

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 7 DECEMBER 2007
IN THE KNOCKDENE SUITE, STORMONT HOTEL
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Nigel Hamilton
Will Haire
Barney McGahan
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Malcolm McKibbin
Leo O'Reilly
Stephen Peover
Paul Priestly
Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Paul Sweeney

In Attendance: Rosalie Flanagan
John McMillen
Oswyn Paulin
Derek Baker
Robert Crawford - agenda item 4
Conor McParland - agenda item 6
Steve Hare - agenda item 7

1. **Apologies:** Alan Shannon
Stephen Grimason

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 30 November 2007**

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Flax Trust

Nigel has written to Sister Mary Turley confirming Malcolm McKibbin's attendance at the Flax Trust Ball.

4. **PSNI LINKS Project – Making the break with the NICS**

Robert Crawford said the Chief Constable and the NIO intended to introduce legislation to break secondment arrangements with the NICS.

There are currently around 1200 seconded civil servants and each secondee will be provided with the opportunity to remain with the PSNI.

It was anticipated that around 200 staff would wish to return to the NICS. CPG have given an undertaking that they should be able to assimilate the individual's back into the NICS. The staff transfer legislation should be completed by 1 October 2008.

5. Executive and Assembly Update

Rosalie said the next Executive meeting was on Tuesday 18 December and it was expected to be a lengthy meeting with a full agenda.

Nigel said papers for the meeting received after 5.00pm on Friday 14 December would not be included on the agenda.

[Perm Secs to note]

6. NICS Policy Delivery Capability and the role of a Head of Profession

Paul said he had held meetings with Permanent Secretaries to discuss their assessment of current policy delivery capability of the Service and the role of a Head of Profession.

Paul said there was a need to raise the profile of policy delivery by creating a Policy Champions' Network, learning and development programmes, policy delivery capability audits, talent management and disseminating good practice.

Paul said the role of Head of Profession should focus on raising the profile of policy delivery, disseminating and promoting good practice, assessing demand and skills gaps, working with CAL to design and implement learning and development programmes and making recommendations for action on relevant issues and keeping PSG advised of progress.

PSG discussed the issues and endorsed the proposed direction of travel. PSG agreed that Paul should continue as Head of Profession and report back to PSG in March with Steve Hare who would consider the strategic direction of policy delivery.

[Action: Paul Priestly/Steve Hare]

Paul also encouraged Permanent Secretaries to forward any feedback on his paper to him following discussions at Departmental Boards.

[Action: Perm Secs]

7. Centre for Applied Learning Progress

Aideen McGinley expressed her thanks to Steve Hare and the CAL staff for the enormous effort put into the establishment of CAL.

Steve Hare updated PSG on the progress of CAL and Year 1 results which had been good. A number of obstacles had been overcome and CAL was well positioned to deliver a stakeholder directed shared service across the NICS.

PSG noted the progress of CAL and Year 1 results, the opportunities and challenges which now present and agreed CAL's move to hard charging from 1 April 2008. In discussion, PSG supported the progressive introduction of more training contextualised to NICS/departmental requirements and reaffirmed CAL's mandate as the sole provider of all NICS generic training.

Nigel asked Steve to return to PSG in October 2008 for a review of progress.

[Action: Steve Hare]

8. e-HR Connect

Derek Baker updated PSG on e-HR developments. He said HR self service had gone 'on line' through DFP and OFMDFM.

It was hoped that NIO, DRD, DOE and DCAL would follow and during week commencing 17 December four more Departments would also follow.

Derek said a series of briefing events for SCS members were currently underway and he encouraged members to attend to gain further understanding of the HR Connect system. The next session on 9 December is fully booked but there were places on 11 December and 16 January sessions.

The sessions are held in the Stormont Hotel.

[Perm Secs to note]

9. Security of Data

Bruce Robinson updated PSG on the current work being undertaken on the Review into the Security of Data.

10. Tour de Table

Surplus Land Policy

Barney McGahan drew PSG's attention to a letter from the Audit Office regarding surplus land policies.

Nigel asked Leo O'Reilly to take the matter forward.

[Action: Leo O'Reilly]

FDA Dinner

It was agreed that Nigel Hamilton, Bruce Robinson and Derek Baker would attend the FDA dinner in the Slieve Donard Hotel on 10 January 2008.

Next Week's PSG

PSG on 14 December will return to the Glasshouse and items on the agenda are:

Essential Skills – DEL

NI Risk Assessment Paper – OFMDFM

11. SCS Management Issues

The grid was agreed.

DEBBIE SWEENEY
December 2007