



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Public Administration - taking the process forward
<b>Date:</b>	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May, 2008
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mr Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kevin Heaney, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer (Ext. 6202)

<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>
1.1	As Members will recall, on 31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2008 the Environment Minister, Arlene Foster MLA made a statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly on the final recommendations of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) and the future shape of Local Government within Northern Ireland. In her speech, the Minister stated that the current 26 District Councils would be reduced to 11 and a range of additional functions would transfer to Councils.
<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
2.1	Members will accept that we are rapidly approaching a critical stage in the RPA process and in defining the future shape and role of local government in Northern Ireland. There are a number of issues which need to be considered in moving the RPA process forward.
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Critical Path</b>
2.2.1	It is important to recognise that the key driver over the next 6 months will be the need to meet the necessary legislative timetable. The critical path works back from the Local Government Bill which will give affect to the new local government structures. The key milestones in the RPA process are outlined below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Boundaries Commissioner appointment released</b> - April 2008</li> <li>▪ <b>Boundaries Commissioner appointed</b> - July 2008</li> <li>▪ <b>Establishment of Transitional Committees</b> - July 2008</li> <li>▪ <b>Instructions to legislative Counsel</b> - August 2008</li> <li>▪ <b>Report of Boundaries Commissioner</b> - June 2009</li> <li>▪ <b>Local Government Miscellaneous Bill</b> - Mid 2009</li> <li>▪ <b>Report of District Electoral Area Commissioner</b> - July 2010</li> <li>▪ <b>Local Government Legislative Bill in place</b> - January 2011</li> <li>▪ <b>Local Government Elections</b> - May 2011</li> </ul>
2.2.2	DoE has indicated that there is an immediate requirement for policy development in the areas of governance, community planning, central/local government relations, HR and estates as instructions to Legislative Counsel are required by August 2008.
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Delivery Structures</b>
2.3.1	In terms of delivery structures, Members will be aware that it is intended that a two-tier model will be developed consisting of a Strategic Leadership Board and three Policy Development Panels (a copy of the terms of reference is attached at <b>Appendix 1</b> ). It is proposed that the Strategic Leadership Board should fulfil the role of Council providing overall direction to the process and the Policy Development Panels should fulfil the role of Council Committees. A series of task and finish working groups will be established principally comprising of officers from both central and local government. The working groups would be tasked with undertaking the detailed work programmes and reporting back to the Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels (PDP).

2.3.2	Members will accept that the current level of capacity within the Local Government sector to engage appropriately within these structures is limited. Therefore, there is an opportunity for the Council, if deemed appropriate, to nominate relevant officers onto the respective work streams of the PDPs. Initial officer suggestions are outlined in <b>Appendix 2</b> and are based on the Council's engagement in the original RPA Working Groups.
2.3.3	In terms of making political nominations to the PDPs, it is intended that the NILGA nominating officers, through discussions within their respective Party Groups, will lead this process. Accordingly, each Party Group leader within the Council has been encouraged to engage at a Party Group level to ensure adequate consideration is given to Belfast Elected Members within the nomination process for the PDPs.
2.3.4	Members will note that, at best, the Council may secure one officer place on each of the PDPs and, therefore, it is intended that appropriate internal support mechanisms would be put in place to ensure emerging issues are given due consideration and a corporate position articulated.
2.3.5	Consideration needs to be given to the resource and capacity implications of the Councils participation on the SLB and PDPs given that business as usual and other internal reforms <b>must</b> be delivered.
2.4	<b>Belfast as the Continuing Authority</b>
2.4.1	Members will accept that the circumstances for the Council are unique given the position of Belfast City Council as one of the only local government bodies that will provide a degree of continuity throughout the change process.
2.4.2	In terms of transitional arrangements, Belfast is somewhat ahead of the game given the fact that it will not need to give significant consideration to the amalgamation of the Council with other surrounding local authorities, but rather can focus its consideration and efforts on how the transferring functions are to be integrated within the Council and the impact this would have on organisational structures, systems and processes.
2.4.3	In this regard, it would be appropriate to focus potential testing of transferring functions or initiating pilots on Belfast as the closest representative example of the form of local authority structure that will exist, post RPA, under the 11 Council model.
2.4.4	This would also provide the Council with a strong platform to take forward accelerated work around local government modernisation and make bids for associated modernisation funding. This work would need to be considered within the context and align with the Council's own ongoing modernisation work.
2.4.5	The commencement of pilot initiatives and the development of necessary policy frameworks would form the logical preparatory stages of any transitional or shadow process associated with the full transfer of functions. It would also provide the opportunity to strengthen institutional and working relationships with transferring departments in the immediate future.
2.4.6	The Environment Minister, Margaret Ritchie MLA, has indicated her willingness to investigate trial-blazing pilots with Belfast around the transfer of Urban Regeneration functions. Consideration should be given to the possible extension of such pilots to give expression to the wider community planning agenda and addressing the quality of life issues which affect our city and its people.
2.4.7	This approach would have to be predicated on more detailed consideration of the potential structures and processes necessary for the assimilation of the new functions into the current Council organisation.
2.4.8	The Council, at both political and senior officer level, need now to start thinking strategically of how the Council could take full advantage of and engage with the RPA and local government modernisation processes and how the transferring functions will be incorporated within and managed by the Council.

