

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING, FRIDAY  
25 JULY 2003 IN STORMONT CASTLE, ROOM GD.10, AT 08.45 am – 10.30 am**

**Present:** Pat Carvill  
Clive Gowdy  
Will Haire  
John Hunter  
Aideen McGinley  
Gerry McGinn  
Stephen Peover  
Stephen Quinn  
Bruce Robinson  
Alan Shannon  
Pat Toal

**Apologies:** Nigel Hamilton  
Stephen Grimason  
Andrew McCormick  
David Watkins

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

**1. Agenda Item 1 – Minutes and Summary of Meeting of 4 July**

Item 5 – Additional sentence at end of final paragraph.

PSG noted the need for the Interdepartmental Group to consider how best to carry forward the further implementation of the Charter, not least in those areas where it was desirable to have consistency of approach across the NICS.

Item 6(iv)(a) – Resourcing Principles for the NICS should read: It was noted that this development is not in line with Trade Union thinking.

Item 6(iv)(b) – Leaders in a Changing World.

Remove (c)

## 2. **Agenda Item 3 – SCS Management Issues**

### Ouseley Report Update

Mr Carvill met with Minister Ian Pearson at the end of May.

Members noted that the Minister agreed:

- Decisions on whether to advertise internally or externally should be taken on a case-by-case basis and external recruitment used as appropriate.
- There should be a continued commitment to exploring options eg through a major pilot exercise in external recruitment programmed for September.

It was also agreed that PSG members would consult their Minister when decisions were being taken as to whether internal or external competitions should be used to fill a SCS vacancy within their Departments.

**[Action – CPG & Members]**

### Forward Look

Members were updated on HOCS proposals on management of the SCS. Members noted:

- PSG will dedicate one meeting per month at which SCS management issues will be discussed.
- Vacancies, retirements, competitions or transfers will be notified to and managed by the Director of CPG in advance of a meeting and proposed outcomes presented in a paper to PSG.
- All proposed bilateral transfers and moves to be brokered by Permanent Secretaries with the Director of CPG. Departments should not make direct approaches to individual members of staff in other Departments to explore the possibility of moves.
- All proposed appointments will be approved by PSG.

- PSG should communicate to the SCS cadre the structures in place for SCS management.

Members were asked to consider staff to fill a Grade 5 vacancy in BDS.

**[Action – Members]**

### 3. **Agenda Item 4 – Resourcing the NICS**

Members considered Mr Carvill's paper of 9 July 2003, Resourcing the NICS: Recruitment and Promotion to General Service Grades.

PDG had defined main drivers of change as:

- securing the best qualified staff to deliver reform agenda
- flexibility
- staff interests
- political imperatives
- TUS interests
- improving the image of the NICS

After considerable discussion, members made the following comments:

- there was total support for the objectives of the paper but also concerns and reservations about specific aspects and about tactics and presentation
- there was a need to draw attention to what was currently being done for existing staff
- a need to identify the sort of people NICS required and what skill shortages needed to be addressed

- the market should be tested and the results will influence how to proceed
- the issue of Grade 7 competition would be addressed further at PSG
- it would require careful handling if Resourcing was going to be factored into pay negotiations.

Mr Carvill asked for any further comments on reflection of this issue.

**[Action – Members]**

#### 4. **Agenda Item 5 – Tour de Table**

##### Hospice

Quintin Oliver had been appointed as independent adviser in relation to the Hospice Review.

##### PPP

A lot of ongoing work around the PPP policy area, especially surrounding the review of the two-tier workforce issue.

##### Staff

Kathryn Menary was introduced to PSG as Mr Haire's new Private Secretary.

##### Jethro Project

Archbishop Eames was pressing the Secretary of State on the Jethro Project.

##### New Opportunities Fund

Mr McGinn met with Stephen Dunmore, Chief Executive of the New Opportunities Fund and presented a number of ideas worth considering for a new fund which they are setting up.

## PPP – Current Education Projects

Matters are progressing on the Derry Diocese issue.

## Lottery Unit Review

Lottery Unit has written to Departments to co-ordinate response in relation to the DCMS Review.

## Capital of Culture

Members noted this subject may feature again.

## North Belfast Festivals

Members noted an ongoing Government exercise is underway to formalise a strategic approach to festival activities.

## Chief Executive Water Service

Criticism in the Newsletter regarding the advertising of the CE post.

## Maze Site

Members noted there may be Planning Policy constraints on the site.

## Elizabeth Meehan Letters

It was agreed EPU would take this on board.

**[Action – OFMDFM]**

## Historic Buildings

Members noted DOE issue of Urgent Works Notice to owner of a listed building and an increase in Conservation and Environmental issues.

### Common Address

Members noted the variable practice of Londonderry/Derry addresses on official documentation. It was agreed that guidance on common practice should be drawn up.

**[Action – OFMDFM]**

### Landfill Sites

Offal from the Republic of Ireland being dumped in landfill sites in Northern Ireland was reported in the Belfast Telegraph – 24 July 2003.

### Belfast City Centre Policy Framework

Members noted the framework document would be published for consultation w/c 28 July 2003.

### Energy Issues

It was noted Mr Pearson met with Dermot Ahern in Dublin to discuss Energy Issues.

### Broadband

Members were informed that DETI was optimistic that arrangements could be made for NI to have 100% Broadband coverage by the end of 2003.

## **5. Agenda Item 6 – Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of PSG will take place on Friday 1 August at 0845 am – 1015 am in Room GD.10, Stormont Castle.

**DEBBIE SWEENEY (MRS)**

**1 August 2003**