

Document Pack

Committee and Members' Services Section
3rd Floor, Adelaide Exchange
24-26 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8GD



20th October, 2008

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Councillor

The above-named Committee will meet in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, Adelaide Exchange on Friday, 24th October, 2008 at 10.00 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters
2. Staff Travel Policy (Pages 1 - 18)

To consider further the minute of the meeting of 22nd September under the heading " Staff Travel Policy" which, at the request of Councillor Rodway, was taken back to the Committee for further consideration at the meeting of the Council on 1st October

3. Modernisation and Improvement
 - (a) Review of Public Administration - Update (Pages 19 - 76)
 - (b) Review of Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland (Pages 77 - 80)
 - (c) Northern Ireland Local Government Association - Update (Pages 81 - 86)
4. Corporate Plan and Performance Management
 - (a) Best Value Performance Indicators 2007/2008 (Pages 87 - 102)
5. Democratic Services and Governance

- (a) National Association of Councillors - Annual General Meeting and Conference (Pages 103 - 104)
 - (b) Requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Civic Hospitality (Pages 105 - 108)
6. Finance
- (a) Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel (Pages 109 - 144)
 - (b) Authority to Seek Tenders (Pages 145 - 146)
 - (c) Authority to Seek Tenders - 3 High Speed Printers (Pages 147 - 148)
 - (d) Tender for Air Conditioning Unit for 22-38 Gloucester Street (Pages 149 - 150)
 - (e) Contract for the Provision of Network Cabling Services (Pages 151 - 152)
 - (f) Tender for the Supply of Core and Edge Network Equipment (Pages 153 - 154)
7. Human Resources
- (a) Absence Management - Second Quarter 2008/09 (Pages 155 - 158)
 - (b) National Pay Negotiations (Pages 159 - 160)
 - (c) Standing Order 55 - Employment of Relatives (Pages 161 - 162)
 - (d) Consultation Response - Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provision) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 (Pages 163 - 164)
8. Asset Management
- (a) Council Meetings in the City Hall - Temporary Arrangements (Pages 165 - 166)
 - (b) City Hall Major Works - Update (Pages 167 - 172)
 - (c) Estates Issues (Pages 173 - 184)
 - (d) Request for the use of City Hall Grounds (Pages 185 - 186)
9. Good Relations and Equality
- (a) Minutes of Good Relations Partnership (Pages 187 - 202)
10. Cross-Cutting Issues
- (a) Fuel Stamps Scheme (Pages 203 - 204)

- (b) Sustainable Development Action Plan Year 2 Annual Report (Pages 205 - 208)
- (c) Cycle to Work Scheme (Pages 209 - 210)
- (d) Consultation Response: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust - New Directions (Pages 211 - 224)

Extract from minutes of -

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

19th SEPTEMBER, 2008

—
“Staff Travel Policy

(Mrs. H. Loudon, Head of Financial Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 22nd August under the heading ‘Staff Travel Policy’. A copy of the minute in that regard is set out hereunder:

‘The Panel considered the undernoted report:

‘Relevant Background Information

A report was tabled at the 11 March 2008 meeting of the Audit Panel advising Members that a taskforce group had been established to Review the Approval and Control Processes and Travel Policy with the following objectives:

Objectives

- 1. To review current approval and control processes and the travel policy***
- 2. To identify improvements to both processes and policy which matches the new financial systems, takes account of the human resources strategy and workforce development plan’s needs and which provides for continuous improvement***
- 3. To ensure that the new processes enable improved access to information which enables improved on-going scrutiny of value for money and greater accountability, both internally and externally.***

A progress report was tabled at a meeting of the Audit Panel on 13 May 2008. The Audit Panel requested that the proposed policy be tabled for approval at this meeting.

Current Position

Members of the Audit Panel will be aware that Belfast is by far the largest Council in Northern Ireland. In order to provide quality, value for money services to the ratepayers of the city employees need to have their knowledge and skills developed to help build organisational capacity. Training and developing staff is also important in motivating employees and in retaining their knowledge and skills in the organisation.

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Included within the Council's workforce development plan are the key themes of leadership development, skills development and organisational development. These reflect the key workforce development themes at a national level.

Frequently employees need to look outside Northern Ireland to access these improved skills and knowledge. This is done by going on study visits to similar sized Councils in Great Britain, attending training courses, conferences and seminars which are not available in Northern Ireland. These new skills and knowledge can be transferred to other employees in the Council which may reduce the need for other staff to attend an event.

Employees also travel outside Northern Ireland to promote the city as an excellent place to invest in and to attract tourism. There is evidence to support the substantial economic returns for the city in engaging in this type of activity.

The Council has successfully attracted in excess of £8million in European funding to support a number of initiatives which would not otherwise benefited the city. It is mandatory in most European funded projects to attend meetings in Europe and to have European partners to compliment the work of an initiative. The travel costs to Europe and the cost of any employees attached to a project are partly funded by the programme.

There is a risk associated with being too restrictive with staff travel with employees not attending relevant conferences, study visits, etc with the result that 'best practice' knowledge and new skills are lost to the Council with the associated risk of ratepayers not receiving innovative quality services.

The Council currently has an authorisation process for staff attending events and many services also require employees to detail a business case to support their application and a post evaluation report on completion of the event. These procedures were examined and good practice identified for inclusion in the proposed draft Policy for Staff Attending Events, which is attached.

In summary it has addressed the following issues:

- 1. The scope covered by the policy, including what is excluded from the policy.*
- 2. The principles that must be adhered to for employees attending events. This includes a mandatory business case to support an application and a post evaluation of the benefits.*
- 3. The arrangement for travel which are set out in a Travel Protocol.*

4. *The need to capture multiple invitations to conferences, seminars, etc which are routinely received by the Council.*
5. *The approval process and the signing off by senior management.*
6. *The arrangements for the payment of subsistence.*
7. *The annual publication of staff attendance at events and a policy detailing what will be included.*
8. *The reporting arrangements to the Audit Panel and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and to the Chief Officers Management Team.*

Resource Implications

None in the context of this report.

Recommendation

The Audit Panel is requested to recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the Policy for Staff Attending Events and the associated appendices.

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

Draft Policy for Staff Attending Events and associated appendices.

DRAFT POLICY FOR STAFF ATTENDING EVENTS

Belfast City Council employees will, from time to time, need to attend events such as training courses, conferences, study visits, etc., in order to discharge their duties. This could result in an employee being absent from normal working and may involve travel and other costs.

We have developed this policy to support the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Accounting Manual relating to employees attending events. It has been developed to ensure that approval and control processes are robust and that attendance at such events provides value for money for the rate payers of Belfast.

1.1 Scope

This approval and control process is for all events which senior management have to approve and addresses the need to ensure consistency between types of events covered in this policy with the categories of events specified on the application form. This will include attendance at:-

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- **Conferences as a speaker representing the Council or a delegate.**
- **Study visits.**
- **Personal/professional development events (excluding part-time study)**
- **Service and operational visits**
- **Research, study and best practice visits**
- **Promotion of the City events and Trade Fairs**
- **Best in Class award ceremonies**
- **Meetings of professional bodies and groups where payments are paid by BCC even where it is refunded partly or in full by the body to the Council.**
- **Other bodies with which the Council is undertaking work and is directly chargeable by the Council to the customer.**

Exclusions from this process are:-

- **Business development days (away days) as they will be subject to a separate policy and application form.**
- **Attendance at residential courses as part of a part-time study course which will be approved through the part time study application process.**
- **Attendance at meetings of professional bodies and groups where the full attendance cost is paid directly by the body concerned or reimbursed directly to the attendee. Approval to attend such events must be requested as a business absence for employees who use the clockwise system.**
- **Attendance at conferences/courses/study visits and meetings which have no cost to the Council. Approval to attend such events must be requested as a business absence for employees who use the clockwise system.**
- **Attendance at a corporate meeting or training course organised by another Council Department. (If there is a charge from an external source e.g. venue, speaker, etc then a purchase order must be raised through the SAP system in advance of the event).**

2.0 Principles

- 2.1 Attendance at all events must be supported by a business case detailing the benefits to the employee, to the Council and in providing services to the public.**
- 2.2 A post evaluation form for every event must be completed.**

- 2.3 Attendance at events will normally be by one person. If more than one person is attending this must also be justified in the business case.**
- 2.4 If an employee is attending an event as a speaker representing the Council any fee earned must be repaid to the Council. If payment is in the form of a gift the Gifts/Hospitality Policy must be complied with. Any potential conflict of interest must be registered.**
- 2.5 Personal development/professional development events must be linked to the employee's job and will normally be part of the employees Personal Development Plan (PDP) and/or a professional body's requirement for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). An employee who is a member of professional body which has CPD requirements must ensure that these are incorporated into his/her PDP.**
- 2.6 Attendance at award ceremonies must be restricted to three employees. In instances where more than one project is shortlisted in the same award scheme and more than three employees are required to attend the Director of Corporate Services will exercise discretion in deciding if sending additional employees is appropriate.**
- 2.7 Any event which is also to be attended by a Councillor must have Committee approval prior to the event.**
- 3.0 Travel Arrangements**
- 3.1 Travel to an event must conform with the current Travel Protocol which can be found at Appendix 1.**
- 4.0 Capture of Multiple Invitations to Events**
- 4.1 Multiple invitations to conferences, seminars, etc., are received within the Council regularly.**
- 4.2 A Protocol will be developed to set out how the Council will deal with this issue.**
- 5.0 Approval Process**
- 5.1 All attendances at events, including those approved by Committee, must be approved in advance of the event by the Head of Service (or appropriate senior manager), or their nominee and the Chief Officer (or nominee).**
- 5.2 All requests to attend events must be accompanied by a business case detailing the benefits to the employee, the Council and in providing services to the public.**

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- 5.3 *Where there are multiple requests to attend an event Heads of Service (or appropriate senior manager), or their nominee, and Chief Officers (or nominee) must satisfy themselves that a sound business case exists to approve the attendance of more than one person.*
- 5.4 *A post event evaluation form must be completed for each event and signed off by the senior manager who approved the attendance at the event.*
- 5.5 *The Director of Corporate Services will approve attendances for Chief Officers for events held within the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.*
- 5.6 *The Chief Executive will sign the approval form for attendances by Chief Officers for events held outside the United Kingdom and Ireland.*
- 5.7 *The Director of Corporate Services will sign the approval form for all events to be attended by the Chief Executive*
- 5.8 *Financial Services will be responsible for maintaining the data base for all requests for attending events, in monitoring compliance with the policy and in providing information to assist in corporate management.*
- 6.0 **Subsistence**
- 6.1 *Subsistence is payable on eligible expenditure incurred in the course of attending events on behalf of the Council. Details on the arrangements for payments are covered in Appendix 3.*
- 7.0 **Publication**
- 7.1 *Information on events attended by staff will be published on an annual basis by 30 June of each year under the Council's Publication Scheme. The first year of publication will relate to events attended during 2008/9 i.e. the first date for publication will be 30 June 2009.*
- 7.2 *A policy detailing the arrangements for the publication of information is attached at Appendix 4.*
- 8.0 **Reporting Arrangements**
- 8.1 *COMT will receive an analysis report on the information held in the database every three months.*

8.2 *A quarterly report will be provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee via the Audit Panel.*

9.0 **Guidelines**

9.1 *The application of this Policy is supported by Guidelines.*

10.00 **Effective Date**

10.1 *The effective date of this policy is 1 October 2008.*

APPENDIX 1

Draft Travel Protocol for Employees

Belfast City Council employees will, from time to time, need to travel to attend events in order to carry out Council business. As a consequence they may have to travel away from Council locations.

This travel protocol has been developed to support the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Accounting Manual regarding staff travel in relation to attending events. It has been developed to ensure that arrangements for travel are robust and consistent across the Council and that the cost of travel provides value for money for Belfast rate payers.

1.0 **Scope**

- *This protocol applies to all employees of Belfast City Council. The travel protocol for Members' is covered by Regulations made by the government.*
- *It applies to travel relating to events as specified in the Policy for Staff Attending Events.*
- *It does NOT apply to travel which is part of normal day-to-day operational work e.g. from the place of work to carry out maintenance, inspections, etc.*
- *It does NOT apply to travel from the employee's home to their place of work.*

2.0 **Principles**

2.1 *Approval for travel to attend events will be through the revised application form. This approval process includes permission to travel on Council business as detailed on the revised application form. Details on how to seek such approvals are in the Policy for Staff Attending Events and in the guidelines for completion of the revised application form.*

2.2 *Approval to attend an event with the associated travel must be completed in advance of the event.*

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- 2.3 *In certain instances approval by Committee is needed. This must also be obtained in advance.*
- 2.4 *Employees must use the most economical method of travel considering the cost of travel, journey start and end times, subsistence costs, potential savings in officer time and the business needs.*
- 2.5 *Account must be taken of the particular needs which may arise from an employee's medical condition. Management should obtain advice on this from the Council's Occupational Health Service.*
- 2.6 *When employees are travelling with Members to the same event the travel class, etc., for the employee and Member will be the same.*
- 2.7 *Employees must not gain any personal and private advantage from business travel. Any rewards for example points, vouchers, air miles, free travel, etc., should be used solely against future business travel wherever possible and not for private use.*
- 2.8 *Travel and accommodation should be booked and paid for directly by the Council in most instances. The exception to this is when these costs are paid directly by an outside body.*
- 2.9 *The payment of overtime or time off in lieu must comply with the relevant Council's policy and guideline on such matters.*
- 2.10 *All travel should reflect the Council's Policy on Environmental Responsibility.*
- 2.11 *When travel arrangements do not meet this protocol the Director of Corporate Services must be consulted in advance of arrangements being made so that approval may be given.*
- 3.0 **The Council's Travel Contract**
- 3.1 *The Council's travel contract should be used to book travel and accommodation. The cost effectiveness of other options may be considered if there is a clear business case for making savings. Booking with Council's contracted travel agent provides assistance and support that non-contract options do not provide and this should be considered as part of the overall cost. Consideration must be given to the total cost which includes the cost of an employee's time in sourcing suitable carriers and hotels.*

4.0 Travelling by Air

- 4.1 *The most economical level of ticket must be booked, taking into consideration the requirement of principles 2.4 and 2.5 above.***
- 4.2 *Tickets booked must not allow for more than two changes. It may be more cost effective to re-purchase a second ticket rather than allow for time changes when booking. For example it may be cheaper to book with a budget airline and have to re-purchase a ticket than to book a flexible ticket through another airline.***
- 4.3 *The lowest available class of ticket must be booked.***
- 4.4 *Where an outward long-haul flight (for example in excess of 3 hours flying time) is needed and employees are expected to start working within a few hours of arrival a return business class (or equivalent) ticket may be booked.***
- 4.5 *Business lounge access may be purchased if available when there is a 'stopover' of more than one hour and the class of travel booked does not include access to an airport business lounge. The Council's contracted travel agency can advise on this.***

5.0 Travelling by Sea

- 5.1 *Travel by sea and onward by road or rail as opposed to air travel is only an option where the total cost provides a low-cost alternative or where medical opinion requires it. The total cost including the cost of travel, hotel costs, subsistence costs, and mileage, must be taken into account when assessing this option. Consideration must also be given to the potential savings in officer time and the business needs.***
- 5.2 *Where available boat reserved seating may be booked. Employees travelling overnight are entitled to book an overnight cabin which must be on a 'single occupancy' basis.***

6.0 Travelling by Land

- 6.1 *The most appropriate method of travelling by land must be used taking into consideration the overall cost, potential savings in employee time and the business case.***
- 6.2 *An employee's own private car may be used if it provides a low cost option. Motor mileage will be claimed under the Council's arrangements for subsistence. An allowance is paid if an employee carries colleagues on business. This may be***

significantly cheaper than public transport or hire car charges.

- 6.3 *A vehicle may be hired provided it is a value for money alternative. This may be appropriate if a number of employees are travelling together or where public transport is unavailable.*
- 6.4 *Rail travel must be at standard class unless the journey is greater than 2 hours. A first class ticket may be booked where employees are expected to start work on arrival or to work during the journey.*
- 6.5 *Where available rail reserved seating may be booked. Employees travelling overnight are entitled to book an overnight cabin which must be on a 'single occupancy' basis.*
- 6.6 *Travel by Heathrow Express must be at standard class and only undertaken where it is the most appropriate means of travel considering cost, potential savings in employee time and the business case.*
- 6.7 *Employees are permitted to use a taxi for short journeys within towns and cities for example from hotels to conference venues or airports. They may also use taxis for longer journeys where no suitable public transport service is available. These costs are claimed retrospectively through the Council's subsistence arrangements.*
- 7.0 **Overnight Stays**
- 7.1 *Employees may travel to an event the previous evening when an event starts early in the working day or the employee anticipates that travel time or risk of delay would result in their arriving late for the start of the event, and if this reduces the value of attending the event to the employee and the Council.*
- 7.2 *Employees are responsible for settling all accounts for incidental costs before leaving the accommodation. The Council will only meet the cost of the accommodation and any meals previously ordered from the accommodation supplier through the purchasing process.*
- 8.0 **Extending Stays Beyond an Event**
- 8.1 *Employees are permitted to extend their stay beyond an event, either before or after. For absences during the working week this must be approved in advance by their line manager and in line with normal leave procedures.*

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8.2 *If the travel cost for the extended stay is greater than it would have been if the employee had returned at the end of the event then the employee will reimburse the Council for the additional cost (or pay for the additional cost directly to the carrier). If the travel cost is less for the extended stay the employee will not benefit from the lower cost.*

8.3 *Any additional accommodation costs will be borne by the employee.*

8.4 *Any other additional costs, for example additional car parking charges, will be paid by the employee.*

9.0 **Travelling with Partners**

9.1 *A partner may accompany an employee provided they do not compromise the employee in carrying out Council business.*

9.2 *The employee will be responsible for all additional costs associated with the partner's attendance. Evidence must be provided to the relevant business support staff that these additional costs have been paid. Ideally this should be prior to the commencement of the travel.*

9.3 *The approval of a senior manager must be obtained in advance of an employee arranging to be accompanied by a partner.*

10.0 **Subsistence**

10.1 *Subsistence is payable in arrears on eligible expenditure incurred in the course of attending events on behalf of the Council*

10.2 *In certain circumstances advance subsistence may be made available.*

10.3 *Details for the arrangements for all subsistence, including what is eligible, are covered in the Council's Subsistence Guidelines.*

11.0 **Insurance**

11.1 *Where an employee's own vehicle is to be used it is the employee's responsibility to make sure that there is a proper level of insurance. The Council will not meet any additional costs for insurance. Whilst the employee will wish to consult their own insurer general advice may be sought from the Council's Insurance Unit.*

- 11.2** *Whilst there is no need for employees to advise the Insurance Unit in advance of individual trips, anyone who has an existing medical condition and who intends to travel on Council business should advise the Insurance Unit. This information will be treated confidentially. Any employee intending to engage in dangerous sports as part of the official visit must inform the Insurance Unit in advance of the visit.*
- 11.3** *Details of the insurance cover provided to Council employees travelling on Council business is attached at Appendix A. This will be updated annually to employees on renewal of the insurance policy.*
- 12.0** **Miscellaneous**
- 12.1** *The cost of car parking at airports or stations can be recouped from the Council under the subsistence arrangements. Employees must minimise costs by using the most cost effective option available.*
- 12.2** *Employees are personally responsible for ensuring that their passport and any visa requirements are up to date to enable them to travel.*
- 12.3** *An employee who is refused permission to travel by a carrier, for whatever reason including invalid or missing documentation, will repay all costs arising to the Council.*
- 12.4** *Employees travelling outside the United Kingdom are responsible for exchanging sterling to the required foreign currency. The Council will meet the cost of one exchange transaction from sterling to another currency and one exchange back to sterling for the same visit. The value of the amount exchanged will not exceed the total amount of subsistence to which the employee would be eligible for the visit. Where the official business involves time in more than one foreign country (other than onward travel time) the Council will meet the exchange costs for each currency on the same basis.*
- 12.5** *The Council will not meet the cost of repairing a mechanical breakdown and/or vehicle recovery for an employee's own vehicle.*
- 12.6** *Any compensation offered by a carrier to an employee, for example, for delayed travel or over-booking, must be declared to their Department on return. Where the compensation involves a monetary payment or future concession on travel these must be paid over to the Council in full as they arise solely from the employee's official work. The employee will be eligible to recoup subsistence costs for the period of any delay in the normal manner.*

13.0 Effective Date

13.1 This protocol will be effective from 1 October 2008.

APPENDIX 2

Travel Insurance

All Council employees and Councillors are covered under the Council's Group Travel Insurance Policy in respect of official Council business and conferences.

The policy covers matters such as:

- **Loss of baggage and personal items.**
- **Medical costs for treatment outside the UK.**
- **Cancellation costs if the person cannot travel due to illness, death of close relatives or other unforeseen circumstances.**
- **Personal liability insurance.**
- **Personal accident cover**

The insurance applies in respect of trips outside of the Northern Ireland for visits worldwide.

Emergency Contact Information

Assistance is available in the event of a medical or other emergency whilst visiting another country from AIG Lifeline Plus. The telephone number is given on the insurer's emergency travel assistance card which is available from the Insurance Unit. It is strongly recommended that a card or copy of it is issued to each person travelling on Council business.

The policy number is 00158 11055 and this must be inserted on the card to validate it.

The travel insurance policy does not provide cover for:-

- **Personal valuables such as jewellery and watches and personal money which should be insured by the member of staff under household insurance.**
- **Hazardous sports activities such as skiing, mountaineering, parachuting etc.**
- **Vehicle insurance for vehicles hired or borrowed.**

Claims

In the event of a loss it is important that certain information is obtained by the person travelling to enable a claim to be made at a later stage. If baggage has been lost a report should be obtained from the carrier stating that the baggage has been lost or delayed. If flights have been delayed necessitating overnight accommodation please retain any receipts for emergency expenses and obtain a report from the carrier that the flight has been delayed.

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*For further information please contact – David Smith
(Insurance Officer)*

*Financial Services Section
Adelaide Exchange
24 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8GD
DDI 028 9027 0517 or Ext 6111
smithd@belfastcity.gov.uk*

APPENDIX 3

Draft Subsistence Arrangements

Belfast City Council employees will, from time to time, need to travel to attend events in order to carry out Council business. As a consequence they may travel and incur expenses which are recoverable under our subsistence rules.

These subsistence guidelines have been developed to support the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Accounting Manual. They have been drafted to ensure that claims and payments for subsistence are consistent across the Council.

2.0 Scope

- These arrangements apply to all employees of Belfast City Council. The subsistence arrangements for Members' are covered by Regulations made by the government.*
- They apply to food, beverages and incidental expenses which an employee incurs because of attending events as specified in the Policy for Staff Attending Events.*
- It will also include reimbursement for travel and accommodation incurred directly by the employee. Payment of travel and accommodation will normally be booked and paid for by the Council in advance.*

2.0 Principles

2.1 *A full completed application form must be approved prior to attending the event. The Central Transaction Unit (CTU) must be in receipt of the form to enable subsistence to be paid.*

2.2 *Subsistence will be paid in arrears for events attended within the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Advance subsistence will only be paid in exceptional circumstances.*

- 2.3 *Advance subsistence may be requested for events attended outside the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.*
- 2.4 *Subsistence should be claimed within two weeks of an event. Claims submitted more than three months after an event may not be paid.*
- 2.5 *Advance subsistence should be reconciled within two weeks of an event. Any money unspent should be refunded to the Council no later than two weeks after the event.*
- 2.6 *All claims for reimbursement must be accompanied by valid receipts and claimed on the Council's claim form.*
- 2.7 *Claims without receipts should rarely happen. Expenditure incurred where no receipt is available should be claimed using the 'Lost or Unobtainable Receipt Voucher'.*
- 2.8 *Subsistence should not be claimed for any meals booked by the Council, for example breakfast, nor should they be claimed if meal(s) are provided by the organisers of the event. If an employee is taking guests for a meal they need to complete a Small Scale Hospitality Form.*
- 2.9 *All claims for subsistence (advanced and retrospective reimbursement) must be made on the appropriate Council form and signed by the appropriate officer. (Currently E7/T2 which is being redrafted to simplify the claim and to improve processing.)*
- 2.10 *The maximum level of subsistence which can be claimed are reviewed annually and issued to all Departments by circular.*
- 2.11 *Claims for expenses outside these guidelines must be referred to the Director of Corporate Services so that approval may be given.*
- 2.12 *The Director of Corporate Services will sign the subsistence claim forms for the Chief Executive and Directors.*
- 2.13 *The Chief Executive will sign the subsistence claim form for the Director of Corporate Services.*
- 3.0 **Eligible Expenditure**

The following additional expenditure is eligible for reimbursement

- *Fares paid for taxis, bus, tram, underground, metro, etc.*
- *Publications for Departmental use for example maps, guides, books.*
- *Photographic equipment for Departmental use for example memory cards, films, developing costs.*
- *Laundry and dry cleaning for trips lasting five days or more*
- *One personal phone call home per day of a reasonable length.*
- *All work related phone calls.*
- *The cost of stationery, fax, email, photocopying, internet usage, etc., which is work related.*
- *Parking at airports.*
- *Any other incidental cost which is directly related to the nature of the visit and the appropriate to the employee's job.*

APPENDIX 4

Policy on Publication of Information Relating to Employee Travel

To demonstrate the Council's commitment to accountability and openness, and following consultation with the trade unions, we intend to publish annually information on payments made to, and on behalf of, employees in connection with expenditure incurred on travel on official business which is outside of day-to-day operational duties.

The information will be published within three months of the end of the preceding financial year. Before publication, employees will have the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the information being published with their Department.

The published information will show each event and activity an employee attended and will include details of the:

- *Employee's job title*
- *Employee's Council Department*
- *Employee's staff number*
- *Date(s) of the event or activity*
- *City/town and country in which the event or activity took place*
- *Description of the event or activity (for example conference name)*
- *Category of the event or activity (categories to be defined by the organisation)*
- *Amount paid on travel*
- *Amount paid on mileage*
- *Amount paid on accommodation*
- *Amount paid on subsistence*

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- **Amount paid on fees (for example conference fees)**
- **Total of any miscellaneous costs**
- **Total cost in respect of an employee's participation in that particular event or activity**

This policy will be applied from 1 April 2008 and be reviewed annually by the Records Management Unit and, if appropriate, be amended by the Chief Officers' Management Team to reflect best practice.'

The Head of Financial Services drew the Members' attention to various aspects of the proposed Policy and answered questions regarding it. She informed the Panel that a further Freedom of Information request had been received requesting information regarding travel which had been undertaken by Members and staff during the financial year 2007/2008 and that this information was currently being compiled. She informed the Panel further that six months after the Policy had been introduced the Audit, Governance and Risk Section would undertake an audit to ascertain how the new Policy was being complied with.

During discussion in the matter, the following points were made:

- (i) no information had been provided regarding the number of occasions staff had travelled with Members to events and the associated costs;*
- (ii) it would be more beneficial if reports were submitted on a quarterly basis to the Committee responsible for the Departmental staff who had undertaken the travel, rather than the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;*
- (iii) the report made no reference of any intention to reduce the costs associated with staff travel;*
- (iv) the Policy should be amended to enable staff to recoup the costs associated with using ATM machines when abroad;*
- (v) information regarding the length of the event being attended should be included in the information to be published;*
- (vi) where possible personal development courses should be undertaken in Northern Ireland; and*
- (vii) where a member of staff was addressing a conference, who paid for the associated travel and accommodation costs and what approval processes were required to enable the employee to attend the conference.*

In response to the above comments, the Head of Financial Services indicated that she would provide the Panel with information regarding the number of occasions staff had accompanied Councillors on trips and the

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costs associated therewith. She pointed out that when employees were addressing a conference they were required to submit the T1 travel form and that most personal development courses attended by staff were held within Northern Ireland.

Following further discussion, the Panel:

- (i) indicated that it wished the costs associated with staff travel to be reduced;*
- (ii) agreed that reports on staff travel be submitted on a quarterly basis to the relevant Committee and the Audit Panel;*
- (iii) agreed that the information contained within Appendix 4 include the duration of the event being attended;*
- (iv) agreed that the Policy be amended to enable staff to recoup the charges incurred when ATM machines were used abroad; and*
- (v) recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the Staff Travel Policy as amended and the associated Appendices.*

After discussion, during which the Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Financial Services answered a number of questions in relation to the application of the policy, the approval process for attending conferences and seminars and when Committee approval was required, the Committee adopted the recommendation of the Audit Panel.'

Councillor Rodway, at whose request the minute had been taken back to the Committee, drew the Members' attention to points 4.4 and 4.5, which referred to the purchase in certain circumstances of business class air travel and the use of airport business lounges. He suggested that these were matters which should more appropriately be subject to the approval of the relevant Committee.

The Committee agreed to the foregoing amendment being made and approved the revised Staff Travel Policy."



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of Public Administration Update
Date:	Friday 24 th October, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer (Ext. 6202)

1.0	<u>RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION</u>
1.1	The Review of Public Administration (RPA) process is starting to pick up pace. Legislation is now being drafted, delivery structures established and active consideration being given to the transitional arrangements to be put in place to support local government reform within Northern Ireland. Members will note that there have been a number of developments in regard to the RPA since the last update provided to Committee at its meeting in September 2008.
2.0	<u>KEY ISSUES</u>
2.1	Members will accept that the challenge ahead cannot be underestimated and ensuring that the Council is engaged within the process is paramount to ensuring that the best interests of the citizen, the Council and wider local government sector is pursued throughout the process.
2.2	Update on Strategic Leadership Board
2.2.1	The RPA Strategic Leadership Board last met on 3 rd October 2008. The work of the Policy Development Panels had been discussed and the Project Initiation Documents for each PDP presented for approval (a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1).
2.3	Update on Policy Development Panels
2.3.1	The three Policy Development Panels are now been established and meeting on a regular basis to discuss issues in regard to <u>governance, community planning, central-local government relations, service delivery and structural reform</u> . <u>It is important to note that the Council is actively engaged, at both elected Member and officer level, within each of the PDPs and inform the ongoing debate and discussions.</u>
2.3.2	PDP A (Governance, Community Planning, Central-Local Government Relations) are currently developing proposals on high level governance arrangements for the new Councils including considering issues in relation to decision-making structures, proportionality, standards, codes of conduct, oversight and transparency. PDP A is also developing proposals for the introduction of a Council led community planning process which will draw upon the experience and lessons learnt from other jurisdictions. In addition, the issue of the future relationship between central and local government within Northern Ireland is being considered by PDP A.
2.3.3	As part of its work, PDP B (Service Delivery) is developing a draft Customer Service strategy, draft IS Strategy and will be examining the potential requirements for an appropriate Performance Management Strategy. A series of sub-groups have been established to take these issues forward and, again, the Council is actively engaged within these groups to ensure, as is reasonably possible, alignment with the Councils own improvement activities.
2.3.4	PDP C (Structural Reform) has established 4 sub-groups to take forward issues in relation to Human Resources; capacity building; finance and estates; regional and sub-regional design. Consideration of the transfer of functions will be taken forward by PDP C.

2.3.5	It would be the intention that the proposals emerging from the PDPs will be combined into a consultation document expected to be issued in Spring 2009. In the interim, Members will kept updated on emerging proposals and political direction sought on the key issues.
2.4	Transitional Arrangements
2.4.1	At the 3 rd October meeting of the RPA Strategic Leadership Board (SLB), the Joint NILGA/DoE Secretariat presented a discussion paper (copy of which is attached at Appendix 2) outlining both the pro's and con's of introducing a 'Shadow Period'. The alternative is to form Statutory Transition Committees with the powers to make decisions and lay the necessary foundations prior to the new elected Councils assuming power. The Transition Committees would be supported by a Transition Management Team which comprising of a representative balance of the senior management team of the merging Councils.
2.4.2	To date, the Environment Minister has been minded to introduce Statutory Transition Committees, however, following discussions at the RPA SLB meeting on 3 rd October regarding the potential introduction of Shadow Councils; the Minister is actively re-examining his position regarding transitional arrangements. The question of whether a transition period takes place <u>before</u> or <u>after</u> the new Councils being elected is also under considered by the Minister and the SLB. It is anticipated that the Minister will provide further clarity on transitional arrangements by the end of October / early November.
2.4.3	If agreed, the establishment of Statutory Transitional Committees would require legislation changes. It is intended that this would be taken forward under the auspices of the Local Government (Contracts) Bill to be introduced in July 2009.
2.5	<u>Belfast as a 'Continuing Authority'</u>
2.5.1	Belfast City Council will be one of few local government bodies that will provide a degree of continuity through the RPA process. In fact, the recent recommendations published by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, Mr Dick McKenzie CB, regarding the proposed new Local Government District Boundaries would only result in a 20% increase in the population and geographical scale of Belfast. Under the proposals the Belfast electorate will increase by 32,000 (20%), making a total electorate of 190,000 and bringing the population of the City up to 318,000 (a separate report on the Review of Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland will be discussed next on the agenda). Furthermore, the proposed transfer of additional functions to local government would result in a less than 20% increase in the Council's budget.
2.5.2	Accordingly, whilst the Council recognises the need for transitional arrangements to be established to support orderly conversion to the new local government structure within Northern Ireland, for the process of managing change, there may be a case for Belfast to be designated as a 'Continuing Authority' and be given responsibility for establishing and managing its own transition process.
2.5.3	Members will note that a position paper is currently being prepared which will set out proposals, for Members consideration, regarding the feasibility of Belfast City Council being designated as a 'Continuing Authority' and the potential implications for the Council in terms of the transition process. A detailed report will be submitted, for the consideration of Members, to the November Committee meeting.
2.6	Regional Implementation Co-ordinating Group
2.6.1	A Regional Implementation Co-ordinating Group will be established to support the RPA transitional process. This Group will provide advice and detailed guidance to the RPA Strategic Leadership Board and Transitional Committees (if established) on implementation and transitional matters.
2.6.2	It is proposed that the group would be chaired by Paul Simpson, the Deputy Secretary of the DOE, and comprise of senior officials from transferring function Departments, 3 local government Chief Executives and a number of other key officials as required e.g. Local Government Staff Commission, NILGA etc.
2.6.3	Members will note that SOLACE has nominated Belfast City Council as one of the 3 local government Chief Executives to be represented on this group.

2.7	Resources
2.7.1	Resourcing the local government structural reform process has been identified as a priority area by the RPA Strategic Leadership Board and consideration of the issue is being taken forward by Policy Development Panel C 'Structural Reform' through the development of a strategic business case. An assignment brief is currently being finalised to employ consultants to assist with the development of this work with a deadline for reporting back set for 31 st March 2009.
2.7.2	Members will note that PriceWaterhouseCoopers, as part of the report " <i>Practical Approach to the Implementation of Successful Change Programme in Local Government</i> " prepared for SOLACE (a copy of which had been circulated previously to Members at Committee in September), estimated that the transitional implementation structures could cost in excess of £4-£8million.
2.8	Statement of Principles to underpin the transfer of functions
2.8.1	The Statement of Principles (copy of which is attached at Appendix 3) developed by NILGA, supported by officials from Belfast City Council, has been endorsed by the Strategic Leadership Board and subsequently the Environment Minister has written to Ministerial colleagues to request that they agree to apply the principles in considering the transfer of functions to local government.
2.9	Severance Scheme for Elected members and Co-Option
2.9.1	The National Association of Councillors met recently with the Environment Minister to lobby for a severance package for councillors to be made available in 2009. The Minister had agreed to consider this issue and has asked officials to examine the possibility of including the power to make a severance scheme in the Local Government (Contracts) Bill which is to be brought in by July 2009 rather than the Local Government (Finance) Bill.
2.9.2	The Minister has indicated that the <u>details</u> of a proposed severance scheme for Councillors will be issued for consultation by the end of the year. The Minister has also indicated that the Secretary of State will introduce legislation allowing co-option onto Councils simultaneously to the enactment of the severance scheme legislation.

3.0 Resource Implications

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

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report

Documents Attached

Appendix 1	PDPs Project Initiation Documents
Appendix 2	DoE/NILGA Joint Secretariat discussion paper on pros and cons of introducing a Shadow Period
Appendix 3	NILGA Statement of Principles for the Transfer of Functions

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Appendix 1

SLB Paper 44a/2008

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME

**GOVERNANCE - COMMUNITY PLANNING -
CENTRAL/LOCAL RELATIONS PROJECT**

PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introductory Note

1.1.1 This Project Initiation Document (PID) will give Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations), and as required by the Terms of Reference, the Strategic Leadership Board, the assurance that the project has established:

- clear terms of reference;
- an adequate management structure;
- that sufficient planning has taken place; and,
- that sufficient resources can be made available.

