

**THE NEW NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

**SHADOW COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING**

**FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY 1999 AT 10.00 AM**

**Present:** Initial Presiding Officer  
Mr R Coulter  
Mr J Fee  
Mr F Molloy  
Mr P Robinson MP  
Mrs E Bell

**In the Chair:** Initial Presiding Officer

**In Attendance:** Mr T Evans, Ms G Campbell, Mr Johnston

1. The minutes of the fifteenth meeting were accepted without change.

2. **MEETING OF THE STORMONT AREA GROUP**

The purpose of this part of the meeting was to consult the Stormont Area Group on the proposal to stage a second major concert in the estate and to discuss the general development of the Stormont Estate.

The Stormont Area Group had no objections to the concert with the following provisos:

- same level of organisation as for the Elton John concert;
- only one concert to be held each year;
- the Stormont Area group to be represented on the organising committee and difficulties highlighted from the previous concert to be addressed; and
- the promoter to be sensitive to the needs of local residents.

The Shadow Commission agreed to write to the Secretary of State reflecting the views of the Group. The Stormont Area Group registered its concerns about the DOE's programme of work for the Stormont Estate. It was agreed that a sub-group of the residents group should meet the DOE officials on a regular basis to present their views. It was agreed that the Shadow Commission would write to the DOE advising them of this decision.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

There was a general discussion on the senior management structure within the Assembly Secretariat.

4. **REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY**

The Shadow Commission agreed the arrangements for the presentation of the Commission's report to the Assembly on Monday 22 February. It was agreed that the statement on SSRB should recommend a longer-term commitment and not just an acceptance of the SSRB's initial recommendations. Also that the Shadow Commission, in recommending public advertisement for all posts, may need to use NICS temporary secondments as a fall-back arrangement.

5. **LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GIFT SHOP HOUSE COMMITTEE**

The Initial Presiding Officer referred to Mrs Robinson's letter in which she complained about the breaches of confidentiality and the general behaviour of one member of the Gift Shop House Committee. Mr Molloy reported that he had addressed the matter but suggested that it touched on a broader issue – how Members behaved in and out of Committees and the need to observe confidentiality. It was agreed that the House of Commons guidelines should be considered. The Initial Presiding Officer agreed to write back to Mrs Robinson. The Initial Presiding Officer raised the issue of refreshments on sitting days. It was agreed that a Refreshments House Committee should be established. Members to come back with nominations.

6. **MEETING WITH DAVID COURT, GOVERNMENT PURCHASING AGENCY (GPA)**

The Initial Presiding Officer outlined the main points from his meeting with David Court, GPA and the proposed action:

- framework advert already issued with 42 replies;
- Assembly to put together brief specification based on House of Commons advert;
- GPA to go back to companies week commencing 22 February; and
- to start with a concession contract (up to 2 years) with the main tendering process running in parallel.

Members agreed that GPA should be asked to progress this issue.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- John Hunter's response to Liz Benson's paper on pensions was tabled. Members agreed that further work is required. The Initial Presiding

Officer agreed to make reference to the pensions issue in next weeks APN.

- Members agreed that a note is required on OCAs covering end of year issues.

***The Shadow Commission:***

- turned down the Queen Alexandra Nursing Corps request for an extension beyond midnight for their dinner dance on 13 March;
- agreed to East Belfast Scouts cross country run on 20 March;
- asked for more detail on the Ulster Hospital cancer services fundraising event; and.
- agreed that Members of the Diplomatic Corps should have access to the public gallery and that an area of the gallery should be set aside for special visitors.

**9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Date of the next meeting to be arranged.

**TOM EVANS**  
**Clerk to the Shadow Commission**