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FOSTER ANNOUNCES THE FUTURE SHAPE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Environment Minister Arlene Foster has announced the key decisions on the future shape of local government flowing from the review of the local government aspects of the Review of Public Administration (RPA).

Speaking after an Executive meeting today, the Minister said: **“Our vision for local government is of a strong, dynamic local government creating communities that are vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe and sustainable and have the needs of all citizens at their core. Critical to the delivery of services that are linked with local peoples needs and ambitions will be the introduction of a statute-based council-led community planning process.**

“The current twenty-six local government districts will be rationalised to create eleven new local government districts, using the model referred to as eleven B, which was canvassed in the March 2005 RPA consultation document. This number will allow new council areas to deliver important services to communities in an efficient and effective manner.

“In order for local government to fulfil its role as leader and shaper of communities, a range of functions will be transferred to the new local councils. These include aspects of planning, as well as rural development, the public realm aspects of local roads functions, urban regeneration and community development, a range of housing related functions, and local economic development and tourism. More detail on the range of functions that will transfer will be set out in a statement that I will make to the Assembly on its return after Easter.

“The decisions we agreed at the Executive meeting this afternoon represent a firm foundation for the development of stronger local government that will deliver a broader range of services for all our citizens.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The review of the local government aspects of the Review of Public Administration was launched by Environment Minister on 6 July 2007.
2. The review was overseen by an Executive sub-committee chaired by the Environment Minister Arlene Foster that included Ministers of Regional Development, Social Development, Finance & Personnel and Health, Social Services and Public Safety.
3. The Review of Public Administration Consultation of March 2005 canvassed views on three 11 council models. Details on the three models are contained in the Consultation document which can be accessed at www.rpani.gov.uk/2005_consultation_doc.pdf
4. For media enquiries please contact DOE Press Office 028 9054 0014 or out of office hours, contact the EIS Duty Press Officer on pager 07699 715 440 and your call will be returned.