

Health and Environmental Services Committee

Wednesday, 4th August, 2010

MEETING OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Adamson (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey); and
Councillors Attwood, Cunningham, Hendron, Jones,
B. Kelly, Kirkpatrick, McCabe, McKenzie, Mullaghan,
O'Neill, F. Rodgers and Rodway.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and
Environmental Services;
Mr. T. Martin, Head of Building Control;
Mr. S. Skimin, Head of Cleansing Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Head of Environmental Health;
Mr. M. McBride, Business Support Manager; and
Miss L. Hillick, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Campbell, Kingston and Kyle.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July.

Councillor F. Rodgers

The Chairman (Councillor Adamson), on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Councillor F. Rodgers to his first meeting.

Directorate

Media Report

(Ms. J. Lowry, Media Relations Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report which outlined the amount of media coverage and extent of press and media enquiries received concerning the work of the Committee during the period from March till June, 2010.

**Outstanding Accounts – Provision of
Services to Associated Companies**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 2nd June, the Committee authorised that certain outstanding accounts be written off in accordance with the Council’s Financial Regulations.

Arising from the discussion at the meeting, the Director of Health and Environmental Services agreed to submit a further report to Committee which considered whether the Council could restrict services to an associated company of a business which has gone into liquidation that had outstanding accounts with the Council, particularly where directors of the company in liquidation are also directors of the associated company.

The Director of Health and Environmental Services agreed also to discuss the current practice of restricting publication of the detail of individual write offs with the Town Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive, given that the publication of such information could be viewed as being in the public interest.

Key Issues

As limited companies are separate legal entities, the Council would not normally have recourse against a company which continued to trade, where the directors were also directors of a company in liquidation. However the Town Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive has advised that, in certain circumstances, the Council could consider withdrawing services to an associated company where the directors were also the sole or substantially the same directors of a company in liquidation which had amounts owed to the Council.

Such decisions would, however, be required to be taken on an individual basis and would need to consider whether the company had a statutory right to the service, such as Building Regulations, or if it was in the interests of the Council to continue the service, for example Regulatory or Licensing services. The business nature of the service may also need to be considered, for example Commercial Waste Collection, where businesses pay a commercial charge for the service. Where the Council perceives that there is a risk of further financial loss in dealing with an associated company, alternative payment methods may be considered, rather than foregoing potential external income. In such cases, the Director of Health and Environmental Services would assess, taking advice from Legal Services where appropriate whether withdrawal of service or alternative payment method is appropriate.

The Town Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive has also advised that there is no requirement to restrict publication of the details of individual outstanding accounts which have been written off by the Council and as such the restriction could now be removed from the Committee reports.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the advice of the Town Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive regarding the provision of services to companies, whose directors are also directors of a company in liquidation which owe amounts to the Council and the publication of the details of outstanding accounts written off by the Council.

The Committee is also asked to note that recommendations will be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources committee regarding circumstances where withdrawal of services may be considered by departments in conjunction with Legal Services and the publication of details of write-offs.”

The Committee noted the information.

Year End Absence Rates 2009/2010

The Committee was advised that the absenteeism rate for the Health and Environmental Services Department for the financial year 2009/2010 was showing an average of 12.22 days per full time employee. That figure had excluded absence related to swine flu which, if included, would be 12.32 days, and would indicate a total of 1.35 days above the target for the year. In addition, there was an increase in the number of staff who had sickness absence during the year in comparison with the same period in the previous year. It was pointed out that 41.34% of staff within the Department had had no sickness absence during the year, while the number of staff with long-term sickness absence had increased from 65.27% during 2008/2009 to 65.39% this year. A list of measures to reduce future sickness absence levels had been provided also.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Peace III - Phase II Project Proposals

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Belfast Peace Plan is one of 14 plans led by local authorities in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties. The plan aims to build positive relations at the local level and tackle sectarian and racist attitudes with a focus on conflict resolution and mediation at the local community level. The plan is 100% funded by the EU.

Belfast City Council has been invited to develop a plan for Phase II of the programme to be submitted to Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) by September 2010. An initial draft plan has been developed under the direction of the Good Relations Partnership. The final draft of the overall plan will be taken back to the Good Relations Partnership (and to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee) in August, however this report is to advise the Health and Environmental Services Committee of projects proposed for phase II of the Belfast plan to be led by the Health and Environmental Services Department.

Key Issues

Four projects were proposed originally by the Health and Environmental Services Department which were deemed to match programme objectives and subscribe to the work undertaken by the Health and Environmental Services Committee. The indicative budget required for the 4 projects was estimated at £1.865m from a total council bid of £7.845m.

At the Good Relations Partnership meeting on 25th June it was agreed that one of the four Health and Environmental Services proposals should be withdrawn (North and West household recycling centre – a new shared space - indicative budget £750k). It was concluded that risks associated with obtaining necessary planning approvals to develop a site at Springvale may have resulted in failure to complete the project within the Peace III programme timeframe.

Work is continuing to develop detailed cases for the following 3 projects for submission to the managing authority for the programme (SEUPB) in September. The anticipated cost/income for the remaining projects is in excess of £1m. An outline summary of each proposal is listed below.

1. Belfast sectarian and racism tension monitoring and response project – indicative budget £600,000

The primary purpose of tension monitoring is to reduce the impact and number of actual or potential community tensions at interfaces and across neighbourhoods in the city. This project is based on a strategy of establishing a multiagency approach to improve communication, information sharing and community engagement to manage and respond rapidly to community tensions before they rise to such an extent that it results in unrest and violence. It seeks to:

- coordinate a multi-sectoral approach to monitoring and responding to identified community tensions and

delivering targeted responses that reduce or minimise the impact and number of community tensions, before they get out of control;

- provide a process whereby quantitative and qualitative information is collated and analysed to inform understanding of community tensions; and
- engage with relevant communities and partners, in particular those from underrepresented and at risk groups; for example, those living in areas affected by sectarian and interface violence; disability groups; LGBT groups and minority ethnic groups.

The project would support a monitoring process and a rapid intervention approach within neighbourhoods through the strategic coordination and deployment of resources at times of increased tension or crisis. There are still areas within the city facing inter-communal tensions resulting in youth-led violence at interfaces and race relations issues. Incidents are often associated with significant anniversary or commemorative events but can also be sparked off by a series of seemingly minor community / neighbourhood issues.

This project will enable and support communities to better manage and reduce tensions, through the deployment of an 'on the ground' community support team to provide reassurance and the delivery of positive interventions that have been shown to reduce community tensions. In order to reduce the incidence of tensions, a number of partner organisations will support reporting of crime, services for victims and witnesses and liaison with service providers.

The project will collate information on community tensions and develop action plans where it is determined that tensions are at levels that might lead to hate incidents or crime. It will promote Belfast as a Shared City Space by reducing tensions in areas that may be at risk of violence or a breakdown in community relations and cohesion. The project is collaborative in that it will bring together statutory, voluntary and community organisations and seek to build a sustainable capacity to reduce the incidence of tensions over time.

2. Youth engagement programme – indicative budget £350,000

This programme aims to improve the quality of life for communities in interface areas by working with marginalised young men in a partnership programme which provides hope and purpose and diverts involvement in gang and paramilitary activity.

In Belfast, there is deemed to be a huge gap in engaging with young men, especially those at risk from continued paramilitary involvement as we emerge from conflict. Improving the quality of life within some communities and the attractiveness of Belfast in terms of investment and tourism will require continued effort to address 'residual' conflict issues which manifest in ongoing paramilitary activity, sectarian violence and so called 'recreational rioting'.

The proposal is based on a successful partnership approach to address criminal and anti-social behaviour which operates in Birmingham as part of the 'total place' pilot in the city. The lessons learned from the project have been documented extensively. This proposal seeks to adopt a similar model to reduce sectarian and racist anti social behaviour in interface areas in Belfast.

The proposed programme would engage with 'hard to reach' young men involved in, or on the periphery of, local paramilitary or gang activity to reduce incidents of violence and create alternative pathways to improve their life chances to:

- deter involvement in gang, dissident and paramilitary activity;
- influence young men's attitudes to violence and sectarianism;
- address mental health issues including youth suicide (potentially connected to a society emerging from conflict); and
- develop community resolution of, and resilience to, gang violence and rioting.

Activities will involve a range of interventions including:

- assertive outreach with groups of hard to reach young males by a team of highly skilled staff;
- mentoring programmes;
- connections to schools, training providers and probation services;
- targeted responses for families at critical times in the family's life or its wider social circle (for example conviction to, or release from, custody);

- targeted responses for communities at critical times, e.g. commemorations, parades, protests;
- development of inter-agency strategies to sustain long term disengagement from gang and paramilitary activity; and
- creation of an agreed comprehensive framework of interventions to reduce violence.

