

**STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING – 15 JANUARY 2007**

**DEVELOPING 'A VISION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT'**

**AGENDA ITEM: 8**

**SUMMARY: Providing members with an update on progress towards developing a shared vision for the future of local government.**

**ACTION REQUIRED: For information.**

**Overview and Context**

1. The administration of local government in Northern Ireland is undergoing very significant changes. These changes require a clear and coherent vision of the roles and responsibilities of councils in what will be a new era post 2009.
2. Local government provides democratically accountable leadership to communities. It has direct, frequent contact with the majority of residents within its boundary. This provides the potential for:
  - Delivering government that is close to people and the issues that concern them;
  - Involving local communities in tailoring regional and national services to local needs and priorities;
  - Finding innovative, joined-up solutions to specific local problems;
  - Coordinating the delivery of other locally provided services;
  - Combining good management with strong accountability, joining up and balancing competing demands.
3. Local government is uniquely positioned to make a big contribution to many of the issues that matter most to people. This requires strong, self-confident local councils in all areas, leading their communities, securing and continuously improving good responsive local services, working effectively with local, regional, national and inter-national partners and with a strong democratic mandate.

4. The Department of the Environment in partnership with the local government sector and other key stakeholders wishes to develop and articulate an agreed Vision for what Northern Ireland's new local government should be.
5. The Department of the Environment intends to appoint a suitably qualified consultant to coordinate and facilitate a process of consultation and stakeholder engagement to develop and articulate this Vision. The detailed Invitation to Tender document has been prepared and agreed with the NI Local Government Association.
6. Members of the Strategic Leadership Board will be kept fully apprised of the progress of this assignment, through presentations by the successfully appointed consultant, who will brief members with an initial overview of their proposals for undertaking the work and through a presentation of the draft final report.

### **Methodology and Timetable**

7. A select list of consultants will be invited to submit tenders outlining a detailed methodology for developing an agreed Vision, which may include, desk research, engagement with key stakeholders as well as an innovative interactive event to engage key stakeholders collectively in the visioning process.
8. The successful consultant(s) will be appointed under the terms of Central Procurement Directorate's Management Consultancy Framework Agreement.
9. Work on this assignment should last no more than eight weeks. The project timetable is as follows;

- Deadline for receipt of tenders January '07
- Interviews for short-listed tenders January '07
- Project initiation meeting February '07
- Presentation by Consultant(s) to the Strategic Leadership Board, giving an overview of the assignment. February '07

- Interim report and presentation to Steering Group March '07
- Presentation by consultant(s) on draft Final Report to SLB March '07
- Submission of final report to Steering Group March '07

### **Project Management & Timetable**

10. A project Steering Group will oversee the assignment comprising the appointed **consultant(s)**, a representative from **Central Procurement Directorate**, a representative of the DoE **Local Government Reform Division** and a representative of the **NI Local Government Association**.

### **Outputs**

11. The consultants will be expected to deliver a report that will record their findings in accordance with the context laid out above. The report will be agreed with the Strategic Leadership Board prior to publication of a final version.