

HCS/257/03

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2003 AT STORMONT CASTLE**

Present: Nigel Hamilton (Chair)
Pat Carvill
Clive Gowdy
John Hunter
Stephen Peover
Stephen Quinn
Peter Small

In Attendance: Angela Dullaghan
Bernie Rooney (Secretary)

Apologies: Will Haire
Gerry McGinn
Alan Shannon
Aideen McGinley
Bruce Robinson

1. Agenda Item 1 - Minutes of meeting 24 January 2003

The minutes were noted and agreed.

2. Agenda Item 2 – Matters Arising

(i) The Chair reported temporary arrangements in the Department of Education to cover the Grade 3 vacancy.

(ii) PSG Sub Committees

The HOCS explained that further work is ongoing on the role, remit and membership of the PSG Sub-Committees and that he will bring forward a composite paper for discussion.

[Action: HOCS]

3. Agenda Item 3 – Healthy Cities Conference

Clive Gowdy introduced the Director of Public Health, EHSSB and the Project Director, Belfast Healthy Cities Conference who made a presentation to the Group. The purpose of the presentation was to provide members background on the conference.

The Director explained that Belfast has been selected by the World Health Organisation (Europe) to host an International Conference in October 2003, marking the current phase of the Healthy Cities initiative. Over 600 delegates from Healthy Cities across the world are expected to attend.

Members noted that the conference is intended to demonstrate the achievements made over the last five years, in particular to show how successful Healthy Cities have been in increasing the focus on health and facilitating Healthy Cities have been in increasing the focus on health and facilitating health improvements in each city. The last international conference took place in Athens in 1998.

The event will take place from 19 – 22 October 2003 in the Waterfront Hall. The visiting delegations will include, Healthy Cities co-ordinators, city representatives, academics, mayors and senior politicians. The Directors of WHO (Europe) will be in attendance also.

As this is a prestigious event the Director sought PSG guidance on;

(i) **Honorary President**

Members advised that given the status of the event it would be appropriate to offer this position to either the Secretary of State, if in Direct Rule or The First Minister and Deputy First Minister under Devolution.

(ii) **Committee of Honour**

It was agreed that it would be appropriate for Ministers with responsibility for the key themes to be members of the Committee as well as the Vice Chancellors of the two universities.

(iii) **Opening/Closing Ceremony**

It is anticipated that the delegates will register on Sunday 19 October and the official opening ceremony will take place on Monday 20 October 2003.

(iv) **Invitations**

WHO (Europe) intend to issue invitations to Ministers from all countries across Europe.

It was suggested that Departments may wish to consider the opportunity to extend visiting Ministers programmes whilst they are in Northern Ireland.

[Action: Members]

(v) **Sponsorship**

It was noted that a funding strategy is in place to cover costs for the conference and that the organisers are actively seeking sponsorship both internationally and at local level.

Members thanked the Director and Project Manager for keeping them informed and agreed to offer assistance and support where possible.

4. Agenda Item 4 – Tour de Table

(i) **DARD**

Ian Pearson, the Minister with responsibility for DARD is planning to attend the next monthly Agricultural Ministers Meeting.

(ii) **Public Appointments –
Commissioner’s Annual Report 01/02**

It was noted that Dame Rennie Fritchie has written to the Secretary of State seeking a general discussion with him on appointment issues. The HOCS will attend the meeting and will raise the question of anonymity in reports and will report back on the outcome.

(iii) **Pay Review Body Reports**

Members noted that the Cabinet Office have received the recommendations of the Pay Review Body. The figures have not yet been released but it is anticipated that the Senior Civil Service headline award will be 2.25%. The range of consolidated performance awards – 0-9% minimum bonus of £2,500 or 3% (whichever is the greater).

The Pay and Appraisal Sub Committee will consider and submit recommendations to PSG.

[Action: Pat Carvill]

(iv) **“Making the Public Sector Delivery Work” Conference**

Members noted that invitations had been widely circulated. It was agreed that attendance should be co-ordinated.

[Action: Will Haire]

(v) **SCS Performance Management Seminars**

Members noted that SCS Performance Management Seminars have been arranged to take place on 24 and 28 February at the Mount Conference Centre, Belfast. It was agreed that Permanent Secretaries should be in attendance.

[Action: Members]

(vi) **Victoria Square**

Members noted the latest developments on Victoria Square.

(vii) **URC**

Members noted that the advert to recruit a Chairman of the Company is being drawn up as well as the Memorandum of Association.

(viii) **Peace II Programme**

DFP recently wrote to Permanent Secretaries highlighting concerns about potential loss of funding to Northern Ireland.

Members were invited to review the position within their Departments and return for a substantive discussion at the next PSG.

[Action: Members]

(ix) **Sub-ordinate Legislation Training Course**

The HOCS informed members that the first pilot of the new Subordinate Legislation Training course has taken place. The feedback is very positive and it was agreed to attach a copy of the details to the minutes for mention to bring to the attention of staff in their Departments. Attached at Annex A.

[Action: Members]

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of PSG will take place on Friday 14 February 2003 at Stormont Castle.

**BERNIE ROONEY (Mrs)
11 February 2003**