2.4.9	There is a compelling need for political engagement between the Council and the Ministers responsible for transferring functions. It is therefore suggested that once the Council's Corporate Plan is agreed, the Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources should request meetings with relevant Ministers for a cross party delegation comprising the Committee Chair and a representative from the Alliance and PUP to discuss alignment of the Council's Corporate Plan with the Departmental Plans of relevant Ministers.
2.5	<b>Potential Impact on Organisational Structure</b>
2.5.1	The RPA as outlined in the statement by the Minister in March 2008 will involve a different set of relationships and functional responsibilities for local government in Northern Ireland.
2.5.2	The approach to these changed relationships and potential operations will be critical in shaping a new structure for local government that has both the ability and powers to deliver the enhanced responsibilities envisaged under the RPA.
2.5.3	If the Council is to demonstrate that it is an organisation " <b>fit to lead and serve</b> "; it needs to get its own house in order and clearly define its desired outcomes from the RPA. Greater clarity and understanding is required to enable the Council to move forward and pursue an approach that seeks to integrate transferring functions in a manner that supports the development of broader Council agendas around community planning and area based regeneration.
2.5.4	Consideration must be given to the necessary changes to the existing Council structures and processes to ensure that the transition and integration of new functions is managed and the implications and opportunities arising from the published RPA proposals align with the emerging corporate priorities.
2.5.5	There is a clear need for the Council to progress the internal consideration and processes that will prepare the organisation and lay the foundations for increasing engagement and integration of transferring functions (e.g. Planning, Urban Regeneration, Community Planning), in advance of statutory transfer. It is essential to develop an approach to the assimilation of the functions that presents a coordinated engagement, consistency and relates to an overall vision or objective for the Council. In so doing, the Council could call for a more meaningful and accelerated process for the transfer of functions.
2.5.6	In preparing for the statutory transfer of functions, it is equally important that a corporate approach be taken to engaging with transferring Departments.
2.6	<b>Change Strategy &amp; Readiness</b>
2.6.1	Rather than seeing all the different strands of the RPA as separate and competing elements, a corporate approach will be taken to bring all the pieces of the jigsaw together. Discussions on corporate priorities will provide a basis for deciding how the change process is managed through the implementation of a comprehensive change management plan and, importantly, how the new functions are to be integrated into the Council's structures.
2.7	<b>Programme Management</b>
2.7.1	Members will note that work is already underway within the Council to develop an effective Programme Management model that aligns with the new approach to corporate planning and performance management.
2.7.2	Members will note further that early discussion with the DoE RPA programme management team has revealed alignment in the approaches being taken by both the DoE and Council. This will be further developed by the Council's Strategic Programme Manager in liaison with Chief Officers and elected Members.
2.7.3	At this stage, early recommendations would be that an interim internal programme management board (as part of the development of a wider programme management framework) to be established, chaired by a Chief Officer, to oversee the RPA programme of work. This group should be supported, as necessary, by working groups and/or technical advisors, for different strands of activity.
2.7.4	A critical element in relation to the effective implementation of the RPA is ensuring that appropriate structures are in place to secure the necessary political engagement and ownership of the RPA change process.

