

**Presentations from the
Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
RPA Workshop
held in Malone House
on Monday, 17th August, 2009**

RPA Local Government Reform Programme Workshop

Opportunities & Challenges

Cllr. Tom Hartley

Belfast Transition Committee
17th August 2009

What is the Context?

Vision for RPA Local Government Reform

- Strong dynamic local government
- Accessible, responsive, Value for Money services
- Vibrant, healthy sustainable communities
- Meet the needs of citizens



Key facts

- Reduction from 26 to 11 Councils
- Transfer of additional functions
- £100m+ of budget transferring
- 1,000+ people transferring
- Elections for new Councils 12th May 2011



The Reality

- RPA is gaining real momentum
- "Its now getting real" with key decisions to be taken in the coming months
- Shifting from policy to implementation (delivery)
- Change will be the only constant & our ability to plan for and manage the change is critical
- Strong political leadership at the local level is needed to drive the process forward
- "Statutory" Transition Committees in early 2010



Purpose of today

- To update members on the current status of the RPA programme
- Explore further our role in leading the transition
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the 'big issues' which need to be addressed
- Create the necessary momentum to take the process forward

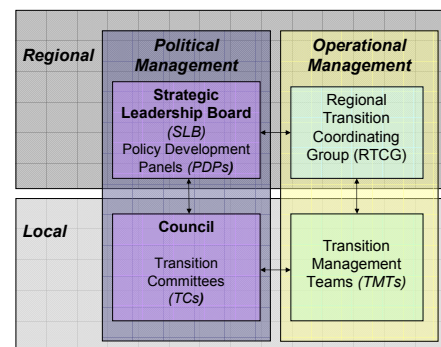
Where are we now?

Gerry Millar
Director of Improvement

Recap

- Established RPA delivery infrastructure – politically lead
- Focused attention on Policy Development
- Drafting necessary legislation to bring affect to the proposed reform
- Priority now moving towards implementation
- Revised delivery structures – greater connection to councils (Transition Committees)

Current Implementation Structures



Progress to date

PDP A: Governance, Central Local Relations & Community Planning

Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill – Sept for consultation

- Establish the new Councils and end old local government districts
- Provide new governance arrangements for Councils
- Introduce new ethical standards regime and new Code of Conduct
- Make provision for central / local government relations
- Introduce community planning and well-being

Community Planning

- Lead role for councils from 2011.
- Potential funding bid being developed for submission to SEUPB
- Work is ongoing on operational aspects of these proposals
- Programme of activities rolled out early 2010

PDP B – 5 key areas

- Service Delivery and Performance Improvement Framework
- Information Systems Strategy for Transition
- Customer Service Strategy
- Shared Service Strategy
- Procurement Strategy

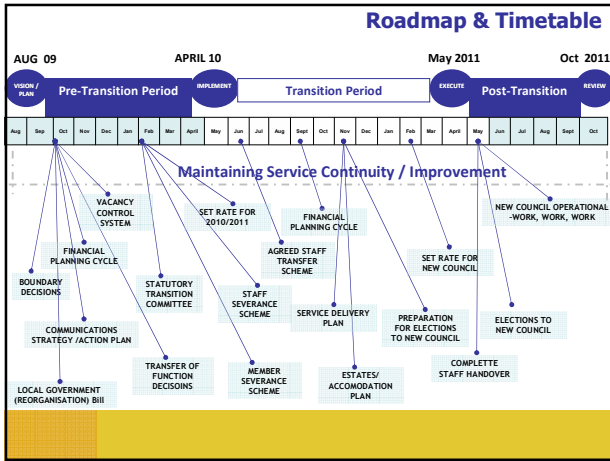
PDP C – Structural Reform

- Human Resources
- Finance & Estates
- Capacity Building
- Service Delivery Consultancy
- Transferring Functions

Proposed New Implementation Structures



- Accounts for the shift from policy to implementation
- Greater connection with Transition Committees
- Alignment between regional and local policy development and implementation



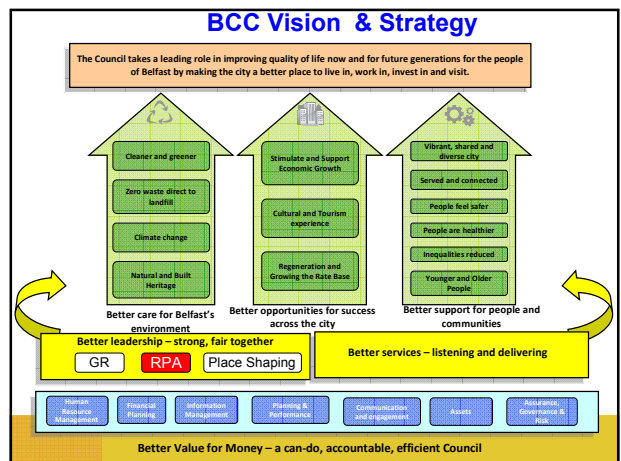
Post May 2011

“Work, work, and more work..”

