OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 7 DECEMBER 2009, 09:00AM, Q1.03

Present: Paul Grice (Chair)
          Alan Balharrie                      Michelle Hegarty
          Colin Chisholm                       Ken Hughes
          Derek Croll                          
          Henrietta Hales                     
          Jerry Headley                       

In Attendance: Tom Wheeler (item 3)
                Lee Bridges (items 3 and 4)
                Robert Rae (item 4)
                Lisa Miller (item 5)
                Mary Nicol (Items 5 and 6)
                Sam Jones (item 6)
                Willie Heigh (item 7)
                Alli Williams
                Johanna Lennon
                Mary Ann Masson (Secretary)

1. Apologies were received from Elizabeth Watson.

Item 1: Minutes of Previous Meeting: 2 November

2. The minutes of 2 November 2009 were approved.

Item 2: Matters Arising

Perimeter Security Works

2. OMG noted that the perimeter security works were currently underway and that good progress was being made.

Item 3: Update on Organisational Culture Work

3. Tom Wheeler, Strategy and Development Manager, provided OMG with an update on the paper on organisational culture and Members’ needs which had been considered by SLT on 3 December.
4. SLT were finalising a statement of intent for the organisation. This would be circulated to group heads along with a request to carry out an assessment of their own groups against the statement. Group heads would be free to decide how to carry this out within their own areas. Assessments and action plans would be submitted to SDO by the end of March 2010 and the Leadership Group would meet in autumn 2010 to review progress and agree further steps.

Item 4: Innovation Fund (OMG/033/2009)

5. Robert Rae, Director of Scotland’s Futures Forum and Lee Bridges, Head of Strategy and Development, presented a paper outlining a proposal for an Innovation Fund. As current levels of public expenditure would not be maintained over the next few years, the Scottish parliamentary service would need to reflect the growing trend in the wider economy of “innovating in a downturn”. The aim of the Innovation Fund was to foster critical thinking, experimentation, and a willingness to take risks by providing staff with the means to try out new things. It would be available to all staff but was aimed at junior and middle grade staff in particular. The fund would be run and managed by the Strategy and Development office.

6. OMG supported the proposal and agreed that it should be described as a “scheme” because many ideas would not require expenditure. It noted that SDO would play a major role in the scheme but suggested that other staff, particularly members of the Scottish Parliament Management Network, could also play a role, perhaps acting as mentors to those leading on taking forward proposals.

7. OMG recognised that a balance would have to be struck between encouraging innovation, implementing new ideas and ensuring that financial and human resources were available. It was also suggested that staff be reminded of the strategic priorities before submitting an idea. However, it would be important not to place unnecessary constraints on the scheme which might act as a barrier to encouraging new ideas. OMG noted the proposed peer group panel which would provide a useful check in the system.

8. There were some reservations about the web-based suggestion and ranking system. Robert and Lee agreed to give this further consideration.

9. OMG noted that final consideration of the proposal would be made by the Strategic Leadership Team in January 2010. OMG’s comments would be incorporated into the SLT paper.

Item 5: Unacceptable Attendance Realignment (OMG/035/2009)

10. OMG considered the paper outlining the realignment of unacceptable attendance. OMG recognised the challenging nature of this realignment and thanked HR colleagues and the reference group for their work in producing the draft guidance and procedures.
11. OMG noted the change of name for the policy and procedures from ‘poor attendance’ to ‘unacceptable attendance’ which signified the seriousness of not attending at an acceptable level and which was consistent with the terminology of the unacceptable performance policy and procedures. OMG supported the proposed introduction of the Bradford Factor to alert managers to the need to address short term persistent absences. HR would discuss this with the TUS.

12. OMG highlighted a number of areas in the guidance which would benefit from clarification. Lisa Miller agreed to consider these suggestions and make the necessary changes to the documentation. Any drafting comments would be submitted to Lisa Miller by Friday 11 December.

**Action: Lisa Miller, Group Heads**

13. The next steps were to consult formally with the TUS, the Office of the Solicitor, and the Equalities Manager. Final sign off would be obtained from OMG.

14. The programme of realignments was nearing completion. Feedback from HR Advisors was that previous realignments had been adopted by senior managers but that, in some cases, other managers might require further support in implementing the changes. Group heads agreed to consider the position in their own areas and to inform Human Resources if further support for managers was required.

**Action: Group Heads**


15. Sam Jones, Programme Manager, introduced a paper providing OMG with an update on the review of the Performance Management System. OMG’s views were sought on a set of high level recommendations to streamline the existing system.

*Recommendations 1 and 2: Review Competencies/Skills and Behaviours and implement a ‘bank’ or ‘menu’*

16. OMG agreed the following:

- Competencies would be re-named ‘skills and behaviours’
- There would be a bank of approximately 10 skills and behaviours from which business areas would draw down 4 to 6 which were most relevant to each role. (Most roles would have 4 skills and behaviours.)
- These skills and behaviours should be suitably broad in scope to prevent the system becoming too prescriptive.

