

Transition Committee

Thursday, 29th January, 2015

MEETING OF TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Jones (Chair);
Councillors Austin, Clarke,
Craig, Corr Johnston, Dudgeon,
Garrett, Graham, E. Groves, Hanna,
Heading, Hussey, Magennis, McDonough-Brown,
McKee, McNamee, O' Hara, and Sandford.

In attendance: Mr R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. C. McCarthy, Interim Strategic Director of
Health and Environmental Services;
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer; and
Miss E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 6th January.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Rates Setting Process - 2015/2016

The Director of Finance and Resources provided the Committee with an update in relation to the establishment of the District Rate for 2015/2016, which would be considered by the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30th, January. He reported that the Northern Ireland Executive had committed a sum of £30million towards a rates convergence scheme as part of Local Government Reform and provided examples of how that scheme and the levels of District and Regional rates would affect the ratepayers.

He explained that, once the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed the District Rate for the 2015/2016, information would be published in the next edition of City Matters, on the Council's website and in rates bills. In addition, Members would be provided with details on how the rates would impact upon constituents within their electoral areas.

Noted.

Service Convergence - Pricing

(Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure, attended in connection with this matter.)

The Committee considered the following report which outlined a proposed scale of charges for the use and hire of Council facilities in 2015/2016:

“2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Ratepayers transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh will face an increase in their rates bill as a result of convergence in 2015/16. It is therefore important that the Council considers the impact of converging prices for comparable services for transferring areas to ensure that where practical no further adverse impact for ratepayers or customers arises from local government reform.**
- 2.2 As part of the service convergence preparations and engagement with Lisburn City Council (LCC), Castlereagh Borough Council (CBC) and North Down (ND), it had become apparent that the scope of services, and associated scale of charges (prices) applied across the councils differ. It was also apparent that whilst each council delivered similar services, they do not deliver them in the same way, and it is therefore difficult to undertake an exact like-for-like comparison.**
- 2.3 Further analysis undertaken by BCC Officers on prices relating to services provided by Belfast, Lisburn, Castlereagh and North Down, indicated that the Belfast level of charge is generally lower than that of the other Councils. As a general principle, it is therefore proposed to apply Belfast prices to transferring areas which will mean that in the majority of cases transferring users and residents will experience a reduction in service prices.**

The analysis identified that for street trading licences the Belfast service charge is significantly higher than that of the transferring area and in these circumstances it is proposed that a phased approach will be taken to the introduction of the Belfast prices.

Scope of Fees & Charges

- 2.4 Members will be aware that the Council currently applies a range of fees and charges for various services as set out below:**

- Many fees are statutory in nature, such as Entertainment Licences and Births, deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnership registration.
- Other charges are discretionary in nature and are applied to contribute to the cost of service provision, often subsidised in part by the rate. For example outdoor leisure.
- Some services trade using a commercial model (e.g. commercial waste collection).
- Please be aware that Belfast Zoo, Malone House, Waterfront Hall, Ulster Hall and Belfast Castle are not included within the scope of this report as there are no comparators in the transferring areas.

2015/16 Rate Setting Context

- 2.5 The price comparison information included in this report is based on the 2015/16 pricing assumptions included in the revenue estimates for 2015/16. Any further proposed changes to BCC pricing would be considered as part of the 2016/17 revenue estimates cycle, and in-line with the proposed Pricing Policy due to go to committee in February.

Service Continuity and Bookings

- 2.6 In the interest of business continuity, Belfast have agreed to honour any bookings taken by LCC/ CBC that transcend 01 April 2015. This mainly relates to outdoor leisure arrangements.

