



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of Public Administration - taking the process forward
Date:	Friday 20 th June, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer (Ext. 6202)

1.0	<u>Relevant Background Information</u>
1.1	As Members will recall, on 31 st 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.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	Members will accept that the Minister's announcement is only the start of the process and the size of the challenge ahead for local government cannot be underestimated. Ensuring that appropriate consideration is given to the outworking of the Review of Public Administration recommendations is crucial.
2.2	The fact that the focus to date of the local government sector has been very much on discussing the functions to transfer to local government, little attention has been given to the actual practicalities of how the restructuring and significant change process resulting from the RPA would be taken forward and managed whilst ensuring that business as usual and service standards are maintained. Whether or not the RPA produces the intended benefits depends as much on how effectively it is implemented as on the exact nature of the reform.
2.3	It is clear that a level of sophistication needs to be built into the RPA implementation process and active discussion between local government, Ministers and officials from transferring Departments must ensue to ensure that the practicalities attached to the reconfiguration of Councils from 26 to 11 and the transfer of new functions to emerging Councils is taken into consideration and informs the implementation process.
2.4	There are a number of strands of work currently underway which seeks to provide greater clarity on the necessary process for the effective implementation of the RPA including the development of a detailed programme of work, the articulation of appropriate delivery structures and, importantly, how its delivery could be resourced. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The DoE Local Government Reform Unit has commissioned Deloitte to prepare a Strategic Outline Business Case for Local Government Modernisation which it is intended would be used to make bids to DFP to secure necessary funding to support local government reform. ▪ PriceWaterhouseCoopers has been appointed by the Society of Local Government Chief Executive's (SOLACE) to develop a high level road map and practical framework to support the implementation and management of the RPA process. It is intended that this work would identify, from a sector perspective, the scope of work required, the key milestones in the process, possible delivery options for taking forward necessary strands of activity and the associated resource implications.
2.5	It is anticipated that these strands of work would be developed over the summer with the emerging findings becoming available in September. This would provide greater clarity on the direction of the RPA process and would aid to inform the Council's own consideration of how it takes forward the implementation of the RPA and develop an organisation "fit to lead and serve" and use the greater place shaping powers it will have post RPA.

	Members will recall that the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 18 th April, had agreed to commission an independent scoping paper which sets out the key implementation issues for Belfast City Council and informs the development of corporate positions on RPA related issues such as the organisations readiness for change; the necessary skills, capacity and resources required to successfully manage the transition process; the transfer and integration of new functions; the impact on organisational structures etc.
2.6	In order to ensure that a prudent approach is taken to both the Council’s consideration and implementation of the RPA, it is intended that the commissioning of this work would be appropriately scheduled to ensure that the findings of the independent work being undertaken by Deloitte and PriceWaterhouseCoopers informs this work.
2.7	Delivery Structures
2.7.1	In terms of delivery structures, Members will be aware that the DoE has established a two-tier model, consisting of a Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) and three Policy Development Panels (PDPs), to take forward the implementation of the RPA. It is proposed that the SLB would fulfil the role of Council providing overall direction to the process and the PDPs would 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 SLB and PDPs.
2.7.2	Given the breadth and complexity of the issues which are to be taken forward by the PDPs (copy of Terms of Reference is attached at Appendix 1) and the far reaching impact of any emerging recommendations in terms of structures, processes and policies, it is crucial that the Council is appropriately represented and actively engaged, at both elected Member and officer level, within both the SLB and PDPs. It is important that Belfast ensures that its experience and expertise in the areas to be considered by the PDPs (e.g. performance management, improvement, estates etc) informs the process of discussion to ensure that the best interests of Belfast City Council and the wider local government sector is secured.
2.7.3	Appendix 1 sets out the political nominations to the three PDPs. Members will note that Belfast City Council is represented on both Strand A ‘Governance’ and Strand B ‘Service Delivery’ of the PDPs but has no political representation on Strand C ‘Support Functions’. Members will note that a number of Council officers have been asked to support the work of the relevant work streams of the three PDPs and are based on the Council’s initial officer engagement with the original RPA Thematic Working Groups.
2.7.4	Internal support structures will be put in place to ensure that both those Members and officers engaged within the PDPs are given the appropriate level of support they require to examine in detail emerging issues and develop a corporate position. It is important also that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee are kept updated on the work of the SLB and PDPs and where necessary direction sought.
2.8	<u>Ministerial Changes</u>
2.8.1	Members will note that Minister Sammy Wilson, MLA has replaced Arlene Foster as the Minister with responsibility for the Department of the Environment. Accordingly, taking forward the implementation of the local government aspects of the Review of Public Administration will rest within the remit of Minister Wilson.

