

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1: October 2010

Welcome,

To the first newsletter introducing the new Local Government Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) Programme.

Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency are currently key business drivers for the local government sector within NI and will continue to increase in importance as public expenditure cuts bite during the next 4 years. The challenge for councils will be to find ways to deliver "more for less", improving services to their citizens whilst streamlining business processes to deliver tangible savings.

This publication is intended to provide an overview of the ICE programme and answer some of your queries. The questions set out in the newsletter have been received directly from Councils.

Further updates will be published monthly as development of the programme progresses. Contact points are included overleaf if you would like further information.



## What is the ICE Programme and what does it mean for Councils?

The **Improvement, Collaboration & Efficiency (ICE) Programme** is designed to support local councils as they strive to continue delivering high quality, efficient local services in a changing and challenging economic environment.

The ICE Programme is being developed on a collaborative basis for the collective benefit of the sector. Its aim is to deliver efficiency gains and savings through improvement and modernisation of systems and processes and through greater collaboration at local, sub-regional and regional levels.

Individual Councils will reach

decisions on the extent of their involvement in the initiatives and opportunities identified based on the associated business cases and their own local needs.

The programme is managed through SOLACE and NILGA and supported by a range of Working Groups and Teams involving staff from across the sector. Three Working Groups are considering the issues of:-

- Regional Governance
- Improvement, Collaboration & Efficiency proposals and options
- Transfer of Functions.

Within the ICE Working Group

a number of Business/Service focused teams have been established to develop proposals across the following areas:

- Procurement
- Information Systems
- Human Resources
- Support Services (incl finance, payroll, asset management)
- Customer Facing Services

Teams have been asked to develop initial proposals together with a high level business case by December 2010.



## What is the current position with RPA?

In June this year, the NI Executive took a decision that RPA would not proceed to the planned May 2011 timetable and that, instead, elections to the existing 26 Councils will take place in May next year.

Revised RPA proposals will be

presented to the NI Executive in the autumn. In the interim, uncertainty continues as to the timeframe for implementation, funding of any reform programme and the transfer of functions.

Much of the work already un-

dertaken towards RPA will provide a sound foundation upon which the ICE Programme will consolidate through the development of advice and guidance to support a new improvement planning cycle.

## How will the ICE Programme benefit Councils at a local level?

The ICE Programme is open to all 26 Councils. Each will develop their participation based on their own Council's assessment of the proposals developed and how these may assist the delivery of tangible benefits for their area. The programme aims to:

- Identify opportunities for councils and their partners to work together where there is potential for collaborative gain moving towards the community planning and total place agenda of enhanced multi-sector working
- Highlight opportunities for economies of scale through shared resources, joint procurement and process efficiency
- Identify and share best practice from the public, voluntary and private sector relevant to council services and the current challenges faced by the sector
- Promote knowledge sharing, learning and business redesign for the benefit of our citizens.

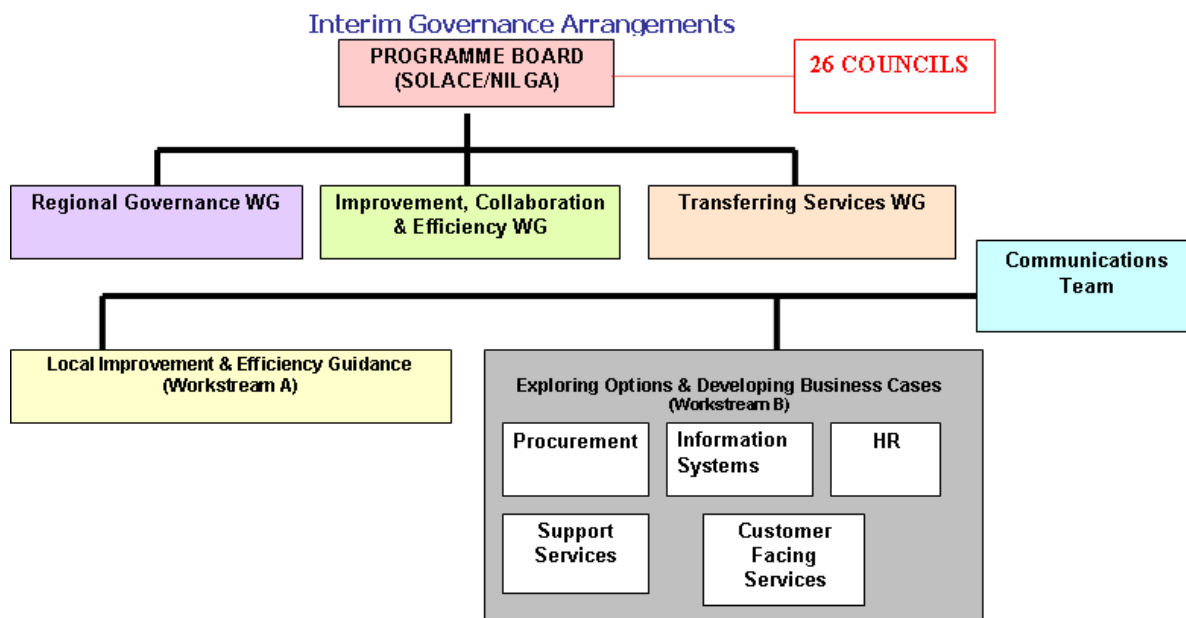
## CONTACTS:

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## How will priorities be set?

Councils have already been consulted on proposals for a new Regional Governance body which will provide leadership, oversight and drive forward the ICE Programme within the sector. Consensus of opinion has indicated that this should be comprised of elected representatives from all 26 Councils.

Each Council will shortly be asked to nominate an elected representative and it is anticipated that the new regional governance structure will be up and running by the end of 2010. Until this time, interim arrangements are in place with programme leadership provided through SOLACE and NILGA working in consultation with the 26 Councils across Northern Ireland (as shown above).

## How will the impact be monitored?

Each Council participating in the ICE Programme will be asked to develop an Improvement Plan (to run concurrently with the Council's Corporate Plan) together with Annual Improvement Statements to monitor and report on progress against the Council's own delivery targets. This will enable the effectiveness of the programme to be assessed and priorities for future action to be identified.