

## Proposals for voluntary Regional Transition Committee and Management Team.

### Background

1. Members will recall that following a review of current structures, the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) agreed revised structures and governance arrangements for managing and integrating the work necessary for the effective and efficient transition to the new councils in May 2011. A key outcome, inter alia, was the establishment of two new groups to replace the current Regional Transition Committee Group.
2. The **Regional Transition Committee** (RTC) will comprise; an elected member from each of the eleven Statutory Transition Committees and the five NILGA representatives on the SLB. It will be accountable to the SLB and chaired by the vice-chair of the SLB. It was accepted by SLB members that to accommodate political representation on the RTC there may be a need to increase the number of members in line with d'Hondt.
3. It was also agreed that a new **Regional Transition Management Team** (RTMT), consisting of officers acting as advisors to the RTC, be established. This group would comprise an officer from; each Transition Management Team (this would be the Chief Executive Designate, once appointed), the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission, the Chief Executive and two Directors from NILGA and a senior representative from each transferring function department. The group would be chaired by the DOE Deputy Secretary (Ian Maye) and it would meet directly after the RTC meetings to co-ordinate implementation of agreed actions.

### Current Position

4. As the focus of the reform process now shifts from policy development to the implementation phase it is important that there is recognition of the strategic role of Transition Committees in driving the process forward. There are clearly a range of issues, including funding of the reform programme and any future collaborative working, which need to be considered and negotiated at a regional level. There is also a requirement for wider engagement across the sector in relation to the transferring functions to draw out the potential linkages and synergies between functions transferring and those functions already delivered by Councils.

5. The establishment of a Regional Transition Committee (RTC) comprising of political representation from each of the Transition Committees would provide a necessary mechanism to progress such issues; supported by the proposed Regional Transition Management Team.
6. With the anticipated delay until at least June 2010 for the necessary legislation which will create the Statutory Transition Committees, it is unlikely that the statutory RTC and RTMT would be in place until some time thereafter. It is important to recognise the vacuum that this would create in the process and the potential to undermine the feasibility of meeting the May 2011 deadline for transferring functions to the new Councils.
7. The SLB has ,therefore, decided that a voluntary RTC and RTMT supported by the Joint Secretariat, be put in place as an interim measure to progress regional issues. Proposals for establishing the 2 groups are attached at Annex A.

## **Recommendation**

8. Members are asked to consider and agree the most appropriate method for establishing a vRTC and vRTMT.

## Options for Voluntary Regional Transition Committee (vRTC)

Three options have been identified for establishing a voluntary Regional Transition Committee (vRTC):

- **OPTION 1**

**The vRTC will comprise the 11 chairs of the voluntary Transition Committees and the five NILGA SLB representatives.**

**Benefits**

- Each Transition Committee is represented.
- Continuity and link with agreed established Reform policy as NILGA representatives are also members of Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels.

**Disadvantages**

- Some Transition Committees have alternating Chairs resulting in a lack of continuity for vRTC.
- May require application of “top-up” procedures to ensure political representation.

- **OPTION 2**

**The vRTC will comprise one nominee from each of the voluntary Transition Committees and the five NILGA SLB representatives.**

**Benefits**

- Each Transition Committee is represented;
- Continuity and link with agreed established Reform policy as the NILGA representatives are also members of the Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels.

**Disadvantages**

- Is likely to require the establishment of a consistent nomination process which could lengthen the timescale for establishing the vRTC.
- May require application of “top-up” procedures to ensure political representation.

- **OPTION 3**

**The NILGA Executive will act as a proxy vRTC.**

**Benefits**

- Works within existing structures and arrangements.
- 24 out of 33 NILGA Executive members are members of Transition Committees and 25 out of 26 Councils represented.
- Avoids the requirement to “top-up” as NILGA Executive already politically representative.
- Continuity and link with agreed established Reform policy as the NILGA representatives are also members of the Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels.

### Disadvantages

- Newtownabbey Borough Council (NBC) is not represented on NILGA Executive but this could be resolved through e.g. NBC nominating an “observer” to attend meetings or by NBC renewing formal links with NILGA;

## **Options for Voluntary Regional Transition Management Team (vRTMT)**

Three options have been identified for establishing a voluntary Regional Transition Management Team (vRTMT):

- **OPTION 1**

**The vRTMT will comprise one Chief Executive from each Transition Management Team and representatives from key Departments including transferring functions.**

### Benefits

- Each Council Cluster represented
- Continuity and link with key central government officers currently involved in reform process.

### Disadvantages

- Is likely to require the establishment of consistent and equitable nomination system for Chief Executives which could over bureaucratise process and lengthen timescales for establishment of vRTMT.

- **OPTION 2**

**The vRTMT will comprise the 26 Chief Executives from existing Councils and representatives from key Departments including transferring functions.**

### Benefits

- Each Council represented;
- Continuity and link with key central government officers currently involved in reform process.

### Disadvantages

- Very large structure which could limit active participation and make decision making more complicated and difficult.
- Does not reflect new council clusters.

- **OPTION 3**

**SoLACE Executive will act as proxy vRTMT with representatives from key Departments including transferring functions.**

### Benefits

- Works within existing structures and arrangements.
- Continuity and link with key central government officers currently involved in reform process.
- Will not result in too large a structure.

### Disadvantages

- May require SoLACE to appoint additional members to ensure all 11 council clusters are represented.