

**MINUTES OF THE OFMDFM DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
ON 18 DECEMBER 2008**

- PRESENT:** Bruce Robinson (Chair), Mary Bunting,
Frank Cushnahan, Rosalie Flanagan, George Gray,
Stephen Grimason, Deirdre Kenny, John McMillen and
Eddie Rooney.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Richard Bullick, Mark Higgins (Secretary) and Colm
Shannon.
- APOLOGIES:** Jackie Kerr and Dara O'Hagan.

Minutes of Last Meeting

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 26.11.08 were agreed as amended.

Matters Arising

2. It was agreed members would provide updates to the secretary on progress in completing actions. **Action: Members.**

Northern Ireland Direct Programme

3. As agreed at the 26.11.08 Departmental Board meeting, Colm Shannon provided detail on OFMDFM's role in delivery of the NI Direct website. Colm outlined the arrangements for managing franchises and content within OFMDFM and the wider responsibilities post March 2009 for the management of NI Direct online. Colm explained that franchises are allocated on the basis of which Department owns the majority of content within a range of themes. Departmental Franchise Managers work with their business areas to update and

develop content and to work with other Departments who own content within their franchise.

4. The Board noted the Department's responsibilities as Franchise Manager for the two themes, "People With Disabilities" and, "Government, Citizens and Rights" and for updating content on a number of other themes. In addition the Department has wider responsibilities for delivering the new website which will go live post March 2009 and which is central to government's communications.
5. Once developed and launched responsibility for the site will transfer in June 2009 from the Project Board to Executive Information Service (EIS) and be managed by a central editorial team who will support Franchise Managers, issue guidance, undertake marketing, quality assure published material and ensure key governmental messages about public services are easily accessible and prioritised. In addition, in conjunction with the Delivery and Innovation Division (DID) of the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) the central team will ensure the site reflects developments within the communications environment and exploits new opportunities, particularly for transactional services. Stephen Grimason advised that funding issues between DFP and OFMDFM for the central editorial team and to market the site need to be addressed.
6. The Board also noted the requirements of OFMDFM business areas to review the content for which they are responsible to localise it to suit citizens in Northern Ireland and to complete that work by mid to late January 2009.

7. It was agreed that Colm would provide a further paper to the January 2009 meeting with detail on a project work plan.

Action: Colm Shannon. NI Direct would be a standing item on the Board's agenda for the foreseeable future.

Review of Knowledge Network

8. John McMillen provided an update on the review of Knowledge Network (KN) by DID Consultants who reported that a medium term replacement was required for this set of Lotus Notes based applications. Their report also makes some quick wins and longer term recommendations. The quick wins included, reducing KN functionality to 'key' modules, "switching off" little used functions, movement of KN hosting from OFMDFM to IT Assist and replacement of some KN functionality.

9. It was agreed that final decisions on the DID recommendations should be made by the end of January 2009 following an impact analysis on those recommendations, consideration of options for replacing and/or retaining or transferring modules and engagement with EIS and IT Assist in those areas which are relevant to their responsibilities.

Action: John McMillen.

Business Continuity Planning

10. Deirdre Kenny reported on the Department's current business continuity plan which is intended to provide assurance of the Department's ability to continue and resume key services in the event of a disruption. Deirdre explained that DID expertise would be engaged in Spring 2009 to review and update the plan. In the meantime it was agreed that Deirdre would identify and circulate to the Directors, 4 to 5 key critical issues for them to consider and to provide assurances to the

January Board meeting that they have taken appropriate action to address any outstanding issues. **Action: Deirdre Kenny/Directors.** It was also agreed that a separate paper on emergency planning would also be tabled for the January Board meeting. **Action: Deirdre Kenny.**

Review of Office of the Legislative Counsel

11. John McMillen provided an update on the above review, conducted by Stewart Johnston whose report identified key areas which required immediate attention, i.e. pay, retention and recruitment of appropriately skilled draftsmen. The Board discussed the key issues of the review and it was agreed that John McMillen would pursue those as a matter of urgency with DFP to bring forward solutions as soon as possible. **Action: John McMillen.**

Finance

12. The Board noted a minute from John McMillen to Jack Layberry dated 9 December, on a November GEMS return which provided an early year end forecast based on the November 2008 outturn data available from the system before formal month end close. The Board noted that the forecast administration cost position had improved significantly following the successful reclassification bid in December Monitoring. The Finance Minister's approval of OFMDFM's bid for the reclassification of £0.75 million resource to administration costs has removed the risk of a year end administration cost overspend arising.

Departmental Brief

13. The Board noted the draft January Departmental Brief which would be circulated to Directors to initiate the team briefing process within the Department. **Action: Board Secretary**

A.O.B.

14. The Board noted that a further strategic planning day would be arranged for mid January to take forward work on the next stage of the draft 2009-10 Business Plan, including further development of the balanced scorecard objectives and associated measures and targets. **Action: Board Secretary.**

Date of Next Meeting

15. The next meeting will take place on Monday 26.1.09 from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. in Room 229, Dundonald House, Stormont. The meeting was rescheduled from 29.1.09 to accommodate an Executive meeting arranged for that day.
16. It was agreed to reschedule future Board meetings which fell on the same day as scheduled Executive meetings currently arranged fortnightly from January to June 2009. **Action: Board Secretary.**

Mark Higgins
29.12.08