

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING – FRIDAY  
22 AUGUST 2003 IN STORMONT CASTLE, GD.10, AT 8.45 am – 10.15 am**

**Present:** Nigel Hamilton  
Pat Carvill  
Robson Davison  
Clive Gowdy  
Will Haire  
Wilfie Hamilton  
Gerry Lavery  
Ian Maye  
Andrew McCormick  
Carol Moore  
Stephen Quinn  
Eddie Rooney  
Chris Thompson

**In Attendance:** Debbie Sweeney (Secretary)  
Kathryn Menary

1. Minutes of 8 August were agreed.

Amendments to minutes of 22 August to be e-mailed to PS/HOCS.

**[Action – Members]**

2. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

3. **Budget/PfG/SIB Update**

Dr McCormick reported that EPU with Central Finance Group has written to Principal Finance Officers to ensure draft Departmental PSAs are available for inclusion in the first draft PfG/Budget for Ministers by mid-September. Guidance also stressed that PSAs would continue to be a key component of the PfG/Budget process.

PSG noted that PfG element is intended to be at a strategic level focusing on the key priorities, improving public service delivery through reform and relating primarily to the 3-year Budget period. Mr Hamilton requested a PSG and Budget handling note to be in the system for 1 September when Ministers will have returned from leave.

**[Action – Dr McCormick]**

Mr Haire updated PSG on the work of the Strategic Investment Board. He encouraged Departments to use SIB's expertise to the full. He informed PSG that Mr Carty would be reporting to PSG in the next couple of weeks outlining the Board's work so far.

**[Action – Mr Haire]**

#### 4. **Festivals**

Mr Thompson updated PSG on the work done so far. Letters of offer had gone to three festivals requesting information and receipts. This had been provided and initial payments had been made.

Mr Hamilton asked that his thanks be passed on to staff for their hard work.

**[Action – Mr Thompson]**

Mrs Moore reported that the draft terms of reference for the Festival Strategy Group were ready to go to Central Procurement Branch. Departments were being asked to supply base information before Consultants were appointed.

Mr Hamilton asked that a short report on Festivals be available for 1 September to update Ministers on progress so far.

**[Action – Mrs Moore]**

#### 5. **Pay Review Bodies Regional/Local Pay**

Dr McCormick reported that detailed and co-ordinated work was essential in response to the Chancellor's letter on how the issue of local/regional pay was being taken forward. He informed PSG that a paper would be discussed at PSG on 12 September.

**[Action – Dr McCormick]**

#### 6. **Tour de Table**

##### Romanian Twins

Mr Gowdy reported further on the Romanian twins tragedy.

##### Cardiac Surgeon

A key Cardiac Surgeon had resigned his post to move to Scotland.

##### RVH Research

The Royal was partaking in the current research into pain relief drugs.

##### Community Action Groups

Mr Haire reported on the continuing work of Community Action Groups.

##### Integrated Development Fund

Mr Haire reported that Mr Pearson would be meeting with representatives from the North West in early-September to discuss IDF. Mr Haire has written to representatives from Departments clarifying the position in relation to development of bids and outlining areas of concern. A meeting has been arranged with Departments for 29 August to prepare the way for Mr Pearson's meeting.

### NICS Pay

Mr Carvill reported on the work in progress in relation to the NICS Pay developments.

### Vetting

Mr Carvill has written to the NIO detailing areas for further consideration.

### Leaders in a Changing World

PSG noted that 30 applications had been lodged.

### PEACE II

Mr Pearson has written to the Chairman of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.

### Textile Company

Mr Wilfie Hamilton reported on recent receivership announcements.

### GCSE Results

Mr Rooney reported that GCSE results were good but there were still problems at a lower level.

### RTU Summer School

1770 teachers attended the RTU Summer School over a 4-day period, being the most successful to date.

### North East Institute

Dr Davison reported on the efficiency review into the North East Institute.

### BBC Restoration Programme

Three Northern Ireland properties would feature on the BBC programme.

### Vehicle Testing Unit

PSG noted that the Vehicle Testing Unit had received bad press in relation to appointment dates for MOTs.

Mr Hamilton reported on his visit to DVTA and possible further actions.

**[Action – Mr Maye]**

### Enforcement Actions

PSG noted various enforcement actions against property developers and quarry owners.

### Age Structure of Farmers

Mr Lavery reported that the Ulster Farmers' Union continued to disagree with the age structure statistics provided by DARD.

### Fish Quotas

Mr Lavery reported on issues surrounding fish quotas.

### Agri-Food

PSG noted a letter of interest was being issued to the two Universities in respect of future responsibility for operating the agri-food higher education.

### Assembly Update

Mr Hamilton updated members on the position regarding the re-deployment of Assembly staff.

### PQs

Mr Hamilton highlighted Assembly Section's PQ table.

Mr Hamilton informed PSG of the death of Terry Carlin. He would be attending the funeral on Tuesday 26 August.

Date of next meeting – 29 August

**DEBBIE SWEENEY**