

REGIONAL TRANSITION CO-ORDINATING GROUP (including JOINT FORUM and TRANSITION COMMITTEES) UPDATE

Agenda Item: 7a

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. 21st January and 12th February).
2. Annex 1 of this paper provides a summary of the key issues discussed at the RTCG meeting on 21st January 2010. Key points to note include:-
 - that RTCG members were provided with an update on deliberations of the SLB meeting on 9th December including details of stakeholders' views on the economic appraisal on

the Assessment of Options for Local Government Service Delivery and the current position on funding issues;

- the updates provided on the work of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum, the Finance and Estates Implementation Group and the Transfer of Functions Working Group; and
- RTCG's agreement that a phased approach to re-branding in the new councils (option 3) be taken and that further work is undertaken in this area prior to presentation of the proposals to SLB for approval.

3. The second meeting on 12th February was dedicated to the consideration of the Transfer of Functions Working Group Report. The report, which has been agreed by RTCG, is to be considered as a separate agenda item (7c) at the SLB meeting on 25th February.

LG REFORM JOINT FORUM

4. The Local Government Joint Forum continues to meet regularly and is working through the matters remitted to it. The three main issues currently are the filling of senior posts in the new councils, staff transfer scheme and staff severance scheme all of which will be considered at the Forum's next meeting.

System for filling senior posts

5. This issue was previously discussed at the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) and the Executive Sub Committee and was remitted by the former to the Joint Forum. The Forum has commissioned its own advice from Counsel which includes an opinion on a draft Code for filling **all** senior posts in the new councils. It is now weighing all of this and the various positions of the interested parties. The Forum will consider a further draft of the Code before reporting back a formal position.

Staff Transfer Scheme

6. The Forum will consider a further draft of the scheme; it is expected that a final draft will issue for consultation in the coming months. Drafting will take on board advice on the transfer of staff from joint committee structures including Group Building Control, Environmental Health and SWaMP 2008 etc. A need has also been identified to include a fast track RPA Scheme of Transfer appeal process.

Staff Severance

7. The remaining responses to the consultation on a final draft Staff Severance Scheme are expected shortly and the Forum expect to agree a scheme at its next meeting. Responses received highlight the basis of funding for the scheme to be a fundamental concern.

TRANSITION COMMITTEES UPDATE

8. The eleven Transition Committees continue to provide minutes of meetings. All documents received from Committees since the SLB on 9 December 2009, are provided for the information of members at Annexes 2 to 12.
9. Ten of the eleven Transition Committees have now appointed officers or assigned existing staff members to the Change Management roles. Ballymena/Carrickfergus/Larne Transition Committee are still in the process of arranging recruitment of staff to fulfil this role.
10. Acknowledging the vital role Transition Committees play in the implementation phase of the reform process, the Minister has now visited ten of the eleven Transition Committees. At the RTCG meeting on 21 January, Members asked that the Minister be made aware of

their appreciation for him taking the time to meet with all Transition Committees. The final visit to the Ards/North Down Transition Committee is scheduled for April 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Joint Secretariat