Baseline Assessment - service provision / associated pricing

- 2.7 Published on mod.gov is a detailed baseline assessment undertaken which compares, where possible, those Belfast City Council services, and associated pricing applied, to similar services provided by LCC, CBC and ND. It seeks to identify any differentials in pricing which need to be managed as part of the service convergence process.
- 2.8 The detailed analysis identified one instance where a significant difference may be experienced if the Belfast price is applied to street trading licenses; there are minimal variances in the majority of charged services provided. Significant is defined as being a sudden and adverse increase in price for recurring services, as a direct result of the boundary extension, when converging the transferring area price to the Belfast price.

Where the difference in price is higher for one off services, the Belfast rate will apply.

2.9 Indoor Leisure

In relation to pricing for Indoor Leisure, GLL (Greenwich Leisure Limited), as part of their contract, have committed to honouring Belfast City Council's current core and concessionary prices within for the first 9 months from the commencement date, and not to introduce any changes without written consent of Council, except the discretion to apply a rate of inflation increase already agreed by Council. GLL will operate the Brook Activity Centre, Belvoir Activity Centre, and Robinson Centre which are due to transfer on 01 April 2015.

3 Resource Implications

The assumptions applied by services in relation to pricing convergence have been considered within the context of the 2015/16 revenue estimates.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

All recommendations outlined will be taken forward within the context of the Council's equality and good relations frameworks. Communications in relation to pricing will be as per all existing Council processes and channels (e.g. City Matters, website).

Members are asked to note that BCC have historically adopted a greater level of enforcement when compared to LCC/ CBC. To effectively manage the knowledge gap with residents and traders, Officers propose to implement an awareness and educational approach in the first instance to inform residents and traders about BCC's proactive approach to enforcement and provide guidance on how to be compliant.

Recommendations

- 5** In order to ensure service continuity as part of the boundary extension, specifically to ensure that ratepayers and service users feel no, or limited, impact from the boundary extension in relation to pricing, the following approach is recommended:

- (i) Apply Belfast prices as of 1st April 2015 to all comparable services except where there is a significantly higher price in Belfast.

This would mean:

- **BCC services will continue with one pricing model which will reduce administration and potential confusion for customers and officers.**
 - **Where the Belfast price is lower and is applied, transferring residents will automatically experience a saving for a continuing service.**
 - **This recommendation would apply to the majority of BCC services including:**
 - **Environmental Health**
 - **Waste Management**
 - **Cleansing (commercial waste, bulky household waste collection)**
 - **Outdoor leisure (includes pitches, allotments)**
 - **Community Centre use of facilities**
- (ii) Apply a phased approach (over a 4 year period) to the price increase, where the Belfast price would be significantly higher**
- **The phased approach will ease the cost increase to former LCC/CBC/NDBC residents**
 - **The approach will mirror the regional rates convergence scheme (i.e. support applied on a decreasing basis over 4 years)**
 - **This recommendation would apply to one main service area - Street Trading Licences**

A Member referred to a specific proposal which indicated that the hire cost for a full-sized 3G pitch within the new Council area would be set at £82.00. He pointed out that the cost in the former Lisburn City Council area had been £60.00, and the increased charge could place a financial burden on sports clubs, specifically those who had been users of the facilities at the Brook Activity Centre in Twinbrook.

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendation as set out in the report and endorsed the scale of charges, subject to the omission of the proposed charge in respect of the hire cost for a full-sized 3G pitch within the new Council area.

It was noted that the Director would provide an update at the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, scheduled for 13th February, which would clarify issues regarding the impact that the cost increase for 3G pitches would have on incoming Belfast residents who had previously hired pitches within the former Lisburn or Castlereagh areas.

Delivery of Front-Line Services from April 2015

The Committee considered the following report:

“1 Background

- 1.1 In December, the Committee received detailed presentations from senior officers from across the Council with responsibility for the delivery of core frontline services. The purpose was to provide Members with assurance on the state of readiness for ensuring service continuity and investment in those areas transferring into the city from Lisburn, Castlereagh and North Down.
- 1.2 With only 61 days remaining until the 1 April, the level and pace of work underway across the organisation is gaining greater momentum. This report sets out a high-level overview of some of the preparations being undertaken by the core frontline services as well as some of the investment plans for the transferring areas in terms of assets and facilities.

