

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 17th August, 2007

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hartley (Deputy Chairman) (in the Chair); the High Sheriff (Councillor Kirkpatrick); and Councillors Adamson, M. Browne, Convery, Lavery, A. Maskey, P. Maskey, McCann, Newton and Rodway.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive; Mr. G. Millar, Director of Improvement; Mr. L. Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services; and Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were received from the Chairman (Councillor D. Dodds) and Councillors D. Browne, W. Browne, Cobain, Hanna and Long.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd July.

### Corporate Strategic Issues

#### Performance Management and Improvement Agenda

#### Members' Away Day

The Committee agreed that an away day for the Committee, to which the Chairmen of each of the other Committees and the Party Group Leaders would be invited, be held on 22nd and 23rd August in order to commence discussion on the Corporate Planning process for 2008/2011. It was agreed also, in order to help facilitate the debate, that the Council engage Mr. B. Marr, Advanced Performance Institute, and/or Mr. J. Huish, Improvement and Development Agency, to attend the away day.

**Local Government Modernisation  
and Review of Public Administration**

**Review of Public Administration Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report which provided an update in respect of the Review of Public Administration:

**“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 Since the restoration of the Northern Ireland (NI) Assembly, the NI Executive has agreed that there would be a review undertaken of the local government aspects of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) led by the Environment Minister, Arlene Foster MLA, who has responsibility for local government. Proposals for the Review of the structural and functional decisions of the previous direct rule administration in relation to local government were presented to the NI Executive for consideration at its meeting on 5th July.
- 1.2 On 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2007, the Environment Minister announced that the Review of the RPA decisions relating to local government would consist of three strands. She indicated that the Review would reconsider the number of Councils, the vision for local government and the functions transferring to local authority control. The Review would reconsider also the proposed introduction of a Council-led community planning process and the complementary power of well-being. A copy of the Terms of Reference for the Review is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The Review will be led by a sub-committee of the NI Executive with provision for reporting progress and emerging findings to the Executive. Chaired by the Environment Minister, the membership of the sub-committee consists of the Minister for Finance and Personnel, Minister for Social Development, Minister for Regional Development and the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.
- 1.4 It is intended that the sub-committee will present its final report to the Executive in November, with a view to the Executive announcing its decisions to the Assembly in December, 2007.

**2.0 Key Issues**

**2.1 Review of the RPA local government recommendations**

**2.1.1** Members will be aware that we are rapidly approaching a key milestone within the Review of Public Administration process and a critical period for local government reform in Northern Ireland.

**2.1.2** It is important that every opportunity is taken to inform and influence the forthcoming decisions of the NI Executive. Local government must develop an agreed and cohesive voice and evidence-based agenda for local government reform and ensure that the views of local government are communicated directly to the decision makers and influential people conducting the RPA Review. The passion and pride that drives many involved in local government must not be lost in the debates that will take place in the months ahead.

**2.2 Local Government Modernisation**

**2.2.1** The Environment Minister, Arlene Foster, has indicated her intention to take forward the important work of modernising local government and has suggested that the modernisation programme will consist of the two undernoted work strands:-

**1. Capacity Building, Policy and Legislation**

Strengthening the way in which Councils work by modernising the policy and legislative framework within which Councils operate and by addressing the capacity of elected Members to deliver accountable citizen-centred local government services. Specific areas to be considered include:

- Capacity building
- Finance arrangements
- Remuneration and severance arrangements
- Power to engage in the establishment of companies, PPPs and PFIs
- Mandatory Code of Conduct for members
- Performance management
- Governance arrangements for Councils

2. Service Improvement

Improving the way in which local Councils work in terms of delivering services in a way that is standardised, simple and provides value for money, thus enabling resources to be released by Councils to improve front-line service delivery. Specific areas to be considered include:

- Front-line customer service mechanisms (e.g. one stop shops, call centres)
- Back office services (e.g. HR, finance, procurement, estates)
- Common ICT infrastructure

2.2.2 It is intended that both strands of activity will be taken forward under the auspices of a sub-group of the RPA Strategic Leadership Board. The Department of the Environment (DoE) is currently developing detailed proposals on the Terms of Reference and standing orders for the two sub-groups, with a view to submitting them to the Strategic Leadership Board for consideration at its meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> August.

2.2.3 On both strands, detailed work to address options, costs, benefits and timescales for delivery will be taken forward as a first step. It is envisaged that this work will take approximately 6 months to complete. It is important that local government is engaged in this process and ensures that the emerging modernisation programme is based on sound information and reflects the needs of the sector.

2.2.4 Whilst no confirmation has been given regarding the intended mechanisms to be put in place to secure the effective engagement and support of local government as a sector and from Councils, it is anticipated that the two sub-groups will be chaired by a member of the Strategic Leadership Board with membership consisting of ten elected members. It is anticipated further that 1 elected member will be nominated onto each of the sub-groups by the five largest Political Parties and the remaining five posts on each sub-group appointed through the Northern Ireland Local Government Association's nominating officer.

2.2.5 The DoE will provide secretariat support to each of the sub-groups, with technical support and advice provided by an officer group consisting of a Chief Executive and senior officer from local government and a Civil Servant officer.

- 2.2.5 Members will note that support and expertise may be sought from individual Councils on an interim basis (subject to the final decisions taken by the Executive in November) to develop proposals for a prioritised, costed and timetabled programme of work.
- 2.2.6 Accordingly, the Council must ensure that Belfast is adequately represented, at both an elected Member and officer level, on these sub-groups.
- 2.3 **Development of a Vision for Local Government**
- 2.3.1 As part of the RPA Review process the DoE have appointed PriceWaterhouse Coopers (PwC) to co-ordinate a process of consultation and stakeholder engagement to 'develop and articulate a shared vision for local government in Northern Ireland'.
- 2.3.2 Accordingly, PwC had scheduled a series of focus group meetings for local government representatives to ascertain their views on a vision for local government. A copy of the correspondence, dated 19<sup>th</sup> July, received from PwC is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.3.3 In order to ensure that as much support as possible was mobilised in favour of creating strong, connected and responsive local government, the Chief Executive, in accordance with Standing Order 41, had sought nominations for an All-Party delegation including the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, together with the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor to attend the PwC meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> August in the Templeton Hotel, Templepatrick.
- 2.3.4 In order to ensure that all relevant issues are fully covered and to enable the Committee to express its views on the development of a shared vision for local government, it is proposed that the Council submit a formal response to PwC, with a view to informing their visioning process. The deadline set for the submission of written responses is 31st August, 2007. A copy of a draft response is attached at Appendix 3 for Members consideration and comment.
- 2.3.5 Members will note the receipt of subsequent correspondence, dated 27th July, from PwC informing the Council of two further stakeholder events scheduled for 12th September and 16th October (a copy of which is attached at Appendix 4). The purpose of the first event is to allow PwC to present the emerging findings on the shared vision from the stakeholder engagement process while the second will seek to reflect the progress made on the wider RPA Review.

