

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2005 IN ROOM GD14, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Alan Shannon (Chair)
Wilfie Hamilton
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Gerry McGinn
Stephen Peover
Stephen Quinn
Paul Sweeney
Pat Toal

In Attendance: Stephen Grimason
Stewart Johnston
Helen Anderson } Agenda Item 4
Stephen Aston }
John Hinds - Agenda Item 5
Mary Bunting - Tour de Table
Debbie Sweeney (Secretary)

1. **Apologies:** Nigel Hamilton, John Hunter, Nick Perry, Bruce Robinson
2. **Minutes and Summary**

Grasping the Opportunity Investing in Our Future

Stewart Johnston updated PSG on the current position of the Secretary of State's forthcoming speech. Machinery of Government and EIS are working on the logistics and venue.

The speech is currently being considered by Phil Taylor.

Pay Update

Alan Shannon said the TUS had requested a meeting with the Secretary of State.

Concern was expressed that the TUS had issued two pay bulletins and as yet none had been issued by the Management Side.

[Note: Bulletin Issued 12/9]

4. **Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy**

Stephen Peover introduced Helen Anderson from DOE Environmental Policy and Stephen Aston from Environmental Heritage Service. Helen explained that the document was a consultation/strategy paper which would generate

differing views, but the new legislation would be largely EU driven. Helen said that Northern Ireland produces vast quantities of waste and the problem must be addressed. To put the infrastructure in place would require in excess of £300m and SIB were currently in discussion with DOE on this issue. The strategy is made up of six strands:

- Waste Prevention
- Planning and Infrastructure
- Law and Enforcement
- Recycling and Recovery
- Data and Research
- Learning and Communication
- Delivering the Strategy

Stephen Aston said one of the most important but most difficult factors of the strategy was that of behaviour change amongst people in Northern Ireland and how to target certain audiences.

Stephen emphasised the need for Government leadership with careful planning needed and firm implementation.

5. **Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework**

John Hinds outlined the background to the NI Civil Contingencies Framework which was endorsed by the then Secretary of State, Paul Murphy. He was committed to ensuring Northern Ireland had a similar level of protection for its people, as is the case elsewhere in the UK, and that the overall principles of civil protection are consistent across the UK.

The Framework represents a development of civil contingencies policy in Northern Ireland, not a radical change. The draft had been circulated to members of the Central Emergency Management Group and the response was generally positive and comments taken into account in the revised document.

Due to Ministerial leave, PSG members were unable to brief their Ministers on the document. It was agreed that PSG would confirm to CEPU if their Department was content with the document, following which CEPU would forward to all Ministers.

[Action: PSG and CEPU]

Please comment to CEPU by **30 September**.

[Action: PSG]

6. **Tour de Table**

NICCY

Mary Bunting drew PSG attention to Phil Taylor's minute of 7 September following his meeting with Nigel Williams. The information required by Phil would be co-ordinated by Eilis McDaniel from OFMDFM.

Mary said she would be meeting Phil on Wednesday 14 September prior to which she would meet with DHSSPS, DE and DFP to discuss the issues.

[Action: Mary Bunting]

Keynote Speeches

Stephen Grimason said Colm Shannon had circulated a grid which set out the forthcoming keynote speeches for the Secretary of State and Ministers. The grid is work in progress and its aim is that the Secretary of State's speech on 21 September would set the policy agenda, and Ministerial announcements would follow with more detail.

Sperrin Lakeland Trust

Andrew McCormick updated PSG on the Sperrin Lakeland Trust.

Economic Conference

Wilfie Hamilton informed PSG that the Secretary of State was keen to host an Economic Conference in the New Year.

Douglas McIldoon

Wilfie Hamilton informed PSG that a press release announcing Douglas McIldoon's retirement would issue in the afternoon.

Water Charging

Stephen Quinn said that Shaun Woodward had announced that water charging would be deferred until 2007.

MLAs

Stewart Johnston said that the Secretary of State believed it would be helpful for briefings on water reform, rates, RPA and health to be offered to Assembly Members. The briefings would involve the Secretary of State introducing the subject and the relevant Minister delivering the briefing. Machinery of Government were arranging the briefings and the first one was scheduled for 3 October.

Special Advisers

Stewart Johnston said Alan Whysall would be issuing a minute following a request by the Secretary of State reinforcing the need for all submissions to be cleared through the Special Advisers before it reaches the Secretary of State. If submissions to the Secretary of State via Ministers do not include a comment from the Advisers, it will not be seen.

[PSG to note]

Civic Leadership Training

Aideen McGinley enquired if PSG colleagues had received a request for quotes from the Civic Leadership Training. Will Haire confirmed that the request had been widely circulated and DEL would take forward.

[Action: Will Haire]

Education and Library Boards

Gerry McGinn informed PSG that the Education and Library Boards had elected their Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

Further Education Structures

Will Haire said that a press release had issued on 6 September which announced that the 16 Further Education Colleges will merge into six larger area-based groupings.

ISNI Launch

Paul Sweeney updated PSG on the ISNI launch.

Women's Groups

Alan Shannon updated PSG on the funding of Women's Groups. The working group had completed its draft report which was forwarded to David Hanson. DSD has extended funding for a further month.

DWP

Alan Shannon said DWP would be issuing a Green paper on Welfare Reform at the end of October which would introduce major reform of benefits, especially incapacity benefits. The reform would have implications for DEL, DSD and DHSSPS.

Alan said he would be writing to colleagues shortly.

[Action: Alan Shannon/Will Haire]

PSG 16 September

Next week's PSG agenda will discuss RPA, HPSS Admin Structure and Renewable Energy.

**D A SWEENEY
9 September 2005**