

LGRJF

Local Government Reform Joint Forum

JOINT COMMUNICATION BULLETIN

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RPA NEGOTIATING BODY ESTABLISHED

The Local Government Reform Joint Forum (the Joint Forum) held its Inaugural Meeting on 22 July 2009.

The purpose of the Joint Forum, as agreed by the SLB in May 2009, is to:

"... facilitate consultation and negotiation between Employer and Employee representatives on a range of Human Resource (HR) related issues that are cross-sectoral in nature ..."

The Scope of the Joint Forum will extend to:

◇ staff employed in the 26 district councils (inc. Group Committee staff, arc21 and SWaMP 2008)

◇ All identified staff employed in the transferring functions

Each Side of the Joint Forum i.e. Employers' and Trade Unions will have 7 members representing those under the scope of the Joint Forum.

The Joint Forum will have an Independent Facilitator to Chair the meetings. Members have agreed the Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive of APSE be appointed to this role.

The Joint Forum was established by the Local Government Staff Commission for NI following an instruction from the Minister and the Commission will provide Independent Secretariat facilities to the Joint Forum.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT FORUM

Employers' Side

Local Government - Councillor Allan Ewart, Councillor Tom Hartley, Trevor Salmon & Roger Wilson

DoE & Transferring Functions -

Ian Maye (DoE), Maureen Taggart (NIHE & DSD) & Grace Nesbitt (DFP)

Trade Union Side

NIPSA - Bumper Graham, Paddy Mackel, Pat Baker & Connor Haughey

Unite - Albert Mills & Jim Parker

GMB - John Dawson

Each Side can nominate substitutes as necessary

OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FORUM

- Meetings will normally be held every 2 weeks. An initial Schedule of Meetings has been agreed i.e. 05 August, 19 August & 02 September 2009
- All decisions of the Joint Forum will be issued to the RTCG to ensure the appropriate dissemination and monitoring mechanisms are employed to ensure consistency of application across local government and the transferring functions
- A Joint Communication Note will be issued promptly after each meeting of the Joint Forum

"...facilitating local government reorganisation...."

Priority Issues for the Joint Forum:

- Introduction of Vacancy Controls
- Filling Posts in the New Organisations
- Staff Severance Arrangements
- Local Consultation and Negotiation Arrangements for Transition Committees
- Staff Transfer Arrangements

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FUNCTIONS OF THE JOINT FORUM

- Agreeing principles and arrangements for the transfer of staff
- Exercising oversight of the application of the Guiding Principles
- Consulting and negotiating on HR policies and implementation decisions
- Developing Terms of Reference for consultation and negotiating machinery for post-2011
- Ensuring that all decisions of the Joint Forum adhere to Section 75 obligations
- Actively promoting and encouraging training and development programmes

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At the Inaugural meeting on 22nd July 2009 the following progress was made:

- The role, remit and operating arrangements for the Joint Forum were discussed and amendments suggested. These will be considered again at the next meeting.
- Both Sides appointed a Lead Person:
 - Trade Union Side - Bumper Graham
 - Employers Side - Maureen Taggart
- Agreement was reached that Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive, Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) be appointed as Independent Facilitator to the Joint Forum. The role of the Independent Facilitator will include:
 - ◇ Overseeing and chairing the meetings, and providing leadership to enable the Joint Forum to act effectively
 - ◇ Fostering and maintaining a disciplined approach having regard to high standards of procedure, behavior and ethics
 - ◇ Ensuring effective and proper conduct of business.
- The following HR implementation issues were prioritised for immediate action:
 - ◇ System for Filling Posts in New Organisations (in particular Chief Executive posts)
 - ◇ Staff Severance Arrangements
 - ◇ Introduction of Vacancy Control System
 - ◇ Developing a protocol on local negotiations for RPA issues at Transition Committee level
- The Joint Forum can establish short-life task groups or sub group as required to consider specific issues. Independent expertise may be engaged to assist with these tasks.
- Communications issued from the Joint Forum will be agreed by both Sides and disseminated to all affected groups in line with overall RPA Communications Policy.

“ ...facilitating local government reorganisation... ”

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facilitating local government reorganisation

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