3. Roots of Empathy – indicative budget £165,000

Roots of Empathy (ROE) is an evidence-based not-for-profit programme that has shown a dramatic effect in reducing levels of aggression (against others from different backgrounds) among school children by raising social and emotional competence and increasing empathy. It is critical that as Belfast emerges from a period of sustained violence, that young people are equipped with the skills and understanding to manage aggression, increase empathy and live in a culture of tolerance and non-violence. The core themes of the project are:

- to engender a positive understanding of diversity;
- to teach children to respect one another and to build a culture of caring;
- to develop empathy and to enable children to value inclusion;
- to value participatory democracy; and
- to promote a culture of non violence and anti-bullying.

The programme will be rolled out in schools across the Belfast City Council area, for children aged 8 or 9 (Primary 5). The reason for the programme being focused on this age group is that according to Queen's University, primary 5 represents the peak age for victimisation in a school setting and it would also complement the start of key stage 2 in the NI Curriculum (Primary). The programme will run through the academic year.

The programme will be delivered in each school by trained instructors, who will mainly be sourced from the consortia organisations. Each instructor, who may be a health visitor, a classroom assistant, a community worker, a worker with Barnardo's or one of the other partners will undertake four days of intensive training to become certified Roots of Empathy instructors.

The programme will include outreach work to ensure that local community representatives avail of opportunities to become trained instructors.

The three projects proposed are expected to contribute significantly to the Council's Community Safety, Good Relations and Health Improvement agendas and will foster improved links with various agencies to achieve common goals.

Resource Implications

None, 100% funding to include administrative costs.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked note the proposals.

Key to abbreviations

SEUPB – Special European Union Programmes Body.
LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender.”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Association for Public Service
Excellence Annual Seminar**

The Director of Health and Environmental Services informed the Committee that the Association for Public Service Excellence would be holding its annual seminar in Londonderry during the period from 7th till 9th September. She explained that the theme of this year's conference would be "Armageddon or Managed Transformation: Where to Next for Local Government's Front Line?", which would explore how Local Government sustained excellence in service delivery during a period of financial constraints and would focus on issues such as cleaning and greening, waste to energy and healthy communities. In addition, the event would incorporate a session for Elected Representatives.

She reported that, given the focus and content of the conference, it would be particularly useful in promoting the Council's good practice and would provide an excellent opportunity to network with other Local Government representatives. Accordingly, she recommended that the Chairman and the Director of Health and Environmental Services (or their nominees) be authorised to attend the annual seminar and Awards dinner. The cost per delegate for attendance at the event would be approximately £500.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Environmental Health

**Bye-Laws Prohibiting the Consumption
of Alcohol in Public Places**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that the present alcohol bye-laws regarding the consumption of intoxicating liquor were made by Belfast City Council on 1st February, 2007 and came into operation on 12th September, 2007. Since this date, there have been numerous requests submitted for further streets and other areas to be considered for inclusion in the schedule to the bye laws.

At Health and Environmental Services Committee on 12th April 2010, the Committee agreed to undertake a review of the streets and areas designated currently within the bye-laws prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in designated streets.

Since this date the following groups and individuals have been consulted:

- Various community groups / general public
- PSNI
- BCC Party Group Leaders
- DPP Members
- BCC Community Safety Team
- BCC Policy Officers Group
- Parks and Leisure (BCC)
- CSP Strategic Tier (Members include Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Department of Justice- Community Safety Unit, Translink, Belfast City Centre Management, NI Fire and Rescue, Youth Justice Agency, NIACRO, Belfast Education and Library Board, PBNI, Victim Support, NI Ambulance Service, NI Alternatives and Belfast Regeneration Office)

Key Issues

Further to this consultation, details of the proposed additional streets to be added to the bye laws are set out in the attached appendix.

Members may wish to note areas of private land to be included within the alcohol bye laws. These areas have been suggested by the PSNI and permission has been sought from the land owners. This will allow the PSNI to enforce the alcohol bye laws in respect of over 18 year olds detected drinking intoxicating liquor on these pieces of designated, private land.

Once the Committee has agreed the additional streets and areas as set out in the appendix, the proposed updated bye laws will be sent to Belfast City Council's legal services section who will submit the draft bye laws to the Department for Social Development (DSD) for preliminary approval. If DSD suggest any amendments, these have to be agreed via the Committee.

Once there is a preliminary agreement with DSD, a report outlining the new draft bye laws, incorporating the additional streets, will then be put before the Committee for adoption and the statutory process for making the bye laws followed, ie:

- A formal Resolution is moved at a full Council meeting;
- A Public Notice is inserted in the press;
- After one month from the date of the notice, an application is made to the DSD for confirmation of the bye laws; and
- The by-laws come into effect.

Resource Implications

A public notice is to be placed in local press regarding the making of the new bye laws. The cost is estimated at £1200 based on previous similar sized notices and will be accommodated within existing revenue estimates.

There will also be costs associated with the purchase and erection of 'alcohol free zone' signs in the areas which are newly designated. Again, these costs have been included within the 2010/2011 revenue estimates.

Recommendations

1. To consider and approve streets and areas listed in the attached appendix as additional areas to be included within the bye laws regarding consumption of intoxicating liquor in designated places.
2. To authorise the preparation of draft bye-laws and the submission of these to the DSD for approval.

Abbreviations

DPP – District Policing Partnership
CSP – Community Safety Partnership
PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland
PBNI – Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Document Attached

Additional areas requested for inclusion within Alcohol Bye-Laws.

Streets and Areas to be Considered for Designation

North

Ardglen Place (Ardoyne)
Ardoyne Avenue
Arosa Crescent
Bootles Hill
Brompton Park
Brookfield Walk (Ardoyne)
Brougham Street
Butler Walk
Butler Place
Cairnmartin Road
Castleton Avenue
Clifton Courtyard, Oldpark Road
Duncairn Parade
Flax Street
Forthriver Crescent (school grounds are designated but not the remainder of the street).
Garmoyle Street
Glencairn Way
Havana Court
Havana Walk
Havana Way
Jamaica Court
Jamaica Road
Jamaica Street

Jamaica Way
Kingston Court
Legann Street
Lothair Avenue
Mountainhill Road
Ophir Gardens
Rutherglen Street
Stanhope Street
St James' Mews
Somerdale Park

South

City Way
Finwood Park
Kimberly Drive
Lavina Square and Mews, Lower Ormeau

East

Ardgowan Street
Bloomfield Parade
Dromore Street
Elmgrove Manor
Elmgrove Road
Euston Parade
Flush Park
Glendower Street
Halcombe Street
Hillsborough Gardens
Knockdene Park South
Lawnmount Street
Maschona Court
Oberon Street
Orangefield Road
Rathmore Street
Reid Street
Sydenham Avenue
Tamery Pass
Tildarg Street
Titania Street
Willowholme Street

West

Ardmonagh Way
Avoca Court
Bellfield Estate
Cairns Street
Coolnasilla Avenue
Coolnasilla Close
Coolnasilla Drive

Coolnasilla Gardens
Coolnasilla Park North, South and East
Creelough Park
Creelough Walk
Creelough Gardens
Downfine Walk
Glenveagh Drive
Glenveagh Park
Glenties Drive
Glenveagh Park
Gortnamonagh Court
Gortnamonagh Heights
Gortnamonagh Place
Gortnamonagh Rise
Gortnamonagh View
Gortnamonagh Way
Hillhead Avenue
Lenadoon Walk
Maple Villas, 2 Sliabh Dubh View
Milltown Cemetery
Monagh Grove
Moyard Crescent
Norfolk Way
Norglen Road
Sliabh Dubh View
Springfield Mill, Springfield Road
St Peters Square North
Ross Mill Avenue
Ross Mill Court
Tildarg Avenue
Twaddell Avenue
Upper Suffolk Road
Verefoster Walk
Woodbourne Crescent

Leisure Centres:

Grounds and car parks of;

Andersonstown Leisure Centre
Avoneil Leisure Centre
Ballysillan Leisure Centre
Ozone Complex
Grove Wellbeing Centre
Loughside Recreation
Olympia Leisure Centre
Shankill Leisure Centre
Whiterock Leisure Centre
Multi Sports Complex (Blythefield) Blythe Street

Allotments

Musgrave

Open Spaces

Britanica Open Space (off Sandy Row)

Cooke Street

**Whiterock Road (space at right hand side when driving into
Whiterock Leisure Centre grounds.**

Playparks

Eversleigh Street

Grampian Avenue

Lenadoon

Moyard

Navarra, Ballyroney Hill

Nubia Street

Stewart Street

Enclosed Parks

Mary Peters Track

Other

Balmoral Industrial Estate

Bank Square

Giants Park

Grounds of Belfast City Hospital

Grounds of Learning and Development Centre, East Bridge Street

Grounds of Mater Infirmorum Hospital

Grounds of Royal Victoria Hospital

**Walkway that runs through the Con O'Neill Park with entrances
on the Beersbridge Road and Abetta Parade.**

Writers Square

Yorkgate Railway Station”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Department for Social Development requesting that all areas throughout the City be designated as places prohibiting the consumption of alcohol.

