

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY)

POLICY PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CUSTOMER FOCUSED APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY WITHIN THE NEWLY FORMED COUNCILS

Agenda Item: 7

Summary: Outlining the recommended approach to the development of a customer focused approach to service delivery to be used by transition committees and transition management teams when developing their new Councils.

Recommendation: That members endorse the proposals set out in this paper and charge the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group with their implementation.

Background

1. On 31 March 2008 Minister Foster gave a commitment, through a major reform and modernisation programme, to the provision of high quality, efficient services by councils that respond to the needs of people and continuously improve over time. In response to the Executive's decisions on the future shape of local government Policy Development Panel (Service Delivery) was charged with the development of policy and implementation proposals in relation to service delivery and performance improvement.
2. Local Government in Northern Ireland wishes to take a stronger lead in putting the citizen at the centre of public services. The proposals being put forward by the Panel seek to support local government, not only to implement the transition to the new council structure agreed by the Executive, but also make the necessary step change from being service focused to customer focused.

Such an approach to service delivery we believe will provide value for money, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of local government services for the citizens and ratepayers of Northern Ireland.

Key Tasks and Milestones

- Local Government Circular 07/09 (LG07/09) issued on 5 May 2009, provided advice to transition committees and transition management teams on the Key Tasks that needed to be completed along with critical dates. The Panel has identified the relevant service delivery tasks within this document and these are detailed in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 – LG07/09 SERVICE DELIVERY KEY TASKS AND MILESTONES	
DATE	TASK
Sept 2009	Short Term Implementation Plan – including Short Term Vision, Associated Aims and Objectives
June 2010	Strategic Framework Plan – covering first year of Council including key priorities, operational policies and projects, incorporating service delivery and performance improvement
Oct 2010	Service Delivery Plan and associated Performance Plan integrating transferred services and new function
Oct 2010	Cohesive IT Strategy and Implementation Plan
Nov 2010	Customer Service Strategy

4. The Panel's Joint Secretariat has developed appropriate guidance and support which it believes will assist councils in delivering the Key Tasks and Milestones listed above. This paper provides a high level overview of the support and guidance available and also details the key principles and policies which should underpin service delivery and performance improvement at the local level.

5. It should be noted that the recommendations contained within this paper are based on the following two premises:-
 - that the PWC Report – Economic Appraisal of Options for Local Government Service Delivery in its Entirety, has not been accepted by the local government sector; and

 - that further work is required in relation to the development of an appropriate Service Delivery and Performance Improvement Framework to support and monitor the effectiveness of the approach to service delivery and performance improvement across the sector. The Panel is currently working on this area in conjunction with the Policy Development Panel on governance and relationships to take account of the linkages with the development of proposals in relation to Community Planning. This will be a longer term project which will need to take into account the outcome from the Community Planning Foundation Programme.

Recommendation 1 – A Customer Focus Resource Pack for Councils

6. LG07/09 specifies that the development of excellent customer services should be a hallmark of the new councils. To facilitate this transition committees and transition management teams should seek to formulate a Customer Service Strategy for their new council by November 2010. In order to assist and help councils with this work the NILGA Improvement Team has developed a Resource Pack for councils. It is anticipated that this resource pack will provide transition committees and transition management teams with:-
 - an understanding of the key elements of work that need to be undertaken to ensure an appropriate customer focus is maintained across their councils;
 - initial access to a wide variety of resource material which will assist councils to take the work forward; and
 - examples of good practice from other organisations and jurisdictions.
7. It is intended that the Resource Pack will be a set of Guidance for councils not a set of Instructions. It contains details of various tools and techniques which transition committees and councils may tailor to their specific needs. It is not intended to be a checklist of activities which councils are required to slavishly follow. It is also a living document which will be placed on the NILGA website to be accessed by transition committees and councils. It provides useful weblinks to other organisations who can provide help and support with development work or to showcase examples of good practice.
8. It is hoped that transition committees and councils in Northern Ireland will use the website as an opportunity to share their experiences and good practice and so develop an Improvement Community within Northern Ireland. It would be intended that this piece of work would form the foundation for a more collaborative approach to improvement in local government and the establishment of a dedicated Improvement Service for the sector.