*Recommendation 3: Streamlining the Performance Management Form*
17. OMG agreed that the form should be streamlined as suggested.

**Recommendation 4: The Professional Development Plan**

18. OMG agreed to the redesign of the personal development plan as proposed. It noted that the use of group training plans might be more useful in some groups than in others.

**Recommendation 5: Linkage to the Strategic Plan**

19. It would not be necessary to include a reference to the strategic plan against every objective. OMG noted that group plans were an important element of the objective-setting process and that this should be considered when drawing up the detailed proposals.

**Recommendation 6: Change Deadline for Submission of End-Year Review**

20. OMG considered the options for changing the timing of the review process. While the current system did not suit every area of the organisation, no option suited everyone. It was agreed that the current timings should remain in place.

**Recommendation 7: Monitoring In-Year Reviews**

21. OMG agreed that a written record of in-year review meetings be produced. Line managers would be given the latitude to decide what format this should take.

**Recommendation 8: Roll-out**

22. OMG noted the tight timescale for roll-out but agreed that the system should be implemented for the 2010/2011 reporting year. The process could be developed and refined throughout the year. Staff training would focus on all aspects of the appraisal system and not just the changes, in order to address misunderstandings and perceived inconsistencies. It was likely that training would take place in June 2010.

23. The next step was to prepare detailed proposals to be brought to SLT and OMG early in 2010. Sam Jones and colleagues in HR agreed to reflect generally on timings.

    **Action: Sam Jones**

**Item 7: Operational Portfolio (OMG/037/2009)**

24. OMG reviewed the operational portfolio.

**Contact Management System**
25. OMG approved the proposal for a project to investigate the options to implement a Members’ contact management system. The project was given a provisional priority ranking. OMG would discuss this further at a future date when it considered the PID.

Debate Recording System

26. A PID for the debate recording system would be brought to OMG on 1 February. At that point it would discuss whether and where to place it on the priority list.

Records Management Phase 2

27. Phase 2 of the records management project had been adjusted to limit BIT involvement and would focus on policies. A budget was no longer required. A PID would be prepared for consideration on 1 February.

Broadcasting Infrastructure

28. OMG agreed the PID for the broadcasting infrastructure programme.

Service Yard Gates

29. OMG would consider the PID on 11 January.

Enquiries Database

30. A revised PID for the enquiries database project would be considered by OMG on 1 February. Susan Mansfield and Shona Skakle would be invited to attend for this item.

31. Henrietta Hales agreed to ensure that HR was consulted regarding the potential customisation of Assyst.

Action: Henrietta Hales

Monthly Portfolio Updates

32. OMG agreed that there should continue to be monthly operational portfolio updates until the end of the current financial year. At the meeting on 12 April 2010, OMG would decide whether future monthly updates would be useful.

Training

33. OMG noted that Willie Heigh had been working with the Capability Development Manager to integrate programme and project management training into the G7/8 Leadership Development programme and the G5/6 Academy proposals. Group heads agreed to consider whether to attend either of the two courses.

Action: Group Heads

Timely Submission of Papers
34. Paul Grice noted that a number of documents for this portfolio report had been submitted later than the stated deadline. Group heads agreed to ensure that all documentation for future operational portfolio discussions was submitted to Willie Heigh in time.

**Action: Group Heads**

**Item 8: SLT Update**

35. Paul Grice updated OMG on discussions at the Strategic Leadership Group which had taken place on 3 December.

**Item 9: Forward Look**

**Forward Plan**

36. OMG agreed to review the forward plan on a regular basis and to keep the secretariat informed of any updates.

**Leadership**

37. Paul Grice asked group heads to collect the views of their staff and other colleagues on leadership in the organisation. A commitment had been made to staff in May to improve leadership and to seek feedback following the structural changes which had been implemented as part of the corporate change programme. Group heads should, among other things they considered important, ask their staff, line managers and peers the following:

- What changes have you seen in my leadership since April 2009?
- What am I doing well?
- Where could I improve?
- Have you noticed a change in leadership styles elsewhere in the organisation?
- What needs to happen to further improve leadership in the organisation?

38. Group heads would be asked to report back what they had learned at OMG on 1 March. A short note provided in advance would help colleagues consider this matter.

**Action: Group Heads**

**SPICe Research Review**

39. Henrietta Hales informed OMG that a review of SPICe Research would be undertaken. As part of the review, staff consultation would take place. Henrietta would keep colleagues informed of progress.

**Item 10: AOB**
Distribution of Papers

40. Group heads noted the commitment outlined in the OMG practices and procedures to share papers wherever possible with their team leaders. It was agreed that Group heads should use their discretion to ensure that all appropriate papers were passed on to their nominated staff in advance of the meeting.

OMG Secretariat
December 2009