

Public Service Commission

Minutes of Proceedings

Friday 27 June 2008

Boardroom 10 Cromac PlaceThe Gasworks

Present:

Mr Sid McDowell (Chairman)

Professor Bernard Cullen

Mr Brian Hanna

Mr Jim McCusker

Mr Desmond Mitchell

Dr Collim Patton

In Attendance:Mr Brian Martin

Ms Beverley Jones – Item 4

1. Apologies

Brenda McLaughlin

2. Minutes of Meeting of 13 May 2008

The minutes of the 13 May meeting were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Codes of Practice Update

An update paper from Central Personnel Group was tabled and noted. The Chairman advised Commissioners that officials and Trade Union Side continue to consult on the draft Code of Practice on Staff Transfers. Officials have been advised that the Commission would not be commenting on the draft Code until a revised draft is produced following the on-going consultation.

Compliance with PSC Guiding Principles

The Chairman advised Commissioners that no response had been received to the letter which had been sent to the Director, Central Personnel Group on 16 May. It had, however, been referred to OFMDFM for a response.

Research Project Update

The Chairman advised Commissioners that the next Project Steering Group meeting would be held at 10.00am on 14 August. Commissioners had been invited to attend to hear the Consultants outline their findings.

Location of Public Sector jobs resulting from the Review of Public Administration

Brian Hanna advised Commissioners that the Bain report should be published in September 2008.

Agreed: Commission to discuss Bain report following publication

Education Sector Update

An update from the Education Sector covering Communication, Legislation and Terms and Conditions was tabled. Commissioners noted that the sector is still working towards an April implementation date for the Education and Skills Authority. Staff transferring to ESA will transfer with their own terms and conditions. Terms and conditions for new staff being appointed to ESA are being developed.

Agreed: Chief Executive to find out if important communication information could be shared with the Commission as it becomes available.

5th Guiding Principle Voluntary Severance

The Chairman advised members that it was now hoped that the Guiding Principle would be taken at a July meeting of the Executive.

Future of Public Service Commission

The Chairman advised Commissioners that the Minister for Finance and Personnel would very much welcome an opportunity to meet in due course to discuss the work of the Commission and its future. It was suggested that it may be useful for senior officials to explore these matters with the Commission.

Agreed: Commission to meet with senior officials.

4. Role of Public Service Commission in Shared Services

The Chairman welcomed Beverley Jones to the meeting. There was a comprehensive discussion on the status of the Commission's Guiding Principles, the extent to which they can be applied to transfers to the private sector and whether they are a contractual obligation. Commissioners took the view that in their opinion staff transferred to the private sector should be afforded the same protection as staff transferred within the public sector.

Agreed: Chief Executive to write to Beverley Jones seeking further legal opinion on the issues raised during the discussion. Letter to be circulated to Commissioners for comment before issue.

5. Chairman's Business

Meeting with NI Library Authority Implementation Team

The Chairman advised members that along with the Chief Executive he had met the Chief Executive designate and the Personnel Director of the Library Authority. Two papers on Organisational Structure and Implementation of Organisational Structure were tabled. These had been the subject of a wide consultation process which included Trade Union Side. Commissioners noted the papers.

Agreed: Library Authority to be invited to make a presentation at next Commission meeting.

Letter from DHSSPS Permanent Secretary and HSC Chief Executive

The letter of 18 June to the Chairman was tabled. This set out the proposals for filling senior posts should the Minister decide to create the new organisations following the consultation process. In noting the contents of the letter the Commission will assume that the issue will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Guiding Principles.

Agreed: Chief Executive to respond. Chief Executive to find out if Minister has put proposals to the Executive.

Appointment of Head of NICS

The Chairman advised Commissioners that Bruce Robinson had been appointed to this post.

Agreed: Chief Executive to write to Mr. Robinson congratulating him on his appointment and indicating that Commissioners looked forward to working with him.

6. Any Other Business

Secretariat

The Chairman advised Commissioners that Barbara Bryan was being transferred to another post at the start of July. Commissioners thanked her for her services. The Chairman also advised Commissioners that the future staffing requirements of the Secretariat is under consideration.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Some dates were re-arranged and meetings will now be held on 30 July, 27 August and 30 September 2008.

Sid Kempwell

