OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Executive Summary

1. This paper provides OMG with an update on the review of the Performance Management System. The paper seeks OMG’s views on a set of high level recommendations to streamline the existing system. Any changes to the Performance Management System must be in place in time for the new reporting year in April 2010. Many of the recommendations outlined below will require significant input from the Human Resources Office, business areas and, to a lesser extent, BIT. SLT’s views on these high level recommendations were sought in early November prior to work being undertaken to develop more detailed proposals. SLT’s views have been incorporated into this paper. Fully worked up proposals will be brought back to SLT and OMG in early 2010.

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Issues and Options

Background

2. The review of the Performance Management System was initiated following scoping work undertaken in the Systems and Processes workstream of the first phase of the Corporate Change Programme. This scoping work entailed interviews with all Grade 7 staff to identify possible systems and processes which could be streamlined. Several members of the then SMT identified the Performance Management System as one such area which should be reviewed.

3. The review commenced in July 2009. Interviews have been carried out with all OMG members and two staff reference groups have also met, one comprising managers, the other comprising staff with no line management responsibilities. Meetings were also held with Security managers and staff. Some comparative work with systems in other public and private sector organisations has also been undertaken. OMG will be briefed on the themes which have emerged from the data collection phase at its meeting on 7 December 2009.

The Context of Performance Management

4. It is critical that performance management is set in the wider context of organisation development, and that it is linked to and supports organisational priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan, as well as underpinning the Parliament’s learning and capability development...
strategy. To function effectively, a performance management system must command buy in from senior management downwards.

Proposed Changes

5. The following recommendations are proposed to enhance the system. As indicated above, OMG’s views on these are being sought ‘in principle’ on the basis that fully worked up proposals are brought back to SLT and OMG in early 2010 for its approval. These recommendations are predicated on the following assumptions/principles:

- The primary function of the performance management system should remain developmental in terms of delivering and developing the business as well as developing the individual.
- The system should continue to be competency based in terms of promoting core skills and behaviours.
- All staff should continue to be appraised on an annual basis, i.e we do not wish to introduce performance management by exception whereby only poor performers are subjected to a full appraisal.

6. There are eight high level recommendations for revising the system and these are as follows:

Recommendation 1: Review Competencies/Skills and Behaviours
Recommendation 2: Skills and Behaviours ‘Bank’ or ‘Menu’

7. The existing suite of competencies (which we suggest are re-named ‘skills and behaviours’) should be reviewed. Possible changes include:

- The separation of the leadership and teamwork competency;
- The removal of the Improving Access and Promoting Equality competency, with these goals instead being reflected in individuals’ job roles;
- To comply with our statutory responsibilities, environmental management and health and safety job objectives should also be introduced for all staff. In the case of health and safety, a range of technical and managerial responsibilities could potentially apply to a role. It is therefore proposed to create a health and safety competency matrix which would outline the skills, training, qualifications and experience necessary for various levels of management and for specific duty holders, such as nominated person, first aider or DSE assessor. Staff and reporting officers would refer to the competency matrix when completing the appraisal form;
- The Parliamentary awareness and Parliamentary values and collaborative working competencies should be reviewed in line with
the developing work on organisational culture being undertaken by SDO.

8. A ‘bank’ or ‘menu’ of 10-15 skills and behaviours should be created to replace the current 9 competencies which are applied universally to all staff. Business areas will then draw down between 4 and 6 skills and behaviours for posts with these being determined by job role rather than by the needs of individual staff. Given the priority attached to meeting Members’ needs, the revised Parliamentary/political awareness competency should be compulsory for all staff. The HR Advisory Team should work with individual business areas to advise on the allocation of skills and behaviours as well as helping business areas produce tailored behavioural indicators and descriptions (this will also help to continue to develop the HR Advisory Team’s business partnering approach as well as to enhance their understanding of the business areas which they are working with).

9. SLT considered whether a separate skills and behaviour bank should be created for senior staff, for example Grade 7 and above. Previously, having all staff appraised against the same competencies regardless of grade has been seen as a particular strength of the system as well as being consistent with the organisation’s culture. On the other hand, the ongoing leadership development programme could be used to develop a separate or additional suite of skills and behaviours for senior managers. SLT agreed that senior management should be subject to the same suite of skills and behaviours but requested further work to develop and strengthen levels 3 and 4 to allow sufficient differentiation between grades 6 to 8.

