



facilitating local government reorganisation

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

**HELD ON 05 AUGUST 2009 AT 10.30 AM
IN COMMISSION HOUSE, 18-22 GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

<u>EMPLOYERS' SIDE</u>	<u>TRADE UNION SIDE</u>
<p>NIJC: Trevor Salmon, Belfast City Council Roger Wilson, Coleraine Borough Council</p> <p>JNC Cllr Tom Hartley, Belfast City Council</p> <p>NICS/DFP Ian Maye, DoE</p> <p>NIHE and Other Transferring Functions Maureen Taggart, NIHE</p>	<p>NIPSA: Pat Baker, Down District Council Connor Haughey, Newry and Mourne DC Bumper Graham, Asst General Secretary Jackie Tennant, Larne Borough Council</p> <p>Unite: Albert Mills, Senior Regional Industrial Organiser Jim Parker, Belfast City Council</p> <p>GMB John Dawson, Organiser</p>
<p><u>INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR</u> Paul O' Brien, Chief Executive, APSE</p>	
<p><u>INDEPENDENT SECRETARIAT</u> Adrian Kerr, Chief Executive, Local Government Staff Commission for NI 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>	

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Paul O' Brien introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.0 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of:

Employers' Side: Cllr Allan Ewart, NIJC

Trade Union Side: Paddy Mackel, Assistant Secretary, NIPSA

Members noted that Jackie Tennant, Larne Borough Council was substituting for Paddy Mackel for this meeting.

Ian Maye reported that Grace Nesbitt, DFP was standing down as a Member of the Joint Forum and that a senior official from the transferring functions will be nominated and the Independent Secretariat would be informed in the near future.

2.0 Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Forum held on 22 July 2009

The minutes of the Joint Forum meeting held on 22 July 2009 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Members agreed that future minutes would only record the decisions and actions and where necessary matters that either Side may wish to formally record.

2.1 Matters Arising

PWC Report on Options for Local Government Service Delivery

The Trade Union Side Lead reported that the Phase 1 Report had been made available by the Department. Ian Maye informed members it is intended that meetings with the Department and PWC will be held within the next 1-2 weeks in relation to Phase 1 Report and building of an economic business case.

Change Manager Posts

The Trade Union Side Lead reiterated his concern regarding the lack of engagement in relation to recruitment processes and asked for an update from the Employers' Side at the next meeting.

Local Government Reform Implementation

Members agreed to include a standing Agenda item 'Local Government Reform Programme Update' and that future SLB and RTCG Updates would be circulated for Members' consideration.

3.0 Agreement on Revised Draft Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements

The Trade Union Side Lead suggested the following amendments:

2.1 Add 'as at July 2009' as final agreement on the transferring functions will not be made by NI Executive Sub Committee until September 2009.

2.2 Line 5 add 'Commission'.

Annex 1 Insert 'Other functions subject to NI Executive Sub Committee review (see 2.1 above)

Decision

Following discussion, members agreed the Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements subject to the suggested amendments.

4.0 Model Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements for Local Consultation and Negotiation Forums at Transition Committee Level

The Trade Union Side Lead made a number of comments on the draft document.

The Employers' Side Lead stated that they had not yet agreed a formal position on any of the Agenda items and would be using this meeting for discussion and awareness raising purposes and that they have agreed to meet on Monday 10 August to progress matters.

The Sides Leads agreed to liaise with each other regarding this issue in advance of the next meeting.

Decision

Members agreed to consider the document again at the next meeting with a view reaching agreement.

5.0 Vacancy Control System – Detailed Guidance

Following a presentation by Adrian Kerr the Members made a number of comments.

Members agreed that the Vacancy Control System will be an agreement of the Joint Forum which will require robust implementation by the Local Government Staff Commission to ensure that councils cannot opt in or out.

Decision

The Secretariat agreed to highlight the areas that require agreement by the Joint Forum and circulate the paper to the Sides Leads in advance of bringing it to the next meeting for consideration/agreement.

6.0 Severance Arrangements for Staff – Discussion Paper

Following a briefing presentation by Linda Leahy members discussed the issues raised.

Ian Maye commented that the Joint Forum could make a working assumption that there would be a centrally funded Scheme.

Decision

Members agreed that the Secretariat should begin work on a draft Scheme in consultation with the Sides Leads.

7.0 Filling Posts in New Organisations – Discussion Paper

Following a briefing presentation by Linda Leahy Members discussed the issues raised:

In answer to a query on the establishment of the Statutory Transition Committees Ian Maye reported that the 2nd stage debate of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill took place in the Assembly on 30 July and it would be hoped to reach Royal Assent in Oct/Nov and will be supplemented by detailed guidance.

Decision

Members agreed that the Secretariat commence work on developing a framework and structure for the process of filling posts in the new organisations in consultation with the Sides Leads.

8.0 Any Other Notified, Agreed Business

The Trade Union Side Lead raised the review of the Local Government Reform Programme Organisational Structures Issues Paper and requested an update of progress at the next meeting. It was agreed that this would form part of the SLB Update as this was one of the main items for consideration.

9.0 Schedule of Meetings and Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

It was agreed that meetings following 02 September would be held every three weeks and that a schedule would be made available at the next meeting.