

# SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT GROUP (SMG)

FRIDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2020 at 9.30AM  
(VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS)

## APPROVED

**Present:** Lesley Hogg  
Tara Caul  
Gareth McGrath  
Richard Stewart

**In Attendance:** Janet Hughes  
Lauren Mills  
Robin Ramsey  
Maria Bannon  
Karen Martin  
Sinéad McDonnell  
David Lynn  
Tracey Wilson  
Brian Devlin  
John Perry  
Kevin Pelan  
Frank Geddis

### Opening/Review

The meeting commenced at 9.41am.

#### 1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. Minutes of previous meeting

It was noted that the minutes and unrestricted papers from the meeting on 23 October 2020 would be published within the next few days.

#### 4. SMG Action Points

The outstanding action points were reviewed and progress was noted.

*Robin Ramsey, Adviser to the Speaker/Head of Corporate Support, joined the meeting at 9.42am for agenda items 5 and 6.*

## **5. Political Update**

### **COVID-19**

Lesley Hogg noted that recent additional measures announced in relation to the Coronavirus Regulations did not necessitate any change to the Assembly Commission's COVID-19 mitigation measures currently in place.

### **Staff Events**

SMG also noted that a staff briefing and virtual event would take place before Christmas.

## **CORPORATE SUPPORT**

## **6. Draft Assembly Commission Agenda**

Robin Ramsey confirmed that the next Assembly Commission meeting was scheduled for 9 December 2020.

Proposed items for the meeting included:

- Clerk/Chief Executive's Report
- Pay Claim 2020
- Extending the Assembly Commission's Annual Dates for the Lighting of Parliament Buildings
- Centenary Events 2021
- Interim Member Development Plan for 2020-21
- Review of the Security Clearance Policy and Development and Implementation of a Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders
- Development of a Policy on Inappropriate Behaviour towards Assembly Commission Staff by Visitors or Members of the Public
- Business Case – Parliament Buildings Television System Replacement Project 2021
- Terms of Reference – Assembly and Executive Review Committee Opposition Review
- Annual Plan 2020-21
- Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill
- Visitor access to Parliament Buildings

Richard Stewart advised that a paper on the Assembly's Budget for 2021-22 was likely to require Assembly Commission approval prior to the 9 December meeting. It was noted that consideration would be given to either issuing this by correspondence to Assembly Commission Members for approval or arranging a single agenda item meeting before 4 December 2020.

## Corporate Support Directorate Update

Robin updated SMG on the centenary event planned for 2 December 2020, to mark the Government of Ireland Act 1920.

Robin also informed SMG that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Speaker's annual Christmas Tree lighting event would not be taking place this year and instead the Speaker would be recording a video message for staff.

*Robin Ramsey left the meeting at 10.01am.*

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### 7. Management Accounts

Richard Stewart presented the Management Accounts for October 2020, which highlighted the forecast level of spend against the budget submitted to the Department of Finance (DoF) for the October Monitoring round.

Richard advised that the January Monitoring submission was due to be submitted to DoF by 3 December 2020. He noted that a return by this date would mean that the November outturn figures would not be available. It was agreed that Paula McClintock, Head of Finance, would arrange a meeting with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors to consider requirements for the remainder of the year. It was noted that the capital position would need close consideration and Directors were asked to ensure that Heads of Business (HoBs) provided accurate and realistic estimates of capital spend for the remainder of the financial year.

**Action:** Paula to arrange a meeting with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors to discuss the January Monitoring submission to DoF.

**Action:** Directors to ensure that their HoBs provide accurate and realistic estimates for capital spend for the remainder of the financial year, for the final monitoring round exercise.

Richard advised that a budget re-profiling exercise had been completed during October 2020, hence no variances were reported for the month or for the year-to date. However, SMG noted that the latest forecast showed a £524k underspend against the October monitoring position. Richard confirmed that this underspend was largely due to reduced requirements for Secretariat salaries (partly caused by further consideration of agency holiday pay costs) and Administrative costs (across a number of business areas and activities).

On reviewing the Capital Plan, Richard referred to a discussion at the October 2020 SMG meeting, on the process for approving capital expenditure. Richard highlighted that current financial delegations

enable Directors to approve expenditure proposals with whole life costs of up to £50,000 and that this was captured through the Decision Authorisation System (DAS). However, he stated that this approval by Directors did not include budget allocation, as the allocation of capital funds to specific projects must be carried out by SMG.