Recommendation 2 – Adoption of Customer Service Excellence Principles

9. In developing this area the NILGA Improvement Team undertook research into good practice across both the public and private sector. As a result Panel members recommend that when transition committees and councils are developing their Customer Service Strategies this should be done according to the principles contained within the Customer Service Excellence Model sponsored by the Cabinet Office. This is a new standard introduced to replace the Chartermark which some councils in Northern Ireland have already attained.

10. The aim of Customer Service Excellence is to encourage, enable and recognise organisations that are delivering services based on a genuine understanding of the needs and preferences of their customers and communities with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. There is also emphasis placed upon developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.

11. The Customer Service Excellence Standard is designed to operate on three distinct levels:-
 - as a driver of continuous improvement – allowing organisations to self assess their capability using an on-line self assessment tool and identify areas for improvement;
 - as a skills development tool – allowing individuals and teams within an organisation to explore and acquire new skills in the areas of customer focus and customer engagement, thus building their capacity to deliver improved services; and
 - as an independent validation of achievement – allowing organisations to seek formal accreditation through the standard and celebrate their success.

12. The Panel recognises that a significant amount of effort and hard work is required to achieve the required standard for accreditation. Given the additional pressures that councils are experiencing as they seek to implement the reform programme it must be stressed that Panel members are not advocating that attainment of the standard should be an immediate goal for councils who are not already a significant way down this route. They are, however, proposing the adoption of the key principles which underpin the new standard as the direction in which transition committees should progress as they seek to deliver revised service delivery strategies for their newly emerging councils.
13. In addition, conscious of the tight timescale that exists for transition, the Panel recognises that the focus for transition committees needs to be on “Must Dos” rather than “Would Like To Dos”. With this in mind the Panel has drawn up a potential Route Map for Customer Service Strategy Development which it considers councils will find helpful. This Route Map prioritises the key elements of work and is also contained within the Resource Pack.

Recommendation 3 – A Centrally Facilitated, Collaborative Approach to Customer Service Strategy Development across Councils

14. To further assist councils in the development of their Customer Service Strategies Panel members recommend that much of the work that is required could be undertaken on a collaborative basis, facilitated through the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RCTCG). It is envisaged that this collaborative approach would reduce the workload on individual transition committees by identifying what work can be completed once and shared across all transition committees rather than being duplicated across all 11. In addition the proposal would be that the central facilitation team would receive specific direction from transition committees in relation to elements of work that it could take forward to research or deliver on behalf of the sector under the guidance and direction of the RCTG / RTC

15. It is anticipated that the following benefits would be achieved through this approach:-

- identification and prioritisation of the key work elements that are essential for transition and agreement of a Route Map for Customer Service Strategy Development;
- reduction of the volume of work required by individual transition committees through facilitation by the joint secretariat, sharing of existing best practice, development of common templates, standards, etc;
- a standardised approach, where possible and practical, so providing the basis for future collaboration or shared services either pre or post transition.

Recommendation 4 – Political Representation on the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group

16. In making this recommendation Panel members recognise that the RTCG as it is currently constituted does not include political representation. While this will be remedied in the early spring with the creation of statutory transition committees and the new Regional Transition Committee, Panel members would wish to see political representation included on the RTCG through the Chairs of the three Policy Development Panels (with deputising by Vice Chairs as required).

Recommendation 5 – A Streamlined Approach to Service Delivery Design across the 11 Councils through an Agreed Collaborative Work Programme

17. Councils should ensure that a customer focused approach to service delivery is embedded within the culture of the new organisation through their Strategic Business Planning Process. An examination of LG07/09 indicates that

transition committees should by now have developed a Short Term Implementation Plan which should identify the key activities that need to be undertaken to ensure that the existing councils, together with the new transferring functions are merged as one entity by May 2011.