2.3.6 It is important that Belfast City Council is strongly represented at both these events and, therefore, approval is sought from the Committee for the attendance of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, together with a representative from each of the other Party Groupings.

2.4 **Strengthening the argument for strong local government: Business Case for the transfer of functions from central to local government**

2.4.1 As previously highlighted, the RPA is now reaching a critical stage whereby consideration is being given to the exact nature of the functions (and the resources that support them) which will be transferred from central government to local government. It is essential that there is a common understanding within both central government and the NI Executive of the need for a cluster of functions to be devolved to local government to enable Councils to fulfil their crucial role as a place shaper, enabler and co-ordinator of the delivery of joined-up local public services.

2.4.2 For local government to be effective and lead successfully they need the powers to make a real difference in their communities and improve the quality of life for the citizen. Councils should be given a comprehensive portfolio of functions and responsibilities to be discharged in partnership with regional government to enable them to:

- improve public services;
- widen both access and choice for local people;
- encourage integrated service delivery at the local level;
- allow local elected councillors to become more in touch with their constituents; and
- create attractive, vibrant, prosperous, safe, friendly and sustainable places where people want and are proud to live.

2.4.3 If we are to create strong, vibrant, innovative and responsive local government who deliver the quality of local leadership and joined-up public services that their communities need, there must be a deepening of the community leadership role of Councils and an assertion of the primacy of local government as a key service provider within Northern Ireland.

- 2.4.4** The NI Executive should give respect and freedom to local government and seek not to overburden Councils with bureaucratic controls or to minimise their ability to deliver integrated services to their communities. Local authorities should not be charged with the delivery of a defined set of services but rather with shaping the overall future of their areas and securing their economic, social and environmental well-being.
- 2.4.5** Furthermore, it is important that local government demonstrates its willingness and ability to discharge an enhanced and comprehensive portfolio of functions in a joined-up citizen centric manner.
- 2.4.6** In June, 2007, Mr. Colin Stutt had been commissioned by contributors from the entirety of local government including the Local Economic Development Forum and individual Councils, to develop an evidenced based business case for the transfer of functions from central to local government. A copy of the terms of reference and the successful tender submission for the project is attached at Appendix 5.
- 2.4.7** It is intended that the business case will provide a detailed analysis of the range of functions which should transfer and the rationale for their delivery at a local level. The report will outline arguments in favour of strong local government and will provide recommendations on the nature and level of resources which should transfer. The report will examine also the role of local government in creating sustainable communities and will identify the key components which Councils need to deliver this agenda.
- 2.4.8** Following his literature review and desk research in July, Mr Stutt will undertake bilateral discussions with Departments and other stakeholders, with a view to finalising his report in late August or early September. Subsequently, a detailed report will be submitted to the Committee, at its meeting in September, for consideration and comment.
- 2.4.9** It is important to note that local government is not just about the provision of quality public services. It has a major and unique role to play in helping to develop and deliver a vision for its communities, making decisions and trade-offs on their behalf, and shaping a strategic view of the area and its future - a role referred to as 'place-shaping'.

**2.5 Manifesto and influencing strategy for local government**

**2.5.1** Members will appreciate the need for local government to develop a shared and coherent agenda for moving forward to ensure that the best interests of the sector and the citizen are taken into consideration within the deliberations of the NI Executive.

**2.5.2** It is equally important that an effective communication and lobbying campaign is initiated on behalf of the sector to ensure that all strands of local government are mobilised and convey a consensual view on the need for strong, connected and responsive local government.

**2.5.3** Accordingly, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) is currently co-ordinating the development of a manifesto and influencing strategy for local government. Members will note that this issue, as well as other matters pertinent to NILGA, will be addressed in the subsequent report.

**2.6 Developing an 'Urban Argument'**

**2.6.1** Whilst the Council is centrally engaged within each of the aforementioned strands of work and would be supportive of the general direction of travel regarding the development and promotion of a robust case for local government, it is suggested that the Council should progress a parallel piece of work around the 'Urban' arguments regarding the RPA and the fact that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate.

**3.0 Resource Implications**

**3.1** Whilst there will clearly be Human Resource and financial implications emerging from the Council's ongoing participation and engagement with the RPA Strategic Leadership Board and associated sub-groups, it will be difficult to quantify until a programme and timetable of work is put in place by the Strategic Leadership Board.

**4.0 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to:

- a) encourage Members to seek nominations from their Political Groupings to serve on the proposed two sub-groups of the RPA Strategic Leadership Board which will be responsible for driving forward the modernisation programme for local government;



- b) clarify with the Department of Environment the terms of reference, structure and programme of work for the proposed two modernisation sub-groups;
- c) consider the Council's draft response to PwC's visioning exercise and approve its submission, subject to any amendments made by the Committee, to PwC;
- d) approve the attendance of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, together with a representative from each of the other Party Groupings to the PwC stakeholder events scheduled for 12th September and 16th October;
- e) note the appointment of Mr. Colin Stutt to develop an evidence based business case for the transfer of functions from central to local government; and
- f) indicate whether they are supportive of Belfast City Council developing an urban/city position paper on the RPA."

After discussion, the Committee adopted recommendations (a), (d), (e), approved the Council's draft response to PricewaterhouseCooper's visioning exercise and agreed to support the development of an Urban/City Position Paper on the Review of Public Administration.

**Northern Ireland**  
**Local Government Association**

The Committee considered the undernoted report in respect of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association:

- "1.0      Relevant Background Information**
- 1.1      Members will be aware of the history with regard to the Council's ongoing consideration of its engagement and relationship with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and the emerging proposals being put forward by the Association to strengthen its role within the Review of Public Administration (RPA) and Local Government Modernisation processes.**
- 1.2      Whilst recognising the need for a remodelled Local Government Association which is highly attuned, responsive and accountable to its constituent authorities and which provides a coherent single voice for the local government sector within Northern Ireland, the Committee has previously documented its concerns with regard to the structure, capacity and representative role of NILGA.**

**1.3** In response to the growing concerns of Members regarding the role, effectiveness and capacity of NILGA and the deterioration in the relationship between the Association and the Council, the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> April, agreed that the Chairman of the Committee and Party Group Leaders would meet with representatives from NILGA to discuss both the Council's concerns and the types of changes necessary to enable the Association to represent and promote effectively the views and interests of the local government sector. Accordingly, a meeting attended by representatives of the Council and the Office Bearers of NILGA took place on 1st June, 2007.