2 Key Issues

Asset transfer preparations

- 2.1 As a result of Local Government Reform (LGR), there are a number of land and property assets due to transfer to the Council on 1 April 2015. These include 55 assets due to transfer from Lisburn City Council, Castlereagh Borough and North Down and 30 no of off street car parks due to transfer from DRD.
- 2.2 A detailed due diligence exercise has been ongoing over recent months and detailed asset Packs have been prepared in respect of the transferring assets containing with summary details on title; lease /3rd party agreements; financial information; contracts; condition and compliance surveys; maps and photographs. These Asset Packs continue to be updated as additional information is obtained as part of the ongoing process of engagement.
- 2.3 There are a number of specific asset related issues currently being worked through with LCC and CBC relating to queries around potential liabilities, title, lease agreements, condition and/or compliance matters. Officers are seeking to bring a resolution to these outstanding issues to enable a detailed report to be brought to Committee in February for Members consideration and direction. Again, this will be submitted to future meeting of Committee for consideration.

- 2.4 The actual transfer of assets and liabilities require a legal Transfer Scheme which will be made by a Government Department. The transfer schemes will be developed by the transferring body (i.e. CBC/LCC/NDBC and DRD) and must be agreed by BCC as the transferee. The Department of the Environment have indicated that they will act in an adjudication role in the event that there are any issues which remain unresolved in relation to council to council transfer schemes.
- 2.5 Individual services are currently putting in place detailed operational plans to ensure day-1 readiness and service continuity for those assets transferring.

Investing in the new areas transferring

- 2.6 Members may be aware that a number of key reports had been submitted to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 16 January, setting out initial proposals in relation to the 2015/16 rates setting process. This included identified funding requirements for both non-recurrent and capital expenditure for those new areas and assets transferring into Belfast. These reports and recommendations are due to be considered again by the Shadow SP&R Committee on 20 January. A prioritisation and implementation plan will now be developed in order to progress these capital and non recurrent projects during the 2015/16 period.

Maintenance/Upgrade investment

- 2.7 £573K budget is currently included in the 15/16 budget estimates for one-off costs associated with the assets transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh. Table 1 below sets out the proposed one-off investments identified.

Property Maintenance - Assets transferring	393,235
Parks & Open Spaces/Tree & Path Works	127,307
Pitches Improvement	10,510
Street Signs	12,000
Building Signage	30,000
<u>Total Assets</u>	<u>573,052</u>

In addition to building signage, work is also underway, in liaison with LCC, CBC and ND to identify and plan for potential boundary related signage works which would be implemented during the 2015/16 period.

Capital investment in transferring areas

- 2.8 Table 2 below sets out proposals for £2m investment in a number of capital projects in the new areas transferring as part of the Council's wider Capital Programme. It has been recommended to SSP&R that the financing of this would be from the new rate base and is included in the 2015/15 rates estimates. It is proposed that all these projects can be completed during 2015/16.

Table 2 - Allocation of £2m New Boundary Capital Financing

Brooke Playground Replacement	£230,000
Mount Eagles Playground Replacement	£230,000
Areema Drive Playground Replacement	£230,000
New playground (Poleglass)	£230,000
Twinbrook Wildlife Park	£80,000
Roddens Crescent Playground Upgrade	£70,000
Lisburn Bridges Repairs	£150,000
Prince Regent Road Depot	£480,000
Sally Gardens	£300,000
Total Financing	£2,000,000

- 2.9 The intention now is to undertake detailed scoping, in liaison with elected Members, to examine the new areas transferring from a physical perspective and identify potential capital investment needs and/or opportunities. This work will input into the Council's future capital programme and financial planning processes.

