

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2007
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Nigel Hamilton
Will Haire
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Malcolm McKibbin
Stephen Peover
Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon
David Sterling
Paul Sweeney

In Attendance: Rosalie Flanagan
Oswyn Paulin
Pauline Boyle – Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Stephen Grimason
John McMillen

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 7 September 2007**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Foot and Mouth

Malcolm McKibbin updated PSG on the new case of Foot and Mouth disease in Surrey. He reported that all consignments of animals imported into Northern Ireland from 23 August have been traced and tested and none showed any symptoms. Northern Ireland has a unique trading position and can export cattle. DARD introduced disinfectant measures as a precaution and continues to liaise with colleagues in the South and DEFRA and will maintain a high state of vigilance. Malcolm said DARD's full Departmental Strategy Board still meet on a daily basis and liaise with producers, processors and retailers to ensure adherence to certification and advise of any trading problems.

4. **Executive and Assembly Update**

Rosalie Flanagan updated PSG on the Executive meeting on 13 September. She said there was a proposal for an additional Executive Meeting on 18 October.

5. Draft Executive and Committee Papers

Stephen Quinn had a query on procedures for handling comments on draft Executive Committee papers. It was agreed that final comments to papers should be highlighted in tracked changes so any late changes could be quickly identified.

6. NI Reform Programme

Bruce Robinson updated PSG on NI Reform Programme costs and arrangements. He has spoken to the Minister and colleagues and agreed HR Connect. On Workplace 2010 four Departments are still concerned. It will take a few weeks to sort Network NI with four Departments agreed and seven in dispute.

Bruce would attend a meeting on 14 September on Account NI in an effort to move that forward. Work in last week has been good in aggregate terms.

7. Britain in Beijing, 2008

Paul Sweeney said the British Olympic Association in partnership with VisitBritain is planning to organise a presence in Beijing during the 2008 Olympic Games. They are approaching nations and regions of the UK to explore interest in participating in this opportunity. DCAL will coordinate the Sports and related Olympic Programme through the 2012 Task Force. Paul wanted PSG to consider whether they wish to broaden this opportunity beyond Sport and explore the wider promotional opportunities a presence in Beijing would offer Northern Ireland. It was agreed that DCAL should meet with Invest NI and the Tourist Board as a starting point and that John McMillen should be invited to this meeting.

8. Tour de Table

Giant's Causeway

Stephen Quinn gave an update on the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre.

PAC Committee

Stephen Peover had appeared before the PAC Committee on 13 September in relation to Road Safety.

Crumlin Road Gaol

Alan Shannon said there would be a ceremonial event to unveil the completed environmental improvement scheme at the Crumlin Road Gaol and the planned public access pilot scheme on Monday 17 September.

Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood Park

Alan Shannon said he has received the draft Masterplan from Roy Adams.

CBI Speech

Bruce Robinson said his Minister, Peter Robinson had addressed the CBI Stratagem event last Thursday. He said he would circulate a copy of the speech.

[Action: Bruce Robinson]

Budget

Bruce Robinson had supported the Finance Minister at a meeting on 12 September with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Classroom Assistants

Will Haire gave an update on the Classroom Assistants dispute.

Invitations

Malcolm McKibbin received an invitation to the Directors Dinner in Dublin Castle hosted by Dermot Ahern on 25 September but can't attend.

Nigel Hamilton was informed of a conference to be held on 3 and 4 October 2007 by an external consultancy firm called SMI on PPP in Northern Ireland. This firm had drawn up and printed a programme which included names of Civil Servants who had not been approached or asked to participate. PSG agreed that this would not be a priority for Departments.

The Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce President's Reception and Banquet 2007 will take place on Tuesday 9 October. Stephen Quinn will represent Nigel Hamilton and Bruce Robinson will also attend as a guest of the Bank.

David Sterling said he had received an invitation from Consul General Mme-Tan Xiutian to a Reception to mark the 58th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China on Monday 1 October in the Europa Hotel. Others had also received an invitation and it was agreed that because this was a reception only it was up to individuals to decide.

Alan Shannon said he would attend the Law Society of Northern Ireland's President's Annual Council Dinner on Friday 26 October in the Balmoral Conference Centre.

Paul Sweeney said the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce 50th Annual Gala Dinner is on Friday 19 October to which Ministers were invited. It was agreed this would be discussed at next week's meeting.

[Action: Secretary]

9. Deputy Secretary Vacancies

Minuted separately.

10. **Next Meeting**

The next PSG meeting will take place on 21 September in the Glasshouse.

To be included on the agenda:

Reform PSG
Shanghai World Expo

PAULINE BOYLE
September 2007