

**SUMMARY OF THE OFMDFM DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING  
ON 24 FEBRUARY 2003**

**PRESENT:** Mr Hamilton, Mr Haire, Mr Gray, Ms Bunting,  
Mr Jardine, Mr Grimason, Ms Flanagan, Dr Smyth,  
Mr McCartney, Mrs Angus, Mr Jackson.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Boyle, Mr Ferguson (Secretary).

**APOLOGIES:** Mr McConnell

**1. Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the Departmental Board meeting on 10 February 2003 were noted and agreed.

**2. Matters Arising**

The Board noted that a paper had been issued to all staff in the Department updating them on the outcome of the review of team briefing.

**3. Preparation for Restoration**

Mr Hamilton outlined the background to this agenda item and explained that whilst the Department could not predict if or when devolution might be restored it was important that the Department was in a position to respond quickly to developments and needed to plan along those lines.

**a) Staff**

The Board discussed the staffing implications of a possible restoration of devolution and agreed that line managers should be made aware of the planned arrangements for returning to their previous posts staff seconded from the Private Offices during suspension.

The Board also agreed that the process of identifying individuals for posts and competitions to fill essential vacancies in the Private Offices and the Information Service should proceed. Key staff should also receive training in new systems and procedures.

**b) Election Guidance**

Ms Flanagan updated the Board on election guidance the Assembly is considering issuing to all MLA's and on separate guidance the Department may need to issue covering the behaviour of all civil servants during an election period.

**c) Assembly Business**

Ms Flanagan updated the Board on the issue of assembly business should restoration occur shortly before dissolution and ahead of Assembly elections scheduled for 1 May 2003.

**d) Legislation**

The Board discussed the need for a future legislative programme should devolution be restored and agreed that early identification of a detailed programme was desirable.

**e) Accommodation**

The Board discussed a number of accommodation issues and it was agreed that restoration would have implications for accommodation particularly for those staff working in Stormont Castle. Mr Jackson reported that the Review of Public Administration team were expecting to vacate their offices in Stormont Castle early in March.

**4. Papers**

**a) Portadown Framework**

The Board discussed and agreed the paper submitted by Ms Flanagan seeking approval to proceed with the Portadown development Framework.

## **5. Tour de Table**

- Ms Bunting updated the Board on developments in relation to the local community fund and on a forthcoming meeting of the implementation group.
- Mr Grimason reminded the Board that a major public announcement on the health service was planned for that day.
- Mr Jardine advised the Board that a number of ministerial meetings were planned for this week to discuss Reform Plans.
- Dr Smyth updated the Board on corporacy arrangements in North/south bodies from April 2003.
- Mr McCartney updated the Board on plans to amend the Civil Service Commissioners Order.

## **6. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

## **7. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Departmental Board will be on Monday 10 March 2003 at 10.45 am.

**Michael Ferguson**

24 February 2003.