

# **PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING**

## **IN STORMONT CASTLE**

**ON FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER 2002**

**AT 8.45 AM – 10.15 AM**

### **AGENDA**

1. - Minutes of Meeting of 6 December  
- Summary of Meeting of 6 December for FOI Website
2. Matters Arising
3. Personnel Issues
  - (a) the SCS review
  - (b) future SCS selection – PWC presentation
  - (c) the new SCS performance management arrangements
4. SCS Vacancies
5. Tour de Table
6. Date of Next Meeting

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING – FRIDAY  
20 DECEMBER 2002 IN STORMONT CASTLE**

**Present:** Nigel Hamilton (Chair)  
Pat Carvill  
Clive Gowdy  
John Hunter  
Aideen McGinley  
Stephen Quinn  
Bruce Robinson  
Alan Shannon  
David Watkins  
Gerry McGinn

**Apologies:** Peter Small  
Felix Dillon

**In attendance:** Linda Brown, CPG  
Bernie Rooney (Secretary)

1. **Agenda Item 1 – Minutes and Summary of meeting of 6 December.**

The minutes and summary were agreed subject to the following amendments:

(i) Para 5, Item (vii)

The final sentence should be removed.

(ii) Para 5, Item (viii)

Add the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) to the first line.

A copy of the revised minutes is attached for the record.

2. **Agenda Item 2 – Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

3. **Agenda Item 3 – Personnel Issues**

The Chair welcomed the Director of Central Personnel Group to the meeting and explained that the discussion for Friday's PSG meeting would concentrate exclusively on personnel issues in order to help focus members' minds for the Away Day, scheduled to take place on 28 January.

(i) **SCS Selection**

Paul Terrington and Helen Foster of PWC consultants joined the meeting and made a presentation to members [Annex A]. The presentation formed a backdrop for future discussions on the assessment centre approach for recruitment to the SCS.

(ii) **SCS Review – Ouesley Report Recommendations**

The two recommendations highlighted for members' consideration were:

- (i) **Recommendation 7** – the filling of resultant vacancies by external recruitment.
- (ii) **Recommendation 17** – The NICS should tackle the “Long Hours Culture”. Following the consultation exercise immediately on the Ouesley Report, five responses were received.

Members agreed that both items required further substantive discussion before reaching conclusion and concluded that substantive papers should be prepared for the Away Day along the following lines:

1. Context and Objectives
2. Means of Selection/Recruitment
3. Methodology

It was agreed that HOCS would convene a meeting to take forward preparation of the papers under the 3 key headings.

**[Action – PS/HOCS]**

(iii) **Performance Management Arrangements**

Members agreed in principle to accept the Recommendation and agreed to consider further within the context of business needs.

Members requested a further substantive discussion about the detail of the pay strategy.

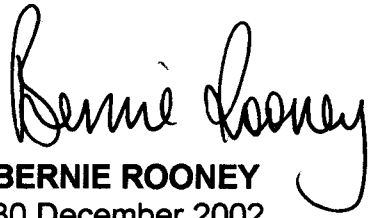
**[Action – Director – CPG]**

4. **SCS Vacancies**

Members noted a number of forthcoming SCS vacancies. Details are noted separately.

5. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on **Friday 10 January at 08.45 am in Stormont Castle, Room GD10.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernie Rooney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'B' and 'R'.

**BERNIE ROONEY**  
30 December 2002

No Meeting  
Friday 27  
December  
2003

No Meeting  
Friday 3  
January 2003

# **PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING**

**ON FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2003**

**AT 8.45 AM – 10.15 AM**

**Room GD10, Stormont Castle**

## **AGENDA**

1. Minutes of meeting 20 December
2. Matters Arising
3. Language Policy
4. Advisory Panel Issues
5. The Flax Trust Super Bowl Ball
6. Tour de Table
7. Date of next meeting – Friday 17 January

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING –  
FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2003, STORMONT CASTLE**

**Present:** Nigel Hamilton (Chair)  
Pat Carvill  
Peter Small  
Clive Gowdy  
John Hunter  
Alan Shannon  
David Watkins  
Bruce Robinson  
Gerry McGinn  
Will Haire

**Apologies:** Stephen Quinn  
Aideen McGinley

**In Attendance:** Angela Dullaghan (Secretary)

**1. Agenda Item 1 – Minutes and Summary of Meeting of 20 December**

The minutes and summary were agreed.