**Nominations to Elected Positions within the
Association of Port Health Authorities**

The Head of Environmental Health reported that the Association of Port Health Authorities was a United Kingdom-wide organisation which represented the interests of Local and Port Health Authorities which had responsibility for public health and environmental health controls both at sea and airports. The Association was directed by an elected Executive Board and had a number of Technical Committees which dealt with various aspects of port health work.

She reported that the Council was a corporate member of the Association and at its Annual General Meeting, which had been held in Manchester during September, 2008, the Chairman (Councillor Adamson) had been re-elected to the Executive Board of the Association for a period of two years and at the Annual General Meeting held in Newcastle during September, 2009 he had been elected as Chairman of the Imported Feed and Food Committee for a period one year. In addition, Councillor McCarthy was the ongoing President of the Authority and it was anticipated that a new President would be elected during September, 2010.

The Head of Environmental Health stated that nominations were being sought in connection with the elections at the Association's Annual General Meeting in September for the Executive Board of the Association and the Chair of the Imported Feed and Food Committee. Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee nominate the Chairman (Councillor Adamson) for re-election to the Executive Board for a period of two years and also for election as Chairman of the Imported Feed and Food Committee for a period of one year.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**George Best Belfast City Airport Runway Extension –
Further Health Impact Assessment Work**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

During discussion at the Health and Environmental Services Committee meeting of 2nd June 2010, it was agreed that the merits of whether any additional information in relation to previous Health Impact Assessment reports on the George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) runway extension should be considered in preparation for the proposed public enquiry.

It was noted that the applicant (Belfast City Airport) had conducted a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) through consultants, RPS, as part of their planning application and some Members had attended a workshop on 19th October as part of that exercise. It was also noted that Belfast Healthy Cities, supported by the Council, had commissioned an independent review, carried out by Ms Erica Ison (HIA expert), of the applicant's HIA. This report had been comprehensive and submitted to the Planning Service along with a Council response to the planning application in November 2009. A copy of the Council's response is attached.

Following discussion, this Committee agreed at its last meeting that a report on the merits or otherwise of Belfast Healthy Cities undertaking a further Health Impact Assessment, including a timeframe for completion and anticipated costs, be submitted to its next meeting. This report is in response to that request.

Belfast Healthy Cities (BHC) has advised that the costs of a Health Impact Assessment depend on the amount of work which is required. It can vary from a desk top HIA at around £5,000 to over £20,000 for a more significant piece of work. Following further discussions with Belfast Healthy Cities and indirectly with the HIA expert it was considered that the main gap in the HIA report that existed was community engagement workshops.

Belfast Healthy Cities have contacted the Ms Ison who conducted the HIA review and requested information regarding:

- 1) what, in addition to the reports that have already been produced, would be required to add value; and
- 2) what would be the full overall costs of any additional work?

Key Issues

Members are advised that the Council has submitted a response on the HIA carried out by the applicant. It is unlikely that a full new HIA would add value as it is likely to revisit many of the areas already covered in the existing HIA report and the review report.

The Health Impact Assessment expert Ms Erica Ison who carried out the previous review has advised the following three main areas would add value:

1. The previous work would benefit from a revised community profile - this may not mean a lot of work because as part of the URBACT II Project, a profile for East Belfast was put together in 2009 by Christine McMaster (HPA), Jonna Monaghan (BHC) around regeneration. Ms Ison has suggested working to get data from local GPs about hypertension, mental health issues, etc to further add value to this work.
2. There needs to be stakeholder consultation particularly with the communities affected by the flightpaths, together with other stakeholders who need to be involved.
3. A report needs to be written that brings together not only the rapid literature review and critique Ms Ison did of the consultant's report, but also the stakeholder findings and important points from the community profile.

In addition to the above work, Ms Ison would need supported locally to assist with collation of data, as well as additional support with facilitation and organisation of the stakeholder workshops. Belfast Healthy Cities suggest that additional community engagement could be supported through their office. This work would take in the region of one month to complete but would be dependent on the availability of the consultant over the next number of months.

A HIA report, if commissioned, would be used to inform the position taken or views expressed by the Council in their 'statement of case' for the public enquiry. However as it was not carried out as part of the original work and response to the Planning Service in relation to the application it would be at the discretion of the Planning Appeals Commission as to what and how much new and additional information could be introduced.

It is also unknown as to the weight and value the Planning Appeals Commission will attach to information from a Health Impact Assessment or indeed community engagement workshops. The advice we have received is that any additional information is only likely to be admissible as an appendix for the amplification of a point made in the body of the Council's 'statement of case'. Again this would only be applicable if the additional information supported a substantive point raised by the Council in its 'statement of case'.

Resource Implications

The costs for engaging the HIA expert with support from Belfast Healthy Cities to complete the additional work detailed above are:

- £3,200 for the work of the Consultant, plus
- £1,500 for Belfast Healthy Cities.

This has not been accounted for in the revenue estimates.

Recommendations

The Committee should consider the content of this report and the previous Council submission to the Planning Service in relation to the Health Impact Assessment work already completed and, based on the merits of further work at this stage in the planning process, decide either:

- To engage an HIA consultant and Belfast Healthy Cities to complete additional HIA work; or
- That further work should not be undertaken at this stage.

Key to Abbreviations

HIA – Health Impact Assessment
HPA – Health Promotion Agency
BHC – Belfast Healthy Cities
URBACT – Urban Development Network Programme EU”

After discussion, the Committee agreed to engage the services of a consultant and Belfast Healthy Cities to complete additional Health Impact Assessment work, the cost of which would be approximately £5,000.

Safety of Dog Wardens

The Committee considered a report in relation to a recent incident which had involved the Council's Dog Wardens seizing a dog which they had considered to be a breed which was proscribed under the Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order and, therefore, could not legally be kept by its owner. Pending legal proceedings, the dog was currently being kennelled by the Council. The Head of Environmental Health reported that a website seeking public support to have the dog released back to its owner had been developed and that threats had been received by the Dog Warden involved. Accordingly, steps were being taken by the Council in conjunction with the Police Service of Northern Ireland to ensure that the Warden's health and safety was being protected.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Dog Warden thanking her for her work and offering its support.

Consultation on a Draft Strategy for Improving the Regulation of Health and Safety in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) and the 26 district councils share responsibility for regulating workplace health and safety. They apply similar legislation in different business sectors, with district councils being responsible for regulating the service, retail and entertainment sectors. The economic and social significance of improving workplace health and safety standards in terms of reducing the number of workplace accidents, reducing absenteeism and getting people back into work creates a compelling argument for HSENI and district councils to work together in developing cohesive and complementary planning arrangements and in applying collective resources in the most effective way to raise workplace health and safety standards across Northern Ireland.

In a report to this Committee in April 2009, a set of proposals for new partnership arrangements were outlined. These included a statement of intent and an agreed joint strategic framework incorporating a set of guiding principles for the health and safety regulatory system in Northern Ireland.

The statement of intent set out 3 main commitments:

- agree a joint strategic framework that identifies a set of guiding principles for the health and safety regulatory system in Northern Ireland;
- work together to develop arrangements that will embed and deliver closer partnership working; and
- introduce a system that will facilitate effective joint planning and delivery at all levels between HSENI and district councils.

The Committee agreed that the Council should endorse the proposed working arrangements with HSENI and the statement of intent and strategic framework were signed by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council in May, 2009.

Following on from this, the district councils and HSENI worked together to develop a strategy for the better regulation of health and safety at work in Northern Ireland. A copy of the draft strategy is attached.

Key Issues

This draft strategy represents a highly significant development in the joint commitment between HSENI and the district councils as regulators. It is a high level strategy that establishes a very clear framework for future joint planning and provides the opportunity for a fully coordinated approach to the regulation of health and safety at work.

The strategy enables HSENI and the district councils to be more proactive and innovative in sharing resources and expertise effectively to address the needs of employers, employees, and others who may be affected by work activities and in so doing it will impact positively on the wellbeing of both Northern Ireland's population and its economy.

This new single strategy sets out a 'blueprint' for health and safety regulation in Northern Ireland and the future operational plans of HSENI and the district councils will align with the goals that are set down within it.

HSENI is coordinating a consultation exercise seeking comments on the draft strategy from interested groups before 27th September, 2010. Senior officers from Belfast City Council were involved with HSENI in developing the strategy and hence it is recommended that Committee agrees to send a letter to HSENI endorsing the strategy.

Resource Implications

The strategy should enable the Council to regulate workplace health and safety more effectively by improved joint planning, sharing resources such as training and information provided by HSENI and by having access to additional expertise and specialist resources at no added cost.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to continue to support the new approach to collaborative working between HSENI and district councils and endorse the draft strategy.

Key to Abbreviations

HSENI – Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and noted that a copy of the draft strategy was available on Modern.gov.

Establishment of a Regulatory Framework for Liquefied Petroleum Gas, Oil and Solid Fuel

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Strabane District Council, at its meeting on 23rd March, agreed that the Chairman of the Council should write to the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) regarding the problems people in their district were facing with respect to fuel poverty in general and high energy prices in particular.

