SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 4 JUNE 2010 AT 9AM
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Susie Brown (deputising for Gareth McGrath)** **Richard Stewart** **John Stewart** **Stephen Welch**
Apologies:	**Gareth McGrath**
In attendance:	**Hugh Widdis** **Georgie Campbell** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6, 7,)** **Simon Burrowes (Agenda item 9)** **Damien Martin (Agenda items 10 and 18(e))** **Brendan O'Neill (Agenda item 12)** **Sinead Lappin (Agenda items 13, 14 and 18(d))** **Brian Moreland (Agenda item 19)**

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Gareth McGrath. Susie Brown, Head of Media Services, deputised for Dr McGrath.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (14 May 2010)

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 14 May 2010 were approved with one minor amendment.

4 MATTERS ARISING

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

5 SMG ACTION POINTS

5.1 Directors were asked to inform either Georgie Campbell or Jim Beatty re progress on Action Points.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

6 FUTURE SMG/COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.1 There will be a "single item agenda" meeting of the Commission on 15 June to discuss the Draft Report on the Pensions and Financial Support for Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly

6.2 Commission members will also be briefed on the second stage of the Allowances to Members of the Assembly Repeal Bill.

6.3 The substantive issues currently scheduled for the Commission meeting on 22 June are:

- Report on Pensions and Financial Support
- Clerk's Quarterly Report
- Policy in Marriage Ceremonies and Wedding Receptions
- Review of Annual Fair Employment Monitoring
- Good Relations Action Plan (Update)
- Draft Language Policy
- SARC Annual Report
- Draft Vetting Policy

7 CURRENT FOI REQUESTS/ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

7.1 There were no Assembly Questions. The FOI requests were noted along with two additional requests. One related to the contract for training and development services and the other to travel costs for an Assembly member.

8 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

8.1 Updates to the Corporate Risk Register were agreed.

8.2 It was suggested that Letters of Delegation should be considered for budget holders.

ACTION: SMG TO CONSIDER

8.3 In order to address a request from the Secretariat Audit and Risk Committee, it was agreed that the "Actions to Improve Controls" in relation to Risk 9 ("Inadequate Information Security") should include engaging with Members re Information Security issues.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO AMEND THE CORPORATE RISK REGISTER AS AGREED

9 STAFF SURVEY REPORT

9.1 The Clerk/DG thanked Simon Burrowes and the Internal Communications Working Group for their work in managing the Staff Survey and also Dr Barry for his advice in relation to the questionnaire and for analysing the findings and drafting the Report.

9.2 It was agreed that:

- The Report should be published the following week with a covering memo from the Clerk/DG

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO ARRANGE

- The introduction to the Report should include a caveat about the weight given to comments by individuals.

- Anonymity should be preserved with no individual being able to be identified from the information contained in the Report with the exception of the Clerk/DG.

- Consideration should be given to repeating the Survey in two years time instead of each year as originally proposed.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY TO INCLUDE ON AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

- An Action Plan should be prepared to address the issues raised

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL TO PREPARE PROPOSALS FOR NEXT MEETING

- The Internal Communications Working Group should make recommendations to SMG in relation to the Actions relevant to Internal Communications.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/SIMON BURROWES

- The Clerk/DG and Directors should study the Report in relation to their areas of responsibility and request more detailed information from Dr Barry as necessary.

ACTION: CLERK/DG AND DIRECTORS

10 NEW BILL TEMPLATE – BUSINESS CASE

10.1 It was agreed that the development of a new Bill template should proceed.

10.2 It was noted that the Intellectual Property Rights for the software for the new system will reside with the Assembly.

10.3 It was noted that a contribution towards the costs of developing the new system would be sought from the Office of the Legislative Counsel.

10.4 The Clerk/DG asked that the paper to the Commission on this issue should include the costs involved.

ACTION: JOHN STEWART/DAMIEN MARTIN

11 EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY PLAN

11.1 The Employment Equality Plan was approved with the inclusion of the following:

- The words “aim to” before “achieve” in paragraph 1.3.
- A reference to a Gender Action Plan in the introductory paragraphs and a relevant activity in Action Plan in Year 1.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/SINEAD LAPPIN

12 IT ISSUES

12.1 IS Strategy

SMG agreed to the adoption of the IS Strategy subject to the inclusion in the Introduction of the delivery being dependent on business cases as appropriate and the availability of the necessary capital year on year.