2.7.5	It will be important that the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is kept updated and have ownership of the change process given their responsibility for the integration of strategic planning within the organisation and for the allocation of resources in the form of finance, people and assets.
2.7.6	Members will also be aware that there is a RPA Members Working Group (see <b>Appendix 3</b> for membership) which would be another important mechanism for discussing emerging issues and testing possible solutions in advance of detailed consideration by the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
2.8	<b>Capacity and Resources</b>
2.8.1	Inevitably, the level of RPA related activity will grow in intensity and scope throughout the transitional period and its management and delivery must be adequately resourced and co-ordinated. A balance must be maintained between ensuring the effective management of the change process and delivering business as usual.
2.8.2	It is important to recognise that delivering the Council's new Corporate Plan, refocusing service delivery on a thematic and area basis and delivering major projects is highly resource intensive. This may be further exacerbated and become increasingly difficult to deliver as the RPA process begins to take pace. The current capacity within the Council is overstretched and needs to be reviewed inline with the Council's Corporate Risk Registrar.
2.8.3	Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of a call-of list of consultants and interim project managers to assist with the delivery of RPA related projects or alternatively to support the implementation of existing projects and thus releasing Council officer capacity to focus on the RPA.
2.8.4	It is important that the level of resources allocated to managing the RPA change process is appropriate to the task. Therefore, Members are asked to consider the establishment of a RPA transition fund, the financing of which would be through the realignment of internal resources. setting the value of such a fund and agreeing on how it would be financed. It is recommended further that the Council's Director of Finance would work up detailed proposals on the realisation of such a fund which would be brought back to Committee in June for consideration along with a detailed programme of work (as referred to below).
2.9	<b>RPA implementation programme</b>
2.9.1	Members will recall that the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 18 <sup>th</sup> April, had agreed to fund the commission of an independent scoping paper which sets out the key implementation issues for Belfast regarding the Review of Public Administration. This paper should set out a high-level route map, process and programme of activity on how such issues could be progressed. The purpose of such a report will be to act as an Influencing Document which will form the basis of the Council's political discussions with Ministers.
2.9.2	It is intended that this initial scoping paper would be brought to Committee in June and form the basis of discussions and engagement with relevant Ministers and transferring function Departments.

### 3.0 Resource Implications

Whilst there is clearly substantial Human Resource and financial implications attached the Council's ongoing involvement and management of the RPA change process, it will be difficult to quantify until a detailed programme of work is put in place.

### 4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) note the establishment of an interim programme management board to manage RPA transition;
- b) agree in principle to the establishment of an RPA Transitional Fund subject to further details being brought back to Committee in June;

- c) consider the establishment of a interim fixed-term call-of list of possible consultancy support and interim project managers to assist, if required, with the delivery of RPA related projects or alternatively to support the implementation of existing projects and thus releasing Council officer capacity to focus on the RPA; and
- d) agree that the Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources and an all party delegation of Councillors seek a series of meetings with relevant Ministers, DSD, DOE, DCAL, DRD, DHSS to discuss transitional work to support RPA implementation and alignment between the Council's Corporate Plan and Departmental Plans.

#### **Documents Attached**

**Appendix 1:** Terms of Reference for the RPA Strategic Leadership Board & Policy Development Panels

**Appendix 2:** BCC proposed Officer nominations to PDPs

**Appendix 3:** BCC Post RPA Working Group

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## **STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING - May 2008**

### **Terms of Reference for Implementation Structures**

**Summary: Providing members with Terms of Reference for implementation structures.**

#### **Background**

At the Strategic leadership Board meeting on 2 April it was agreed that a paper on the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels would be presented for consideration. A separate paper is provided to consider the establishment of Transition Committees.

All of these structures will be established in alignment with the four guiding principles from the 'Better Government for Northern Ireland' report:

- 1. Subsidiarity**
- 2. Equality and Good Relations**
- 3. Common Boundaries**
- 4. Strong Local Government**

#### **Strategic Leadership Board – Terms of Reference**

The original design and composition of the Strategic Leadership Board was based on the recommendations detailed in the Review of the Local Government Modernisation Taskforce, drafted by the Improvement and Development Report in October 2006.

Following some minor amendments to reflect the changing context it is proposed that the role and composition of the Strategic Leadership Board would be as detailed in the table below.

