

**RPA Communication Steering Group
3rd Meeting
2.00pm The Mount Business and Conference Centre, Belfast
27th September 2006**

Chair: Chris Stewart (DE)
Secretary: Christine Kidd (DE)
Attendees: Maura McCusker (DE)
Sarah Lowe (SEELB)
Richard Bullick (SELB)
Oliver Kelly (WELB)
John Martin (BELB)
Daryll Kenny (NEELB)
Deborah Girvan (NICIE)
Karen Gribbon (CCEA)
Karen Witherspoon (Youth Council)
Pol Ó Mórdha (CnaG)
Paul O'Connor (CCMS)
Rev Timothy Bartlett (Catholic Trustees)
Alma Abbs (RTU)
Mary Field (Youth Net)
Deirdre Vaugh (Staff Commission for ELBs)
Liam Barr (DE)
Wendy Eager (DE)
Scott Harbinson (DE)

Apologies: Mark Langhammer (NITC)
Revd Ian Ellis (TRC)
John Miskelly (GBA)
John D'Arcy (ANIC)
Brian Campfield (NICICTU)
Gareth Nicholson (DCAL)
Angela McAllister (DEL)

No.	Description	Action
1.	Welcome	
a.	C. Stewart opened the meeting at 14.10 and welcomed the group back after the summer break. Apologies were noted.	
b.	It was put to the group that the HR update on the agenda for this meeting at point 5 should be moved to point three. This was agreed.	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	
a.	The Minutes were presented to the Group as a true and	

	accurate record of the meeting that took place on 16 th June 2006. The Group adopted the minutes as presented.	
3.	Update on progress	
a.	Chris Stewart gave an update on the on-going work on the RPA within the Department. Bi- and Multi-lateral meetings with stakeholders have been held, and have moved the thinking on policy development on significantly.	
b.	Policy papers were submitted to the Minister on 18 th September. When feedback is received, the papers will be revised in light of this. At this stage, further stakeholder engagement will take place. Stakeholders will also be given sight of these papers at this stage.	PMO
c.	The policy proposals will be screened and if necessary, impact assessments carried out. Following this, instructions will be prepared for Legislative Counsel, who will draft the legislation. Although the deadline for laying the legislation has been brought forward, the date for implementation remains unchanged.	
d.	The Department wants to increase our work on Communication, in line with the RPA Communication Strategy.	
4.	HR Update – Maura McCusker	
a.	Maura McCusker gave a talk on the work of the HR project, in particular, work in relation to the Public Service Commission (PSC) Guiding Principles and associated recommendations.	
b.	HR is a structured project, with a Project Initiation Document (PID) for each stage of the project. The project is currently in its first 6-month phase – ‘Planning and Preparation’.	
c.	The project has set up a Project Board and QA group including key stakeholder representatives.	
d.	An Education Sector Joint HR Forum including the scope and membership of this group is currently being considered.	
e.	The HR project team has produced a draft Equality Plan, a draft HR Communication Plan and a draft Vacancy Control Policy and are currently working on a database of information which will enable them to gather data on staff across the Education Sector.	
f.	Maura outlined the role of the PSC in setting out guiding principles, and the role of the HR project in using these to develop operational policies for the education sector.	
g.	The HR Cross-sector forum was discussed. The membership and operation of this group is currently being reviewed to ensure it is fully informed about issues across the Education sector.	

h.	Maura gave a handout to the group (Annex A) on the PSC Guiding Principles and associated recommendations. She outlined each of these and the work the HR project team are doing in relation to them.	
i.	The HR project team hope to have the draft Vacancy Control policy signed off by the Project Board shortly. This will then go to the RPA Programme Management Board and TUS for approval.	
j.	The 'RPA affected group' has not yet been finalised. Chris Stewart invited views on whether teachers should be part of this group.	Communication Group
k.	The next Guiding Principle from PSC had been expected to be released very shortly, but this may be delayed due to the ongoing discussions on Principles 3 and 4.	
5.	Chief Executive (designate) for ESA	
a.	An update was given on the Chief Executive (designate) for ESA competition. The closing date for applications was 22 September. 12 applications were received. Interviews will commence on 23 October and it is expected that the successful candidate will be in post by January 2007.	
b.	A query was raised as to the makeup of the interview panel. PMO representatives agreed to circulate this information.	PMO
6.	Newsletter	
a.	The September edition of 'RPA – Moving Forward' was discussed. Group members are to forward all comments to Christine Kidd by 5pm, Friday 29 th September.	Group members
b.	It was suggested that a general update article, concentrating on policy work underway and the policy papers sent to the Minister on 18 th September should be included in the next edition. This was agreed.	Christine Kidd
c.	A list of editorial deadlines for the remainder of the year was circulated. It is requested that all submissions of material for the newsletter should be made within these deadlines.	
7.	AOB	
a.	Deborah Girvan thanked Chris Stewart for visiting NICIE and speaking to staff about the RPA. She encouraged other group members to avail of the RPA team's offer to visit organisations to speak to groups of staff.	
8.	Next Meeting	
a.	The next meeting will take place on 25 th October in the Cherry Room, Lagan Valley, Lisburn.	
b.	Members who cannot attend the next meeting are to inform PMO as soon as possible. Names of any deputies who will attend should also be provided.	All members
c.	The meeting concluded at 15.40.	

Christine J. Kidd