1.2 Purpose

1.2.1 The purpose of this document is to put in place firm foundations for the project by:

- setting out the aims and objectives of the project,
- defining the scope of the project;
- setting out the activities, resources, responsibilities and outputs required to facilitate the completion of the project; and,
- setting out the management structure for the project.

The PID will be the baseline against which Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations) and the Strategic Leadership Board can monitor progress and make decisions.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The decisions on the future shape of local government announced by the Minister of the Environment on 31 March 2007, following the review of the local government aspects of the Review of Public Administration, represents a significant change management programme for local government. The Minister has agreed that the implementation of the overall programme will be managed at strategic level by the Strategic Leadership Board supported by three Policy Development Panels comprising elected members advised by senior local government officers and senior departmental officials.

2.2 The Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations Policy Development Panel has been tasked with the development of recommendations on policy and implementation proposals in relation to governance, a council led community planning process, and relations between central and local government.

3. PROJECT DEFINITION

3.1 Project Objectives

- 3.1.1 Whilst there is the potential for the thinking on aspects of one policy area to impinge on the other areas the nature of these work strands is such that it precludes the definition of a single clear high level policy objective or strategic deliverable. Rather each of the strands will need to be viewed as an individual project stream within the overall programme of work for the Panel, with its own specific strategic deliverable, and its own management Terms of Reference.

Governance

- 3.1.2 The policy objective in relation to governance is the development of arrangements with appropriate checks and balances that are designed mindful of the need to ensure effective and inclusive local democracy, to protect the rights of minorities, to prevent any direct or indirect discrimination, and to promote the need of equality of opportunity, that will operate in the new councils following their creation in 2011. These would include arrangements to allocate Council Chairs, Deputy Chairs and positions on Council committees and to facilitate cross community decision making. The aim of the new council governance arrangements is to ensure the protection of the rights of all people in Northern Ireland, and provide for fair, transparent and efficient decision making.
- 3.1.3 In the context of this strategic policy objective the management Terms of Reference for this project are defined as:

‘To bring forward proposals for governance arrangements that provide for effective, efficient and transparent decision making by Councils, with appropriate checks and balances, taking account of Councils additional service delivery and community planning responsibilities.’

Community Planning

- 3.1.4 The essence of Community Planning is a recognition that the needs of individuals and communities – if they are to be addressed successfully – must be addressed collectively, not separately. The policy objective for this strand is the development of an effective statute-based community planning process, led and facilitated by local councils, that enhances civic leadership and that allows local councils, working in partnership with all sectors, to be at the heart of the provision of high quality, efficient services that respond to the needs of people and communities and which continuously improve over time.
- 3.1.5 The management Terms of Reference for this strand are defined as :

‘To bring forward proposals to effect the implementation of the duty of “Community Planning” and a power of “Well Being” to district councils in Northern Ireland, recognising local diversity and the need to devise approaches suited to local circumstances’.

Central / Local Relations

3.1.6 The policy objective is the development of appropriate mechanisms to provide for the optimum partnership between central and local government in carrying out their separate but inter-related functions in the provision of efficient and effective citizen centred services.

3.1.7 To guide this project the following management Terms of Reference have been defined:

‘To develop the framework to underpin the formalisation of relations between the Northern Ireland Executive and local government on matters of mutual interest and concern.’

3.2 Method of Approach

3.2.1 The overall project, and the individual work strands, will be managed using the PRINCE2 (Projects in Controlled Environment) standards and associated project controls, in line with best practice for projects in the public sector.

3.2.2 The project will consist of a number of stages as follows:

- Stage 1 Preparation of the Project Initiation Document
- Stage 2 The development of policy proposals on the three workstrands
- Stage 3 The development of arrangements for the piloting of the community planning process
- Stage 4 The development of guidance to underpin the operationalisation of the policy proposals
- Stage 5 Reviewing the policy proposals in the context of responses to the public consultation process
- Stage 6 Post Project Review

3.2.3 The timeframe for the development of the policy proposals to inform the preparation of legislative provisions is constrained by the requirement to have the legislation enacted prior to the creation of the new councils and the timetable for the passage of the legislation through the Northern Ireland Assembly. Accordingly the proposals must be developed by early November 2008. Guidance also needs to be developed and agreed prior to the creation of the new councils in 2011.

3.3 Project Scope

3.3.1 As indicated earlier in this document this project will bring forward proposals for the governance arrangements for the new councils; the framework and foundation guidance for the council led community planning process; and proposals for the formalisation of the relationship between central and local government. It is an integral element of the overall programme for the reform and modernisation of local government.

- 3.3.2 A preliminary examination of the issues to be addressed within the individual work strands suggests that the project will interface with the work of the other Policy Development Panels. For example, arrangements for the assessment of community planning, and the creation, in the future, of Local Area Agreements will be interlinked with the development of Performance Management frameworks. The extent of interfaces with other projects will become clearer as the detailed work progresses and these will be managed accordingly to minimise risks to the successful delivery of the project.

3.4 Project Deliverables / Outputs

- 3.4.1 In meeting the project's objectives the Policy Development Panel will be required to deliver a number of key outputs as follows:

Stage 2 – policy proposals for consideration by the Minister of the Environment on:

- statutory governance arrangements, which meet the agreed requirements;
- a statutory framework for the community planning process and the 'Power of Wellbeing'; and,
- the formalisation of relations between central and local government.

Stage 3 – the development of a framework, and the selection criteria, for the establishment of a number of pilot projects to develop and test the detailed working aspects of the community planning process. The operation of these pilots will inform the development of statutory guidance to support the practical outworking of the overarching framework.

Stage 4 – the delivery of the necessary detailed guidance to support the operationalisation of the new governance arrangements, the community planning process, and the relationship between central and local government.

- 3.4.2 Descriptions of the project outputs are attached at Annexes A - G of this document.

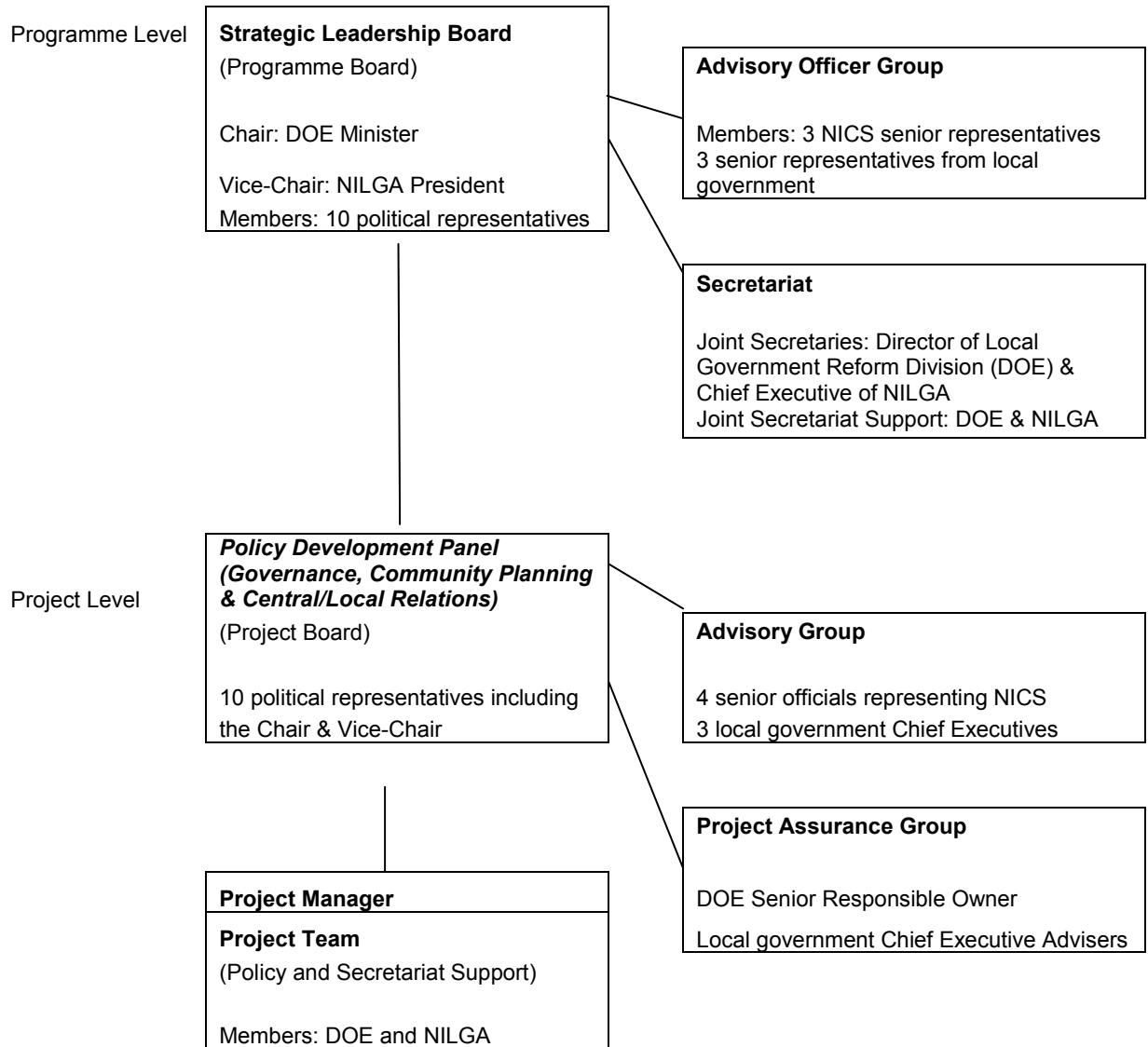
3.5 Interfaces

- 3.5.1 The project management team within the Local Government Policy Division of DOE will meet on a regular basis with officers from NILGA, local government Chief Officer advisors to the Panel, and senior colleagues in Departments to advance the work of the Panel in line with the agreed timetable.
- 3.5.2 The project manager will also meet on a regular basis with the Senior Responsible Owner, the Programme Manager, and the project managers supporting the other two Policy Development Panels to consider and develop proposals for the handling of interlinked issues. Any such proposals will be submitted to the Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations) for consideration and agreement.
- 3.5.3 It will be important for the elected members of the Panel to seek and articulate the views of their political parties on the work strands being taken forward as part of the project. The Chair of the Panel will also report and seek the views of the Strategic Leadership Board at its regular meetings during the project.

3.6 Project Filing Structure

3.6.1 All papers produced to inform the deliberations of the Policy Development Panel, and those to support its efficient and effective operation will be filed in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s records management procedures.

4. PROJECT ORGANISATION



5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations) - (Project Board)

5.1.1 Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations) is accountable for the success of the project and has responsibility and authority to make decisions on the management of the project and the commitment of resources to it. The Panel manages by exception, delegating the day to day running of the project and the development of material for consideration by the Panel to the Project Manager. The main responsibilities of the Panel are:

- review and approve the PID;
- agree with the Project Manager their responsibilities and objectives;
- agree project and stage tolerances; and
- authorise commitment of project resources.

5.1.2 As the project progresses:

- guide the project ensuring it remains within specified constraints;
- authorise the start of each phase;
- review and approve plans;
- management of risks identified at plan approval stages;
- approval of changes; and
- ensure compliance with policy direction from the Strategic Leadership Board.

5.1.3 At the end of the project:

- assure that all products have been delivered;
- assure all acceptance criteria have been met;
- approve End Project Report;
- authorise Project Closure; and,
- approve Project Evaluation Review.

5.2 The Project Manager

5.2.1 The Project Manager has the delegated authority to run the project on a day to day basis on behalf of the Policy Development Panel within the agreed constraints. The main responsibilities of the Project Manager are:

- to deliver agreed products to required specification and quality according to the planned timetable, and within any approved expenditure limits;
- direct and motivate the project team;
- project manage and plan all stages of the project;
- agree delegations and project assurance roles;
- prepare project, stage and exception plans and agree with the Policy Development Panel;
- manage business and project risks (includes contingency planning);
- produce the Project Initiation Document;
- liaise with members of associated projects or programmes;
- monitor progress, expenditure, resources, initiation of corrective action;
- keep the Policy Development Panel informed of deviations in plans and associated action (Change Control) – any changes to be approved by the Panel;
- preparation of highlight reports for the PDP;
- liaise with PDP to assure the direction and integrity of the project;
- prepare End Project Report;

- identify and obtain support and advice necessary for the management, planning and control of the project; and,
- responsibility for project administration.

5.3 Project Assurance Group

5.3.1 Project Assurance has responsibility for independent monitoring of all aspects of the project's performance and products. Specific responsibilities of Project Assurance are to:

- assure the Panel members needs and expectations are being met or managed;
- assure that risks are being controlled;
- keep the project in line with the agreed Project Plan;
- inform the project of any changes caused by external events; and
- ensure adherence to quality assurance standards.

6. PROJECT PERSONNEL

6.1 Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations)

Name	Organisation	Function
Cllr Joanne Bunting	Elected Member	Project Chair
Cllr Sean Begley	Elected Member	Vice-Chair
James Hutchinson	DOE	Senior Responsible Owner

6.2 Project Manager and Project Team

Name	Organisation	Team Role
John Murphy	DOE	Project Manager
Nora Winder	NILGA	Lead local government Officer
Damian McKeivitt	DOE	
Lynn McCracken	DOE	
Sinead Kelly	NILGA	

6.3 Project Assurance

Name	Organisation	Position
James Hutchinson	DOE	Senior Responsible Owner
Liam Hannaway	NILGA	Lead Local Government Chief Executive
John Briggs	NILGA	
Ashley Boreland	NILGA	Chief Executive SLB link

7. PROJECT TOLERANCES

7.1.1 Given the constraints outlined above in relation to the timetable for the passage of the legislation through the Assembly and the associated preparatory stages the first phase of the project must be completed as set out in the programme plan. There is therefore only very limited tolerance within this phase. This relates to the potential rescheduling, within a few days, of any postponed meetings. The exceptions to this are the meeting to agree the emerging proposals for submission to the Strategic Leadership Board, and the discussion on the final proposals.

7.1.2 There is greater flexibility on reaching agreement on proposals during subsequent stage when guidance is being developed and the community planning pilots are being taken forward. The limiting factor is the timetable for the introduction of the Bill and the laying of any associated subordinate legislation in the Assembly to meet the operative date for the commencement of the legislative provisions.

8. PROJECT CONTROLS

8.1.1 Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations) assumes overall responsibility for the control of the project and will receive information from the Project Manager (and the Assurance Group) to enable it to fulfil this role.

8.1.2 The major controls for Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations) are:

- Project Initiation – to ensure that, before resources are committed to the project, everything involved in the project has been agreed: project objectives, roles and responsibilities, project scope and boundary, project controls. A Project Initiation meeting will be held to agree this PID and give approval to move to the next stage.
- End Stage Assessment – Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations) only commits to one stage of work at a time. This assessment approves the work to date and provides authority to proceed to the next stage.

- Highlight (dashboard) Reports – provided by the Project Manager to Policy Development Panel (Governance, Community Planning & Central/Local Relations) on a regular basis to report progress during a stage. The Highlight Reports for this project will be produced monthly and will contain details of progress to date, achievements in the current period and achievements expected in the next period, details of actual or potential problems and suggestions for their resolution.
- Exception Reports – notification by the Project Manager to the Project Board that the stage or project plan will deviate outside tolerance limits. This details the problem, outlines the available options and identifies the recommended option.
- Mid-Stage Assessment – this assessment is held between the PDP and the Project Manager after an Exception Report or a significant milestone to determine how the project will proceed.
- Project Closure – the PDP formally closes the project, confirming that it has been completed.

8.1.3 The Panel will report progress to the Strategic Leadership Board on a regular basis through the submission of Highlight Reports.

9. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

9.1.1 A Communications Plan will be developed that links with the Communications Strategy that has been developed for the overall reform and modernisation programme. This will ensure that the sector and other interested stakeholders are kept informed of developments, through the regular NILGA updates, the DOE website, and the joint DOE / NILGA Newsletter.

10. QUALITY PLAN

10.1.1 The quality requirement for this project is the production of clear comprehensive project outputs on a timely basis. The Quality Review process will check to identify any errors, omissions, misunderstandings, ambiguity, and non-compliance with the overarching policy direction set out in the Minister of the Environment's Statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 31 March 2008 on the future shape of local government.

10.1.2 A Quality Management System to be used in the project will be developed for endorsement by the Panel. This will include the following elements:

- a set of standards to be applied to the production of project outputs;
- a quality assurance procedure for all outputs;
- procedures to facilitate project issues;
- procedures to facilitate change control; and,
- the implementation of a consistent structured document management system for selected outputs produced by the project.

11. INITIAL PROJECT PLAN

11.1.1 A high level Project Plan outlining the main stages of the Project has been included at Annex H.

12. INITIAL RISK LOG

12.1.1 A detailed Risk Log and a strategy for managing the risks will be developed for endorsement by the Panel and the Strategic Leadership Board. An initial appraisal suggests that the key risks will relate to the following issues:

- the timescale for the development of policy proposals;
- availability of elected members to engage in the project;
- availability of project team personnel;
- continuity of personnel as the project progresses;
- availability of financial resources to fund any required research / consultancy support;
- effective engagement by councils in the community planning pilots;
- effective engagement by departments and other key sectors in the community planning pilots; and,
- availability of funding to support community planning pilots.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Workstream: Governance

Product: Policy Proposals

1. Product Purpose

To detail policy proposals for governance arrangements that provide for effective, efficient and transparent decision making by Councils with appropriate checks and balances.

2. Composition

The proposals will cover issues including:

- decision making structures
- proportionality
- checks and balances
- standards
- transparency
- citizen engagement.

3. Format / Presentation

A formal structured report.

4. Derivation

The report will be produced referencing desk research and the views articulated by Policy Development Panel members.

5. Responsibility

The Project Team will prepare the report for consideration and approval by the Policy Development Panel.

6. Quality

The report will be subject to a formal Quality Review by members of the Quality Assurance Group.

7. External Dependencies

None exist as the process has been internalised through the direct involvement of elected members and council officers.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Workstream: Community Planning

Product: Policy Proposals

1. Product Purpose

To articulate policy proposals for the overarching framework for the council led community planning process and the associated 'Power of Wellbeing'

2. Composition

The proposals will cover the following issues:

- a definition of community planning
- structures and models
- the duty on councils
- the duty on government departments and other specified bodies
- reporting arrangements
- the provision of guidance
- the establishment of bodies
- legislative provisions for a 'Power of Wellbeing'

3. Format / Presentation

A formal structured report.

4. Derivation

The report will be produced referencing desk research and the views articulated by Policy Development Panel members.

5. Responsibility

The Project Team will prepare the report for consideration and approval by the Policy Development Panel.

6. Quality

The report will be subject to a formal Quality Review by members of the Quality Assurance Group.

7. External Dependencies

None exist as the process has been internalised through the direct involvement of elected members and council officers.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Workstream: Central / Local Relations

Product: Policy Proposals

1. Product Purpose

To articulate policy proposals for the formalisation of relations between central and local government.

2. Composition

The proposals will cover the establishment of any proposed structure(s), their membership and remit.

3. Format / Presentation

A formal structured report.

4. Derivation

The report will be produced referencing desk research and the views articulated by Policy Development Panel members.

5. Responsibility

The Project Team will prepare the report for consideration and approval by the Policy Development Panel.

6. Quality

The report will be subject to a formal Quality Review by members of the Quality Assurance Group.

7. External Dependencies

None exist as the process has been internalised through the direct involvement of elected members and council officers.

ANNEX D

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Workstream: Governance

Product: Draft Guidance

1. Product Purpose

To support the operationalisation of the governance arrangements through the provision of subordinate legislation or guidance.

2. Composition

The draft guidance may cover such issues as:

- outline corporate governance structures and arrangements
- a Standing Orders framework
- a Constitution / Citizen Contract framework

3. Format / Presentation

A formal structured report.

4. Derivation

The report will be produced referencing desk research and engagement with the sector, and the views articulated by Policy Development Panel members.

5. Responsibility

The Project Team will prepare the report for consideration and approval by the Policy Development Panel.

6. Quality

The report will be subject to a formal Quality Review by members of the Quality Assurance Group.

7. External Dependencies

None identified at this stage.

ANNEX E

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Workstream: Community Planning

Product: Programme of Community Planning Pilots

1. Product Purpose

To provide a framework for the piloting of the community planning process that will inform the preparation of subordinate legislation and guidance to underpin the operation of the process when the new councils are established.

2. Composition

The proposals will cover the:

- identification of need for appropriate subordinate legislation.
- identification of other bodies to be specified in subordinate legislation.
- development of statutory guidance.
- testing various processes and methodologies for consultation and engagement in the community planning process.
- production of an agreed Community Plan.
- development of monitoring and reporting arrangements.
- evaluation of Pilot Programme.
- identification of capacity building needs across all sectors.

3. Format / Presentation

A formal structured report.

4. Derivation

The report will be produced referencing the work of the Taskforce Sub-group and the views articulated by Policy Development Panel members.

5. Responsibility

The Project Team will prepare the report for consideration and approval by the Policy Development Panel.

6. Quality

The report will be subject to a formal Quality Review by members of the Quality Assurance Group.

7. External Dependencies

None identified at this stage.

ANNEX F

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Workstream: Central / Local Relations

Product: Draft Concordat

1. Product Purpose

To set out proposals on a framework to underpin the effective relations between central and local government.

2. Composition

The proposals will cover such issues as:

- a framework for working arrangements between central and local government on matters in which they have a mutual interest;
- arrangements for administrative co-operation and exchange of information

3. Format / Presentation

A formal structured report.

4. Derivation

The report will be produced referencing and the views articulated by Policy Development Panel members.

5. Responsibility

The Project Team will prepare the report for consideration and approval by the Policy Development Panel.

6. Quality

The report will be subject to a formal Quality Review by members of the Quality Assurance Group.

7. External Dependencies

None identified

ANNEX G

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Workstream: Community Planning

Product: Draft Guidance

1. Product Purpose

To support the operationalisation of the community planning process.

2. Composition

3. Format / Presentation

A formal structured report.

4. Derivation

The report will be produced referencing the analysis of the outcomes of the community planning pilots and the views articulated by Policy Development Panel members.

5. Responsibility

The Project Team will prepare the report for consideration and approval by the Policy Development Panel.

6. Quality

The report will be subject to a formal Quality Review by members of the Quality Assurance Group.

7. External Dependencies

ANNEX H

PROJECT PLAN

Period	Activity
Jul – Oct '08	Develop policy proposals on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • governance arrangements, • the community planning process, and • central / local relations.
Nov '08	Submit policy proposals to the Strategic Leadership Board
Nov '08 – Mar '09	Development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • framework and criteria for Community Planning pilots • Concordat to underpin formalisation of central / local relations • Guidance on governance arrangements
Apr '09	Consider responses to consultation on policy proposals Recommendations on any amendments submitted to the Strategic Leadership Board Commencement of initial planning for community planning pilots
May – Jun '09	Finalise arrangements for community planning pilots
Jul '09 – Jun '10	Monitor community planning pilots and address issues that emerge.
Jul '10 – Sep '10	Evaluate outcomes from community planning pilots
Oct '10 – Nov '10	Develop and refine community planning Statutory Guidance proposals.

SLB Paper 44b/2008

DRAFT

Policy Development Panel B

Service Delivery

Project Initiation Document

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the Project Initiation Document (PID) for Policy Development Panel B (Service Delivery). The purpose of this document is to:-
- define the scope of the project;
 - set out the aims and objectives;
 - identify the major end products to be delivered;
 - detail the activities and resources required to ensure the successful completion of the project;
 - specify the management structure for the project; and
 - outline the key responsibilities within the project.

This PID will be the baseline against which Policy Development Panel B can monitor progress and make decisions.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Decisions on the future shape of local government were announced by the Minister of the Environment on 31 March 2007, following the review of the local government aspects of the Review of Public Administration (RPA). The decisions taken include the rationalisation of the current configuration of 26 local councils to create 11 new council areas and the transfer of a range of functions from central to local government.

- 2.2 The Minister has agreed that the implementation of this change programme will be managed at a strategic level by the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) supported by three Policy Development Panels (PDPs), comprising elected members supported by senior local and central government officials and joint secretariat (DOE/NILGA). PDP B has been charged with the development of recommendations on policy and implementation proposals in relation to Service Delivery issues. The work will cover three main strands, namely:-

- Customer Service Delivery;
- Improvement and Modernisation of Services (including IS Strategy, Shared Services Strategy, e-government); and
- Performance Management.

It is proposed that three working groups be established, to assist in the development of the necessary high level strategies and the lower level policies and implementation plans to support these various Work Strands. More detail on the work of these strands will follow.

- 2.3 Some of the work of the Panel overlaps significantly with the current work carried out through NILGA's e-Government Working Group, e.g. the development of the IS Strategy and piloting of specific applications e.g. mobile working, GIS applications. Close relations therefore will be maintained with this group by the Improvement and Modernisation Working Group.

3. PROJECT DEFINITION

Strategic Aim

3.1 The overall aim of the project is:-

“To lead the development of recommendations on policy and implementation proposals for agreement by SLB in relation to:-

- Customer Service Delivery;
- Improvement and Modernisation including Information Systems, e-government, Shared Services; and
- Performance Management.”

Key Objectives

3.2 The key objectives of the Panel are:-

- to develop appropriate high level strategies for the relevant areas ensuring appropriate consultation throughout the sector and undertaking of relevant impact assessments;
- to pilot suitable approaches and systems to support the strategies developed for implementation across the sector; and
- to develop appropriate proposals for implementation of the proposals across the sector.

Project Scope

3.3 It is expected that the work will interface very closely with the work of other Panels e.g. Performance Management proposals will need to take account of the work undertaken by Panel A on Governance and the work on Transferring Functions undertaken by Panel C will need to be taken into account in the development of the Customer Service Strategy and the IS and Shared Services Strategies.

Dependencies

3.4 The success of the project will be dependent on the timely delivery of the end products identified. Key dependencies will include the following:-

- the commitment of Panel B and the relevant working group members;
- the maintenance of effective communication channels;
- sufficient identification of the key activities required to deliver the end products;
- accurate assessment of timescales and costs;
- identification and acquisition of the necessary staff resources for the project team and the various working groups;
- availability of the necessary expertise to the working groups; and
- securing the necessary financial resources for external consultancy as and when required.
- Involvement of transferring function Departments (as appropriate).

Managing Interfaces

3.5 The Project Manager (John Price, Local Government Policy Division of DOE) will meet on a regular basis with Sheena Mairs, (Director of Improvement NILGA) the local

government Chief Officer advisors to the Panel and the Chairs of the Working Groups to advance the work of the Panel in line with the agreed timetable.

- 3.6 The Project Manager will also meet on a regular basis with the Senior Responsible Owner, the Programme Manager, the Project Manager supporting Policy Development Panels A & C to consider and develop proposals for the handling of interlinked issues. Any such proposals will be submitted to PDP B for agreement.
- 3.7 It will be important for the elected members of the PDP B to seek and articulate the views of local government on the Work Strands being taken forward as part of the project. The Chair of the PDP B will also report and seek the views of the SLB at regular checkpoints in the project.

Method of Approach

- 3.8 The overall project and the individual Work Strands will be managed using the PRINCE 2 (Projects in Controlled Environment) standards tailored appropriately to the scope and size of the project.

- 3.9 The project will consist of a number of stages as follows:-

Stage 1	Preparation and Agreement of the Project Initiation Document
Stage 2	Establishment of Working Groups
Stage 3	Development and Agreement of Individual Work Strand Proposals
Stage 4	Completion of work by Working Groups and sign off by Project Board (this may be completed on staged basis)
Stage 5	Submission of policy proposals, including options and recommendations to the SLB
Stage 6	Post Project Review

Project Deliverables/Products

- 3.10 The project will deliver the following end products:-
- a **Customer Service Strategy** for the local government sector which will provide guidelines and principles to assist individual councils to formulate their own Customer Service Strategies to provide citizens with high quality services in an efficient and effective manner;
 - an **Information Systems Strategy** for the sector which will:-
 - identify the current systems and processes in operation within the 26 councils and the Transferring function Departments;
 - will provide a road map to assist in the Transition to the 11 council structure; and
 - include proposals for increased use of ICT across the sector building on shared knowledge and best practice from within local and central government.
 - a **Shared Services Strategy** to identify in conjunction with Panel C, the potential for delivery of services on a common basis across councils on a cluster and regional basis so increasing efficiency;

- **Performance Management** legislative proposals and a framework which will facilitate appropriate assessment of the performance of councils both internally and externally.

Project Filing Structure

- 3.14 All papers produced to inform the deliberations of PDP B and those to support its efficient and effective operation will be filed in accordance with the Department of the Environment's records management procedures.

4. PROJECT ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

Policy Development Panel B- (Project Board)

- 4.1 PDP B will be accountable for the success of the project and has responsibility and authority to make decisions and provide commitment of resources to the project. The Panel will manage by exception, delegating the day to day running of the project and the development of material for consideration by the Panel to the Project Manager.

The main responsibilities of PDP B are to:-

- review and approve the PID and High Level Project Plan;
 - agree roles and responsibilities of the Project Managers and Project Team;
 - agree project and stage tolerances; and
 - authorise commitment of project resources.
- 4.3 As the project progresses PDP B will:-
- guide the project ensuring it remains within specified constraints;
 - authorise the start of each phase;
 - review and approve plans;
 - manage the risks identified at plan approval stages;
 - approve all changes; and
 - ensure compliance with directives.
- 4.4 At the end of the project PDP B will:-
- assure that all products have been delivered;
 - assure all acceptance criteria have been met;
 - approve End Project Report;
 - authorise Project Closure; and,
 - approve Project Evaluation Review.

The Project Manager

- 4.5 The Project Manager has the delegated authority to run the project on a day to day basis on behalf of PDP B and within the agreed constraints. The Project Manager through the joint secretariat, will:-
- ensure that the 3 Work Strands deliver the agreed products to required specification and quality according to the planned timetable, and within budget;
 - direct and motivate both the project team and the Work Strand teams;
 - project manage and plan all stages of the project;
 - agree delegations and project assurance roles;

- prepare project, stage and exception plans and agree with the Project Board;
- manage business and project risks (includes contingency planning);
- produce the PID;
- liaise with members of associated projects or programmes;
- monitor progress, expenditure, resources, initiation of corrective action;
- keep PDP B informed of deviations in plans and associated action (Change Control);
- prepare highlight reports for PDP B;
- liaise with PDP B to assure the direction and integrity of the project;
- prepare End Project Report;
- identify and obtain support and advice necessary for the management, planning and control of the project; and,
- take responsibility for project administration.

Project Assurance Group

4.6 Project Assurance has responsibility for independent monitoring of all aspects of the project's performance and products. Specific responsibilities of Project Assurance are to:-

- assure the Panel members' needs and expectations are being met or managed;
- assure that risks are being controlled;
- keep the project in line with the agreed Project Plan;
- inform the project of any changes caused by external events; and
- ensure adherence to quality assurance standards.

5. PROJECT PERSONNEL

5.1 Policy Development Panel B – Project Board

Name	Organisation	Function
Cllr Helen Quigley	Elected Member	Project Chair
Cllr Eddie Rea	Elected Member	Vice-Chair
Cllr Janice Austin	Elected Member	
Cllr Dermot Curran	Elected Member	
Cllr Gordon Dunne	Elected Member	
Cllr Tony Hill	Elected Member	
Cllr Sean Kerr	Elected Member	
Cllr Alan McDowell	Elected Member	
Cllr Michelle McIlveen	Elected Member	
Cllr Bob Stoker	Elected Member	

5.2 Project Manager and Project Team

Name	Organisation	Team Role
John Price	DOE	Project Manager
Sheena Mairs	NILGA	NILGA Lead Official
Angela Fitzpatrick	DOE	
Lorcan O'Kane	DOE	
Damien Deane	DOE	
Simon Sloan	DOE	
Sarah Connor	NILGA	

AN Other	NILGA	
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The Project Team will be supported on the various work streams by council officials in the 3 Working Groups.

5.3 Project Assurance

Name	Organisation	Position
Ian Maye	DOE	Director, Local Govt Policy
Danny McSorley	Omagh District Council	Lead Chief Executive
Trevor Martin	Belfast City Council	
Bill McCluggage	DID, DFP	
Jim Wilkinson	DOE Planning	
Barry Jordan	DRD	
Sharon Gallagher	DSD	
Paul McAllister	DCAL	
Phil Rodgers	DETI	
David Barr	DARD	

6. PROJECT TOLERANCES

6.1 The recommendations of PDP B will have some bearing on the formulation of proposals of the other PDPs. There is, therefore, only limited tolerance within the overall project.

(DN: What are the recognised Project Tolerances? The Working Groups will have to examine the dependencies between the various Panels and take these into account when drawing up the project timescales.)

7. PROJECT CONTROLS

7.1 PDP B assumes overall responsibility for the control of the project and will receive information from the Project Manager (and the Assurance Group) to enable it to fulfil this role.

7.2 The major controls for PDP B are:

- **Project Initiation** – to ensure that, before resources are committed to the project, everything involved in the project has been agreed: project objectives, roles and responsibilities, project scope and boundary, project controls. A Project Initiation meeting will be held to agree this PID and give approval to move to the next stage.
- **End Stage Assessment** – PDP B only commits to one stage of work at a time. This assessment approves the work to date and provides authority to proceed to the next stage.
- **Highlight Reports** – will be provided by the Project Manager to PDP B on a regular basis to report progress during a stage. The Highlight Reports for this project will be produced monthly and will contain details of progress to date on each of the various strands, achievements in the current period and achievements expected in the next period, details of actual or potential problems and suggestions for their resolution.

- **Exception Reports** – notification by the Project Manager to PDP B that the stage or project plan will deviate outside tolerance limits. This details the problem, outlines the available options and identifies the recommended option.
- **Mid-Stage Assessment** – this assessment is held between PDP B and the Project Manager after an Exception Report or a significant milestone to determine how the project will proceed.
- **Project Closure** – the PDP B formally closes the project, confirming that it has been completed.

7.3 PDP B will report progress to the SLB on a regular basis through the submission of Highlight Reports.

8. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

8.1 A Communications Plan, embracing the 3 projects within the remit of PDP B, will be developed that links with the Communications Strategy of the overall Reform and Modernisation programme. This will ensure that the sector and other interested stakeholders are kept informed of developments through the regular NILGA updates, the DOE website and the joint DOE/NILGA Newsletter.

9. QUALITY PLAN

9.1 The quality requirement for this project is the production of clear comprehensive project outputs on a timely basis. The Quality Review process will check to identify any errors, omissions, misunderstandings, ambiguity, and non-compliance with the overarching policy direction set out in the Minister of the Environment's Statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 31 March 2008 on the future shape of local government.

9.2 A Quality Management System to be used in the project will be developed for endorsement by the Panel. This will include the following elements:-

- a set of standards to be applied to the production of project outputs;
- a quality assurance procedure for all outputs;
- procedures to facilitate project issues;
- procedures to facilitate change control; and,
- the implementation of a consistent structured document management system for selected outputs produced by the project.

10. INITIAL PROJECT PLAN

10.1 A high level Project Plan outlining the main stages of the Project will follow.

11. INITIAL RISK LOG

11.1 A detailed Risk Log and a strategy for managing the risks will be developed for endorsement by the PDP B and the SLB. An initial appraisal suggests that the key risks will relate to the following issues:-

- availability of elected members to engage in the project;

- availability of project team personnel with experience in the relevant areas;
- continuity of personnel as the project progresses;
- availability of financial resources to fund any identified requirements; and
- effective engagement with departments and other key bodies.

SLB Paper 44c/2008

DRAFT

Policy Development Panel C (Structural Reform)

**Project Initiation Document for approval by the
Strategic Leadership Board**

INTRODUCTION

1.2 This Project Initiation Document (PID) will give the Strategic Leadership Board, the assurance that PDP C (Structural Reform) has established:

- clear Terms of Reference;
- an adequate management structure;
- that sufficient planning has taken place; and
- that sufficient resources are in place to take the project forward.

