

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 24 MARCH 2006 IN ROOM GD14, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 AM**

Present: Nigel Hamilton
Derek Baker
Will Haire
Edgar Jardine
Andrew McCormick
Aideen McGinley
Gerry McGinn
Stephen Peover
Nick Perry
Stephen Quinn
Bruce Robinson
Paul Sweeney
Pat Toal

In Attendance: Denis McCartney
Rosalie Flanagan
Stephen Grimason
Alan Leitch - Agenda Item 4
Lorna Armstrong } - Agenda Item 6
Colm Shannon }
Debbie Sweeney - Secretary

1. **Apologies:** John Hunter
Alan Shannon

2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 10 March 2006**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Loyalism

Nigel Hamilton said the outcomes of both the Taskforce Report and the recent engagement process would be presented on Tuesday 4 April at 11.00 am in the Park Avenue Hotel. Nigel asked that Permanent Secretaries, diaries permitting, try to attend the event.

[Action: PSG]

4. **Reform Update, Market Research Presentation**

Alan Leitch said his objective had been to identify a suitable 'brand' for the programme of change currently being undertaken across all strands of the public sector. To research the issue, Alan explained that after a brainstorming session to determine what the brand should portray and shortlist potential brand themes, internal and general public group discussions had been held.

At the sessions, awareness and understanding and attitudes to change were discussed. There were seven options for a brand tested and two shortlisted. After discussions, the brand was finalised as 'Changing for the Better'. The title suggested an ongoing process and was less final; it did not give an unrealistic suggestion of improvement and gave reassurance that there was a reason for the changes.

Alan said that ultimately the choice of brand was less important than how the reform was actually delivered and communicated, both internally and externally. For the public it was necessary for a visible improvement to accompany the brand and for staff communication was essential.

PSG endorsed the 'Changing for the Better' brand.

Bruce Robinson said following the Masterclass on 28 March, DFP would produce a short bulletin with web links for all staff.

5. **Second Session Legislative Programme**

Rosalie Flanagan asked PSG to agree the proposed prioritisation of OLC work on Orders in Council for the Second Session, which was due to be considered by the Ministerial Legislation Committee on 3 April.

Stephen Peover asked for co-operation from Departments with regard to the Marine Bill. DOE were working to DEFRA timetables to complete the Bill.

NIO's Police (Miscellaneous) Bill and Police (Ombudsman) Bill were moved to second priority.

Rosalie said she would continue to monitor progress with the development of Instructions and would come back to PSG to discuss further prioritisation if, due to slippage in other areas, drafting resources become available.

6. **Advertising Review**

Colm Shannon and Lorna Armstrong outlined the final report of the Advertising Review Group. Colm said the implementation of the review will begin a significant change that will deliver advertising as part of an effective and integrated communication process. Colm summarised the government's future advertising policy and practice and outlined the savings envisaged.

PSG agreed in principle to the future advertising policy and proposed new arrangements.

7. **Tour de Table**

Disclosure of Salary

Nigel Hamilton drew PSG attention to David Thomson's minute of 21 March regarding disclosure of salary and pension information details in accounts.

SPAD

Nigel reminded PSG that SPAD advice must be sought before submissions are forwarded to the Secretary of State.

Education Boards

Will Haire updated PSG on Angela Smith's meetings with BELB and SEELB.

Health Announcements

Andrew McCormick informed PSG of Shaun Woodward's forthcoming press releases.

Reform

Bruce Robinson said he had written to local political parties offering a meeting to update them on the Reform Programme.

Strike

Gerry McGinn updated PSG on the proposed one-day strike by Translink on Tuesday 28 March.

Belfast Development Plans

Derek Baker said the Minister would be making a final decision on the developer for the North East and North West Quarters of Belfast.

Avian Flu

Pat Toal said there was nothing further to report on the spread of Avian Flu. DARD had issued a press release to remind poultry keepers to register their birds.

Nationality

Denis McCartney said he would be writing to the Attorney General regarding Nationality issues.

Nigel Hamilton said he would also raise the issue with Sir Gus O'Donnell in due course.

PSG – 31 March 2006

Agenda: NIMA Presentation – DCAL

Reminder

PSG – 7 April, will be held in the Invest NI Building Board Room.

DEBBIE SWEENEY
27 March 2006