OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

Operating Principles

Background

1. This paper invites OMG to review and agree operating principles for the group. These have been drawn up following discussions between the secretariat and individual members of OMG. They include a number of expected behaviours, which are listed below, in addition to a list of operating principles which is attached at Annex A.

Contact: Mary Ann Masson x85304

Timing

2. It is proposed that the agreed principles be adopted by OMG with immediate effect.

Discussion

3. The operating principles are adapted from those of the Strategic Leadership Team to meet the purposes of OMG. A number of behavioural principles have also been produced and are included in this paper for approval. The OMG Secretary met individually with members of the group to gather views relating to the operation of OMG. The operating and behavioural principles have been produced with these discussions in mind. There were a number of areas on which there were differing views from OMG members and on these issues the secretariat has made a decision where possible, usually based on the majority view, and incorporated these into the operating principles. Where there was no majority view, a question is posed below for collective discussion. These areas are outlined below along with any significant changes from the arrangements which applied to the Senior Management Team. OMG is invited to consider and decide upon these areas specifically and to comment on any other aspect of the operating and behavioural principles.

Behavioural Principles

4. The remit of the group is included in the operating principles. All members of OMG were agreed that to fulfil this role will require them to work closely together. Group heads were clear about the importance of improving the lines of communications with each other outwith meetings. Each agreed that the primary responsibility for maximising the effectiveness of the group lies with them.

5. The following behavioural principles are proposed:
5.1. OMG meetings will provide a forum for free and frank discussion and debate of high level cross-cutting operational issues. OMG members are expected to challenge colleagues’ ideas and be open to constructive criticism.

5.2. OMG members will engage fully with each topic whether or not it relates directly to their group.

5.3. OMG members will undertake to build upon their existing working relationships with their fellow members.

5.4. OMG will discuss topics to which it can add value. OMG will have sight of forward plans for future meetings so that any concerns/issues about forthcoming agenda items can be addressed.

5.5. OMG will consider suitable methods of onward communication to all stakeholders as part of the discussion of each topic.

6. OMG is asked to agree the list of behavioural principles.

**Operational Issues**

7. Unless papers are restricted, group heads should be free to circulate OMG papers to office heads and brief them on discussions held at OMG to ensure that all teams are aware of cross-cutting operational issues affecting the organisation.

8. It is proposed that OMG meet at 10.30am on a Monday morning with no fixed networking time prior to the meeting. Refreshments will still be available on arrival and a 15 minute opportunity for networking will be scheduled into each meeting.

9. The draft OMG paper template is based upon the SLT template and is attached at Annex B. Given the importance of effective corporate communication, it is proposed that the template include a section on the way in which the issue will be communicated to stakeholders. A reference to this could be included in the guidance under ‘next steps’ or a communications sub-heading could be added. OMG is asked to agree that a reference to communication methods be included in papers and, if so, where this should be included in the template.

10. Members were divided on when they would prefer to receive their papers. The secretariat proposes that papers are issued no later than the Wednesday prior to the meeting. This achieves a balance between allowing members time to read papers in advance of the meeting, providing authors with sufficient time to prepare, reducing the necessity to issue late papers and ensuring the relevance of the topic. OMG is asked to agree that papers are issued 3 working days prior to the meeting.
11. The operating principles list a number of standing items for OMG agendas although there are mixed views about the benefit of these. Several, specifically Finance, the SLT update and the OMG forward look will assist OMG in fulfilling its remit. The secretariat proposes that a proactive approach is taken to the quarterly health and safety standing item with each member taking a turn to bring a specific health and safety issue to the group for discussion. **OMG is asked to agree the list of standing items listed in the operating principles and the suggested approach to health and safety.**

12. Several members asked to receive regular updates on progress against KPIs. **OMG is asked to agree whether this should form a standing item or whether a summary of progress could be circulated as part of the monthly management information.**

13. All OMG members were agreed that it would be beneficial to have a regular slot on each agenda to allow group heads to update colleagues on forthcoming issues or initiatives in their offices. It is proposed that the secretariat commissions contributions for this item in advance so that sufficient time can be allocated on the agenda. The Clerk/Chief Executive’s office holds a combined forward plan listing all items scheduled for future OMG, Strategic Leadership Team and Corporate Body meetings which OMG may find useful to see on a regular basis. **OMG is asked to agree the proposal to include an ‘OMG Forward Look’ on each agenda and to decide whether the forward plan should be circulated for this item.**

14. It is hoped that the forward look and the monthly update from SLT will give OMG a sufficient overview of what is going on in the organisation. **SMT is invited to discuss whether there are any information gaps and, if so, what processes can be put in place to close these.**

15. Members held a variety of views on the benefits of OMG sub-groups. **OMG is asked to agree whether sub-groups should be used, and if so, whether they should have full secretariat support.**

16. There was divided opinion over the benefits of the meeting review. The secretariat proposes that this is retained as a useful feedback tool particularly as OMG is a new group. **OMG is asked to agree that the meeting review is used to evaluate the quality of the papers, the discussion on agenda items and the behaviours displayed by the group rather than more mechanistic aspects of meetings.**

