

**RPA CROSS SECTOR HR FORUM MEETING
28 FEBRUARY 2008 AT 2.00PM, ROYSTON HOUSE**

Present: Derek Baker (CPG)
Grace Nesbitt (CPG)
Jacqui Wallace (CPG)
John Adams (NILGA)
James Hutchinson (DOE)
Dale Heaney (OFMDFM - Equality)
Eugene O'Loan (DSO)
Damian Prince (OFMDFM – RPA Central Unit)

Apologies: Vivienne Walker (DHSSPS)
Mark Browne (DE)
Maureen Taggart (NIHE)
Paul McAllister (DCAL)

Minutes: Laura Armstrong (CPG)

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.

The minutes of the meeting on 21 November were agreed as drafted.

Action point from previous meeting

On 27 November 2007 Damian Prince copied to the Forum the letter which issued to the PSC regarding Shared Services and the PSC Guiding Principles. A follow-up letter had been received from the PSC in this regard and would be picked up later on in the meeting under “Shared Services and Future Staffing Decisions.”

2. 5th Guiding Principle

Derek Baker outlined that the 5th Guiding Principle had been in draft for some time and highlighted the paper Jacqui Wallace issued to the group in advance of the meeting which contained a further draft of the 5th Guiding Principle. Derek pointed out that negotiations were continuing with the PSC in this regard and that the PSC were also currently considering this draft. Derek stressed that the PSC are unlikely to be receptive to negotiate any further on this issue. Derek asked the group for their views in relation to the current re-draft and advised that Mark Browne from Education had signalled in advance of the meeting that he was content with the proposed revisions.

There was a discussion in this regard. Subject to the views of Health, who were unable to attend the meeting, the consensus of the group was that the current draft was acceptable but there would be a need both to clarify certain issues in any response to the PSC and to ensure that this

clarification was circulated as widely as possible in the form of a Code of Practice.

3. **Shared Services and Future Staffing Decisions**

Derek referred the group to the memo Damian had issued to the forum in advance of the meeting in relation to the PSC remit for Shared Service Centres (SSC) and invited Damian to lead the discussion in this regard.

Damian referred the group to the previous correspondence to the PSC on this issue and highlighted that the most recent letter from the PSC appeared to be seeking to widen the remit of the application of the PSC Guiding Principles to a proposal for shared services of functions which are currently carried out by any part of the public sector.

Damian outlined that Health had already clarified its position to the PSC in relation to the application of PSC Guiding Principles to SSC under RPA but that there was a need for a further cross-cutting response on the issue. It was agreed that Education's views would be sought in this regard before responding to the PSC on the matter.

Action: Damian Prince

4. **Update on PSC Guiding Principles and Codes of Practice**

Jacqui Wallace updated the group in respect of the current position of the PSC Guiding Principles and Codes of Practice

Guiding Principles 2, 4 and 10

Jacqui advised that Codes of Practice were currently being drafted and it was hoped to consult with the Forum on these drafts within the next couple of days.

Draft Code of Practice for the 3rd Guiding Principle

Jacqui outlined that a further draft of the Code of Practice had recently issued to forum members for comment, a range of comments had been received and were currently in the process of being responded to. It was hoped, once again, to get the draft code of practice back to TUS for comment before formal consideration by the LRA. Jacqui emphasised the need to get this code of practice agreed and operational given the elements contained within it which people currently need.

5th Guiding Principle

Already covered under agenda item 2

Guiding Principles 7, 8 and 9

Jacqui advised the group that draft codes of practice for Guiding Principles 7, 8 and 9 had just issued for public consultation.

5. **Sectoral Updates**

Derek referred the group to the emerging issues update and invited updates from each of the respective sectors.

With regards Local Government, James Hutchinson advised that, as yet, no decisions had been made but that decisions were expected soon with the timetable for implementation being 2011 at the earliest.

In relation to the equality database, Dale Heaney outlined that the outcome of discussions at the Departmental Board regarding the future of RPA were awaited before further progress could be made.

Derek referred the group to the update in respect of DCAL and Jacqui highlighted that the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee had agreed to Schedule 2 to the Libraries Bill (the model for RPA transfers).

In relation to Education, Derek highlighted the progress being made in relation to ESA. With regards Health, Derek referred the group to the recent announcements made by Minister McGimspey.

6. Any other Business

Derek referred the group to the review of policy on the location of public sector jobs that was currently being undertaken by Sir George Bain. He advised that an Issues paper was likely to be published by April and highlighted the likely political interest in the issue.

7. Date of next meeting

20 March 2008 at 2.00pm in Royston House, however, a decision would be taken on the need for this meeting closer to the date.