Gareth McGrath queried whether this was the best approach and it was agreed that a separate meeting would be arranged with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors to consider the matter.

**Action:** Corporate Support Unit to arrange a meeting with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors to review the approval process for capital expenditure.

Richard informed SMG of two capital budget surrenders and sought approval from SMG for nine additional bids for capital budget as follows:

**Communications Office**

- £38.3k request to facilitate the ongoing roll-out of StarLeaf;

**Information Systems (IS) Office**

- £1.5 request for the HyperV project;
- £16.7k request for the purchase of a number of laptops;
- £18.7k request for the purchase of tablet devices;
- £6.2k request for the purchase of a number of webcams;

**Building Services**

- £30k request for the refurbishment of the gas suppression system;
- £50k request for the partial replacement of a battery back-up in the Switch room for emergency lighting;
- £6.4k request for the replacement of the industrial kitchen carousel; and

**Events Office**

- £7k for a presentation screen for the Great Hall (retrospective approval).

Following consideration, SMG approved all of the capital bids outlined with the exception of the bid for £38.3k from the Communications Office in relation to StarLeaf, as this had not yet been approved by SMG for inclusion in the Capital Plan.

SMG noted that capital expenditure should not be incurred before it had been approved.

**Action:** Directors to remind Heads of Business (HoBs) that approval must be gained from SMG before capital expenditure is incurred.

SMG considered the DAS reports and highlighted the continuing need for HoBs to review all records, particularly in relation to the end dates for planned expenditure and for any business case where expenditure had exceeded the approved limits.

**Action:** Directors to ensure that their HoBs thoroughly review and update records on the DAS reports as required.

Richard advised SMG that DoF had asked for any cost that might arise from implementing New Decade, New Approach (NDNA). Lesley queried the timeframe over which the cost might be incurred and Richard agreed to seek clarification on this from DoF.

**Action:** Richard to seek clarification from DoF on the timeframe for which DoF was seeking NDNA implementation costs for.

*Change to agenda running order, item 8 - Insurance Policy Update, to be discussed later in the meeting.*

*Maria Bannon, Equality and Good Relations Manager, joined the meeting at 10.51am for agenda items 9 and 10.*

## **9. Disability Action Plan 2016-21: November 2020 Update**

Maria Bannon presented a progress update on the actions in the Disability Action Plan 2016-21 for the six-month reporting period.

Maria advised that of the 54 actions in the Plan, 43 had been completed, 7 were progressing/ongoing, 3 were overdue and 1 had been suspended.

In relation to the overdue actions, it was noted that all three had been impacted by COVID-19.

On reviewing the other actions within the plan, Lesley requested revisions to some of the 'Progress Updates' and subject to these amendments, SMG approved the update for publishing on the Assembly's website.

**Action:** Maria to update the Plan as requested by SMG and arrange for it to be published on the Assembly's website.

Maria informed SMG that the next progress update on the 2016-21 Disability Action Plan would be the final update as the plan came to an end in 2021 and that a new action plan was being developed for presentation to SMG and the Assembly Commission for the five-year period from 2021-26.

## 10. **Audit of Inequalities Action Plan 2016-21: November 2020 Update**

Maria presented a progress update on the actions in the Audit of Inequalities Action Plan 2016-21 for the six-month reporting period.

Maria advised that of the 27 actions in the Plan, 20 had been completed, 6 were progressing/ongoing and 1 had been suspended.

Following review, SMG approved the Plan for publishing on the Assembly's website, subject to some minor amendments to the 'Progress Updates' for some of the actions.

**Action:** Maria to update the Plan and requested by SMG and arrange for it to be published on the Assembly's website.

*Maria Bannon left the meeting at 11:26am.*

*Meeting suspended at 11.26am and resumed at 11.36am.*

*Karen Martin, Deputy Head of HR, joined the meeting at 11.36am for agenda items 11, 12 and 13.*

## 11. **HR Management Information**

Karen Martin presented the monthly HR Management Information as at 1 November 2020.

SMG noted that the Staff in Post (SiP) figure on 1 November 2020 (including agency and inward seconded staff) was 344.5 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) against an agreed staff complement (including complement plus) of 385.8 FTE.

Karen provided information on temporary promotion and deputising arrangements.

Karen advised SMG of a letter received from NICS regarding agency staff who were required to self-isolate. SMG requested sight of the letter and agreed to give consideration to the approach to be adopted by the Assembly and advise Karen accordingly.

