PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Executive Summary

1. This paper provides SLT with an update on the review of the Performance Management System. The paper seeks SLT’s endorsement of a set of high level recommendations to streamline the existing system which can then be more fully worked up. 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. We are therefore seeking SLT’s views now on taking them forward before this work is undertaken. If SLT is content with this approach, fully worked up proposals will be brought back for its consideration 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 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. Some comparative work with systems in other public and private sector organisations has also been undertaken. SLT will be briefed on the themes which have emerged from the data collection phase at its meeting on 4 November 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.
Proposed Changes

5. The review has exposed wider cultural issues about the priority and emphasis given to staff management in the basis that fully worked up proposals are brought back to core tasks rather than an integral and fundamental part of the job.

- 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 SLT does 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

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. An environmental management job objective should also be introduced for all staff. Consideration should also be given to introducing a health and safety related job objective;
- The high quality service competency should be reviewed.
- 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.

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

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 may wish to consider 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.

Recommendation 3: Streamlining the Performance Appraisal Form

10. 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’s views are also sought on whether the amount of text which can be included in areas of the form should be restricted.

Recommendation 4: The PDP

11. 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 and one element of the implementation should be to ensure that they are meaningful and to ensure 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

12. 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**

13. We would welcome SLT’s views 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.

**Recommendation 7: Monitoring In Year Reviews**

14. 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.

**Recommendation 8: Roll Out**

15. 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 not only assist with tailoring the skills and behaviours for job roles in conjunction with the HR Advisers but also assist in the roll out, implementation and training on the revised system.

**Resource Implications**

16. 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

17. 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

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. Given the potential sensitivities around this subject, we will continue to work closely with the Equalities Manager as we develop more detailed proposals.

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

22. This paper has been shared with the TUS.

Publication Scheme

23. This paper may be published.

Next steps

24. Depending on SLT’s consideration of the recommendations set out above, we will prepare a similar paper to be considered by OMG. In parallel, work
will get underway on preparing detailed proposals to be brought back to SLT in early 2010.

**Decision**

25. SLT is invited to consider whether it wishes the high level recommendations above to be taken forward and for detailed proposals to be brought back to SLT in early 2010.

Human Resources Office
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