**2. Agenda Item 2 – Matters Arising**

**SCS Selection**

Mr Carvill reported that the Director of Central Personnel Group would draft a follow up letter to PWC Consultants on the way forward. This would be circulated to Permanent Secretaries.

**[Action: Pat Carvill]**

**3. Agenda Item 3 – Language Policy**

Mr Hamilton explained that he had taken the decision to defer discussion of the DCAL language policy paper because it had only been submitted to colleagues on Wednesday. In the meantime colleagues expressed some concern that there needed to be further discussion with the NIO given that language policy was now on the political agenda. They also expressed concern that the paper appeared not to have been circulated to, and discussed by, the Inter-Departmental Committee. It was also noted that the status of the meeting on 22 January was unclear. Mr Hamilton agreed to seek clarification from DCAL.

**[Action: PS/HOCS]**

**4. Agenda Item 4 – Advisory Panel Issues**

Advisory Panel issues are minuted separately.

**5. Agenda Item 5 – The Flax Trust Super Bowl Ball**

Mr Hamilton reported that he had accepted the invitation to the Flax Trust Super Bowl .

**6. Agenda Item 6 – Tour de Table**

**Fisheries**

Members noted the announcement of the Taskforce for South Down and the request for nominees from departments to join the Taskforce. Members also expressed their appreciation to DARD officials for their work on the fisheries issue.

**Permanent Secretaries Pay Committee**

It was noted that some further discussion was required with regard to the operation of the Pay Committee System.

**Belfast Healthy Cities Conference**

Members agreed that the organisers of the Conference should give a presentation to Permanent Secretaries Group.

**[Action: Clive Gowdy]**

**Acute Hospitals Review**

A major structural change element within the Review was noted. Clive Gowdy and Will Haire agreed to discuss further with regard to implications of the delay in the Review of Public Administration.

**Experimental Treatment for CJD Patient**

It was noted that, following a court ruling, the teenage CJD sufferer in Northern Ireland would receive previously untested treatment from today.

### **Age of Retirement**

It was noted that a submission had issued from DFP on the handling of age of retirement issues. Members were asked for a response by Wednesday 15 January.

### **Review of Public Administration – Meeting with the Institute of Directors**

Members noted that Mr Hamilton would meet the Institute of Directors to discuss the Review of Public Administration.

### **Victoria Square**

It was noted that the Secretary of State had taken the decision to proceed with the Victoria Square Development with a formal announcement on Monday 13 January.

### **INI Accommodation**

It was reported that an announcement in principle would be made with regard to a single building for INI with a view to seeing what the market had to offer. It was agreed that DFP, DSD and DETI should discuss further.

**[Action: Mr Carvill, Mr Hunter,  
Mr Robinson]**

### **White Paper on Higher Education**

It was noted that the debate on this issue in Whitehall was ongoing.

### **Holy Cross**

The recent incident at Holy Cross School was noted.

### **House of Commons Business**

Members noted the House of Commons half day Opposition Debate on Education in Northern Ireland on Tuesday 14 January.

### **West Belfast Task Force**

Members noted the publication of the Taskforces' report. It was reported that as a next phase in this work, Minister Pearson would meet the Taskforces in West Belfast on 23 January. DEL would also engage the group on the targeting of initiatives. It was agreed that it may be worthwhile to brief the Irish Government on this issue.

### **Political Development**

Members noted the recent round of talks with Political Parties.

### **Meeting with the Secretary of State**

It was agreed to defer the meeting, provisionally set for 21 January.

**[Action: PS/HOCS]**

**ANGELA DULLAGHAN**  
**14 January 2003**

**PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING**

**ON FRIDAY 17 JANUARY 2003**

**AT 8.45 AM**

**IN ROOM GD10, STORMONT CASTLE**

**AGENDA**

1. Minutes of last meeting
2. Matters Arising
3. Nominations for Commonwealth Study Conference Advisory panel  
Business
4. Tour de Table

**Advisory Panel Business**

5. Department of Education – Grade 3, Director of Schools – Gerry McGinn’s minute of 14 January 2003
6. Permanent Secretary Pay Committee – Peter Small’s minute of 9 January 2003
7. Date of next meeting

**SPS/029/03**

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING – FRIDAY  
17 JANUARY 2003, STORMONT CASTLE**

**Present:** Pat Carvill (Chair)  
Peter Small  
John Hunter  
Alan Shannon  
Bruce Robinson  
Gerry McGinn  
Aideen McGinley  
Will Haire

**Apologies:** Nigel Hamilton  
Clive Gowdy  
Stephen Quinn  
Felix Dillon  
David Watkins

**In Attendance:** Linda Brown  
Angela Dullaghan (Secretary)

1. **Agenda Item 1 – Minutes and Summary of meeting of 10 January 2003**

The minutes and summary were agreed, subject to the amendment suggested by Dr McGinley.

