

HCS/1094/06

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY
18 AUGUST 2006 IN ROOM GD14, STORMONT CASTLE AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Nigel Hamilton
Catherine Bell
Doreen Brown
Will Haire
John Hunter
Edgar Jardine
Gerry Lavery
Andrew McCormick
Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon

In Attendance: John Clarke } agenda item 4
John Hagan }
Richard Pengelly } agenda item 5
Brian Doherty
Stephen Grimson
John McMillen

1. **Apologies:** Aideen McGinley
Gerry McGinn
Paul Sweeney
Pat Toal

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 4 August

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 August were agreed with one amendment.

3. Matters Arising
Assembly

Bruce Robinson updated PSG on his Evidence Session in the Assembly.

4. Flood Management Presentation

John Hagan explained that there were a number of key drivers which prompted the need for the Review of Flood Management Policy, namely:

- government taking a more holistic approach to flood management by looking at flood risk on a River Basin District and Shoreline wide basis;
- ongoing proposals to implement a new directive on the assessment and management of flood risks in the EU;
- DEFRA's new strategy on Flood Risk Management;
- the UK Foresight report on Flood and Coastal Defence;
- a new Marine Bill; and
- the new EU Water Framework Directive.

The overall aims of the Flood Management Policy Review are to identify the future policy requirements for flood management in Northern Ireland, including the needs of stakeholders and to identify the best option for delivery and implementation of the policy. John said the Flood Management Policy Review document had been circulated for public consultation for a period of twelve weeks from 15 August to 6 November 2006. All responses will be considered by the Minister for DARD in identifying where and how Rivers Agency will accommodate any proposed change to their existing role and organisation. The responses of the consultation paper will also be made available to a panel of independent experts appointed in 2006 by the then Environment Minister Jeff Rooker.

5. CSR

PSG was reminded of the comprehensive, radical and strategic importance of CSR which in Northern Ireland's case involves a detailed assessment of some 80% of departments' expenditure. The current stage involves:

- (a) careful consideration of administrative expenditure along the lines recently advised by DFP; and
- (b) robust analysis, on a zero based approach of all areas of major policy and programmes.

In due course this will involve extensive discussions by each Permanent Secretary with their respective departmental Ministers.

6. Voluntary Sector Project Update

Bruce Robinson said he would forward an update to Nigel Hamilton.

[Action: Bruce Robinson]

7. Capability Review Update

John Hunter outlined his participation in the Review of the Scottish Executive. So far he had attended workshops to identify key lines of enquiry which will be followed by concentrated fieldwork during the middle of September and said that the focus was centred around the top team. John said the aim of the reviews is to improve the capability of the Civil Service to meet today's delivery objectives and to be ready for the challenges of tomorrow.

Nigel asked John to update PSG further on the Review when the Scottish exercise was complete and before the Capability Review of the NICS to begin in 2007.

[Action: John Hunter]

8. Harvard: Leaders in a Changing World

PSG agreed to proceed with the Leaders in a Changing World programme.

9. Tour de Table

PQ Clearance

Stephen Quinn drew PSG attention to the performance of Departments for PQ clearance.

Travel/Security

Nigel Hamilton said the Security Advisory Unit would be issuing advice on flying to GB and carrying official papers.

Audit Office Report

Edgar Jardine said the Audit Office report on the Arts Council would be published on 31 August.

Education Budgets

Will Haire said he would be writing to all schools re budgets.

Further Education

Catherine Bell updated PSG on Further Education Residency Requirements.

PSC Meeting

Andrew McCormick outlined his meeting with PSC on Wednesday 16 August.

Next Week's PSG

Agenda: 'Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries' – Edgar Jardine / Colin Jack
Reform PSG
Delivering New Funds Update

* Please note Departmental Structures will now be discussed at PSG on
1 September.