

Public Document Pack

Committee and Members' Services Section
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Belfast BT2 8GD



19th May, 2008

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Councillor

The above-named Committee will meet in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, Adelaide Exchange on Friday, 23rd May, 2008 at 10.00 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Minutes
2. Modernisation and Improvement
 - (a) Review of Public Administration - Taking the Process Forward (Pages 1 - 10)
 - (b) Review of Policy on the Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland (Pages 11 - 42)
 - (c) Northern Ireland Local Government Association (Pages 43 - 68)
 - (d) Northern Ireland Assembly Liaison (Pages 69 - 72)
3. Corporate Plan and Performance Management
 - (a) Performance Management Framework (Pages 73 - 76)
 - (b) Strategic Information Management Framework (Pages 77 - 80)

- (c) Proposed Assurance Framework (Pages 81 - 84)
- (d) Code of Governance (Pages 85 - 106)
- 4. Democratic Services and Governance
 - (a) Arrangements for Somme Anniversary Ceremony - July, 2008 (Pages 107 - 108)
 - (b) Requests for the Provision of Hospitality (Pages 109 - 112)
 - (c) Replacement of Lord Mayor's Vehicle (Pages 113 - 114)
 - (d) Business in the Community Awards (Pages 115 - 116)
- 5. Finance
 - (a) Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel (To Follow)
 - (b) Financial Planning Cycle (Pages 117 - 120)
 - (c) Travel Services - Extension of Contract (Pages 121 - 122)
- 6. Human Resources
 - (a) 2007-08 Absence Rates (Pages 123 - 134)
 - (b) Community Outreach (Pages 135 - 138)
 - (c) Standing Order 55 - Employment of Relatives (Pages 139 - 140)
- 7. Asset Management
 - (a) Appropriation of Land at Shore Road Playing Fields (Pages 141 - 144)
 - (b) Capital Programme: McCrory Park - Play Area and Associated Facilities (Pages 145 - 148)
 - (c) Temporary Licence and Disposal of Land at Dundonald Cemetary (Pages 149 - 156)
 - (d) City Hall Grounds Tours (Pages 157 - 160)
- 8. Good Relations and Equality
 - (a) Minutes of Good Relations Steering Panel (Pages 161 - 168)
 - (b) Book of Honour for Belfast (Pages 169 - 170)
- 9. Cross-Cutting Issues
 - (a) Update on Resilience of IT Infrastructure (Pages 171 - 176)



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of Public Administration - taking the process forward
Date:	Friday 23 rd May, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer (Ext. 6202)

1.0	<u>Relevant Background Information</u>
1.1	As Members will recall, on 31 st March, 2008 the Environment Minister, Arlene Foster MLA made a statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly on the final recommendations of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) and the future shape of Local Government within Northern Ireland. In her speech, the Minister stated that the current 26 District Councils would be reduced to 11 and a range of additional functions would transfer to Councils.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	Members will accept that we are rapidly approaching a critical stage in the RPA process and in defining the future shape and role of local government in Northern Ireland. There are a number of issues which need to be considered in moving the RPA process forward.
2.2	Critical Path
2.2.1	It is important to recognise that the key driver over the next 6 months will be the need to meet the necessary legislative timetable. The critical path works back from the Local Government Bill which will give affect to the new local government structures. The key milestones in the RPA process are outlined below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boundaries Commissioner appointment released - April 2008 ▪ Boundaries Commissioner appointed - July 2008 ▪ Establishment of Transitional Committees - July 2008 ▪ Instructions to legislative Counsel - August 2008 ▪ Report of Boundaries Commissioner - June 2009 ▪ Local Government Miscellaneous Bill - Mid 2009 ▪ Report of District Electoral Area Commissioner - July 2010 ▪ Local Government Legislative Bill in place - January 2011 ▪ Local Government Elections - May 2011
2.2.2	DoE has indicated that there is an immediate requirement for policy development in the areas of governance, community planning, central/local government relations, HR and estates as instructions to Legislative Counsel are required by August 2008.
2.3	Delivery Structures
2.3.1	In terms of delivery structures, Members will be aware that it is intended that a two-tier model will be developed consisting of a Strategic Leadership Board and three Policy Development Panels (a copy of the terms of reference is attached at Appendix 1). It is proposed that the Strategic Leadership Board should fulfil the role of Council providing overall direction to the process and the Policy Development Panels should fulfil the role of Council Committees. A series of task and finish working groups will be established principally comprising of officers from both central and local government. The working groups would be tasked with undertaking the detailed work programmes and reporting back to the Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels (PDP).

2.3.2	Members will accept that the current level of capacity within the Local Government sector to engage appropriately within these structures is limited. Therefore, there is an opportunity for the Council, if deemed appropriate, to nominate relevant officers onto the respective work streams of the PDPs. Initial officer suggestions are outlined in Appendix 2 and are based on the Council's engagement in the original RPA Working Groups.
2.3.3	In terms of making political nominations to the PDPs, it is intended that the NILGA nominating officers, through discussions within their respective Party Groups, will lead this process. Accordingly, each Party Group leader within the Council has been encouraged to engage at a Party Group level to ensure adequate consideration is given to Belfast Elected Members within the nomination process for the PDPs.
2.3.4	Members will note that, at best, the Council may secure one officer place on each of the PDPs and, therefore, it is intended that appropriate internal support mechanisms would be put in place to ensure emerging issues are given due consideration and a corporate position articulated.
2.3.5	Consideration needs to be given to the resource and capacity implications of the Councils participation on the SLB and PDPs given that business as usual and other internal reforms must be delivered.
2.4	Belfast as the Continuing Authority
2.4.1	Members will accept that the circumstances for the Council are unique given the position of Belfast City Council as one of the only local government bodies that will provide a degree of continuity throughout the change process.
2.4.2	In terms of transitional arrangements, Belfast is somewhat ahead of the game given the fact that it will not need to give significant consideration to the amalgamation of the Council with other surrounding local authorities, but rather can focus its consideration and efforts on how the transferring functions are to be integrated within the Council and the impact this would have on organisational structures, systems and processes.
2.4.3	In this regard, it would be appropriate to focus potential testing of transferring functions or initiating pilots on Belfast as the closest representative example of the form of local authority structure that will exist, post RPA, under the 11 Council model.
2.4.4	This would also provide the Council with a strong platform to take forward accelerated work around local government modernisation and make bids for associated modernisation funding. This work would need to be considered within the context and align with the Council's own ongoing modernisation work.
2.4.5	The commencement of pilot initiatives and the development of necessary policy frameworks would form the logical preparatory stages of any transitional or shadow process associated with the full transfer of functions. It would also provide the opportunity to strengthen institutional and working relationships with transferring departments in the immediate future.
2.4.6	The Environment Minister, Margaret Ritchie MLA, has indicated her willingness to investigate trial-blazing pilots with Belfast around the transfer of Urban Regeneration functions. Consideration should be given to the possible extension of such pilots to give expression to the wider community planning agenda and addressing the quality of life issues which affect our city and its people.
2.4.7	This approach would have to be predicated on more detailed consideration of the potential structures and processes necessary for the assimilation of the new functions into the current Council organisation.
2.4.8	The Council, at both political and senior officer level, need now to start thinking strategically of how the Council could take full advantage of and engage with the RPA and local government modernisation processes and how the transferring functions will be incorporated within and managed by the Council.

2.4.9	There is a compelling need for political engagement between the Council and the Ministers responsible for transferring functions. It is therefore suggested that once the Council's Corporate Plan is agreed, the Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources should request meetings with relevant Ministers for a cross party delegation comprising the Committee Chair and a representative from the Alliance and PUP to discuss alignment of the Council's Corporate Plan with the Departmental Plans of relevant Ministers.
2.5	Potential Impact on Organisational Structure
2.5.1	The RPA as outlined in the statement by the Minister in March 2008 will involve a different set of relationships and functional responsibilities for local government in Northern Ireland.
2.5.2	The approach to these changed relationships and potential operations will be critical in shaping a new structure for local government that has both the ability and powers to deliver the enhanced responsibilities envisaged under the RPA.
2.5.3	If the Council is to demonstrate that it is an organisation " fit to lead and serve "; it needs to get its own house in order and clearly define its desired outcomes from the RPA. Greater clarity and understanding is required to enable the Council to move forward and pursue an approach that seeks to integrate transferring functions in a manner that supports the development of broader Council agendas around community planning and area based regeneration.
2.5.4	Consideration must be given to the necessary changes to the existing Council structures and processes to ensure that the transition and integration of new functions is managed and the implications and opportunities arising from the published RPA proposals align with the emerging corporate priorities.
2.5.5	There is a clear need for the Council to progress the internal consideration and processes that will prepare the organisation and lay the foundations for increasing engagement and integration of transferring functions (e.g. Planning, Urban Regeneration, Community Planning), in advance of statutory transfer. It is essential to develop an approach to the assimilation of the functions that presents a coordinated engagement, consistency and relates to an overall vision or objective for the Council. In so doing, the Council could call for a more meaningful and accelerated process for the transfer of functions.
2.5.6	In preparing for the statutory transfer of functions, it is equally important that a corporate approach be taken to engaging with transferring Departments.
2.6	Change Strategy & Readiness
2.6.1	Rather than seeing all the different strands of the RPA as separate and competing elements, a corporate approach will be taken to bring all the pieces of the jigsaw together. Discussions on corporate priorities will provide a basis for deciding how the change process is managed through the implementation of a comprehensive change management plan and, importantly, how the new functions are to be integrated into the Council's structures.
2.7	Programme Management
2.7.1	Members will note that work is already underway within the Council to develop an effective Programme Management model that aligns with the new approach to corporate planning and performance management.
2.7.2	Members will note further that early discussion with the DoE RPA programme management team has revealed alignment in the approaches being taken by both the DoE and Council. This will be further developed by the Council's Strategic Programme Manager in liaison with Chief Officers and elected Members.
2.7.3	At this stage, early recommendations would be that an interim internal programme management board (as part of the development of a wider programme management framework) to be established, chaired by a Chief Officer, to oversee the RPA programme of work. This group should be supported, as necessary, by working groups and/or technical advisors, for different strands of activity.
2.7.4	A critical element in relation to the effective implementation of the RPA is ensuring that appropriate structures are in place to secure the necessary political engagement and ownership of the RPA change process.

2.7.5	It will be important that the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is kept updated and have ownership of the change process given their responsibility for the integration of strategic planning within the organisation and for the allocation of resources in the form of finance, people and assets.
2.7.6	Members will also be aware that there is a RPA Members Working Group (see Appendix 3 for membership) which would be another important mechanism for discussing emerging issues and testing possible solutions in advance of detailed consideration by the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
2.8	Capacity and Resources
2.8.1	Inevitably, the level of RPA related activity will grow in intensity and scope throughout the transitional period and its management and delivery must be adequately resourced and co-ordinated. A balance must be maintained between ensuring the effective management of the change process and delivering business as usual.
2.8.2	It is important to recognise that delivering the Council's new Corporate Plan, refocusing service delivery on a thematic and area basis and delivering major projects is highly resource intensive. This may be further exacerbated and become increasingly difficult to deliver as the RPA process begins to take pace. The current capacity within the Council is overstretched and needs to be reviewed inline with the Council's Corporate Risk Registrar.
2.8.3	Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of a call-of list of consultants and interim project managers to assist with the delivery of RPA related projects or alternatively to support the implementation of existing projects and thus releasing Council officer capacity to focus on the RPA.
2.8.4	It is important that the level of resources allocated to managing the RPA change process is appropriate to the task. Therefore, Members are asked to consider the establishment of a RPA transition fund, the financing of which would be through the realignment of internal resources. setting the value of such a fund and agreeing on how it would be financed. It is recommended further that the Council's Director of Finance would work up detailed proposals on the realisation of such a fund which would be brought back to Committee in June for consideration along with a detailed programme of work (as referred to below).
2.9	RPA implementation programme
2.9.1	Members will recall that the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 18 th April, had agreed to fund the commission of an independent scoping paper which sets out the key implementation issues for Belfast regarding the Review of Public Administration. This paper should set out a high-level route map, process and programme of activity on how such issues could be progressed. The purpose of such a report will be to act as an Influencing Document which will form the basis of the Council's political discussions with Ministers.
2.9.2	It is intended that this initial scoping paper would be brought to Committee in June and form the basis of discussions and engagement with relevant Ministers and transferring function Departments.

3.0 Resource Implications

Whilst there is clearly substantial Human Resource and financial implications attached the Council's ongoing involvement and management of the RPA change process, it will be difficult to quantify until a detailed programme of work is put in place.

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) note the establishment of an interim programme management board to manage RPA transition;
- b) agree in principle to the establishment of an RPA Transitional Fund subject to further details being brought back to Committee in June;

- c) consider the establishment of a interim fixed-term call-of list of possible consultancy support and interim project managers to assist, if required, with the delivery of RPA related projects or alternatively to support the implementation of existing projects and thus releasing Council officer capacity to focus on the RPA; and
- d) agree that the Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources and an all party delegation of Councillors seek a series of meetings with relevant Ministers, DSD, DOE, DCAL, DRD, DHSS to discuss transitional work to support RPA implementation and alignment between the Council's Corporate Plan and Departmental Plans.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the RPA Strategic Leadership Board & Policy Development Panels

Appendix 2: BCC proposed Officer nominations to PDPs

Appendix 3: BCC Post RPA Working Group

- DRAFT -**STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING - May 2008****Terms of Reference for Implementation Structures**

Summary: Providing members with Terms of Reference for implementation structures.

Background

At the Strategic leadership Board meeting on 2 April it was agreed that a paper on the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels would be presented for consideration. A separate paper is provided to consider the establishment of Transition Committees.

All of these structures will be established in alignment with the four guiding principles from the 'Better Government for Northern Ireland' report:

- 1. Subsidiarity**
- 2. Equality and Good Relations**
- 3. Common Boundaries**
- 4. Strong Local Government**

Strategic Leadership Board – Terms of Reference

The original design and composition of the Strategic Leadership Board was based on the recommendations detailed in the Review of the Local Government Modernisation Taskforce, drafted by the Improvement and Development Report in October 2006.

Following some minor amendments to reflect the changing context it is proposed that the role and composition of the Strategic Leadership Board would be as detailed in the table below.

Remit and Function	Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinnacle and driver for the overall modernisation process. • To agree a joint overall vision and strategy for change • To provide clarity on expected outcomes. • To develop an overall work programme in conjunction with the Policy Development Panels • To advise the Minister on key decisions and oversee the overall programme for modernisation. • To consider contributions and cascade questions and issues for action through the Policy Development Panels and Transition Committees. 	<p>Minister (Chair)</p> <p>NILGA President (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Four NILGA Vice Presidents (Or their representatives)</p> <p>Five Party Representatives</p> <p>(NILGA will provide support to manage the political nominations process on an annual basis in liaison with the DOE and Political Parties)</p>

Support and Advice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice To SLB with regard to steering and developing a co-ordinated overall programme for delivery. • Support to Secretariat 	Three Chief Executives of Councils Three senior representatives from transferring Departments.
Cycle of operation	
Pre-planned programme of meetings every six weeks, plus ad hoc meetings as required. (Meetings will be co-ordinated with the meeting cycle of the Policy Development Panels.)	

Policy Development Panels – Terms of Reference

It has been agreed that the Strategic Leadership Board will be supported by three Policy Development Panels to consider the regional policy issues and provide a policy framework for implementation. It is proposed that in line with the recommendations of the Improvement and Development Agency report the role and composition of the Policy Development Panel will be as detailed in the table below.

PDP A	PDP B	PDP C
Governance and relationships: - Community Planning; Governance; Central/Local Government Relationships	Service Delivery : - Service Delivery Improvement; Performance Management;	Structural Reform Issues: - Human Resources; Capacity Building; Finance; Estates; Regional and Sub-Regional Design
Remit and Function		Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To present recommendations on policy and implementation proposals to the Strategic Leadership Board for consideration, as appropriate • To ensure that the policy proposals being developed are subject to appropriate liaison with stakeholders, including relevant government departments, and to the relevant impact assessments • To lead the development of a detailed programme of work, including timescales and resources, and to agree that programme with the Strategic Leadership Board • To ensure that the programme of work remains on track and report regularly to the Strategic Leadership Board on progress, using agreed progress 		Each panel will be composed of ten elected members, two from each of the five main political parties. Each Panel will be Chaired by an elected Member from the Strategic Leadership Board. Each panel will also have a Vice Chair (NILGA will provide support to manage the political nominations process on an annual basis in liaison with the DOE and Political Parties.)

<p>reporting methods, via the Programme Management Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that an appropriate business case is developed for all resource requests • To commission projects on key work areas • To develop, where appropriate, proposals for local pilots in specific geographic areas • To develop guidance documents 	
<p>Advice and Support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the Policy Development Panel with regard to steering and developing a co-ordinated overall programme for delivery. • Support to Secretariat • The role of Officer Working groups will be to support the policy development process, undertake or commission research projects. 	<p>One lead Local Government Chief Executive</p> <p>Supported by a Substitute Chief Executive.</p> <p>Officer Working Groups will be Commissioned to undertake policy development work as required.*</p>
<p>Cycle of operation</p>	
<p>Meeting every six weeks within individual policy development panels. Pre-determined programme of meetings to feed conclusions on policy formulation and results of implementation work into SLB within the reporting cycle.</p>	

Belfast City Council
Officer nominations to the RPA Policy Development Panels

PDP	Work Stream	Officers
A	Community Planning	Marie-Therese / Sharon McNicholl
	Governance	Gerry Millar
	Central/Local Government Relations	Andrew Hassard
B	Service Delivery	Rose Crozier / Ciaran Quigley / Trevor Martin
	Procurement Management	Valerie Cupples / Rose Crozier
C	Human Resources	Jill Minne
	Capacity Building	Jill Minne
	Finance	Trevor Salmon / Ronan Cregan
	Estates	Cathy Reynolds

**Belfast City Council
Post Review of Public Administration Working Group**

MEMBERSHIP

- Sinn Fein Party Councillor M. Browne
- Democratic Unionist Party Councillor Newton
- Ulster Unionist Party Councillor D. Browne
- Social Democratic and Labour Party Councillor Mullaghan
- Alliance Party - Councillor Ekin
- Progressive Unionist Party Councillor Smyth



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of Policy on the Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland
Date:	23 rd May, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer (Ext. 6202)

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Review of Policy on the Location of Public Sector Jobs was established in December 2007 at the request of the Northern Ireland Executive. The Review originated in 2006 following the initial RPA announcements when a cross-sectional estates working group was formed to develop a framework against which well informed and evidence-based decisions on the future location of public sector jobs would be taken.
1.2	This work culminated with the publication, in January 2007, of a set of draft “Guiding Principles on the Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland” which had been issued for consultation. Members will recall that the Council had submitted a formal response to this consultation exercise in March 2007.
1.3	Having considered the responses to the initial consultation exercise, “Guiding Principles for the Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland”, the NI Executive approved a two-pronged approach to taking this issue forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establishing a framework to provide a robust process for decision-making on the location of RPA-related bodies; and ▪ undertaking a time-bound review of policy on the location of public sector jobs in Northern Ireland.
1.4	In November 2007, The Department for Finance Personnel published, in November 2007, a Framework to Underpin Decisions on the Location of Public Sector Jobs resulting from the Review of Public Administration (a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1) and an independent review of policy initiated.
1.5	The Review Team, lead by Professor George Bain, has been asked to put forward ‘a set of practical recommendations for the longer-term approach to the location of public sector jobs (including civil service jobs) in Northern Ireland and propose an agenda for action. A copy of the Terms of Reference and membership of the Review Team is attached at Appendix 2 .
1.6	In order to inform this process, a series of public meetings had been scheduled across Northern Ireland between April 16 th and 9 th May 2008 to seek views and comments regarding the future location of public sector jobs. Council representatives (both officer and elected Members) had attended the event scheduled in Belfast on Monday 28 th April, 2008.
1.7	Members will note that the Review Team had stated that the public meetings were not consultation events but rather a means to capture the general views and comments of stakeholders. A period of consultation will follow the publication of the findings of the Review Team which are expected in late Summer.

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	As Members will be aware, the dispersal or decentralisation of civil service jobs from the greater Belfast area has been a key political issue for a number of years. Members will accept that an affirmative dispersal policy would have severe implications for Belfast given the current large concentration of public sector jobs which are located within the city.

2.2	The outworking of the Review of Public Administration process will result in a number of public bodies which presently have headquarter premises situated throughout Northern Ireland will ceasing to exist. In relation to, for example, the Health sector, the four Health and Social Services Boards to be replaced by a Regional Public Health Authority and the previous 18 Health Trusts reduced to 5 Health and Social Care Trusts. In education, the four Education and Library authorities will be reduced to a single Education Authority. In addition, the decision to reduce the current twenty-six Councils to eleven will also result in a further rationalisation of the public sector estate.
2.3	The cumulative effects of potential headquarter closures could have a significant detrimental impact on many market towns and cities across Northern Ireland. Therefore, it is vital that a robust and transparent policy framework is put in place to ensure that future location decisions are properly informed.
2.4	Whilst the designation of employment locations will inevitably remain a territorial issue of contention between District Council areas, with each seeking to improve employment and economic opportunities for citizens, due consideration must be given to the strategic impact and sustainability of (re)location decisions for Northern Ireland plc.
2.5	Whilst the Council recognises the need to strengthen regional cohesion, all efforts should be taken to ensure that the strategic significance of Belfast, as both the primary engine for economic growth and regional gateway, as stated within the Regional Development Strategy ‘Shaping Our Future 2025’, is not compromised through future decisions on the location of public sector jobs.
2.6	It should be noted that the public sector has played a significant role over the last decade in supporting the revitalisation of Belfast and has directly assisted in alleviating the traditionally high levels of unemployment and income poverty experienced within the city. The sector remains one of the city’s main employers.
2.7	Members are advised that recent relocation and dispersal policy developments in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland have primarily focused on the decentralisation of public sector jobs from the main capital cities of London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Dublin.
2.8	Any decision(s) taken by Central Government to decentralise public sector employment from the greater Belfast area must, therefore, be viewed with caution and should be governed through the existence of a robust and transparent policy framework.
2.9	Accordingly, a draft Belfast City Council written response is attached at Appendix 3 for Members consideration. It is intended that the draft response would be submitted (subject to any proposed amendments being made) to the Review Team to inform its discussions regarding future policy on the Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland.

Resource Implications

There are no Financial or Human Resource implications contained within this report.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the draft Council response attached at Appendix 4 and agree its submission (subject to any proposed amendments being made) to the Review Team.

Documents Attached

- Appendix 1:** DFP Framework to Underpin Decisions on the Location of Public Sector Jobs
- Appendix 2:** Review Team’s Terms of Reference and Membership
- Appendix 3:** Belfast City Council draft written response

Framework to Underpin Decisions on the Location of Public Sector Jobs resulting from the Review of Public Administration

Executive Summary
November 2007



Department of
**Finance and
Personnel**

www.dfpni.gov.uk



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Executive summary

Introduction

1. This document provides an executive summary of the framework to underpin and provide a robust process for decision-making on the location of public sector jobs resulting from the Review of Public Administration (RPA). The full framework document can be downloaded at www.rpani.gov.uk/index/cross-cutting-themes/estate-issues.htm

Background

2. The RPA reached a conclusion in March 2006. Thereafter implementation was taken forward by the relevant government departments. Following the return of devolution and the Northern Ireland Executive in May 2007 various aspects of the RPA are currently under review or have had their timetables altered.
3. While recognising that the outcomes of the various reviews are not yet complete, it is clear that the implementation of Ministerial decisions in relation to RPA could potentially result over time in some relocation of public sector jobs across Northern Ireland. There is currently guidance on relocation and accommodation, however, the scale of change provides opportunities to review the policy framework and in particular the principles which need to underpin location decisions resulting from the RPA.
4. Accordingly a cross-sectoral Estates Working Group, chaired by DFP was set up in summer 2006. The Working Group issued a set of draft guiding principles for public consultation in January 2007: **Guiding Principles for the Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland**¹. The Committee for Finance and Personnel then published its 'First Report on Workplace 2010 and the Location of Public Sector Jobs' in July 2007².
5. Recognising that decisions around the future location of public sector jobs could have important implications for communities throughout Northern Ireland and the need for a longer term strategy, the Executive subsequently agreed a two-pronged approach:

¹ http://www.rpani.gov.uk/estates_final_guiding_principles.pdf

² <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/finance2007mandate/finreports-07.htm>

- **To put in place a framework to provide a robust process for decision-making on the location of RPA-related bodies; and**
 - **To undertake a time-bound review of policy on the location of public sector jobs in Northern Ireland.**
6. The Minister made a statement to this effect to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 24 September 2007³.
7. This document is an executive summary of the framework which is the first element of the approach agreed by the Executive. It also outlines progress on the second element – the time-bound review of location policy.

Framework

8. This framework is relevant to those decisions on the location of public sector jobs resulting from the RPA. It replaces the DFP guidance on ‘Dispersal of Northern Ireland Civil Service Jobs’ produced in March 1999 and whilst compliance by other sectors including local authorities cannot be mandated, there is an expectation that decision makers will follow the framework as it provides a robust and transparent process and consistency in the approach to decision-making across sectors.
9. The framework will be examined as part of the policy review and therefore may change as a result of the final outcome. However, in the interim it should be applied to any decisions being made about the location of RPA-related bodies.
10. The framework is made up of two key components:
- **A set of five guiding principles; and**
 - **A detailed methodology on how the principles should be applied.**
11. The guiding principles and the methodology on how the principles should be applied are set out at Annexes A and B to this summary. Full details are set out in the framework document www.rpani.gov.uk/index/cross-cutting-themes/estate-issues.htm

³ <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2007/070924.htm#3>

12. The five guiding principles are underpinned by a detailed methodology on how the principles should be applied throughout the decision making process. It aims to promote an efficient and equitable process that in turn supports efficient and equitable outcomes and meets accountability requirements. In brief, the methodology adopts an impact statement approach in particular to broaden the initial long list of locations. Thereafter detailed appraisal should be undertaken as set out in the Northern Ireland Practical Guide to the Green Book complemented by a commentary recording how the guiding principles have been applied throughout the process. In line with the Northern Ireland Practical Guide to the Green Book, those responsible for location decisions should ensure that each decision should be subject to comprehensive but proportionate assessment.
13. The Estates Working Group has established a base case of data which decision-makers should draw on as appropriate in applying the framework. Further detail on the information available can be found in the full framework document.

Review of policy on the location of public sector jobs

14. The framework will provide a robust and transparent methodology for decisions on location for the RPA-related bodies. However, the Executive also recognised the need to think about the longer term. The wide spectrum of opinion on the issue of location was reflected in the responses to the consultation exercise and the Committee for Finance and Personnel also called for a strategic approach with a cross-cutting strategy on jobs location. The Executive therefore agreed to initiate a time-bound review, the outcome of which would enable the Executive to come to an agreed approach to location policy. The terms of reference for the review will shortly be discussed by the Executive and the review will get underway as soon as practicable thereafter.

Conclusion

15. The issue of public sector job location is complex and in reaching a practical way forward the Executive have agreed to a detailed time-bound review of policy alongside a robust framework to facilitate decision making for RPA-related bodies. Those with responsibility for taking decisions on the location of public sector jobs resulting from the RPA in the forthcoming period should therefore apply the framework until such times as the review is concluded and the Executive reaches conclusions on future policy.

Queries in relation to the framework should be directed to:

Emma Wilson
Emma.wilson@dfpni.gov.uk
Tel: 028 91 858 245
Department of Finance and Personnel
Room S21
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor
BT19 7NA

Guiding principles

Principle: Improving service delivery

- Objective of principle: To ensure decisions on the location of public sector jobs help drive improvements in service delivery through embracing innovation and collaboration and ensuring skills retention.
- **Sub-principles:**
 - Providing workspace that promotes effective working and makes best use of ICT to enable the provision of more efficient, effective and accessible public services;
 - Providing local public services where demand and need exists;
 - Exploiting opportunities for co-location, co-operation and integration of services to meet customer and business needs and achieve economies of scale;
 - Ensuring skills retention; and
 - Promoting the creation of effective new organisational cultures.

Principle: Achieving value for money

- Objective of principle: To ensure decisions on the location of public sector jobs deliver value for money to secure the best deal for the taxpayer and release resources for front line services.
- **Sub-principles:**
 - Releasing funding to priority front line services;
 - Maximising value for money for the taxpayer in line with Green Book guidance;
 - Minimising, where possible, transitional costs such as recruitment, travel, staff costs, training, and parallel running; and
 - Ensuring effective asset management through a co-ordinated approach which makes best use of existing assets to deliver a smaller, more efficient portfolio and maximises value for money on the basis of whole life costs.

Principle: Maximising social and economic benefits

- Objective of principle: To ensure that, as well as delivering value for money, decisions on the location of public sector jobs support efforts to tackle inequality and disadvantage and stimulate economic growth across Northern Ireland in a way that promotes sustainable development.
- Sub-principles:
 - Supporting development in areas of social and economic deprivation (in line with the Anti Poverty Strategy);
 - Contributing to local economic growth and sustainability in line with the Regional Development Strategy;
 - Taking rural issues into account through rural proofing;
 - Taking account of the impact on public employment within the new Council boundaries (when these are agreed); and
 - Promoting sustainable development in line with the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Principle: Taking Account of Staff Interests

- Objective of principle: To ensure that decisions on the location of public sector jobs and the decision-making process take staff interests into account.
- Sub-principles:
 - Respecting staff rights, terms and conditions;
 - Engaging fully with staff and their representatives throughout the decision-making process; and
 - Seeking to provide sustainable career development opportunities for staff, taking account of their mobility, travel to work and work-life balance needs

Principle: Promoting equality and good relations

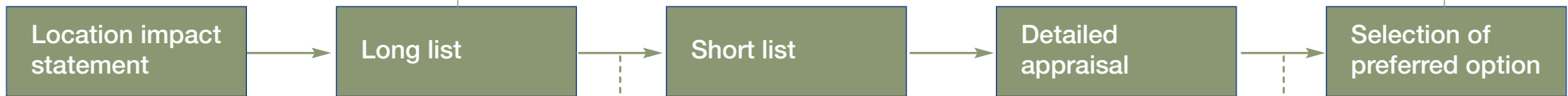
- Objective of principle: To ensure that decisions on the location of public sector jobs and the decision-making process work positively to promote equality and good relations.
- **Sub-principles:**
 - Contributing to the equitable distribution of public sector employment opportunities;
 - Promoting equality and good relations and creating opportunities to address inequalities in access to services and employment opportunities for vulnerable groups and communities;
 - Creating a decision making process that is objective, open and transparent;
 - Ensuring open communication and consultation with the public and their representatives during the decision making process; and
 - Promoting good relations between different groups as specified in Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Methodology for application of the guiding principles

Outline of approach

Guiding principles applied throughout

Business case process as per the NI
Practical Guide to the Green Book



∞

Consider how each location option performs in terms of the guiding principles.

The purpose of this stage is to broaden the long list of location options.

The long list options usually need to be sifted to produce a more manageable short list of options for in-depth appraisal. This should be done according to specific, stated criteria. Where options are rejected in this way, the precise manner in which they fail to meet the criteria should always be explicitly explained.

Robust process presented to decision makers.

Outline of Methodology

Outset stage

Location impact statement



Long list of accommodation options

Short listing stage

Assess performance against Guiding Principles plus any project specific objectives that are not covered in the Guiding Principles plus any project specific constraints



Short listed



Not short listed



Conventional monetary and non-monetary analysis



Selection of the preferred option



Commentary

Record how the guiding principles have been applied throughout

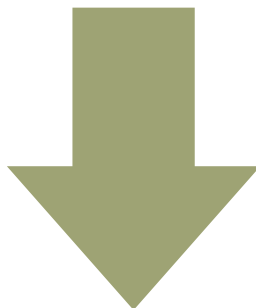
Overview

The Outset Stage involves assessing location options exclusively against the guiding principles. At short listing Stage, accommodation options are assessed against the guiding principles plus project specific objectives and project specific constraints.

Outset: Location Impact Statement

- The purpose of the outset stage is to broaden the initial long list of location options.
- A wide range of location options are considered exclusively against the location guiding principles at the outset. Location options might include Regional Hubs identified in the Regional Development Strategy.
- The impact statement at the outset stage is primarily descriptive. However, assessment against the guiding principles should be informed, drawing on available information including quantitative information. This might include the information collated by the Estates Working Group, plus any additional information. The aim is to populate the Location Impact Statement and not to rank the locations.
- It would not be appropriate to 'rule out' location options at this stage as they have not yet been assessed against other factors relevant to the accommodation decision.

