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# 1. The Public Service Commission (PSC) - Update

To date five guiding principles have been accepted by government.

These are:

- An Effective Communications Strategy
- Managing Vacancies Effectively
- Staff Transfers
- Filling New Posts in New Organisations
- Employer Statutory Obligations.

Staff can find out more about the PSC and their recommendations on the [PSC website](#).

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## 2. Progress Report

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- Gavin Boyd took up post as Chief Executive (Designate) of the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) on 1 February 2007. The ESA is due to be operational from April 2008.
- The Central Joint Forum comprising representatives of Government and the trade unions continues to meet monthly to deal with all RPA implementation issues affecting staff. Minutes of meetings are available on the [RPA website](#).
- The locations of the new public bodies has taken a step forward with the publication (for consultation) of the [draft guiding principles](#) which will help decide where they are housed.
- Several pieces of primary legislation, required to implement the RPA, are currently out for consultation. These include the draft Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order, the draft Health and Social Services (Reform) (Northern Ireland) Order and the draft Public Authorities Reform (Northern Ireland) Order.
- Seven Assistant Local Boundaries Commissioners have been appointed. Their role was to carry out the public hearings into the Commissioner's provisional recommendations of the seven new local government districts. They will subsequently submit written reports to the Commissioner based on written and oral representations within each of the areas.

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- 1 April sees the existing 18 Health and Social Services Trusts being dissolved and 5 new Trusts operational. The names of the 5 new Trusts will be:
  - Northern Health and Social Services Trust
  - Southern Health and Social Services Trust
  - Belfast Health and Social Services Trust
  - South Eastern Health and Social Services Trust
  - Western Health and Social Services Trust

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# 3. New Structure for Local Government Reform

Following an independent review a revised structure has been established to deliver the reform programme in local government. There are now three main elements:

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### a) The Strategic Leadership Board

The Board will drive the implementation process and will include 10 political party representatives who are nominated by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and the political parties. It is chaired by the Department of the Environment (DOE) Minister with the NILGA President as Vice-Chair.

### b) Policy Development Panels

The Panels will take their lead from the Board and will include further political representation. They will be responsible for addressing the following areas:

- Human resources and capacity building
- Shared services, finance and estates
- Community planning and governance
- Central local government and performance management
- Transfer of functions.

### c) Social Partners Forum

Local government reform will also be shaped by involvement from social partners, these will include representatives from the voluntary, community and private sectors.

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## 4. The Local Government Boundaries Commission

The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, Dick Mackenzie CB, took up his post on 1 June 2006. The Commissioner's role is to make recommendations regarding the boundaries and names of the seven new districts, and the number, boundaries and names of the wards into which each district is to be divided, and to produce a report by 31 March 2007.

The Minister or the new Executive will then recommend whether to accept the Commissioner's proposals with or without revision.

### What has the Local Boundary Commissioner recommended?

- Belfast Local Government District should reflect its setting as encompassed by the surrounding hills. This would mean that some localities, which are currently part of Lisburn and Castlereagh council areas would be incorporated in the Belfast District.
- Part of Coleraine Borough, at Magilligan Strand, should be incorporated into the new North West District.
- Apart from the above, the Commissioner has proposed that the new council boundaries should follow the perimeters of the existing district council boundaries as grouped together in the legislation.

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