

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

**Present:** Nigel Hamilton  
Clive Gowdy  
Wilfie Hamilton  
Will Haire  
Andrew McCormick  
Aideen McGinley  
Gerry McGinn  
Stephen Peover  
Stephen Quinn  
Alan Shannon  
Pat Toal

**In Attendance:** Chris Thompson } Agenda item 3  
Olive Maybin }  
Rosalie Flanagan } Agenda item 4  
George Gray }  
Stephen Grimason  
Debbie Sweeney (Secretary)

**Apologies:** John Hunter  
Bruce Robinson

**1. Minutes and Summary**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September were agreed.

**2. Matters Arising**

Matters Arising would be covered in the Agenda.

**3. Review of Office Accommodation**

Mr Thompson updated PSG on progress to date on the Review of Office Accommodation. The Review has looked at major rationalisation of the existing estate rather than large-scale acquisition of new property and the

programme is on target to complete by the end of October. Proposals suggest open plan accommodation determined by function and not grade, flat screen technology, off-site electronic storage and new space targets. Mr Thompson said if the guidelines were adopted there would be a real opportunity to make transformational change and major savings across the NICS. As part of the business case, recommendations were made to achieve early gains. The first would be the lease of the site at Harbourgate to accommodate the Central Procurement Directorate and the move of CPG to Royston House. Concern was expressed regarding open plan accommodation, getting staff on board, the need for flexibility, communication and the proposed moratorium on new acquisitions.

Mr Thompson said the final report was due in three weeks' time which would be issued to TUS for comment and then submitted to Ministers and PSG for approval.

#### 4. **Legislative Programme**

Mrs Flanagan updated PSG on the current political situation.

On the Legislative Programme, Mrs Flanagan said she and Mr Gray had completed their round of discussions with Departments and a note will circulate setting out main points of good practice.

PSG agreed the assessment of priority of legislation and Mrs Flanagan asked that colleagues keep in touch with OLC to keep them updated on any changes or slippage to orders.

#### 5. **Sub-Group C**

Dr McGinley updated PSG on the work in progress of Sub-Group C. PSG agreed to the 360 profiles across the SCS.

Dr McGinley reminded PSG of the various forthcoming Masterclasses. Dr McGinley said she would be writing to colleagues regarding a 2-day Masterclass with Pete Zimmerman and 3 members from the Harvard faculty, outlining purpose, objectives and cost.

**[Action: Dr McGinley]**

Dr McGinley said CPG were looking for mentors for the new SCS entrants; names should be forwarded to Gareth Johnston. She said she would write to colleagues to remind them.

**[Action: Dr McGinley]**

#### 6. **Budget**

Dr McCormick updated PSG on the Draft Priorities Budget and Civil Service Reform document for publication on Wednesday 6 October. Mr Hamilton asked that a handling plan for the announcement be finalised.

**[Action: Dr McCormick, Mr Grimason]**

7. **Tour de Table**

Festivals

Dr McGinley said the Festivals Policy was being finalised.

Beef Ban

Mr Toal reported that the EU has agreed to lift the ban on Portuguese beef.

**DEBBIE SWEENEY**  
**27 September 2004**