The Chairman of Strabane Council subsequently wrote to the OFMDFM on 30th March requesting that their office initiate the necessary procedures to set up a strong regulatory framework for oil, solid fuel and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

Strabane District Council also sought the support of all other Councils in Northern Ireland on this matter and forwarded a copy of their letter to each of the other 25 district councils, including Belfast.

A letter of response was forwarded on 14th May to the Chairman of Strabane District Council from the OFMDFM. A response was issued also to Councillor John Matthews, President of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) as he had offered the support of NILGA. The OFMDFM response, however, did not offer any expectation that it would accede to the request although it did make reference to the new Fuel Poverty Strategy due to be issued for public consultation.

Key Issues

- Over 34% of people in Northern Ireland are in fuel poverty (2006 House Condition Survey [HCS]).
- According to the 2006 HCS, 38% of households in Belfast are in fuel poverty but, with rising fuel costs and continuing economic problems, the 2009 figure, due in the autumn of this year, is likely to be significantly higher.
- 70% of people use oil, 5% use solid fuel, 5% use electricity and 12% use gas.
- The utility regulator's responsibilities include gas and electricity but not oil, solid fuel or LPG.
- In January of this year when temperatures dropped to as low as -11°C the average price of 900 litres of oil rose by around £25. This demonstrates how exposed vulnerable people are to unregulated oil prices.
- The Consumer Council is concerned that the most vulnerable customers, who cannot afford to purchase 300-500 litres of home heating oil in one transaction, are left with no option but to use 20 litre drums and can end up paying an additional 57 pence/litre.
- An added problem with the 20 litre drums, particularly for the frail or elderly, is the method of transfer into their oil tank. This can present serious health and safety risks.
- Strabane District Council has written to the OFMDFM calling for a regulatory framework for oil, solid fuel and gas and has copied this correspondence to all other district councils seeking their support on this matter.
- Mr. John Matthews, President of NILGA, has written to OFMDFM supporting the call to set up a regulatory framework for oil, solid fuel and gas.

- The OFMDFM has responded to Strabane District Council, however, their position does not provide any expectation that they are currently considering a wider regulatory framework.
- The OFMDFM has also confirmed that the Department for Social Development is producing a new fuel poverty strategy which is due to be issued for publication.

Resource Implications

None.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee writes to the OFMDFM endorsing the contents of the letter of Mr. Kieran McGuire, Chairman of Strabane District Council, in which he seeks the support of all other Councils in Northern Ireland for a regulatory framework for oil, solid fuel and gas.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation and noted that a copy of the letter which had been received from the Chairman of Strabane District Council was available on Modern.gov.

Housing (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill – Consultation Response

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

In May of last year, the Department for Social Development (DSD) published a consultation document ‘Building Sound Foundations: a Strategy for the Private Rented Sector’. The Council provided a detailed response to this consultation at that time and the Department indicated that, subject to the results of the consultation, the proposals in the strategy would be included in a proposed Housing Bill.

On 7th December 2009 the DSD published a further consultation with respect to the Housing Bill with additional proposals for the regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), different approaches to tackle fuel poverty and a range of suggestions to build on existing powers to deal with homelessness and community safety with regard to tenants. The Committee considered this at its meeting of 3rd February 2010 and subsequently submitted a detailed response which was ratified by the Council on 1st March.

The Housing (Amendment) (No.2) Bill was formally introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 22nd June 2010 and has been referred to the Committee for Social Development for the Committee Stage. The stated purpose of the Bill is to enable better regulation of the private rented sector, provide new tools to tackle fuel poverty, promote effective housing management and clarify existing law in respect of homelessness. The clerk of the Committee for Social Development has written to the Council's Chief Executive outlining the main provisions of the Bill and inviting written evidence on behalf of the Council for the Committee Stage of the Bill.

Whilst the previous Council submissions continue to be pertinent to the main thrust of the Bill, there are some points which may require additional clarification.

On 1st March 2010, the DSD published proposals for a Regeneration and Housing Bill which included provision for district councils to promote energy efficiency within their own areas. The Council did respond to that consultation through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 15th April, 2010 including comments on the energy efficiency proposals. That provision however is now being taken forward in the Housing (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill.

The Committee has requested that any written evidence should be forwarded to them, preferably by e-mail, by Monday 23rd August.

Key Issues

The Draft Bill:

- The Housing (Amendment) (No.2) Bill has been referred to the Committee for Social Development for the Committee Stage.
- The Council has been invited to submit written evidence.
- The Council has already submitted two detailed responses to Housing Bill consultations in 2009 and 2010.
- The Council submissions continue to be broadly pertinent to the draft Bill.
- The Bill enables the Department to make regulations for a mandatory registration scheme for all private landlords however the Committee indicates that the scheme is described as 'light touch'.

- The Department has not clarified which authority would regulate the rent deposit scheme.
- Proposals to give district councils powers to promote energy efficiency were originally included in a draft Regeneration and Housing Bill and are now included in the Housing Bill. The Council has commented on this as part of the SP&R Committee's response in April of this year.
- Submissions, preferably by e-mail, to be sent to the committee by 23 August 2010.

Draft response

The Council welcomes the Bill and would refer the Committee to the Council's previous responses to the consultation document, *Building Sound Foundations: a Strategy for the Private Rented Sector and the draft Housing Bill*.

The Council seeks clarification of the Department's reference to a 'light touch' registration scheme. It is vital that the scheme requires landlords to register all their properties and that councils are responsible for both administering and regulating the scheme. The Council also seeks clarification from the Department regarding its commitment in the strategy document to raise the fitness standard for the private sector, as there is no reference to this in the Bill, and it should also seek to clarify which authority should regulate the rent deposit scheme.

The Council restates its comments to the Department in its response to the Regeneration and Housing Bill with regard to the introduction of a power to allow district councils to promote energy efficiency in residential accommodation, namely:-

- The Council welcomes the proposal to provide councils with powers to promote domestic energy efficiency as an element in the drive to address fuel poverty.
- The Council understands that an option for a national Fuel Stamps Scheme will be included as a proposal for consideration in a DSD public consultation in the current Fuel Poverty Strategy due out in the spring of this year.
- In order to facilitate this type of support to the fuel poor however the Department may wish to consider a more explicit inclusion in the draft Bill that would ensure that Councils have a clear vires for such schemes by specifically empowering them to support schemes that are designed to assist the management of heating costs in residential accommodation.

- The administration of this function would have significant resource implications for councils. The Council would welcome full and formal consultation in relation to the nature and extent of resource provision.
- The Council observes that there is an existing synergy with functions it currently holds with building control having a regulatory function in relation to building regulations and responsibility for energy performance certificates. A certain level of expertise already exists in Councils in respect of this function.

Resource Implications

The Council currently funds its Fuel Stamps scheme through the thematic budget for people and communities. The Council's recommendation however for explicit powers for councils to assist in the management of heating costs in residential accommodation would require formal consultation with the Department in relation to the extent of resource provision.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee agrees the draft response to the Committee for Social Development.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed to recommend an amendment to Clause 13 of the Bill – Functions of district councils in relation to energy efficiency - paragraph (1) to read:-

'A district Council may take such action as it thinks appropriate for the purpose of promoting the efficient use of energy and to assist the management of heating costs in residential accommodation in its district.'

Under paragraph (2) of Clause 13 should be included:-

'provide or secure the provision of assistance in the management of domestic heating costs'

Consultation on the Caravans Bill

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

The purpose of the Caravans Bill is to introduce statutory protections for caravan owners who occupy a caravan as their main residence and caravan owners using seasonal sites.

An officer response was forwarded to the Committee for Social Development on 2nd June 2010 by the Director of Legal Services. Whilst broadly welcoming the provisions of the Bill on behalf of the Council, the Director of Legal Services sought clarification with regard to enforcement responsibilities under Part 3 'Protection of residential occupiers from eviction and harassment'. In the original Caravans Bill, Part 2, 'Provision for Protection of Occupiers of Caravans' it was intended that district councils would have a role in the enforcement of the protection of occupiers of caravans. This has been omitted in the redrafted Caravans Bill and there appears to be no explicit authority for any statutory body to enforce Part 3. Given that such offences within the Private Rented Sector are enforced by district councils (by virtue of the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 as amended) and that district councils are responsible for licensing caravan sites (under the Caravans (Northern Ireland) Act 1963), it was suggested that the proposed legislation is amended to grant councils the power to investigate and prosecute complaints of harassment and eviction.

Although the Department had stated that the Bill did not give rise to any issues of selectivity affecting any groups listed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Director of Legal Services noted that good practice would dictate that Section 75 should be considered and the Council would urge that a full human rights impact assessment (including an Equality Impact Assessment) be conducted on the Bill as the legislation appears to affect the Traveller Community and potentially the elderly.

Key Issues

- The purpose of the Caravans Bill is to introduce statutory protections for caravan owners who occupy a caravan as their main residence and caravan owners using seasonal sites.
- The Director of Legal Services forwarded an officer response to the Department on 2nd June 2010. A copy of this letter is attached.
- There appears to be no designated enforcing authority for the provisions of Part 3 relating to the protection of occupiers against eviction and harassment.
- The Council would recommend that district councils are given the power to investigate and prosecute complaints of harassment and unlawful eviction given that similar offences are enforced by district councils under the Rent (NI) Order 1978.