All locations considered at the outset stage are carried forward into the economic appraisal to the Long list



Economic Appraisal: Short listing Stage

- Section 2.4.4 of the Northern Ireland Practical Guide states that ,
“The long listed options usually need to be sifted to produce a more manageable ‘short list’ of options for in-depth appraisal. This should be done according to specific, stated criteria. These may be expressed in terms of, for example, failure to satisfy the principal objectives of the proposal, or violation of important constraints regarding finance, manpower availability, policy commitments, site suitability and so on. Where options are rejected in this way, the precise manner in which they fail to meet the criteria should always be explicitly explained.”
- Short listing stage will involve assessing the Long list of accommodation options against the Guiding Principles plus Project Specific Objectives and Project Specific Constraints that are not covered in the guiding principles.

Accommodation Project Specific Objectives

The following principles should be applied when identifying accommodation project level objectives and constraints:

- SMART objectives (**S**pecific **M**easurable **A**greed **R**ealistic & **T**ime-dependent).
- Substantial quantification included rather than vague qualitative aims.
- Outputs to be produced are expressed in measurable terms.
- Constraints are clear e.g. technical, legal, financial, political, timing.
- Implementation targets included e.g. dates for completion of milestones.
- Provides sufficient detail to enable option generation and option performance assessment.

Project Specific Constraints

- Constraining factors might include for example timescales, accommodation schedules and specification and planning permission.
- Constraints should not only be listed, but also explained fully.
- It seems likely that in many cases there may well be an overlap between the accommodation project objectives and the guiding principles. If this is the case i.e. there is an overlap, there should be a short commentary listing which of the project objectives are already contained in the guiding principles and their subheadings. The important thing is that looked at holistically, the short listing process is capable of bearing scrutiny.
- The short listing impact statement will comprise the guiding principles plus any additional project objectives not covered by the guiding principles (please see example in the full framework document). Any project specific constraints should also be included in the short listing stage impact statement.
- Assessment at Short listing stage is envisaged to be primarily descriptive, akin to a 'list and describe' method of considering accommodation options against the guiding principles, project specific objectives, and project specific constraints.

Any narrative or description should be informed by both quantitative and qualitative information, drawing on information collated by the Estates Working Group plus any additional information that may be relevant to a particular decision. There would be no scoring of options at this stage.

- Performance against these attributes will provide those undertaking the economic appraisal with an indication as to which accommodation options should form the short list. Accommodation options are then divided into two categories as follows:

Short-listed

Not Short-listed

- The rationale for placing accommodation options in either category should be presented clearly. In addition, the rationale underpinning any constraint should be fully explained and recorded.

- The Short list should include the status quo option which is normally retained as a benchmark.

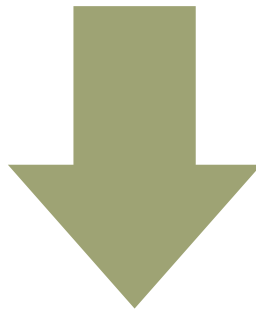
The Northern Ireland Practical Guide, section 2.4.6 states:

“The status quo should normally be short-listed and appraised even where it is not considered to be a realistic option. Its function is to provide a benchmark so that the VFM of the alternative 'do something' options may be judged by reference to current service provision. The exception to this requirement is where the appraisal concerns the introduction of a wholly new service, that is, where there is no existing provision to appraise.”

- Section 29 of the consultation document ‘Guiding Principles for the Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland’ (Jan 2007) states:

“The Estates Working Group has not sought to rank these proposed guiding principles into a priority order because depending on the different sectors and issues appropriate to those sectors and the specific circumstances of decisions, decision-makers would have to consider the varying levels of importance of the individual principles”

**Short list carried forward to
selection of the preferred option stage**



Economic Appraisal: Selection of the Preferred Option

- Accommodation options carried forward in the Short list are subject to conventional monetary and non-monetary analysis.

Conventional Monetary Analysis

- Identify and quantify the monetary costs and benefits of each accommodation option (The Northern Ireland Practical Guide, Section 2.5)

Conventional Non-Monetary Analysis

- Weigh up non-monetary costs and benefits of each accommodation option (The Northern Ireland Practical Guide, Section 2.7).
- Selection of the preferred option involves bringing together all key decision making information from the monetary and non-monetary analysis.
- The final stage of the methodology comprises a summary commentary section recording how the Guiding Principles have been applied throughout.
- **Any decision would only be taken once all of the stages, including commentary on application of the guiding principles, are complete.**

Benefits of the Proposed Approach

Economic Appraisal Guidance

- The proposed approach is consistent with the current HM Treasury Green Book (2003) and The Northern Ireland Practical Guide to the Green Book (2003).

Timing

- Consideration of location options against the location guiding principles at the outset stage broadens the initial long list of locations.

Transparency and Accountability

- The outset stage provides an opportunity for location options to be considered exclusively against the location guiding principles.
- The guiding principles continue to be applied throughout the economic appraisal, with the final stage providing an opportunity to record how the guiding principles have been applied throughout.

Consistency and Flexibility

- The proposed approach offers both consistency and flexibility. The timing and application of the guiding principles, from the outset and through to selection of the preferred option, will be consistent across all decisions. However, this approach offers flexibility to incorporate objectives and constraints relevant to each decision. Whilst sectors can draw upon information collated by the Estates Working Group, they may also incorporate any additional sector/project specific information which may be relevant to a decision.

Monetary/Non-Monetary Analysis

- Selection of the preferred option will involve consideration of both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits. The final stage of the methodology brings together the findings from the monetary and non-monetary analysis, recording how the guiding principles have been applied throughout.
- Whilst value for money from a financial perspective is important, any decision will also need to reflect social and environmental policy considerations in arriving at an overall value for money assessment.

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**REVIEW OF POLICY ON LOCATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS
PUBLIC RESEARCH PAPER**

Purpose of paper

1. This paper sets out the background to the Review of policy on the location of public sector jobs in Northern Ireland. It gives some information on:
 - the background to the Review;
 - a consultation paper on draft guiding principles;
 - the report of the Committee of Finance and Personnel on location;
 - the Review;
 - terms of reference;
 - membership of the Review;
 - timescales; and
 - the public research forums.

Background to the Review

2. The Review of policy on the location of public sector jobs was established in December 2007 at the request of the Northern Ireland Executive. The Review originated in 2006 following initial announcements on the Review of Public Administration (RPA) when a cross-sectoral estates working group was formed to develop a framework against which well informed and soundly based decisions on location could be taken. This resulted in the publication of a set of draft guiding principles in January 2007 for public consultation.
3. The consultation attracted strong interest and one of the key themes to emerge was the issue of dispersal. Some people argued for a proactive policy of dispersing public sector jobs from the Belfast area. Others acknowledged that a well managed relocation policy could bring a more even spread of benefits of public sector employment opportunities across Northern Ireland. But it also emphasised the

critical relationship between the long-term success of Belfast and the success of Northern Ireland Plc. There was a general desire for greater clarity on policy and there was a proposal for a policy review to enable the Executive to come to an agreed approach on the scale and degree to which a proactive relocation policy should be applied in Northern Ireland.

4. The Committee for Finance and Personnel in its *First Report on Workplace 2010 and the Location of Public Sector Jobs* in July 2007 also called for the development of an affirmative policy for the dispersal of public sector jobs and a cross-cutting strategy on jobs location, covering the Northern Ireland Civil Service, local government and the wider public sector. Details of the Committee's report are available at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/finance/2007mandate/workplace2010.htm>

Review

5. Having considered the consultation responses and the Committee for Finance and Personnel's report, the Executive approved a two-pronged approach to the issue of location:
 - establishing a framework to provide a robust process for decision-making on the location of RPA-related bodies; and
 - undertaking a time-bound review of policy on the location of public sector jobs in Northern Ireland.

The framework was published on the RPA website in November 2007 and the independent Review was established in parallel.

Terms of Reference

6. The Review has been asked to put forward a set of practical recommendations for the longer-term approach to the location of public sector jobs (including civil service jobs) in Northern Ireland and propose an agenda for action. In doing so it will:

- a) consider the current location and nature of public sector jobs and functions in Northern Ireland, including planned movements in the short term;
- b) consider current policies on the location of public sector jobs, including the framework for decision-making on the location of RPA-related bodies (published in November 2007);
- c) take into account the public sector reform agenda, including
 - the future context of the Northern Ireland Civil Service in light of the reforms underway to develop a modern civil service;
 - the practical outworking of the Review of Public Administration on the ground; and
 - changing patterns of service delivery, including increasing co-location, co-operation and integration of services and use of electronic delivery channels;
- d) consider the costs, benefits and lessons learned from previous dispersal exercises of public sector jobs within Northern Ireland;
- e) consider the potential longer term impacts, costs and benefits of dispersal in the Northern Ireland context, including the social and economic cases for dispersal, the implications for communities, how best to maximise the longer-term benefits of a dispersal policy and value for money considerations;
- f) consider the potential equality issues in relation to the location public sector jobs;
- g) consider the potential human resource issues in relation to the location of public sector jobs;
- h) consider the sustainable development and environmental issues in relation to the location of public sector jobs, including the road and public transport impacts;
- i) consider the organisational/operational impacts of decentralisation;

- j) take into account the Programme for Government and the Executive's plans and priorities, including considering how location policy could best be linked with other Executive priorities;
 - k) consider the lessons learned from decentralisation policies in other jurisdictions - Scotland, Wales, England and the Republic of Ireland and their respective implementation;
 - l) take into account the Regional Development Strategy
 - m) consider the availability of suitable office accommodation to which public sector jobs could be dispersed;
 - n) reflect best practice in relation to policy-making and implementation in relation to decentralisation of public sector jobs and functions; and
 - o) take proper account of existing legislative and regulatory regimes, including employment law and other relevant Government policy and strategic frameworks, including 'Lifetime Opportunities'.
7. Having considered the terms of reference, the Review has subsequently set an overriding aim which draws the various elements together in a way that enables the group to focus on a pragmatic way forward: **to recommend the distribution of public sector jobs that best enhances the sustainable economic and social development of Northern Ireland.**

Membership

8. The Review is chaired by Professor George Bain and comprises six other members:
- David Dobbin
 - Brian Hanna
 - Feargal McCormack
 - Joan Ruddock

Janice Tracey

David Watkins

Timescale

9. The review was established in December 2007 and is due to produce its report by the summer of 2008.

Public research

10. The Chair of the Review is holding 12 events across Northern Ireland between 16 April and 9 May 2008. Details of the events are listed below. Anyone with an interest in the location of public sector jobs is welcome to attend. Interested parties are also invited to submit views in writing to location.review@dfpni.gov.uk by 23 May 2008.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: DATES AND VENUES

WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL 11.00am – 12.30pm Verbal Arts Centre LONDONDERRY	WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL 3.00pm – 4.30pm Strabane Community Library STRABANE
FRIDAY 18 APRIL 11.00am – 12.30pm Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre ARMAGH	FRIDAY 18 APRIL 3.00pm – 4.30pm Sean Hollywood Arts Centre NEWRY
MONDAY 21 APRIL 11.00am – 12.30pm The Braid Ballymena Town Hall, Museum and Arts Centre BALLYMENA	MONDAY 21 APRIL 3.00pm – 4.30pm Coleraine Leisure Centre COLERAINE
MONDAY 28 APRIL 11.00am – 12.30pm Spires Conference Centre BELFAST	
FRIDAY 2 MAY 11.00am – 12.30pm Council Offices DUNGANNON	FRIDAY 2 MAY 3.00pm – 4.30pm Burnavon Arts and Cultural Centre COOKSTOWN
THURSDAY 8 MAY 11.00am – 12.30pm Down Arts Centre DOWNPATRICK	
FRIDAY 9 MAY 10.30am – 12.00pm Omagh Community House OMAGH	FRIDAY 9 MAY 3.00am – 4.30pm The Clinton Centre ENNISKILLEN



Review of Policy on the Location of Public Sector Jobs

Belfast City Council Written Response

1.0	<u>BACKGROUND</u>
1.1	The Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the ongoing work in Reviewing the Policy on the Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland and supports, in principle, Central Government's intention to create a coherent and integrated Policy which will inform future decisions on the (re)location of public sector jobs within Northern Ireland. Such key decisions will inevitably have a long-term impact upon the future competitiveness and sustainability of both Belfast and Northern Ireland generally.
1.2	The outworking of the Review of Public Administration process will result in a number of public bodies which presently have headquarter premises situated throughout Northern Ireland will ceasing to exist. In relation to, for example, the Health sector, the four Health and Social Services Boards to be replaced by a Regional Public Health Authority and the previous 18 Health Trusts reduced to 5 Health and Social Care Trusts. In education, the four Education and Library authorities will be reduced to a single Education Authority. In addition, the decision to reduce the current twenty-six Councils to eleven will also result in a further rationalisation of the public sector estate.
1.3	The cumulative effects of potential headquarter closures could have a significant detrimental impact on many market towns and cities across Northern Ireland. Therefore, it is vital that a robust and transparent policy framework is put in place to ensure that future location decisions are properly informed.
1.4	Whilst the designation of employment locations will inevitably remain a territorial issue of contention between District Council areas, with each seeking to improve employment and economic opportunities for citizens, due consideration must be given to the strategic impact and sustainability of (re)location decisions for Northern Ireland plc.
1.5	Whilst the Council recognises the need to strengthen regional cohesion, all efforts should be taken to ensure that the strategic significance of Belfast, as both the primary engine for economic growth and regional gateway, as stated within the Regional Development Strategy 'Shaping Our Future 2025', is not compromised through future decisions on the location of public sector jobs.
1.6	It should be recognised that the public sector has played a significant role over the last decade in supporting the revitalisation of Belfast and has directly assisted in alleviating the traditionally high levels of unemployment and income poverty experienced within the city. The sector remains one of the city's main employers.
1.7	Decisions taken by Central Government to decentralise public sector employment from the greater Belfast area must, therefore, be viewed with caution.
1.9	Any dispersal policy should not be framed simply in terms of the demographics of public sector jobs location or the need to transfer jobs outside the Belfast area. Rather a strategic approach is required in terms of the locations selected, the numbers, types and grades of jobs and the functions and business units to be relocated - to maximise the benefits throughout Northern Ireland.
1.10	Prior to any decisions being taken with regard to the (re)location of public sector jobs, an economic impact study should be commissioned to evaluate the regional impact of the decentralisation of public sector jobs within Northern Ireland.
1.11	Consideration needs to be given to the potential longer-term impacts, costs and benefits of any dispersal policy including the social and economic cases for dispersal, the implications for communities and value for money considerations.

1.13	Such a policy should take account of existing strategies for equality, sustainable development and targeting social need.
2.0	<u>CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORK</u>
2.1	<i>Regional Development Strategy</i>
2.1.1	The Council would draw attention to the fact that the Regional Development Strategy identifies Belfast as the dynamic metropolitan core, regional gateway and focal point of the regional strategic transport network. It recognises that the Northern Ireland region as a whole requires a healthy heart and that the Belfast Metropolitan Area, as the largest employment nexus, is the primary engine for the region's growth and prosperity. It further acknowledges that securing a strong and vibrant Capital City and Metropolitan Area is vital to the economic and social well being of Northern Ireland.
2.1.2	Therefore, it follows that any significant decentralisation of jobs from Belfast may have an adverse impact upon not only the economy of Belfast but also on the Northern Ireland economy as a whole. Accordingly, the Council would recommend that prior to any future decisions being taken on the (re)locations of public sector jobs, an economic impact study should be commissioned to evaluate the regional impact of the decentralisation of public sector jobs from the Greater Belfast area.
2.1.3	The Council would note that the Regional Development Strategy sets out a spatial framework for the future growth of the Belfast Metropolitan Area which is underpinned by Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG). The Council would propose that the undernoted SPGs should be taken into consideration as part of the overall policy framework within which future (re)location decisions are based. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPG- BMA1: "To create a thriving Metropolitan Area centred on a revitalised city of Belfast" - maintain the role of Belfast City Centre as the primary retail and office location in the Region. ▪ SPG-BMA2: 'To promote an Urban Renaissance throughout the Belfast Metropolitan Area,' strengthen the role of the BMA as the regional economic driver.
2.2	<i>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan</i>
2.2.1	Any future Policy Framework should have regard to the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP). The central aim of the dBMAP is to strengthen the regional role of the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) as the major gateway to Northern Ireland. Supporting the continued vitality and growth of the BMA would contribute to the continued competitiveness of Northern Ireland.
2.2.2	Due regard should also be given to the Office Study carried out by Colliers CRE as part of the BMAP process and the recommendation put forward that Belfast City Centre should remain the primary office location within Northern Ireland.
2.2.3	Consideration needs to be given to the availability of suitable office accommodation outside of the Greater Belfast area and the current capacity within the office market to accommodate future (re)location decisions.
2.2.4	Traditionally, the Belfast Office Market has been influenced strongly, and at times dominated, by the public sector. This has become less of a feature in recent years and the potential impact of the Government's 'Workplace 2010' Strategy, and associated rationalisation and privatisation of the civil service office estate, may have further adverse implications for the office market.
2.2.5	The service sector and office market are important elements of the Belfast economy and the inclusion of any objectives for even "limited" dispersal of public sector employment or rationalisation of the Civil Service Estate will have implications for the Belfast economy.

2.3	Workplace 2010
2.3.1	Given that Workplace 2010 is at an advanced stage with Central Government entering into contractual agreements, the Council is concerned that the Workplace 2010 programme will have a bearing upon decisions taken on the (re)location of public sector employment.
2.3.2	As over 60% of the 80+ properties being considered under the Workplace 2010 Strategy are located within the greater Belfast area, the Council would seek clarification on the Governments intentions with regard to Workplace 2010 and its potential linkage and impact upon future civil service employment (re)location decisions.
3.0	<u>REGIONAL VARIATIONS</u>
3.1	The Council would strongly encourage the Review Team to recognise the sub-regional variations which exist within Northern Ireland and acknowledge the role of Belfast as the Capital City and key driver for economic growth and competitiveness within the region. There must be greater clarity about geographical differences within Northern Ireland, recognition of local distinctiveness and the importance of sub-regions.
3.2	There is a need to recognise the critical relationship between the long-term success of Belfast and the success of Northern Ireland Plc.
3.3	Current national UK policy reflects this and recognises the role of cities in contributing to overall regional economic growth. The UK 'Core Cities' agenda ¹ highlights the important role of core cities in driving regional competitiveness and growth. Certainly, cities are now high on the UK Government's policy and regeneration agendas and are viewed as assets to the national economy ² . Across Europe Governments have been intervening to stimulate their urban economies with the assumption that this will support wider national growth.
3.4	By contrast, in Northern Ireland there is little apparent awareness or recognition of the critical relationship between the long-term success of Belfast and the success of Northern Ireland Plc. This view was reinforced within research commissioned by the Council ' <i>Belfast: City-Region Report</i> ' ³ which clearly demonstrated the regional significance of Belfast.
3.5	Cities act as hubs for employment, culture and are, increasingly, the places where people want to live, work and visit. This has been more recently reinforced by work commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) comparing the UK's 'Core Cities' to their European equivalents ⁴ - work that emerged following the Government's major Urban White Paper of 2000, <i>Towards an Urban Renaissance</i> . Certainly, cities are economic drivers with urban-based economic activities accounting for more than 50% of GDP in all countries ⁵ .
3.6	In an Assembly Adjournment debate on 12 th June 2007, the Minister with responsibility for the Department of Finance and Personnel, stated that whilst he was "not unsympathetic to having more public-sector jobs located outside the greater Belfast area", due consideration needs to be given to the importance of the Capital City as a key location.
3.7	In line with the Government's Anti-Poverty Strategy 'Lifetime Opportunities' it is important that all decision-makers ensure that appropriate efforts are taken to address area based deprivation and that Government resources and programmes are targeted at those areas, groups and individuals in greatest objective need.
3.8	It is important to note that despite the level of regeneration activity experienced by Belfast over recent years, there remain concentrations of multiple deprivation within the city characterised by high levels of unemployment and crime, poor health and low educational attainment. Nine of the ten most deprived wards in terms of multiple deprivation within Northern Ireland are located in Belfast and 48% of the city's population is living in the highest levels of deprivation within the region ⁶ .

¹ <http://www.corecities.com/coreDEV/coreindex.htm>

² 'Devolving decision making: Meeting the regional economic challenge: The importance of cities to regional growth', ODPM, 2006

³ Belfast: City-Region, Regional Forecasts, 2005 - http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/stateofthecity/docs/belfast_city_region.pdf

⁴ 'State of The English Cities Report', 2004

⁵ A Framework for City-Regions', ODPM, March 2006 - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163567>

⁶ The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (MDM), 2005,

3.9	Huge challenges remain for Belfast in addressing effectively the entrenched Inter-generational problems facing those deprived neighbourhoods within the city which remain unresponsive to public sector intervention. There is no doubt that public sector employment has played a key role in helping to alleviate this problem within the city and has provided a route map for many out of poverty. Almost 60% of all public sector jobs are currently located within the greater Belfast area and public sector employment accounts for 39.5% of overall employment within the city ⁷ .
3.10	Whilst the Council recognises the need to strengthen regional cohesion, all efforts should be taken to ensure that the strategic significance of Belfast is not compromised through future decisions regarding the location of public sector jobs. The Council is not advocating the continued centralisation of public sector jobs within the greater Belfast area but rather seeks to minimise any detrimental impact upon the citizens of Belfast and the regional competitiveness of Northern Ireland of future (re)location decisions regarding public sector employment.
3.11	The emerging policy framework should provide ballast between the need to secure regional cohesion, assist in alleviating deprivation, promote social inclusion and enhance the economic and competitive sustainability of Northern Ireland.
4.0	<u>VALUE FOR MONEY CONSIDERATIONS</u>
4.1	The Council would advocate the need to undertake a full-economic appraisal of all (re)location proposals for public sector employment, taking account of all associated economic, environmental and social impacts. This means that as well as considering the direct impacts, i.e. relocation costs, the appraisal should also consider the wider impacts on customers, stakeholders and society as a whole. It is important that Government Departments and the wider public sector are fully informed about the social and economic implications of (re)location decisions and that this information is taken into consideration when compiling relevant business cases for the (re)location of public sector functions and employment.
4.2	Relocation decisions must not be arbitrarily introduced to alleviate growing demands from some commentators for the decentralisation of public sector jobs within Northern Ireland. The final decisions on the location of public sector jobs and employment - in terms of the furtherance of equality, social inclusion, regional cohesion and other knock-on effects - must be properly considered. It should bring about real social, economic, environmental and equality benefits throughout Northern Ireland, and not merely displace unemployment.
5.0	<u>LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS</u>
5.1	Whilst acknowledging that the conditions in Northern Ireland, in terms of the location of public sector jobs, will differ from elsewhere, the Council, nonetheless, calls for greater consideration to be given to the experiences of other jurisdictions regarding the decentralisation of public sector jobs.
5.2	A recent research paper ⁸ considered by the NI Assembly on 'the relocation of public sector jobs in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland' examined the experiences of these jurisdictions and the potential lessons for Northern Ireland.
	<i>Impact of Relocation - Republic of Ireland Experience</i>
5.3	The Irish Public Service is currently in the middle of implementing a substantial programme that proposes to move over 10,000 civil and Public Service jobs out of Dublin on a voluntary basis. Within the Irish Public Service system, this is referred to as the 'Decentralisation' programme. It should be noted, however, that this programme does not envisage any devolution or transfer of decision-making functions or authority currently held by Central Government or Departments to Local or Regional Government level, which is traditionally understood as 'decentralisation'. As such, the programme should be understood to mean administrative relocation of staff from the Dublin area.

⁷ Belfast Facts and Figures 2006/2007, Belfast City Council

⁸ Research Paper 'The Relocation of Public Sector Jobs in England, Scotland and the ROI', 30th January 2008

5.4	<p>It was originally intended that most of the administrative relocation programme would be completed by the end of 2007. To date, progress in advancing the programme has been slow, with low levels of up-take for the voluntary programme among senior management. Recent progress reports published by the Decentralisation Implementation Group (DIG) who are overseeing the implementation of the programme have indicated:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ many of those opting to avail of the programme are staff who had already moved out of Dublin and were working in other locations ▪ the majority of moves that have taken place to date are within the Civil, as opposed to the Public Service ▪ some departments have experienced significant turnover, particularly those that are relocating in full, with reported turnovers in the region of 90% of staff
5.5	<p><i>Impact of Relocation - Scotland Experience</i></p> <p>The main risks attached to the introduction of an affirmative relocation policy within Scotland included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ disruption in the delivery of services ▪ the completed relocations did not appear to have had a significant impact on areas of deprivation
5.6	<p>Based on an examination of the evidence emerging from decentralisation policies applied in other jurisdictions, it would be irresponsible to suggest that there is a perfect relocation model which could be applied within the Northern Ireland context.</p>
6.0	<p><u>EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS</u></p>
6.1	<p>Belfast City Council believes that it is incumbent upon all policy-makers and service-delivery agencies to acknowledge the divided context within which we work and deliver our services, in order to contribute in a meaningful way to developing better relations within our society. Therefore, the Council would strongly encourage the Review Team to consider the potential equality issues in relation to the location of public sector jobs and would recommend that a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) should be carried out on any emerging policy.</p>
7.0	<p><u>HUMAN RESOURCES AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS</u></p>
7.1	<p>The Council recognises that there will be complex people management considerations attached to any dispersal decisions and potential social barriers may exist. The Council would recommend that the Review must give detailed consideration to the Human Resource and industrial relations issues in relation to the (re)location of public sector jobs.</p>
7.2	<p>The Council would recommend further that proper account be given to existing legislative and regulatory regimes including employment law and other relevant Government policies and frameworks including, for example, ‘Lifetime Opportunities’.</p>
8.0	<p><u>CONCLUSION</u></p>
8.1	<p>Whilst the Council would accept the need to both put in place a robust and evidenced-based policy framework which supports more effective decision-making with regard to the future location of public sector jobs and ensure equality and equity across Northern Ireland, it would recommend that such a policy framework needs to take into consideration the regional significance of Belfast and examine the potential longer-term impacts, costs and benefits of any dispersal policy including the social and economic cases for dispersal, the implications for communities and value for money considerations.</p>
8.2	<p>As previously stated, the emerging policy framework should provide ballast between the need to secure regional cohesion, assist in alleviating deprivation, promote social inclusion and enhance the economic and competitive sustainability of Northern Ireland.</p>

DRAFT

Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Date:	Friday, 23rd May, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney (ext 6202)

1.0	<u>Relevant background information</u>
1.1	Members will be aware of the ongoing discussions over recent months with regard to the Council's relationship with and engagement within the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and the concerns of Members in terms of the level of capacity within the Association, the subscription contributions sought from the Council, the value for money received and the lack of representation on NILGA's Executive.
1.2	Members will recall that the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 1 st September, had agreed to pay the Council's annual subscription to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association for the period of 2007/2008 to the value of £86,219 - which was based on the previous year's fee plus the rate of inflation (3%) - pro-rata for the period April till September, 2007, with the remaining payment only being made on the basis of NILGA clearly demonstrating that it had taken adequate actions to address the concerns previously documented by the Council.
1.3	The Council is currently withholding 50% (£42,110) of its annual subscription to NILGA for the period 2007/2008 with payment only being made on the basis of NILGA clearly demonstrating that it has taken adequate actions to address the concerns previously raised by the Council.
1.4	NILGA has recently submitted an invoice for £104,324 for the Council's subscription for the period 2008/2009. This equates to 25% of NILGA's total subscription income and an 11% increase on the Council's subscription charge from the previous year.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	On 3 rd April 2008, an all-party deputation consisting of the Chairman of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Party Group Leaders meet with NILGA representatives to discuss the Council's concerns in more detail.
2.2	Whilst it was generally agreed that NILGA had made some progress in addressing the majority of issues identified by the Council, there were two areas for which further clarification was sought. Firstly, the Value for Money received by the Council from NILGA and secondly the level of Council representation on NILGA's Executive.
2.3	Subsequently, NILGA submitted a formal response, dated 17 th April 2008, to the Council outlining proposals on how the Council's representation of NILGA's Executive could be improved and indicating the value added by NILGA to the Local Government Sector generally and not Belfast specifically (a copy of the response is attached at Appendix 1). This paper also includes an analysis undertaken by NILGA of the Pros and Cons of the Council's continued participation on the Association (annex a).
2.4	In order to inform Members consideration of this paper and the proposals contained therein, cross-departmental comments where sought, on the basis of officer engagement on NILGA's RPA working group, and are summarised below.
2.5	<i>Added Value provided by NILGA</i>
2.5.1	Whilst there was a clear recognition of the need for a strong Local Government Association which is highly attuned, responsive and accountable to its constituent Councils and which provides a coherent single voice for the local government sector in Northern Ireland, there was clear acceptance that the Council does not currently require nor avail of the support provided by NILGA to the same extent as the other Councils.

2.5.2	The Council is a substantial organisation with a budget of £140million and 2,600 staff. The Council has successfully developed its own internal expertise, capacity and support mechanisms and has a strong in-house policy and communication capacity. It has successfully implemented Members' support and development programmes, developed and coalesced around corporate positions on emerging policy issues and has gained direct access to Ministers and Central Government officials as required.
2.5.3	Whilst accepting that NILGA should serve the local government sector on a generic basis and lobby on behalf of the best interests of the entire sector, it has been the Council's experience that NILGA tend to draw on the capacity and experience within Belfast City Council to inform the Associations positions on key policy areas including the Review of Public Administration, European Funding Programmes, Local Economic Development, Waste Management, Planning etc. Council officers play a key role within NILGA's Working Groups.
2.5.4	The general view of the Departmental comments received was that NILGA play at best a supporting role, have endorsed the Council's position to some extent, but that the Council is proving the bulk of the expertise in key policy areas.
2.5.5	It should be noted that in many instances NILGA are reliant on the input from the Council to expand the evidence base and policy positions taken by NILGA and the limited added value provided by NILGA in developing the Council's own policy positions.
2.5.6	Concern has been raised regarding the clear intention of both the NI Executive and Central Government generally to engage solely with NILGA as the representative body for the local government sector and the fact that NILGA has been designated as the key support mechanism and nominating body for local government participation on the RPA and modernisation negotiation and implementation machinery (i.e. Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels). NILGA is also responsible for nominating elected Members to the European Programme Monitoring Committees and is the local government representative body on other forums including, for example, the Good Relations Forum, the Migrant Workers Sub-Group etc.
2.5.7	During the RPA transitional period, hard decisions will be taken, new policy and legislative frameworks developed and a huge change management programme will need to be delivered across the sector.
2.5.8	Whilst the Council welcomes the recent new additions to NILGA's staffing complement including the appointments of a Director of Communications, Director of Policy & Strategy and a dedicated European Officer, it would still be concerned regarding the level of capacity.
2.5.9	NILGA is a representative body with no direct experience in the delivery of public services, tackling local issues and limited implementation capacity. Therefore, it is essential that the Council be given the opportunity to engage directly and independently with Central Government and develop joint policy frameworks to enable the experiences of the Council to inform the process.
2.5.10	The Local Government sector needs to play a significant role in shaping, influencing and informing the policy agenda of Central Government. There is a need to deliver a strong and coherent local authority voice and maximise the sectors contribution and influence. The Council would suggest that the broader range of local government expertise and experience should be utilised in driving forward the reform and modernisation of the sector.
2.6	Representation
2.6.1	The Council welcomes the proposals contained within the Value for Money report regarding the Council securing two additional places (bringing the total to five) on NILGA's Executive. This would equate to 18% representation from Belfast City Council on the NILGA Executive and would be in proportion to the Council's population base which is 18% (277K of 1.7million) of Northern Ireland's total population. It is recommended that the Council request that this additional representation should be formalised within NILGA's Constitution.
2.6.2	It is recommended further that the Council give its support to the other proposals contained within the report regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a nominated official from Belfast City Council to attend the NILGA Executive meetings; and ▪ NILGA nominating officers to ensure that no less than one person from Belfast City Council is represented on the new Policy Development Panels.

2.7	Annual Subscription Charge
2.7.1	NILGA has undertaken a benchmarking exercise to compare its level of resources (both staffing and financial), membership base and annual subscription rates within those of the Welsh and Scottish Local Government Associations and other representative bodies within Northern Ireland (i.e. NICVA and the Local Government Staff Commission). Whilst on the face of it NILGA's average Council subscription rate is comparatively low at £13.5K, the cost of subscription for Belfast is substantial (i.e. £104,324) given the scale of the organisation and the associated penny rate product on which NILGA's subscription rate is calculated (a breakdown of the proposed subscription charges for 2008/2009 is attached at Appendix 2).
2.7.2	On balance, it would be inappropriate to recommend to Members that the Council withdraw from NILGA given the significant change within the local government sector which lies ahead and the central role envisaged for NILGA, as the representative body, in driving forward this process. Equally it would be difficult to justify the payment of the substantial subscription fee in terms of 'Value for Money' considerations and the added value which is provided by NILGA to Belfast. There is a further argument to be made regarding the Council's in-kind contribution towards NILGA in terms of officer support which is substantial.
2.7.3	Accordingly, it is recommended that consideration be given to the Council putting forward to NILGA a more equitable model on which the Council's annual subscription charge may be calculated, i.e., equalling the Council's relative percentage of the total local government budget and population catchment - which both currently stand at approximately 18%. This would equate to an annual subscription charge of £76,230 for the period 2008/2009 and would be a saving of £28,000 on the current annual subscription charge proposed by NILGA. Such savings could be ringfenced to fund activities to address emerging BCC RPA needs.
2.7.4	Given the level of engagement which has taken place over recent months and the progress made by NILGA in addressing the majority of concerns raised by Members, it is recommended that the Council release the outstanding 50% subscription fee of £42,110 for the period 2007/2008 so as to enable a clean basis on which to move forward with the aforementioned proposal regarding calculating the Council's future subscription charges.
2.7.5	The potential Pros and Cons attached to any consideration that the Council would give to the possible withdrawal from NILGA is attached at Appendix 3 .