**1.4** Members will recall that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2007, had agreed that:

- a) payment of the Council's annual NILGA subscription of £94,169 would be withheld subject to an acceptable Service Level Agreement between both parties being agreed and put in place; and**
- b) an All-Party NILGA Working Group would be established to progress this strand of work and to monitor and co-ordinate the Council's future relationship with NILGA.**

**Members should note that nominations to the NILGA Working Group are currently being sought.**

**1.5** In recent months NILGA have brought forward a number of proposals and initiated particular strands of RPA related activity which Members should be made aware of. These include the:

- development of a manifesto and influencing/ lobbying strategy on behalf of local government to inform and influence the RPA Review being undertaken by the NI Executive;**
- submission of a revised business case to the Department of Environment (DoE) seeking funding to support the seeking funding to enable the Association to provide support to the RPA Strategic Leadership Board; and**
- initiation of a consultation exercise on proposed amendments to NILGA's Constitution.**

**2.0 Key Issues**

**2.1 Development of a manifesto and influencing strategy for local government**

**2.1.1** Members will accept that we are rapidly approaching a critical milestone in defining the future shape and role of local government within Northern Ireland. The initiation of the Executive's Review of the RPA recommendations relating to local government has led to a high degree of uncertainty and suspicion within the sector. Key decisions will be taken over the coming months with regard to the vision for local government and the transfer of functions, assets and resources to Councils. It is essential that local government is engaged within these discussions and takes every opportunity to influence the ongoing deliberations and decisions of the NI Executive to ensure that the best interests of the citizen and the sector are protected and enhanced.

**2.1.2** It is equally important that an effective communication and lobbying campaign is initiated on behalf of the sector to ensure that all strands of local government are mobilised and convey a consensual view on the need for strong, connected and responsive local government.

**2.1.3** The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) is currently co-ordinating the development of a 'Manifesto for Local Government' which, it is intended, will outline the key arguments on behalf of the sector and which can be used as a lobbying tool to inform and influence the NI Executive's Review of the future shape and role of local government within Northern Ireland.

**2.1.4** It is important that all strands of local government and, in particular, Councils contribute to the development of the Manifesto so as to ensure that it is truly representative and endorsed by the sector.

**2.1.5** A copy of both NILGA's draft 'Manifesto for Local Government' and an initial Council response outlining suggestive changes is attached at Appendix 1 for Members consideration and comment. It is important to note that the Manifesto is a working draft and will be further refined in the coming weeks through a process of discussion with key stakeholders.

- 2.1.6 Accordingly, NILGA have scheduled a series of sub-regional focus group meetings with clusters of Councils to enable elected Members and senior officers to contribute towards both the refinement of the Manifesto and the development of an appropriate influencing strategy on behalf of local government.
- 2.1.7 Attached as Appendix 2 is a copy of the correspondence, dated 27th July, received from NILGA inviting the Council to attend a joint NILGA and SOLACE focus group meeting scheduled for Monday, 20th August, 7.00pm till 9.00pm in the reception room of Belfast City Hall.
- 2.1.8 It is important that Belfast City Council is strongly represented at this event and, therefore, approval is sought from the Committee for the attendance of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, together with a representative from each of the other Party Groupings.
- 2.1.9 Furthermore, NILGA has appointed Stratagem, one of Northern Ireland's premier lobbying and public affairs companies, to provide professional support in developing an effective influencing/engagement strategy on behalf of local government (a copy of the Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix 3). This engagement and support can be mobilised to influence Ministers, advisors and civil servants to understand and act on the concerns of the local government sector. Support from other interest groups in the business and community sector would also be sought.
- 2.2 NILGA's 'Revised' Business Case to provide support to the RPA Strategic Leadership Board
- 2.2.1 Members may recall that in March of this year NILGA had developed and submitted, for the consideration of the Department of Environment (DoE), a business case seeking funding to enable the Association to 'staff up' the officer and administrative support for the Strategic Leadership Board and the proposed Policy Development Panels. The business case had anticipated that the total investment required for local government reform would be £8.4million and sought for the DoE to invest £6.2 million with local government making an in-kind contribution of £2.12 million. At that stage, NILGA's business case had been held pending the outworking of the restoration of the NI Assembly.

- 2.2.2 As a result of the recent announcements of the Environment Minister regarding the initiation of a Review and the introduction of an interim implementation structure consisting of a Strategic Leadership Board and two modernisation sub-groups, NILGA had decided to revisit their business plan, with a view to submitting, for the consideration of the Strategic Leadership Board at its meeting on 15th August, a streamlined funding proposal of £1,962,937. A copy of the revised business case is attached at Appendix 4.
- 2.2.3 Whilst the revised business case does not seek financial or in-kind support from Councils at this stage, Members will note that the funding proposals put forward are attached to strengthening NILGA's staffing structure including the appointment of three director posts (i.e., Policy and Strategy Director, Improvement Director and Communications and Engagement Director) and seven additional support staff. This is disappointing given the obvious requirement for funding to be made available to finance the development and delivery of necessary strands of local government modernisation activity.
- 2.2.4 Caution must be taken by central government in committing significant funding support towards the restructuring of NILGA prior to any agreement on the role of the Association within the Review of Public Administration and local government modernisation processes.
- 2.3 **Consultation on Amendment to NILGA Constitution**
- 2.3.1 By a letter dated 24th July, 2007, NILGA submitted for the Council's consideration a consultation paper on 'Amendment to NILGA Constitution'. A copy of the correspondence received and the proposed changes to NILGA's Constitution is attached at Appendix 5.
- 2.3.2 Members will note that the proposed changes to NILGA's Constitution, if accepted, would mean that any member authority upon ceasing to be a member of the Association (resignation) would *'forfeit all rights and claims upon the Association and its property and funds'* and would *'lose any entitlement whatsoever to any share of the assets of the Association'*. However, the Constitution states also that any past member authority *'shall remain liable for its share of the net liabilities of the Association for a period of five years from the date the member authority ceased to be a member of the Association'*.
- 2.3.3 It is important that this change is discussed by the Council's All-Party Working Group on NILGA.

**3.0 Resource Implications**

**3.1 The proposed changes to the Constitution of NILGA, if accepted, could potentially place a financial obligation upon the Council in the event that it decides to resign as a member of NILGA.**

**4.0 Recommendations**

**The Committee is asked to:**

- a) consider NILGA's draft Manifesto for Local Government (refer Appendix 1) and the Council's response and provide any additional comments which it may have;**
- b) approve the attendance of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, together with a representative from each of the other Party Groupings to the joint NILGA/SOLACE focus group meeting scheduled for Monday, 20th August, 7.00pm till 9.00pm in Belfast City Hall; and**
- c) agree that the discussions to be undertaken by the Council's NILGA Working Group includes the proposed change to NILGA's Constitution mentioned above."**

During discussion, a Member expressed concern that the Association was engaging a consultant to provide professional support in developing an effective influencing/engagement strategy on behalf of Local Government and indicated that this should be a role which the Association itself undertook. In addition, with regard to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association Constitution, concern was expressed regarding the proposed amendment which stated that if a Member Authority resigned from the Association it would remain liable for a share of the net liabilities of the Association for a period of five years from the date in which the Member Authority ceased to be a member of the Association.

