SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2010 at 9.30am
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Sheila McClelland** **Stephen Welch** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Hugh Widdis**
Apologies:	**Gareth McGrath**
In attendance:	**Jim Beatty** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6 - 12)** **Maria Bannon (Agenda items 8 – 12)** **Brian Moreland**

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Gareth McGrath. Sheila McClelland deputised for Gareth McGrath.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 Hugh Widdis declared an interest as a member of the UAHS (Agenda Item 16).

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (9 July 2010)

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 9 July 2010 were approved with some amendments.

4 MATTERS ARISING

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

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

5.1 The Action Points were reviewed and updated.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY

6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.1 The substantive issues currently scheduled for the Commission meeting on 28 September 2010 are:

- Equality Issues
- Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission
- Good Relations Consultation Update
- Revised Equality Scheme Update
- Employment Equality Scheme
- Report on the Equality Screening of Policies
- Language Policy
- Good Relations
- Pay and Grading Review
- Ormiston House Update
- Equal Pay Update
- Disability Access Audit

7. CURRENT FOI REQUESTS

7.1 The FOI requests were noted.

8 SECTION 75 COMPLAINTS POLICY

8.1 Mrs Bannon briefed SMG on the need for a separate complaints policy which addressed any failure to comply with the Equality Scheme. There was a discussion around the need for this policy to 'stand alone'.

8.2 The content of the policy was agreed and it will be incorporated into the draft complaints policy which is currently under development in consultation with TUS.

9 SCREENING OF POLICIES REPORT

9.1 Mrs Bannon explained that staff and equality contact groups had been consulted on the draft report and following the receipt of comments, the report had been amended.

9.2 It was agreed that the paper should be referred to the Commission for approval to consult on the final draft.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE

10 GOOD RELATIONS ACTION PLAN

10.1 Mrs Bannon explained that the Action Plan was distributed for public consultation on 29 March 2010 and a number of meetings were held with groups representing a range of the categories of persons specified in S75.

10.2 SMG approved the paper and agreed that it should be referred to the Commission.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE

11 DISABILITY PLACEMENT SCHEME

11.1 Mrs Bannon explained that this paper arose from the Commission's Employment Equality Plan and set out the principles surrounding short-term work placements for people with disabilities

11.2 SMG agreed that, subject to insurance issues being clarified, the paper should be referred to the Commission.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE

12 S75 ANNUAL REPORT

12.1 Mrs Bannon explained that this was a two-part report for 2009/10 which covered both the progress made on implementing S75 and also the Disability Discrimination Order 2006.

12.2 SMG agreed that the paper should be referred to the Commission.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE

13 HR – RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE

13.1 SMG discussed a proposal on filling an AG6 post in the HR Core Team. It was agreed that further consideration should be given to filling the post from within the existing complement in light of a current surplus of AG6 staff and the impending budget constraints. The need for specialist HR skills and knowledge was noted. A revised paper will be brought back to SMG.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

14 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL INITIATIVES
(a) Cycle to Work Scheme
(b) Travelwise Taxsmart Scheme
(c) Interest Free Loans for Annual Commuter Cards

14.1 Stephen Welch spoke to his paper on the three schemes and outlined the potential benefits to the Assembly and staff.

14.2 SMG welcomed the initiatives and agreed to the introduction of the three sustainable travel schemes.

15 BCP TRAINING

15.1 Stephen Welch provided a verbal update on progress to date. Workshops had been held during the summer recess and most offices had agreed the plans.

15.2 It is intended meet with the Belfast Resilience Group to discuss the benefits of closer links.

15.3 It was agreed that a paper would be referred to the SMG meeting on 17 September 2010.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH

16 ORMISTON UPDATE

16.1 Stephen Welch spoke to his paper on the way forward with Ormiston House.

16.2 SMG discussed a range of options on disposing of the property. It was agreed to refer the paper to the Commission.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH

17 SPENDING REVIEW

17.1 SMG discussed the progress that had been made within Directorates on identifying potential savings. It was agreed to discuss the matter in more detail at the SMG meeting on 17 September 2010.

18 STAFF SURVEY

18.1 SMG discussed the progress to date on identifying issues arising from the Staff Survey to be taken forward.

18.2 It was agreed that Georgie Campbell would co-ordinate the corporate action plan and draft a paper for the SMG meeting on 15 October 2010.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

19 UPDATES

(a) Directors

John Stewart informed SMG that 5 Bills had received Royal Assent and 25 Bills were being progressed. Up to 7 PMBs were due to be introduced in Sept/Oct. The Business Committee is to meet for the first time after recess on Tuesday 7 September 2010.

Stephen Welch said that the summer works programme was nearing completion with a new committee room and offices and the refurbishment of the Senate. Stephen complimented the staff on what had been achieved. The security contract work was progressing.

Sheila McClelland told SMG that the Website Development Project was on schedule. The Education Website was progressing and it was intended to have a presentation to Heads of Business before Christmas. The pilot Tour of Parliament Buildings exercise had been very successful and over 640 had taken part. Work on the Youth Assembly was progressing with the aim to have it in place for March 2011.

Hugh Widdis told SMG that the Effectiveness Project had progressed well over the summer. Robert Barry was taking it forward with research on benchmarking the Assembly's processes with others.

Richard Stewart informed SMG that almost 200 PCs had the new Windows 7 installed and more would be done as Members and their staff returned after the summer recess. NIA TV was now available online and there would be final testing next week.

Richard Stewart provided the absence figures for January to March 2010 and SMG discussed the need to set an absence target. It was agreed that it would be better to benchmark our rates against comparable organisations and to manage the absences.

(b) Outstanding Audit Recommendations

Brian Moreland said that the format of the report on outstanding recommendations had been changed to focus on those that needed to be addressed. While welcoming the new format, SMG proposed some further amendments which Brian will consider.

ACTION: BRIAN MORELAND

(c) Members Survey Action Plan

SMG noted the contents of this paper.

20 AOB

SMG Self-Assessment

Trevor Reaney referred members to his paper of 11 June 2010. SMG was content that this annual exercise had now concluded.

21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 9.30am in Room 106 on Friday, 17 September 2010. This meeting will include a presentation from Bray Leino.