

**Communicating Change Consultative Group, 9th Meeting, NEELB Antrim
Board Centre, Antrim, 31 March 2009**

Present: Frances Donnelly (NICIE)
Emma Hegarty (CCMS)
Frances Logue (CCEA)
John Martin (BELB)
Byron Evans (RTU)
Patricia Weir (Staff Commission)
Diane Wilson (NEELB)

Apologies: Richard Bullick (SELB)
Micheál O Duibh (CnaG)
Daryll Kenny (NEELB)
David Guilfoyle (YCNI)
Michael Henderson (DE)
Mary Scullion (DE)

In attendance: Robert Shilliday (ESAIT)
Joe Reynolds (DE)
John McCourt (DE)

The meeting commenced at 10.35am.

1. Joe Reynolds welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.
2. The minutes from the meeting on 25 February 2009 were agreed.
3. Robert spoke about the Actions Arising from the meeting on 25 February 2009.
 - Information received by the Chief Executives in relation to the Communications Survey was copied to the group on 24 March
 - A draft copy of March's ESAIT Update was circulated to the group
 - A copy of the presentation that is to be given at the BOG conferences in April will be shared with the group and published on the ESAIT website. Q & As from the day will also be shared with the group and published on the website.

Legislation Update

4. Joe updated the group on the legislation situation.
 - Education Committee has identified a range of issues in relation to Bill 1 that they wish the Department to clarify;
 - The Committee is continuing to take oral evidence from a number of organisations and bodies;
 - A paper identifying amendments that the Department is suggesting to make to Bill 1 will be forwarded to the Committee before Committee Stage finishes on 30 September 2009;

- The Committee has indicated that they wish to view a draft of Bill 2 before Bill 1 completes Committee Stage;
- Consultation on all the major issues in Bill 2 apart from the Education Advisory Forum (EAF) has concluded. EAF consultation should last at least eight weeks; and
- The Department is still aiming to bring Bill 2 to the Committee before summer recess but this could be delayed until September.

5. Joe then briefed the group on the different legislative stages that all bills have to pass through before they become law and also the possible timetables for both bills. A member of the group asked if the Education Committee could delay Bill 1 past 30 September 2009 and if ESA could still be established on 1 January 2010 if Bill 2 is not passed by that date. Joe replied that the Committee Stage could not be extended past 30 September and Bill 2 is not required to have become law for ESA to be established. However, the actual dates for stages of the Bill will be determined by Assembly Members.

ESAIT Update

6. Robert updated the group on the progress that ESAIT has made since the last meeting, what they are currently working on and what they have planned over the coming months.

- **Managing Transition and Convergence** - While ESA will have operational responsibility for the last three months of the 09/10 financial year, under merger accounting rules the Accounting Officer of ESA will have to sign off the accounts for the full year. Therefore from April 09 the ESA Chief Executive (Designate) will have a role in overseeing systems of control, corporate governance and the quality of decision making within the existing organisations. DE will also exercise oversight by convening a monthly meeting of Chief Finance Officers chaired by the Director of Finance in DE.
- **Director level structures** - Consultation on Director Level Structure completed on 6 March with 19 responses received. A final proposed structure is with DE for approval with agreement expected by end of April. Consultants have also been appointed to carry out an evaluation of the Director level posts. The proposed structures and responses to the consultations will be published on the ESAIT website.
- **Recruitment, Redeployment and Voluntary Severance (RRVS) Strategy** – RRVS Strategy is out for consultation and finishes end of April. We are awaiting DFP response on Business Case for voluntary severance arrangements and expressions of interest in voluntary severance from senior managers will hopefully be issued in the coming weeks.
- **Recruitment** – Recruitment of Directors expected before the summer with the aim of having first Directors in post by September, First Assistant Directors in post by December, and the Staff Transfer Scheme published in the autumn.
- **Organisational design and location** - Consultants have been appointed and work is underway to identify the number of staff, skills and resources required in each function; and to determine the appropriate organisational structure and location for each function. This will feed into the development of a long term location strategy, expected before the summer. Further work will also be taken forward on the composition, size and roles of Local Area Teams.

Consultants due to deliver location audit in early April with day one locations made clear by the autumn but it is expected that very few staff will change location initially with the Location Strategy being rolled out over a 2 – 3 year period.

- **Children’s Services and Education Working Groups** – Both groups have now met three times with a final meeting scheduled for April. Each group will provide feedback on the models proposed and the role and composition of local area teams.
- **Secondment opportunities in ESAIT** – Applications are invited from individuals within the existing education sector bodies. There are currently nine posts advertised with all details published on the ESAIT website.
- **ESAIT Second Communications Survey** – Robert thanked all those within the organisations that have already contributed to the survey and asked the group if they would issue a reminder email to their colleagues advising them that the survey is running and that their views would be appreciated.
- **Engaging with stakeholders** – Gavin had met with, or given updates/presentations to, a range of groups during March and would continue to do so in April. Robert stressed that Gavin is keen for more face-to-face meetings and those that are interested should contact him or Gavin’s office directly.
- **Critical path for communications** – Joe and Robert have been working on this and will share, and consult with, the group on this matter.
- **Frequently answered questions** – Robert thanked those who had responded on this matter and advised that he would now be consulting further with colleagues in ESAIT HR and the HR Managers’ Group.

RPA News – Issue 3

7. Robert advised the group that they are aiming to publish the third issue of RPA News during May and asked the group for their suggestions for possible articles. Suggestions included: feedback on communications survey; new timeline for key dates; legislation update; DE Transformation; update on services to schools; RRVs; why ESA is happening?; sectoral support bodies; NILA and GMI/Voluntary Grammars.

ESAIT Risk Register

8. Robert advised the group that between now and the summer he would be working on a provisional communications risk register for ESAIT. He asked the group for their thoughts on an initial register and advised that he would produce a draft list and issue it to the group. Robert also advised that this was only a starting point, not an exhaustive list, and welcomed any further thoughts on the issue.

Any Other Business

9. Joe then asked each present at the meeting for an update on issues within each of the organisations arising from the establishment of ESA. Comments included location, job security, will ESA happen, business planning for those organisations that will exist post ESA, the need for continuous communications and how the Department will operate once ESA is established.

Date for future meetings

10. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 7 May at 10.30am in Antrim Board Centre.

Action point	Assigned to	Due by
6(ii) Publishing proposed structures and responses to the consultations on the ESAIT website	Robert	By end of April 09
6(v) Confirm when location audit to be available	Robert	Date to be confirmed