

REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (RPA)

MAKING IT HAPPEN FOR APRIL 2009

The implementation of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) proposals is happening across the Education sector. Following the return of the devolved administration, the NI Executive, in July 2007, agreed that the RPA programme in Education should proceed with the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) being operational by April 2009 at the latest. This will lead to a reduction in the administrative bureaucracy of the education system in Northern Ireland, with any resources saved being redirected to front line services to help create a modernised education system. This is the largest reform of education in a generation.

To put the new education administration in place a lot of work is required. A Programme Management Board (PMB) is in place and is supported by a Programme Management Office (PMO). For information about the RPA programme you should contact Peter O'Neill on Ext 59637.

There are currently two strands to the RPA Programme.

One is led by DE and is focused on DE Transformation and the 'enabling' strand for the range of changes ahead. Recently, the DE leadership team developed a vision for the new DE and this will be shared with staff in the near future. This strand is responsible for ensuring the required legislation is in place, governance and accountability issues are addressed, arrangements for DE staff transferring to ESA are in place, the new DE structure is put in place and key issues relating to the Schools Estate are finalised.

The 'operational' strand is led by the ESA Implementation Team (ESAIT) and is responsible for:

- HR policies for staff (excluding DE staff) transferring to ESA;
- Accounting Procedures and systems for the new organisation;
- Rationalisation of ICT systems;
- Structure of and locations for the new organisation; and
- Definition and transformation of education services.

Work in DE on the enabling strand – Strand 1

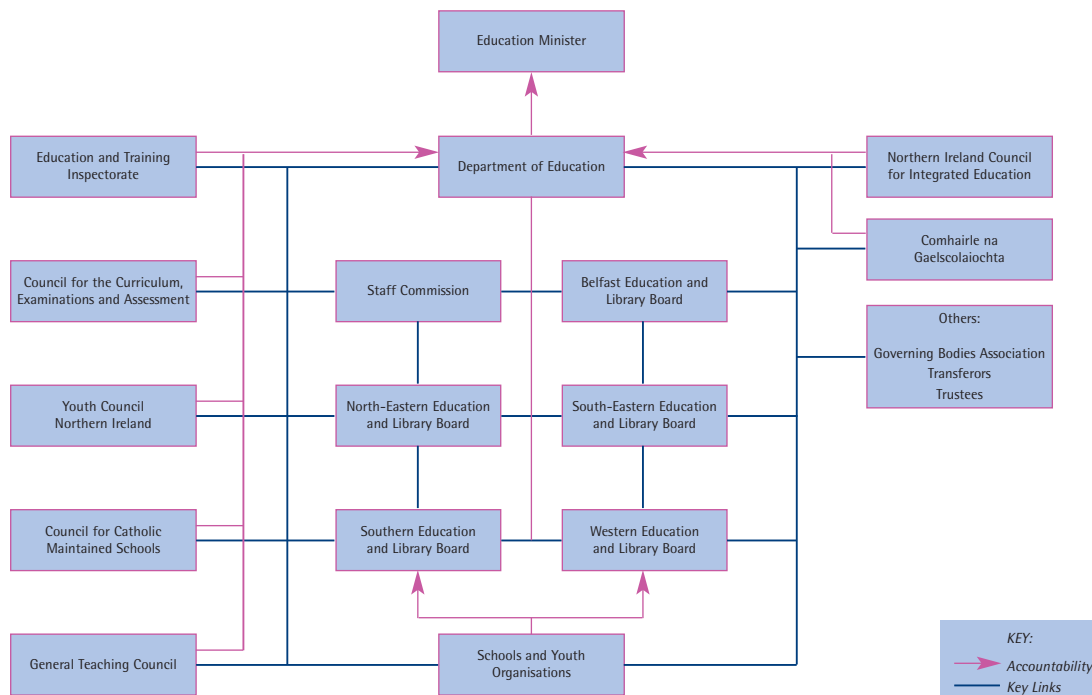
Finance, Accounting and Accountability Project

Within the policies which Executive Ministers determine, ESA will have a good deal of flexibility to decide how it should provide services to schools, teachers, pupils and parents. That is as it should be. But the Department is ultimately accountable – to the Assembly and to the general public – for the way ESA spends public money and for the quality and cost-effectiveness of the services it provides.

