

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING – 5 OCTOBER 2007

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND STANDING ORDERS FOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP BOARD

AGENDA ITEM: 3

SUMMARY: Setting out proposal on the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders for the Strategic Leadership Board, to cover the period to the conclusion of the review of the RPA decisions as they relate to local government.

ACTION REQUIRED: Agreement on Terms of Reference and Standing Orders

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

1. The Local Government Taskforce was established by the Department of the Environment in March 2006, to develop a programme of local government modernisation and implement decisions flowing from the Review of Public Administration and in alignment with the four guiding principles, namely;
 - (i) Subsidiarity
 - (ii) Equality and Good Relations
 - (iii) Common Boundaries
 - (iv) Strong Local Government

2. The first phase of this work was completed in July 2006 and the Taskforce subgroups produced proposals to inform policy and legislation as well as identifying key tasks for implementation. In order to move into the next, implementation phase, there was consensus among all stakeholders that a review of the Taskforce structure and its delivery mechanisms was required. Following this review agreement was reached between the Department of the Environment and local government that the Taskforce should be reconfigured into a Strategic Leadership Board supported by Sub-groups.

3. Following the restoration of a devolved Assembly, the Executive at its meeting on 5 July 2007 agreed the Environment Minister's detailed proposals for a review of the Review of Public Administration decisions of the previous administration as they relate to local government. In parallel with this review the Minister agreed that a modernising programme would be taken forward to build on the earlier work of the Taskforce.

Strategic Leadership Board

4. The Environment Minister will chair the Strategic Leadership Board and the vice chair will be the President of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association. The role of the board is to act as the sponsoring group for the overall local government modernisation and structural reform implementation programme. It will be the pinnacle of and driver for the modernisation and reform programme.
5. The establishment of the Strategic Leadership Board marks a new way of central and local government working together. The model is based on the central/local partnership model in other areas and is designed to develop a greater partnership approach and more productive working relationships. Particularly the Strategic Leadership Board will seek to work collectively to develop a shared understanding of the strategic issues and facilitate consensus building between all the stakeholders on the way forward. Participation in the Board will also help to inform each individual organisation's policy making process.
6. The prime objective of participation in the Strategic Leadership Board is to develop a consensual approach. It is acknowledged that political involvement on behalf of local government in the Strategic Leadership Board is representational, and that responsibility for individual budgets and service delivery remains with individual councils.
7. The Strategic Leadership Board is designed to facilitate high level political leadership of the implementation process. The key role of advisors is, therefore, to inform the process and contribute to debate.

8. The specific remit and functions of the Strategic Leadership Board will be to:
- agree a joint overall vision for local government;
 - be the pinnacle of and driver for the overall local government modernisation and structural reform implementation programme;
 - agree the detailed remit, functions, priorities and composition of the Sub-Groups;
 - approve the programme of work to be taken forward by the Sub-Groups and others, monitor the progress of programme delivery, ensure co-ordination across the various work strands, and provide visible leadership and commitment to the programme and clarity on the expected outcomes;
 - approve the programme communication strategy and monitor its delivery;
 - advise the Minister on key decisions in relation to the programme.

Strategic Leadership Board Sub-Groups

9. The Strategic Leadership Board will be supported by two Sub-Groups, as agreed by the Board. Each Sub-group will be chaired by an elected member from the Strategic Leadership Board. Each group will also be allocated a vice chair from political parties represented on the board.
10. The detailed remit and functions of Sub-Groups will be determined by the Strategic Leadership Board, but the general remit and functions of the Sub-Groups will be to:
- lead the development of a detailed programme of work within their policy areas and to agree that programme with the Strategic Leadership Board;

- commission projects on specific areas and key work streams;
- to report regularly on progress to the Strategic Leadership Board;
- to identify and manage linkages within their own as well as other policy areas; and,
- to develop, where appropriate, proposals for local pilots in specific geographic areas.

Secretariat Support

11. The Strategic Leadership Board and the Sub-Groups will be supported by a Secretariat provided jointly by the Department of the Environment and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association.

Review

12. The operation of the Strategic Leadership Board and Sub-groups will be subject to review following the outcome of the review of the Review of Public Administration decisions of the previous administration as they relate to local government.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TASKFORCE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP BOARD – STANDING ORDERS

Membership of the Strategic Leadership Board

Central Government Membership

1. The members of the Board representing central government shall comprise:
 - the Minister for the Environment, who will act as Chair;
 - three senior officials from the Department of the Environment.

Local Government Membership

2. The local government representatives shall comprise:
 - the President of NILGA, who will act as Vice-Chair;
 - ten elected members [two elected representatives from each of the five main political parties];
 - three council Chief Executives.

Secretariat to the Strategic Leadership Board

3. The Department of the Environment and NIGA shall provide a joint secretariat to the Board. The Director of Local Government Reform within the Department of the Environment and the Chief Executive of NILGA shall act as Joint Secretaries to the Board.

Resignation from the Board

4. A member may resign from the Board by giving written notice to one of the joint secretaries to the Council who shall notify the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of any such resignation.
5. On ceasing to be a member of the Board, a member of the Board who also serves as a Chair of a Sub-group shall also cease to be the Chair of that group.

6. The appropriate organisation should then reappoint a member within a one month period.

Meetings of the Strategic Leadership Board

7. The Board will meet at such intervals and in such places as the Board may determine.
8. The Board may invite any other person to attend meetings and may invite such a person or body to submit evidence and produce documents or to speak.

Agendas

9. The Joint Secretaries shall determine the agendas for meetings of the Board. At the request of two of its members the Board may resolve to include an item of business on the agenda of a specified future meeting.
10. Wherever possible the papers to be discussed at Board meetings will be joint papers - representing the views of central government and local government. Where there is disagreement as to approach or policy, this will be recorded in the papers.
11. Documents relating to the business to be taken at the Board should normally be made available to members at least 5 working days before the meeting to which they relate.

Minutes of Board Meetings

12. Minutes of Board meetings will be produced by the joint secretariat and, once agreed by the Board, will be placed on the Department of the Environment's website, as will papers discussed at Board meetings.