

**Communicating Change Consultative Group, 18th Meeting, RTU Offices,
Belfast, 22 April 2010**

Present: Tony Millar (CCEA)
Sarah Lowe (SEELB)
Lorna McAlpine (NICIE)
Richard Bullick (SELB)
John Martin (BELB)
Daryll Kenny (NEELB)
Alma Abbs (RTU)
Patricia Weir (Staff Comm)

Apologies: Nigel McCosker (WELB)
Pat Ward (WELB)
David Guilfoyle (YCNI)
Micheál Ó Duibh (CnaG)
Emma Hegarty (CCMS)

In attendance: Joe Reynolds (DE)
Michael Henderson (DE)
John McCourt (DE)
Robert Shilliday (ESAIT)
Frances Byrne (ESAIT)
Angela Devine (ESAIT)

1. Robert Shilliday welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Alma Abbs for hosting the meeting. Robert also welcomed Tony Millar to the group.

2. Minutes of meeting 22 February 2010

The minutes were agreed without amendment.

3. Actions Arising

(i) Frances Byrne advised the group that work was continuing on the development of the ESA Intranet site and those who wish to view the work so far should contact her.

(ii) Robert Shilliday stated that the updated ESAIT Communications Strategy had not been circulated to the group due to there being no start date for the establishment of ESA. The strategy will be circulated to the group once a date is finalised.

4. DE Update

Joe Reynolds advised the group that the situation had not changed from the previous meeting and a paper to break the logjam was with the Executive.

The group then discussed: the recent article in the Belfast Telegraph from the deputy First Minister relating to the education sector; the Committees established as part of the Hillsborough Agreement looking at the work of the Executive; the money available in the budget to fund voluntary severance and convergence as the way forward.

Joe emphasised that the deliverance of a single educational body was an Executive decision and that was still the position towards which DE was working.

Concerns were expressed by the group that the recent article in the Belfast Telegraph from the deputy First Minister was less than helpful, staff found themselves under attack in the article and morale at this time was very low.

5. ESAIT Update

4.1 Convergence Delivery Plan

Robert Shilliday advised the group that the Convergence Delivery Plan had been published on the DE & ESAIT websites. DE Permanent Secretary, Paul Sweeney, Deputy Secretary, John McGrath, and ESA Chief Executive (Designate), Gavin Boyd, have held a second series of meetings with Board members and senior management teams in ELBs.

Since the beginning of March, John McGrath has attended the Education Committee on three occasions to discuss Convergence. Audio recordings of these meetings are available on the Assembly website.

4.2 Convergence Business Plan

Work is on-going within ESAIT to develop a Convergence Business Plan. This will set out the potential savings to be made through Convergence including the number of posts to be reduced and the cost of implementing Convergence.

The full business plan will be published and circulated to the group once finalised.

4.3 Voluntary Severance

The production of the Voluntary Severance Strategy is at an advanced stage. A member of the group enquired that with the intention of there being one regional manager for services, will voluntary severance be offered to lower grades/levels. Robert replied that this was still work in progress.

4.4 Convergence Communications Strategy

Work is continuing with DE colleagues on the strategy. It is the intention that Convergence work will begin in the new term and staff will be kept informed during the implementation of Convergence.

Once agreed by ESAIT/DE, the Convergence Communications Strategy will be shared with the group for comment.

The group then discussed the lack of information being circulated to staff; the belief that work towards the establishment of ESA has ceased and the poor morale within various organisations due to the uncertainty. The group also discussed the various options available to communicate with staff and the importance of communication.

4.5 Terms of Reference for CCCG

Robert advised the group that he would be asking John McCourt to circulate the Terms of Reference to all in the group for their views on how we could move the group forward, and if the group is fulfilling the requirements of the TOR.

5. AOB

A member of the group enquired if any announcement was imminent on appointments to ELBs. Joe Reynolds replied that the process was continuing in line with advice from the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland and announcements will follow.

6. Dates for future meetings

The group agreed to meet again on Thursday 17 June at 10.30am in BELB Offices, The Ulidia Centre for Training Resources, Somerset Street, Ormeau Road, Belfast,

Action Point	Assigned to	Due by
4.2 Convergence Business Plan circulated to group	Robert Shilliday	Pending consultation with ELBs, TUS and agreement of DE.
4.4 Convergence Communications Strategy	Robert Shilliday/Michael Henderson	As above
4.5 TOR of CCCG to be circulated for views	John McCourt	