SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP

FRIDAY, 7 JANUARY 2011 at 9.42am
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

APPROVED

Present:	**Trevor Reaney** **Sheila McClelland** **John Stewart** **Richard Stewart** **Stephen Welch** **Hugh Widdis**
Apologies:	**Gareth McGrath**
In attendance:	**Jim Beatty** **Tony Logue (Agenda items 6 and 7)** **Georgie Campbell (Agenda Items 8, 9, 10 and 18(e))** **Sinead McDonnell (Agenda Items 13, 14 and 15)** **John Gibson (Agenda Item 17)** **Simon Burrowes (Agenda Item 18(e))**

1 Apologies

1.1 Gareth McGrath sent apologies. Sheila McClelland attended in Mr McGrath's absence.

2 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting (3 December 2010)

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2010 were approved without comment.

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: DIRECTORS

6 Future SMG/Commission Business

6.1 Tony Logue joined the meeting and told SMG that the business to be discussed at the Commission meeting on 25 January 2011 will be as follows:-

- NIA Spending Review
- Clerk/DG's Report
- Political Leadership Programme
- Hansard Bound Volumes
- Election Planning

Stephen Welch joined the meeting at 10.08am.

It is likely that the Commission will meet in w/c 17 January to continue discussions on the Spending Review. Until the financial issues are resolved, there will be no further staff recruitment.

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 and spoke to the recent changes to the Register. In particular, she identified the new risk, No. 10, in relation to procurement.

8.2 During a discussion, some amendments to a number of the risks were agreed. Georgie Campbell will update the register.

AP: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

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9 Draft Corporate Plan

9.1 Georgie Campbell told SMG that following the HoB workshop in early December, a revised draft plan was circulated to directors for comment.

9.2 As more time was needed to discuss all of the issues, it was agreed that Georgie Campbell should make the arrangements for SMG to meet next week for this discussion.

AP: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

10 Staff Survey Action Plan

10.1 Georgie Campbell told SMG that following the meeting of 12 November 2010, she had identified ten actions for completion by 31 March 2011 and a further 18 actions for inclusion in 2011/12 Business Plans. The remaining actions should be addressed by the appropriate director/s.

10.2 The draft plans had been discussed with TUS on 14 December 2010 and apart from some queries raised about the ad hoc staff comments, TUS was content.

10.3 SMG discussed the draft plans and considered TUS queries. It was agreed that Head of HR should respond to TUS on how the ad hoc comments are being addressed. It was also agreed that CPU should monitor and report progress on delivery of the plans.

AP: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

11 Protecting Vulnerable Groups

11.1 Sheila McClelland said that this policy was drafted following extensive consultation on best practice. It is intended to deliver online training for all staff and more specific training for those staff with direct contact with children and vulnerable adults.

11.3 Several issues arose from the discussion on the draft:-

(a) The definition of 'vulnerable adult'
(b) The need to cross-reference this with our vetting policy
(c) The need to include a reference to possible disciplinary action for breach of the policy.

11.4 It was agreed that the draft policy should be amended as discussed, referred to TUS for consultation and brought back to SMG.

AP: GARETH MCGRATH

.12 ID Passes

12.1 Stephen Welch explained to SMG what were considered to be the failings of the current pass system, especially the lack of control over visitors and contractors.

12.2 The draft plan has proposals for passes with some form of electronic information which will be detected by scanners at access points. The scanners will be linked to a central control which will approve or deny access.

12.3 The proposed passes for visitors and contractors will not only have a photo but also details of the reason for access.

12.4 Mr Welch emphasised the benefits to gained from introducing the proposed system and said that, if agreed, this could be in place by the start of the next mandate. Specific issues relating to the use of passes by Members were discussed.

12.5 SMG agreed the proposals and asked for the paper to be brought to the next Commission meeting on 25 January.

AP: STEPHEN WELCH

13 Performance Management System

13.1 Sinead McDonnell joined the meeting and told SMG that following a previous SMG decision, HR had carried out a short consultation exercise with staff gathering their views on the current performance management system and what a new performance management system might consist off.

13.2 The paper contained a number of high level principles on what a new performance management system might contain and asked for SMG views on these principles.

