

**SUMMARY OF OFMDFM DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
ON 9 DECEMBER 2002**

PRESENT: Mr Haire, Ms Flanagan, Mr Jardine, Mr Grimason,
Mr McCartney, Mrs Angus.

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

APOLOGIES: Mr Hamilton, Mr Gray, Mrs Bunting, Dr Smyth,
Mr McConnell.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

It was agreed that the minutes of the Departmental Board meeting on 2 December 2002 would be circulated to Board members for their agreement.

2. Matters Arising

Special Bonus Scheme

The Board meeting on 25 November agreed that this issue should be reviewed on 9 December. The Board noted that Mrs Angus would report on this issue under 'Staffing and Finance'.

Web Publishing Policy

The Board meeting on 25 November agreed that this issue should be reviewed on 9 December. The Board noted that this issue was still in progress and that Directors were providing comments direct to Mr Grimason.

3. Standing Items

a) Direct Rule including Assembly Issues

Ms Flanagan updated the Board on her regular meeting with the Speaker of the Assembly. One of the issues raised was the status of staff from the Northern Ireland Civil Service who are currently on loan to the suspended Assembly.

b) Staffing and Finance Issues

Recognition and Reward

Mrs Angus updated the Board on options for recognising and rewarding the efforts of staff pending the review of the Special Bonus Scheme. The Board noted that options were limited in the short term and agreed that formal mechanisms should await the formal review of the current bonus scheme. In the meantime it was recognised that there was much managers could do to recognise good performance amongst their staff.

c) Information Issues

Mr Grimason updated the Board on the media awareness seminar for OFMDFM staff on 4 December. One of the issues arising from the seminar was that staff preparing submissions were unaware of the need to consider seeking advice from the Information Service about presentational issues. The Board agreed to a request from Mr Grimason that they disseminate this information to their staff.

4. Papers

a) IT Upgrade Brussels and Washington

Mr Jardine had submitted a paper to the Board setting out the business case for upgrading and improving the information technology links with the Brussels Office and the Washington Bureau for the benefit of both staff there and here in Northern Ireland. The Board, whilst noting that the funding for this upgrade was not bid for in the December monitoring round, approved the project if funding could be found within the Department. Should funding prove to be a problem the Board agreed that the project could, subject to budgetary constraints, go forward on a phased basis beginning with the Brussels Office.

[Action: Mr Jardine / Mrs Angus]

5. Current Issues

a) Seminars with NIO colleagues

The Board noted the letter circulated by Mr Hamilton suggesting a series of seminars with NIO counterparts to discuss issues of mutual interest and seeking the views of Directors on other topics for discussion. Mrs Bunting and Mr Jardine suggested several topics for discussion and Mr Haire asked members to let him have any further topics by the 13 December.

[Action: Directors]

6. Tour de Table

- Mr Haire updated the Board on a number of consultation issues surrounding the Ministerial announcement in connection with the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative at the Odyssey Centre on 11 December.
- Ms Flanagan updated the Board on a recent consultation meeting that touched on a number of issues including the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Bill, the Community Relations' policy and the panel of experts for the Single Equality Bill.

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 16 December at 10.45 am.

Michael Ferguson

9 December 2002.