

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



8th December, 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, 12th December, 2008 at 10.00 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Minutes
2. Modernisation and Improvement
 - (a) Review of Public Administration - Update (Pages 1 - 6)
 - (b) Extension of Current Council Term (Pages 7 - 10)
3. Democratic Services and Governance
 - (a) Requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality (Pages 11 - 14)
 - (b) National Association of Councillors - Crime and Disorder Conference (Pages 15 - 16)

4. Finance

- (a) Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel (Pages 17 - 24)
- (b) Update on the Revenue Budget 2008-2009 (Pages 25 - 26)
- (c) Request for Funding - City of Belfast Youth Orchestra (Pages 27 - 30)
- (d) District Rates Update (Pages 31 - 44)

5. Human Resources

- (a) Standing Order 55 - Employment of Relatives (Pages 45 - 46)

6. Asset Management

- (a) City Hall - Coffee Shop Facility (Pages 47 - 50)
- (b) Proposed Disposal of Land at Park Road, Mullusk (Pages 51 - 58)

7. Good Relations and Equality

- (a) Good Relations Partnership (Pages 59 - 76)
- (b) City Hall Memorabilia (Page 77)

8. Cross-Cutting Issues

- (a) Royal Maternity Hospital Support Campaign (Pages 78 - 93)
- (b) Safer Belfast Plan 2009-2011 (Pages 94 - 141)



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of Public Administration Update
Date:	Friday 12 th December, 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 now entering into the critical stage of implementation whereby primary legislation is being drafted, implementation structures established and active consideration being given to the transitional arrangements to be put in place to support local government reform within Northern Ireland.
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.
	<u>RPA Implementation Structures</u>
2.2	<i>Update on Policy Development Panels</i>
2.2.1	Members will note that is intended that the initial proposals emerging from the three Policy Development Panels in regard to the necessary Primary (enabling) Legislation will be submitted for the consideration of the NI Assembly in early 2009 and will subsequently be issued for formal consultation (3 months period). Attached at Appendix 1 are progress updates on each of the three Policy Development Panels which provides an update on activities and a high level project schedule setting out what are the key action areas over the coming weeks.
2.3	<i>Regional Transition Coordinating Group</i>
2.3.1	The Regional Transitional Coordinating Group (RTCG) has been established and held its inaugural meeting on Tuesday 25 th November 2008. The Group is chaired by Paul Simpson, Deputy Secretary of the DoE with the Chief Executive of Belfast City Council as Vice Chair with membership comprising of senior officers from local government and transferring Departments.
2.3.2	The Group will provide the essential interface between the strategic policy direction set by the Strategic Leadership Board and its Policy Development Panels, and the local policy set by the Transition Committees and their operational delivery teams (the Transition Management Teams). It will oversee the management and integration of the implementation stage of the local government reform programme.
2.3.4	Initial areas for action proposed by the RTCG was the need for clarity around the detail of the transferring functions and associated resources; the importance of establishing a 'Transfer of Functions Working Group' to consider the details around transfer; the establishment of a Local Government HR Coordinating Group (comprising officers from local government, the Local Government Staff Commission, transferor bodies and Trade Unions) who would advise on regional human resource and staff transfer implementation issues.
2.4	<i>Belfast City Council's Transition Committee</i>
2.4.1	The Committee agreed, at its meeting on the 14 th November 2008, that the Council be recommended to appoint the Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as the Council's RPA Transition Committee, the additional meeting of the Committee be used for the

	meetings of the Transition Committee and that a letter be forwarded to the Minister with responsibility for the Department of the Environment on this basis. <u>This had been ratified by Council at its meeting on 1st December, 2008.</u>
2.4.2	Subsequently, the Chief Executive has written to the Environment Minister and relevant central government officials outlining the Council's position in regards to the proposal that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be designated as the Council's RPA Transitional Committee, that that committee comprises of 20 elected Members appointed on the basis of proportionality using D'Hondt and that an additional monthly meeting of the Committee has been designated for the purpose of RPA Transition.
2.4.3	The Council has also sought for a process of engagement and discussion between relevant Department officials and officers within the Council to develop a draft Terms of Reference for the Transition Committee. Members will note that a further update report will be submitted to Committee, for consideration, on this issue.
2.4.4	Members will note further that the DoE has indicated that an amount of £150,000 would be made available to each Council to resource the change management implications, staffing and the payment of an additional allowance of £2,700 to each Member who sat on the Transition Committee which would be allocate the payment. It would be the intention that this payment would be allocated within Belfast City Council on the same basis as the allocation of Special Responsibility allowances.
2.5	<u>Resourcing RPA Implementation</u>
2.5.1	A major issue of concern in moving forward the RPA implementation process is the level and availability of resources necessary to deliver the local government reform process. An implementation plan cannot be realised without appropriate resources are made available to support its delivery
2.5.2	Deloitte has been commissioned by the Department of the Environment to develop a strategic outline business case which sets out the resources required to deliver the local government aspects of the Review of Public Administration. Early indications from Deloitte would suggest that there is a need for £60million to support the transition process (e.g. moving from 26-11 Councils with additional functions) and £60million to support the transformation (modernisation) process.
2.5.3	NILGA is currently in the process of developing, in partnership with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, a major 'Campaign for Resources' which seeks to ensure that necessary resources are provided by the NI Executive to support the effective implementation of the RPA. Please refer to Appendix 2 for initial proposals around 'Campaign for Resources'.
2.5.4	NILGA is seeking to enlist the support of all Council's and elected Members in taking forward this campaign in regards to lobbying on behalf of local government and ensuring a united front is provided on the need to adequately resource the RPA implementation process.

3.0 Resource Implications
There are no financial or Human Resources implications contained within this report.

4.0 Recommendations
Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note the contents of this report; b) agree that the Council be fully supportive of the emerging 'Campaign for Resources' currently being developed.

Documents Attached	
Appendix 1	Policy Development Panel Progress Updates
Appendix 2	NILGA's proposals regarding an RPA 'Campaign for Resources'

Appendix 1: PDP Progress Update

PDP A GOVERNANCE & RELATIONS		Classification:	Established
Senior Responsible Owner:	James Hutchinson	Project/ Programme Manager:	John Murphy
Project/ Programme Director:		Risk Management:	
		Communications Management:	
		Tel: 37048	
		Tel:	
		Tel:	

Overall Status



Overview	Latest News	01/12/2008
<p>Policy Development Panel A (Governance, Community Planning and Central / Local relations) has been tasked with the development of recommendations on policy and implementation proposals in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the governance arrangements for the new councils; the framework and guidance required for an effective council led community planning process; and, the development of mechanisms for effective relations between central and local government, particularly on matters of mutual interest and concern. 	<p>Policy Proposals endorsed by SLB on 7/11/08. PDP (A) met on 19 November to further develop policy proposals on governance issues in relation to a 'Call in' procedure, 'Key' Decisions for full council and Weighted majority voting arrangements.</p>	

3 Month Forward Outlook
<p>Meeting on 17/12/08 to look at governance arrangements for Transition committees. Development of governance arrangements for Transition Committees to be completed by early 2009. Continued work on detail of outworking of policy proposals for all 3 areas of PDP (A).</p>

Risk Profile	OGC Gateway Review Details	Date	Result
No of High Risk Items > 12	0		
No of Medium Risk Items >= 6	0		
No of Low Risk Items < 6	0		
<p>Risks have been rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (impact and probability) and multiplied together to form an overall rating</p>			
<p>Next Gateway Review planned for:</p>		<p>Comments</p>	

High Level Project Schedule

Activity	Start Date	End Date	%Complete	RAGStatus
Policy Development				
01 develop proposals on governance, community planning & central/local govt relation	01/07/2008	31/10/2008	100	
02 submit policy proposals to the Strategic Leadership Board	07/11/2008	07/11/2008	100	
03 develop framework and criteria for community planning pilots	01/11/2008	31/03/2009	0	
04 develop concordat to underpin formalisation of central/local government relations	01/11/2008	31/03/2009	0	
05 develop guidance on governance arrangements for Transition Committees	01/11/2008	31/03/2009	0	
06 consider responses to consultation on policy proposals	01/04/2009	30/04/2009	0	
07 recommendations on amendments submitted to the Strategic Leadership Board	01/04/2009	30/04/2009	0	
08 commencement of initial planning for community planning pilots	01/04/2009	30/04/2009	0	
09 Finalise arrangements for community planning pilots	01/05/2009	30/08/2009	0	
10 Monitor community planning pilots and address emerging issues	01/07/2009	30/08/2010	0	
11 Evaluate outcomes from community planing pilots	01/07/2010	30/09/2010	0	

PDP B SERVICE DELIVERY**Classification: Established**

Senior Responsible Owner: James Hutchinson Project/ Programme Manager: John Price
 Project/ Programme Director: Risk Management:
 Communications Management:

Tel: 39786
 Tel:
 Tel:

Overall Status**Overview**

On 16 April 2008, SLB Modernisation Sub-Group B presented its End of Term Report to SLB recommending that the work started by Sub-Group B should be continued by the newly constituted Policy Development Panel B on Service Delivery.

A large number of recommendations were made on a wide range of projects, to enable the Panel to proceed with the work of the Sub-Group. This report was accepted and endorsed by SLB and has formed the work plan for Panel B.

The work of the Panel has been split into 3 main subject areas: policy and strategy relating to customer service delivery (including Customer Service Strategy) and to information systems (including IS Strategy, network infrastructure, collaborative procurement), and policy, strategy and legislation development on Performance Management.

Latest News**28/11/2008**

Initial meeting on development of sectoral Customer Service Strategy has taken place.

Sectoral IS Strategy (through NILGA E-Government Working Group) expected to be finalised in mid-November 2008.

Discussion underway with Network NI on network infrastructure potentials.

Draft Procurement Guidance and draft Performance Management papers presented to last Panel meeting.

3 Month Forward Outlook

The workplan underlying the PID needs to be further reviewed in the light of the 5 November Planning Day for what must be delivered for councils to operate from May 2011.

The IS Strategy (through the NILGA E-Government Working Group) is expected to be delivered in mid-November 2008 and, subject to consideration by the Panel, could be presented to SLB in early 2009.

Draft Performance Management proposals, subject to consideration by the Panel, could be presented to SLB in Early 2009.

Risk Profile

No of High Risk Items > 12	0
No of Medium Risk Items >= 6	0
No of Low Risk Items < 6	0

Risks have been rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (impact and probability) and multiplied together to form an overall rating

OGC Gateway Review Details**Date****Result**

OGC Gateway Review Details	Date	Result
Review 0 - Strategic Assessment		

Next Gateway Review planned for:

Comments

High Level Project ScheduleActivityStart DateEnd Date%CompleteRAGStatus

01 Schedule of activities to be completed following the 5 November Planning Day

PDP C STRUCTURAL REFORMClassification: **Established**

Senior Responsible Owner: James Hutchinson Project/ Programme Manager: Brenda Mooney

Tel: 37054

Overall Status

Project/ Programme Director:

Risk Management:

Tel:

Communications Management:

Tel:

**Overview**

Panel C has been charged with the development of policy and implementation proposals in relation to 8 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).

It was agreed that some of the work strands naturally interlinked and for this reason 4 groups should be taken forward on the basis of 4 projects (ie Assessment of Options for Local Government Service Delivery, Human Resources, Finance/Estates and Capacity Building). The Assessment of Options for Local Government Service Delivery project, which embraces the Transfer of Functions, is to be taken forward by way of a consultancy assignment. The other 3 projects are taken forward by Working Groups comprising mainly Central and Local Government Officers.

Latest News

01/12/2008

Working Groups, established to assist PDP C, continued their deliberations.

On 24 November 2008 PDP C met to sign off the final policy proposals paper.

3 Month Forward Outlook

Policy proposal paper to be presented to SLB on 5/12/08. Consultants will be appointed by mid-January to take forward Assessment of Options for Local Government Service Delivery - Phase 1 Draft report scheduled for mid March 2009.

Collation of information from transferring functions departments will be completed by the Finance/Estates Working Group by the end of 2008.

An options paper on the benefits or otherwise of secondment of staff from central government to the new councils will be prepared by the Human Resources Working Group for the consideration of the Panel. The Capacity Building Working Group will produce a final report early in 2009 for the Panel's consideration.

Risk Profile

No of High Risk Items > 12

0

No of Medium Risk Items >= 6

0

No of Low Risk Items < 6

0

Risks have been rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (impact and probability) and multiplied together to form an overall rating

OGC Gateway Review Details

Date

Result

Review 0 - Strategic Assessment

Next Gateway Review planned for:

Comments

High Level Project Schedule

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>%Complete</u>	<u>RAGStatus</u>
Policy Development				
01 Preparation of PID for SLB approval and securing team resources	01/09/2008	30/09/2008	100	
02 Identify position in relation to work strands and scope of work group programmes	01/09/2008	30/09/2008	100	
03 Identify any primary legislation requirement for Human Resources Work Strand	01/10/2008	31/10/2008	100	
04 Identify any primary legislation requirement for Finance/Estates Work Strand	01/10/2008	31/10/2008	100	
05 Identify any primary legislation requirement for Capacity Building Work Strand	01/10/2008	31/10/2008	100	
06 Commence Assessment of Options for Local Govt Service Delivery - Phase 1 & 2	30/11/2008	30/04/2009	0	
07 Consideration of Assesment of Options report Phase 1	30/01/2009	28/08/2009	0	
08 Consideration of Assesment of Options report Phase 2	31/03/2009	30/04/2009	0	

Appendix 2: NILGA Campaign for Resources



Presidents Campaign

NILGA Drive for Resources

Introduction

The intention of the RPA launched in 2002 was to review the entire operation of the public sector. At an early stage Local Government indicated that it would not be appropriate for the sector to pay for the local government aspects of the RPA and this has been the stated position for some time.

The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review was originally intended to include a modernisation fund for local government, but this funding was not included in the final budgets. It is understood that the key reason for this is that the bid for resources was not well enough developed at the time. Local Government is now faced with an unprecedented change process, which if critically underfunded will undermine the capacity of the sector to change and to become a key partner with government in enhancing public services. NILGA members have raised this issue at a political level on many occasions.

As agreed at the last Full Executive meeting on Friday 28 November, NILGA will now embark on a major Campaign for Resources, and lobby strategically for the resources needed to support RPA.

The President asks:

That the NILGA RPA Working Group designs a campaign in partnership with SOLACE, to seek to ensure that the Executive provide the necessary resources to ensure the RPA can be effectively delivered in local government.

Any campaign could include;

- An assessment of the resources required at an essential and desirable level to support delivery to ensure a balanced and professional approach. (Early indications from Deloitte would suggest £60M for transition and £60M for transformation)
- Write to all the Ministers on the Executive and all MLAs
- Organise an awareness raising event at Stormont
- Seek meetings with DFP and the Environment Committees
- Initiate a strategic press campaign on the issue, engaging all the councils to ensure regional coverage
- Provide councils with materials to campaign both in their local press and to lobby their local MLAs.
- Engage the parties - offer to meet with the party councillor associations to advise them on the critical need for funding. (Meet with Party leaders?)
- Request NILGA members and all councillors to lobby their own party hierarchies
- Engage the other local government organisations to ensure a united front is provided on resources

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Date:	Friday, 12th December, 2008
Subject:	Extension of Current Council Term – Appointments Procedures
Reporting Officer:	Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)
Contact Officer:	Robin Boyd, Members' Support Officer (extension 6323)

Purpose of Report

To consider the impact of the two year extension of the current Council term on the arrangements for the nomination of Members to outside bodies, the appointment of Committee membership and the appointment of Chairmen/Deputy Chairmen posts and to agree appropriate protocols for these appointments during the additional two years of the Council term.

