SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 30 MARCH 2011 at 2.07pm
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Stephen Welch** **Susie Brown (deputising for Gareth McGrath)** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Hugh Widdis**
In attendance:	**Jim Beatty** **Georgie Campbell (Agenda item 8)** **Eddie Kelly (Agenda item 12(d))**

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Trevor Reaney and Gareth McGrath. In Mr Reaney's absence, Mr Welch chaired the meeting. Susie Brown deputised for Mr McGrath.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 16 March 2011 were approved subject to some minor amendments.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 Outstanding matters arising will be dealt with through the Action Points or discussed within today's items.

5 SMG Action Points

5.1 SMG members were asked to advise Jim Beatty of any amendments/updates.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY

6 SMG Forward Work Plan

6.1 The SMG Forward Work Plan was noted.

7 Current FOI Requests

7.1 The current FOI requests were noted.

8 Corporate Risk Register

8.1 Georgie Campbell joined the meeting at 2.18pm and referred SMG to several areas within the Register to consider amending/updating. The Register was reviewed and amendments were agreed.

AP: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

9 Business Case - Room 29

9.1 Susie Brown spoke to the paper on this issue. Ms Brown said that it was intended to install similar technology to that already in use in Room 30 and that this will be completed during the Summer Recess.

9.2 It was noted that the Clerk/DG had already approved the Business Case a few days previous to the meeting. SMG was content with the Business case.

10 Car Parking Arrangements

10.1 Stephen Welch spoke to SMG on this paper. A pilot exercise has been run for the past months in order to manage the lower east car park, particularly on Plenary sitting days. While parking within the car park has improved, it is recognised that problems are occurring elsewhere within the estate.

10.2 Following talks with DFP, it has been proposed that an existing car park with up to 50 spaces, currently within the boundaries of Stormont Castle, might be used as an additional car park for the Assembly. The existing fence and security cameras would have to be realigned.

Hugh Widdis joined the meeting at 2.40pm.

10.3 It was also proposed that with a relatively small outlay, an additional 20 spaces could be provided within the lower east car park. This work would include remarking of the spaces and some minor earthworks.

10.4 Susie Brown raised the issue of parking for the media which had been recently provided. This will be addressed through consultation with the Stormont Correspondents Association.

10.5 SMG agreed to the development of a design scheme with a view to undertaking the project.

10.6 The issues of ownership of the car parks and procurement of the required contractors were also discussed. If DFP retained ownership, they would be responsible for any maintenance and this may require a Service Level Agreement to be put in place. It was agreed that Stephen Welch would arrange for advice to be sought from legal Services on the ownership issue.

10.7 It was agreed that Stephen Welch would consult the Clerk/DG about incorporating design work, estimated at £2k, in the current single tender blanket approval.

AP: STEPHEN WELCH

11 Business Case – Fuel Tanks Upgrade

11.1 Stephen Welch spoke to SMG on this paper. The Assembly's current fuel storage arrangements do not comply with the Pollution Prevention Guideline 2 and certification under ISO 14001 would not be achieved until the arrangements comply with the legal requirements and good practice.

11.2 It was noted that the Clerk/DG had approved the Business Case a few days before this meeting. SMG was content with the Business Case.

12 Updates

(a) Directors

John Stewart said that the Election Planning Team was meeting weekly and making good progress. The Efficiency Review Project Board had held its first meeting and considered a research paper on the issue. A draft methodology paper was also considered and will be brought back to the next meeting on 11 April 2011. Applications for the post of Project Manager closed today, 30 March 2011.

Richard Stewart said that an offer had been put to TUS in respect of Pay and Grading and understood that TUS was holding a meeting on 31 March 2011 to consider their response. If accepted, funding was in place to pay the arrears. In line with the offer, posts (and subsequently post holders) were to be upgraded from 4 May 2010. Some staff had already been contacted about this.

Hugh Widdis said that the IFRS Bill had received Royal Assent. Work on the Effectiveness Project was continuing and he encouraged those staff who had been contacted to fully participate.

Stephen Welch said that new passes had been issued for the upper car park. The new ID pass system for staff was on track for delivery before the new mandate. A BCP Action Lists Template had been issued and he asked for the relevant staff to return this as soon as possible to Sarah Preece. Work will begin on Room 22 on Monday 4 April 2011 to comply with the Changing Places agreement. The Environmental Management System procedures have been developed and implemented. Some additional recording may be required in some offices. Following dissolution, Building Services have identified rooms and areas to be cleaned and tidied.

(b) Financial Update

Richard Stewart said that current figures indicated a low underspend for 2010/11.

(c) Legislative Programme

John Stewart said that only one Executive Bill (ESA) had failed to complete its passage through the Assembly and so it fell. A number of PMB s failed to reach Final Stage. Approximately 12 Bills were awaiting Royal Assent.

(d) Audit Issues

Eddie Kelly joined the meeting and spoke to the paper on this issue. A End of Year activity report was being prepared for SMG/SARC. While still to be confirmed, he considered the Assembly's general level of assurance to be satisfactory. Internal Audit noted the high acceptance level of their recommendations – 120 out of 128. Audit plans were being completed for the coming year but account had to made of his considerable involvement with the Efficiency Review Team and this will have to raised with SARC. Internal Audit still planned to deliver a short training session for the liaison officers.

(e) Core Brief Feedback

The latest report was noted.

(f) Staffing

Richard Stewart said that work was ongoing surrounding SIP and complement.

(g) Accommodation Planning

Stephen Welch tabled a paper and floor plan on the issue which contained proposals for group and individual moves to be carried out over the next 3 months. The primary focus was on the transfer of the remaining Resources' staff from Annexe C to Parliament Buildings and what will be required to achieve this. A number of internal staff moves within the building were planned and Mr Welch invited comments from SMG on each. File storage posed a particular problem and more work was needed to reduce the number held before they could be moved into the basement area. It was accepted that the training rooms in Annexe C would no longer be available and there was some discussion on alternatives, eg, the revamped Brasserie. Mr Welch asked that Building Services be informed of any internal directorate moves so that the accommodation record can be updated. Mr Welch stressed that the plan tabled was the result of a lengthy iterative process and required the full support of all Directors to be successful.

13 AOB

John Stewart referred to the Commission's decision on 7 December 2010 on savings to be implemented in that financial year. He asked for details on the items listed in both tables in the Commission minutes.

John Stewart suggested that a corporate approach to the implementation of savings in relation to items such as hospitality at internal meetings, learning and development, overseas travel by Secretariat staff and newspapers would be better than a directorate by directorate approach. He asked Richard Stewart to consider writing to all budget holders setting out SMG's position on these issues as they prepare budgets for 2011 – 12.

15 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 13 April 2011 at 2.00pm in Room 106.

The meeting adjourned at 4.34pm.