



<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Review of the Size of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Government Departments.
<b>Date:</b>	2 March 2012
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kevin Heaney (Ext. 6202)

<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>
1.1	The Chief Executive's office has received correspondence, dated 15 February 2012, from the Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Review Committee, informing the Council of the initiation of a review of the size of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the number of government Departments (copy attached at <b>Appendix 1</b> ). The Committee has invited the Council to submit its views on the review by <b>Wednesday 28 March 2012</b> .
1.2	A copy of the detailed Terms of Reference for the review is attached at Appendix 1. In summary the Assembly and Executive Review Committee are to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ size of the NI Assembly and its statutory relationship with Westminster;</li><li>▪ potential reduction in the number of government Departments and re-allocation of functions;</li><li>▪ number of MLAs the potential benefit of streamlining government institutions</li></ul>
1.3	After giving consideration to all the evidence received as part of the consultation process, the Assembly and Executive Review Committee are to submit for the consideration of the NI Assembly the following two reports:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) number of MLAs by early June 2012; and</li><li>(ii) number of NI government Departments by October 2012.</li></ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
2.1	Given the potential political implications of the outcome of this review, in terms of <u>possible</u> reductions in the number of Departments and/or MLAs, the Committee may wish to consider referring the 'call for evidence' to individual Party Groups for consideration and to respond accordingly.

<b>3.0 Resource Implications</b>
There are no financial or HR implications contained within this report.

<b>4.0 Recommendations</b>
Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. note the contents of this report and appendices attached; and</li><li>ii. consider whether the 'call for evidence' be referred to individual Political Parties for consideration and to respond accordingly.</li></ul>

<b>5.0 Abbreviations</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b> Assembly and Executive Review Committee - 'Call for Evidence'