

**REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES**

Agenda Item: 9

Summary: This paper proposes a Terms of Reference for the Review of Local Government Reform Programme Organisational Structures and arrangements for taking it forward.

Action Required: Presented for the approval of the Strategic Leadership Board.

BACKGROUND

1. At the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) meeting, on 10th April 2009, it was agreed that the organisational structures in place for managing and integrating the implementation stage of the Local Government Reform Programme should be reviewed.
2. It was also agreed that the review should be taken forward by the Joint Secretariat and that a paper would be prepared, for SLB's consideration, encompassing a Terms of Reference (TOR) and implementation arrangements.

DETAIL

3. The Joint Secretariat has prepared a draft Assignment Brief (attached as an Annex) which proposes, inter-alia, a TOR for the review and a work programme for taking it forward. Members will wish to note that:-
 - the review is to evaluate the progress, performance and future relevance of SLB, the Policy Development Panels (PDPs) and the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG);

- evaluation will be carried out through a series of focus group meetings with the PDPs and interviews with the members of the political parties represented on SLB and other key stakeholders; and
 - the final report will make recommendations on appropriate structures and governance arrangements for managing and integrating the continued work necessary for transition in May 2011.
4. The Joint Secretariat proposes to report its key findings and recommendations to the SLB meeting on 14th August 2009. This timescale takes account of the demanding work programme, available resources and the impact of the summer holiday period.

RECOMMENDATION

5. It is recommended that members approve the attached Assignment Brief and authorise the commencement of the review.

Joint Secretariat

ANNEX

**REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME
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ASSIGNMENT BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

1. At the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) meeting, on 10th April 2009, it was agreed that the organisational structures in place for managing and integrating the implementation stage of the Local Government Reform Programme should be reviewed.
2. The review is to be taken forward by the DOE/NILGA Joint Secretariat which supports SLB and other elements of the organisational structure.
3. The purpose of this brief is to outline the requirements of the review, arrangements for taking it forward and the timescale involved. It will be presented at the SLB meeting on 22 May 2009 for approval.

BACKGROUND

4. The local government Review of Public Administration (RPA) proposals of the previous Direct Rule administration were reviewed by the Executive and the outcome was announced, on 31st March 2008, by the Minister of the Environment. The key decisions taken include the:-
 - rationalisation of the current configuration of 26 council areas to create 11 new council areas;
 - transfer of a range of functions from central to local government; and
 - development of a new council led community planning process with a complementary power of well-being.
5. Structures have been developed to help manage and integrate the implementation stage. The top tier of the structure is the SLB which is the key driver of the reform process. This is chaired by the Minister of the Environment (Mr Sammy Wilson MP MLA) with the President of NILGA (Councillor Helen Quigley) as Vice Chair and its membership including elected representatives of each of the five main political parties. The SLB is supported by three Policy Development Panels (PDPs), also comprising elected representatives along with central and local government advisors, which have been charged with developing the policy and implementation proposals necessary to ensure the smooth transition to the new councils in May 2011. The broad remits of the PDPs are:-

- PDP A - Governance and Relationships;
 - PDP B - Service Delivery; and
 - PDP C - Structural Reform issues
6. The PDPs' proposals are subject to the approval of SLB with the implementation of agreed recommendations being taken forward by a Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG) in conjunction with Transition Committees (TCs) and Transition Management Teams (TMTs) representing the 11 groupings of existing councils which will form the proposed new local authorities.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

7. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the review are to:-
- “evaluate the existing remits and key objectives of the SLB, PDP and RTCG structures and associated resources (i.e. elected representatives, officer support, finance, skills and monitoring processes);
 - assess progress against the agreed implementation programme;
 - identify what has worked well so far, any issues encountered, the extent of change and challenge that will impact on the implementation structures up to May 2011 and the learning from experiences to date;
 - in the light of the above, identify the most appropriate structures and governance arrangements for managing and integrating the work necessary to ensure the effective and efficient transition to the new councils; and
 - present a draft report, outlining the key findings and recommendations, to the SLB for consideration at its meeting on 14th August 2009”.
8. The review will not embrace the Transition Committees or the Transition Management Teams which have only recently been established.

APPROACH TO THE REVIEW

9. The review will be taken forward by a Joint Secretariat Team led by John Price and Nora Winder and comprise Helen Richmond, Bill Smith, Speers Charters and Angela Fitzpatrick.
10. SLB will form the Project Board for the review. However, a Steering Group comprising Ian Maye and Heather Moorhead will be responsible for guiding the work of the Team and ensuring that the requirements in the TOR are met.

11. The Joint Secretariat's approach to the review will involve the three phase (i.e. fact finding, analysis and report preparation) programme of work outlined in the attached Appendix. The key fact finding phase will include focus groups with PDPs and interviews with key stakeholders.

12. The timescale involved with the review is heavily dependant on, inter-alia, the availability of key stakeholders for interviews and discussions. The Review Team will liaise closely with the Steering Group on the progress of the review and seek its approval to any variations to the timetable which may prove necessary.

