

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING  
HELD ON FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER 2006  
IN ROOM GD14, STORMONT CASTLE  
AT 8.45 AM**

**Present:** Nigel Hamilton  
Will Haire  
John Hunter  
Andrew McCormick  
Aideen McGinley  
Gerry McGinn  
Stephen Peover  
Nick Perry  
Stephen Quinn  
Bruce Robinson  
Alan Shannon  
Paul Sweeney  
Pat Toal

**In Attendance:** Brian Doherty  
Stephen Grimason  
Stewart Johnston - Agenda Item 4  
Billy Stevenson - Agenda Item 5  
Linda Wilson - Agenda Item 6  
Debbie Sweeney - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** Rosalie Flanagan

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 8 December**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Section 75 Guidance

Nigel Hamilton confirmed he had written to Cynthia Smith for advice on a single response.

4. **Restoration/Political Update**

Stewart Johnston updated PSG on the week's political events. Stewart said PfG work was ongoing and Chairs had been appointed to the Sub-Committees. The main PfG Committee was working with Machinery of Government on the Ministerial Code.

Stewart informed PSG that advice would be issued to Departments on working with the Committees. It was currently with Ministers for comment and should issue week beginning 18 December.

## 5. **Economic Key Points (Critical National Infrastructure)**

Nick Perry introduced Billy Stevenson from NIO who explained the background to the NI EKP register. The NI Register is limited to 3 sectors:

Telecommunications  
Water  
Energy (gas, oil and electricity)

Cabinet Office is leading a fundamental review of EKPs in response to the current threat from international terrorism.

EKPs are divided into two priorities and that determines the level of security that must be maintained at individual sites.

Billy explained the roles and responsibilities of the NI EKP model. The NIO are responsible for implementing the EKP policy in NI, maintaining the register and Chairs the NI EDP Committee.

Due to the forthcoming change in primacy for national security, Security Service will engage with NIDs and EKP operators. Cabinet Office will also lead a review of EKPs and definitions, following which NI EKP Register will be reviewed.

## 6. **Capability Review: Futures Project**

Stephen Quinn said in November PSG asked PSG Sub-Group D to take forward a Futures Project.

Stephen and Linda Wilson outlined the work done by PIU under the direction of PSG D.

Already, two broad approaches to Futures work have been adopted in GB. The Scottish Executive has adopted a centrally driven model to identify current performance and priorities, future challenges and appropriate responses across key areas of Scottish life and society. Whitehall has adopted a different approach with no centrally driven Futures Programme.

PSG agreed that the Scottish model was a more appropriate model for a Northern Ireland Strategic Futures Programme.

It was agreed that Stephen Quinn would take forward the Project and would seek Departments' further representation on a Steering Group to progress the work.

## 7. **Tour de Table**

### Economic Development Forum

Stephen Quinn reported on the 5 December meeting of the Economic Development Forum.

### Leitch Report

Aideen McGinley outlined the scope of the Leitch Report and said she would be writing to Departments to nominate a representative to sit on a cross-Departmental team to consider the implications of the Review for Northern Ireland.

### Irish Language Consultation

Paul Sweeney said the Consultation Paper on Proposed Irish Language Legislation was launched on 13 December.

### Bain Report

Will Haire said Maria Eagle would issue a press release accepting the broad thrust of the Bain Report.

### Child Support White Paper

Alan Shannon said the Minister had issued a press release welcoming the Child Support White Paper, published at Westminster on 13 December.

### Affordable Housing

Alan Shannon said Sir John Semple's Interim Report on affordable housing had been released on 14 December.

### Warrenpoint Harbour

Gerry McGinn said the Minister would announce government support for essential developments at the port of Warrenpoint.

### Loughs Agency

Pat Toal alerted PSG to a recent problem in relation to the draft Foyle and Carlingford legislation.

### Fisheries Council

The Minister would attend the Fisheries Council meeting. Prospects for an increase in quota for prawns were promising but a further reduction in days at sea for white fish was likely.

### Single Farm Payments

Pat Toal informed PSG that 75% of farmers would receive their single farm payments by end-December and Orchard House, who generate the payments, should achieve their target. Pat said one of the reasons for the high success rate in Northern Ireland was due to the dedicated IT team in Orchard House.

### Pay

John Hunter updated PSG on NICS pay.

## Security

Nick Perry updated PSG on attacks on the elderly, and the situation regarding the prisoner currently on hunger strike.

## Next Week's PSG

Please note the meeting will take place in the Glasshouse.

Agenda Item is:

Maze Stadium Progress Report - Edgar Jardine/John McMillen

The first PSG of 2007 will be held on 5 January and will be an HR meeting.

**DEBBIE SWEENEY**  
**19 December 2006**