

HCS-74-15 PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING

FRIDAY 27 MARCH 2015

Minutes

1. **Present:** Malcolm McKibbin (Chair)
Leo O'Reilly
Richard Pengelly
Derek Baker
David Sterling
Cynthia Smith
Peter May
Noel Lavery

Apologies: Andrew Hamilton
Nick Perry
Andrew McCormick
Paul Sweeney
Stephen Grimason

In attendance: Brenda King
Oswyn Paulin
Mark Browne
Denis McMahon
Tracy Meharg
David Lavery
Eugene Rooney
Katrina Godfrey
Colin Lewis – Item 5
Mark Goodfellow – Item 5
Debbie Sherlock – Item 5
David Lammey – Item 6
Mike Brennan – Item 7
Kellie Sprott (secretariat)

2. **Minutes of 20 March 2015 Meeting**

The minutes were approved.

3. **Matters Arising**

SCS Event

Action complete, an email invite has issued to the SCS for Friday 8th May.

Meeting with Chair and vice-Chair of PAC

Action complete, no comments were received.

4. **Executive & Assembly Update**

Neill Jackson provided an update on the previous day's Executive meeting. He referenced the note he had issued to all departments and asked PSG to take a critical look at the Executive papers that they have in circulation to assess whether or not they still need to be under active consideration.

Action: PSG

5. **VES analysis – update on VES quotas**

Colin Lewis took the lead for this agenda item. He updated PSG on the following:

- analysis of applications to date;
- proposed quotas for the scheme and rationale;
- exceptions;
- anticipated attrition rates;
- timeline for progression of the scheme; &
- next steps.

A general discussion followed. PSG noted the current position in relation to applicants and noted and agreed the proposed use of quotas. Colin Lewis will report back further at next week's HR PSG.

Action: Colin Lewis

Colin Sullivan updated PSG on the Transformation Fund. He advised that the first tranche of applications would be submitted early next week. PSG noted the position.

6. **Changes to central FOI provision**

David Lammey took the lead for this agenda item. He discussed the following:

- background;
- current role of OFMDFM;
- comparison with England and Wales;
- proposed new approach;
- NICS FOI statistics;
- FOI workflow; &
- conclusion and recommendation.

A general discussion followed. PSG agreed to the proposals in the paper with the following caveats:

- OFMDFM will produce an annual report on FOI performance for the NICS; and
- for sensitive round robin requests where there is no lead department, central advice will be provided.

Action: Mark Browne

7. **Finance Update**

Mike Brennan updated PSG on the 15-16 June monitoring potential position and the NI resource DEL budget scenarios up to 2020.

8. **Future of NICS – SCS away day and PSG away day discussion**

Malcolm McKibbin led a discussion around the timings and format of the upcoming SCS away day on 8 May. It was agreed that it should be a half day running from 9.30am to 2.30pm approx. Short presentations to start followed by workshops. Further discussions on arrangements will follow. Malcolm left the meeting.

David Sterling took the lead for the rest of this agenda item. He went through the draft papers that had been provided from the 3 groups of Permanent Secretaries about the Role of PSG, Performance Culture and Outcome and Engagement.

Various suggestions were made whilst discussing each paper and the lead person in each group agreed to incorporate the agreed changes into their paper by Wednesday 1 April.

Action: Derek, Andrew/Noel and Leo

David Sterling will then incorporate all of the inputs into one composite paper in advance of next week's PSG meeting.

Action: David Sterling

9. **Tour de Table**

OFMDFM

Mark Browne advised PSG that Henry Johnston would be temporarily promoted to Grade 3 in OFMDFM following the recent senior civil service moves.

DOE

Leo O'Reilly advised that Wesley Shannon would be acting Chief Executive of the NIEA following Terry A'Hearn's departure.

DARD

Noel Lavery informed PSG that the Agricultural Commissioner is currently in Northern Ireland.