

Communicating Change Consultative Group, Third Meeting, NEELB Antrim Board Centre, Antrim, 18 June 2008

Present: Richard Bullick (SELB)  
Frances Donnelly (NICIE)  
Daryll Kenny (NEELB)  
Frances Logue (CCEA)  
Sarah Lowe (SEELB)  
John Martin (BELB)  
La'verne Montgomery (CCMS)  
Pat Ward (WELB)

Apologies: David Guilfoyle (YCNI)  
Micheál O Duibh (CnaG)  
Chris Stewart (DE)

In attendance: John McCourt (DE)  
Mary Scullion (DE)  
Robert Shilliday (ESAIT)

The meeting opened at 10.55am.

1. Mary Scullion explained that due to re-organisation within DE, Chris Stewart, the lead representative on RPA legislation in the department, would be replacing Louise Warde Hunter on the group.
2. The minutes from the meeting on 30 April 2008 were agreed.
3. Mary Scullion spoke about the Action Arising from the meeting on 30 April 2008.
  - The milestones are still being finalised with the aim of communicating them with the group before the end of June.
  - A summary of results of the Communications Survey carried out by ESAIT has been shared with the group and posted on ESAIT's website.
  - The action plan arising from the survey has been shared with the group and posted on ESAIT's website. Robert Shilliday added that he would like to discuss with the group further the future use of new media. The group then discussed the advantages, and disadvantages, of using automatic e-updates; webcasts; weblogs and a Q and A facility on the ESAIT website. Robert asked the group if they could discuss with their colleagues the options of using new media and e-mail their comments to him. Clarification was also sought by a member of the group on the possibility of organisations being able to sign up corporately for automatic e-updates.
  - The questions that were answered, and not answered, during the workshop on 4 April were fed back to the appropriate project managers and would be addressed within the relevant projects.
  - The Terms of Reference for the Transition Board were tabled during the meeting and the membership of the board was discussed by the group.
  - The results of DE's Internal Review had already been shared with the group. A member of the group enquired if the affected DE staff would be transferring

to the ESA or be seconded. Mary replied that planning for ESA was proceeding on the basis that staff would be transferring. However TUS had asked for secondments to be considered, therefore the department was obliged to investigate this option but the final decision would be made centrally within the NICS. She also observed that this option could not even be explored for staff from the legacy organisations as those organisations would cease to exist after the establishment of ESA

- Guidance on how the affected organisations wind-down in preparation for ESA is currently being prepared by DE's Finance Division. This will be issued to Chief Executives in their role as Accounting Officers and a briefing for Chief Finance Officers (CFO) will be arranged thereafter. A copy of the guidance will be issued to the group once finalised.
- The membership of the School Principal Focus Groups consisted of a representative cross section of Principals from all levels and sectors of schools. Advice was also sought from the Education and Training Inspectorate on schools that had successfully implemented improvement programmes. The membership and feedback from the groups will be posted on ESAIT's website. Clarification was also sought on the feedback from the conference/workshop held in March 2007. Robert Shilliday confirmed that this was already posted on the home page of the ESAIT website.
- The school governors conferences held on 15 April and 21 May were attended by governors from all the different ranges of schools. An agenda for the day has already been communicated with the group and the presentation and feedback from the day is available on the ESAIT website.
- The arrangements for the reconstitution of boards of governors are currently under consideration by the department in consultation with the ELBs, CCMS and ESAIT. The process usually starts a year in advance but because the RPA legislation has not been passed, the next reconstitution will be based on the existing legislation. The new legislation will enable ESA to confirm the new governor appointments on behalf of the ELBs and CCMS for the transition year. The representative from NICIE sought clarification on the whether this approach also applied to Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI) Schools in this process and therefore what role NICIE would play.
- The Chief Executives received copies of the Outline Business Case (OBC) in confidence at the Transition Board meeting in May. Chief Finance Officers for the ELBs and CCMS were briefed on Tuesday 18 June and ESAIT intend to hold further briefings for those CFOs not represented on the board.
- The ESAIT website has been updated to reflect new members of staff and their responsibilities.

4. Mary Scullion and Robert Shilliday updated the group on the joint DE and ESAIT RPA news letter that is being produced and an initial first draft was circulated to the group for their comments. Robert outlined the articles that would be included in this edition and thanked the members of the group who had contributed their comments on how within their organisations, they are keeping their colleagues up to date on how the changes in RPA will affect them.. It was agreed that the newsletter would be issued to schools and members of the CCCG early in the week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 and that the number of hard copies produced would be reduced in light of the fact that the schools holidays would mean that some of the target audience would not be working during the summer. The group agreed that the next issue could focus more

on the impact of RPA on schools. This issue to be developed early in the new school term.

