SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 16 APRIL 2010 AT 9.33am
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Gareth McGrath** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Stephen Welch**
In attendance:	**Hugh Widdis** **Jim Beatty** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6, 7,)** **Adrian Davis (Agenda item 8)** **Brian Moreland (Agenda item 9)**

1 APOLOGIES

None

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Hugh Widdis, Gareth McGrath and Richard Stewart declared an interest as a recipient of Childcare Allowance (Agenda Item 11).

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (12 March 2010)

Subject to amendments, the minutes of the meeting of 12 March 2010 were approved.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

The Action points were reviewed and the list was updated.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY

6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

The issues currently scheduled for the Commission meeting on 22 April include:

- Update on Members' Pay, Pensions and Financial Support
- ISB/NI Assembly Bill
- Clerk/DG's Quarterly Report
- Policy on Marriage Ceremonies and Wedding Receptions
- Public Attitude Survey
- Sustainable Development Strategy

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY
TONY LOGUE

7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

These were noted.

8 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Adrian Davis explained that following the agreement on a Sustainable Development Policy, this Strategy was required to implement the policy. The Strategy contains six key themes of Corporate Governance, Community Engagement, Sustainable Workplace, Contribution to a Sustainable Economy, Environmental Impact Reduction and Communicating Sustainable Development. It is planned that the Strategy will cover three years with annual Action Plans.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that, subject to amendments, the paper should be referred to the Commission for approval.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH
ADRIAN DAVIS

9 LOG OF OUTSTANDING AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Brian Moreland reported on a recent meeting that he and the Clerk/DG had with the SARC chairperson about the implementation of outstanding audit reports. SMG discussed the need for a more effective monitoring system, amendment to stewardship statements and the delivery of awareness sessions to HoBs. It was suggested that it may be beneficial if SARC members were to see the operations of the Assembly, for example, committees.

It was agreed that Brian Moreland would raise a number of these suggestions with SARC.

10 BUDGETS 2010/2011

Richard Stewart spoke to his paper on the draft budget for 2010/2011. The funding arrangements for the Assembly were discussed and the need to prepare for expected pressures on public sector expenditure.

SMG considered the financial funding requirements under each heading for the coming year. It was agreed that, subject to some amendments and further review of identified budgets, the paper should be referred to the Commission in May 2010.

11 ASSEMBLY CHILDCARE ALLOWANCE SCHEME

The Assembly provides a weekly allowance towards the cost of childcare and in May 2008 the Commission agreed that the rate paid should increase annually in line with December RPIX (the Retail Price Index excluding mortgages). SMG agreed that the current rates should increase from April 2010 by 3.8%.

Richard Stewart undertook to review the 2009 figure and the number of children eligible under the Scheme.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

12 HR RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE

SMG agreed to defer the recruitment exercise for Assembly Clerks to September 2010 and approved a further competition for Researchers.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

13 ENHANCING ASSEMBLY FINANCIAL SCRUTINY

It was agreed to defer discussion on this item to the next SMG meeting.

14 ASSEMBLY PROTOCOL FOR MARKING THE DEATH OF AN INDIVIDUAL

SMG considered Gareth McGrath's paper on a protocol on tributes and condolences. A number of different scenarios relating to individuals in and out of office were discussed. It was agreed that the paper should be amended in line with the discussions and brought back to a future SMG.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

15 INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY

SMG discussed the draft Information Security Policy from Gareth McGrath. Following approval of the draft, it was agreed that the views of Legal Services and the Equality Manager should be sought. It was also agreed that the draft IS Security Policy should be brought to the next SMG meeting for consideration.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

16 DIGITAL AUDIO/WORKFLOW PROJECT BUSINESS CASE

SMG considered the business case for the above project which will replace the existing analogue recording equipment and workflow systems in Hansard with a digital audio system. The business case was agreed.

17 BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

Stephen Welch explained that the draft policy had been before SMG previously and a number of amendments had been identified which were incorporated into this document.

SMG discussed and agreed the revised draft.

18 USHER/SECURITY REOURCES

Stephen Welch explained that a paper on this subject had been before SMG at the meeting on 12 March 2010 and further information had been requested.

SMG discussed and agreed the further paper.

19 E-SOURCING PROCUREMENT

Richard Stewart outlined the proposed business case to SMG regarding the three elements of e-sourcing and purchase to pay procurement. It is considered vital that the Assembly has access to the e-SourcingNI system which is a central advertising portal that captures all of the NI Executive procurement expenditure. In order to gain access, it is necessary to sign up to the Bravo sourcing solution. SMG agreed to proceed with the business cases for access to the Bravo and e-SourcingNI systems. A further paper will be brought to SMG on the purchase to pay system.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

20 EVALUATION OF SMG

SMG discussed the outcome of the self-evaluation exercise and identified some areas which could be enhanced. It was agreed that the Clerk/DG would consider these and bring proposals to a future SMG meeting.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY

21 GUIDANCE ON PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF VALUES

SMG discussed the proposed guidance. It was agreed that members should circulate the paper to HoBs and senior staff for consideration and Richard Stewart would organise a workshop for all to attend.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS
RICHARD STEWART

22 UPDATES

(a) Directorates

Gareth McGrath said that following a recommendation from the CAL committee, the Commission had agreed that the townland name of Ballymiscaw should be included within the address for Parliament Buildings. The University of Ulster was progressing a Political Leadership programme.

John Stewart provided an update on the workloads within the Clerking and Reporting Directorate.

(b) HR Information/Staffing

SMG noted Richard Stewart's paper on staffing issues and recent HR Office activity.

(c) Legislative Programme

John Stewart said that three more Executive Bills may be received by the end of April with up to eighteen before the summer recess. Every committee, except CAL, was now involved in pre-legislative scrutiny. There were a number of Private Members' Bills with the Bill Office. Additional resources are being considered for the Bill Office.

(d) Health and Safety Quarterly Report

It was agreed to defer discussion on this item until the next SMG meeting.

(e) Internal Communications Working Group

The group planned to hold a further meeting next week regarding the outcome of the Staff Survey and would prepare a paper for SMG to consider at a meeting in May 2010.

(f) Team Briefing Feedback Summary

SMG noted the latest report.

23 AOB

Richard Stewart raised the impact of the Remedies Directive on the procurement process as the Directive allows an assurance to the supplier, before the award is given, that the correct processes have been followed. The Directive introduces a number of new risks for the procurer which will have to be addressed. SMG agreed the recommendations within the paper and asked for a briefing session for Directors to be arranged.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
JOHN GIBSON

24 NEXT MEETING

The next SMG meeting will take place in Room 29 at 9.30am on Friday, 30 April 2010.