The Chief Executive pointed out that these issues could be considered and addressed by the Council's Northern Ireland Local Government Association Working Group at its next meeting.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and approved the Council's response to the Association's Draft Manifesto for Local Government.

### Libraries Bill

The Chief Executive advised the Members that the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure was considering currently the introduction of a Libraries Bill. The Committee was planning a programme of public hearings to take place in early September and had written to the Council inviting it to make a written submission. Once all written submissions had been received, the Committee would then decide from which individuals/parties it would take oral evidence.

The Chief Executive pointed out that, due to the tight deadline for responses and since there had been no Committee meeting in July, a written submission had already been forwarded to the Assembly Committee, though it had been highlighted that the submission would be subject to formal ratification by the full Council at its meeting in September. He reminded the Committee that the then Secretary of State, in his final announcements on the Review of Public Administration in March, 2006, had indicated that responsibility for libraries would not be transferred to Local Government but would be transferred instead to a new Northern Ireland Library Authority. Subsequent to that, a review of the decisions taken pertaining to Local Government on the Review of Public Administration was being undertaken by the Executive. In addition, the Education Minister had announced recently that the Education and Library Boards would remain in place for a further year and that the new Education and Skills Authority would not become operational until April, 2009.

The Chief Executive pointed out that both of these recent decisions had raised key questions about the need for the Libraries Bill to progress at this time. Accordingly, the following key points had been included in the written submission:

- the passage of the Libraries Bill should be delayed until the results of the review of the decisions taken pertaining to Local Government under the Review of Public Administration were known;
- the Libraries Bill should not be considered as a stand-alone document but must be placed within the broader context of the ongoing Review of Public Administration with its commitment to modern, customer-focused service delivery at the local level;
- libraries are community facilities and should be integrated with other public service facilities such as education and health for the ultimate benefit of the whole community; the current Bill makes no provision for this type of integration; and
- libraries will be a significant part of any future community planning process – there is no reference to this in the Bill.

The Committee approved the response to the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure.

### Financial Matters

#### Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure in Belfast

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report on the establishment of a legacy fund for cultural infrastructure in Belfast to enable it to be considered in the context of a report on a City Investment Fund which would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

#### Supply of Equipment and Provision of Insurance Services

The Committee granted approval for the commencement of tendering exercises in respect of a framework agreement for the supply of workstations, servers and storage and the provision of insurance brokerage services for the Council.

#### Executive Review of Rating Reform

The Committee was reminded that the new domestic rating system, which was based on capital values, had been introduced in April, 2007. In June, the Minister of Finance and Personnel had announced a short-term review of the system with a twelve week consultation period ending on 31st August. Given that the review period had covered the summer holiday period, the Director of Corporate Services had commissioned the Institute of Revenue, Rating and Valuation to prepare a draft response on behalf of the Council. Accordingly, it was recommended that the draft response to the Rating Review be circulated to the Party Groups on 21st August and that a briefing session for the Committee, to which the Party Group Leaders would be invited, be held at 10.00 a.m. on 29th August.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### Political Processes and Members' Issues

#### The Court of the University of Ulster

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Head of Governance Services, University of Ulster, advising of changes which were being made to the membership of the Court of the University of Ulster.

The Head of Committee and Members' Services explained that earlier this year the University's Governing Body had adopted recommendations in relation to the size of the Court, which would result in a reduction in the number of members. In reviewing the Court membership, the University had been mindful that under previous arrangements approximately 180 external bodies had been invited to have representation on the Court. Some of those organisations had, through time, ceased to play an active role in the civic life of Northern Ireland or beyond and indeed had ceased to exist. However, whilst some organisations had been consistent in sending representatives to the annual meeting, others had not participated to the same extent. Therefore, the revised Ordinance which governed the composition of the Court had reduced the number of organisations which would be entitled to membership of the Court to 50.



The Senate of the University was seeking expressions of interest from organisations which would wish to be considered for membership on the revised Court, with a view to the successful organisations being selected in January, 2008. The Council was represented currently on the Court by Councillors Adamson and M. Browne.

The Committee agreed that it would wish to continue to be represented on the membership on the Court of the University of Ulster.

**National Association of Councillors  
(Northern Ireland Region) – Annual  
Conference and Annual General Meeting**

The Committee was advised that the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) was holding its Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting in the Marine Court Hotel, Bangor on 5th and 6th October. The Head of Committee and Members' Services reported that the Council had been represented at the meeting and conference in previous years. Those Members who had attended had found it to be a valuable opportunity to increase their awareness of Members' issues and to discuss with other Councillors from across Northern Ireland issues of mutual interest and concern. As in previous years, key politicians and decision-makers would be attending the conference and, given that major decisions remained to be taken in relation to the full implementation of the Review of Public Administration, it was considered important that Members take up all opportunities to influence and shape the outcomes of the Review.

The Committee agreed to authorise the attendance at the Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region), the Head of Committee and Members' Services (or their nominees) and a representative of each of the Party Groupings on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members and approved the payment of the appropriate travelling and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

**Good Relations and Equality Issues**

(Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager, attended in connection with these items.)

**Peace II and Wind-down of the  
Belfast Local Strategy Partnership**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th June, it had noted that, given that a number of Elected Members of the Council were members also of the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership, it would be appropriate to ensure that the Partnership's business affairs were managed effectively in the transitional period of the rundown of Peace II. It had been agreed therefore that the Director of Legal Services be authorised to hold discussions with the Partnership with a view to ensuring that due care was exercised in relation to the continuing management of the Partnership.

The Chief Executive reported that the Director had held a number of meetings with the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Partnership and its Operations Director and it had been agreed that the Partnership would provide the Council with a high level due diligence report which would set out the key information on the current and forecasted workload associated with the ongoing delivery and wind-down of the Peace II Project. The report would also identify the areas of risk associated with staffing and any issues connected with Partnership committed projects. The Partnership had indicated that it would welcome assistance from the Council to ensure that the Programme was closed down in a safe and efficient manner.

The Committee agreed to support the proposal to offer assistance to the Belfast Local Strategic Partnership for the winding down of the Peace II Programme and the associated activities of the Partnership in a safe and secure manner and noted that the work would be undertaken on a cost-neutral basis.

### **Peace III Update on Progress**

The Committee noted a report which provided an update on the current position regarding the Peace III Programme.

