

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING –
FRIDAY 2 MAY 2003 AT STORMONT CASTLE, ROOM GD10**

PRESENT: Nigel Hamilton (Chair)
Pat Carvill
Will Haire
John Hunter
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Gerry McGinn
Stephen Peover
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon

APOLOGIES: Clive Gowdy
Pat Toal
David Watkins

IN ATTENDANCE: Peter May (Item 3)
Stephen Grimason (Item 6)
Rosalie Flanagan (Item 6)
Angela Dullaghan
Bernie Rooney (Secretary)

1. Agenda Item 1 – Minutes and Summary of 11 April 2003 Meeting

The Minutes and Summary were noted and agreed.

2. Agenda Item 2 – Matters Arising

(i) PSG Strategic Planning Day

Members noted the agenda and arrangements for the PSG meeting on 9 May.

It was agreed that the Chairs of the PSG Sub Committees would provide a short oral update on the work of their respective Committees.

[Action: Chairs of PSG Sub-Committees]

(ii) Contingency Planning – SARS

Members noted that the Central Emergency Planning Unit are working closely with the lead Department, DHSSPS to monitor the situation.

The Chief Medical Officer reported that Northern Ireland to date have had no probable cases. DHSSPS have clear guidelines and arrangements in place. Northern Ireland is in a state of preparedness to deal with cases which may present here. The Department are continually reviewing and monitoring the situation, maintaining daily contact with the appropriate authorities in GB.

(iii) Public Appointments

It was noted that DEL officials met recently with Dame Rennie Fritchie to consider handling applicants for public appointments who may be the subject of criminal investigation.

Dame Rennie has kindly agreed to consider how such a situation might be handled within the guidelines if it arose.

3. Agenda Item 3 – Freedom of Information and Information Management

Members agreed that it was important for Permanent Secretary Group to take ownership of the Departmental project approach and corporate programme needed to meet the objectives in these areas and the requirements of the EDRMS Gateway/Review.

Members also agreed to remind their relevant senior teams of the importance and significance of the Freedom of Information and Information Management project.

4. Agenda Item 4 – Human Resource Issues

(i) SCS Development

The Director of Central Personnel Group presented an overview of the work underway in this area. Members noted and endorsed the principles outlined in the SCS Development Plan of Action.

(ii) SCS Pay Strategy 2003

Members agreed to endorse the 2003 Strategy and as the bonus arrangements extend only to the top 50% of Tranche 2, so to divide the names in Tranche 2 when making returns to CPG on their proposed tranche distributions for moderation by the NICS Pay Committee.

Members agreed to submit returns to Central Personnel Group by **Friday 9 May.**

[Action: All Members]

Members agreed that the Guidance should be amended and issued to the SCS cadre.

[Action: Linda Brown]

(iii) Updates

Brief oral updates were provided to members on work in progress on the items;

(a) e-HR

(b) HRMS 'Audit' Report

(c) Water Service HR Developments

(iv) Senior Civil Service – Staffing Issues

A number of Senior Civil Service personnel issues were discussed and are noted separately.

(v) Forward Programme

The HR forward programme was noted and it was agreed that PSG should monitor progress on a regular basis.

[Action: Linda Brown]

5. Agenda Item 5 – IRAQ – Seconding Staff to the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA)

PSG agreed that the NICS should in principle support this project. It was agreed that CPG would identify skill requirements and liaise with Departments on a bi-lateral basis to explore what assistance and expertise might be available.

6. Agenda Item 6 – Tour de Table

(i) Senior Civil Service (SCS) Seminars

The structure and final details for the SCS Seminars was agreed.

Members agreed to encourage their relevant officers to stay for the networking opportunity over lunch.

PSG asked for an evaluation of the Seminars to take place and suggested that as part of the evaluation the SCS cadre might be invited to offer views and suggestions on the next steps.

(ii) PEACE II Programme Expenditure Targets

It was noted that detailed work is still ongoing and that further co-operation from all Departments would be appreciated.

[Action: All Members]

The HOCS asked members to ensure that;

- (i) Departments maximise every possible use of the Programme and that NI Departments have a consistent and defensible approach across Departments.

7. Agenda Item 7 – Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Permanent Secretary Group will be the Strategic Planning Meeting on Friday 9 May in Stormont Castle.

Bernie Rooney

BERNIE ROONEY (Mrs)
15 May 2003