



Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Governance Proposals in the Local Government Reorganisation Bill
Date:	23rd March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
Contact Officer:	

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 2nd March, 2012, agreed that a short report should be prepared setting out the current position with regard to the latest thinking on governance arrangements in the new Councils following the Review of Public Administration.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Committee, at its meeting on 18th February, 2011, had approved a response to a Consultation Document on Local Government Reform which had been issued by the Department of the Environment. A copy of the Consultation Document and the Council's response are attached at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.
2.2	The main governance considerations contained in the 2011 Consultation Paper are set out in Section 3 of Appendix 1. These proposals cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision-making Structures, including scrutiny arrangements;• Sharing power and responsibility (Proportionality);• Checks and balances, including weighted majority voting and call-in; and• Increased transparency, including the development of a Council Constitution.
2.3	The Council's initial comments on the Consultation Document, as approved by the Committee in February, 2011, are set out in Appendix 2.

2.4	Essentially, things have not moved on very far from the position in February, 2011. No new proposals have been produced by the Department and officials have confirmed that the Minister is currently examining the responses to the 2011 Consultation Paper. It is expected that the Minister's position on Local Government Reform will be presented to the Environment Committee in April. At that point, the Council will have an opportunity, if it so wishes, to respond to the Environment Committee on the Minister's proposals either in writing or by appearing before the Committee to give evidence.
2.5	A further report setting out the Minister's proposals for Local Government Reform will be presented to the Committee once they have been published.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	None associated with consideration of the policy proposals.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	To note the contents of the report and that a further report will be presented to the Committee once the Minister has published his proposals.

6	Decision Tracking
None.	

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Consultation Document on Local Government Reform (November, 2010) Appendix 2 – Council response to the Consultation Document (February, 2011)	