2. PURPOSE

2.3 The purpose of this document is to put in place firm foundations for Panel C by:

- setting out the aims and objectives of the project;
- defining the scope of the project;
- setting out the activities, resources, responsibilities and outputs required to facilitate the completion of the project; and
- setting out the management structure for the project.

2.2 This PID will be the baseline against which the Strategic Leadership Board can monitor progress and make decisions.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The local government proposals of the previous Direct Rule administration were reviewed by the Executive and the outcome was announced on 31st March 2008, by the Minister of the Environment. The decisions taken include the rationalisation of the current configuration of 26 council areas to create 11 new council areas and the transfer of a range of functions from central to local government. This is due to take place in 2011.

3.2 Taskforce structures have been developed to help manage and integrate the implementation stage of the local government reform programme. The top tier of the structure is the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) which is the key driver of the reform process. This is chaired by the Minister of the Environment (Mr Sammy Wilson MP MLA) with the President of NILGA (Alderman Arnold Hatch) as Vice Chair and membership includes elected representatives of each of the five main political parties. The SLB is supported by three Policy Development Panels (PDPs), also comprising elected representatives along with central and local government advisors which have been charged with developing the policy and implementation proposals necessary to ensure the smooth transition of the new councils in 2011. PDP C (Structural Reform) proposals are subject to the approval of the Strategic Leadership Board with recommendations being taken forward by the Regional Transitional Co-operating Group in conjunction with Transition Committees representing the 11 groupings of existing councils which will form the proposed new local authorities.

3.3 SLB has charged Panel C with the development of recommendations on policy and implementation proposals in relation to 6 structural reform work strands. These embrace Human Resources, Capacity Building, Finance, Estates, Transfer of Functions and Service Delivery (ie on a Regional/Sub Regional basis).

- 3.4 At the inaugural meeting of Panel C, on 31st July 2008, it was agreed that working groups should be established, as and when required, to assist in the development of policy and implementation for each of these work strands or projects.
- 3.5 It was further agreed that some of the work strands naturally interlinked and for this reason should be taken forward on the basis of 4 projects listed below:
- Strategic Business Case (embracing local government structural reform)
 - Human Resources
 - Finance/Estates
 - Capacity Building
- 3.6 The Strategic Business Case project will be taken forward by way of a consultancy assignment. Phase I of the assignment, which is the responsibility of PDP C, will provide a cost benefit analysis of future service delivery options and models. Phase 2 of the assignment, which is the responsibility of SLB, will provide a full cost benefit analysis of local government restructuring in its entirety.
- 3.7 The other 3 projects taken forward mainly by internal working groups comprising central and local government officers.

4. PROJECT DEFINITION

Project Objectives and Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The management Terms of Reference of Panel C (Structural Reform) are defined as:-

“To lead the development of policy, for the structural reform work strands of the local government modernisation programme, to facilitate the effective and smooth transition from the current configuration of 26 council areas to the 11 new council areas which are to be in place in 2011. These structural reform work stands embrace Human Resources, Capacity Building, Finance, Estates, Regional and Sub Regional Design (Service Delivery) and the Transfer of Functions from central to local government.”

It will be the responsibility of Panel C to:-

- lead the development of policy, including timescales and resources, and to agree that programme with the Strategic Leadership Board;
- ensure that the programme of work remains on track and report regularly to the Strategic Leadership Board on progress;
- present recommendations on policy and implementation proposals to the Strategic Leadership Board for agreement;
- ensure that policy proposals are subject to consultation and the relevant impact assessments;
- ensure that requests to Strategic Leadership Board for financial resources are supported by an appropriate business case;
- commission task and finish projects on key work areas; and develop, where appropriate, proposals for local pilots in specific geographic areas.

Method of Approach

- 4.2 The work of PDP C will be managed using the PRINCE 2 (Projects in Controlled Environment) standards and associated project controls, in line with best practice for projects in the public sector.

A key priority of Panel C will be to develop a Project Plan/Programme for SLB approval (see Annex 1) setting out how it proposes to take the project forward. It is envisaged, however, that the project will consist of a number of stages:

Stage 1	Preparation of PID and approval by SLB
Stage 2	Establishment of working group and consultancy assignment teams
Stage 3	Delivery of options and recommendations to Panel C by working group/consultant teams
Stage 4	Policy proposals, including options and recommendations, made to the SLB
Stage 5	Post Project Review

Project Scope

- 4.3 It is envisaged that the scope of the Panel will embrace consideration of a range of key issues in each of the work strands.

Project Deliverables/Products

- 4.4 There are two key themes to the work that will need to be taken forward by Panel C:-
- the development of policy proposals for consideration by the Strategic Leadership Board and ultimately the Minister which will form the basis for the primary legislative proposals for the reorganisation of local government; and,
 - the development of proposals for subordinate legislation, guidance (both statutory and non-statutory), pilot schemes where appropriate, etc to underpin the effective operationalisation of the primary legislative provisions.
- 4.5 Within each of these thematic areas there are a number of tasks that will need to be taken forward, both sequentially and in parallel, if the timetable for reform and modernisation programme, including the passage of the required primary legislation through the Assembly, is to be achieved. It is currently envisaged that most of the legislative provision, relating to the work strands for which Panel C has been charged, will be encompassed in the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill.

Managing Interfaces

- 4.6 The PDP C project management team within the Local Government Policy Division of DOE will meet on a regular basis with officers from NILGA, local government Chief Officer advisors to Panel C, and senior colleagues in Departments to advance the work of the Panel in line with the agreed timetable.
- 4.7 The PDP C Project Manager will also meet on a regular basis with the Senior Responsible Owner, the Programme Manager, and the project managers supporting Policy Development Panels A & B to consider and develop proposals for the handling of interlinked issues. Any such proposals will be submitted to Panel C for agreement.

- 4.8 It will be important for the elected members of Panel C to seek and articulate the views of local government on the work strands being taken forward as part of the project. The Chair of the Panel will also report and seek the views of the Strategic Leadership Board at regular checkpoints in the project.

Project Filing Structure

- 4.9 All papers produced to inform the deliberations of Panel C and those to support its efficient and effective operation will be filed in accordance with the Department of the Environment's records management procedures.

5 PROJECT ORGANISATION

PROGRAMME AND PROJECT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

- 5.1 The diagram attached at Annex 2 sets out the overall programme structure.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy Development Panel C (Project Board)

- 6.1 Following approval of this PID by the Strategic Leadership Board, Panel C will be accountable for the success of the overall project. It will have responsibility and authority to make decisions in relation to the management of the project and provide commitment of resources to the project. The Panel will manage by exception, delegating the day to day running of the project to the Project Manager. The main responsibilities of the Panel will be to:
- review and seek SLB approval for this PID;
 - agree responsibilities and objectives with the Project Manager;
 - agree project and stage tolerances; and
 - authorise commitment of project resources following SLB approval.
- 6.2 As the project progresses:
- guide the project ensuring it remains within specified constraints;
 - authorise the start of each phase;
 - review and approve plans;
 - management of risks identified at plan approval stages;
 - approval of changes; and
 - ensure compliance with policy direction from the SLB.
- 6.3 At the end of the project:
- ensure that all products have been delivered;
 - ensure all acceptance criteria have been met;
 - provide End Project Report for SLB consideration;
 - authorise Project Closure following SLB approval; and
 - provide Project Evaluation Review for SLB consideration.

The Project Manager

6.4 The Project Manager will have the delegated authority to run the project on a day to day basis on behalf of Panel C within the agreed constraints. The main responsibilities of the Project Manager will be to:

- deliver agreed products to required specification and quality according to the planned timetable, and within budget;
- direct and motivate the project team;
- project manage and plan all stages of the project;
- agree delegations and project assurance roles;
- prepare project, stage and exception plans and agree with the Project Board;
- manage business and project risks (includes contingency planning);
- produce PIDs for Work Groups;
- liaise with members of associated projects or programmes;
- monitor progress, expenditure, resources, initiation of corrective action;
- keep PDP C informed of deviations in plans and associated action (Change Control);
- prepare highlight reports for the PDP;
- liaise with PDP to assure the direction and integrity of the project;
- prepare End Project Report;
- identify and obtain support and advice necessary for the management, planning and control of the project; and
- take responsibility for project administration.

Project Assurance Group

6.5 Project Assurance will have responsibility for independent monitoring of all aspects of the project's performance and products. Specific responsibilities of Project Assurance will be to:

- ensure the Panel members' needs and expectations are being met or managed;
- ensure that risks are being controlled;
- keep the project in line with agreed Project Plan;
- inform the project of any changes caused by external events; and
- ensure adherence to quality assurance standards.

7 PROJECT PERSONNEL

Policy Development Panel C – Project Board

7.1

Name	Organisation	Function
Ald. Arnold Hatch (UUP)	Elected Member	Project Chair
Cllr Myreve Chambers (DUP)	Elected Member	Vice-Chair
Cllr Mairead O'Dowd (SF)	Elected Member	
Cllr Seamus Doyle (SDLP)	Elected Member	
Cllr Marion Smith (UUP)	Elected Member	
Cllr Alan Lawther (All)	Elected Member	
Cllr Sean McPeake (SF)	Elected Member	

Cllr Gary Stokes (SDLP)	Elected Member	
Cllr Anne Wilson (All)	Elected Member	
Cllr Clive McFarland (DUP)	Elected Member	

Project Manager and Project Team

7.2 Following approval of this PID by SLB, the Project Manager (Brenda Mooney) will have the delegated authority to run the project on a day to day basis on behalf of Panel C within the agreed constraints. The Project Team will be a joint secretariat comprised of officers from DOE and NILGA.

Name	Organisation	Function
Brenda Mooney	DOE	Project Manager
Nora Winder	NILGA	Lead Officer NILGA
Speers Charters	DOE	
Helen Richmond	NILGA	
Sinead Kelly	NILGA	
Michael McKeown	DOE	
Gail Downey	DOE	

Project Assurance

7.3 Project assurance will be provided by the officers outlined below:-

Name	Organisation	Position
Ian Maye	DOE	Director, LG Policy
Tom McCall	LG Advisor	Chief Executive
David McCammick	LG Advisor	Chief Executive
Philip Irwin	DFP	
Barry Jordan	DRD	
Jim Wilkinson	DOE Planning	
Sharon Gallagher	DSD	
Michael Daly	DFP	
Grace Nesbitt	DFP	

8 PROJECT TOLERANCES

8.1 The recommendations of PDP C will have a very significant bearing on the formulation of proposals of the other PDPs. There is, therefore, only limited tolerance within the overall project.

9 PROJECT CONTROLS

9.1 Following approval by SLB, Panel C will have overall responsibility for the work strands within the project and will receive information from the Project Manager (and the Assurance Group) to enable it to fulfil this role. It will include checkpoint meetings, highlight reports, exceptions plans, stage authorisation and change control procedures, etc.

9.2 The major controls for Panel C will be:-

- Project Initiation – to ensure that, before significant resources are committed to the project, everything involved in the project has been agreed: project objectives, roles and responsibilities, project scope and boundary, project controls. Following approval by SLB, Panel C can move to the next stage.
- End Stage Assessment – SLB only commits to one stage of work at a time. This assessment approves the work to date and provides authority to proceed to the next stage.
- Highlight (dashboard) Reports – provided by Panel C to the SLB on a regular basis to report progress during a stage. The Highlight Reports for this project will be produced monthly and will contain details of progress to date, achievements in the current period and achievements expected in the next period, details of actual or potential problems and suggestions for their resolution.
- Exception Reports – notification by Panel C to the SLB that the stage or project plan will deviate outside tolerance limits. This details the problem, outlines the available options and identifies the recommended option.
- Mid-Stage Assessment – this assessment is held between the PDP and the Project Manager after an Exception Report or a significant milestone to determine how the project will proceed.
- Project Closure – Panel C formally closes the project following approval from SLB.

10 COMMUNICATION PLAN

- 10.1 A Communications Plan, embracing the 4 projects within the remit of Panel C, will be developed that links with the Communications Strategy of the overall reform and modernisation programme. This will ensure that the sector and other interested stakeholders are kept informed of developments through the regular NILGA updates, the DOE website and the joint DOE/NILGA Newsletter.

11 QUALITY PLAN

- 11.1 The quality requirement for this project is the production of clear comprehensive project outputs on a timely basis. The Quality Review process will check to identify any errors, omissions, misunderstandings, ambiguity, and non-compliance with the overarching policy direction set out in the Minister of the Environment's Statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 31 March 2008 on the future shape of local government.
- 11.2 The Quality Management System to be used in the project is composed of the following elements:
- a set of standards to be applied to the production of project products;
 - a quality assurance procedure for all products;
 - a set of procedures to facilitate project issues;
 - a set of procedures to facilitate change control; and
 - the implementation of a consistent structured document management system for selected outputs produced by the project.

12 INITIAL RISK LOG

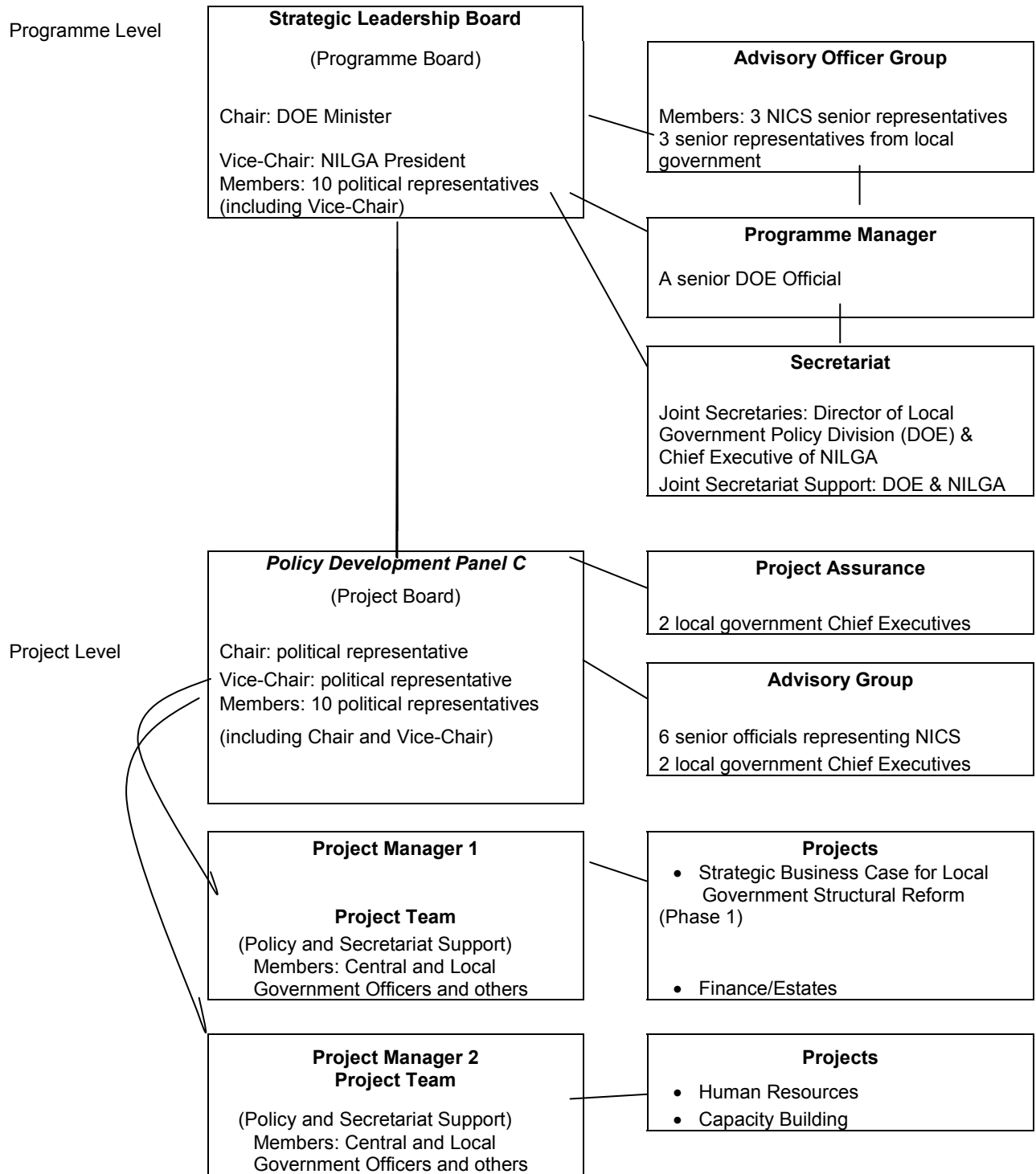
12.1 A detailed Risk Log and a strategy for managing the risks will be developed for endorsement by the Strategic Leadership Board. An initial appraisal suggests that the key risks will relate to the following issues:-

- availability of elected members to engage in the project;
- availability of project team personnel with experience of various work strands
- continuity of personnel as the project progresses;
- availability of financial resources to fund any identified requirements; and effective engagement with departments and other key bodies.

PROJECT PLAN / PROGRAMME

Timescale	Key Work Item
<i>September 2008</i>	<p><i>Preparation of Project Initiation Document for SLB approval and securing team resources</i></p> <p><i>Identification of current position in relation to work strands and the scope of work group/ consultancy teams' programmes</i></p>
<i>October 2008</i>	<p><i>Commence Strategic Business Case for the restructuring of local government.</i></p> <p><i>Phase 1 – Evaluation of service delivery organisational models</i></p> <p><i>Phase 2 – Evaluation of the overall Strategic Business Case</i></p> <p><i>Identification of any primary legislation requirement for 6 work strands</i></p>
<i>February 2009</i>	<p><i>Consideration of Strategic Business Case Phase 1 Report</i></p>
<i>Ongoing</i>	<p><i>Preparation and presentation of Working Group reports to SLB outlining issues, analysis and recommendations</i></p>

PROGRAMME AND PROJECT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



Appendix 2

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING – 3 October 2008

Discussion Paper on Local Government Reorganisation: Shadow Period

Joint Secretariat Paper

Summary: Discussion Paper on whether there should be a shadow period, to inform the Minister's decision

Action Required: For discussion

- 1.
- 2.

3. Introduction

1. At the Strategic Leadership Board meeting of 3 September the Minister asked for a paper to be prepared on the implications of the reorganisation being taken forward with a shadow period or in the absence of a shadow period. He also indicated that the views of political parties are needed on this issue as soon as possible.
2. This paper has been prepared for discussion by the Strategic Leadership Board at its meeting on 3 October to enable the Minister to take views before making a decision on whether the new councils will operate in shadow form for a period before assuming full power and responsibility. Any decision by the Minister will require Executive support.

4. Background

3. On 13 March 2008, the Executive agreed to implement the local government aspects of the Review of Public Administration by adopting the 11b model set out in the RPA Further Consultation of March 2005.

4. In her announcement to the Assembly on 31 March 2008, Arlene Foster, then Minister of the Environment, stated that she had not yet taken a definitive view in relation to shadow councils. She also announced that she intended to ask the Secretary of State to postpone the next round of local government elections (due in 2009) to 2011, when members would be elected to the new councils.
5. On 15 April, Minister Foster wrote to the Secretary of State, asking him to indicate whether he would be prepared to postpone the next round of local government elections to 2011. This would see the term of office for serving councillors extended by two years. The Secretary of State agreed to the postponement of the elections to May 2011 as an exceptional but justified step in the circumstances.

What is meant by “shadow period”?

6. The term “shadow period” refers to the period from the date of elections to the new district councils until the date when those councils assume full powers and responsibilities. The newly elected council, acting in shadow form, would work towards planning and developing the policies that would shape the direction of the new council before it became fully operational.

Should there be a shadow period?

7. A decision is needed as to whether the new councils will operate in shadow form alongside the existing councils for a period following the elections in 2011. This decision is crucial in shaping the implementation structures and transitional arrangements for the reorganisation of local government and will have an impact on the powers and responsibilities of the Transition Committees. The precise roles, responsibilities and powers of those committees will flow from the decision on whether there should be a shadow period. The decision may also impact on the case for putting in place early severance arrangements for councillors in advance of the elections to the new councils.
8. The issue of whether there should be a shadow period was raised at a meeting of the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) held on 2 April 2008. At this meeting,

the SLB also commissioned a paper on options for transitional arrangements and early guidelines for transitional committees. The resulting paper (SLB Paper 32/2008) identified that any transition vehicle would have to have:

- “the legal ability to make decisions”; and
- “the democratic right to make decisions”.

9. A Transition Arrangements Working Group – including representatives from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Department – was established to produce and report on detailed proposals for transition structures.
10. The paper which was prepared by the Transition Arrangements Working Group (SLB Paper 39/08) for the 3 September meeting of the SLB assumed that the new councils established in 2011 would not operate in shadow form, but noted that further direction on this matter was required. As a result of the discussion on this paper, the SLB agreed that the Department should produce a paper on shadow periods.
11. The issue of whether there will be a shadow period has been raised in meetings between officials and local government representatives, both elected and officer. Members of the Environment Committee, at its meeting on 18 September 2008, also asked whether a definitive view had been taken on whether there would be a post-election shadow period.

Pros and Cons

12. Annex A sets out the pros and cons for reorganisation without a shadow period whilst Annex B sets out the pros and cons for reorganisation with a shadow period.
13. Irrespective of the preferred option, there are at least two key decisions that must be made and acted upon before the new councils come fully into operation:
 - appointment of a clerk of council and, ideally, creation of and appointments to the senior management structure; and

- development of a service delivery plan to enable calculation of rates for the next financial year.

14. Continuity and quality of service delivery by local government must remain a priority during the changeover from 26 to 11 councils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. That:

- the views of political parties are canvassed as a matter of urgency to help inform the debate at the SLB meeting on 3 October;
- the issue is discussed at the meeting of 3 October to enable the Minister to take a view before making a decision on whether or not there should be a shadow period and to enable him to take the matter to the Executive at the earliest opportunity.

New councils come into operation without a shadow period

1. Summary

- 1.1. Members elected to the new councils will come into office on the fourth day after polling day, in accordance with Part III of the Electoral Law (Northern Ireland) Act 1962.
- 1.2. The council will assume full powers and responsibilities from that date, and will be accountable for service delivery.
- 1.3. The political make-up and identity of individual members comprising the new council, operating on behalf of a new local government district, will not be known until immediately before the new councils are established.
- 1.4. Transition committees will have to make important decisions (e.g. the appointment of clerk and senior managers, service delivery plan, rates, etc) on behalf of the incoming councils.

2. Potential advantages of this approach

- 2.1. The process of reorganising local government, which has already taken a considerable amount of time, will not be further delayed as the new councils will assume immediate responsibility for the delivery of services and carrying out of functions.
- 2.2. There will be a clean break between the roles and responsibilities of the old and new councils – this will mean less confusion for the citizen concerning the body responsible for delivering services after the elections in 2011.
- 2.3. It will position the new councils to provide civic leadership and take responsibility for the delivery of services, including those functions transferring from central government, to the public immediately following the election to that council, and enable councils to focus immediately on shaping their communities.
- 2.4. There will be financial savings from not having to pay for two sets of local government bodies and two sets of councillors simultaneously.
- 2.5. Questions over whether separate central government funding would be required for the shadow period will not arise.
- 2.6. The new Assembly and councils will start together – a fresh political canvas for Northern Ireland.

3. Potential disadvantages of this approach

- 3.1. New councils may not accept the draft management structures, transfer schemes and service delivery plans prepared by transition committees. Resources could therefore be wasted if the new councils reject the draft arrangements, and have to undo work already undertaken under these arrangements.
- 3.2. The timetable for achieving full operation of new councils is very tight, with no leeway to take account of external influences (eg political, economic, social, technological, legislative and environmental). Transition committees may have to devote resources to engage in contingency planning activities, which may not be feasible or practicable in the time available.
- 3.3. The Local Government Taskforce Human Resources Sub-group – which submitted its report in June 2006 – advised strongly against an approach that would require interim management structures and transfer schemes.
- 3.4. Elections to councils and the Assembly will run simultaneously in May 2011. There is a risk of the new administration allocating different resources to local government, which will require different budgeting by councils. Therefore, budget decisions for full service delivery by the new councils cannot be finalised until the new administration agrees to the budget allocation for local government.
- 3.5. Calculation of rates for 2011-12 will be problematic, covering two systems of local government, with rates for the greater part of the year being struck by the old councils on behalf of the new, based on assumed budgets that might not be honoured by the new administration, and on draft service delivery plans that might not be accepted by the new council.
- 3.6. There is the risk of a governance mismatch between representatives of old councils on transition committees (subject to old governance rules) making decisions on behalf of councils that would require additional controls, consents, checks and balances etc under the new governance regime.
- 3.7. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has advised that issues and problems arising from workforce transfers are difficult to address without the benefit of a shadow period.
- 3.8. There may be an increased risk of failure (actual or perceived) at go-live date – new councils starting out under a cloud.
- 3.9. Transition committees with enhanced functions and powers will require substantial funding.
- 3.10. Although transition committees could be given statutory authority to appoint Chief Executives Designate and other Directors Designate, such appointments may not be accepted by the new councils. The implications of the rejection of some or all of these appointments would be costly, and highly detrimental to the new councils in the early stages of their existence.

3.11. By giving transition committees such powers in statute, supported by Transition Management Teams (non-statutory), it could be argued that the Executive has created a pre-election shadow authority in all but name.

New councils come into operation with a shadow period**1. Summary**

- 1.1. If the new councils are to operate in shadow form alongside the existing councils for an initial period, legislative provision will be needed enabling members of the existing 26 councils to remain in office until the new council structure is adopted. This would be a matter for the Secretary of State.
- 1.2. As the shadow councils are, essentially, the new councils waiting to take over, they will have the democratic right to make decisions that will determine the direction taken.
- 1.3. It will be the Department's responsibility to make legislation regarding the respective powers and functions of the new councils and the outgoing councils during the shadow period.
- 1.4. Looking at other administrations within the United Kingdom, the Local Government Changes for England Regulations 1994 (the 1994 Regulations) are regulations of general application and make incidental, consequential, transitional and supplementary provision for local authorities undergoing structural change.
- 1.5. The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008, made under section 14 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, make further provision for shadow councils.
- 1.6. Although the provisions of these regulations could not be applied in their entirety to Northern Ireland, some of the areas covered indicate the possible functions and responsibilities of shadow councils in 2011.
- 1.7. The appointment of the Clerk will be one of the first duties undertaken by the shadow councils.
- 1.8. Business needs require the Clerk to be in place as early as possible. A shadow period that permits the new councils to appoint Clerks and work together on the service delivery plan will in turn support effective management and service delivery once the new councils come fully into operation.
- 1.9. If management decisions remain the responsibility of the new councils, transition committees will be able to focus on the essential spadework of gathering information on assets, liabilities, staff etc, to be passed on to the new council at the start of the shadow period.

2. Potential advantages of this approach

- 2.1. The new councils will have the democratic right as well as the statutory authority to make decisions concerning the new local government district.
- 2.2. The new councils will have ownership of key decisions concerning the appointment of the Chief Executive and management team. This will remove the need for

additional appointments (eg “Chief Executive Designate”) to cover the period prior to elections and the commencement of the new councils.

- 2.3. A shadow period will help provide clarity and separation of roles, with transition committees gathering and sorting information (eg human resources, financial position, contracts, assets/estate/fleet for first day brief), and with making arrangements for the first meeting of the new council, but leaving executive decisions to the new council.
- 2.4. Depending on the length of the shadow period, calculation of rates for 2011-12 may prove less complicated than if reorganisation takes place towards the end of May 2011.
- 2.5. Efficiency may be improved, as the new council will not have to spend time debating and resolving to accept or reject the business plans prepared by the transition committee.
- 2.6. Differences in the political make-up and direction of old and new councils will have less of an impact, as the decision-making responsibilities of the old regarding the new will have been minimised.
- 2.7. The new council will be best placed to identify the social and organisational needs of the district, which may differ from those of their predecessor, and will be able to take the necessary action.
- 2.8. Service delivery plans devised by councils during the shadow period will be developed in the context of the budget for local government allocated by the newly elected Assembly.
- 2.9. During the shadow period, the new councils will be able to respond to changes (eg political, economic, social, technological, legislative and environmental) in the external environment.
- 2.10. New councils will be able to liaise directly with departments concerning the functions transferring from central government.
- 2.11. Members will be able to agree upon the name and headquarters of the council before coming fully into operation, allowing for effective corporate branding from the outset.
- 2.12. A shadow period supports strong business planning by the individuals (elected members and officers) who will implement the plans on behalf of the new council.
- 2.13. The decisions on (for example) staffing structures made by the new council are more likely to be final and sustainable, even if the decisions are made at a later date than if taken by transition committees.
- 2.14. The discrete activities of information-gathering (by transition committees) and decision-making (by the new councils) will be kept apart. This encourages complete and impartial information gathering, not influenced or limited by desired outcomes.
- 2.15. Business-based decisions will have the authority and support of the new council, reducing the need for interim plans and revisions.

- 2.16. Wherever appropriate, staff and officers in existing councils continue to be employed by those councils for the purpose of service delivery throughout the shadow period. This may relieve some immediate concerns among the workforce, as employment will be secure for an additional period before transferring to the new councils.
- 2.17. Standard practice in other jurisdictions:
- Wales (legislation effective from 5 July 1994, new local authorities effective 1 April 2006)
 - Scotland (legislation effective from 8 November 1994, affecting new local authorities established on or after 1 April 1996)
 - England (continuous restructuring on a local basis through local implementation orders or structural change orders).
- 2.18. During meetings and discussions, officials from Great Britain have emphasised the benefits of including a shadow period as part of the reorganisation process, and have expressed surprise that a shadow period for Northern Ireland should be under question.
- 2.19. Pressure for immediate delivery by the new councils of day to day frontline services will be relieved. With the old councils retaining the dominant role in service delivery throughout the shadow period, the new councils will be able to focus on strategy and planning for future service delivery and the development of the new council.

3. Potential disadvantages of this approach

- 3.1. The Secretary of State agreed to postpone local government elections due in 2009 by 2 years – “an exceptional but necessary step in the circumstances”. The Secretary of State has not been asked to extend the term of office for existing council members beyond this and may be unwilling to do so.
- 3.2. The right to free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot is enshrined in Article 3 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. Although the electorate will have a voice in 2011, the “old” councillors elected in 2005 remain in office until 2012. The longer the period of postponement / extension, the greater the risk of challenge under the Human Rights Act 1998 on the basis that democratic rights have not been observed.
- 3.3. Depending on the number of councillors availing of the proposed severance scheme, casual vacancies on the old councils may be filled through co-option by members who have never faced the public vote, and who are lacking in experience of local government. Extending the life of the old councils during a shadow period will also extend the period in which they will operate under inexperienced members.
- 3.4. There is a risk of a loss of momentum in the process of reorganisation: there is still a substantial amount of work that needs to be done, and the deadlines are still very challenging.
- 3.5. This approach will prolong the period of uncertainty for officers and staff in councils before the final position is established.
- 3.6. Some councils may already be working towards an end date of May 2011, tailoring forward business plans accordingly.

- 3.7. The obvious costs of running two sets of councils simultaneously will attract criticism, even though neither set of councils would be delivering the full range of services or discharging the full range of functions.
- 3.8. Based on a shadow period that comes to an end on 1 April 2012, almost 10 years will have passed since the abolition of the current 26 councils was first mooted.
- 3.9. There may be some confusion among members of the public, being unsure of which council to approach for assistance and advice.

Appendix 3

DELIVERING ON THE REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

CREATING STRONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A Paper Outlining a local Government Preferred Approach

August 2008

Context

1. The Review of Public Administration (RPA) initiated by the devolved Assembly was announced in September 2002. It was subsequently overseen by direct rule Ministers from October 2002 until May 2006, when devolution was restored. In July 06, the then Minister for the Environment, Arlene Foster MLA, initiated a further Review of the Local Government Aspects of the Review of Public Administration.
2. Arlene Foster MLA announced the outcome of the review to the Assembly on March 31st 2007. The key elements of the final decisions were:-
 - the rationalisation in the number of local authorities in Northern Ireland from 26 to 11, to be effective from May 2011
 - the transfer of a range of functions from central to local government including planning, regeneration, public realm aspects of local roads, and some minor economic development, tourism and housing related functions
 - the creation of new Community Planning and Wellbeing Powers for Local Government
 - Statutory Governance arrangements
 - A clear indication that the strengthening of local government would be “a process and not an event” and that a further review would be carried out 12 months after the new councils become operational
 - Central and Local Government to work in partnership to deliver the Programme for Government and the vision for local government
4. In the announcement the Minister set out a vision for Local Government.

“Our vision for local government is therefore one of a strong, dynamic local government creating communities that are vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe, sustainable and have the needs of all citizens at their core. Central to the vision is the provision of high quality, efficient services that respond to the needs of people and continuously improve over time. That vision resonates with the Executive’s Programme for Government and the strategic priorities contained within it. It also reflects the strong desire that central and local government should work in partnership to deliver the Programme for Government and the vision for local government.”
5. The **vision** articulated in the announcement is consonant with the vision outlined by NILGA at its conference on 16/17 February 2006. This vision recognises the requirement that

citizens' needs need to be at the centre of delivering public services. It further recognises the need to integrate public services both to serve the public more effectively and to provide better value for money. Finally it recognised that for community planning to work local government, central government, statutory agencies and the voluntary community and private sector will have to build relationships and **common cause** on what they are trying to achieve.

6. In the context of the discussion about the future relationship between central and local government and the transfer of functions from central government to local government it is important to note the principles underpinning the Review.
 - (1) **Subsidiarity** – the need to balance the efficiency of regional service delivery against local democracy and local responsiveness;
 - (2) **Equality and Good Relations** – in terms of service delivery, diversity and employment, the governance of organisations including the Councils and the embracement of principles set out in A Shared Future – The Framework for Good Relations;
 - (3) **Common Boundaries** – experience elsewhere demonstrates that people can understand public services better when they are delivered in common boundaries which also make it much easier for organisations to deliver real joined-up services; and
 - (4) **Strong Local Government** – all the Review consultations saw people strongly in support of local government as the centrepiece in service delivery and local democracy.
7. The RPA is now reaching the critical stage of implementation where functions will be transferred from central government to local government. It is essential that there is a common understanding across central government on the purpose and vision underpinning the transfer of functions to local government. Local Government now calls upon the Minister and Executive Colleagues **agree a set of principles to firmly set the context in which the implementation work for the transfer of functions should be approached.**
8. Such a statement of principles will serve to ensure that both central and local government are working in partnership to a common vision and that the transfer of functions takes place in an environment of trust, mutual regard and the common cause of providing integrated public services meeting the needs of our citizens. NILGA therefore requests the Minister of the Environment in line with the specified vision to endorse the principles set out below and to seek agreement from Ministerial colleagues to inform the manner in which the Departments and local government approach the work of implementing the transfer of functions to local government.
9. The purpose of the transfer of functions to local government is to create a strong local government having direct control over local services which are delivered in a manner responsive to local needs. Such services must be provided fairly and equitably and in a manner which ensures value for money. Community planning is the mechanism through which the aim of integrated public services responsive to the needs of local communities will be pursued. This will require both central and local government to look at the manner in which services are delivered at the moment and the manner in which resources are allocated.
10. The common aim of both central and local government is to work in partnership to create sustainable, safe and fair communities that live in attractive places and enjoy effective public services and a good quality of life. Such communities will also be economically

successful and socially cohesive with an appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of people from all backgrounds, providing opportunities for business and individuals to thrive in a sustainable manner.

Local Government Requests

11. **Local government therefore requests the Minister of the Environment to endorse the following set of principles and to seek agreement from Ministerial colleagues to agree the statement of principles and subsequently ensure that Government Departments adhere to these principles when transferring functions to local government.**

Local Government feel the following statement of principles to guide the work would be appropriate.