**Action:** Karen to send a copy of the letter received from NICS in relation to agency workers to the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors, for consideration and agreement on the approach to be taken by the Assembly.

SMG reviewed the Recruitment Schedule, which had been updated following a meeting with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors on 6 November 2020.

Sickness absence information was provided and it was noted that for the period November 2019 to October 2020, the average days lost to sickness absence per FTE member of staff was 8.6 days, compared with an average of 11.5 days during the period November 2018 to October 2019.

Karen advised that the contract with the additional occupational health adviser commenced on 2 November 2020. It was also noted that since the last SMG meeting, OHS had offered a limited facility for telephone referrals.

## **12. Review of the Security Clearance Policy and Development and Implementation of a Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders**

Karen presented a draft Assembly Commission paper on the Implementation of a Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders.

Following consideration, SMG approved the paper for presentation to the Assembly Commission at its next meeting, subject to some minor amendments.

## **13. Development of a Policy on the Prevention and Management of Inappropriate Behaviours towards Assembly Commission Staff by Visitors or Members of the Public**

Karen presented a draft Policy on the Prevention and Management of Inappropriate Behaviours towards Assembly Commission Staff by Visitors and Members of the Public.

Following consideration of the Policy, SMG suggested some amendments and agreed that approval of the draft Policy should also be sought from the Assembly Commission at its next meeting.

**Action:** Karen to update the draft Policy as discussed and re-issue to SMG via correspondence for final approval.

**Action:** Karen to prepare a paper seeking approval of the Policy by the Assembly Commission at its next meeting.

*Karen Martin left the meeting at 12.28pm.*

*Sinéad McDonnell, Head of HR, joined the meeting at 12.28pm for agenda item 14.*

## 14. Review of Performance Management Policy and Software

SMG reviewed the success of the new approach to performance management since its implementation in April 2019, giving consideration to the level of usage and the achievement of agreed goals.

Sinéad provided SMG with statistics on the average number of performance conversations held by each member of staff per Directorate and Business Area during 2019 and 2020. It was noted that the level of compliance was generally good, but that a few business areas fell well below the expected number of conversations.

Sinéad also provided SMG with an update on achievement against the agreed five performance management goals. It was noted that to assist in measuring success against the goals, that a range of specific questions relating to 'Managing and Developing Performance' were asked in the 2019 Staff Survey.

SMG considered the survey findings against each goal and in light of these, Sinéad sought SMG's views to proposed changes to some aspects of the approach to performance management.

Sinéad proposed a change to the frequency of performance conversations and a minor change to the nature of the 'In the Moment' conversations.

SMG discussed the proposals and agreed with the minor change to the 'In the Moment' conversations and the reduction of the frequency of the Big Picture Conversations to twice yearly. SMG was not, however, content to approve the proposed reduction of the 'Regular Performance' conversations from monthly to bi-monthly as it was felt that it was important that line managers maintained regular contact with staff and vice versa.

It was acknowledged that there was clearly an issue with some staff not using the system and it was agreed that Directors would remind their HoBs of the importance of carrying out regular performance conversations and ask that they in turn communicate this to their staff.

**Action:** Directors to remind their (HoBs) of the importance of carrying out regular performance conversations and ask that they in turn communicate this to their staff.

Sinéad referred to the goal in relation to the 'promotion of a coaching style of management' and stated that the results of the staff survey indicated that perhaps more work needed to be done to facilitate meaningful performance conversations. She advised that a more strategic approach was required and suggested that this could be explored by the Learning and Development consultant who would shortly be taking up post. SMG was content with this proposal.

On reviewing the contract for the provision of the performance management software, Sinéad advised SMG that it was only intended to run for a period of two years until March 2021, at which time performance management was to be facilitated by the new HR and Payroll system. However, as the new HR and Payroll system would not be in place when the contract expired in March 2021, Sinéad advised that she had been considering requesting an extension of the current contract for one year to allow time for the new HR and Payroll system to be put in place.

Sinead explained that with the end of the EU Exit transition period ending on 31 December 2020, the Information Standards office had been gathering information on where Assembly Commission applications and contracts held or processed data outside of the United Kingdom (UK). She said that as the current provider was located outside of the UK, discussions were currently taking place with the contractor to seek to gain the relevant assurances about data protection and security.