That means we have to have sound and robust arrangements for:-

- setting ESA's annual budget;
- monitoring its expenditure;

Current Education Structure



- monitoring its performance against whatever key service/performance targets and indicators may be set; and
- ensuring that ESA's internal processes, for the planning and management of its business and for its handling of public money, meet the high standards expected of all public bodies.

The aim of the Finance, Accounting and Accountability Project is to ensure that such arrangements are in place from the outset. The project is led by Catherine Daly as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and involves staff from Strategy, Performance and Accountability Division on the relevant issues.

It will also work closely with the newly appointed ESAIT Finance Project Managers. Key milestones for the project in the coming year include development of the budgetary control framework and the Financial Memorandum and Management Statement for ESA.

RPA Legislation

The Executive has agreed that the legislation required to set up ESA will be implemented using a two-Bill approach.

The first Bill will focus on structural reform – the establishment of ESA, including the transfer of staff, functions and liabilities from the existing organisations. Drafting of the Bill is 95% complete and the next step will be to clear it with the Minister, the Education Committee and the Executive, prior to it being introduced in the Assembly. It is intended that ESA will be operational by April 2009 at the latest.

The second Bill will focus mainly on area-based planning of the schools' estate and the reconstitution of school Boards of Governors (which will simplify the current complex arrangements). It will also provide the statutory basis for the Education Advisory Forum.

The policies surrounding the issues in the second Bill are currently being developed and finalised and there have been a number of useful meetings with the Education Committee. It is intended that the provisions in the second Bill will come into operation by April 2010, at the latest.

Organisation Design and Implementation Project (ODIP)

Part of the RPA programme will include the development of a 'new' DE. The ODIP is taking forward work on areas such as the Internal Review, Human Resource issues for DE RPA Affected Staff and HR Communications on RPA for DE Staff. DFP's Delivery and Innovation Division (DID) is also contributing to work on Workforce Planning and Skills Development, Organisation Culture and Capability and the lower level structure of the remaining DE Functions.

The Project Team, led by Matthew Alford with Maura McCusker as SRO, is currently working towards the completion of the Internal Review. On completion of consultation with TUS, the Review will be submitted to the Minister and it is expected that the results will be released to staff early in the New Year 2008. The Review will inform staff which functions will be transferring to ESA in April 2009.

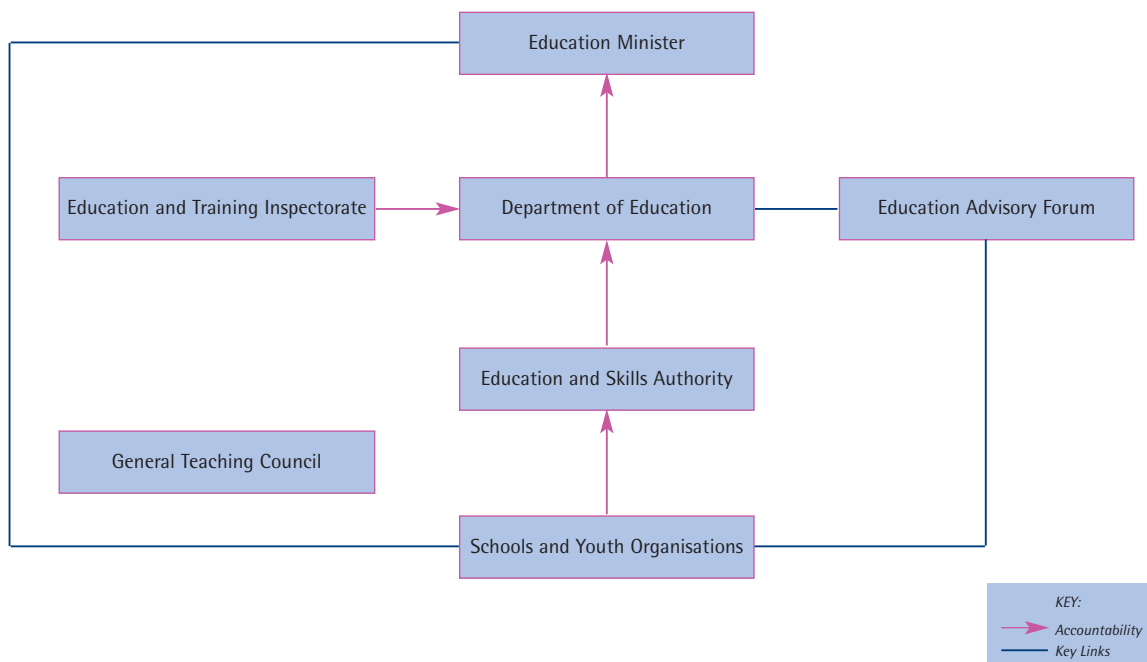
A Staff Transfer Scheme will then be developed, in consultation with TUS, later in the year and this will deal with the 'people and posts issues' to determine those staff who will transfer and how transfers will take place.