Relevant Background Information

The Minister with responsibility for Local Government has agreed, in order to accommodate the Review of Public Administration process and the transfer of additional powers to Local Councils, to extend the current Council term until 2011 at which time elections will be held to the eleven new Local Authorities. Accordingly, it will be necessary to consider the impact of the additional two years on the Council's arrangements for appointments to outside bodies and the protocols relating to the appointment of Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees.

Decisions Required

Nominations and Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Council, at its Annual Meeting held on 26th May, 2005, in accordance with its policy in this regard, nominated Members to represent the Council on a number of outside bodies. These nominations were made for the period to end on the date of the Local Government Elections to be held in 2009. These appointments were made on the basis of proportionality using the d'Hondt system to generate a hierarchy of choices based on Party Group strengths at that time.

There were more than ninety appointments made by the Party Groups and agreed by the Council in 2005. I would suggest that to review these appointments for the additional two years of the Council term would have little benefit and would merely cause unnecessary disruption and confusion for the outside bodies concerned. Accordingly, I would recommend that the Committee amend the decision of the Council of 26th May, 2005 to reflect that the period of appointment of Members will be until the date of the next Local Government Elections, anticipated to be held in May, 2011.

Committee Appointments to Outside Bodies

From time to time Committees have made appointments of Members to outside bodies and these are also often stipulated to be for the period to end on the date of the Local Government Elections to be held in June, 2009. It seems reasonable that any decisions of Committee couched in these terms should also be accepted now as extending to the revised date of the Elections in 2011.

Appointment of Committees and Chairmen/Deputy Chairmen

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 1972 and the provisions made in Standing Orders, the Council agrees Committee membership and appoints Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees at the annual meeting each year. These appointments are made on the basis of proportionality and are reviewed annually.

There is no need, during the two additional years, to review or amend the mechanisms used for the making of appointments to Committees or for the appointment of Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees. The principles of proportionality will apply and decisions will be reached on the basis of Party strengths. However, there is an issue in relation to the appointment of Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen which will require consideration:-

Standing Order 42 states that:

“No political group shall hold the same post for more than two years in a four year term and groups must make their selections on the basis of this principle provided that a group shall not be required to select a post of Deputy Chairman if a post of Chairman is available and provided that a group may select the same post if no other post is available to it.”

Since the Council term has been extended to six years, subject to formal confirmation, this restriction of no more than two year appointments will have to be set aside so that the principles of proportionality can be applied.

A supplemental arrangement to deal with the additional two years will be necessary. I would suggest that it would be fair and equitable for the Council to agree by resolution that during 2009/10 and 2010/11 each Party Group would be limited to the holding of a post for no more than one year of the additional two years of this Council term. This would effectively permit an unrestricted choice for each Party Group in relation to the posts of Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen for 2009/2010. However, subject to there being an alternative choice available, a Party Group could not hold the same posts in 2010/2011. This arrangement will apply only in the special circumstances of the current extension to the Council term and thereafter the conditions of Standing Order 42 (f) would apply at all times.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

the decision of the Council of 26th May, 2005 in relation to the nomination and appointment of Members to outside bodies be amended to extend the period of appointment of such Members until the date of the next Local Government Elections anticipated to be held in May, 2011;

any remaining decisions made by the Committees to appoint Members to outside bodies in which it has been stipulated that the appointments should end on the date of the Local Government Elections to be held in June, 2009 be amended in a like manner; and

in relation to the appointment of Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the additional years of this Council term from June, 2009 until May, 2011, the conditions of Standing Order 42 (f) be set aside by resolution of Council and that the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen appointed under the proportionality arrangements be permitted to hold their posts for no more than one year of the additional two years of the extended Council term.

Resource Implications

None

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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, 12 th December, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (ext. 6325)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Gareth Quinn, Development Officer (ext. 6316)

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
Northern Ireland Federation of Townswomens' Guilds	Luncheon to mark International Women's Day 3 rd March, 2010 Approximately 175 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a luncheon	Belfast City Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. This lunch which will mark International Women's Day seeks to promote the principles of good citizenship and equality for women. This event contributes to the Council's Corporate Strategic Objectives of Promoting Civic Leadership and Improving the quality of life now, and for future generations.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a luncheon Approximate cost £4,500 Approximate budget remaining £159,630
St Colmcille's Guide Unit	Awards Ceremony Dinner 7 th October, 2011 Approximately 150 attending	The provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.	This event seeks to acknowledge the role played by the current leaders of the Unit in providing a challenging Guiding programme which aims to enable girls and young women to develop their full potential. The event will also recognise the commitment and dedication of long serving members. 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 £600 Approximate budget remaining £159,030
Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland	Annual Conference Reception 7 th April, 2009 Approximately 140 attending	The provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception.	It is estimated that 140 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 £560

				Approximate budget remaining £158,470
Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining	Conference Reception 17 th March, 2009 Approximately 120 attending	The provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception.	It is estimated that 110 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 £480 Approximate budget remaining £157,990



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Date:	Friday, 12th December, 2008
Subject:	National Association of Councillors - Crime and Disorder 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 a Conference in York from Friday, 16th until Sunday, 18th January, 2009.

The theme of the Conference is 'Tackling Violent Crime and Disorder – Delivering Safer Communities'. The Conference will consider the range of issues faced by local communities which are blighted by criminal and anti social behaviour and the measures which need to be put in place to deal effectively with these problems. 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 network and 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:	£75
Accommodation:	£130
	—
Total per delegate:	£555

Recommendations
<p>It is recommended that the Committee agrees to authorise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the attendance at the 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 Groupings on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members; and▪ the payment of the conference fees and appropriate travelling and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

Audit Panel

Monday, 8th December, 2008

MEETING OF AUDIT PANEL

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

In attendance: Mr. T. Salmon, Director of Corporate Services;
Mr. C. Quigley, Director of Legal Services;
Mr. A. Wilson, Head of Audit, Governance and
Risk Services;
Mrs. G. Ireland, Corporate Risk and Governance
Manager;
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator;
Mr. J. Buchanan, Chief Local Government Auditor; and
Mr. S. Knox, Local Government Auditor.

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Kyle.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 29th September were taken as read and signed as correct.

Compensation Claims

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

At the Audit Panel meeting 29 September 2008 the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services indicated that he would raise the matter of reporting claims settlements with the Director of Corporate Services.

In response the Director of Corporate Services requested that a report giving an overview of the amount and nature of claims which the Council has paid and how this area is managed would be presented by the Director of Legal Services at its next meeting.

Key Issues

Types of Claim

Claims for compensation can be categorised as:

- Public Liability i.e. claims from members of the public,
- Employer Liability i.e. claims involving members of staff,
- Motor Insurance i.e. vehicle damage and injury to members of the public; and
- Employment i.e. claims to Fair Employment and Industrial Tribunals.

The Council has insurance policies with St Paul's Travelers in place covering Public Liability with an excess set at £1.4m. Motor Insurance is also covered by insurers for any individual claim over £15,000. The Council is self insured for the other categories i.e. Employer Liability, Employment Claims and Contractual Disputes.

The premiums paid have been noted on the attached document.

Reporting Difficulties

The period from when a claim is initially received to when it is finally concluded can run into a number of years and therefore, when examining figures in particular financial years, it is unlikely that any meaningful correlation can be made between information as to claims received as against payments made.

For example, in the figures provided for Motor Insurance, the number of claims shows a downward trend although the cost to the Council has increased by 100%, (for reasons explained below).

Public Liability Claims

The total damages paid with costs averages £511K p.a with the majority of claims originating in Parks and Leisure, although the number of claims received has shown a downward trend from 177 to 109 in the last three years. The most common type of injury can be attributed to slips, trips and falls.

The insurance premium over the last three years has decreased from £278k to £207K which reflects insurance market conditions.

Audit Panel,
Monday, 8th December, 2008

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The Legal Services Department has been liaising with Parks and Leisure for a number of years and steps are being taken to implement recommendations detailed in a draft report compiled by Audit Governance and Risk Services in September 2008.

Legal Services is also represented on the Insurance/Risk Working Group chaired by the Head of Financial Services which is a cross departmental working group formed to look at all areas of sharing claims information and implementing recommendations to reduce the risk of personal injury. Accident/incident investigation management training has been provided by Willis, the Council's insurance broker, with a view to rolling out the training to line managers.

Employer Liability Claims

The number of claims made in the past three years has remained fairly constant at an average of 42 p.a with an average cost to the Council of £177K p.a.

The Council does not hold any insurance cover for this type of claim.

The majority of claims again relate to slips trips and falls, the majority received from the Cleansing Section and Parks & Leisure Department.

There have been no major claims over the last three years.

Motor Insurance Claims

The number of claims relating to Motor Insurance has also shown a downward trend in the last three years from 105 to 61, which has been reflected in the reduced insurance premium from £239K to £112K.

However the cost to the Council has risen from £112K to £194K, which is indicative of the province wide upward trend of reporting injury following collisions which has been reported by PSNI and would account for the rise in the trend to report injury.

The Occupational Road Risk Manager has implemented the Management of Road Risk Strategy in the past five years including undertaking thorough investigations, providing statistical analysis, improved training and the re-launch of the Drivers Handbook. While this has brought a great deal of success, it is important that line managers for drivers and banksmen not only reinforce the significance of road risk but also take proactive action to reduce the level of incidents.

The management of risk has become even more important with the recent introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter Act in April 2008. This Act covers situations where serious failure in the management of health and safety resulting in a fatality could lead to the prosecution of the Council.

Employment Claims

The number of claims received in this area has reduced from 9 in 2005/06 to 4 in 2007/08 although the implementation of Single Status has resulted in 4 Equal Pay claims. The total number of live claims in April 06 was 25 which has been reduced to 12 as at April 08.

The cost to the Council, in terms of damages paid, is relatively minimal showing total damages paid in settlement of all cases averaging approximately £10,000 per annum.

Management of legal cases

A number of operational measures in place to deal with the management claims have been mentioned above as:-

Legal Services liaison with Departments
Implementation of the AGRS report of September 2008
Insurance / Risk Working Group
Management of Road Risk Strategy

The Legal Services Department also follows the Law Society Practice Management Standard to ensure that claims handling is undertaken appropriately. The Department undergoes an external assessment each year by the Law Society which includes an inspection of claims files.

In addition the Department provides regular details of claims history to the Council's insurers and all files are then subject to an annual insurance audit. The previous audits undertaken by St Paul's Travelers have shown that our insurers are satisfied with the claims handling measures deployed by the Department.

Reporting of Compensation Claims

The Legal Services Department maintains the only central database of claims within the Council and as such maintains the responsibility for reporting.

**Audit Panel,
Monday, 8th December, 2008**

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The Department provides regular details of the Council's claims history in the form of providing an insurance bordereaux to the Council's brokers via the Insurance Unit. These figures are reported to the Council's insurers, St Paul's Travelers, who in turn conduct an annual audit of case files.

The details from both the Public Liability and Motor Insurance bordereaux are available to the relevant Departments across the Council.

The Department also provides Financial Services with all details for contingencies and reserves regarding potential outcomes of claims, which are incorporated as a note in the year end accounts. These details are then audited annually by the Local Government Auditor.

Resource Implications

There are no significant resource implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

The Panel is asked to note and outline their requirements for future reporting.

Key to Abbreviations (including in attached paper)

AGRS – Audit, Governance and Risk Services”

The Director of Legal Services spoke to the report and responded to a number of questions raised by Members. In particular, he referred to the significant costs incurred from time to time by the Council in defending employment claims taken in the Tribunals by unrepresented claimants. He advised the Panel of recent comments made by a High Court Judge on this issue and indicated that he would provide a report in relation to this matter to a future meeting.

During discussion, the Director of Corporate Services indicated that the Audit Panel would be receiving on an annual basis a report regarding compensation claims, although, if a significant claim were to arise, a report would be submitted to the Panel as a matter of urgency.

The Panel noted the contents of the report and that the Director of Legal Services would be submitting to a future meeting a report regarding the difficulties which Tribunals sometimes caused the Council due to their unpredictable nature.

**Audit Panel,
Monday, 8th December, 2008**

Update on Audited Accounts 2007/2008

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 position regarding the external audit of the 2007/08 accounts, the LGA’s annual audit letter and management letter.

Background Information

In accordance with statutory requirements the Council’s draft accounts were approved by the end of June, having been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20 June 2008. The Audit Panel was also briefed on the accounts at both its June meeting and, at its meeting in August, where the Panel was briefed with regard to the clawback of £4.1 million from the Land and Property Services.

The accounts have now been audited and formally published. The Local Government Auditor has recently issued his annual audit letter. The Local Government Auditor has also just issued his draft management letter which is currently being considered by management and will be submitted to the Audit Panel, together with an action plan to implement audit recommendations.

Key Issues

1. Overall Audit Opinion

The Chief Local Government Auditor has provided an unqualified opinion on Belfast City Council’s accounts for 2007/08.

2. Adjustments

The Chief Local Government Auditor has noted a number of minor and material adjustments to the draft accounts as a result of his audit work.

The material amendments are as follows:

- Subsequent to the accounts being approved in June, the Council received notification of a reduction in the rate income received for 2007/08. This resulted in a repayment to the Land and Property Service of £4.1m. This was not originally allowed for in the accounts.
- Following a review of the estimate the Landfill Closure Provision has been increased by £2m.

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- The provision for Single Status was reviewed in the light of the calculation of the final payments and reduced by £800k. This was then used to increase the Renewals and Repairs Reserve by £400k and the provision for Legal claims was also increased by £400k.
- Long Term Debtors and the Capital Adjustment Account were reduced by £11,152,000 in relation to the financing of capital expenditure by internal loan.
- A number of presentational adjustments were made to fixed assets.
- Fixed assets work in progress was reduced by £8,579,943 as this amount represents contributions received for the Grove Leisure Centre Project from other agencies.

The overall impact of these amendments resulted in the District Fund Reserve balance being reduced by £4.1m.

3. Annual Audit Letter

Under Article 13 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (NI) 2006 the Council is also required to publish the annual audit letter it receives from the Local Government Auditor. The letter summarises the issues arising from the final accounts audit.

4. Management Letter

In addition to the annual audit letter the LGA has also recently issued a draft management letter. This summarises the system/control issues arising during the LGA's audit and includes recommendations for management attention. We are currently in the process of reviewing these recommendations and those set out in an interim management letter that the LGA issued during their audit and developing an action plan to address all the recommendations. Once completed, the finalised management letter will be reported to the Audit Panel.

Resource Implications

None.

Recommendations

The Audit Panel is asked to note the outcome of the annual audit of the 2007/08 accounts.

