MANAGEMENT OF SPCB BUSINESS

Background

1. A Working Group was set up by the Clerk/Chief Executive to review the management of SPCB business and the support provided to its members.

2. The purpose of this paper is to highlight those actions arising from the review which affect OMG.

Contact: Judith Proudfoot, x85307.

Timing

3. It is the intention to implement any changes before the Corporate Body’s meeting on 16 September.

Discussion

4. There were a number of actions arising from the review which have consequences for OMG members:

Need for officials to work more corporately

5. The Working Group agreed that it was important that officials liaised thoroughly with colleagues in the preparation of papers and in advance of meetings. It was essential that any issues were dealt with before the matter was discussed at an SPCB meeting so that only the lead official and the Chief Executive were required to contribute at the meeting and they could do so armed with all the facts/arguments. When more than one official was required to contribute, it should be on the basis that consistent advice was provided to the Corporate Body.

Quality of papers

6. As a result of the revised organisational structure, it is anticipated that the majority of papers to the Corporate Body will now come through Group Heads. SPCB members were generally content with the papers received, however they did have a number of comments on how papers could be improved, including:

   o issues presented should be more strategic and less operational
   o papers should be more concise with less detail
   o they should contain more realistic costings
   o figures should be presented in a clearer way
   o inclusion of an executive summary
7. The SPCB secretariat has revised the SPCB paper template. A copy, along with updated guidance on drafting papers, will be available through SPEIR by 4 September. A draft version is attached for information.

**Engaging with SPCB portfolio members**

8. The review recognised that the Corporate Body was engaged with its role and responsibilities and members endeavoured to make themselves available whenever issues needed to be discussed or their comments sought outwith meetings. This provided a good basis for officials to improve working arrangements where necessary.

9. All Group Heads should be aware of who their respective portfolio member is. Some offices, eg committee and chamber offices, may not have a specific portfolio member; other offices may deal with more than one depending on the subject matter being addressed.

10. SPCB members have commented on a few occasions where they have felt that they had not been informed or involved in issues early enough. Group Heads should remember to alert their portfolio member at an early stage to any issue arising or paper being prepared for SPCB consideration. You should be aware of the differing working styles amongst members and tailor the method of engagement accordingly.

11. Portfolio members are available to provide advice and guidance and challenge during the preparation of papers, but they can not direct the conclusions or recommendations, these are for the paper author to determine. The portfolio member is entitled, if they so wish, to put forward any opposing argument or opinion at the SPCB meeting.

**Meetings**

12. **Frequency** – it was agreed that meetings would continue to be held on a fortnightly basis.

13. **Operational** – it was agreed that the appropriate official should continue to be invited to introduce papers and thereafter the Presiding Officer would firstly seek comments from the relevant portfolio member before opening up discussion to all members.

**Resource Implications**

14. There are no financial implications of this paper. However, it is recognised that there will be an additional call on Group Heads’ time in developing relationships with their portfolio members where these are not
already in place. Additional time may also need to be built into programmes to enable full consultation to take place on cross-cutting issues.

Dependencies

15. One of the key aims of this paper is to ensure that Group Heads take full account of dependencies when preparing SPCB papers.

Equalities Implications

16. There are no equality implications of this paper.

Publication Scheme

17. This paper will be published on the website in conjunction with the minutes of the meeting.

Next Steps

18. The following actions are being taken forward:

- Revised SPCB paper template and guidance for drafting papers are due to be signed-off by the Corporate Body by 28 August. Final versions will be published on SPEIR by 4 September
- SLT and OMG templates will be reviewed to ensure consistency.
- SPCB Practices & Procedures to be reviewed to ensure they reflect the actions outlined in this paper.

Decision

19. The OMG is invited to note the actions arising from the review.

Chief Executive’s Office
August 2009
GUIDANCE FOR DRAFTING SPCB PAPERS

Secretariat support for the SPCB is provided by the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office. Following consultation with members of the Corporate Body we have taken the opportunity of reviewing our procedures and the format of SPCB papers.

Please follow the link to access the up to date SPCB Paper template. This template should be used for all future papers. If you have any questions about completing the template or the formatting of papers for SPCB, please call the secretariat on 85307/86222.

