

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2007
IN THE GLASSHOUSE, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

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

In Attendance: Rosalie Flanagan
Stephen Grimason
John McMillen
Oswyn Paulin
Debbie Sweeney - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Nigel Hamilton

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 21 September 2007**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September were agreed with one minor amendment.

3. **Matters Arising**

Masterclass – 25 September

Bruce Robinson said there had been a good turnout at the Masterclass and the event had been very successful. Bruce said the guest speaker Bernard Herdan CB, was excellent and should be considered for further events.

Advertising Shared Service Centre

PSG agreed the amendments to the paper, Alan Shannon had a further minor amendment to be incorporated before final circulation by Colm Shannon.

[Action: Colm Shannon]

Foot and Mouth and Blue Tongue

Malcolm McKibbin updated PSG on the Foot and Mouth Disease in Surrey, he said a further four cases had been confirmed but were confined to the original risk area.

Malcolm said Blue Tongue disease had been detected in cattle in Suffolk. The disease is transmitted by biting insects. There are no human health issues.

Malcolm said the Minister would make a statement in the Assembly on Monday 1 October.

Giant's Causeway

Stephen Quinn and Stephen Peover updated PSG on the continued interest in the Giant's Causeway Visitors' Centre.

Reform Costs

Bruce Robinson updated PSG on the latest Reform developments.

Bruce said the DFP Pilot Reform Events were being held and had been well attended. The events were chaired by Seamus McKee and were interactive with opportunities for questions. Bruce asked PSG to encourage staff involved in Change Management to attend the events.

[Action: Permanent Secretaries]

4. Assembly and Executive Update

Rosalie said following a minute issued from Nigel Hamilton regarding the late circulation of Executive papers, the papers for Thursday's meeting had been distributed on time.

Rosalie briefed PSG on the previous day's Executive meeting and arrangements for the next meeting on 8 October.

Concern was expressed by PSG on ISNI issues and Bruce asked that Permanent Secretaries relay their concerns to Leo O'Reilly.

[Action: Permanent Secretaries]

5. Tour de Table

Civil Service Awards

Aideen McGinley said the NICS should be encouraged to enter for more awards for their participation in major ongoing initiatives.

Ambassadors Visits

Stephen Quinn said US Ambassadors Tuttle and Foley would be visiting NI on October 15th and 16th along with 25 US business executives.

Classroom Assistants

Will Haire updated PSG on the strike by Classroom Assistants held on 26 September.

PAC Report

Andrew McCormick said the Minister had issued a press release in response to the PAC Report on Cancelled Clinics.

Red Meat Task Force

Malcolm McKibbin informed PSG that the Red Meat Task Force Report would be published on Wednesday 3 October. The report was likely to attract considerable media attention.

Mourne National Park

Stephen Peover said the recommendations of the Mourne National Park Working Party had been received. The Minister had issued a press release acknowledging the Report and confirming that she would be considering the Working Party's recommendations.

PPS 14

Stephen Peover said a judgement from the High Court was expected within the next week.

Renewing Communities

Alan Shannon said Ministers should be aware that funding for Renewing Communities would end in March.

Director of Voluntary and Community Unit

Alan Shannon said the Grade 5 Post of Director of the Voluntary and Community Unit would be re-advertised. He said he would copy the advertisement to Permanent Secretaries for circulation.

[Action: Alan Shannon]

Independent Water Review

David Sterling said the embargoed Report of the Independent Water Review would be delivered to Ministers and was on the PSG Agenda for 5 October.

Next Week's PSG

Agenda – HR PSG – CPG
SIB/ISNI – David Gavaghan/Paul Priestly
Independent Water Review - DRD