- (1) The transfer of functions to local government will be governed by the vision and guiding principles set out in the Ministers speech, as reiterated above in paragraphs 2-6 above.**
- (2) To build and sustain the trust that will create the relationships to deliver community planning, the transfer of functions must take place in an open and transparent manner. This will require the Departments and agencies transferring functions and representatives of local government to hold early and open conversations involving the mutual exchange of information on the resources and capacity of the functions being transferred.**
- (3) This work should be facilitated within the arrangements for the task force, ensuring a timetable, consultation arrangements and a project plan for implementation is prepared and overseen by the Minister in liaison with the Strategic Leadership Board.**
- (4) Reports on the transfer of individual functions should be prepared by individual Departments and be reported to the Minister and Strategic Leadership Board for endorsement.**
- (5) Ministers should require Departments to prepare reports in consultation with local government and each report going to the Strategic leadership Board should be signed off by both parties indicating the areas of agreement and disagreement.**
- (6) Ministers should require their Departments to prepare these reports based on the following principles:**
 - (a) All services announced by the Minister as transferring to local government will transfer (subject to discussions with local government on some minor items).**
 - (b) A clear definition will be provided for of the transferring functions in terms of their scope, currently policy, associated resources and current governance arrangements.**
 - (c) A clear time line and project plan will set out the methodology and processes (including consultation arrangements) necessary for the timely transfer of functions.**
 - (d) Functions being transferred should be sufficiently funded at the point of transfer to ensure that the same quality of service is available to citizens pre- and post-transfer in a manner that ensures that at the point of transfer there is no additional cost to the ratepayer.**
 - (e) All the resources associated with the function in terms of estate, fleet and human resources together with a proportionate amount of the**

back office administration and human resources associated with the exercise of the function will transfer.

- (f) Both parties recognise that it is essential that skilled staff are transferred with the function as it is these staff who will ensure that services to citizens are maintained and improved. Discussions will take place between both parties to agree the number, capacity levels and skills of staff who should transfer.
- (g) The Minister in liaison with the Strategic Leadership Board will determine whether the above principles have been complied with when considering the reports from the individual Departments and if there is disagreement will consider taking independent advice on the arguments put before them.
- (h) The Minister and Strategic Leadership Board recognise that it is vital to maintain staff motivation and morale through a period of radical change and therefore undertake that the principle of parity will apply to all staff who are affected by the change whether they be in local or central government. This means that the same compensation and transfer arrangements will apply and that the principle of fair and equal treatment will be at the heart of all decisions.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Local Government Boundaries
Date:	24th October, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services
Contact Officer:	Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services

Purpose of Report

To bring to the Members' attention the release of the provisional recommendations of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner.

Background

The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner has released his recommendations on the new Local Government Boundaries in the Province.

He has proposed 11 Council areas with the undernoted names:

1. Belfast City Council
2. Derry City and Strabane District Council
3. Armagh and City and Bann District Council
4. Lisburn City and Castlereagh District Council
5. Newry City and Down District Council
6. Antrim and Newtownabbey District Council
7. Ards and North Down District Council
8. Causeway Coast District Council
9. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
10. Mid Antrim District Council
11. Mid Ulster District Council

The number of wards, and therefore Councillors, in each District, with the exception of Belfast, is 40. The number in Belfast is 60. The total number of Councillors will be 460, which represents a reduction of 122.

Belfast

The Commissioner has recommended that the boundary of the Belfast City Council Local Government District should reflect the City's natural setting within the surrounding hills, a number of landscape features and several major roads. He has proposed that:

9 localities – Gilnahirk, Tullycarnet, Braniel, Castlereagh, Merok, Cregagh, Wynchurch, Glencreagh and Belvoir – be transferred from the current Castlereagh Borough Council area into Belfast;

6 localities – Collin Glen, Poleglass, Lagmore, Twinbrook, Kilwee and Dunmurray – be transferred from the existing Lisburn City Council area into Belfast; and

1 small area of housing at Knocknagoney be transferred from the existing North Down Borough Council area to Belfast.

I have attached to the report a map showing in yellow the areas to be included within the new Belfast boundary. These changes would increase the population of the City to 318,000, with the eligible electorate rising by 32,000 to 190,000.

Consultation Process

The Commissioner is seeking views on all aspects of his provisional recommendations, including the boundaries and the names of the new Local Government Districts and the number, boundaries and names of the wards making up each District. Written comments are sought by 12th November, 2008. Following that there will be a series of public hearings in each of the new Local Government Districts, with the Belfast hearings scheduled for 20th and 21st November in Malone House commencing at 10.00 a.m. Thereafter the Commissioner will submit his final recommendations to the Department of the Environment by June, 2009. These will be laid before the Assembly for approval.

Issues for consideration by Belfast City Council

In addition to the obvious political issues relating to revised Local Government boundaries, there are other issues which will have to be considered:

- the resource implications for services such as refuse collection and street cleansing;
- the potentially significant increase in the Council's demographic profile in terms of TSN areas; and
- the impact on leisure provision.

Resource implications

Whilst it is certain that there will be significant financial implications arising from the expansion of the boundary of the city in terms of the potential impact on its rate base, both domestic and commercial, this impact has not been quantified yet. Any consideration of the impact of the proposed changes to the city's boundary would need to be set within the context of the expansion of Council services into the merging areas and the potential requirement for new facilities.

Furthermore, the reconfiguration of the local government boundaries may result in the Council taking ownership of additional areas of open space and/or facilities (e.g. community, leisure). Again, an assessment will need to be undertaken to identify such facilities, examine fitness for purpose and to quantify the potential capital/revenue implications for the Council.

Such consideration will be taken forward within the context of the Council's ongoing work in regard to the rates and the continued engagement within the wider Review of Public Administration process. Further reports will be submitted, for the consideration of the Committee, in due course.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to consider whether the Council should prepare a corporate response to the Commissioner's provisional recommendations or whether responses should more appropriately be left to the individual Political Parties.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Date:	Friday, 24 th October, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Gerry Millar (ext 6217)

1.0	<u>Relevant background information</u>
1.1	Members will be aware of the ongoing discussions over recent months with regard to the Council's relationship with and engagement within the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and the concerns of Members in terms of the level of capacity within the Association, the subscription contributions sought from the Council, the value for money received and the lack of representation on NILGA's Executive.
1.2	Members will recall that the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 23 rd May, agreed to write to NILGA indicating that it would willing to pay a reduced annual subscription of £79,230 (excluding VAT) for the period 2008/2009 which would be proportionate to the percentage of the Northern Ireland population rather than the £104,328 subscription charge requested by NILGA which is based on the penny rate product.
1.3	At its meeting on 19 th September 2008, the Committee had been informed that NILGA had written to the Council, dated 17 th July 2008, to report that its Executive had agreed in principle to the reduced subscription fee and had set out proposals to further strengthen the Councils relationship with the Association including additional places for Belfast City Council on its Executive, the designation of a NILGA liaison officer and the provision of officer support to NILGA.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	It is important to recognise that there is a high level of expertise and capacity which exists within the Council which could be used to inform the ongoing debate within NILGA. At present the Council is directly engaged, at both elected Member and official level, in a range of working groups and forums established by NILGA to take forward particular issues (please refer to Appendix 1). Members may wish to revisit the Councils current membership on the <u>working groups</u> and feedback to officers any proposed changes that they may wish to make.
2.2	Strengthened role for the Council on NILGA's Executive Committee
2.2.1	As previously discussed, NILGA's Executive has agreed that Belfast City Council would secure two additional places (bringing the total to five) on NILGA's Executive. These appointments will be drawn from the Council's overall membership on NILGA and agreed through discussions between NILGA's DUP and SF nominating officers and the Council's DUP and SF Party Group Leaders.
2.3	Belfast City Council NILGA Liaison Officer
2.3.1	Members will recall that the Committee, at its meeting on 17 th September 2008, agreed that the Director of Core Improvement would be designated as the NILGA liaison officer and would accordingly have the option to attend Executive meetings of NILGA as an observer.
2.4	Current role of NILGA
2.4.1	NILGA is firmly anchored within the established decision making machinery and implementation structures established to take forward the Review of Public Administration process. NILGA facilitated the nomination process for the RPA Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels and provide Joint Secretariat support, alongside DoE officials, to these structures. The Joint Secretariat is contributing also to the development of policy and discussion papers which are being submitted to the SLB and PDPs for consideration. NILGA has an established internal RPA Working Group on which the Council is represented.

2.4.2	It is important to recognise that whilst NILGA is one key component in supporting the RPA, local authorities (at both elected Member and Officer level) are a constituent part of the process as it is important that the implementation of the RPA is 'owned' by the whole sector.
2.4.3	It is suggested that the Council could use its strengthened role within the NILGA Executive and its direct Member and officer interface with NILGA to further reinforce the Council's engagement and overall influence within the RPA process.
2.4.4	The establishment of a more formalised link between NILGA and the Council and a structured approach to liaison between both parties, will enable the Council to inform and somewhat shape the ongoing agenda of NILGA and help raise the bar in terms of planning and policy development within NILGA and across the wider local government sector. Accordingly, the support and advice provided by the Council to NILGA will benefit the wider local government sector. This should be considered, in particular, within the context of the RPA process.
2.4.5	NILGA has also taken a leading role in advocating on behalf of the local government sector and in co-ordinating the development of sectoral position papers on key policy areas including, for example, Review of Public Administration, local government modernisation, European affairs, health and environmental issues, planning, e-government etc. NILGA has established a series of working groups to take forward detailed consideration of these important issues and the Council has been engaged within this process.
2.4.6	With a view to enhancing their capacity, NILGA has recently strengthened their senior management team with the appointment of a Director of Improvement, a Director of Policy and Strategy and Director of Communications. These posts have been funded by the Department of Environment (DoE).
2.5	Future role of NILGA
2.5.1	Members will accept that the future role and remit of NILGA post RPA is somewhat uncertain at this stage. NILGA themselves have indicated that the Association would be subject to review in the lead up to the new local government structures to be put in place in 2011.
2.5.2	The future role and remit of NILGA is being considered within the context of the ongoing discussions at RPA Policy Development Panel (PDP) A regarding the future of central / local government relations within Northern Ireland. PDP A is currently reviewing the Welsh Local Government Association model as part of this process.
2.5.3	The Council has previously documented the need for a remodelled Local Government Association which is highly attuned, responsive and accountable to its constitute Councils and which provides a coherent single voice for the local government sector within Northern Ireland. Within the context of a smaller number of constitute Councils post 2011, there is a real opportunity to develop a more focused and effective role for NILGA as the representative voice of local government.
3.0	Newtownabbey Borough Council withdrawal from NILGA
3.1	Members will note that Newtownabbey Borough Council has formally withdrawn from NILGA with effect from 1 October 2008. NILGA has indicated that they are currently assessing the impact of this decision on the Association and its role as the representative voice of local government.

4.0 Resource Implications

Financial and Human Resources

- There will be Human Resources implications (in terms of Member and Officer time) attached to the Council's continued engagement with NILGA and associated working groups.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to:
- a) note the contents of this report; and
 - b) consider whether they wish to make any proposed changes to the Council's current membership on NILGA's working groups;

6.0 Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Belfast City Council support /representation on NILGA Working Groups

NILGA Full Membership

Cllr Tom Hartley	Cllr Mrs Ruth Patterson	Cllr Francis McCann MLA
Cllr Danny Lavery	Cllr Patrick McCarthy	Cllr Jim Kirkpatrick
Cllr Bob Stoker	Cllr Tom Ekin	Cllr May Campbell
Cllr Jim Rodgers	Cllr Michael Browne	Cllr Robin Newton MLA
Cllr Tim Attwood	Cllr Cathal Mullaghan	Cllr Marie Moore
Cllr Sammy Wilson MLA MP		

NB. The full membership has remained the same since the AGM.

NILGA Executive Members

- Cllr Francis McCann, MLA
- Cllr May Campbell
- Cllr Cathal Mullaghan

N.B: Two additional BCC (1 DUP and 1 SF) places has been secured and still to be confirmed

RPA IMPLEMENTATION STCUTURES

RPA Strategic Leadership Board

- Cllr Alex Maskey, MLA
- Peter McNaney

RPA Policy Development Panel A

- Cllr Pat Convery
- Ciaran Quigley
- Gerry Millar

PDP A: Community Planning

- Marie-Therese McGlvern

Policy Development Panel B

- Cllr Janice Austin
- Cllr Bob Stoker
- Trevor Martin

PDP B: Performance Management Working Group

- Ronan Cregan

PDP B: Customer Focus Strategy Working Group

- Trevor Martin

PDP B: Modernisation and Improvement Working Group

- Rose Crozier

- Ronan Cregan

RPA Policy Development Panel C

PDP C: Human Resources Working Group

- Jill Minne

PDP C: Capacity Building Working Group

- Jill Minne (Chair)

PDP C: Finance and Estates Working Group

- Cathy Reynolds
- Trevor Salmon

Regional Co-ordinating Group

- Peter McNaney

WORKING GROUPS

RPA Working Group

- Cllr Tom Ekin
- Cllr Cathal Mullaghan
- Peter McNaney

E-government Working Group

- Rose Crozier,
- Paul Gribben
- Marie-McCrory

Waste Working Group

- Tim Walker

Planning Working Group

- Robin Boyd

EU Working Group

- Laura Leonard

NIJC

- Trevor Salmon

JNC for CE's

- Cllr Tom Hartley

Health and Environment Working Group

- Cllr Cathal Mullaghan

EU Monitoring Committees

PEACE II Monitoring Committee

- Cllr Tim Attwood
- Cllr Bob Stoker

Peace III

- Cllr Bob Stoker
- Cllr Tim Attwood

Competiveness & Employment

- Cllr Robin Newton MLA

Outside Body - Commonwealth and Local Gov Forum

- Cllr May Campbell

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Best Value Performance Indicators (2007-2008)
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, CIT
Contact Officer:	Maeve-ann Higgins, Assistant Policy & Performance Analyst, CIT Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager, CIT

Relevant Background Information

Since 2001 the Council has been preparing an annual submission of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) in accordance with our commitment to continuous improvement. This has not been a statutory requirement since the introduction of Best Value legislation in 2002 (Local Government (Best Value) Act (NI) 2002) and is completed in response to a formal request from the Local Government Division of the Department of the Environment (DoE).

Unlike Best Value regimes in other parts of the United Kingdom, central government in Northern Ireland (NI) has no power to issue directions or guidance to Councils in relation to their duty to ensure continuous improvement; the District Councils in NI are solely accountable to their Elected Members, ratepayers and the users of their services.

Concerns have continually been raised regarding the value and usefulness of some of the indicators reported; in particular the lack of clarity with certain definitions and the absence of independent validation of the data. This has resulted in variations in performance data reported across the 26 District Councils and cannot be solely attributed to variations in standards of performance but potentially a result of differing interpretation of the definitions. In recent years not all the District Councils are submitting BVPI's and it appears little is done with the figures once they are reported to the DoE Local Government Division and re-published in a "league table" form.

Recent developments in England, around the performance management of Local Government where there has been a move away from the use of over 1,000 national BVPI's (largely manifest through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime) and a subsequent move towards the use of smaller sets of indicators (c. 200) which combine robust local performance data and a Council's and its partners' own assessment of performance

(Comprehensive Area Assessments).

The performance information relating to the Council's 2007/08 financial year has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines provided by the DoE. Previous years' figures have been included for comparison purposes, where possible.

Members are asked to note that:

- (I) since 2004/05 there has been no change to the definitions of indicators collected; and
- (II) this report considers recent data relating to the 2007 public consultation survey.

Key Issues

The BVPI's for 2007/08, although not necessarily providing a balanced view of the Council's performance, do go some way in assisting the Council to assess aspects of its performance across a number of years.

Appendix 1 provides the performance data for 2007/2008 to be submitted to the DoE – including trend data from previous years and an analysis of variations.

Performance Highlights 2007/08

In general the Council has performed well in many of the key indicators and in particular improvements can be seen in areas identified as priorities for the organisation including the following:

- **% Citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by their Council has increased by 9% to 74%** in the 2007 Public Consultation Survey.
- In 2007/2008 the average number of working days per FTE lost due to absence has continued to fall by **1.17 days or a 7.75% reduction on the previous year**. This is a continuing trend and reflects the significant amount of work carried out across the organisation to reduce staff absenteeism.
- A further key priority for the citizens of Belfast has cleanliness standards across the city. This year there has been a **very impressive increase of 26% in satisfaction to 73% compared with 47% in the previous survey in 2004 and also a 5% increase in satisfaction with the refuse collection service to 83%**.

Other highlights include top performance in Food Safety and Health & Safety in the areas of management; service delivery and quality controls for Environmental Health; a 4% increase in household recycling; a 3% reduction in the net cost of waste collection per head of population and a 30% reduction in the net cost of indoor leisure per admission.

The BVPI's in spite of their limitations do provide the organisation with a means of highlighting performance across a range of key Council services and functions; particularly as the ethos of performance management is becoming embedded within the organisation.

BVPI's and RPA

The future of BVPI's remain unclear and must be viewed in the context of future regional performance management arrangements post RPA. Consideration of potential future performance arrangements is being taken forward under the auspices of the RPA Policy Development Panel C "Service Delivery" and associated Performance Management Working Group. The Council is represented on this working group and it will be important to ensure alignment between the continued work of the Council in regard to Performance Management and the emerging RPA proposals.

Belfast City Council Performance Management Framework

Further work on the development of the performance management framework via the Value Creation Map process and the recently procured Performance Management system is ongoing. Work has started to populate this system with a range of corporate and service level performance information. This will provide the Council with performance data linked to strategic objectives and priorities. It is hoped and expected that a blend of both a new regional framework and our own arrangements will provide Members and Senior Managers with the means to accurately evaluate and compare the Council's performance in the future.

Decision Required

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and approve it for submission to the DoE Local Government Division.

Documents Attached

Appendix I Best Value Performance Indicators 2007/2008

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APPENDIX I

Best Value Performance Indicators 2007/2008

Corporate Health Performance Indicators

CH/1 the net cost of Council services per head of population for 2007/08 is £434.88. This has increased from the 2006/2007 figure due to increases in expenditure in Leisure & Recreational Services and Environmental Services.

CH/2 the percentage of the Council's net expenditure compared with agreed revenue estimates has again performed well for 2007/08 (99%) and was within target for the financial year.

CH/3 74% of citizens are satisfied with the overall services provided by Belfast City Council – this represents a 9% increase on the previous overall levels of satisfaction as highlighted as 65% in 2004 when the last survey was undertaken.

CH/4 the average number of working days lost per FTE employee due to sickness absence has again decreased for a third consecutive year. This 1.17days or 7.75% reduction reflects the status of absence management as a key priority for the Council and an outcome of the Council's desire to minimise absence through a continuous and co-ordinated performance management framework which supports a consistent, fair, flexible and sympathetic approach.

Indicator		00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
CH/1	Net Cost of Council services per Head of Population	£272.67	£243.92	£307.40	£313.60	£342.51	£392.96	£368.02	£434.88
CH/2	% of Council's Net Expenditure compared with agreed Revenue Estimates	96.1%	97%	95%	93.4%	95%	97.5%	97%	99%
CH/3	% of Citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by their Council	68%	71%*	71%*	65%**	65%**	65%**	65%**	74%***
CH/4	The ave. no. of Working Days per FTE lost due to absence	12.64	13.32	14.22	15.02	16.10	15.70	15.08	13.91¹

* 2001 Public Consultation Survey

** 2004 Public Consultation Survey

*** 2007 Public Consultation Survey

¹ The figure of 13.91 days absence per full time equivalent is a combined figure relating to sickness absence and industrial injury. Before 05/06 industrial injury was not included in the figures and therefore comparison before this date is not possible.

Street Cleansing Performance Indicators

SC/1 The net cost of street cleansing per head of population has increased by 5% on the previous year to £35.99. This is largely due to a 3% increase in wages due to the introduction of Single Status in 2007/8, a 2% increase in superannuation and a 12% increase in fuel costs during the year. Taking these three increases out of the equation the revised increase would have been 2.5%.

SC/2 The level of cleanliness index achieved remains at 70%. This is higher than the Tidy NI guidance level of 67 which represents a good level of cleanliness.

SC/3 Overall the level of residents' satisfaction with cleanliness standards in Belfast has increased by 26% from 47% in the 2004 public consultation survey to 73% in the 2007 public consultation survey.

Indicator	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
SC/1 Net Cost of Street Cleansing per head of population	£26.03	£25.52	£28.01	£29.34	£31.12	£32.78	£34.27	£35.99
SC/2 Level of Cleanliness Index achieved	56	58	65	68	68	70	70	70
SC/3 % of Residents satisfied with Cleanliness Standards	61%	55%*	55%*	47%**	47%**	47%**	47%**	73%***

* 2001 Public Consultation Survey

** 2004 Public Consultation Survey

*** 2007 Public Consultation Survey

Waste Disposal Performance Indicators

	Indicator	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
WD/1	Net Cost of Municipal Waste Disposal per head of population ²	£2.25	£0.35	-£1.99	-£7.97	-£9.07	-£6.70	£4.51	£26.28
WD/2	Household Waste Recycled & Composted as a % of Arisings ³	3%	4%	4%	4.6%	9%	14%	19%	23%
WD/3	% of Residents satisfaction with the Civic Amenity Service provided by the Council ⁴	N/A	64%*	64%*	80%**	80%**	88%^	88%^	80%***

* 2001 Public Consultation Survey

** 2004 Public Consultation Survey

^ 2005 Millward Brown Independent Survey

***2007 Public Consultation Survey

WD/1 the net cost of municipal waste disposal per head of population has increased from £4.51 in 2006/07 to £26.28 in 2007/08 financial year. The reason for this increase is the phased closure of the Council's own landfill site at Dargan Road, resulting in significant income reduction from third party waste and the additional costs of disposing of waste at private contracted landfill sites.

Since the landfill site ceased accepting municipal waste from November 2006 the above costs exclude any capping and North Foreshore development works. This is consistent with the BVPI 2005/06/07 edited by Dudley for the EEC Directorate whereby the net costs of the management of old landfill sites is to be excluded. Net costs are any costs (including staff, central support services, revenue & capital charges) associated with the management, monitoring and pollution control of old landfill sites formerly operated by the Council as a WDA.

WD/2 Household waste recycled and composted as a % of arisings has increased by 4% from the previous year. The main reasons for this are (a) reduction in the growth rate of the household waste arisings figure and (b) continued emphasis on education and promotion activities to bring about behavioural change.

² This indicator was changed in 2003/04 and previously read "Net cost of waste disposal per head of population".

³ This indicator was changed in 2003/04 and previously read "Percentage of total waste received which is recycled"

⁴ This indicator was changed in 2003/04 and previously read "Level of residents' satisfaction with the Civic Amenity service adopted by the Council".

WD/3 The % Residents satisfaction with the Civic amenity service provided by Belfast City Council is 80% from the 2007 public consultation survey which is the same figure from the 2004 public consultation survey. Satisfaction remains at a high level.

Waste Collection Performance Indicators

Indicator		00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
WC/1	Net Cost of Municipal Waste Collection per head of population ⁵	£21.84	£22.59	£21.26	£21.18	£22.25	£20.79	£19.06	£18.56
WC/2	Net Cost of Collection & Treatment of Recycled / Composted Household Waste per head of population ⁶	N/A	N/A	N/A	£2.87	£3.55	£10.29	£16.88	£19.03
WC/3	% of Residents' satisfaction with the Refuse Collection Service	N/A	88%*	88%*	78%**	78%**	78%**	78%**	83%***

* 2001 Public Consultation Survey

** 2004 Public Consultation Survey

*** 2007 Public Consultation Survey

WC/1 Overall the net cost of municipal waste collection per head of population has reduced by 3%. It should be noted that the three bin system employed for the collection of recyclables and compostables was further expanded in 2007/08 for both domestic and commercial waste collection services. This expansion has resulted in a reduction in the resources required to collect residual municipal wastes.

WC/2 the net cost of collection and treatment of recycled / composted household waste per head of population has increased by 12% from the previous year. The main contributing factor is the increase in Capital accounting charges.

WC/3 Overall the level of residents' satisfaction with the refuse collection service has increased by 5% from 78% in the 2004 public consultation survey to 83% in the 2007 public consultation survey.

⁵ This indicator was changed in 2003/04 and previously read "Net cost of refuse collection per head of population".

⁶ This indicator was changed in 2003/04 and previously read "Net cost of collection and treatment of recycled waste per tonne".

Building Control Performance Indicators

Indicator		00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
BC/1	% of Domestic Plans receiving a first assessment within 15 Working Days from date of receipt	94%	13%	23%	24%	69%	89%	63%	65%
BC/2	% of Non-Domestic Plans receiving a first assessment within 25 Working Days from date of receipt	96%	9%	21%	21%	61%	70%	72%	77%
BC/3	% of Resubmissions (amended plans / information) assessed within 14 Days	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	63%	62%	44%	56%
BC/4	No. of Completions per annum / No. of Commencements per annum expressed as a %	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	120%	111%	112%	104%
BC/5	% of Gross Service Cost recovered in fee income	175%	111%	116%	127%	132%	122%	104%	107%

BC/1 The complexity of the new regulations from November 2006 is still being reflected in this year's figure which shows a very slight increase on last year's figure. This is substantiated in the low percentage of first time approval of plans. In addition the Service allocated resources toward a Vacant rating Project and a flood relief scheme both of which had considerable impact on the day to day work.

BC/2 The same rationale applies to BC/2 as BC/1. In addition the non domestic applications have continued to increase in effective turnaround time despite the new Regulations. The volume of these applications is significantly lower than domestic applications (BC/1)

BC/3 There has been a further reduction of 8% for first time approvals, which in turn has led to more resubmissions being required. There is still unfamiliarity with the new Regulations therefore there can be several resubmissions in relation to one application. In spite of this the return shows a 12% increase in target being achieved and this reflects the effort made to train staff in all the complexities of the new regulations.

BC/4 The Valuation Survey scheme, integration with the property certificates function and the continuous efforts by management to ensure this is a priority task has ensured the Service exceeds the 1:1 Ratio by addressing legacy work.

BC/5 Once again the Service has achieved in excess of the 100% figure for Building Regulation. However we feel that the full impact of the current squeeze on the building industry is not reflected in the figure and we expect this will be more evident in next years return.

Indoor Leisure Performance Indicators

	Indicator	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
IL/1	Net Cost of Indoor Leisure per head of population	£37.87	£37.53	£49.36	£46.77	£49.55	£60.32	£51.02	£43.69
IL/2	Net Cost of Indoor Leisure per admission	£5.39	£5.40	£7.45	£6.99	£9.28	£9.73	£8.56	£5.63
IL/3	No. of Admissions per 1,000 population	7,030	6,950	6,620	6,692	5,339	6,197	5,816	7,577
IL/4	% level of Customer Satisfaction with Indoor Leisure ⁷	69%	59%*	59%*	57%**	75%^	91%^	91%^	70%***
IL/5	Annual Energy used expressed in Gigajoules per Hour per Square Metre	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.05Gj	1.83Gj	N/A	1.03Gj	2.15Gj
IL/6	Nature & Scale of provision of Indoor Leisure ⁸	N/A	N/A	N/A	536.22	502.06	342.34	340.13	367.77
IL/7	Existence & Performance of quality Health & Safety arrangements	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	7	7	7

* 2001 Public Consultation Survey

** 2004 Public Consultation Survey

^ Service Satisfaction Survey

*** 2007 Public Consultation Survey

IL/1 the reported net cost of indoor leisure per head of population has decreased from the previous year's figure of £51.02. Investment in upgrading our buildings, equipment, and membership packages have seen a reported 20% increase in income.

A new methodology for calculating capital charges was also adopted, leading to a reported fall in capital (depreciation) charges, from £4,268,785 in 2006/07 to £2,838,629 in 2007/08. If capital charges figures are discounted then the

⁷ This indicator was changed in 2003/04 and previously read "Level of residents' satisfaction with Indoor Leisure services".

⁸ This indicator is calculated by measuring the square metres of available floor space against the number of activities carried out.

reported net cost per head of population for 2007/08 is £33.08 compared to a revised 2006/07 figure of £35.05, a fall of £1.97 per head of population, or 6%.

IL/2 in 2007/08 reported admission exceeded 2 million for the first time, due to the reasons detailed in IL/1 above. If the discounted figure for 2006/07 is used, then the reported net cost per admission for 2007/08 is £4.26, compared to a revised 2006/07 figure of £6.05, a cost reduction of 30% per admission.

IL/3 the number of admissions per 1,000 population has increased by 30%, as per detail in IL/1 and IL/2

IL/4 this figure of 70% is taken from the 2007 Public Consultation Survey. Whilst it shows a decrease on the service satisfaction survey carried out in 2005, it shows a marked increase in satisfaction when compared with the 2004 Public Consultation Survey with an increase of 13% in user satisfaction from 57% in 2004 to 70% in 2007.

IL/5 In 2007/08 Centres returned to full operation, following closures for the Building Upgrade Programme in previous years. This, plus increased opening hours, greater throughput, and an ageing building stock has led to greater reported energy consumption compared to 2006/07. It is hoped that planned energy efficiency measures will see a reduction in the reported figure for this indicator from 2008/09 onwards.

IL/6 Increased opening hours and a revised activity programme has led to an enhanced service provision, resulting in an increase figure for this indicator.

IL/7 is the average health and safety score achieved by the QUEST registered Centres within Belfast City Council.

Environmental Health Performance Indicators

The three performance indicators for Environmental Health represent an overall score calculated for each of the performance indicators using matrices provided by the DoE. The three PIs for 2007/08 are:

- **EH/1 Management**
- **EH/2 Performance (Service Delivery)**
- **EH/3 Review (Quality Controls)**

Performance is measured for parameters such as the development and the implementation of enforcement policies and the management of inspection programmes and complaint responses. It also considers Departments' policies and actions in developing joint working arrangements and consultation with customers.

Performance across the different parameters is expressed as a percentage of achievement against the best standard, providing a detailed profile allowing comparison with other Councils and facilitating improvement plans. The performance indicators are set out as matrices for core functions within Environmental Health and include Health & Safety Enforcement and Food Safety.

Indicator		Health & Safety Enforcement			
		04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
EH/1	Management	B	C	A	A
EH/2	Performance	A	A	A	A
EH/3	Review	A	B	B	A

Indicator		Food Safety			
		04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
EH/1	Management	D	B	A	A
EH/2	Performance	D	A	A	A
EH/3	Review	D	B	A	A

- A above mean by >1 standard deviation
 B above mean within 1 standard deviation
 C below mean within 1 standard deviation
 D below mean by 1 standard deviation

Health & Safety Enforcement

There has been an overall improvement for a second year with Belfast City Council achieving above the collective average in the three areas of management, performance and review. This is reflected in the results where the Council has maintained an A in both management and performance and moved from a B to an A in Review.

This is the fourth year using the improved matrix so it is possible to make comparisons with last year and demonstrate improvement.

Food Safety

Belfast City Council's performance against the Food Safety indicators in the matrix for 2007/08 show improvement has been maintained at a high level. The Council has continued to provide a high quality food safety service.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Date:	Friday, 24th October, 2008
Subject:	National Association of Councillors - Annual General Meeting and Conference
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)
Contact Officer:	Mrs. Julie Lilley, Members' Liaison Officer (extension 6321)

Relevant Background Information

The National Association of Councillors is holding its Annual General Meeting and Conference in Lytham St Annes from Friday, 14th until Sunday, 16th November.

The theme of this years Conference is 'Improving Services –Delivering Best Practice'. The Conference will consider the ongoing challenge to continue improving public services to meet rising citizen expectations. The Conference will also provide an opportunity to hear from a number of expert speakers, participate in interactive question and answer sessions and hear of best practice in other Local Authorities.

The Council has been a member of the National Association of Councillors for a considerable period of years and has been represented at previous Conferences. Those Members who have attended have found it to be a valuable opportunity to increase their awareness of Members' issues and to discuss with other Councillors from across England, Scotland and Wales issues of mutual interest and concern.

Key Issues

The business of the Conference falls within the criteria set out in Section 38 of the 1972 Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act in that it involves issues connected with the discharge of the functions of the Council and/or affecting the district or its inhabitants.

Resource Implications	
Delegate Fee:	£350
Travel:	£105
Accommodation:	£130
	—
Total per delegate:	£585

Recommendations
<p>It is recommended that the Committee agrees to authorise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the attendance at the Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors, Northern Ireland Region, the Head of Committee and Members' Services (or their nominees) and a representative of the Party Grouping on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members; and ▪ the payment of the conference fees and the appropriate travelling and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

Key to Abbreviations
N/A

Documents Attached
N/A



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality
Date:	Friday, 24 th October, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (ext. 6325)
Contact Officer:	Ms. Sandra Robinson, Lord Mayor's Principal Officer (ext. 6244)

Relevant Background Information

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

Key Issues

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

Resource Implications

Provision has been made in the Revenue Estimates for hospitality.

Recommendations

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

Key to Abbreviations

Not applicable

Documents Attached

None

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Appendix 1

**SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE CITY HALL AND THE
PROVISION OF HOSPITALITY**

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date – Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
The Law Society of Northern Ireland	The Law Society of Northern Ireland Council Dinner 1st October, 2010 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.	This event seeks to provide an opportunity for representatives from the judiciary, business, voluntary and community sectors to come together to acknowledge the achievements of the society. The event aims to highlight best practice and to develop relations with key stakeholders. This event meets the Council's Corporate Strategic Objective of Improving Quality of Life, Now and for Future Generations	The provision of hospitality in the form of wines and soft drinks. Approximate cost £1,500 Approximate budget remaining £ 168,560
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Queen's University Belfast	Frank Pantridge's Legacy : A Symposium 11 th June, 2009 Approximately 200 attending	The provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception.	It is estimated that 100 delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city.	The provision of hospitality in the form of wines and soft drinks. Approximate cost £800 Approximate budget remaining £167,730

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Audit Panel

Monday, 29th September, 2008

MEETING OF AUDIT PANEL

Members present: Councillor Rodgers (Chairman); and
Councillors Ekin, Lavery, Mullaghan and Rodway.

In attendance: Mr. A. Wilson, Head of Audit, Governance and
Risk Services;
Mr. A. Harrison, Acting Corporate Assurance
Manager;
Mrs. G. Ireland, Corporate Risk and Governance
Manager;
Mr. L. Mulholland, Auditor;
Mr. H. Downey, Committee Administrator; and
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from the external Member Dr. Smith.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5th August were taken as read and signed as correct.

Staff Travel Policy

The Panel was reminded that, at its meeting on 5th August, it had recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve an amended the Staff Travel Policy. The Committee Administrator reported that at its meeting on 22nd September the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had adopted that recommendation. However, at the Council meeting on 1st September, that minute had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration. Following discussion at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th September, it had been agreed that, in connection with points 4.4 and 4.5 of the Travel Policy, which referred to the purchase in certain circumstances of business class air travel and the use of airport business lounges, the Policy be amended so that these matters be subject to the approval of the relevant Committees. He pointed out that this decision would, of course, be subject to ratification by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

Noted.

Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to bring Members of the Audit Panel up to date with the most recent activities in the following areas:

- Risk Management, including the implications for future internal audit work
- Governance; and
- Business Continuity.

Relevant Background Information

The terms of reference for the Council’s Audit Panel state that part of its responsibility will be *‘to monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance of the Council.’* In accordance with this role, the plan of Audit Panel business for 2008 / 2009 provides for an update to Members on the current risk management arrangements and related activity at this Audit Panel meeting.

Members will recall that the Council is obliged to implement risk management and governance processes to ensure that the Council is compliant with the recent amendments in legislation.

In addition, the DOE also advised that they considered the CIPFA Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2007) to be appropriate professional guidance regarding proper practices. These practices embraced the wider governance issues and were not confined to risk management activities.

Key Issues

Implementation of Risk Management

The Council has a risk management strategy in place which outlines the approach we have adopted to implement risk management. A number of activities have taken place in line with this strategy including:

- A corporate risk register has been created which identifies the management of risks which chief officers feel are the greatest risk to the achievement of Council objectives.

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- Risk registers are in place for all Departments, and for their critical services / units and major corporate projects. The registers contain details relating to risks and causes which have been identified in relation to the department or service objectives
- Ongoing facilitation of the risk management process by AGRS
- The process of management of risk is reported on a quarterly basis to Senior Management Teams, the Assurance Board and periodically to the Audit Panel.

Identified risks must be evaluated to give an indication of their relative importance against objectives. Managers consider the risks against the likelihood of them occurring or the impact were they to do so. The overall evaluation of this is defined in the risk matrix. This evaluation is necessary so that operational staff can target the limited resource they have available to manage key risks. Risks are categorised as green, amber and red, with red risks being the most serious and always requiring active action to manage them.

It is this robust risk management process which has allowed senior staff to develop their annual management 'sign-offs' as part of the process of preparing the Annual Governance Statement.

How good is the process?

Risk management is acknowledged as a process which takes a number of years to become embedded into an organisation's culture. In our view there is a general awareness of risk management processes in Belfast City Council but there is still further work to be done to integrate risk management fully into business planning processes.

