



Belfast District Council (Shadow)

Report to	Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Council response to DOE Correspondence on the Partnership Panel
Date:	28 November 2014
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive Designate
Contact Officers:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance & Resources Ext 6148

1.0	Introduction
1.1	Purpose <p>The purpose of this report is to inform the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Minister for the Environment has sought confirmation of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the Council nomination to the Partnership Panel. This is Councillor Paula Bradshaw (for the Shadow Council period), and- that the Council is content to recommend that NILGA be the local government representative body or association who would nominate up to five additional elected Members to the Partnership Panel <p>It is understood that the first meeting of the Partnership Panel will on Tuesday 2 December 2014 at 3.30pm in Castle Buildings.</p>
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>The Minister for the Environment has written to the Council advising of his intention to establish the Partnership Panel as soon as possible (see letter at Appendix A). The Minister has asked to the Council to inform the Department in writing of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the Council nomination to the Partnership Panel- the Council's views on which representative body or association should be represented on the Partnership Panel; and,- confirmation of the two local government Chief Executives that will support local government members to participate fully in the business of the Panel. This will be done through the new Chief Executives' Group

2.2	<p>The Minister has indicated that the Executive has now agreed plans to establish a Partnership Panel between central and local government.</p> <p>The basic structure of the Panel is laid out in Section 103 of the Local Government Act. The purpose of the Partnership Panel will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) give advice to any Northern Ireland department about matters affecting the exercise of any of its functions; (b) make representations to any Northern Ireland department about any matters affecting, or of concern to, those involved in local government; and (c) give advice to those involved in local government. <p>The Act provides for all Executive Ministers (including Junior Ministers) to be members of the Partnership Panel. Local government representation will comprise of a nominated representative (elected Member) from each of the 11 councils and up to five additional elected Members nominated from a representative body or association of district councils. In his correspondence the Minister refers to this as it being possibly NILGA that appears to the Department to be appropriate.</p>
2.3	<p>The Minister has included a number of annexes to the draft letter including the relevant section 103 of the Local Government Act, draft Terms of Reference and Standing Orders for the Partnership Panel and a copy of the DOE Press Release on the establishment of the Panel. Each of these documents has been attached to the report for Member's information.</p>
3.0	Draft Council Response
3.1	<p>Members will note that Councillor Paula Bradshaw was nominated as the Council representative on the Partnership Panel at the inaugural meeting of the Shadow Council on the 11 June 2014. The Chief Executive has therefore already responded to the DOE notifying them that Councillor Bradshaw will be the Council's representative on the Partnership Panel up until 1 April 2015 when the nomination to the Panel will be made as part of the overall new Governance are being put in place.</p>
3.2	<p>The Minister's letter asks the Council for its view as to which representative body or association of local government should be on the Partnership Panel and mentions NILGA as a possibility. Members are therefore asked to advise if they would be content for NILGA to be represented in the interim period until 1 April 2015, when it may be appropriate to review the Partnership Panel membership in line with the new governance arrangements of councils and any potential reconstitution of NILGA.</p>
4.0	Resource Implications
4.1	None
5.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
5.1	None
6.0	Call-in
6.1	This decision is subject to call-in.

6.0	Recommendations
6.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) note the contents of the report including the letter from the Minister for the Environment at Appendix 1 and the accompanying annexes from the DOE; and(ii) advise as to whether they would be content for NILGA to be the nominating body for the additional five (maximum) representatives to the Partnership Panel until 1 April 2015 when membership of the Panel may be reviewed. <p>Members will be aware that any decision will be subject to ratification by Full Council on 8 December 2014.</p>
7.0	Documents attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Letter from the Minister for the Environment on the Partnership Panel for Northern Ireland – Council Nominations</p> <p>Annex A – Section 103 Local Government Act</p> <p>Annex B – Draft Terms of Reference to Partnership Panel</p> <p>Annex C – Draft Standing Orders for the Partnership Panel</p> <p>Annex D – DOE Press release</p>