<b>Remit and Function</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pinnacle and driver for the overall modernisation process.</li><li>• To agree a joint overall vision and strategy for change</li><li>• To provide clarity on expected outcomes.</li><li>• To develop an overall work programme in conjunction with the Policy Development Panels</li><li>• To advise the Minister on key decisions and oversee the overall programme for modernisation.</li><li>• To consider contributions and cascade questions and issues for action through the Policy Development Panels and Transition Committees.</li></ul>	<p><b>Minister</b> (Chair)</p> <p><b>NILGA President</b> (Vice-Chair)</p> <p><b>Four NILGA</b> Vice Presidents ( Or their representatives)</p> <p><b>Five Party Representatives</b></p> <p>(NILGA will provide support to manage the political nominations process on an annual basis in liaison with the DOE and Political Parties)</p>

<b>Support and Advice</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice To SLB with regard to steering and developing a co-ordinated overall programme for delivery.</li> <li>• Support to Secretariat</li> </ul>	<p>Three Chief Executives of Councils  <b>Three senior representatives from transferring Departments.</b></p>
<b>Cycle of operation</b>	
<p>Pre-planned programme of meetings every six weeks, plus ad hoc meetings as required.            (Meetings will be co-ordinated with the meeting cycle of the Policy Development Panels.)</p>	

## Policy Development Panels – Terms of Reference

It has been agreed that the Strategic Leadership Board will be supported by three Policy Development Panels to consider the regional policy issues and provide a policy framework for implementation. It is proposed that in line with the recommendations of the Improvement and Development Agency report the role and composition of the Policy Development Panel will be as detailed in the table below.

<b>PDP A</b>	<b>PDP B</b>	<b>PDP C</b>
<p><b>Governance and relationships:</b> - Community Planning; Governance; Central/Local Government Relationships</p>	<p><b>Service Delivery :</b> - Service Delivery Improvement; Performance Management;</p>	<p><b>Structural Reform Issues:</b> - Human Resources; Capacity Building; Finance; Estates; Regional and Sub-Regional Design</p>
<b>Remit and Function</b>		<b>Membership</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To present recommendations on policy and implementation proposals to the Strategic Leadership Board for consideration, as appropriate</li> <li>• To ensure that the policy proposals being developed are subject to appropriate liaison with stakeholders, including relevant government departments, and to the relevant impact assessments</li> <li>• To lead the development of a detailed programme of work, including timescales and resources, and to agree that programme with the Strategic Leadership Board</li> <li>• To ensure that the programme of work remains on track and report regularly to the Strategic Leadership Board on progress, using agreed progress</li> </ul>		<p>Each panel will be composed of ten elected members, two from each of the five main political parties.</p> <p>Each Panel will be Chaired by an elected Member from the Strategic Leadership Board.</p> <p>Each panel will also have a Vice Chair</p> <p>(NILGA will provide support to manage the political nominations process on an annual basis in liaison with the DOE and Political Parties.)</p>

<p>reporting methods, via the Programme Management Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that an appropriate business case is developed for all resource requests</li> <li>• To commission projects on key work areas</li> <li>• To develop, where appropriate, proposals for local pilots in specific geographic areas</li> <li>• To develop guidance documents</li> </ul>	
<b>Advice and Support</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise the Policy Development Panel with regard to steering and developing a co-ordinated overall programme for delivery.</li> <li>• Support to Secretariat</li> <li>• The role of Officer Working groups will be to support the policy development process, undertake or commission research projects.</li> </ul>	<p>One lead Local Government Chief Executive</p> <p>Supported by a Substitute Chief Executive.</p> <p>Officer Working Groups will be Commissioned to undertake policy development work as required.*</p>
<b>Cycle of operation</b>	
<p>Meeting every six weeks within individual policy development panels. Pre-determined programme of meetings to feed conclusions on policy formulation and results of implementation work into SLB within the reporting cycle.</p>	



**Belfast City Council  
Officer nominations to the RPA Policy Development Panels**

<b>PDP</b>	<b>Work Stream</b>	<b>Officers</b>
<b>A</b>	Community Planning	Marie-Therese / Sharon McNicholl
	Governance	Gerry Millar
	Central/Local Government Relations	Andrew Hassard
<b>B</b>	Service Delivery	Rose Crozier / Ciaran Quigley / Trevor Martin
	Procurement Management	Valerie Cupples / Rose Crozier
<b>C</b>	Human Resources	Jill Minne
	Capacity Building	Jill Minne
	Finance	Trevor Salmon / Ronan Cregan
	Estates	Cathy Reynolds

**Belfast City Council  
Post Review of Public Administration Working Group**

**MEMBERSHIP**

- |                                      |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Sinn Fein Party                    | Councillor M. Browne |
| • Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Newton    |
| • Ulster Unionist Party              | Councillor D. Browne |
| • Social Democratic and Labour Party | Councillor Mullaghan |
| • Alliance Party                     | - Councillor Ekin    |
| • Progressive Unionist Party         | Councillor Smyth     |