17. OMG members were agreed that the group should meet to discuss both office plans and budget planning. **OMG is asked to agree how often planning meetings should take place and the appropriate timing of these.**
18. Where possible, the secretariat will produce and circulate minutes of OMG no later than 3 working days after the meeting. SLT minutes are kept brief, focusing mainly on what was finally agreed whereas SMT minutes provided greater detail on significant interim discussions. **OMG is asked to decide on the format of OMG minutes.**

19. Three new distribution lists have been created with ‘DL Operational Management Group’ and ‘DL Strategic Leadership Team’ covering the new groups. A DL Group Heads list has also been created to allow group heads to communicate with each other easily by email. This DL may also be used by other staff to communicate with group heads. As the Clerk/Chief Executive has group head responsibilities, it would be useful if he was included on the list. However, it is recognised that group heads may prefer to have use of this distribution list without the Clerk/Chief Executive copied in. If this is the case, the OMG Secretary could be added to the DL to pick up any emails which require action from the Clerk/Chief Executive. **OMG is asked to decide whether the Clerk/Chief Executive be added to DL Group Heads.**

**Resource Implications**

20. There are no direct resource implications arising from this paper. Budgetary provision has been made for OMG to have a day-long meeting for planning purposes during 2009/10.

**Equalities Implications**

21. There are no direct equal opportunity implications arising from this paper.

**Publication Scheme**

22. This paper can be published.

**Next Steps**

23. Subject to OMG approval, the secretariat will:

- finalise the behavioural and operating principles and the OMG paper template and make these available to staff via SPEIR and on MS Word.
- keep the operation of OMG under review and conduct further 1-2-1 meetings with members in 6 months.

**Decision**

24. OMG is asked to:

- agree the behavioural principles outlined at paragraph 5;
• agree the OMG operating principles; and
• agree that a review of these principles be carried out by the secretariat in 6 months.

Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office
March 2009
OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUP
OMG/001/09
3 April 2009
Annex A

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUP (OMG) OPERATING PRINCIPLES
– as at April 2009

Membership

- Clerk/Chief Executive (Chair)
- All Group Heads
- Head of Procurement, Head of SDO and Senior Lawyer

In attendance:

- Other Office Heads to attend as appropriate
- AC/CEs as appropriate
- Head of the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office
- Member of the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office (Secretary)
- Chief Executive Office Administrative Support

Remit

- To deal with cross-cutting operational issues;
- To deliver the organisational strategy;
- To develop operational strategies required effectively to deliver organisational goals;
- To promote collaborative working across the business to deliver organisational goals;
- To hold regular operational reviews to demonstrate operational performance and progress;
- To provide a forum to agree prioritisation and resourcing for projects. This includes responsibility for taking a view on projects which require cross-organisational support or resources. OMG will oversee the delivery of the operational portfolio of programmes and projects, including reviewing business cases, securing budget, ensuring that resources are focused appropriately, reviewing the status of ongoing projects, addressing issues encountered in projects and managing operational risks;
- To monitor the operational effectiveness of the organisation and to advise the Chief Executive and Strategic Leadership Team on operational matters and operational effectiveness;
• Within the overall strategy set by SLT, to co-ordinate the SPCB’s annual budget bid and SPS staffing bid for submission to the Strategic Leadership Team, as part of a revised budget planning process;

• To undertake workforce planning to deliver organisational objectives that contribute to the strategic outcomes defined by SLT;

• To act as change agents for organisational change required to deliver the organisation’s strategy;

• To work together to ensure that resource from across the organisation is utilised effectively and efficiently to deliver the operational portfolio i.e. activities are well planned and managed to avoid bottlenecks and maximise utilisation and throughput; and

• To carry out all responsibilities in a manner that is open, transparent and demonstrates alignment with the Parliament’s values.

**Frequency of Meetings and Meeting Attendees**

OMG normally meets once a month on a Monday at 10.30am, usually in a small Committee Room or Q1.03.

Meetings will be chaired by the Clerk/Chief Executive and will not normally take place if he is unable to attend.

Recurring calendar invites are issued for the next one or two parliamentary terms, inviting all members as well as Alli Williams (Head of C/CE Office) and Mary Ann Masson (OMG Secretary) to all meetings.

Meetings are arranged, wherever possible, to avoid recesses. Frequency is normally reduced during the summer recess. Additional meetings are arranged as required.

**Planning Days**

OMG will meet twice a year specifically to discuss office and budget planning.

**Forward Plan**

Future papers are programmed into the combined SPCB/SLT/OMG forward plan. These are notified to the secretariat by Group Heads, the C/CE or AC/CEs.
Meeting Papers

Papers are, where practical, issued 3 working days in advance of the meeting. Papers are filed on Sharepoint and issued via an email link to all members.

If a decision is required urgently, clearance of papers can be sought via correspondence. In such cases, papers are not numbered.