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial and Human Resources

If the decision is taken to make payment on the Council's outstanding subscription fee for the period of 2007/2008 and/or the proposed reduced subscription fee for the period 2008/2009 this could have a financial burden for the Council of £118,340 (i.e. £42,110 + £76,230).

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to:
- endorse proposal that the Belfast City Council should seek to secure 2 additional places on NILGA's Executive;
 - consider the proposal for a Council officer to attend the NILGA Executive meeting in an observer capacity;
 - agree to make payment on the outstanding 50% (£42,110) of the NILGA subscription charge for the period 2007/2008;
 - consider whether it wishes to pay the NILGA subscription for 08/09 of £118,340 in full or whether it wishes to propose to NILGA a revised model for calculating the Council's annual subscription which would be proportion to percentage of population catchment, which for 08/09 would be £76,230.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1: NILGA Value for Money Paper submitted to Council

Appendix 2: NILGA's proposed annual subscription breakdown for the period 2008/2009

Appendix 3: Belfast City Council Pros and Cons paper Belfast City Council Pros and Cons paper

Appendix 1

Belfast City Council
Adelaide Exchange
24- 26 Adelaide St
Belfast
BT2 8GD

17th April 2008

Dear Peter,

Relationship between NILGA and Belfast City Council

I would like to thank Belfast City Council's leading members for meeting NILGA representatives on the 3rd April to discuss the ongoing development of the relationship between Belfast CC and NILGA.

NILGA members were pleased with the positive tone of the meeting, particularly in the context of the modernisation programme, when it will be increasingly important for councils to work together. We therefore welcome the opportunity to work towards a productive outcome for Belfast CC, NILGA and importantly the wider local government sector.

The NILGA Office Bearers and Executive have undertaken some early thinking and discussion on the issues following the meeting. We trust that the proposals made in this letter provide the basis for progress and further discussion if necessary.

Belfast CC detailed three specific issues of concern, namely;

1. The clash of meeting dates for NILGA & Belfast CC meetings
2. Value for money received for the level of subscription paid
3. Lack of representation (based on a cost/population basis)

The following paragraphs detail the NILGA proposals to address the concerns raised.

Clash of Meeting Dates – NILGA to alter one date

To limit the issue of a clash of diary dates the following protocol was agreed between NILGA and Belfast CC some time ago and staff liaise on the issue at the beginning of each year.

- NILGA Full Members meeting – to be held on the last Friday of each month
- NILGA Executive meeting - to be held on the second Friday of each month
- Belfast Policy and Resources meeting – to be held on the third Friday of each month

Over 17 NILGA meetings, there are five diary clashes, two of which are outstanding this year; namely the 23rd May and 12th December. NILGA feel it is inappropriate to alter the date of the Full Members meeting on the 23rd of May (as it has already been rescheduled), but have agreed to move the Executive meeting from the 12th of December to the 5th of December.

NILGA staff will also liaise with Belfast members' services when designing the meeting programme for 2008/09.

Value for Money – Paper for Consideration

NILGA has, since its establishment in 2001, developed significantly as an organisation. The development has been informed by three external reviews and supported by an annual strategic planning cycle. A full report which details the value for money has been drafted for your consideration and we hope that you will agree that on reflection of the last 6 years' activity, the organisation has made significant progress, is becoming increasingly effective and is delivering significant additionality to the sector.

We would be happy to discuss any further areas of concern with regard to the performance of the organisation and welcome the ongoing support of Belfast CC professional staff in the development of NILGA systems.

Representation – 2 Additional Places on the NILGA Executive

NILGA representatives agreed to discuss with the NILGA Executive options for strengthening Belfast CC representation on NILGA in recognition of the cost and population issues.

- Number of Councillors in Northern Ireland **9%** (51 of 582) (Belfast have 11% of members on the Executive (3 of 28) and 11% of Full members (17 of 152))
- Proportion of Local Government Budget **18%** (£107m of £584m)
- Proportion of the Population **18%** (£277k of 1.7m)

NILGA Office Bearers and the Executive have had initial discussions with regard to this issue. Each party has reviewed its nominations to NILGA and both the DUP and SF have agreed to stand down members with low attendance and to reallocate a seat each to Belfast CC members.

This would ensure the Belfast City Council membership increases to 5 members. This would give the council **18%** proportionate representation on the NILGA Executive and this would be in line with population and local government spending.

NILGA remains open to considering the matter further subsequent to the initial Belfast CC views on the proposals.

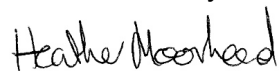
Further Action- Interim Arrangements 2008/2011

NILGA would very much seek the full participation of Belfast CC in the work of NILGA and would therefore like to also propose the following additional actions.

1. NILGA would like to invite an officer from Belfast CC to attend all NILGA Executive meetings to facilitate stronger liaison arrangements.
2. NILGA welcomes the fact that we have representatives from Belfast CC on all the relevant Working Groups. We hope to review the existing structure of the groups when the full Taskforce is established and NILGA will endeavour to ensure Belfast CC is represented on all the groups at either elected member or officer level. (See Annex A below re Belfast Participation).
3. In the nominating process to the new PDPs, NILGA nominating officers will ensure that no less than one person from Belfast CC is on each PDP.
4. NILGA Office Bearers would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the matter with Belfast CC representatives and consider any other suggestions or proposals.

I trust that Belfast City Council finds these proposals helpful and that they provide a basis for a productive way forward. We look forward to hearing from you in due course to further progress the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Heather Moorhead
Chief Executive

Enclosed – Value for Money Paper

Annex A**Belfast City Council Representation on NILGA Working Groups**

Group	Number of Members	Belfast Representation
NIJC	7	Trevor Salmon
JNC	5	Cllr Tom Hartley (Chair)
Waste	5	Tim Walker
RPA	10	Cllr Tom Ekin, Cllr C Mulligan, P McNaney/ G Miller
E Govt	5	Rose Crozier, Marie McCrory, Paul Gribben
Health and Environment	10	Cllr C Mulligan
EU	5	Cllr M Brown, Cllr C Mulligan, Laura Leonard
Agriculture and RD	10	n/a
Planning	10	Mr R Boyd

NILGA - Value for Money Report

F.A.O. Belfast City Council – 18th April 2008

1. Background

A very positive meeting took place on 3 April 2008 between NILGA representatives and members of Belfast City Council's Policy and Resources Committee. It was agreed at this meeting that NILGA had provided a satisfactory response to the majority of issues raised by Belfast City Council. However, there were two areas where further clarification was sought. Firstly the issue of value for money and the additionality provided by NILGA and secondly Belfast City Council's representation on NILGA.

It was agreed that NILGA would respond to these issues and that this would be considered by Belfast City Council's Policy and Resources Committee. This document seeks to detail the value for money that NILGA provides and the additional value it makes to the local government sector.

As the role of NILGA is to serve the sector on a generic basis, no analysis of the value to Belfast CC specifically has been undertaken.

2. Key Areas of Added Value

- NILGA's aims and objectives are consistent with those of Local Government Associations in neighboring jurisdictions and are also consistent with the views of local and regional government in Northern Ireland.
- NILGA is meeting its objectives within its current capacity. It has demonstrated that it can and does provide a strong voice for the local government sector through the media, policy position papers and meetings with Ministers.
- NILGA has been the subject of robust and professional external review and has implemented the recommendations of these reviews.
- NILGA's financial performance compares extremely well with that of comparative organisations.
- NILGA is committed to continuous improvement and is currently developing a business planning framework.
- NILGA has demonstrated significant additionality estimated to be in the region of 200% of council subscriptions.

- NILGA has been successful in increasing resources overall to the local government sector through DFP grants for innovation, the capital investment in waste management and the reinstatement of the general grant to councils.

3. Background - Role of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association

The Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland, in its first consultation document published in 2003, stated that a significant feature of other jurisdictions is the existence of a framework wherein local, regional and/or national governments work together to ensure a co-ordinated approach to policy development and the delivery of services. It commented that:

“the existence of a strong local government association appears to be a significant feature in countries where local government influence is greatest. Such associations can represent local government interests and lobby central government on issues of concern to councils. In addition local government associations can also provide a range of support services to councils.”¹

NILGA endorses this view and has reflected this within its constitution. NILGA believes that the role of the organisation is not well understood. NILGA exists to deal with issues that are generic in nature to the sector and to provide a forum for working together. Specifically, the role of NILGA is to represent the interests of local authorities to the Northern Ireland Executive, Assembly, government departments, parliament, international institutions and other public bodies. This is achieved by developing sound policies for the development of local government, effective management within local authorities and the enhancement of local democratic processes.

Over the past number of years NILGA has had several key successes which could not have been achieved if a representative body for the sector had not been in place.

- All the councils and all the political parties in Northern Ireland subscribe to NILGA unlike its predecessor ALANI. This is a major achievement in the political context of local government which enables NILGA to provide one strong voice for the sector on key strategic issues.
- NILGA is widely recognised as the first port of call for organisations wishing to work across councils and NILGA has many representatives from across the sector on regional working groups.

¹ Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland, First Consultation Document, 2003, pg.30

- NILGA has been appointed as the joint secretariat to support the Strategic Leadership Board and the Waste Management Board. This provides for the first time a significant leadership role for local government in policy making.
- NILGA has coordinated local government input to the RPA, the Waste Strategy for NI, planning reform and environmental policies. Local government input is currently being developed in the areas of Health and Education. While not achieving everything that some councils would aspire to, NILGA has been able to exert significant pressure/influence on MLAs and Ministers.
- NILGA has developed the practice over the past year of holding meetings with all the Ministers. Meetings were held with a number of Ministers in relation to the Emerging Findings Paper published in Autumn 2007 and it is the intention of NILGA to extend this practice as it has proved effective. It should be noted that the meetings were to deal with generic issues rather than specific local issues.
- NILGA has facilitated local government involvement in EU institutions which was previously facilitated by the political parties.

NILGA continues to provide a forum for discussion relating to issues of strategic concern to member authorities and facilitates the formulation of joint views. Specifically NILGA provides the following services to the local government sector:

- Represents the interests of local authorities as employers; to appoint elected representatives and officers (as appropriate) to the employers' sides of joint negotiating machinery; and to participate in the Social Dialogue and similar European activities.
- Provides a range of cost-effective services to local authorities in accordance with their wishes including the dissemination of accurate and timely information on all local government and other relevant issues and the provision of training for councillors.
- Promotes the policies of the Association by providing information on local government issues to the public, the media and outside organisations.
- Provides advice and assistance upon request to any local authority, or association of local authorities outside the United Kingdom particularly in respect of training for elected representatives or staff in developing countries.
- Ensures that members of all political parties in Northern Ireland are afforded the opportunity to contribute to the Association's activities and to the development of policies, which represent as far as possible, consensus between parties.
- Provides office accommodation, administrative support and secretarial services for (i) any association or party political grouping of elected

councillors; or (ii) any professional association of senior local government officers; in return in each case for financial contribution or the provision of services.²

4. Efficiency and effectiveness

NILGA is a relatively new organisation operating in a highly dynamic environment. The organisation therefore aims to develop to meet the agreed needs of the sector and in reference to the work of the other LGAs. Since its creation in 2001, NILGA has undertaken three reviews to ensure effectiveness and value for money.

- Denise Wheatley 2003 – Survey of Members Opinions
- Review of NILGA November 2005 by Peter Hyde Management Consulting
- Modelling NILGA's Future – IDeA, September 2006

5. Review of NILGA 2003

A consultant (Denise Wheatley) surveyed members' opinions of the organisation in the establishment phase. There was overall strong satisfaction with the organisation but members did highlight concerns specifically in relation to communication issues.

6. Review of NILGA, November 2005

The 2005 review found that approval was not far short of that achieved by the English LGA and that at least three quarters of Councillors of all parties rated NILGA's performance as at least moderate. It was found that there was room for improvement and in particular, there was a need to engage more with Councillors who were not NILGA members. The key issue was one of limited capacity. Specific areas for improvement were insufficient policy capacity, ability to influence and lack of effective interaction with Councils. The main issues identified in the report were longer term strategy, political engagement, Councillor/ Council engagement, Governance, policy capacity, relationships with key stakeholders and organisation and staffing³.

7. IDeA Review, September 2006

The IDeA carried out a fundamental review of NILGA in 2006. This review assessed the critical role which a local government association for Northern Ireland should play over the next three years in the context of implementing the modernisation of local government and subsequent to the RPA. The report made

² NILGA Constitution updated AGM 05

³ Hyde, P., Review of NILGA Report, November 2005, pg 3

key recommendations for NILGA, Central Government, SOLACE NI, Local Government Staff Commission and political parties.

Table 1

Key Recommendations for NILGA	Actions
Rationalize decision making processes	Political management structure continuing to develop in light of the changing environment e.g. RPA implementation evolving structures Decision Making process to be formalized in the current Framework for Engagement
Business Planning Process	Consultation on the Draft NILGA Strategic Plan is almost complete (Plan developed with support from Belfast CC Officers and other professional Officers)
Formal consultative arrangements with government departments	Working towards a concordat in advance of a statutory relationship with government
Restructure NILGA working group structure	Working group structure developing in line with the RPA Implementation Structure.
External mentoring	Robert Gilmore and Bill Smith continuing to provide mentoring as required
Reconstruct the senior management structure	Director of Communications & Engagement and Director of Policy & Strategy appointed. Director of Improvement currently being appointed
Enhance policy, research and administrative support	Additional policy positions currently being appointed Additional administrative officer positions currently being appointed
Widen relations with other departments	Working towards a concordat but relationships are developing informally across government NILGA is a first point of contact for many departments
Focus should be on key service areas	Key service areas identified in NILGA's Draft Strategy 2008 - 2011
Expand resource base	Several additional resources secured – will seek additional resources in the context of the RPA
IIP	Achieved
Performance Management Framework	To be developed in 2008/09 in the context of a Corporate Business Plan

8. NILGA Benchmarking

NILGA is committed to delivering value for money for the sector through maximizing the use of its resources and leveraging in additional resources.

The following table details comparison data across the 4 local government associations operating within the UK. The information presented clearly indicates that NILGA performs very well in comparison with similar organisations.

Table 2

	NILGA	COSLA	WLGA	NICVA	LGSC
Number of Staff	9	46	81	43	11
Number of Member Councils	26	32	32	984	27 (inc NIHE)
Total Income	774k	4627K	9528K	2393K	651k
Incl: Council Subscriptions (%)	359K (46.4%)	2988K (64.6%)	2260K (23.7%)	62.5K (2.61%)	571k (87.7%)
Grants	320K	222.8K	5692K	1698K	25K
Activities	95K	1416.2K	1576K	632.3	55K
Total Expenditure (excl. grants)	508K	4748K	4771K	3154K	665k
Staff Costs	263K	2478K	3787K	1152K	429k
Average Travel & Subsistence per staff member	1.03K	1.38K	2.9K	0.68K	1.27K
Average Rent, Rates & Insurance per staff members	3.5K	11.9K	4.1K	1.6K (Own Premises)	2.8K (Own Premises)
Training per staff member	0.9K	1.65K	0.4K	0.8K	1.6K
Payment to Chair / President	1.25K	29.7K (Chair and Vice-Chair)	5K	–	14K
Statistics					
Average council subscription	13.8K	93.4K	103k	63K	21K
Expenditure / head of pop.	£0.30	£0.94	£1.64	£1.86	£0.39
Average staff cost (inc. pension)	29K	53.9K	46.8K	26.8K	£39K

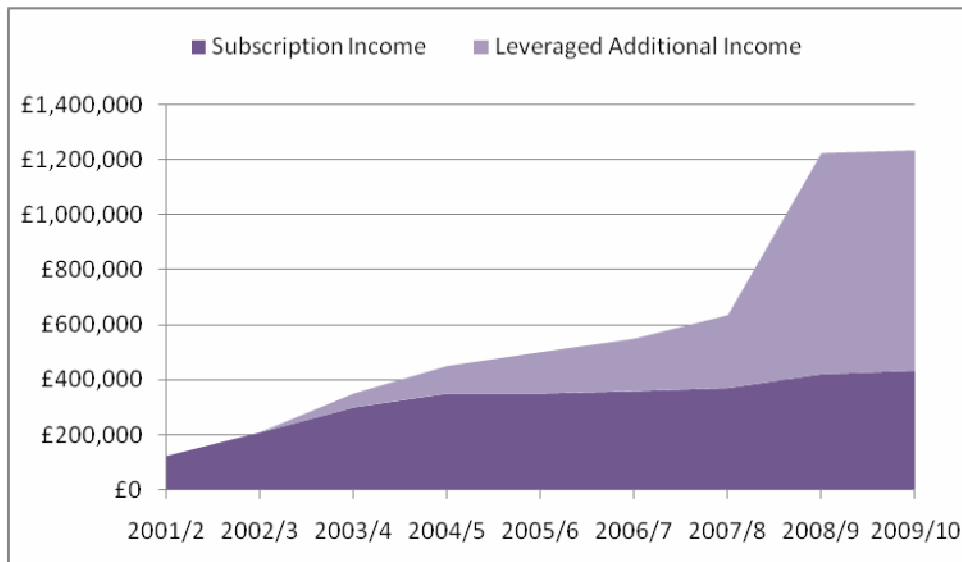
9. NILGA Estimates and Subscriptions for 2008/2009

Introduction

The past two years have seen an unprecedented development of the role of NILGA. The key successes in 2006/2007 are listed below.

Key Successes

- Allocation of **£200m** for Councils for waste infrastructural spend – NILGA lobbied strongly on behalf of the local government sector for this essential capital investment package
- Reinstatement of **£1m** of General Grant – NILGA again lobbied strongly on behalf of the sector
- Leverage of **£277k** (75%) last year which will increase to **£800k** (190%) next year
- Greater political leadership and a much stronger voice in government policy making
- A stronger more united sector



The trend since 2002 has been that subscription income has been reducing as a percentage of overall spend.

10. 2008/09 Budget

NILGA's budget has increased from £401k in 2002 to the current budget of £1.3m. In the same period the contribution to NILGA from Councils has proportionately decreased from 52% to 30%. NILGA has been active in sourcing additional funding to support its operations. The following table summarizes the budget for the current year and details the different sources of income.

Table 3

	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09 Estimated
Subscriptions	210,000	300,000	350,000	350,000	358,732	369,513	423,500
Expenditure	401,306	573,107	601,747	628,933	844,111	895,000	1,395,626
% contribution	52%	52%	58%	56%	42%	41%	30.3%

Table 4

NILGA Budget Summary 2008/09		
	£	% contribution
INCOME		
Subscriptions	423,500	30.3%
Bank Interest	18,000	1.3%
Seminars/Conferences	10,000	0.7%
DOE Waste	30,000	2.1%
Arts	38,900	2.8%
DoE - RPA Implementation	587,234	42.1%
Specified Bodies	229,242	16.4%
EU Project	58,750	4.2%
Total Income	1,395,626	100.0%
EXPENDITURE	1,395,626	

11. Business Planning and Performance Management

A period of consultation on NILGA's Draft Strategic Plan covering the period 2008 – 2011 is almost complete. Following the adoption of this plan, a Corporate Business Plan will be developed for the organisation detailing the specific actions that the organisation will undertake

to meet the objectives set within the Strategic Plan. The Corporate Business Plan will also contain performance measures to enable the evaluation of NILGA's performance.

12. Conclusion

NILGA is a relatively new organisation which has developed significantly over the last 5 years. NILGA was able to demonstrate to DFP that it was sufficiently professional to warrant a substantial funding allocation in 2007. NILGA will be transformed in the context of the RPA and new arrangements will be required in 2011.

NILGA believes that it has a professional approach which provides value for money for the sector. We would welcome further discussions with Belfast in relation to its concerns.

Annex B

Costs and Benefits - Belfast CC Involvement within NILGA

Introduction

NILGA is committed to working with all Councils to provide the capacity for Local Government to work together to improve services and to articulate a collective voice. The following costs/benefit table sets out the costs and benefits of membership for the City Council and for the sector.

Remaining in Membership and enhancing participation Benefits for Belfast City Council	Remaining in Membership and enhancing participation Benefits for the Sector
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mechanism to relate to other Councils 2. Mechanism to influence the wider local government debate 3. Mechanism to support and learn from the work in other councils(SOLACE and officer working groups also provide this but have limited dedicated resource) 4. Mechanism to participate in joint local Government projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IS Strategy • Mobile Working Pilot • Arts and Waste 5. Capacity Building and Development opportunity for Belfast CC members 6. Drive sector wide policy change e.g. Clean Neighbourhoods legislation 7. Support elected member representation on EU monitoring committees and EU institutions such as the Committee of the Regions and Congress 8. Direct input into the debate in relation to the development of sector wide projects e.g. shared services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthens credibility of Local Government Sector (Every other GB nation has a strong LGA which includes the main Cities) 2. Maintains and strengthens the Local Government voice 3. Strengthens the concept of Local Government working as a strong strategic partner with government 4. Supports the stability of NILGA at a critical time in the RPA process 5. Strengthens Central Local Relationships in the longer term 6. Local Government Positions are fully informed by Belfast CC 7. Adds value to the funding already invested in NILGA 8. Enables Local Government to collaborate on strategic sector wide projects
Withdrawal From NILGA Benefits for Belfast City Council	Withdrawal from NILGA Benefits for the sector
Save the Subscription - invest in Belfast CC services	No benefits identified (May jeopardise future Central/Local Relationship) (May jeopardise value of funding already secured from DoE for RPA implementation)

Conclusion

There are many benefits associated with Belfast City Council remaining members of NILGA both for Belfast City Council and for the sector. It is important to note that it is likely that the withdrawal of Belfast City Council as members of NILGA would have a damaging impact on the Local Government Sector and therefore by definition on the City Council itself.

Appendix 2

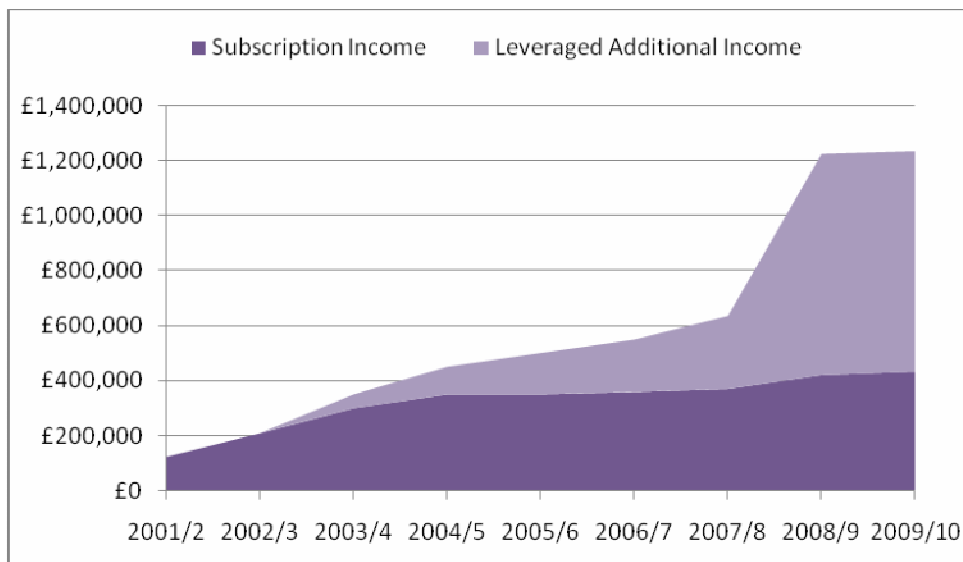
NILGA Estimates and Subscriptions for 2008/2009

Introduction

This year has seen an unprecedented development of the role of NILGA. The key successes in 2006/2007 are listed below.

Key Successes

- Allocation of **£200M** for Councils for waste infrastructural spend
- Reinstatement of **£1M** of General Grant
- Leverage of **£277k** (75%) last year which will increase to **£800k** (190%) next year
- Greater political leadership and a much stronger voice in government policy making
- A stronger more united sector



NILGA Estimates 2008/09		
<i>Item</i>	<i>07/08 (Est)</i>	<i>08/09</i>
EST INCOME		
Subscriptions	369,513	423,500
Bank Interest	18,000	18,000
Seminars/Conference	10,000	10,000
DoE Waste	30,000	30,000
TOTAL INCOME	427,513	481,500
EXPENSES		
Administration Expenses		
Secretariat	315,000	284,000
Staff training	2,000	7,000
Pension	2,072	2,000
Rent and rates and insurance	28,000	30,000
Subscriptions to other bodies	5,000	5,500
Office expenses	8,000	10,500
Post and telephone	8,000	9,500
Audit fee, Bank Charges	3,000	3,000
Furniture/equipment	5,000	3,000
Photocopier	5,000	5,000
Website/IT	2,000	3,000
Newsletter and publications	5,000	6,000
PR and Marketing	5,000	5,000
	78,072	89,500
Other Expenses		
Office Bearer Allowances	4,250	6,000
NILGA Meetings	8,000	10,000
Working groups etc	22,000	23,000
Conferences	4,000	3,000
Conferences	0	0
Travel and Subsistence	30,000	30,000
Portraiture	1,000	1,000
Advertising (Personnel)	3,500	3,000
Professional Support	6,000	10,000
Hospitality	1,000	2,000
Development Budget	14,000	20,000
	93,750	108,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	486,822	481,500

**Estimated Penny Product for General Grant
Purposes**

District Council	1p Rate Product for General Grant (EPP @ November 2007)	Subscriptions 07/08	Subscriptions 08/09
Antrim	622,320	11,073	12,909
Ards	763,440	13,870	15,836
Armagh	493,340	8,839	10,234
Ballymena	690,990	12,472	14,333
Ballymoney	222,950	4,012	4,625
Banbridge	401,480	6,880	8,328
Belfast	5,029,470	94,169	104,328
Carrickfergus	369,420	6,841	7,663
Castlereagh	845,970	15,373	17,548
Coleraine	753,240	13,421	15,625
Cookstown	321,730	5,640	6,674
Craigavon	887,220	15,330	18,404
Derry	1,180,550	21,312	24,489
Down	625,780	11,266	12,981
Dungannon	497,200	8,731	10,314
Fermanagh	610,490	10,816	12,664
Larne	335,640	6,153	6,962
Limavady	264,940	4,699	5,496
Lisburn	1,308,280	23,208	27,138
Magherafelt	349,940	6,001	7,259
Moyle	157,370	2,810	3,264
Newry & Mourne	936,360	17,042	19,423
Newtownabbey	946,520	16,752	19,634
North Down	1,028,390	19,238	21,332
Omagh	480,590	8,543	9,969
Strabane	292,540	5,024	6,068
Total	20,416,160	369,515	423,500



Weighing the Pros and Cons

This paper is not definitive in nature, but rather highlights some of the Pros and Cons attached to any consideration Belfast City Council would give to the possible withdrawal from NILGA. Whilst there is growing political pressure within the Council to reconsider its position within NILGA given the fact that the Council's interests may not be adequately represented, at this stage, through NILGA, it should be noted that **no decision has been taken by the Council to withdraw from NILGA.**

PROS

- Whilst NILGA has shown a willingness to engage with the Council and seek its input and views on emerging policy issues (e.g., Waste Management), there has been a tendency that the agreed "NILGA view" frequently reflects the perspective of rural Councils.
- The Council would be required to commit more time and effort at Elected Member level to reflecting Belfast's interests in NILGA's lobbying positions.
- It is the Council's experience that Government have been willing to engage independently with BCC on key policy issues, e.g., the Review of Public Administration, European Affairs, Waste Management etc.
- The Council would tend to develop and coalesce around a "Belfast position" on major policy issues
- Concerns with regard to the current levels of capacity within NILGA and its ability to effectively lobby on behalf of the local government sector on key issues including, for example, the positioning of NILGA as a key player in lobbying European affairs and the possible negative impact this may have on the Council's information networks and ability to bring down European funding.
- In terms of regional policies and economic development issues, Belfast tend to lose out in regional arguments as the majority of Councils and hence NILGA are not supportive of the regional significance of Belfast.
- There seems to be a strong anti-Belfast agenda within the **Membership** of NILGA.
- The interests of Belfast may be better served outside of NILGA than within.
- The Council's annual subscription charge (which is currently in excess of £100K) could be redirected to other services within the Council.

CONS

- The Council should be engaged within NILGA and attempt to gain greater influence within the Association with a view to providing leadership and direction to the Local Government sector.
- NILGA have the ear of Government and consequently, in theory at least, can be an effective channel through which to influence Government policy.
- Withdrawal from NILGA may lead to a fracturing of the local government sector. In that event, Local Government as a whole may be weaker and that in turn may have a potential negative impact on the level of influence of the Council.
- The reputation of the Council could be severely damaged as a result from its withdrawal from NILGA.
- The Council may become marginalised and the rural vs urban differential may be exacerbated.
- The Environment Minister and Central Government generally might give greater weight to the views espoused by provincial Councils through NILGA as a forum as against the City Council.
- Central Government intend to use NILGA as a key stakeholder in engaging on behalf of the Local Government sector on issues such as local government modernisation, NI Direct and the Review of Public Administration process.
- Belfast must ensure that it would retain adequate representation on the current delivery structures in place to take forward the modernisation programme and RPA process e.g., the RPA Strategic Leadership Board and Modernisation Sub-Groups.
- The Council would need to consider its engagement with and role within regional bodies such as NIJC and its ability to play a part in regional and national negotiations.
- If the Council were to withdraw from NILGA without a clear commitment from Government that it would engage separately with BCC, the Council's ability to influence could be dangerously diminished.
- There may be no political consensus within the Council to withdraw from NILGA.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	NI Assembly liaison/update
Date:	Friday 23 rd May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Christina Bateson, Assistant Policy & Performance Analyst (ext 6208)

Relevant Background Information

This report is being brought on a monthly basis to Strategic P&R as agreed at August 2007 meeting. It provides contact and update information on the work of the Assembly to assist Members liaise with, and influence the work of, the Assembly and ensure that the interests of the city of Belfast are most effectively represented.

Key Issues

1. Belfast City Council guide to the Assembly

An updated version of this guide is available on the Members' portal.

2. Official liaison with the Assembly

In order to ensure that the Council is aligned in its approach and liaison with the Assembly, it was agreed that Assembly/Ministerial updates are added as a standing item to the agenda of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and the appropriate Committees of the Council.

3. Update on Assembly business

Local Government (Boundaries) Bill

The Bill was introduced at its first stage on 21st April and concluded its final consideration stage on 6th May. This bill is progressing under accelerated passage.

The Minister of the Environment intends that the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner will be appointed by 1st July. The Commissioner is then intended to report on the new boundaries for the 11 councils by 30th June 2009.

Racial Equality Strategy

An update on the progress of the current action plan for the Racial Equality Strategy from OFMDFM on 4th April stated that while work to fulfil the commitments in the first action plan to implement the Racial Equality Strategy continues with government departments, resources are now focused on developing and implementing the proposals of the new administration. These proposals will include arrangements for the development of an action plan covering both central and local government and

will pick up outstanding actions in the original implementation action plan. OFMDFM intend to bring the proposals forward shortly.

Post Office Closures

An Ad Hoc Committee has been set up within the Northern Ireland Assembly to consider, and make proposals for, partnerships that could enhance the economic case for viable local postal services in accordance with the Assembly resolution of 21st April 2008, and to submit a report to the Assembly by 2nd June 2008.

Varney II Review

On 30th April Sir David Varney published The Review of the Competitiveness of Northern Ireland. The report highlighted how there is significant potential to develop the economy further, identified policy areas that need to be reassessed and structured better to assist economic growth.

Multi-Sports Stadium

The Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure stated that there is an indicative allocation of £70m in the current budget period of 2008-09 to 2010/11 for the proposed Multi-Sports Stadium. The Outline Business Case on the Multi-Sports Stadium remains with the Department of Finance and Personnel for scrutiny. In the event of a decision not to proceed with the stadium proposal, the Department will seek approval from the Executive to reassign this funding. The Department will look to other priorities, initially within Sport, and then within its other programmes to utilise this money. On 2nd May, the Finance Minister stated that a decision to build a stadium at the Maze should be made by the end of the month.

Litter Prevention

The Minister of the Environment has asked NILGA representatives to consult with their councils and provide their priorities for the clean neighbourhood agenda.