Key to Abbreviations

LGA Local Government Audit"

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**Audit Panel,
Monday, 8th December, 2008**

The Director of Corporate Services drew the Panel's attention to various aspects of the report and indicated that the Chief Local Government Auditor had pointed out that the Council would be required to be prudent regarding its future Capital Schemes.

The Panel noted the contents of the report and the comments thereon of the Director of Corporate Services.

Audit, Governance and Risk Services – Progress Report

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

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services pointed out that two major audits of the Council's new financial system and related processes had been completed and that action plans had been developed to ensure that the controls in these areas would be enhanced. He also provided the Members with information regarding the value-for-money review of the mobile phones which the Council provided to staff and pointed out that the issues arising therefrom would be addressed as part of a wider plan to improve the Council's telephony system.

The Corporate Risk and Governance Manager provided the Panel with an update on the current position regarding risk management and business continuity management.

The Panel noted the contents of the progress report regarding the work which had been undertaken between September and November by the Audit, Governance and Risk Services Section and the comments thereon of the two officers.

Audit Panel Training

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services reminded the Panel that in 2007 it had received training from a representative of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and suggested that it would be beneficial for the Members to receive further training early in the new year.

The Panel agreed to this suggestion.

Dates of Future Meetings

The Panel agreed that it would hold its next two meetings on Monday, 23rd March and Thursday, 11th June, commencing at 1.00 p.m.

Chairman



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Revenue Budget 2008/09 Update
Date:	12 December 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the forecasted year end outturn for 2008/09.

Relevant Background Information

Based on the half year actual position, Members were informed at the November Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the forecasted year end outturn was an overspend of £850,000. It was agreed that actions to be taken to address the potential overspend would be reported to committee in December.

Key Issues

The forecast year end outturn for 2008/09 is now an overspend of £400,000. This has been achieved through a number of short term cost cutting measures which have been identified by a cross-departmental task force established by the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services to tackle the potential overspend issue.

The measures taken include the following:

- The decision to close Beechmount Leisure Centre will reduce forecasted expenditure by £135,000.
- Reductions in overtime and agency costs and delaying recruitment of a number of back office posts will save £326,000.

Members should note that because of the volatile economic conditions impacting on both income and expenditure that this forecast may change over the coming months which will require further cost cutting measures to be taken. The position will be tracked on a continuous basis and a further update will be provided to Members in January.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of the report and agree to receive a further update report in January 2009.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for Funding
Date:	12 December 2008
Reporting Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Corporate Services Directorate Ext 6084
Contact Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Corporate Services Directorate Ext 6084

Relevant Background Information

This paper presents for consideration a request for financial assistance to the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra for a tour of Italy and Slovenia.

Under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the Council has discretion to consider exceptional requests for financial assistance. A Special Expenditure budget within the Corporate Services Department is available to provide support which may be made available providing:

- (i) The Council has statutory authority to make such payments
- (ii) Assistance is not available from the remit of another Committee.

The criteria for assessing requests for assistance which would fall within the Council's Special Expenditure budget is included at Appendix 1.

Key Issues

The City of Belfast Youth Orchestra is drawn mainly from students of the Belfast School of Music which is funded by the Belfast Education and Library Board. There are approximately 90 members in the orchestra aged between 14 and 20 and drawn from all communities in the city. The orchestra has been in existence for over 50 years.

The orchestra is seeking financial support from the Council towards a tour of Italy and Slovenia in July 2009. The cost of the tour is approximately £118k. Participants will contribute approximately £72k and have been asked to raise a 'shortfall' of £46k through various fundraising and sponsorship activities.

Consideration

The request states that the orchestra seeks to

“...show the high quality of local talent and promote a very positive and attractive profile of our city....”

In this context, the Committee agreed to contribute £5k towards the cost of previous tours by the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra in 2007 and City of Belfast Youth Concert Band in 2008.

The Youth Orchestra or other groups from the Belfast School of Music are not in receipt of funding from any Council Department. As in previous years, the Committee has discretion as to whether it wishes to support this request. If assistance was agreed the Youth Orchestra would be required to acknowledge support from the Council in publicity material etc.

Resource Implications

Resources are available from current budget.

Financial

The Committee may wish to consider a contribution of £5,000, the sum provided towards tours in 2007 and 2008.

Human Resources

None.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee considers a contribution of £5,000 towards the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra tour to Italy and Slovenia and, if agreed, passes the under-noted resolution:

That the expenditure in respect of the aforementioned event be approved under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to the District, and inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefits so accruing would be commensurate with the payments to be made.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Criteria for the assessment of requests for financial assistance.

APPENDIX 1

B Policy and Resources Committee,

2772 Friday, 18th June, 2004

Special Expenditure Budget - criteria to be applied in the assessment of requests

- (1) whether there are sufficient funds remaining in the Council's Special Expenditure budget for the relevant financial year;
- (2) whether the application for financial assistance links to any of the Council's Corporate Objectives;
- (3) whether the direct benefit to be obtained is specific to the Council or its district or inhabitants;
- (4) whether the activity or initiative in respect of which assistance is being sought is being promoted by a person or organisation living or operating, or otherwise having a direct connection with, the City;
- (5) whether the request for financial assistance relates to an event or initiative which falls within the remit and statutory power of any other Committee of the Council (in which case it should be so referred);
- (6) whether the request relates to a specific event, activity or initiative as distinct from a request for a contribution to general funds;
- (7) whether the benefit to be obtained will be commensurate with the payment to be made.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Council would nevertheless reserve to itself the right to give special consideration to any particular request for financial assistance if the Members consider that special circumstances apply and legal advice has been sought where appropriate.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	District Rates Update
Date:	12 December 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Improvement Manager
Relevant Background Information	
<p>Members will recall that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee met on 17 October 2008 to discuss a number of rates issues. The purpose of this report is to update Members on a number of developments which have occurred since the October meeting.</p> <p>Key Issues</p> <p>The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for Northern Ireland has issued his audit report on the Statement of Rate Levy and Collection 2006/07. This covers all rate assessments billed and cash collections from ratepayers. In his report the C&AG stated that he could not give any assurance to the Assembly on the assessment and collection of rates for 2006/07 due to significant system control problems which arose following the introduction of a new IT system. His report highlighted numerous problems in relation to checking the accuracy of the figures in the accounts and control failures that impacted on LPS's performance in administering and collecting rates.</p> <p>Following the issue of the C&AG report, the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee has released its response to the report. A copy of the executive summary of the report is provided at Appendix One. The report, "examines the reasons for the financial and operational difficulties that have overwhelmed Land and Property Services, in its assessment, administration and collection of rates."¹</p> <p>Members should note in particular that the Public Accounts Committee has made recommendations in relation to vacant properties (para.18), the accuracy of penny product information (para.20) and the collection of arrears (para.21 and 22). These are the same issues which were brought to Members attention at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in October. The key recommendation made by the PAC is in paragraph 23, "The Committee recommends that revenue forgone and additional costs</p>	

¹ Public Accounts Committee Report on Statement of Rate Levy and Collection 2006-07 Para 1

of collection as a result of the problems with the new system will not be passed on to Councils. The Committee would like an assurance of this from DFP.”

In relation to this recommendation, the council has been informed that LPS intend to write-off £10m of debt in 2009/10. This is likely to result in losses for Belfast in the region of £2.5m in 2009/10. Also, indications are that increases in the cost of collection for 2009/10 will be more than 20%. It is recommended that the council write to the Minister to seek assurances that the increase in cost of collection and debt write-offs are being passed on to the council in the context of the PAC recommendation.

Members should also be aware that NILGA has issued a press release in relation to rates issues. A copy can be found at Appendix Two. The President of NILGA has written to the Minister calling on him to implement the recommendation of PAC that “revenue forgone and additional costs of collection as a result of problems with new systems will not be passed on to councils”. It is recommended that the council supports NILGA on this issue.

A worrying development for the council is that a number of high value non-domestic properties are being re-valued. This may lead to a further reduction in rates income which could be back dated for a number of years. If these reductions are claimed from the council in one year then they will have to be financed from cuts in expenditure. NILGA has called for the extension of transitional relief arrangements to cover the impact of re-valuations on councils. It is recommended that the council write to the Minister in support of the NILGA position.

Given the seriousness of these issues and their potential negative impact on the EPP 2009/10 Members may also wish to consider whether a request should be made for council representatives to meet with the Minister to discuss these issues in more detail prior to the setting of the rate for 2009/10.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to agree :

1. The council writes to the Minister to seek assurances that the likely increase in cost of collection and debt write-offs are being passed on to the council in the context of the recommendation 23 of the PAC Report on Statement of Rate Levy and Collection 2006-07.
2. The council supports NILGA's position on transitional relief to cover the impact of back dated re-valuations and calling on the Minister to implement recommendation 23 of the PAC Report on Statement of Rate Levy and Collection 2006-07.

Appendix One: Public Accounts Committee Report on Statement of Rate Levy and Collection 2006-07

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This report considers the reasons for the financial and operational difficulties that have overwhelmed Land and Property Services, an Agency of the Department of Finance and Personnel, in its assessment, administration and collection of rates. The report examines the management of rate collection activity during a time of considerable change in policy, systems and management structures and, in particular, the decisions taken in implementing these changes.

2. The Committee has given priority to considering this topic given the importance that the collection of rates revenue has on both central and local government finances. Rate assessments amount to some £1 billion annually.

Overall conclusions

3. The Committee's overall conclusion is that the implementation of the new IT system was very poorly managed. This has resulted in significant additional costs being incurred to resolve basic failings in the system which had not been discovered before the system went live. The Committee is amazed that shortcuts were taken to implement a complex and large IT system and substantial resources transferred from operational duties to ensure that the system was in place to issue domestic rates bills based on the new reforms.

4. The Committee considers that the Department and the Agency were trying to do too much in too short a timescale. The Agency was attempting to manage significant change on three different fronts; policy, systems and structures.

5. The Committee considers that the decision to proceed with the implementation of the new system was based on a fundamentally flawed risk assessment. It is crystal clear that the Department's risk assessment did not take sufficient account of the huge risks of inadequate system testing, the impact of transferring front line staff to work on the introduction of rate reforms and the enormous financial consequences of postponing the collection of arrears. The Committee accepts that the Department achieved its objective of successfully calculating and issuing bills based on capital values by April 2004, however, the price paid for meeting this deadline outweighed the benefit many times over. The timetable objective may have been achieved but in the process of achieving it the business was thrown into chaos.

6. The Committee noted that the bills successfully issued did not provide either central or local government with any additional revenue. The Committee accepts that the new reforms may have led to a fairer allocation of rates between ratepayers with some paying less, others more and various reliefs and allowances introduced for those in great need, such as the Lone Pensioner Allowance, however, the Committee is of the view that a properly considered risk assessment would have avoided many of the problems noted in this report by postponing the reforms for one year.

7. There are a number of important recommendations for the Department of Finance and Personnel and Land and Property Services to ensure that what went wrong is fixed and that the resulting adverse consequences to ratepayers, Councils and staff are quickly resolved. There are also wider lessons on implementing complex new IT systems.

The Management of the IT Project

8. The IT specification was incomplete even though it ran to some 800 pages in length. The Committee was informed that the specification mostly got mainstream business processes correct but DFP regretted that some areas were missed and some functional errors made. The Committee disagrees with this assessment by the Department. Areas missed included the systems ability to chase arrears, a core operation of the Agency, validation controls over manual input errors and an audit trail to enable the C&AG to give assurance on the accuracy of the accounts. The Committee is most concerned that so many errors were made that led to such significant, additional sums being paid to the contractor.

9. The Committee accepts that the accuracy of the specification was the responsibility of the Agency but also considers that a number of the deficiencies in the software should have been, at least, challenged by the contractor, before proceeding. For example the Committee is very surprised that the system allows some ratepayers to be incorrectly issued with million pound bills due to simple keying in errors. IT systems should be designed to prevent and detect manual errors of this nature. It beggars belief that such a basic matter as this was overlooked by all involved in the development of the system's software.

10. The Committee is concerned that the cost of the IT project has escalated from an initial estimate of £10.5 million to a revised estimate in the C&AG's report of £11.5 million and now this cost has increased by a further £1.5 million to £13 million. The Committee is of the opinion that the contractor is doing very well out of the increasing value of the contract. Errors or omissions from the specification provide contractors with a rich revenue stream that is not subject to competitive tendering.

11. The Gateway Review process sounded alarm bells on the risk of not delivering. The Committee is not convinced that all the Gateway recommendations were implemented as effectively and as quickly as was necessary, particularly the concerns raised by the Gateway team about time pressures and adequacy of resources. The Committee can only conclude that the Department is mistaken in its positive assessment of the actions it took and/or the speed with which it took them.

12. This case has exposed a worrying IT skills deficit which the Department is now taking steps to address. The public service needs talented, commercially orientated IT specialists that can negotiate effective outcomes with private sector contractors. The Committee also considers that the project lacked sufficient accounting and management expertise. Better accounting skills should have assisted in reducing the volume of basic financial deficiencies in the system specification and design. Better management skills may have led to better decision making in terms of what needed to be done to create stable post implementation operations.

13. Both the quality of the data transferred from the existing IT system to the new one and the testing of the new system with test data were substandard. Much of the data on the old system was unstructured and it was therefore apparently difficult to establish rules for its

transfer. The Department admitted that more resources should have been allocated to this. The Committee is surprised by this given that a new system had been in the planning since 2001. Moreover, test data was used to check whether the system worked properly but the data used did not test all potential eventualities and therefore did not reveal certain crucial errors in the specification leading to adverse performance and cost implications.

Defective Financial and Operational Controls

14. The Comptroller and Auditor General could not, in the circumstances, give any assurance on the 2006-07 accounts as it was not possible to verify a number of very material figures reported in the accounts. This was due to significant control problems arising from the poor specification of the IT system and certain key controls not functioning.

15. The Committee is concerned that a new IT system dealing with hundreds of thousands of bills requires so much manual data input. Where data is input manually, the Committee noted that there were insufficient validation controls built into the system software to detect keying in errors. These are basic controls which have been standard in IT system designs for decades.

16. Weaknesses in financial procedures in the new IT system, as detailed in this report increase the risk of fraud, as well as error. They also reduce the likelihood of detection of fraud. Given this extremely weak control environment, the Committee was therefore surprised that DFP, the department responsible for issuing best practice guidance, did not yet have a whistle-blowing policy in place. It must be currently one of the few departments without one.

17. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Department conducted a staff attitude survey for all its staff, including those at the Agency, during what has been a very challenging time for all those working there. It also welcomes the introduction of an action plan to improve staff morale at the Agency.

18. Customer service has suffered appallingly as a result of the system problems and the transfer of experienced front line staff to help with the implementation of the new system. Not responding to customer enquiries is unacceptable. Many ratepayers have legitimate worries as a result of receiving inaccurate bills and vulnerable ratepayers need help in obtaining allowances, which can be complicated to claim, let alone understand. The Committee records the obvious point that administrative backlogs and poor customer care are not a good combination and must be avoided by public sector service providers.

