

LGRJF

facilitating local government reorganisation

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM JOINT FORUM (JOINT FORUM)

HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2009 AT 2.30 PM
IN MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES

MEMBERS PRESENT

<u>EMPLOYERS' SIDE</u>	<u>TRADE UNION SIDE</u>
<p>NIJC: Jill Minne, Belfast City Council (Substitute) Roger Wilson, Coleraine Borough Council (Lead for this meeting)</p> <p>JNC Cllr Tom Hartley, Belfast City Council</p> <p>NICS Ian Maye, DoE Jim Wilkinson, DSD</p>	<p>NIPSA: Connor Haughey, Newry and Mourne DC Bumper Graham, Assistant General Secretary Jackie Tennant, Larne Borough Council (Substitute) Colette Brownlee, Lisburn City Council (Substitute)</p> <p>GMB Paul Magee (Substitute)</p>
<p><u>INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR</u> Paul O' Brien, Chief Executive, APSE</p>	
<p><u>INDEPENDENT SECRETARIAT</u> Linda Leahy, Professional Officer, Local Government Staff Commission for NI Diana Stewart, Project Officer, Local Government Staff Commission for NI Lisa O' Neill, Policy Officer, Local Government Staff Commission for NI</p>	

1.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Sides and noted.

Members noted that Wesley Shannon, Director, Local Government Policy Division, DoE, would be replacing Ian Maye forthwith as a NICS representative.

2.0 FOR INFORMATION

2.1 Circular LGRJF/01 Vacancy Control System – Detailed Procedure

Members noted Circular LGRJF/01 has been issued for implementation from 1 October 2009.

2.2 Circular LGRJF/02 Model Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements for Local Consultation and Negotiation Forums at Transition Committee Level

Members noted Circular LGRJF/02 and undertook to monitor implementation on a regular basis.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT FORUM HELD ON 02 SEPT 2009

The minutes of the Joint Forum meeting held on 02 September 2009 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

3.1 Matters Arising

3.1.1 Consideration of Information Bulletin re 'at risk' posts

Decision

Members agreed that the Secretariat should prepare an Information Bulletin detailing guidance on the application of Vacancy Controls to the 'at risk' group of employees.

It was also agreed that the next Joint Communication Bulletin should remind employers of their duty to 'keep in touch' with staff who are absent through sickness, maternity, career breaks, etc, and in particular to ensure that information is brought to their attention.

3.1.2 Arrangements for the Awareness Seminar

An awareness seminar on the decisions of the Joint Forum will be held on Thursday 10 and Friday 11 December 2009 in the Lough Erne Golf Resort. This will be part of a wider event to discuss the HR implementation issues within local government reform and will be partnered by SOLACE.

Decision

Members agreed that the format should be developed through the Side Leads and that trade union representatives should be invited to attend.

The Trade Union Side Lead sought updates on the following matters:

3.1.3 The Transfer of Functions

Ian Maye confirmed that the transfer of individuals is being considered by the Transfer of Function Working Group under the Regional Transition Co-Ordinating Group (RTCG).

Details of the functions transferring, subject to a few minor outstanding issues, are agreed and Ian Maye confirmed that he would be happy to share the details with trade unions.

3.1.4 Implementation of Community Planning

In response to a query Ian Maye confirmed that the closing date for submissions for Peace III funding had passed and that no bid had been submitted.

4.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME

Members noted that the Secretariat had requested that copies of the weekly Local Government Reform Programme Updates issued by the DoE be circulated directly to Joint Forum members.

The Trade Union Side Lead queried the local government reform costs so far, in particular consultancy fees/expenses. The Employers' Side felt that these issues were outside the specific remit of the Joint Forum and considered it a matter for the Central Joint Forum.

In response to a query Ian Maye informed members that the PWC report on Local Government Service Delivery options and economic appraisal had been circulated to Strategic Leadership Board members and will be issued to all stakeholders as soon as possible.

5.0 DRAFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT RPA STAFF SEVERANCE SCHEME

Following an overview of the Agenda Paper and progress made to date by Linda Leahy, members made a number of comments on the issues raised.

Decision

Members agreed that the issue of reckonable service should be referred back to the Task Group for agreement.

Members further agreed that the Staff Severance Scheme should be finalised by the Side Leads and issued accordingly as soon as possible.

6.0 FILLING POSTS IN THE NEW COUNCIL STRUCTURES

Following a report on progress to date by Linda Leahy, particularly in relation to seeking further legal advice in relation to restricted posts and the work to progress the drafting of chief executive job descriptions and person specification, members made a number of comments.

Members agreed that timing with regard to the filling of senior posts in the new council structures linked to severance was crucial.

Decision

It was agreed that the Secretariat should produce a detailed project plan specifically addressing the filling of senior posts in the new council structures.

The Secretariat agreed to liaise with the Side Leads with regard to meeting with Counsel.

It was agreed that the meeting scheduled for 04 November may be used solely to progress this Agenda item.

7.0 ANY OTHER NOTIFIED, AGREED BUSINESS

The Secretariat agreed to revise and update the timeline of work for the Joint Forum for the next meeting.

8.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Members agreed to hold the next meeting in Commission House at 2.30pm on Wednesday 04 November 2009.

The individual Side meetings will commence at 1.30pm in Labour Relations Agency offices.