LEADERSHIP GROUP

FUTURE OF SPMN

Executive summary

1. The future of the Scottish Parliament Management Network was previously discussed in early 2009. That review provided useful feedback on the membership, purpose and format of the group and provided the basis for a programme of events which have taken place over the past couple of years. That programme came to an end with an event on 21 February 2011 on strategic planning.

2. Against the background of recent organisational changes I thought it an appropriate time to take stock of how well those arrangements have worked and seek your views on moving forward.

Issues and options

3. Following the event in August 2010 we sought feedback from SPMN members on the event and on the group. In relation to the group, comments were fairly consistent:

- Remains a useful forum.
- Main strength is in networking opportunity.
- Sessions a bit long; refresh the format and make more use of inspirational speakers.
- 2 or 3 sessions a year about right with extra events only if on big issues at a corporate level that would benefit from wider input.

4. There was less consensus in relation to the membership of the group, in particular whether Grade 5s should be included.

5. I think the group – which I suggest might simply be referred to in future as the Managers Network (MN) – continues to have a clear role to play, providing a valuable link between the Leadership Group and staff, facilitating communication (in particular acting as the focal point for downward and upward communications), helping to shape policy and managing implementation. I thought the network’s involvement during the recent VER/VES exercise was particularly helpful.

6. With regard to the membership, I am inclined not to extend it to all Grade 5s as this would make it too large to be effective. However, as previously suggested by some members of SPMN, I intend to include as members those Grade 5s who lead a team and report directly to a Grade 7, ie Head of Public Information and Publications, Head of Visitor Services and the Senior Building Manager. I would
be grateful for confirmation that you have no other staff in your groups falling into this category.

7. The recent programme of events has generally worked well. The introduction of an AC/CE to take responsibility for the planning of each event, involving other members of the network with a direct or expressed interest in the topic being discussed, has led to high quality agendas. I propose that this format continues, with a member of the Leadership Group being assigned to each event once a programme is agreed. The secretariat will then seek notes of interest from other network members.

8. The value of these events and the quality of any output can be directly linked to the level of preparation and planning. In addition to requiring time to identify and procure the services of any relevant external speakers, any staff member who is contributing/presenting at an event should be given sufficient time to prepare and this may include receiving some training or coaching in presenting the topic. Chris March has indicated that she is available to provide both direct and financial assistance where required and I would urge those with responsibility for planning sessions to take advantage of this resource.

**Resource Implications**

9. A small budget has been allocated in the CE Office budget to cover minimal refreshments during sessions. Resource has also been identified within the corporate training budget to cover external speakers and the provision of some presentation training.

**Governance issues**

10. There are no governance issues relating directly to this paper. SPMN events will be subject to individual EQIAs.

**Publication**

11. This paper will be published in line with the SPCB’s Publication Scheme.

**Next steps**

12. If the LG agrees the points below, the secretariat will liaise with MN members to develop a programme of events for the next 12 to 18 months.

**Decision**

13. The Leadership Group is asked to agree:

13.1 That the Management Network should continue.
13.2 That the membership should consist grades 6, 7 and 8 and those G5s who report directly to a G7 and head a team.

13.3 That the group meets 2 or 3 times a year, with topics for discussion being a mix of key corporate issues such as strategic planning, financial planning, etc, and topics proposed by MN members and agreed by LG.

13.4 That a member of the Leadership Group is identified, at the time the topic is agreed, to lead the session and work with colleagues on the agenda and content.

13.5 That Chris March is involved at the early stage of planning of each session to ensure support is available to any staff involved in presenting content and to assist in identifying and enlisting the services of external speakers.

Clerk/Chief Executive
February 2011