

MEETING OF THE RPA STEERING GROUP HELD ON

FRIDAY 7 JULY 2006 IN ROOM GD14 STORMONT CASTLE AT 10.30am

Members: Nigel Hamilton
Aideen McGinley
Andrew McCormick
Stephen Peover
Alan Shannon

Present: Stephen Graham (Chief Executive, PSC for Sid McDowell)
George Gray
Denis McMahon
Colm Shannon
Brett Hannam (for David Gavaghan)
Linda Brown (for John Hunter)
Chris Stewart (for Will Haire)
Brian Doherty
Edgar Jardine (for Paul Sweeney)
Rosalie Flanagan
Mary Bunting
John McMillen
Jim McKeown
Debbie Donnelly
Colette Leeson

Apologies:

Sid McDowell (Chair, PSC)
David Gavaghan
Bruce Robinson
John Hunter
Will Haire
Gerry McGinn

1. Minutes of 2 June 2006

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 2 June were agreed.

2. Matters Arising –

2.1 Progress on key actions for 7 July meeting

2.1.1 Nigel Hamilton welcomed John McMillen to his first meeting as Head of the Central RPA Implementation Unit and wished Debbie Donnelly success in her new role as Deputy Chief Executive of the NI Policing Board.

2.1.2 Andrew McCormick reported that David Sissling has been appointed as Chief Executive (Designate) of the Health and Social Services Authority

and the appointment of the Chairs of the 5 new HSS Trusts had been completed, with successful candidates announced on 20 June (Anne Balmer, Denise Fitzsimons, Gerard Guckian, Patrick McCartan and James Stewart).

- 2.1.3 Interviews for the Chief Executives (Designate) for the 5 new Trusts take place in week commencing 10 July.
- 2.1.4 Subordinate legislation creating the five new Trusts has been made and details of the Trusts were announced on 20 June. Some preparatory work has been done on defining key overarching management principles for the new Trusts. There is a considerable amount of work to be done on internal structures (below second tier level), this will begin in earnest when the CEs Designate and Chairs of the new Trusts are all in place. A paper relating to the filling of Director posts in these Trusts (that is, the level below Chief Executive) has been prepared for issue to the PSC.
- 2.1.5 Initial work has been carried out on possible models for Local Commissioning Groups operating within the new Health and Social Services Authority. Considerable policy development will be required in a number of areas including proposals for representation on these Groups and how they might engage with the public and local communities / organisations.
- 2.1.6 Denis McMahon stressed that whilst formal mechanisms exist to consult with NICICTU and PSC there is also a need for on-going engagement with employers on HR issues. Nigel Hamilton advised that he and OFMDFM Central Unit will consider whether more formal mechanisms should be established to facilitate consultation with employers.

Action: Nigel Hamilton / Central Unit

- 2.1.7 Chris Stewart reported that a timetable has been agreed for a competition to appoint a Chief Executive (Designate) for the Education and Skills Authority. Consultants will assist in identifying candidates from the second half of July onwards with the post being advertised at the start of September. Interviews are planned for mid-October.

2.2 Legislation Programme – progress

- 2.2.1 Initial legislation instructions on Health Restructuring were passed to OLC on 30 June following consideration by the DHSSPS Reconfiguration Programme Board.
- 2.2.2 Education have a considerable amount of complex policy development and engagement to complete before legislation can be drafted and they

are advising their Minister that the earliest date for getting instructions to OLC is likely to be November 2006.

- 2.2.3 Stephen Peover advised that DoE are hopeful of meeting the September/October deadline for the submission of instructions in relation to both the Local Government Restructuring and Transfer of Functions Orders. On the latter, DoE intends to hold discussions with local government through the Local Government Taskforce Political Panel and Working Group in August and September. DoE is therefore keen to ensure that Departments have obtained policy clearance for their elements of the transfer package in July from their Departmental Minister.
- 2.2.4 DCAL will provide further instructions to OLC on the draft Libraries Order in mid-July. Departments were asked to ensure that policy proposals are suitably developed before drafting instructions.
- 2.2.5 Rosalie Flanagan advised that the Secretary of State has asked that the date for laying all Orders in Parliament be brought forward from October to July 2007. She acknowledged that this could impact on the period available for consultation on the legislation and advised that Ministers will need to be kept informed of progress against the legislative timetable.

2.3 Cross-cutting Issues – progress

- 2.3.1 As agreed at their 2 June meeting, a draft scoping paper on cross-cutting capacity building issues had been circulated with Steering Group papers. Research to date highlights the need for a corporate approach across government.
- 2.3.2 An event has been organised for Wednesday, 26 July 2006 to establish priority needs, resource implications, delivery mechanisms required and future work programme. A discussion paper on the way forward will be presented at the 1 September 2006 Steering Group meeting.
- 2.3.3 Debbie Donnelly presented a paper on common boundaries. The Steering Group agreed with the recommendation that a scoping study is conducted which will involve a review of the information available on current best practice, and analysis of the views of key stakeholders to assess the issues associated with organisations moving to common boundaries.
- 2.3.4 On equality and good relations, Mary Bunting advised that the Equality, Good Relations and Social Need Group (which brings together key members from Departments, the Equality Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Community Relations Council and the Northern

Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People) held its first meeting on 6 June 2006.