### **Good Relations Funding Applications**

The Committee was advised that applications for Good Relations grant-aid had been received from thirteen organisations. The applications had been assessed using pre-agreed criteria and a schedule of the recommendations made is set out hereunder:

| <u>Organisation</u>                          | <u>Project</u>  | <u>Recommendation</u><br>£ |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| Dairy Farm Jobclub                           | Connecting Cultures   | £7,560                     |
| Ballysillan Presbyterian Church              | Civic/Church Relationship Conference 2007   | £2,493                     |
| Belfast Festival at Queen's                  | Truth in Translation  | £7,495                     |
| Belfast Islamic Centre                       | Islam for Service Providers   | £4,550                     |
| Community Convention and Development Company | Developing a Health and Lifestyle Project with Men Aged 50+ from the Lower Shankill and the Markets | £4,100                     |
| Community Dialogue                           | Understanding Diversity within Society  | £6,750                     |
| Lagan Watersports                            | Active Diversity 2  | £1,750                     |
| Queen's Film Theatre                         | Bridging the Divide – Part Three  | £8,510                     |
| Shankill Stress Trauma Centre                | Road to Reconciliation (Levels 2-3)   | £4,185                     |

| <u>Organisation</u>                               | <u>Project</u>                           | <u>Recommendation</u><br>£ |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| Springwell House                                  | Road to Reconciliation<br>(Levels 2-3)   | £4,185                     |
| St. Peter's Immaculata Youth<br>Club              | Unsung Heroes                            | £5,000                     |
| Tinderbox Theatre Company                         | The Duke of Hope –<br>Outreach Programme | £4,000                     |
| Ballynafeigh Community<br>Development Association | Shared Neighbourhood Week                | £5,500                     |

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Funding of Mobile Phone Networks**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 20th April, it had approved the award of grant-aid to fund Belfast Interface Project's proposed development of mobile phone networks in the City. The Committee had agreed also that a progress report in relation to the project, a report on mobile phone network projects and appropriate evaluations and other measures of funding for such schemes be submitted to the Committee in due course. Accordingly, the Good Relations Manager submitted for the Committee's information a report which provided details in this regard.

She stated that the report, which was available on the Members' Portal, had been considered by the Good Relations Steering Panel at its meeting on 3rd August. The Panel had recommended that the Committee consider providing, in certain circumstances and for short-term interventions only, support for mobile phone networks in future.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **INTI – Eurocities Project on Migration and Integration**

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to the Eurocities Project on Migration and Integration:

#### **“Relevant Background Information**

**Belfast City Council is a member of the Eurocities Network. Eurocities brings together the local government authorities of more than 120 cities in over 30 European countries and provides a platform for its members to share knowledge and ideas, to exchange experiences, to analyse common problems and develop innovative solutions, through a wide range of forums, working groups, projects, activities and events. The network is active across a wide range of policy areas, including economic development, cohesion policy, provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society, governance and international cooperation.**

In 2004, Eurocities published a widely recognised document “Eurocities - contributions to good governance concerning the integration of immigrants and reception of asylum seekers” in which its members agreed to jointly promote and implement at the local level effective policies for the integration of immigrants by agreement on set principles and commitments. More recently, Eurocities was a major partner in the conference “Integrating cities – European policies, local practices” in Rotterdam in October 2006, in collaboration with the European Commission, confirming the commitment of its members to work with the European Commission on the integration of migrants and to showcase good practise of local integration policies.

The formal title of this project is *Benchmarking Integration Governance in European Cities*, acronym or short title INTI-Cities.

#### Key issues

The INTI-Cities project focuses on benchmarking successful integration structures in European cities and promoting an innovative model for integration governance that is based on creating links between different actors at local, national and European levels.

An innovative method for best practice identification among selected European cities will be combined with a comprehensive dissemination and dialogue strategy that will reach out to the wider European integration community.

A peer review approach will be piloted to achieve benchmarking, this will go beyond a simple good practice collection to deliver expert validated comparative knowledge on integration practises in European cities as well as on the necessary supportive policies environments at local, national and European levels. The results and lessons of the peer reviews will feed into a report with practical guidance on innovative integration governance.

A high level conference on the significant contributions of cities to European integration policy at the beginning of the project will guarantee high visibility as well as launch the community of experts that will implement the peer views and will become a valuable dialogue partner for policy makers.

Six European cities – Düsseldorf, Genoa, Helsinki, Lyon, Malmö, and Rotterdam – will act as host cities and be subject to peer reviews on local integration policies. Belfast will be one of six additional European cities – Barcelona, Belfast, Milan, Tampere, Utrecht and Amaroussion – which will act as team members, actively involved in the project and contributing to the final report.

The issue of inward migration and cohesion of migrants into local communities is of increasing importance throughout Europe. The final report will be helpful in increasing knowledge and assisting in the transfer of experience among cities in Europe.

This project will build on and develop some of the themes included in the recent report on Migrants to Belfast by Dr Neil Jarman, adopted recently by the Council. It will also be complementary to a much larger URBACT project being devised by the Development Department.

#### **Resources required**

The full project will be coordinated by the Eurocities office staff based in Brussels. The 18 month project will run from 1 August 2007 – January 2009.

The majority of the costs will be financed by the EU. Belfast's contribution to Eurocities for this project will be approximately £3,600. The Eurocities project budget will cover the costs of participation (flights and accommodation) of one representative per city at the necessary project management meetings.

The Good Relations Unit has made provision for this expenditure in its annual revenue budget.

#### **Recommendation**

The Good Relations Steering Panel considered this report at its meeting on 3 August and recommends that the Committee approve the Good Relations Unit's participation in this Eurocities INTI project."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### **Conflict Transformation Project Update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report detailing key initiatives – including study visits at no cost to the Council to the USA – to be undertaken over the ensuing twelve months as part of the Conflict Transformation Project.

**Conflict Transformation Project –  
Research Framework**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“Relevant Background Information**

In 2004, Belfast City Council commissioned Dr. M. Morrissey to conduct research and write a report on current good relations activities within the city and to make recommendations for future interventions. The report recommended improved understanding of the costs of service delivery in a divided city and the development of public policy interventions to address proactively the legacies of conflict in Belfast.

Within the applications to the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership (BLSP) for the Conflict Transformation Project, a series of research proposals were grant-aided.

**Key Issues**

The overarching aim of the research framework is to better understand the dynamics of managing a divided city and designing interventions which proactively address segregation. The framework for the research strand of the Conflict Transformation Project comprises 3 tiers:

1. An analysis of the various impacts, including cost, of segregation on service delivery in Belfast;
2. Collection of existing models of good practice, including within the statutory sector, which may be replicated elsewhere; and
3. Recommendations for future public policy interventions which support increased sharing, improved service delivery and the regeneration of Belfast.

The research proposals are designed to complement existing research and other current research initiatives, particularly those under the BLSP-funded network and the Community Relations Council Peace II research programme.

