



To: Chairs of Transition Committees
Vice Chair and Members of the Strategic
Leadership Board
Chairs of the Policy Development Panels
President of NILGA

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Your reference:

Our reference: SUB/579/2010

13 October 2010

Dear Colleagues

At my meeting with the local government representatives on 15 September 2010, the work of the Transition Committees was discussed in the context of future governance options for leading the sector's Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) programme.

During the discussions I explained that my Department was facing severe financial pressures and that it would be necessary to make a decision on the future of Transition Committees, in advance of the Governance Working Group's Report on governance structures.

I undertook to reflect not only on the Transition Committees but also the other elements of the current reform structures namely the Strategic Leadership Board and the Policy Development Panels.

In the absence therefore of clarity from the Executive on the way forward with the local government reform programme I have decided today to announce the suspension of the funding for Local Government's 11 Voluntary Transition Committee's with effect from 31 October 2010.

As you know the Committees were set up to work towards the new 11 council model, however with the May 2011 deadline no longer achievable and the uncertainty around reframing the RPA timetable, I have decided to take this decision.

From my meetings with the sector in recent months it has become apparent that no significant role was envisaged for Transition Committees in their collaboration plans. I understand many of the Committees were no longer meeting as they felt they carried out no useful function towards reorganisation.

In light of the budgetary pressures faced, it is hard to justify my Department's continued funding. Some Committees may decide to continue to meet but this will have to be on a voluntary basis without the support of DOE funding.

However, I am keen that Change Managers continue with their valuable efforts to find efficiency savings within their Council groupings. I have therefore decided that funding for Change Managers will continue until 31 March 2011.

I remain committed to the reform programme and when a new delivery timetable is determined and a role for Transition Committees is decided by the sector we can then revisit the responsibility the Committees might play in the reform programme.

It is also difficult because of the lack of clarity to justify the continuation of the Strategic Leadership Board and the Policy Development Panels. It is my intention therefore to stand down these bodies from today.

I would appreciate if you could ensure that all members of your respective Transition Committees and Policy Development Panels are advised of my decision.

Copies of this letter have also been sent to Council Chief Executives, the Chair of SOLACE and to the Trade Union Side lead representative.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwin Poots', written in a cursive style.

EDWIN POOTS MLA
Minister of the Environment