Grant Provision

- 2.10 As part of the 15/16 rates estimates there has also been £429k budget allocation proposed to support the alignment of the Council's grant aid programmes for those new areas transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh. To enhance the awareness of the council grant opportunities and the capacity of potential applications to draw down possible funding, the Council's Central Grants Unit has implemented a series of focused workshop and briefing sessions with key stakeholder groups from across the new larger city boundary.

3.0 Service Readiness Preparations

Detailed service planning is ongoing across the organisation to ensure the effective delivery, within budget limitations, of core frontline services to the additional 21,000 households, 53,000 citizens residing in approximately 690 new streets transferring and the transfer of 800 businesses and 160 commercial waste customers. Some key highlights include:

3.1 Communications and Engagement

- All services have mapped out their detailed customer profiles and needs linked to the areas transferring and this information has informed service and resource planning.
- Officers throughout the organisation are working closely with communities' right across the city to raise awareness of the services and support provided by the Council
- A community engagement working group has been established to coordinate a corporate approach to LGR service convergence engagement; to map all engagement activity taking place in the run up to April 15 and beyond, ensuring that all areas transferring to the city are covered and that all relevant and timely information relating to services is available to officers on the ground.
- City Matters issued to transferring areas 19 Jan
- Business e-shot to be issued in early February. Engagement event for businesses on the LPS rates revaluation and convergence scheme in early Feb

3.2 Environmental Health:

- New operational geographies agreed and service plans in place to extend all core services (e.g. night-time noise, air quality, food safety) into new areas transferring
- Emergency Planning – assessment undertaken to identify risks in the transferring areas (e.g. flooding, security alerts, high risk locations) and identification of available resources for emergency response (e.g. Emergency Support Centres). BCC Emergency Plan being revised and engagement underway with other key stakeholders to ensure that all multi-agency plans take account of new areas.

3.3 Cleansing:

- Have mapped customer needs and preparations remain on track
- Operational plans in place to extend existing services (e.g. commercial waste, bulky waste, street cleansing, dog control, pest control) to new areas. Estimated that there will be approximately 312 additional miles to be cleansed weekly.
- Routes developed and staff resources allocated.
- Roll-out of education and awareness activities with key stakeholder including schools, resident groups and local communities in the new areas.

3.4 Waste Management:

- Operational plans in place to extend services (including e.g. refuse collection, recycling) into new areas transferring
- Geographical areas identified and new collection bin routes planned.
- Education & Promotions Team commencing door-to-door engagement in transferring areas in February 15.
- Initial article on bin collections included in January 15 edition of City Matters which had been issued to all new households.

3.5 Building Control

- Operational plans in place to extend services into new areas including e.g. building regulations, licensing and addressing dangerous or dilapidated buildings.
- There have been 32 dangerous or dilapidated buildings identified. These will be triaged against the impact matrix and then built into future submissions for additional funding should it arise or, where the Council can take action.

3.6 Parks & Leisure

- Area plans developed to include all new open spaces. Routes developed and staff resources allocated.
- Belfast in Bloom to be extended to new area.
- Plans underway to extend Green-flag in new areas - initial assessments undertaken of transferring assets and improvement plans currently being considered.
- All clubs and community groups in transferring areas have been contacted to raise awareness of Support for Sport and Park Small Event grants availability.

- Outreach Managers working with new communities to develop programmes for 2015/16 – initial emphasis on Easter week
- Music in Parks event programme will extend to new areas
- Warden service extending to new areas
- Playground upgrades included in capital programme

3.7 Community Services

- Community/user groups mapping exercise complete and engagement underway
- Service plans in place for the extension of community and area support services into the new areas.
- Day-1 operational plans being prepared for transferring assets.
- Grant funding - communications and awareness sessions with potential grant recipients completed.

4 Resource Implications

4.1 Resources have been included in the revenue estimates for 2015 /16.

5 Equality and Good Relations Implications

5.1 None

6 Recommendation

6.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report and that more detailed reports will be brought to Committee in February 2015.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Organisation Central Support for Transition

The Committee considered the following report:

“1 Background

1.1 As part of the local government reform programme, departments across the organisation are working to ensure the Council will be able to deliver its services to the extended boundary areas.

