

REGIONAL TRANSITION CO-ORDINATING GROUP UPDATE

Agenda Item: 8

Summary: This paper provides a summary of the issues discussed at recent meetings of the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group along with updates on the work of the LG Reform Joint Forum and the Transition Committees.

Action Required: To note for information.

REGIONAL TRANSITION CO-ORDINATING GROUP

1. Since the last Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) meeting the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG) met on two occasions (i.e. 3rd September and 8th October) primarily in its role as Steering Group for the Assessment of Options for Local Government Service Delivery Phase 2 project being taken forward by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).
2. The Group has carefully considered and agreed the PwC report for Phase 2 which is to taken at agenda item 7 of the SLB meeting.
RTCG has also:-
 - received an update on deliberations at the SLB meeting on 14th August;
 - noted an update provided by the Local Government Reform Communications Group and agreed a local communications strategy designed to assist Transition Committees at local level;
 - accepted responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations in the third Finance and Estates Working Group agreed at the last SLB meeting; and

- noted updates provided on Community Planning, the work of the Finance and Estates Implementation Group and the Transfer of Functions Working Group.

LG REFORM JOINT FORUM

HR Implementation issues

3. The Local Government Reform Joint Forum held its first three meetings on 22nd July, 5th August and 02nd September respectively. The Group has recently finalised and agreed a Vacancy Control System for district councils and agreement has also been reached on the final arrangements for local consultation and negotiation arrangements for Transition Committees. Work is ongoing around Severance Arrangements for Staff and the Group has produced a first draft Procedure for Filling Posts in the New Organisations.

Secondment of civil servants to local government

4. The views of local government on this issue were recently considered by the Local Government Reform Executive Sub Committee and work is also ongoing within the Local Government Reform Joint Forum before final decisions can be reached. The Executive Sub Committee concluded that the NICS opening position for negotiation with Local Government Employers should be the application of the temporary transfer arrangements which applied to the DHSSPS staff.

TRANSITION COMMITTEES UPDATE

5. The eleven Transition Committees continue to provide minutes of their meetings. All documents received since the last SLB, on 14 August, are provided for the information of members at Annexes 1 to 8.

6. Following the Minister's indication that he wished to visit each of the Transition Committees in light of the crucial role they have to play in the implementation stage of the programme, a series of visits have been arranged between now and the end of the year. The first visit to the Causeway Coast and Glens District Council Transition Committee took place on 24th September.

7. Antrim/Newtownabbey Transition Committee have now published their Short Term Vision for the new Council together with a newsletter to provide staff with an update on the overall reform programme and also to keep them informed of the councils' Transition planning. It was agreed that it may be helpful to circulate copies of these documents to members for information (see Annexes 9 and 10.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that members note the information provided in this update.

Joint Secretariat