consider and comment, as necessary, on the latest BCP draft plan. This document provides the last opportunity before the final plan is agreed. It was agreed that the planned meeting of 27 October would be cancelled but that the plan would be brought to the meeting of 1 December 2010 with Belfast Resilience.

13.6 John Stewart raised the issue of 360° appraisal. This is included in the future programme of work for Bray Leino Broadskills.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 9.30am on Friday, 5 November 2010 in Room 106.