STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

NOTE OF MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2009, 10.00AM, ROOM Q2.07

Present: Paul Grice, Stewart Gilfillan, Ian Leitch, Bill Thomson, Lynda Towers

In Attendance: Derek Croll (items 3 & 4), Willie Heigh (item 4), Andy Munro (item 5), Judith Proudfoot & Jane McEwan (item 6), Colin Chisholm, Mary Nicol & Sam Jones (item 7), Ed Murray, Alli Williams, Jon Orr

Item 1. Minute of Previous Meeting

1. The minute of the meeting of 9 October 2009 was approved.

Item 2. Matters Arising

Business Continuity Management (BCM)

2. SLT discussed the BCM handover and forward plan for the new BC Manager. It was noted that on completion of the BC project early in 2010, Bethan Murray would provide support on two separate work areas: the Corporate Change Programme and environmental project work. A full job description was being produced.

Action: Stewart & Ian

2010/2011 Budget

3. Derek Croll was preparing a letter for Tom McCabe MSP to send to the Finance Committee in advance of its budget evidence session on 17 November. A draft would be circulated for comment.

Strategic Plan, KPIs and Strategic Risk Register

4. SLT noted that an update report would be circulated by the end of the week.


5. The P6 Report, which included the results of the forecast exercise at the end of P5, was noted. A further forecasting exercise was scheduled to commence in late November.

6. A request to release £24K from the 2009/10 contingency for HR and FM work was approved. This would be reflected in the next forecasting exercise. It was also agreed that, as part of the forecasting exercise, AC/CEs should encourage Group Heads to identify other potential projects which could usefully be taken forward this financial year.

Action: AC/CEs
7. It was noted that, for the first time, the vacancy gap had been devolved to individual office budgets, with a few exceptions, though the need collectively to hit the 5% target remained. It was agreed that SLT would closely monitor the position.


8. SLT noted the latest strategic portfolio report.


9. SLT was apprised of recent internal audit activities. It was noted that Andy Munro would be preparing, and then monitoring the progress of a summary of the status of recommendations from all recent internal audit reports. Once completed, this would be circulated to SLT for discussion with their group heads.

   Action: Andy Munro

10. SLT was advised that the audit of the Events and Exhibitions Team had been deferred until January 2010 and that work on the Payroll System deferred until February/March 2010. On Information Security Management, it was reported that other organisations had developed good practice guidelines and that these would be examined to determine if the Scottish Parliament’s own processes could be improved through their adoption.

11. Andy was asked to ensure that he completed an equality impact assessment on his auditing processes. Advice was available from the Equality Team.

   Action: Andy Munro


12. The draft agendas were noted and updates provided. Further to SLT’s request at its previous meeting for additional information on the item relating to corporate identity, it was noted that the SPCB, at its meeting on 11 November 2009, would take two related papers, the first on policy, the second on the use of parliamentary resources and external communications.


13. Sam Jones updated SLT on the work undertaken on the review to date, including the main themes to emerge during the consultation phase. SLT was asked for its views in principle on the proposed eight high level recommendations so that more detailed proposals could be worked up for approval early in 2010, in time for the revised system to be introduced for the 2010/11 reporting year.

14. Running through the recommendations, SLT made the following comments:
Recommendation 1: Review Competencies/Skills and Behaviours

15. It was agreed that a number of the current competencies should be reviewed as outlined in the paper, including reflecting governance/compliance requirements in individual objectives rather than as competencies. Whilst some caution was expressed over separating leadership and teamwork, on balance SLT agreed that this would be appropriate given the emphasis placed on leadership within the Corporate Change Programme. The importance of all staff having leadership skills was emphasised.

16. SLT agreed that competencies should be re-named “skills and behaviours”.

Recommendation 2: Skills and Behaviours ‘Bank’ or ‘Menu’

17. SLT supported the development of a bank or menu of skills and behaviours which business areas, supported by HR, could draw down from, based on the needs of different job roles rather than individual needs. HR Advisors could also advise on tailoring behavioural indicators and descriptions.

18. SLT strongly favoured the application of 2-3 universal behaviours to all staff. It also agreed that senior management should be subject to the same bank/menu but requested further work to develop and strengthen the levels/indicators at the top end to allow sufficient differentiation between grades.

Recommendation 3: Streamlining the Performance Appraisal Form

19. SLT agreed that the form should be streamlined and, where appropriate, restrictions placed on the amount of text allowed to be inserted.

Recommendation 4: The Personal Development Plan (PDP)

20. The importance of the PDP as a tool to determine corporate as well as individual training requirements was reaffirmed, as was the need to ensure that PDPs were submitted within specified deadlines. This would be helped by making PDPs more meaningful to staff and explaining the importance of completing them. Group heads and HR should be asked to monitor returns and identify any areas or individuals where further training on the use of PDPs was required.

21. The name change from ‘personal’ to ‘professional’ was agreed.

22. Future proposals should include the discretionary separation of the appraisal and PDP discussions. A further option was to separate the review of past performance and completion of the previous year’s PDP from the discussion on the next year’s objectives and PDP.
23. On a related point, Colin advised that he would bring proposals to a future meeting about the linkages between skills/behaviour, recruitment and training.

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

24. It was agreed that personal job objectives should be linked directly to the relevant section of the Strategic Plan. This would continue ongoing efforts to help staff understand how their work contributed to the organisation’s high level objectives.

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

25. SLT agreed that the performance management cycle should continue to mirror the strategic and financial planning cycles.

**Recommendation 7: Monitoring In Year Reviews**

26. It was agreed that a written record of in year reviews was an essential addition to the current system. The format should be left to the discretion of individual managers. There was a clear expectation that managers should ensure this requirement was carried out, making use of HR’s expertise as appropriate. There was no need to adopt a central monitoring system.

**Recommendation 8: Roll Out**

27. All elements of recommendation 8 were agreed but it was stressed that training provision should be proportionate to requirements.

28. SLT agreed that any necessary cultural changes relating to performance management should be addressed via the leadership academy.

29. In conclusion, HR was asked to work up a further paper to be discussed at SLT’s meeting on 27 January 2010. Early engagement with OMG was also required and it was suggested that the review could be placed on the agenda for its meeting on 7 December 2009.

30. In addition, it agreed that HR should conduct an analysis of ‘spans of control’ – ie determine how many staff individual managers manage with a view to determining whether it would be beneficial to set limits in this area if there was evidence that large spans had a negative impact on performance management.

**Action: Colin, Mary & Sam**

**Item 8. Security Projects Update**

31. SLT noted a verbal update from Ian on the latest security project developments. It was emphasised that regular communication would take place with the key affected groups during the life span of the perimeter work, which was expected to be
completed by March 2010. Regular updates would also be provided to all building users and every effort would be made to minimise disruption.

Item 9. Meeting Review

32. It was agreed that it had been a very useful meeting, aided by an informative and well prepared brief on the Performance Management Review. The time dedicated to this paper had been sufficient to allow a good discussion on the issues concerned.

Item 10. Date of Next Meeting

33. The next meeting was scheduled to take place at 3.30pm on 3 December 2009.

Item 11. Any Other Business

34. None.

SLT Secretariat
20 November 2009