



**Public Service Commission
Minutes of Proceedings**

**Tuesday 25 November 2008
Boardroom 10 Cromac Place
The Gasworks**

Present: Mr Sid McDowell (Chairman)
Professor Bernard Cullen
Mr Jim McCusker
Mr Brian Hanna
Mrs Brenda McLaughlin (present from 3pm)
Mr Dessie Mitchell
Dr Collim Patton

In Attendance: Miss Susan Dornan

1. Apologies

Brenda McLaughlin advised that she would arrive late at the meeting due to earlier commitments.

2. Minutes of Meeting of 29 October 2008

The minutes were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Codes of Practice/Guidance Notes Update

The progress report from Jacqui Wallace, Central Personnel Group (CPG, dated 20 November 2008) which had previously been forwarded to Commissioners was noted.

Compliance with PSC Guiding Principles/draft 5th Guiding Principle Voluntary Severance Arrangement - Update

Commissioners briefly discussed Derek Baker's note (dated 24 November 2008) and paper on compliance which was sent in response to the Chairman's email of 31 October 2008 (tabled). The position on the "Lessons Learned" paper was noted.

Agreed: Commissioners to give the compliance paper further consideration and to raise any concerns on the paper with the Acting Chief Executive in advance of a future substantive discussion.

Agreed: Acting Chief Executive to send an interim response to Derek Baker advising that a substantive discussion was awaited on the paper, but in the interim, the paper would be improved by addressing roles, responsibilities and accountability. The response should also refer to the Commission's view that an element of independent review is required and that clarification is sought on paragraph 4 of the paper.

Communication Event 9 December 2008 - Update

The Chairman advised that approximately 80 delegates had registered to attend including Chief Executives, HR Managers and Communications Officers. The delegate list was circulated and a query raised over the number of health sector attendees.

Agreed: Acting Chief Executive to investigate distribution of invitations to the health sector. Commissioner Patton to raise with D Bingham.

Health and Social Care Reform – Update

Commissioners were advised that a provisional meeting has been arranged with David Bingham on 16 December 2008 from 10.00am to 12noon.

Agreed: Acting Chief Executive to confirm meeting arrangements with D Bingham's office.

Location of Public Sector Jobs – Bain report – Update

The Chairman advised Commissioners that David Orr and Olive Maybin are the Civil Servants responsible for the handling of the Bain report. Commissioners noted that Minister Dodds has written to all Executive Ministers inviting initial views in the report. The DFP Committee also received a briefing from Sir George Bain on 1 October. Commissioners commented that the Guiding Principle on Location should be applied to any RPA affected organisations chosen for the pilot.

Role of PSC in Shared Services/Status of PSC Guiding Principles – Update

The Chairman advised this work was ongoing.

Local Government Reform – Update

Commissioners discussed the progress in local government reform including the guidance which had been circulated to Local Government Chief Executives by Ian Maye on the Transition Committees and Transition Management teams. Commissioners noted that the guidance helpfully refers to the Transition Committees abiding by the PSC Guiding Principles.

4. RPA Progress Reports

Commissioners briefly discussed the progress reports supplied on Local Government, Education and the NILA.

On the Education sector changes, Commissioners noted that Minister Caitriona Ruane had announced that the ESA will be established on 1 January 2010, allowing the Assembly time to consider and pass the necessary legislation. Copies of the Ministerial announcement were sent to Commissioners last week.

With respect to the update provided on the Health sector, Commissioners were concerned that the Chief Executive posts in the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well Being, Regional Health and Social Care Board, Regional Business Services Organisation, and the Patient and Client Council are to be run by open, external competition.

Agreed: Acting Chief Executive to determine if the Chief Executive posts in Health have already been advertised, and to seek a rationale from the Department on the proposed recruitment mechanism being applied.

Agreed: Acting Chief Executive to seek clarification on the applicability to the ESA of the 6 and two-thirds years added years protection date being moved to 30 September 2009 in the Health sector.

5. Chairman's Business

The Chairman provided an update on a potential future PSC accommodation proposal.

6. Northern Ireland Assembly/Executive Developments

This was addressed under item 4 on the agenda.

7. Any Other Business

Communications on the new HR Connect payroll system were tabled.

The Acting Chief Executive advised that a copy of the draft Recruitment, Re-deployment and Voluntary Severance Strategy (RRVS) had been requested from the ESA Implementation Team.

Agreed: Acting Chief Executive to circulate Strategy on receipt.

The Commission meeting on 14 January 2009 was rescheduled to 2pm on 26 January 2009.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next commission meeting is due to take place at 2pm on Wednesday 17 December 2008 when Paul Simpson and Ian Maye will provide an update on local government reform.

Sid Kempwell