5. Mary then gave an update on Legislation and stated that the aim is still to get the First Bill in front of the Assembly before summer recess. The Education Committee has been supplied with draft copies of the Bill and officials from the department have also met with the Committee on two occasions to brief them on the contents of the Bill. Mary added that each organisation should have a copy of the draft Bill and that stakeholders have been briefed, and will continue to be briefed on the draft Bill.

6. The group then discussed if the legislation timetable was achievable, Mary pointed out that the timetable was in the hands of the politicians and therefore neither the Department nor ESA had any control over it. Several members pointed out the uncertainty with the legislation has led to a doubt amongst staff that ESA will happen for April 2009 or indeed that ESA will happen at all. Mary pointed out that the legislation is only one strand of the work that is being done to establish ESA and other project work is forging ahead in terms of financial framework, location, structures, and service delivery models to ensure that everything is in place once the legislation is passed by the Assembly. The group suggested that this point should be communicated to staff. The group then asked if a delay in legislation means that the two bill approach might be reviewed. Mary responded that since the Department was still working to April 2009 an alternative to the two bill approach was not actively being considered.

7. Robert updated the group on the work that ESAIT has been carrying out and what they have planned for the future. This included the 17 workshops that had been held with a total of 350 participants attending; the four focus groups that had been held for 25 principals – two in Lisburn and two in Derry; that Chief Executives had been briefed on the feedback from the workshops and that the feedback along with information on the next stage of the process would be published on ESAIT's website at the end of June.

8. The Minister had provisionally agreed the membership of the working groups on Education Quality and Children's Services with the intention of drawing membership from service users, service providers and others who have expertise in these areas. Given the passage of time that had elapsed since the original proposals were presented, the Minister is considering whether a review of the proposed working group approach might be appropriate.

9. In the coming weeks ESAIT intends to publish the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier structures for ESA and also information on how services will be delivered at a local level. This will be issued to Chief Executives and published on ESAIT's website.

10. Work has begun on the first stage of the Location Strategy which will be an initial audit of existing premises and other buildings in the possession of the legacy organisations. Additional information will be provided after the summer and a specific communications plan is being devised for the location strategy.

11. Two new members of staff will be joining ESAIT within the next fortnight and the post of Communications Officer will be re-advertised.

12. Work is underway on Day One Planning and Communications Structures. Robert added that he had already spoken to members of the group regarding these two issues and that he aimed to share more information with the group over the next couple of months and that he would welcome feedback from the group on both areas.

13. A member of the group enquired if there would be any more vacancies within ESAIT's HR Project. Robert replied that due to the considerable scope of the HR Project, ESAIT were currently reviewing arrangements and that information will be shared with the group as it becomes available.

14. The group discussed the belief that there is with some staff in the legacy organisations that voluntary redundancies will be offered to all staff. It was agreed that this was not the case and a message should be communicated to all affected staff explaining this. A recent communication to Chief Executives from the Deputy Secretary, John McGrath, explains how the voluntary redundancies will be targeted only at specific groups.

The next meeting is scheduled for the 17 September at the same time and venue, depending on venue availability.

The meeting finished at 12.25pm.

<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Due by</b>
3(i) A DE and ESAIT milestones communication document to be shared with group.	Robert Shilliday, John McCourt and Mary Scullion.	A "Roadmap to ESA" diagram was published in the first edition of RPA News. Additional information will be issued to the group when it becomes available.
3(iii) Clarification on whether organisations can sign-up corporately for automatic e-updates.	Robert Shilliday	By end of August 2008
3(vii) A copy of the guidance issued to Chief Executives on winding-down in preparation for ESA	Mary Scullion and John McCourt.	The guidance is being finalised by DE's Finance Division and will be issued once approved.
3(viii) The membership and feedback from the School Principal Focus Group to be published on ESAIT website.	Robert Shilliday	August 2008

3(x) Clarification of the process for reappointment of Boards of Governors for GMI schools.	John McCourt	The arrangements for the reconstitution of Boards of Governors for GMI schools remains the same.
4. The number of RPA news hard copies required by each representative.	John McCourt	Complete July 2008
7. Feedback from the ESAIT workshops and information on the next stage of the process to be published on ESAIT's website.	Robert Shilliday	Complete July 2008
9. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tier Structure for ESA to be published on the ESAIT website.	Robert Shilliday	September 2008
12. Information on ESA Day 1 Planning and Communication Structures to be shared with the group for their comment.	Robert Shilliday	Information to be circulated for comment ahead of the next CCCG meeting in September.