



Mr S McAteer  
Northern Ireland Assembly  
Committee for Finance and Personnel  
Room 144  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont  
BELFAST  
BT4 3XX

Our Ref: BM/MMC/GF

Date: 21 March 2014

Dear Mr Mc Ateer

### **Home Based Working Pilot Scheme/s**

I refer to your letter of 12 March 2014 and would advise that Home Based Working was piloted in the SELB in 2005 across a limited range of board support services deemed suitable.

A pilot exercise was not however undertaken in WELB on the basis that connectivity and other start-up arrangements which would have had to be put in place at that time to facilitate the pilot proved too costly against a backdrop of financial stringencies.

The pilot exercise in the SELB involved trialing Home Based Working across the following services, Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS), Internal Audit and Maintenance. The assessment of suitability of board services and individual employees within those services for inclusion in the pilot was based on the following general requirements:

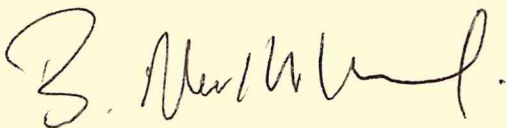
- the job role requiring minimal face-to-face communication or physical contact at the work base;
- autonomy of role;
- easy use of technology;
- minimal need for specialized equipment;
- controllable work flow and definable output.

In order to fully appreciate the issues associated with implementation of the Pilot and gauge lessons to be learnt from its roll-out, it is proposed that it may be beneficial for the Committee, to engage one of the senior SELB Officers who was involved in exercise. For this purpose Mr John Curran, Management Side Secretary has been nominated to act as the point of contact. In advance of any such discussion it should be highlighted

however, that some of the information provided will reflect working arrangements 8.5 years ago, when technology and work practices may differ from today's environment.

In conclusion and in order to provide a current perspective, the Education and Library Boards took a decision, subsequent to Home Based Working having been trialed in the SELB, that as a consequence of the announcement that the new Education and Skills Authority for Northern Ireland was imminent, it would be the wrong time to implement the Scheme. The rationale behind the decision was that the Scheme would potentially change the work base locations of a significant number of staff whose posts were deemed to be "at risk" and this could be problematic at a time when major organisational change was imminent within Education.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Mullholland', written in a cursive style.

**BARRY MULLHOLLAND**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**