SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 04 MARCH 2011 at 1.37pm
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Gareth McGrath** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Stephen Welch** **Hugh Widdis**
In attendance:	**Jim Beatty** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6 and 7)** **Georgie Campbell (Agenda items 8 and 9)** **Eddie Kelly (Agenda Item 10)** **Damien Martin (Agenda item 11)**

1 Apologies

1.1 There were no apologies.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 18 February 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 Directors were asked to send updates on the list of Action Points to Jim Beatty.

ACTION: JIM BEATTY

6 Future SMG/Commission Business

6.1 Tony Logue joined the meeting at 1.39pm and advised SMG of the business to be discussed at the Commission meeting on 22 March 2011:

- Various Matters Arising
- European Strategy Update
- Report on Pay Issues
- End of Mandate Commission Report
- Corporate Business Plan 2011/12
- Effectiveness of the Assembly
- Disability Action Plan

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 Corporate Risk Register

8.1 Georgie Campbell joined the meeting at 1.55pm and referred SMG to recent amendments to the current version of the Corporate Risk Register. The register was reviewed and some further amendments were agreed.

8.2 It was agreed that Election Planning should be inserted as a Current Control under Risk 1 in the Corporate Risk Register.

AP: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

9 Review of Risk Management Policy

9.1 Georgie Campbell spoke to her paper on this issue. A Risk Management Policy had been introduced in 2008 and in light of significant changes since then, eg, Assurance Statements, it was considered proper to review the policy at this time.

9.2 SMG considered the report and its recommendations and agreed some amendments. It was also agreed to inform the Commission and SARC of the revised policy and to review the policy in 2012.

9.3 The issue of Member and Secretariat involvement with trusts and the associated governance and risk arrangements were discussed and it was agreed that Directors would consider how this could best be reviewed.

AP: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

AP: GARETH MCGRATH

10 Audit Issues and Recommendations

10.1 Eddie Kelly, Internal Audit, joined the meeting at 2.30pm and briefed SMG on audit issues.

10.2 Liaison contacts had been agreed within all directorates and early indications are that these are working well. Some more work was required on how to make best use of the liaison contacts and Internal Audit were arranging meetings over the coming weeks. It was agreed that any training needs would be raised at those meetings.

10.3 SMG also discussed the issue of fraud which is covered in Corporate Risk 5 and the current policy on 'whistle blowing'.

11 Review of Assembly Effectiveness

11.1 Damien Martin joined the meeting at 2.57pm. Hugh Widdis, spoke to the paper on this issue.

11.2 SMG had considered this report at previous meetings but felt it necessary to give further attention to Recommendation 4 which referred to the need for strategic co-ordination of projects that impact on effectiveness.

11.3 It was agreed that the impact of internal pressures and the importance of other key work must be taken into account.

11.4 It was agreed that these issues needed to be further developed and Hugh Widdis will arrange a meeting after dissolution which will consider a range of issues relating to effectiveness of the Assembly as an institution.

AP: HUGH WIDDIS

12 Information Management Strategy and Action Plan

12.1 Gareth McGrath spoke to his paper on this issue. The 2007 Information Strategy had been reviewed and as a result, a number of key Guiding Principles for Information Management had been identified – these were within Section 9 of the paper. If these were agreed, a project team was already in place to take forward the development of an action and implementation plan.

12.2 It was agreed that directors would consider the proposals and send their comments to Mr McGrath by 11 March 2011 who would incorporate any changes and circulate the paper and implementation plan.

AP: DIRECTORS

13 Updates

(a) Directors

Richard Stewart said that negotiations with TUS on the 2010 pay award and on the outcome of the pay and grading exercise were continuing. It was hoped to have these concluded before the end of March 2011.

Stephen Welch said that a new ID Pass system would be in place at the start of the new Mandate except for the visitor paper pass. Directors were asked to forward any comments on the car parking trial to Ken Eccles who would be meeting soon with DFP. A meeting had been held on 3 March 2011 with local residents about the planned developments for Ormiston House. Through the use of light filters, Parliament Buildings had been coloured yellow on 1 March 2011 as part of an awareness campaign from the Marie Curie Society. This can be repeated in future with other colours, where appropriate. The Assembly is very close to achieving a Charter Mark accreditation from RNID.

John Stewart said that arrangements for the final weeks were being considered and it may be necessary for the plenary to sit on Monday and Wednesday of the last week to accommodate consideration of legislation. There are currently 8 Executive bills and 4 PMBs at various stages. Bound Volumes are now only being produced for limited purposes. A meeting had been held with SLIQ Media Technologies and the introduction of the new digital audio system was proceeding satisfactorily.

(b) HR Management Information

SMG discussed the HR paper. There was some concern that the SIP figures may not accurately reflect the position within directorates, eg, Facilities. Mr Reaney emphasised the need for a workforce plan as a map for the future. It was noted that the HR paper showed 30 performance review reports outstanding for 2009/10 and directors were again asked to have these all cleared as soon as possible. The annual sick absence rate for 2010 at 2.7% was noted.

(c) Finance

Richard Stewart provided a verbal update on the current position. Agreement had been reached by the Commission on future budgets and it is expected that this will be ratified by the Assembly when voting on the Budget next week. Minimising any underspend at 31 March 2011 was discussed.

14 AOB

(a) Corporate Planning

Trevor Reaney referred directors to his e-mail of 3 March 2011 which set out proposals for taking forward the preparation of the new Corporate Plan for 2012/16. It is intended to hold two workshops during the period of dissolution which will consider what the Assembly may want to achieve and then how that could be achieved. The use of an external facilitator for the second session was discussed and this will be considered further by Trevor Reaney. It was agreed that all staff from AG4 up and HoBs should be invited to the workshops which would ideally be held in an external location, subject to costs.

AP: TREVOR REANEY/GEORGIE CAMPBELL

(b) Election Planning

SMG discussed the arrangements planned for after the election on 5 May 2011. As the count for the Local Government seats will not begin until Monday 9 May 2011, it has been decided to hold an induction day for new members on Tuesday 10 May 2011. The date for the first sitting of the new Assembly has yet to be arranged. Guidance for members during the election period has been issued and guidance for staff will be issued early next week.

15 Staff Bonus Nominations

15.1 A number of staff bonus nominations were considered and decided by SMG.

16 Date of Next Meeting

Friday, 18 March 2011 at 10.00pm in Room 106.

The meeting adjourned at 4.09pm.