

Communicating Change Consultative Group, first meeting. Island Civic Centre, Lisburn. 30 January 2008

Present: John Martin (BELB)
Pat Ward (WELB)
Patricia Weir (Staff Com)
La'verne Montgomery (CCMS)
Daryll Kenny (NEELB)
Richard Bullick (SELB)
David Guilfoyle (YCNI)
Frances Donnelly (NICIE)
John Reid (RTU)
Nicky McBride (SEELB)
Mark Fegan (CCEA)
Michael O'Duibh (CnaG)

In attendance: Louise Warde Hunter (DE)
Robert Shilliday (ESAIT)
Fearghal O'Reilly (DE)

Meeting Commenced at 1000.

- Louise Warde Hunter welcomed everyone to the group and introductions were made.

- The background and purpose of the group was outlined. It was set up at the request of the RPA Programme Management Board to:
 - Establish clarity on RPA communications needs and flows.
 - Explore the methods and media for communicating with staff of the respective affected organisations.
 - Update affected organisations on what is currently happening with the RPA.

- The Terms of Reference of the group were explained. Individuals were also invited to comment on the purpose of these to ensure there were no gaps.

The following points were made:

1. The group should facilitate two way communication between DE, ESAIT and the education sector organisations. Communication should come from DE and ESAIT about what is happening and the organisations should report back to the group on the communications' effectiveness and of that within their own respective organisations.
2. It would be useful to bring forward any information and learning from the previous communications group to inform this group's work.
3. The same key messages need to be delivered to each organisation to ensure consistent, timely and accurate information is shared.
4. It was acknowledged that members were nominees of the Chief Executives and would report back to them.
5. It was clarified that the group was a consultative group only.
6. Any consideration of establishment of a working group would depend on need.
7. Measures of the success of the group were seen as:
 - Key messages being received by staff.
 - Increased awareness of the RPA.
 - Feedback on actions taken.
 - Establishment of systems for people and structures.
8. It was noted that in the absence of information, rumours could spread and that it was important to keep communicating even when it was to update people that there was no new information to share.
9. The need for effective use of all the layers of communication established to date was highlighted and that messages being conveyed by affected organisations could be underpinned by central communication from DE and ESAIT.
10. Clarity was needed on who shall communicate with Principals and Teachers. It was suggested that a twin track approach needs to be taken. Both the Department and ESAIT should explore how this is to be done with input from the organisations as they will also need to communicate news to Principals and Teachers.

11. There will be governors' conferences and principals' conferences for both primary and post primary happening this year. The notes and strategy for these will be shared with the group.

12. Robert Shilliday gave a presentation on the two strand approach, what has been happening and what to expect in 2008/09:
 - a. Currently a milestones communications piece is planned for February 08.
 - b. A Staff transfer Scheme is to be published later in the year.
 - c. Timeline for 2nd Tier structures being put in place.
 - d. Location – the DFP guidance document has been placed on ESAIT website.
 - e. The ESAIT team will, over the next 4-5 months, embark upon an intensive series of engagements with staff in the RPA affected organisation to help design the services of the new organisation.
 - f. Corporate ID – will look for input from sector.
 - g. Work will begin on a joint DE/ESAIT newsletter with an aim of publication and distribution in April '08.
 - h. The message on Transfer, Transform and Innovate has been delivered to senior management in the education sector organisations.
 - i. There will be a number of vacancies coming up over the next few months and the ESAIT website will continue to be updated.

- 13 Questions and issues were then raised to be taken back to ESAIT and DE.
 - j. Is there a deferring of important decisions? A definitive statement needs to be made.
 - k. Could a timeline leading us up to April 09 be made available with clarity on jobs and timescale?
 - l. Clear communication is required on staff transfer and redundancy.
 - m. Staff will expect to transfer to equivalent jobs which will be very difficult for some smaller organisations, where staff are

concerned that they may be required to undertake additional duties.

- n. What is happening to Boards of Governors and how will they be reconstituted?
- o. An overview should be developed on the range of communications that are happening already.

- The meeting closed at 11:40.

Action point	Assigned to	Due by
1: Pro-forma	Robert Shilliday (ESAIT)	To be issued and received by next meeting.
2: Previous group analysis	Fearghal O'Reilly (DE)	To be issued before next meeting
10: Clarity on communicating with Principals and Teachers.	Responsibility will be with both DE and ESAIT. It is expected that the organisations will have some responsibility as there are already methods of communicating with staff in place. The pro-forma being developed under action point 1 will take account of what communication methods are already available.	Proforma to be issued before the next meeting (Action point 1) and an analysis to be developed.
13:j A definitive statement to be issued saying that we are on course for April 2009.	Will Haire and Gavin Boyd to agree, DE oversight board to prepare. Mary Scullion. (DE)	To be issued at the next meeting.
13: K A DE and ESAIT Milestones communication to be developed.	Robert Shilliday, Mary Scullion (DE) and John McCourt (DE)	To be issued before next meeting.
13:M Information on the transfer of staff to ESA	Robert Shilliday gathering information.	Information to be provided before the next meeting.

being in a similar position within the new organisation.		
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The next meeting will take place in late April at a venue in Dungannon.

Please respond indicating which dates and times you are available within the last two weeks in April 2008.