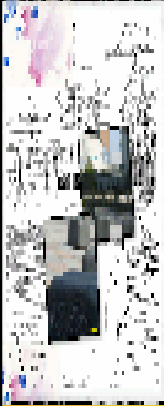
- Deliver services
- Keep rates down
- Bed in new organisation
- Councillors, officers, new functions
- Improve services

Where does Belfast want to be?

Peter McNaney
Chief Executive



Financial Position



- Desire to keep rates low
- Reserves shrinking
- External income reduced
- Capital Programme over committed
- Pressure on the current budget
- Growing citizen expectations

Roadmap & Timetable

VISION / PLAN	Pre-Transition Period – Transition							IMPLEMENT
Aug 09	Sept 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar10	April 10

Transferring Functions

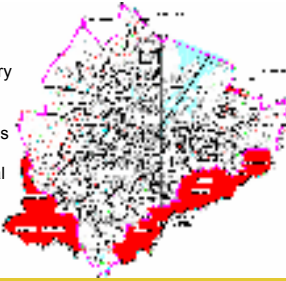
- NI Executive Sub-Committee meeting on 7th Sept
- What will transfer in terms of functions, budgets, people and assets?
- How will they be resourced – who will pay (short term to long-term)
- How will resources be disaggregated regionally
- Retain service continuity throughout the transition process
- Delivery of responsive, value-for-money services to the citizen crucial

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Boundary Recommendations

- To what extent will Belfast's boundary change?
- Baseline audit of assets and liabilities
- Analysis of the impact on operational services
- Differentials in rates – expectations



How do we make it happen?

Gerry Millar
Director of Improvement



Some Hard Learned Truths About Change

- Nothing happens without **Leadership** – Political & Managerial Leadership is key to success
- Nothing happens without **resources**
- Nothing happens without **structure** and clarity of who does what in **process**

Role of Transition Committee

Voluntary – at present

- Now established across 11 new council areas
- SP&R designated as Belfast's Transition Committee
- Beginning preparatory work and informing the drafting of legislation

Statutory – in place from early 2010

- Miscellaneous Provisions Bill
- Providing political leadership and direction
- Decision-making at local level (e.g. governance, staff issues)
- Ensure successful implementation
- Political scrutiny

Effective HR Management

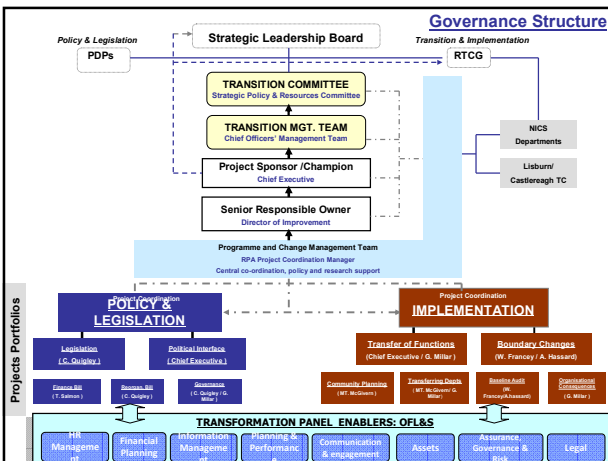
- Vacancy control
- Filling posts in new structures
- Staff transfer
- Severance (Members & Officers)
- Capacity Building (Members & Officers)
- Local Government Reform Joint Form

Finance

Who is going pay?

- Local Government (Finance) Bill
 - modernise the financial regime of councils
 - more responsibility for the management of finances
 - greater flexibilities with appropriate checks and balances
 - removal of the need to obtain prior approval of the DoE
- PwC Financial Business Case
 - How much will RPA cost? What funding options available?
- Need to balance the impact upon rate
- Local Government likely to pay in long-run
 - need to achieve real efficiencies; asset rationalisation etc

Rates bills rise by up to 113% in 10 years




Engagement

Lisburn / Castlereagh Transition Committee

Early and constructive engagement critical - meeting 25th Aug

Key Issues

- Engagement Mechanisms
- Support structures
- Convergence
- Staffing
- Aligning financial planning processes
- Rate harmonisation
- Transfer of assets & liabilities



Engagement

Northern Ireland Local Government Association

- Voice of local government
- Role in the RPA implementation machinery
- Should not confuse representative role and delivery
- Need now to reengage within NILGA

Ministerial Engagement

- DoE Minister – reform
- DFP Minister – funding
- NI Executive Sub-Committee

What is needed?

Peter McNaney
Chief Executive



What's needed

- Clear political direction on the 'big issues'
- Wider and deeper political engagement
- Council, Political Parties
- Committed Senior Management Team
- Support for resources
- All shoulders at the wheel

Options for Local Government Service Delivery

Moving Forward – an update for the Belfast Transition Committee

17 August 2009





Closing Remarks & Next Steps

- Meeting with Lisburn/Castlereagh TC
 - Scheduled Implementation Plan
- *submitted to Committee in Sept.*
 - Communications and Engagement Plan
- *submitted to Committee in Sept.*
 - Forward Work Plan for Transition Committee
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