Commission for Victims and Survivors Bill

The draft bill was introduced to the Assembly on 31st March 2008 which will amend the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to make provision for a Commission for Victims and Survivors. The draft bill is being taken through the Assembly under the accelerated passage procedure and therefore is subject to approval by the Assembly. OFMDFM would like to see the new Victims and Survivors Commission put on a sound and durable legislative footing and hopes the Commission for Victims and Survivors Bill will complete its passage through the Assembly by mid-May and obtains Royal Assent in June.

The Commission for Victims and Survivors Bill (NIA 12/07) concluded the consideration stage on 6th May.

Combating Underage Drinking

On 25th April, DHSSPS stated they has begun to develop an Action Plan as agreed by the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs, and as part of the development process, officials will engage and consult with a range of key stakeholders, including the local councils, the PSNI, the local Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Teams (DACTs), relevant professionals, other relevant Government Departments, and community and voluntary organisations who work in this area. This process will explore and learn from the local initiatives that are currently operating, including those that have been

put in place by the local councils and the PSNI, to identify best practice and to ensure a co-ordinated and evidenced based approach can be taken across Northern Ireland.

No Drinking Areas

The Minister for Social Development stated on 18th April new powers relating to the public consumption of alcohol have been included in the draft Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 which Minister of State Paul Goggins has laid before Parliament. The measures in the draft Order, which will replace the drinking in public bye-laws, are intended to ensure that problematic drinking can be tackled on the spot in a focused and targeted way. Only those public areas where nuisance, annoyance or disorder is associated with public drinking may be designated by councils. Subject to Parliamentary approval of the draft legislation, the new provisions will come into effect when councils next designate areas that are a source of problematic drinking.

Rates Relief

Following the Executive's Domestic Rating Review in November 2007, the Lone Pensioner Allowance was introduced on 1st April By Land & Property Services.

Road Schemes Investment

On 30th April the Regional Development Minister announced an £8 million investment for the Belfast City Council area this year, focusing on a number of major and minor schemes taking place across the City.

Rapid Transport System

The report from the feasibility study commissioned by the DRD for a pilot rapid transit system for Belfast was published on 8th April. The report looked at procurement options and identified scope for contributions by private investors. Three pilot routes were also suggested for what is likely to be a bus based network rather than a Light Rail System.

Parking Schemes

The Roads Service is currently considering 11 areas in South Belfast for residents' parking schemes. The 11 areas are at various stages of the survey, design and consultation process.

The Byron Report

The Review on Safer Children in a Digital World was published on 27th March. OFMDFM have asked officials in the Children and Young People's Unit to examine Dr Byron's recommendations in detail and produce a paper on the way forward for discussion at the next meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People.

Public Health (Amendment) Bill

The further consideration and final consideration stages of this Bill were agreed in April. The Public Health (Amendment) Bill received Royal Assent on 6th May 2008.

Investment Conference

The NI Executive lead conference began for two days on 7th May, with over 100 leading executives from the US attending which aimed at attracting investment into Northern Ireland.

Taxis Bill

The Bill passed final consideration stage on 8th April and received Royal Assent on 21st April and became law.

Libraries Bill

The consideration stage on this Bill was completed on 6th May 2008.

Sinn Fein Reshuffle

On 7th May Sinn Féin Assembly Group Leader John O'Dowd MLA (Upper Bann) announced a reshuffle of the party's Assembly team which saw 10 of Sinn Féin's 27 MLAs changing roles.

Resource Implications

Financial

No financial implications

Human Resources

No HR implications

Asset and Other Implications

No asset or other implications

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note the contents of the above report.

Key to Abbreviations

N/A

Documents Attached

N/A



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Performance Management Framework
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager
Contact Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager

CONTEXT

At a special meeting in June 2008 Members will consider the Council's corporate plan 2008 – 2011. A number of key frameworks have been developed to support the implementation and management of the plan. The Financial Framework and HR Framework have already been presented to Committee, the Information Management and Assurance Frameworks are being presented at this meeting as separate reports. The purpose of this report is to present the organisation's Performance Management Framework which is another key process for aligning the organisation to deliver agreed council priorities.

The remainder of this paper outlines the Performance Framework and highlights the key pieces of work carried out within each element.

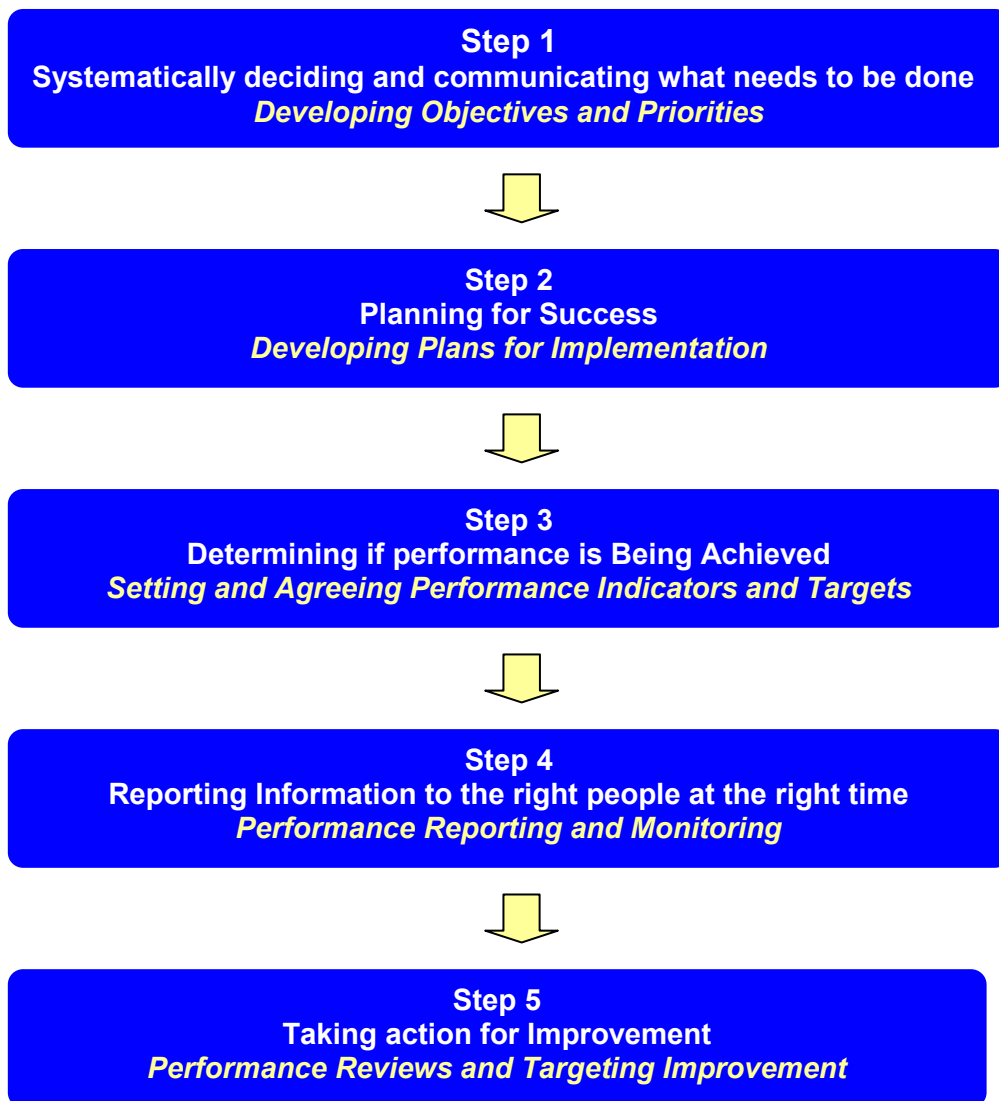
BACKGROUND

Performance management is one of the fundamental building blocks of any organisation. It matters to Belfast City Council as a whole, because it helps to ensure we are achieving what we set out to do, giving value for money to the ratepayer and making the lives of the people of Belfast better. Basically, it is about politicians making decisions on how to make things better based on information about how things are today; officers acting on these decisions and Members making sure that the desired outcomes are achieved. This is the essence of evidence based scrutiny in terms of Members making sure that their agreed priorities are delivered by officers.

The Council's adoption of the Value Creation Map planning process, which has now been rolled out across the organisation, was based on its commitment to place performance management at the heart of planning and to begin to develop capacity and processes to support an overall performance management framework. The recent planning process led by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has built further on this process and has identified emerging priorities and activities for the organisation which need to be translated into specific actions, which are properly resourced, with clear accountability and measurable indicators. These will then be collated, analysed and reported on at regular intervals to Committee, Chief Officers and Senior Managers to ensure the organisation is on target to meet its objectives. The information will also be used to assist in future

planning, allocate resources and target areas for improvement. The mechanism for facilitating this is the Council's Performance Management Framework.

The Performance Management Framework



Step 1 – Systematically deciding and Communicating what needs to be done - Developing Objectives and Priorities

Members and officers have been engaged in the development of objectives and priorities for the Council through the development of the overall corporate strategy. This has been informed by

- What people in Belfast have said they think the Council's priorities should be;
- An analysis of how issues such as population changes and economic conditions are affecting the city;
- An analysis of how the plans of other bodies, such as the Assembly are likely to affect Belfast;
- The views of elected Members as to how they feel the Council can help Belfast achieve its potential and ensure people here have a good quality of life;
- The views of Belfast City Council employees

and has resulted in the agreement of the Council's overall purpose 'to improve quality of life for the in Belfast' through the implementation of a number of strategic themes supported by

operational service delivery. Work has been continuing on the further development and refinement of these themes which will be presented to Committee in June and will form the Basis of the Council's Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011.

Step 2 Planning for Success - Developing Plans for Implementation

In a large complex organisation such as Belfast City Council the delivery of the objectives and priorities is through the various plans of the organisation. The roll out of the VCM process across the Council has brought a co-ordinated approach to planning with all services demonstrating how they contribute to the overall purpose. Once agreed the themes emerging from the current strategy development process will be fed into the VCM process and cascaded to services to enable them to include them in their updated plans. Work will also commence on developing implementation plans for the cross cutting elements of the plan and this will be supported by a programme of work. A further report being presented to this Committee meeting outlines how the various plans will link to the financial strategy of the organisation and this will allow Members to make decisions on aligning resources with priorities.

Step 3 – Determining if performance is Being Achieved - Setting and Agreeing Performance Indicators and Targets

The Council's performance measurement framework is based on the VCM and is closely aligned to the strategic planning framework. It facilitates the collection and analysis of performance indicators at every level in the planning system recognising that different information is required by members, managers and directors. Outcomes and objectives can rarely be measured in terms of a single performance indicator so it is important to identify a group that collectively provides a picture of performance. Through the VCM process all plans have developed performance indicators against which the achievement of the plans can be assessed. At corporate level this has included approximately 150 PIs agreed by Members and Chief Officers. Much work has been undertaken to collect these indicators through various methods including a ratepayer, member and employee surveys. This information has now been used to set a baseline of performance and was reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 08. The results were also fed into the planning process and used to inform the emerging themes.

Revised indicators are now being developed to reflect the emerging themes and in particular the various services contribution to the achievement of these themes.

It will also be important to set meaningful targets where appropriate. At corporate level the work to date has concentrated on developing the right indicators and identifying baseline information however in order to drive performance in some areas it will be important to set challenging targets. This process will begin when the final indicators are agreed with targets being set for 2009/10.

Step 4 - Reporting Information to the right people at the right time – Performance Reporting and Monitoring

Intrinsic to the VCM process are the development of Key performance questions - the answers to which enable the organisation to assess if it is achieving its objectives. All the information on the progress of actions and indicators relating to questions and achievement of the priorities will be collated and reported to Members, Chief Officers and senior Managers to inform decision making. Clearly it is important that this information is reported at the right level and in a meaningful way. Recent reports on the performance of the improvement agenda used traffic lights colour coding to highlight good and poor performance and included details of both projects and indicators. The implementation of an automated performance management IT system will help to co-ordinate, improve and cascade performance reporting to all levels of the Council.

The Performance Management System will support a hierarchy of PIs and tasks that are

linked through the corporate and service level CMs. Where necessary indicators and actions can be drilled down to individual services to ensure a clear line of accountability. These will eventually linked to individual chief officers/ heads of service / senior managers through an appraisal scheme which is currently under development. Phase 1 of implementation of the system will begin in June 2008.

Step 5 Taking action for Improvement – Performance Reviews and Targeting Improvement

Members and Chief Officers will be supported by CIT to ensure the performance reporting is meaningful and useful. An analysis of progress against both the programme of work, individual projects and relevant performance indicators will assist the decision making process and allow better alignment of resources to priorities. As the performance information develops this analysis will also enable the identification of areas that need to improve. These areas may require specific review to identify issues and solutions. Accountability in the form of the Chief Officer / Senior Manager appraisal system currently being developed by SOLACE will also feed into this aspect of the framework.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

Member are asked to agree the components of the Performance Management Framework



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Strategic Information Management Framework
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services

Relevant Background Information

Strategic information management is central to the Council's improvement agenda because it:

- is an essential element of good corporate governance
- provides Elected Members with the right information to support effective decision making
- challenges our thinking on how we deliver services and supports innovation in service design
- sets direction in terms of investment in technology assuring alignment to corporate objectives
- provides the basis of accountability to Elected Members and the citizens of Belfast for the stewardship and use of IT resources.

The purposes of this report are:

- To outline for Elected Members the proposed strategic information management framework for the organisation
- To agree governance arrangements for the development of strategy and delivery of services
- To agree to seek external assistance in the development of strategy within agreed budgets.

Key Issues

Key elements of the Council's strategic information management framework are outlined below:

Strategy and Business Alignment

It is important that the Council invests in the right technology to meet the business objectives of the Council both corporately and at service level. This becomes more important in the context of modernising public services and the drive to deliver efficiency and value for money. It is essential that planning for the use of IT is fully integrated with the financial, capital, human resources and business planning processes of the Council.

Management and Governance

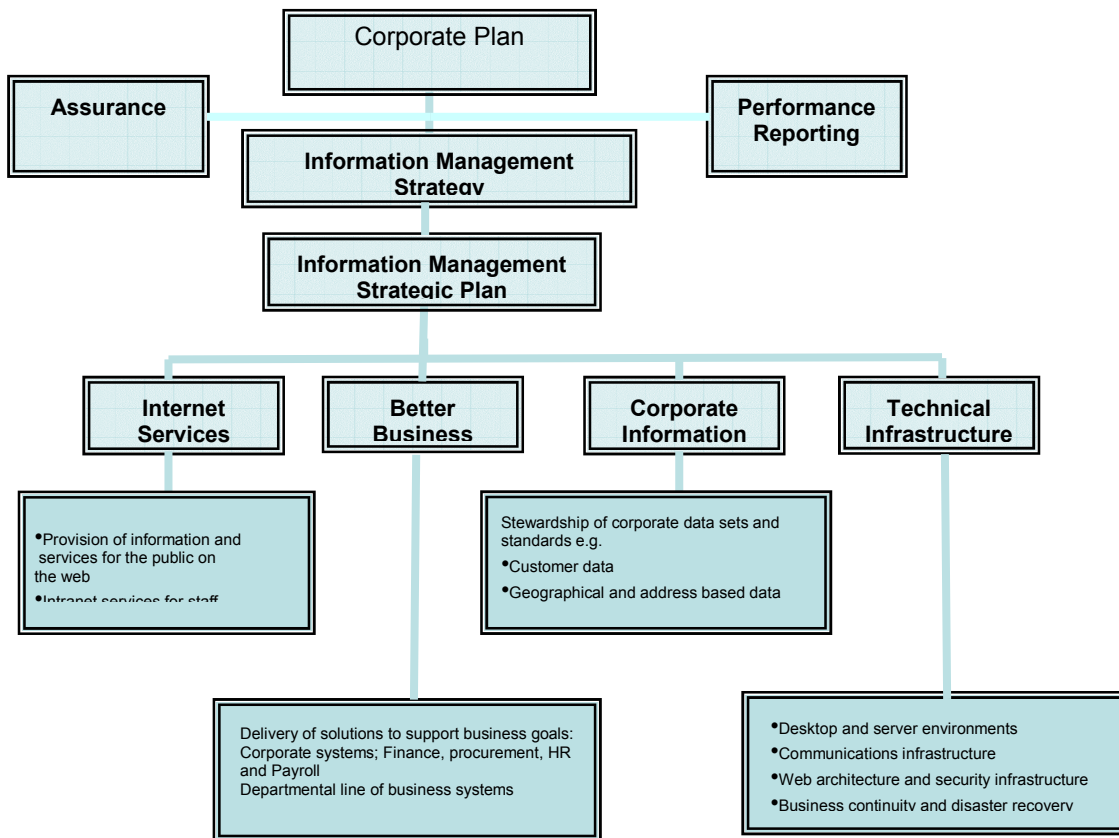
The Council needs to direct and control IT resources to achieve the objectives of the Corporate Plan as well as employing good practices for managing the business operation of IT. **Figure 1** outlines the context of the information management strategy in relation to the corporate plan. It is proposed that an information panel of officers is established, chaired by a Chief Officer and reporting to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to oversee delivery of the strategic plan and the work of the sub groups. Assurance that risks and issues are managed and quality outcomes delivered will fall within the remit of Audit, Governance and Risk service whose staff will fulfil a scrutiny role alongside project teams.

Technology and Architecture

A critical element of the framework is the underlying technology infrastructure e.g. communications, and the processes for developing, deploying, enhancing and supporting the business capabilities using technology solutions. It is equally critical that these solutions are measured in terms of their fitness for purpose and return on investment. Reporting on performance of KPIs against targets will form part of the routine reporting on corporate performance to the Strategic Policy and Resources committee.

Organisation and skills

An essential element is the capacity of the Council in terms of its IT skills as well as management ability to deliver change effectively and create and promote an environment of productivity, learning and employee satisfaction.



Summary of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee Forward Work Plan July-October for Information Management

June

- Establish governance arrangements with Information Panel and appropriate subgroups
- Commission work on developing strategy

Mid July -September

- Run a series of workshops to determine IM strategic objectives in line with corporate plan, define priorities, assess resource impact and develop strategy and plan.

October

- Report on IM Strategy with proposed strategic plan for 2009-2011

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Agree to the information management forward work plan for July - October 2008 as outlined above.
3. Agree to commission external assistance to facilitate workshops and development of strategies to report to committee in October 2008.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Council – Proposed Assurance Framework
Date:	13 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Wilson, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services
Contact Officers:	Gay Ireland, Corporate Risk and Governance Manager Andy Harrison, Acting Corporate Assurance Manager Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager

Relevant Background Information

In simple terms, assurance is about knowing what is actually going on and having the evidence to prove it.

In a large organisation, it can be difficult for senior managers, Members and other stakeholders to know what assurances they are getting on the way their organisation is run, whether they are adequate or address their real areas of concern. To aid understanding, progressive councils in GB, NHS Trusts and other government bodies have begun to map their 'assurance frameworks' and have related these to the process of producing their annual governance statement to aid greater understanding of how their organisation is gaining its assurances.

An assurance framework shows the key sources of assurance and the basis upon which this assurance is provided.

Key Issues

Over the past 2-3 years there has been considerable effort put into developing and implementing the key elements of an assurance framework within Belfast City Council. Significant progress has been made in terms of:

- implementing a process whereby managers are required to sign annual assurance statements
- implementing risk management
- developing business planning and related performance reporting arrangements
- re-constituting the Audit Panel
- further developing the professionalism of the internal audit function, including the commissioning of an external review of the service and the planned implementation of risk-based audits, whereby the actions taken to manage key risks in risk registers

will be examined

- developing a Code of Governance.

It is now possible to begin to map the key elements of the Council's proposed Assurance Framework. The proposed **Assurance Framework** is attached at Appendix 1. The proposed framework shows:

- the main sources of assurance, such as financial control, performance management, internal and external audit
- the basis on which these key sources of assurance are provided
- how the Code of Governance relates to these assurances
- how the Audit Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee have a key role to play in reviewing and approving the annual governance statement and overseeing the assurance framework as a whole.

As the elements within the proposed assurance framework are developed further over the next year, it will be important to provide an assurance to the Audit Panel that each source of assurance is reliable, that the framework as a whole is adequate and that there are no significant gaps.

Much of the detailed work of AGRS is related to reviewing the various sources of assurance and the key elements of the Council's internal control framework and we will continue to report to the Audit Panel on these areas. We are also planning on reporting on the adequacy of the assurance framework as part of the process of completing the 2008/09 Annual Governance Statement.

The framework will also be useful as a communication tool, enabling those involved and affected by the various assurance reviews / processes to see how particular pieces of work and functions 'fit in' to an overall framework.

Resource Implications

There are no significant resource implications.

Recommendations

That the Committee notes the Council's proposed assurance framework as set out at Appendix 1.

A review of the adequacy of this framework will be undertaken on an annual basis by AGRS at the end of the 2008/09 financial year, as part of the process of producing of the Annual Governance Statement.

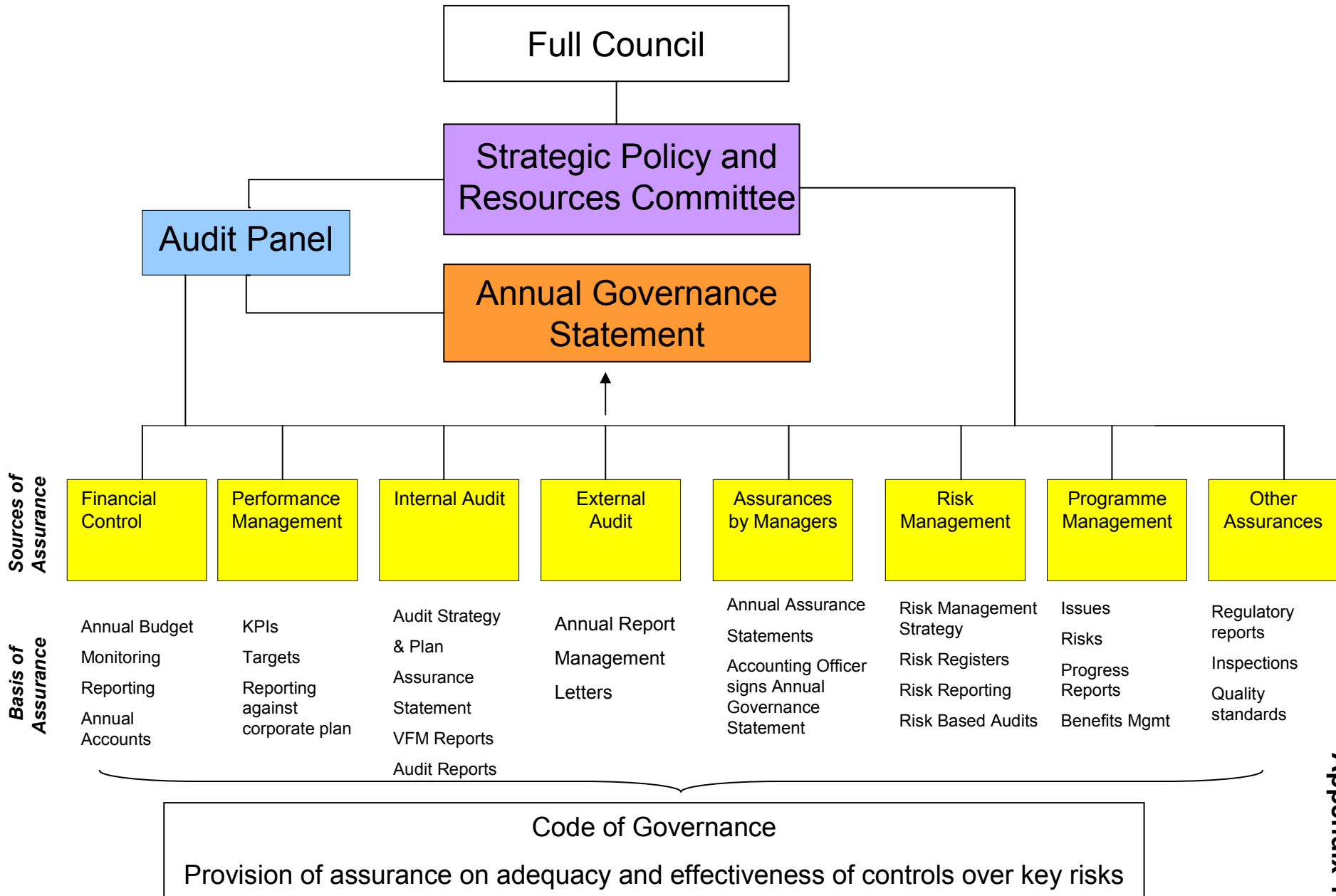
Key to Abbreviations

AGRS – Audit, Governance and Risk Services
GB – Great Britain
KPIs – Key Performance Indicators
NHS – National Health Service
VFM – Value for Money

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Belfast City Council - Proposed Assurance Framework

Belfast City Council - Proposed Assurance Framework





Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Council – Code of Governance
Date:	13 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Wilson, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services
Contact Officers:	Gay Ireland, Corporate Risk and Governance Manager Andy Harrison, Acting Corporate Assurance Manager Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager

Relevant Background Information

At the Audit Panel meeting of 2 April 2008, the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services presented a paper entitled “Annual Governance Statement 2007/08.” The paper dealt with the implications for the Council of DoE Circular No LG/04/08. The Circular provides guidance to local authorities on how to implement the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2006. To recap, one of the key requirements of the Regulations is that the Council must conduct a review each year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and prepare a ‘governance statement’ to this effect in accordance with ‘proper practices.’ This statement will be signed off as part of the annual accounts. The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services submitted a separate report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting of 18 April 2008 drawing attention to the reporting and ‘sign-off’ arrangements.

The DoE Circular refers councils to the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’ as guidance containing ‘proper practices’ with regard to an effective system of internal control / governance. The Framework is recommended as best practice for developing and maintaining a local code of governance and for discharging accountability for the proper conduct of public business, through the publication of an annual governance statement that will make the adopted practice open and explicit.

The purpose of this report is to apprise members as to:

1. The content of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’
2. The specific actions that the Council has taken / proposes to take to meet the requirements of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework, in particular, the adoption of a local Code of Governance. Members are asked to approve this Code.

Key Issues**1. CIPFA / SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'**

Governance, in the context of local government, is about how a council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads its community.

The CIPFA / SOLACE 'Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework' was published in July 2007 and represents best practice for developing and maintaining a local code of governance and making adopted practice open and explicit. It sets out 6 principles of good governance:

1. Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
3. Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
4. Taking informed transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
5. Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers – including the statutory officers - also have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively.
6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

The guidance recommends that councils develop and implement a Code of Governance based on the above principles and recommends that councils:

- (a) Review existing governance arrangements against the Framework
- (b) Develop and maintain an up to date local code of governance, including arrangements for ensuring its ongoing application and effectiveness
- (c) Prepare a governance statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which they comply with their own code on an annual basis, including how they have monitored the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period.

2. Belfast City Council – Actions Taken and Proposed to Meet Requirements of CIPFA / SOLACE Framework**Action Taken / Proposed to meet the requirements of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework**

- (a) Audit Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) has assessed the Council's governance arrangements against the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework. This review found that, while the Council already has many arrangements in place for good governance, there was scope for further improvements (see (b) below).

- (b) We have developed a draft Code of Governance for Belfast City Council based on the 6 core principles set out in the CIPFA Solace Framework. This is attached at Appendix 1. Appendix A to this Code is a table summarising the key systems, processes and documents that provide evidence of compliance with the core and supporting governance principles, along with the individual or committee responsible for monitoring and reviewing the same. In addition, the table summarises the planned improvement actions (as per the corporate value creation map) that will strengthen governance arrangements. The majority of the planned improvement actions set out within our Code have been taken from the corporate Value Creation Map, so there is no significant additional resource required in terms of implementing improvement actions. **We are recommending that the Audit Panel approves the adoption of this Code of Governance.**
- (c) We have provided a high level one page summary showing the measures that the Council has in place or is developing to address the key principles of our Code. This is attached at Appendix 2.
- (d) the Council will produce an annual governance statement from 2007/08. In line with DoE requirements, this will comply fully with the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework by 1 April 2009.
- (e) In addition, from 2008/09, AGRS will undertake an annual review of our Code to ensure that the Council is complying with it. The results of this review will be reported to the Audit Panel and will inform the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement. It will form one of the assurances that senior managers and Members receive on the Council's internal control environment.

Resource Implications

There are no significant resource implications.

Recommendations

That the Audit Panel **approves** the proposed Belfast City Council Code of Governance, as set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

The Audit Panel should note the one page summary of the Council's Governance arrangements, as set out at Appendix 2.

Key to Abbreviations

AGRS – Audit, Governance and Risk Services
CIPFA – Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
DoE – Department of the Environment
HR – Human Resources
KPIs – Key Performance Indicators
LGA – Local Government Auditor
OPM – Office for Public Management
SOLACE – Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
VCM – Value Creation Map
VFM – Value for Money
WDP – Workforce Development Plan

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – BCC Code of Governance (including Appendix A of the Code)
 Appendix 2 – Good Governance in BCC – A Summary

Belfast City Council Code of Governance

Introduction

Governance is about how Belfast City Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

It comprises the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads its community.

The CIPFA Solace 'Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework' was published in July 2007 and represents best practice for developing and maintaining a local code of governance and making adopted practice open and explicit.

Belfast City Council is committed to the principles of good governance and this Local Code of Governance is a public statement of that commitment.

The Audit Panel approved this Code on **DATE**

The 6 Principles of Good Governance

Belfast City Council is committed to the core and supporting principles of good governance set out within the CIPFA Solace Framework, namely that good governance means:

1. Focussing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
3. Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
4. Taking informed transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
5. Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers – including the statutory officers - also have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively.
6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

Compliance with the Code

Our Local Code of Governance is supported by systems, processes and documents that determine and control the way in which the Council manages its affairs.

Appendix A demonstrates how the Council currently complies with the Code, in addition to detailing the tasks, projects and initiatives within the corporate Value Creation Map that will further enhance the governance arrangements within the Council.

Monitoring and Review

Using the Corporate Plan Portfolio where appropriate, we have identified the individual or committee responsible for monitoring and reviewing each system, process and document that underpins our governance arrangements.

The Head of Audit Governance and Risk Services will undertake at least annual reviews of the Councils governance arrangements to ensure that governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively in practice.

The results of these reviews will be reported to the Audit Panel and will inform the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement¹ which forms part of the published financial statements.

