

# SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP PERFORMANCE FORMAT

FRIDAY, 3 JUNE 2016 at 9.39AM  
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**APPROVED**

**Present:** Trevor Reaney  
Tara Caul  
Gareth McGrath  
Richard Stewart  
Stephen Welch

**In Attendance:** James Gilsenan  
Janet Hughes  
Lesley Hogg  
John Power  
Tracey Wilson  
Debra Savage  
Maria Bannon  
Robin Ramsey

## 1. Opening/Review

Trevor Reaney welcomed Lesley Hogg to the meeting.

### (a) Apologies

No apologies were received.

### (b) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### (c) Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approved minutes of the meeting of 13 May 2016 were published on 27 May 2016. Unrestricted meeting papers have also been published.

### (d) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

## 2. SMG Action Points

Progress on all action points was noted.

**Action:** Richard Stewart to brief Lesley Hogg on Managing Change and the draft Delegation Framework.

### **3. Assembly 21**

Richard Stewart provided a verbal update on Assembly 21.

The proposed Corporate Strategy Planning Day with Commission Members is unlikely to take place before the Summer recess hence a paper on the Corporate Strategy will be brought to the Commission meeting on 23 June 2016 for initial discussion and consideration.

Commission Members will be kept involved with progress on the development of the Strategy via correspondence over the summer recess and a draft Strategy will be presented at the September Commission meeting for further discussion.

Two sessions for Secretariat staff who were not involved in the ALF engagement sessions to contribute to the Strategy will be held during week commencing 13 June 2016.

### **4. Business Plans 2016/17**

Trevor Reaney reminded SMG that Directorate Business Plans should be prepared before 1 July 2016.

**Action:** Richard Stewart to re-issue Business Plan template to Directors.

### **5. Management Accounts**

#### **5.1 Year end outturn 2015/16**

Richard Stewart advised SMG of the final 2015-16 financial year end outturn underspend of 2.27% against a threshold of 1.5%.

Richard noted there was an underspend on Members' OCE and FAPP.

#### **5.2 April 2016**

Richard advised SMG that a significant amount of anticipated accruals set up for anticipated expenditure at March year end had not materialised.

Richard also advised SMG of current expenditure on the salaries budget.

### **6. Correspondence from Department of Finance**

Trevor Reaney referred SMG to a letter received from the Department of Finance.

Richard Stewart provided SMG with an overview of the Commission's budget setting process.

**Action:** Trevor to issue a response to the Department of Finance and update Commission Members at meeting on 23 June 2016.

## **7. Innovation Fund**

Trevor Reaney asked SMG for ideas on how the Innovation Fund could be used.

Gareth McGrath provided two suggestions:

A corporate wide apprenticeship programme for school leavers; and

Funding for the Legislative Studies and Practice Programme.

Tara Caul suggested a legal apprenticeship similar to one run previously in association with the Law Society of Northern Ireland.

Richard Stewart and Stephen Welch suggested that further consideration be given to governance and the method of approving ideas.

Following discussion, SMG agreed to briefly return to this agenda item at the end of the meeting.

*John Power joined the meeting for agenda item 8.*

## **8. Report on Internal Communications**

John Power spoke to his paper asking SMG to note and comment on recommendations aimed at improving and enabling internal communications.

John advised SMG that he had met with Tara Caul in her capacity as Chair of the Internal Communications Group (ICG) and representatives from Human Resources to discuss the idea of creating an "Assembly Gazette" to report on the positive work undertaken by the Assembly.

The above proposal would involve the establishment of an Editorial Group and a Reporting Team.

Trevor Reaney thanked John for the work undertaken to date.

John asked SMG to consider the allocation of resources, both staffing and financial, and suggested a possible launch during the summer recess.

Tara Caul thanked John for the work done and suggested that the draft paper be presented to the ICG for comment.

Stephen Welch and Gareth McGrath were in favour of the proposal and indicated the need to move quickly with publishing the gazette.

SMG was supportive of the concept and agreed to move this idea forward by engaging with ICG and Susie Brown, Head of Communications and Outreach.

**Action:** John Power to engage with ICG and Susie Brown for additional input.

*John Power left the meeting at 11.51am.*

*Tracey Wilson joined the meeting for agenda item 9.*

## **9. Legislative Printing and Print/Design Framework**

Tracey Wilson spoke to this paper seeking approval from SMG for the business case to tender for and procure a new Legislative Printing Contract as described in Option 4 of the paper.

Approval was also sought from SMG for the business case to tender for a framework for print/design as described in Option 2 of the paper.

It is anticipated that there will be considerable interest from potential suppliers for the new Legislative Printing Contract as Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) legislation will not be as relevant as it was historically.

SMG supported the proposals put forward and approved both business cases.

**Action:** Tracey to proceed with the procurement of a new Legislative Printing Contract and framework for print design.

*Tracey Wilson left the meeting at 12.03pm.*

*Debra Savage joined the meeting for agenda item 10.*

## **10. Classified advertising Re-Tender**

Debra Savage spoke to this paper outlining the need to re-tender for the Classified Advertising placement service as the current contract ends in October 2016.

Debra proposed a number of options for consideration by SMG, with a recommendation to proceed with the Competitive Tender Option 2 as detailed in the paper.

Following a discussion, SMG was content to proceed with Option 2 as proposed.