Any accompanying papers or annexes providing more detail on the background and discussion must be relevant to the purpose of the paper. Where it is helpful, bullet points should be used instead of any lengthy text, for example to set out the benefits of a recommended action. Figures should be presented clearly, in a table format if appropriate. Remember – yours will not be the only Paper the member is being asked to read and consider.

Other points to consider include:

- Any financial, procurement, HR or legal related aspect to any paper must always be cleared with the respective office. You should also consider whether the issue has any implications for colleagues in other areas of the organisation and consult where appropriate.
- Consideration must be given to any media handling aspects and you should alert MRO at an early stage in order to seek advice and/or enable them to prepare lines to take. Any particular media aspects should be noted under the ‘Publication Scheme’ heading.
- Papers should be discussed with the relevant portfolio member at an early stage in order to ensure you have time to incorporate any comments they may have. The portfolio member will be expected, by the PO, to be familiar with the contents and issues in the paper. A copy of the members’ portfolio responsibilities is attached at Annex A.
- Papers must be cleared with your Group Head or SRO before being submitted to the SPCB secretariat for issue.

The assumption should be that a Paper will be published along with the minute of the relevant meeting where the Paper was discussed. You should confirm this under the ‘Publication Scheme’ heading. It is recommended that you clear this with legal services, particularly if you are indicating that the paper, or part of it, should not be released. It would be helpful if you could refer to any specific legal advice received. You should be aware, however, that not publishing a Paper under the Parliament’s Publication Scheme does not prevent someone from asking for the Paper under FOI so you should always bear this in mind when drafting your Paper.

SPCB meetings usually take place on Wednesday mornings. All papers relating to the meeting must be issued to the SPCB members on the
Thursday prior to the meeting. It is therefore important that you forward the final version of your paper to the secretariat by close of play on the Wednesday preceding the SPCB meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Carolyn Costley (86222) if you have any queries about any aspect of this note or the SPCB more generally.

Judith Proudfoot
Secretary, SPCB
85307

September 2009
SPCB members’ portfolio responsibilities

- **Alex Johnstone MSP** – Technology and facilities management issues including building maintenance, IT and local office support
- **Tom McCabe MSP** – Resources and governance issues covering Procurement, Allowances and Finance Offices
- **Tricia Marwick MSP** – Access and information issues covering visitor services, events, public information, education and outreach, SPICe and the editorial content of the website and intranet as well as broadcasting and the broader aspects of media relations
- **Mike Pringle MSP** – Corporate issues (including governance, equalities and HR issues) and Office Holders/Commissioners
TITLE

Executive summary

This should be a brief paragraph or two setting out the purpose of the paper and the decision(s) being sought.

Issues and Options

This section should be clear, factual and as concise as possible – where helpful, numbered bullet points should be used instead of lengthy text.

You should set out any factor the SPCB should be aware of in reaching a decision, such as how any action would be implemented and any effects on Members, their staff or parliamentary staff.

Briefly set out each issue immediately followed by the decision/action required of the SPCB. These decisions/actions should then be summarised at the end of the paper under the heading ‘Decisions’.

Resource Implications

You should consult with the relevant offices such as Finance, HR and Procurement to ensure that all resource implications including financial and staffing are addressed and set out clearly here. The Head of Human Resources will decide whether the TUS need to be notified.

Governance issues

This section should be used to highlight any governance issues relating to the decisions/actions being discussed. This will include areas such as equalities, health & safety, environmental, etc. As a minimum, you should indicate/confirm that these matters have been considered and all the necessary actions have been taken, eg an Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out.

Publication Scheme

You should consider whether MRO should be alerted to the paper in advance of it being issued for SPCB consideration. Any media issues should be noted here including a recommendation on whether the paper should be published in line with the SPCB’s Publication Scheme. Please indicate if there are any specific timing issues in relation to publication, eg if the paper should only be published after formal announcement of an event or policy.
Next steps

Identify here how decisions will be implemented. This includes a note on whether further updates will be provided to the SPCB and what form these might take, eg a follow-up paper; an update by email; liaison with the relevant portfolio member, etc.

Decision

This section should set out clearly what is recommended by the paper and what decision is being sought and invite the SPCB to agree/note as appropriate.

Office name
Date