Moving forward how can the risk management process be used to give further assurances on the management of risk?

In order to give senior management and Members assurance, an element of internal audit resource must be targeted on the areas of the greatest risk within the Council. Where management have adopted a reliable process of managing their key risks, then it follows that process can be audited.

The AGRS plan for 2008/09 took account of the need for an objective review of the risk management process and the management of key risks. These reviews will provide evidence for the Head of AGRS to form an opinion on the Council's risk management processes and provide assurance to the Assurance Board and relevant Directors regarding the risk management process and controls.

Code of Governance

The CIPFA Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2007) brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, fundamental principles of corporate governance and management processes. Crucially it states good governance relates to the whole Council and therefore a more holistic approach needs to be adopted. A copy of this framework can be found in the Members' Library; in addition, we will be issuing Audit Panel Members with their individual copy.

A Code of Governance was produced for the Council in which we adopted the six core governance principles outlined in the framework.

The Code sets out the measures currently in place to show how we are demonstrating good governance and highlights the wider proposed actions we intend to implement to improve our position. Most importantly, the Code is a prerequisite to the Council being able to produce the Annual Governance Statement. This is the formal statement that explains and publishes the Council's governance arrangements in its Annual Financial Report. For the 2007 / 2008 financial year, this statement was signed by the Chief Executive, the Accounting Officer and the Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. During 2008/09 we plan to take action to communicate the Code.

Business Continuity Management

I can give assurance that in line with a COMT decision, the Council has now implemented BCM. This was a huge piece of work which has taken several years to achieve and involved the identification and participation of all critical services. BCM will help us anticipate, prepare, respond to and recover from the impact of disruptive events, including a pandemic.

All critical services and their relative importance to Council objectives have been identified. For information, a list of the agreed critical services is attached at Appendix A. BCM strategies and plans or aide memories as appropriate were then produced for these services.

At a corporate level we also have the following plans:

- A Council-wide IT business continuity plan which focus's IT resource
- An accommodation plan which outlines how to relocate displaced staff
- In addition, BCM activities have been included in the Council Emergency Plan.

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The Council also has a strategic pandemic plan in addition to individual critical services plans; these indicate how services would continue to deliver their service during a pandemic.

We are currently implementing a programme of testing the service BCM plans.

Finally to give assurance on the process adopted we have been working with BCM qualified consultants who have given an assurance on the BCM framework we have adopted.

Resource Implications

There are no significant resource implications arising from this report. The resources required are included in the AGRS plan for 2008/09.

Recommendations

That the Audit Panel note this report

Key to Abbreviations

AGRS - Audit, Governance and Risk Services
BCM - Business Continuity Management
CIPFA - Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
COMT - Chief Officers Management Team
DOE - Department of the Environment
IT - Information Technology

Documents Attached

Critical Services (BCM) – Appendix A

Appendix A

Belfast City Council Critical Services

The following services have produced BCM strategies and/or plans.

Health & Environmental Services Department, individual service strategies and plans

- Cleansing
- Waste management
- Building Control
- Environmental Health Service

Development Department, departmental overview strategy and plan / aide memoir

- Waterfront Hall / Ulster Hall
- Community Services

Corporate Services Department, individual service strategies and plans

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Central Transaction Unit
- Information Services Belfast
- Property Maintenance Unit
- Fleet Maintenance Unit
- Facilities Management
- Births Deaths and Marriages

Parks and Leisure Department, individual service strategies and plans / aide memoir

- Bereavement services
- Belfast zoological garden
- Leisure centres

Legal Services Department, departmental overview strategy and plan”

During discussion in the matter, several Members expressed surprise that, given the likely cost to the Council arising from any failure to put in place by 2012 appropriate arrangements for the treatment of residual waste, the risk was rated in the Corporate Risk Register as significant rather than major. It was pointed out that any inaction by the Council in this regard could result in substantial fines for non-compliance with the relevant legislation. They suggested, therefore, that the rating be amended to reflect the seriousness of the situation.

In response, the Corporate Risk and Governance Manager indicated that the issue was rated as a high risk within the Health and Environmental Services Department’s Risk Register. However, having regard to the views of the Members she stated that she would discuss with the Director of Health and Environmental Services the upgrading of the risk from significant to high within the Corporate Risk Register.

In his capacity as Chairman of the Health and Environmental Services Committee, Councillor Mullaghan informed the Members that a report highlighting the anticipated costs to the Council of any failure to establish residual waste treatment facilities would be presented to the next monthly meeting of the Committee.

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The Corporate Risk and Governance Manager provided clarification to the Members regarding a number of the issues contained within the report. In addition, the Acting Corporate Assurance Manager reminded the Members that the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services was required to provide an annual opinion on the Council's risk management system in his Annual Assurance Statement. In order to provide information to support his opinion, Internal Audit would be auditing the process of risk management and the management of key risks in Departments.

After further discussion, the Panel agreed to note the contents of the report and the comments thereon of the officers.

Fraud and Whistleblowing Update

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services introduced to the Panel Mr. Liam Mulholland, a member of staff within the Section who was qualified in fraud investigation, who had prepared an update report regarding the Council's Policy Statement on Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing Policy. The Panel then considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to bring the Members of the Audit Panel up to date with:

**The Council's existing counter fraud arrangements / policies
New joint initiatives on tackling fraud in the Public Sector in
Northern Ireland**

Background Information

The terms of reference for the Council's Audit Panel state that part of its responsibility will be *'to monitor Council policies on Whistle blowing and the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.'* In accordance with this role, the plan of Audit Panel business for 2008 / 2009 provides for an update to Members on the current policy arrangements and related activity. As with other large organisations, the size and nature of activities undertaken by Belfast City Council (BCC) puts it at risk of loss due to fraud and corruption both from within and from outside the organisation. However, it is worth noting that the Council is not responsible for the management or administration of large benefits systems, for example, housing benefit. In this regard the level of fraud risk to which the Council is exposed is not as significant as with other large public sector organisations. However, the Council recognises that there is always a residual risk of fraud and as such has taken a number of steps to mitigate this risk, as detailed below.

Key Issues

1. The Council's existing Counter Fraud arrangements

(a) Policy arrangements

The Council's current policies with regard to Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing were approved by the Audit Panel on the 22nd of April 2004, and subsequently approved by the Policy and Resources Committee and ratified by full Council on the 1st June 2004. The policies were then publicised via the staff magazine and intranet (Belnet) site.

Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) has recently carried out a review of the key policies: i.e. the Council's 'Policy Statement on Fraud and Corruption' and the Council's 'Whistleblowing Policy.' The policies have been reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate and up to date, particularly in the light of new fraud legislation. AGRS have also carried out some benchmarking of the contents of the Council's fraud and whistleblowing policies by comparing them to those policies used by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and Sunderland City Council. This review has found that the 'Policy Statement on Fraud and Corruption' and the 'Whistleblowing Policy' used by BCC continue to reflect good practice, have served the Council well over the last 4 years and require only minor revision. The revised policies are attached as Appendices 1 and 2. The only changes we have made to the policies are:

- A description of the new Fraud Act 2006 and implications of this Act
- Minor changes to job titles (for example, change of title from 'Head of Internal Audit' to the 'Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services')
- Insertion of a paragraph on the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA).

Typically, each year there may be 2 – 3 fraud related investigations undertaken, although not all of these investigations find evidence of fraud. In the last eight years, only three of the investigations undertaken by Belfast City Council Audit, Governance and Risk Services have found evidence of fraud and in all cases disciplinary action was taken and / or the case referred to the police.

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(b) Fraud prevention

The primary responsibility for preventing fraud lies with management, through the:

- Identification of risks to which systems and procedures are exposed
- Implementation, documentation and operation of internal controls
- Establishment of an environment that promotes compliance with internal controls
- Promotion of fraud awareness amongst staff
- Fostering of an 'anti fraud' culture.

As such, the most important control over the prevention and detection of fraud is management review and supervision. The Council's Financial Regulations / Accounting Manual require departments to have local, documented procedures in place, including, where appropriate, segregation of duties within key financial processes. The Council's key financial system enforces a separation of duties within the procurement / payment process and a system of access control. In addition, the Council has a number of other written rules and procedures to guard against the risk of fraud and malpractice. The most important of these are as follows:

- Standing Orders relating to Contracts
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Scheme of Delegation / budgetary control
- Employees' Condition of Service

(c) Role of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS)

Whilst AGRS does not have direct operational responsibilities for the prevention and detection of fraud, the service does, through its audit and risk management work, contribute to the management of the risk of fraud. In terms of audit planning, the Service undertakes an annual audit needs assessment exercise. This exercise involves the identification, risk assessment, and prioritisation of auditable areas. The risk assessment specifically involves a review of 'fraud risk'. As a result, the overall programme of audit work includes coverage of areas inherently susceptible to the risk of fraud – such as income, purchasing, payments and grant schemes. Audits of these areas incorporate evaluation of the controls in place to mitigate the risk of fraud and review of samples of transactions. Where weaknesses in the systems of control are discovered we make recommendations for improvement and, in our follow up audits, we confirm whether or not the recommendations made have been implemented and report accordingly.

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AGRS may also be involved in the investigation of suspected fraud and / or whistleblowing cases that involve allegations of fraud. The service has two members of staff who have obtained the Advanced Professional Certificates in Investigative Practice (APCIP), enabling them to carry out fraud investigations in line with established best practice. In addition, AGRS will routinely liaise with the Council's Human Resources and Legal Services sections to ensure that investigations are conducted appropriately. Where investigations are undertaken a report will be produced for the Council's Fraud Response Group (FRG), summarising the findings of the investigation in relation to the initial allegation(s). The FRG comprises the Director of Corporate Services, Head of AGRS, a representative from Legal Services and a representative from Human Resources. The results of our investigations are summarised in our annual report to the Audit Panel / Assurance Board. Any instances of any actual frauds would be notified to the Department of the Environment and the Local Government Auditor (LGA). Where control weaknesses are identified during the course of investigations, we would issue appropriate audit reports with recommendations for improvement.

Over the past number of years AGRS has run some presentations / training which have covered the areas of fraud risk. We plan to do further work in this area during the course of 2008/2009, and time for this is included in our audit plan.

AGRS is therefore actively involved in promoting an anti fraud culture, but, in itself, cannot guarantee that the Council will not be affected by instances of fraud.

2. New joint initiatives on tackling fraud in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland

In recent years, government has placed greater emphasis on the management of the risk of fraud. In many ways, this interest reflects concern over levels of benefit fraud, prescription fraud etc. As noted previously, the Council does not currently administer major benefits systems so, in certain respects, there is a lower inherent risk to the Council of large scale external fraud. It should be noted however, that there remains a residual risk of fraud to the Council by virtue of its size and the nature of the activities it undertakes, many of which are conducted at disparate locations.

The practical implications of the greater emphasis on fraud in government for Belfast City Council has been increased interest from Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and the Local Government Auditor (LGA) in terms of the arrangements we have in place to manage the risk of fraud and the contribution we make to multi-agency working. Both the DFP and LGA have invited us to

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complete an annual fraud questionnaire on the Council's existing counter fraud arrangements. In addition, the Council has recently signed up to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) involving all large public sector organisations in Northern Ireland and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The MOU aims to establish a framework for ensuring that appropriate action is taken by public sector organisations in dealing with cases of suspected fraud and that the investigative process is conducted in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (PACE), where appropriate. The MOU also provides for the exchange of information between relevant parties i.e. the PSNI and any public sector organisation(s) affected, to ensure that such disclosures of information are done in a timely manner and comply with relevant legislation.

On the 6th of October 2008 the Council will be involved in carrying out a data matching exercise as part of a wider 'National Initiative' being conducted in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Audit Commission. The data matching exercise will see the Council provide payroll and creditor data to the NIAO to determine if there are any matches with data held by other public sector bodies, for the purpose of detecting potential fraud. Matched data will be forwarded to the Council for investigation.

In addition, two members of staff from AGRS recently attended a fraud seminar hosted by DFP. The seminar provided case analyses of frauds committed in some NI departments and the lessons to be learned from these particular types of fraud. AGRS is also in regular contact with the Northern Ireland Civil Service's Fraud Forum. The fraud forum comprises representatives from each Civil Service Department and the PSNI and provides an important resource in terms of keeping up to date with developments in fraud policy and investigation.

It can therefore be seen from this paper that the issue of fraud is one that is increasing in importance / profile and an area where the Council has been proactive in developing policies to reduce the risk of fraud and investigate allegations of fraud when they do arise. That said, it is also an area where there is no room for complacency and the Council will continue to devote appropriate priority to tackling fraud risk.

Resource Implications

None.

Recommendations

The Audit Panel is asked to:

- (a) Approve the updated :
 - (i) 'Policy Statement on Fraud and Corruption' (Appendix 1)
 - (ii) 'Whistleblowing Policy' (Appendix 2)
- (b) Note that these updated policies will be posted on the Council's website and re-publicised in the staff magazine.
- (c) Note ongoing developments and future work plans in relation to fraud and note that AGRS will be rolling out a programme of fraud training during 2008 / 2009.

Key to Abbreviations

AGRS	Audit, Governance and Risk Services
APCIP	Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigative Practice
BCC	Belfast City Council
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
FRG	Fraud Response Group
LGA	Local Government Audit
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Order
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland

Documents Attached

- Belfast City Council Policy Statement on Fraud and Corruption (Appendix 1)
- Belfast City Council Whistleblowing Policy (Appendix 2)

Appendix 1

POLICY STATEMENT ON FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 WHAT IS FRAUD?

Prior to 2007 there was no legal definition of fraud and in response to the growing threat of fraud the Government introduced 'The Fraud Act 2006'. The legislation became effective from the 15th January 2007. The 'Fraud Act' now provides for a general offence of fraud, with three defined

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ways of committing fraud. These are: by false representation, this section makes it an offence to commit fraud by dishonestly making a false representation to make a gain for himself or another, or to cause loss to another, or to expose them to a risk of loss. By failing to disclose information, this aspect of the Fraud Act makes it an offence to commit fraud by failing to disclose information to another person where there is a legal duty to disclose information. The legal duty may arise from statute, under oral implied, written contracts or where there is a fiduciary duty or good faith. For example, the relationship between a solicitor and client and or employer and employee. Finally, abuse of position, examples of abuse of position may include, for example, an employee who grants contracts and discounts to friends and family.

1.2 WHAT IS THE COUNCIL DOING ABOUT IT?

The Council is committed to protecting the public money it looks after and to making sure that the opportunity for fraud and corruption is reduced to the lowest possible risk. Where there is the possibility of fraud, corruption and other problems, the Council will deal with it in a firm and controlled manner.

1.3 POLICY STATEMENT

The policy statement on Fraud and Corruption applies to:

Employees
Elected Members
Contractors
Consultants
Suppliers
and Service Users as we expect the citizens of Belfast to be honest in their dealings with us

This policy statement explains the Council's position on fraud and corruption and includes a 'fraud response plan' which provides more detailed guidance on how to deal with fraud and corruption.

1.4 The main message is that the Council expects all Employees, Elected Members, contractors, consultants, suppliers and service users to be fair and honest, and to give it any help, information and support needed to deal with fraud and corruption.

- 1.5 The Council will maintain robust control mechanisms to both prevent and detect fraud and corruption. All Line Managers have a responsibility for maintaining documented control systems and must be seen to be setting an example by complying fully with all procedures, regulations and controls.**

All members of staff have a responsibility to protect the assets and reputation of the Council and are expected to be alert to the potential for fraud. Line Managers will be expected to brief staff on the common types of fraud perpetrated in their areas of responsibility.

Confidential mechanisms will be established to allow staff to report suspected frauds to Management or to the Audit, Governance and Risk Services Section. All reported suspicions will, in the first place, be referred to the Fraud Response Group which will undertake as limited a review as is necessary to establish whether the allegation does require further investigation. Details on how to raise a concern are detailed in the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

If as a result of this review it is agreed that there is sufficient evidence to justify further investigation such an investigation will be undertaken by the Audit, Governance and Risk Services Section.

If fraud is proven to involve staff, disciplinary action will be taken by management. Formal action may be taken in regard to staff who are found after investigation to have facilitated fraud as a result of a serious dereliction of duty.

The Council is committed to working and co-operating with other organisations to prevent organised fraud and corruption. Wherever possible, it will be prepared to help and exchange information with other Councils and organisations to deal with fraud.

THE DETAILED GUIDANCE

- 1.11 The guidance set out in this document covers the following areas:**
- The Council's written rules**
 - How the Council expects Members and employees to behave**
 - Preventing fraud and corruption**
 - Management responsibility and risk management**
 - Internal controls**
 - Management checks**
 - Corporate governance**

- Staff training
- Fraud detection and reporting
- Fraud Response Plan

2.0 OUR WRITTEN RULES

The Council has a number of procedures and rules to make sure that its financial, working and organisational procedures are properly controlled. These are an important part of its internal control process, and it is important that all Members and staff are aware of them.

2.2 The most important of these are as follows:

- Standing Orders relating to Contracts
- Financial Regulations
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Scheme of Delegation
- Employees' Condition of Service
- Accounting Manual

2.3 Individual departments have also introduced their own measures, which are designed to control their activities, e.g. accounting control procedures, working manual and operating procedures.

2.4 Line Managers must make sure that all staff have access to these rules and regulations and that staff receive suitable training.

2.5 Members and employees must make sure that they read and understand the rules and regulations that apply to them, and act in line with them.

2.6 If anyone breaks these rules and regulations the Council may take formal action against them.

2.7 The Council must regularly review and update its written rules.

2.8 Directors must make sure that suitable levels of internal checks are included in working procedures, particularly financial procedures. It is important that duties are organised so that no one person can carry out a complete transaction without some form of checking process being built into the system.

3.0 HOW WE EXPECT COUNCIL MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES TO BEHAVE

- 3.1** The Council expects all people and organisations that are in any way associated with it to be honest and fair in their dealings with it and our clients and customers. The Council expects our Members and employees to lead by example in these matters.
- 3.2** The Codes of Conduct for Members and employees set out an approach to work that is both honest and fair. Members and employees must act in line with the codes at all times.
- 3.3** The Council feels that Members and employees have an important part to play in dealing with fraud and corruption and will encourage staff and Members to inform us if they suspect fraud.
- 3.4** The Council will deal with all information fairly and confidentially. It will endeavour not to reveal the names of the people who gave it the information unless legally required to do so. The Council's fraud response plan gives more advice on this issue for staff.
- 3.5** The Council expects Directors to deal firmly and quickly with anyone who is responsible for fraud or corruption. The Assurance Board take the decision to refer matters to the police if they suspect any criminal activity has been carried out.
- 3.6** The Council must ensure that any investigative process is not misused and therefore any abuse, such as raising allegations that are demonstrably made for an ulterior and undesirable purpose will be deemed not to have been made in good faith and disciplinary action may be considered against the individual making the allegation.

4.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1** The primary responsibility for preventing fraud lies with Management through:
- Identification of risks to which systems and procedures are exposed
 - The implementation, documentation and operation of internal controls.
 - Establishing an environment that promotes compliance with internal controls.
 - Promoting fraud awareness amongst staff.
 - Fostering an 'anti fraud' culture.

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- 4.2 However, while Managers are responsible for assessing and controlling the level of risk within their areas of authority, it is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of fraud and take the necessary steps to minimise the risk to the Council.
- 4.3 Managing the risk of fraud is the same in principle as managing any other business risk. It is best approached systematically both at organisational and operational level. Managers should identify risk areas, assess the scale of risk, allocate responsibility for managing specific risks and implement and test controls to minimise the risks.
- 4.4 Management also have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with common fraud techniques in areas for which they have control. This should include being alert to signs which may indicate that fraud is taking place. These may include:
- staff under stress without a heavy workload
 - unexplained wealth and sudden change in lifestyles
 - staff always working late
 - new staff resigning quickly
 - original documents being lost and replaced by photocopies
 - suppliers/contractors/customers insisting on dealing with a particular member of staff
 - excessive use of correcting fluids
 - cosy relationships with suppliers/contractors/customers
 - reluctance of staff to take leave
 - sudden changes in behaviour
 - staff refusing promotion.
- 4.5 Management will support the Council's responsibilities and will co-operate with Audit, Governance and Risk Services, other involved services and the Police in the detection, reporting and investigation of fraud and corruption, including prosecution of offenders. Audit, Governance and Risk Service shall have full and unrestricted access to all necessary records and personnel. All Council furniture and contents, including desks and computers are open to inspection when there is reasonable suspicion of a dishonest or fraudulent activity which makes such inspection appropriate. There is no assumption of privacy.
- 5.0 **INTERNAL CONTROLS**
- 5.1 Internal controls are the key element in preventing fraud. They should be documented, communicated to all staff and the importance of compliance regularly reminded to staff.

It is the responsibility of Management to ensure controls in their areas of responsibility have been documented and communicated. The Financial Regulations are just that, they are not the definitive record of the Council's systems of internal control.

5.2 Management should periodically monitor compliance with controls. Audit, Governance and Risk Services may also test compliance. It should be emphasised that the primary function of Audit, Governance and Risk Services is to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall framework of internal control, with management being responsible for ensuring implementation and monitoring the framework. However Audit, Governance and Risk Services will be available to work with management in an advisory and facilitating role in developing and improving the control framework and also in regard to the monitoring arrangements necessary to provide management with evidence of compliance.

5.3 Common excuses for non-compliance with controls are that they are no longer applicable, insufficient time is available or they are not appropriate. It is important that such comments are reported to Management so that the need for the controls can be re-evaluated.

6.0 MANAGEMENT CHECKS

6.1 The prevention and detection of fraud and corruption is only possible where strong internal controls are present and constantly applied. Routine checks and monitoring by management to ensure that procedures are being followed are therefore essential. There are two benefits from implementing a culture of strong management controls.

- a deterrent effect when it is known that Management are actively involved in ensuring that procedures are followed, and
- the results of the checks will allow Management to identify any operational areas where controls are not being uniformly applied and investigate whether systems have been exploited.

7.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

7.1 The subject of Corporate Governance in the public sector will be regularly monitored by the Council. Development of best practice and recommendations arising from the Nolan, Cadbury and Turnbull reports and any subsequent reports will continue to be important in the development of an

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environment in which awareness of responsibility for fraud prevention and detection can flourish.

- 7.2 The Nolan Committee sets out the seven guiding principles that apply to people who serve the public. The Council will develop its working behaviour around these principles which are as follows:

Selflessness

Holders of public office take decisions in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in their performance of the official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contract, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

- 7.3 The Corporate Governance arrangements in relation to fraud will be overseen by the Assurance Board (Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Director of Legal Services) which will be regularly updated on the progress of any fraud investigation and other matters brought to the

attention of the Fraud Response Group. The Assurance Board will at the conclusion of any fraud investigation reserve the right to notify the Police.

8.0 STAFF TRAINING

8.1 A recent HM Treasury Report concluded that staff provide the best protection against fraud and corruption. It is important therefore that Council policy on fraud prevention and investigation is fully communicated to all staff. The lack of clear guidance and ignorance of procedures will often be the first excuse used by offenders.

8.2 The recruitment of suitable staff is the Council's first defence in preventing fraud. Best practice recruitment policies such as detailed application forms including a statement on criminal records, written and verbal communication with referees and past employers and verification of educational and professional qualifications will be strictly adhered to.

8.3 Staff awareness of policy and procedures is fundamental to the effective operation of systems. Best practice includes:

- instruction and discussion on control and probity issues as part of staff induction
- formal staff training on operational procedures
- detailed written instructions for specific tasks
- publication of Council policy on fraud and corruption
- regular staff notices regarding changes to Standing Orders and financial procedures.

9.0 FRAUD DETECTION AND REPORTING

9.1 The primary responsibility for detecting fraud lies with Management through the implementation, documentation and operation of effective systems of internal controls. The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Section, through their evaluation of the control framework also have a role to play in preventing and detecting fraud, however this is not the main function of Audit, Governance and Risk Services.

9.2 Responsibility for internal control rests with Management and they should ensure they are effective without regard to audit activity. However internal audit will during the course of any assignment exercise due professional care and be alert to indicators of fraud and carry out the review so that they have a reasonable expectation that any fraud occurring would be detected.

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- 9.3 All staff have a responsibility to be aware of the potential for fraud and take the necessary steps to minimise the risk to the Council. Management should ensure staff in their areas of operation are familiar with the common types of fraud. The Council is not advocating the creation of an overtly suspicious environment but expects staff to be alert to the potential for fraud in areas where they operate.**
- 9.4 Staff will often be the first to notice the potential for, or actual fraud. Staff suspicious of fraud should in the first instance if appropriate report their concerns to their Senior Manager. Our fraud response plan paragraph 11 gives more advice and detail on this issue for staff. This requirement to alert Management is not confined to suspicions about other members of staff, but includes any misgivings staff may have about contractors, consultants, suppliers and service users. If necessary a route other than the Senior Manager may be used to raise such concerns, e.g.**
- Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services**
 - Director of Corporate Services**
 - Chief Executive**
 - Director of Legal Services**
- 9.5 A Fraud Response Group should be established to investigate all reported fraud. This group would comprise:**
- Director of Corporate Services**
 - Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services**
 - Head of Human Resources**
 - Representative from Legal Services**
- 9.6 Staff should not be dissuaded from reporting actual or suspected fraud, as all cases will be treated in the strictest confidence. The Council is fully committed to supporting and protecting staff who raise legitimate concerns and the anonymity of individuals who report any suspicions will be preserved if requested unless this is incompatible with a fair investigation or legal imperative. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns. Employees reporting concerns in this way are afforded certain rights through legislation (Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998).**
- 9.7 If an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the originator. If however the allegation is demonstrably made for an ulterior and undesirable purpose it will be deemed not to have been made in good faith and disciplinary action may be considered against the individual making the allegation.**

- 9.8 Any action to prevent the reporting or any attempts at intimidation will be treated seriously; the person involved may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 9.9 Fraudulent or corrupt activity is regarded as a breach of contract and where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion then suspension, pending the outcome of enquiries, is likely. Where there are genuine grounds to suspect that fraud has occurred or where there is direct evidence of fraud, the Council's policy in all cases is to advise the Police.
- 9.10 Where fraud is detected then disciplinary procedures will be instigated and this may lead to dismissal of the individual concerned. In all cases the Council will co-operate fully with the Police and pursue prosecutions where possible.
- 9.11 Line Managers should note that suspects have certain rights under the law and no action (such as interviewing staff) should be taken without prior consultation with the Fraud Response Group. Failure to follow established procedures in relation to investigating fraud and interviewing the staff involved can invalidate disciplinary action and compromise the success of any future investigation and/or prosecution.

10.0 **FRAUD RESPONSE PLAN**

Introduction

- 10.1 Management and staff are likely to have little experience in dealing with fraud and when suspected cases arise, may be unsure of the appropriate action to take. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy will provide adequate guidance as to the avenues open to employees to raise concerns. The objectives of this response plan are:
- to provide a documented framework which the Council can refer to in the event that fraud is suspected or reported, and
 - to ensure that in the event of fraud, timely and effective action is taken to prevent further losses, identify fraudsters, safeguard evidence, minimise publicity, reduce adverse effect on the service involved and to learn lessons.

11.0 **REPORT FRAUD**

- 11.1 Paragraph 9.4 outlines the methods by which staff can report suspected fraud.

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- 11.2 When staff report suspected fraud it is important that their suspicions are treated seriously and that all details provided by the reporting employee are promptly and accurately recorded. They should be repeated to the reporting employee to confirm understanding.
- 11.3 Of primary importance, regardless of the method of reporting, is the need to put staff at ease since the decision to report may be traumatic for the individual concerned. Employees reporting fraud must be assured that all information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and that their anonymity will be preserved if requested, unless that is incompatible with a full and fair investigation or legal imperative.
- 11.4 Regardless of the direction any future internal or Police investigation may take, the anonymity of any reporting employee will be guaranteed during the initial investigation. The advice of Human Resources will also be sought at an early stage to see if any guarantees over future employment will be appropriate. It would not be normally expected that the employment status of any reporting employee to be affected unless they themselves have broken the law or admit to gross misconduct.
- 11.5 If the person having been notified of suspected fraud is not a member of the Fraud Response Group they will after having recorded the details of the individual case, immediately contact a member of the Fraud Response Group, namely the Director of Corporate Services, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services, Head of Human Resources, providing all recorded details together with any supporting evidence or documentation.
- 11.6 The person referred to in 11.2 will retain a copy of the details and record the time and date when they notified the Fraud Response Group. The maintenance of detailed and accurate records is important in supporting any subsequent investigations.
- 11.7 At this stage management should also take whatever steps are necessary to prevent further losses, e.g. by changing procedures or suspending payments, without compromising the quality of evidence or alerting the fraudsters. This should be done on the advice of the Fraud Response Group.
- 12.0 Initial Enquiry
- 12.1 On receiving details of a suspected fraud, the Fraud Response Group undertakes as limited review as is necessary to establish whether the allegation does require

further investigation. Any detailed internal investigation at this stage runs the risk of alerting the perpetrator and the destruction of evidence. Until there is sufficient evidence to support the accusation, the details of the case should be restricted to the Fraud Response Group.

- 12.2 Once the Fraud Response Group is satisfied that there is a case to be answered, immediate steps will be taken to safeguard any evidence and to revisit the action taken at paragraph 11.7 above to see if further measures can be taken to prevent further losses.
- 12.3 If staff are implicated at this stage and it would appear that there is sufficient evidence to justify future disciplinary action, the possibility of suspension must be considered. Staff should not be dismissed prior to a thorough investigation. In such circumstances the Council's disciplinary procedure will apply.

13.0 CONDUCTING A FRAUD ENQUIRY

- 13.1 Once it is agreed that there is sufficient evidence to justify a further investigation, such an investigation will be undertaken by the Audit, Governance and Risk Services section, supported as necessary by Council staff who may have the specialist knowledge required.

The access rights of the Audit, Governance and Risk Services section are those as detailed in paragraph 4.5. and are set out in the Charter for Audit, Governance and Risk Services which has been approved by the Assurance Board and the Audit Panel.

In exceptional circumstances the Fraud Response Group after seeking the authority of the Assurance Board may meet initially with the Police to decide who is best placed to undertake the further investigation.

- 13.2 Once the Fraud Response Group has decided that an internal enquiry should take place, a detailed remit will be agreed, including deadlines for reporting. Throughout the course of the enquiry there should be regular meetings between the investigators and the Fraud Response Group with minutes taken and agreed.
- 13.3 All involved should be clear on the scope of any investigation. Is it simply to confirm there is sufficient evidence to support the allegations, to identify those involved, to gather evidence for the Police or does the Council wish to quantify the potential loss?

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13.4 There is an obvious requirement to record all details fully, accurately and in a manner that is accessible.

14.0 **STAFFING ISSUES**

14.1 A member of Human Resources is on the Fraud Response Group as further investigations may have employee rights and disciplinary repercussions.

14.2 Of crucial importance in any fraud investigation is the need to conduct enquiries within the parameters of relevant laws and regulations. Employees have certain statutory rights and if infringed, the likely success of disciplinary action or prosecution is diminished. It is vital therefore that any interviews with suspects are undertaken strictly in accordance with established procedures.

14.3 No interviews should progress without first seeking advice from the Fraud Response Group, which has members from Legal Services and Human Resources, on the relevant procedures and rules to be followed.

15.0 **CONCLUDING AN INVESTIGATION**

15.1 At the end of a case, irrespective of outcome, it is important that the progress of the investigation is reviewed to see what lessons can be learnt and to assess the effectiveness of the action taken. Such reviews will help identify any weaknesses in internal control that initially led to the fraud and should highlight any deficiencies in the systems for reporting and investigating, enable more effective future enquiries and precipitate changes to internal procedures designed to prevent reoccurrence.

15.2 Reviews should be undertaken by a member of the Fraud Response Group in consultation with relevant line managers and a brief report summarising the main points of the case produced for submission to the Assurance Board and to the Audit Panel.

15.3 Where enquiries have resulted in disciplinary action or a successful prosecution, consideration should be given to publishing summary details for staff circulation.

15.4 This could be in the form of a staff notice, briefly covering the case details and reiterating the overall Council policy on fraud.

15.5 This open approach is likely to be appreciated by the majority of staff, would emphasise the Council's active commitment to maintaining probity of operations and may indeed have a deterrent effect.

16.0 **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA)**

16.1 The Council has arrangements in place that will allow it to conduct surveillance, where appropriate, using the conditions outlined in the RIPA legislation. This includes obtaining the necessary written authorisation prior to undertaking surveillance. Any use of powers under RIPA must be discussed with and approved by the Director of Legal Services.

FRAUD INVESTIGATION - CHECKLIST

- Don't rush in – consider the facts
- Establish the facts without alerting anyone
- Maintain confidentiality
- Make an immediate note of everything reported. Repeat these notes to whoever is reporting the details to establish understanding
- Take steps to minimise any immediate further losses
- Consider legal implications
- Inform a member of the Fraud Response Group
- Fraud Response Group convenes to consider allegation
- Initial investigation to establish substance of allegation
- Agree if further investigation is required
- Agree a remit, establish scope of investigation and reporting deadlines
- Suspend rather than sack (if applicable)
- Secure any evidence
- Assume the worst case scenario in terms of losses and staff involved
- Hold regular meetings at which progress and agreed action is documented
- Identify all internal and external sources of information and evidence
- Prepare for interviews thoroughly
- Do not interview one to one – offer all interviewees the opportunity to have a witness/representative
- Document and reference all sources of evidence, including interview notes
- If enquiry is inconclusive, consider what internal measures need to be taken – commission further investigation, changes in procedures, disciplinary action, transfer of staff, etc.

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- On completion of investigation hold a review of the process to consider what lessons need to be learnt for the future.

Appendix 2

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life made clear recommendations that local authorities should adopt 'Whistleblowing' procedures. The Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998 now gives protection to whistleblowers who are treated unfairly. This policy addresses those issues.
- 1.2 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Council. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Council. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees and others that we deal with who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This Policy Document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage
- 1.4 This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage you to raise serious concerns within the Council rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle to the media or other external bodies.
- 1.5 The Policy applies to all staff working for the Council, both full and part-time, temporary and casual, and it also covers those contractors working for the Council on City Council premises for example, agency staff and builders. It also covers suppliers and those providing service under a contract with the Council in their own premises.
- 1.6 The procedures as set out in this Policy are in addition to the Council's Complaints Procedures, Grievance Procedure, Policy on Fraud and Corruption and other reporting procedures applying to some departments.

2.0 AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

2.1 This policy aims to:

- Make you feel confident to raise concerns and to question and act upon concerns.
- Give you avenues to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Inform you on how to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the response, and
- Reassure you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

2.2 There are existing procedures in place for you to legitimately complain about harassment, violence and aggression, discrimination and instances where you feel that you have a grievance. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use of public funds
- fraud and corruption
- any attempt to prevent disclosure of any of the above or
- other conduct which gives you cause for concern.

2.3 Thus any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of staff or members of the Council or others acting on behalf of the Council can be reported under this policy. This may be something that:

- makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe the Council subscribes to or
- is against the Council's Standing Orders and policies or
- falls below established standards of practice
- has caused damage to the environment
- amounts to improper conduct.

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3.0 Safeguards

3.1 Harassment or Victimisation

3.2 The Council recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. However uncovering malpractice will be doing a service to the Council. You will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing a service.

3.3 The Council will fulfil its responsibility to ensure that you are NOT harassed, victimised or otherwise disadvantaged when you raise a concern. The Council will take appropriate action including the application of the disciplinary procedure, to protect an employee who raises a concern in good faith.

3.4 In accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998 you cannot be dismissed or selected for redundancy as a result of making a disclosure. In addition, an employer cannot withhold a pay rise, object to a promotion or not give training.

3.5 This does not mean that if an employee is already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures, that these procedures will be halted as a result of their Whistleblowing.

4.0 Confidentiality

4.1 The Council will make every effort to preserve your anonymity if you so wish. It must be appreciated however that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement from you may be required as part of the evidence.

5.0 Anonymous Allegations

5.1 This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but they will be considered at the discretion of the Council. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issue(s) raised
- the credibility of the concern
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

6.0 Untrue Allegations

6.1 If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If however the allegation is demonstrably made for an ulterior and undesirable purpose it will be deemed not to have been made in good faith and disciplinary action may be considered and taken against you.

7.0 How to Raise a Concern

7.1 For some minor issues (e.g. personal use of Council equipment, abuse of flexi-time) you should normally raise your concerns with your immediate manager or superior. In general, however, the whistleblowing procedure is expected to be used for potentially more serious and sensitive issues (e.g. corruption, fraud).

