SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER 2011 AT 2PM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Gareth McGrath** **Damien Martin** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Tara Caul**
In attendance:	**Georgie Campbell** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6, 7,and 8)** **David Johnston (Agenda item 9)** **Sebastien Mingout (Agenda items 10)** **Peter McCallion (Agenda item 11)** **Simon Burrowes (Agenda item 12(c))** **Brian Moreland (Agenda item 12(d)** **Chris Taylor (Agenda item12(e))** **Marina McConville (Agenda item 13)**

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Hugh Widdis. Tara Caul deputised for Mr Widdis.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 30 September 2011 were approved subject to some amendments.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 All issues within Matters Arising were dealt with through the Action Points or discussed as substantive agenda items.

5 SMG Action Points

5.1 Members were asked to advise Georgie Campbell of updates and amendments.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

6 Future Commission/SMG Business

6.1 Tony Logue joined the meeting at 2.15pm. There were no changes to the agenda for the Commission's meeting on 25 October 2011 since it was discussed at the SMG meeting on 30 September.

6.2 SMG noted the progress in relation to the Commission Action Points.

6.3 SMG noted the Forward Work Plan for the Commission and SMG.

7 Assembly Questions

Tony Logue advised SMG of the latest questions received. These were noted.

8 Corporate Strategy 2012 - 2016

8.1 SMG agreed to proceed with the latest draft of the Corporate Strategy 2012/16. The Clerk/DG asked Directors to forward their amendments/additions on the performance measures to Georgie Campbell as a matter of urgency.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

8.2 It was agreed that a "Foreword" should be included.

8.3 It was agreed that a revised draft of the Strategy would be presented to members of the Core Management Group at the meeting of the Group on 21 October 2011.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

9 Corporate Risk Register

9.1 David Johnston joined the meeting at 2.55pm. He outlined the updates which had been made to the Corporate Risk Register in consultation with the Risk Owners. SMG agreed these updates and identified some further changes to be made.

9.2 The Clerk/DG asked Risk Owners to ensure that all actions listed under “Current Controls” have been completed. Those which have not yet been completed should appear under “Actions to Improve Controls” with relevant deadlines etc.

10 Members’ Consumables

10.1 Sebastien Mingout joined the meeting at 3.10pm and spoke to his paper on this issue. It was agreed to recommend a number of changes and amendments to the Commission to improve the governance of this budget.

10.2 It was agreed that a paper should prepared for submission to the Commission which reflects these changes in addition to the following:

- Paragraph 10: Under “Disadvantages”, delete point (ii)
- Include the full extract from the NIAO Report on the Assembly’s Resource Accounts under the heading “Free Issues to Members”.
- Present the tables in graph format

10.3 The Clerk/DG asked that the draft paper is discussed with the Facilities portfolio Commission Member, Pat Ramsey, before it is formally submitted to the Commission.

ACTION: DAMIEN MARTIN/SEBASTIEN MINGOUT

11 Business Efficiency Review

11.1 Peter McCallion joined the meeting at 3.20pm and spoke to his paper on this issue.

11.2 SMG discussed the approach proposed and the Terms of Reference for the Reviews of Efficiency and the Creation and Management of Contracts as proposed.

11.3 SMG discussed the proposal to secure the involvement of BCS in the Contract Review.

11.4 SMG agreed that the contract review should focus on improving efficiency and governance of the process for the future rather than examining the past.

11.5 It was agreed that a further paper should be submitted to SMG which addresses the issues raised.

ACTION: JOHN STEWART/PETER MCCALLION

12 Updates

(a) Directors

Facilities

- Damien Martin reminded SMG members that there will be a Business Continuity Desktop Exercise on 26 October 2011.

- The move of the Finance Office to Parliament Buildings is now complete. Annexe C will continue to be used for training purposes in the short term.

- Consideration is being given to the use of Blackberries under the mobile phone contract.

Legal and Governance

- Tara Caul reported that the Supreme Court has rejected the appeal by AXA and other insurers challenging the validity of an Act of the Scottish Parliament similar to the Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Act (NI) 2011. This confirms, for all intents and purposes, that the Assembly Act is also valid and within the Assembly's legislative competence.

Information and Outreach

- Gareth McGrath reported that the management of the IS Office is proceeding.

Clerking and Reporting

- John Stewart reported that options were being explored to allow Committee Clerks to be released at the same time to participate in the Leading in Challenging Times programme

- The Assembly and Executive Review Committee continues to be busy.

- Simon Burrowes will speak to the Clerk to the Commission re a demonstration of the digital audio process for the Commission. The Clerk/DG asked Directors to consider whether there are other projects which the Speaker/Commission should be briefed on.

(b) Staffing

- Richard Stewart advised that the Vacancy Management Group continues to meet and progress actions on current vacancies.

(c) Internal Communications Working Group

- Simon Burrowes joined the meeting at 3.50pm and reported that as a result of the reorganisation of Directorates, the membership of the Group had been reviewed to ensure full representation. Membership now stands at 12.

- The Head of Communications is reviewing the Internal Communications Strategy.

- The ICWG will review its Terms of Reference in conjunction with the Head of Communications.

- The next meeting of ICWG will be on 14 October 2011.

- Arrangements need to be put in place soon for the Staff Survey if it remains the intention that this should be carried out in the early months of 2012. Dr McGrath said that he would lead on this.

  ACTION: GARETH MCGRATH

- In response to a query from Mr Burrowes re progress on a Charities Policy, Dr McGrath said that a policy had been approved and that he would be discussing its implementation with Outreach staff.

- In response to a query from Mr Burrowes re the publication of the results of internal trawls, Richard Steward said that he would ask the Recruitment staff to arrange this.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

- Mr Burrowes pointed out that the Emergency Contacts list is out of date. Mr Martin undertook to have this updated.

  ACTION: DAMIEN MARTIN

- Mr Burrowes said that some members of ICWG had suggested a staff art exhibition. He had raised this with Frances Leneghan who is the Secretary to the Speaker's Art Advisory Group. It was agreed that it should be left to that Group to address this issue.

(d) Audit

Brian Moreland joined the meeting at 4.15pm. He reported that of the three most recent audit reports two had "Satisfactory" ratings and the third a "Substantial" rating.

(e) Website Project

Chris Taylor joined the meeting at 4.25pm. He said that staff would be trained to publish their own Business Area material on the website and that this would commence in December and will proceed on a phased basis. The Website Team will be available to provide advice and support where necessary. As is the case currently, it will be for Directorates to exercise editorial control.

13 Demonstration of Education Service Website

SMG members proceeded to Room 55 for a demonstration of the new Education website. At the conclusion of the demonstration SMG congratulated the Education Service on the excellent website developed in partnership with CCEA.

14 Any Other Business

There was no further business.

15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 10am on Friday 4 November 2011 in Room 106.