1.2 The organisation is also preparing to deliver new functions, most notably Planning, Off-Street Car Parking; and teams have

also been working to ensure the organisation can deliver these services from 1st April 2015.

- 1.3 As day one comes closer, Members has asked for assurances that everything will be in place to ensure a smooth transfer and continuity of service delivery. This report sets out at a high level the preparations being undertaken by the Finance and Resources and Chief Executive's departments.

2 Supporting Transition

- 2.1 As central support functions the Finance and Resources and Chief Executives departments have primarily focussed on helping the frontline services to prepare for the transfer of services on 1st April.
- 2.2 Digital Services has been working to ensure all ICT requirements have been considered including networking and cabling to transferring assets, provision of IT equipment and telephony to transferring staff, data transfer etc. The service has also developed a training plan for implementation from 1 April for all transferring staff.
- 2.3 Financial Services has been working with services to develop new budgets for the transferring functions and the extended boundary areas as part of the rate setting process. It is also working to ensure transferring staff are included on the payroll system, transferring contractors and customers details are captured, systems are configured to ensure additional invoices can be processed and contractors can be paid.
- 2.4 AGRS has been providing ongoing assurances around key areas of the LGR programme and ongoing work is planned from 1st April to ensure adequate controls and risk management processes are in place across the newly transferred services. The Health and Safety Unit has been working with departments undertaking inspections of transferring assets, reviewing information and data transfer in relation to health and safety. The service has also prepared plans for the induction and training of transferring staff.
- 2.5 Corporate Communications is working to ensure ratepayers, existing and new, and staff are kept up to date with developments and progress. City Matters, website, social media, media and video are being used to get across messages and information. Design work on signage is also underway in relation to incoming buildings and assets, while discussions with Planning Service are ongoing on a range of communications issues, notably in relation to advertising which will provide challenging in relation to volume and resources.

- 2.6 HR has developed the elected member induction and capacity building programmes and developed and implemented the process for the effective and fair transfer of staff from Castlereagh and Lisburn. In addition, a programme of staff engagement and induction has been developed (and is ongoing) that includes site visits, presentations, information packs and videos for transferring staff; HR has also established a joint Castlereagh, Lisburn and Belfast TU forum. Further, the significant HR and OD implications of establishing the new Planning function within the Chief Executive's department are being managed – this includes transfer of staff from DOE Planning, recruitment of new director and other staff and the alignment of existing staff and skills to the function. HR is currently analysing terms and conditions and HR policies in conjunction with Legal Services to determine TUPE implications and an agreed position going forward.
- 2.7 Democratic Services has been servicing shadow and existing council; is preparing for the new governance arrangements post April 2014 in line with the 2014 Act and is undertaking member training on Code of Conduct and Decision-Making Processes
- 2.8 Legal Services is undertaking significant work in relation to a range of issues in the transition phase; these include new governance arrangements, transfer of assets and liabilities, transfer of staff and other preparatory/advice work in relation to the transfer of functions. Legal Services is also supporting services across the council in data transfer by way of advice and the provision of templates; it is also undertaking significant work with regard to the transfer of planning, in particular governance, capacity building and operating protocol.
- 2.9 All this transition work is planned and on target, with a particular focus on the transfer of planning between now and the end of March. The Finance and Resources and Chief Executives departments will continue to work with the Planning team on all outstanding issues.
- 3 **Day One Transfer – Readiness Assessment**
- 3.1 On 1st April there is expected to be little structural impact on the Finance and Resources and Chief Executive's departments themselves given they are not involved in delivering frontline services. The revenue estimates reflect that very little

additional resource is required by the Finance and Resources department with just three staff transferring to Finance who will be dealing with the additional payroll requirements and the increase in accounts payable section.