7.2 As a first step you should normally raise concerns to your Senior Manager. This depends however on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice.

7.3 For example if you believe that Senior Management is involved you should approach one of the following officers:

- Chief Executive
- Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services
- Director of Corporate Services
- Director of Legal Services

7.4 You may also take the matter outside the Council to one of the bodies referred to in paragraphs 9.1.

7.5 Concerns are better raised in writing. The background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, should be set out and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. If you do not feel able to put your concern in writing you can telephone or meet the appropriate officer.

7.6 The earlier you express the concern the easier it will be to take action.

7.7 Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for concern.

- 7.8 Advice and guidance on how matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained from the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services. You can get confidential, independent advice from the charity Public Concern at Work on 02074046609 or check the website www.pcaw.co.uk. You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.
- 7.9 You can invite your trade union or professional association representative or a friend to be present during any meetings or interview in connection with the concerns you have raised.
- 7.10 Concerns can be raised through your trade union.
- 8.0 **How The Council Will Respond?**
- 8.1 The Council will respond to your concerns, and it will be necessary to investigate your concerns but this is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.
- 8.2 Within ten working days of a concern being received, you will receive a written response –
- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
 - indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter;
 - giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
 - telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made; and
 - telling you whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.
- 8.3 The action taken by the Council will depend on the nature of the concern.
- 8.4 The matters raised may:
- be investigated internally
 - be referred to the police or other statutory agencies
 - be referred to the Local Government Auditor.
- 8.5 In order to protect individuals and the Council, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of other existing procedures will normally be referred for consideration under these procedures.

- 8.6 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- 8.7 The amount of contact between the individual considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the investigating officers, will seek further information from you.
- 8.8 Where any meeting is arranged, and this can be off-site if you so wish, you can be accompanied by a trade union or professional association representative or a friend.
- 8.9 The Council will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Council will advise you about the procedure.
- 8.10 The Council accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcomes of any investigation.
- 9.0 **How the Matter Can Be Taken Further**
- 9.1 This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue within the Council to raise concerns. If you are not satisfied with the outcome you can write to the Chief Executive and ask for the investigation and outcome to be reviewed. If you remain dissatisfied and you feel it is right to take the matter outside this process, the following are possible contact points:
- the Commissioner of Complaints
 - the Local Government Auditor
 - relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
 - your solicitor
 - the police
- 9.2 One possibility is that you may wish to rely on your rights under the Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998. This Act gives you protection from victimisation if you make certain disclosures of information in the public interest. The provisions are quite complex and include a list of prescribed persons outside of the Council who can be contacted in certain circumstances. You should seek advice on the effect of the Act from for example your solicitor, your local Citizens Advice Bureau, the Ombudsman or Public Concern at Work.

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9.3 If you take the matter outside the Council, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information or that disclosure would be privileged. In order to ensure that you do not make any such disclosures you may want to check the position with the Director of Legal Services or the persons referred to in paragraph 9.2.

10.0 The Responsible Officer

10.1 The Chief Executive (as Monitoring Officer) has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. The Monitoring Officer maintains a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality) and may report to the Council, but in such a way that your confidentiality will be preserved.”

The Panel was informed that the risk of fraud was one of the factors which was taken into account in the internal audit needs assessment exercise. In the run-up to the implementation of the Review of Public Administration the fraud risks which would be presented by the Council obtaining new responsibilities would be identified and assessed.

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

**Audit, Governance and Risk Services –
Progress Report**

The Panel considered a report regarding the work which Audit, Governance and Risk Services had undertaken between June and September, 2008.

The Acting Corporate Assurance Manager pointed out that one of the most significant pieces of work which had been completed during the period related to a detailed review of the corporate arrangements for the management of health and safety following the introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter Act and he apprised the Members of the work which this had entailed.

In answer to a Member's question regarding contractors, the Acting Corporate Assurance Manager informed the Panel that the legal agreements which were prepared regarding their appointment should address the respective health and safety responsibilities of the different parties. He informed the Panel further that the audit of fixed assets, which was in the Section's programme of work for the current financial year, would be deferred until the next financial year to enable the Financial Services Section to resolve ongoing systems issues.

The Panel noted the contents of the progress report regarding the work which had been undertaken between June and September by the Audit, Governance and Risk Services Section and the comments thereon of the Acting Corporate Assurance Manager.

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**Local Government Auditor's Management
Letter 2006/2007 – Follow-up Report**

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services reminded the Panel that the Local Government Auditor had provided an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts for the 2006/2007 financial year. However, the Local Government Auditor had identified a number of issues and had made thirty-six recommendations, eleven of which had been classified as Priority 1.

He reported that the Section had undertaken follow-up work regarding the implementation of the recommendations which had been made by the Local Government Auditor. However, that work had been hampered by the fact that it had proved difficult to identify the individual officers who had been responsible for the various issues which had been highlighted. He pointed out that arrangements had been made to ensure that this situation did not arise in the future.

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services indicated that 60% of the recommendations had been implemented fully, 26% had been implemented partly and 14% had not yet been implemented or had been superseded by subsequent events but that work was under way to deal with those issues. He informed the Panel that the Local Government Auditor had referred to two important issues: the number of staff who were permitted to amend the bank details of the Council's creditors and the lack of a policy regarding economic appraisals and post-project evaluations. He informed the Panel that work was ongoing to reduce the number of staff who were permitted to change bank details. In connection with the recommendations that the Council draft an economic appraisal policy and that post-project evaluations be completed on all capital projects, a report in the matter would be considered by the Chief Officers' Management Team later in the week.

The Acting Corporate Assurance Manager informed the Members that the introduction recently of a new core financial system had meant that some of the recommendations within the Local Government Auditor's Management Letter were no longer applicable.

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services pointed out that, although the Local Government Auditor had made thirty-six recommendations, in terms of materiality they were not of such significance as to prevent him issuing an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts.

The Panel noted the information with which it had been provided.

**Claims against the Council and the
Employment of Agency Staff**

The Chairman (Councillor Rodgers) suggested that the Panel should receive at future meetings reports regarding the amount of money which the Council was spending on settling claims and information regarding the number of agency staff who were employed within the Council.

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In response, the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services indicated that he would raise the matter with the Director of Corporate Services to ascertain his view as to whether the Audit Panel would be the appropriate forum to receive such reports and that he would discuss the matter further with the Chairman directly.

Noted.

Chairman

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Delegated Authority regarding a tender exercise for the provision of a minibus/coach service
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Core Improvement
Contact Officer:	Valerie Cupples, Procurement Manager

Relevant Background Information

A report seeking permission to seek tenders for the provision of Minibus/Coach Hire Services for the period 1 March 2009 to 28 February 2010, with the option to renew for a further 2 years, was presented to Committee on 19 September 2008.

Members deferred consideration of the commencement of a tendering exercise to enable further information to be gathered. It was agreed that Community Services would be consulted regarding specific issues raised by Members.

Consultation with the Community Development Manager Community has taken place and she has indicated that she is happy for the tender process to proceed.

Key Issues

The Community Development Manager has confirmed that, when staff were surveyed regarding the existing contract, they expressed satisfaction with the standard of service. She also recognised that any concerns regarding cost would be tested through the tendering exercise. The tender will be publicly advertised and any local providers will have the option to submit bids for the work.

Members are also asked to note that groups supported through Community Services eg grant aided or centre based are not restricted to using the successful tenderer. They can use their own resources to purchase services from local transport providers.

The projected cost of this service is £75,000 per year.

A co-ordinated contract for the delivery of this service will ensure that the required standards are met regarding Child Protection, Health and Safety regulations and all current legislation relating to Public Service Vehicles.

Resource Implications

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

Recommendations

Committee is requested to approve seeking tenders for the provision of a minibus/coach service using pre-determined evaluation criteria including cost and quality. In addition, Committee approval is sought under the Scheme of Delegation for acceptance of successful tenders to be delegated to the Director of Improvement.

Documents Attached

None.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	To seek approval to tender for three High Speed Digital Printer/Photocopiers and the appropriate queue management software.
Date:	24 th October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of Information Services Freda Delargy, Reprographics Unit

Relevant Background Information

Reprographics

The Reprographics Unit is the Council's in-house provider of printed material. The Unit is responsible for producing high volume specialised printing, including the Council Minute Book and Committee Reports. This work is completed to a high standard within very tight deadlines. The current equipment was due to be replaced in January 2008 but the lease was extended for another year until January 2009 due to a review of the operations of both the Reprographics Unit and the Operations Section within Information Services Belfast (ISB).

Information Services Belfast

ISB is the provider of IT Services to the Council. As such they are responsible for high volume printing on a range of specialist stationery from a diverse range of IT systems. Many of the deadlines are fixed and the ability to move quickly to contingency arrangements is critical.

To this end ISB currently utilise three Xerox printers. These were bought in Feb 2001 (1 printer) and Jan 2003 (2 printers). The suppliers no longer offer support for the older printer and have given notice that support for the others will be withdrawn shortly (including the provision of spare parts).

Requirement

The requirement is to replace the equipment in use in both operations.

Key Issues

Reprographics will be relocating to the Gloucester Street offices which are the current base for ISB. Both units are cooperating to ensure that the printers acquired will be suitable for use by both Reprographics and ISB.

The move will allow the burden of contingency to be shared by the two services therefore reducing the number of printers required / maintained. The number of printers required is three which is a reduction of 1 printer and an estimated saving of £66,000 over the life of the printers.

Resource Implications

Financial Following discussions with Financial Services it is proposed to acquire the printers using a suitable leasing arrangement. The estimated total cost of the lease is £198,000 including support. The leasing option represents a savings of up to £6,000 over a 5 year leasing period.

There is no residual value in the printers at the end of the 5 year period.

Tenders will be sought using the OGC Contract.

Human Resources There are no Human Resource issues.

Asset and Other Implications Lease is the preferred option for environmental reasons as the equipment will be removed by the supplier (also relieving us of any potential disposal costs).

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council invites tenders for a five year lease for three High Speed Digital Printer/Photocopier and appropriate queue management capability. Copy speed not less than 100cpm.

Key to Abbreviations

Documents Attached



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	To seek approval to tender for new air conditioning for 22-38 Gloucester Street as the result of the move of Reprographics to 22-38 Gloucester
Date:	24 th October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of Information Services Belfast

Relevant Background Information

The Reprographics Section will be relocated from 9 Gloucester Street to 22-38 Gloucester Street (where ISB is located) to free up the ground floor of number 9. This will allow the options available regarding the long term use of number 9 Gloucester Street to be considered.

Plans are being drawn up to make the available space on the ground floor of ISB suitable for Reprographics.

The building work required will be carried out by the Council's Facilities Management Service.

Key Issues

An important requirement to facilitate the move is the installation of new air conditioning on the ground floor of the ISB building to accommodate the needs of reprographics.

Air conditioning is installed on other floors of the building and is in various states of repair. It is now considered that the benefits of a coordinated approach to the air conditioning needs of the building will produce better value for money, single point responsibility with a supplier and better controls as well as meeting the needs of Reprographics.

Resource Implications

Financial

The estimated cost for the necessary upgrade to the air conditioning in Gloucester Street is £60,000. The amount has been provided for in the current year's revenue estimates.

Human Resources

Discussions have taken place with the staff concerned and with their nominated trade union representatives regarding the move to ISB.

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council invites tenders to install the required air conditioning in 22-38 Gloucester Street.

Members are requested to:

1. Note the relocation of Reprographics to the ISB building.
2. To approve the recommendation to tender for new air conditioning in 22-38 Gloucester Street.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Contract for the provision of network cabling services
Date:	24 October 2008.
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of Information Services Belfast

Relevant Background Information

The Council uses various cabling suppliers for the installation of cabling in buildings for the purposes of connecting devices to the corporate communications infrastructure. This is done routinely by seeking quotations for individual projects.

The frequency of network change and expansion requests and the possibility of extra cabling work arising from an upcoming network upgrade mean that it would be considered advantageous if the Council entered into a contract with one supplier for its entire network cabling needs. This would also save time and effort in acquiring cabling services.

Information Services Belfast (ISB) have gained experience working with a range of different cabling contractors and believe that they are in a position to accurately assess them in terms of quality, price, and ability to deliver network cabling installation and support services.

Key Issues

With modern technology delivering more functionality over a data network it is important that the Council seeks to form a contract with a supplier who will install and support the Council's cabling infrastructure to an extremely high level of quality and provide value for money.

Resource Implications

Financial

It is estimated that the cost of cabling for 2009/2010 will be in the region of £60,000. This amount is provided for in revenue estimates. It is envisaged that value for money

and high quality services will be gained from spending within a contracted framework.

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

The council network is an asset that will be increasing in importance as modern technology uses the same network to deliver data, telephony and video signals to whoever and wherever the Council needs it. The increasing importance of this asset means that any risks associated with the management of the network should be minimised.

Recommendations

Seek to enter into a contract with a supplier delivering cabling installation and support to the required standards for the next 2 years with the option of extending the contract for a further year.

Key to Abbreviations

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Documents Attached

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	To seek approval to tender for a new framework agreement for the supply of core and edge network equipment.
Date:	24 th October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of Information Services Belfast

Relevant Background Information

In 2006 the Council entered into a framework agreement with a supplier for the supply and maintenance of 'core and edge' network equipment. This equipment is required to provide a network service both at the centre and periphery of the organisation.

The Council supports computer systems located at various sites across Belfast. The ISB site in Gloucester Street is the centre of computer operations. All sites that form part of the current data network are connected to ISB. Additional sites are likely to be connected as required and additional high-speed links may be introduced to establish resilience.

Equipment supplied via the Agreement will provide connectivity for the following:

- (i) The Edge – the peripheral / user equipment (PCs, printers etc)
- (ii) The Core – the infrastructure that links all sites, servers and edge equipment

The Council has established a strategic arrangement to progressively upgrade the network to take advantage of current and future technological developments and provide for all data, voice and video applications. A rolling refresh of the Core and Edge network has been taking place since the agreement was put in place in 2006. It is hoped to continue this process by providing a call off arrangement whereby network equipment can be purchased in a timely fashion.

The framework agreement is due to end in November and a new agreement is required. This is a particularly important framework if permission is given to implement a new telephone system and ensure that the network equipment is in place to accommodate it.

Key Issues

Resource Implications

Financial

The nominal value of the contract to be let over three years is £150,000. Provision is made for this amount in the capital programme.

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendations

Permission to seek to create a framework agreement with suppliers to supply the Council with its core and edge network equipment and to maintain and support the equipment.

Key to Abbreviations

Documents Attached



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Absence management performance, quarter two, July-September 2008.
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Acting Head of Human Resources, extension 3220
Purpose	
The purpose of this report is to inform members of the council's performance in managing absence during quarter two, July – September 2008.	
Relevant Background Information	
In 2007/08 the average number of days lost per full time employee was 13.91 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed an overall council target reduction in absence of two days by 2010/11.	
Key Issues	
Absence Management Performance Quarter Two July – September 2008	
The following are the key absence performance indicators for quarter two, July – September 2008. Appendix one provides absence rates at corporate, department and service levels against target and performance for the same time last year.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average number of working days lost per FTE for quarter two for this year is 2.79 days • The average number of working days lost per FTE for last quarter (quarter one of 2008/09) was 2.79 days • The average number of working days lost per FTE for the same quarter last year (quarter two 2007/08) was 3.88 days. • This represents a reduction of 1.09 days for the same time last year. • This means that at quarter two the council is on target (i.e. to reduce by two days by 2010/11) as our reduction so far this year is 1.79 days • 75.72 % of staff had no absence during quarter two of this year. This represents an increase for the same time last year when 73.27% of staff had no absence. • 5.10 % of the council's staff were categorised as long term absent. This represents a decrease from the same time last year when 7.99%% of staff were categorised as long 	

term sick.
Recommendations
Members are asked to note the performance figures for quarter two 2008/09
Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Year to date figures at quarter two performance indicators at corporate, department and section level.

APPENDIX 1						
Number of employees (FTE for quarter two)	% of BCC'S workforce		Annual target for 2008/09 (average days absence per employee)	Target at quarter two, 2008/09 (average days absence per employee)	Actual average days absence per employee at quarter two 2008/09	Average days per employee at quarter two last year
2321.51		BCC	12.90	6.45	5.52	7.31
77.29	3.33	Chief Executive's Department	8.80	4.40	6.35	6.66
17.31	0.75	Corporate Communications	11.34	5.67	10.37	7.28
32.50	1.40	Committee & Member Services	13.84	6.92	7.63	9.03
16.50	0.71	Secretariat and Business Supp	1.52	0.76	0.85	2.22
10.98	0.47	Good Relations	2.84	1.42	4.46	1.08
18.08	0.78	Legal Services Department	4.60	2.30	1.72	1.73
485.36	20.91	Corporate Services Department	11.98	5.99	4	6.48
64.51	2.78	Human Resources (includes BIS)	7.72	3.86	2.38	4.60
24.50	1.06	Financial Services	10.28	5.14	8.31	6.97
115.77	4.99	ISB	10.03	5.01	2.21	4.62
219.96	9.47	Facilities Management	15.20	7.60	4.49	8.79
12.00	0.52	Audit, Gov & Risk Services	1.18	0.59	1.33	0.55
6.00	0.26	Projects & Corporate Systems	11.75	5.88	1.5	1.17
42.62	1.84	Directorate Support (includes BDM)	11.23	5.61	7.41	2.87
794.06	34.20	Health & Environmental Services Dept.	13.17	6.59	5.98	6.39
153.67	6.62	Environmental Health Service	10.78	5.39	4.71	3.67
70.89	3.05	Building Control	8.15	4.08	3.1	2.11
466.19	20.08	Cleansing	15.36	7.68	6.69	8.10
87.24	3.76	Waste Management	10.81	5.41	7.61	5.72
16.07	0.69	Directorate Support	7.88	3.94	1.16	5.32

626.57	26.99	Parks and Leisure Department	15.59	7.80	5.98	10.30
303.82	13.09	Leisure	14.79	7.40	6.67	8.24
312.23	13.45	Parks and Cemeteries	16.70	8.35	5.48	12.43
10.52	0.45	Directorate Support	3.75	1.88	1.24	2.87
269.26	11.60	Development Department	10.14	5.07	5.9	5.73
60.94	2.63	Economic Initiatives	5.08	2.54	4.81	0.96
115.71	4.98	Community	12.30	6.15	6.83	7.74
53.01	2.28	Waterfront & Ulster Hall	10.98	5.49	4.31	6.38
39.61	1.71	Directorate Support	10.96	5.48	6.06	5.54
50.89	2.19	Core Improvement Team	6.90	3.45	5.02	3.21
22.10	0.95	Improvement Unit	3.87	1.94	2.09	0.36
4.00	0.17	Corporate Policy Unit	0.42	0.21	0.88	3.40
7.09	0.31	Estates Management	16.28	8.14	4.79	10.15
17.70	0.76	Procurement & Project Management	6.77	3.38	9.69	2.00



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	National Pay Negotiations
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Acting Head of Human Resources, extension 3220
Purpose	
The purpose of this report is to update members on the current national position in relation to the 2008/09 pay negotiations.	
Relevant Background Information	
The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee was advised in August 2008 that the National Employers Organisation, UNISON and Unite were entering into further negotiations with the aim of securing an agreed employment package to resolve the ongoing pay dispute.	
Key Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the further talks which were planned following the industrial action of 16 and 17 July 2008, the trade union side referred the matter of the ongoing pay dispute to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) for arbitration. • This action is provided for in the National Joint Council (NJC) National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, which states that: <i>"In the event of a dispute over terms and conditions of employment arising between the two Sides of the Council the dispute shall, if requested by either Side, be referred for settlement by arbitration."</i> • Arbitration will take the form of written submissions in the first instance, with a subsequent arbitration hearing. Thereafter, the arbitrator will advise both sides of the settlement to be awarded. • The typical timeframe for such an exercise is between two and three months. Both sides have informally indicated they would hope to conclude the arbitration by December 2008. • The National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service states that <i>"...the arbitration award shall be accepted by both Sides and shall be treated as though it were an agreement between the two Sides"</i>. Consequently there can be no further industrial action on this issue. 	
Recommendations	
Members are asked to note the information set out in this report.	

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services, ext 6083
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Acting Head of Human Resources, ext 3220

Relevant Background Information

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

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

NAME OF NEW EMPLOYEE	POST APPOINTED TO	RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING OFFICER	NAME OF EXISTING OFFICER	DEPARTMENT
Dean Azzabi	Cleansing Operative	Nephew	John McFarlane	Health and Environmental Services
		Nephew	Matt Cosby	Health and Environmental Services
Jonathan Frizzell	Leisure Attendant (Casual)	Husband	Lindsey Frizzell	Parks and Leisure
		Son	Phyllis Frizzell	Parks and Leisure
Carolyn Donnelly	Management Support Assistant	Daughter	Gerry Donnelly	Health and Environmental Services

Resource Implications

<u>Financial</u>

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

<u>Human Resources</u>

There are no Human Resource considerations. All appointments have been made on the basis of merit in accordance with the Council's Recruitment Policies.
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<u>Asset and Other Implications</u>

There are no other implications.

Recommendations

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

None.

Documents Attached

None.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations (NI) 2008 Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations (NI) 2008 Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions) Regulations (NI) 2008
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services, extension 6083
Purpose	
<p>The purpose of this report is to inform members on the current consultation exercise in respect of the proposed new regulations, which is due to close on 31 October 2008, and to consider a suggested response.</p>	
Relevant Background Information	
<p>Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the above proposed regulations. It is a fact that people are living longer and consequently former employees are drawing benefits for longer periods than before. The proposed changes to local government staff pensions and regulations are therefore both needed and necessary. There must be a modern scheme that is affordable, viable, and fit for the 21st century.</p>	
Key Issues	
<p>The key aspect of the proposed regulations is to make sure that the pension scheme is sustainable in the long term, provides a good deal for Council ratepayers, and makes sure that local government continues to be an attractive place to work for both current and future employees. Notwithstanding, there are some issues that the Department of the Environment might wish to consider before making the regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are three sets of regulations out for consultation requiring cross referencing for some elements of the proposals. It would be preferable to produce one set of regulations for ease of management and understanding. • Seven new contribution rates are being introduced for employees and this will result in a significant administration burden for employers, scheme administrators as well as presenting some inequities. It would be preferable to determine one common contribution rate for all participants calculated on an average rate, which is understood to be circa 6.3%. Additionally, some discretions are provided for employers to exercise and it is considered this may well result in wide variations within schemes given the number of employers. This is not viewed as desirable and may well lead to future difficulties for employers. 	

- New ill-health arrangements are proposed introducing a 3-tier system. It is believed these proposals are unworkable as has been demonstrated in England. It would appear to be perverse to introduce any such new arrangements given they will not work.
- Revisions to amend the application of Flexible Retirement arrangements so that part of a member's benefits can be paid require clarification before they can be implemented.
- Proposals to revise the age at which benefits can be accessed from 50 to 55 is unhelpful at this time given it will limit scope for managing the transition of a small number of employees through the RPA process. It would be preferable if this could be deferred to facilitate RPA transition work. It may be that the relevant Compensation Regulations could be modified to mitigate the negative impact of this age revision.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note and agree the information set out in this report which will be submitted in due course to the Department of the Environment.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources
Subject:	Council Meetings in City Hall - Temporary Arrangements
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext: 6217 George Wright, Head of Facilities Management, Ext: 5206 Liam Steele, Head of Committee & Members' Services, Ext: 6325

Relevant Background Information

Council agreed that the refurbishment work to City Hall would take place in two phases. Phase 1 would be the availability of the main civic rooms ie the Council Chamber, Reception Room, Banqueting Hall, Great Hall, Rotunda and associated access and amenity in the form of stairway lift and restrooms. That target has now been achieved although access to the building will only be available from the front.

Key Information

Phase 1 will be complete by 19 November 2008 meaning the Council Chamber will be available for the Council meeting from December 2008, although the Committee rooms and Party rooms will not be available until phase 2 in the Summer.

As phase 2 of the construction programme will be ongoing until Summer 2009 a number of temporary arrangements will need to be put in place for Members to hold Council meetings in City Hall from December onwards. Restrictions that will necessarily apply are outlined below:

The Civic Rooms – as stated the main rooms and access to them will be available from 19 November 2008. There will be heating and lighting, toilets available in the East entrance and lift and stair access.

What will **not** be available are any phone or data links and there will be no arts or artefacts displayed in the rooms.

Catering – Facilities Management can provide a cold buffet service as they do presently with the Reception Room made available for dining or if required hot food can be made available. Alternatively, if Members wish, catering could be provided in CWB although that would mean Members having to walk around to the front of City Hall to

access the building.

Pre Council Party Meetings – space can be made available for Party Groups to hold Pre Council meetings in the main civic rooms by partitioning some space eg in the Banqueting Room or Great Hall. Please note, however, any Party Groups who wish to meet in City Hall rooms will have fairly basic furniture such as round dining tables and stacking chairs.

The alternative to this ad hoc arrangement is to meet first in Adelaide Exchange and then transfer to City Hall for the Council meeting.

Car Parking – Car parking at City Hall will be very limited with at most 10-14 spaces available at the East and Front entrances. Again the main alternative is to park in Adelaide Exchange and walk to City Hall although there is free on street parking in Linenhall Street etc from 6.00pm.

Members views are sought on allocation of any available City Hall spaces. Please note the courtyard is the contractors compound and will be the last part of the contract to be completed.

December Issues – In addition to the above arrangements the December meeting has an added difficulty in that the Continental Market which will be occupying the front lawn. Members will have to access the building via the market, although Facilities Management will maintain sufficient security to manage any issues from the public seeking to also access the building.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider:

1. Whether monthly Council meetings should be held in City Hall from December onwards
2. If so, Members preference in terms of catering, ie City Hall or CWB or Adelaide Exchange
3. The preferred location for pre meetings
4. The question of the limited car parking availability
5. The question of the restricted access because of the impact of the Continental Market in December

Documents Attached

None



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	City Hall Major Works Update
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement
Contact Officer:	Michael Stanley, Project Manager

Relevant Background Information

A previous update on the City Hall contract was presented to Committee on 20 June 2008 and as agreed this is the third quarterly update.

1. Project Information:

Project Start Date: 19th November 2007

Contract Period: Phase 1 Completion Date – 52 weeks (19th November 2008) – on target
Phase 2 Completion Date – 90 weeks (10th August 2009) – on target

Project Budget: £11.9 million

Main Contractor: Graham Construction

Progress to Date:

- Asbestos removal/encapsulation work is now complete
- Re-roofing work is 95% complete and currently running ahead of programme
- Electrical strip out is complete and the first fix is in progress
- Strip out of radiators, sprinkler system, heating pipework and boilers is complete and the first fix is ahead of programme
- Plaster repairs have commenced and are on programme
- Redecoration of the Council Chamber and Rotunda area are almost complete
- Refurbishment of chandeliers is in progress and chandeliers are now refitted

- Phase 1 of the Contract regarding main Civic Rooms is due for completion on 19 November 2008

The project is currently on programme and a simplified version of the construction programme is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

Variations:

Members will be aware that the biggest risk to the budget and programme of any project is that of 'changing your mind' – hence it is vital that Committee exercises very strict control over any proposed variations to the specification over and above those that occur through unforeseen circumstances.

Variations approved to date include:

- Removal of all racking in the basement - £16,500 (funded by Facilities Management)
- Relocation of the Emergency Room from the basement to the second floor - £350,000 (funded by Health and Environmental Services Department)
- Replacement of the lightning protection system which does not comply with current standards
- Decoration of all internal window frames
- Repairs to stained glass windows at high level in the Rotunda
- Replacement of pigeon netting/wiring
- Upgrade of the sound system in the three function rooms
- Re-covering bench seats in council chamber
- Refurbishment of gas lights

All at an estimated cost of £337,000
(Funded by Facilities Management and Corporate Services)

- Creation of exhibition space (funded from contingency budget)

There are no further budget or programme impacts from these variations.

Financial Matters:

The project is currently within budget.

Resource Implications

The anticipated project expenditure is £12,541,500 for the Major Works contract, based on the accepted tender and approved variations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes this report and consider if a site visit would be useful post 19 November 2008 completion of phase 1.

Key to Abbreviations

N/A

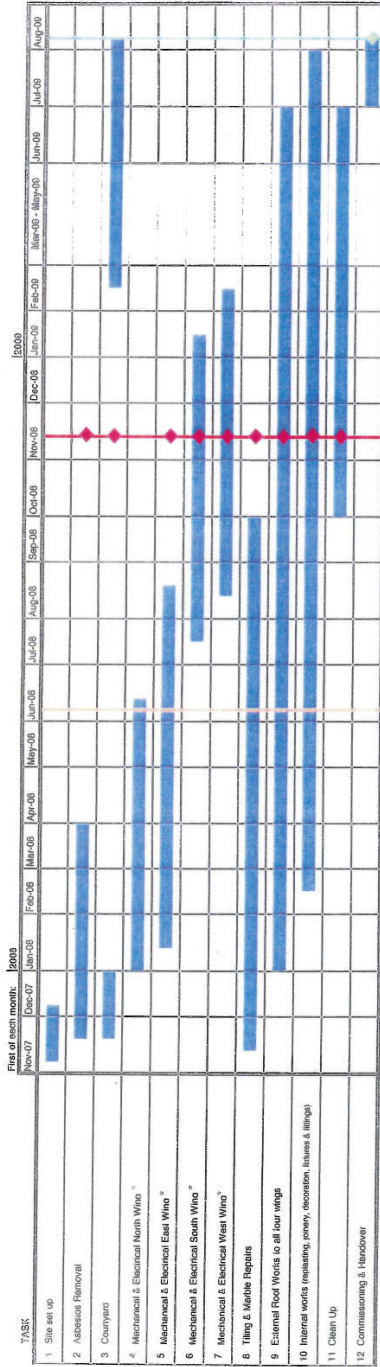
Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Updated Programme

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CITY HALL REPAIRS/REPLACEMENT WORKS
PROGRAMME OF WORKS

ONGOING CONSTRUCTION



* ducts, wallways, electrical rewiring, Ventilation, Fire compartmentation

Contractor's Completion Over Areas

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**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Asset Management – Estates Issues
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext. 6217.
Contact Officer:	Sub-Item 1, Cathy Reynolds, Estates Surveyor, Core Improvement, Ext. 3493. Sub-Items 2 & 3, Ken Anderson, Estates Surveyor, Core Improvement, Ext. 3496.

Relevant Background Information

- Sub-Item 1. Appropriation of former Grove Leisure Centre to Corporate Landbank
- Sub-Item 2. City Cemetery Gate Lodge (Fox's Lodge)
- Sub-Item 3. Wayleave Adjoining Shaftesbury Recreation Centre

Sub-Item 1.

The Council, at its meeting on 3rd March 2008 approved the minutes of the Parks and Leisure Committee of 14th February 2008, which had recommended that upon closure of the former Grove Leisure Centre that the site be transferred to Core Improvement Team for disposal, as per Council procedures, subject to an amendment to provide that the Grove Leisure Centre be closed and that officers investigate the future use to which the site could be put in order to maximise the benefits to the local community.

Sub-Item 2.

At its meeting on 19 September 2008 the Committee approved the disposal of Fox's Lodge and that the associated Development Brief be submitted to Committee for consideration. Following on from this the attached draft Development Brief (Appendix 1 attached) which sets out the intended basis for submission of bids is provided for Members consideration.

In particular Members may wish to note that the primary objective in the Brief is to facilitate the restoration of the Gate Lodge and adjoining buildings in a sensitive manner which respects the architecture of the original building and nature of the immediate surroundings in the City Cemetery.

Members will also be aware that in the current financial climate it is not an ideal time to bring this property to the market and that it would be anticipated that marketing of the property may be more appropriate in spring 2009.

Sub-Item 3.

The Council have recently received a request from Doran Consulting (consultant engineers) to provide a wayleave across Council owned land for a proposed new storm sewer to serve a proposed new pitch on the Shaftesbury Recreation Centre site. The length of sewer on Council owned land is 4.5 metres and the width of the wayleave sought by Doran Consulting is 9 metres.

The Council currently lease Shaftesbury Recreation Centre to the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum on a ten year lease from 1 October 2000. The leased land presently falls under the operational control of Community Services and the Development Committee.

The proposed wayleave is across land which forms part of the Parks and Cemeteries Services land known as River Terrace and falls under the operational control of Parks and Leisure Committee.

The attached map (Appendix 2) shows the location of the land leased to the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum (shaded light blue) and the lands controlled by Parks and Leisure Committee shown shaded green. The portion of the proposed wayleave across Parks and Leisure lands is shown by a green line. The portion of the proposed pipe shown in blue is across land owned by the Department for Social Development and the LO&MCF will require a separate arrangement with that body.

Key Issues

Sub-Item 1.

- Property is to be appropriated from the Parks & Leisure Committee to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to form part of the Corporate Land Bank managed by the Estates Management Unit.
- Future report to be provided to Committee in due course on the future utilisation of the site.

Sub-Item 2.

Draft development Brief attached (Appendix 1) for consideration by Members in accordance with the Committee's decision of 19 September 2008. Members are advised that marketing of the property may be more appropriate in spring 2009.

Sub-Item 3.

- Wayleave for storm sewer to serve proposed pitch development at Shaftesbury Recreation Centre requested by Doran Consulting on behalf of the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum.
- Route of proposed wayleave is partly across Parks and Leisure land at River Terrace and partly across land owned by Department for Social Development.

- Given the nature of the arrangements it is proposed to enter into a formal wayleave arrangement which would be co-terminus with the current lease to LO&MCF. No charge to be levied for grant of wayleave.
- All work in connection with installation of proposed sewer to be carried out by LO&MCF or their agents with relevant safeguards to Council in terms of liabilities etc.

Resource Implications

Sub-Item 1.

Financial: Some expenditure will be incurred to cover general security and health and safety issues that may arise. There will be future cost implications if the building is to be demolished. There is however a potential capital receipt if the site is ultimately disposed of.

Human Resources: No additional human resources at this time.

Asset & Other Implications: The appropriation of this property to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee as part of the Corporate Land Bank will allow the Council to consider the most appropriate future use of the property and its potential disposal.

Sub-Item 2.

Financial

As previously reported.

Human Resources

As previously reported.

Asset and Other Implications

As previously reported.

Sub-Item 3.

Financial

No financial income or expenditure by Council in connection with grant of wayleave.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

Failure to grant wayleave could impact upon the ability of the LO&MCF or their agents to draw down funding for the proposed pitch development.

Recommendations

Sub-Item 1.

Committee is asked to note the appropriation of the former Grove Leisure Centre premises to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to be held as part of the Corporate Land Bank and note that a further report will be brought to Committee in due course regarding future use options for the property.

Sub-Item 2.

Committee is recommended to approve the draft Development Brief and note the potential timing regarding marketing of the property.

Sub-Item 3.

Committee is recommended to approve the grant of a storm sewer wayleave at no cost to the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum to facilitate the development of a proposed new pitch on land leased to them by the Council, the wayleave to be on terms agreed by the Estates Manager and incorporated in an appropriate legal agreement to be drawn up by the Director of Legal Services.

Key to Abbreviations

LO&MCF – Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum

Documents Attached

Sub-Item 1.

None

Sub-Item 2.

Appendix 1 - Draft Development Brief for City Cemetery Gate Lodge (Fox's Lodge)

Sub-Item 3.

Appendix 2 – Map showing:

Shaded Light Blue – Land presently leased to Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum.

Shaded Green – Land under operational control of Parks and Cemeteries Services as part of the River Terrace site.

Green Line – Location of proposed storm sewer wayleave across Council land

Blue Line – Location of storm sewer across land owned by Department for Social Development.

APPENDIX 1

**DRFAT DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR CITY CEMETERY GATE
LODGE (FOX'S LODGE)**

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL



DEVELOPERS BRIEF

**GATE LODGE
CITY CEMETERY
WHITEROCK ROAD
BELFAST**

DEVELOPERS BRIEF

GATE LODGE, CITY CEMETERY, WHITEROCK ROAD, BELFAST

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This brief invites submissions from parties interested in putting forward development proposals for the Gate Lodge at Belfast City Cemetery for the purposes of a scheme which will provide benefit and advantage to both the City Cemetery and the local physical and social environment.
- 1.2 The site is in the ownership of Belfast City Council.

