

**SUMMARY OF OFMDFM DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
ON 27 JANUARY 2003**

PRESENT: Mr Hamilton, Mr Gray, Mr Jardine, Mr Grimason,
Ms Bunting, Ms Flanagan, Mr McCartney, Mrs Angus.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Rooney, Miss Dullaghan, Mr Ferguson (Secretary).

APOLOGIES: Mr Haire, Mr McConnell, Dr Smyth

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the Departmental Board meeting on 20 January 2003 were noted and agreed subject to an amendment to item 4b.

2. Matters Arising

The Board noted that any matters arising were included in the agenda for the meeting.

3. Standing Items

a) Direct Rule including Assembly Issues

Ms Flanagan updated Board members on a number of issues arising from her meeting with the Speaker of the Assembly.

The Board discussed formal mechanisms for engaging with party advisers and it was agreed that a paper would be prepared for the Secretary of State setting out the options.

Mrs Bunting updated Board members on the outcome of the Implementation Group meeting on the afternoon of 20 January.

b) Staffing and Finance Issues

Mrs Angus reported that some returns from Directors on staff numbers in their Directorates were still awaited and confirmed that the last outstanding staffing review, in the Economic Policy and Public Service Directorate, should be completed soon.

Mr Haire had circulated a paper to Board members on flights to Great Britain. It was agreed that this issue would be carried over to the meeting on 3 February.

c) Information Issues

Mr Grimason updated Board members on the launch of the community relations' policy scheduled for Tuesday 28 January.

d) Contingency Planning

Mrs Angus updated Board members on developments in relation to work being undertaken by the Cabinet Office on contingency planning and advised that this issue was being kept under constant review.

4. Current Issues

a) Joint Seminar with the NIO

The Board discussed the joint seminar with the NIO Departmental Board on Thursday 23 January 2003. There was general consensus that the seminar was an informative, worthwhile and useful exercise that opened up new lines of communication and enabled NIO colleagues to gain a better understanding of the issues facing OFMDFM. It was agreed that bilateral meetings on specific issues should continue and that a further joint meeting should be considered in April ahead of a possible local election or sooner if there are any significant political developments.

5. Papers

a) Review of Team Briefing

Mrs Angus updated Board members on issues raised at the senior management meeting on 22 January in relation to the review. The Board discussed each of the points contained in the Action Plan and agreed a number of changes of which the main one was that the core and local brief should be based around a template that reflected the main issues within OFMDFM.

[Action: Mrs Angus]

b) Team Brief

The Board discussed the core brief for January 2003 and agreed a number of changes to the text.

c) SDA Quarterly Progress Report

The Board noted the contents of the quarterly progress report for the 200/03 Service Delivery Agreement.

6. Tour de Table

- Ms Bunting reminded colleagues that the launch of the community relations' policy was due to take place on 28 January.
- Mr Jardine advised colleagues that the Strategic Investment Board Bill had been referred to the Northern Ireland Grand Committee;
- Ms Flanagan asked about the use of Hospitality Registers, which gave rise to a discussion about recent guidance on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. To be discussed at the Board meeting on 3 February.

7. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Departmental Board will be on Monday 3 February 2003 at 10.15 am.

Michael Ferguson

30 January 2003.