18. In addition by June 2010 strategic transition committees should have developed a sufficiently detailed Strategic Framework Plan of Key Priorities to allow them to determine the required resources for the first year of operation of the council and set the new District Rate. In developing this transition committees will need to give due regard to how the transferring functions are to be delivered, to ensure a continuity of service standards. In addition councils, through the transition process, are expected to maximise the potential for delivering efficiencies and economies through service rationalisation.
19. To support councils in their Strategic Business Planning the Resource Pack contains advice and guidance together with toolkits in relation to best practice across the public sector in Business Planning.
20. In addition a work-plan has been drawn up of the Key Customer Service and Business Design Projects considered necessary to successfully complete this work. The Panel recommends that all of this work is taken forward on a collaborative basis through the group specified above. The list of Project Areas to be completed includes the following:-
 - Customer Service Strategy Development – a project to be completed in three phases namely:-
 - Phase 1 – to identify the customers, services and standards required within the new councils (to include existing council functions, transferring functions and taking account of Community Planning);
 - Phase 2 – development of individual Customer Service Strategies for each new council based on local need accompanied by new Council Visions. This will be followed by a generic Customer Service Strategy for the sector which will provide the basis for any future collaborative development e.g. IS Strategy; and,

- Phase 3 – development of Target Operating Models for the new Councils along with Strategic Business Plans which will allow Councils to set their new rate for the first year of operation;
 - Service Delivery Business Functions Redesign – examination and redesign, at a high level, of all service delivery functions (including existing council functions and new transferring functions) to identify opportunities to implement more streamlined and efficient processes;
 - Joint Service Delivery/Partnership Working Arrangements Design – identification of the key partnership arrangements that will be required with other bodies and the data flows between them; and,
 - Corporate Support Business Function Redesign – identification of all the support functions that will be necessary to support service delivery functions in councils along with the relevant data flows between them.
21. Annex A provides a summary of these projects and their interdependencies. The Panel's Joint Secretariat has developed more detailed specifications for each of these projects to provide advice on the potential scope of these projects. During the delivery of these projects opportunities should be taken to identify potential areas for future collaborative working or shared service delivery both internal and external.
22. Panel members are conscious that the projects detailed in Annex A may appear to some to be too resource intensive and not achievable within the time period set for transition. The Panel has, however, been charged with developing policy proposals to deliver the implementation of the reform programme. If local government is truly to achieve the objective of delivering value for money, efficiency and effectiveness then these key project areas need to be addressed. The Panel however submits this work programme to RTCG on the understanding that the necessary resource will be made available. Should this not prove to be the case decisions on priorities will need to be made. Panel members consider that any debate on priorities needs to be

made in full consultation with the transition committees and transition management teams through the RTCG.

23. The Panel would stress that the possibility of delivering the required work programme will be significantly enhanced through a centrally facilitated, collaborative approach to service delivery design, with individual transition committees taking lead responsibility in different areas and the full co-operation and involvement of the existing relevant professional reference groups. If transition committees and councils seek to work independently the resource costs across the sector will be much higher, the potential for development of efficient processes will be greatly reduced and the scope for future collaborative working, particularly in relation to IT development, may be lost.
24. Within LG 07/09, transition committees will also need to develop an IT Strategy for their new council. Building on the work of the Deloitte Draft IS Strategy which was developed through the e-Government Working Group the key areas for potential IS projects have also been identified. These are also included within the summary of projects contained at Annex A and more detailed project specifications have been drawn up for consideration by RTCG.

Recommendation 6 – Development of Proposals on Shared Service Delivery

25. Included within the remit of the Panel's work programme were policy proposals in relation to the development of a Shared Services Strategy. Work on this was delayed pending the receipt of the PwC Economic Appraisal which identified potential areas for Collaborative Working or Shared Service Delivery.
26. While recognising the potential benefits that can be delivered through collaborative working and shared service provision, Panel members would express concerns at the establishment of any Shared Service Organisation without a full and comprehensive review of the relevant service delivery area. In undertaking such reviews all potential approaches should be considered including:-

- collaborative approaches across selected council clusters;
- collaborative approaches across all council clusters on an informal basis through the relevant professional reference group;
- delivery of functions on a lead council or centre of excellence basis;
- delivery of functions on a formalised shared service organisation basis;
- delivery of functions through alternative public sector solutions e.g. NICS initiatives; or
- delivery of functions on an external contractual basis.