Policy Owner: Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services

Version Number	Date of Issue	Issued by	Issued to
1	28.08.07	Corporate Risk and Governance Manager	COMT
2	19.03.08	Corporate Risk and Governance Manager	Assurance Board

¹ Local Government (Accounts and Audit) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

Appendix A: Compliance with the Belfast City Council Code of Good Governance

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
1	Core principle: Focussing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.				
1.1	Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value Creation Map (VCM) and corporate plan ▪ Taking an active role in RPA ▪ One Council corporate communication guidelines ▪ www.belfastcity.gov.uk and City Matters magazine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT ▪ Strategic Planning and Policy Officer ▪ Head of Corporate Communications ▪ Head of Corporate Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement a new Corporate Plan and define links to the Community Plan and to the Council's Business Plans through the development of a new planning framework which includes area based planning. ▪ Cascade VCM to all Services ▪ Implement internal communications plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement Manager, the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager and the SNAP Manager ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Director of Improvement
1.2	Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VCM key performance questions and indicators ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collate and analyse and report on VCM performance indicators ▪ Develop an automated PMS to assist in the collation of indicators across the council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Director of Improvement

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
		<p>performance management system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is underway to develop corporate and service standards ▪ DOE Best Value indicators ▪ Corporate complaints system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Business Support Manager, Chief Executive's Dept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carry out performance reviews (collection, analysis, decision) ▪ Develop IPM for COMT / Directors / Heads of Service / Senior Managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Human Resources and Core Improvement Team
1.3	Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic financial management framework ▪ Council Improvement Agenda ▪ Efficiency programme ▪ VFM programme of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Core Improvement Team and AGRS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement a Financial Strategy ▪ Refine the rolling medium term financial plan ▪ Implement the agreed efficiency programme ▪ Apply gateway process to all projects included within the capital programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Core Improvement Team

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of a rolling medium-term financial plan ▪ Capital programme ▪ Gateway process ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic performance management system ▪ LGA review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services and Core Improvement Team ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Local Government Auditor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the Better Business project ▪ Develop and implement an Asset Management Plan ▪ Development of the City Investment Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of ISB ▪ Director of Improvement ▪ Director of Corporate Services and Director of Improvement

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
2	Core principle: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles				
2.1	Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New political governance structures ▪ Council Standing Orders ▪ Scheme of Delegation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services ▪ Director of Legal Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop guidance for officers on how to implement the Scheme of Delegation, e.g. guidance on procurement, recruitment etc. In addition, develop a process for regular reporting on the implementation of the Scheme of Delegation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Legal Services leading a team to take this forward
2.2	Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scheme of Delegation ▪ Committee reporting protocol ▪ Party Group Briefing Days to facilitate and coordinate contact with officers ▪ Terms and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Legal Services ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services and Core Improvement Team ▪ Head of Human 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a set of corporate values for the Council ▪ Implement the member development programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT supported by the Core Improvement Manager and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
		<p>conditions of employment and job descriptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members remuneration ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic performance management system 	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services and Core Improvement Team ▪ Core Improvement Team 		
2.3	Ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing consultation processes ▪ Development of the local code of governance for BCC ▪ Work is underway to develop corporate and service standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Audit Governance and Risk Services ▪ Improvement Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a set of corporate values for the Council ▪ Review and revise systems for community engagement and consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT supported by the Core Improvement Manager and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Director of Improvement

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
3	Core principle: Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour				
3.1	Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The NI Code of Local Government Conduct for Members ▪ Code of Conduct for BCC Officers ▪ Policy and Guidance on the Acceptance and Provision of Gifts and Hospitality ▪ Policy and Guidance on Potential Conflict of Interest Situations Encountered by Council Officers ▪ Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement ▪ Whistleblowing Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Head of Audit Governance and Risk Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a set of corporate values for the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT supported by the Core Improvement Manager and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
3.2	Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value Creation Map ▪ Equality Reference Guide has been developed by the Council ▪ Sustainable Development plan (supported by Energy Conservation Strategy and In-house Waste Strategy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Equality Officer ▪ Sustainable Development Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a set of corporate values for the Council ▪ Incorporate the agreed corporate values into the senior management appraisal system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT supported by the Core Improvement Manager and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Head of Human Resources

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
4	Core principle: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk				
4.1	Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New political governance structures ▪ Committee reporting system ▪ Council minutes system on www.belfastcity.gov.uk ▪ Audit Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services ▪ Principal Committee Administrator ▪ Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement Modern.Gov minutes system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principal Committee Administrator
4.2	Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic performance management system ▪ Committee reporting system ▪ Ongoing consultation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare a scoping paper on the development of an Information Management Strategy ▪ Develop and implement an Information Systems Strategy which will include the requirements of Information Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of ISB ▪ Head of ISB

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is underway to develop corporate and service standards ▪ Complaints system ▪ Professional advice sought when required ▪ Ongoing development and use of Citistats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Business Support Manager, Chief Executives Department ▪ COMT ▪ Director of Development 		
4.3	Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk management strategy ▪ Annual Governance Statement ▪ Business continuity management policy ▪ Whistleblowing Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Corporate Risk and Governance Manager ▪ Director of Corporate Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitating the embedding of risk management into the day to day processes of the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit Governance and Risk Services

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
4.4	Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Standing Orders ▪ Scheme of Delegation ▪ Financial Regulations ▪ Legal Services Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Director of Legal Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Legal Services 	No further actions identified.	N/a

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
5	Core principle: Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective				
5.1	Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Induction sessions for Members ▪ Corporate induction programmes for officers ▪ Code of procedures on recruitment and selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Head of Human Resources 	No further actions identified.	N/a
5.2	Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member development programme ▪ Personal development planning ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic performance management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a workforce development plan for the organisation ▪ Implement the member development programme ▪ Put in place a corporate approach to Personal Development Plans for Members and Officers ▪ Develop IPM for COMT / Directors / Heads of Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of HR ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Head of HR ▪ Core Improvement Team and Head of Human Resources

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
5.3	Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing consultation processes ▪ Recruitment of independent person to sit on the Audit Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Head of Audit Governance and Risk Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise systems for community engagement and consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Improvement

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
6	Core principle: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability				
6.1	Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embryonic community planning board ▪ Ongoing consultation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of improvement and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish current status through an overall Stakeholder Audit ▪ Develop an External Relations Strategy ▪ Review and revise systems for community engagement and consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Director of Improvement
6.2	Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Belnet and City Matters magazine ▪ Complaints handling system ▪ Council meetings open to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Corporate Communications ▪ Business Support Manager, Chief Executive's Dept. ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise systems for community engagement and consultation ▪ Develop and implement a new Corporate Plan and define links to the Community Plan and to the Council's Business Plans through the development of a new planning framework which includes area based planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Improvement ▪ Improvement Manager, the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager and the SNAP Manager

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
6.3	Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Terms and conditions of employment ▪ Ongoing consultation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement Single Status arrangements ▪ Implement internal communications plan ▪ Create a Workforce Development Plan ▪ Put in place PDPs for Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Director of Improvement ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Head of Human Resources

Good Governance in BCC – A Summary

Principle	Focus on Purpose and Outcomes	Performing Effectively in Defined Functions and Roles	Promoting Values of Good Governance	Informed, Transparent Decisions and Managing Risk	Development of Capacity and Capability of the Organisation	Community Engagement & Making Accountability Real
<i>Current Compliance and Further Improvement Actions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Planning / VCM ▪ VCM Cascade ▪ One Council Communications ▪ Strategic Financial Management Framework ▪ Efficiency Programme ▪ VFM Programme of Work ▪ Integration of area based planning ▪ Integrated Financial Planning ▪ External Relations Strategy ▪ Performance Management ▪ Corporate and Service Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Standing Orders ▪ Scheme of Delegation and implementation of SOD ▪ Financial Regulations ▪ Committee Structure ▪ Conditions of Employment ▪ Job Descriptions ▪ Committee Reporting System ▪ Party Group Briefings ▪ Performance Appraisal System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member / Officer ▪ Codes of Conduct ▪ Fraud Policy ▪ Whistleblowing Policy ▪ Standing Orders ▪ Financial Regulations ▪ Gifts and Hospitality ▪ Conflicts of Interest ▪ Equality ▪ Sustainability Performance ▪ Appraisal System ▪ Corporate values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit Panel ▪ Risk Management Framework ▪ Modern.gov Minutes System ▪ Standing Orders ▪ Scheme of Delegation ▪ Committee Structures ▪ Member Development Programme ▪ Party Group Briefings ▪ Committee Reporting System ▪ Business Continuity Management ▪ Consultation & Engagement Strategy ▪ Information Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member Development Programme ▪ Improvement Agenda ▪ Human Resources Strategy and Workforce Development Plan ▪ Code of procedures on recruitment and selection ▪ Personal development Planning ▪ Performance Appraisal System ▪ Implementation of HR Strategy and WDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Report ▪ City Matters ▪ Website ▪ Community Planning ▪ Consultation & Engagement Strategy ▪ Performance Management ▪ Strategic Frameworks

Good Governance in BCC – A Summary



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Arrangements for the Somme Anniversary Ceremony, July 2008
Date:	Friday, 23 rd May, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (ext. 6325)
Contact Officer:	Ms. Sandra Robinson, Lord Mayor's Principal Officer (ext. 6244)

Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that the annual Somme Ceremony, takes place at the Cenotaph in the grounds of City Hall in July of each year. A Special Meeting of Council precedes the ceremony and it has been customary for the City Hall to be used as a mustering point for all those involved in the formal proceedings.

Although the City Hall will be closed for the Ceremony access is permitted to the Garden of Remembrance. The closure of the City Hall will, however, necessitate arrangements being made to provide an alternative venue which will act as a mustering point for those involved and will also prove suitable to host a suitable level of hospitality.

Key Issues

An appropriate mustering point is crucial in achieving a successful event. The procession consists of approximately 200 participants who all process in a specific order in their relative groups.

A number of factors were taken into account in determining potential venues, including: cost, accessibility and distance to the Cenotaph, suitability as a mustering point and ability to provide post event hospitality.

Following consideration of all potential venues within the vicinity of the Cenotaph, the Assembly Buildings at Church House, Fisherwick Place, proved to be the most suitable. There will be no cost for the use of the buildings, it contains individual function rooms which are suitable for the needs of the participants, it has previously been used as a mustering point for similar processions in the city centre and car parking is available in the grounds of the Royal Belfast Academic Institution, situated directly across the road from Church House.

If using Church House, an application would have to be made to the Parades Commission requesting that the procession leave from Wellington Street, proceed up Queen Street before turning right into Wellington Place to make the short walk to the

front gates of the City Hall. This route is slightly longer than the previous one from the Council Chamber in the City Hall to the Cenotaph but is not significantly so and provides an opportunity for the Associations taking part, the Band and Guard to process the short distance through the City.

Discussions have taken place with representatives from the Royal British Legion who advise that all those participating in the Ceremony are able-bodied and should not have any difficulties making this short journey. Following the Ceremony the procession would return to Church House where tea/coffee and light refreshments would be provided.

This proposal meets with the approval of the PSNI who have confirmed that there will be no difficulty associated with implementing the appropriate traffic and security measures.

Church House would also be suitable in that it could accommodate the holding of the Special Meeting of the Council which precedes the Somme Ceremony, thus removing the need to hold a meeting in the current Civic Headquarters at Adelaide Exchange and thereafter merging the Councillors group with the other participants and moving to the City Hall

Church House is considered to be the most appropriate venue to use as a mustering point prior to the Somme Ceremony based on the issues outlined above and having had the opportunity to view its facilities and make objective comparisons to other venues.

Resource Implications

Not applicable

Recommendations

To approve the use of Assembly Buildings, Church House, to act as a venue for the Special Meeting of Council prior to the Somme Ceremony on 1 July, 2008 and to be used to provide tea/coffee and light refreshments following the formal proceedings.
--

Key to Abbreviations

Not applicable

Documents Attached

Not applicable



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
Date:	Friday, 23 rd May, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (ext. 6325)
Contact Officer:	Ms. Sandra Robinson, Lord Mayor's Principal Officer (ext. 6244)

Relevant Background Information

A schedule of applications, together with an indication as to whether they fall within the criteria approved by the Committee, is attached as Appendix 1.

Key Issues

To advise the Committee of applications which have been received for the Use of Accommodation in the City Hall and/or the Provision of Civic Hospitality.

Resource Implications

Provision has been made in the Revenue Estimates for hospitality.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations as set out in the Appendix.

Key to Abbreviations

Not applicable

Documents Attached

None

Appendix 1

SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE PROVISION OF HOSPITALITY

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date – Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Belfast County Guides	Belfast County Guides Awards Ceremony 20 th May 2008 (evening) Approximately 150 attending	Provision of hospitality in the form of a pre- event drinks reception and Canapés	Girl Guiding is an international, multi- cultural, inter- denominational organisation for young girls and women which promotes good leadership and citizenship amongst its members. This event meets the Council's Corporate Strategic Objective of Improving Quality of Life, Now and for Future Generations	Provision of hospitality in the form of soft drinks and Canapés Approximate cost £1,200 Approximate budget remaining £192,080
Cavehill Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club	Centenary Dinner for Cavehill Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club 1 st October, 2012 Approximately 150 attending	Provision of hospitality in the form of a pre- dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to celebrate the 100 th Anniversary of Cavehill Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well- being of the city.	Provision of hospitality in the form of wines and soft drinks Approximate cost £600 Approximate budget remaining £191,480
Paediatric Psychology Network	Annual Paediatric Psychology Network Conference 19 th June, 2008 Approximately 60 attending	Provision of hospitality in the form of a pre- dinner drinks reception	It is estimated that 150 delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city.	Provision of hospitality in the form of wines and soft drinks Approximate cost £240 Approximate budget remaining £191,240
Sonorities Festival of Contemporary Music	International Computer Music Conference 24 th August, 2008 Approximately 300 attending	Provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	It is estimated that 350 delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city.	Provision of hospitality in the form of wines and soft drinks Approximate cost £1,200 Approximate budget remaining £190,040

Institution of Highways and Transportation	Institution of Highways and Transportation Conference Dinner 16 th September, 2010 Approximately 300 attending	Use of City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	It is estimated that 150 delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city.	Use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wines and soft drinks Approximate cost £1,200 Approximate budget remaining £188,840
Rotary Club of East Belfast	Rotary Club of East Belfast Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony 12 th June, 2008 Approximately 170 attending	Provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This Dinner and Awards Ceremony aims to acknowledge the work of the Rotary Club of East Belfast within the city and will recognise individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service through fundraising and their work within the voluntary and community sectors. This request meets the Council's Corporate Strategic Objective of Improving quality of life, now and for future generations	Provision of hospitality in the form of wines and soft drinks Approximate cost £680 Approximate budget remaining £188,160



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Replacement of Lord Mayor's Vehicle
Date:	Friday, 23 rd May, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (ext. 6325)
Contact Officer:	Ms. Sandra Robinson, Lord Mayor's Principal Officer (ext. 6244)

Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 16th November, 2001, it had been agreed that the Lord Mayor's vehicle should be replaced every three years.

Key Issues

The current Lord Mayor's vehicle was last replaced in 2005 and it will be necessary therefore to replace the vehicle forthwith.

Resource Implications

Approximately £35,000 - to be determined by public tender.

Recommendations

To approve the invitation of tenders, through public advertisement, for the replacement of the Lord Mayor's vehicle on a similar, though updated, specification to the current car.

Key to Abbreviations

Not applicable

Documents Attached

None



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Business in the Community Awards – Gala Dinner on 29 May 2008
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services

Relevant Background Information

Belfast City Council submitted an entry for the Business in the Community 'Women in Local Councils' award and as a result reached the final shortlist. A formal presentation was made to a judging panel on 16 May 2008 and this panel will decide the winner of the award on the basis of the written submission and the presentation.

In addition, the Women in Non-Traditional Sectors (WINS) project entered the Business in the Community "Diversity" award and a presentation was also made as part of the final selection stage for that award.

Winners of both awards will be announced at a Gala Awards ceremony on 29 May in Belfast Waterfront Hall.

Key Issues

It is an honour for the council to be short listed in these prestigious Northern Ireland awards and recognised for the valuable work it is doing in relation to diversity issues.

It is therefore proposed that the council attends the awards dinner and those invited to attend should include:

- The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee or nominee(s)
- A representative from each political party (excluding the parties represented by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee)
- The Chief Executive or nominee.
- Two officers from each project i.e. two from the Women in Local Council's Steering

Group and two from the WINS project.

On the basis of the above proposal, a maximum of 11 council representatives (6 Members and 5 Officers) would attend the event.

Resource Implications

Financial

On the basis of the above proposal, the cost incurred would be £885+VAT.

The costs would be met from the Human Resources Section's budget for the attendance of members and officers from the Women in Local Councils initiative. The costs for the attendance of officers in relation to the WINS project would be met from the WINS budget.

Human Resources

There are no Human Resources implications.

Recommendations

Members are asked to agree the following:

- the representation of Belfast City Council at the Gala Awards Dinner
- the proposed council representatives

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

None



Belfast City Council

Report to: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Subject: Financial Planning Cycle

Date: 23 May 2008

Reporting Officer: Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services

Contact Officer: Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager

Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that the Council's strategic financial management framework was presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 14 March 2008. As can be seen from figure one below, a key element of this framework is financial planning.



The key outputs of the financial planning processes in the Council are the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Annual Budget which concludes with the setting of the rate. These financial plans are simply a monetary expression of what the Council wants

to deliver and therefore they need to reflect our key priorities and objectives. In June 2008 Members will agree a new corporate plan. One of the key delivery determinants of this plan will be the Council's ability to align money to the agreed priorities within the context of an agreed district rate. The most successful organisations have achieved this by ensuring that their business planning and financial planning are very closely aligned. The purpose of this report is to propose a revised planning cycle for the organisation which starts to merge the financial and business planning cycles.

Key Issues

The following paragraphs outline chronologically the key elements of a revised planning cycle.

June 2008

Members will be requested to agree:

- Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011
- Capital Programme 2008/09

Members will receive the following:

- An assessment of the financial performance and standing of the council for 2007/08.
- Notification of the district rates finalisation figure for 2007/08.
- An assessment of key financial external pressures such as inflation.
- Draft efficiency programme

Members will also be requested to provide a range of indicative acceptable rate levels for 2009/10. This information will be needed so that a comparison can be made of draft budgets and plans against affordability.

September / October 2008

Members will receive the following:

- Costed options for taking forward corporate priorities for 2009/10
- Draft core budgets for delivering business as usual activities
- A first indication of the level of income the rates will yield in 2009/10
- An assessment of mid year financial position for 2008/09

October / November 2008

Members will receive the following:

- A comparison of proposed summary budgets for corporate priorities and business as usual against affordability levels and rate yield indication.
- An analysis of funding gaps and trade-off options
- A second indication of the level of income the rates will yield in 2009/10

Members will be requested to:

- Provide direction on trade off between budget and priorities

November / December

Members will receive the following:

- Notification of the level of income the rates will yield in 2009/10
- An assessment of the impact of rate yield on plans and budgets

- Revised summary budgets aligned to plans

January / February

Members will be requested to:

- Agree district rate 2009/10
- Agree summary budgets for business as usual and corporate priorities for 2009/10.

March

Members will be requested to:

- Agree corporate plan year 2 - 2009/10

April

Members will be requested to:

- Agree department plans

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Note of the contents of the report.
2. Agree to the revised planning cycle.

Item No:

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Delegated Authority for extension of contract for the provision of Travel Services
Date:	23 May 2007
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Core Improvement
Contact Officer:	Valerie Cupples, Procurement Manager

Relevant Background Information

The Terms of Reference of the Procurement Unit include 'co-ordinating purchasing for the Council and that it will enter into contracts where the best price can be obtained by working from a central contract, with Departments purchasing from it'. The existing contract was due for expiry in March 2008.

In November 2007 a new tender was advertised for the provision of travel services. In response to this advertisement seven companies submitted tenders. The estimated value of this contract was £200,000 per year.

Key Issues

An extensive evaluation of tenders has been undertaken. However, because of the complex nature of the travel industry, varying pricing mechanisms that contractors have presented in their tender submissions and a difficulty in making a like-for-like comparison means that we are unable to make a recommendation that we could stand over.

In addition, it has become apparent that, in view of changes within the travel industry as well as the Council's own emphasis towards greater efficiency, we should not award a tender at this stage but rather carry out further research into the best approach for contracting our travel arrangements.

The Audit Panel is also conducting an investigation into Council travel which will result in further recommendations that may affect any further travel contracts.

Resource Implications

A co-ordinated contract will provide the Council with a cost effective method of purchasing this service. The Procurement Unit will manage the co-ordinated tender process on behalf of the Council.
--

Recommendations

Committee is requested to approve extending the existing contract with McNeill Menary for a period of six months, with the option to extend on a monthly basis thereafter as required, while further research is undertaken.
--

Documents Attached

N/A



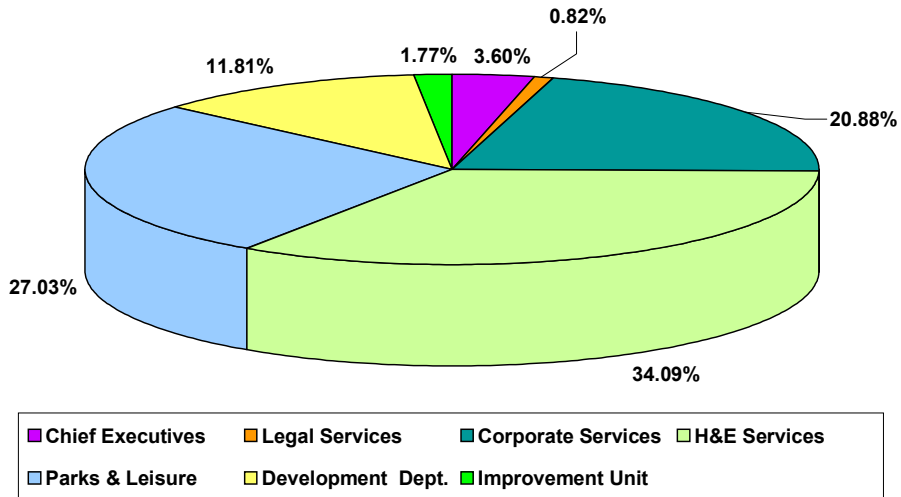
Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee										
Subject:	2007/08 Absence Rates										
Date:	May 2008										
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive										
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Acting Head of HR										
Purpose											
<p>This report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides sickness absence data for the council for the financial year 2007/08. • Compares this year's absence figure with the same period for financial years 2005/06 and 2006/07. • Recommends a target for reduction in sickness absence. 											
Relevant Background Information											
<p>A robust and corporate approach to the consistent management of absence has been put in place and resources have been prioritised to carry out considerable work in this area. This has included the development and negotiated agreement of a new Attendance Policy; identification and monitoring of 'hot spots'; weekly identification and monitoring of priority cases across the council; monthly central monitoring of departmental compliance with absence procedures; implementation of a case review mechanism; and the delivery of a training programme on effective absence management.</p> <p>This is a good example of how a central support service can work in conjunction with departments to deliver a corporate priority.</p>											
Key Issues											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This work has resulted in a reduction of almost two days during the past two years. 											
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Average number of days sickness absence per full time employee</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2006/06</th> <th>2006/07</th> <th>2007/08</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td align="center">15.75</td> <td align="center">15.08</td> <td align="center">13.91</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Average number of days sickness absence per full time employee			2006/06	2006/07	2007/08	15.75	15.08	13.91
Average number of days sickness absence per full time employee											
2006/06	2006/07	2007/08									
15.75	15.08	13.91									

- At the end of the financial year 2007/08 the average number of sickness absence per employee is 13.91 days per full time employee.
- This is the lowest figure for absence the council has had since 1999/00.
- The council has reduced its absence by 2,708 days, or 7.75%, this year.
- Over two years the figure has reduced by nearly two average days per person (1.84 days or 11.6%)
- 35% of staff had no absence during 2007/08
- 65% of staff had less than the CBI norm for the private sector, i.e. 6 days.
- 17.5% of staff were absent from work on a long term basis (more than 20 consecutive working days)
- Long term sickness accounted for nearly 70 % of the council's sickness absence.
- Departmental sizes have a significant impact on the overall sickness figures and so the size of each department is shown overleaf at Figure one.
- Table 1 shows council and department performance this year compared to last year.
- Table 2 shows council and departmental performance against council and departmental targets.
- Three departments met their annual absence targets; those departments that did not either reduced notably on their 2006/07 figure or more or less maintained their 2006/07 figure.
- All departments will develop action plans to improve absence rates and achieve their targets as part of the departmental planning process and it will be a performance target for all senior managers to develop and implement these action plans in accordance with Council policy.
- Performance at section level for this year compared to last year and against section targets is shown in appendices 1-5. (CIT and Legal Services are not included due to their size and the fact that they are not structured down to service level. This information is covered however in tables one and two)

Figure 1

Percentage of BCC's workforce by department (07/08)



Percentage of BCC's sickness by department (07/08)

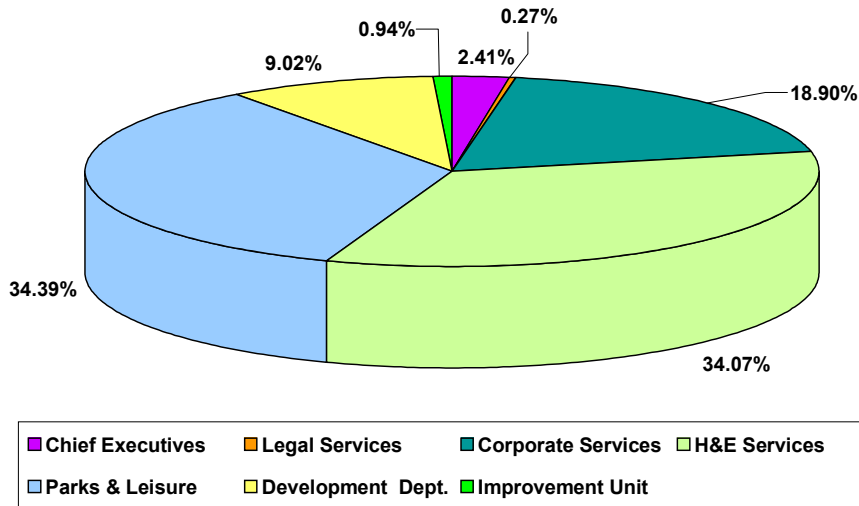


TABLE 1

This years absence compared to last year

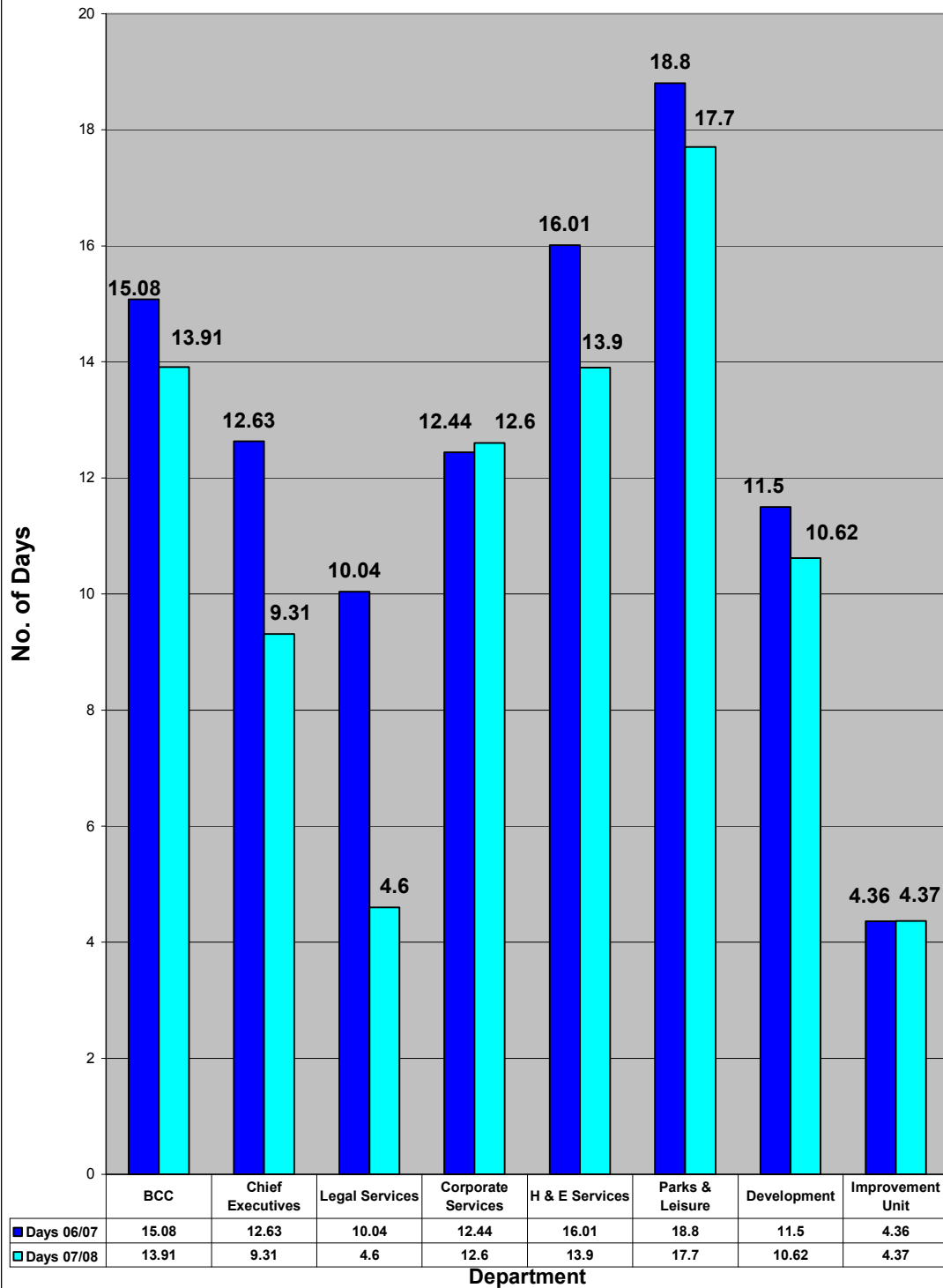
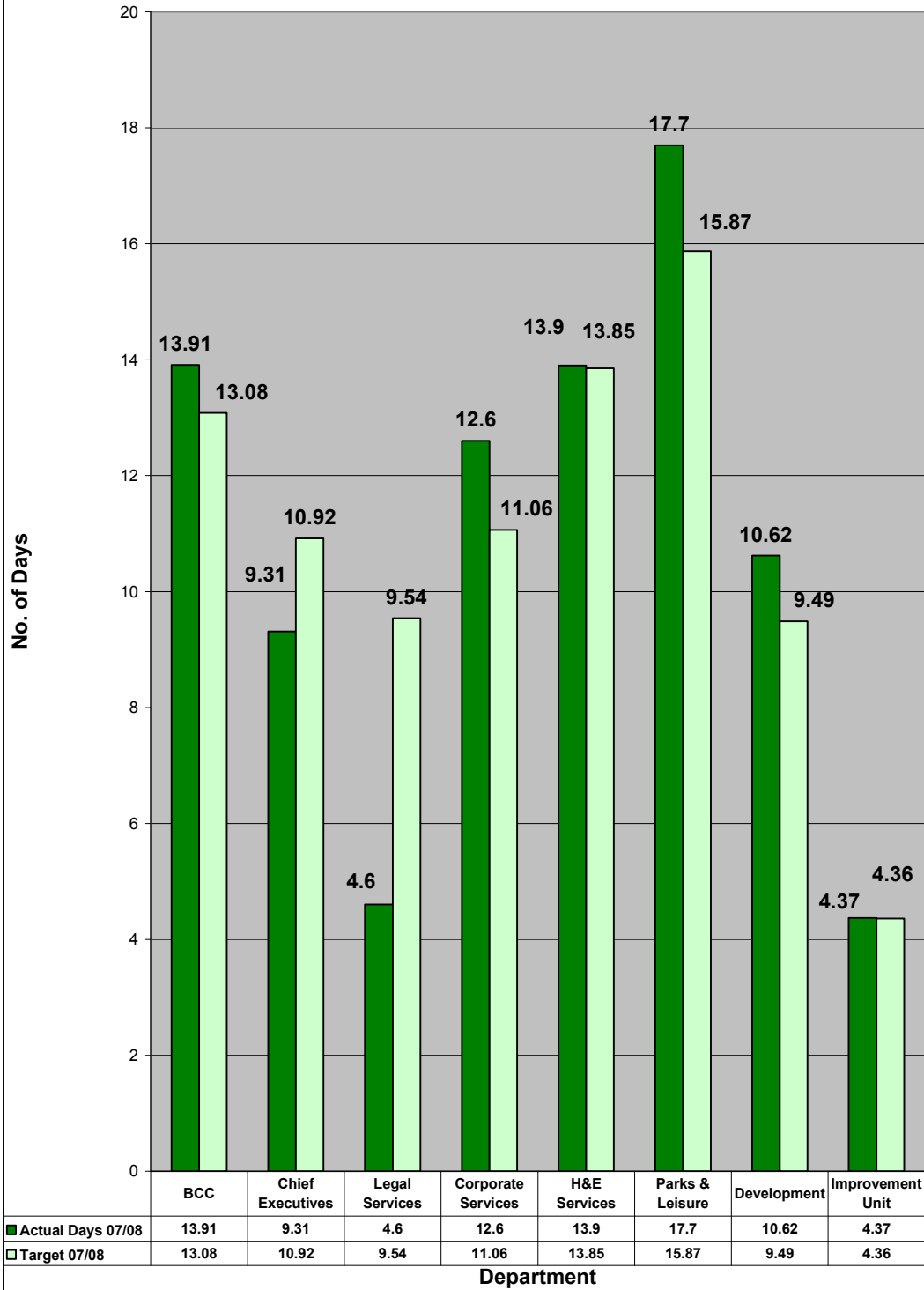


TABLE 2

Department Targets -v- Actual 07/08



Absenteeism rates in Northern Ireland employment sectors.

The council's figure of 13.91 compares as follows;

Belfast City Council average days absence 2007/08	13.9
N I Councils average days absence for the sector 2006/07	13.8
N I Housing Executive average days absence 2007/08	14.8
N I Health Service average days absence 2006/07	13.9
N I Civil Service average days absence 2006/07	13.8

Members should note:

- Belfast City Council figures are in line with the average figure for all NI councils even though Belfast is the largest of the NI authorities and there is a direct correlation between organisation size and workplace absence.
- According to the Noble Index, the 10 worst super output areas (SOA) in terms of multiple deprivation are located in Belfast and the 20 worst SOAs in terms of health and disability deprivation are all in Belfast.
- The NI Civil Service figure does not include industrial staff (some 1,500 staff) and if included the overall NICS figure may well be higher.
- Comparisons above have been made with 2006/07 figures (with the exception of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive) as 2007/08 were not yet available.

