SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

MONDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2011 AT 10.00AM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **David Lynn** **Gareth McGrath** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Hugh Widdis**
In attendance:	**Jim Beatty** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6 and 7)** **Robin Ramsey (Agenda items 6 & 7)** **David Johnston (Agenda item 8)** **Peter McCallion (Agenda item 9)** **Sinead McDonnell (Agenda items 10 & 11)** **Paula McClintock (Agenda item 12)** **Brian Moreland (Agenda item 13(b))**

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Damien Martin. David Lynn attended on his behalf.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No member declared an interest.

3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 2 December 2011 were approved subject to some amendments.

4 Matters Arising

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

5 SMG Action Points

5.1 The outstanding Action Points were reviewed. Members were asked to advise Jim Beatty of further updates and amendments.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

6 Future Commission/SMG Business

6.1 Tony Logue and Robin Ramsey joined the meeting at 10.10am.

6.2 The proposed agenda for the next Commission meeting on 24 January 2012 was discussed:-

- Commission Newsletter
- Ormiston House
- Corporate Strategy
- Efficiency Review Project Update
- Draft Language Policy
- Members Financial Services Handbook

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

7 Assembly Questions

7.1 SMG noted the latest questions received and answered.

8 Corporate Risk Register

8.1 David Johnston joined the meeting at 10.25am and advised SMG of the recent changes/updates to a number of the risks identified within the Register.

8.2 SMG agreed the changes/updates.

8.3 The question of making better use of IT tools to keep the Register updated was raised. Hugh Widdis advised SMG that that this was being taken forward.

9 Efficiency Review Project Update

9.1 Peter McCallion joined the meeting at 10.36am and spoke to the paper on this issue.

9.2 Peter McCallion reported progress on taking forward the recommendations in the thematic reviews and that work had commenced on the Security, RaISe and Clerking reviews. SMG considered the initial feedback from workshops.

9.3 SMG discussed the paper and the approach to engagement with Members and their staff which was essential to ensuring satisfactory outcomes.

9.4 Peter McCallion will prepare a paper for the Commission based upon these discussions.

9.5 SMG also discussed the need to progress the review of major contracts and to address any issues before further contracts are awarded.

9.6 SMG commended the Project Team on the work done to date.

10 Performance Management System

10.1 Sinead McDonnell joined the meeting at 11.23am and spoke to the paper on this issue.

10.2 This issue had been before SMG previously and on 15 September 2011, SMG approved the development of a PMS in line with the agreed Key Principles paper. HR was now seeking approval to proceed to formal consultation with TUS and staff.

10.3 SMG discussed the proposals and suggested a number of changes. The use of online forms is not possible initially, this will be considered later.

10.4 Subject to the amendments, the paper was approved and will be issued for formal consultation.

11 Volunteering Policy – Key Principles

11.1 Sinead McDonnell spoke to the paper on this issue which sets out the key principles to base a Staff Volunteering Policy.

11.2 This policy is required as part of the Commission’s Sustainable Development Strategy which supports the outward engagement of staff within the community.

11.3 SMG considered the proposed Key Principles and identified some areas which may require clarification.

11.4 SMG approved the development of a Staff Volunteering policy based on the amended Key Principles.

12 Financial Monitoring

12.1 Paula McClintock joined the meeting at 12.05pm and spoke to a tabled paper on this issue.

12.2 The outcome of the December Monitoring Round has to be with DFP by 23 December 2011 and the current paper reflected a number of surrenders and bids. The Clerk/DG re-emphasised the need for effective forecasting and monitoring of all expenditure throughout this and the coming years. SMG approved the paper.

13 Updates

(a) Directors

Hugh Widdis said that there would be a review of the Corporate Risk Register and aspects of corporate governance following the Commission's approval of the Corporate Strategy. He was considering the relevance of the recent NIAO Audit Strategy document. Other Directors were asked to consider the role of and the work likely to come to Legal and Governance Services when preparing their business plans.

David Lynn reminded Directors of outstanding responses to the BCP exercise.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

(b) Audit Issues

Brian Moreland joined the meeting at 12.28pm and spoke to the paper on this issue. The Internal Audit office has now issued eight reports – the latest was a satisfactory report in respect of Freedom of Information. The next audit will relate to secretariat payroll. At the SARC meeting on 9 December 2011, the progress made in addressing Audit recommendations was noted. A new Audit strategy is to be developed from April 2012 and discussions will be held with Directors. A temporary vacancy within the Internal Audit Office will be filled through Interchange in January 2012.

14 Any Other Business

14.1 There was no further business.

15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 10.00am on Thursday, 12 January 2012 in Room 106.

The meeting adjourned at 12.37pm.