19. During 2006-07, the Agency abandoned its inspections of vacant properties, that is, properties which are not billed for rates. Through such inspections, properties notified as vacant can be found to be occupied and rates payable. This important work was deferred as staff were needed to assist with the introduction of rate reforms.

20. It is vital that there is an accurate up to date list of all properties so that all those liable to pay rates are assessed and billed. The Committee was concerned that there was evidence of both old and new properties that had been overlooked.

21. The Committee is most concerned that DFP was not providing Councils with sufficiently accurate penny product information to enable them to do their corporate planning. Small

percentage errors in forecasts have a very significant impact on their finances. It seemed to the Committee that insufficient resources have been provided to improving accuracy in this important area, perhaps, because DFP considered this to be more of a problem issue for Councils than for itself. While the Committee notes DFP's comments that more co-operation had been introduced recently, this seems to the Committee to be too little and too late.

The High Level of Rate Arrears following the Introduction of the New Reforms

22. The Committee finds it difficult to understand the decision taken to defer recovery of arrears, given its effect on public finances. The Committee is not convinced that other options, such as timetable adjustment, were sufficiently explored.

23. Arrears were £48 million in 2006 but rose to £124 million by 2008. Pursuing arrears is time-consuming, particularly if it is not done in a timely manner. With the delay in recovery action, more people will have moved house or will avoid payment or simply will not be able to afford payment of rate arrears on top of the arrival of the next year's bill. More time and money will also be spent arranging assistance to those in financial difficulty to pay off arrears by instalments.

24. All of this has a significant cost. At one stage the Agency had only seven people tasked with pursuing arrears. DFP informed the Committee that it is now putting a lot of time and effort into this. Staff involved in the catchup exercise has risen to 80. The Committee is very concerned with, not only the spiralling level of arrears as a result of the decision to defer, but also with the spiralling cost of collection given the number of staff needed to undertake recovery action.

25. Irrecoverable arrears are estimated to double from £2 million to £4 million each year but the Department noted that this estimate was subject to a fair amount of uncertainty. It was a question of just waiting to see what happens. In the Committee's view the £4 million estimate seems very much understated given the current economic difficulties people are facing with enormous rises in electricity and gas prices and the lack of credit now available.

26. Under current arrangements, Councils will have to fund the higher cost of collection in the years to come as well as sharing with central government any loss of funds through irrecoverable arrears. This may mean less money for Councils to spend on services, as a result of the estimated doubling of irrecoverable arrears. The Committee finds it intolerable that Councils will have to 'pick up the tab' for systemic failure in a central government agency.

27. DFP does not presently have any robust target for arrears. DFP is seeking to carry out benchmarking with other collection authorities to establish what the future level of arrears should be. The Committee is concerned that arrears will not be reduced to the levels achieved some years previously when the Agency was one of the better performing collection authorities.

Next Steps

28. The Department has referred to some of the measures it is taking to stabilise the Agency's rate collection business. These should now be put to the Committee in the form of a comprehensive action plan which sets out what is needed to resolve the key problem issues.

Summary of Recommendations

1. The Committee recommends that risk assessments for new projects and programmes include a full assessment and evaluation of the costs of any steps taken to override normal implementation controls, to re-prioritise front line staff and to reduce customer services, particularly when challenging or fixed deadlines must be met (see paragraph 14).
2. Strong and realistic leadership from the programme board is essential to recognise what is and what is not achievable given the available timescales and resources. The Committee recommends Departments to invoke strong governance arrangements over such risk assessments, including consideration by the Department's Audit Committee (see paragraph 15).
3. Implementation of new IT systems in the public sector has regularly caused difficulties. This is particularly the case if implemented at the same time as major policy changes. The Committee recommends that major new IT systems should not go live until major policy changes are finalised. In exceptional circumstances where this cannot be avoided, such IT projects should be assessed and managed on the basis that there is a high risk of failure, risks must be fully evaluated and adequate resources and contingency plans put in place to minimise the likelihood of post implementation failure and/or significant additional costs occurring. Risk of failure should also be mitigated through skilful project management and ensuring that whatever resources are needed are secured to check and test the adequacy of the design changes. Shortcuts in quality control measures must not be taken (see paragraph 16).
4. Transferring key operational staff to the project to meet the go live deadline led to significant operational problems post implementation of the new system. The Committee recommends that sufficient resources must always be found to ensure core business functions, customer service and performance standards are maintained rather than allow these to deteriorate in order to meet a project deadline, no matter how important that project might be (see paragraph 17).
5. The Committee recommends that DFP examines, in consultation with the Office of Government Commerce, why the Gateway process did not lead to a better outcome in this case. There are obviously lessons to be learnt. The Committee wishes to be informed of the results of this review (see paragraph 21).
6. The completeness and accuracy of specifications for large, complex and/or Mission Critical IT systems are essential if a system is to be successful. The Committee recommends that IT personnel, business users, the finance team, internal auditors and the IT contractor must work closely and effectively together. In addition they must have a clear understanding of the knowledge and expertise each must bring to the successful development of a specification that meets operational and financial requirements. Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined (see paragraph 28).

7. The Committee considers it essential that all projects, but particularly IT projects, have project teams with the skills and experience proportionate to the size, complexity and importance of the project. The Committee recommends that a general pool of experts from the wider public sector, who have extensive skills and experience of successfully delivering IT projects, is formed and if necessary enhanced by recruitment. This pool must have sufficient breadth of experience to meet the longer term future needs of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. These experts should be allocated to lead large and complex Mission Critical projects (see paragraph 32).

8. The Committee recommends that there must be clear lines of communication between project sub-teams and Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) reporting to the main project board. This is particularly important given the failure to cope with the various interdependencies which, in this project, were not properly identified and/or communicated (see paragraph 33).

9. The Committee strongly recommends that sufficient planning, time and resources must be given to the quality of data transfers and the adequacy of data testing before a system goes live. Shortcuts with testing data must never be taken no matter how important the deadline might be as the cost of any subsequent flaws can be very substantial in terms of fixing an underperforming, live system. The Committee makes this recommendation recognising that it is a very basic and self-evident point but one that was not followed in this project, given the pressures arising from the tight implementation deadline (see paragraph 36).

10. The Committee strongly recommends that DFP ensures that all major systems problems that have led to a lack of proper audit trail are fully resolved. The Committee acknowledges that these audit trail deficiencies remain inherent within the 2007-08 accounts but expects DFP to ensure that the 2008-09 accounts are properly supported by the books and records so that the C&AG can provide the Assembly with an unqualified opinion on the accounts (see paragraph 41).

11. The Committee expects DFP to prepare accurate and timely accounts, initially on a cash basis. The Committee recommends that DFP puts in place arrangements for the preparation of a modern style annual report, as soon as possible that includes accruals based financial information. DFP should liaise closely with the Audit Office in devising the accounting policies and disclosures for these accounts (see paragraph 42).

12. The Committee recommends that all software systems should be designed to reduce the amount of manual data input and limit the extensive use of supervisory test checking that has for so long been the resource intensive practice employed in the public sector. Information should only be input once with all aspects of the system updated electronically. IT systems must have strong validation controls that prevent or, at the very least, substantially reduce human error. In this particular case, DFP should amend the system accordingly and robustly negotiate the cost of doing so with the contractor given the Committee's view that such system failings should have been obvious to the contractor when designing the software (see paragraph 49).

13. The Committee is particularly concerned that the new system contained a major system weakness in cash procedures which increased the risk of fraud. The Committee recommends that all outstanding system problems are resolved as a matter of urgency and that this Committee is provided with a timetable for their resolution. The Committee expects DFP's

audit committee to closely monitor and challenge progress made and obtain sufficient evidence that there are no other significant system weaknesses (see paragraph 54).

14. The Committee reiterates the recommendation made previously in its report on Tackling Public Sector Fraud that it would like to see much more emphasis given to whistle-blowing as an important means of identifying potential fraudulent activity. There is no excuse for 25% of departments and agencies not having whistle-blowing policies in place and expects DFP to ensure this deficit is addressed and that full compliance is achieved. The Committee also expects DFP to ensure that departments are proactive in training and encouraging staff to blow the whistle and for DFP to include an analysis of activity levels of whistle-blowing across departments as part of its annual Fraud Report (see paragraph 57).

15. The Committee recommends that meaningful and challenging performance targets are set for staff morale and that the implementation of the action plan is monitored by DFP's audit committee (see paragraph 61).

16. The Committee also recommends that a further survey of the Agency's staff is conducted in Autumn 2009 (see paragraph 62).

17. The Committee recommends that DFP radically improves the quality of its customer care to its ratepayers, including its handling of phone calls and introduces strong, measurable performance criteria in this area, which should be monitored closely. The Committee wants DFP to report back on what performance targets it has put in place to measure customer service and its timeframe for achieving them. These performance measures should be reported and commented upon in the Annual Report (see paragraph 69).

18. The Committee recommends that demanding targets are set for a reduction in the level of incorrectly recorded vacant properties, over each Council area, and for increasing the amount of rateable assessments for so called vacant properties (see paragraph 72).

19. The Committee recommends that co-operation is needed with Councils to maximise district and regional rate revenues and recommends that the Department conducts a research study in conjunction with Councils with a view to having an agreed strategy on assessing and billing all eligible properties in a timely manner(see paragraph 73).

20. The accuracy of penny product information is essential to the effective financial planning of Council services. While the Committee recognises that forecasting is not an exact science, the Committee is of the view that DFP has not invested sufficient energy into developing systems for calculating the actual penny product and into estimating subsequent year(s) penny product. The Committee recommends that DFP places more resources into the system and develops a more robust budgetary model to estimate future Council revenue (see paragraph 79).

21. The collection of arrears is a core business activity of the Agency. The collection of rate revenue is an important source of funding for central government and a vital one for Councils. The Committee recommends that sufficient resources should always be allocated to the collection of arrears and that these should be ring-fenced. Collection of arrears should never be deferred (see paragraph 92).

22. The Committee recommends that DFP introduces robust measurable performance criteria for the management and collection of rate arrears. This should include a target level of overall arrears, and more detailed targets for each Council area (see paragraph 93).

23. The Committee recommends that revenue forgone and additional costs of collection as a result of the problems with the new system will not be passed on to Councils. The Committee would like an assurance of this from DFP (see paragraph 94).

24. The Department has referred to some of the measures it is taking to stabilise the Agency's rate collection business. The Committee recommends that these should be put to the Committee in the form of a comprehensive action plan which sets out what is needed to resolve the key problem issues. In particular, the action plan must deal with the following:

- a. governance and the control environment;
- b. leadership and management skills;
- c. communication with stakeholders; and
- d. the IT systems.

DFP's Audit Committee must closely monitor the progress made against this action plan (see paragraph 95).

25. The Committee also considers it essential that the Department's Audit Committee monitors closely the governance and control environment of Land and Property Services and the performance of its constituent parts that now include rates assessments, property valuations, mapping and land registration (see paragraph 96).

26. The Agency's problems are so wide ranging that the Committee would suggest that the Assembly's Committee for Finance and Personnel pays particular attention to the regular monitoring of progress made in stabilising the business and strengthening the governance arrangements (see paragraph 97).

27. The Committee recommends that DFP introduces as soon as possible measurable performance criteria for the assessment and collection of rates. These should include:

- a. rates assessments, including a target for improving the completeness of the register of rateable properties and inaccuracies in the number of properties treated as vacant;
- b. billing;
- c. collection, including the cost of collection per £1 of rates;
- d. stakeholder satisfaction; ratepayers, District Councils and staff;
- e. irrecoverable rates; and
- f. accuracy of penny product estimates.

The standard for these performance criteria should be set at a level that is comparable to the best results achieved in other collection authorities and take account of the needs of key stakeholders (see paragraph 98).

28. All public bodies need to think realistically and carefully about the number of complex change management or IT projects that they can manage and resource at the same time, particularly given the short supply of skilled and experienced project managers and specialists. The Committee recommends that DFP disseminates information on lessons learnt in terms of skills, project management and specialists during this process to other departments where there are multiple significant changes occurring, to avoid similar issues arising in the future (see paragraph 101).

Appendix Two

COUNCILS CAUGHT IN RATES FIASCO



24 November 2008

Local councils have raised deep concerns about the dramatic impact of the reduced revenue from rate collection. The reduction is a result of a number of factors which include the following:

- The reduction in the penny rate product demonstrated by initial figures produced by Land and Property Service (LPS)
- Substantial increases in losses arising from unrecovered debt
- Deficiencies in vacant property inspection
- Increased costs in the collection of rates
- Change in rating policy
- Loss of Ministry of Defence (MOD) revenue

In a letter to Nigel Dodds MP MLA, Minister of Finance and Personnel, Cllr Helen Quigley, President of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) called for immediate action on this issue which is the fault of central government, largely caused by inadequacies in the change programme in Land and Property Service.

She highlights that councils are faced with an extremely difficult position where services may have to be cut, or increases placed on rates at a time of already significant economic hardship for the people of Northern Ireland.

Cllr Quigley calls on the Minister to implement the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee that "revenue foregone and additional costs of collection as a result of problems with new systems will not be passed on to councils"

NILGA appreciate that Local Government Officers and LPS staff are working closely on this issue, but urgently call on Minister Dodds to ensure his Department take all the necessary steps to alleviate the negative impact to local government.

NILGA would welcome for example the extension of transitional relief arrangements to cover the impact of re-evaluations for councils, a reconsideration of the proportion of the cost of rate collection apportioned to councils or other appropriate action. We would also welcome reassurances

about the improvements in the performance of LPS on issues such as vacant property inspection and debt collection.

CLr Quigley is currently seeking a meeting with Minister Dodds to consider options for transitional support and agreement on how we can work towards a longer term solutions to this matter.

ENDS

Editorial Notes:

- The Public Accounts Committee report 16 October 2008 highlighted significant deficiencies in the change management programme in Land and Property Service, particularly as the service tried to do too much in too short a timescale.

- The Agency was attempting to deal with significant change on three fronts; policy, management structures and a new IT system.

- Issues arising include:

- o Penny product over estimated

- o Uncollected rates on vacant premises arising from lack of vacancy inspection work by LPS

- o Substantial loss of revenue due to inadequate debt recovery

- (£48M in 2006, arising to £124M in 2008)*

- The proportion of* this debt falling on councils is estimated to be in the region of £70M

- o Changes in rating policy (including significant increases in allowances)

- o Impact of loss of MoD revenue

- o High cost of rate collection (IT system costs increased from £10.5M to £13M)

- These issues are coupled with increased losses from a slowdown in growth and business closures

- The impact on councils is that they are faced with increasing rates or cutting services.

