

**SUMMARY OF OFMDFM DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
ON 16 DECEMBER 2002**

PRESENT: Mr Hamilton, Mr Haire, Ms Flanagan, Mr McConnell,
Mr Grimason, Dr Smyth, Mrs Angus, Mr May.

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

APOLOGIES: Mr Jardine, Mr McCartney.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the Departmental Board meetings on 2 and 9 December 2002 were noted and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

Seminars with NIO

The Board noted that this issue was being carried forward from the last meeting and was included on the agenda under item 5.

3. Standing Items

a) Direct Rule including Assembly Issues

The Board noted the latest position in relation to the appointment of former special advisers and agreed that whilst there would be no automatic right of access to official papers, requests would be facilitated as much as possible. Ms Flanagan also updated the Board on a meeting of the British Irish Intergovernmental Conference planned for Wednesday 18 December.

b) Staffing and Finance Issues

The Board noted that December monitoring bids had been submitted to DFP. The Board discussed a request from DFP for the loan of Grade 7 to assist with the review of the Business Development Service. It was agreed that the request would be passed to the Central Personnel Group to consider against surplus staff from the NI Assembly.

c) Information Issues

The Board discussed handling issues ahead of the British Irish Intergovernmental Conference meeting on Wednesday. Mr Haire congratulated the Information Service on their work at the launch of the Budget in the Odyssey Centre. Mr Hamilton endorsed Mr Haire comments and added that the event demonstrated the need for a corporate approach to cross cutting issues. Mr Grimason indicated that a post event evaluation was underway and would seek to identify elements of best practice. Mrs Bunting indicated that it would be beneficial to take a similar approach with the launch of the community relations policy in mid January 2003.

4. Papers

a) SDA Quarterly Report

The Board noted the contents of a report from Mrs Angus in relation to the achievement of targets contained in the Department's Service Delivery Agreement for the first and second quarters of 2002/03. It was agreed that Directors would review targets for the remainder of the year and that the issue would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

[Action: Directors]

5. Current Issues

a) Seminars with NIO colleagues

The Board noted two separate proposals. The first proposal was that the OFMDFM and NIO Departmental Boards would meet during week commencing 20 January 2003 to discuss issues of mutual interest. The second proposal was for a series of information seminars in early 2003 involving senior staff from NI Departments and their NIO counterparts.

It was agreed that the OFMDFM and NIO Departmental Boards would meet in January 2003 and this would precede the wider information seminars, which would be held from February 2003 onwards. Initial topics for these seminars include 'community relations and tackling sectarianism' and 'equality, human rights and victims'.

It was further agreed that at least one information seminar would be lead by a NI department other than OFMDFM and that soundings would be taken at the Permanent Secretaries Group meeting to identify suitable topics and departments.

6. Tour de Table

- Mr May updated the Board on a forthcoming meeting with DFP to discuss the way ahead in relation to the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative, Service Delivery Agreements and Reform Plans. Mr Hamilton emphasised the need to demonstrate commitment to the reform agenda.
- Mr Haire thanked Directors for their support with the Departmental conference on 12 December in Stormont Castle, which was very well attended.
- Mr McConnell updated the Board on the Review of Public Administration, he reported that the Review team had met with Sinn Fein but were still trying to arrange a meeting with the DUP.

- Dr Smyth reported on a number of issues around the North/south implementation bodies. It was agreed that consideration should be given to involving DFP in a forthcoming meeting with the implementation bodies to discuss business planning issues.
- Mr Grimason updated the Board on a couple of issues that may come up before Christmas, one was the release of census figures later this week the other involved budget allocations to DCAL.
- Mr Hamilton drew the Boards attention to an e-mail updating the Department on the number of gifts collected as part of the 'Giving Tree' initiative. Mr Hamilton congratulated everyone involved for the excellent response to this appeal.

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 23 December at 10.45 am.

Michael Ferguson

17 December 2002.