**Action:** Debra to proceed with the re-tendering exercise for a new Classified Advertising Contract.

*Debra Savage left the meeting at 12.21pm.*

*Maria Bannon joined the meeting for agenda item 11.*

## **11. Annual Equality Report to the Equality Commission 2015-2016**

Maria Bannon spoke to this paper asking SMG to consider and approve the Annual Equality Progress Report for submission to the Equality Commission.

Trevor Reaney thanked Maria for producing a very thorough report and Richard highlighted that the work of Maria and Roisin Mooney in the Equality Unit was held in very high regard by the Equality Commission and asked that the Commission be made aware of this.

SMG was content for the Annual Equality Report for the reporting year 2015-16 to be submitted to the Equality Commission.

**Action:** Maria to submit Annual Equality Report to the Equality Commission.

*Maria Bannon left the meeting at 12.26pm.*

*Robin Ramsey joined the meeting for agenda item 12.*

## **12. Commission/SMG Business**

Robin Ramsey updated SMG on the upcoming Commission meetings on 16 June and 23 June.

On 16 June, there will be a familiarisation session for Commission members. This will not be a formal meeting of the Commission. Robin tabled a draft agenda for the first formal Commission meeting on 23 June 2016. The proposed items are:

- Appointment of SARC Chair
- Annual Equality Report to the Equality Commission 2015/16
- SARC Annual Report
- Budget 2017-2021
- Corporate Strategy
- IFRP Minor Reforms
- Appointment of Pension Trustees
- Clerk/CE Update

*Robin Ramsey left the meeting at 12.38am.*

## **13. Directors' Updates**

Stephen Welch advised SMG that the Replacement Desktop PC Project was going well with new pc's rolled out to all Members, Party Staff and 75% of Secretariat Staff. The remaining Secretariat Staff and

constituency offices will be supplied with their new hardware at the beginning of summer recess.

Stephen provided an update on the Accessibility Project. Work is currently being carried out on Rooms 13 and 14 with major works planned to commence at the start of the summer recess.

Stephen mentioned that all parties had been given Ministerial accommodation on the first floor, however, some negotiations were still taking place.

Stephen also made reference to car parking passes for MLAs but agreed that this would need to be considered in more detail when discussing longer term security issues.

Gareth McGrath advised SMG that the first meetings of the Assembly had now been held. The 'Fresh Start Agreement' had made the arrangements more complex than had been the case in previous mandates.

Gareth mentioned increased activity in relation to proposals for Private Members Bills (PMB) and Written Questions, currently 15 proposed PMBs compared with 19 for the entire 2011-16 mandate and the number of written questions received to date is higher than at any time previously. Gareth stated that if the activity continues at this rate more resources will be required to cope with the increased volume of business.

Gareth advised SMG that a number of Secretariat staff were supporting the Hungarian National Assembly in an institutional strengthening project at the Assembly of Kosovo. This initiative would generate some revenue for the Commission, as well as providing developmental opportunities for those staff involved.

Gareth also advised SMG that the Politics Plus contract for institutional strengthening work in the Philippines had been extended.

Tara Caul reminded SMG that the next SARC meeting would be held on 17 June 2016 and asked SMG to assist David Johnston with the gathering of papers for the meeting.

Tara also advised SMG that David was reviewing the Risk Register and asked for any comments/suggestions to be forwarded to him.

Lastly, Tara raised concerns around contingency for dealing with FoI requests. There is currently only one person responsible for handling these requests with no contingency arrangements in place. Tara will produce a paper for SMG highlighting her concerns and options for addressing the issue.

Richard Stewart advised SMG that the NIPSA pay claim had been received for consideration and that discussions will start next week.

Richard also asked SMG to refer any issues raised by Members regarding the 2016 IFRP Determination to either him or Paula McClintock, Head of Finance.

Trevor Reaney recorded his thanks to the Pay Team for their efforts at handling the large volume of changes due to the IFRP 2016 Determination and the start of the new Mandate.

**Action:** Tara to provide SMG with a paper highlighting concerns and options for addressing the issue of contingency for dealing with Fol requests.

#### **14. Items cleared by correspondence**

Corporate Risk Register

IP Telephony

Stephen Welch advised SMG that the implementation of an IP Telephony system was a major piece of work taking a minimum of 2 years to fully install. In light of this timeframe and the work involved he stated that a single year extension to the existing STA would be essential in the interim. Stephen also stated that insufficient ISO resources exist currently to undertake the project at this time.

**Action:** Stephen to produce a further paper for the next SMG meeting.

#### **15. AOB**

Trevor Reaney updated SMG on a recent request by a member of staff to undertake political activity and that this policy was being urgently reviewed.

**Action:** Richard Stewart to review the Staff Conduct Policy.

#### **16. Innovation Fund (Agenda Item 7)**

Trevor stated that further thought was required in relation to the usage and application of the Innovation Fund and that SMG would return to this at a later date. A decision was needed on whether this was to be a staff suggestion or management led scheme or a combination of the two.

Richard Stewart noted the need to ensure an innovation project was not encumbered by bureaucratic considerations, but driven by ideas to innovate.

**Agreed:** SMG to return to this agenda item at its next meeting.

## **17. Date of Next Meeting**

Trevor reminded SMG that this was his last meeting and he thanked all Directors and Corporate Support Staff (past and present) for their work and support.

Trevor also wished Lesley Hogg well on her appointment and on chairing her first SMG meeting on 1 July 2016.

The next meeting will be held on Friday, 1 July 2016 at 9.30am in Room 106.

The meeting ended at 1:11pm.