- 3.2 The Chief Executive's department has five members of staff transferring – three into HR, one into Corporate Communications and one into Democratic Services. Additional resources in the Chief Executive's department relate primarily to Members' allowances and additional staff resources required to effectively deal with the potential legal implications of the transfer of the Planning function.
- 3.3 Digital Services, Democratic Services and Corporate Communications have temporary staff to implement the significant ICT, governance and communication (and advertising) requirements associated with the reform programme and have a plan in place to ensure that sufficient staff will be on hand to deal with any issues relating to transfer. Once this is complete they will simply extend their services across the council within the current budget.
- 3.4 Legal Services also has a number of additional temporary staff who are assisting with the process of transferring assets and undertaking due diligence. The transfer of planning is likely to create a substantial additional burden for the service, as will ongoing work in respect of assets. Additional posts will be required post transition and it may therefore be necessary to extend the temporary contracts of existing temporary staff. The current staffing complement in respect of information management will be sufficient to undertake this function until recruitment can be undertaken.
- 3.5 From April 2015, Councils will also have responsibility for leading the process of community planning for their new area. This is an important new role which will bring partners together to develop a long term vision for the city and actions plans for implementing the vision. The Corporate Planning and Policy team within the Chief Executive's department has been supporting elected members' preparations for this new role.
- 3.6 Members' have agreed to call the community plan for Belfast the 'Belfast Agenda' to show that it will be the one strategic plan for the city bringing together existing and new plans so that they can be more effective. During the year the team has supported elected members to undertake significant preparations including resident and stakeholder engagement and the development of a draft Belfast Agenda to provide the focus of further work post transition. Preparation to develop an

interim one-year corporate plan for the new Council is also underway and this will be agreed with elected members in advance on 1 April 2015. Staff resources to support community planning have been included within departmental budgets for 2015/16 and there are no anticipated immediate risks to on-going implementation.

- 3.7 AGRS and HR have no additional staff and will see no immediate impact on day one. The health and safety unit has been working with services to ensure compliance with transferring assets from April 1st with staff training planned for all new staff. The Planning function will have implications for the audit and risk management functions but these have been prioritised and built into the audit plan for 2015 / 16.
- 3.8 Under the new local government Act, Councils will, from 2015, have a general duty of performance improvement imposed on them. This will require putting in place arrangements for delivering improvement objectives that are relevant to the Council and to local communities while making best use of resources and evaluating the impact of our actions on a continuous basis. As the department with responsibility for performance management the Finance and Resources Department has been liaising with the DoE in relation to the implications for the Council. There will be no immediate impact on day one and work is ongoing to ensure appropriate mechanisms and frameworks are in place to comply with the act. Again this will not require additional resources.
- 3.9 There is a separate report on the Committees' agenda outlining the detailed work and day-1 preparations being taken forward by core frontline services relating to the new areas transferring into the city.

4 Next Steps – Transformation

- 4.1 The significant change that comes with LGR has presented an opportunity for the new Belfast City Council to transform its services and develop its role as the leading organisation in the city. The organisation of the future will need to be more outward facing and Members are keen for the Council to operate at a city-wide and neighbourhood level with opportunities to deliver services appropriately within neighbourhoods while working in a coherent way with other agencies in the city. Ultimately this would involve more efficient use of resources.

4.2 The central support services have a key role in developing and supporting this new organisation and work has begun to ensure the right capacity, frameworks, structures and skills will be put in place. This includes the development of internal and external governance structures, the further implementation of the organisation and improvement agenda, a far-reaching capacity building and communications programme, the development of new organisational structures, a revised efficiency programme, new planning and performance frameworks, city branding and a city financing strategy.

4.3 The Council's central support services will also begin to explore how they can support the local government sector through the delivery of some of its services including ICT and advertising.