- 2.3.5 The Group discussed how best to ensure that Departments weave their equality, social need and good relations obligations into the key RPA decisions and milestones. At its next meeting, the Group will focus attention on a high-level, overarching approach to equality impact assessments for the Location and Human Resources elements of RPA implementation.
- 2.3.6 To assist this process, Departments will need to provide details of key decisions to be taken, timing and mechanisms for equality, impact assessment and consultation. The Equality Directorate will seek this information from Departments, the HR and Estates Management Group during July.
- 2.3.7 In discussion at the NICICTU Forum, representation of NICICTU on the Equality Group has been sought. The Steering Group agreed that NICICTU should be invited to nominate a person to the Equality Group.

Action: Mary Bunting

- 2.3.8 DFP is leading on costs and efficiency and location of public sector estate. A lot of work is already underway to map out the location of the estate. Relevant issues include Workplace 2010 and transfer of functions and staff. John Hunter and Bruce Robinson will be asked to provide an update at the next meeting (see also para 3.1.2 below).

Action: John Hunter and Bruce Robinson

- 2.3.9 Steven Peover provided an update on DOE's four cross-cutting themes – community planning, central/local government relationships, financing / funding of councils and governance, including checks and balances. All of the workstreams have produced reports which were discussed by the Taskforce Working Group on 4 July and will be considered by the Political Panel on 17 July. Policy decisions will need to be taken on the options contained in these reports by the end of August so that these can be translated into legislation instructions for Local Government Restructuring. Rosalie Flanagan advised that the Irish have a particular interest in some of the cross-cutting issues and in implications for cross-border co-operation under the 7 council model.

3. HR Issues

3.1 Public Service Commission

- 3.1.1 The Commission's first recommendation and associated principles – namely, that there should be an effective communications strategy – have been endorsed and promulgated in Nigel Hamilton's announcement to be considered under item 4 (Communications). The Commission has been considering arrangements for managing

vacancies and are liaising with DE on arrangements for appointing a Chief Executive (Designate) for the Education and Skills Authority.

- 3.1.2 Stephen Graham informed the Group that the PSC had shown a keen, and recent, interest in the future location of the public sector estate, given the potential HR implications; he suggested that Government should consider some early engagement with the Commission on the issue.

Action: John Hunter and Bruce Robinson

- 3.1.3 John McMillen provided an update on the proposed arrangements for dealing with papers on staffing issues throughout the implementation of RPA decisions. He advised that following the Steering Group meeting a draft protocol for handling PSC correspondence would be forwarded to PSC for consideration along with four other papers – proposals for staff-related primary legislation provisions; a draft transfer scheme for staff moving to the 5 new Trusts; response to the PSC's draft recommendation on managing vacancies and a DHSSPS paper on the handling of competitions for Director posts in the 5 new Trusts.
- 3.1.4 The next two PSC meetings are on 16 and 30 August which means that any further papers going to the Commission would need to be ready by 7 and 21 August respectively.

3.2 NICICTU

- 3.2.1 There was a further meeting of the NICICTU consultative forum on 27 June. A future work programme has been agreed for the Forum. It was confirmed that a copy of the papers submitted to the PSC would be sent to NICICTU. NICICTU had written to Nigel Hamilton about the draft Communications Strategy and the promulgation of PSC recommendations – these issues would be discussed at the next meeting of the Forum scheduled for 28 July.

Staffing Issues in legislation instructions

- 3.2.2 Members noted that the HR Cross-sector Group has prepared a paper for submission to PSC with a view to ensuring that a consistent line is taken in relation to staffing provisions in RPA-related legislation. It is intended to share this paper with NICICTU. The aim is to seek agreement on a number of general principles relating to staff transfers.

4. Communications Message from HoCS

- 4.1 A message had issued from Nigel Hamilton to all Departments for distribution to RPA-affected organisations and staff on 30 June. The message incorporated the PSC's recommendation that there should be an effective communications strategy.

- 4.2 NICICTU have expressed concerns about the Communication message, in particular, the fact that no particular style or brand was used for the PSC recommendation which is expected to be the first in a series. It was agreed that a further communications message would issue around the end of July when a PSC recommendation on managing vacancies might be available and that the issue of branding would be addressed.

Action: Colm Shannon

5. Key Actions for 4 August Meeting

- 5.1 There were no new actions to add to those considered under item 2.1 above. It was agreed that a formal meeting of the Steering Group will not be held on 4 August and that a short paper will be circulated covering progress on the key actions and cross-cutting issues considered under item 2.

6. Steering Group – Programme Management

- 6.1 John McMillen provided an update on programme management arrangements being put in place to oversee the implementation of RPA decisions and ensure that the Steering Group can monitor progress. The Central Unit held a series of bi-lateral meetings with Departments to outline the approach and a successful workshop on the reporting system and gateway process was held on 29 June at which all Departments were represented. The Unit plans to test its monitoring system for the purposes of updating the Steering Group on progress during July and will circulate a paper to the Group at the beginning of August.

7. Any Other Business

- 7.1 Nigel Hamilton stressed that he was conscious of the enormous work programme ahead and took the opportunity to congratulate Departments for their programme management arrangements and thank them for the huge amount of work that had already been done.

8. Dates of Next Meetings

Paper update in week commencing 7 August.
Friday 1 September 2006, 10.30 a.m.