Proposed targets for reduction

Best practice indicates that longer term targets for reduction in absence rates should be set by organisations. Also, the introduction of the new Attendance policy will take time to embed. It is therefore proposed that the council's target should be to reduce its average day's absence rate to 12 days by 2011. This is a reduction of a further two days and will represent a 14% reduction in the period 2008/09 to 2010/11

Continuing work on absence management

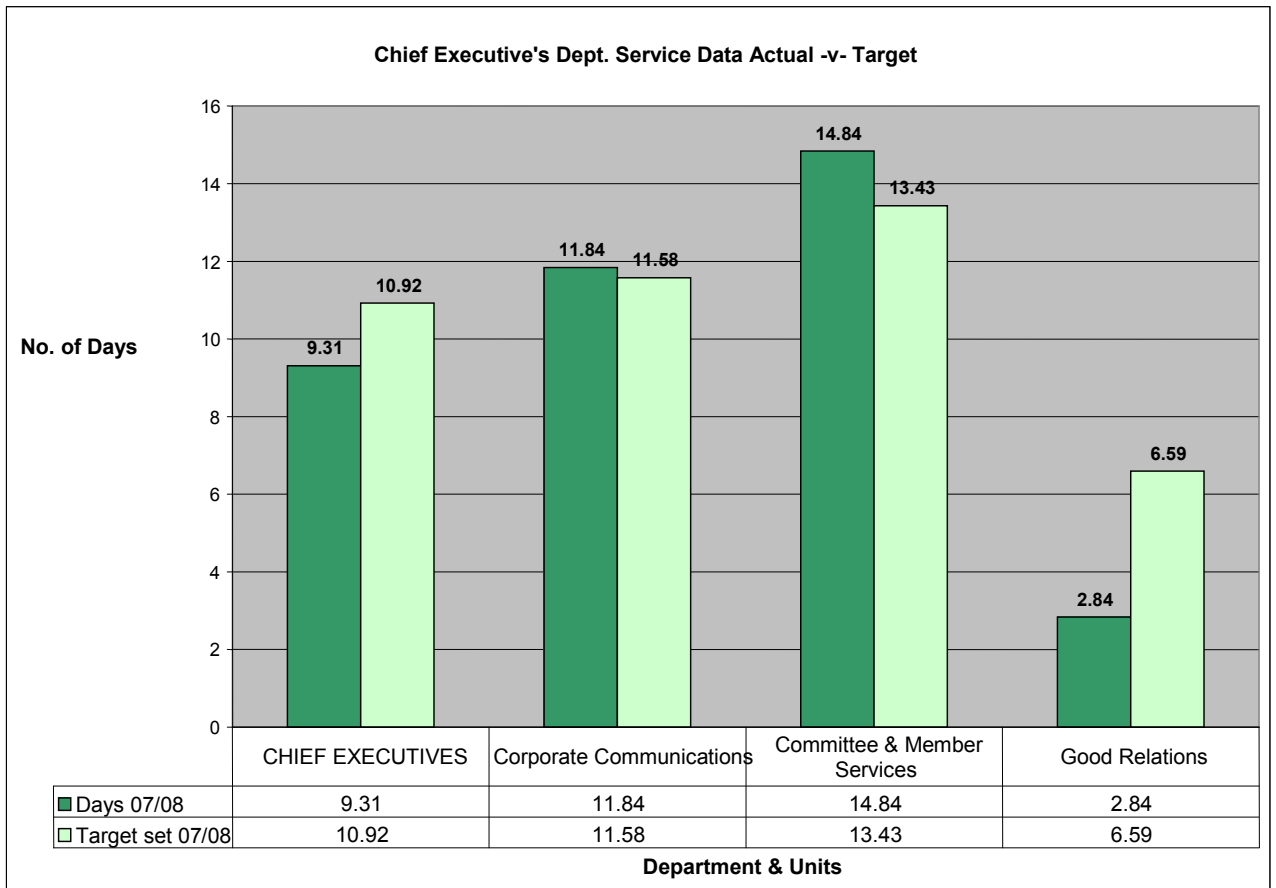
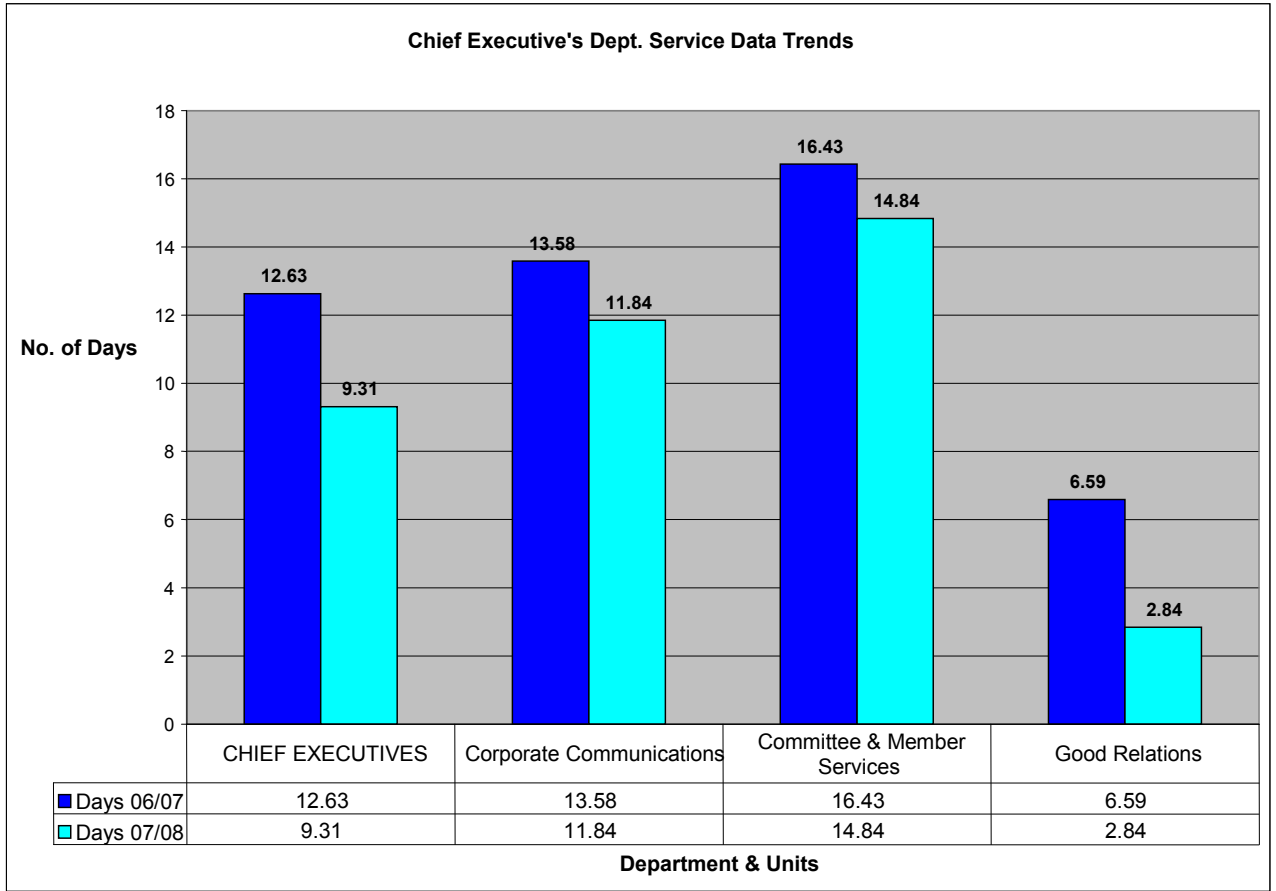
In order to help the council achieve this target absence management continues to be a key priority within the council's HR framework. Work is continuing to maintain and improve absence rates, including:

- Implementation of the new Attendance Policy. The trade unions have agreed the new policy and work is now underway to develop and agree detailed guidance on the application of the policy. A training and communication plan has been developed to ensure effective implementation.
- Review of Occupational Health service to ensure it can effectively support a robust attendance culture.
- Ongoing monthly central monitoring of compliance with absence management procedures; weekly identification and monitoring of priority cases across the council; and the effective management of case reviews.
- A programme of health and well being activities.
- Performance management targets have been set for all senior managers to develop absence action plans and implement them in accordance with Council policy.

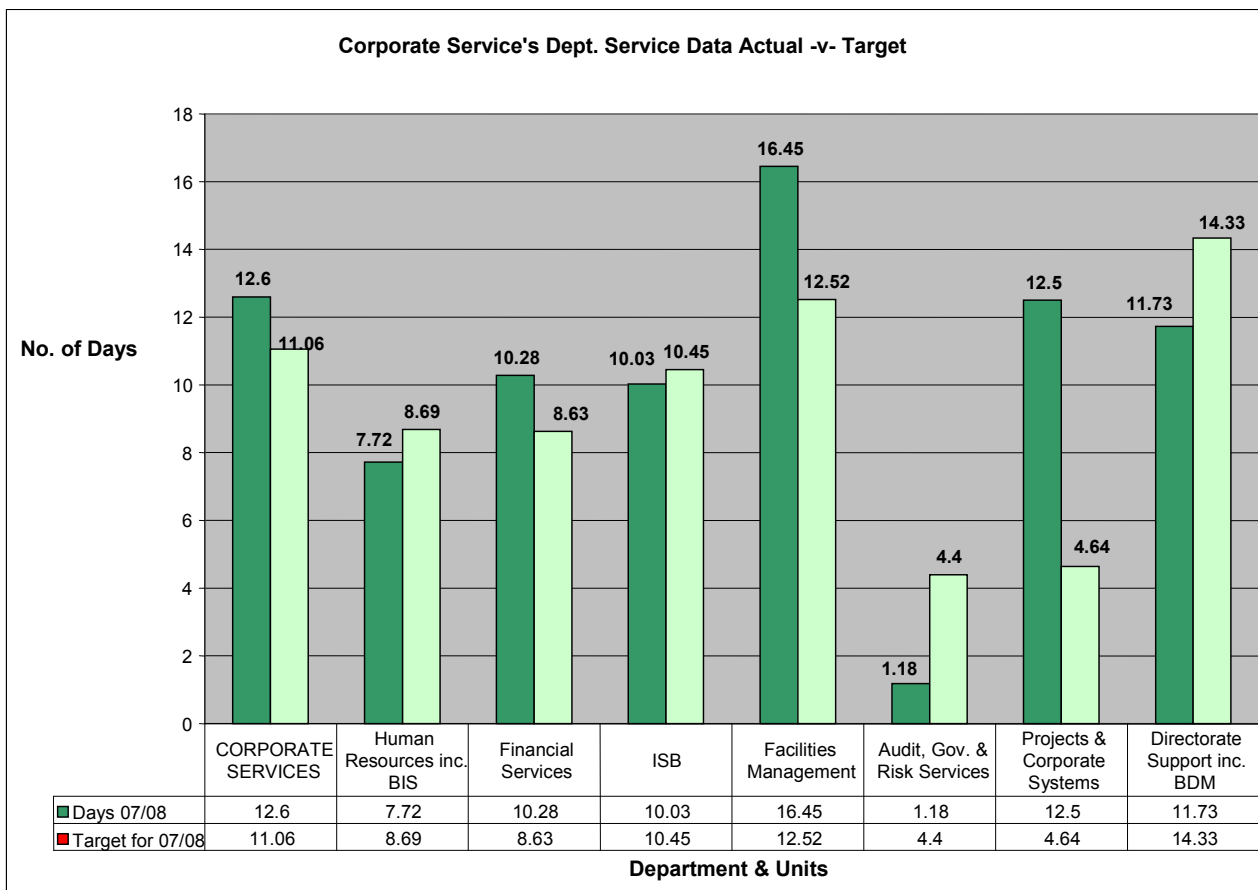
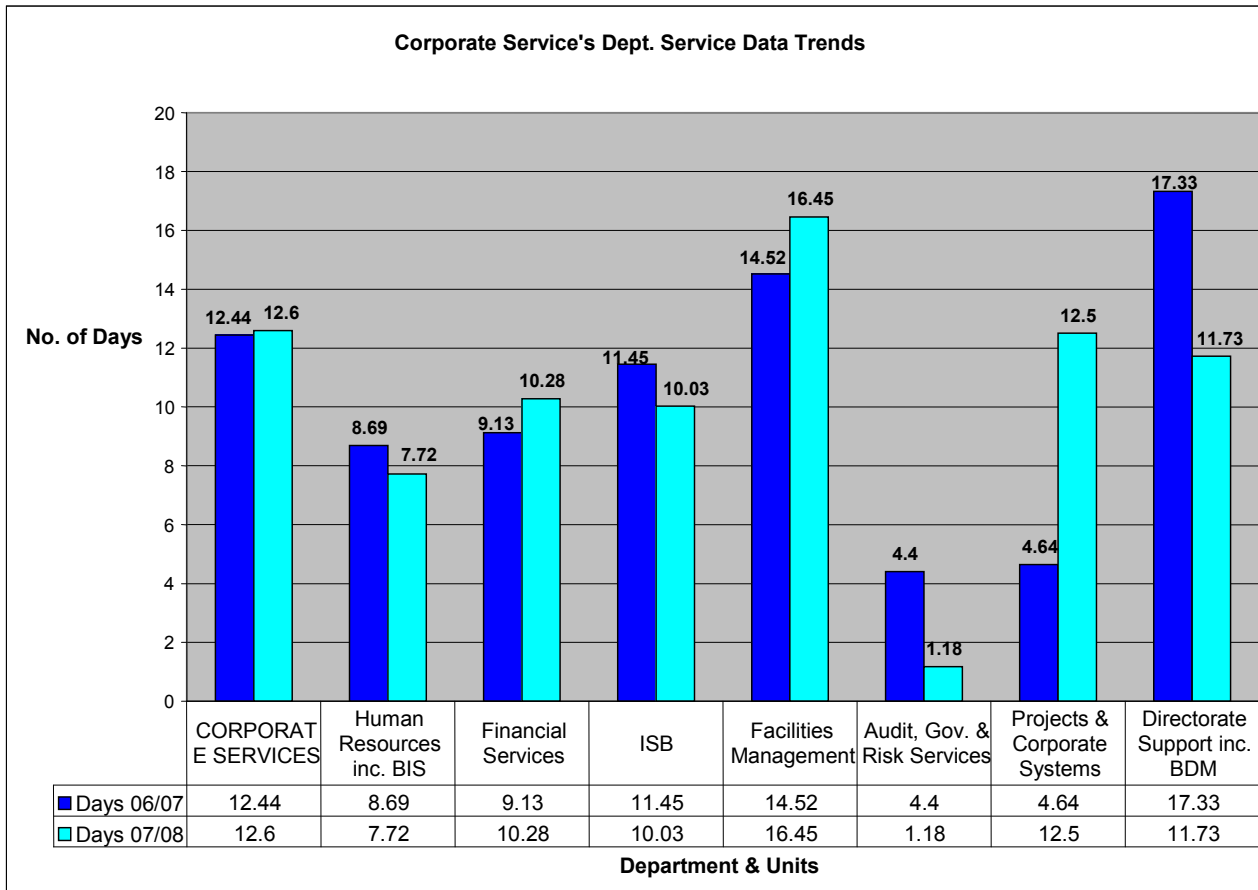
Recommendations

Members are asked to note the year end performance figures and agree the above target.

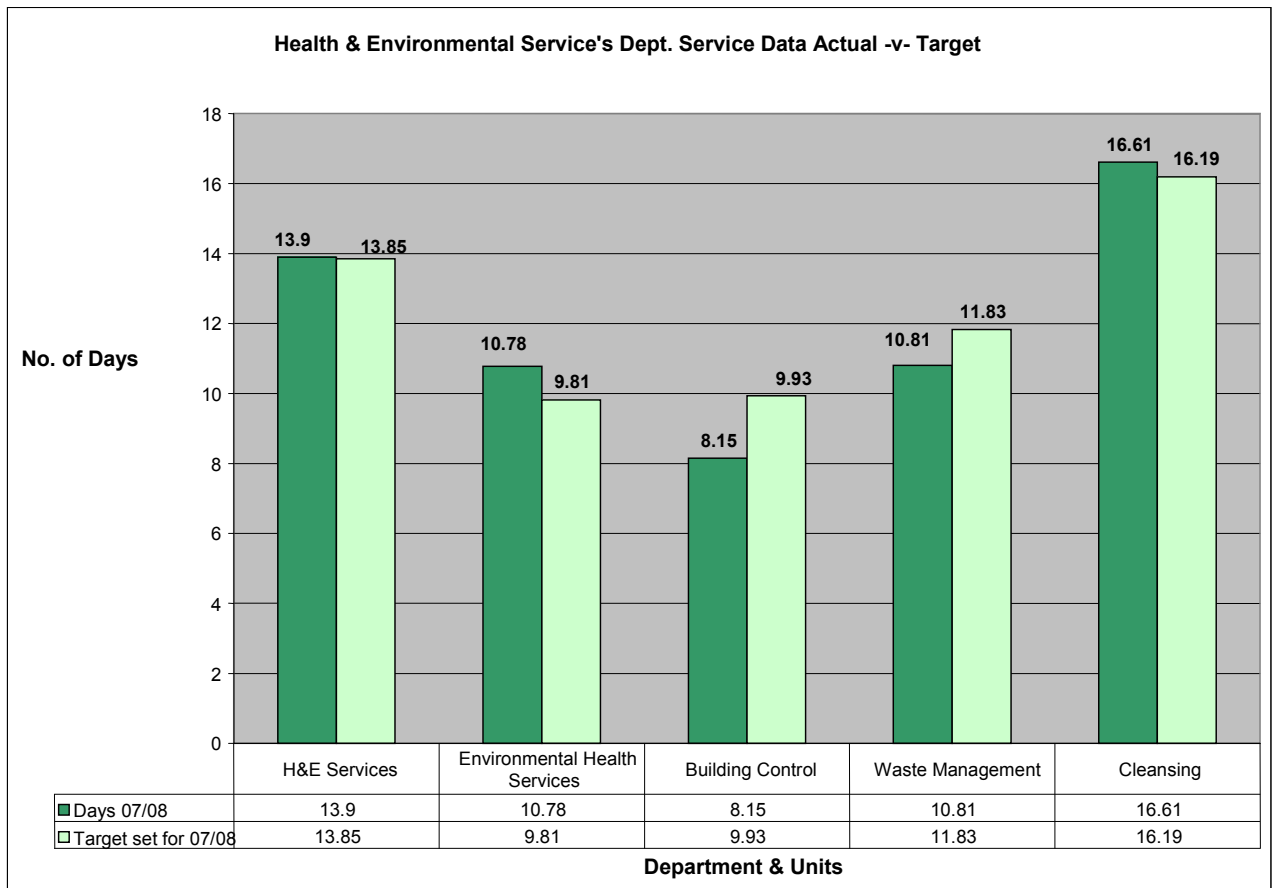
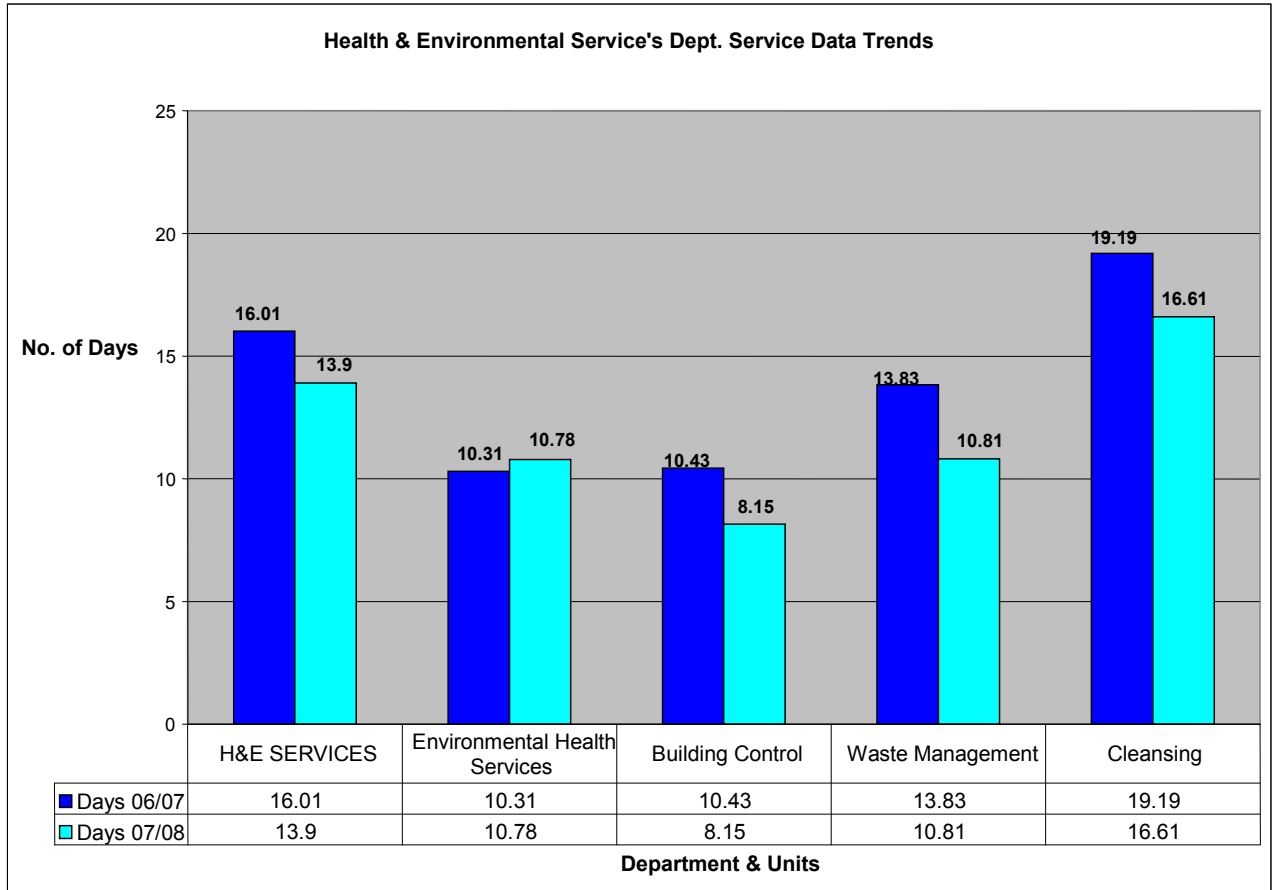
APPENDIX 1



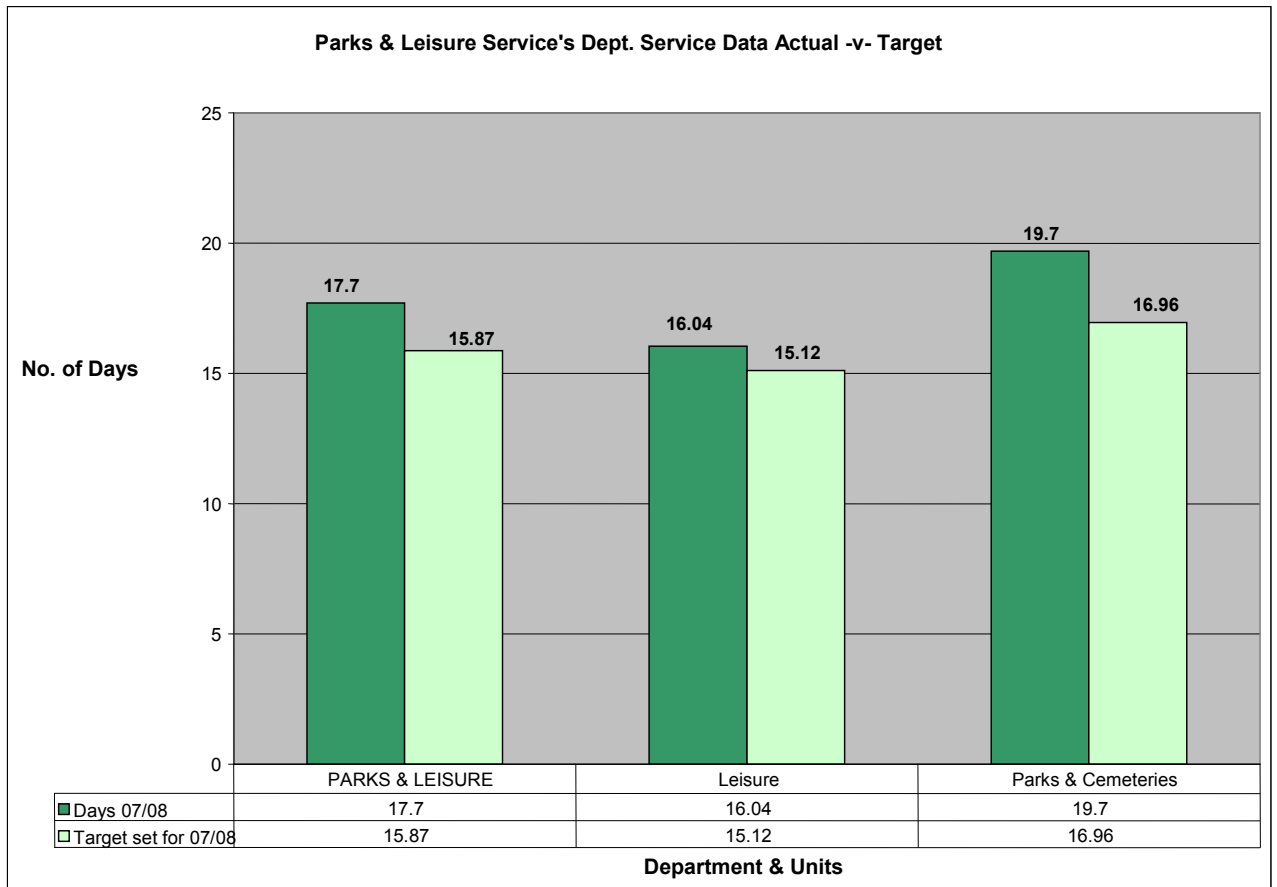
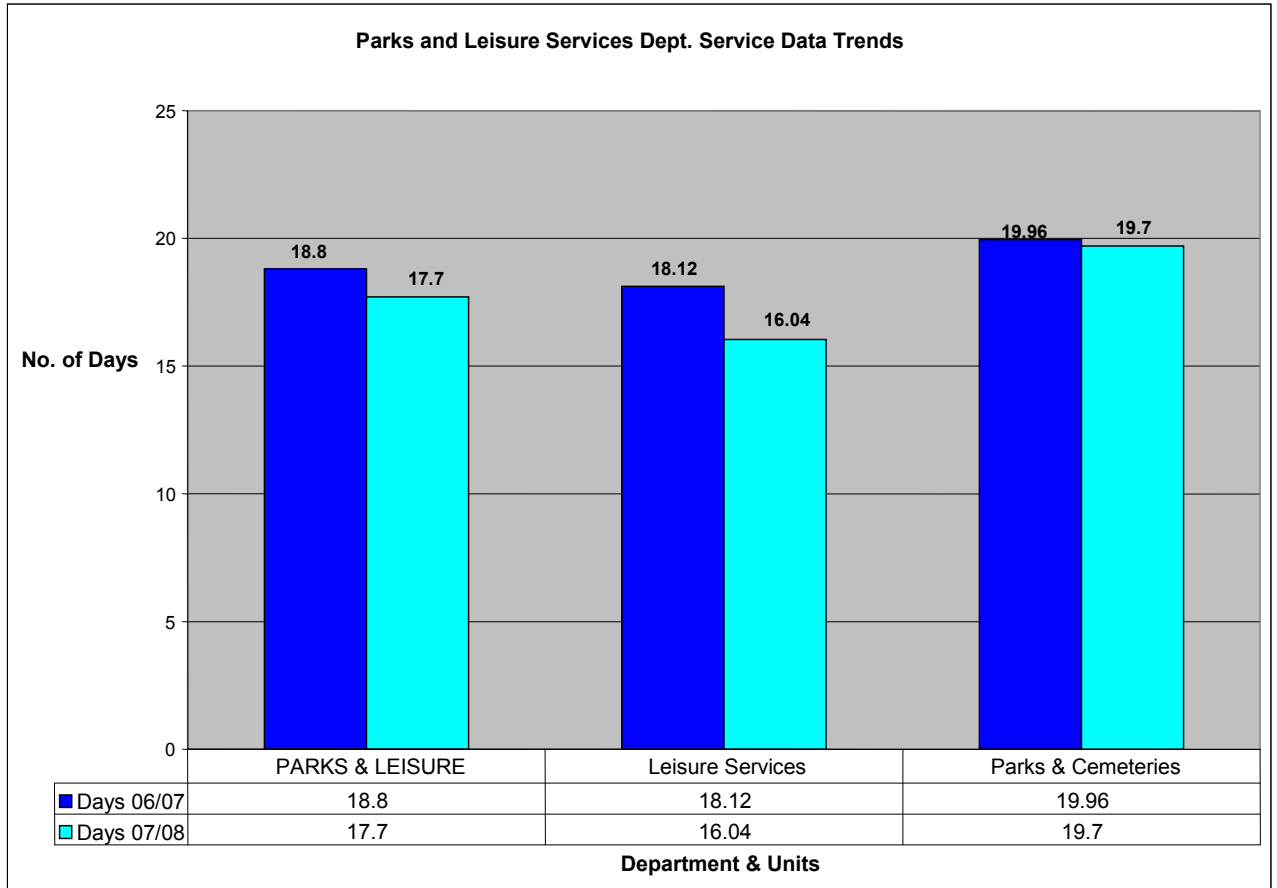
APPENDIX 2



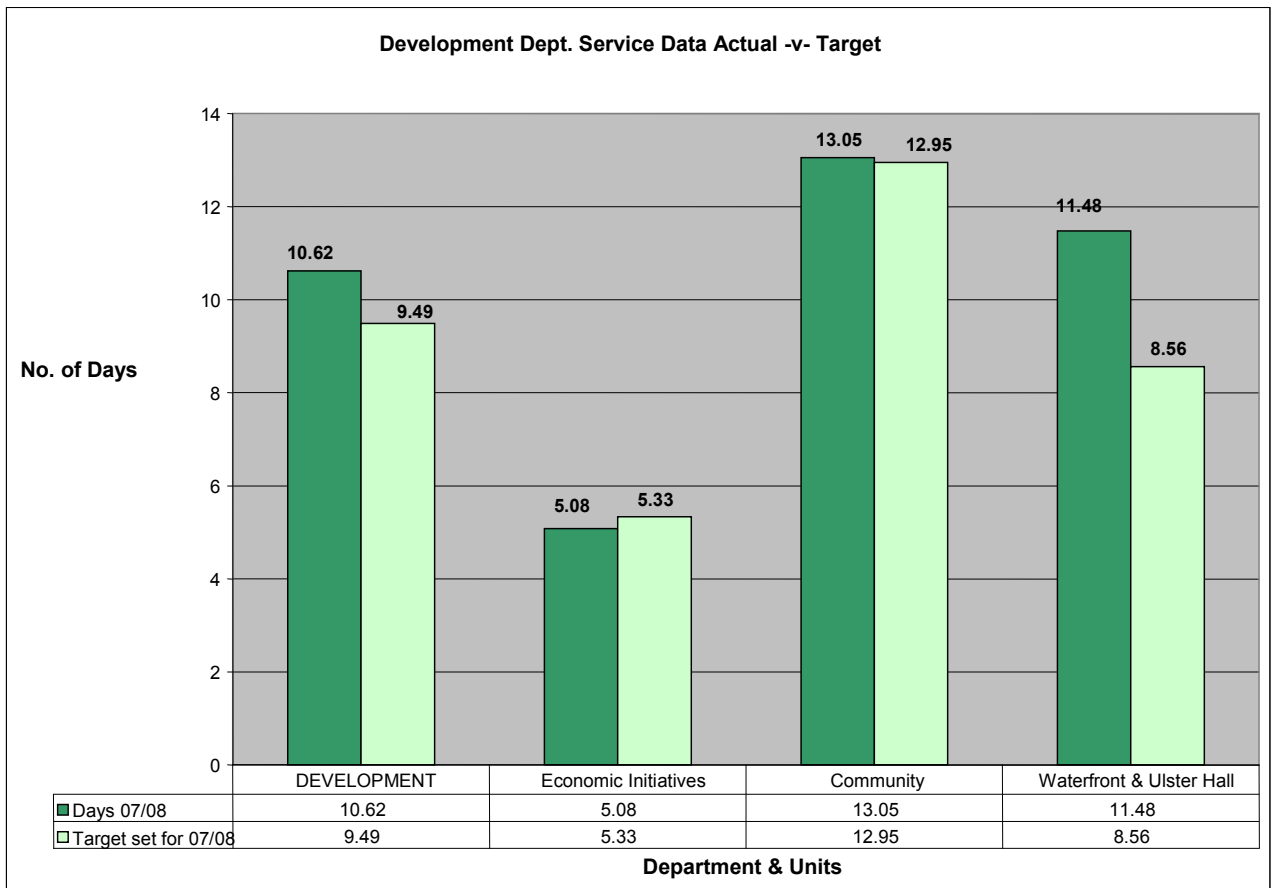
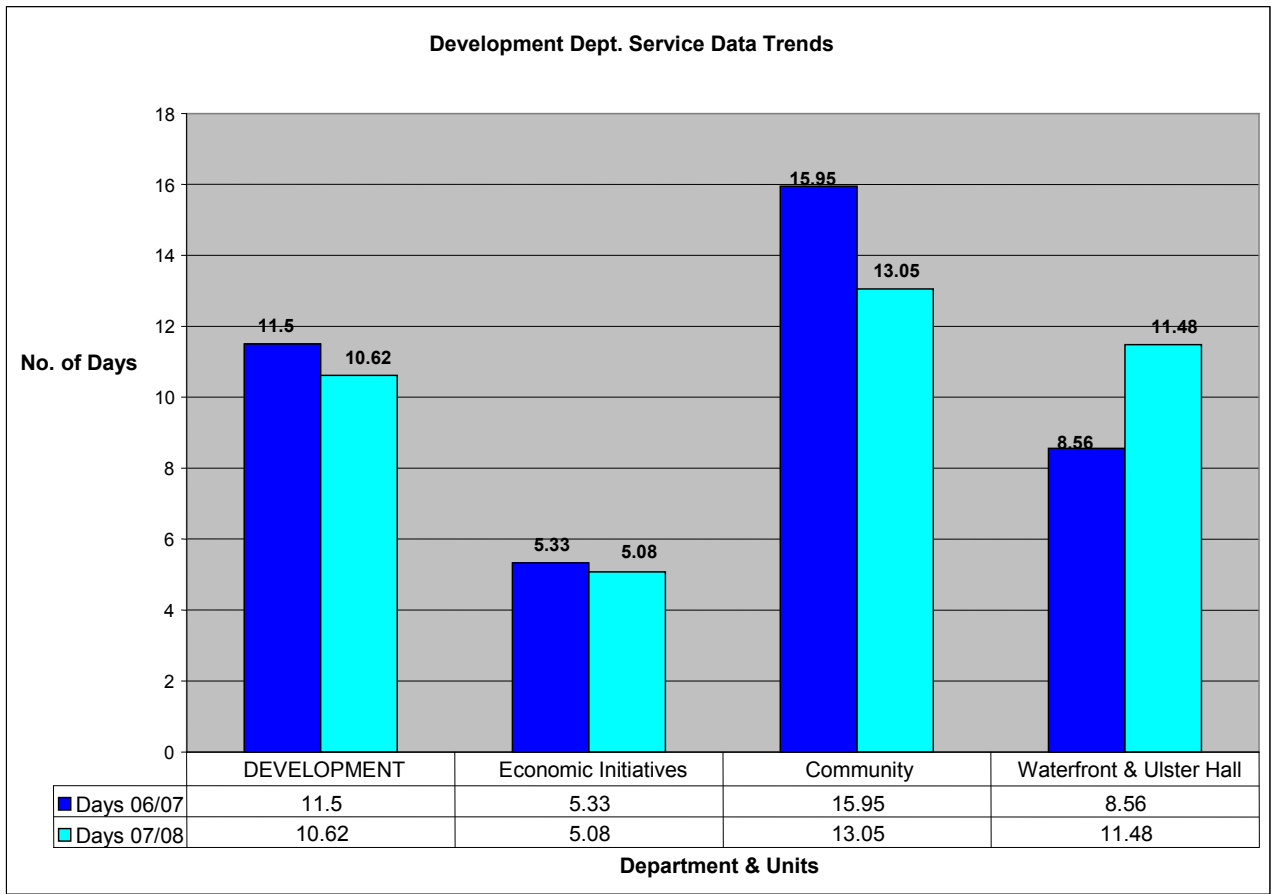
APPENDIX 3



APPENDIX 4



APPENDIX 5





Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Community Outreach
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services, extension 6083
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Acting Head of Human Resources ext 3220

Purpose of report:

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide an update on the council's community outreach activities;
- provide information in respect of council funding to the Citywide Employability Consortium (CEC) to develop pre-employment training programmes for the long-term unemployed.

