

Senior Management Team

Terms of Reference

Role

1. The Senior Management Team (SMT) brings together the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's (the Assembly Commission's) Clerk/Chief Executive (C/CEX) and directors to form its collective strategic and operational leadership. Its role is to provide the Assembly with the property, staff and services that it needs to carry out its business and deliver the Assembly Commission's Corporate Strategy. It does so by advising and supporting the C/CEX in the exercise of her non-procedural duties.
2. Individual directorate responsibilities are delegated to SMT members by the C/CEX. Therefore, SMT members have both individual and collective responsibility for the effective operation of the Assembly Commission. However, the C/CEX retains final authority for all decisions taken at SMT.

Membership

3. SMT comprises:
 - Clerk/Chief Executive;
 - Director of Corporate Services;
 - Director of Legal, Governance and Research Services; and
 - Director of Parliamentary Services.

Meetings, papers, and support

4. SMT meets approximately monthly and focuses on setting corporate strategy and plans, operational delivery, corporate policy and corporate governance.
5. By exception, business may also be dealt with by correspondence. Such a matter must be agreed by the C/CEX, circulated to all SMT members, and noted at the next meeting.
6. The C/CEX approves the agenda and papers for SMT. In so doing, the C/CEX must be satisfied that any matter proposed requires consideration by SMT. It is for the SMT member proposing the matter to so satisfy the C/CEX. In particular, attention must be given to:
 - Whether the item is novel, contentious or politically sensitive; and
 - Whether the item is within delegated authority.

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7. Administrative support is provided by the Assembly Commission and Chief Executive's Office. It will endeavor to distribute papers at least four working days before each meeting.
8. All papers for consideration by SMT must be submitted using the agreed template.
9. A draft action list and minutes will be prepared for consideration by SMT within a target of 5 working days of a meeting. Approved minutes will aim to be published on AsslSt and the Assembly website no later than 15 working days after the meeting. Unrestricted papers will also be published on AsslSt within the same timeframe.
10. All members of SMT attend the Assembly Commission Audit and Risk Committee (ACARC). ACARC supports the C/CEX (in her role as Accounting Officer), the Assembly Commission and SMT in their responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance by reviewing the comprehensiveness of assurances in meeting the organisation's assurance needs and reviewing the reliability and integrity of these assurances.

Business and Agenda

11. SMT will deal with the following business:
 - Development and delivery of Corporate Strategy, Corporate Plan and Annual Plans;
 - Consideration of Assembly Commission business;
 - Organisational leadership;
 - Strategic and business planning;
 - Financial planning and budget management;
 - Corporate policy setting;
 - Corporate risk management;
 - Change management;
 - Strategic resource planning and approvals;
 - Strategic communications;
 - Cross-Directorate issues;
 - Corporate governance;
 - Horizon-scanning; and
 - New or emerging issues.

Quorum and decision making

12. SMT is chaired by the C/CEX or a member nominated by her.
13. The quorum for SMT is three, including the chair. An SMT member who cannot attend must notify the C/CEX that he/she cannot attend and identify a deputy, with the consent of the C/CEX, to attend in his/her place.

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14. SMT is expected to act corporately, taking decisions for the benefit of the Assembly Commission and the Assembly in the context of wider resource and strategic management considerations. Accordingly, papers will usually be presented by Heads of Business.
15. Decisions will generally be made through consensus. However, the C/CEx retains final authority to make whatever decision she considers fit having considered all relevant factors and SMT is accountable collectively to her. If a Director has a view on a matter which differs to the wider SMT consensus, the view of the dissenting Director will be recorded in the minutes.

Sub-Committees

16. SMT may create Sub-Committees or Working Groups and if it does so must approve their terms of reference. A Sub-Committee will report through its chairperson to SMT in a suitable format.

Accountability and performance

17. The C/CEx intends SMT to be an effective, well regarded and visionary leadership group. The C/CEx will lead annually an evaluation of the performance of SMT.
18. Members of SMT are individually accountable to the C/CEx for the delivery of their performance and corporate and other objectives.