The proposals were discussed at the June meeting of the project’s inter-agency Project Reference Group, with the partner agencies agreeing the terms of reference. Given the short time-frame for the project, invitations to quote were issued in line with standard procurement procedures and 4 organisations have been commissioned. Six of the seven research projects are outlined below:

**Project 1: A study on the implications of providing services in a divided city**

**Research Aim:**

- To examine usage and access patterns, utilising post-code analysis in a range of service provision areas such as leisure facilities and other services, such as housing, training schemes and health provision.

**Resource Allocation: £29,950 Appointed consultant: Deloitte**

**Project 2: A qualitative record of good practice in conflict transformation**

**Research Aim:**

- To identify models of good practice, using Belfast City Council's 'Community Engagement, Good Relations and Good Practice' model as a framework

**Resource Allocation: £10,000 Appointed consultant: MacBride International.**

**Project 3: A qualitative scoping study of sharing and interaction in public spaces**

**Research Aim:**

- To explore the understanding of and the values which underpin shared public space

**Resource Allocation: £29,950 Appointed consultant: Queen's University Belfast.**

**Project 4: An updated quantitative audit of good relations activities**

**Terms of Reference to be issued in November 07**

- To update the map of community relations, peace building and good relations activities in Belfast

**Resource Allocation: £25,000 Consultant: to be appointed.**

**Project 5: A study into the linkages between good relations and local area planning**

**Research Aim:**

- To determine, based on the examination of models from elsewhere and utilising different scenarios/options what is the optimum model for the delivery of good relations within local area planning

**Resource Allocation: £20,000 Appointed consultant: Community Technical Aid.**

**Project 6: A study to explore the process of developing shared residential space in a divided city**

**Research Aim:**

- To undertake community, political and agency consultation across Belfast to explore community attitudes and proposals for shared residential space
- To define a common understanding of shared residential space in Belfast and to determine the barriers and enabling factors of achieving this in the city
- To examine the issues around promoting best use of land for residential use in the city and the wider affordability debate
- To develop a framework which enables statutory intervention to support shared living in the future

**Resource allocation: £24,000 Consultant: to be appointed.**

The final proposal will be commissioned in the autumn on an economic development theme, estimated at £12,000. Draft reports are scheduled for October 07, with final reports due in January 08.

**Resource Implications**

**Financial**

Six of the 7 research projects are 100% grant-aided under the Peace II extension programme through BLSP, at a total of £126,900.

The remaining project is Project 6 outlined above, estimated at £24,000. The NI Housing Executive and Community Relations Council have each committed to contribute £8,000 towards this and the Council's contribution will be £8,000.



### Human Resources

Project staff will commission and liaise with researchers on an operational basis.

### Recommendations

1. That the Committee notes the information in this report.
2. That the Committee approves £8,000 match-funding for the housing research project; the Good Relations Unit has made provision for this expenditure in its current revenue budget.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Good Relations Issues, Format of Future Reports to the Committee

The Committee was reminded that one of the principal aims of the Improvement Agenda and the revised Committee structure was to support a more efficient system of governance for the Council and to speed up the decision-making process. Although all the Sub-Committees of the Council had been abolished, the Committee had agreed that a certain number of working groups should continue. The Good Relations Steering Panel was one of these and it will continue to meet on a monthly basis to consider a wide range of issues. To date, reports to the Committee arising from matters considered by the Panel had taken the form of individual reports grouped under the general heading of Good Relations.

The Improvement Agenda clearly envisages that Members of the new Strategic Policy and Resources Committee should be able to concentrate on those issues of a major policy or strategic nature. It is therefore proposed that, in future, all items which had been considered by the Good Relations Steering Panel would be submitted to the Committee in the form of the minutes of the Panel meeting held that month. All of the decisions and recommendations of the Panel would be included in the minutes and this should prove a more efficient method of reporting information to the principal Committee and a more effective use of Committee time. On occasions, it might be appropriate or necessary for a Good Relations issue to be considered directly by the Committee without first having been submitted to the Panel. In such circumstances, a separate report would be produced.

The Committee agreed, in future, to receive the minutes of the Good Relations Steering Panel rather than separate reports on individual Good Relations issues.

### Policy Issues

#### Northern Ireland Assembly Liaison

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details on how the Members could effectively liaise with, and influence the work of, the Northern Ireland Assembly to ensure that the interests of the City of Belfast were most effectively represented. The Committee agreed that Assembly/Ministerial updates be added as a standing item to the monthly meeting of the Committee and that an influencing strategy be developed in order to pursue the Council's strategic agenda for the City.

### Human Resources Issues

#### Single Status Implementation – Update

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 2nd April, had ratified an amended Single Status Implementation Agreement which had been put subsequently to the four Trade Unions involved with a request that they ballot their membership thereon.

The Head of Human Resources reported that the Trade Unions had now concluded their ballots and had secured an overwhelming yes vote in favour of the Agreement. Accordingly, the pay and grading provisions contained within the Agreement would now be implemented with effect from 1st July, 2007, which was the date specified within the Agreement. He pointed out that arrangements had been made in consultation with the Payroll Section, Council Departments and the Trade Unions to apply the new pay rates in September.

He advised the Members that a communications programme would be initiated to inform the workforce of the outcome of the Agreement; the implementation programme for the application of the new pay rates; and the payment of arrears and compensation as appropriate.

With regard to Craft employees, a meeting would be convened with the Craft Trades Unions in order to finalise a local agreement in respect of their members – who were not covered nationally by the Single Status Arrangements – based on the pay and grading provisions of the Council's Single Status Agreement. He stated that negotiations would continue in order to conclude outstanding issues including working time, standby/call-out and car users allowances. In this regard, the Members' Single Status Working Group would be convened as necessary to give direction on these issues, which it was anticipated would be resolved by the end of the year.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and commended the work of the Head of Human Resources and his staff and praised the co-operation received from the Trades Unions in establishing a Single Status Implementation Agreement.

#### Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Order 55 and the authority delegated to him, the Director of Corporate Services had authorised the appointment of Ms. J. Mitchell, Community Awareness Officer, who was related to an existing member of staff.

The Committee noted the appointment.

**Retirement of the  
Head of Human Resources**

(Mr. S. Black, Head of Human Resources, left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.)

The Chief Executive reported that Mr. S. Black, Head of Human Resources, who was approaching sixty years of age and would have completed 43 years of service by the end of the current year, had made a formal request under the provisions of the pension scheme to retire five months early on 31st December, 2007. The Council's Policy Statement on Employer's Discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme, as approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 22nd August, 2003, provided that "each request (for early retirement) from existing staff members would be judged equally on its own merits and in exercising its discretion the Council would seek to ensure that the cost of early retirement would be satisfactorily offset by the combined benefits for the Council of the cost savings of release and other factors such as service efficiency and effectiveness."