- NILGA are currently seeking a meeting with Nigel Dodds MP MLA, Minister of Finance and Personnel to consider:

- o Options for transitional support

- o Reconsideration of the proportion of the cost of rates collection apportioned to councils

- o Other appropriate action to implement the PAC recommendation

- o How we can work towards longer term solutions on this matter

For more information contact:

CLr Helen Quigley, President, NILGA - 07779351008

Heather Moorhead, Chief Executive, NILGA – 07808181625

Mark Maher, Communications Officer. Tel: 028 9024 9286 Fax: 028 9023 3328

Email: m.maher@nilga.org

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives
Date:	16 December 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
Donna Hylands	Cleaner (Part-time)	Sister	Jacqueline Gough	Corporate Services
Adrian O'Neill	Casual Front of House Steward	Son	Harry O'Neill	Corporate Services (HR)
Eileen O'Prey	Casual Front of House Steward	Sister	Joanne O'Prey	Corporate Services (BIS)
Heather Millar	Casual Front of House Steward	Wife	Eric Millar	Parks & Leisure (Zoo)
Jonathan Rooney	Casual Front of House Steward	Nephew	Harry O'Neill	Corporate Services (HR)
Katherine Moore	Casual Front of House Steward	Daughter	Valerie Moore	Parks & Leisure (Ozone)
Laura Beare	Casual Front of House Steward	Daughter	Angela Beare	Development (WFH)
Rosaleen Murray	Casual Front of House Steward	Mother	Karen Murray	Development (WFH)
Susan McCullough	Casual Front of House Steward	Daughter	Anne McCullough	Corporate Services (ISB)

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 & Resources Committee
Subject:	City Hall coffee-shop facility
Date:	12 th December 2008
Reporting Officer:	G Wright – Head of Facilities Management
Contact Officer:	As above

Relevant background information

At its meeting of 24th October 2008 the Committee authorised the invitation of quotations in respect of the operation of a proposed coffee-shop facility in the City Hall.

Quotations were invited and briefings conducted with respondents in terms of the scale and scope of the proposed facility and the constraints imposed in respect of menus and opening hours etc. Quotations were invited on the basis of (a) the operation of the coffee-shop facility only, and (b) on the basis of the operation of both the coffee-shop and giftware sales. The resulting contract, if any, would run for 1 year with an optional further year at the Council's discretion.

A total of 3 quotations have been received, as follows:-

Mount Charles Catering Ltd: management fee (i.e. the Council to pay the caterer) of **£7,500** pa (rising to £7,725 in year 2) in respect of the coffee-shop and giftware franchise;

Posh Nosh: management fee of **£12,000** pa for the coffee-shop facility only. No quote for optional 2nd year, and no quote for giftware option; *and*

Castle Catering: franchise fee (i.e. the caterer pays the Council) **£11,100** for the coffee-shop option only in Year 1 or **£15,100** for the combined coffee-shop and giftware option, rising to **£12,100** in Year 2 for the coffee-shop option or **£18,100** for the combined coffee-shop & giftware option.

As can be seen from the above, the only respondent offering to pay the Council for the franchise opportunity is **Castle Catering**, which also operates the catering franchises in a number of other Council properties, notably Belfast Castle, Malone House and the new Stables restaurant.

Members should be aware that the initial fit-out costs for the area (including the supply of necessary kitchen equipment etc) is estimated to be in the region of £40,000, and this is not recoverable from the franchisee.

It has also been proposed that the coffee-shop area be 'themed' (one option being the replication of the Café Parisien or Veranda Café originally found on the first-class deck of the Titanic) in order to link better with the enhanced tours of the building agreed by the Committee in November 2008.

Additional costs (estimated to be a further £40,000) will be associated with this work which again is not recoverable from the franchisee.

It should also be noted that, as the franchise is a commercial opportunity, no staff or Member discounts would be available under any of the bids made.

Key Issues

The key issues are therefore as follows:-

- does the Committee wish to proceed with the coffee-shop option;
- does the Committee wish to franchise only the operation of the coffee-shop facility or should the giftware option also be made available (although managed and quality-assured by the Facilities Manager); *and*
- does the Committee wish to incur the additional cost of theming the coffee-shop area and, if so, is the Titanic option acceptable or should other options be pursued?

Resources Implications

Financial

The total cost of fit-out and theming is estimated to be in the region of £80,000, provision for which has been made in the City hall revenue budget for 2009/10. At the highest level of franchise fee offered (i.e. £18,100 p.a.) the pay-back period will be at least 4 years, however the facility will undoubtedly add an extra dimension to the building and enhance its tourist potential.

Human Resources

The staffing of the coffee-shop facility (and receipting of giftware sales if offered) will be the responsibility of the successful franchisee. However in light of the fact that the coffee-shop facility would be open to the public and that the obvious point of entrance/egress is the East Entrance, it would be necessary to provide Security cover in this area from 08:30 -16:30 (Mon-Sat) and this would mean a change to the establishment and current shift patterns of the Security unit.

Asset & other implications

There are no direct asset implications in terms of the fabric of the building or its systems and services.

Recommendations & Decisions

The Committee's direction is sought in terms of the desirability of proceeding with the coffee-shop facility, the potential inclusion of the giftware franchise and the theming or otherwise of the area.

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents attached

Illustrations of Titanic's Café Parisien and Veranda Café.

Titanic's Café Parisien



Titanic's Veranda Café



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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Asset Management – Estates Issues
Date:	12 December 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext. 6217.
Contact Officer:	Ken Anderson, Estates Surveyor, Core Improvement, Ext. 3496.

Relevant Background Information

- Sub-Item 1. Disposal of Land at Park Road, Mallusk
 Sub-Item 2. Additional Land at Mary Peters Track

Sub-Item 1 – Land at Park Road, Mallusk

At its meeting on 9 October 2008 the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to disposal of an area of approximately 0.46 acres at City of Belfast Playing Fields to DRD Roads Service to allow them to carry out installation of a footway and minor road widening. The relevant portion of land is shown hatched black on the attached map Appendix 1. The Parks and Leisure Committee approval was subject to terms being agreed by the Estates Manager, completion of a suitable legal agreement by the Director of Legal Services and notification of the disposal to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Order 62.

A figure of £16,500 has now agreed between the Estates Manager and Land & Property Services acting on behalf of Roads Service, for the above 0.46 acres of playing fields.

Sub-Item 2 – Land at Mary Peters Track

By a lease dated 19 May 1987 Queen's University Belfast (QUB) granted the Council a 99 year lease for approximately 36 acres of land at Upper Malone on which the Mary Peters Track was located. QUB provided the land free of charge to the Council (subject to a nominal rent of £1 per annum) but with the proviso that the property would be available for use free of charge by QUB students and staff.

By way of a Supplemental Lease from dated 4 April 1995, an additional small area (0.168 acres) was incorporated in the site on the same terms and conditions as the 1987 lease.

Recent examination of the Council's title, with the aid of modern digital mapping, has revealed that an additional small portion of land should be acquired from QUB to provide further frontage land at the main access point to the facilities from Old Coach Road. The relevant portion of land is shown shaded yellow on the attached map (Appendix 2). It seems this land was unintentionally omitted from the 1987 lease and it is proposed to acquire it from QUB by way of a further Supplemental Lease on the same terms as previously.

Key Issues

Sub-Item 1 – Land at Park Road, Mallusk

- Proposed disposal of approximately 0.46 to Roads Service (see map at Appendix 1) as approved by Parks & Leisure Committee at its meeting on 9 October 2008.
- Disposal price of £16,500 now agreed with Land & Property Services.

Sub-Item 2 – Land at Mary Peters Track

- In 1987 Council acquired some 36 acres of land at Mary Peters track from QUB on a 99 year lease.
- Small area of land (31.27 square metres) unintentionally excluded from 1987 lease. QUB willing to provide this area to Council by way of Supplemental Lease on same terms as 1987 lease.

Resource Implications

Sub-Item 1 – Land at Park Road, Mallusk

Financial

Modest capital receipt of £16,500 in respect of land being acquired by Roads Service. No additional expenditure anticipated in connection with the proposed road widening scheme.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

Land being lost comprises frontage strip to Park Road, Mallusk. Proposed road scheme will, for the first time, provide safe pedestrian access to the Council's site from the public transport route on the Antrim Road. The scheme will improve sight lines for vehicles emerging from the Council's site on to Park Road. Roads Service will carry out accommodation works to minimise disruption to the Council's lands, including provision of replacement fencing where required, replacement of appropriate trees and ensuring any drainage systems which serve, or run through, the Council's land are not adversely affected by the scheme.

Sub-Item 2 – Land at Mary Peters Track

Financial

No known financial implications at this stage.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

Acquisition of this land would assist in consolidating the access to/from Old Coach Road and could prove beneficial for future development at the Mary Peters Track.

Recommendations

Sub-Item 1 – Land at Park Road, Mallusk

Further to the decision of the Parks and Leisure Committee on 9 October 2008, Committee is requested to approve the proposed disposal of approximately 0.46 acres of land (shown hatched on Appendix 1) at City of Belfast Playing Fields to DRD Roads Service at a figure of £16,500 now agreed between the Estates Manager and Land & Property Services (acting on behalf of Roads Service) subject to completion of a suitable legal agreement to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services.

Sub-Item 2 – Land at Mary Peters Track

Committee is recommended to approve acquisition of a small portion of land (31.27 square metres) at the entrance to Mary Peters Track, as shown hatched on Appendix 2 attached, from Queen's University Belfast, by way of a Supplemental Lease, at no cost to the Council, and on the same terms as the 1987 Lease on which the Mary Peters Track is currently leased from QUB.

Key to Abbreviations

DRD – Department for Regional Development
QUB – Queen's University Belfast

Documents Attached

Sub-Item 1 – Land at Park Road, Mallusk

Appendix 1 – Map showing (hatched) portion of land to be disposed of to DRD Roads Service. Adjoining land in Council ownership is shaded green.

Sub-Item 2 – Land at Mary Peters Track

Appendix 2 – Map showing (shaded yellow) the location of the land it is proposed to acquire from QUB at the entrance to Mary Peters Track. The land already held by the Council from QUB is shown shaded green.

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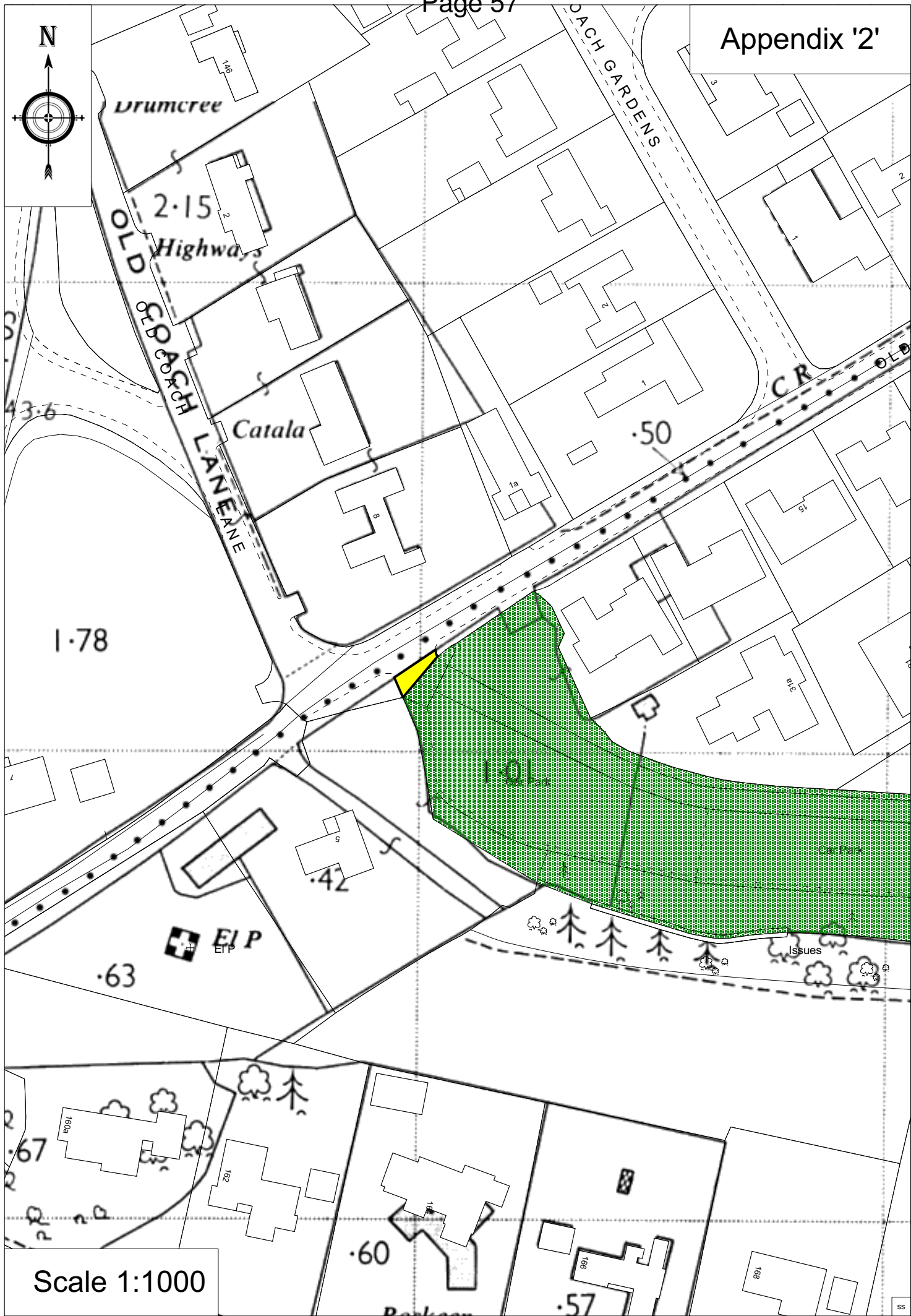
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GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**FRIDAY, 5th DECEMBER, 2008****MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

- Members present: Councillor Long (Chairman); and
Councillors C. Maskey, McCausland,
McCarthy and Stoker.
- External Members: Ms. L. Coates, Belfast City Centre Management;
Ms. E. Wilkinson, Department for Social Development;
Mr. L. Reynolds, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Ms. S. Bhat, Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum;
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church;
Reverend S. Watson, Protestant Churches; and
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector.
- In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer;
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager;
Ms. L. Cox, Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project Officer;
and
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Ms. A. Chada, Ms. H. Smith and Messrs. R. Galway and P. Bunting.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th November were taken as read and signed as correct.

Peace III Programme – Priority 1.1

Arising from discussion of the minutes, the Good Relations Manager advised the Members that she had written to the Special European Unit Programmes Body expressing the Partnership's concerns regarding the delays associated with the introduction of the Peace III Programme, the possible cash flow implications for the Council and the consequent negative repercussions for communities in Belfast.

She tabled for the information of the Members a response which had been received from the Chief Executive of the Programmes Body which indicated that he understood the concerns of the Partnership. However, the organisation believed that early implementation of the Belfast Peace III Action Plan would help to alleviate any hardship by those groups which were eligible for funding under the Programme.

The Good Relations Manager informed the Members that, since the Special European Union Programmes Body's proposed template for a Partnership Agreement was inappropriate, the Council would be preparing its own Partnership Agreement in conjunction with the Director of Legal Services.

Noted.

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Good Relations Partnership,
Friday, 5th December, 2008

**Peace III – Proposed Procedure for Commissioning
Projects and Inviting Expression of Interest**

(Ms. E. Dargan, Consortium of Community Relations Council and Border Action, attended in connection with this item.)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ms. E. Dargan from the Consortium and reminded the Partnership that a Consortium representative would be attending future meetings in order to observe the Partnership's Peace III items of business.

