

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT)

**THURSDAY, 7 AUGUST 2025 at 9.30 PM
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

APPROVED

Present:

**Lesley Hogg, Clerk/Chief Executive
Paula Ewart, Interim Director of Corporate Services
Angela Kelly, Examiner of Statutory Rules (deputised for Tara Caul,
Director of Legal, Governance and Research Services)
Mary-Ellen Nutt, Head of IT (deputised for Gareth McGrath, Director of
Parliamentary Services)**

In Attendance:

**Janet Hughes, Clerical Supervisor
Krystal Clarke, Executive Assistant
Paula McClintock, Head of Finance (Item 7)
Karen Martin, Deputy Head of HR (Item 8)
Christine Watts, Environmental Services and Health and Safety
Manager (Items 9 and 10)
Michael Cairns, Acting Head of Communications (Item 11)**

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Tara Caul, Gareth McGrath and Steven Baxter.

Lesley Hogg welcomed Paula Ewart, Angela Kelly and Mary-Ellen Nutt to the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

It was noted that the minutes from the meeting on 2 July 2025 had been published.

4. SMT Action Points

The outstanding action points were reviewed and progress was noted.

5. Political Update

Lesley noted that it was Summer recess and there was nothing of significance to report.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

6. Draft Assembly Commission Agenda

Lesley advised that the next Assembly Commission meeting was scheduled for 10 September 2025.

Proposed items for the meeting included:

- Clerk/Chief Executive Key Update Report
- Assembly Commission Budget 2026-2029
- Pay Claim 2025
- Review of the Transgender Policy and Guidance on Assisting and Supporting Transgender Visitors and Other Users of Parliament Buildings
- Request for the Assembly Commission to Display a Portrait of His Majesty The King
- Security Review Recommendations Made by Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Outworkings of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (aka Martyn's Law)

CORPORATE SERVICES

Paula McClintock joined the meeting at 9.39 am for agenda item 7.

7. Management Accounts June 2025

Paula McClintock presented the Management Accounts for June 2025.

SMT noted the forecast outturns for Resource DEL, the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee (WFDSC) and Capital DEL.

On reviewing the breakdown of the current forecast outturn, Paula McC highlighted movements in Admin costs during the month which had resulted in a reduction from the June Monitoring position. She also stated that Salaries had been reforecast to reflect the impact of continuing recruitment and internal manpower planning.

SMT noted a summary of the vacant posts that had been budgeted for the current financial year. Mary-Ellen queried the budget for the IS Scholarship post and it was agreed that she would liaise with Paula McC in relation to the recording of this.

In relation to the Capital budget, Paula McC advised of two bids from the IS Office and Building Services, along with a surrender from the Speaker's Office.

SMT approved the bid for the IS Office. SMT noted that a paper had been tabled in relation to the bid from Building Services and that it would be considered later in the meeting.

Paula McClintock left the meeting at 9.56 am.

Karen Martin joined the meeting at 9.56 am for agenda item 8.

8. HR Management Information

Karen Martin presented the HR Management Information as at 1 July 2025.

Karen advised that the Staff in Post (SIP) figure on 1 July 2025 (including agency and inward seconded staff) was 382.6 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) against a staff complement (including complement plus) of 405 FTE.

SMT noted the temporary promotion/deputising arrangements and agency worker assignments currently in place.

Karen updated SMT on recruitment activity.

On reviewing the Recruitment Schedule, SMT agreed that a competition for a permanent IT Security Officer should be added.

Sickness absence information was provided and it was noted that for the period July 2024 to June 2025, the average sickness absence per FTE member of staff was 10.8 days, which represented a reduction of 1.9 days when compared to 12.7 days for the period July 2023 to June 2024.

Paula Ewart acknowledged the work that had gone into preparing the volume of management information provided, and she thanked Karen and the HR Team for their efforts.

Karen Martin left the meeting at 10.06 am.

Christine Watts joined the meeting at 10.07 am for agenda items 9 and 10.

9. Removal and Disposal of Asbestos from Boiler Room of Parliament Buildings

Christine Watts presented and sought approval of a business case for the removal and disposal of asbestos from the boiler room of Parliament Buildings.

SMT noted that the project had already commenced and that retrospective approval was being sought.

Following consideration, SMT approved the business case and highlighted the need for timely business case submission.

10. Removal and Replacement of Waters Tanks from the Roof of Parliament Buildings

Christine presented and sought approval of a business case for the removal of water tanks from the roof of Parliament Buildings.

SMT noted that the project had already commenced and that retrospective approval was being sought.

Following consideration, SMT approved the business case.

Christine Watts left the meeting at 10.19 am.

Change to agenda running order.

OTHER ITEMS

13. Directors' Updates

Legal, Governance and Research Services

Angela provided an update on the work undertaken by all business areas within the Legal, Governance and Research Services Directorate and, in particular, highlighted the ongoing litigation cases; the ongoing work to update the Office Resources file registry database; and current procurement projects.

Angela also advised that a new Legal Adviser had taken up post in Legal Services.

Corporate Services

Lesley provided an update on all business areas within the Corporate Services Directorate.

In particular, Lesley updated SMT on the remedial works to the roof; the electronic access control project; ongoing HR and Building Services projects; new climate change reporting; and the refurbishment of the Blue Flax.

Parliamentary Services

Lesley noted that, due to recess, there was no Director's update report for Parliamentary Services.

Mary-Ellen provided an update on the ongoing Network Refresh project, which she noted involved a significant amount of work by the IS Team. In light of this being a major project and the potential impact on all users, the importance of effective communication was highlighted. It was therefore

agreed that Mary-Ellen would ensure that users were informed of any issues that may arise as the project progresses.

PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Michael Cairns joined the meeting at 10.35 am for agenda item 11.

11. Strategic Communications Update

Michael Cairns provided SMT with a communications update.

SMT welcomed the significant number of views of video outputs for the Assembly's Tours in Summer social campaign.

Lesley noted that this was Michael's last appearance at an SMT meeting and thanked him for all he had contributed to the Assembly during his time as Acting Head of Communications. She then wished him well in his future endeavours.

Michael Cairns left the meeting at 10.46 am.

OTHER ITEMS CONTINUED

12. SMT Papers Cleared via Correspondence

- Business Case for the Proposed Direct Award of the MidlandHR Contract for a 3-Year Period to 2028.

14. AOB

There was no other business.

15. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 26 September 2025.

16. Proposals for Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Assembly Commission Budget 2026-2029
- Pay Claim 2025
- Review of the Transgender Policy and Guidance on Assisting and Supporting Transgender Visitors and Other Users of Parliament Buildings
- Insurance Broker Renewal Business Case
- North Lift Upgrade Business Case
- Security Review Recommendations Made by Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Outworkings of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (aka Martyn's Law)
- Quarterly Review of the Corporate Risk Register
- Biennial Review of the Risk Management Strategy

- Internal Communications Quarterly Update
- Business Case for the Refurbishment of the Communications Unit Offices B4 and B5
- Strategic Communications Update
- Update on the Work of the Internal Communications Group April 2025 to September 2025

The meeting ended at 11.02 am.