

20 February 2007

**Local Government White Paper: Timetable for Implementation**

**The circular is to inform branches of the timetable for the implementation of the Local Government White Paper, and of the lobbying work that UNISON is doing on the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill**

The Local Government White Paper could lead to one of the most fundamental changes in Local Government since the 1835 Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations. It proposes:

- A major acceleration of the drive for councils to become ‘enabling authorities’ – merely commissioning services with little role in direct service provision
- A requirement for most public sector service providers to work together to achieve improvements in services through Local Area Agreements
- A substantial shift of Government funding away from councils towards unelected Local Strategic Partnerships
- The compulsory introduction of Mayors or powerful council leaders in virtually all local authorities

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill (LGPIH) Bill is the first part of the Government’s plans to introduce the Local Government White Paper. It sets in place the framework for the White Paper, although most of the details will be laid out in the coming months in regulations issued by the Secretary of State.

Overviews of the citizenship aspects of the White Paper and the contents of the Bill were included in previous branch circulars, and the full timetable for introducing the main elements of the White Paper is set out below:

**Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill**

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>First Reading (first announced)</b>         | December 2006         |
| <b>Second Reading (full details presented)</b> | January 2007          |
| <b>Committee Stage (for amendments)</b>        | February – March 2007 |
| <b>Royal Assent (becomes law)</b>              | October 2007          |

## Regulations

| <b>Community Empowerment</b>  | <b>Consultation starts</b> | <b>Regulations finalised</b>                 |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Community Call for Action   | April 2007                 | April 2008                                   |
| Overview and Scrutiny Committees  | April 2007                 | By April 2008                                |
| Community Governance (including well-being power for eligible parishes, local community governance, byelaws)    | April 2007                 | April 2008                                   |
| <b>Place-Shaping</b>  | <b>Consultation starts</b> | <b>Regulations finalised</b>                 |
| Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements and Multi-Area Agreements, Sustainable Community Strategies | Summer/ Autumn 2007        | Late 2007/ Early 2008                        |
| Best Value Guidance (including commissioning, involving local people)   | Summer/ Autumn 2007        | Late 2007/ Early 2008. Involving people 2009 |
| <b>Stronger Leadership</b>  | <b>Consultation starts</b> | <b>Regulations finalised</b>                 |
| New leadership models   | Autumn/ Winter 2007/8      | By May 2008                                  |

UNISON is currently lobbying for a number of amendments to the Bill, in line with our policy. These include changes such that:

- Trade Unions must be consulted on the contents of Local Area Agreements
- Local Area Agreements cover all local health and education bodies, which were not included in the long list of public sector bodies required to work together to provide services
- Local authority scrutiny committees can oversee private contractors, as well as directly provided services
- Primary Care Trusts are not exempt from the recommendations of scrutiny committees

Branches will be fully briefed and consulted on UNISON's response to the regulations when they are available.