

Options for Local Government Service Delivery

Moving Forward – an update for the Belfast Transition Committee

17 August 2009



Phase 1 – Key Conclusion

The right answer is not to prescribe a single 'operating model' or, indeed, a set of models for local government service delivery in Northern Ireland.

- There is no 'one size fits all' model – the new councils need to be designed to address the needs and preferences of the citizens they serve;
- There is no 'best' model - analysis of operating models for service delivery in other jurisdictions are based on a marriage of political leadership and accountability and efficient and effective service delivery to meet local need; and
- Certain elements of the operating model of the new councils is a matter for Transition Committees to agree.

Best practice suggests that a consistent "approach" to the design of service delivery should be applied to each council.

Phase 1 – Key Recommendation

A common design approach is adopted for the development of a consistent council operating model for all new councils, consisting of the following elements:

- **Design framework** – a standard approach to the development of a council operating model based on a shared set of guidelines and principles;
- **Design ‘toolbox’** – a set of shared processes (data recording), technologies (ICT infrastructure), and enabling initiatives (capacity building) which are designed collectively and deployed as common building blocks across all councils; and
- **Design resource** – subject matter experts working with councils to provide advice, assistance and assurance on the design and build activities within individual councils.

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Phase 1 – Next Steps

How do we determine the optimum ‘scale and scope’ of this Design Approach?

- The design approach and a number of options around it have been discussed with the main political parties and SOLACE
- Objective was to agree a consensual approach to the development of the 11 new councils based around :
 - Achievability by 2011;
 - Cost;
 - Value added to the citizen;
 - Future opportunities for collaborative working, including shared services; and
 - Agreed regional arrangements at local government level to facilitate political leadership and service delivery.

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Phase 1 – Options for Economic Appraisal

The following recommended options were agreed by SLB (3rd July 2009) as a basis for a detailed Economic Appraisal

- **Option 1** – Do Nothing (baseline position)
- **Option 2** – Do Minimum (transition)
- **Option 3** – Transformation within council functional areas
- **Option 4** – Transformation across council functional areas
- **Option 5** – As Option 4 but with an exploration of functions which could be delivered on a shared services basis
- **Option 6** – Option 4 with the addition of a regional support organisation operating on behalf of local government delivering a range of shared services, within or apart from a LGA

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Phase 1 – Supporting Recommendations

A number of supporting recommendations were also accepted by SLB (3rd July 2009)

- **Enhanced guidance and support for Transition Committees**
 - The design approach places a greater emphasis on the direction, scope and support for the work of Transition Committees and their Transition Management Teams.
- **Assessment of options for appropriate future regional structures for local government**
 - Collaborative decision making;
 - Strong central/local government voice;
 - Managing or delivering shared support services; and
 - The role of a Local Government Association.

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Phase 2 – Developing the Economic Appraisal

The key deliverables from Phase 2 are an Economic Appraisal and an associated Implementation Plan (for the preferred option)

- **Economic Appraisal will:**

- be complete by end August 2009 (draft to be released for review w/c 31st August);
- provide both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits for each option (including resource implications for Transition Committees and existing councils); and
- be used to assess and agree an option as the basis for bid(s) to DFP.

- **Implementation Plan will:**

- Set out activities, timescales and resources for preferred option; and
- Define dependencies, risks and issues.

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