2.0 LOCATION/ PROPERTY SITE DETAILS (see Map attached)

- 2.1 The buildings are located within the boundaries of Belfast's City Cemetery, fronting onto the Whiterock Road.
- 2.2 The site area extends to approximately 0.15 acres (589 sq metres).
- 2.3 The main building on site is the former Gate Lodge which is reported to date from the 1860's. Located adjacent to the Gate Lodge are two outbuildings and a former enclosed service yard. The three buildings are in a severe state of dereliction.
- 2.4 The boundary wall fronting Whiterock Road is 'Listed' by the Department of the Environment, Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) as being of historic interest. A preliminary indication from EHS suggests they would consider construction of an appropriate access to the Gate Lodge site from Whiterock Road. Any new access should be in sympathy with the 'Listed' wall and would be subject to the normal statutory approval processes.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The primary objective is to restore the Gate Lodge and adjoining buildings in a sensitive manner which respects the architecture of the original building and nature of the immediate surroundings in the City Cemetery. The more specific objectives are as follows:-

- a. Restoration of the Gate Lodge, and the remainder of the site in a sensitive manner which respects the architecture and nature of the immediate surroundings through good design and use of appropriate materials.
- b. The development should be consistent with its location on the periphery of the City Cemetery and should also incorporate measures which seek to minimize anti-social behavior.
- c. The site should be developed as a self-contained entity with direct pedestrian and vehicle access to/from Whiterock Road. No parking will be permitted on any of the service roads within the cemetery and no direct pedestrian or vehicle access from the site to the Cemetery will be permitted. Any existing access must be closed up.
- d. Mains services should be brought from Whiterock Road and any services currently through the cemetery should be terminated.
- e. The project should take account of the historical significance of the City Cemetery.
- f. Provide investment to stimulate regeneration and act as a touchstone for good urban renewal practice within the local community. The Council will consider a range of uses which may be either based on the social economy, residential or commercial use or a combination of these.
- g. Although not obligatory, the Council would welcome proposals which are cross-community in nature.
- h. The project must be financially and economically viable.

4.0 TERMS OF DISPOSAL

4.1 The development will be carried out on the basis of a Lease of the site by Belfast City Council for a term of 25 years. Developers should indicate if this term meets their requirements or state what alternative period may be required for their purposes.

4.2 Disposal will be by way of an Agreement for Lease with Lease to be granted on completion of the development. The Agreement for Lease will contain time limits for commencement and completion of development. The terms of the Agreement for Lease will include provisions which allow the developer to take possession of the site to carry out the proposed development. Signature of the Agreement for Lease will be expected within

six weeks of its issue. A deposit will become payable upon signature of the Agreement for Lease.

- 4.2 Financial bids are invited for the Lease of the site.
- 4.3 The terms of the Lease will restrict use of the buildings and yard to uses deemed compatible with Objectives stated in this Brief.
- 4.4 During the term of the Lease the developer will be required to:-
- I. carry out developers proposals contained in response to this Brief as may be altered or amended with the agreement and written consent of Belfast City Council.
 - II. obtain in advance of development all necessary Planning and other statutory consents in relation to the construction and refurbishment of all or any buildings, structures and spaces.
 - III. abide by all bye laws and regulations in relation to building operations and subsequent use of the premises and the surrounding lands retained by the Council.
 - IV. pay fees and all other outgoings, including insurance and maintenance costs of the premises.
- 4.4 The developer will be required to obtain all necessary planning permissions and consents, erect and maintain all buildings, control building operations, abide by all regulations and pay fees and other outgoings, including insurance. It should be noted that within the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 the entire City Cemetery site is zoned for Landscape, Amenity or Recreation use. The draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan shows the Cemetery as a Local Landscape Wedge.
- 4.5 The developer will be required to conduct all necessary negotiations with the statutory bodies in respect of mains services, and must make their own enquiries and satisfy themselves as to the availability of services etc, and further satisfy themselves as to all the site conditions and constraints. The developer shall provide main foul sewer and water connections to the Whiterock Road.

5.0 SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ASSESSED ON:

- How the scheme meets the requirements set out in this Brief in particular as outlined in Paragraph 3.0.
- Financial bid.
- Design qualities.

6.0 SUBMISSION

6.1 Developers should submit two copies of documents giving the following information.

- Sketch layout plans of the site/buildings, indicating proposed uses.
- Written statement outlining the nature of the proposal, financial bid, source(s) of funding and development programme.
- Name of solicitor who will be acting in this matter.

6.2 Two Copies of Submissions should be sent to:

**The Estates Manager
Belfast City Council
Core Improvement Team
The Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BP**

6.3 All proposals must reach the above address on or before **4.00 p.m.** on ?????.

These particulars do not form any part of an Offer or Contract. While the statements contained in this brief are given in good faith and as a general guide to the property, the City Council cannot accept any warranty as to their accuracy. Interested parties are not entitled to place reliance on them as statements or representation of fact and must satisfy themselves by inspection or otherwise as to the correctness of



Scale 1:500

Area 0.146 acres (589m²)



**Playing Field
(All Weather)**

**Shaftesbury
Recreation
Centre**

Haulers Way

Bols

**Car
Park**

144

138

126

Scale 1:500

SW



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Use of City Hall lawns by Belfast Community Circus (Festival of Fools)
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	George Wright – Head of Facilities Management – Ext.5206
Contact Officer:	Peter McKay – Ext. 6233

Relevant Background Information

As Members will be aware, the Committee has recently delegated authority for routine requests for use of the City Hall grounds etc. to the Director of Corporate Services, on the basis of an agreed set of criteria. However it was recognized that there would be occasions on which the nature, scale and/or scope of the request means that it is appropriate to place the matter directly before the Committee. The request detailed below falls into this category, and the direction of the Committee is therefore sought.

A request has been received from The Belfast Community Circus School to use the City Hall east lawn as a venue for a “**Festival of Fools**” event taking place from 1st to 5th May 2009 (inclusive of set-up and break down times). The Festival of Fools event was established by Belfast Community Circus School in 2004 and is Northern Ireland’s only street theatre festival. Members may recall that a similar application was made in respect of this event in January 2007 but the Committee rejected the request on that occasion.

The centre-piece of the event - which would cover a 18m x 16m area on the east lawns - would be a high quality maze installation called “Get Lost”. If approved, it would be the first time that this installation will have been toured in Northern Ireland.

The event is essentially walkabout theatre in an enclosed space - actors in fantasy costume travel around a maze (constructed of Heras fencing covered in plastic privet hedge) interacting with participants and visitors to the City Hall Grounds. The maze will be open for 5 hours per day, entrance is free of charge and the maze is fully wheelchair accessible. The event is described by the organizers as “an artistic vision combining elements of fairytale, myth, comedy, art and landscape”. “Get Lost” will be aimed at family audiences from across Belfast through an extensive advertising campaign, and to visitors from outside the city through websites and press coverage. The organizers anticipate that the installation will attract around 1,000 visitors per day. Visitors in queues will be entertained by walkabout performers from the Festival Of Fools.

This event is financially supported by Belfast City Council through an annual grant administered by the Culture and Arts Unit. If approved, the event is scheduled to commence on the 2nd May 2009 after a media launch which is anticipated to attract a crowd in the order of 300. It is then scheduled to run for a further 3 days ending on 5th May.

All additional security and stewarding will be provided by the organisers at their expense. The grounds of the City Hall will be kept open for the event however the timings are mostly within the normal opening times of the grounds. Security will be paid for and overseen by the organisers; this will include appropriate daytime and overnight security. The Council would be required to give access to the 3-phase power supply available in the grounds for the PA system. The organisers are willing to re-turf the lawn if necessary, and they will also provide changing facilities for the artists in the form of a tent in the grounds.

A risk assessment will be carried out on the site in conjunction with the organisers and Belfast City Council's Workplace Health unit. Public Liability Insurance has been organised. Stewards will be in place to guide visitors on the site. A PA system will be set up for low-level music and announcements.

From a practical point of view there would be little potential disruption to the normal routines within the City Hall grounds.

If this request is approved, further meetings with the organisers, together with representatives from Corporate Communications, Events and the Culture and Arts Units will be held to progress planning for the event. This event has the potential to enhance the profile of the City Hall and the Council, particularly during the closure of the building.

Key Issues

As already indicated, the Committee has, in 2007, already refused a request to host this event. However Members may take the view that, on this occasion, the event could assist in the important task of keeping the City Hall in the public eye during the period of closure, and may therefore be worth considering again.

The organisers have provided assurances in principle in respect of the following key issues;

- that an appropriate level of indemnity in respect of loss, damage or personal injury will be provided for the Council;
- that the impact on the normal operation of the grounds will be minimal;
- that all incidental costs associated with the event, including additional stewarding and security costs, will be borne by the organisers;
- that signage used for the event will have due regard for the status of the City Hall as the political and administrative home of the Council; *and*
- that the lawn will be kept intact as far as possible, and re-turfed if necessary.

Resource Implications

Financial

There are no significant direct costs for the council associated with this request.

Human Resources

No additional resources are required, as all additional security and stewarding staff are the responsibility of the organisers.

Asset and other implications

There are no significant implications for the integrity of the Councils assets.

Recommendation/Decision

The Committee's decision is sought in respect of the application to host the Festival of Fools event in the City Hall grounds on the dates set out above.

Documents Attached

None.

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**FRIDAY, 10th OCTOBER, 2008****MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

- Members present: Councillor Long (Chairman); and
Councillors C. Maskey, McCausland and Stoker.
- External Members: Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Ms. H. Smith, Protestant Churches;
Ms. A. Chada, Ethnic Minority Groups;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast Trades Council;
Ms. L. Coates, Belfast City Centre Management;
Mr. M. Wardlow, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Mr. L. Reynolds, Voluntary/Community Centre; and
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector.
- In attendance: Ms. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Ms. C. Wilson, Conflict Transformation Project Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. J. Heaney, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Kyle and Mr. P. Scott, the Rev. S. Watson, Mr. R. Galway, Mr. P. Bunting, Ms. E. Wilkinson, Mrs. M. Marken and Ms. M. De Silva.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 5th September were taken as read and signed as correct.

Good Relations Grant Aid Fund

Arising from discussion of the minutes, the Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 5th September, it had agreed that a limit be set on the amount of grant aid which might be awarded in respect of the Good Relations Grant Aid Fund to an individual group during any one financial year. Accordingly, she recommended that, in order to minimise any disruption to the work of the groups which might apply for funding, that the maximum amount which any one individual group could be awarded during one financial year be £15,000.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation in this regard.

Interface/Peace Walls

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd March, had adopted a Notice of Motion which had been proposed by Councillor Maginness and seconded by Councillor Long in regard to the reduction and ultimate removal of the so called "Peace Walls" and barriers that divided the City. This matter had been referred to the former Good Relations Steering Panel.

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She reported that several members of staff from the Good Relations Unit were participating currently in the Interface Working Group, which was an inter-agency organisation established at the end of 2007. Representatives on the Group included the Northern Ireland Office, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the NIHE, North Belfast Community Action Unit and the Belfast Community Safety Partnership with the Community Relations Council acting as a co-ordinator.

The aims of the group were to:

1. draft a policy and process for potential new interfaces which would take on board the various learning initiatives being developed;
2. develop key principles and indicators to monitor and review the existing peace walls; and
3. support all practical actions to achieve the above two points.

The Good Relations Manager reported further that the Interface Working Group had commissioned a report which sought to bring together all information which had been gathered to date on interfaces throughout the City into a practical working document. The contents of the report would be circulated to all relevant community groups and organisations as soon as possible. She pointed out that interface work formed a major element under "Contested Spaces" within the Council's Peace III Plan and that funding for future activities to address interfaces/peacelines issues had been reserved under that programme.

The Partnership was advised that the Interface Working Group had agreed recently that it would be useful if a further mapping exercise/audit were to be undertaken of those groups or organisations working at various interfaces throughout the City, in order to establish which practitioners/groups/networks were in existence and which might have the capacity to be involved in any major programme or action plan seeking to address interface issues. The Working Group had also considered the possibility of identifying possible pilot projects for future work.

It was reported the Dr. N. Jarman, Institute of Conflict Research, and Mr. T. Macaulay, Independent Consultant, were in attendance and they were welcomed by the Chairman.

Dr. Jarman outlined the various aspects of the Community Relations Council's report entitled "Towards Sustainable Security Interface Barriers and the Legacy of Segregation in Belfast". He outlined the background to the report and defined what was meant by segregation and security barriers in the City. He pointed out that the research had sought to identify and compile a list of all security and segregation barriers throughout the City, together with all other structures which acted as barriers between the communities within Belfast. The report had sought also to quantify the level of violence which had taken place at the various interfaces and, where possible, to identify the reasons for such violence.

The Members were informed that the report attempted to identify the obstacles which existed regarding the removal of the physical barriers. Dr. Jarman pointed out that it was important that any removal of barriers should be as a consequence of, or accompanied by, the regeneration of the area. He stated also that there should be a presumption that any re-development or regeneration at an interface area should aim

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to remove barriers and physical divisions rather than consolidate existing ones or create new barriers.

The report addressed the various attitudes to interface barriers, in particular, it considered the reasons why people believed the walls/barriers should remain and what factors would be required to increase support for the removal of the peace barriers or walls.

In conclusion, Dr. Jarman stated that the review of the interface areas had highlighted the scale and diversity of the existing security architecture across the City and had identified that, to date, there was no overall strategy designed to remove the existing barriers or prevent new barriers being constructed. He indicated that it was vitally important to consult with the local community and with their political/community representatives prior to developing strategies for the removal of the barriers.

Mr. Macaulay presented to the Members a discussion paper which he had developed independently and which proposed a five stage process for the removal of the peace walls throughout Northern Ireland. The five stage process included mapping, consultation, local interface development plans, implementation and support and normalisation. He outlined the main aspects of the five stages and highlighted the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholder groups, including the Northern Ireland Office, the Community Relations Council and the City Council, in regard to the removal of the barriers throughout the City.

Dr. Jarman and Mr. Macaulay answered various questions from the Members in relation to the report and discussion paper and agreed with the Members that it was vitally important that the views of the people living directly at the interfaces and the young people of the areas were taken into consideration prior to any action plans being put into operation. Dr. Jarman pointed out that his report was a draft document for consultation purposes and that the suggestions of the Members would be taken into consideration prior to the publishing of the final report. He and Mr. Macaulay thanked the Partnership for receiving them and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information contained within the reports and agreed that a further audit/mapping exercise of the groups or organisations working in interface areas be commissioned by the Good Relations Unit in accordance with the Council's and the European Union procurement procedures. The Partnership noted also that a further report in this regard would be submitted to the Partnership for its consideration in due course and that copies of Dr. Jarman's and Mr. Macaulay's draft report/discussion papers would be available for inspection on the Modern.Gov intranet site.

**Correspondence between the Partnership
and the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB)**

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th August, it had agreed that a letter be sent to the SEUPB outlining the Partnership's concerns over the delays associated with the introduction of the Peace III Programme, the possible cash flow implications for the Council and the consequential negative repercussions for communities in the City.

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The Good Relations Manager submitted for the Partnership's consideration a copy of a letter which had been sent to Mr. Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of the SEUPB addressing the Council's concerns and a copy of the response which had been received from Mr. Colgan.

Several Members pointed out that the letter from Mr. Colgan had failed to address the concerns which had been raised by the Partnership and it was agreed that a further letter be forwarded to the SEUPB reiterating the Partnership's concerns. It was agreed also that the matter be raised with the SEUPB's at the Monitoring Committee meeting.

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that she had recently received the formal Letter of Offer relating to the award of £6.3 Million under 1.1 of Peace III and she was consulting with the financial audit and legal services of the Council to ensure that the conditions of the offer could be fully met.

Peace III Small Grants Programme

The Partnership considered the undernoted report in respect of the development of a Small Grants Programme under Peace III:

"Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that at its meeting on 15th August 2008, the Good Relations Partnership agreed that the Good Relations Officers should commence drawing up the criteria and application process for the proposed Small Grants programme that will form part of Peace III funding.

As the staffing structure required to administer Peace III will not be in place until November at the earliest, the main bulk of the Peace III funding will not be available until the spring of 2009. If the Small Grants element can be progressed in advance of this, it would provide an important source of funding for community based organisations in the interim. This would also assist in alleviating pressure on the Council's main Good Relations Grant Aid Fund.

Key Issues

During public consultation on the initial Peace Plan, the Council's proposal of offering small grants, including potential salary costs, was widely supported and welcomed by the community and voluntary sector as a means of supporting locally based initiatives.

The SEUPB have stated that "small grants" in Peace III may be up to £25,000 each; an allocation of £850,000 for open calls and small grants has been included within Belfast's final approved Peace Plan.

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A key issue is whether the small grants proposal should support salary/employment related and overhead costs for applicant groups and whether this should be capped. It is acknowledged that many organisations, particularly smaller groups, are finding it increasingly difficult to access funding for salary costs; a small grant of £25,000 could provide organisations with the opportunity to employ a member of staff. SEUPB guidelines allow for employment costs to be proportionate to the project being delivered.

We considered several options:

Option 1: That the small grants scheme supports only project related costs that meet the Peace III objectives. This was felt to be unfair and overly restrictive.

Option 2: That the small grants scheme includes provision for the support of employment related costs capped at £15,000, that all eligible expenditure is based on real costs, is proportionate to the project, represents value for money and meets the Peace III objectives.

Option 3: That the small grants scheme includes provision for salary/employment related costs up to a maximum gross sum of £20,000, based on NJC pay scales, that all eligible expenditure is based on real (evidence based) costs, is proportionate to the project, represents value for money and meets the Peace III objectives.

Following discussion with representatives from the Community Relations Council/Border Action Consortium, appointed to provide specialist advice to SEUPB on Peace III, Option 3 is the recommended option for the Peace III small grants element of the Council's Peace programme, as it provides maximum flexibility to applicants. The draft guidance notes, application form and scoring matrix based on option 3 are attached for information.

An amount for programme costs must be included. Apportioned salary costs are more likely to be eligible. Match funding with other non-EU funding sources will be considered.

The Good Relations Partnership should be aware that minor textual changes may have to be made to the final document if required by SEUPB.

Financial Implications

As the vast majority of applications are likely to be from smaller organisations, advance payments may be required; we are awaiting SEUPB guidance on this. Each application will be dealt with on an individual case level and is recommended that the maximum advance if required should be 25% of the applicant's first year's anticipated expenditure.

The Small Grants programme is included within the Peace III allocation of £6.3m. and may be reclaimed at 100% from the SEUPB.

There are no overall costs to the Council but there may be cash flow issues pending recoument from the SEUPB.

Recommendations

The Good Relations Partnership is requested to approve the recommended option as outlined above and agree the following conditions :

In view of the first spend target of September 2009, that the sum of £500,000 (out of a total of £850,000 for the first 2 years of the Peace III Programme) be made available at this stage and this will be a competitive process, with the highest scoring applications receiving funding

That a limit of one application per group/organisation be set at this stage, in view of the likely demand, to ensure the broadest possible take-up, unless in exceptional circumstances

That a call for applications will be made in mid-November with a closing date early in January 2009 and recommendations to the Good Relations Partnership in February 2009

That the position be reviewed in the summer of 2009, i.e. after 6 months, to ensure that the delivery of the small grants element is manageable within the Peace III resources and provides value for money within the overall Peace Plan.

All decisions will be at the discretion of the Good Relations Partnership.

Officers to contact for further information

David Robinson, Good Relations Officer. (ext: 6030)
Leish Cox, Good Relations Officer. (ext: 6028)"

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During discussion, the Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the Consortium, made up from staff from the Community Relations Council and Border Action which had been appointed to provide specialist advice to SEUPB on Peace III, had requested that it be permitted to send observers to any meeting of the Partnership during which consideration was being given to the Peace III matters.

After discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendations contained within the report and agreed that Consortium be permitted to send a representative to the Partnership, in an observer capacity only, when items of business relating to the Peace III Programme were under discussion.

Conflict Transformation Project – Closure Report

The Committee considered the undernoted report in respect to the work of the Conflict Transformation Project:

“Relevant Background Information

In December 2006, Belfast City Council was successful in its 3 applications to the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership to draw down funding under Measure 3.1 of the EU Programme for Peace & Reconciliation in Northern Ireland (Peace II) Extension 00-07. The total grant-aid was almost £750,000 to support the Conflict Transformation Project.

The 3 programmes within the Conflict Transformation Project were:

- **Addressing Divisions**
- **Conflict Transformation Learning Consortium**
- **Towards a Shared City.**

This project formally closed at the end of June 2008 and the final evaluation, expenditure and audit reports have now been completed.

Key Issues

The overarching aim of the 3 programmes contained within the Conflict Transformation Project was to build a foundation for a series of collaborative good relations activities in the city, between Council departments and with other statutory bodies in the city. This was both in terms of an evidence base, as well as political and agency consensus on priorities for the city. This was designed to support the future implementation of the Peace III programme and community planning.

Delivery

Five staff were appointed to deliver the project and its 30 targets. These covered a range of objectives including the formation of ad-hoc networks; organisation of seminars and workshops; production of research reports; publicity campaigns; and the development of a series of recommendations for action. Of these 30 targets, 23 were fully achieved or exceeded, 3 were partially achieved and 4 were not achieved. These 4 targets were substituted with 4 new targets, in agreement with BLSP; these were all fully achieved.

The main constraint in achieving all of our targets was time and BLSP agree that we were perhaps over-ambitious in our original applications. The independent evaluators agree with this conclusion. Four additional outputs were delivered during the course of the project, including the elected Members' study visit; the UK study visit; the collaborative working partnerships seminar series; and the research on mobility and connectivity. These were all funded from savings made elsewhere within the programmes and BLSP agreed that they enhanced the overall aim of the project.

Key outputs include:

- Over 300 people, drawn from the statutory, community, private and academic sectors participated in 16 seminars over the 12 months. These seminars focussed on shared space, economic regeneration, inter-cultural cities, inclusive decision-making and good practice in conflict transformation;
- 6 research projects on shared space, mobility, local area planning and transformative service delivery. These reports included 124 recommendations and have been widely disseminated through the website and partner agencies;
- A photographic exhibition exploring the diversity of the city exhibited at the Waterfront with over 4000 visitors and attracted significant positive media coverage at its launch in June. It asked a range of people where they considered the 'heart' of the city to be. This is currently in store and will be used at other locations;
- 2 study visits to Chicago, USA (Oct 07 & May 08). The first visit was for senior public officials (20 participants) and the second visit was for elected representatives (17 participants). Both of these visits were hosted by the Mayor's Office in Chicago and included a high-level of contributors from public office, advisory councils, academia and economic regeneration experts;

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- A study visit to Leicester, UK (Feb 08) for 22 senior operational staff examining good relations, economic competitiveness, shared space and community cohesion. This was hosted by Leicester City Council and the Institute for Community Cohesion;
- 12 inter-agency meetings to build consensus on priorities for good relations in the city, in line with the existing objectives of the Good Relations Plan;
- The establishment of an inter-agency forum, led by the CRC, on a co-ordinated regeneration approach in those communities at the interface;
- A pilot with over 40 participants from the community and statutory sectors exploring the synergies between peace-building and local area working; and
- 4 international good practice visits to explore heritage; divided societies; city-making; and gang-related violence;
- 6 articles in relevant publications and a web-site highlighting the work of the project;
- Participation in 6 meetings of the BLSP Conflict Transformation Network with the academic and community sectors to examine linkages between funded projects;
- Formal presentations at 5 conferences, including the high-profile UK-Ireland Planning Research Conference;
- 14 claims with supporting documentation were successfully submitted to BLSP to re-coup expenditure.

BLSP praised the project for its range of outputs and the in-depth nature of the discussions and issues addressed.

Partners and participants

A number of ad-hoc networks were established during the project. The 12 key agencies represented were:

- Belfast Education Library Board;
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
- Belfast Metropolitan College

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- Community Relations Council;
- Department of Social Development;
- Department of Environment;
- NI Council for Integrated Education;
- NI Council for Voluntary Action;
- NI Housing Executive;
- OFMDFM;
- Police Service NI;
- Queen's University Belfast; and
- Strategic Investment Board.

Throughout the project, a range of participants were drawn from the academic, community and voluntary sectors. This included, amongst others: Belfast Interface Project; Greater Shankill Community Council; Intercomm; South Belfast Roundtable on Racism; and Mediation NI. The private sector was also represented at a number of seminars.

Expenditure

The total expenditure on each of the 3 programmes was:

1. £205,057 – Addressing Divisions (82% LoO grant-aid £249,950)
2. £178,860 – Learning Consortium (71.5% LoO grant-aid £249,950)
3. £196,428 – Towards a Shared City (78.5% LoO grant-aid £249,910)

A major reason for the under-spend was that, in practice, the project was only fully operational for 12 months as opposed to the planned 18 months. This was due in part to the funder's requirement for a public staff recruitment process and the longer lead-in time required to build partners' participation in the process. Also, the project staff ensured that all study visits and events were delivered at best value, in line with strict procurement requirements. Several high-profile international speakers generously contributed their time at no cost to the project.

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BLSP were appropriately informed regarding projected under-spend and any changes to spend profiles were agreed in advance, as required.

Emerging themes

A number of key themes emerged from the study visits, inter-agency meetings and commissioned research.

Fundamentally, it is important that the city leadership balances the need to deal with its past effectively as well as creating the vision for the future. The visits to Chicago and the commissioned research repeatedly stressed the importance of positive political leadership in transforming a divided city. It is commonly agreed that it is important to have a comprehensive good relations agenda in Belfast, led by the Council, in order to improve the quality of life for its citizens and for it to become a competitive city within a wider Europe, with an image as tolerant, clean, green and safe.

The Conflict Transformation Project has enabled the Council to clearly demonstrate the cross-cutting thematic nature of good relations. The good relations agenda cross-references other city-wide agenda, including economic development, health improvement, open spaces and promoting a safer city. The direct connection between the good relations agenda and city prosperity agenda were clearly and repeatedly demonstrated. Council is currently considering adopting a thematic approach to work planning as it prepares for community planning.

The challenge facing Belfast is to ensure that all of its citizens are able to share the new opportunities and 'feel-good' factor. There are still many areas within the city where the change has been much slower and deprivation remains. There is a clear desire to build a vision of a shared and better future between local communities in the city as we enter the next phase, moving from conflict management to city transformation.

Generally, there is a growing openness to the concept of shared space and an increased recognition amongst providers and users that duplication of services is an inefficient and unsustainable method of delivery. Unsurprisingly, territoriality and safety remain key concerns. The promotion of sharing in public spaces would also ease the pressure on the mixing in residential areas. It is recommended that the economic and social value of sharing should be more explicitly promoted by statutory agencies when planning, delivering and managing shared spaces in the city.

The significance of transport and connectivity was stressed in terms of promoting access to shared spaces in the city. There is a need to comprehensively plan a safe 'path network' (public transport, cycle ways and pedestrian routes) between sites of employment, leisure and services in the city, as well as ensure individual safety at the destination. This is important for the major regeneration sites at Titanic Quarter, Giant's Park, Crumlin Road/Girdwood and Springvale.

Independent evaluation

An independent evaluation was completed by Williamson Consulting, as required by our funder. They conducted 30 meetings with a number of stakeholders and reviewed the materials from the project.

Generally, the evaluation was very positive about the implementation and management of the project, the quality of seminars and study visits and the focussed discussions on transforming a divided city. Inevitably, given the short time scale for the project, they concluded that the emerging recommendations will need to be done through a range of alternative mechanisms to ensure that the learning from the project continues to create benefit and, ultimately, demonstrates value for money and a lasting legacy.

Their key recommendations were grouped under four headings: Structures; Planning; Partner Organisations; and other recommendations. They included:

1. A forum for political leaders to consider how opportunities could be created for Councillors to continue discussions started during the Chicago visit. It is critical that the Council continues engagement with internationally-recognised experts on good relations/conflict transformation, to support the political and strategic leadership of the city to reflect on progress. It is suggested that the CRC also be included in such a forum;
2. As a framework for Community Planning continues to develop, it must centrally recognise the importance of good relations and provision of shared services and spaces;
3. Council and its partners must continue to develop community engagement models which deliver good relations outcomes as well as fulfil a service delivery need, for example, in local area working;

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4. Consideration is given to the further dissemination of the research. Some of those consulted felt that the presentation was too academic and would benefit from a more 'user-friendly' format;
5. Councillors who have participated in the project could present its main findings to a group of MLA's at the NI Assembly; and
6. All of the statutory agencies involved in the project recognise that Belfast City Council should take a key role in civic leadership and are happy for Council to co-ordinate and facilitate ongoing work which is focused on the city as a whole. It is recommended that Belfast City Council supports the ongoing role of such a group. Its primary purpose would be to develop and monitor the implementation of the city's Good Relations Plan.

The full evaluation reports are available on the website at:

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/conflict

Recommendations 3 and 5 have been incorporated into the Council's recent application to SEUPB under the 2.2 priority of the Peace III programme (see below).

Discussions are ongoing with the CRC regarding recommendation 4. It is proposed that summaries of all of the research are prepared for publication in their regular Shared Space Journal.

SEUPB will be conducting a further audit and evaluation of the projects. This is part of a standard sampling procedure for all grant-aided projects under the EU Peace Programmes.

Next steps

The key outcome of the project is the informal agreement by partner agencies that the Council is best placed to lead the priority-setting and implementation of collaborative good relations planning in the city. This is in line with the new Council Corporate Plan 2008-2011, which outlines our commitment to demonstrate civic leadership in this complex area.

Following the Members' visit to Chicago, a number of broad headline areas of action were recommended. These will now be developed into a series of indicative actions and draft objectives. This will be presented to the appropriate Council Committees for agreement in due course.

The Good Relations Partnership granted authority for an application to be made under the 2.2 priority of the Peace III programme (Key institutional capacities are developed for a shared society). This application outlines an inter-agency leadership, learning and development programme building on the work of the Conflict Transformation Project, as well as examines models of community engagement in a peace-building context. This proposal, entitled 'A Learning City', has been submitted to SEUPB for consideration, as recommended by the Good Relations Partnership at its meeting in August 2008.

An ad-hoc group of Chief Executives of statutory agencies in Belfast has been central to the implementation and strategic direction of the Conflict Transformation Project. It is proposed that the Council's Chief Executive will brief them on progress at the next available opportunity.

Externally, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee granted authority to the Chief Executive to initiate discussions with the appropriate partner agencies and the Northern Ireland Good Relations Panel, chaired by the Head of the NI Civil Service, on the contribution partner agencies will make to the delivery of the plan. It is proposed that the Chief Executive seeks an agenda item at a future meeting of the Panel, to present the 'next generation' Belfast Good Relations Plan.

Conclusion

In overview, the Williamson Consulting evaluation report concluded that:

'The Project was an ambitious project which sought to bring about significant change... It recognised the political importance of creating a critical mass whereby people who had sufficient authority and a shared vision could bring about major change.'

Finally, they remarked:

'The Project has had many successes; however the true benefit of this work will only come about if the learning is taken forward in a range of practical ways.'

All of the information from the project, including the full research reports are available at:

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/conflict

Good Relations Partnership,
Friday, 10th October, 2008

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Resource Implications

Financial

The project was 100% grant-aided under the Peace II extension programme through BLSP.

Human Resources

All posts were 100% grant-aided under the Peace II extension programme through BLSP.

Recommendations

The Partnership notes the report and considers the independent evaluator's recommendation regarding a briefing for MLA's.

The Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the research is prepared for publication in partnership with the Community Relations Council.

Key to Abbreviations

BLSP - Belfast Local Strategy Partnership
CRC - Community Relations Council
LoO - Letter of Offer"

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

Bonfire Management Programme

The Partnership agreed to defer consideration of a report in respect of the Bonfire Management Programme to a future meeting of the Partnership in order to permit Members to give due consideration to the matter.

The Partnership agreed also that an invitation be extended to representatives from a number of the communities involved in the programme to deliver a presentation to the next meeting of the Partnership in respect of the community's role in the development of the programme.

Progress Report on the Implementation of the Council's Good Relations Strategy

The Good Relation Manager, in accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme and Good Relations Strategy, submitted for the Partnership consideration a report detailing the work of the Good Relations Unit for the period from 1st April till 30th September, 2008.

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**Good Relations Partnership,
Friday, 10th October, 2008**

She highlighted various aspects of the report, including the establishment of the Good Relations Partnership, the work which had been carried out in relation to the European Programme for Peace and Reconciliation – Peace III Programme, the allocation of funding under the Good Relations Grant Aid Fund, the Conflict Transformation Project, the Bonfires Project, together with work which had been undertaken in relation to the St. Patrick's Day Small Grants Scheme, the St. Patrick's Day Concert, and the Showcase event. In addition, she reported on the work of the Unit in providing assistance and information to Migrant Workers, the project associated with the Eurocities Initiative, the organisation of various conferences, the Book of Honour and the Shared Neighbourhood Programme and, most recently, the work in relation to Interface problems and the removal of Peace Walls.

The Good Relations Manager advised the Members also of the work undertaken in respect of equality issues, including the production of the Equality Reference guide for employees and Year 2 of the Disability Action Plan, together with the hosting of a number of equality-related events.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Polish Picnic

The Partnership was advised that the Polish Picnic, an event which was organised by the Polish Community within the City, would be held in St. Georges Market on Sunday, 19th October. The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Hartley) would be attending the event and that all Members of the Partnership had been invited to attend.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Chairman



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
Subject:	Fuel Stamps Scheme
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Head of Environmental Health, ext 3281
Contact Officer:	John Corkey, Environmental Health Manager (Public Health), extension 3289

Relevant Background Information

The officer group facilitating the All Party Reference Group on Older People has developed an action plan around the delivery of council services to older people. The plan is designed to facilitate a one council approach by both building on existing services and, where possible, identifying new or innovative ways of meeting the needs of older people.

One of the principal areas of concern is fuel poverty and the impact that it has on older people in particular. A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain an acceptable level of temperature throughout the home, the occupants would have to spend more than 10% of their income on all household fuel use.

The 2006 House Condition Survey has reported fuel poverty in Belfast at 38.5% of households, however, recent fuel price rises are likely to have increased this figure significantly. The survey also confirms that older people, and lone older people in particular, are most likely to be in fuel poverty.

Some district councils in Northern Ireland currently operate "Fuel Stamps" schemes for domestic heating oil users. These schemes are designed to help people who are in, or are close to, fuel poverty to better manage their fuel costs. Whilst such a scheme will not reduce fuel poverty it can ensure that people who are struggling to budget for everyday living are encouraged to set money aside to help with their heating costs.

It is a relatively simple procedure whereby members of the public are given a card, on request, and they can then buy stamps (e.g. at £5 each) which they stick on the card and are able to build up credit that will be accepted by specific participating oil companies towards their fuel bills. The scheme is facilitated principally by participating retail outlets but can also be supplemented by Council staff located in public buildings, such as leisure centres.

The scheme utilises a savings method that would be very familiar to older people and therefore one they are more likely to feel comfortable with. The experience of other district councils operating similar schemes is that they are very popular.

A fuel stamps scheme operating across the Belfast City Council area would be of a significantly greater magnitude than any of the existing council schemes. In order therefore to measure its feasibility and the potential resource implications of a comprehensive scheme it would be necessary to apply a pragmatic and manageable approach in the first instance by piloting it in a defined area of the city. Currently the Council is represented on the North and West Belfast, Investing for Health, Fuel Poverty Community of Interest (COI). As part of its action plan the COI has been delivering a pilot project in North Belfast which is designed to target fuel poverty through energy efficiency programmes, grants, community development and communication. The Council has already demonstrated its support for the project with a £5,000 contribution (Health and Environmental Services Committee of 5th December 2005). The project is delivered by National Energy Agency (NEA) and its Chief Executive has confirmed that it would be keen to facilitate the Council in identifying retail outlets and distributing cards and stamps.

Key Issues

- Belfast City Council is committed to addressing issues affecting older people.
- Over 38% of households in Belfast are in fuel poverty with older people the most affected
- Rising fuel costs continue to increase the number of households affected
- Fuel stamps schemes operate successfully in a number of district councils and are very popular with the public.
- The scheme provides a savings approach that is familiar to many older people.
- Belfast City Council has been offered tangible support from NEA to roll out a pilot fuel stamps project.
- Whilst the pilot could be accommodated within existing budgets it is anticipated that additional resource would be required to operate the scheme across the city.