The Chief Executive outlined the important work which had been undertaken by the Head of Human Resources in recent years and indicated that, with the current Human Resources agenda nearing completion and the initiation of a new strategic direction for Human Resource management, this could be seen as an appropriate time to review the nature of the Council's most senior Human Resources post. Such a review would undoubtedly impact on other aspects of the work of the Corporate Services Department, which would require a broader review in light of the introduction of the Better Business System and the Efficiency Review.

The Committee agreed, since there was a clear business case for his early release, that the request of the Head of Human Resources to retire five months early on 31st December, 2007 be granted under Section 2.1 of the Employer's Discretions.

**Recruitment to the Post of  
Head of Human Resources**

The Chief Executive advised the Members that, consequent upon the previous decision, the post of Head of Human Resources would become vacant in December. The filling of the post would have to be considered in the context of anticipated changes in the role and responsibility of the post, the anticipated market place issues with regard to the recruitment of Senior Human Resource professionals and the identified need to review the structure of the Corporate Services Department as part of an overall review of the Council's organisation/top management structure to meet its own objectives and to prepare for the Review of Public Administration.

He explained that the current role of the Head of Human Resources embraced Human Resource operations, policy and strategy, together with the recent addition of operational responsibility for the work of the Business Improvement Section, with the postholder reporting to the Director of Corporate Services. The Council's strategic direction reflected in the Improvement Agenda and the Value Creation Map process highlighted the need for the Council to invest more heavily in its strategic human resource management, with organisational design development becoming an increasingly important element of the post. The salary for the post, which was on the lower half of the Heads of Service salary band, was currently £54,060 to £64,356 per annum.

An evaluation of the post, taking into account the addition of the organisational design and developmental elements arising from the Human Resource Strategy and the full integration of the Business Improvement Service, would justify the post being remunerated on the upper half of the Heads of Service salary band, currently £65,640 to £75,939 per annum. Such a post could be re-titled Head of Human Resources and Organisational Design and Development. This evaluation had been provided by Mr. Huw Jones-Owen, former Employer's Secretary of the Greater London Employers' Association, who had been the author of the Job-evaluation Scheme used by the Council and who had, for many years, evaluated Head of Service and Chief Officer posts for the Council. Research through the Council's contractors for the provision of competency-based selection and recruitment and the executive recruitment wing of Employment Agencies had indicated that such a level of salary would be required in order to attract suitably skilled and experienced candidates. Research had also indicated that it would be necessary to adopt a very proactive recruitment approach to ensure potential candidate identification, rather than leaving such a vital appointment to chance.

Accordingly, it was recommended, given the increasing importance of organisational development and strategic human resource management to the Council's Improvement Agenda and the need to attract experienced and talented professionals to apply for the vacancy, that:

- (i) the Council commence a recruitment exercise for a post of Head of Human Resources and Organisational Design and Development at a salary level of £65,640 to £75,939;
- (ii) the recruitment campaign begin immediately with executive search being employed to encourage the strongest field possible for the post;
- (iii) the Chairman (Councillor D. Dodds), the Deputy Chairman (Councillor Hartley), one other Member and the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services be appointed to the shortlisting/interview panel; and
- (iv) a robust recruitment methodology be applied and that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman agree with the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services the details for the recruitment campaign and the associated documentation.

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that Councillor Long be appointed as the fifth Member of the panel.

#### **Absence Management. Overtime and Employment of Agency Staff**

The Committee considered a report which provided information on the Council's performance in managing absence, overtime and the number of agency staff during April till June, 2007.

### **Absence Management**

The absenteeism for the period had shown an average of 3.27 working days lost per employee, which represented a reduction of 1.15 days per employee on the previous quarter. This meant that the Council was on target to meet its 2 day target reduction for 2007/08. The Director of Improvement pointed out that 71% of staff had no absence during quarter one, with 65% of the overall absence in the Council during the period being attributed to long-term sickness. He stated that 6.8% of staff had been categorised as long-term absence, which represented a decrease on the previous quarter of 7.8%.

### **Overtime Costs**

The total cost of overtime during the period was £1,118,556, representing a total number of overtime hours worked of 101,295. This represented a 6.6% decrease in terms of cost and 6.1% decrease in terms of hours worked compared to the same period last year.

### **Employment of Agency Staff**

As at 30th June, the number of full-time equivalent posts filled by agency staff was 227.7. This represented an increase of 49.7 in comparison with the same quarter for the previous year. The main reason for the increase was the additional use of agency operative workers filling front-line vacancies, the recruitment of which had been delayed until the outcome of Single Status had been known.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Early Termination of Employment Arrangements for Council Staff**

The Committee agreed that a briefing session be held on a date to be determined in conjunction with the Chairman (Councillor D. Dodds) to consider options for the early termination of employment arrangements for Council staff.

### **Accommodation and hospitality**

#### **City Hall – Use of Accommodation and Provision of Civic Hospitality**

The Committee was advised that the undernoted requests for the use of accommodation in the City Hall and the provision of civic hospitality had been received. An indication as to whether they fell within the criteria approved by the Committee and the recommendation thereon of the Head of Committee and Members' Services is set out hereunder:

| Organisation/<br>Body  | Event/Date –<br>Number of<br>Delegates/Guests  | Request   | Comments  | Recommendation  |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Irish Academy<br>of Management                                     | Irish Academy of<br>Management<br>Annual Conference<br><br>4 <sup>th</sup> September, 2007<br>(evening)<br><br>Approximately 250<br>attending  | Provision of<br>hospitality in the<br>form of a<br>pre-dinner<br>drinks reception   | It is estimated that<br>300 delegates will be<br>staying in<br>accommodation in<br>Belfast  | Provision of a<br>pre-dinner drinks<br>reception in the<br>form of wines and<br>soft drinks<br><br>Approximate cost<br>£750<br><br>Approximate<br>budget remaining<br>£164,517  |
| The Institute of<br>Chartered<br>Secretaries and<br>Administrators | The Institute of<br>Chartered<br>Secretaries and<br>Administrators<br>Annual Conference<br>Dinner<br><br>11 <sup>th</sup> October, 2007<br>(evening)<br><br>Approximately 200<br>attending   | Provision of<br>hospitality in the<br>form of a<br>pre-dinner<br>drinks reception   | It is estimated that 30<br>delegates will be<br>staying in<br>accommodation in<br>Belfast   | Provision of a<br>pre-dinner drinks<br>reception in the<br>form of wines and<br>soft drinks<br><br>Approximate cost<br>£600<br><br>Approximate<br>budget remaining<br>£163,917  |
| Royal Air Force<br>Aldergrove                                      | Reception to mark<br>the 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary<br>of the Royal Air<br>Force Aldergrove<br>being granted the<br>Freedom of the City<br>of Belfast<br><br>23 <sup>rd</sup> September,<br>2007 (afternoon)<br><br>Approximately 500<br>attending | Use of the City<br>Hall and the<br>provision of<br>civic hospitality<br>in the form of a<br>drinks reception<br>and canapes | This event will<br>conclude a day of<br>celebration for the<br>Royal Air Force which<br>will include a parade<br>through the City and<br>a service at St<br>George's Parish<br>Church<br><br>This reception seeks<br>to celebrate the 50 <sup>th</sup><br>anniversary of the<br>granting of the<br>Freedom of the City<br>of Belfast on Royal<br>Air Force Aldergrove | Use of the City<br>Hall and the<br>provision of civic<br>hospitality in the<br>form of wines,<br>beers, soft drinks<br>and canapes<br><br>Approximate cost<br>£5,000<br><br>Approximate<br>budget remaining<br>£158,917 |

