

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2005

S.I. 2005 1968

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## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

### CONSULTATION

5. Consultation on the various proposed changes was conducted as follows.

#### *Emergency planning*

6. In June 2003, the Cabinet Office published a consultation document on a draft Civil Contingencies Bill (CCB). At the same time in NI, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) published a consultation document on local issues arising from the CCB proposals. In response, local government bodies highlighted that, unlike the situation in GB, NI district councils had no statutory power to prepare for, or to respond to, local emergencies.
7. Following the consultation, the Northern Ireland Office and OFMDFM issued a joint report indicating that an early opportunity would be taken by the Department of the Environment to bring forward legislation on the role of district councils in civil protection.

#### *Cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin-colouring*

8. The Local Government Act 2003 included provisions extending the powers of local authorities in England and Wales to control the practices of cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin-colouring. The Department proposes to give similar powers to NI councils and consulted key stakeholders between 7 April 2004 and 30 June 2004. The Department received 30 responses, mainly from health bodies (20) and district councils (8), all of which were in support of the proposal.

#### *Consultation Paper*

9. On 19 October 2004, a Consultation Paper, which included a copy of the draft Order, was circulated to NI district councils, NI departments and other interested parties. The Consultation Paper outlined the proposals for amending local government legislation (see paragraph 4) and requested that comments should be submitted by 10 January 2005. The Department received comments from 33 respondents who generally welcomed the proposals.
10. Subsequently, Articles 8 and 25 of the Order have been amended to provide that, instead of local government bodies paying audit fees to the Department which, in turn, would pay the fees to the Comptroller and Auditor General, they will pay the fees directly to the Comptroller and Auditor General. The Department will still be responsible for determining the fees. Also, Article 27 has been amended to take account of Freedom of Information legislation.