

SOLACE NI BUSINESS PLAN 2010 – 2011



FOREWORD

The Business Plan has been updated for the period of one Year to allow for the anticipated establishment of eleven new councils.

It therefore addresses the main focus of branch members which will be the implementation of the Reform of Public Administration.

The plan maintains the strategic focus on Branch Aims and Objectives and engages members as professional voice for Chief Executives and Senior Managers who contribute significantly to shaping the future of local public services in Northern Ireland.

This plan has been drafted taking into consideration the past good performance of the Branch in achieving their objectives and deals with the important future challenge of developments in local government due to RPA and the current economic climate.

NI Branch officers 2010:

Chairman	David McCammick
Vice Chairman	Ashley Boreland
Hon. Secretary	Liam Hannaway
Ass. Secretary	Liam Flanigan
Treasurer	Valerie Watts
Auditor	John Briggs
Past Chair	Trevor Polley

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Background of Branch

The SOLACE Group of companies is a membership organisation, a commercial services arm and a charitable trust.

SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers)

is the representative body for senior strategic managers working in the public sector. The Society is run by the members for the members, promotes public sector management excellence, and provides professional development for its Members who come from all areas of the public sector. Whilst the vast majority of its members work in local government, it also has members operating in senior positions in health authorities, police and fire authorities and central government. SOLACE spans all of the UK, having membership in Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England.

SOLACE Enterprises is wholly owned by the Society and operates, in effect, as a "not for profit" public sector company. It provides high quality, customer-focused and practical support to local government, the public sector and the voluntary sector, both in the UK and internationally.

The SOLACE Foundation carries out educational and other work, which falls within the charitable aspects of the

Society's own objectives. Its trustees include Society nominees. The Foundation can provide grants and bursaries for travel and visits to other local authorities in the UK or abroad and for attendance at training events.

Members are drawn from a variety of professional backgrounds and are:

- Local authority Chief Executives
- Senior Executives of local authorities (or other related organisations)
- Members of related International organisations
- Past Service Members

SOLACE members elect a President and Key Office holders annually [Society Officers].

The Director General of the Society is responsible for achievement of the Society's business plan. Formal decision-making and constitutional activity takes place through the Management Board.

SOLACE Branches provide the focus for regional activities and networking.

NI Branch

Founded in the 1973 SOLACE NI is the representative body for senior strategic managers working in local government. Its membership currently includes the 26 local council Chief Executives and Senior Managers, the Chief Executives of the NI Local Government Staff Commission, the NI Housing Executive, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and Arc 21.

The Society strives to promote excellence and expertise in local government management and provides a valuable forum for professional debate with partner organisations in the Province.

SOLACE Northern Ireland aims to promote effective local government and to provide professional support and development opportunities to Chief Executives and Senior Managers.

SOLACE NI is committed to the vision of Public Service Excellence and the values defined in 2004, continue as guiding principles for the Society through the annual business planning process. The Northern Ireland Branch also subscribes to the corporate **key values**.

VALUES

1. Transformation and Leadership
2. Integrity and Courage
3. Judgement and responsibility

4. Vision and Creativity
5. Good Governance and Accountability
6. Learning and Capacity Building

SOLACE Northern Ireland Aims and Objectives

The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives in Northern Ireland launched its first Development Plan in January 2004. The plan has been updated on a regular basis to ensure that the aims and objectives of SOLACE NI take cognizance of the changing environment of local government within Northern Ireland and in the wider UK and International context.

This Business Plan aims to provide strategic focus for members within the context of the challenges that the Review of Public Administration and modernisation agenda bring for the branch. The Business Plan for 2010 sets out a number of **key objectives** under the following themes

- Branch Development
- Professional Development
- Business Partner Development
- Financial Accountability
- Gender Equality

1. Branch And Policy Development

To support Chief Executives and Senior Managers through the exchange of information, policy development and sharing of best practice.

2. Professional Development

To provide quality events that encourages personal development for Chief Executives and Senior Managers within Local Government.

3. Business Partner Development

To deliver a comprehensive, value driven Business Partners Programme and enhance partnership working with stakeholders.

4. Financial Accountability

To ensure effective use of financial resources by management of branch finances in line with the SOLACE financial management systems to add value for members and to the organisation.

5. Promotion of Gender Equality

To support the 'Women in Local Councils' initiative, through the implementation of a Branch Gender Action Plan.

Staff Resources

The Society currently employs one full time member of staff, their remit is to act as secretariat, manage the day-to-day business of the branch and to work with the Branch Officers on local policy issues. The branch receives funding for this post indirectly from Solace Enterprises through the Solace Foundation which covers most of the staff costs.

