

**SUMMARY OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT MEETING  
ON 22 JANUARY 2003**

**PRESENT:** Mr Haire  
Ms Bunting  
Ms Flanagan  
Mr Jardine  
Mr McCartney  
Mr Stewart  
Mrs Angus  
Mr Vincent  
Mrs Devlin  
Mr May  
Mr Johnston

**APOLOGIES:** Mr Hamilton  
Mr Gray  
Mr Grimason  
Dr Smyth  
Mr McKervill  
Mr Jackson  
Mrs Cummins  
Dr Smith  
Mr Shannon  
Mrs McAuley  
Dr Mulligan  
Mr Rooney

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr Ferguson (secretary)  
Miss Dullaghan  
Mr Playfair  
Mr Davidson  
Mrs Russell (Deloitte & Touche)  
Mr Thompson (Deloitte & Touche).

**1. Risk Management Project**

Mrs Gillian Russell and Mr David Thompson, consultants with Deloitte & Touche, attended the meeting to give a short progress report on the risk management project they are undertaking for the Department and to answer any questions.

Mrs Russell outlined the progress that had been made to date in relation to the development of Directorate Risk Registers and Risk Control Frameworks before setting out the schedule for completing the project by the end of March 2003.

Mrs Russell then responded to a range of questions from those attending the meeting including integration of the different levels of the project, integrating risk management with business planning, stewardship arrangements and risk management in future years.

## **2. Review of Team Briefing**

A paper on the Review of the Team Briefing system, as it operates in OFMDFM, had been circulated before the meeting. Mr Haire explained that the paper had been referred to the Departmental Board on 20 January where it was agreed that in order to give more time to consider the recommendations it should be circulated to the senior management meeting on 22 January and resubmitted to the next Board meeting on 27 January.

Mrs Angus outlined the key messages in the Review, that the Departmental Board needed to play a larger role in determining the content of the core brief, that more emphasis needed to be placed on the local brief and that there needed to be greater consistency in the delivery of the team brief across the Department.

The meeting discussed a wide range of issues arising from the Review and examined the impact of a number of the recommendations contained in the Report. It was agreed that the Departmental Board needed to look critically at some of the recommendations when next it considers the Report.

## **3. Tour de Table**

- Mrs Angus advised colleagues that an announcement was expected soon on the next round of promotion boards beginning at Deputy Principal level and that the new Performance Management system for staff below the senior civil service level was unlikely to be introduced before April 2004. Mrs Angus also advised colleagues of the Departments formal commitment to apply for the Investors in People standard.

- Mr Stewart advised colleagues that the Children's Bill had completed its passage through the House of Commons, was due to go to the House of Lords within the next few weeks and that as a result the appointment of a Children's Commissioner was expected in the summer. Mr Stewart also confirmed that informal consultation on the Children's strategy had been completed and that a formal six month consultation period on the community relations policy would be launched on 28 January.
  
- Ms Bunting updated colleagues on the launch of proposals for implementing EU Regulations on race and sexual orientation, on the launch of the European Year of People with Disabilities and on the ongoing community capacity building programme in North Belfast.
  
- Mr Vincent reminded colleagues of the MSc of e-government seminar being held on the afternoon of 23 January in the Long Gallery in Parliament Buildings and also advised that consultation on 'Bridging the Digital Divide' had now closed with a number of good quality responses received and being considered.
  
- Mr Haire updated colleagues on a number of issues including a forthcoming meeting of the Permanent Secretaries Group, the Review of Public Administration, the selection process for a conference in Australia and sick absence rates in OFMDFM.
  
- Mrs Devlin updated colleagues on the processing of Parliamentary Questions and both current and future legislative programmes. Mrs Devlin reported that nearly 600 Parliamentary Questions had been processed since the suspension of devolution and outlined plans to set up a Northern Ireland Committee in the House of Lords. Mrs Devlin also reminded colleagues of the Holocaust memorial in Armagh on 27 January.

- Mr Johnston updated colleagues on a number of current issues affecting his Division including North/South bodies, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Civic Forum and a British Irish Council meeting on the environment.
- Ms Flanagan advised colleagues that the arrangements for implementing a pension scheme for staff working in the North/South bodies was still not resolved and that nominations for the Boards of North/south bodies had now been received and signed off allowing appointments to be made.
- Mr May reported that a JMC meeting on Europe was planned for next week and alerted colleagues to the role of the Public Service Reform Unit in supporting the wider reform agenda.
- Mr Jardine updated colleagues on the South Down Fishing Villages Regeneration scheme, on the merger of the Northern Ireland Economic Council and the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre and that the debate on the Strategic Investment Board Bill was scheduled for 29 January.
- In concluding the tour de table Mr Haire briefly updated colleagues on the recent implementation group meeting and on issues surrounding car parking difficulties in Castle Buildings.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**5. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 12 February 2003.

**MICHAEL FERGUSON**

22 January 2003