

## APPENDIX 1: Correspondence received from Environment Minister

From the office of the  
Minister of the Environment



Department of the  
**Environment**  
[www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk)

DoE Private Office  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Goodwood House  
44 - 58 May Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 4NN

Telephone: 028 902 56019

Email: [private.office@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@doeni.gov.uk)

Your reference:

Our reference: SUB/184/2012

15 February 2012

Dear Council Mayors and Chairs

As you will be aware, the Executive decided in November 2011 that the reform of local government would be delivered on the basis of an 11-council model. As Minister responsible for implementation of the local government reform programme, I shall manage this decision in line with the 2015 timetable proposed in the Programme for Government 2011-2015. As a result, I will now be working to refresh this major initiative in partnership with the local government sector.

Consequently, I would ask you to restore, as soon as it is possible, the 11 Voluntary Transition Committees which are a key aspect of the implementation structures needed to bring about operational delivery of the programme in the council groupings. I would ask that the VTC for your constituent councils is established if possible by the end of March 2012 and confirm by e-mail to Linda MacHugh, Director of Local Government Policy Division (email [linda.machugh@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:linda.machugh@doeni.gov.uk)) that the Committee has been re-established together with the name of the Chair, the Chief Executive (to act as the main point of contact for correspondence), the Transition Manager and a list of Transition Committee and Transition Management Team Members. I recognise this process will be more straight forward for those VTCs that have continued to meet.

Previous guidance circulars issued to Councils during 2008 and 2009 for Transition Committees will be refreshed accordingly to bring them into line with the reform programme going forward and re-issued as soon as possible. However, in re-establishing your Committee you should in the meantime, continue to follow the guidance in Circular LG 16/08 about the formation and membership of Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams, as it remains relevant to an extent. You should also note that Circular LG 19/08 about Transition Committee Funding is withdrawn. This is as a consequence of the Executive's decision that local government should bear responsibility for the implementation costs of the reform programme. I confirm that central funding will not be provided to support the work of

Transition Committees moving forward. This is a matter for the amalgamating councils to provide the resources necessary to undertake this work.

I appreciate that, in re-establishing the Transition Committees, this may entail additional duties for Councillors. Therefore, I draw your attention to the system of allowances under Section 36 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, which provides Special Responsibility Allowances for members.

For the purposes of leading the transition process, I will soon put in place a Regional Transition Committee to provide high level political leadership for the implementation of the programme. I will write to you again to set out the terms of reference, membership and date of the first meeting of the Regional Transition Committee and to invite the Chair of your Voluntary Transition Committee to join that Committee as a member.

Finally, I plan to visit each Voluntary Committee to discuss how, together, we take forward this important work.


I have copied this letter to the President of NILGA, Council Chief Executives, the Local Government Staff Commission, the Chair of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum, the Chair of the Public Service Commission, the Chair of SOLACE, the Chair of the National Association of Councillors and the Chair of the Environment Committee.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Attwood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**ALEX ATTWOOD MLA**  
**Minister of the Environment**

**APPENDIX 2:** Correspondence received from National Association of Councillors

National Association of Councillors  
Northern Ireland Region 

8 February 2012

Mr Peter McNaney  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Donegall Square  
Belfast BT1 5GS

Chief Executive's Office		
Date	10/2/12	
Seen by	GX	
Referred to		
AGX	Corp Comms	Dem Serv
GR	SPP	Bus supp
Dev	F&R	H&ES
P&L	P&P	Other
Ref	McN 38/02	

16/2  
Emailed to  
KHeaney  
smcroy

Dear Mr McNaney

**RE: FUNDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

Further to our earlier letter regarding severance payments to councillors displaced by local government reorganisation, we are concerned that the Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, has now made it clear to us that he expects the entire cost of reorganisation, including transfer of functions, additional member training, amalgamation of councils, transition committees and severance payments, to be borne directly by the councils with no funding input from central government.

We are concerned that local councils will not have sufficient resources to carry through all these changes adequately. We would be interested in knowing whether you believe this to be possible or whether you expect central government to provide at least part of the necessary funding.


Yours faithfully



Cllr Ronnie Ferguson  
Regional Secretary, NAC

Krum,

Refer to this in RPL  
paper for H&ES, so  
we can send a  
response.

National Association of Councillors  
Northern Ireland Region 

29 November 2011

Mr Peter McNaney  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Donegall Square  
Belfast BT1 5GS

**File: RPA**  
**Severance arrangement**

Dear Chief Executive

Our members are increasingly concerned that as yet there is no clear agreement about the award of severance payments to those councillors who will be displaced by the proposed reduction in the number of local councils in 2015.

Severance payments have been promised by a number of ministers going back to 2005, but the current Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, has told the NAC that unlike previous ministers he is not minded to approve severance payments.

Given this new uncertainty, we would be grateful if you and other chief executives of local councils could press the Environment Minister for a clear commitment to the award of severance payments on the same basis as those council officers who may also be displaced by the restructuring.

Yours faithfully



R FERGUSON  
Secretary, NAC, Northern Ireland Region

*RPAfile*

Chief Executive's Office		
Date	11/12/11	
Seen by	[initials]	
Referred to		
ACX	Corp Comms	Dem Serv
GR	PP	Bus Supp
Dev	F&R	H&ES
P&L	P&P	Other
Ref	McN 04/12	

*11/12/11*  
*remailed 6/12*  
*Corn Walker*  
*H. O'Keefe*

Administrative Assistant: Nick Rogers  
National Association of Councillors, Sketrick House, Jubilee Road, Newtownards BT23 4YH  
Phone 028 9181 9413 Email: naoc@btconnect.com  
Regional Secretary: Councillor R Ferguson  
c/o The Council Offices, 2 Church Street, Newtownards BT23 4AP 028 9182 4000 Fax 028 9181 9628



## APPENDIX 3

### Government Reform Workshop with Members

Friday 2 March, 10am-12noon in Lavery Room, City Hall

#### OUTCOMES

1. Establish a shared understanding of the current status of local government reform;
2. Provide a forum for Members discussion on some of the key challenges and immediate actions required to make 'local government reform' happen;
3. Examine the potential governance arrangements to support implementation;
4. Agree next steps and timescales

#### WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

10.00 -10.15	<b>Arrival</b> – tea and coffee, scones
10.15 -10.25	<b>Welcome &amp; Context</b> - by Chair of SP&R
10.25 -10.40	<b>Session 1</b> <b>Where are we now?</b> – by Chief Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- brief re-cap of history of RPA</li><li>- overview of current status and anticipated delivery timetable</li><li>- what does local government reform means for Belfast City Council</li><li>- outline the key challenges BCC may face in moving forward</li></ul>
10.40 -10.55	<b>Session 2</b> <b>What did we learn last time round?</b> – by Chief Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- need to focus attention and energy on Belfast</li><li>- whilst still keeping a watching brief on regional discussions</li><li>- direct engagement with Environment Minister, DoE and other Ministers required</li><li>- Joint political and officer voice</li><li>- Professionalise engagement with Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh through evidence base</li><li>- Need to put enabling legislation in place and then move to delivery</li></ul>
11.55 -11.15	<b>Members discussion</b>
11.15 -11.30	<b>Session 3</b> <b>How do we make it happen?</b> - by Gerry Millar <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- role of elected Members and Transition Committee in driving the process</li><li>- committed senior management team</li><li>- engaging with transferring function departments</li><li>- engaging with Lisburn and Castlereagh</li><li>- communicating and Influencing key stakeholders – manage expectations</li></ul>
11.30	<b>Closing remarks and next steps</b> - by Chair of SP&R