If you have any queries on the work of ODIP please contact Wendy McConnell on ext 59464.

DE Transformation

Work began on a new DE vision in early November and this will be shared with staff in the near future.

New Education Structure



RPA (continued)

The Northern Ireland Schools Modernisation Programme

The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland published in December 2005 identified over £3 billion to be spent in the Schools' and Youth Estate over the next 10 years. In view of this planned investment, the Department and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) jointly commissioned a study to address the need for new planning, procurement and delivery arrangements for the schools' estate. As a result of the study, a programme to modernise the Northern Ireland schools' estate is to be taken forward.

Stephen Creagh is heading up the Programme Delivery Support Unit (PDSU) which is responsible for taking forward this Programme.

The programme consists of a number of broad workstreams, including:-

- developing a more strategic approach to the planning of the schools' estate with the introduction of area-based planning and the development of 10-year Strategic Investment Plans to take account of the needs of all school sectors in Northern Ireland;
- Asset Management surveys for the entire schools' estate assessing the condition and suitability of the schools estate;
- development and introduction of framework arrangements for major and minor capital works, for maintenance and the provision of professional services including project and cost management, design services, etc.

PDSU is also bringing forward work on the early thinking of the schools estate position within the new ESA and the supporting legislation base to bring forward.

PDSU is located in Gainsborough 2 Lower. If anyone needs any information about the Programme, please contact any of the team members:-

Vicky Tolson

Andrena Murray

Tracey McGuiggan

Nicola Emmett

Keeping People Posted

Communications is a vital part of the RPA and there is a commitment from the PMB and the Minister to ensure that stakeholders, including staff, will be involved in the process and kept informed on a regular basis.

The Project Manager, Fearghal O'Reilly and the SRO, Louise Warde Hunter, will ensure that staff within DE are kept up-to-date on all key milestones as the RPA programme progresses. Fearghal is working closely with Robert Shilliday, the ESAIT Communications Project Manager, to make sure key messages are identified and are consistent. The RPA section of the DE website is currently being re-designed to become more user-friendly. The Question and Answer section of the Internet provides useful information for anyone who wants to know how the RPA may

affect them. There is also an opportunity to ask your own questions, just email them to: RPA@deni.gov.uk

If you have any questions on the work of RPA, please contact Fearghal O'Reilly on ext 59207.

News from the ESA Implementation Team www.esani.org.uk – Strand 2

Showing the way forward

At a series of meetings through November and December, the ESA Implementation Team (ESAIT) has been meeting the senior management teams of the current education sector organisations and trade union representatives to set out how the journey to ESA will be made.

A Powerpoint presentation that includes key milestones through to April 2009 is now available to view on the ESAIT website.

ICT gets connected

In November, as an important early step in taking forward the Convergence Programme, Gavin Boyd chaired the first meeting of the ESA ICT Programme Board.

The new Programme Board has been set up to oversee the funding and development of all major current and planned ICT projects across the education sector and ensure they meet the requirements of the new Education and Skills Authority. Eddie Rooney is representing the Department of Education on the group.

..... and ESAIT gets engaged

Yes, engagement is the watchword at ESAIT. During recent weeks and months ESAIT leadership and project teams have been meeting face to face with colleagues in the current education sector organisations to discuss how we will move forward together in areas such as human resources, finance, communications, area planning and much more.

This is an essential part of the team's work to involve staff in these organisations in planning and developing future ESA provision. Visit the ESAIT website for regular updates.

Latest Appointment to ESAIT

The team has another new member. In early October Hilary McVitty, previously Chief Finance Officer of the SEELB, joined the team as project manager for Finance and Accounting.

The arrival of Hilary brings the team up to 14 members seconded from seven of the current education sector organisations. Look out for more recruitment notices early in the New Year.

New look for ESAIT website

The ESAIT website has now been restructured to make it easier to check the latest news on ESA implementation and to get in touch with the team at Forest View.

Make sure www.esani.org.uk is one of your browser favourites.