

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2008
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Bruce Robinson – Chair
Doreen Brown
Will Haire
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Malcolm McKibbin
Leo O'Reilly
Stephen Peover
Stephen Quinn
Alan Shannon
Paul Sweeney

In Attendance: David Gavaghan }
Brett Hannam } Agenda item 4
Martin Spollen }
Rosalie Flanagan }
John McMillen }
Oswyn Paulin }
Pauline Boyle - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Sir Nigel Hamilton
Paul Priestly

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 7 March 2008**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March were agreed with a few amendments.

3. **Matters Arising**

SCS Management Issues

Minuted separately.

4. **Delivering the Investment Strategy**

Bruce Robinson welcomed David Gavaghan, Martin Spollen and Brett Hannam. David wanted to update PSG on work across the NICS to produce Investment Strategy Plans and to update on the planned roll-out of a new Investment Monitoring IT system to assist public bodies involved in procurement and delivery.

By way of background Leo O'Reilly reminded the meeting of the significant increase in capital budgets and the problems of managing spend within restrictive timeframes.

Malcolm McKibbin pointed out that the spending plans were also predicated on income from asset sales and that the anticipated receipts from some of these were dependent on planning permission.

David Gavaghan said some Departments have returned their investment delivery plans already and asked others to submit as soon as possible as they are due to be published by 31 March. The Procurement Practitioners group are working with the Office of Government Commerce OGC to develop a delivery tracking system. This exercise is almost complete and the next stage is training in Departments and identifying SROs. SIB will have a series of workshops with finance directors.

5. Executive & Assembly Update

Rosalie Flanagan reported on the Executive meeting held on Thursday 13 March. Leo O'Reilly raised concern in relation to End Year Flexibility which was not on the agenda for the meeting and Rosalie said she would look into this.

[Action: Rosalie Flanagan]

6. Economic Conference Update

Stephen Quinn reported on arrangements for the Economic Conference. Mayor Bloomberg had confirmed his attendance. Minister Dodds hosted 2 briefing sessions with community groups and district councils. He said all Ministers would receive an invitation to the opening reception and the gala dinner.

7. Data Protection

Bruce Robinson said a paper had gone through the Executive Process and Minister Robinson would make a statement on 31 March.

8. FOI Update

David Lammey did not issue an update for this week's meeting as there was nothing to report.

9. Civil Service Reform Report February 2008

Bruce Robinson said the Civil Service Reform Report was discussed at the Oversight Board on Thursday 13 March.

Financial Reporting

He said stricter financial reporting mechanisms would be introduced at the beginning of April. SROs have formally been notified of project budgets for the 3 years from 2008-09 onwards.

NI Direct

He said the NI Direct project includes a web consolidation exercise and an editorial board would be set up to ensure all Departments take responsibility to regularly maintain the web pages and keep them up to date.

SCS Stakeholder Event

These events were held in February and were well attended.

Account NI

Further Departmental briefings will take place prior to Wave 2 of the Account NI project in July 2008.

Stephen Quinn felt more dialogue would be beneficial with Heads of Audit and DFP in relation to shared service projects.

Future@Work

Two additional future@work sites are now running in Castle Buildings and Clarence Court.

Reform News

The new integrated reform online bulletin has been launched. Printed copies are also available. The bulletin will be published every 6-8 weeks and would report on major projects and provide a good understanding of key issues.

Communications Strategy

Bruce said Grainne Creaney and Kim Martin attended DFP Departmental Board on Monday 10 March and suggested that colleagues may wish to invite them to their Departmental Boards.

Bruce said he would write to Departments to offer the opportunity of suggesting a representative to join the Civil Service Reform Oversight Board.

[Action: Bruce Robinson]

10. Tour de Table

RPA

Andrew McCormick said Minister McGimpsey hosted seminars and workshops for staff on RPA.

Investment Conference

Stephen Quinn said Minister Dodds was in the States for a couple of days to promote the Investment Conference.

Local Government Boundaries Commissioner

Stephen Peover updated on the appointment of a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner.

Invitation

It was agreed that Stephen Peover would accept an invitation from PWC to a conference in London on 13 May.

Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

Alan Shannon updated on the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

SSA PAC Report

Alan said he had received the PAC Report on the CSA Client Funds Account on Thursday 13 March which was balanced.

Maze Stadium

Paul Sweeney updated on last week's announcement on the Maze Stadium.

Finance Seminar

Bruce Robinson reported John O'Dowd, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee agreed to open the Finance Seminar on Thursday 20 March.

11. Next PSG Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday 4 April and is a HR PSG. No meeting on 21 or 28 March due to Easter holidays.

PAULINE BOYLE
20 March 2008