

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 26 JANUARY 2007
IN ROOM GD14, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Nigel Hamilton
Will Haire
Wilfie Hamilton
John Hunter
Gerry Lavery
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Gerry McGinn
Stephen Peover
Nick Perry
Alan Shannon
Paul Sweeney

In Attendance: Rosalie Flanagan
Stephen Grimason
Mick Cory }
Jackie Palmer } - Agenda Item 5
Debbie Sweeney } - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Pat Toal
Brian Doherty

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 19 January**

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 19 January were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Restoration Update**

Rosalie Flanagan updated PSG on the current political situation. She said Sinn Fein were holding their Ard Fheis on Sunday to debate the policing issue.

Rosalie updated PSG on the sequence of events following the announcement of an Election. She said Purdah guidance had issued and Ministerial activities should be examined on a case by case basis.

5. **Sports Strategy**

Paul Sweeney said the Sports Strategy was developed by DCAL in partnership with the Sports Council for Northern Ireland, with the co-operation of other Departments.

Mick Cory said participation in sport in Northern Ireland was amongst the lowest in the UK. There was also evidence that certain groups of people – most notably women, those on a low income and those with a disability – remain under-represented in sport. Similarly, at a performance level, NI has a poor and declining record of success in major competitions.

Mick said the Strategy proposed how the gap that exists between NI sport and the rest of the UK and further afield, can be closed.

Mick said the hosting of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London in 2012 provided an opportunity to accelerate the development of sport in terms of improved athletic performance, increased participation and healthier lifestyles.

In pursuit of the vision and to deliver on Government's commitments, a series of 24 targets had been identified which would be reviewed periodically throughout the lifecycle of the Strategy.

PSG discussed and endorsed the Strategy. It was agreed that as the document was literally just off the press they would forward any comments to DCAL. It was agreed the launch of the document should be deferred until restoration.

6. **Tour de Table**

Pay

John Hunter updated PSG on the GB Pay Ballot and NICS pay settlement progress.

Chief Executive

John Wilkinson had been appointed as Chief Executive of the Land and Property Agency.

Irish Language Bill

Paul Sweeney updated PSG on the progress of the Irish Language Bill.

Learning Disability

Andrew McCormick said the Minister would be announcing an Action Plan to tackle issues relating to Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

ROI Meeting

Andrew said he would be meeting his Irish counterpart on Friday 2 February to discuss shared interests.

Bain Review

Will Haire said the Secretary of State had announced the Government commitment to the implementation of the Bain Review recommendations.

Quality Improvement Strategy

Aideen McGinley said DEL had launched their 'Success through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in NI'.

Derry/Londonderry

Stephen Peover updated PSG on the Judicial Review on Derry/Londonderry.

Ballymurphy

Alan Shannon said the Minister would announce financial assistance to tackle community tensions in Ballymurphy and the continuation of officials engaging with representatives of the community to put together measures to address current difficulties.

Judicial Reviews

Gerry McGinn updated PSG on PPS14 and Omagh Judicial Reviews.

City of Derry Airport

Gerry said grant-aid for runway safety works at City of Derry Airport had been confirmed following a commitment of matching funding from the Irish Government.

West Belfast Task Force

Wilfie Hamilton said a press release on West Belfast Taskforce would issue on 29 January.

IMC Report

Nick Perry said the latest IMC Report would be released on Tuesday 30 January.

Advertising Review

Stephen Grimason updated PSG on the Advertising Review.

Irish National Development Plan

Rosalie Flanagan said the development plan had been published with a major focus on roads. The plan had attracted a lot of media attention.

Recruiting People with Conflict-Related Convictions

Nigel Hamilton asked that PSG consider the draft guidance circulated by Cynthia Smith on 23 January, by 30 January.

[Action: PSG]

NICS, Wales and Scotland Good Practice Seminar

Nigel said meetings had been held with Scotland and Wales and a rough plan had been drawn up for the event on 8 and 9 February. It was agreed that Andrew McCormick and Will Haire would make a presentation on Programme for Government Workshop.

[Action: Andrew McCormick/Will Haire]

Next Week's PSG

Next week's meeting will be a HR meeting and a discussion on the Quarterly Reform Report.

DEBBIE SWEENEY
30 January 2007