

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY
22 OCTOBER 2004 IN ROOM GD14, STORMONT CASTLE,
AT 8.45 am**

Present: Nigel Hamilton
Doreen Brown
Will Haire
John Hunter
Andrew McCormick
Gerry McGinn
Stephen Peover
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon
Pat Toal

In Attendance: Stephen Grimason } Agenda Item 3
Maynard Mawhinney }
Peter Scott
Debbie Sweeney (Secretary)

Apologies: Clive Gowdy, Aideen McGinley, Nick Perry, Stephen Quinn

1. Minutes and Summary

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

Fit for Purpose

Mr Hunter informed PSG that CPG would be producing a briefing pack for Departments which would include lines to take and speaking notes.

Feedback from any sessions held would be appreciated.

It was agreed that each Department handle their own briefings in whatever way it suited them logistically.

[Action: PSG Members]

3. Food Strategy Group

Mr Scott and Mr Mawhinney introduced the 'Fit for Market' Report of the Food Strategy Group. The FSG were committed in October 2003 to drive and advise on a new strategic vision for the development of the NI agri-food sector. The Chairman of the Group, Mr Dan Flinter, delivered the FSG Report at the beginning of August. The FSG Report emphasises the significant contribution the agri-food sector has made to the NI economy. The Report also highlights the social and economic benefits to rural areas from the food sector.

Emphasis is placed on the importance of processing firms constantly moving faster and better than competitors, having access to real time market intelligence and market promotion, having robust supply chains and the ability to improve and develop capability.

For future organisational arrangements, a Food Strategy Implementation Partnership is proposed to oversee and drive implementation and maintain momentum in the short-term. The Report also proposed the establishment of an inter-Departmental Group of key public servants to push forward the key actions and develop budgetary proposals.

The Report has been agreed by Mr Pearson and Mr Gardiner and a joint public announcement is proposed for early/mid-November.

4. **Waste Audit**

Mr Peover explained that the DOE commissioned an audit of 20 sites within the Department to establish resource and waste management practices within its four agencies. The audit confirmed there was much room for improvement.

An action plan has been produced which will be implemented across all DOE sites. The plan is structured around the messages of 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'.

Mr Peover said he would be writing to all Departments to encourage Departments to consider their waste management and introduce steps to reduce waste.

5. **Tour de Table**

Finance

Dr McCormick updated PSG on in-year monitoring, the Efficiency Review and Peace II.

Dr McCormick said the 'Spotlight' programme, to be shown during week commencing 25 October, would focus on Water and Rates. Ian Pearson and John Spellar were both interviewed for the programme.

Dr McCormick reminded PSG to ensure DFP are informed and consulted about any forthcoming policy issues.

[Action: PSG colleagues]

Mr Hamilton asked that PSG discuss issues from the budget at PSG on 12 November.

[Action: PSG to note]

Michael Howard

Mr McGinn informed PSG that Michael Howard would be addressing a number of Principals at BRA on Monday 25 October.

Education and Library Board

Mr McGinn updated PSG on the Minister's meeting with both Boards.

IFI Meeting

Mr Hunter updated PSG on his meetings in Ottawa, organised jointly by the British High Commission and the Irish Embassy, to argue the case for Canadian funding for the IFI.

Herdman's Mill

Mr Peover said he would be writing to relevant colleagues to arrange a meeting to discuss funding.

Retail Reception

Mr Shannon reported that Mr Spellar's reception for the retail sector had been very successful.

Meat Industry

Mr Toal updated PSG on the Moy Park chicken scare and Sainsbury's decision to source all their meat from a single supplier, Anglo Beef Processors, which has plants in Newry and Lurgan. This decision would have a large impact for Dungannon Meats who also supplied Sainsbury's.

Single Farm Payment

Mr Toal said over 3,000 members of farm families attended DARD's information events.

Economic Vision

Mr Robinson reported that the Belfast Telegraph would feature an interview with Barry Gardiner on the Draft Economic Vision.

Broadband

Mr Robinson said that Broadband would feature in the media as a good news story.