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of report

To provide the Good Relations Partnership with an overview of the process for commissioning projects and procuring goods and services under the Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan and to seek approval for recommendations regarding the proposed process.

Background

Within each theme of our Peace Plan we identified indicative actions where we proposed implementation through a commissioning process to involve the community and voluntary sector. (Copy of the final Action Plan attached for information of the Partnership). The SEUPB Letter of Offer includes the allocation of funding for 2009/10 and states that failure to meet agreed annual spend targets may result in the unspent balance being removed from the project under the process of automatic decommitment of funds, known as the N+2 rule.

Key Issues

The key issues relating to the ongoing roll out of the Peace Plan are:

- The need to ensure that potential applicants are in a position to bid for support under the four themes of the Plan.
- The need to ensure quality proposals in line with the aims and objectives of the Peace Plan
- The need to ensure accountability and transparency in relation to the process for procuring goods and services and delivering projects under the terms of the Letter of Offer from SEUPB.
- The need to ensure that work begins as quickly as possible on the ground to minimise risk of decommitment.

Good Relations Partnership,
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- The need for procurement of goods and services relating to overall programme. management such as event management, communications and publicity requirements; professional evaluation and economic appraisal services.

In consideration of the above, the following options have been considered in relation to implementation of specific actions within the plan.

Option A - Invitation to tender

This option would involve the development of specifications, tender documentation and a procurement exercise, in line with EU regulations, for specific actions identified within the Plan.

Within the plan there are specific actions where this approach is appropriate and could prove beneficial in terms of speed, although for other actions the indicative resource allocations could require application of a more stringent and lengthy procurement regime under procurement regulations.

The Good Relations Partnership should also note that this option could work against meaningful development of project proposals from the community and voluntary sector. Any specifications drawn up for the exercise would need to be based upon the indicative outputs associated with each action and this focus upon outputs rather than outcomes could negatively impact upon the overall quality of projects.

Option B – 2 Stage process: Open Call for Expressions of Interest & Full Proposals

This option would invite expressions of interest for all of the relevant actions identified within the Plan. These would then be assessed and those proposals scoring above a minimum quality threshold (set at 50%) would be invited to submit a full proposal. If the value of expressions of interest received exceeds the resource allocation for that theme, then a higher quality threshold may need to be considered by the Partnership. Applicants whose expressions of interest (EOI) fail to reach the minimum threshold will be advised that they have been unsuccessful. Those achieving or exceeding the quality threshold will be invited to submit a full proposal. Developmental workshops for those organisations reaching this threshold will be organised in order to further improve the quality of final project proposals. The EOI form, guidance notes and scoring matrix are attached for information, though the Good Relations Partnership should be aware that minor textual changes may have to be made to final documents if required by SEUPB.

This approach allows for the identification of projects that build upon established links with our broader social partners in the voluntary and community sector and that have a thorough understanding of the political and social environment in which they operate, including the needs of, and the capacity to engage with, key excluded or disadvantaged groups. In addition this process will help identify innovation and good practice to inform the future development of the Peace Plan. The Good Relations Partnership will be aware that this will be a lengthier process.

A dual approach

In light of the above is suggested that a dual approach is adopted, whereby some elements within the plan can be procured directly, while expressions of interest are invited on the remaining themes and actions. This will ensure that immediate action may be taken on those activities to be commissioned and managed directly by the Council, while maintaining the fullest engagement possible with the voluntary and community sector in Belfast. The Partnership will be aware that the Council is under considerable pressure to commence delivery of the programme as quickly as possible to be in a position to meet the spend targets as set by the SEUPB.

The Partnership is asked to consider the following:

1. Procurement of appropriate elements within the Plan as set out below:

	Theme & Action	Process	Budget
Procurement of event management services	<i>Shared City Space</i> 1.1 Safe, Accessible & Shared City Space	Invitation of 4 quotations	£20,000
Procurement of research services	<i>Shared City Space</i> 1.3 Mobility research	Invitation to Tender	£30,000
Procurement of training services for potential applicants	All themes	Invitation to Tender	£30,000

2. Open call for expressions of interest relating to the following themes and actions:

Transforming Contested Space

Projects supported under this theme will seek to reduce inter-community tensions and conflict as well as support the peace-building initiatives necessary for the regeneration of those neighbourhoods located at the interface.

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2.2 Local Mediation Capacity Building Process (Allocation of £200,000)

- East/ west/ north/ south conference on mediation good practice by Sept 2009 with over 60 practitioners and identification and presentation of 3 Belfast Case studies
- A city wide network to deliver 6 cross community capacity building programmes with 60 participants
- Accreditation of 12 trainers representative of the city

2.3 Intercommunity forum including dialogue on removal of interfaces (Allocation of £450,000)

- At least 5 networks established in contested interface areas engaging local people, statutory organisations and political leadership of areas challenged with removing or reducing physical divisions
- Progress to the removal or reduction of at least 4 physical barriers in the City, 10% of existing barriers in the city
- At least four locally agreed community plans

2.4 Engagement Capacity Building (Allocation of £50,000)

- At least 3 local community groups addressing issues related to vulnerability, change and community cohesion with at least 60 participants over duration of the programme.
- At least 2 frameworks for engagement produced by participating groups by Dec 2010

2.7 Youth Intervention Programme (Allocation of £300,000)

- At least 12 youth groups from interface areas engaged on enhanced cross community and cross border programmes by September 2010 with at least 50% by September 2009
- At least 25 schools engaged in an enhanced inter-community and cross border programme which promotes community cohesion and citizenship by September 2010 with at least 12 by September 2009
- A conference in October 2009 led by young people for young people on issues related to community cohesion and citizenship attended by 120 young people from informal and formal education.

Shared Cultural Space

Projects supported under this theme will celebrate and respect difference and build a sense of belonging for all the different cultural backgrounds and expressions of identity in the city.

3.1 City of Festivals (Allocation of £350,000)

- Work with a range of groups to support local community festivals, based on a new civic charter on standards, based on the Chicago City of Parades model, e.g. Chinese New Year, St Patrick's Day, Orangefest etc e.g. work with Grand Orange Lodge and Féile an Phobail. This would include minority language events
- Development of framework to increase sharing and interaction in cultural festival activities in Belfast by April 2009
- Enhance sharing and community cohesion element of 10 existing festivals
- Support the establishment of at least 2 new community based festivals representing new cultural identities in the city by end of 2010
- A cross border exchange programme for 6 community based festival providers to share good practice by December 2009

3.2 Inter-faith work (Allocation of £300,000)

- To develop inter-faith initiatives to be delivered at local level, to encourage greater inter-church participation and understanding and counter intolerance, particularly among young people
- 4 cross border inter-faith community based networks
- 24 interfaith dialogue initiatives by June 2010 with over 500 participants
- A good practice guide developed to promote integration of new communities to existing congregations and networks
- 15 inter-community initiatives with over 300 young people from faith based organisations

3.3 Cultural Diversity in Sport (Allocation of £350,000)

- To identify a range of other appropriate sports e.g. boxing, with an established cross community base, and other sports some with existing cross border links to promote anti-sectarianism and anti-racism through their extensive club linkages, particularly targeting young people
- Establishment of a multi-sports interleisure facility community programme involving 10 Belfast leisure facilities and over 300 participants by September 2010
- A cross city, cross border multi-sports event involving 8 Belfast teams and 4 border region teams by December 2010

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- A youth led diversionary sports programme incorporating anti-sectarianism and anti-racism training in 3 areas of ongoing intercommunity tension/ conflict of at least 250 young people
- A roadshow of taster sessions which visits over 30 schools demonstrating new non traditional sports engaging over 1200 young people of whom 50% would be women

Building Shared Organisational Space

Projects supported under this theme will build the capacity of organisations to be able to challenge prejudice, intolerance, sectarianism and racism in a shared society.

4.1 Voluntary and Community Sector Training (Allocation of £200,000)

- Build the capacity of local voluntary and community organisations in relation to the appreciation of diversity, the promotion of tolerance, mediation and conflict resolution, especially for target groups in the programme i.e. young people, older people and women – in particular inter-generational projects.
- At least 100 people to receive accreditation for training in workplace integration practices by September 2009

4.2 Citizenship Education Programme (Allocation of £200,000)

- Work with formal and informal education providers in developing models of engaged citizenship and public participation and support the use of innovative models of learning, including interactive and e-learning spaces to challenge sectarianism, racism and injustice
- At least 200 people to complete Belfast citizenship programmes

3. Approval is also sought for procurement of goods and services relating to overall programme management.

These include items such as communications and publicity requirements; professional evaluation and economic appraisal services. These costs are included within the approved running costs for the programme. Specific procurement exercises are required for:

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Process</u>	<u>Budget £</u>
Communications Software	Invite 3 quotations	10,000
Design & Print Services	Invite 3 quotations	10,000
Economic Appraisal Services	Invite 4 quotations	15,000
Evaluation Services	Invite 4 quotations	22,000

Criteria for assessing quotations and tenders will be clearly set out in the procurement documentation and will include cost and quality criteria relevant to the goods and services being procured.

Financial Implications

Eligible Project expenditure under the four themes of the Peace Plan was included within the Peace III allocation of £6.3m and may be reclaimed at 100% from the SEUPB.

Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to approve the dual approach as set out above:

Procurement of the following services:

<u>Ref</u>		<u>Allocation £</u>
1.1	event management services	20,000
1.3	research services	30,000
	training services for potential applicants	30,000
	communications software	10,000
	design & print services	10,000
	economic appraisal services	15,000
	evaluation services	<u>22,000</u>
	Total	137,000

Call for expressions of interest under the following themes using the attached EOI form, guidance notes and scoring matrix:

		<u>Allocation £</u>
2.2	Local Mediation Capacity Building Process	200,000
2.3	Intercommunity forum including dialogue	
	on removal of interfaces	450,000
2.4	Engagement Capacity Building	50,000
2.7	Youth Intervention Programme	300,000
3.1	City of Festivals	350,000
3.2	Inter-faith work	300,000
3.3	Cultural Diversity in Sport	350,000
4.1	Voluntary and Community Sector Training	200,000
4.2	Citizenship Education Programme	200,000
	Total	2,400,000

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The Partnership is also requested to note the anticipated timeline for expressions of interest:

Call for Expressions of Interest opens	12 Jan 2009
Date for return of expressions of interest	02 Feb 2009
Assessment of eligible expressions of interest	
Recommendations to Good Relations Partnership	13 Feb 2009
Debriefings for unsuccessful applicants	Feb/ March
Call for Final Project Proposals	w/e 06 March 09
Development Workshops	09 - 20 March 09
Date for return of Final Proposals	27 March 09
Assessment of Final Project Proposals	
Recommendations to Good Relations Partnership	17 Apr 09
Debriefings for unsuccessful applicants	April
Letters of Offer Issued	May 2009
Review Process	May/June"

Several Members expressed concern at the tight timescales which were outlined in the report but accepted that these were being dictated by the Special European Union Programmes Body.

In response to Members' questions, the Good Relations Manager indicated that the funding criteria required the scheme to involve a quota of 30% cross-border projects and that funding could only be awarded to new initiatives that demonstrated additionality.

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the foregoing report and commend them to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Peace III – Arterial Routes Programme

(Ms. E. Dargan, Consortium of Community Relations Council and Border Action, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Purpose of report

To present an overview of the proposed Arterial Routes project under the Belfast Peace Plan and to seek approval of target areas and initial stages of project development.

Background

The Partnership will recall that they approved commencement of the Arterial Routes element of the Peace Plan at their meeting in August. Subsequently SEUPB have requested that a full economic appraisal on the Arterial Routes element is required given the resource allocation of £800,000. In order to progress this it is now necessary to identify target areas upon which the appraisal can be based.

To date work done on and around arterial routes across the city under Belfast City Council's Renewing the Routes Programme has ranged from landscaping works to enhanced lighting initiatives and built on regeneration activity funded by Brighter Belfast and the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership. The current interventions or projects include commercial improvements (e.g. signage, repainting, lighting), improvements to key gateways (e.g. landscaping, traffic management, public art), targeted sites of architectural or historical merit (through lighting, landscaping, fencing etc.) and "cleaner, safer, greener" activities including measures to tackle derelict properties and areas of leftover land to create new focal points for community use and access.

What has become clear through this work to date is that the arterial routes in Belfast also contain a significant number of interface points. While the programme of works has been very successful in general, these interfaces, because of their nature and the issues involved, have proved more difficult to address in terms of physical improvements. The proposal for targeted schemes under the Peace Plan complements the broader Renewing the Routes framework and aims to bring new energy and renewed focus to producing positive change to interface areas on these routes.

Key Issues

The proposed scheme under the Peace Plan has been developed to address the differing local circumstances across the city and comprises a package of four distinct projects that seek to respond to the unique local physical and perceived environments. An initial scoping exercise to identify potential areas considered the requirement of the Operational Programme for Peace III for activities to target areas that have been affected by the conflict and experience problems of segregation, marginalisation and isolation and the following additional criteria:

- the existence of an interface area (either in terms of physical barriers or area perceptions);
- the need to address a diverse range of circumstances in terms of both the intrinsic issues in each target area and a geographic diversity across the city.
- Relation to existing regeneration activity identified as part of the previous partnership arrangements;
- The potential to complement existing or proposed regeneration activity.

By definition, targeted areas will have been adversely affected by the problems of the last thirty years and where socio-economic problems exist more prominently than in other areas of the city. Targeted areas will demonstrate visible signs of dereliction and

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disadvantage and will be those where the full impacts of positive economic changes in the city may not yet have been fully felt. By enhancing the physical environment, it is considered that there will be a positive impact on the perception of these areas and creation of shared space for the benefit of local communities.

Based on the criteria outlined above initial target areas have been identified. These are:

- Carlisle Circus, North Belfast
- Northumberland Street, Shankill, West Belfast
- Bridge End/Newtownards Road, East Belfast
- Ormeau Bridge/Embankment, South Belfast

The proposed areas all exhibit different characteristics and provide the opportunity to pursue a differentiated package of works that would inform proposals for further future activity in other parts of the city. The proposed approach to each is community consultation; project design; procurement and construction / implementation. This approach reflects the potential diversity of the final physical works that could be carried out in the various locations and the different design skills that may be required to be deployed. Taking account of this differentiated approach the capital construction and design costs for the specific projects are estimated between £150,000 and £210,000 depending on the specific locations and final approvals.

Identification of initial target areas is necessary to allow for economic appraisal as required by SEUPB. The Partnership will also be aware that delay to progressing this element of the Plan may result in funding being lost due to the process of automatic decommitment of funds, known as the N+2 rule.

Financial Implications

Eligible project expenditure under the four themes of the Peace Plan was included within the approved allocation of £6.3m and may be reclaimed at 100% from the SEUPB.

Recommendations

The partnership is requested to note the approach detailed above and approve the selection of initial target areas for the purposes of economic appraisal.”

A Member pointed out that he was aware of two locations which met the criteria outlined in the report and suffered from more serious interface difficulties than those which had been identified. The communities in those areas were holding discussions on a regular basis in an attempt to resolve the difficulties. He therefore suggested that the Partnership should make provision for at least one of these two additional locations to be included within the Programme.

