



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources (Transition) Committee
Subject:	Review of Public Administration Update
Date:	11 th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney, RPA Project Coordinator (ext. 6202)

1.0	<u>Relevant Background Information</u>
1.1	Discussions are ongoing within the NI Executive with regard to the future progress of the RPA process and the associated reform of local government. Members will be aware that the Environment Minister, Edwin Poots MLA is locked in ongoing negotiations with Ministerial colleagues within the NI Executive regarding proposed modifications to the independent Boundary Commissioners' recommendations for the new Belfast City Council boundary post RPA.
1.2	If there is no political agreement around these critical issues secured within the coming weeks, then the already tight legislative timetable would be unachievable and the local reform programme could be at significant risk.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	<u>Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh</u>
2.1.1	Notwithstanding that a final decision has yet to be taken on boundaries, discussions are ongoing between Council officers and their counterparts in Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Councils to scope out the transition related issues which need to be addressed in moving forward and to collate the relevant baseline information necessary to inform future political discussions.
2.1.2	An initial joint project planned has been agreed and is attached at Appendix 1. Members should note that officials from Lisburn and Castlereagh had requested that given the added complexity that they face with having to engage with each other as well as with Belfast, could the timetable for the initial outputs (e.g. baseline reports on assets and liabilities; service harmonisation issues etc) be extended by a month from January to February 2010.
2.2	<u>Community Planning</u>
	Over recent weeks there has been an upsurge in the number of stakeholders from across the city who have approached the Council to seek initial views with regard to community planning. As agreed by the Committee, at its meeting on 20 th November, a series of briefing sessions are to be scheduled over December '09 and January '10 with party groups and Members to seek their views on how the Council should move forward the issue of community planning and to agree the key principles and process for supporting this.

3.0 Resource Implications

There are no financial or Human Resource implications contained within this report.

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report

5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Joint programme of work with Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Councils

Lisburn/Castlereagh and Belfast Transition Committee Indicative Programme of Work (Version 2)

RAG KEY:	Delivery on schedule	Delivery likely, however, some minor issues need to be addressed.	Delivery unlikely with immediate correction action required
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	DELIVERABLES	OCT 2009	NOV 2009	DEC 2009	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	Mar 2010	STATUS -RAG-
Governance	1. Consider and agree proposed governance arrangements for taking forward consideration of Transition related issues.	27 th						
	2. Agree schedule of joint meetings between Transition Committees	27 th						
	3. Agree indicative programme of work	27 th						
Scoping and Baseline	4. Agree a process for taking forward joint communications activities; identifying the key milestones in the process, the key messages which need to be conveyed and the proposed methods of delivery. Submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.							
	5. Undertake a service audit and examine potential harmonisation issues and submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.							
	6. Undertake a detailed Asset and Liabilities Audit and submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.							
	7. Examine potential staff transfer issues (taking into account wider discussions and emerging Guidance released by the Local Government Reform Joint Forum) and submit a report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.							
	8. Examine the potential financial implications (including the impact on the rate) resulting from the proposed boundary changes and identify possible options for how these issues could be addressed. Submit a report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.							