

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING  
HELD ON FRIDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2009 IN THE GLASSHOUSE,  
STORMONT CASTLE AT 8.45 AM**

**Present:** Bruce Robinson – Chair  
Catherine Bell  
Will Haire  
Andrew McCormick  
Malcolm McKibbin  
Leo O'Reilly  
Stephen Peover  
Paul Priestly  
Stephen Quinn  
Alan Shannon  
Paul Sweeney

**In attendance:** Oswyn Paulin  
Stephen Grimason  
Neill Jackson  
John McMillen  
Adryan Bell  
Philip Irwin } Item 5  
David Orr }  
Pauline Boyle – Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Aideen McGinley  
Rosalie Flanagan

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 13 February 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Economic Downturn – Meetings with the Banks

Bruce Robinson informed PSG that FM and dFM are scheduled to meet with Senior Officials from the Northern Bank on Thursday 26 February and with those from the Bank of Ireland on Tuesday 3 March as part of their bi-lateral meetings with the banks.

Leo O'Reilly said the Finance Secretary to the Treasury has written to Minister Nigel Dodds.

Bruce Robinson said it is important that we coordinate on these matters and Damian Prince in OFMDFM should be asked to ensure this happens.

**[Action: Secretary]**

#### 4. **Executive & Assembly Update**

Neill Jackson said the next meeting of the Executive is scheduled for 26 February. He said dates have been announced until the end of March for the Executive to meet. OFMDFM officials are working with Private Offices to have the Agenda for each meeting of the Executive issued by the Wednesday of the week of the meeting.

#### 5. **Workplace 2010**

David Orr, Philip Irwin and Adryan Bell gave PSG an update on the Workplace programme.

The current procurement has been terminated by the 2 BAFO bidders withdrawing their bids. This is because exceptional market conditions make it difficult to obtain debt finance for this type of property-related PFI, and because the reduction in property values has adversely affected affordability. A complicating factor is that the 2 bidders came under common ownership on 8 January. While disappointing, the termination is the result of circumstances outside the control of the parties. The knowledge and experience gained from the process is valuable in determining baseline data for the estate, and tools and specifications to develop it.

A distinction was drawn between the key drivers and principles of the Workplace programme, and the contractual means of delivering it. The key drivers include a reduction in the accommodation footprint by around 30%, better energy efficiency, improved flexibility through providing more generic office space, greater staff inter-action and improved working environment. This type of open plan working is now the norm in the private sector and being increasingly adopted in Britain under the direction of OGC.

Philip Irwin outlined a proposed way forward in the short and medium terms and invited comment. In response to a number of queries it was agreed that the focus going forward would be on meeting, insofar as possible, the key needs of departments for example single site location and providing a strong customer focus in the delivery of shared services. It was recognised that there is the potential for some quick wins eg remote working and provision of touch down facilities.

David Orr would follow up on specific information requests re post occupancy evaluations for Clare House and Royston House, the original business case and the operational research work that had been referred to previously. David agreed to follow up with meetings with individual departments as requested.

**[Action: David Orr]**

PSG noted the reasons for the termination of the procurement and the proposed way forward. The Workplace principles were endorsed, together with the establishment of a Stakeholder Group to ensure that the principles can be applied in a way that is effective and meets the needs of staff and Departments.

## 6. **Tour de Table**

### Ministerial Code

Oswyn Paulin said he is expecting judgements on the two Ministerial Code cases next week.

### Judicial Review on Dioxins

Oswyn also updated on the Judicial Review case on Dioxins.

### Kelvin Project

Stephen Quinn referred to the Kelvin Project.

### Farm Organisation Scheme

Malcolm McKibbin set out the background to the current issues re the above.

### Equal Pay

Leo also updated on the Equal Pay matter.

### Invitations

It was agreed that Leo O'Reilly would attend the Construction Employers Federation dinner on 24 April and the Ulster Society for Chartered Accountants dinner on 19 March.

### PAC

Stephen Peover reported on his appearance at the PAC Committee on Thursday 12 February on the PFI Contract for Northern Ireland's new Vehicle Testing Facilities.

### SCS Pay and Bonus

Bruce Robinson referred to the media reports on SCS Pay and Bonus and updated PSG on the SSRB work.

### Devolution of Policing & Justice

Bruce Robinson updated PSG on the Devolution of Policing and Justice.