As an alternative to extending the current contract by one year, Sinéad advised that she had approached the IS Office to ascertain whether the application development team could develop software to carry out the necessary performance management actions. It was noted that the IS Office had confirmed that this work could be undertaken by the development team.

Lesley and Gareth stated that their preference would be to have a paper based system in the short term, if the current contract could not be extended, rather than developing an in-house system. It was agreed that the development of an in-house system should not be progressed and that Sinéad would continue to seek to obtain the necessary assurances to enable the contract with the current provider to be extended by one year.

**Action:** HR Office to continue to seek to obtain the necessary assurances from the current provider and report back to SMG.

SMG thanked Sinéad for the comprehensive review.

*Sinéad McDonnell left the meeting at 1.28pm.*

*Lauren Mills left the meeting at 1.28pm*

*Meeting suspended at 1.28pm and resumed at 2.02pm.*

*David Lynn, Head of Building Services, joined the meeting at 2.02pm for agenda items 15, 16 and 17.*

## **15. Roof Project Issues**

David Lynn outlined the current position with regard to issues that had arisen in relation to the roof project, which completed in 2015.

It was noted that David was working with the design team and contractor to determine the cause of the issues, agree responsibility for them and identify a methodology to have them satisfactorily rectified.

On consideration of the issues outlined, SMG noted that continuing close liaison with Legal Services was needed to ensure a satisfactory resolution.

David agreed to provide SMG with regular updates on these issues.

## **16. Building Services – 10 Year Life Cycle Property, Plant and Equipment Upgrade/Replacement Plan**

David presented the Life Cycle Property, Plant and Equipment Upgrade/Replacement Plan for Building Services, which included the work items required to maintain the Assembly's property, plant and equipment over a 10-year timeframe.

Following consideration, SMG requested that some additional general refurbishment work be added to the Plan.

SMG also agreed that it would be helpful to have a summary spreadsheet listing all of the equipment including the estimated capital cost, covering a rolling 10 year period, as part of the Plan.

David advised that the Plan was a living document which would be continually updated and reviewed.

SMG thanked David for the developing the Plan and stated that the Plan should be considered as part of the annual budgeting process and that it be shared with the Head of Procurement.

**Action:** Summary spreadsheet to be produced as part of the Plan, listing all of the equipment including the estimated capital cost, covering a rolling 10 year period.

**Action:** Plan to be shared with the Head of Procurement.

## **17. Sustainable Development Office Revised and Updated Targets**

SMG noted the Continuous Improvement Action Plans for 2018-19 and 2020-21.

In light of the ongoing challenges and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on proposed actions in the 2020-21 Plan, David sought clarification from SMG regarding whether to remove some of them. Following review, SMG agreed to remove those actions which could not progress due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

David also sought approval to a proposal, in relation to the action on 'Environmental Champions', to extend the invitation to Party Support staff. SMG was content with this proposal.

**Action:** Sustainable Development Office to extend the invitation in relation to becoming an Environmental Champion to Party Support staff.

**Action:** David to arrange for the 2020-21 Action Plan to be updated as agreed by SMG.

The number of electronic vehicle charging points in the upper car park of Parliament Buildings was also discussed and SMG asked that David pursue with DoF the possibility of installing some in the lower main car park.

**Action:** David to contact DoF to discuss the possibility of installing electronic vehicle charging points in the lower main car park.

SMG reviewed and was content, following a request at the July 2020 SMG meeting, with the revised sustainable development targets for 2022.

Lesley requested that a report showing the outturn against the 2020-21 Action Plan be produced for consideration by SMG, following the financial year-end.

**Action:** Sustainable Development Office to produce a report showing the outturn against the 2020-21 Action Plan following the financial year-end, for consideration by SMG.

SMG thanked David and asked him to pass on their thanks to Christine Watts, Environmental Services and Health and Safety Manager and her team for their work on producing the paper.

*David Lynn left the meeting at 2.53pm.*

## **PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES**

*Tracey Wilson, Information Officer, joined the meeting at 2.54pm for agenda items 18, 19 and 20.*

### **18. Life Cycle Equipment Maintenance Plan for Broadcasting**

Tracey Wilson presented the Life Cycle Equipment Maintenance Plan for Broadcasting Infrastructure, which included details on acquisition, deployment, utilisation, planned and unscheduled maintenance and disposal.

Tracey advised SMG that the Plan was a living document which would be continually updated and reviewed as equipment was procured, repaired or disposed of.

