SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2010 at 9AM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **John Power** **Stephen Welch (until 12 noon)** **John Stewart (until 12 noon)** **Richard Stewart** **Hugh Widdis**
Apologies:	**Gareth McGrath**
In attendance:	**Georgie Campbell** **Aideen O'Neill, Bray Leino (Agenda item 3)** **Stephanie Morgan, Bray Leino (Agenda item 3)** **Sinead Lappin(Agenda items 3, 12.1 and 12.2)** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 7 and 8)** **John Gibson (Agenda items 11 and 12.3)** **Paula McClintock (Agenda item13.3)**

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Gareth McGrath. John Power deputised for him.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK – BRAY LEINO

3.1 Ms O'Neill and Ms Morgan, Bray Leino, said that they viewed a Competency Framework as fundamental to the future of an organisation and there needs to be a commitment of resources to ensure that it fully meets the needs of the organisation.

3.2 The Bray Leino representatives suggested that staff are asked how they want to use the Competency Framework, what it should look like, how it can be accessed and also to check its validity once drafted.

3.3 After Ms O'Neill and Ms Morgan left the meeting, SMG had a wide ranging discussion in which some concerns were expressed with the proposal. It was agreed that Sinead Lappin should prepare a memo for SMG members which summarises the points raised and proposes a way forward.

3.4 This issue will be discussed further at the Directors' meeting on 28 September with the aim of giving direction to HR.

ACTION: SINEAD LAPPIN

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (2 Sept 2010)

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of 2 September 2010 were approved without amendment.

5 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Matters Arising were dealt with under the substantive agenda items.

6 SMG ACTION POINTS

6.1 Directors were asked to send updates on the Action Points to Jim Beatty.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

7 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

7.1 The business to be discussed at the Commission meeting on 19 October 2010 will be as follows:

Commission Report: Financial Support and Pensions
Equality Papers
ISB Progress
Litigation Matters
Pay and Grading Review
European Engagement Strategy
Language Policy
Accommodation/Changing Places
Disability Access Audit

Action Plan from Commission Planning Day
Business Continuity Update
Ormiston House Update

7.2 A paper on the Spending Review will be submitted to SMG before going to the Commission at a special meeting in late October 2010.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART (JIM BEATTY TO NOTE)

7.3 A paper on Business Continuity training will be submitted to SMG before going to the Commission meeting in October 2010.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH (JIM BEATTY TO NOTE)

8 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS

8.1 The FOI requests were noted.

9 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

9.1 Directors were asked to send updates to the Corporate Risk Register to Georgie Campbell.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

10 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME

10.1 John Stewart spoke to Damien Martin's paper giving an update on the legislative programme. He said that a further AG6 had been allocated to the Bill Office to assist with the management of current pressures. The forthcoming Assembly election and the associated period of dissolution are expected to result in increased demands on the Assembly and on the Bill Office in the months of February and March 2011. Mr Stewart said that the Bill Office is taking advice regarding obtaining Royal Assent during the pre election dissolution period.

Stephen Welch and John Stewart left the meeting at 12.00pm.

11 PROCUREMENT COMPLIANCE

11.1 John Gibson spoke to his paper of 14 September 2010. SMG agreed the following recommendations:

- that the Procurement Office introduce improvements in the database in respect of purchasing methods in consultation with Directors
- That expenditure with the NICS and which exceeds EU thresholds are risk assessed against the Remedies Directive and VFM considerations

11.2 Mr Gibson said that a Purchase Order System is urgently required and that this was highlighted in a recent Internal Audit report. He said that lack of staff resources was preventing this being taken forward. Richard Stewart said that the introduction of a Purchase Order System required a considerable amount of planning and a very significant amount of detailed work. He undertook to urgently review the resources necessary for this task.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

11.3 Mr Gibson emphasised the fact that the introduction of the Remedies Directive significantly increased the risk associated with work sourced directly with the NICS, primarily Construction Services. It was agreed that this risk should be assessed and its extent identified. Proposals should be submitted to SMG regarding any necessary ameliorating action.

ACTION: JOHN GIBSON

11.4 It was agreed that a short seminar should be arranged for Heads of Branches to alert them to the consequences of the introduction of the Remedies Directive.

ACTION: JOHN GIBSON

12 HR ISSUES

12.1 Management Information

12.1.1 The information contained in Richard Stewart's submission of 13 September 2010 was noted.

12.1.2 SMG discussed the Recruitment Programme in light of the current Spending Review. It was agreed that before filling any vacancy, the post should be reviewed and that SMG approval should be sought before proceeding to fill the post.

12.1.3 It was agreed that in order to allay fears and dispel rumours, Sinead Lappin would draft a memo to staff regarding the impact of the Spending Review on the Recruitment Programme.

ACTION: SINEAD LAPPIN

12.1.4 Sinead Lappin agreed to contact TUS to identify any consultation problems associated with the Spending Review.

ACTION: SINEAD LAPPIN

12.2 AG6 Recruitment

12.2.1 It was agreed that this post should be reviewed in light of the Spending Review.

12.3 Business Case Template

12.3.1 SMG approved the changes to the business case template as proposed in John Gibson's memo of 8 September 2010. It was agreed that the template should also be amended to take account of the single tender action process.

ACTION: JOHN GIBSON

12.3.2 SMG agreed to the method proposed for project prioritisation and said that where there were similar or competing priorities, these cases should be referred to SMG for adjudication.

ACTION: JOHN GIBSON

13 UPDATES

13.1 Directors Update

It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

13.2 Performance against Corporate Plan 2010/11

13.2.1 The progress report was noted.

13.2.2 Richard Stewart said that because of other pressures, work had not yet commenced on the Benchmarking objective (4.8). The Clerk/DG said that work done by Internal Audit may be helpful. Richard Stewart undertook to discuss this with the Head of Audit.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

13.3 Financial Update

13.3.1 Paula McClintock spoke to her paper of 11 September 2010 and the contents were noted by SMG.

13.3.2 Trevor Reaney drew attention to the need to improve Spending Performance and the discussion on the matter at the Commission meeting held on 16 September 2010.

13.3.3 Paula McClintock undertook to write to Directors to alert them to the areas which need to be examined in preparation for the December Monitoring Round, returns for which will be required by 3 December 2010.

ACTION: PAULA MCCLINTOCK

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12.45pm.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 9.30am on Friday, 1 October 2010. The venue will be confirmed.