SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2010 AT 9.35am
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Gareth McGrath** **Brendan O'Neill** **John Stewart** **Stephen Welch**
In attendance:	**Hugh Widdis** **Jim Beatty** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6, 7, 8)** **Maria Bannon (Agenda item 8)** **Richard Good (Agenda item 9)** **Brian Moreland (Agenda items 10, 15(b))** **Simon Burrowes (Agenda item 11)** **Georgie Campbell (Agenda item 12)**

1 APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Richard Stewart. Brendan O'Neill attended on Richard's behalf.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Hugh Widdis declared membership of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (Item 13).

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (12 February 2010)

The minutes of the meeting of 12 February 2010 were approved.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

It was agreed that SMG would provide updates to Jim Beatty.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS
JIM BEATTY

6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

The issues currently scheduled for the Commission meeting on 25 March are:

- Clerk's Key Issues Update
- Corporate Plan 2011 – 2015
- MLA/Staff Protocol
- Policy on Tributes and Condolences
- NI Assembly Annual Report
- Display of Artwork
- Policy on Marriage Ceremonies and Wedding Receptions
- Draft Language Policy
- Update on Members' Pay, Pensions and Financial Support
- Update on arrangements to support Policing and Justice
- Draft Charities Policy
- Legislative Programme
- NIA/PSNI SLA
- Members' Support Strategy
- Ormiston House Security

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY
TONY LOGUE

7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

These were noted.

8 INTERNAL GOOD RELATIONS RESEARCH AUDIT

Maria Bannon explained that the need for this audit arose from the Good Relations Action Plan, which was agreed by the Assembly Commission in January 2010. SMG acknowledged that the proposed audit would have to be carried out sensitively and any outcomes would be referred to SMG/Commission. After a discussion, approval was given to commence a Good Relations Research audit

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY
TONY LOGUE
MARIA BANNON

9 MEMBERS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Richard Good introduced his paper and SMG discussed the issues identified and Richard's recommendations. Subject to some amendments, the recommendations were accepted. It was agreed that Richard Good would meet with John Stewart to agree the way forward and report back to a future SMG meeting.

ACTION: JOHN STEWART
RICHARD GOOD

10 IMPROVING ASSURANCE LEVELS

Brian Moreland spoke of the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee's (SARC) commitment to improving audit assurance levels. While it was accepted that the overall trend was improving with the majority of audits assessed as satisfactory, a range of actions had been identified which, if implemented, would go some way to enhancing the likelihood of achieving satisfactory and substantial levels of assurance. SMG discussed the suggested actions and agreed some amendments, as well as some additional actions. It was agreed that Brian Moreland would bring these to the next SARC meeting for discussion.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY
BRIAN MORELAND

11 REVIEW OF STAFF MAGAZINE

Simon Burrowes provided SMG with details of the findings of the staff survey on 'Life on the Hill'. The response rate had been low but valid and showed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the magazine. After discussion, the recommendations within the report were agreed.

ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH
ICWG

12 DRAFT CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN 2010 - 2011

Georgie Campbell had circulated an earlier draft of the plan to all Directors for comments and SMG discussed the revised plan. A number of further amendments were identified. Georgie Campbell will incorporate these into a revised draft plan which Directors would consider before discussion at the next SMG meeting.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS
GEORGIE CAMPBELL

13 ORMISTON HOUSE SECURITY

Following a review of the current security arrangements at Ormiston House, Stephen Welch brought forward a number of options for SMG to consider. After discussion it was agreed to maintain the current level of security but this will be reviewed after six months. The Commission will be updated on this issue at the next meeting.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH

14 NIA/PSNI SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The Commission's Service Level Agreement with the PSNI is to be renewed and following discussions on the level of policing required for Parliament Buildings, Stephen Welch brought forward a number of options for SMG to consider. SMG agreed that, following confirmation of some of the figures, the issue would be referred to a future Commission meeting with a recommendation to progress with Option 2.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH

15 UPDATES

(a) Directorates

Stephen Welch updated SMG on a range of security issues relating to Parliament Buildings and it was agreed that he would prepare a paper for consideration at a future SMG meeting. He advised SMG that the projects relating to convergence and security delivery were progressing well. Adrian Davies had spoken to all of the Heads of Business on sustainable development issues and it was agreed that Adrian should deliver this programme to all staff.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH
ADRIAN DAVIES

Hugh Widdis advised SMG that the Northern Ireland Assembly Members Bill had cleared the House of Lords on 24 February and was now due for a second reading in the House of Commons on 12 March 2010.

John Stewart advised SMG that the preparations for the devolution of policing and justice were progressing well. A Directorate Business Planning Workshop had been very successful. Some committees were considering the likelihood of meeting during the summer recess.

Gareth McGrath advised SMG that filming on a documentary about the Assembly would commence in early March and asked for everyone's co-operation.

(b) Outstanding Audit Recommendations

Brian Moreland advised SMG that following a SARC review of past internal and external audits, it was found that previous recommendations had either been implemented, were progressing or had been overtaken by events. While SARC would report regularly on this matter, it had no ongoing major concerns. SMG discussed how best to deal with future reports, including the need for agreement on reasonable dates for implementation and monitoring by exception.

(c) Team Briefing Feedback

The report was noted.

16 AOB

No issues were raised.

17 NEXT MEETING

The next SMG meeting will take place in Room 29 at 9.30am on Friday, 12 March 2010.