- As the Bill appears to directly affect the Irish Traveller Community and potentially the elderly, the Council would recommend that a full human rights assessment be carried out.
- The Director of Legal Services informed the Assembly Committee Clerk that the Bill would be considered by the Health and Environmental Services Committee in August and that any further views expressed by the Council would be forwarded to the Committee for Social Development for their consideration.
- A copy of the Bill and Explanatory and Financial Memorandum can be obtained from the Assembly's website –
http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/legislation/primary/2009/nia17_09.htm

Resource Implications

As there are no Residential Caravan Sites or Seasonal Sites in the Belfast City Council areas there are currently no resource implications.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to endorse the letter of 2nd June 2010 from the Director of Legal Services to the Committee for Social Development in relation to the Caravans Bill.

Document Attached

Appendix 1 – Letter of 2nd from the Director of Legal Services to Mr Peter McCallion, Committee Clerk, Committee for Social Development, Northern Ireland Assembly.

Appendix 1

CARAVANS BILL

I refer to the above and thank you for your letter dated 5 May 2010 in respect of the proposed Caravans Bill which was formally introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 26 April 2010.

Belfast City Council welcomes the introduction of statutory protections for caravan owners who occupy a caravan as their main residence and caravan owners using seasonal sites. The introduction of fair treatment and protection of the property rights of caravan users is positive and the Council broadly welcomes the provisions of the Bill.

The Council seek clarification as to who will be responsible for enforcing Part 3 'Protection of residential occupiers from eviction and harassment.' In the original Caravans Bill, Part 2, 'Provision for Protection of Occupiers of Caravans' it was intended that district councils would have a role in the enforcement of the protection of occupiers of caravans (by virtue of Section 7(4)). This has been omitted in the redrafted Caravans Bill and there is no explicit authority for any statutory body to enforce Part 3. Given that such offences within the private rented sector are enforced by district councils (by virtue of the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 as amended) and that district councils are responsible for licensing caravan sites (under the Caravans (Northern Ireland) Act 1963), it is suggested that the proposed legislation is amended to grant district councils the power to investigate and prosecute complaints of harassment and eviction.

In relation to this consultation, due to time constraints, officers have not yet had the opportunity to bring a report in relation to the draft bill to the Health and Environmental Services Committee. The Head of the Health and Environmental Services Department will be taking a report to the Health and Environmental Services Committee in August 2010. In the meantime, the above comments are the observations of the officers on behalf of the Council, but we will of course let you know if any further views are expressed once the matter has been reviewed by Committee.

The Department has stated that the Bill does not give rise to any issues selectively affecting any groups listed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Good practice dictates that Section 75 should be considered and the Council would urge that a full human rights impact assessment (including an Equality Impact Assessment) be conducted on the Bill as the legislation appears to directly affect the Irish Traveller Community and potentially the elderly.

I trust that this information has proved useful and I thank you for your interest in Belfast City Council's position with regard to these issues

Yours sincerely

CIARAN QUIGLEY
Director of Legal Services"

The Committee approved the response.

Building Control

Naming of Streets

The Committee considered the undernoted applications for the naming of streets in the City:

<u>Proposed Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
St. Kevins Walk	Off North Queen Street, BT15	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Clonavogie Gardens	Off Donegall Road, BT12	JNP Architects

The Head of Building Control informed the Committee that the Royal Mail had no objections to the proposed names and that they were not contained within the Council's Street Register and did not duplicate existing approved street names in the City.

Arising from discussion in the matter, a Member pointed out that the residents of the area had had objections in relation to the naming of St. Kevins Walk.

After discussion, the Committee granted approval for the naming of Clonavogie Gardens and agreed that the applicant be requested to submit an alternative street name in respect of St. Kevins Walk.

Involvement of Council Staff in Vacant Property Rating Project

(Mr. D. Rogan, Building Control Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

The District Rate accounts for 74% of the Council's total income. It is therefore the most important source of income to support our annual expenditure. For several years the Council has been working in partnership with Land & Property Services (LPS) to ensure the billing and collection of all rates that are due.

This has been specifically in relation to providing information through our:

- **building regulations applications to facilitate early and accurate valuations;**
- **sharing address data as new addresses are created;**

- promoting benefit and rate relief take up; and
- carrying out inspections of properties to confirm occupancy and collate ownership and occupant details.

Members will be aware that this work has culminated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between LPS and the Council whereby both parties have agreed to work in partnership for mutual corporate interests on a series of issues. This MoU was discussed when LPS attended the Budget and Transformation Panel in March. One of the issues to be addressed is maximising the legitimate rateable income for the city.

Recently a Local Authorities/LPS Strategic Steering Group (SSG) was formed to ensure a more joined up approach across all 26 councils following the work carried out in Belfast. In addition to LPS that group has representation from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and Northern Ireland Building Control (NIBC). Additionally, Ronan Cregan, the Council's Head of Finance and Performance, has been co-opted on to the group to provide specialised input in relation to local authority finance.

It is the responsibility of LPS to manage records of properties that are occupied and vacant throughout Northern Ireland. As requested through Committee, officers have sought assurances that LPS manage this more robustly than occurred during the period of rating reforms, when the Agency encountered difficulties in resourcing work to ascertain the occupancy status of properties and collect full ratepayer information. Through the Local Authorities/LPS Strategic Steering Group (SSG), LPS has presented a Vacancy/Occupancy Strategy which involves, amongst other things, more robust measures in recording when a property becomes vacant and a plan to integrate new data sources such as utility company records. The strategy also involves councils playing a significant role, specifically in the sharing of data to support valuation of properties and issuing of rate bills based on timely and accurate information.

In 2007 and 2008, Council staff undertook, on behalf of LPS, occupancy inspections of properties which had been recorded as vacant or where there had been difficulties collecting ratepayer names and dates of occupation. LPS funded the exercise on the basis of £7 per completed inspection and occupancy report. In Belfast staff from the Building Control Service carried out in excess of 12,000 surveys realising that over 50% of the previously recorded vacant properties were in fact occupied and therefore were subsequently billed for rates. In 2009, we again undertook a much smaller survey of approximately 500 properties of high yielding rates for no recompense per survey but on the understanding that there is ultimately a financial return through the rates yield.

All of these exercises were considered extremely worthwhile and yielded significant income for the Council as reported through to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on a number of occasions. LPS are still in pursuit of some of the cases, where it proved impossible to collect all of the information required for billing, and these should still bring in additional income in both this and next financial year.

The Finance Minister for Northern Ireland, Mr Sammy Wilson MP, MLA, has announced that empty homes will be liable for rates from 1 October 2011. This is a rating initiative which has cross party support within the Assembly and the Council. During consultation on these proposals in 2008, the Council supported this amendment to the rating legislation. In preparation for the Rating of Empty Homes, LPS needs to gather ownership details of all vacant domestic properties.

Key Issues

LPS estimates that there are currently in excess of 12,000 rateable domestic and non domestic properties in the Belfast City Council area which are registered as non rate paying. This includes newly valued properties for which bills have yet to be issued, properties exempt from rates and domestic vacant properties (non-domestic vacant properties are liable for 50% rating, unless exemptions apply).

The primary responsibility for managing vacancies is on LPS and the Agency is continuing to pursue a strategy as agreed at the SSG. However, in discussions with senior LPS officers, they have indicated that they would welcome assistance in reviewing entries on the vacant properties list, using the Council's local knowledge. This work is fully in line with the purpose and objectives of the MoU. To support targeted activity by the Council, LPS will:

- delegate authority to Council staff to act on behalf of LPS for the purposes of determining occupancy;
- process all rates bills to final conclusion as far as is reasonably practical;
- process all properties for which full billing details are provided by Council, in a timely manner, with particular reference to Penny Product cut off dates.

The projects of 2007, 2008 found that in excess of 53% of properties registered as vacant were in fact occupied. This was in significant part due to the lack of regular occupancy inspections having been completed during the period of rating reform. Given

the work already done, and the economic downturn (which has increased vacancy levels), the results of new exercises will be lower. However, returns in terms of rate income is likely to be many times greater than the effort expended – returns on the 2008 exercise were approaching a one hundred-fold return (therefore roughly a forty-fold return on the district rate income).

Given the quantity of the properties, timeframes and the restructuring and staff reductions in the Service, it will be impossible for all the properties to be visited during 2010, so prioritisation will be undertaken by the Council and LPS, based largely on rateable value but also taking account of factors such as the length of time since the vacancy was last checked. The Service will receive no payment from LPS for doing this work. However, it is anticipated that, as previously was the case, the rates gain for the Council will be significantly more than the resources required to do this work.