The vires for incurring expenditure for this pilot and any subsequent roll out would be under section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, if, in the opinion of the Committee, the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to the inhabitants of the district, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefits so accruing would be commensurate with the payments to be made.

Resource Implications

These are mostly associated with printing and administration costs

- 20,000 stamps - £4845 (includes set up costs)
- 1,000 cards and 1,000 flyers - £650
- Design costs £600
- Administrative costs for pilot would be met from within existing budgets
- Operational and administrative costs for roll out to be identified through the pilot and a further report brought back to Committee
- Officers are continuing to seek additional funding streams

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee agrees to the piloting of a "Fuel Stamps" scheme by the Council, in partnership with NEA, with a view to rolling it out across the city and that it approves expenditure on this project under section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.

Key to Abbreviations

NEA – National Energy Agency



Belfast City Council.

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
Subject:	Sustainable Development Action Plan 2006 – 2009. Year 2 Annual progress report.
Date:	24 th October 2008.
Reporting Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Corporate Services Directorate. Ext. 6084.
Contact Officer:	Alastair Curran, Sustainable Development Manager. Ext. 3309.

Relevant Background Information.

In August 2006, Belfast City Council adopted a new 3 year Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP). The plan was designed to enable the Council to demonstrate leadership by addressing the priority action areas as described within the 2006 Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Performance management of the Action Plan requires the provision of annual progress reports to the SP&R Committee. This paper summarises year two activities and seeks to bring emerging sustainable development issues to the Committee's attention. New issues relate predominantly to measures aimed at addressing the sources of climate change across the city. Local Government, particularly in large urban areas, is deemed to have a critical role in implementing practical remediation measures. Members have already identified challenges and opportunities associated with the climate change debate during the current corporate planning process.

In addition, the Committee is reminded that the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has introduced a statutory obligation upon local authorities to exercise their functions in the way "best calculated to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development". This duty commenced in April 2007 and requires local authorities to integrate sustainability considerations within their decision making processes.

The Council's Sustainable Development Action Plan comprises seven priority work areas;

- Improving organisation efficiency via the introduction of environmental management systems.
- Reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases via energy conservation activities.
- Encouraging our suppliers to adopt more sustainable business practices through the incorporation of environmental criteria in the Council's procurement decisions.
- Providing 'green' transport opportunities for staff in order to reduce reliance upon the private car and to reduce emissions from our own vehicle fleet.
- Introducing measures to protect and enhance Belfast's environment and natural resources.
- Reducing our waste by maximising recycling and reuse levels.
- Making our staff and the public more aware of sustainability issues through the provision of briefings, publications and by benchmarking our environmental stewardship activities against other private and public sector bodies.

Key Issues - Year Two Progress.

1. Introduction of an environmental management system (EMS).

The Council has chosen to introduce BS8555:2003, which provides for the phased introduction of an environmental management system. Environmental co-ordinators, located throughout Departments or Services, have been working towards completing phase 3 of the 6 phase process, which requires the development of targeted action plans, designed to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts associated with service delivery. This means has been selected in recognition of the fact that not all services have a large impact on the environment. Areas of greatest significance, for example, Fleet Management and Procurement Units continue to maintain ISO14001 accreditation, deemed the most rigorous EMS. Other sections of the Council such as the Waste Management Service are currently working towards achieving formal accreditation.

Key Issues - Year Two Progress Continued.**2. Energy Conservation.**

This measure has attracted additional significance given escalating energy costs for the Council. A new Energy Conservation Strategy, designed to significantly reduce both the Council's energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, is included within the overall SDAP. The Council's Energy Conservation Manager continues to work closely with building managers to ensure that appropriate conservation measures are practiced within our highest energy consuming premises. Additionally, a strategic assessment of Renewable Energy Provision for Belfast City Council has been completed in collaboration with the Carbon Trust. One recommendation completed during the year is the biomass and solar energy installation at the newly refitted Stables Complex in Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park. The Council has also become a partner in the Energy Savings Trust (EST) Key Account Management Programme. The EST assessment of Council activities, completed in March 2008, describes a range of actions the Council could take to tackle climate change through the introduction of sustainable energy management practices. The Council's Energy Conservation and Sustainable Development Managers are currently identifying actions which the Council will be pursuing, supported by EST funding. The Council continues to purchase green electricity with some 70% of our load currently generated from renewable sources.

3. Green Procurement.

Activities within this section of the action plan are designed to mainstream the Council's green procurement policy, which requires Departments to consider the adverse environmental impacts as a component of the tender evaluation processes. Over the past 12 months, out of 62 tenders awarded, 49 companies have indicated that they are actively pursuing environmental considerations as part of the assessment process. In addition, the Procurement Unit continues to heighten awareness of the 'green' purchasing requirements by providing appropriate training to Business Support Managers.

4. Green Transport.

The Greener Vehicle Group continues to promote the Council's car share and bike to work schemes amongst other transport initiatives. Both schemes provide staff with the opportunity to choose sustainable forms of transport, thereby reducing road congestion and air pollution. The Council's bike to work scheme membership continues to grow with 181 staff having joined the scheme to date. A short user survey has revealed high levels of satisfaction with the scheme. Sixty-five percent of participants now routinely commute by cycle and 64% indicated that cycling had shortened their commuting time. Publicity surrounding the scheme has resulted in a range of other employers across the city introducing the scheme including the Belfast Health Trust and Translink. The Greener Vehicle Group is also currently facilitating a review and update the Council's Transport Policy. It is anticipated that the new policy, which will establish the Council's vision of transportation for the City until 2015, will be completed in early 2009. Findings from this exercise will be used to progress a project initiated by the Council, involving a sample of major employers in the city, to encourage greater use of public transport.

5. Waste Management.

The principal aim of the 'In House' Waste Plan is to reduce the Council's waste to 90% of 2006 levels by 2012. A detailed waste characterisation study has been completed to establish baseline waste levels for Council properties and provision of recycling facilities has been extended to over 90 Council premises with collections undertaken by Cleansing Services. Staff have been provided with personal recycling bins and external recycling bins are 'chipped' thereby allowing building recycling levels to be accurately monitored. The provision of recycling services is to be further expanded to enable the Council to fulfil its obligations under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations and the Batteries Directive. A further waste characterisation survey is scheduled during 2009 to ensure waste levels are declining in line with plan objectives.

6. Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement.

Year 1 of the 3-year Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) has been completed resulting in six specific action plans for conserving priority species and habitats. Biodiversity considerations are also being routinely incorporated into parks' management decisions. Awareness of biodiversity issues is being addressed via the delivery of a training programme for Council staff and others on topics such as invasive species. A series of promotional events has also been co-ordinated including the Wild Belfast programme and the Biodiversity and the Built Environment public lectures. These activities have been supplemented by the development of partnerships to deliver biodiversity projects locally such as wetland creation at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, in partnership with Rivers Agency and the Lagan Valley Regional Park.

Key Issues - Year Two Progress Continued.**7. Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement (contd).**

The Council has been successful in securing funds for biodiversity projects such as a 'Breathing Places' grant for woodland management and site improvements at Hazelwood Local Nature Reserve. We continue to provide advice on biodiversity-related issues to staff and outside organisations and maintain representation on the N.I. Biodiversity Group and a range of external organisations, management groups and funding bodies. One major action within the LBAP - the establishment of a detailed and up to date register of biodiversity in Belfast through surveys and research - has not yet been completed due to limited resources.

8. Sustainable Development Communication.

The Council's sustainable development initiatives continue to be routinely publicised via 'City Matters', BelNet, Core Brief and 'Intercom' including a regular 'Going Green' column in the latter publication. The Sustainable Development Steering Group continues to provide a sustainability briefing for new employees, delivered as part of the staff induction process. The Council is represented and recognised as contributing significantly to the Belfast Fairtrade Committee through specialist advice provided, including assistance with communications.

In demonstrating external validation of its environmental management activities, Council performance is benchmarked against the top 200 Northern Ireland companies, 26 local authorities, Health Trusts and the Education Sector via participation in the annual Arena Network Environmental Management Survey. This is one of the key performance measures for the Council SDAP. Despite the introduction of a much more rigorous survey in 2008, Belfast City Council has maintained its position within the highest performing sector. It is the only Council to have achieved this level of performance consistently over the past three years.

Future Sustainable Development Steering Group Activities.

The current SDAP and Energy Conservation Strategy are scheduled to be completed during 2009. One of the principal future priorities for the Group will be the development of a new three year work programme. The Sustainable Development Steering Group has already proposed a number of actions within the 'Better care for Belfast's environment' section of the 2008-2011 Corporate Plan including:-

- (i) Implementing the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Belfast.
- (ii) Developing and implementing a sustainable transport strategy for the Council.
- (iii) Participating in the adoption of a Northern Ireland Local Government declaration on climate change and developing a prioritised action plan to address the causes and consequences of climate change within Belfast.

The Sustainable Development Steering Group has identified that many of these actions will have to be delivered in collaboration with outside bodies and local communities thereby enabling the Group to further extend the Council's civic and political leadership.

Resource Implications.Financial

Minimal - The majority of costs associated with the delivery of SDAP activities are contained within various departmental estimates.

Human Resources

None - It is anticipated that remaining activities in the 2006-09 plan will be undertaken utilising existing staff resources across a number of Council departments.

Asset and Other Implications

To be established - With specific regard to improving the Council's energy conservation and minimising emissions of greenhouse gases, investment will be required as part of the Council buildings maintenance programme to ensure highest levels of efficiency within the Council estate.

Recommendations.

The Committee is invited to note the progress achieved during year two of the Council's Sustainable Development Action Plan and to note proposals to address emerging city-wide sustainable development issues, as reflected in the Council's current corporate planning process.

Key to Abbreviations.

SDAP – Sustainable Development Action Plan; EMS – Environmental Management System;
EST – Energy Savings Trust; LBAP – Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Documents Attached.

None

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Cycle to Work Scheme
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Corporate Services Directorate (Ext. 6084)
Contact Officer:	Alastair Curran, Sustainable Development Manager, (Ext. 3309)

Relevant Background Information

The P & R Committee in April 2007 agreed that the Council should investigate the feasibility of establishing a 'cycle-to-work' scheme for employees. A paper was presented to the Committee the following month recommending a pilot scheme to operate for two years, on condition that the scheme was 'cost-neutral'. The pilot was based on a Department for Transport initiative which provides a tax exempt loan scheme for employees to purchase cycles and related safety equipment up to a value of £1,000. The main condition of the scheme is that cycles are used mostly for travel to work.

The Council viewed the initiative as impacting positively on the quality of life in Belfast by lessening traffic congestion; contributing to improved air quality; reducing the use of fossil fuels and improving people's health through exercise. It agreed to conduct a trial scheme in June 2007.

Based on the response to the pilot exercise, this paper seeks approval to make the cycle-to-work scheme a permanent provision for Members and staff.

Key Issues

The scheme has been progressed over 3 phases to date in consultation with cycling retailers in Belfast. The original target of between 50-80 participants has been exceeded significantly. Projected uptake, based on a Council survey and evidence from UK employers who operate cycle-to-work schemes, was estimated at around 2-3 per cent of employees. There are currently 180 members of staff who have committed to cycle to work and who lease bicycles from the Council by way of "salary sacrifice" deductions.

The Council has received positive recognition and following lobbying by Members, Belfast Health Trust introduced cycle-to-work for its 20,000 employees.

The Council has received endorsement for the initiative including its selection as a case study in "inspiration" in the 2008 Arena Network Environmental Benchmarking Survey.

Resource Implications	
<u>Financial</u>	
None	- All costs to the Council are recoverable through contributions made by participants over 12-18 months.
<u>Human Resources</u>	
None	- Existing staff resources utilised. Administrative overhead recovered by sale of cycles on completion of lease agreements.
<u>Asset and Other Implications</u>	
Minimal	- Adaptation of shower facilities and provision of cycle racks paid from existing maintenance budgets.

Recommendations
<p>The cycle to work scheme makes a small but significant contribution to the achievement of the Council's Transport, Health and Sustainable Development policies. More importantly, the scheme demonstrates leadership by the Council in setting an example and has been promoted successfully to other organisations in Belfast by Members and staff.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to agree that the cycle-to-work scheme is made a permanent provision by Belfast City Council for its employees.</p>

Key to Abbreviations
None

Documents Attached
None



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	CONSULTATION RESPONSE – BELFAST HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST: NEW DIRECTIONS
Date:	Friday 24th October 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, ext 6217
Contact Officer:	Patricia Flynn, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer, ext 6204

Relevant Background Information

Purpose

To bring to the attention of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee details of a consultation by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust – New Directions: A conversation on the future delivery of health and social care services in Belfast. The Belfast Trust has started a process to examine how it will deliver services in the future and this consultation details the initial overview of the strategic direction for services. The consultation runs from 29th August 2008 to 7th November 2008.

Background

On the 22nd November 2005, the previous Minister for Health, Shaun Woodward announced the largest reform to health and social services in Northern Ireland. The plans included:

- A considerably smaller Government Department;
- A Strategic Health and Social Services Authority to replace the four boards and take on some functions currently with the Department;
- Eighteen Trusts reduced to five by April 2007 (the Ambulance Service remains as a separate Trust);
- Seven local commissioning bodies, demand led by patients and driven by GPs and primary care professionals, taking on some roles from the four boards and some roles from the 15 Local Health and Social Care Groups, which will be abolished;
- One Patient and Client Council replacing the existing four Health and Social Services Councils.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust was formed in April 2007 from the merging of six Trusts, four of which were acute, as part of the Review of Public Administration reforms. The new Trust is responsible for a full range of services, removing the distinction between acute, community and mixed Trusts. It was intended that the new Trusts would promote integration between health and social services, across professional groupings and across geographical areas; the networking of services would be at the core of this.

Summary of the Consultation

The consultation document outlines the guiding principles that will steer the Trust's approach to reviewing and reorganising services. The Trust is generally seeking feedback around the guiding principles and the proposed models of care that might be implemented.

The key principles outlined in the consultation documentation for comment under the following headings:-

1. Guiding Principles
 - Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities
 - Focus on prevention of illness, early assessment and intervention
 - Focus on individual needs and choices
 - Provide safe, high quality, effective care
 - Improve accessibility to services – promote equity and welcome diversity
 - Localise where possible, centralise where necessary
 - Integrate services (through partnerships working)
 - Provide clear directions to services, reducing fragmented and frustrating services
 - Maximise utilisation of assets

2. Proposals for modernisation and reform of services
 - Following discussions within the Trust, proposed models of care have been outlined and set within DHSS policy decisions and PfG
3. How do I get access to community health and social care services?
 - A network of seven wellbeing and treatment centres, intended to be single access points for information, advice and services
4. Where do I go if I am having a baby?
 - Central to the delivery of the Trust's Maternity Services are Choice, Continuity and Control. The Belfast Trust's model of care favours a holistic, community based model of maternity care which incorporates a wide range of services in a variety of settings including the women's own home (community midwifery teams), Wellbeing and Treatment Centres, a midwife led unit (at the Mater Hospital) and a single inpatient obstetrics unit (On the Royal Hospitals site).
5. Where do I go if I need to access services for children?
 - The Trust favours a model of care which incorporates a wide range of services to children in a variety of child focused settings. The Trust is committed to providing high quality assessment and treatment and intervention across the continuum of care.
6. Where do I go if I need support or care because of my physical or sensory disability?
 - The Trust favours a model of care that continues to provide a range of specialist rehabilitation services on a single site, Musgrave Park Hospital. The Trust's services plan is that people with physical or sensory disability should be supported to live as independently as possible in the community.
7. Where do I go if I need support because I have a learning disability?
 - The Trust will continue to provide inpatient assessment and treatment services (however after 2016 Muckamore Abbey Hospital will not be a home for life for people with a learning disability). The Trust will develop, in partnership with other agencies, homes for life in the community and to expand the availability of small respite units and develop a small number of community treatment beds for people in Belfast. The Trust also plans to develop new day service accommodation for people with complex needs and challenging behaviour.
8. Where do I go if I am an adult and need mental health services or I have an acute mental illness?
 - The Trust's strategy is to provide a modern, responsive mental health service in a range of settings with the aim of moving away from hospital-based models of services to early intervention and community support. While the Trust currently provides acute inpatient mental health services at Belfast City Hospital, the Mater Hospital and Knockbracken Healthcare Park, the preference for the future is to develop a single acute inpatient mental health facility for patients that cannot be treated within the home setting.
9. Where do I go if I need acute hospital services?
 - Emergency Services would be retained at the Mater Hospital, Belfast City Hospital and Royal Hospitals. However, there would be differentiation of services to improve patient care, based on the type of patient's condition and needs:
 - Cardiology services would be provided at the Mater Hospital, Belfast City Hospital and Royal Hospitals.
 - The provision of a major acute hospital; encompassing trauma services, emergency services and a heart centre on the Royal Hospitals site.
 - The provision of a range of acute hospital services and a Regional Ophthalmic Centre (including a unit for planned eye surgery and treatment) on the Mater Hospital site, as part of a larger ambulatory care centre.
 - The provision of a range of acute hospital services, encompassing cancer and renal services, the chronic admissions centre as well as the major elective centre for Belfast (including an elective orthopaedics unit) on the Belfast City Hospital site.

- The provision of specialist rehabilitation services on Musgrave Park Hospital site.
10. Where do I go if I need support because I am an older person?
- The Trust's aim is that older people should be maintained in their own homes, supported by a network of care services that enable them to maintain their quality of life.

Key Issues

Implications for Belfast City Council

Guiding Principles

The Trust has set out a draft document for 2008-2013, entitled "The Belfast Way" which describes the values and objectives for service delivery. Many of the guiding principles, as set out above, reflect the values and direction of Belfast City Council. There is scope, therefore, for the Council to work in partnership with the Trust to improve the health and quality of life for all people living in, or indeed visiting Belfast. The Council is already actively working with the Health Trust and other health organisations to improve well-being and to reduce health inequalities; the vision document therefore recognises and provides an opportunity to build upon this work. In addition, the principles of maximising assets and integrating services through partnership working provides scope for the Council and others throughout the city to contribute to efficient and more customer focussed service delivery. The focus on prevention; promoting equality and diversity; service improvement and local access are all reflected in the strategic work of the Council.

Wellbeing Centres

The Trust is proposing to establish a network of seven wellbeing centres, strategically located within the main community sectors across Belfast which are expected to be single points of access for information, advice and services i.e. Four of these centres are open including the Grove Centre and three more are set to open over the next two years. The Knockbreda Centre will open early in 2009, followed by the Shankill Centre and the West Belfast Centre which are set to open in 2010. Each centre will have dentistry, occupational health, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and may in the future offer outpatient clinics relocated from hospital settings. There is scope for Belfast City Council to work in partnership with the Trust and others to maximise the utilisation of assets, not just within the Trust, but across the city thereby creating economies and more effective and accessible services.

Modernisation and Reform

The Belfast Trust is planning to centralise mental health services through the provision of a single acute health care facility at Knockbracken Healthcare Park, which will be part of a network of residential, day care and treatment centres provided locally throughout Belfast. The potential closure of acute inpatient mental health facilities at both Belfast City Hospital and the Mater Hospital will have various implications and may potentially mean increased waiting times to be seen by a professional mental health care worker, and the subsequent impact this may have on vulnerable patients. There is no information provided on the level or pattern of usage of services within the two hospitals that are proposed for closure, the current waiting times or of the ability of a single health care facility to absorb the volume of displaced patients.

Acute emergency care will continue in the three hospitals and in future will specialise and differentiate service depending on the patient's needs and condition. Cardiology services will be provided at the Mater Hospital, Belfast City Hospital and the Royal Hospital. The Royal Hospital site will be a major acute hospital encompassing trauma services, emergency services and a heart centre. Belfast City Hospital will provide a range of acute services encompassing cancer and renal services, the chronic admissions centre and the major elective centre for Belfast. The Mater Hospital will provide a range of acute services and a Regional Ophthalmic Centre as part of a larger ambulatory care centre.

Inpatient obstetric services including neonatal services will be on a single site at the Royal Hospital and this will be supported by a midwifery led unit at the Mater Hospital. With the closure of the Jubilee Maternity Unit at Belfast City Hospital and the subsequent merger with the Royal Hospital in January 2001, Belfast has already experienced serious upheaval in maternity care in recent years.

Considering the major changes to service provision for the Belfast area that the Trust have outlined as above, and in order to fully understand the impact that this may have on the city as a whole, much more detailed information would be required. Perhaps even including a detailed impact assessment and further consultation on specific changes.

Partnership Working and Integrated Services

The guiding principles that are outlined within the consultation are generally aligned with the principles of the Council, particularly in the current corporate plan, to deliver high quality, customer focused services that meet the needs of local people and work towards improving quality of life and well being. In order to be successful in these aims, effective partnership working is crucial. The Council has already proved its willingness to work with the Trust in the successful development of the Grove Wellbeing Centre. In addition, the Council is currently working with the Trust and other partner agencies to ensure that services for older people are appropriate to need and accessible. Furthermore the Trust is keen to work with the Council and other agencies in the care of Children and Young People. The Council has indicated its desire to work with the Trust in the consultation response and the potential role of the Council has been highlighted.

As a result of the Review of Public Administration, Councils have a new wellbeing power. Four Councillors from Belfast City Council will be represented on the Local Commissioning Group and there are plans for local collaborative working arrangements between Councils and the new public health agency.

Ongoing Engagement

The Strategic Policy and Resource Committee were advised of a correspondence received from William McKee, Chief Executive of the Belfast Trust, seeking permission to address the Committee on health issues. As yet, no date has been set for this meeting.

Further Details

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust welcome all views & comments regarding future access to services.

The consultation document is available at the following website -

http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/Inews/New_Directions.html#TopOfPage

All responses should be forwarded to Belfast Health and Social Care Trust by 7 November 2008.

Resource Implications

n/a

Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the attached draft response from Belfast City Council and agree its submission to Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Key to Abbreviations

Documents Attached

APPENDIX 1: Draft copy of response to Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Core Improvement Team

Our Ref:

Being dealt with by: Patricia Flynn

Ext: 6204

Date: 4th November 2008

William McKee, Chief Executive
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
C/O Public Liaison Services
Communication Department
1st Floor, Nore Villa
Knockbracken Healthcare Park
Saintfield Road
BELFAST BT8 8BH

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr McKee

Re: New Directions – A conversation on the future delivery of health and social care services in Belfast

Please find attached a response to your consultation, "New Directions – A conversation on the future delivery of health and social care services in Belfast" which was ratified by Council on 1st November 2008.

I hope you find this response both useful and informative. If, however, you have any queries in respect of the points raised, please feel free to contact me or to another member of the Core Improvement Unit on 028 90 270234.

Thank you for the opportunity to input the views of Belfast City Council on this issue.

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive

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New Directions - a conversation on the future delivery of health and social care services in Belfast

General Comments on the Consultation Document

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation document. The Council is committed to working in partnership to improve the quality of life among the people of the city. One of our key priorities is to create a healthy city through the services we provide directly and through those we provide in partnership with others. In partnership, the needs of local communities can be best addressed by bringing together the relevant agencies to deliver the appropriate mix of public services. Belfast City Council is keen to (continue to) work with the Belfast Trust in this endeavour.

Our Elected Members are particularly interested in the issues affecting health and social care services and request that ongoing dialogue be established between the Trust and the Council to explore the ongoing implementation of the high level proposals set out in the New Directions consultation along with the proposals for the ongoing changes to health structures which we hope will strengthen joined up working with local government.

Belfast City Council would like to highlight the willingness of local government in working in partnership with the health service and other partners, to assist in service provision where appropriate, providing information on services available and shared asset usage and in providing a civic leadership role in terms of partnership working across agencies, particularly on addressing the determinants of ill health. While the Trust mentioned the possibility of working in partnership with the Council and other agencies around services for children, Belfast City Council would like to see the partnership going beyond this to benefit all citizens. The Council is working towards improving the health of the local population and the associated impact of social and health inequalities across a range of areas. The Council provides a range of services which can impact on people's health and well-being - leisure, parks, community services, community safety etc; many of which are provided directly within communities. The Council has a number of facilities, such as community and leisure centres, and operates a range of programmes and initiatives which taken holistically contribute to improved health promotion and well-being. It is important that services such as these, which exist outside the traditional Health and Social Services field, are also considered and utilised where appropriate.

Whilst the Council is generally supportive of the high level policy and guiding principles; there are several issues which the Council feels require further clarification. At this stage, Belfast City Council cannot agree to the Belfast Trust's proposed model of care for some of the "stages of life" contained in the consultation document. Further, detailed information on the implications of the changes in these health services is required, particularly in relation to inpatient obstetric services and acute inpatient mental health services. It is not clear from the consultation document, what is meant by a midwifery led unit (as proposed at the Mater Hospital) and further clarification is sought as to what kind of unit this will be, what services will be staying at this unit and what this will mean in a practical sense for patients. In addition, the Council would seek assurances of a continued level of services for patients who suffer from acute mental illness and will be treated in a single facility rather than in three facilities currently.

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With regard to relocation and rationalisation of services, Belfast City Council acknowledges the economic and efficiency considerations behind the restructuring of the health and social care services; however the Council would urge the Trust to be more innovative and imaginative in seeking solutions rather than simply centralising services. Opportunities may exist to combine with other agencies with regard to sharing assets, or working in partnership to deliver services.

The consultation document highlights a number of issues that the Council feel it would be more meaningful to address after the Trust has provided more detail regarding its future proposals Council feels that there is not enough detail within the published consultation document on which to provide informed feedback. However, the Council would welcome further consultation appreciate being informed of and involved in ongoing consultation and engagement undertaken by the Trust on specific changes to services within the health and social care services along with other affected parties.

The Council would draw attention to the need to support the community as it emerges from 30 years of protracted violent conflict and the impact this has had on mental well-being. We believe that it is the duty of all policy-makers and service delivery agencies to acknowledge the deeply divided context within which we work and to contribute in a meaningful way to developing better relations within our society. This will not only enhance general well-being but will also contribute to government objectives of building community cohesion and developing a more shared society.

Whilst it is not possible at this stage to assess equality and human rights implications, it is essential that future policy decisions, particularly those which affect service provision and access, are properly assessed and fully consulted upon.

The Council has placed customer focus as a central theme within its corporate plan and welcomes the Trust setting out its new strategy in terms of what it will mean to different people at different stages in their life. This approach will help the public engage more meaningfully with the trust and help to ensure better accessibility to the services provided.

In general, the Council agrees that the delivery of services for the local population needs to be simplified. We have made a number of comments on which we would like to receive further communication. The Council would be keen therefore to know how the Trust's consultation has progressed and how you intend to incorporate these and comments from other interested organisations who respond to your consultation into your final strategy.

Consultation Questions

1	Guiding Principles	
	<p>The Trust is seeking your views on the principles outlined to guide the modernisation and reform of services across Belfast.</p>	<p>The Council is generally supportive of the guiding principles outlined in the consultation document. Indeed, there is much synergy between the Trust's principles and those of Belfast City Council. Our own Corporate Plan is committed to delivering high quality, customer focused services that meet the needs of local people and the city, and which ultimately improves quality of life and well-being. We recognise that this can only be achieved through effective partnership working. We therefore welcome the emphasis on person-centred, joined-up and integrated service delivery. The first two principles relate to reducing health inequalities and prevention, yet the remainder of the document focuses primarily on treatment and care. Addressing health inequalities and prevention should also feature strongly in the rest of the document.</p> <p>The Review of Public Administration will give councils a new power of wellbeing, and Belfast hopes to use this new power to become much more involved in promoting health and wellbeing. Four Councillors from BCC will also be represented on the Local Commissioning Group and there are plans for local collaborative working arrangements between Councils and the new public health agency. The Council looks forward to working with the Trust to identify and maximise potential opportunities to work in a more coordinated and holistic person-centred manner in relation to improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.</p> <p>Belfast City Council recognise the rights of everyone, to have equal access to services and agree that these services must be readily accessible, effective and of good quality. The Council also commend the Trust's focus on developing a 'patient centred' approach to have the right care, delivered by the right person in the right place.</p> <p>The Council has consistently highlighted the need for a more holistic view of healthcare generally, and particularly, for example, in terms of encouraging greater participation in sporting activities and in the use of leisure and recreation facilities as methods of improving well-being and ultimately reducing the levels of a number of preventable illnesses. We particularly endorse an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and participation but consider that prevention and health inequalities could be covered in more detail in the remainder of the document.</p> <p>The Council welcomes that the Trust's core purpose is to 'Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities'. One of the key elements of the Council's own strategy is the use of all assets at its disposal over</p>

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		<p>the coming years such as parks, leisure centres and community centres and by utilizing these assets, the Council aims to deliver health and wellbeing in communities. The Council look forward to working together with the Trust in developing a cohesive health improvement agenda for the city.</p> <p>The Council would welcome ongoing dialogue with the Trust, and other agencies in the city, about the future use of facilities in the city in order that opportunities for shared and integrated facilities can be availed of for the benefit of local communities.</p>
	Do you have any comments or suggested additions to the general principles outlined?	
2	Proposals for the modernisation and reform of services	
	Do you agree with the principles outlined?	The Council feels that it would benefit from further dialogue with the Trust and greater understanding of the implications of these proposals before answering this question.
	Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	<p>It is vital that the proposals for modernisation should also include clear accountability arrangements. The Appleby review of health and social care services in 2005 found that the HPSS lacked “appropriate performance structures, information and clear and effective incentives - rewards and sanctions - at individual, local and national organisational levels to encourage innovation and change”.</p> <p>Belfast City Council welcomes a smaller, more focused department driving the efficient use of resources and service provision.</p>
	Do you agree with the Trust’s favoured model of care?	<p>Following the Review of Public Administration, Councils are to take the lead, through the proposed new powers of community planning, in improving community well-being. Therefore it is essential that the Council has the opportunity to input into the local planning and delivery of all services involved in promoting, protecting and improving health in the city. There are multiple determinants of good health which cut across many organisations and improving these determinants is therefore inextricably linked to community planning process.</p> <p>All appropriate organisations should be involved in the community planning process, facilitated by open and joined up partnership working which identify specific issues and generate approaches that meet local needs and preferences.</p>
3	How do I get access to Community Health and Social Care Services and be informed about services that are available to me?	
	(a) Do you agree with the Trust’s strategy to “localise where possible and centralise where necessary”?	
	(b) Do you believe the range of services offered at Wellbeing and Treatment Centres is appropriate?	
	(c) Do you think other services could be	

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	offered in the Wellbeing and Treatment Centres?	
	Any further comments:	<p>The Council would strongly support proposals that promote health and wellbeing while reducing health inequalities. A key Council philosophy is the creation, where possible of shared facilities to improve community access to services. There is the potential through interagency partnership at a local level to provide information on services available within the Trust so that the public can have ready access to this. It would also provide the potential to improve the efficiency of services within the Trust, if local communities are better informed regarding how to access facilities.</p> <p>The Parks and Leisure Department has worked with the Trust in the development of the Grove Wellbeing Centre and would be willing to do so again in the future if an opportunity arose that was practicable and was in line with the Council's corporate objectives and priorities.</p> <p>Potential linkages between the other Health and Wellbeing centres and Council Services should be explored.</p> <p>Community development approaches to health should also be considered as part of the system such as community based Healthy Living Centres, Sure Start organisations etc.</p>
4	Where do I go if I am having a baby?	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined?	As mentioned in the opening comments, the Council would like further clarification regarding the proposal of a midwifery led unit in the Mater Hospital and which services would potentially be available at this unit.
	(b) Should additional principles be established?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	The Council cannot agree with the Trust's favoured model of care without receiving additional detailed information on the nature of the proposals for the Mater Maternity Unit. With the closure of the Jubilee Maternity Unit at Belfast City Hospital and subsequent merger with the Royal Hospital, Belfast has already experienced serious upheaval in maternity care in recent years. The reduction of the range of services available at the Mater Maternity Unit may only add to this. In addition, the impact on patient care must be thoroughly explored and additional consultation carried out on specific changes e.g. increased waiting times, ability of the Royal Maternity Unit to absorb additional displaced patients and risk to mothers and babies.
	Any further comments:	In the Developing Better Services Programme launched by the Health Minister in February 2003, it was proposed to increase the choice of services to expectant mothers by developing midwife led maternity units beside consultant led care should an emergency arise. The information provided by the Trust does not make it clear if there will be consultant led facilities on the Mater Hospital site to support the

		<p>midwife led unit or if this provision will only be available on the Royal Jubilee site. Therefore the Council feels that further clarification around the provision of emergency care at the Mater site and inpatient obstetric services for the Belfast area is required. In addition details of what is meant by midwifery led unit, the services staying at the unit and the practicalities of this would be required.</p> <p>It is important that before any decisions are made on future service provisions at a local level, that proposals are fully and openly consulted on and that the potential implications for patients and communities are fully explained.</p>
5	Where do I go if I need to access services for children?	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	In line with the principles outlined, Belfast City Council would like to point out that issues related to the health and wellbeing of Children and Young People are also linked to other key programmes such as active living, promotion of good relations, personal development and representation of young people in decision making. All of which Belfast City Council actively supports and promotes and we look forward to working with the Trust in the future to continue this work.
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the proposed model of care?	Belfast City Council is willing to work in partnership with the Trust and other agencies in all areas of children's services.
	Any further comments:	
6	Where do I go if I need support or care because of my physical or sensory disability?	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Should additional principles be established?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	
	Any further comments:	
7	Where do I go if I need support because I have a learning disability?	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	
	Any further comments:	The needs of people with learning disabilities are distinct from the needs of those with mental health problems and the approaches need to be very different. Elected Members have expressed the view that there are limited facilities provided for people with learning difficulties, particularly young adolescents, and as such additional resources need to be targeted in that area.
8	Where do I go if I am an adult and need mental health services or I have an acute	

	mental illness?	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the proposed model of care?	<p>Belfast City Council would question the plans to close two out of the three acute inpatient mental health facilities. The potential impact of closure of acute services at BCH & the Mater Hospital, and their effect on patients, may mean increased waiting times to be seen by a professional health care worker, and the subsequent impact this may have on vulnerable patients. There is no information provided on the level or pattern of usage of services within the two hospitals which are proposed for closure, the current waiting times or of the ability of the single health care facility to absorb the volume of displaced patients.</p> <p>It is important that when agreeing the future of mental health provision, that treatment facilities are accessible for all people, not just for in and outpatients, but for family, loved ones and carers to be able to visit and/or make arrangements for travel. If all the services are centralised, it may make access difficult for people from those parts of the city that are not near or on direct public transport routes to the proposed facilities.</p> <p>The Bamford Review discusses an aim of 10% reduction in admissions to mental health hospitals in the province by 2011 - how does this guide compare with the closure of two units? Would this not exceed a 10% reduction in the Belfast Trust Area therefore leaving patients in the area at a distinct disadvantage?</p> <p>The issue of suicide is perhaps one which should receive some mention in the document. The Council is currently working with the Trust to develop a response mechanism for addressing potential suicide clusters.</p>
	Any further questions:	
9	Where do I go if I need acute hospital services (that is emergency services, planned care and long term chronic condition management)?	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	
	Any further comments:	<p>Within the Developing Better Services Programme launched by the Health Minister in February 2003, the position of the Mater Hospital as an acute service provider was confirmed for a "considerable period ahead" however the long term intention was for the hospital to become a local hospital. The consultation does not make reference to this possibility therefore the Council would seek confirmation if this is still in the long term plan for the Mater Hospital, and what provision the Belfast Trust will be making to deal with</p>

		the impact this would have on service provision in the city.
10	Where do I go if I need support because I am an older person?	
	(a) Do you agree with the principles outlined above?	
	(b) Do you have any suggested additions to these principles?	
	(c) Do you agree with the Trust's favoured model of care?	
	Any further comments:	Belfast City Council is currently working in partnership with the Trust and other agencies to ensure services for older people are appropriate to need and are accessible. We are committed to delivering better services for older people. The Council, in collaboration with other agencies and older people themselves, has initiated dialogue through its annual older people's convention along with supporting programmes aimed at enhancing older people's quality of life. An All Party reference Group on older people provides political direction to our work in this area. This work will provide opportunities for raising health issues and improving services and access. The Council has a number of facilities, such as community and leisure centres, and operates a range of programmes and initiatives which taken holistically contribute to improved health promotion and well-being. It is important that services such as these, which exist outside the traditional Health and Social Services field, are also considered and utilised where appropriate.

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