3.0 Resource Implications

Whilst there is clearly Human Resource implications attached to the Council’s ongoing involvement within the RPA process and, in particular, its engagement within the SLB and PDPs it will be difficult to quantify until a detailed programme of work is put in place.

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree that appropriate Council Members and officers support the reform process.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Political nominations to the RPA Policy Development Panels and Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: Council officers requested to support the process.

APPENDIX 1

Policy Development Panel Nominations

Year 1		
Governance (A)	Service Delivery (B)	Support Functions (C)
Chair – Cllr Joanne Bunting (DUP)	Chair – Cllr Dermot Curran (SDLP)	Chair – Ald Arnold Hatch (UUP)
Vice-chair – Cllr Sean Begley (SF)	Vice-chair – Cllr Eddie Rea (UUP)	Vice-chair – tbc (DUP)
Cllr Paul Fleming (SF)	Cllr Sean Kerr (SF)	Cllr Sean McPeake (SF)
Cllr Pat Convery (SDLP)	Cllr Janice Austin (SF)	Mairead O'Dowd (SF)
Cllr John O'Kane (SDLP)	Cllr Gary Stokes (SDLP)	Cllr Helen Quigley (SDLP)
Ald Jim Dillon (UUP)	Cllr Tony Hill (All)	Cllr Seamus Doyle (SDLP)
Cllr Jim Speers (UUP)	Cllr Alan McDowell (All)	Cllr Marion Smith (UUP)
Cllr Lynn Frazer (All)	Cllr Bob Stoker (UUP)	Cllr Alan Lawther (All)
Cllr John Mathews (All)	Cllr Michelle McIlveen, MLA (DUP)	Cllr Anne Wilson (All)
Cllr Peter Weir, MLA (DUP)0	Ald Gordan Dunne (DUP)	tbc (DUP)
Year 2		
Chair – Cllr Sean Begley (SF)	Chair – tbc (DUP)	Chair – tbc (UUP)
Vice-chair – tbc (DUP)	Vice-chair – Cllr Dermot Curran (SDLP)	Vice-chair – Cllr Tony Hill (All)
Year 3		
Chair – Cllr John O'Kane (SDLP)	Chair – tbc (DUP)	Chair – Cllr Sean McPeake (SF)
Vice-chair – Cllr Sean Begley (SF)	Vice-chair – Cllr Marion Smith (UUP)	Vice-chair – tbc (DUP)

Terms of Reference for Policy Development Panels

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 overleaf.

PDP A	PDP B	PDP C
Governance and relationships:- Community Planning; Governance; Central/Local Government Relationships	Service Delivery :- Service Delivery; Improvement; Performance Management;	Structural Reform Issues:- Human Resources; Capacity Building; Finance; Estates; Regional and Sub-Regional Design
Remit and Function		Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To present recommendations on policy and implementation proposals to the Strategic Leadership Board for consideration, as appropriate ▪ 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 ▪ To lead the development of a detailed programme of work, including timescales and resources, and to agree that programme with the Strategic Leadership Board ▪ To ensure that the programme of work remains on track and report regularly to the Strategic Leadership Board on progress, using agreed progress reporting methods, via the Programme Management Office ▪ To ensure that an appropriate business case is developed for all resource requests ▪ To commission projects on key work areas ▪ To develop, where appropriate, proposals for local pilots in specific geographic areas ▪ To develop guidance documents 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each panel will be composed of ten elected members, two from each of the five main political parties. ▪ Each Panel will be chaired by an elected Member from the Strategic Leadership Board. ▪ Each panel will also have a Vice Chair
Advice and Support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advise the Policy Development Panel with regard to steering and developing a co-ordinated overall programme for delivery. ▪ Support to Secretariat ▪ The role of Officer Working groups will be to support the policy development process, undertake or commission research projects. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One lead Local Government Chief Executive ▪ Supported by a Substitute Chief Executive. ▪ Officer Working Groups will be commissioned to undertake policy development work as required.
Cycle of operation		
<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>		

APPENDIX 2

OFFICER SUPPORT TO SLB'S POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANELS

PDP	Work Stream	Officers
A	Community Planning	Marie-Therese McGivern, Director of Development Sharon McNicholl, Policy and Performance Manager, Core Improvement Team
	Governance	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement Ciaran Quigley, Director of Legal Services Kevin Heaney, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer, Core Improvement Team
	Central/Local Government Relations	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
B	Service Delivery	Rose Crozier, Head of Information Services Trevor Martin, Head of Building Control
	Procurement Management	Valerie Cupples, Procurement Manager Rose Crozier, Head of Information Services
	Performance Management	Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager
C	Human Resources	Jill Minne, Acting Head of Human Resources
	Capacity Building	Jill Minne, Acting Head of Human Resources
	Finance	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager
	Estates	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Surveyor