The rating of empty homes, when introduced, is anticipated to yield 10 million pounds in rates for Northern Ireland. Belfast is likely to receive a larger income than any other council, estimated to be between £300K-£500K for the financial year 2011/12. LPS has been working through the vacancy strategy to increase its data sources in preparation for the implementation of this legislation. By continuously assisting LPS in the collection of this data, it will be to the benefit of the council in terms of timely rate bills being reflected in the penny product, and reduced incidence of backdated bills causing problems for ratepayers.

This work will continue in the manner of previous agreements with LPS and will further assist in building a robust partnership with the aim of optimising the operation of an equitable and efficient rating system for all ratepayers.

LPS has previously provided all the requisite guidance on the information that they need to be collected and will provide the:

- necessary data sets which highlight the potential rate intake; and
- required delegated authority for council officers to act on its behalf should this work be approved.

This work will be kept under review so it does not detract from the core Service duties and so as to determine that there is always a net gain for the Council through the projected rates return.

Resource Implications

Financial

Based on our previous experience of actual versus listed occupation of properties, this work has always yielded increased income for the Council through additional rates collected. The Head of Finance and Performance has indicated that some of the additional finance collected through this project will be reallocated internally to the Service to cater for any additional expenditure. Any expenditure by the Service would be significantly outweighed by the additional potential generated rates income for the Council.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resources implications in the proposed work as in the short term a risk based approach toward regulation work will be used to manage capacity. The Trade Unions were consulted and are satisfied that the work falls under the current job descriptions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee grants approval to carry out the vacant premises inspection work with LPS to influence the Penny Product figures, subject to a regular review and assessment to show that the returns warrant continuation of the surveys.

Abbreviations

LPS	Land & Property Services
MoU.	Memorandum of Understanding
SSG.	Strategic Steering Group
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
NILGA	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
NIBC	Northern Ireland Building Control"

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Waste Management

Northern Ireland Landfill Allowances Scheme and Recycling Rate Updates

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

This report provides the Committee with an update on the Council’s NILAS and recycling rate over the past quarter. This report also provides Members with some indicative projections arising from the introduction of new recycling and waste diversion schemes which are likely to be needed up to 2020. These schemes are being developed in conjunction with arc21 in order to address the emerging requirements of the EU Waste Framework Directive which has identified 2020 as the target year. At this time, councils will be required to have achieved a 50% recycling and composting rate.

The EU Waste Framework Directive (EU WFD) is in the process of being transposed into national legislation this year both in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and two consultation exercises are currently underway at present on this legislative process.

Key Issues

NILAS

Members will be aware that the Service has been providing regular updates on the Council’s performance against the Northern Ireland Landfill Allowances Scheme (NILAS) targets. These were set by the Department of the Environment (DOE) for each council on an annually reducing basis between 2006 and 2020. These allowances incorporate the step change reductions in the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) permitted to be landfilled by each council in 2010, 2013 and 2020 in accordance with the EU Landfill Directive (LFD) target years.

Since the introduction of NILAS in 2005/06, the Council has until 2009/2010 met its annual NILAS obligations. This has been achieved by the Council delivering substantial changes in its waste collection and management operations in order to divert annually increasing volumes of waste from landfill through the development of new facilities and the introduction of various recycling schemes over the past five years.

In addition, the municipal waste growth rate has exhibited a slowdown in more recent years.

The Council’s compliance with NILAS changed in the target year 2009/10, with the Council exceeding its allowance by 1,376 tonnes; an overshoot of 1.9%. The primary reason for this exceedence was the step change in the level of allowances between 2008/09 and 2009/10 rather than any decrease in recycling performance.

The tonnage recycled continues to grow and, at 34,417 tonnes, it was 0.3% greater than the equivalent tonnage achieved last year. This means the Council will need to transfer in NILAS allowances from each of the arc21 constituent councils in order to meet its obligations. The Council is working with arc21 to implement the methodology for these transfers. The completed transfer request must be submitted to the DOE by Thursday 30 September 2010.

It is anticipated that due to the introduction of food waste into the brown bins from April 2010 onwards the Council will meet its NILAS obligations for 2010/11 and 2011/12 before returning to a deficit situation from 2012/13 onwards.

The projections in relation to the Council are based on a number of key assumptions:

- A waste growth rate of 0.4% per annum has been applied from 2010/11 onwards. This is the same rate used by arc21 in its recent modelling exercises for the residual waste project.
- Performance of the food waste in the brown bins being sustained throughout the three winter months in spite of a reduced monthly collection frequency.
- No MBT capacity being available in the 2012/13 target year.
- The Council adopting a 'single council' approach towards NILAS, rather than an arc21 collective one.

Modelling carried out by arc21 shows that by adopting a collective approach in the region towards NILAS, the constituent councils will collectively meet their NILAS obligations up to 2012/13. After this time, and should mechanical-biological treatment (MBT) capacity not be available to the region, arc21 collectively will not meet its NILAS obligations. Hence the need for arc21 to expeditiously and successfully conclude the current residual waste tender using the EU Competitive Dialogue process.

Members will be aware that the NILAS figure is obtained using a relatively complex mass balance formula covering a wide range of waste streams. The template used by the Council to calculate these projections seeks to mirror this model but is ultimately subject to verification by the DOE through the WasteDataFlow software.

In this regard, Members should note that the DOE is conducting a series of audits on NILAS data returns from councils and, consequently, the above provisional figures for Belfast may change.

Members should also note that, as stated in the background section above, the DOE has launched several consultation papers, two of which relate to (i) changing the definition of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and (ii) introducing new restrictions to increase the amount of waste diverted from landfill for recycling or other purposes. These consultation exercises are called:

- 'Meeting the EU Landfill Diversion Targets' and
- 'The Introduction of Restrictions on the Landfilling of Certain Wastes'.

As discussed in previous Committee meetings, the introduction of these pieces of legislation, and potentially other DOE policies to increase recycling, will continue to require amendments to how the Council provides its waste management operations.

The Waste Management Service is working with arc21 to prepare appropriate responses and these will be submitted to the Committee for consideration next month.

For the purpose of projecting the Council's NILAS performance in the years ahead, the projections are based on the present scheme.

Recycling Rate

As stated above, the Council's recycled tonnage continues to grow and reached 34,417 tonnes at the end of March. This was 0.3% greater than the equivalent tonnage last year and means the provisional recycling rate for the financial year 2009/10 is 26.6%, subject to ratification by the DOE.

The Departmental Plan's target in 2009/10 for household waste recycled and composted as a percentage of total municipal waste arisings was 27%. Members should note that the recycling target could have been achieved by an earlier introduction of food waste into the brown bins, but licensing and operational issues resulted in a subsequent delay of many months to the provision of this service in Belfast.

Now that the food waste is being captured in the brown bins, it is projected that the recycling rate for the City will increase to around 30% for the current financial year as a result of the first full year's tonnage.

Members may recall that in previous Committee meetings, discussions have been held regarding the transposition of the EU WFD. This has set a target of 50% recycling and composting by 2020 for all councils across Europe. Locally, the DOE is in the process of transposing this Directive into legislation, as predicted in the Departmental Plan and considered at the March Committee meeting.

Further proposals, such as the impact of the bids which the Service submitted under the DOE's recently launched 'Rethink Rubbish Grant' have not been included at this time.

Members may also care to note that the Environment Minister, Mr Poots recently wrote to councils to congratulate them on their 'excellent progress...to date in boosting recycling activity'. In this letter, the Minister also highlighted an intention to revise the recycling policy in Northern Ireland and he stated he was 'convinced that a municipal recycling rate of 60% by 2020 is achievable and fully justifiable'.

The Council is working with arc21 to identify initiatives to divert suitable tonnages from landfill for recycling purposes in order to achieve the EU WFD and close the gap between the current recycling rate and the target of 50%. These initiatives are being closely examined in terms of their economic viability and their potential impact on the guaranteed minimum tonnages needed by arc21 for the current residual waste tender process. It is proposed to submit a further report on this topic to a Special Committee meeting later this month.

Resource Implications

Financial

In view of the Council's breach of its NILAS obligations in 2009/10, it will be reliant on the transfer of allowances in accordance with the agreed arc21 methodology from each of the arc21 councils in order to avoid liability to financial penalties. This transfer of allowances will be concluded and registered with the DOE by 30 September 2010. There will therefore be no financial penalty.

It is likely that new initiatives will be identified as critical for the Council in terms of reaching the 50% recycling rate and these will require appropriate resourcing. As stated above, these potential initiatives are presently being considered to determine their contribution to the Council's recycling rate and assist in the Corporate Objective of a 'Improving Belfast's Environment' while, at the same time, demonstrating value-for-money .

Human Resources

No human resource implications are associated with this report.

Asset and Other Implications

No other implications are associated with this report.

Recommendation

The Committee is requested to note the NILAS and recycling rate updates.

Key to Abbreviations

NILAS – Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme
DOE – Department of the Environment
EU WFD – EC Waste Framework Directive
MSW – Municipal Solid Waste
MBT – Mechanical Biological Treatment
EU LFD – EC Landfill Directive”

It was noted that the Council had exceeded its landfill allowance for 2009/2010 by 1,376 tonnes and would be relying on the transfer of allowances from each of the other ten arc21 councils to ensure compliance with the scheme. In addition, the Committee noted the indicative projections for future years which included assumptions that new recycling and waste diversion schemes would be introduced up until 2020.