10. A list of possible new skills and behaviours is at Annex A with short descriptions.

Recommendation 3: Streamlining the Performance Appraisal Form

11. The performance appraisal form should be streamlined. A possible solution could be developed in conjunction with BIT to conflate both job objectives and competencies, preferably on to the same page. This should avoid repetition of the same evidence relating to performance and achievements. SLT agreed that, where appropriate, restrictions should be placed on the amount of text which can be included in areas of the form.

Recommendation 4: The PDP

12. The PDP should be re-designed so that the previous year’s development activities are captured separately from the following year’s objectives. The form should be re-named Professional Development Plan, rather than Personal Development Plan. The PDPs should collectively underpin the Parliament’s reactive element of the learning and capability development strategy and training catalogue for the year ahead; one element of the
implementation should be to ensure that they are meaningful and to ensure that staff are aware of the importance of completing them. The proactive element of this strategy should continue to be derived from the Strategic Plan. We also wish to explore the potential for working with Group Heads in developing group training plans and using these to inform organisational priorities.

Recommendation 5: Linkage to the Strategic Plan

13. Personal job objectives should be linked directly to the relevant section of the Strategic Plan. For example, a job objective for a Clerk in the Chamber Office might read ‘Act as voting clerk in the Chamber on a weekly basis (SP 1.1 – support the successful delivery of Chamber business)’. This would have the benefit of reinforcing the link between organisational strategy and individual job roles and objectives, and would also help to encourage all staff to familiarise themselves with the SPS’s strategic aims and priorities.

Recommendation 6: Change Deadline for Submission of End Year Review

14. SLT’s views were sought on addressing concerns that the end year review process clashes with the busiest time of the Parliamentary year. The present approach is aligned with the strategic planning cycle; however, one option would be for the reporting year to run from June to June with forms being required to be submitted to Human Resources by the end of August. This option would risk clashing with the financial planning cycle and might also be problematic in terms of staff availability during recess. SLT was minded to retain the current reporting cycle but wishes to revisit this when detailed proposals have been fully worked up.

Recommendation 7: Monitoring In Year Reviews

15. Managers should produce a written record of in year review meetings. The format of this should be left to the discretion of individual managers. For example, some managers may prefer to use the performance appraisal form, others may prefer to send a short memo or email to the job holder summarising the discussion. The Human Resources Office should consider introducing a means of tracking that in year reviews have been carried out perhaps via individual members of OMG. SLT agreed that a written record of in year review meetings should be kept by managers but did not wish to see the introduction of a central monitoring system.

Recommendation 8: Roll Out

16. The roll out of the changes will be critical to their success, as will highly visible buy in from senior managers. Training should not only focus on new aspects of the system but also refresh staff on areas of current confusion and/or inconsistency. The training should be delivered and led by the Human Resources Office with support from Bray Leino and an Assistant
Clerk/Chief Executive should introduce each training session to emphasise the organisation’s commitment to effective performance management and staff development. We will also explore the possibility of identifying performance management ‘champions’ in individual business areas who can assist with tailoring the skills and behaviours for job roles in conjunction with the HR Advisers and also assist in the roll out, implementation and training on the revised system.

**Resource Implications**

17. As indicated above, the development and implementation of these recommendations will require support from the Human Resources Office and some limited input from BIT. This will be met by existing resources. There will also be some costs associated with any training associated with the roll out. We will seek to meet these through the existing corporate training budget.

**Dependencies**

18. There are significant dependencies with the work being carried out on organisational culture by SDO as part of Phase 2 of the Corporate Change Programme as well as the leadership development programme. We will work closely with SDO and with the Leadership Development Group in developing these recommendations and in working up an implementation plan.

**Governance Issues**

19. The Equalities Manager has been consulted in the development of this paper and was present at both of the staff workshops. We are conscious that recommendation one, part of which recommends the removal of the Improving Access and Promoting Equality competency, poses some risks to the ongoing perception and promotion of equality across the organisation. The existence of this competency has met with widespread approval among equality groups and its removal could be perceived, both internally and externally, as a downgrading of the importance we place on equality and accessibility.

