OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUP
POSITIVE ACTION EVENT – POST-EVENT UPDATE

Background
1. The positive action event aimed at Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people, “Your Parliament! Your Career?” took place on the afternoon of 9 July 2009. The purpose of the event was to provide delegates with:
   - the opportunity to find out about the variety of jobs in the Parliament, and current vacancies
   - workshops on our application and interview process, to ensure they make the most of any application
   - a tour of the building with particular focus on Holyrood as a workplace
   - the opportunity to apply for work placements with the SPCB

2. We provided OMG with an update on 8 June 2009 and said that we would report back after the event and, in particular, provide more detail about the level of interest in placements (Directors’ Group having previously agreed in principle to making 20 placements of 2 days specifically available, although these could be extended, depending on whether an office can accommodate someone for longer or if there is a specific project they can work on.

Contact: Dominic Johnston, 86638

Discussion
3. We contacted BME (and other) organisations, universities and colleges and asked them to publicise the event and/or nominate people to attend. Our aim was 60 attendees. Demand for places was slightly more than we were able to accommodate and just under 90 people attended on the day.

4. There was a positive contribution from staff, with MRO, Committee and Chamber Offices, Finance, BIT, SPiCe, Security, SDO and MRO all taking part. Deputy Presiding Officer, Trish Godman and Assistant Chief Executive, Stewart Gilfillan also attended and gave welcome speeches to delegates.

5. Our feeling is that, on the whole, the event was a success. Delegates attended in numbers and were engaged and enthusiastic. Feedback from delegates on the day was very positive, with the interview workshop particularly popular. Attendees and staff appeared to enjoy themselves. We are currently gathering more formal feedback from attendees.

6. There have been measurable results. We publicised vacancies for Education Assistants and Administrators at the event. This resulted in a
modest number of direct applications (one and 6 respectively). There has been a noticeable rise in BME applications since the event, as illustrated in the table overleaf:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>White Applications %</th>
<th>BME Applications %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average all posts 08-09</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Assistant May 2008</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Assistant July 2009</strong></td>
<td><strong>92.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators Feb</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrators July</strong></td>
<td><strong>91.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*BME categories include Asian, (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or other) Black (Caribbean, African or other), Mixed ethnic group and Other ethnic group. Figures do not include candidates who did not indicate an ethnic origin.

These are significant increases, but cannot be directly attributed to the event and should be seen in the context of an overall increase in BME applications in the past year.

7. There has been some constructive criticism. We have received comments that some attendees had unrealistic expectations about the number and nature of employment opportunities that would be available. The fact is that the Parliament is a relatively small employer and opportunities are therefore limited and will arise unpredictably. Many people are unclear about what the Parliament does and often confuse it with much larger organisations such as the SG. These are points to consider when publicising any similar event in the future. Some staff commented, fairly, that they lacked information about the possibility of placements, or how to respond to questions about visas/entitlement to work. In future we would seek a better balance between written briefing for offices/staff and more, direct, communication to staff on the day.

8. Thirteen placement applications have been received – a little short of the 20 we planned for. Applicants were asked to list three areas of interest. There is a good spread across the organisation with MRO, Finance, Clerking and HR most popular. The only areas with no specific expressions of interest are BIT, FM and Security. HR and SDO are currently reviewing the applications with a view to allocating applicants and ensuring a fair spread across offices.

**Timing**

9. We informed delegates that any placements would take place between September 2009 and February 2009. We said that we would write to applicants in September about the outcome of their applications.
Resource Implications

10. As placements are expected to be short the call on staff time will be modest. No single business area is expected to take more than two placements over the 6 months period. Placements are intended to be unpaid.

Equalities Implications

11. The aim of the placement programmer is to increase the potential for applications from and appointment of BME people, increasing diversity in the organisation and further demonstrating the SPCB’s commitment to equality and diversity.

Publication Scheme

12. This paper is suitable for publication under the SPCB’s Publication Scheme.

Next Steps

13. After HR/SDO have completed their review of applications and considered the allocation of applicants they will meet with groups/offices to discuss candidates and agree the timing of placements. We would seek to have applicants allocated and dates confirmed by mid September. Group/office heads will be asked to nominate one individual as co-ordinator for their area.

14. HR will then write to applicants about their placement and will arrange for security questionnaires to be completed. Thereafter offices/groups will be responsible for taking forward the specific arrangements and liaison with the individuals.

Action

15. OMG are asked to confirm that that the organisation will accommodate a minimum of a two day placements for each of the 13 applicants, and that they are content with the approach to arranging them outlined above.

Dominic Johnston
Human Resources
August 2009