

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2007
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Nigel Hamilton
Will Haire
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Malcolm McKibbin
Stephen Peover
Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon
David Sterling
Paul Sweeney

In Attendance: John Dennis - FCO } Agenda item 4
John McMillen }
Stephen Grimason }
Oswyn Paulin }
Colm Shannon } Agenda item 5
Lorna Armstrong }
Neill Jackson }
Debbie Sweeney - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Rosalie Flanagan

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 14 September 2007**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Foot and Mouth

Malcolm McKibbin updated PSG on the Foot and Mouth outbreak in Surrey. Malcolm said the outbreak was still confined to one area and at present there was no further action to take in NI and no plans at present to vaccinate. There had been no reports of any trading problems.

Nigel said a speaking note for the Minister to update the Executive on Thursday 27 September would be helpful.

[Action: Malcolm McKibbin]

Giant's Causeway

Stephen Quinn and Stephen Peover updated PSG on the mounting media interest in the Giant's Causeway Visitor's Centre.

Crumlin Road Gaol

Alan Shannon said the Gaol was opened to the public on 17 September. It would be open for tours on Thursdays and Saturdays until mid December.

4. Shanghai World Expo 2010

John Dennis explained that the UK accepted the invitation to attend the Expo in 2006. It is expected to be the biggest Expo ever and 70 million visitors are expected. The UK pavilion had been allocated a prime location beside the Huangpu River. John said it was an opportunity to promote UK creativity, diversity, design, tourism to a vast emerging market.

The theme of the Expo was 'Better City, Better Life' and the UK has the expertise of urban regeneration, education, services, culture and sustainable development. John said the overall UK budget was £10-£12 million of which £7.2m would be to mesh out the content of the design, build a framework to measure success and develop a programme of events. Contributors to the UK Expo could expect to receive an enhanced profile and a say in all major decisions on the project including theming and content.

John said a project board and stakeholders group had been established compiling of contributors who had made firm commitments. He said the list of contributors would close at the end of the year.

Nigel thanked John for his comprehensive outline of the Expo and said the issue would be taken forward at the Centre.

[Action: John McMillen]

5. Advertising Shared Service Centre

Colm Shannon referred to his Advertising and Shared Service Centre – Budget and Funding Model paper.

Colm said the revised model was developed in conjunction with DFP to address departmental concerns about the structuring of the budget with concerns that the original was too centralised. The revised model had been agreed by the Programme Board and formal agreement had been received by all Departments except one. PSG agreed in principle to the recommendations, requesting an alteration to the wording of paragraph 2.3.

[Action: Colm Shannon]

6. Assembly and Executive Update

Neill Jackson updated PSG on Assembly and Executive issues.

A note had been issued to Departmental Representatives on Future Executive Business.

Nigel asked PSG to consider the suggested high profile announcements/initiatives for inclusion in the Programme for Government and respond to Paul Priestly by midday on Tuesday 25 September.

[Action: Permanent Secretaries]

7. Reform Costs

Bruce Robinson updated PSG on the NI Reform Programme costs and progress.

8. Reform Communications

Bruce referred to the focus group report and asked that Permanent Secretaries note the report and discuss with their leadership team and agree to meet Kim Martin from Internal Communications Unit and agree a way forward for their department.

[Action: Permanent Secretaries]

Bruce said DFP were holding Reform Events at the Park Avenue Hotel in advance of the roll-out in NICS Departments. Bruce requested that Permanent Secretaries or a senior colleague attend one of the events.

Please respond to Bruce's Office or Emma Wilson re proposed attendance.

[Action: Permanent Secretaries]

9. Tour de Table

PSG Sub-Group

Aideen said CPG would be writing to Permanent Secretaries regarding the Grade 7 written test for assistance as 80 volunteers were needed at Grade 7 to test the exam.

[Action: Departments]

Nigel asked that she make the numbers requested from departments relative to the number of Grade 7's in post in each department.

[Action: Derek Baker]

SCS Masterclass – 25 September

Aideen asked that Permanent Secretaries encourage attendance at the Masterclass on 25 September at 10.00am in the Pavilion. Bernard Herdan CB, Executive Director of Service Delivery in the Identity and Passport Service would be speaking on Programme and Project Management.

Londonderry Chamber of Commerce Dinner

It was agreed Paul Sweeney would attend.

Classroom Assistants

Will Haire said a strike by Classroom Assistants was planned for 26 September.

Top 200 Event

Nigel said the next Top 200 Event would take place on 13-14 December at Sunningdale. It was agreed that Andrew McCormick, Malcolm McKibbin and possibly Bruce Robinson would attend.

A copy of Sir Gus' invite would be circulated to Permanent Secretaries.

Next Week's PSG

Agenda: Assembly and Executive Update
Reform Costs

DEBBIE SWEENEY
September 2007