27 Ideally decisions on collaborative working or shared service delivery should be completed prior to reorganisation, however given the time period involved this will not be feasible. The Panel however maintains that areas that must be considered prior to reorganisation include all transferring functions that cannot be delivered on an 11 council basis and procurement. The latter area due to the significant projected savings.

Summary

28. The Strategic Leadership Board is asked to:-

- endorse the key recommendations within this paper, namely:-
 - a Customer Focus Resource Pack for Councils;
 - adoption of the Customer Service Excellence Principles;
 - a centrally facilitated collaborative approach to Customer Service Strategy Development across Councils;
 - political representation on the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group;
 - a streamlined approach to Service Delivery design across the 11 councils through an agreed collaborative work programme;
 - development of proposals on Shared Service Delivery; and

- remit the proposals and more detailed papers to RTCG for agreement on the implementation arrangements.

29. In taking this work forward consideration needs to be given to who will facilitate the work and the NILGA Improvement Team offers its services and expertise to support transition committees and transition management teams through this process.

NILGA / DOE Joint Secretariat

December 2009

ANNEX A

PDP B DRAFT PROPOSALS IN RELATION TO KEY WORK AREAS FOR TRANSITION COMMITTEES TO DELIVER SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE NEW COUNCILS

This Table provides a summary of the key work areas that need to be taken forward in advance of Transition for development of the new Council's Customer Service Strategies, IT Strategies and First Year Business Plans (as specified within LG07/09). More detail in relation to the specific work areas can be obtained by examination of the Related Project Proposals. This summary outlines the key areas where work will be required and the linkages and sequencing of work. More detailed scoping and identification of priorities will be required by the RTCG in consultation with the relevant Transition Committees. Agreement will also need to be reached on how this should be taken forward on a collaborative basis.

NO	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION OF KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTPUTS	DEPENDENCY
1.1	Customer Service Strategy Development – Phase1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formalisation of Collaborative Working Arrangements through convening of collaborative group 2. Agreement of Route Map for Customer Service Strategy Development 3. Identification of Customers, Services and Standards for Existing Council Services on a central basis 4. Identification of Customers, Services and Standards for Transferring Functions on a central basis 5. Identification of services that could be delivered on a Collaborative or Shared Services basis for input into Shared Services Project 	Initial Project critical for all further projects
2.	Service Delivery Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process Mapping and Flowcharting of the high level business processes required within each Existing Council Service Delivery Business Function 	Dependent on work completed in Project

1.2	<p>Function Re-Design</p>	<p>and each Transferring Function to deliver the Customer Services that have been identified in Project 1.1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Critical examination of the high level Process Maps produced for each service delivery business area and merger of common businesses between existing Council Service Delivery Business Functions and Transferring Functions. Streamlining to remove duplicate and redundant processes. Mapping of new processes Identification and endorsement of New Streamlined Council Service Delivery Business Functions at a generic level Identification of the Policy Oversight and Performance Management arrangements that will be required by the Parent Departments in relation to the Transferred Functions Identification of services that could/may need to be delivered on a Collaborative or Shared Services basis for input into Shared Services Project 	1.1 – Phase 1
1.2	<p>Customer Service Strategy Development – Phase 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping of Customers and Services unto the new Streamlined Council Service Delivery Business Functions required within each of the councils Development of Customer Service Strategy for each new Council based on local customer needs Development of Vision for new Councils Development of Generic Customer Service Strategy for sector which can form the basis for any future IS Strategy development 	<p>Dependent on outcome of work from Project 2</p>

