



COMMUNICATION TO COUNCILS FOLLOWING NILGA ENGAGEMENT EVENT

MEETING WITH MINISTER 15TH JULY 2010

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The office bearers at NILGA wish to thank those for attending the recent engagement event held on the 6th July. It is important those being invited attend these events, as it is an opportunity to facilitate open debate and discussion. But crucially, it is for members to reach an agreement on what is being proposed as options for consideration.

Local Government Association representatives accompanied by members of SoLACE, met with Minister Poots on Thursday 15th July to present a proposal following his request - a delivery model for driving forward the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Agenda. Further work will be carried out during the summer months to support the proposals enabling the Minister to present to the next Executive in September 2010.

Following the recent decision by the Executive, the onus was put back on local government to design, agree, and develop proposals as the way forward; and to formally confirm these proposals to Minister Poots in a special meeting. From the recent engagement event hosted by NILGA Vice President Councillor Helen Quigley; whereby 23 councils were represented, agreement and support was reached on the proposed direction; to support the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Agenda while taking forward the necessary governance proposals for consultation to councils.

- A Governance Structure is currently being developed which councils will have the opportunity for full consultation during August/September on the best option for agreement. Results of which will be collated and presented to the Minister for early September.
- While at the same time, NILGA in partnership with SoLACE members are currently developing an Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Agenda to support councils develop more efficient delivery of customer focused services. Critical to the successful delivery of the Agenda, will be the development of suitable Governance arrangements to ensure there is engagement by both elected members and senior management to provide appropriate accountability at a strategic level. Work on collaboration and efficiencies will be delivered on an "Invest to Save" basis through the development of robust business cases by specific Task and Finish Teams. Areas currently under investigation are Procurement, Information Systems, Human Resources, Asset Management, Support Services and Customer Facing Services. These teams will consider scope for collaboration on a regional, sub-regional or local basis.

- The Transferring Functions Working Group will consider the key issues yet to be addressed to achieve the successful transfer of services from central to local government given the change in the reform timescale. Critical to the successful achievement of the work programme is the Re-Organisation Bill and Minister Poots confirmed at the meeting held on the 15th July, his commitment to taking forward the necessary legislation as soon as possible.

The Minister recognized the achievements to date, and the potential achievements of the 11 Transition Managers who were originally recruited to take through transition. A new brief for development with a governance structure and terms of reference must now be designed if this work is to continue, with the recognition that the Managers will be self financing with the savings being achieved, within each council cluster.

It was confirmed that many areas are already being investigated to see how a framework can be designed to support local government. When discussing the development of an IT system, Minister Poots was in support of this and offered central government's experience in how they have one IT department servicing 11 government departments at central level.

The Minister has given his commitment to supporting local government reform and taking the necessary legislation through to the Executive. A timetable of actions will be provided by DoE to ensure deadlines at both local level and central level are met.

NILGA will continue to support local government and provide full commitment to the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Agenda while working with SoLACE to deliver, in the interests of a stronger local government and best value for the citizens.

For more information please contact:

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