

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TASKFORCE
CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS SUB-GROUP MEETING

NOTE OF MEETING

**HELD AT 10.00 AM ON WEDNESDAY 31ST MAY 2006 IN THE ROSSPARK
HOTEL, KELLS**

In attendance: Wavell Moore (Chair)
Angela Fitzpatrick (Secretary)
Colin Knox (UUJ)
Stephen Finlay (SOLACE)
Lorraine Crawford (Craigavon)
Ken Webb (North Down)
Esther Mulholland (Moyle)
Andrew Hassard (Belfast)
Barry Heywood (Omagh)
Kate Lagan (SDLP)
Liz Johnston (UUP)
Stephen Huggett (Sein Fein)
Richard Kemp (IDeA)
Eleanor Kelly (IDeA)
Colin Reid (IOD)
Michael Briggs (NICVA)
Barry Jordan (DRD Roads Service)
Robert Heyburn for Victor Douglas (DCAL)
Seamus McCrystal (DFP)
Trevor Gordon for Jim Wilkinson (DOE Planning)
Gail Corrigan for Stephen Martin (DSD)
Michael O'Neill (DOE)
Gerry Arkins (DOE)
Pauline Hughes (DOE)

Apologies: Alan Cardwell (Carrickfergus)
Liam Flanagan (Limavady)
Naomi Long (Alliance)
Mervyn Storey (DUP)
Eleanor Gill (GCCNI)
Drew Haire (OFMDFM)
David McCune (DETI)
Nigel Carson (DHSSPS)

1. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Richard Kemp and Eleanor Kelly (IDeA).

2. NOTE OF MEETING 17th MAY 2006

The note of the meeting on 17th May 2006 was agreed.

3. FIRST DRAFT REPORT – Presentation of Main Themes

The Chair advised the group that as per Item 5 of the Note of the Meeting on 17th May 2006, a first draft of the report had been prepared and circulated to members for consideration. The Chair thanked members of the group for their contributions and input to the draft. He then asked Colin Knox to talk attendees through the report advising members that this would be followed by a plenary discussion including input from the IDeA representatives.

3.1 Colin Knox talked members through the draft report explaining that drawing on the T.O.R, the report was structured into the following sections:

- Background – local government: a new era
- A more precise understanding of central local relations
- Consideration of the possible mechanisms to enhance central local government relations
- Modelling central local relations in Northern Ireland; and
- How best to implement the proposals.

3.2 A plenary discussion followed with input from members including the IDeA representatives. The Chair then took members through the document, section by section to get agreement/comments. In light of the discussion/comments, it was agreed the following key issues would be addressed in the next draft report:

- It was agreed that a Local Government (LG) Department should be “housed” within OFMDFM with a senior Minister having specific responsibility for this area and other Ministers participating in discussions as appropriate;
- It was agreed there was a need to progress Westminster/European issues in a different way;
- Engagement with community/voluntary sector - it was agreed that there was merit in keeping the proposed Partnership Panel at the political level with community/voluntary engagement achieved via the community planning process;
- It was agreed there was a need to maintain a clear “line of sight” between central government and local government priorities e.g. regional and local plans;

- It was agreed there was a need to be proactive in terms of capacity building/building relationships in central and local government in terms of secondments etc. in advance of new arrangements coming into effect; and
- It was agreed there were clear cross-cutting issues/overlap with other workstreams of the Taskforce and there was a need to integrate in a meaningful way.

4. NEXT STEPS

As a result of the discussions/feedback from the group, it was agreed that Wavell Moore, Colin Knox, Andrew Hassard and Stephen Finlay would take away the feedback from the day's meeting and prepare a final draft of the report for the next meeting scheduled for 14th June 2006. The final draft would issue to members in advance of the next meeting.

Action: Wavell Moore/Colin Knox/Andrew Hassard/Stephen Finlay

5. A.O.B

There was no further business discussed. The Chair thanked members for their participation and the meeting concluded.