Relevant background information:

Committee agreed in February to engage with the Citywide Employability Consortium to develop pre-employment training programmes for the long-term unemployed.

The decision as to whether or not the council should part fund this initiative (a proposed contribution of £10,000 per annum, for three years from the corporate workforce development budget) was however deferred.

Members requested a further report on the current council funding to the CEC and an update on the council's community outreach activities.

Key Issues:

Update on community outreach activities:

- The council's community outreach programme was launched in 1998 to promote Belfast City Council as an attractive, equal opportunities employer with wide and varied job opportunities.
- We operate an extensive work experience placement scheme which deals with, on average each year, 200 unpaid work experience placement opportunities for students from schools and further education / university establishments and 40 unpaid disability work experience placements from a range of disability organisations.

- We attend jobs and careers fairs; conduct 'site visits' to promote the council as an attractive employer; provide training and development opportunities for young people on interview awareness skills using mock interview sessions; and deliver presentations to students, teachers and representatives from other organisations e.g. ethnic minority and disability groups to advise them of job opportunities and the council's recruitment and selection procedures.
- The programme has created eight basic grade posts specifically 'ring-fenced' to disabled applicants; operates a 'guaranteed interview' scheme for people with disabilities; has a confidential care-line for applicants whose first language isn't English; has skilled up to 50 front-line council officers on sign language techniques; and issues details of all council vacancies to under-represented groups within the ethnic minority and disabled communities.
- The programme holds the NIACRO award for the fair recruitment of people with criminal convictions; has engaged in an extensive partnership project to encourage women into non-traditional roles; and has attained the 'Gold' Opportunity Now benchmarking award for gender equality. More recently, it has agreed to engage with the CEC to develop pre-employment training programmes for the long-term unemployed.

Council funding to the CEC to develop pre-employment training programme for the long term unemployed:

- The council currently co-finances, along with the European Social Fund (ESF), projects which are currently run by two of the organisations which comprise the CEC. These two organisations, LEAP (North Belfast) and Stepping Stones (East Belfast), are financed as local employment initiatives to bring together the supply and demand ends of the labour market for private sector development:
- LEAP (North Belfast) receives £48,864 per annum from the council to assist with a project to enhance employer and client engagement in North Belfast with a view to increasing employability of local people. The project aims to place approximately 300 local people in employment over the three year period of the programme; and
- Stepping Stones (East Belfast) receives £32,665 per annum to assist with a project to enhance employer and client engagement in East Belfast, focussing on addressing the needs of small businesses. The project aims to place approximately 220 local people in employment over the three year period of the programme.
- In terms of this employment initiative, which is to develop pre-employment training programmes for the long-term unemployed, the council's finances would be targeted towards public sector development.
- Members should note that while part-funding (£10,000 per annum, for three years from the corporate workforce development budget) by the council may represent an opportunity for us to enhance our corporate social responsibility and take a leading role in the development of the pre-employment training programmes, it is not essential to our participation in the CEC public-sector programme.
- Should members have concerns in relation to the part funding the council will proceed with the programme on a non-funding basis, as previously agreed by committee.

Resource Implications:

Financial

If it is agreed that a contribution of £10,000 is made, it is recommended that this funding should be given for one year only (i.e. £10,000 contribution for 2008/09) with funding for year two and three of the programme being dependant on successful evaluation of the first year of the programme and further agreement from committee in this regard.

Human Resource

There are no additional human resource implications contained within this report.

Asset and Other Implications

There are no assets and/or other implications contained within this report.

Decisions required:

Members are asked to note the information on the council's community outreach activities and decide whether or not the council should part fund the CEC's pre-employment training programme for the long-term unemployed as outlined above.

Key to Abbreviations

CEC- Citywide Employability Consortium

ESF – European Social Fund

NBPB- North Belfast Partnership Board



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services, ext 6083
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Acting Head of Human Resources, ext 3220

Relevant Background Information

To inform the Committee of delegated authority exercised by the Director of Corporate Services to the employment of individuals who are related to existing officers of the Council.

The Director of Corporate Services has authorised the appointment of the following individuals who are related to existing officers of the Council in accordance with the authority delegated to him by the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee on 27 June, 2005. The Committee is asked to note the appointments authorised by the Director under Standing Order 55.

NAME OF NEW EMPLOYEE	POST APPOINTED TO	RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING OFFICER	NAME OF EXISTING OFFICER	DEPARTMENT
Anthony Morrison	Gardener	Son	Anthony Martin Morrison	Parks and Leisure
Melvyn Waddell	Neighbourhood Dev Officer	Nephew	Wilma Stewart	Chief Executive's
Louise Monaghan	Neighbourhood Dev Officer	Sister	Catherine Tohill	Chief Executive's
Lisa Campbell	Industrial Placement – ISB	Niece	Alan Neilly	Corporate Services

Resource Implications

Financial

Provision for these posts exists within the revenue budgets of the relevant departments.

Human Resources

There are no Human Resource considerations. All appointments have been made on the basis of merit in accordance with the Council's Recruitment Policies.

Asset and Other Implications

There are no other implications.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the appointments authorised by the Director of Corporate Services in accordance with Standing Order 55.

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Appropriation of Land at Shore Road Playing Fields
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext. 6217.
Contact Officer:	Ken Anderson, Estates Surveyor, Ext. 3496.

Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 13 March 2008 the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to the Appropriation of approximately 0.84 acres of land (shown hatched on Appendix 1) at Shore Road Playing Fields to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to be managed as part of the Corporate Land Bank. The land is currently let on Licence to the Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle and is used as an overflow car parking area. The current financial receipt from the Licence is £10,000 per annum.

Site to be managed by Estates Management Unit, Core Improvement Team, with an appropriate budgetary allocation to facilitate among other things, any physical works to secure the site, and site marketing, as required.

Estates Management Unit are to consider the longer term utilisation of the site and will provide Committee with further reports in due course.

Key Issues

- Appropriation of approximately 0.84 acres from Parks and Leisure Committee to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to form part of the Corporate Land Bank managed by Estates Management Unit, Core Improvement Team.
- Further reports to be provided to Committee in due course on future utilisation of the site.

Resource Implications

Financial

It may well be appropriate to physically separate the site from adjoining lands which will continue to form part of Shore Road Playing Fields and it may be appropriate to market the property at some stage. The need for these actions (and any expenditure associated with them) will be considered by Estates Management Unit as part of their review of the site. In the interim it is envisaged the current financial receipt of £10,000 per annum is likely to continue and there remains the prospect of a capital receipt if members ultimately approve disposal of the land.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required at this time.

Asset and Other Implications

The declaration of this land as surplus to Parks & Leisure operational requirements and its appropriation to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of the Corporate Land Bank will allow the Council to consider the most appropriate future use of the land and its potential disposal.

Recommendations

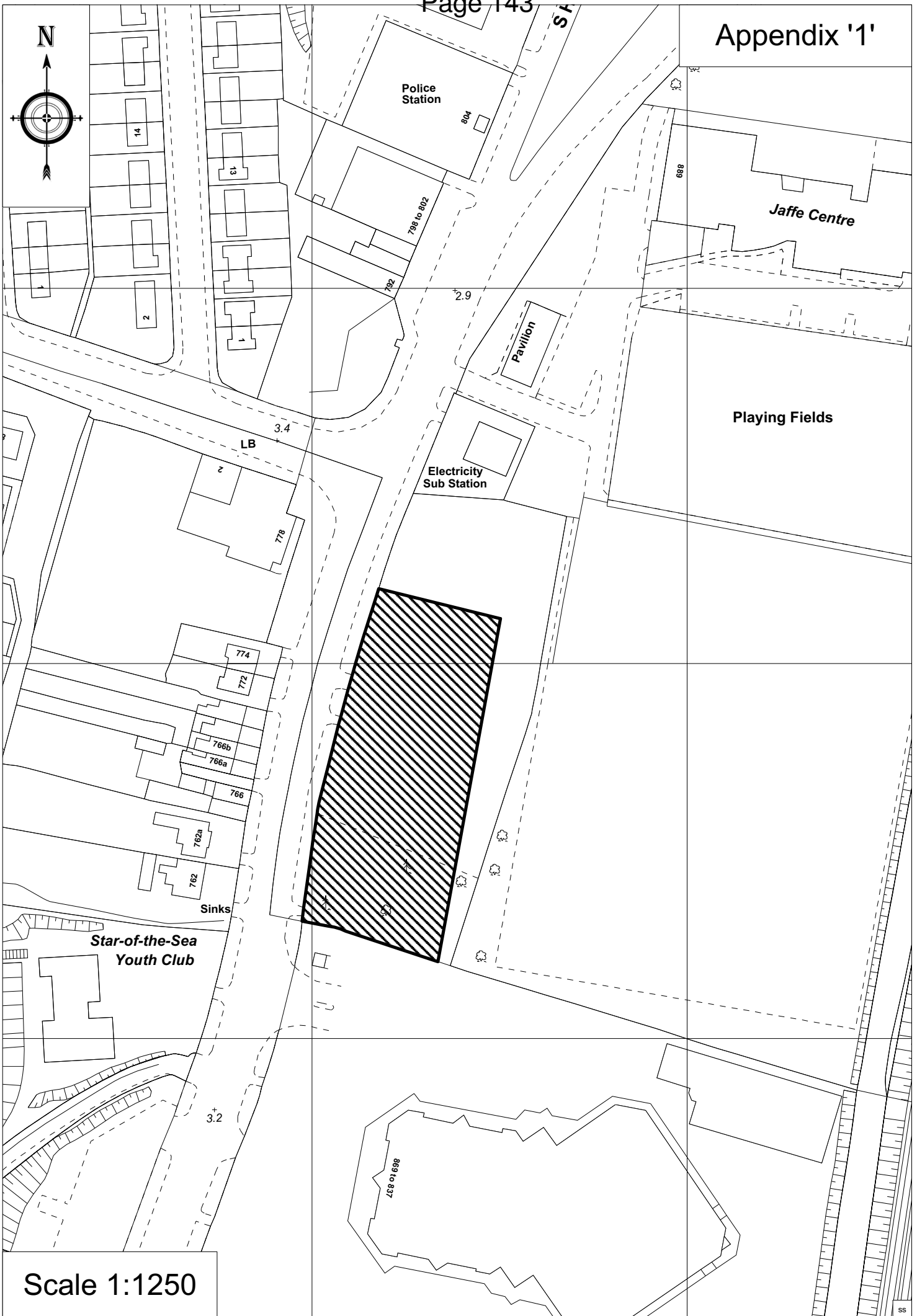
Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report and note that further reports will be brought to Committee in due course.

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Map showing (hatched) the area of land to be appropriated from Parks and Leisure Committee to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.



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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Capital Programme: McCrory Park – Play Area and Associated Facilities
Date:	18 April 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement
Contact Officer:	Michael Stanley, Project Manager

Relevant Background Information

A tender was accepted under authority delegated by the Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries Services) Sub-Committee, Tuesday, 6th February 2007 in the sum of £293,000 against an initial budget of £389,500.

Key Issues

As tenders were particularly competitive further discussions were held between BCC, BRO and community representatives resulting in the unexploited funding of £96,500 being offered by BRO as an additional variation to the project.

Details of the proposed variation were reported to the Parks and Leisure Committee on 14 February 2008, but due to an oversight this was not forwarded to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

Financial Regulations require that any variation of this scale in the approved capital budget must be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Resource Implications

This capital proposal including the variation is 100% funded by BRO, with net £Nil cost to BCC.

Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the instruction of the variation to the approved contract sum.

Documents Attached

Appendix A

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Extract from minutes of Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries Services) Sub-Committee 6 February 20072. Extract from minutes of Parks and Leisure Committee 14 February 2008 |
|---|

Appendix A

Extract from minutes of Parks and Leisure Committee, Thursday, 14th February, 2008

McCorry Park

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Committee may recall that the development of a playground facility at McCorry Park has been ongoing from April 2000 when the former Parks and Amenities Sub Committee agreed to acquire the land from the O’Donnell’s GAC at no cost to the Council. The funding for the project has come from three sources, Belfast Regeneration Office; Creating Common Ground consortium and Lloyds TSB. This has been a protracted project with delays in acquiring title and funding.

The Council has agreed to manage and maintain the facility once completed.

The project is nearing completion, March 2008. However, a request has now been received from the Community in relation to the landscaping of a piece of land adjacent to the facility and indicated on the drawing at Appendix A. The piece of land was not included in the original lease from the O’Donnell’s GAC; however discussions with the Club and local residents have indicated that both were under the impression that the land had been included.

The work was not included in the original tender; however discussions with the contractor have indicated that the work can be undertaken. The Belfast Regeneration Office has also advised the Council that it would be willing to meet the additional cost of the work providing the council is willing to revise its lease with O’Donnell’s.

Key Issues

Key Issues for consideration

The Committee is asked to note the following points

1. The Committee is being asked to agree to extend the current lease from O’Donnell’s GAC to incorporate the additional area of land;
2. The BRO is willing to fund the additional work providing it is undertaken prior to end of March 2008;
3. Formal confirmation has been sought from O’Donnell’s GAC in relation to the transfer of the land;
4. It is anticipated that the lease will be in line with the existing agreement and will be at nil cost to the Council;
5. The work will enhance the environmental and aesthetic appearance of the area

Resource Implications

Financial

The acquisition of the land will have revenue implications in terms of ongoing maintenance.

Human Resources

There are no significant human resource implications.

Asset and Other Implications

The additional work will enhance the appearance and attractiveness of the area.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agree in principle to accept the acquisition of the additional land at nil cost to the Council subject to the entering into an appropriate legal agreement between the Council and O'Donnell's GAC. It is further recommended that the Committee agree to accept the management and maintenance of the area and carry appropriate public liability insurance in respect of the facility."

The Committee adopted the recommendation, subject to notification, in accordance with Standing Order 60, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Extract from minutes of Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries Services)
Sub-Committee, Tuesday, 6th February, 2007**

Development of Play Facilities at McCrory Park

The Sub-Committee was reminded that the former Client Services Committee, at its meeting on 19th April, 2005, had approved a tender for the construction of play facilities at McCrory Park.

The Director reported that, due to a problem associated with securing a sub-lease for the land in which the playground was to be constructed, it had not been possible to secure possession of the site for the successful contractor, Whitemountain (Civils) Limited, and the contract could not be signed. He pointed out that the sub-lease was near completion and it had been necessary for the project to be re-tendered with the tender documentation due to be received on 9th February, 2007.

The Director pointed out that this delay had meant that, if the necessary Council approvals were to be pursued for the project, there was a likelihood that the timeframe associated with the Belfast Regeneration Office's release of grant monies could expire.

He recommended therefore that the Sub-Committee agree to delegate authority to the Chief Executive and the Director of Community and Recreation, in consultation with the Chairman of the Community and Recreation Committee, to accept tenders within the approved overall budget of £389,500.

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Temporary Licence and Disposal of Land at Dundonald Cemetery
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext. 6217
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Principal Parks & Cemeteries Development Manager, Ext 3510. Ken Anderson, Estates Surveyor, Core Improvement Team, Ext. 3496.

Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 14 February 2008 the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to disposal of an area of land at Dundonald Cemetery to the Hanwood Trust and agreed in principle to the preparation of a legal agreement which would enable early commencement of work at the site prior to completion of a formal land transfer. The Committee also noted and supported the Hanwood Trust's requested to transfer the land at a notional cost subject to compliance with the Council's obligations to obtain the approval of the Department of the Environment to any disposal at less than best price (in accordance with Section 96 of the Local Government Act 1972). Approval was also subject to notification to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The land in question lies on the opposite side of the former Comber Railway line from the main portion of Dundonald Cemetery and lies within Castlereagh Borough Council local government area. The Belfast City Council land is required as part of an area required for development of a third generation pitch and associated run-off area. In the short term the land was required to accommodate soil shifting from other parts of the development taking place in the immediate vicinity.

The report to the Parks and Leisure Committee gave brief information on the proposed development which is being carried forward by the Hanwood Trust on behalf of Castlereagh Borough Council. Appendix 1 attached provides further information on the potential use of the developed facilities by residents from Belfast City Council area.

Key Issues

There are three main issues and several sub-ordinate issues associated with these:

1. The views of Committee are sought in relation to retrospective approval to the grant of a temporary Licence Agreement to the Hanwood Trust to allow storage of soil on approximately 0.43 acres of Belfast City Council lands. This land forms part of the lands referred to at '2' below.
 - The terms of this Licence to provide protection to the Council particularly in relation to provision of suitable indemnities and insurances plus compliance with all statutory requirements in relation to control of pollution and waste disposal.
 - Although Hanwood Trust are understood to have made considerable savings from use of the Council lands it has been requested by the Hanwood Trust, in view of the nature of the scheme, that the Licence should be granted at no financial cost to Hanwood Trust.
2. The views of Committee are sought in relation to disposal of the area of land shown outlined red on the attached map Appendix 2 (approximately 0.58 acres). The map also shows adjoining BCC land shaded yellow.
 - Disposal is proposed by way of a 125 year lease (or such longer period as considered appropriate) to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services and subject to conditions which include protecting the Council's interests in relation to any future land contamination issues.
 - Hanwood Trust have requested the land for nil consideration. In accordance with Section 96 of the Local Government Act 1972 the approval of the Department of the Environment is likely to be required if the Council proceed on this basis. On a pro rata basis, and based upon a valuation prepared for Castlereagh Borough Council by the District Valuer, to value of Belfast City Council's portion would be approximately £50,000 a further reference to the District Valuer would be require in order to verify the appropriateness of this level of value to the BCC lands.
3. The main funders of this project are Sport NI (formerly the NI Sports Council) who are making a capital contribution of £1M. It is understood that Sport NI may require Belfast City Council to enter into a Deed of Dedication in relation to the BCC (land) portion of the scheme. If such a requirement is to be proposed by Sport NI it would be aimed at ensuring continued use of the facility for its intended 'sports' use for the 21 year period covered by the Deed. While understanding this aim, officers will wish to ensure that Belfast City Council does not commit to provision of future financial support for a scheme which lies outside the city's local government boundary.

Resource Implications

Financial

It is envisaged that no expenditure (except for limited legal and valuation fees) would be required by Belfast City Council. However the release of these lands at nil cost on Licence and their subsequent disposal may represent something of a lost financial opportunity to Belfast City Council. For these reasons the approval of the Department of the Environment is required.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

The portion of land requested by Hanwood Trust forms part of a larger area of approximately 3.6 acres, in Belfast City Council ownership, which is located on the opposite side of the former Comber railway line from Dundonald Cemetery. None of this land is used in connection with the cemetery and it is essentially a low lying area of scrubland. The southern boundary of the 3.6 acres adjoins the extended Dundonald Ice Bowl site and is believed held by Castlereagh Borough Council or their nominees.

Recommendations

Committee is recommended to accede to the requests from the Hanwood Trust for provision of the lands outlined red on the map (Appendix 2 attached) subject to appropriate legal agreements to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services to encompass the safeguards as set out in this report and to approve reference of these matters to the Department of the Environment for approval as required. The Committee is further recommended to approve entering into a 21 year duration, Deed of Dedication with Sport NI such does not commit the Council to any future financial expenditure in respect of the Hanwood development.

Key to Abbreviations

BCC – Belfast City Council

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Further background information relating to the provision of sports and community facilities by the Hanwood Trust at Dundonald

Appendix 2 – Map showing the lands for disposal (outlined red) and adjoining BCC lands (shaded yellow).

Appendix 1 -

Proposed User Groups

Hanwood Trust consulted widely during completion of their stage one Building Sport application; and the business case consultants held further workshops with the community and user groups to confirm their intention to use the facilities.

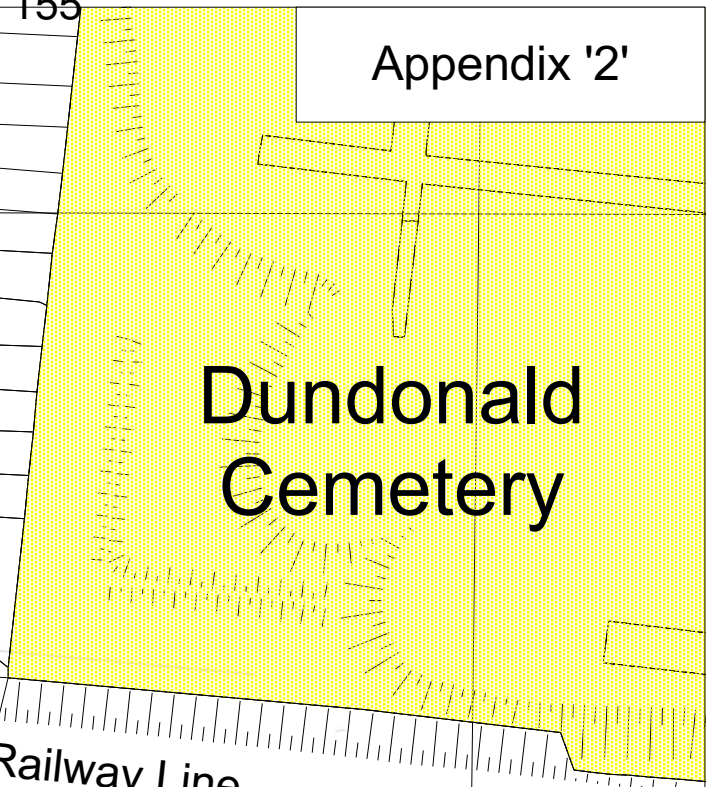
The groups located in the Castlereagh Borough Council area include:

- Tullycarnet Young Women's Group
- Down GAA clubs
- Ladies Football Group
- Tullycarnet Young Men's Group
- Tullycarnet Primary School
- Dungoyne FC
- Dundonald High School
- TAGIT
- Brooklands Primary School
- Tullycarnet Football Team
- Community Sports Development Project
- SE Sports Development Committee

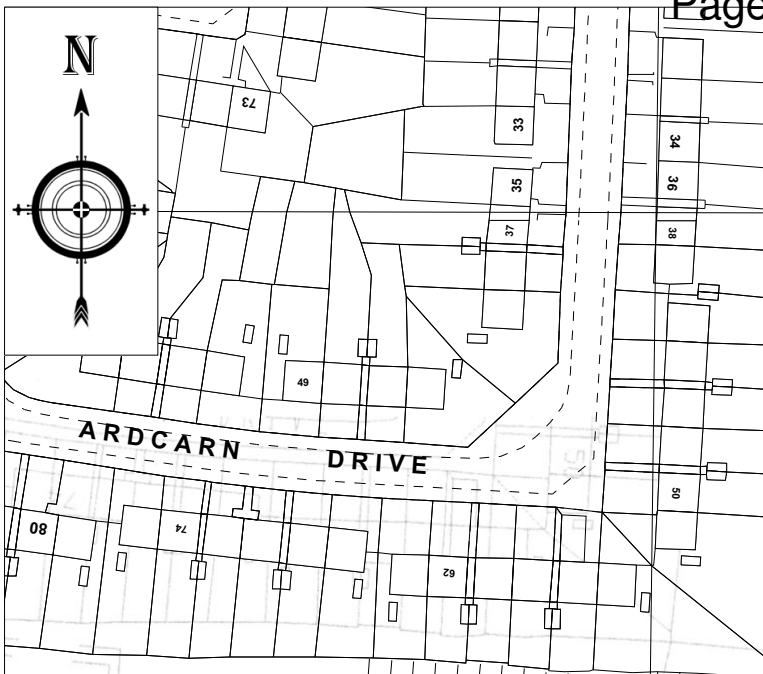
The groups listed below were also involved in the consultation process, but are located in Belfast City Council area:

- Brantwood FC, North Belfast – Irish league Division Two team (contact Robert Irwin)
- Donegal Celtic FC – Senior Irish Premier League club, reserve team and U10-U18 male and female teams (contact Pat McCallister)
- LORAG – cross community football competitions between Lower Ormeau and Tullycarnet. Applicant has set up visits from Lower Ormeau to Tullycarnet which would not have happened without the sports related interests of both communities
- Boyland FC, East Belfast – U10-U16 teams (contact Francis Gallagher)
- Knocknagony youth groups under Knocknagony and Garnerville Community Association (contact John Hoey)
- Sirocco Works FC have three teams and a youth team. Players come from all over Belfast, including Inner East, Carrickhill, Shankill Road, Ardoyne (contact William Walker)
- Harland and Wolff Welders FC – Irish League First Division based in East Belfast (contact Fred Magee)
- East Belfast FC – Amateur League, and have three teams (contacts Gary Hillis and Raymond Morrison)
- Dundela FC – Irish League First Division (contact Mark Snodden)
- Glentoran FC – Irish League Premier Division, youth, women's and senior teams
- IFA development teams – select group of players aged 12 to 15 years from areas of Belfast and Down (contact Nigel Best)

- IFA Disability squads – teams and individuals from all over Belfast and NI, taking part in training sessions, and competitions (contact Mal Donaghy)
- IFA Women’s team – use of facilities for training squad of female players from all over NI (contact Alfie Wylie)
- GAA Down County Board – running taster programmes in Tullycarnet as part of their development academies. Coach/player development programmes will be run from the Hanwood Centre. (contact Sean Og McAteer)
- Newbridge FC – based in East Belfast and comprising of teams from U10-U16 (contact Raymond Lavery)
- Ardarn estate borders the boundary of the Hanwood facility and residents will have access at several points across the Green Way
- As the Green Way runs from Comber through to Hollywood Arches, this is an easily accessible route to travel to Hanwood and use the facilities, particularly on an individual usage basis

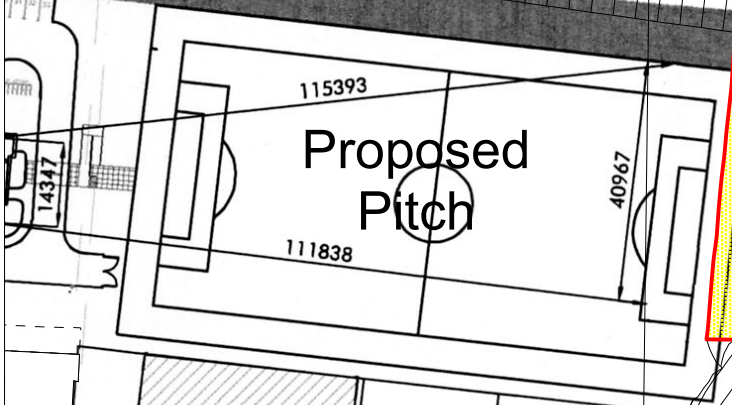


Dundonald Cemetery

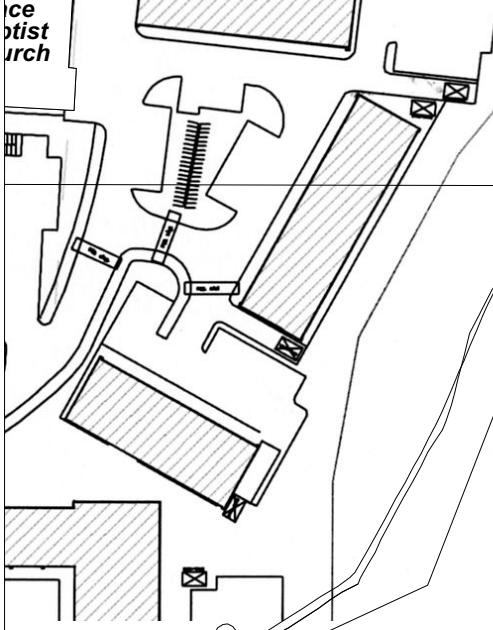


ARDCARN DRIVE

Former Comber Railway Line



Proposed Pitch



Issues

OLD DUNDONALD ROAD

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BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	City Hall grounds tours (deferred item)
Date:	23 rd May 2008
Reporting Officer:	George Wright – Head of Facilities Management
Contact Officer:	As above (Ext. 5206/6232)

Relevant background information

Members will recall that a report was submitted to the April meeting of the Committee seeking approval for the introduction, over the summer period only, of tours of the City Hall grounds. The rationale for this proposal was twofold; to maintain the City Hall's position as an important visitor attraction during the closure and to emphasize the fact that the grounds remain open for use by citizens and tourists.

After some discussion members raised a number of queries in respect of the proposal, and it was agreed to defer the matter until these could be considered. The issues raised were that:-

1. some members expressed a wish to see the proposed tour script (which was therefore circulated to all party group leaders some time ago);
2. the issue of charging required further clarification;
3. a question was raised in terms of the potential commercial impact on existing 'blue badge' tour guides; *and*
4. a concern was raised about policing the tours (in the sense of preventing unauthorised hangers-on from tagging on to the tour without paying etc).

A revised proposal has therefore been developed in the light of all of the above, which it is hoped deals adequately with the various issues raised.

The original proposal was based on using dedicated staff to provide a bespoke City Hall grounds tour product twice per day, five days per week. The revised proposal takes a different approach, in that it builds on an existing relationship between the Council's Development Department, the Belfast Visitor & Convention Centre and the 'blue-badge' guides who deliver the existing 'Historic Belfast' walking tour of the city.