Following consideration, SMG asked for a summary spreadsheet listing all of the equipment including the estimated capital cost, covering a rolling 10-year period, to be added to the Plan.

SMG thanked Tracey for developing the Plan and stated that the Plan should be considered as part of the annual budgeting process and that it be shared with the Head of Procurement.

**Action:** Summary spreadsheet to be produced as part of the Plan, listing all of the equipment including the estimated capital cost, covering a rolling 10 year period.

**Action:** Plan to be shared with the Head of Procurement.

## **19. Post-Project Evaluation for the StarLeaf Project (Virtual/Hybrid Committee Meetings)**

Tracey presented the Post-Project Evaluation (PPE) for the StarLeaf Project, which had been implemented to facilitate virtual/hybrid committee meetings, in light of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

SMG noted the urgency of delivering an appropriate video-conferencing solution to support and facilitate Members' participation in committee business outside of Parliament Buildings.

Tracey referred to the Lessons Learned section of the paper and highlighted what went well and what could have been improved, during delivery of the project.

SMG was very appreciative of the work undertaken by Tracey and all the staff involved with delivering this extremely successful project, in a very short timeframe.

SMG also asked that Tracey pass on their thanks to the Assembly's contractor for broadcasting services, for all their hard work in assisting the delivery of the project.

Richard advised that development of the PPE Registry was progressing and it was anticipated that it would go live shortly.

**Action:** Tracey to arrange for the PPE to be uploaded onto the new PPE Registry once it goes live.

## **20. Installing StarLeaf in the Assembly Chamber**

Tracey stated that the purpose of the paper presented, was to ensure that plans were in place, to enable the rapid implementation of StarLeaf in the Assembly Chamber, should it be required, to facilitate Members participation in committee business as well as potentially in plenary business.

Tracey outlined two options for consideration by SMG, for installing StarLeaf in the Assembly Chamber.

Following discussion, SMG agreed in principle, the recommendation to re-use the existing StarLeaf installation from Room 29 in the Assembly Chamber for any hybrid committee meeting (and potentially plenary business) and the associated financial expenditure, subject to further consideration of the equipment specification and cost.

**Action:** Tracey to review the equipment specification and cost as detailed in the paper.

SMG thanked Tracey for the consideration given to date in relation to planning for the possible implementation of StarLeaf in the Assembly Chamber.

*Tracey Wilson left the meeting at 3.28pm.*

*Meeting suspended at 3.28pm and resumed at 3.44pm.*

*Brian Devlin, Head of IS Office, joined the meeting at 3.44pm for agenda items 21 and 22.*

## **21. Information Systems Office - Life Cycle Equipment Maintenance and Replacement Plan**

Brian Devlin presented the Life Cycle Equipment Maintenance and Replacement Plan for the Assembly Commission's IT environment, which outlined the projected IT systems required to maintain and enhance the Assembly Commission's data network and other specialist infrastructure over a multi-year timeframe.

Following consideration, SMG asked for a summary spreadsheet listing all of the equipment including the estimated capital cost, covering a rolling 10-year period, to be added to the Plan.

SMG thanked Brian for developing the Plan and stated that the Plan should be considered as part of the annual budgeting process and that it be shared with the Head of Procurement.

**Action:** Summary spreadsheet to be produced as part of the Plan, listing all of the equipment including the estimated capital cost, covering a rolling 10 year period.

**Action:** Plan to be shared with the Head of Procurement.

*John Perry, Systems Analyst, joined the meeting at 3.55pm for agenda item 22.*

## **22. Business Case – Parliament Buildings Television System Replacement Project 2021**

Brian Devlin advised that previous papers had been presented to SMG and the Assembly Commission in September and November 2017 respectively, seeking approval to replace the Cathode Ray Tube televisions in Parliament Buildings.

It was noted that at that time the Assembly Commission declined to approve the proposal but agreed to revisit it upon resumption of normal Assembly Business.

Brian explained that the business cases presented to the Commission in 2017 were in relation to the replacement of only the televisions, but that given the passage of time, the current business case also included replacement of the associated distribution system.

On consideration of the recommended option in the business case, to carry out a full replacement of the Assembly television distribution system including televisions, Lesley queried whether any consultation had taken place with Members in relation to the removal of the facility to provide recorded content from the proposed new system. Brian stated that this was previously an important requirement of the system but that other methods were now being used by Members to obtain recorded content. He agreed however, to consult further on the usage of this facility under the current system and update SMG.

