

**Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
and Senior Managers
Northern Ireland Branch**

BRANCH MINUTES

Venue **Banbridge Enterprise Centre**

Date & Time **Friday 2 October 2009 at 1.00pm**

POSITION	PRESENT	APOLOGY
<i>CHAIR</i>	<i>Trevor Polley</i>	
<i>SECRETARY</i>	<i>Liam Hannaway</i>	
<i>VICE CHAIR</i>		<i>David McCammick</i>
<i>TREASURER</i>	<i>Ashley Boreland</i>	
<i>VICE SECRETARY</i>	<i>Liam Flanigan</i>	
<i>AUDITOR</i>	<i>Rodney Connor</i>	
<i>PAST CHAIR</i>	<i>Philip Faithfull</i>	
	<i>John Briggs</i>	
	<i>Alan Burke</i>	
	<i>Tara Cunningham</i>	
	<i>John Dempsey</i>	
	<i>Norman Dunn</i>	
	<i>Robert Gilmore OBE</i>	
	<i>Adrian Kerr MBE</i>	
	<i>Richard Lewis</i>	
	<i>Eamon McCotter</i>	
	<i>Geraldine McGahey</i>	
	<i>John McGrillen</i>	
	<i>Mick McGuckin MBE</i>	
	<i>Peter McNaney</i>	
	<i>Danny McSorley</i>	
	<i>Heather Moorhead</i>	
	<i>Edwin Patterson</i>	

	<i>John Quinn</i>	
	<i>Roger Wilson</i>	
	<i>Nora Winder</i>	

IN ATTENDANCE		
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<i>DOE</i>	<i>Ian Maye, Angela Fitzpatrick</i>	
<i>LGSC</i>	<i>Linda Leahy</i>	
<i>TRANSITION CO-ORDINATOR, ANTRIM / NEWTOWNABBEY</i>	<i>Stephen Finlay</i>	

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 As above.

2 RPA

2.1 Issues Raised by SOLACE Members

Ian Maye provided members with an update on the following issues:

2.1.1 Update on Legislative Timetable

Ian Maye confirmed that the Reform process is on schedule and has the full support of the Minister. There is no plan to hold local government elections next year. The process will enter a new, dynamic, phase from January 2010 and the Minister is confident that he will find appropriate funding solutions to support the process. The Minister intends to make a significant statement to the Assembly at the end of October to update on progress.

The legislation giving effect to the local government reform is being taken forward by three Assembly Bills. The first of these Bills, the **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill**, is already before the Assembly and is being considered in detail by the Environment Committee. This Bill will, inter alia, provide for the making of severance arrangements for long-serving councillors and for the establishment of Statutory Transition Committees. This Bill should complete its passage by the end of the year, thus enabling the establishment of the Statutory Transition Committees early in the new year.

The second, the **Local Government (Finance) Bill** is out for public consultation until the end of October. It is anticipated that this will be taken to the Assembly in early Spring and complete its passage through the Assembly by October.

The **Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill** - which will actually bring the new councils into being - is before the Executive for consideration and if the Executive agrees the proposals a consultation paper will be issued before the end of October. It is anticipated that this will be brought to the Assembly by June 2010 and complete its passage through the Assembly by March 2011.

Planning Reform

Consultation events are now completed and it is on schedule to be introduced to the Assembly by September 2010 with Royal Assent scheduled for March 2011. The issue of Third Party Appeals has yet to be decided.

2.1.2 Update on HR/LGRJF Issues Secretariat

Linda Leahy provided members with an update on the work of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum to supplement the regular communication update that is circulated to members after each LGRJF meeting. It was noted that the Vacancy Control System was implemented from 1st October 2009 on a phased basis. This first phase will apply to vacancies within existing organisations for the posts of Chief Executive, Director, Head of Service, PAs to the above and member services.

The Joint Forum has agreed the Secretariat can commence work on the drafting of Chief Executive job descriptions and person specifications.

The Joint Forum has a 'rolling' HR Implementation Issues Workplan and the next set of priority items are likely to be:

- Staff transfer scheme for local government
- Transfer arrangements for Civil Servants
- Consultation and negotiation arrangements post 2011.

2.1.3 PWC Exercise Phase 2

It is anticipated that the PWC Phase 2 report will be presented to the SLB on 16th October. Ian Maye stressed the importance of SOLACE garnering a considered and collective response to the report, thus ensuring that the figures contained within the report can be backed up and supported. It is planned that the Department will seek NI Executive support for an appropriate funding package before Christmas. SOLACE agreed to hold further discussions at the forthcoming Transfer of Functions Working Group meeting.

EXECUTIVE
to consider appropriate response to PWC report.

2.1.4 Review of Reform Structures

Ian Maye provided members with an update on the review of the reform structures and noted the strategic importance of the new Regional Transition Committee (RTC) and Regional Transition Management Team (RTMT). He confirmed that Policy Development Panels have scheduled meetings up to the end of December 2009.