The Clerk/DG thanked Brendan O'Neill for his work on the development of this Strategy document.

12.2 ISO Workplan

SMG considered the IS Office workload. SMG also discussed the option of a stand-alone internet connection. It was agreed that this proposal merits further consideration and that a business case should be prepared in relation to a separate internet connection for the Assembly for submission to SMG.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/BRENDAN O'NEILL
JIM BEATTY TO NOTE

12.3 Windows 7 Project

SMG agreed the need for the project in principle. It was emphasised that because of the impact on the work of Secretariat staff and Members, a phased approach is essential. It was agreed that a Project Plan should be prepared for approval by SMG and that this should include timing and staff training requirements.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/BRENDAN O'NEILL
JIM BEATTY TO NOTE

13 DRAFT VETTING POLICY

13.1 The draft Vetting Policy was approved for submission to the Commission in draft form for discussion. It was agreed that the initial discussion with the Commission should preceed consultation with TUS. A final draft policy will then be submitted to the Commission for approval.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

14 ARTICLE 55 - STAFF MONITORING RETURN

14.1 SMG noted the contents of this paper and agreed that it should be copied to TUS and submitted to the Commission.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/SINEAD LAPPIN

15 BUSINESS CONTINUITY OPTIONS

15.1 It was agreed that the paper should include a reference to a new build option including the purchase of a site.

15.2 It was agreed that the proposals should be submitted to the Commission as a discussion paper in order to take the views of Commission members on the way forward.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH/KEN ECCLES

16 INTEGRATED FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM BUSINESS CASE

16.1 The business case was approved, with the proviso that the Keeper of the House examines the RAM system for its appropriateness as an alternative.

17 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

17.1 It was agreed to defer discussion of this paper to the next meeting of SMG.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY TO NOTE

18 UPDATES

18.1 Directors

This discussion was deferred.

18.2 Financial Update Report

This discussion was deferred.

18.3 HR Management Information

The contents of this paper were noted.

The Clerk/DG asked for a detailed breakdown of the staff complement (by Directorate and grade) for the next meeting of SMG

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/SINEAD LAPPIN

The Clerk/DG asked for a comparison of the age profile of Secretariat staff with other comparable organisations.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/SINEAD LAPPIN

18.4 Recruitment

SMG approved the addition to the Recruitment Schedule of competitions for Adviser to the Speaker and Senior Legal Adviser.

18.5 Legislation Programme

The contents of this paper and the measures being taken to deal with the larger than anticipated influx of Bills were noted.

It was agreed that if necessary, staff should be drawn from other tasks to supplement the resources available to the Bill Office. It was acknowledged that this may mean that Corporate and Directorate objectives will need to be reviewed. John Stewart undertook to bring proposals to SMG re the resourcing of the Bill Office.

ACTION: JOHN STEWART
JIM BEATTY TO NOTE

It was agreed that the need for a mechanism, similar to the Westminster “wash up” arrangements, should be considered to allow priority Bills to complete the legislative process before the end of the mandate.

ACTION: JOHN STEWART/DAMIEN MARTIN

19 ISSUES ARISING FROM SARC

19.1 Recommendation Schedule

The revised format for the Recommendations Schedule was agreed subject to staff being referred to by their job titles and at an appropriate level of responsibility.

19.2 Publication of Internal Audit Reports

It was agreed that final Internal Audit Reports should be published on AssISt.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/BRIAN MORELAND

19.3 Stewardship Reporting

Brian Moreland undertook to obtain examples of formats of Stewardship Statements used by other organisations for discussion with SMG.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/BRIAN MORELAND

19.4 Governance Awareness Session

It was agreed a Governance Awareness Session should be arranged to which Heads of Business and Committee Clerks would be invited. This should take place in early July if possible and should involve the Chairman and independent member of SARC.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY/BRIAN MORELAND

20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20.1 Staff Bonus Nomination

It was agreed that this should be considered at the next meeting of SMG.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY TO NOTE

20.2 Replacement Staff Uniform

It was agreed that Ushers and Security Staff should be supplied with an appropriate high quality name badge.

ACTION: STEPHEN WELCH

21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

25 June 2010 at 9.30am in Room 29