

**Communicating Change Consultative Group, 10th Meeting, NEELB Antrim  
Board Centre, Antrim, 7 May 2009**

Present: Sara Lowe (SEELB)  
Emma Hegarty (CCMS)  
Daryll Kenny (NEELB)  
Richard Bullick (SELB)  
Pat Ward (WELB)  
John Martin (BELB)

Apologies: Frances Donnelly (NICIE)  
Micheal O Duibh (CnaG)  
Frances Logue (CCEA)  
Patricia Weir (Staff Commission)  
John McCourt (DE)  
Michael Henderson (DE)

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

1. Robert Shilliday welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Minutes of meeting 31 March 2009

The minutes were cleared without amendment

### **3. Actions Arising**

Robert indicated he would deal with the publication of the ESA Director Structure during his update. He indicated that while the Location Audit was complete it was not yet available for publication.

Robert also confirmed that the presentation from the DE Governors' Conference had been placed on the ESAIT website and that Joe Reynolds had issued the guide to legislation to group members via email.

### **4. Legislation Update**                      **Joe Reynolds**

In recent weeks the Education Committee has continued to take evidence from a range of groups and more sessions are planned. The main areas for concern now seem to be well established.

The text of the Second Bill is with the legislative draughtsman and the aim remains to get it before the Assembly prior to the summer break. It is most likely that the Bill will be made available in draft prior to the final sitting before the summer recess at the end of June.

Richard Bullick indicated that any delays in the passage of the legislation would be seen by some as a delay in the creation of ESA. We should prepare for that possibility from a communications perspective.

The Chair agreed that if a delay to the expected timeline for Bill 2 was looking likely, messages would be developed in advance for use by DE, ESAIT and the existing organisations to reassure that ESA was still on track for January 2010.

Emma Hegarty queried how issues highlighted during Committee Stage such as the size of the ESA Board are taken forward for resolution?

Joe replied that a paper would go forward from the Department to the Committee setting out how these issues might be dealt with. The Committee will then make its own judgements on how each matter is taken forward.

Richard Bullick initiated discussion on how non-staff related issues surrounding the legislation can still sometimes affect staff perception, ie that the process is under threat.

Joe responded that while it is important that these issues are recognised the strong message must be that the process will continue to move forward.

## **5. ESAIT Update**

**Robert Shilliday**

### ***5.1 Approval received for Voluntary Severance Arrangements***

The Department of Finance and Personnel has approved the business case for the extension of discretionary added years enhancements of up to 6 2/3 years, as part of the severance arrangements for affected staff in the Education Sector, for the duration of the RPA.

The important message here is that we can reassure staff that all will be treated equitably during this process.

### ***5.2 Expressions of interest in voluntary severance – process underway soon***

It was anticipated that letters will shortly be issued to senior managers across the RPA affected education sector organisations requesting expressions of interest in voluntary severance.

As reorganisation will take several years to complete, the voluntary severance process will be managed on a phased, targeted basis, to coincide with the phased population of the new organisation structure through recruitment and redeployment.

The first phase of voluntary severance is being made available to “at risk” staff at the top management level within the affected organisations.

The majority of voluntary severances will not take place until well after the establishment of ESA to facilitate continuity of service provision and business needs.

It is hoped decisions will be taken to enable the first offers of voluntary severance to be made in early July 2009.

The second phase of voluntary severance is expected to commence early autumn following the development of proposals for the ESA Assistant Director structure.

Further phases of voluntary severance will be implemented as appropriate, until the reorganisation is completed.

In order to assist in answering some common questions in relation to voluntary severance, some FAQ's have been/will be posted on the website

A number of the group highlighted concerns that as recruitment to ESA got underway, the existing organisations already struggling with vacancy control would be adversely affected by the process.

It was agreed that communications should be developed to further highlight how this process was to be managed to ensure existing services were delivered while the new organisation was being developed.

Reference was made to the arrangements already in place for Chairs, Chief Executives and Finance Directors, to report their concerns to DE/ESAIT. Tribute was paid to the professionalism and commitment of staff in all the legacy bodies and the expectation that services would be maintained in the face of the many difficulties that could be expected. All present were encouraged to flag up potential difficulties to Robert and/or Joe as the need arose.

### ***5.3 ESA Director Structure***

Robert indicated that while the Department of Education had informally responded to proposals on the Director level structure for ESA, formal agreement had not yet been received. Once that happened, the structure plus the responses received during the consultation process will be posted on the ESAIT website

Robert agreed to check whether or not the Assistant Director level structure would be put out for consultation.

### ***5.4 RRVS***

Consultation on the Recruitment, Redeployment and Voluntary Severance (RRVS) Strategy for Senior Management is now complete. The process of recruitment for ESA Director posts is expected to start in the next few weeks with appointments made by the autumn.

Again once full consideration to the responses received has been carried out. ESAIT will assess responses and publish the strategy.

A discussion arose over the perception among many staff that on 1 January everyone that's acting up immediately falls back in to their substantive posts. Again it was agreed that there was an opportunity to clarify this in future communications.

It was also noted that in recent trawls for posts in ESAIT a reference was made to staff reverted back to ESA or the appropriate employing authority. This had caused confusion among some staff.

Robert agreed to clarify what this meant and why this had been inserted.

### ***5.5 Recruitment to ESAIT***

Interviews have, and are taking place, for the ESAIT posts trawled during March/April. Information on new appointments to the project team will be posted on the ESAIT website later this month.

### ***5.6 2nd annual communications survey results summary***

The group were issued with a one page summary of the main findings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual ESAIT staff communications survey.

It was explained that the full survey report and a set of recommendations for future communications would be tabled at the next Transition Board on 15 May.

The group noted that many of the issues were not necessarily communications issues, but simply where we are in the process e.g. the lack of information currently available on organisational structure and location.

Robert suggested that the results should be used as evidence to support a push for a greater communications effort, rather than as a judgement on the existing organisations. Joe reminded colleagues that he and others in DE and ESAIT were available to meet with staff in all the affected bodies to consider any issues or concerns that staff wished to raise.

### ***5.7 Visit to NEELB TV – 24 June***

As part of the next CCCG meeting Daryll Kenny has arranged a visit to NEELBTV. This will include an opportunity to view the facilities and the work they have undertaken.

Daryll explained to the group how the resource had been used to communicate with staff and customers through web – based communications and satellite TV.

## **6. Any Other Business**

There was no other business

## **7. Dates for future meetings**

The group agreed to meet again at Antrim Board Centre at 10.00 am on Wednesday 24 June.

<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Due by</b>
5.3 Clarify whether the ESA Assistant Director level structure would be put out for consultation	Robert Shilliday	
5.4 Clarify position of successful candidates for ESAIT posts after secondment/temporary transfer completed	Robert Shilliday	