SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2011 AT 10.05AM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present: **Trevor Reaney**
Gareth McGrath
Ken Eccles
Roisin Kelly
Richard Stewart
Hugh Widdis

In attendance: **Jim Beatty**
Georgie Campbell (Agenda item 8)
Martina Dalton (Agenda items 9 and 10)
Peter McCallion (Agenda item 11)
Jonathan McMillen (Agenda item 13)

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from John Stewart and Damien Martin. Roisin Kelly and Ken Eccles deputised accordingly.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 13 October 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 Action Points were reviewed and updated. Members were asked to advise Jim Beatty of further updates and amendments.

ACTION: DIRECTORS

6 Future Commission/SMG Business

6.1 The deferred Commission meeting is due to be held on Tuesday, 8 November 2011.

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

7 Assembly Questions

7.1 SMG noted the latest questions received.

8 Corporate Strategy 2012 - 2016

8.1 Georgie Campbell joined the meeting at 10.21am and spoke to her paper on this issue.

8.2 This paper reflected the significant inputs from the recent Corporate Management Group meeting and latest comments from directors. A further meeting of directors and AG3s is planned for 9 November 2011.

8.3 SMG discussed the draft and agreed a few further amendments.

9 Review of Disclosure Log

9.1 Martina Dalton joined the meeting at 11.10am and spoke to her paper on this issue.

9.2 The current process for disclosure is managed by the Communications Office and is considered to be unnecessary wieldy. The proposals within the paper will request business areas to highlight any issues concerning the release of information as part of the response to the FOI request. Any information approved for disclosure would be presented to the Head of Communications prior to publication of the weekly Communications meeting.

9.3 SMG asked about the need for additional training on related issues such as defamation, Personal Data, and Copyright which Heads of

Business would have to consider. It was agreed to provide additional face-to-face training.

9.4 In emphasising the need for care in introducing these changes, Hugh Widdis suggested that special care be taken during the transition period, with the FoI Unit maintaining sufficient supervision so as to ensure compliance with the FoI Act. Hugh Widdis would inform Legal Services Office.

9.5 Subject to the comments made, SMG approved the paper.

10 Implementation of Retention and Disposal Policy

10.1 Martina Dalton spoke to her paper on this issue. SMG had approved the schedule at a previous meeting and it was now ready for official signing by the NIA and PRONI when it will then be laid before the Assembly. In allowing for the specified 10 Sitting Days, the schedule will come into force on 19 December 2011.

10.3 Once the schedule has been activated, action will need to be taken on the 6000 files deemed for destruction. After discussing a number of options, SMG agreed that these files should be destroyed through on-site confidential shredding.

10.4 SMG approved the paper.

11 Procuring the Review of the Creation and Management of Contracts

11.1 Peter McCallion joined the meeting at 11.27am and spoke to his paper on this issue.

11.2 At its meeting on 13 October 2011 SMG agreed the Terms of Reference for the reviews of the efficiency and the creation and management of contracts to be undertaken by an external resource.

11.3 SMG considered a number of options on how best to take these reviews forward. It was agreed that a fully competitive tendering process represented the best option.

11.4 SMG discussed the need for a cross-directorate team to take forward the project management of the tendering process. It was agreed that a team be established including BEP representation. Richard Stewart and John Stewart will consider the composition of the team.

ACTION: RICHARD STEWART
JOHN STEWART

12 Change of Smartphones to Blackberries

12.1 Ken Eccles spoke to the paper on this issue.

12.2 There are a number of mobile phone models from various manufacturers currently in use within the Secretariat which can lead to some difficulties with upgrading and billing issues.

12.3 It was proposed that following the installation of a server, the Secretariat should only use the Blackberry 8520 mobile phone. Contracts with Vodaphone would be reviewed to provide improved services and to reduce costs.

12.4 While supporting the move to Blackberries, there were some concerns about future support for the 8520 model, the integration with future technologies and the arrangements for assessing personal use.

12.5 Subject to the satisfactory resolution of these concerns, the paper was agreed.

ACTION: DAMIEN MARTIN

13 First Report of the Effectiveness Project Working Group

13.1 Jonathan McMillen joined the meeting at 11.50am and assisted Hugh Widdis in delivering the paper on this issue.

13.2 The report, with a substantial number of recommendations, covered three primary areas:-

- Committee Scrutiny Techniques and Resources
- Supporting the Constituency Function of Members, and
- Forward Work of the EPWG

13.3 SMG was also asked to consider the use of rapporteurs, standard-based scrutiny and Office Management Support.

13.4 SMG recognised the work of this group as among the most significant being currently undertaken within the Assembly and complimented the team on the report. It was agreed that the report would be discussed by the Commission and would be referred to Directors to decide on the recommendations to take forward within individual directorate business plans.

ACTION: HUGH WIDDIS

14 Updates

(a) Directors

- Ken Eccles advised that the analysis of the Business Continuity desktop exercise is continuing. Representatives from the Scottish Parliament will visit Parliament Buildings on 7 November 2011. Work is continuing on the new File Store in B34.

- Hugh Widdis provided an update on litigation issues.

- Roisin Kelly said that Pensions/Superannuation Bill may be before the Assembly in December.

- Richard Stewart spoke of the need to plan for 30 November 2011, the day for when public services unions are calling for industrial action.

- Gareth McGrath advised that recruitment exercises are ongoing for senior posts within the directorate.

(b) Information Management

Gareth McGrath told SMG that it is planned to launch the new website in early December and most of the information on AIMS will be published. It is hoped to relax the rules relating to coverage of the Assembly, subject to the necessary approvals being obtained.

(c) Performance against Corporate Plan 2011/12G

SMG considered the latest report to 30 September 2011 on the Corporate Business Plan for 2011/12. It was agreed that Trevor Reaney would meet with John Stewart to discuss progress on Section 1.2, Members Support. It was agreed to ask HR, to provide an update for the SMG meeting in December 2011 on the Staff Survey Action Plan. Hugh Widdis will check on compliance with the statutory duties referred to in Section 4.4.

ACTION: TREVOR REANEY, RICHARD STEWART, HUGH WIDDIS

14 Any Other Business

There was no further business.

15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 10.00am on Thursday 17 November 2011 in Room 106.

The meeting adjourned at 1.15pm.