**Action:** Brian to consult on the usage of the recorded content facility under the current television system and update SMG.

*Lesley Hogg left the meeting at 3.58pm*

Following discussion, SMG agreed with the recommended option as outlined in the business case, and approved it for presentation to the Assembly Commission at its next meeting, subject to further consultation taking place in relation to the requirement of recorded content.

SMG also agreed that the expenditure for this project should be added to the Capital Plan for 2021/2022, subject to the Assembly Commission's approval of the business case.

*Lesley Hogg re-joined the meeting at 4.30pm.*

**Action:** Brian to prepare a paper for presentation to the Assembly Commission at its next meeting.

*Brian Devlin and John Perry left the meeting at 4.32pm.*

*Kevin Pelan, Clerk Assistant, joined the meeting at 4.33pm for agenda item 23.*

## **23. Interim Member Development Plan for 2020-21**

Kevin Pelan presented a draft Assembly Commission paper outlining the Interim Member Development Plan for 2020-21.

Kevin informed SMG that the Clerking and Member Support (CAMS) Office had met with the Whips' offices to identify the parliamentary development requirements of Members and their staff. He explained that, based on this engagement the CAMS office had produced an Interim Member Development Plan for 2020-21, taking account of COVID-19 restrictions, and that a more detailed development plan was being prepared for the period from June 2021 to the end of the mandate.

Following consideration, SMG approved the Plan for presentation to the Assembly Commission at its next meeting.

**Action:** Paper to be presented to the Assembly Commission at its next meeting.

*Kevin Pelan left the meeting at 4.56pm.*

*Frank Geddis, Clerk Assistant, joined the meeting at 4.56pm for agenda item 24.*

## **24. Update on Private Members' Bills (PMBs)**

Frank Geddis updated SMG on the progress of PMBs following the passing of the deadline for initial proposals on 18 September 2020.

Frank highlighted the indicative timetable for introducing PMBs in the Assembly and Tara asked that this information be shared with the Head of Research and Information Services and Legal Services, to help assist with planning. Tara also asked that Legal Services be advised of any PMBs that were subsequently withdrawn.

**Action:** Frank to share the indicative timetable for the introduction of PMBs in the Assembly, with the Head of Research and Information Services and Legal Services and advise Legal Services of any that were subsequently withdrawn.

*Frank Geddis left the meeting at 5.07pm.*

## **25. Implementation of the Internal Communications Strategy 2020-2023**

Gareth presented a further draft of the Internal Communications Strategy 2020-2023, following initial discussion at the October 2020 SMG meeting.

Following further review, SMG approved the draft Strategy and noted that consultation would now take place with the Internal Communications Group, staff and Trade Union Side.

SMG recorded its thanks to Gareth and all the staff involved in developing the Strategy.

## **8. Insurance Policy Update**

Richard presented an update, following discussion at previous SMG meetings, on potential additional insurance policies for Directors and Officers' Liability insurance cover and Employment insurance cover for Members.

Following consideration, SMG sought some additional costings and agreed that the Clerk/Chief Executive, Directors and the Head of Finance would meet to discuss further, once the additional information was available.

**Action:** Head of Finance to arrange a meeting with the Clerk/Chief Executive and Directors to discuss the potential additional insurance cover, following receipt of additional information as requested.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **26. Directorate Updates**

SMG noted the Directorate updates.

#### **Corporate Services**

#### **Support Services**

Richard advised that the catering costs for October 2020 were slightly less than the monthly budget profile for 2020/21.

## **Legal, Governance and Research Services**

### **Examiner of Statutory Rules (ESR)**

Tara advised of the increasing workload for the ESR in terms of COVID-19 Regulations and further potential demands on resources following EU Exit.

Tara also acknowledged the excellent work done by Clerking, ESR and IS Office staff on updating the Assembly's website with all of the COVID-19 Regulations.

SMG recorded its thanks to all the staff involved in developing the COVID-19 Regulations page on the Assembly's website.

## **Parliamentary Services**

### **Clerking**

Gareth advised that four new Assembly Clerks had been appointed following a recent recruitment exercise.

### **27. AOB**

There was no other business.

### **28. Date of next meeting**

Next meeting to take place on 17 December 2020.

### **29. Proposals for Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- Maintenance and Minor Capital Works Review
- Quarterly Review of Corporate Risk Register
- Corporate Governance Framework
- Update on EU Exit
- Provision of Broadcasting Technical Advice

The meeting ended at 5.54pm.