Establishment of Waste Working Group

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th June, 2007, it had approved the establishment of an All-Party Working Group on the Waste Plan Implementation to act as a reference point for work on waste management within the Department.

The Director pointed out that that group had met briefly to discuss the implementation of the Council's Waste plan. However, its discussions had been effectively overtaken by the establishment of an ad hoc Officer/Member Working Group which had been established to consider proposals for the arc21 residual waste treatment facilities and the subsequent party group briefings.

She stated that, given the corporate priority which the Council was continuing to afford to waste management, the current proportion of the budget allocated to that function, the significant forthcoming policy decisions, the persistent compliance issues in terms of meeting the European Union Landfill and Waste Framework Directives and how the Council could best respond to the issues in the medium term, it was considered important that that Working Group should be reconvened.

Accordingly, it was recommended that:

- (i) the Committee approve the re-instatement of the All-Party Waste Working Group comprising the Chairman and Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) and a member from each of the Party Groups not represented by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman; and
- (ii) the Group be established for a period of two years, with a review of the continued requirement taking place prior to 30th September 2012.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Waste Management Issues - Special Meeting

The Committee agreed that a special meeting be held in order to consider various waste management issues which will have a major impact on the Council.

"Rethink Waste" Grant Applications

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

The Department of Environment for Northern Ireland (the DOE) recently launched a £3.13 million fund which was open to councils in order to assist with the roll-out of additional recycling and re-use schemes.

On 28 May, the Minister for the Environment, Mr Edwin Poots, announced the 'Rethink Waste' Fund during a visit to the Council's Ormeau Recycling Centre. The fund is being administered by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

The fund has been specifically developed to cover the cost of *capital* items for which councils can submit proposals either individually, or in partnership with other councils or the community and voluntary/private sector. The community and voluntary/private sector however are excluded from applying directly for funding. The funding made available for councils must comply with certain criteria, one of which is that the money must be spent before 31 March 2011.

Examples of the type of schemes for which funding may be available include:

- improvements or extensions to kerbside collection schemes;
- improvements or extensions to Household Recycling Centres (HRCs);
- the introduction of home composting schemes; and
- the introduction of/improvements to bulky household waste collections.

Speaking at the launch of the fund Minister Poots said *'I recognise that all Northern Ireland's councils have made excellent progress in boosting recycling rates in recent years. However, I am convinced that with the right support further improvements can be achieved and I am keen to assist councils in doing this.'*

Under the criteria set out in the *'Rethink Waste'* Fund the Waste Management Service lodged 3 applications for the following equipment:

- A shredding machine to facilitate mattress recycling.
- Two pre-fabricated buildings, two lock up steel containers, four electric trucks and associated signage for storage of items for 'reuse' at the Council's HRCs.
- The installation of new wireless on-board weighing equipment to collect data from recycling collection rounds.

Key Issues

The DOE has stated that it will be announcing successful projects at the end of August 2010. Should the Council receive funding approval for any or all of its submissions, and in order to comply with the criteria set by the DOE, the contracts must be awarded and monies spent before the end of this financial year. A further criterion worth noting is that all projects must be scheduled to run for a minimum of three years. Given that the fund is for capital expenditure, the criteria and spend timeframes have presented significant challenges. However, the Council has submitted bids for the following three projects.

1. Mattress Recycling

The objective of this project is for the Service, in partnership with a suitable commercial or third sector organisation, to purchase a mattress shredding machine to increase the amount of waste diverted from landfill.

It is estimated that 40,000 mattresses are currently discarded in Belfast each year. Each mattress weighs 0.02 tonnes (approx.) and contains materials such as steel and textiles which could be recovered.

The mattresses are presently either collected by the Council's bulky household collection service, deposited at the HRCs or illegally fly-tipped. They are then uplifted and landfilled but are also difficult to handle.

The following materials may be generated from a typical mattress.

Waste Item	Market
Coconut Hair	Compost Horticultural
Flock	Biomass
Cover Fire Retardant	Equestrian Surfaces
Foam	Cortex
Polyester Webbing	Textile
Horse Gut	Composting
Linen Cotton	Textile
Mattress Base	Kindling Wood
Springs	Metal

It is proposed to use the '*Rethink Waste*' funding to purchase a suitable shredding machine to enable the materials in the mattresses to be recycled and helping the Council meet both its EU Landfill and EU Waste Framework Directives targets and divert waste from landfill for recycling.

The Service proposes to tender for a commercial or third sector contractor to provide the staff and facility for a mattress shredding operation, for sole use by the Council. It is anticipated that the project could divert about 10,000 mattresses from landfill, the material of which could be recovered. The recovery of these materials also reduces the prospect of greenhouse gases being produced by their decomposition.

- The estimated cost for a suitable shredding machine - £265,000

- The estimated cost of four containers for on-site storage of mattresses at the HRCs - £10,000

The project meets the objective of the '*Rethink Waste*' Fund as it improves the services offered by the Council at its HRCs and through its bulky waste collection service.

2. Storage Facilities for Articles for Re-use

The objective of this project is for the Service to purchase and erect two temporary pre-fabricated buildings and two steel lock-up containers for the storage of reusable items brought onto the four HRCs by members of the public. This will increase the range of materials which could be diverted from landfill for reuse purposes but items such as furniture and electrical items must be dry-stored to prevent them suffering weather damage.

Arising from concerns regarding manual handling, electric trucks will also be needed to move heavy items into the storage units, along with appropriate signage to promote the reuse buildings/containers at each of the HRCs.

It is proposed that a tender exercise will be conducted to select two third sector organisations to work in partnership with the Service to provide a reuse service for items brought to the HRCs. The HRC staff will ask the public to consider putting items into a building/container should they be appropriate for reuse.

These items would then be inspected and removed from the HRCs on a regular basis for refurbishment and resale through established charitable retail outlets.

There is currently limited, accurate data on the actual tonnage of bulky items which could be reused but, from experience, it is estimated that around 300 tonnes could be diverted from landfill each year. The Service also anticipates that, by not paying for disposal, this project should also save the Council money.

Planning approval will be required to erect the buildings at the Ormeau and Blackstaff Way HRCs and planning applications will be promptly lodged should this project be approved.

- The estimated cost of two pre-fabricated buildings - £70,000
- The estimated cost of two steel storage containers - £5,000
- The estimated cost of four electric trucks - £24,000

As above, the project meets the objective of the '*Rethink Waste*' Fund as it improves the services offered by the Council at its HRCs and it also neatly dovetails with the first project as the sites can accommodate both types of container.

3. Wireless On-Board Weighing System

The objective of this project is for the Service to improve the data capture and use of information to increase its engagement with the public in poorer-performing areas or where contamination levels are higher in order to increase the Councils recycling rate and divert waste from landfill. This could be achieved through the purchase and installation of a wireless based on-board bin weighing equipment onto the recycling vehicles used for the blue and brown collection rounds.

Longer-term, such information will allow the Service to plot the City's recycling performance and better target communication and behavioural change messages.

It is estimated that the installation of a wireless on-board weighing system could result in a total savings of £472,000 over the lifetime of the project (7 years). These savings are likely to be achieved through increased participation and reduced contamination levels in the blue and brown schemes.

- The estimated capital cost of installing wireless bin weighing system in the blue and brown bin vehicles - £217,000.

The project meets the objective of the '*Rethink Waste*' Fund as it improves the quality and reliability of the data captured and allows both the Cleansing and Waste Management Services to target their resources more effectively.

Resource Implications

Financial

All funding applications have been based on 100% capital grant funding from the Rethink Waste Scheme.

It is anticipated that there will be minimal annual revenue funding required for each scheme, however this will be fully assessed as part of the Council's Gate Review Process should the projects be considered further.

Human Resources

None.

Asset and Other Implications

These projects will help the Council meet its recycling targets and divert waste from landfill.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:-

- Note the submission of the three applications for capital grant funding under the recently announced Rethink Waste Scheme.
- Approve the advancement of the proposals in principle and commend the proposals to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for prioritisation and inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme and (given the extremely tight timescales regarding availability of funding and completion of projects) seek the prompt commencement of the tender process, subject to the Council's review Process and the successful drawdown of 100% funding from the 'Rethink Waste' Fund.

Key to Abbreviations

WRAP – Waste & Resources Action Programme
HRC – Household Recycling Centre
DOE – Department of Environment"

After discussion, the Committee granted the approval sought and noted the submission of the three applications for capital grant funding under the Rethink Waste Scheme.

**Tender for the Collection and Recycling of
Scrap Metal from the Council's Recycling Centres
and Civic Amenity Sites**

The Director sought and was granted authority to instigate a tendering exercise in relation to the collection and recycling of scrap metal from the Council's recycling centres and civic amenity sites for a one year period, with the option to renew on a yearly basis for a further period of three years, subject to satisfactory performance. It was anticipated that this contract would generate income in excess of £10,000 per annum for the Council.