Financial Resources

The NI Branch Accounts are held centrally and ring fenced for branch use. The

Branch Treasurer holds a small sum for day to day branch sundries. Profit and Loss accounts are provided to the branch on a regular basis. Income is generated through membership fees, corporate partnership agreements, the SOLACE Foundation and events.

Premises

The NI Branch occupies desk space within the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) premises at Unit 5B Castlereagh Business Park under an annual service level agreement. Branch and Executive Committee meetings are held throughout the 26 local authorities on an agreed basis.

Objectives

1. Branch And Policy Development

Objective: To support Chief Executives and Senior Managers through the exchange of information, policy development and sharing of best practice.

Actions and Measurement

To actively promote membership of Solace as a professional body and to participate in a membership drive in June 2010.

To establish an agreed protocol to respond to policy and consultation documents

To respond to consultations on policy issues within the set timescales and influence central government and other agencies decisions with a local government officer professional view.

To respond to the implementation of the Review of Public Administration through maintaining a high profile in advisory and implementation roles with Central Government and Ministers

To develop a protocol which continues to facilitate the appointment of members and senior managers to outside bodies.

2. Professional Development

Objective: To provide quality events that encourages personal development for Chief Executives and Senior Managers within Local Government

Actions and Measurement

To identify the development needs for 2010 by March 2010.

To deliver a series of workshops for Chief Executives in the agreed areas by the end of 2010.

To work with the All Island Forum to provide a joint North South workshop in the autumn of 2010.

To develop a series of joint workshops in spring and autumn with the Chief

Executives Forum which address the RPA transfer of functions cross cutting issues.

To deliver a Branch Conference in Autumn 2010

3. Business Partner Development

Objective: To deliver a comprehensive, value driven Business Partners Programme and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders in the public and private sector.

Actions and Measurement

To continue regular meetings between NILGA and SOLACE office bearers through attendance at NILGA full meetings and working groups when possible.

To continue to meet central government representatives on a monthly basis in response to RPA implementation plan.

To actively encourage and engage with the existing corporate partners as contained in the agreements.

4. Financial Accountability

Objective

To manage branch finances in line with SOLACE management systems to ensure effective use of resources.

Actions and Measurement

To manage the branch accounts in line with SOLACE policy.

To review membership numbers, additional fees and associated membership benefits.

To monitor and review the corporate partnerships and retain the agreements into 2011.

To maintain financial management of branch events.

5. Promote Equality

Objective

To ensure that SOLACE policies and practices meet legal requirements and promote best practice in relation to

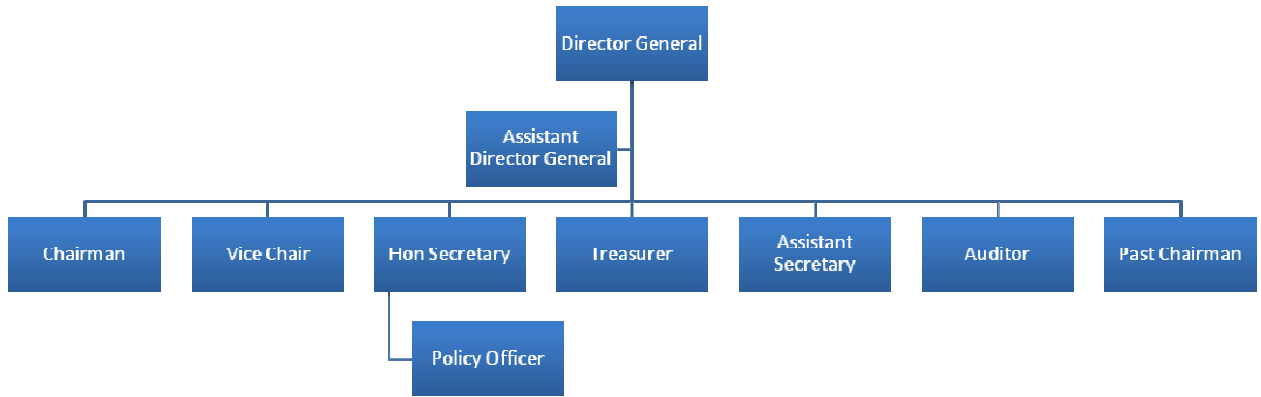
equality; to address gender under representations and job segregation by promoting sex equality and developing and implementing strategies to identify and remove barriers.

Actions and Measurement

To promote and adopt the gender strategies into the branch business plan and corporate aims.

To monitor and implement best practice in the nomination of solace representatives on other bodies throughout the year.

To deliver a women's conference to coincide with Women in local councils week in March 2010.



**NI Branch Structure
April 2010**