SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2011 at 09.40am
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Gareth McGrath** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Stephen Welch**
	Apologies: Hugh Widdis
In attendance:	**Jim Beatty** **Cathy McGowan (Agenda items 6 and 7)** **Georgie Campbell (Agenda items 8 and 9)** **John Power (Agenda Item 10)** **Sinead McDonnell (Agenda item 12)**

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Hugh Widdis.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

(a) **21 January 2011**
The Minutes of the meeting of 21 January 2011 were reviewed without amendment.

(b) **9 February 2011**
The Minutes of the meeting of 9 February 2011 were approved subject to some minor amendments.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 SMG discussed issues arising from Item 15, ICT Provision to Members for 2011 – 2015 Mandate from the meeting on 9 February 2011.

4.2 It was agreed that Directors should meet soon to agree the Terms of Reference for a single project which would bring together a number of projects in this area.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART/GARETH MCGRATH/JOHN STEWART

4.3 SMG also discussed issues arising from Item 16, ICT Asset Management during Election Period from the meeting on 9 February 2011.

4.4 Election Guidance is due to go on AssISt and this includes guidance on the removal of ICT equipment from constituency offices on a phased basis.

5 SMG Action Points

5.1 SMG reviewed and updated the list of Action Points.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY

6 Future SMG/Commission Business

6.1 Cathy McGowan joined the meeting at 10.03am and advised SMG of the business to be discussed at the Commission meeting on 22 February 2011:

- Various Matters Arising
- Financial Support for Members Handbook
- ICT Provision for Members 2011 – 2015
- Front Ramp Access
- Review of Dining Facilities
- Accommodation for the new Mandate
- Clerk's Key Update report
- European Strategy
- Assembly Members' Pension Scheme

6.2 The Commission and the SMG Forward Work Plans were noted.

7 Current FOI Requests/Assembly Questions

7.1 The FOI requests and Assembly Questions were noted.

8 Draft Corporate Plan 2011/12

8.1 Georgie Campbell joined the meeting at 10.17am and referred SMG to the latest draft of the Corporate Plan. Staff and TUS had been consulted on the previous draft and the draft plan before SMG today reflected changes arising from those consultation exercises.

8.2 SMG discussed and agreed the revised draft Corporate Plan. It will now be referred to the Commission.

9 Draft Internal Communications Strategy

9.1 Georgie Campbell spoke to her paper on the issue. The 2008/10 strategy had now expired and SMG had requested a revised strategy to be prepared for the period 2011 – 2013.

9.2 It is intended that the revised strategy will address:-

- The outstanding actions from the previous Action Plan
- The views expressed within the 2010 Staff Survey
- Additional means by which staff can be given a voice and engage with their management.

9.3 SMG discussed the draft and its recommendations. It was agreed that Internal Communications should remain within the DGO at this time. It was recognised that the Assembly's core values needed to be incorporated within the strategy. It was agreed that the project team which will look at application of the values, will also report on how this can best be achieved.

9.4 The draft strategy was agreed subject to some amendments. Georgie Campbell will amend the strategy and refer it to TUS for comment.

ACTION: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

10 Review of Assembly Effectiveness

10.1 John Power joined the meeting at 10.53am and spoke to Hugh Widdis' paper on the issue.

10.2 It was accepted that qualitative measurements are much more difficult to determine than quantitative measurements and it was agreed that the team had prepared a very informative report which would be brought before the Commission with the aim that it would be carried forward to the next Mandate.

ACTION: HUGH WIDDIS

10.3 The recommendations were discussed and it was agreed in principle that a cross-Directorate Working Group on effectiveness should be set up. Further consideration needs to be given to its composition. It was also agreed that any further discussion on Recommendation No. 4 on what needs to be done in order to ensure the strategic co-ordination of existing projects should be deferred to the next SMG meeting when it is hoped that Hugh Widdis will be present.

11 European Engagement Strategy

11.1 Gareth McGrath spoke to his tabled paper on the issue and explained the circumstances of its late circulation. The draft strategy was developed following the Assembly's approval on 26 January 2010 of the OFMDFM Committee's report on its inquiry into Consideration of European Issues.

11.2 It was agreed that SMG members would consider the draft and pass individual comments to Gareth McGrath. The draft would be referred to the Commission in advance of the meeting of the OFMDFM Committee to be held on 2 March 2011.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS (except G Mc Grath)

12 Staff Handbook - Conduct Chapter

12.1 Sinead McDonnell joined the meeting at 11.20am and spoke to her paper on this issue. SMG was told that this originated within the Genesis Project and although broadly reflective of the corresponding NICS policy, it had been amended to reflect the nature of the work within the Assembly. TUS had been consulted and was content with the draft policy.