NO	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION OF KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTPUTS	DEPENDENCY
3.	Joint Service Delivery/ Partnership Working Arrangements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of the Key Partners (on a regional and strategic basis) that need to be involved in the delivery of services by councils. This will include not only the Parent Departments of the Transferring Functions but also the various partners identified as required for successful Community Planning (where known at this stage) 2. Identification of the Key Data Flows between the Partner Organisations and Councils (including the policy links and performance management arrangements required in the future by the parent Departments of the Transferring Functions) 3. Development of High Level Process Maps for Revised Council Service Delivery Business Functions showing Data inputs and outputs between the Council and the various Partner Organisations including the Parent Departments 4. Identification of services that could be delivered on a Collaborative or a Shared Services basis for input into the Shared Services Project e.g. Data Collection/Data Management, Combined Customer Surveys. 	<p>Will build on the work undertaken through Project 2.</p>
4.	Corporate Support Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Redesigned Corporate Support Business Functions for the new councils 2. Business Process Mapping at a high level of the Key Corporate Support Business Functions and Data Flows including linkages between the Service 	<p>Dependent on work completed through Project 3.</p>

	<p>Function Redesign</p>	<p>Delivery Business Functions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Development of the Generic High Level Operating Model for councils for input into Phase 3 of the Customer Service Strategy Development Project 4. Identification of services that could be delivered on a Collaborative or a Shared Service basis for input into the Shared Service Project. 	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Shared Service Design</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritisation of the potential areas for future Collaborative or Shared Service Delivery which have been identified through the earlier projects 2. Completion of Scoping Studies and Business Cases for the Prioritised Potential Shared Services 3. Development of Target Operating Model for BSO (if agreed by the sector) 4. Establishment of Business Support Organisation (if agreed by the sector) 	<p>Will build on the work undertaken in all previous projects</p>
<p>1.3</p>	<p>Customer Service Strategy Development – Phase 3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of Target Operating Models for new Councils 2. Development of Strategic Business Plan for new Council 3. Development of First Year Operating Model for new Council 4. Striking of District Rate for new Council 	<p>Dependent on completion of work in all earlier Projects</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Information Architecture Design</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consideration of the Key Data Requirements in new Councils 2. Development of requirements for Information management including Information Strategy and Governance arrangements to include data security and data standards 3. Implementation of Data Standardisation and Data Cleanse across clusters to include common address methodology and common citizen database 4. Consideration of Geographic Information Systems capability 	<p>Will Build on Work done in Projects 1-5</p>

		5. Design and development of appropriate Business Intelligence and performance management systems (in consultation with the SDPI Framework proposals) 6. Consideration of need for a suitable Electronic Document and Records Management system (EDRMS)	
NO	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION OF KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTPUTS	DEPENDENCY
7.	Application Architecture Design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of the specific ICT Applications that are required to support the Business from Day 1 2. Access to the various Transferring functions systems currently delivered through Network NI 3. Design and implementation of any additional systems required to deliver the new Transferring functions 4. Design and implementation of any additional systems required to deliver new council functions e.g. Community Planning, SDPI Framework 5. Integration of existing systems as a result of any Business Function Redesign proposed in projects 2 and 4 above e.g. integration of e-Pic and Building Control systems 6. Design and implementation of any agreed Collaborative or Shared Services Systems 	Will be dependent on satisfactory completion of elements of projects 1-6
8.	On-Line Optimisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and implementation of website technology for new councils 2. Delivery of an on-line payment facility for use by all 11 councils (to include the 	Will be dependent on satisfactory

	Design	Dept for Business and Regulatory Reform (BERR) requirements) 3. Development and implementation of common web portal for sector 4. Development and implementation of kiosk facilities to allow greater access to council services	completion of projects 1-6
9.	Customer Relationship Management System Design	1. Design and development of appropriate Customer Relationship Management system to handle customer queries whether on-line, face to face, by telephone or email	Will be dependent on satisfactory completion of elements of projects 1-6
10.	Technical Architecture Redesign	1. Design and Implementation of new Wide Area Network to facilitate transition of the Transferring functions (Network NI) 2. Design and implementation of Unified Communications 3. Design and implementation of Mobile Working arrangements 4. Creation of optimum Server and Storage Environment 5. Design and development of appropriate IT support for sector particularly in relation to Shared Service delivery 6. Design and implementation of Business Continuity plans	Will be dependent on satisfactory completion of projects 1-6