



Department of the
Environment

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Clerk and Chief Executive
of each district Council

Circular No: LG 02 / 09

Local Government Policy Division

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Your reference:
Our reference:

Date: 28 January 2009

Dear Chief Executive,

JOINT COMMITTEES

Section 19(1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 makes provision for a Council to appoint a joint committee (with voluntary conditions) and sub-section (9) allows for the constitution of a body corporate (or joint committee with statutory powers). A joint committee of two or more Councils is defined as a 'local government body' in Section 3(2) (c) of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. It follows that such a body must comply with the provisions of the Order in relation to the preparation, approval and audit of accounts.

I am aware that, for certain functions, some Councils have formed (or are in the process of establishing) joint committees, in accordance with the above legislation. However, the Department's information is rather sketchy, particularly in the area of voluntary joint committees. We are aiming to develop a comprehensive record and then consider whether or not we should issue an accounts direction or need to designate local government auditors to audit the accounts.

To simplify this task, I have summarised in the attached table the main joint committees of which I have some knowledge, including those which involve part-funding under European programmes. As my information is limited, I would need your assistance to get the full picture. Therefore, I am asking you to complete the columns for those entries I have made and then list and detail any joint committees of which your Council is a member.

For the purposes of this exercise I am excluding Transition Committees associated with the local government reform programme, which are currently being established, as these will be dealt with separately.

I am also taking this opportunity to ascertain what companies, if any, your Council has formed or entered into since the coming into operation of the Local Government Companies (Best Value) Order (NI) 2006 on 22 January 2007, or if you have any plans to do so. Please let me have a separate list of the names of the companies and the relevant dates. These details would assist in building up our information base.

As we are concentrating on 2008 / 2009 and are approaching the end of the financial year, it would be much appreciated if you could complete the table and return it by 27 February 2009, at the latest. Should you need any clarification, please contact me or Janet Cooper. Contact details: email: marie.finnegan@doeni.gov.uk; telephone 028 9025 6079 and email janet.cooper@doeni.gov.uk; telephone 028 9025 6083.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Finnegan', with a small flourish at the end.

MFT FINNEGAN (Miss)

Enc.