It is proposed that the existing 'Historic Belfast' tour be enhanced through the inclusion of the script prepared for the City Hall grounds, and that the tour be extended in length by approx. 30 minutes in order to make City Hall the centrepiece. These tours currently operate once per day at 2pm each Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and are booked through the Belfast Visitor & Convention Centre at a flat cost of £6 per person (no concessionary rates apply). The tours would be available from **June – September 2008** only, and could be reviewed thereafter.

The net cost of the 'Historic Belfast' tours is already being met by the Tourism Development unit of the Development Department, so only the marginal cost of the blue-badge guides would have to be funded by the Facilities unit. Following discussions with the blue-badge guides this additional cost is estimated to be **£1,870** in total, in contrast to the £8,500 costs of the original proposal. This amount could be funded from existing Facilities budgets, and would therefore not need to be passed on to tourists in increased tour prices. There may also be some modest additional costs to amend existing publicity material in order to promote the enhanced tour.

The blue-badge guides are experienced, professional tour staff, and are very capable not only in terms of delivering an interesting and stimulating experience to tourists but also of managing the tour and dealing effectively with any issues around non-payment or attempts to disrupt the tour etc. We have discussed these matters with the guides and are confident of their ability to deal with them. We also have a contracted security presence in the grounds during the summer months, should their assistance be required.

The content of the enhanced City Hall portion of the tour has also been discussed with the blue-badge guides and they are happy to use the script already prepared and to build it into their existing script.

Key Issues

This revised proposal would appear to deal with the various issues raised by members, while still delivering the key objectives of maintaining the City Hall's profile and emphasizing that the grounds remain open for use. It is not seeking to develop a new tour product in competition with the blue-badge guides but rather to build on an existing tour provided by these guides, and can be done in a way which involves very modest additional cost to the Council and no additional cost to the tourist.

Booking, administration and cash-handling etc. would be provided by the Belfast Visitor & Convention Centre. The blue-badge guides are happy with the script, and are confident that they can manage the tours effectively and have an excellent record in this regard to date.

The blue-badge guides have also indicated that they are available to conduct additional tours should the enhanced product prove popular, however it should be noted that the full cost of such additional tours rather than simply the marginal cost would have to be borne by the Facilities unit, and that this may have an effect on pricing.

Resources Implications

Financial

If the revised proposal were to be adopted a modest total additional cost of £1,870 would be incurred by the Council. Some additional expenditure in respect of publicity/promotional material may also be necessary, but it is not envisaged that

this would be significant.

Human Resources

If the revised proposal were to be adopted there would be no requirement for the Council to recruit and train agency staff, as the existing blue-badge guides would provide the service.

Asset & other implications

There are no direct asset implications arising from this report.

Recommendations & Decisions

It is recommended that the Committee approve the enhancement of the existing 'Historic Belfast' tour by incorporating the City Hall grounds script and points of interest, and that the existing blue-badge guides be utilized to provide the tours, as outlined above. Approval is sought for the period **01st June – 30th September 2008** only; following this the situation can be reviewed.

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents attached

None.

GOOD RELATIONS STEERING PANEL**MINUTES OF MEETING****FRIDAY, 9th MAY, 2008**

- Members present: Councillor Long (Chairman); and
Councillors Hanna, Humphrey (nominee of
Councillor McCausland), Kyle, C. Maskey
and Stoker.
- External Members: Rev. D. Baker, Presbyterian Church;
Canon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Rev. S. Watson, CALEB;
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church;
Mrs H. Smith, Methodist Church.
- In attendance: Ms. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Miss A. Deighan, Good Relations Officer;
Mr D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer;
Mr N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor McCausland.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4th April were taken as read and signed as correct.

Peace III – New Good Relations Partnership

The Good Relations Manager advised the Members that a number of the organisations which would be involved in the new Partnership had provided the Council with the names of their representatives and that the remainder would be providing this information in the near future.

She informed the Panel that it was intended that the first meeting of the new Partnership would be held at 1.00 p.m. on Friday, 20th June and that training for the Members of the new Partnership would be held in August.

Noted.

Book of Honour

The Panel was reminded that some years ago Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Book of Honour, had proposed that each District Council in Northern Ireland should publish a book which recorded the names of those people from their Council area who had died in the Great War of 1914-1918. In August, 2004 the former Policy and Resources Committee had considered a report outlining that suggestion. The Committee had supported the proposal in principle but queried whether additional external funding could be secured for such a project.

**Good Relations Steering Panel,
Friday, 9th May, 2008**

In 2005, Sir Kenneth had informed the Council that the Ad Hoc Committee had been successful in obtaining a grant of £20,000 from the Ulster Garden Village Trust and had engaged Mr Derek Smyth, a retired history teacher, to undertake the necessary research and prepare a *Book of Honour* for Belfast, using the City Council district as a pilot area. Mr Smyth had made a presentation to the former Commemorations Working Group in February, 2006, referring to the books which had already been produced by Donegal and Newry and Mourne and outlining the various phases of his research. The Council had included an article on the project in the winter 2006 edition of the *City Matters* magazine in order to seek the public's assistance in the compilation of the list of people from Belfast who had given their lives during the Great War.

She pointed out that the Belfast Book of Honour was almost complete and it was expected to be published in November, which would mark the 90th Anniversary of the ending of the First World War. She explained that the Ad Hoc Committee had had discussions with representatives of the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the News Letter who were keen to be involved with the project. Each newspaper would be prepared to contribute £5,000 towards the costs of producing the Book of Honour, on the understanding that the Council provided a similar sum, which it was anticipated would cover the likely publication costs. The Ad Hoc Committee was planning to establish itself as a Company Limited by Guarantee and to pursue charitable status in order to make the best possible use of any profits which were generated by the sale of the book.

The Good Relations Manger indicated that the book was an excellent example of a cross-community historical initiative which illustrated Belfast's shared history and which was funded by a combination of public and private finance. In addition, the proposal was in keeping the aims of the Council's Good Relations Strategy. Accordingly, she recommended that the Panel request the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to approve funding in the sum of £5,000 towards the cost of the publication of the Belfast Book of Honour and provide small scale hospitality at its launch.

The Panel adopted the recommendation.

Interfaces/Peace Walls

The Steering Panel considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

The Steering Panel will recall that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd March 2008, had adopted the following Notice of Motion, proposed by Councillor Maginness and seconded by Councillor Long:

'Belfast City Council resolves that it is now time to begin to work towards the reduction and the ultimate removal of the so called "peace walls" and barriers that presently divide our City.

Good Relations Steering Panel,
Friday, 9th May, 2008

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To this end, the Council therefore agrees to establish a working group to explore ways and means to initiate such a process and to report back with proposals by September, 2008.'

The issue was referred without debate to the Good Relations Steering Panel. At the meeting of the Steering Panel on 7 March, the Good Relations Manager had advised the Members that a report would be submitted in due course.

Key Issues

Staff from the Good Relations Unit have participated in an Interface Working Group established towards the end of last year on an inter-agency basis. Other organisations represented include the NIO, PSNI, NIHE, North Belfast Community Action Unit and Belfast Community Safety Partnership, with the Community Relations Council acting as co-ordinator.

This Group has met several times and has begun to collate and map relevant data and information. It aims to:

- draft a policy and process for potential new interfaces which takes on the various learning initiatives currently being developed
- develop key principles and indicators to monitor and review the existing 46 peace walls
- support practical actions to achieve the above two points.

At its last meeting on 16 April, the Group agreed to commission a report which would bring together all information on interfaces gathered to date in the city into a practical working document.

The Group agreed that it would be important to inform the community of the existence of the document and share it with other organisations once it was finalised.

It was suggested that case studies could be included, with practical steps for practitioners or organisations to address interface issues. An action plan should be included with a view to identifying two pilot projects for future work; short, medium and long term projects could be identified, which would be dependent on the context of the situation at the interfaces where barriers were located.

Members of the group agreed on a time frame and that the draft report should be completed by summer.

The Steering Panel should note that interfaces form a major element within the Council's current bid under Peace III and that funding for future activities are expected to be available under this programme.

Resource Implications

None at this stage. Future work may be funded under Peace III.

Recommendations

That the Good Relations Steering Panel notes this interim report and that future reports on progress will be submitted at regular intervals."

During discussion in the matter, several Members pointed out that it would be essential for residents of the City who lived in close proximity to interfaces and peace walls to be consulted regarding the work of the Interface Working Group.

In response, the Good Relations Manager indicated that, while statutory agencies would be involved in the early stages of the Interface Working Group, it intended to inform communities affected by peace walls and interfaces of the contents of its findings.

Churches Forum for Belfast

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Panel, that at its meeting on 7th March during discussion on the Church representation on the Good Relations Partnership, it had been suggested that it would be beneficial if a Churches Forum were established to consider, not only Good Relations issues, but all matters relating to the Council.

She indicated that it had been established that six local authorities in Northern Ireland had some form of Christian Church Forum operating in their area. In addition, the Minister for Social Development had indicated that she intended to initiate consultation on the establishment of a new Faith Liaison and Advisory Forum which would seek to build more effective partnerships between the Government and the faith sector. The Good Relations Manager informed the Members that a report regarding these issues would be submitted to a future meeting.

Noted.

Awareness Sessions on Migrant Workers for Members

The Steering Panel was reminded that the Equality and Good Relations Learning Development Strategy had proposed that a programme of good relations awareness training sessions be held for Council staff and Elected Members. Since October 2007, a Good Relations Awareness Training session had been delivered to all new staff as part of their induction, with the programme being gradually rolled out to all other existing staff. However, at present there was no similar programme available for Members.

**Good Relations Steering Panel,
Friday, 9th May, 2008**

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The Good Relations Manager explained that the Members Services Unit had indicated that it might be possible to introduce a session on good relations as part of the induction for newly-elected Councillors after the next Council Elections. In the interim, she suggested that Members might find sessions based on specific issues useful. Accordingly, the Good Relation Unit intended to develop a number of training sessions which would raise awareness of and provide a forum for discussion of good relations issues which were of particular relevance to Belfast and the Council. She pointed out that one such issue which had been identified was that of inward migration and, since the Council had established a Shadow Migrant Workers Forum, migrant workers could be the theme of the first awareness session and she outlined the likely format, which would last approximately two hours.

Following discussion, the Steering Panel agreed that a programme of good relation awareness sessions be held for Elected Members and that the first session be on the theme of migrant workers as outlined.

Elected Members' Study Visit to Chicago

The Steering Panel was reminded that, at its meeting on the 7th March, it had recommended that two Members from each of the Political Party Groupings on the Council should participate in a study visit to Chicago at the end of May. The recommendation had been adopted by the Strategic Policy and Relations Committee at its meeting on 14th March.

The Good Relations Manager indicated that, following the re-allocation of funding within the budget for the Conflict Transformation Project, savings had been achieved which would mean that it would be possible to cover the costs of sending an additional Member from each of the two largest Party Groupings on the Council, namely the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin, on the visit to Chicago.

She pointed out that the principal purpose of the visit was to engage Belfast's elected representatives in discussions on the task of building a welcoming, peaceful, prosperous and open City. In addition, the visit would demonstrate the strong inter-linkages between good relations and economic competitiveness and examine political leadership in Chicago. It was considered that additional representation on the visit would be useful, in the interests of inclusivity and to engage a broader group of Elected Members in this issue.

Following discussion, the Steering Panel recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the participation of one additional Elected Member from each of the two largest Party Groupings represented on the Council on the Study Visit to Chicago.

Funding for Training Providers

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

The Steering Panel may recall that at its meeting on the 4th of May 2007, it adopted a recommendation regarding the funding of groups around the access of training provision. This sought to

encourage groups to seek portions of funding for elements of their proposal by developing partnerships through different funding bodies, such as the CRC, CFNI, Co-operation Ireland etc. This would be reviewed and monitored over the year.

Key Issues

Groups are entitled and encouraged to undertake training as part of their development. The Good Relations Fund supports groups undertaking good relations engagement activities and applications are scored according to the quality of that engagement. The Fund is not designed to support the core activities of an organisation.

Many training organisations which receive core funding for their work are funded under Peace II, which will be coming to an end in June 2008. There is no 'gap' funding in place to bridge the period between the end of Peace II and the roll-out of Peace III. Organisations are aware that Belfast City Council will be administering Measure I.I of Peace III.

Currently there are 4 applications with the Good Relations Unit from groups seeking to access training programmes – totalling roughly £35,000. In the report submitted to the Steering Panel last May, it was pointed out that while the groups themselves will benefit from undertaking this training, there is also a large financial benefit to the training provider. In the past year, training providers have been encouraging groups to apply directly to the Council to access funding to undertake a pre-designed training course. Where a pattern has emerged, the fund has supported new programmes being piloted – not the core work of the training provider.

The Steering Panel should be aware that groups who apply to the Council for assistance with training are not subject to the same procurement processes as the Council. If the Council is engaging a training provider, for example, at least 3 written quotations must be obtained for any work costing over £3,000. There is no such requirement for voluntary/community groups to demonstrate value for money in this regard.

Recommendations

That the applications received remain on hold to allow discussions to be held and an appropriate policy devised. A report will be made to the next meeting of the Steering Panel on this issue.”

After discussion, the Panel adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.

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Good Relations Grant – Aid

The Good Relations Manager submitted for the information of the Panel a report detailing a summary of applications to the Good Relations Grant-Aid Fund, together with the associated recommendations.

After discussion, the Steering Panel agreed unanimously that the recommended grant-aid be awarded under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive to the following organisations:

Ref no.	Organisation	Recommendation £
596/1165	Barnardos Tuar Ceatha Services	1,700
685/1161	Ligoniel Improvement Association	5,000
345/1174	South Belfast Roundtable	9,700
605/1172	Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)	7,500
686/1163	Victims and Survivors Trust	7,420
690/1169	Di-verse	1,000
320/1158	Roden Street Community Development Group	4,535
693/1177	Crossroads Project Ltd	4,000
302/1156	Women's Information Group	2,580
588/1163	Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	4,910
531/1164	Voluntary Service Bureau	2,900
580/1160	Community Relations in Schools	8,500
Provisional Total This Month		59,745

Arising from discussion in the matter, the Good Relations Officer advised the Members that evaluation forms were required to be completed by organisations before the final 30% of the organisation's funding was provided. The information on those forms would provide useful feedback to the Steering Panel regarding the projects and she undertook to provide this information to future meetings, together with a list of the organisations which benefited from events which received assistance under the Good Relations Fund.

Media Coverage

The Good Relations Manager advised the Panel that On 26th April an article had appeared in the Irish News regarding the Evaluation Report which had been presented to the Panel in October, 2007 in relation to the Council's Bonfire Management Programme. The article had contained a number of inaccuracies and had misquoted from the report. Due to the misleading and unhelpful nature of the article, the Head of Corporate Communications had spoken to the journalist concerned to express the Council's concern at the inaccurate content of the story. Subsequently, the issue had then been discussed by Stephen Nolan on B.B.C. Radio Ulster. Consequently, a press

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statement had been issued by the Council to counter the inaccurate story in the Irish News and the comments thereon by the Nolan Show. Although the statement had been printed by the News Letter, the Irish News had not referred to it. She indicated that, in order to ensure that as many residents of Belfast were made aware of the Council's Bonfire Management Programme, an article would be produced in the next edition of "City Matters" which would provide a general outline of the scheme.

During discussion in the matter, the Steering Panel expressed its disappointment at the poor standard of journalism displayed by the Irish News.

In response to various questions regarding the Bonfire Management Programme, the Good Relations Officer indicated that a scheme was being organised by the Ballynaveigh Community Development Association the aim of which would be to obtain wider community input and support across the City for better bonfire management.

Arising from discussion in the matter, the Good Relations Manager advised the Steering Panel that proposals in connection with media coverage for the forthcoming study visit to Chicago were being prepared currently.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided by the officers.

On-going Items and Up-dates

Migrant Issues

The Good Relations Manager informed the Steering Panel that the next editions of City Matters and Intercom would both include articles concerning migrant issues.

Noted.

Chairman



Report to: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Subject: *Book of Honour* for Belfast

Date: Friday 23 May 2008

Reporting Officer: Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager

Relevant Background Information

Some years ago, Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the *Book of Honour*, proposed that each District Council in Northern Ireland should publish a volume recording all those from their own Council area who had died in the Great War of 1914-18.

In August 2004 the Policy and Resources Committee considered a report outlining this suggestion. The Committee supported the proposal in principle but queried whether additional external funding could be secured for such a project.

In 2005, Sir Kenneth informed us that his Ad Hoc Committee had been successful in obtaining a grant of £20,000 from the Ulster Garden Village Trust and had engaged Mr Derek Smyth, a retired history teacher, to undertake the necessary research and prepare a *Book of Honour* for Belfast, using the City Council district as a pilot area. Mr Smyth made a presentation to the former Commemorations Working Group in February 2006, referring to the books already produced by Donegal and Newry & Mourne and outlining the various phases of his research. The Council included an article on the project in the winter 2006 edition of our *City Matters* magazine, to seek the public's assistance in the compilation of the list of people from Belfast who had given their lives during the Great War.

Key issues

The Belfast *Book of Honour* is now almost complete and is expected to be published around November 2008, the 90th anniversary of the ending of the First World War. The Ad Hoc Committee have had discussions with the editors and managers of the three main local daily newspapers who are keen to be involved with this project. It is likely that the format of the Book will be similar to that produced by Newry & Mourne Council with probable publication costs of around £20,000.

The Ad Hoc Committee has now approached us with a proposal that the publication costs could be shared equally by the City Council, the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and News Letter, with each contributing £5,000. The Ad Hoc Committee is planning to establish itself formally as a Company Limited by Guarantee and to pursue charitable status.

This is an excellent example of a cross-community historical initiative which illustrates our shared history and is funded by a combination of public and private finance. This proposal is in keeping

with the aims of our Good Relations strategy and the Ad Hoc Committee members are keen to stress the inter-denominational nature of their Committee and approach. The partnership with the local newspapers will ensure wide media coverage of the launch of the Book.

Resources required

Total costs of publication £20,000. Total Council contribution to be £5,000 and additional costs to be met by the 3 local daily newspapers.

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

Recommendation

The Good Relations Steering Panel considered this at its meeting on 9 May and recommends:

- that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the funding of the cost of the publication of a Book of Honour for Belfast, in partnership with the 3 main local newspapers - the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and News Letter - with a sum of up to £5,000, as outlined above.
- that the Council provide small scale hospitality at the launch of the *Book of Honour*.

Officer to contact for further information:

Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext 6020



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Update on Resilience of IT Infrastructure
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of ISB

Relevant Background Information

At April's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee Elected Members raised the issue of performance and resilience of the Council's internet service. This was raised in the context of the Council's website development and the proposed addition of on-line transactions enabling the public to use Council services via the internet.

In the past two years ISB has worked with the Council's Audit, Governance and Risk services and undergone a series of risk assessments for business continuity and information security. Recommendations from these assessments have been incorporated into the business plan of the service and delivery monitored through periodic reviews of the risk registers.

This report outlines the current infrastructure in place and developments to assure performance. Access to internet is dealt with specifically at point 3 but it is important to note that all components of the infrastructure are important and each has an impact on the other.

Key Issues

The key issues in providing infrastructure services are:

1. Availability and accuracy of information
2. Internal network connectivity
3. External connectivity and information security.

As demand for internet services increases and the Council changes ways of working and ways of delivering services, it is critical that we have a robust infrastructure to support these needs.

The following points summarise the position in relation to infrastructure services.

1. Information Availability

The Council's PCs and servers are connected to the council's network enabling access to documents, email and information held on databases.

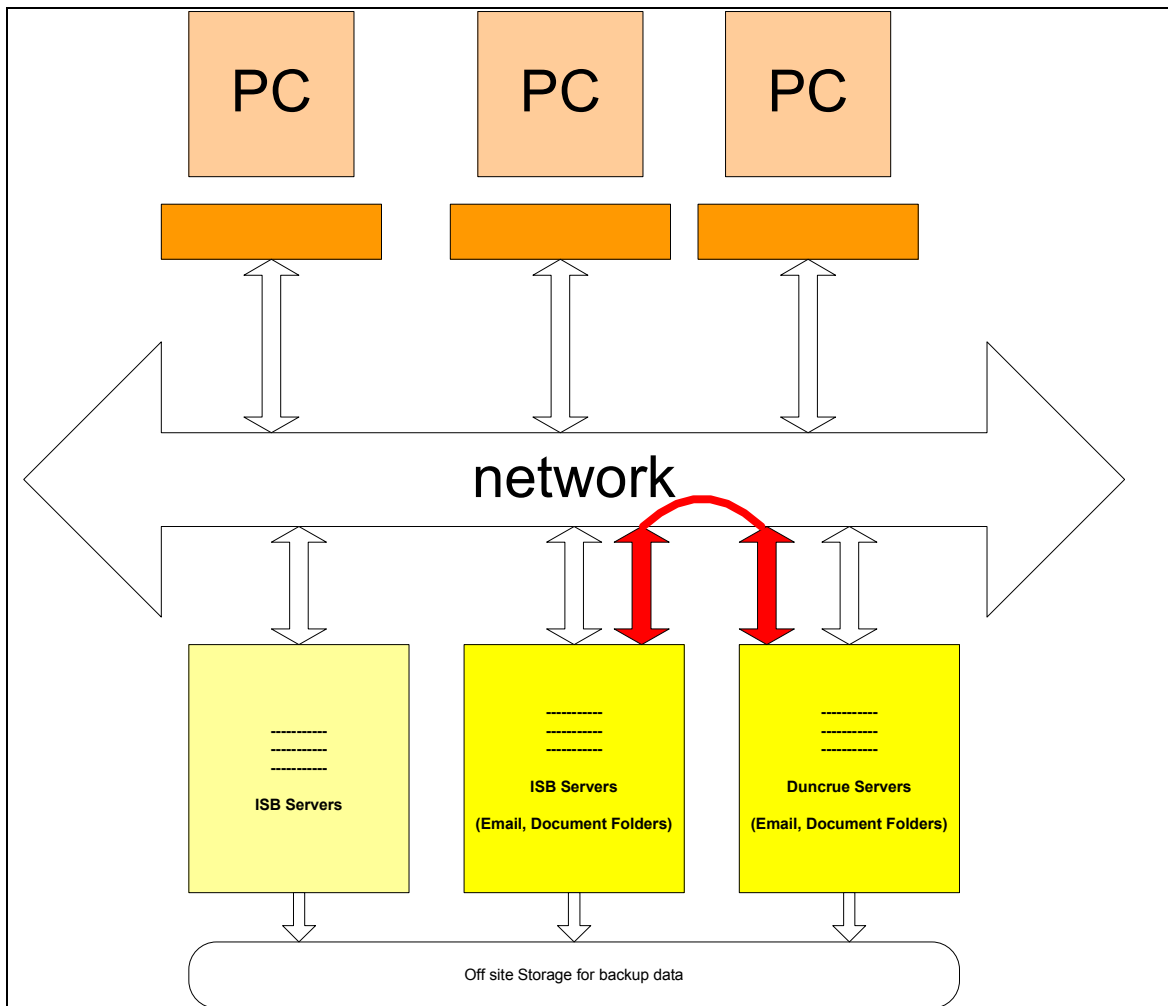


Fig.1

The above diagram show servers that hold information connected to the council network thus allowing access from PCs connected to the same council network. Access to the network is controlled by username and password.

Servers storing data

Most servers are hosted at ISB's site in Gloucester St, but servers that hold critical information to users such as documents and email are duplicated at the council's Duncrue Complex site. ISB commissioned a 2nd server room at Duncrue in 2007 and both rooms have their own emergency power supply, are secure, and have air-conditioning and fire protection systems. All data held on those servers in ISB deemed critical is automatically duplicated in real time at the 2nd site in Duncrue. These servers currently include those that store data for the following services:

Documents in secure file shares,
Email

There is currently an active project implementing data duplication for Financial systems.

All of the data on all servers is backed up every night onto magnetic tape, held temporarily at ISB in a fire-proof cabinet, and periodically moved to an off-site location.

Servers delivering data

Modern technology and industry best practice requires the separation of servers that

store data, called data servers and servers that actually deliver that data to users, called application servers.

At present, the application servers that deliver documents and email services to users are duplicated at ISB and Duncrue. If there are problems with any of the servers in ISB, then their counterparts in Duncrue can be quickly brought into service. There is currently an active project implementing duplication of the financial systems application servers.

ISB are currently working with the Council's Audit, Governance and Risk service to ascertain what other duplication of application and data servers is required and the priority of work.

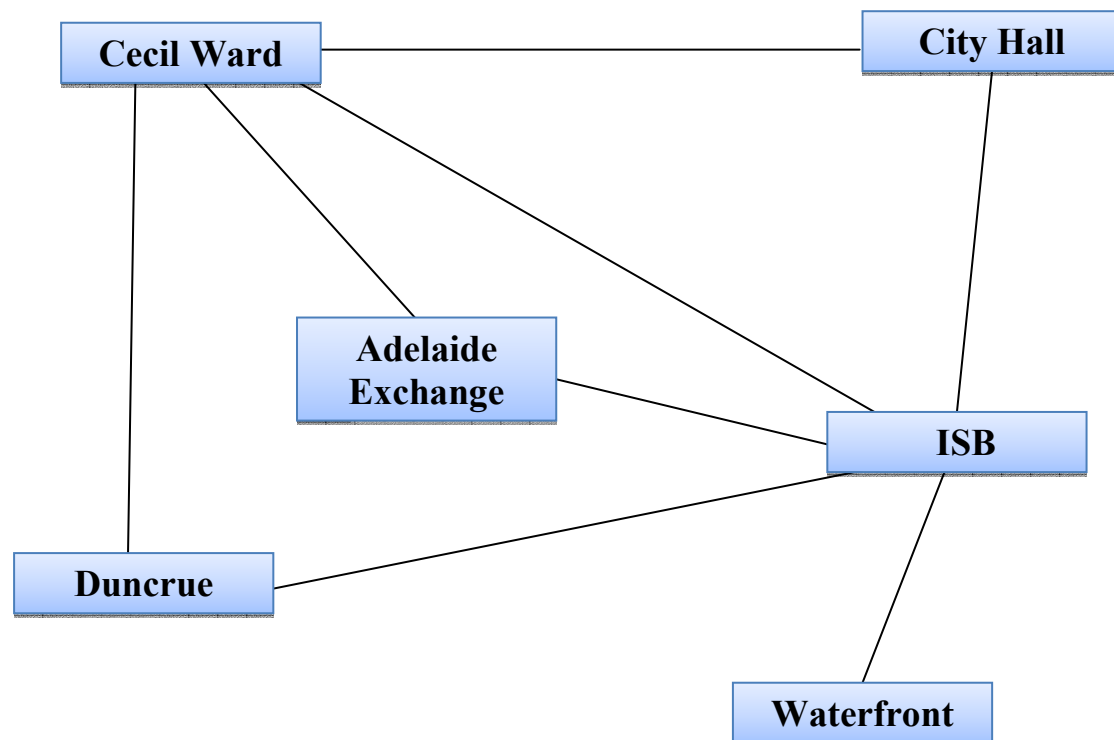
2. Network Resilience

Belfast City council staff are distributed across a number of sites around the city. The council network has been designed in order to provide connectivity between all sites in such a way as to be totally transparent to the user.

Fig.2

BCC Network Diagram showing links between main sites

N.B. ALL links are 100mb Fibre



Key sites are connected together using fibre-optic technology mainly provided by BT. All key sites' connections have a capacity in excess of that required by normal working activity and also any periodic peaks in activity.

In addition to this, redundant links are used as a contingent against the failure of a link or of equipment at a key site. In effect, all key sites are triangulated so that a failure of one link or site will not result in the loss of network services.

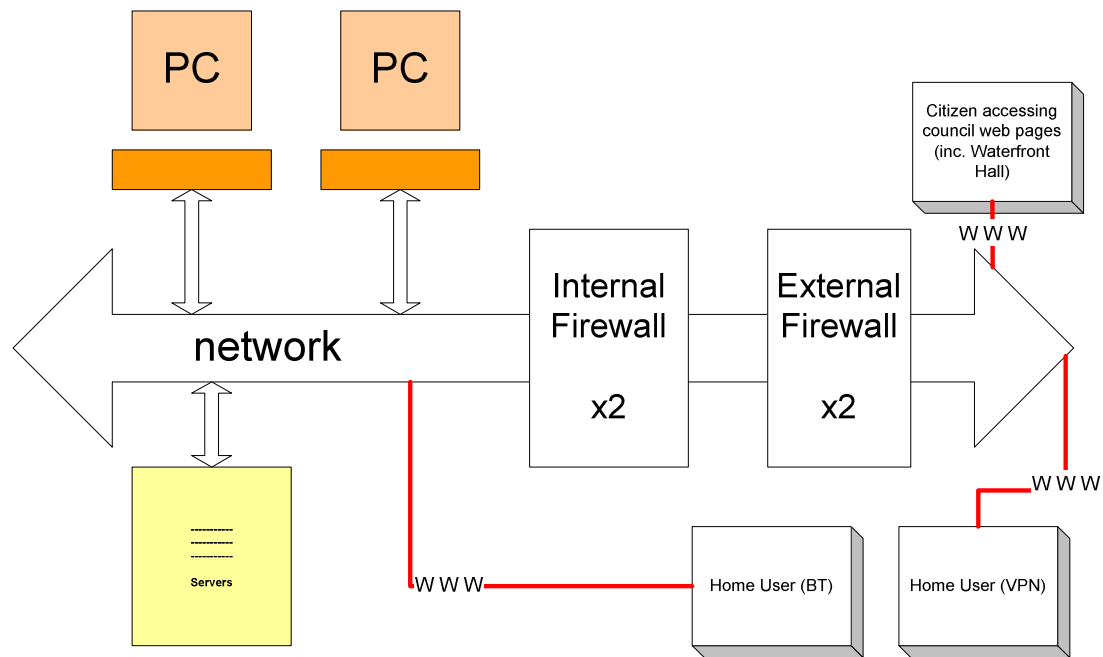
The diagram shows the links between the key council sites and also indicates that there are alternative routes available should any link or site become unavailable.

This design is under constant review and more links will be added to the network as required.

3. External connectivity

Users connected to the council's network may also use internet-based services such as email and web page browsing.

There is also a requirement for users to connect to the council's network from locations that are not part of the council estate (for example from home).



Any external connection to outside the council's network must be made secure against viruses, malware and other attacks. ISB have installed a secure and resilient web architecture that is shown above in simplified terms for clarity.

Entrance to the council network is granted only when authenticated as a council user and also by being granted access by a 2 layer firewall.

Each layer in the firewall is duplicated for resilience purposes; the 2nd firewall becoming active when the primary firewall fails for some reason.

The firewall at each layer is also of a complementary type of technology and built by different manufacturers as per industry best practice.

Home users with their own broadband connection can use the council's virtual private network (VPN) that is a fast, secure, encrypted connection via the internet from a PC outside the council network through the secure web connection (including the 2 layers of firewall) onto the council network.

Some other home users use an older method of connection called BT Central. This is a BT managed service that gives a secure encrypted connection via the internet and BT's own network from a PC outside the council network onto the council network. BT

supplies a trusted connection onto our network and BT manages the security of that.

4. Infrastructure performance

Access to information and network resilience elements (points 1 and 2) of the Council's infrastructure are very robust because of the Council's investment over a number of years.

External connectivity (point 3) does have considerable capacity with contingency for failure built in. The web sites hosted by the council at the ISB site in Gloucester St. currently receive on average 50,000-80,000 hits per day. However the infrastructure is capable of handling much more than that. One example is the recent Billy Connolly concert ticket sales when the number of hits received that day was over 436,000.

It has been the case though in recent months where problems have occurred with the inner layer of the firewall. This piece of equipment is reaching the end of its life and has on occasions failed and the secondary firewall has failed to start operating in this instance. The result of this is that all network traffic to and from the internet is blocked – effectively blocking all web page access and emails to users connected to the council network either in council premises or at home.

ISB are currently selecting a replacement firewall. The timescale for implementing the new equipment is June 2008. In the meantime, ISB are operating an out of hours service where a telephone support service is manned 9:00am-9:00pm. If there is a problem with internet access ISB staff will correct the failure in the inner firewall which will restore internet and email access.

It is planned to continue this service even after the new firewall is in place and ISB are working with Business Improvement to introduce a more formal provision for staff out of hours cover in expectation of an increased demand for out of hours support for a growing number of services such as on-line transactional services.

ISB will bring forward periodic reports on infrastructure performance.

Planned improvements to the web infrastructure

ISB management are assessing the costs and benefits of having a 2nd connection to the internet (called a point of presence or POP) based at the 2nd server site at the Duncrue complex. The main reason for having a 2nd internet connection at Duncrue is to have a contingency for external access to the internet (and thus backup web page, email and VPN services) in the instance of the Gloucester St site being lost for any reason. While the prime reason for having a second POP is for providing greater resilience, it will also allow the spreading of web traffic across the 2 connections delivering greater performance and enabling the council's web sites to handle even greater volumes of traffic it currently experiences.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

Note the contents of the report.