| <b>Organisation/<br/>Body</b>                                      | <b>Event/Date –<br/>Number of<br/>Delegates/Guests</b>  | <b>Request</b>   | <b>Comments</b>  | <b>Recommendation</b>  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Belfast City Council, Health and Environmental Services Department | Reception to mark the contribution of those who responded to the recent flooding in the city<br><br>18 <sup>th</sup> September, 2007 (afternoon)<br><br>Approximately 400 attending | Use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a finger buffet reception | This event seeks to acknowledge the contribution made by Belfast City Council Officers and Multi-agency partners who include Emergency Services, Utilities, Agencies, Voluntary organisations and Government Departments during the flooding emergency in June<br><br>This event meets the Council's Corporate Strategic Objective of Providing Civic Leadership | Use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a finger buffet reception<br><br>Approximate cost £4,000<br><br>Approximate budget remaining £154,917 |

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Belfast OrangeFest**

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Committee and Members' Services undertook to submit to the Committee in due course a report on the Belfast OrangeFest event which had been held in the City Hall on 11th July.

Noted.

### **Interim Arrangements Relating to the Lord Mayor's Installation Dinner during the Decant of the City Hall**

The Committee was reminded that the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 3rd November, had agreed to decant from the City Hall in order to allow major refurbishment works to be undertaken. The decant from the building would necessitate an alternative venue for the holding of the Lord Mayor's Installation Dinner in 2008 and possibly in 2009. Accordingly, arrangements had been made to host the dinner on Saturday, 20th June, 2008 and Saturday, 27th June, 2009 (should the City Hall not be available) in the main auditorium of the Belfast Waterfront Hall. The Council-owned building would provide an appropriate setting for the event and was one of very few venues in the City which would be able to accommodate the number of guests catered for at this function and also meet all the requirements necessary to stage the event.

The Committee noted the revised arrangements in relation to the Lord Mayor's Installation Dinner during the decant of the City Hall.

**Request for the use of the City Hall Grounds:  
Irish Air Ambulance**

The Head of Facilities Management advised the Members that a request had been received from Irish Air Ambulance seeking permission to land a helicopter on the front lawn of the City Hall on a number of occasions over a two-day period and to invite members of the public and representatives from a number of media, emergency service and voluntary organisations to view the helicopter. It was proposed to hold the event in mid to late September, 2007.

Ireland Air Ambulance, which was a registered charity, would provide the first dedicated accident emergency helicopter service in Northern Ireland. The helicopter would be based at Aldergrove International Airport and, within three minutes following a 999 call, would be airborne and available to deliver trained trauma/medical personnel directly to emergencies. The helicopter used would have the capacity to land directly on the roadside even in an urban environment. The organisation had requested also that the Council consider allowing the City Hall grounds to be used as a future landing base for emergencies within the City centre.

The Committee agreed to grant permission to Ireland Air Ambulance to use the City Hall grounds for the landing, display and departure of an emergency response helicopter over a two-day period in September and approved, in principle, the use of the City Hall grounds as a potential landing area for the emergency helicopter, subject to a satisfactory review of the aforementioned exercise.

**Use of the Waterfront Hall for  
Nominated charity Events**

The Committee was reminded that the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff had authority to allocate the use of the City Hall to a maximum of twelve nominated charities each year. However, with the imminent decant of the City Hall this would not be possible during the next eighteen month period until the civic parts of the building could be brought back into use after refurbishment. Accordingly, the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the three civic dignitaries, had approached the Director of Corporate Services enquiring about the possibility of using the Waterfront Hall as a venue for those events. The Managing Director of the Hall was content with the proposal, subject to availability and reallocation of costs.

The Committee agreed, given the exceptional circumstances of the closure of the City Hall, that the use of the Waterfront Hall be permitted on up to twelve occasions for use by the Lord Mayor's, the Deputy Lord Mayor's and High Sheriff's nominated charities, subject to availability.

**City Hall Decant: Members' Accommodation**

The Head of Facilities Management submitted a report in relation to the accommodation which would be made available for the Elected Members during the decant of the City Hall. The report provided details in relation to the layout of the Members' rooms on the 3rd floor of the Adelaide Exchange building, the Council Chamber/Committee Room, car parking and access control, out-of-hours facilities, visitor management, the use of Clarendon Dock by the three Civic Dignitaries and the proposed decant timetable.



After discussion, during which the Chief Executive assured the Members that all the concerns which had been expressed regarding the proposed layout of the Members' rooms and the car parking facilities would be addressed to the satisfaction of the Members concerned prior to the move being finalised, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**City Hall Decant:  
Redeployment of Front-Line Staff**

The Committee was reminded that the closure of the City Hall during the decant would affect a number of groups of front-line staff. This involved a total of over 60 employees, including full-time and part-time cleaners, cleaners/labourers, security personnel, reception staff and telephonists. The Head of Facilities Management advised the Members that consultations had been ongoing for some time with all the relevant Trades Unions with a view to providing mutually acceptable redeployment opportunities for all those members of staff affected. He outlined the agreements which had been reached with each of the group's Trades Unions and recommended that these be endorsed by the Committee.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Provision of Automated External Defibrillators**

In the absence of Councillor D. Browne, who had first raised this matter, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report on the provision of automated external defibrillators.

**Consideration of Consultative Documents**

**Code of Practice on the  
Appointment of Independent Members  
to District Policing Partnerships**

The Committee was advised that the Northern Ireland Office, Policing Division, had issued a draft Code of Practice on the appointment of Independent Members to District Policing Partnerships and was seeking comments thereon. The draft Code had been prepared to reflect the legislative changes which would be brought about by the commencement on 4th September, 2007 of a range of District Policing Partnership related provisions in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2003 and the Northern Ireland (St. Andrews Agreement) Act 2006. The Head of Committee and Members' Services submitted for the Committee's consideration a draft response in this regard, copies of which were available on the Members' Portal.

In addition, the Committee was requested to consider the appointment of between two and four Members to sit on the Interviewing Panel for the selection of Independent Members of the District Policing Partnership.

The Committee approved the response submitted and agreed to nominate one Member from each of the four largest parties on the Council to sit on the Interviewing Panel for the selection of Independent Members of the District Policing Partnerships.