

REGIONAL TRANSITION CO-ORDINATING GROUP AND TRANSITION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Agenda Item: 8

Summary: This paper provides a summary of the issues discussed at the last meeting of the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group along with an update on the work of the Transition Committees.

Action Required: To note for information.

REGIONAL TRANSITION CO-ORDINATING GROUP

1. The fourth meeting of the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG) was held on 30th April 2009. Annex 1 of this paper provides a summary of the key issues discussed.
2. Key points to note include the Group's endorsement of the Advisory Notes, for the Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams, on Key Tasks and Milestones (Circular LG 07/2009) and Winding Up Arrangements (Circular LG 08/2009). These issued on 5th May 2009.
3. RTCG members also noted the Communications Plan, which was approved at the Strategic Leadership Board meeting on 10th April 2009, and accepted the role of Steering Group for its implementation. In the light of the views expressed by RTCG members, and subsequent discussions with stakeholders, it has been agreed that membership of the Local Government Communication Group should now be based on the eleven council structure. The Transition Management Teams will now provide one representative from each council group rather than from each council.

TRANSITION COMMITTEES

4. The eleven Transition Committees continue to provide minutes of their meetings. All documents received since the last SLB on 10 April are provided for members at Annexes 2 to 8.
5. Among other things, the Transition Committees have recently focussed on the following issues:
 - identified areas for joint working in areas of procurement, community planning;
 - agreed transition frameworks, identified work streams and established sub-Committees/task groups/project teams to scope, prioritise and implement the work required for the change-over to the new councils.
 - discussed and arranged for the appointment of staff to Change Management roles; and
 - discussed co-ordinated responses to the public consultation on Statutory Transition Committees

RECOMMENDATION

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



Key Outcomes and Action Points from Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG) 30.4.09

Public Service Guiding Principles

- Minister Wilson is likely to publicly reinforce his commitment to the Public Service Commission (PSC) Guiding Principles in the near future.

HR Issues

- Policy Development Panel C (PDP C) will be presenting a paper to the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) on the 22 May 2009 outlining the key Human Resources implementation issues to be taken forward.
- It is understood that the paper is likely to recommend the establishment of a joint negotiation and consultation forum with the employers' side comprising representatives of local government, central government and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive with the Trade Union side being led by NIC/ICTU.
- All members agreed that it is critical to get this forum operational as soon as possible.

SLB Update

- PDP C will be presenting a paper to the Minister on potential changes to the transferring functions package to inform discussion at the Executive Sub Committee.
- Discussions took place on delays on planning reform and the potential implications for the Local Government Reform Programme if legislative deadlines are missed.
- Negotiations are still ongoing between Minister Wilson and the deputy First Minister to resolve remaining differences and move forward.

Local Government Implementation Framework

- This updated version of the Local Government Reform Implementation Framework is a simple guide to the programme plan. This will be continuously updated and presented regularly for consideration.
- A Strategic Advisor will be appointed, within the next 6 – 10 weeks, to assist in the development of an enhanced programme management system.

Transition Committee Update

- All Transition Committees' Management Teams have been established.
- Whilst progress levels vary between areas, a number of the Teams are making very good progress.

Advisory Note on Key Tasks and Milestones

- This note provides an indicative list of tasks which should be carried out by Transition Committees in their voluntary and statutory phases. This has been prepared by the DOE/NILGA joint secretariat and its terms have been agreed by PDP A.
- It was agreed that this would help Transition Committees take forward their areas of work. The note was issued on the 5 May 2009.

Advisory Note on Winding Up Arrangements

- Following SLB and PDP C feedback, this guidance had been revised in order to provide more clarity on the financial responsibilities of the Winding Up Manager.
- The note issued on the 5 May 2009.

Communications Implementation Requirements

- The Communications Plan has been agreed by SLB. This plan will be continuously revised to take account of changes as the programme progresses.
- RTCG members were asked to re-consider the council representation on the Local Government Reform Communications Group following SLB feedback that membership should be based on the eleven council structure.
- Subsequent to the RTCG meeting, it has been agreed that Transition Management Teams will nominate one representative from each council group, rather than from each council.
- The Communications Plan will issue week commencing 4 May 2009 to Transition Management Teams and transferring functions. A

letter requesting nominations from transferring functions and Transition Management Teams will accompany this.

Assessment of Options for Local Government Service Delivery Assignment

- PwC will present its draft report on Phase 1 of this assignment to PDP C in early May. PDP C members will then consider the report and present their views to SLB.
- It was agreed that PwC would be asked to present this draft report at the next RTCG meeting.
- RTCG will be accountable to the SLB for steering Phase 2 of the PwC assignment that will entail a full economic appraisal of the Local Government Reform Programme.

Funding

- There should be clarity by the end of this financial year on the funding required for the Local Government Reform Programme.
- This will be assessed, particularly in the current economic climate, against other Executive priorities.
- DOE continues to explore innovative funding options.

Future RTCG Meetings

- Proposed dates have been set up to the end of the calendar year.
- The next meeting will take place on the 11 June at 10.30am in Clarence Court.

Please note: The information above may be subject to amendment. This is due to the quick turn around of information in order to provide a summary as soon as possible after each meeting. The formal minutes will represent the information in finalised format.