

## PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING

### Minutes of meeting on Friday 8 January 2016, 8.45 am

1. **Present:** Malcolm McKibbin (Chair)  
Andrew McCormick  
Derek Baker  
Andrew Hamilton  
Leo O'Reilly  
Paul Sweeney  
Denis McMahon  
Hugh Widdis  
Peter May  
David Sterling  
Richard Pengelly

**Apologies:** Nick Perry  
Noel Lavery  
Brenda King

**In attendance:** Mark Browne  
Stephen Grimason  
Neill Jackson  
Anthony Harbinson  
David Small  
Kellie Sprott (Secretariat)

2. **Minutes of 18 December 2015 Meeting**

The minutes of 18 December 2015 were cleared subject to one minor amendment.

3. **Matters Arising- verbal**

2016-17 Budget Process

Action complete, DFP has issued a note to finance directors regarding next steps in the budget process.

Digital Transformation Programme

Malcolm reminded PSG to ensure accurate tracking of savings within their departments from the Digital Transformation Programme.

2015 Fast Stream Assessment to Grade7

Malcolm confirmed that PSG would work collaboratively to ensure that departmental needs are met whilst preserving merit order from the Fast Stream Grade 7 list.

Nominations for WIG future leader's programme

DFP will issue a note to departments asking for nominations for the WIG future leaders' programme. It is aimed at fast streamers.

VES – tranche 5 returns

Action complete. Requirements for a tranche 5 have been provided. David Sterling advised PSG that the NIAO had approached DFP regarding scoping work for an audit of the VES. David will report back to PSG next week with further details about this. DFP will be the single point of contact for the NIAO regarding this.

Boardroom Apprenticeship Programme

Action complete. Contact details of Boards willing to partake in the programme have been sent the Ulster University.

4. **Executive & Assembly Update**

Neill Jackson provided an update on Executive and Assembly business. He thanked departments for adhering to the schedule of legislative business. A discussion was held about the flooding situation and the Ministerial meeting the previous day with relevant representatives. The potential for an Executive meeting next week was discussed.

Neill also advised PSG that the resigning First Minister would make a personal statement in the Assembly at 12 noon on Monday. The handover to Arlene Foster as First Minister will then take place.

The next scheduled Executive meeting is 21<sup>st</sup> January.

5. **Review of Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government Order (Northern Ireland) 1999)**

Derek Baker discussed the request he had issued to departments asking them to conduct a stock-take of the public bodies listed on the Continuity of Employment in Local Government Order. The current list is dated and some of the bodies listed no longer exist. Derek advised PSG that some further work is required on this. He said that DEL would take some time to re-visit the original policy rationale of the Order and come back to departments with more detail at a later date. This is not a time critical piece of work. Departments do not need to take any action at this stage.

**Action: DEL**

6. **Tour de Table**

DARD

David Small advised PSG that the DARD Minister would launch a Home Owners Flood Protection Grant Scheme next week. PSG advised DARD to take into consideration the interface of this scheme with the £1000 emergency payment scheme which DOE operates and potential implications for insurance liabilities.

**Action: DARD**

DOJ

Anthony Harbinson informed PSG that the legal aid strike is ongoing. He advised that the three person panel established to recommend a strategy to disband paramilitary groups, as indicated in 'A Fresh Start', had held its first meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015.

DHSSPS

Richard Pengelly advised PSG that the Health Minister would be making an announcement about nurses' pay in the next few days.

DSD

Andrew Hamilton informed PSG that the NIAO report on the NI Housing Executive's Land Disposals had been published. He advised that the Eileen Evason work, as indicated in 'A Fresh Start', was ongoing and that a final report was expected next week.

### DRD

Peter May advised of preparations being made for the next Permanent Secretary/SpAd Programme for Government workshop on 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

### DCAL

Denis McMahon informed PSG that the Attorney General's office would now be hard charging DCAL for advisory work.

### HOCS

Malcolm McKibbin advised PSG that Nick MacPherson, long standing Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, had announced his retirement. He also advised relevant Permanent Secretaries of a change of date for the next Chamber of Commerce in-camera event. A date in April will now be selected. An early dinner straight after work is the preferred timing for the event. HOCS office will make the necessary arrangements.

**Action: HOCS Office**

## **PERMANENT SECRETARIES ONLY**

### **7. Grade 5 Management Structure in nine new departments**

PSG discussed the proposed Grade 5 Management Structure in the nine new departments. Derek Baker and David Sterling agreed to brief Colin Lewis on the outcome of the discussion. Colin Lewis will report back to PSG on the remaining outstanding issues within the next two weeks.

**Action: Derek Baker, David Sterling and Colin Lewis**