

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2008
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

- Present:** Sir Nigel Hamilton - Chair
Will Haire
Gerry Lavery
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Leo O'Reilly
Stephen Peover
Paul Priestly
Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon
Paul Sweeney
- In Attendance:** Sir George Bain
Olive Maybin
Rosalie Flanagan
John McMillen
Oswyn Paulin
Pauline Boyle - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Malcolm McKibbin

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 15 February 2008**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February have been circulated. Any comments/amendments to Pauline.

3. **Matters Arising**

As discussed at the last PSG meeting, Sir Nigel Hamilton has written to all SCS members to inform them that attendance at a future Masterclass on Financial Management is mandatory.

Absence Management

PSG noted the meeting held on Monday 25 February with Minister Peter Robinson on Absence Management. Absence Management should be on next week's HR PSG Agenda.

[Action: Secretary]

4. **Location of Public Sector Jobs**

Professor Sir George Bain provided an update on the progress of the Review of Policy on Location of Public Sector Jobs. He outlined the context in which the review had been established, the membership and timescales in which he was required to report. He referred to the terms of reference and the potential tensions between the various elements, but was clear that the overriding goal was to recommend the distribution of public sector jobs that best enhances the sustainable economic and social development of Northern Ireland. Sir George regarded the civil service as a key stakeholder and was keen to engage with Permanent Secretaries to understand better the impact of the reform agenda and other departmental initiatives on job locations; any plans to relocate civil service jobs and the scope within departments to do so. It was agreed that he should make arrangements for meetings with Permanent Secretaries during April 2008 and would be welcome to come back to PSG in 6 weeks time if he felt that would be helpful.

5. Executive and Assembly Update

Rosalie Flanagan reported on the Executive Meeting held on Thursday 28 February. Rosalie asked colleagues to discuss the legislative process with their departmental boards and monitor the legislative programme.

6. Economic Conference Update

Stephen Quinn reported on a conference planning meeting held on Monday 25 February with Ambassador Paula Dobriansky and an R&D delegation. He said good progress had been made in relation to attendance at the conference and further meetings will take place next week with other key players who may be involved. Stephen asked PSG colleagues to write to him with any good news departmental and community projects which could be announced at the conference.

[Action: PSG]

7. Policing & Justice Update

Bruce Robinson updated PSG on devolution of Policing and Justice.

8. Tour de Table

Labour Relations Agency

Aideen McGinley said Jim McCusker has been appointed as the new Chair of the Labour Relations Agency.

Bluetongue

Gerry Lavery said that Minister Michelle Gildernew would make an announcement on Bluetongue.

Barroso Taskforce

John McMillen said he has circulated a draft paper from the Barroso Taskforce and would appreciate comments from colleagues.

[Action: PSG]

Clostridium difficile

Andrew McCormick reported on the C Diff outbreak in hospitals.

UK Health Permanent Secretaries

Andrew said he would be meeting later today with the UK Health Permanent Secretaries.

Varney Review

Leo O'Reilly reported Minister Peter Robinson would meet with Sir David Varney, the Chief Secretary and the Secretary of State on Thursday next to review progress on the second Varney Review.

PAC Hearing

Alan Shannon said he attended a PAC hearing on Thursday 21 February in relation to the Social Security Agency.

Victoria Square Development

Alan said the official opening of the Victoria Square development would take place on Wednesday evening 5 March 2008.

Women in Public Life Awards 2008

Alan had attended the Women in Public Life Awards Ceremony on Wednesday evening 27 February at which Minister Arlene Foster won the "Devolved Assembly Member of the Year" Award and Mary Quinn, Chief Executive of the Child Support Agency won the "Leaders of the Year" Award.

Next week's PSG

Next week's PSG will be an HR meeting plus an update on Rural Champion and Rural White Paper.