

**SUMMARY OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT MEETING
ON 24 MARCH 2004**

PRESENT:	Mr Sweeney	APOLOGIES:	Mr Hamilton
	Mrs Angus		Ms Bunting
	Mrs Cummins		Ms Flanagan
	Mr Gamble		Mr Finnegan
	Mr Jackson		Mr Gray
	Mr Jardine		Mr Grimason
	Mr Johnston		Mr McConnell
	Mrs McAuley		Dr Mulligan
	Mr McCartney		Mr Shannon
	Mr McCluggage		Dr Smith
	Mr McCormick		Mr Stewart
	Mr McKervill		
	Dr Smyth		
	Miss Wilson		
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr Higgins (secretary) Mr Fee		

Mr Sweeney chaired the meeting in the absence of Mr Hamilton. The meeting offered Mrs McAuley best wishes on her move to the Department for Employment and Learning at the end of April 2004.

1. Summary of last meeting

The summary of the Senior Management Group meeting held on 18 February was noted and agreed.

2. Assembly Issues

Mr Johnston updated the Board on a range of Assembly matters including the report of the Independent Monitoring Committee.

3. Forum on the Sponsorship of NDPB's

Mr Sweeney reported on a proposal for the establishment of a forum, to share experiences, identify training and development needs and review best practice, for OFMDFM officials involved in the sponsorship role of NDPB's. It was agreed that a representative from the North South Ministerial Council and the Department of Finance and Personnel would be invited to be involved.

4. Computer Application for Risk Registers

Mr Fee presented a proposal to make use of a computer application for updating Business Risk Registers. Editorial control of updates to Business Risk Registers would remain the responsibility of each Director. It was agreed that each Director would provide Mr Fee with the name of an editor to enable a pilot to commence to test the effectiveness of the proposed computer application. The outcome of the pilot would be reported at a future senior management meeting. **Action: Mr Fee/Directors.**

5. Tour de Table

- a) Mr Jackson reported on legislation matters and on plans to conduct presentations to MLAs highlighting the work of Departments. This was part of an ongoing series of seminars aimed at providing an opportunity for MLAs to learn more about the main issues and priorities facing Departments.
- b) Mr McKervill reported on a booklet "Northern Ireland – take a closer look" and its associated website, www.nitakeacloserlook.gov.uk officially launched by the Secretary of State in Washington DC on 16 March. They promote worldwide the positive aspects of Northern Ireland. The booklet is being distributed to a wide cross section of national and international audiences, from potential investors and journalists to students, visitors and researchers.
- c) Mr Johnston provided an update on the relocation of Executive Services Directorate staff to Dundonald House and on a range of Assembly matters including the Speaker's resignation, North/South Implementation Bodies and Civic Forum issues.
- d) Mr McCartney reported on progress on a Westminster Bill for placing the Home Civil Service on a statutory footing.
- e) Mrs Cummins reported on the Department for Social Development's consultation exercise on the implementation of the North Belfast neighbourhood renewal initiative, an announcement on funding for local partnerships and developments concerning Crumlin Road Goal.

- f) Mrs McAuley updated the Board on the latest developments in respect of consultation on the Single Equality Bill, disability legislation, age discrimination issues concerning retirement age, judicial review cases in respect of sexual orientation and progress by Anti-Discrimination Division as one of the participants in the Electronic Data Records Management pilot.
- g) Mr Gamble reported on matters concerning the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, race relations, community relations, victims issues and progress on the strategy for Children and Young People.
- h) Dr Smyth reported on his visit to Boston, USA for a programme of engagements he carried out in the course of the St Patrick's week celebrations, a seminar for North/South bodies on corporate governance on 26 March 2004 and work in progress on the development of business plans.
- i) Mr Sweeney explained the procedure for access for frequent visitors to Stormont Castle and reported on the detailed refurbishment programme being undertaken in Castle Buildings which involved considerable relocation of staff. The meeting recorded its appreciation for the work of Office Services in effectively managing the extensive relocation programme and the forbearance of staff while the programme is completed. Mr Sweeney also reported on issues concerning the forthcoming Spending Review and 2004/05 Business Plan.
- j) Mr McCluggage reported on the Citizens Information Project and noted that it was being developed in parallel with, but completely separate to, the Identification Card Project. He also reported on Broad Band aggregation and media advertising for the OnLine NI web based service. He expressed his appreciation to the Executive Information Service for their assistance with the media coverage of OnLine NI.
- k) Miss Wilson reported on matters concerning the Priorities and Budget 2004-06 publication, the Economic Research Institute, infrastructure investments and the review of Public Private Partnership (PPP) policy.

- l) Mr Jardine updated the meeting on the current position for applications to the Chief Executive post in the Strategic Investment Board and on progress with applications to the Integrated Development Fund.
- m) Mr McCormick reported on the successful launch of the first Best Practice Scheme open day held by the Down Lisburn Trust in March, progress on finalising 2004/05 Departmental business plans and further development work on customer service standards, Freedom of Information issues and technical projects to provide a framework for the Electronic Data and Records Management (EDRM) system.
- n) Mrs Angus reported on the completion of the Security Vetting Review report, an Emergency Management Development Programme, Continuity of Government plans, a series of presentations on the Electronic Human Resource programme, a review of e-business strategy by outside consultants and the completion of the 2004/05 Departmental Business Plan. The actions and targets contained in the latter would cascade to individual staff in terms of annual reports and personal development plans as stipulated in the new performance management system.
- o) Mr Fee reported that the Department would shortly be signing a software agreement with Microsoft covering products used by OFMDFM such as Microsoft Office. As part of the agreement OFMDFM staff could avail of a copy of Microsoft Office for home use at a minimal cost of around £10 or £15 a copy. It was agreed Mr Fee would arrange for staff to be informed of the availability of this facility at an appropriate time. **Action: Mr Fee.**

6. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 21 April 2004 commencing at 9.30 a.m. in the Conference Room E4.18 Castle Buildings.

MARK HIGGINS

2 April 2004