



Local Government Taskforce

Performance Management Sub-Group

Note of meeting, Friday 5th May 2006, Holiday Inn, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast

Present:

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Cynthia Smith | - | Department of the Environment NI |
| Cllr. Alan Mc Dowell | - | Alliance Party |
| Cllr. Michelle McIlveen | - | DUP |
| Cllr Michael Carr | - | SDLP |
| Cllr Diana Peacocke | - | UUP |
| Pat Cumiskey | - | Banbridge District Council |
| Stephen Reid | - | North Down Borough Council |
| Ronnie Mc Bride | - | Ballymena Borough Council |
| Ronan Cregan | - | Belfast City Council |
| Phillip Faithfull | - | Strabane District Council |
| Paula Kerr | - | Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council |
| Mike Fisher | - | IDeA |
| Claire Thompson | - | DoE Planning Service |
| Barry Jordan | - | DRD |
| Denver Lynn | - | NI Audit Office |
| Wesley Henderson | - | NI Consumer Council |
| Graeme Bannister | - | CEHOG |
| Ellen Cavanagh | - | APSE |
| Mrs Linda Leahy | - | Local Government Staff Commission |
| Damian McKeivitt | - | DOE Local Government Division |
| Tommy Mc Cormick | - | DOE Local Government Division |
| Jim Stewart | - | DOE Local Government Division |
| Claire Devlin | - | DOE Local Government Division |

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from the following;

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Cllr. Graham Chapman | - | IDeA |
| Eleanor Gill | - | NI Consumer Council |
| Des Murray | - | APSE |
| John Mc Cormick | - | Carrickfergus Borough Council |

2. Welcome and Introductions

Mrs Cynthia Smith introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Performance Management Sub-Group. She then invited everyone present to briefly introduce themselves and indicate which organisation they were representing.

3. Local Government Taskforce – Overview and Background; formation of Sub-Group; timetable and required outcomes.

- a. Mrs Smith then gave an overview of the Local Government Taskforce, outlining the structure of the Taskforce, its Working Group, Political Panel and nine sub-groups, and explained the purpose of the Performance Management sub-group and the timetable and outputs required from it.
- b. The chief purpose of each of the sub-groups is to come to a broad consensus of what the key issues are, identify what needs to be included in any necessary legislation, and then map the way forward. This must be completed by the end of June.
- c. The Chair stated that it was her intention to circulate minutes of meetings by email as quickly as possible, and advised that minutes from all the sub-groups would be available on a website which would be developed soon.
- d. Mrs Smith emphasised that the Chairs of each of the nine sub groups along with the DoE Permanent Secretary, would meet regularly during this phase of work to ensure that cross-cutting issues are identified and taken into account and that there is a joined-up approach, and effective communication channels, between all the sub groups.

4. Improvement and Development Agency

- a. The Chair introduced Mike Fisher from the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). He outlined his role, as officer peer, and that of Cllr. Graham Chapman, the elected member peer, and how they envisaged supporting the work of the sub-group.
- b. There was an extensive discussion around the different models of performance measurement / assessment. It was agreed that it would be helpful if the sub group were to look at the various models and options available and identify which, if any, of these was most appropriate to the Northern Ireland situation. Northern Ireland had a great opportunity to take advantage of learning from what is in place elsewhere and, drawing on best practice and avoiding mistakes made elsewhere, there was the potential to develop an effective model best suited to the new local government structures being created for Northern Ireland.

- c. The issue of communications was raised again, and Mrs Smith agreed that it was very important to keep staff informed of developments. She advised members that a Communications Officer has been appointed to Local Government Division, and they would shortly be taking up their post.

5. Draft Terms of Reference

- a. After discussion it was suggested that the draft Terms of Reference circulated should be amended to include a reference to the transfer of functions and services to Councils from Central Government. The Chair invited members to input any suggestions as to the appropriate wording via the group secretariat.
- b. It was agreed that the focus should be on paragraphs 6 and 7 of the draft Terms of Reference document, and in particular on the required outputs defined in paragraph 7. The report produced by the sub group should reflect the four required outputs, and should reflect all views expressed.
- c. Although the Terms of Reference focus is on the end of June target for reporting back, it was agreed that these should be revisited after June to consider implementation. In response to a question relating to pre-set financial targets, the Chair advised that the Finance Sub Group would be focussing on financial issues. Although the Trade Union sector had been given the opportunity to nominate representatives to all of the sub groups, they had not as yet nominated anyone to the Performance Management sub group.

6. Planning Away Day

- a. It was agreed that a planning awayday to focus and agree on the key issues for the group and to develop a work plan for all identified key tasks would be very beneficial to the members of the sub group. The date for this event would be 16th May, and Mrs Smith asked all members of the sub group to keep this day clear in their diaries. The venue and programme for the day will be finalised as soon as possible.
- b. The day would be facilitated by both IDeA peers along with Ronan Cregan. Mike Fisher outlined his initial thoughts on the format that the day might take. After an initial round table discussion, he proposed dividing into three discussion groups: elected members could meet with Cllr. Graham Chapman to identify the key issues from their perspective, while the officers could look at the issues from their point of view facilitated by Ronan Cregan and Mike Fisher would focus on the perspective of the citizen/ratepayer with the remaining members of the group. All three groups would reassemble at the end of the day and report back to a plenary session. By the end of the day the sub group should have established key principles, identified what they want to achieve, and have a path mapped of key priorities and tasks.

- c. The focus is to establish the objectives, and consider the various options. Consideration will also be given to all cross-cutting issues between the Performance Management sub group and any of the other Taskforce sub groups.
 - d. Following the awayday it was envisaged that a small group or project team would carry out any agreed key pieces of work including the initial drafting of the sub group's report and recommendations.
 - e. It was suggested that the local government offices might usefully meet together prior to 16th May to agree on producing position papers and any other appropriate issues. Ronan Cregan agreed to organise this meeting.
 - f. It was stressed that in terms of developing the necessary primary legislation it would be critically important to get the balance right between setting out a clear framework and building in flexibility to allow for future change and adaptation.
7. The meeting agreed to try to set further dates for meetings to allow people to plan their diaries. A **schedule of dates** for the next meetings of the Performance Management sub group was agreed as follows:-

16th May 2006 – Awayday
12th June 2006 – meeting of full sub group
19th & 20th June 2006 – study visit to Nottingham Council
27th June – final meeting of full sub group

Where members of the Sub-group were unavailable they were invited to nominate an alternative representative from their organisation.

9. Any other Notified Business

There was no other notified business. Mrs Smith thanked everyone for attending, and for their interest and enthusiasm.

CLAIRE DEVLIN
DoE Local Government Division