Papers normally follow the OMG paper template [attached]. Where papers do not follow the template, a decision on publication must still be included.

All papers are numbered prior to circulation. Papers are numbered numerically according to where they appear on the agenda.

Agenda

Agendas routinely include:

- Minutes of last meeting
- Matters arising
- Networking time
- Date and time of next meeting
- Any other business
- Meeting Review

Quarterly agendas include the operational portfolio. Willie Heigh (Projects and Best Value Manager) will be invited to attend for this item.

Standing Items

The following standing items will appear on the agenda at the stated frequency:

- Health and Safety (quarterly)
- OMG Forward Look (monthly)
- SLT Update (monthly)
- Finance (a quarterly report and a monthly update)
- Equalities Update (bi-annually)

Substantive Agenda Items

An item will be added to the agenda if it falls into one or more of the following categories:

- proposed by a member of OMG
• draft SPCB paper
• proposed by SLT
• those identified by OMG via the operational portfolio as requiring further discussion

All papers must be endorsed by the relevant group head(s).

Agendas indicate the item number for each issue being considered, the length of time for discussion for each item, and who will lead the discussion. Where there is a paper, this is always numbered. Where the item is just to be spoken to without an accompanying paper, the agenda indicates “oral”. Items being presented by non members are normally at the top of the agenda.

Minutes

Minutes are, where possible, issued by email to members no later than 3 working days after the meeting.

The relevant extract of the minute is also issued to any staff who attended specific items.

Minutes routinely record:

• Attendance
• Apologies
• Approval of or any changes to previous minutes
• Matters arising
• Items discussed
• date and time of next meeting;
• any other business
• meeting review

Principles of OMG Minutes

Minutes will normally report views as those of the Operational Management Group, rather than of individuals.

Publication of OMG minutes and papers

OMG minutes, agendas and, where appropriate, papers are published on the OMG page of the Parliament’s website.
Papers which are thought may be subject to an exemption under FOI or which are draft SPCB papers and are not published. The latter are destroyed after consideration by SPCB.

Each paper should contain a recommendation on publication. OMG may decide to change this recommendation.

Publication takes place after the minute of the previous meeting has been approved.

**Action Table**

All action points from the minutes are logged on a table listing all SPCB/SLT/OMG actions. Action parties should inform the OMG Secretariat of any updates. The Secretariat will follow up outstanding responses quarterly.

**Monthly Management Information**

OMG receive monthly management information which is saved to Sharepoint and issued via an email link to all members. This includes:

- Finance Reports
- Personnel Management Reports
- Freedom of Information
- Health and Safety
- KPIs

Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office
March 2009
TITLE - Should be as specific as possible

Background

This should be a background note drawing OMG's attention to why an issue is being raised & what previous relevant decisions were taken. It should be crisp & brief.

Contact: [author's name and 📡 ]

Timing

This section need not always be used, as in most cases when a paper is submitted to the SPCB a decision will be made. However where a specific timescale must be met and depends on an OMG decision it should be noted here.

Discussion

This section should explain in more detail the reasoning behind the recommendation or conclusion reached and where appropriate set out what other options were considered and why they were not recommended.

It should also set out any factors that OMG should be aware of in reaching a decision such as how any action would be implemented & any effects on Members, their staff or parliament staff. It is also important to clarify any potential political implications.

The discussion should be clear, factual and as concise as possible - where helpful, bullet points should be used instead of lengthy text e.g. to set out the clear benefits of an action; or to set out specific ways of doing something.

Resource Implications

Any financial, staffing or other resource implications should be clearly set out here. If there are any financial implications the paper must be agreed with the Finance Office before it is submitted to OMG. Also, if there are any staffing issues/implications you must make sure you have discussed these with the
Head of Personnel who can then decide whether the TUS needs to be notified.

Dependencies

You should use this section to indicate whether successful implementation of the proposal/policy is/may be dependant on any other area of the organisation or any external factors.

Equalities Implications

This section should explain clearly any equal opportunities implications, either positive or negative. In particular, it should:

- highlight any areas where there is the potential for discrimination to occur in the execution of this project or policy (and explain how this risk will be minimised);
- explain how this policy/project will contribute to the accessibility of the Parliament and/or to the promotion of equal opportunities amongst staff or service users;
- describe any further work that is needed to examine fully the equal opportunities implications of this policy/project;
- refer to any legal issues that are raised by this project/initiative that relate to equal opportunities.

The Equalities Manager is happy to advise about the potential equality issues that should be taken into account.

Publication Scheme

You should use this section to indicate whether the paper will be published on the Parliament website in conjunction with the minutes of the relevant OMG meeting. You should seek legal advice if appropriate and record here any notes on reasons for withholding the paper.

Next Steps

Identify here any actions to be taken or which may occur as a result of any decision(s) made relating to the paper.

Decision

This section should set out clearly what is recommended by the paper or what conclusion is reached on the issue and invite OMG to agree or to note as appropriate.