

**RPA Communication Steering Group  
Lagan Valley Island Centre, Lisburn  
Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at 10am**

**Chair:** Liam Barr (DE)  
**Secretary:** Tracy Hodgen (DE)  
**Attendees:**

- Nicky McBride (SEELB)
- Richard Bullick (SELB)
- John Martin (BELB)
- Daryll Kenny (NEELB)
- John Miskelly (GBA)
- Philip O'Sullivan (NICIE)
- Carol Morrow (DCAL)
- Juliet Whitford (DEL)
- Robert Shilliday (CCEA)
- Karen Witherspoon (Youth Council)
- Pol Ó Mórdha (CnaG)
- Paul O'Connor (CCMS)
- Mary Field (Youth Net)
- Kim Martin (DE)
- Wendy Eager (DE)
- Anne Martin (DE)

**Apologies:** Chris Stewart (DE)  
 Oliver Kelly (WELB)  
 Reverend Ian Ellis  
 Deirdre Vaugh (Staff Commission)

<b>No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	
a.	Liam Barr opened the meeting thanking everyone for attending this workshop. Apologies were noted.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Update on progress</b>	
a.	Liam Barr gave an update on the on-going work on the RPA within the Department.	
b.	Policy papers will be issued at the end of November to all Stakeholders before the next SH's group meeting.	<b>PMO</b>
c.	A candidate has been identified for the Chief Executive's post and pre appointment procedures are currently ongoing, there should be an announcement made within the next few weeks.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Presentation on Newsletter Design – Leslie Stannage</b>	
a.	Leslie Stannage from Leslie Stannage Design, showed the group 3 versions of possible newsletter designs. He asked the group to discuss these within their groups to decide on a title for future newsletters.	

b.	<p>Leslie suggested that the newsletter content is currently pitched at too high a level and should be written in plain English to enable all readers to understand the content and that the copy should take into consideration the wider spectrum of readers. He suggested that the focus should be on real issues such as jobs, location, redundancies etc rather than organisation and people profiles, although he acknowledged that there still remained an information vacuum as some of this information was still not available.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Outline of Workshop</b>	
a.	<p>The group was split into 3 smaller groups to discuss the following issues:</p> <p><b>1. RPA Moving Forward E-Zine.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name of Newsletter – Have we got it right? Should we change it?</li> <li>- Masthead</li> <li>- Styling design</li> <li>- Content</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Communications Strategy</b></p> <p>We are initiating a review of the communication strategy. Prior to this meeting, each organisation had been asked to submit tracked changes to update their section of the communications strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have we got the objectives right?</li> <li>- Have we got the messages right?</li> <li>- What internal communication tools do you currently use within your organisation?</li> <li>- Which of these do you use to communicate information on the RPA?</li> <li>- What opportunities are there for DE and you to maximise internal communications with your organisation?</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Stakeholders Involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the barriers to achieving this?</li> <li>- How do you recommend DE address this?</li> <li>- What opportunities are there for your organisation to help us achieve this?</li> <li>- How do you want to be involved?</li> <li>- What have we got right so far?</li> <li>- What has not been so good?</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Two-way Communication Network</b></p> <p>One of the priorities is to develop a 2-way communications network with Stakeholders Organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What has worked well so far?</li> <li>- What has not worked well?</li> <li>- What opportunities are there for DE and your organisation to address this?</li> </ul>	

<b>5.</b>	<b>Feedback from Groups</b>	
a.	See attached Annex A with results of feedback from all three groups.	
b.	It was agreed that a newsletter should only be produced when there was relevant information to communicate to stakeholders and staff. There was a broad consensus that a paper should not simply be produced to meet a monthly date. In the event of information becoming available at the time which did not coincide with the publication of a newsletter, an e-mail should be issued from DE to inform stakeholders who in turn would cascade this information to their staff.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b>	
a.	The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> December in the Cherry Room, Lagan Valley, Lisburn at 10am.	
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.	<b>All members</b>
c.	The meeting concluded at 1.15pm.	

Tracy Hodgen

## **Annex A**

### **RPA Workshop Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2006 Lagan Valley Island Centre, Lisburn**

#### **Question Schedule for Workshop**

##### **Question 1: RPA Moving Forward newsletter**

- We need to define who it is targeted at and what the key messages are.
- What other communications tools could we use? We need to consider using other communications tools in addition to the newsletter
- Content needs to be reconsidered
- Magazine should not be used for 'spin'
- It provides an opportunity to build trust
- There is confusion with where the central RPA newsletter sits
- It should not be the primary communications tool
- The masthead should be less cluttered
- The newsletter needs to set the context, explain the process give timelines, FAQ's and a glossary
- It needs to be relevant to readers
- It should only be produced when there is a strong front-page story.

##### **Question 2: Communications Strategy.**

- We need to produce a strategy rather than a Project Initiation Document. It needs to be simple and clear
- The strategy needs an overall aim, and objectives should be linked to benefits
- Key messages need to be refined and tailored to audience
- Key audiences should be targeted and segmented
- Stakeholders analysis should be undertaken, and also focus on end users
- A core script should be drafted (management level)
- A communications audit should be carried out

##### **Question 3: Stakeholders Involvement**

- We are currently in a 'holding period' and there is a lack of information
- Are we prepared?
- More effective segmentation is required
- DE needs to resource this work

- Make more effective use of time: Communications Steering Group, Stakeholders Group and Bilaterals
- DE needs to define role of Communications Steering Group.

### **Barriers to Stakeholder involvement**

- Morale
- Political uncertainty
- Website
- Honesty/Clarity
- Resources
- Briefing Material/Core scripts

### **Solutions**

- For stakeholders to become involved in decision making process, not just informed
- Workshops
- Members of the Communications Steering Group to cascade information down to their organisations

### **Question 4: Two-way Communication Network.**

- A communications audit should be carried out
- There is a question of resourcing this work
- DE needs to investigate e-communications - (depending on audit and resourcing)
- Robust FAQ's are required