20. That said, the proposed alternative approach of building equality into core job roles and objectives is consistent with our existing initiatives around mainstreaming equality and could, if thoughtfully implemented, bring greater benefits than the current competency, which is too often treated as a “box-ticking” exercise. But if we do pursue this new approach, we will need to ensure that the associated communication, guidance and training are used to negate any perception that equality is being sidelined or downgraded.
21. Given the potential sensitivities around this subject, we will continue to work closely with the Equalities Manager as we develop more detailed proposals.

22. We will also consult the Environmental Performance Manager and Health and Safety Adviser on possible personal job objectives relating to these areas if OMG agrees that this option should be pursued.

23. This paper has been shared with the TUS.

**Publication Scheme**

24. This paper may be published.

**Next steps**

25. Following OMG’s consideration of the recommendations set out above, work will get underway on preparing detailed proposals to be brought back to SLT and OMG in early 2010.

**Decision**

26. OMG is invited to discuss the proposals above.

Human Resources Office
December 2009
Annex A – Possible New Skills and Behaviours

The following is a list of possible skills and behaviours which could be included in the new ‘bank’. The majority will draw on the existing suite of competencies, although we suggest that the leadership/teamworking competency is split. Short descriptions have been included for each skill/behaviour. The appropriate levels and behavioural descriptors will be developed and brought back to SLT and OMG in early 2010 as part of the detailed package.

The proposed skills and behaviours will include:

- Parliamentary and Political Awareness
- Leadership/Leading Others to Success
- Staff Management
- Teamwork and Collaborative Working
- Communication
- Interpersonal and Influencing Skills
- Delivery
- Planning and Organising
- Improvement, Innovation and Change
- High Quality Service
- Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Financial Management
- Specialist Professional or Technical Skills

Parliamentary and Political Awareness

This will be based on the existing parliamentary awareness competency but will also draw on work underway in the Strategy and Development Office on cultural and behavioural issues as well as Members’ needs. We propose that given the organisation’s emphasis on the latter that this is a compulsory skill/behaviour for all staff.

Leadership/Leading Others to Success

This skill/behaviour will draw on work underway as part of the leadership development programme. SLT emphasised that leadership should not be restricted to staff with management responsibilities.

Staff Management

As distinct from leadership, this skill/behaviour will focus on staff management skills.
Teamwork and Collaborative Working

This skill/behaviour will comprise the team working elements of the current leadership and teamwork competency which will be conflated with elements of the parliamentary values and collaborative working competency. There will be particular emphasis on the avoidance of a silo culture.

Communication

This skill/behaviour will cover written, oral and non-verbal communication and will draw on the existing communication related elements of the current communication and interpersonal skills competency. We suggest splitting this existing competency in order to differentiate between roles which have a heavy emphasis on written communication and those which require an emphasis on influencing and interpersonal skills.

Interpersonal and Influencing Skills

See comments above.

Delivery

This skill/behaviour is proposed to address concerns that the current performance management system does not adequately promote a delivery culture. We anticipate that this skill/behaviour would include core project management skills, such as organisation and planning, risk management, etc.

Planning and Organising

This skill/behaviour is proposed to cover more general planning and organising activities outwith a project management context and would focus on planning and organising individual and/or team activities in order to achieve the objectives of the role, office and organisation.

Improvement, Innovation and Change

This skill/behaviour will be largely the same as the existing competency which was introduced this year.

High Quality Service

This skill/behaviour will be largely the same as the existing competency, although it may be subject to some revision to reflect the drive for meeting Members’ needs.
Financial and Resource Management

This will be a new skill/behaviour not currently treated as a standalone competency in the current framework. We will seek to develop this skill/behaviour in conjunction with the Financial Resources Group.

Specialist Professional or Technical Skills

This skill will be developed with individual business areas to identify specialist professional or technical skills which are a core requirement of certain job roles. Such skills need not necessarily be linked to a professional qualification. For example, in Clerking consideration could be given to the development of a committee management skill.