

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2008
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Bruce Robinson – Chair
Catherine Bell
Mary Bunting
Will Haire
Gerry Lavery
Andrew McCormick
Leo O'Reilly
Stephen Peover
Paul Priestly
Stephen Quinn
Alan Shannon
Paul Sweeney

In attendance: Oswyn Paulin
Rosalie Flanagan
Stephen Grimason
Pauline Boyle – Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Aideen McGinley
Malcolm McKibbin
John McMillen

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 29 August 2008**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 August were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Flooding

Gerry Lavery said DARD's assessment on the flooding in August which affected the farming community is almost complete.

4. **Executive & Assembly Update**

Rosalie Flanagan informed PSG that the Ministerial Reps Meeting due to take place on Thursday 11 September had been postponed until Thursday 18 September and the two new Special Advisers would be in attendance. She said the Assembly will resume on Monday 15 September and the Executive is scheduled to meet on Thursday 18 September. The Assembly

and Executive Review Committee met on Tuesday 9 September: an update on the work of this Committee would come to the 26 September meeting.

Rosalie said a draft paper on revised processes for bringing papers to the Executive would issue to colleagues for discussion at the PSG meeting on 19 September. Neill Jackson would be in attendance for this item.

[Action: Rosalie Flanagan & Secretary]

Stephen Grimason noted the planned visit by the Prime Minister to Northern Ireland on Tuesday 16 September as part of his tour of the regions.

5. **Awayday Follow-up**

The minutes of the meeting for the PSG Awayday 4-5 September 2008 were discussed and some amendments were agreed.

6. **Tour de Table**

Attorney General

Oswyn Paulin said the Attorney General visited the Departmental Solicitors office on Friday 5 September.

Handling of correspondence

Paul Priestly said he had issued a reminder to his officials that letters from local elected representatives should receive a Ministerial reply.

Anti-Poverty Network

The Anti-Poverty Network has written to a number of Departments seeking funding support. It was agreed that Departments would respond individually. Stephen Peover agreed to circulate the DOE response to colleagues. Mary Bunting agreed to check out how OFMDFM had handled this and to report back.

[Action: Stephen Peover & Mary Bunting]

Invitations

SOLACE

Stephen Peover said he and other colleagues had received an invitation from SOLACE to their Annual Dinner in Newtown Stewart Golf Club on 24 October 2008. It was agreed that Paul Simpson, DOE would attend.

NI Hotels Federation

Leo O'Reilly has received an invitation to the NI Hotels Federation President's Ball on Wednesday 15 October. PSG agreed that a representative from DETI would be appropriate.

Construction Employers Federation

Bruce Robinson has received an invitation to the Construction Employers Federation Construction Excellence Awards Gala Dinner on Thursday 9 October 2008 in the Culloden Hotel. Paul Priestly also received an invitation and it was agreed that Paul would attend.

Climate Change

Stephen Peover said he attended an Environment Conference in Dublin on Tuesday 9 September and spoke on Climate Change.

Advisory Commission

Stephen Peover reported on the appointments to three Advisory Commissions.

Public appointments

Stephen Quinn said he received correspondence on public appointment processes. DOE and DE also received and it was agreed that this correspondence might best be dealt with through a central response. Mary Bunting agreed to ask Deirdre Kenny in OFMDFM who is responsible for Public Appointments to co-ordinate the response and colleagues were asked to forward any correspondence to her. This would be discussed at next week's PSG meeting.

[Action: Mary Bunting & Secretary]

Local Government Boundaries Commission

Stephen Peover said the Report of the Local Government Boundaries Commission would be launched on Wednesday 17 September in the Ramada Hotel, Belfast by Dick Mackenzie.

McLaughlin & Harvey Case

Leo O'Reilly reported that he had received the judgement on the McLaughlin & Harvey application for judicial review.

Fuel Price Increase

Stephen Quinn reported on energy fuel price increases.

Cold Weather Payments

Alan Shannon reported on the package announced by Gordon Brown on Thursday 11 September 2008.

Fuel Poverty

Alan said Minister Ritchie will put a paper to the Executive on fuel poverty.

Child Support

Alan Shannon said an advertising campaign on Child Support was launched on Thursday 11 September.

OCPANI

Bruce Robinson said he had an introductory meeting with Felicity Huston, the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Access NI

Bruce Robinson said he received correspondence from Carol Moore, NIO on Access Northern Ireland and drew colleagues attention to the information which is on the website.

Glasshouse, Stormont Castle

Bruce Robinson informed colleagues that he met with DFP Property colleagues to discuss improving facilities in the Glasshouse to include a screen for powerpoint presentations. He asked if anyone had any views to come back to him.

[Action: Permanent Secretaries]

**Pauline Boyle
15 September 2008**