13.3 During the discussion, it was agreed that that a revised system had to be workable to both staff and management and the number of forms to be completed should be kept to a minimum with online completion as a goal. There were also concerns as to how the system would improve the management of those few staff who were under-performing. The need to consult with HoBs as well as TUS was emphasised.

13.4 It was agreed that the development of a new performance management system be taken forward by HR Office in consultation with TUS through the ERG Policy Subgroup and staff in general.

AP: SINEAD MCDONNELL

14 Learning and Development

14.1 Sinead McDonnell explained that although this paper had been discussed by SMG on 3 December 2010, further comments had been received and guidance on the way forward was sought.

14.2 Bray Leino (BL), our training provider, had suggested three Management Development programmes based on grades and each contained a number of mandatory and additional optional modules.

14.3 During the discussion there were concerns over limiting the programmes by grade rather than business need. It was felt that some modules, such as conflict resolution and effective working relationships, should be mandatory and others, such as mentoring, should be made available. A query over accreditation was also raised.

14.4 As the programmes are being developed for staff working in a legislature, it was felt that this needed to be reflected within the programmes.

14.5 It was agreed that arrangements would be made for BL to meet with John Stewart to discuss how best to address the concerns within 14.4 above. It was also agreed that HR should proceed with the proposed pilot training.

AP: SINEAD MCDONNELL

15 Sick Absence Statistics

15.1 Sinead McDonnell spoke on the absence figures for the period November 2009 to October 2010. The rate of absence was 6.9% which was below the recently agreed benchmark of 7.5%.

15.2 It was noted that one member of staff is currently absent with Swine Flu. The level of such absences will be closely monitored in case contingency plans are required.

16 ICT Access by Mobile Phone

16.1 Richard Stewart explained that this item had been before SMG previously and a number of amendments had been identified. These had now been incorporated into the revised draft.

16.2 In recognising the need to minimise the number of smart phones with access to the network, the draft policy was agreed.

17 Managed Print

17.1 John Gibson joined the meeting and told SMG that following a decision from SMG in January 2010, Northgate and OKI completed an assessment of the printer deployment and usage. Extensive figures relating to printing had been produced and were before SMG at today's meeting.

17.2 Difficulties arose in that there were short-term pressures which needed to be addressed, particularly with photocopying contracts, but a longer term strategy needed to be agreed.

17.3 It was agreed that short-term requirements for photo-copying should be taken forward as necessary, pending the outcome of a long-term review.

AP: STEPHEN WELCH

17.4 Responsibility for taking forward the wider managed print strategy has still to be determined.

AP: TREVOR REANEY/SMG

18 Updates

(a) Directors

John Stewart said that there are currently 31 bills with the Assembly but 5 may not progress further. Another 3 Executive bills may be shortly introduced. The Finance and Personnel Committee is co-ordinating the Assembly's response to the draft Budget but only 3 Departments have produced draft spending plans to date. Committees resume in w/c 10 January and following meetings with the party whips, the Election Planning team will meet next week.

Stephen Welch said that work is progressing on the arrangements for moving the remainder of the staff from Annexe C to Parliament Buildings.

(b) Financial Update

Discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

(c) Website Project

Discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

(d) Information Management

Discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

(e) ICWG

Simon Burrowes and Georgie Campbell joined the meeting and provided a background to the set-up and achievements of the ICWG. There were 23 points within its Action Plan with 16 achieved and 7 ongoing. During a discussion, SMG indicated its satisfaction with the work of the work and was content for the group to continue. It was agreed that Georgie Campbell would bring a paper on Internal Communications to SMG on the way forward.

AP: GEORGIE CAMPBELL

(f) Staffing Complement

Discussion was deferred to the next meeting. It was noted that recruitment was suspended pending the resolution of the Commission's budget under the Spending Review 2010.

19 AOB

19.1 No items were raised.

20. Staff Bonus Nominations

20.1 Discussion was deferred to Monday, 10 January 2011

21 Date of Next Meeting

21.1 Friday, 21 January 2011 at 9.30am in Room 106.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20pm.

The meeting reconvened on Monday, 10 January 2011 at 3.07pm.

22 Staff Bonus Nominations

SMG considered and decided on nominations from 4 directorates.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.40pm.