5 Resource Implications

5.1 Resources have been included in the revenue estimates for 2015 /16.

6 Equality and Good Relations Implications

6.1 None

7 Recommendation

7.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Local Government Reform - Cemetery Charges

(Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure attended in connection with this matter.)

The Committee considered the following report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

1.1 Currently BCC has an arrangement with CBC regarding burials for its residents. Castlereagh Borough Council pays one quarter of the difference between the Belfast resident and non Belfast resident charge for burials which is £300. In addition, a £100 per month management / administration fee is also paid to BCC by CBC. This is a long standing arrangement and relates to the fact that CBC has no burial grounds of its own and

Roselawn and Dundonald Cemeteries lie within the CBC boundary.

- 1.2 In Lisburn City Council (LCC) there is no such arrangement as they have a number of cemeteries within its boundaries. However the relevant issue is that former CBC residents availing of the arrangement with Belfast are now joining with LCC as part of local government reform. Also some former LCC residents who would have bought graves in Blaris for example will now fall within BCC boundaries and will have to pay the higher non resident rates charged by LCC for subsequent grave openings.

2. Key Issues

Discussions have been ongoing with Lisburn and Castlereagh regarding the impact of the changes on burial charges to residents and non residents. Both Councils have presented written reports to the Shadow Environmental Services Committee.

The analysis has highlighted that there are potentially 1041 grave lease at Blaris that will be affected by residents transferring from LCC to BCC.

A number of options were put forward to the Shadow Environmental Services Committee for LCCDC regarding providing a subsidy for transferring LCC residents to assist with the increase from Resident to non resident rates.

The option adopted by the committee was a phased subsidy for former LCC residents in line with the 3 year rates convergence period.

In contrast 26k residents moving into the Belfast City Council area from CBC/LCC will experience a reduction of over 60% in purchasing a grave in comparison to the previous non resident charge they would have paid as LCC/CBC residents.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

The issue relates to subsequent re-openings for LCC residents moving into Belfast – currently their charge is £312 for residents and goes up to £1,150 for non-residents (£838 of a difference)

In year 1 this differential would be subsidised by 100%, year 2 66.6%, year 3 33.3% and in year 4 the former Lisburn resident with a grave in Blaris would be paying the full non resident rate

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None

4. Equality and good relations implications

There are no equality implications as the price is applied to all LCC/CBC residents moving into Belfast City Council area.

5. Recommendation

To note the content of the report and the option adopted Lisburn and Castlereagh's Shadow Environmental Services Committee."

Concern was expressed by a number of Members in relation to the decision which had been taken by the Shadow Lisburn and Castlereagh District Council in respect of the burial charges which would be levied on its former ratepayers for the opening and re-opening of graves. It was pointed out that former ratepayers who had purchased graves in the Blaris Cemetery, particularly those from within the Poleglass and Twinbrook areas, would be faced with an increased cost of £838.00 to open or re-open a grave which had been bought, in good faith, whilst they had resided within the former Lisburn City Council. It was suggested that party briefings be provided, to those parties who so wished, in respect of the impact such an increased cost would have on residents transferring to within the Council's boundary on 1st April.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and it was agreed that party briefings be provided, as outlined, to those parties who so wished to receive them.

Belfast Strategic Partnership and Framework for Tackling Life Inequalities

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that, in working to establish the Council's new ambition for the future and its governance arrangements, consideration has been given to the Council's role in delivering key outcomes for people across Belfast, including addressing the enduring health inequalities that exist in the city. This means addressing the wider social determinants of health (i.e. the economy, employment, poverty, urban regeneration, sustainable development,

community safety, good relations) and the new Council will continue to actively support healthy people, healthy families and healthy communities.

