

PERMANENT SECRETARIES' STOCKTAKE

Minutes of meeting on Friday 13 March 2020, 8.45am
Executive Room, Stormont Castle

1. **Present:** **David Sterling Chair**

Peter May
Derek Baker
Richard Pengelly
Hugh Widdis
Sue Gray
Mike Brennan
NR
Jill Minne
Tracy Meharg
Chris Stewart
Mark Browne
Chris McNabb

Apologies

Katrina Godfrey
Brenda King
Andrew McCormick
Denis McMahon

In attendance:

Karen Pearson (for Andrew McCormick) NR (for
Brenda King), Julie Thompson (for Katrina Godfrey),
Robert Huey (for Denis McMahon), NR
(Secretary)

2. **Minutes of 6 March 2020 Meeting**

The minutes were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Updates on matters arising from the previous meeting were provided.

4. **Executive and Assembly update**

NR provided details of current Executive issues and updated the Board on papers that may be tabled at the Executive Meeting on Monday 16th March. There was some discussion on the possibility of a special Executive Meeting to discuss the Budget w/c 16 March with a further possibility of a follow-up meeting w/c 23 March. Sue Gray advised that she will speak to her Minister and propose for the Minister to write to

FM/dFM on the potential of a special Executive Meeting to discuss the budget.

Action: Sue Gray

5. **Covid-19 Update**

David Sterling opened the discussion advising that Covid-19 is top priority for the NICS. He noted that there will be a CCG (NI) meeting w/c 16 March with the possibility of attendance by FM and dFM. David asked all Permanent Secretaries to revisit their cumulative impacts and resilience plans for their department in the event of an impact on the NICS.

Action: All

David also highlighted that communication is key regarding Covid-19 and that a core script on key issues should be issued to Ministers. Chris McNabb advised that he's working on an updated core script and this will issue to Ministers shortly.

Action: Chris McNabb

David proposed the setting up new two teams. One to deal with cumulative impact on essential services and the other on coordinating resilience planning. It was suggested that the Operation Delivery Profession (DfC) would lead on essential services with Civil Contingency Branch (TEO) leading on coordination.

**Action: Tracy Meharg
/ Chris Stewart**

Tracy Meharg raised the issue of hand sanitiser being provided for all NICS buildings. Permanent Secretaries agreed they would liaise with their departmental services branch to ensure that sanitiser is being ordered.

Action: All

There was discussion on each Permanent Secretary issuing a note to their department to update and reassure staff that the NICS is taking forward all precautionary matters in relation to Covid-19. NICS HR advice on Covid-19 should issue along with the note.

Action: All

Richard Pengelly provided an update on the latest Covid-19 position and advised that there was no change to the cases in NI as of this morning and advised that everyone should adhere to the advice from Public Health Agency (PHA).

Derek Baker raised the issue on the differential position of school closures north and south regarding Covid-19. Richard Pengelly advised that he

would issue a note to Derek explaining the understanding on the relative position.

Action: Richard Pengelly

6. **HOCS update**

David Sterling noted the publication of the RHI report today.

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Irrelevant & Sensitive

7. **Tour de Table**

TEO

HOCS Office to issue HOCS NDNA presentation to PSS.

Action: HOCS Office

David to meet with **NR** to discuss Assembly business.

Action: HOCS Office

Note to issue to staff on the RHI findings on behalf of the NICS Board.

Action: HOCS Office

Irrelevant & Sensitive

DSO

Hugh Widdis alerted Perm Secs to the current pressures within legal advisory legal services.

DoF

Irrelevant & Sensitive

NR

13 March 2020