

**SUMMARY OF THE OFMDFM DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
ON 2 JUNE 2003**

PRESENT: Mr Hamilton, Mr Haire, Ms Flanagan, Ms Bunting,
Mr Grimason, Dr Smyth, Mr McConnell, Mr Jardine,
Mr McCartney

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Rooney, Miss Dullaghan,
Mr Ferguson (Secretary).

APOLOGIES: Mr Gray, Mrs Angus

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the Departmental Board meeting on 19 May 2003, as amended, were noted and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

The Board noted that establishment of a small working group to look at issues for the Departmental conference in September had been referred to the senior management meeting on 21 May for additional nominations and that arrangements were in hand for the group to meet.

3. Standing Items / Current Issues

a) Political Developments

Ms Flanagan updated the Board on a number of Assembly related issues including the remuneration and status of former MLA's and access to Parliament Buildings. Press reports about redundancies amongst Assembly staff were discussed although the Board noted that no decisions had yet been made. Bids for the use of staff on loan to the Assembly from the Northern Ireland Civil Service are due with Central Personnel Group this week.

Mr Jardine updated the Board on Ian Pearson's meeting with the Former First Minister and Deputy First Minister, which covered a number of topics including the reinvestment and reform initiative, water and rates charges, Peace II funding, the Special EU Programmes Body and the Strategic Investment Board.

Mr Hamilton summarised a number of issues over which there was some uncertainty but about which clarity was needed ahead of any major public announcements in June.

4. Papers

a) Public Accounts Committee Reports

The Board noted three Westminster Public Accounts Committee reports and Mr Hamilton said that it was important that Directors and their senior colleagues were aware of the accountability issues raised within them. Mr Hamilton asked Mr Haire to raise this issue at the next senior management meeting.

[Action: Mr Haire]

5. Tour de Table

- Mr Jardine reported that the Northern Ireland Grand Committee would be meeting next week to discuss the reinvestment and reform initiative and that a letter of offer had been issued to a candidate in respect of the post of Head of the Washington Bureau.
- Ms Bunting reported that the Northern Ireland Grand Committee would be meeting on 26 June to discuss community relations, that the outcome of the competition to fill the post of Commissioner for Children should be known soon and that appointments to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland were expected at the end of this month.

- Mr Haire reported that this weeks Permanent Secretaries Group meeting planned to discuss a paper from DCAL on regional minority languages. It was agreed that the paper would be copied to all Directors for their views.
- Dr Smyth updated the Board on a recent meeting with staff in the Special EU Programmes Body. It was agreed that in light of the recent suspension of the Chief Executive it was important at this time to support and encourage staff.
- Mr McConnell reported that a submission has gone to the Secretary of State setting out options for the way forward on the Review of Public Administration.
- Mr Grimason reported that work on the branding of the reinvestment and reform initiative was at an advanced stage and that options were ready to go to the appropriate Minister.
- Ms Flanagan updated the Board on a recent problem with inter-departmental cooperation in relation to a British-Irish Council issue.
- Mr Hamilton reported that discussions at the recent joint OFMDFM / NIO Departmental Board seminar had been very worthwhile and asked Mr Grimason to consider speaking on presentational issues at the next meeting, which is planned for September.

6. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Departmental Board will be on Monday 16 June 2003 at 10.45 am.

Michael Ferguson

2 June 2003.