

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY, 8 AUGUST 2008
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Bruce Robinson – Chair
Doreen Brown
Will Haire
Don Hill
Edgar Jardine
Aideen McGinley
Malcolm McKibbin
Stephen Peover
Stephen Quinn
David Thomson
Alan Shannon

In Attendance: Rosalie Flanagan
Stephen Grimason
John McMillen
Pauline Boyle - Secretary

1. Apologies: Andrew McCormick
Leo O'Reilly
Paul Priestly
Paul Sweeney
Oswyn Paulin

2. Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 1 August 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 August have been circulated. Any comments to Pauline.

3. Matters Arising

Public Inquiries

Oswyn Paulin will circulate a UK version of guidance on public inquiries in the UK on his return from annual leave.

Legislative Programme

A draft Executive paper on the Legislative Programme was due to be tabled for today's meeting but will be discussed at a later date.

SCS Pay Award

Minuted separately.

4. Executive & Assembly Update

Rosalie Flanagan said FM/dFM had written to Jimmy Spratt, Chair of the Assembly & Executive Review Committee in relation to devolution of policing and justice. She said the Assembly & Executive Review Committee would resume business in the first week of September.

Rosalie updated PSG on outstanding Executive papers and said arrangements were in place to clear some of these through Urgent Procedure. She indicated it was unlikely that the Assembly would be recalled early.

5. Celtic Forum

Bruce Robinson is keen to get preparations underway for the Celtic Forum event scheduled for 2-3 October. He attended the Joint Ministerial Committee on 25 June chaired by Jack Straw and he considered how the Scots and the Welsh would wish to use the October meeting to progress issues on the JMC agenda. Stephen Quinn indicated the R&D appraisal project was still running and he would provide HOCS with an updated report on this. Aideen McGinley suggested examining HR and recruitment issues. Alan Shannon felt the main purpose of the devolved get together was to share experiences and information and he proposed a presentation on the Crumlin Road regeneration project along with a visit to the site. PSG agreed this was an excellent idea and agreed to include Local Government on the agenda also. Bruce Robinson thanked PSG for their very helpful ideas: he will report back on developments.

[Action: Stephen Quinn]

6. Tour de Table

Aideen McGinley highlighted vacancies on the PSG Sub Group on Training and Recruitment. Bruce Robinson said the organisation of PSG and its Sub-Group would be on the agenda for the Away Day in September.

Non-Executive Members – Jobcentre Plus

Lesley Strathie, Chief Executive, Jobcentre Plus wrote to Permanent Secretaries offering an opportunity to Senior Civil Servants to become Non-Executive Board members of the Jobcentre Plus Corporate Governance Board. Aideen McGinley highlighted the value of such opportunities to the SCS.

Cost of Living

Stephen Quinn enquired if inputs on cost of living themes were being co-ordinated across Departments. There was general agreement that this would be co-ordinated at the Executive.

Invest NI

Stephen Quinn noted Sinn Fein issued a Press Release re concerns about Invest NI's failure to tackle regional inequalities and noting NIAO may examine this.

Celtic Ball in Boston

Stephen Quinn informed PSG that a Celtic Ball has been arranged in Boston on 9 October and wished to establish who would be attending. Bruce Robinson asked John McMillen, through the NI Bureau in Washington, to provide a short background brief for PSG next Friday on arrangements.

[Action: John McMillen]

Rathlin Island Ferry

Doreen Brown reported on the Rathlin Island Ferry tendering process.

Next PSG Meeting

The next PSG meeting will be held on Friday 15 August.

PAULINE BOYLE

10 August 2008