2. **Agenda Item 2 – Matters Arising**

(i) Language Policy

It was noted that there was no urgent need to consider this paper. 'The Inter-departmental group would consider the paper in parallel.

(ii) Healthy Cities Conference

It was noted that this was on the PSG Forward Planner for 7 February.

(iii) Age of Retirement

It was noted that Permanent Secretaries had responded supportively to DFP proposals. It was agreed that a submission could go to Minister Pearson addressing the issues raised by Bob McCartney.

(iv) SCS Selection

Mr Carvill reported a mixed reaction to the paper produced by Mrs Brown, detailing the way forward on this issue. Some believed there was a need for further discussion. It was agreed that dialogue with PWC would continue with firm decisions to be taken at the Away Day.

It was noted that the open competition to fill the Head of Central Expenditure Division in DFP could be the vehicle for filling other similar posts. There was some discussion around the implications for mobility on specialist posts.

(iv) Fisheries

It was noted that the first meeting to discuss the Taskforce for South Down had taken place and the response had been good. The first meeting of the Taskforce should take place next week with a view to reporting on the key issues by the Spring.

3. **Agenda Item 3 – Nominations for Commonwealth Study Conference Advisory Panel**

It was noted that due to pressure to time, it was not possible to carry out a service-wide competition for this Study Conference but that it was now possible to ask the SCS to self-nominate. It was agreed that the previously set criteria would still apply. PSG would prepare a proforma to standardise the applications. The nominee would then be selected through a paper sift exercise.

4. **Agenda Item 4 – Tour de Table**

Mr Carvill reported:-

- Mr Hamilton's visit to Washington was going well and he would report to colleagues at next week's meeting;
- Secretary of State is content for the DARD Permanent Secretary post to proceed with an external, public competition. He also agreed the extension of the Second Secretary post in DFP to be filled by an internal NICS competition.

**Leadership in a Changing World**

The invitation to the Leadership in a Changing World participants to attend the Technology Lecture in Dublin was noted.

## **Government's Response to PWC report on Foot and Mouth Disease**

It was noted that the Government had accepted the PWC report.

## **Public Appointments**

Issues arising from Dame Rennie Fritchie's report on Public Appointments were discussed.

Plans by OFMDFM to hold a seminar on Public appointments were noted.

## **Arts Council – Architecture**

Dr McGinley referred colleagues to the recently published Arts Council document on Architecture and Built Environment Policy. She advised colleagues that she would be seeking contact points in relevant Departments to move forward on the recommendations to Government outlined in the report.

## **Community Relations Review**

The launch of the Community Relations Review on 28 January was noted.

## **Implementation Group**

The meeting of the Implementation Group to discuss equality issues on Monday 20 January was noted.

### **Employment Differential**

It was agreed that OFMDFM and DEL officials should discuss employment targets in the Employability Taskforce report.

### **Schools Issues**

The members noted hoax device sent to Wheatfield Primary School in North Belfast. Mr McGinn also reported on the Opposition debate on education issues.

### **Giants Causeway**

The ongoing negotiations between Moyle District Council and the National Trust were noted.

### **Victoria Square**

The announcement with regard to the use of the land at Victoria Square was noted. Negotiations had begun with MDC. A project team has been set up to take the development scheme forward. The request for nominees from relevant departments was noted. The implications for Churchill House and INI were noted.

## **Community Development Issues**

Members noted the work on community capacity building being taken forward by the North Belfast Community Action Unit as well as the establishment by Des Browne of a Community Action Group to co-ordinate and carry forward community development and relations issues across Northern Ireland and bring together key stakeholders.