2.1.5 Financing the Change/Impact of Rates

Ian Maye confirmed that none of the Executive Ministers will want to see rate hikes in May 2011. Consequently, there may be a willingness to secure funding to offset potential rates increases. Creative funding solutions will be explored. However, it will be the responsibility of each TC and TMT to examine ways to soften the impact of potential rates rises; local savings will be encouraged. At the regional level, it is unlikely that regional savings will be identified before 2014/15.

2.1.6 Communications

Heather Moorhead introduced her new Director of Communications, Tara Cunningham. Ian Maye noted that it is the intention of the Department to ensure communication with the public is increased during 2010 to provide information on reform and the future responsibilities of local government and statutory providers. Funding for such communication will be factored into the Department's funding request.

2.1.7 Community Planning Update

Ian Maye confirmed that PDP C is completing its report on Community Planning proposals and this too will be included in a future funding package request. The document will be issued shortly and will include a number of community planning issues for consideration by Council clusters.

2.1.8 Additional Issues:

The Minister has completed his first visit to Transition Committees by visiting the Causeway Transition Committee. He plans to visit the Antrim & Newtownabbey TC on 13th October to be followed by visits to the remaining clusters.

The Boundary Commission report has to be agreed by the Executive before Christmas.

3. Presentations / Discussions

No further presentations.

4. MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of branch meeting on Friday 4 September 2009

The minutes of the branch meeting held on 4 September was proposed to be approved by Philip Faithfull and seconded by John McGrillen. Branch members extended their best wishes to Christine Horner.

4.2 Matters Arising – Action Sheet

4.2.1 *Item 12.1 Petroleum Licensing:* Philip Faithfull noted receipt of a letter from the Minister regarding the future of petroleum licensing.

4.2.2 *Item 2.1.3 Scottish Visit:* The Chairman informed members that the local government visit to Scottish Councils to examine the Target Operating Model (TOM) scheduled for 10th and 11th September has been cancelled. The proposed new date is Wednesday 11th November. Geraldine McGahey, Liam Flanigan and Danny McSorley expressed an interest to attend. Nora Winder agreed to forward details when they have been completed.

4.3 Executive Committee will next meeting on Friday 16 October 2009 in Dungannon and South Tyrone.

As this is the same day as the next SLB meeting, the Executive agreed to circulate a new date/venue.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

5.1 Chairman's Annual Dinner, Friday 16 October 2009

Noted for information.

5.2 Local Government Awards

The Chairman agreed to be the SOLACE representative pending Christine's return.

5.3

DEL offer of CEX places on Action Learning Sets

Members agreed to nominate the following Chief Executives: Philip Faithfull; Geraldine McGahey; Liam Flanigan and from Newry and Mourne, Eddie Curtis.

6. PRIORITY ISSUES

No issues were identified.

7. NILGA

No further issues were identified.

8. CORPORATE PARTNERS

8.1 Tascomi Agreement

Members supported the agreement as outlined. Ashley Boreland noted the branch should broaden out the scope of its agreements

NILGA to inform of proposals for Scottish visit.

SECRETARY to agree new date for Executive meeting.

CHAIRMAN to be SOLACE rep at LG Awards.

SECRETARY to confirm nominations to DEL.

to provide for up to five or six partners.

9. SOLACE CONFERENCES & EVENTS

9.1 Joint Events with CEX Forum: 15 October 2009 at Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn

Members were encouraged to attend this event which will focus on wellbeing and prosperous communities.

9.2 Joint Event with All Island Forum Wednesday 18 November 2009

Sixteen members from the SOLACE NI Branch have confirmed their attendance. Members were asked to commit also to the dinner event.

9.3 Support Programme for Chief Executives working in Transition Committees

Robert Gilmore confirmed that this has been agreed in principle and a date will be issued shortly.

9.4 Skills workshop for Chief Executives / Aspiring to be a CEX

A workshop planned for 21st & 22nd October has been cancelled. Norman Dunn noted that Councils will have to meet the full course fee as it is unfair to assume responsibility on the LG Training Group.

9.5 One day Branch Conference 2009 26 / 27 November 2009

No further work has been undertaken. The Chairman agreed to discuss the matter with Adrian Kerr.

9.6 Gender Steering Group Women's event

Noted for information.

9.7 SOLACE National Conference Programme launched Brighton 20-22 October 2009

Noted for information.

10. CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION

There was no additional correspondence for information.

11. CORRESPONDENCE / CONSULTATIONS FOR ACTION

11.1 Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2009 Consultation Document

Danny McSorley encouraged members to examine the consultation document and to respond as appropriate.

11.2 MAG Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment

Members suggested that the Secretary write to suggest that information should be circulated to the branch.

11.3 Increase in the limit of Statutory Redundancy Pay

Noted.

12. COMMUNICATIONS SLOT

12.1 Distribution of Anti-Viral

John Briggs confirmed that a paper would be circulated to

CHAIRMAN
to discuss
branch event
with Adrian
Kerr.

SECRETARY
to inform MAG
of branch
request to
circulate
information.

members shortly but that it was up to each Council to sign up individually.

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AOB

DATE OF NEXT BRANCH MEETING

Friday, November 6th, 2009
Ards Borough Council
Skettrick House
Newtownards