- 1.2** Following on from the presentation by Dr Eddie Rooney, Chief Executive of the Public Health Agency (PHA) at the 19th December meeting, it was acknowledged that Council would continue to work with the Public Health Agency, the Belfast Strategic Partnership and other bodies in the establishment of a common agenda to address health inequalities across Belfast. This report outlines the background to current partnership investment through the Belfast Strategic Partnership and how Belfast City Council could continue to support the health agenda in the medium term.
- 1.3** The report acknowledges that, in the year ahead, the on-going approach to tackling inequalities and improving health and wellbeing in Belfast will need to be considered and reviewed in the context of the emerging Belfast Agenda and the governance that will support this.

2 **Key Issues**

- 2.1** The Council's current Investment Programme for Belfast sets out its commitment to deliver for the city, through a prospectus for partnership, to help its citizens realise their potential and focus on reducing inequalities and tackling disadvantage. Additionally, as part of the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge which focused on the issue of persistent deprivation and poverty, the Council committed to create a collaborative environment (and management system) with clear accountability and leadership to implement an evidence-based decision-making model.
- 2.2** The Investment Programme currently supports joint working arrangements with the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) in the form of a city wide strategic health partnership, Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP). The BSP connects strategic, regional and local joint working to maximise impact and improve health and wellbeing by tackling disadvantage and deprivation across the city. The BSP produced a framework for action for tackling life inequalities (2011-2015). This work was done in conjunction with the Big Lottery community planning pilot for Belfast and includes a number of cross cutting key themes which are still relevant now in shaping city outcomes; in particular

- Addressing poverty related issues by focusing on:
 - employability,
 - education and links to poverty,
 - fuel poverty
 - access to services
 - Releasing community capacity
 - Organisational Development – joining up planning, resourcing and delivery
 - Establishing an Active Belfast Partnership
 - Addressing mental health and emotional resilience
 - Healthy ageing
 - Health and health equity in all local policies.
- 2.3** BSP has wide representation across the statutory, community and voluntary sectors and to a lesser extent the private sector. It connects a number of thematic partnerships and strategic networks such as Belfast Healthy Aging Strategic Partnership, Children and Young People Outcomes Group and Belfast Healthy Cities. The investment by the Council and the other main partners (PHA, BHSCT and Belfast Local Commissioning Group, (LCG)), mainly in the form of project officer posts in the Council, in the Health Development Unit (HDU is the delivery arm of BSP) and in the Belfast Healthy Cities organisation has resulted in significant work to tackle social deprivation and disadvantage in the city and to address life inequalities
- 2.4** Developing strategic relationships with key stakeholders at a city thematic and area-level will be the cornerstone of the Council's approach to community and strategic planning and will be a key lever to stimulating continued investment and supporting the social, economic, environmental and physical renewal of the city and its neighbourhoods. It is good therefore to note a strong intention by the main investors in the BSP to continue to support it and the HDU through this transition period up to March 2016.
- 2.5** The BSP is leading the way in Northern Ireland in delivering tangible improvements that address life inequalities and tackle social disadvantage and deprivation in the city. However, it has evolved against a backdrop of considerable change and transformation, firstly in the health service and now in local government. The ongoing transformation process provides an ideal opportunity to improve governance arrangements and better link delivery mechanisms to focus on shared outcomes in light of the emerging Belfast agenda and community planning development.

2.6 It is proposed therefore that the Council continues to support the delivery of this work through the BSP's Health Development Unit and through the Belfast Healthy Cities Office who are now a member of the BSP steering group, for a further year and that, within the next year, further consideration is given to aligning this work to the Belfast Agenda and the governance that will be needed at city level to support this agenda.

3 **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Financial**

Provision has been made within the 2015-2016 estimates to support the work

3.2 **Assets.**

BH DU operates out of the Lanyon Building, sharing the space with Cleansing Services and Building Control.

4 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

4.1 No equality implications at this stage.

5 **Call In**

5.1 This decision is subject to Call In.

6 **Recommendation**

6.1 Members are asked to note the work on health inequalities and the need to review continually its future delivery in the context of the Belfast Agenda and community planning and emerging outcomes for the city."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Chairman