

HCS/1045/03

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING –
FRIDAY 27 JUNE 2003 at 08.45 am – 10.30 am at STORMONT CASTLE**

Present: Nigel Hamilton (Chair)
Pat Carvill
Clive Gowdy
John Hunter
Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon
Pat Toal

Apologies: Will Haire
Gerry McGinn
Andrew McCormick
Stephen Peover
David Watkins

In Attendance: Carol Moore

Edgar Jardine	}	Item 3 only
Peter May		
Nigel McCormick		
Stephen Grimason		Items 5, 6 & 7
John McKervill	}	Item 5 only
Alan McArthur		
Linda Brown		Item 6 only

- 1. Agenda Item 1 - Minutes and Summaries of PSG meetings:**
 - PSG meeting on 13 June
 - PSG meeting on 23 June

The Minutes and summaries were deferred to the next meeting.

2. **Agenda Item 2 – Matters Arising**

(i) **Secretary to PSG**

The Chair welcomed and introduced Debbie Sweeney as the new Secretary to the Permanent Secretary Group. Mrs Sweeney will take up post on 4 August 2003.

(ii) **SCS Management Issues**

The Chair advised members that the PSG meeting on Friday 25 July will focus on Senior Civil Service Management issues. The HOCS asked the Group to encourage their relevant SCS cadre to CPG Career Development Profiles for the 2002 reporting period.

[Action: Members]

3. **Agenda Item 3 – Moving forward on the Reform Agenda**

Edgar Jardine, Peter May and Nigel McCormick joined the meeting for this item.

Following discussion the following action points were agreed;

(i) **SCS Newsletter**

- to issue a Newsletter to SCS cadre taking account of the following suggestions:
 - clarify ownership of the Reform agenda,
 - re-iterate the reform message
 - broadening of the citizen-centric approach
 - highlight the professionalism of the NICS

(ii) that the HOCS should write to the Secretary of State outlining the proposed early wins which are currently being pursued.

[Action: Peter May]

4. **Agenda Item 4 – Presentation on SARS**

The Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland, Dr Henrietta Campbell, and Dr Elizabeth Mitchell joined the meeting for this item.

Dr Campbell outlined the work currently underway in DHSSPS. She assured members that officials in DHSSPS, the lead Department, are maintaining close contact with counterparts in Whitehall and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Dr Mitchell outlined the background to and experience of handling the recent outbreak of SARS in other regions.

As a precautionary measure, Dr Campbell invited members to consider the likely implications for their relevant business areas and advise Dr Mitchell by 18 July 2003.

[Action: Members]

5. **Agenda Item 5 – Graphic Design**

The Director of Information Services Stephen Grimason, Deputy Director John McKervill and Alan McArthur of DRD joined the meeting for this item.

Following considerable discussion, members tabled the following concerns;

(i) **Savings**

Acknowledged the proposed savings but recognised lack of evidence to support cost savings. Members sought further work to be undertaken to provide reassurances of potential savings.

(ii) **Career Structure for Designers**

Acknowledged the merit of improving career structure for Graphic Designers but strongly stated that there must be no increase in the numbers of persons employed.

(iii) **Centralisation or Centralisation on two Sites**

Considered Options 1a and 2 as possible structures capable of achieving the objectives set out in the paper, but sought further evidence to support recommendations.

(iv) **Detailed Proposals**

Members agreed that the review team should be invited to work up further proposals for both option 1a and 2.

It was noted that members strongly opposed a single centralised service but rather preferred to support the concept as one of a menu of options for consideration by Departments. Members preferred flexibility in order to meet business needs.

Finally it was agreed that PSG would consider the proposal at a future date when further work was complete.

**[Action: J McKervill/
A McArthur]**

6. **Agenda Item 6 – Graduate Recruitment**

The Chair of PSG Sub-Committee C – Selection, Training and Recruitment provided a paper providing the additional information requested by members at the 23 June meeting.

It was agreed that the entry requirement should be raised from a 2:2 to a 2:1 and that the literature should be printed to this effect.

[Action: Linda Brown, CPG]

7. **Agenda Item 7 – Tour de Table**

(i) N+2 Update

Members noted that there would be a substantive discussion on progress on N+2 at the 4 July meeting.

(ii) DHSSPS

Members noted that the Minister, Angela Smith, intends to make an announcement on Monday regarding the future of the maternity services.

(iii) DARD

It was noted that the Farm Deal has now been agreed by Ministers in Europe.

(iv) Growing the New Gateway Seminar

It was noted that the Chamber of Commerce in Derry were very pleased with the success of the seminar and the support of government Departments. They acknowledged the high level of attendance and active participation of senior government officials.

It was agreed at the seminar to establish a stakeholder alliance which would be supported by a secretariat located at the North West Development office.

(v) DRD

Members were informed that the NIAO would be publishing the report on suspected fraud in the water service followed by a report on absenteeism in the Water and Roads Service on 1 July.

(vi) DETI

Mr Robinson provided an overview on the economic front.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Friday 4 July. The Chair invited members, as an exception to send representatives during the summer leave period.

Bernie Rooney

BERNIE ROONEY
11 July 2003