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In response, the Peace III Programme Manager indicated that there was scope under the Programme for additional areas to be included, although decisions on this would have to be taken very soon to meet the required timescale.

After discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendation contained within the report and agreed that it would receive at next month's meeting a report regarding additional locations which met the criteria and could be included within the Programme. The Partnership agreed further that the Council should ensure that schemes which were approved complemented the work which was being undertaken in those areas by the various statutory bodies.

Good Relations Grant Aid Fund

Councillors C. Maskey, McCausland and Stoker declared an interest in this matter in that organisations with which they were associated were being considered for funding under this scheme and took no further part in the discussion.

The Good Relations Manager submitted for the information of the Partnership a report detailing a summary of applications to the Good Relations Grant Aid Fund, together with the associated recommendations. She pointed out that when the scheme had been reopened for applications in November, twenty-five applications requesting approximately £115,000 in funding had been received. Consequently, the Good Relations Officers had had to re-band the scoring of these grants in order to take account of the large number of applications which were seeking funding from the limited amount of money available. Therefore, for medium-scoring projects, the maximum amount available had been set at £2,500 and for higher-scoring projects, the maximum amount available would be £5,000. Additionally, the following conditions had been added to the Letter of Offer:

- to ensure value for money, organisations must demonstrate that they had sought three quotations for the hire of the venue and that the most cost-effective venue had been selected; and
- grant aid would not be paid for room hire where the lead organisation or named project partners utilised their own meeting space.

In relation to the application from Splash Media, the Good Relations Manager pointed out that, although it had been made by a private enterprise, the beneficiaries would all be from the community and voluntary sectors and the project had the potential to attract much positive media coverage for the Council's Good Relations Fund.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed unanimously that Grant Aid be awarded under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive, to the following organisations:

Ref no.	Organisation	Recommendation
754/1334	Ashton Community Trust	£4,140
368/1332	Finaghy Crossroads Group	£2,500
467/1222	Forward Learning Limited	£5,000
323/1345	Greater Village Regeneration Trust	£5,000
332/1217	Lower Shankill Community Association	£4,033

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Ref no.	Organisation	Recommendation
430/1348	Markets Development Association	£2,500
752/1331	Ulster Scots Community Network	£2,500
266/1349	Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association	£2,200
756/1336	North Belfast Partnership Board	£1,700
350/1344	An Droichead	£1,410
759/1347	Gort Na Mona Historical Society	£2,500
240/1220	Belfast Exposed Photography	£2,500
568/1340	Sandy Row Residents Association	£2,500
307/1339	Northern Ireland Tolerance Educational Cultural Association (NI-TECA)	£2,465
712/1214	Golden Thread Gallery	£5,000
747/1346	Divis Youth Project	£3,800
514/1216	Queen's Film Theatre	£2,500
751/1330	West Kirk Community Project	£2,500
757/1338	White City CDA	£3,950
758/1342	Lower North Belfast Community Council	£4,260
757/1338	Splash Media	£5,000
TOTAL		£67,958

St. Patrick's Day 2009: Small Grants Scheme

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 15th August, it had agreed that the Council should support community and voluntary groups who wished to organise small-scale local events to mark St. Patrick's Day through the Good Relations Grant Aid Fund in 2009 and in future years, subject to the total budget not exceeding £32,000 and the upper limit for each application not exceeding £1,000, with the standard Good Relations criteria to apply.

She reported that 104 applications from groups throughout the City had been received and assessed against the established criteria. The Good Relations Manager recommended that each application should receive funding proportionate to the score obtained following assessment. She pointed out that, although the total amount to be paid out exceeded the approved sum of £32,000, since grant-aid was paid on receipted expenditure only, experience indicated that some groups would not spend their full allocation and therefore it was likely that the final figure would remain less than the approved sum of £32,000.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information provided and agreed unanimously that the Grant Aid be awarded, under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive, to the following organisations:

a. Up £1,000	
719/1244	The Academy of Ulster Scots
568/1303	Sandy Row Residents Association

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b. Up to £700	
426/1247	Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group
449/1255	Twin Spires Community Group
401/1308	Bridge Community Association
374/1327	Society of St. Vincent de Paul
c. Up to £500	
563/1231	Lower Shankill Group Welfare
413/1249	Trinity New Lodge Senior Citizens Club
720/1250	Tigers Bay Historical Society (up to £350)
328/1251	Walkway Community Association
729/1256	Willowfield Parish Community Association
732/1269	Families Beyond Conflict
267/1273	Ulster-Scots Heritage Council
661/1275	Blackie Community Groups Association
569/1278	Arts Ekta
649/1300	Age Concern
746/1316	Greater Shankill Partnership Early Years Project
643/1318	Manor Street/Cliftonville Community Centre
750/1328	An Cumann Gaelach
714/1225	Glen Community/Parent Youth Group
724/1261	Ledley Hall Boys & Girls Club Trust Ltd
734/1272	Concorde After Schools & Youth Club
645/1282	Indian Senior Citizens 50+ Club
414/1293	The Ulster Society (up to £400)
583/1298	An Munia Tober
256/1310	The Queens University of Belfast Foundation
424/1320	Ballymacarrett Community & Cultural Engagement Project
748/1325	Upper Donegall Road Social & Recreational Committee
d. Up to £350	
715/1227	Conway Senior Citizens Group
534/1228	Cairn Lodge A.B.C
716/1232	Habinteg Pensioners Group
447/1240	Clara Park Tenants & Residents Association (up to £300)
727/1264	Sportopps.com
728/1265	Sydenham Historical & Cultural Society
541/1274	C.E.H.T Community
735/1276	The First Step Drop-in Centre
560/1285	Quality User Group
380/1288	South Belfast Malecare
650/1299	St. John's Pre-school Playgroup
386/1304	Woodvale/Cambrai Youth & Community Group
350/1223	An Droichead

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308/1224	Star Neighbourhood Centre
373/1229	Ballymac Friendship Centre
442/1230	Fane Street Primary School
718/1235	St. Mary's Ladies Group
389/1239	174 Older People's Group
545/1241	Retired Senior Volunteer Programme
535/1243	St. James Residents Association
556/1252	West Belfast District Scout Council
520/1253	Duncairn Friday Women's Group
722/1258	Ligoniel Community Centre Committee
543/1259	Carrickhill Senior Citizens
726/1263	West Belfast Senior Citizens' Group
730/1267	Ballysillan Community Forum
733/1270	Glenbank Community Association
526/1271	Sherbrook Senior Citizens
531/1277	VSF – The Volunteer Centre for Belfast & Castlereagh
393/1279	Whitecity Community Development Association
407/1280	Whitecity over 50s Group
421/1281	Whitecity Parent Toddlers Group
737/1284	Ardcarn Residents & Tenants Association
539/1286	Docksiders Senior Men's Group
548/1287	Silverthreads
566/1290	Hammer Community Complex Committee
738/1291	Sydenham Cross Community Support Centre
741/1296	Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association
450/1297	Highfield Fifty Plus Group
612/1305	Woodvale Young at heart 50+ Group
743/1307	East Belfast & Castlereagh Age Concern
617/1309	Salisbury Special Olympics Club
644/1312	Brookvale Seniors Group
452/1313	Lagan Valley Heritage & Cultural Society (South Belfast)
745/1315	Hard of Hearing Group
434/1317	Knocknagoney Community Centre Committee
425/1319	Round Tower Community Project
657/1321	Friends of Fruithill
709/1322	Taughmonagh Community Forum Ltd
620/1323	Nubia South Belfast Eagles
747/1324	Divis Youth Project
e. up to £250	
717/1234	Ballysillan Senior Citizens Fellowship
623/1238	St. Kevin's Senior Citizens Group
417/1245	Midland Senior Citizens Club
618/1246	Midland Arts Club

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537/1248	Mountpottinger Presbyterian Senior Citizens Group
731/1268	Men United
416/1289	Shore Crescent Friendship Club
616/1292	Harbour Lights Senior Women
739/1294	Ballygomartin Presbyterian Church
744/1314	Immaculata Junior Football Club
f. up to £200	
615/1237	Church of the Firstborn Senior Citizens Club
527/1254	Belles of Belmont Ladies Club
725/1262	Upper Springfield Resource Centre
740/1295	Culturlann McAdam O Fiaich
546/1306	Time 4 u
659/1329	Ionad Il Spoir Bharr and Chluanai
753/1333	RAG Queen's University
636/1256	Avoniel Over 50s
721/1257	Onward Community Engagement
723/1260	Solway Stars FC
736/1283	Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
742/1301	Windsor Women's Centre
561/1302	North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
627/1311	Glen Colin Residents Association
g. up to £150	
615/1237	Gleann Amateur Boxing Club

Migrant Workers' Forum

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that, in 2006, the Good Relations Unit had commissioned research on the issues of migration and migrant workers and that subsequently a Shadow Migrant Working Group for Belfast had been established. She reported that, under the Council's Peace III bid, the Good Relations Unit had established a Migrant and Minority Ethnic Support Project aimed at developing effective co-ordination and partnership working in the City. The Project Officer outlined to the Members the organisations from the statutory, voluntary, community and social partners sector which were involved in the Shadow Working Group, which would now be formalised and become the Migrant Forum. She then outlined the work which it would undertake and the areas of work on which it would focus.

Noted.

Faith Forum

The Good Relations Manager advised the Members that, following discussions at meetings of the former Good Relations Steering Panel, a large number of faith-based organisations had attended a meeting on 12th November to discuss how they might

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assist the Council to meet its aims and objectives. Those present had indicated that they had found the meeting beneficial and agreed that the Faith Forum should meet three or four times a year and that its next meeting would be held on 11th February.

The Partnership noted the information provided by the Good Relations Manager.

Current Issues

Anti Racist Workplace Week

The Partnership was informed that seventy members of staff had participated in a range of events which had been held as part of Anti Racist Workplace Week in November.

Noted.

Safer Belfast Action Plan

The Good Relations Manager advised the Members that the themes contained within the Safer Belfast Action Plan outlined how the Council intended to tackle anti-social behaviour, reduced alcohol related crime, dealt with hate crime and help Belfast feel safer. She indicated that it was likely that the Good Relations Unit would work closely with the Council's Community Safety team in the development of the thematic area of addressing hate crime.

Noted.

Youth Forum Hate Crime Subgroup

The Chairman informed the Partnership that representatives from the Youth Forum Hate Crime Sub-Group had met recently with Council officers and had indicated that they would like to meet with the Partnership.

The Partnership agreed to receive a deputation from the Sub-Group at a future meeting.

University of Ulster's UNESCO Office

The Good Relations Manager informed the Members that she had been advised by the UNESCO office within the University of Ulster that it wished to build links with six local authorities within Northern Ireland, including Belfast City Council, regarding a proposal to promote civic engagement using the theme of international development. The University had requested, before a submission was made to the International Development Programme, that the Council indicate whether it was supportive of this work.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed in principle that the Council could be named in the application.

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North and West Belfast Parades Forum

The Partnership noted that it had been invited to attend a presentation on a hundred years of Unionist murals which would be held in the Spectrum Centre on 15th December.

Finaghy Crossroads Group

The Partnership noted that it had been invited to attend the official opening of the Finaghy Crossroads Group's new office on 16th December.

Date of Next Meeting

The Partnership agreed that its next meeting be held on 16th January, 2009.

Chairman



Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	City Hall Memorabilia
Date:	12 December 2008
Reporting Officer:	Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager

Purpose of the Report

To update the Committee on proposals regarding City Hall memorabilia and balance.

Relevant Background Information

The Committee will recall that at its meeting on 14 November, it agreed that during the closure of the City Hall the Council should take the opportunity to rationalise and improve the tour offering and work towards achieving a fully balanced and inclusive display. The Committee agreed that the 6 elected Members of the Good Relations Partnership should act as a cross-party reference group in any future discussions regarding City Hall memorabilia.

Those 6 elected Members met last Friday 5 December, to discuss how best to ensure that future displays were more representative of the history and population of Belfast. The group was of the view that further work should be commissioned to reflect groups that are not currently represented; it also agreed that there was little in recent displays of interest to young people and no sense of local or recent achievements in, for example, music and sport.

The group agreed that the Council should attempt to seek to involve the people of Belfast and gauge their views on what should be displayed in their City Hall. A short article should be placed in *City Matters* to invite suggestions for possible future displays and information made available on the Council website, considered a particularly important medium for engaging young people.

The group is aware that any relevant decisions have to be taken quickly so that any commissions or work can be completed in time for the Hall's re-opening in summer 2009.

Resources required

Minimal costs for *City Matters* article and website.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to agree with the approach outlined above.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Royal Maternity Hospital Support Campaign
Date:	12 December 2008
Reporting Officer:	Director of Legal Services, Ciaran Quigley – Ext 6038

Purpose of the Report
To provide supplemental advice to the Committee in relation to how the Council might undertake a campaign in support of the provision of a new regional hospital for children and women on the site of the Royal Group of Hospitals.

Relevant Background Information
The Committee, at its meeting of 21 November, considered a report submitted by the Director of Legal Services in relation to the question of support for the proposed new regional hospital for children and women. Following a suggestion by a Member that the Council should incur expenditure of an appropriate amount in relation to mounting its own campaign in support of the proposed hospital, and following the contribution of a number of other Members to the discussion, the Director of Legal Services pointed out that any proposal of such a nature could lawfully be implemented by the Council pursuant to the special expenditure powers set out in Section 115 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972. However, he also pointed out that this would be in the context of cross party support for the proposal and he noted that the advice from Counsel had referred to the restriction in the 1972 Act which precludes the use of Section 115 for “party political publicity campaigns”.

Key Issues
It would appear from the general thrust of the discussion at the meeting of the Committee on 21 November, and from a number of subsequent discussions with various individual Members, that a certain amount of support exists across the parties for the proposal to mount some form of campaign in support of the proposed hospital. However, that support does appear to be qualified to the extent that any expenditure to be incurred should be of a reasonably modest nature and on the basis that any resolution by the Council in support of the proposal should attract support on a cross party basis.
If Members are minded to support a cross party resolution that the Council should incur expenditure of a reasonably modest nature in pursuance of a campaign to support the provision of a new regional hospital for women and children on the site of the Royal Group of Hospitals,

then such a proposal is legally tenable subject to the following

1. the resolution attracts cross party support
2. the Council agrees the level of expenditure to be incurred, which it is suggested might be in the region of £15-20,000
3. the resolution to incur that expenditure be on the basis that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 115 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the Council considers that the expenditure shall be in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to the Council, its district, and the inhabitants of its district – and that the expenditure to be incurred is considered to be commensurate with the direct benefit to be so achieved.

If the Committee is desirous of proceeding on this basis, and passes a resolution in the appropriate wording, then it is suggested that, for the purpose of taking the matter forward, a Working Group be established comprising of nominated Members from each of the Party Groups for the purpose of agreeing how the approved expenditure should be applied in relation to the proposed campaign of support.

The Committee should also decide if it would be appropriate that the Working Group, if established, should also liaise, for information purposes, with the Royal Maternity Hospital Liaison Group, which the Committee will recall it received a presentation from at its meeting of 22 August 2008.

