

**MINUTES OF PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON 29 APRIL 2005 IN ROOM GD14, STORMONT CASTLE
AT 8.45 am**

Present: Nigel Hamilton
Derek Baker
Will Haire
Don Hill
John Hunter
Edgar Jardine
Noel Lavery
Andrew McCormick
Stephen Peover
Stephen Quinn
Eddie Rooney
Pat Toal

Apologies: Clive Gowdy
John Hunter
Aideen McGinley
Gerry McGinn
Nick Perry
Bruce Robinson
Alan Shannon

In Attendance: Stewart Johnston - Agenda Item 3
Pauline Boyle - (Secretary)

1. Minutes and Summary

The Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 22 April were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Purdah/Elections/First Day Briefs

Stewart Johnston reminded colleagues that the deadline for preparation of First Day Briefs was 29 April.

The majority of Departments have finalised their First Day Briefs.

Purdah queries have continued to be handled by Machinery of Government and the Election Business Committee.

4. **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

Edgar Jardine tabled Aideen McGinley's paper of 21 April. The initial guidance was tabled and cleared at PSG in December 2003 and DCAL requested PSG agreement to the revised guidance following changes in response to EQIA and wider consultations. Edgar Jardine said there were no significant amendments to the previous paper and paragraph 8 of Aideen McGinley's paper set out key changes.

PSG discussed how best to implement the guidance throughout all Departments and it was decided the Interdepartmental Group who have been working together would be best placed to look at best practice across Departments. PSG colleagues had a few minor amendments to the guidance and would let Edgar Jardine have their comments. It was agreed the guidance would be amended and circulated in Departments and Nigel Hamilton suggested it could be discussed at individual Departmental Boards.

PSG were content for the revised guidance to be submitted by DCAL's Minister to the Secretary of State for approval after the period of purdah expires.

5. **Delivery and Efficiency Unit**

Andrew McCormick gave a preview of a paper which would be discussed at next week's PSG meeting.

Ian Pearson gave a commitment to establish a Delivery and Efficiency Unit, to include outside sources, in his budget statement in December past. Andrew will meet with Bruce Robinson and Will Haire initially for preliminary discussions and subject to that meeting will circulate paper as soon as possible.

[Action: Andrew McCormick]

6. **North South Arrangements**

Stewart Johnston reported on a meeting he had with colleagues in the South on Wednesday, and particularly North South arrangements after the Election. Nigel Hamilton said he had received a copy of Brian Cowen's address on the occasion of his visit to Derry last Monday and asked for this to be circulated to PSG.

[Action: Secretary]

7. **Ulster Farmers' Union**

Pat Toal reported on the proposed farmers' protest in the Stormont Estate.

8. **West Belfast Information Pack**

Nigel Hamilton reported on the content of the booklet issued by the West Against Racism Network.

9. **State of the City Conference**

Derek Baker attended part of this conference on Tuesday and gave a short update. Nigel Hamilton had been asked by Peter McNaney to consider whether it would be possible for PSG to receive a presentation on the Council's approach to achieving a joined-up focus on key issues for Belfast. After discussion, it was agreed that PSG would not be the most appropriate forum and Derek Baker/Alan Shannon should speak to Peter McNaney and suggest perhaps lunchtime seminars for interested parties.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

Friday 6 May 2005.

PAULINE BOYLE
29 April 2005