12.2 SMG discussed the paper and raised queries on some of the wording used in a number of paragraphs.

12.3 It was agreed to ascertain the position taken within the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly on staff involvement in politics. The paper, after amendment, will be brought back to SMG.

ACTION: SINEAD MCDONNELL

13 Updates

(a) Directors

Richard Stewart said that he had met with TUS to discuss the 2010 pay and the outcome of the pay and grading exercise. Agreement had been reached on a number of issues but discussions were ongoing. The PWC report on pay and grading would be released at a time to be agreed.

Stephen Welch said that a new ID pass system should be in place for staff at the start of the new Mandate. Others would follow shortly. The action list for the Business Continuity Plan had been circulated and it was intended to have a further desk top exercise soon. The pilot car parking scheme had been in place for one week and appeared to be working well. It is planned to light the building yellow on 1 March in aid of the Marie Curie Cancer Fund. Under the Changing Places exercise, Room 22 will be converted before the start of the new Mandate. The sale of Ormiston House is progressing and it is planned to hold a public meeting for the residents about the planning application. SMG was reminded about the additional costs for the support services when the Assembly sat late.

John Stewart said there are currently 16 Executive bills and 7 Private Members bills being progressed. The Business Committee has agreed for the Assembly to sit on an additional day, Wednesday 23 February 2011 and would review the need for more additional days. Committees remain very busy with a range of matters, including statutory rules and draft budget proposals. Official Report staff are also busy supporting both plenary sittings (with 2 exceptionally late sittings this week) and committee business.

(b) Finance/Spending Review

Following receipt of correspondence from the Minister for Finance and Personnel, there was now a need for detailed spending and workforce plans. The latter were currently being developed to achieve a workforce of 375. It was agreed that Richard Stewart would have an outline 2011/12 budget for discussion at the Director's meeting to be held on 25 February 2011.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART

(c) Progress on Delivery of the 2008/11 Corporate Plan

SMG reviewed the updates to the 2008/11 Corporate Plan. While good progress had been made on the majority of objectives, it was clear that a few would not be achieved due to various factors, some of which are outside of the Secretariat's control. All Directors were asked to make as much progress as possible on those objectives outstanding to ensure the fullest delivery on the Corporate Business Plan for 2010/11.

(d) Team Brief Feedback

SMG noted the feedback received.

(e) Staffing Update

SMG noted the current position and the need for a workforce plan.

(f) Information Management

Gareth McGrath provided a verbal update. SMG noted the progress made on this project.

(g) Web Project

Gareth McGrath provided a verbal update. SMG noted the progress made on this project.

14 Staff Bonus Nominations

14.1 It was agreed to defer discussions on this item until Friday, 25 February 2011.

15 Accommodation – New Mandate

15.1 Stephen Welch spoke to his paper on this issue. Facilities had developed a number of principles to guide the allocation of rooms after the forthcoming election and SMG was asked to agreed these principles.

15.2 SMG discussed the paper and while recognising that further talks were likely to be needed with Party Whips before final allocations could be made, the broad principles were agreed for referral to the Commission.

16 AOB

16.1 SMG discussed the Clerk/DG's e-mail of 16 February 2011 regarding the Business Efficiency Review project. The Project Board will be chaired by John Stewart.

16.2 A paper had already been presented to the Commission and it now necessary to set up the Project Team from existing staff resources. Further to the existing Outline Proposals, the Clerk/DG had put forward additional parameters for the project. SMG agreed the parameters and the need to move forward as quickly as possible.

16.3 The Clerk/DG asked the Directors to consider how best staff could use the dissolution period. While there would be agreed tasks for some staff to do during this period, it would be an opportunity for staff to take relevant matters forward together, eg, consideration of the Corporate Plan 2012/16.

16.4 Richard Stewart asked about the provision of a template for Directorate Business Plans. Following agreement of the draft Corporate Plan 2011/12 (item 8) it was agreed that Directors should follow this layout and share their Directorate Business Plans with each other by 28 February 2011.

ACTION: ALL DIRECTORS

16.5 Gareth McGrath raised the issue of FOI requests and responses as recently he had to correct a response issued to a requestor.

16.6 It was agreed to review the processes associated with the processing of FOI requests.

ACTION: TONY LOGUE

17 Date of Next Meeting

Friday, 4 March 2011 at 1.30pm in Room 106.

The meeting adjourned at 12.45pm.