The Committee noted that the tenders would be evaluated against criteria based on both cost and quality and, in accordance with the authority delegated to her, the Director would be accepting the most economically advantageous tender submitted.

Cleansing Services

Illegal Dumping of Black Bags in Alleyways

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

A Member of the Committee has requested that a report be brought to Committee on the issue of the approach taken by Enforcement Officers when dealing with illegally deposited black bags of waste in alleyways.

The Council has been collecting waste in wheeled bins for a considerable number of years, and, whilst there is a requirement that all residents will present their waste in a bin, there is a significant proportion of residents who fail to present their waste in a bin and leave it in bags in the alleyways behind their homes, either on their scheduled refuse collection day or on days which are not their scheduled refuse collection day. The presence of waste on any day other than bin collection day is not only unsightly but bags can be disturbed and torn open which creates larger quantities of loose waste and litter on the streets and particularly in alleyways, thereby requiring additional resources to clean up and remove deposited waste. Bagged and loose waste also creates issues around attracting rodents, risks to public health and the deterioration of the general amenity of the area.

The large quantities of bagged waste, generated by residents, require additional resources in the form of dedicated Entry Clearance Squads. These teams are responsible for removing the excess quantities of waste that are deposited mainly in alleyways and on some streets.

Cleansing Services is currently devising a draft Waste Collection Policy which will define how the Council expects all households to manage and present their waste in the future so that it does not become a littering or health issue. A future report will be brought to Committee once a draft policy is developed.

Key Issues

The Enforcement Team within Cleansing Services is responsible for enforcing matters relating to littering and the illegal depositing of waste, as well as ensuring that bins are used correctly to prevent

nuisance. In view of the excessive quantities of waste found in our streets, alleyways and on vacant ground, the Enforcement Team dedicates a significant amount of effort, through enforcement, in an attempt to reduce the quantities of bags and waste which are illegally dumped.

The current practice in relation to such illegal dumping is as follows. A fixed penalty would not be issued for the depositing of side waste on bin collection day in weekly bin collection areas. However, a fixed penalty notice will be issued if bagged waste is deposited at a time outside of bin collection day. This current practice is based on providing a deterrent to illegal dumping of bagged waste.

It is estimated that the Enforcement Officers investigate over 9000 incidents of dumped waste over the course of a year and a large proportion of this waste comprises of black bags and loose waste left in entries and streets. In areas of the city where there are recurrent and widespread problems of dumped waste, the Enforcement Officers may send out general warning letters asking residents to dispose of their waste in a responsible manner. The frequency and appropriateness of the use of warning letters will be determined by the Enforcement Officer in conjunction with the Area Cleansing Manager, who has local knowledge of the area. Within the last year (June 2009 to June 2010), some 3,600 general advisory letters have been sent out to residents across the city highlighting the problems of dumped waste within their area and to warn that such actions will attract a fixed penalty notice or prosecution under The Litter (NI) Order 1994.

Enforcement officers monitor alleyways on a routine basis and where they find evidence of dumping, they will issue fixed penalty notices. Since January 2010, the Enforcement Section has issued 844 Fixed Penalty Notices for litter related offences (151 were issued in respect of bagged household waste).

Whilst warning letters are used to highlight the general problems of litter and dumping within an area, experience has shown that warning letters have a limited effect in achieving a successful reduction in dumping in areas where there is persistent dumping of household waste. The most effective way of tackling the issue, demonstrated through experience in BCC as well as in other authorities, is to have a robust and consistent approach to enforcement using the Fixed Penalty Notice provisions contained within the Litter Order. This approach has been found to be the most effective way of changing attitudes towards littering and dumping within local neighbourhoods across the city.

An alternative process has been suggested with an additional step, i.e: that on the discovery of illegally dumped waste, the offender is first sent a personalised warning letter and then only if that person re-offends would a fixed penalty notice be issued. However if the current practice were to be altered to include this additional step then this would create significant additional administration and future enforcement could be cumbersome/difficult as offenders may be more difficult to trace on subsequent occasions. It would also place an even greater burden on other areas of the service such as the entry clearance squad staff.

Such an additional step would also be contrary to what experience demonstrates is most effective in changing behaviour and the change itself could send out the wrong message at a time when the Council is trying to reduce dumping in the city through improved behaviour.

The Council could also potentially be criticised for taking an inconsistent approach, in that a fixed penalty notice would immediately be issued to someone who drops a cigarette butt on one of our streets but only a warning letter would be issued to someone who dumped a whole bag or multiple bags of rubbish in an alleyway.

The Council's ultimate aim is to work towards all waste being containerised and to eliminate, as much as possible, the depositing of black bags of waste, leading to the achievement and maintenance of cleaner streets and alleyways through behaviour change, which experience has shown is most likely to be achieved at this stage through fixed penalty notices.

Resource Implications

There are no financial, human resources, asset or other implications in this report.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report and to advise if it wishes:

- To make changes to the Council's approach to the issuing of fixed penalty notices for the illegal dumping of waste; or
- To maintain the current approach to enforcement."

After discussion, the Committee agreed to maintain the current approach to enforcement.

Illegal Flyposting in Belfast

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to illegal flyposting throughout the City and the lack of powers available to the Council to effectively deal with the problem. In addition, the Committee noted the progress which had been achieved in respect of the Clean Neighbourhoods legislation and the ongoing initiatives to provide promoters with alternatives to fly posting.

Street Cleanliness Index

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The figures presented in this report cover the first quarter of the financial year i.e. the period from April 2010 to June 2010. Monitoring figures were measured by Cleansing Services Quality Officers. Enforcement, and Education and Awareness information was supplied by the Customer Support Service, and the Community Awareness Section within Cleansing Services, who were responsible for these functions over the period concerned.

The monthly monitoring programme consists of a random 5% sample of streets throughout the city being inspected and graded. From the grading, a Street Cleanliness Index is calculated and plotted for the various areas of the city, and the city as a whole.

The index range is from 1 to 100; with a Cleanliness Index of 67 being regarded as an acceptable standard by Tidy NI. The results show the trends on a month to month basis. To alleviate the influence of spurious results on the overall index, the results are averaged over the last 4 surveys. Spurious results may occur for reasons such as adverse weather conditions, seasonal problems etc.

Key Issues

The overall city wide cleanliness index for this quarter is 76. This is an increase of 2 on the score from the previous quarter's cleanliness index of 74. The index for the same period in the previous year was 74.

The breakdown by individual area is as follows:

North

The North Cleanliness Indices for April 2010 to June 2010 were 73, 75 and 76 respectively. This represents a small decrease for April (down 1), a similar score for May (75), and an increase for June (up 5), by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 74, 75 and 71 respectively.

The area is maintaining a consistently very good level of cleanliness

South

The South Cleanliness Indices for April 2010 to June 2010 were 79, 79 and 77 respectively. This represents an increase for April (up 3) and May (up 3), and a small decrease for June (down 1) by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 76, 76 and 78 respectively.

The area is maintaining a consistently very good level of cleanliness.

East

The East Cleanliness Indices for April 2010 to June 2010 were 76, 78 and 79 respectively. This represents an increase for all three months, with April (up 2), May (up 1) and June (up 2), by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 74, 77 and 77 respectively.

The area is maintaining a consistently very good level of cleanliness.

West

The West Cleanliness Indices for April 2010 to June 2010 were 71, 74 and 75 respectively. This represents a similar score for April (71), and an increase for May (up 3) and June (up 3), by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 71, 71 and 72 respectively.

The area is maintaining a consistently very good level of cleanliness

Central

The Central Cleanliness Indices for April 2010 to June 2010 were 76, 73 and 74 respectively. This represents an increase for April (up 3), a small decrease for May (down 2), and a similar score for June (74), by comparison to those figures for the same period in the previous financial year viz. 73, 75 and 74 respectively.

The area is maintaining a consistently very good level of cleanliness.

Complaints/Enquiries

There were 1181 complaints/enquiries regarding street cleansing during the quarter (by comparison to 1034 last quarter).

There were 15 Corporate Complaints made to the Cleansing Service (13 Stage One, 2 Stage Two and 0 Stage Three) during the quarter – two of which related to street cleansing (all Stage 1).

Enforcement

There were 428 Fixed Penalty Notices issued under the Litter (NI) Order 1994, and 95 summonses issued. In addition 255 Article 20 Notices were issued requesting information.

Community & Education Projects

During the last quarter the Community Awareness Team launched Year 7 of the anti-litter campaign in the grounds of the City Hall. The Team also launched two campaigns during the quarter; the 'Big Sweep' and the 'Brighter Belfast' awards.

The Team facilitated 29 community cleanups involving 980 volunteers, and undertook 13 school visits, promoting the anti litter message, involving 730 pupils.

The Community Awareness Team also attended 16 community / residents meetings on behalf of Cleansing Services, and attended 6 events engaging with 1837 members of the public.

Resource Implications

There are no financial, human resources, asset or other implications in this report.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.”

Noted.

Chairman