



**Minutes of the second meeting of the Strategic Leadership Board Modernisation Subgroup Strand B –Service Improvement held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2007 in Craigavon Civic Centre**

**Present:** Cllr Sean Begley (Chair), Cllr Gordon Dunne, Cllr Eddie Rea, Cllr Michelle McIlveen MLA, Cllr Gary Stokes, Cllr Tony Hill, Danny McSorley, Rose Crozier, and John Gillanders.

**In Attendance:** Alan Hanna (NILGA); John Price, Angela Fitzpatrick, Damian Dean and Lorcan O’Kane (Local Government Reform Unit, Department of the Environment).

**Apologies:** Cllr Ross Hussey, Cllr Alan McDowell and Cllr Dermot Curran (Vice Chair)

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair, Cllr Sean Begley, welcomed members and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**2. Apologies**

The apologies were noted.

**3. Minutes of last meeting**

These were accepted as a true record, proposed by Cllr Rea and seconded by Rose Crozier.

**4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**5. Update on officer appointments**

John Price explained that the following officers had been appointed to support the work of the Strand B sub-group. Danny McSorley as Chief Executive was involved with NILGA and the Department to appoint John Gillanders of Lisburn City Council and Rose Crozier of Belfast City Council. The Chair welcomed them to the sub-group.

**6. Smart Community**

John Price explained that all sub-group papers and a range of other materials would be available on the sub-group’s Smart Community website. He asked for feedback on this and reiterated the availability of support if any member had difficulties with accessing material.

## **7. NILGA E-Gov Working group update**

Alan Hanna gave a report on the progress of the NILGA eGovernment Working Group. The members of the eGovernment Working Group (plus the sub-groups on Local Citizen View, IS Strategy and Mobile Working) were invited to the Strand B Away Day on 4<sup>th</sup> October. This replaced the eGovernment Working Group meeting that was due to take place on that day. The next meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November will have a presentation from the Best Practice Group. The Mobile Working sub-group is now working on the implementation of its 3 pilot projects in Building Control and Environmental Health. There is a high level of council participation in these projects with Down, Newry and Mourne, North Down, Belfast, Ballymena and Lisburn all involved. The draft terms of reference for an IS Strategy for local government were sent to councils for consultation in August. Responses were received from 13 Councils as well as responses from the Finance Officers and IT Officers groups. These responses will be taken on board and revised terms of reference produced. The Local Citizen View is continuing to make progress under the leadership of Moira McVeigh of North Down Borough Council. The eGovernment Working Group has funding support from the Delivery and Innovation Division of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

## **8. Wider E-Gov Issues**

### **8.1 Network Infrastructure**

DoE officials have met with NIRAN(NI Regional Area Networking, high-speed network infrastructure which underlies the further education sector across the UK) to explore how this could be applied to local government.

### **8.2 Microsoft Enterprise Agreement**

The current Microsoft agreements (negotiated through the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) on a national basis) are the best that can be achieved. Members expressed concern that not all Local Authorities would be aware of this agreement. Rose Crozier offered to produce a short leaflet to highlight this. Communication to Councils will be through the Chief Executives and copied to other officers.

### **8.3 Local Authority Customer Relationship Management (LA CRM)**

A customer event is being held on 30<sup>th</sup> November to demonstrate a low-cost CRM facility for all of NI Local Government, using the LA CRM system, which enables major improvement in handling and recording interaction with citizens/customers.

### **8.4 EU/ERNACT**

Discussions are continuing on the potential for Interreg funding applications and other applications through ERNACT.

## **9. Procurement**

Lorcan O’Kane and Damien Dean of Local Gov Reform are conducting an initial review of current procurement arrangements and systems used in Local Government looking at the potential for a more common approach to purchasing to maximise Local Government buying power and savings. Members agreed that the scope for savings was enormous if councils came together to collaborate. Some pilot development work is underway with Lisburn, Newry and Mourne, Belfast, Derry and Omagh Councils. It was proposed that an information event should be held in the New Year to publicise and promote the ideas of joined up procurement.

## **10. Away Day report**

The Away Day was held on 4<sup>th</sup> October and received presentations on NI Direct, the ROI Local Government Computer Services Board and Shared Services.

**10.1 NI Direct** –Ray Wright from Delivery and Innovation Division (DFP) described the plans to have a single phone number as a point of contact for citizens with government. It emerged that local government was not included in this even though local government is the first port of call for many citizens who contact their council because they do not know who to contact in central government. Following discussion it was recommended that engagement with NI Direct should begin as soon as possible to ensure that Local Government is involved from the outset. A meeting will be requested with Ray Wright to discuss local government involvement. The delegation will be cross party and include Rose Crozier and the Secretariat.

**10.2 LGCSB** – delivered by Tim Willoughby, Assistant Director in LGCSB. It was recommended that exploration of a closer working relationship with LGCSB should begin as soon as possible. Local Government in Northern Ireland could benefit from lessons learnt, benchmarking carried out, etc within LGCSB. One drawback of the LGCSB is the absence of elected member involvement.

**10.3 Shared Services** – delivered by Danny McConnell, Technology Partner with Deloitte. This presentation highlighted the difficulties of introducing shared services as well as the potential benefits. The sub-group agreed to commission a feasibility study to explore and appraise all options for shared services in local government. Secretariat will work on the terms of reference for this and consultants will be asked to explore the widest possible range of options for shared services including the value of Public Service centres where a range of public services work together –not just council services. Secretariat will write to Chief Executives of Councils to ask for their views on which services could be shared. Members were also alerted to advice from the Cabinet Office which raised EU procurement issues in relation to shared services.

## **11. AOB**

11.1 Email addresses –members were asked to clarify which email addresses were best to receive sub-group papers as efficiently as possible.

11.2 The next meeting will be held in Lisburn City Council offices. Secretariat will establish a meeting schedule for members for forward planning purposes.

12. **Date of next meeting** 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007 at 2pm