

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2008
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Sir Nigel Hamilton - Chair
Will Haire
Don Hill
Greg McConnell
Malcolm McKibbin
Stephen Peover
Paul Priestly
Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon
Paul Sweeney

In Attendance: Denis Rooney } Agenda item 4
Sandy Smith }
David Thomson - Agenda item 5
Rosalie Flanagan
Stephen Grimason
John McMillen
Oswyn Paulin
Debbie Sweeney - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Aideen McGinley
Andrew McCormick

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 8 February 2008**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. **IFI Update**

Denis Rooney updated PSG on the work of the International Fund for Ireland. He said they have met with Ministers Ritchie, Empey, Gildnernew and FM and dFM. Meetings with Ministers Poots and Ruane have also been arranged. IFI would like to develop stronger working links with the Department of Education.

Denis explained the Fund has been in existence for 21 years and would wind up in 2010. After 2010 pressure will be on departments to oversee and maintain current IFI projects. Denis said IFI attach a great importance to PR and Communications in relation to launches and official openings and they were working with EIS to improve the profile.

Denis said Northern Ireland could make much better use of the network of significant supporters the Fund has in the USA and Europe. He said in the ROI politicians and senior officials use the Fund as a means of accessing key players in the States and Europe.

Denis said IFI had very good working relationships with departments and asked PSG to pass on his thanks to all officials involved in their work.

5. Financial Management

David Thomson updated PSG on the current work of the PAC.

David said GANI would be replaced with a document now used in GB 'Managing Public Money'.

David updated PSG on SCS Seminars and general training. He said he would also be willing to attend Departmental Board meetings if departments so wished to update on accountability and financial management matters.

[PSG to note]

David said there would be changes to the International Financial Reporting Systems. Sir Nigel asked David to organise a presentation to a seminar of PSG, departmental board colleagues and NED's to explain the forthcoming changes. He asked that a paper explaining the procedures be circulated before the presentation.

[Action: David Thomson]

6. Reform Update

Bruce updated PSG on the Network Service problems on 11 and 12 February and details of the computer hacking incident.

Bruce reported on the Clare House evaluation report which had been forwarded to the TUS.

Bruce said the Stakeholder event held on 13 February received good feedback.

Website

Bruce announced to PSG that a new online staff bulletin would launch providing staff with the latest news on NICS Reform.

7. Executive and Assembly Update

Rosalie Flanagan reported on the Executive meeting held on Wednesday 13 February and the BIC held on Thursday 14 February in Dublin.

8. Economic Conference Update

Stephen Quinn updated PSG on the arrangements for the Economic Conference. Formal invites would issue on 18 February and the conference website would also go live on that date.

9. FOI Update

PSG noted the latest position on FOI issues.

10. Tour de Table

Celtic Forum

Sir Nigel said Conor had issued a note re administrative arrangements for the Celtic Forum. A delegate pack would issue from the Welsh Office.

Victoria Hall

Alan Shannon said the official opening of Victoria Square would be 5 March.

Bluetongue

Malcolm McKibbin said bluetongue had been detected in an animal imported from the Netherlands. He said the Minister would release the plans for New Health Structures on Monday 18 February.

Single Electricity Market

Stephen Quinn reported on the Single Electricity Market.

CBI Dinner

PSG agreed that Sir Nigel, Stephen Quinn and Paul Priestly would attend the CBI Dinner on 24 April.

Next Week's PSG

There will be no meeting on 22 February.