

**SUMMARY OF THE OFMDFM DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
ON 6 MAY 2003**

PRESENT: Mr Hamilton, Mr Haire, Mr Gray, Mr Grimason,
Mr Jardine, Ms Bunting, Ms Flanagan,
Mr McConnell, Mr McCartney, Mrs Angus.

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

APOLOGIES: Dr Smyth

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the Departmental Board meeting on 7 April 2003, as amended, were noted and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

The Board noted that Mr Grimason's paper on co-ordinating publicity in OFMDFM and the Bullying and Harassment policy had been circulated to all staff in the Department.

3. Standing Items

a) Preparation for Restoration

The Board discussed a range of issues around the recent postponement of the Assembly elections scheduled for 29 May. It was agreed that the issue of staff from the Northern Ireland Civil Service currently seconded to the Assembly needed to be addressed in the short term.

b) Contingency Planning

The Board agreed to the removal of contingency planning as a standing item on the agenda.

4. Current Issues

a) Data Protection and E-Mails

Mr Hamilton drew the Board's attention to a recent circular from the Departmental Information Officer on data protection and e-mails. Mr Hamilton asked Board members to ensure that their staff were fully aware of the contents of this circular.

b) Coffee Morning

Mr Hamilton updated the Board on plans for a coffee morning on 28 May for staff from Corporate Services Division, the purpose of which is to recognise success including CEPU recently achieving IIP accreditation. Mr Hamilton extended an invitation to all Board members.

5. Papers

a) Team Briefing Commissioning Note

The Board noted a paper inviting them to identify topics for inclusion in the May 2003 issue of the Team Brief. It was agreed that Directors would forward their contributions to the Team Briefing Co-ordinator.

[Action: Directors]

b) Departmental Conference

The Board discussed a paper tabled by Mrs Angus seeking their views on the structure and timing of an OFMDFM Departmental Conference in 2003. It was agreed that instead of a separate social event, this year's conference should include lunch and that September would be a more appropriate time than June. To get the views of staff about what would be of most interest to them the Board also agreed to a suggestion that a small group be set up to look at this issue.

[Action: Mrs Angus]

c) E-Business Programme Update

The Board noted an update report from Mrs Angus on the Department's e-business programme. Mr Hamilton thanked Mr Jardine for taking on the role of Senior Responsible Officer for the e-participation project.

6. Tour de Table

- Mr Gray updated the Board on taking forward the legislative programme through orders in council;
- Mr Jardine updated the Board on a number of staffing issues including interviews for Head of the Washington Bureau, locating an official from Invest Northern Ireland in the Washington Bureau and current and future vacancies at Grade 5 level in his Directorate;
- Mr McConnell updated the Board on a number of issues in relation to the Review of Public Administration;
- Mr Haire updated the Board on interviews for the post of Commissioner for Children, the Integrated Development Fund and a recent seminar on accountability;
- Ms Bunting updated the Board on a number of issues including work arising from the joint declaration, new appointments to the Equality Commission, Section 75, New TSN and the Department's Equality Scheme;
- Ms Flanagan updated the Board on north/south issues and plans to review election guidance and the work of her Directorate;
- Mr McCartney reported that he was still awaiting a response to his recent letter to the Departmental Solicitor's Office;
- Mr Grimason reported some progress on co-ordinating publicity within the Department with ten branches making positive returns;
- Mrs Angus updated the Board on the Civil Contingencies Bill, a review of the Ombudsman's Office and a change in responsibility for office services in Stormont Castle. Mrs Angus also reported that a review of all re-deployed staff was being carried out to ensure their current placement remains appropriate.

7. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Departmental Board will be on Monday 19 May 2003 at 10.45 am.

Michael Ferguson

7 May 2003.