

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY, 29 AUGUST 2008
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

- Present:** Bruce Robinson – Chair
Geoff Allister
Will Haire
Mary Bunting
Gerry Lavery
Greg McConnell
Andrew McCormick
Barney McGahan
Leo O'Reilly
Stephen Peover
Stephen Quinn
Paul Sweeney
- In Attendance:** Oswyn Paulin
Rosalie Flanagan
Colm Shannon
Richard Pengelly
Tom Josephs
Pauline Boyle - Secretary
- 1. Apologies:** Aideen McGinley
Malcolm McKibbin
John McMillen
Paul Priestly
Alan Shannon
Stephen Grimason

2. Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 22 August 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 August were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Flooding

Gerry Lavery said work is continuing to assess the damage caused to farming arising from recent flooding. Inspections are concentrating on the worst affected areas along the six main river catchment areas. DARD expects the beginning of the assessment results by Monday 1 September.

PSG discussed briefly the issues re financial assistance for those affected. Bruce Robinson said a paper on the flooding and lessons learnt would be prepared soon.

4. Executive & Assembly Update

Rosalie Flanagan informed PSG that Trevor Reaney is now in post as the Clerk to the Northern Ireland Assembly. She said the next Executive meeting is scheduled to take place on 18 September.

5. UK Fiscal Position & Outlook for Public Spending

Tom Josephs, HMT joined PSG to give a presentation on the UK Fiscal Position and Outlook for Public Spending. Tom's presentation covered the fiscal position as set out in the Budget and the outlook for spending in the short term, over the next Spending Review and in the period to 2020. This provided the context both for short-term policy-making and for the longer-term strategic challenges work being led by Cabinet Office and the Value for Money Reviews which the Chancellor and the Prime Minister have launched.

6. Civil Service Reform

Leo O'Reilly gave an update on civil service reform issues since the last monthly report on 30 June.

7. Tour de Table

Leadership in a Changing World

Leo O'Reilly said Steve Hare in the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) had written again to Permanent Secretaries to ask for nominations to the Leadership in a Changing World event at Harvard.

Equal Pay

Leo updated PSG on Equal Pay.

Pay Strategy

Leo said the Pay Strategy for the SCS had been agreed and a submission would be put to Minister Dodds today.

September Monitoring

Leo said September Monitoring returns were due back from all departments to DFP by 11 September and asked colleagues to adhere to this deadline.

SSA

Barney McGahan reported on the SSA consultation on the Strategic Business Review.

DARD

Gerry Lavery updated PSG on the use of Irish Language on DARD material.

CBI (NI) Public Procurement Survey

Bruce Robinson said he received a report from the CBI about Government Procurement. Leo O'Reilly had also received this and DFP would take the lead.

[Action: Leo O'Reilly]

Economic Conference

Stephen Quinn reported on Economic Conference planned for October.

Lunch for Sir Nigel Hamilton

Bruce Robinson said he was attending the lunch today in honour of Sir Nigel Hamilton hosted by Jonathan Baume, General Secretary of the FDA.

PSG Awayday

Bruce Robinson said he had issued papers for next week's PSG Awayday to be held in the Galgorm Manor from 4-5 September 2008.

PAULINE BOYLE
1 September 2008