

**SUMMARY OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT MEETING  
ON 18 AUGUST 2004**

**PRESENT:**

**Dr Smyth  
(Chair)  
Mrs Angus  
Mrs Cummins  
Mr Finegan  
Mr Gamble  
Dr Griffith  
Mr Jardine  
Mr Johnston  
Mr McCormick  
Dr Mulligan**

**APOLOGIES:  
Mr Hamilton  
Ms Bunting  
Ms Flanagan  
Mr Gray  
Mr Grimason  
Mr Jackson  
Mr McCartney  
Mr McCluggage  
Mr McConnell  
Ms McGivern  
Mr Shannon  
Dr Smith  
Mr Stewart  
Mr Sweeney  
Miss Wilson**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Higgins (secretary)**

**1. Summary of last meeting**

The summary of the Senior Management Group meeting held on 16 June was noted and amendments agreed.

**2. Assembly Issues**

Mr Johnston updated the meeting on the latest position in respect of the forthcoming inter-party talks in September and the preparations for restoration.

**3. Tour de Table**

- a) Mr McCormick gave an update on progress in the development of a Public Service Reform Framework which sets out the high priority reforms of Ministers across public services and Departmental Reform Frameworks which set reform priorities at a lower level. Mr McCormick also advised that the Department was a lead implementer in the Electronic Data Records

Management (EDRM) system which was at the evaluation stage prior to implementation.

- b) Mr Gamble reported on a June 2004 meeting of the Northern Ireland Grand Committee. Minister Spellar's key note speech to the Committee on the possible future direction of a draft new good relations policy and strategic framework was well received. Mr Gamble also reported that the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee session focused on racism. The Committee's focus at a September meeting would be on sectarianism.
- c) Mrs Angus provided an update the latest inquiry of the Committee on Standards in Public Life which was addressing issues concerning "Getting the Balance Right: Implementing Standards of Conduct in Public Life". Mr Hamilton gave evidence on 29 June to the enquiry. Mrs Angus also reported that a pay offer had been put to the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) and management side were currently awaiting a NIPSA response. Mrs Angus gave an update on a review of Information Technology and e-business strategy which was ongoing. She also requested that each division complete the training plan issued by Training and Development Unit (TDU) to all business areas to enable TDU to decide corporate training priorities and complete a Departmental Training Plan.
- d) Mr Johnston and Dr Griffith emphasised the importance of providing accurate and timely answers to Parliamentary Questions including part inputs to other departments.
- e) Dr Griffith reported that work was commencing on the 2005 Holocaust Memorial Ceremony and specifically an event in the North West on 23 January 2005.
- f) Mr Jardine advised members that his directorate were revising the current draft Public Service Agreement (PSA) for 2005-06 with the aim of reducing the number of PSA targets and focus on high level outcomes. He proposed that other directorates may

wish to review the number and level of their draft PSA targets to ensure that the Department's PSA targets are consistent across the Department and with other Northern Ireland Departments. Mr Jardine also outlined the purposes of a project being conducted by the Economic Policy Unit as part of the Government's strong commitment to partnership working. The project will examine the accountability, funding and composition of partnerships, produce an analysis paper to address issues such as the efficiency and effectiveness of present arrangements and take account of the developments in the Review of Public Administration.

- g) Mr Mulligan updated the meeting on a British Irish Council meeting which addressed social inclusion matters and the meeting chose disability as its key theme. Officials would visit Northern Ireland to examine social inclusion in respect of disabled people. Mr Mulligan also advised that public consultations were ongoing in respect of Older People and New Targeting Social Need policies and that a Gender Equality Strategy would be launched later in the year.
- h) Mr Finnegan provided an update on the Review of Public Administration and some emerging proposals in respect of a developing model had received wide media coverage. Minister Ian Pearson has been working with the main political parties and other key stakeholders towards achieving a broad consensus on the new shape of public administration in Northern Ireland with a view to publishing firm proposals for consultation in autumn 2004.
- i) Mrs Cummins gave an update on progress on the development of the Crumlin Road Gaol site and an Integrated Action Plan for North Belfast which had the key themes of education and employment.

**5. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 22 September 2004 commencing at 9.30 a.m. in the Conference Room E4.18 Castle Buildings.

MARK HIGGINS

9 September 2004