5. **Agenda Item 5 – DE-G3, Director of Schools**

Recorded separately

6. **Agenda Item 6 – Permanent Secretary Pay Committee**

Recorded separately

7. **Agenda Item 7 – Date of Next Meeting**

Next meeting for PSG will be on Friday 24 January 2003



**Angela Dullaghan**

**22 January 2003**

No meeting  
on Friday  
13 December  
2002

HCS/455/02

cc David Watkins

**SUMMARY OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING ON FRIDAY  
6 DECEMBER IN STORMONT CASTLE**

**Present:** Nigel Hamilton (Chair)  
Pat Carvill  
Clive Gowdy  
Will Haire  
John Hunter  
Gerry McGinn  
Stephen Quinn  
Bruce Robinson  
Alan Shannon  
Felix Dillon

**Apologies:** Aideen McGinley  
Peter Small

**In attendance:** Stephen Grimason, EIS  
Gary Smyth (for Honours only)  
Angela Dullaghan  
Bernie Rooney (Secretary)

Members noted funeral arrangements following the recent bereavement of Peter Small's mother.

All members acknowledged that their thoughts and sympathies were with Peter and his entire family circle at this sad time.

1. **Birthday Honours 2003**

The Honours Secretary presented the various stages in the process for the Birthday Honours Round 2003.

2. **Agenda Item 1 – Minutes of Meeting of 29 November**

The minutes of the last meeting were noted and agreed.

3. **Agenda Item 2 – Matters Arising**

(i) **Hospice Review**

Members noted progress on proposals for the Hospice Review.

(ii) **Vetting**

It was noted that Lord Laird has tabled a Parliamentary Question raising issues with regard to vetting of posts across the NICS.

The Secretary of State is expected to respond early next week on behalf of all Ministers. It was agreed that the Secretary of State's views should be circulated to members.

**[Action – PS/HOCS]**

(iii) **Fire Service Dispute**

There was an update on developments in the industrial action by the Fire Brigades' Union.

4. **Agenda Item 3 – Language Policy**

This item was deferred.

5. **Tour de Table**

(i) **Community Relations Review**

The Review of Community Relations Project Consultation Document was tabled.

Members were advised that the Minister with responsibility for Community Relations has decided to proceed with the consultation exercise to inform the future directive of policy in this area.

It was agreed that members would examine the document and submit comments to other Permanent Secretaries OFMDFM by close of play Wednesday 11 December (copy attached at Annex A for ease of reference).

**[Action – All Members]**

(ii) **Hospital Waiting Lists**

It was noted that the hospital waiting lists have increased.

(iii) **Budget**

PSG commended the work that had been done by DFP and other Departments to secure a co-ordinated approach to the Budget decisions and announcements.

(iv) **SCS Leadership in a Changing World Programme**

Members agreed in principle to offer training and make a provisional booking at the John F Kennedy Business School to run a Leadership in a Changing World Programme.

Following the formal evaluation, PSG agreed to consider the final composition of the Programme.

**[Action – DFP]**

(v) **Human Resources**

Members noted that the meeting planned for 20 December would consider Human Resource issues in preparation for the Away Day scheduled to take place on the afternoon of 28 January. Final agenda and arrangements to be agreed on 20 December.

**[Action – DFP]**

(vi) **Employability Task Force Report**

The launch of the Report by the Employability Task Force will take place on Monday 16 December at the Knockbreda Jobs and Benefits office. The joint office will be officially opened at the same event.

(vii) **Legislative Programme**

It was noted that there would be a need for a further Employment Bill. A paper would be submitted to the Secretary of State seeking his approval to prepare a draft Bill or Order in Council for the next Legislative Programme.

**[Action – DEL]**

(viii) **Tomlinson Report**

DE & DEL officials are working on implementing the recommendations agreed in the Tomlinson Report with the aim of improving the process for 'A' levels in 2003.

(ix) **Disturbances**

It was noted that schools in the Antrim area have reported an increase in disturbances in recent weeks. Housing Executive estates have reported similar disturbances.

The situation is being monitored.

(x) **Energy Bill**

The Energy Bill is being progressed as planned. There is significant lobbying under way.

(xi) **Staffing Issues**

Members were informed of the outcome of the DRD trawl and two Grade 5 vacancies. Details are noted separately.

(xii) **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Friday 13 December at 8.45 am in Stormont Castle.

**BERNIE ROONEY (MRS)**  
December 2002