Recommendations

It is a matter for the Committee, having considered the foregoing advice, to decide whether it wishes the Council to now undertake its own campaign in support of the proposed hospital, subject to the conditions which have been suggested by the Director of Legal Services.

Documents Attached

Copy of Report to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee – 21 November 2008



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	ROYAL MATERNITY HOSPITAL LIAISON GROUP
Date:	21 November 2008
Reporting Officer:	Director of Legal Services, Ciaran Quigley – Ext 6038

Purpose of the Report

To provide advice to the Committee as to the ways in which the Council can support the campaign for the provision of a new regional hospital for children and women at the site of the Royal Group of Hospitals, either financially or otherwise as requested by the Committee at its meeting of 22 August 2008.

Relevant Background Information

The Council, at its meeting of 1 July 2008, unanimously passed the following Notice of Motion :

“Belfast City Council calls on the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Executive to make the completion of the new regional hospital for children and women, on the site of the Royal Group of Hospitals, a matter of top priority in the next comprehensive spending review.

The Council calls on the Minister of Health and the Executive to secure the resources now for clearing the site, which is an essential first step in progressing the new hospital for children and women.

The Council agrees to work in partnership with the Royal Maternity Hospital Liaison Group to lobby the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly to secure the capital funds necessary to build the new regional hospital for children and women.”

At its meeting of 22 August 2008, the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee noted that a response had been received from the Minister for Health in which he had indicated that his Department had not received adequate funding in the current budget allocation for the new regional hospital. However he had commissioned a review of capital priorities over the next ten years. Also, a revised business case for the new hospital, which would include phased options for the proposed development, including the possibility of advance site clearance and enabling works, was being developed by the Belfast Trust in the context of the Review. Only when the business case had been submitted and scrutinised could a decision on the funding and timing of the project be taken.

The Committee received a presentation from representatives of the Royal Maternity Hospital Liaison Group (“the Liaison Group”). After hearing that presentation, the Committee agreed that the question of the business case for the new regional hospital could be raised with the Chief Executive Officer of the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Mr William McKee, who had requested permission to address the Committee on health issues at a future meeting, and the Committee further agreed that ways in which the Council could support the campaign either financially or otherwise be investigated and that a report thereon be submitted for the Committee’s consideration in due course.

Key Issues

The Director of Legal Services has now obtained advice from leading Counsel, Mr David Scoffield BL, in relation to the legal issues which arise in relation to the proposal that the Council should support the hospital campaign, and a full copy of Mr Scoffield’s advice is appended to this report. Mr Scoffield’s advice is detailed, but essentially makes the following points

- Belfast City Council, as a district council, is subject to the *ultra vires* rule which means that it must restrict its activities to those for which it has statutory authority and, subject to the special expenditure power in Section 115 of the 1972 Act of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, it cannot incur expenditure for any purpose for which it is not authorised to exercise
- the Council does not have any direct role in the provision of health care
- district councils have a limited power to contribute to the funds of any voluntary body, but the voluntary body must be one which provides a “public service in Northern Ireland” – and the Liaison Group could not be considered to be providing such a service
- Section 115 of the 1972 Act gives a power of special expenditure to district councils in Northern Ireland. Under this section, a council may make any payment for any purpose which in its opinion is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to the council, or its district, or the inhabitants of its district (or part thereof)
- the exercise of the special expenditure power in Section 115 is however subject to certain constraints and, in particular the constraint that a payment cannot be made under the Section by way of assistance to a voluntary body (which would include the Liaison Group) where that payment is primarily intended for publicity
- the proposals which have been put forward by the Liaison Group to the Council were clearly stated to be in relation to providing financial assistance for publicity purposes – and accordingly the Council is not legally able to make payment for such purposes
- the Council does, however, have the power to incur limited expenditure under Section 115 by way of assistance to the Liaison Group in circumstances where no publicity is primarily involved. Counsel has mentioned that, for example, the Council facilitate meetings with the Minister and apply political pressure (see paragraph 40).

Counsel has noted that the City Council could of course conduct its own campaign in relation to the establishment of a hospital but this would require a resolution that the Council is satisfied that any expenditure to be incurred by it in relation to the matter would bring a direct benefit to the City and that the expenditure to be incurred would be “commensurate” with that direct benefit. Such expenditure could only be incurred, where publicity is involved, provided that the Council is not perceived to be publishing material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for any particular political party.

Recommendations

It is a matter for the Committee to take into account the advice which has been received from Mr Scoffield BL and, having taken that advice into account, decide whether or not the Council should:

1. decline to provide any financial assistance to the Liaison Group
2. agree to provide assistance, either financially or otherwise, to the Liaison Group, but on condition that any financial assistance given is not used for publicity purposes
3. decide that the Council itself should mount some form of campaign in support of the proposed hospital.

Should the Council elect for Option 3 above, then it will be necessary to determine an appropriate level of expenditure to be incurred in the context that the Council is satisfied that such expenditure will bring direct benefit to the Council and will be “commensurate” with the benefit to be achieved.

Documents Attached
Advice of David Scoffield BL

BRIEF TO ADVISE

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Querist

**In relation to the proposed assistance
for the campaign for a Royal Maternity Hospital**

COUNSEL'S ADVICES

INTRODUCTION

1. I am asked to advise Belfast City Council ('the Council') in relation to the legality of potential assistance which might be given to a campaign for a Royal Maternity Hospital for Belfast.

FACTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

2. The Council's Strategic Planning and Resources Committee ('the SP&R Committee'), at its meeting on 20 June 2008, agreed to hold an informal meeting in the form of a briefing session with representatives of the Royal Jubilee Maternity Liaison Committee (RJMLC).
3. The RJMLC is a lobby group seeking support for the proposal to build a new regional hospital for children and women on the Royal site. The group's short-term aim is to secure by late Autumn 2008 a commitment from the Minister of Health and the Executive to prioritise in the Infrastructure Budget 2008-2011 the funds required to clear the site at the Royal Hospital Complex; and then to secure a commitment to source the funding and commence building works at the start of the next Comprehensive Spending Review in 2011.
4. However, before this meeting occurred, Councillor Tim Attwood brought a motion to the Council, which was passed unanimously on 1 July 2008, in the following terms:

"Belfast City Council calls on the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Executive to make the completion of the new regional hospital for children and women, on the site of the Royal Group of Hospitals, a matter of top priority in the next comprehensive spending review.

The Council calls on the Minister of Health and the Executive to secure the resources now for clearing the site, which is an essential first step in progressing the new hospital for children and women.

The Council agrees to work in partnership with the Royal Maternity Liaison Group to lobby the NI Executive and Assembly to secure the capital funds necessary to build the new regional hospital for children and women."

5. Subsequently, the SP&R Committee agreed to look at ways in which resource assistance could be given to the Group and in which a lobby could be built for the purpose set out in the motion.
6. In the meantime, a copy of the motion was forwarded to both the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Minister for Health. The Minister responded on 29 July 2008 indicating that his Department had not received adequate funding in the current budget allocation for the new regional hospital. However, he had commissioned a review of capital priorities over the next 10 years. Also, a revised business case for the new hospital, which would include phased options for the proposed development, was being developed by the Belfast Trust in the context of the review. Only when the business case had been submitted and scrutinised could a decision on the funding and timing of the project be taken.
7. The SP&R Committee received a delegation from the RJMLC on 22 August 2008. I have been provided with a copy of the minutes of this Committee meeting. These also indicate that the Committee have asked the Chief Executive of the Belfast Trust (who wished to address the Committee on the delivery of health care in Belfast in any event) to update them on the preparation of the business case for the new hospital.
8. The Committee agreed that a report be submitted for its consideration in due course in relation to the question of how the Council could support the campaign either financially or otherwise.
9. The cause certainly appears to be a popular one. RJMLC have indicated that they have received letters of support from every political party. As to Council support, they are seeking:
 - Continued political support on a cross or all party basis (supporting statements for campaign etc)
 - Financial support to run the campaign
 - Practical support eg. the use of local Council facilities to distribute campaign materials or hold publicity events or advice of Council staff to the RJMLC.
10. In relation to financial support, the Group project their costs to be in the region of £14,000, made up as follows:
 - (i) £8,800: Poster and postcard campaign: 'Freepost' postcards to the Minister for Health and the First and Deputy First Minister's Office (design, printing and freepost costs for 40,000 cards and 2,000 posters);
 - (ii) £2,300: General publicity and information events (including 3 PVC banners and 10 'pop-up' stands); and
 - (iii) £3,900: other costs such as administration, general postage and paper, transport, etc.
11. The Director of Legal Services met with members of the Royal Jubilee Maternity Liaison Committee (RJMLC) on 18 September 2008. Further to this, the Chairperson of RJMLC wrote to the Director of Legal Services by letter dated 30 September 2008 asking the

Council “to take the lead in an awareness campaign to highlight the need for the new Women and Children’s Hospitals to be built on the Royal Hospital site”. The correspondence continues:

“Belfast City Council is a major partner in the Healthy Cities initiative which aims to improve the health and well being of those who live and work in Belfast. What better start on this aim than to improve the conditions of the hospital where children are born as research indicates that this first experience and indeed the experiences of the mother whilst pregnant have a major impact on the lifelong health and well-being of our very youngest citizens.

Based on the discussions at the meeting on the 18th September as to how best to progress this work we would like to officially request Belfast City Council to lead this campaign. RJMLC would of course continue to offer the Council every support as an advisory group.”

12. As to similar precedents:

- (i) I understand that Lisburn City Council organised a campaign in opposition to the reduction of services provided at Lagan Valley Hospital. A motion of opposition was passed by the Council in this regard and, subsequently, a decision was taken to fund a campaign in this regard on the basis of special expenditure under section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972. A public relations firm was then employed to assist the Council in this campaign.
- (ii) Similarly, Omagh District Council raised by public subscriptions monies to fund a campaign to locate a new acute hospital in Omagh – and all costs are met from this fund so that no expenditure is charged to the ratepayer.

13. I am asked to advise on the Council’s powers in the above circumstances.

DISCUSSION

THE VIRES PRINCIPLE

14. The *vires* principle is the legal principle which determines what bodies such as the Council can, and cannot, lawfully do. The nature of the principle is that district councils are statutory bodies whose powers, as creatures of statute, must be within the purview of some statutory authority. Thus Cross¹ states at paragraph 1-02:

“A fundamental feature is that the United Kingdom is a unitary and not federal state. Subject to overriding provisions of European Community law, an Act of the United Kingdom Parliament is the supreme source of law. The existence of the powers of elected local authorities depend on the provisions of Acts of Parliament.”

15. Thus, for a power or function of a council to be lawfully exercised, it must be acting within the bounds of authority delegated by legislation. If it acts beyond or outwith the powers which have been conferred on it, it is said to have acted *ultra vires* (beyond its powers). This doctrine as applied to statutory corporations is stated in Lord Watson’s speech in *Baroness Wenlock v River Dee Co*²:

¹ Cross on *Principles of Local Government Law* (2nd edn, 1997, Sweet & Maxwell).

² (1885) 10 App Cas 354 at 362.

“Whenever a corporation is created by an Act of Parliament, with reference to the purposes of the Act, and solely with a view to carrying these purposes into execution, I am of the opinion not only that the objects which the corporation may legitimately pursue must be ascertained from the Act itself, but that the powers which the corporation may lawfully use in furtherance of these objects must either be expressly conferred or derived by reasonable implication from its provisions.”

16. Cross expands on the issue again at paragraph 1-20:

“Unlike a natural person who can in general do whatever he pleases so long as what he does is not forbidden by law or contrary to law, a statutory corporation can do only those things which it authorized to do by statute, directly or by implication. If such a corporation acts otherwise than in this way its acts are *ultra vires*. There must in all cases be statutory authority for what is done, and that authority must either be expressly given or reasonably inferred from the language of an Act of Parliament.”

17. Sharland³ makes the same point in these terms:

“Local authorities owe their existence to statute. It follows from this that they owe their powers to statute as well. They are not sovereign bodies. This means that they can do nothing outside the powers given to them by legislation. This is known as the doctrine of *ultra vires*.”

18. The requirements of the *ultra vires* doctrine as regards Belfast City Council and other local authorities in Northern Ireland are evident from section 1(1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (‘the 1972 Act’) which provides:

“For every local government district established in pursuance of the Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 or the succeeding provisions of this Act there shall be a district council which –

... (b) shall have such functions as are conferred on the council by any statutory provision.’

THE PROVISION OF FUNDS BY THE COUNCIL

19. The requirement that the Council must restrict its activities to those for which it has statutory authority is re-emphasised in section 60 of the 1972 Act which makes provision for the application of council funds in the following manner:

“A council shall not directly or indirectly apply any part of the district fund, or any money under its control, for any purpose not authorised specifically or generally by some statutory provision...”

20. A key concern for the Council (and, no doubt, individual councillors who vote to approve such expenditure) is that where expenditure is unlawful, the Local Government Auditor can become involved and the possibility of surcharge becomes live. In the present

³ Sharland, *A Practical Approach to Local Government Law* (2nd edn, 2006, OUP) at paragraph 6.01.

circumstances, therefore, the Council is quite correct to ensure that it has a firm legal basis for doing so before deciding to provide the RJMLC with the financial assistance it is seeking.

THE RELEVANT STATUTORY PROVISIONS

21. One then turns to try to find statutory authority for the Council lending assistance to the RJMLC. Such authority may be express within the terms of legislation or may be implied from the terms of the legislation.
22. Express authority is usually in the form of the conferral of a power or the provision of a duty (with a coexistent power to perform the duty). An implied power will usually be a power which is a necessary implication of the functions of the Council provided for by the legislation. In addition, the Council will have power to do things which are “reasonably incidental” to the doing of things for which there is express or implied authority. In *Attorney-General v Great Eastern Railway Co*⁴ Lord Selborne commented at that:

“It appears to me to be important that the doctrine of *ultra vires*... should be maintained. But I agree... that this doctrine ought to be reasonably, and not unreasonably, understood and applied, and that whatever may fairly be regarded as incidental to, or consequential upon, those things which the legislature has authorised ought not (unless expressly prohibited) to be held by judicial construction to be *ultra vires*.”
23. This common law rule is given statutory force in respect of local authorities in England and Wales by virtue of section 111(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 which provides:

“Without prejudice to any powers exercisable apart from this section but subject to the provisions of this Act and any other enactment passed before or after this Act, a local authority shall have power to do any thing (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.”
24. Unfortunately, this provision does not appear to be replicated in the Northern Irish legislation. However, the common law rule that the doing of things reasonably incidental to the Council’s functions will be permissible is still applicable. The absence of a specific provision in similar terms to section 111 of the English legislation is not a terrible difficulty therefore. Indeed, section 17 of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 provides that where an enactment empowers any person or authority to do any act or thing, all such powers shall be deemed to be also given as are reasonably necessary to enable that person or authority to do that act or thing or are incidental to the doing thereof. There is also recent authority in this jurisdiction to the effect that whatever may be fairly regarded as incidental to, or consequential upon, those things which the legislator has authorised ought not (unless expressly prohibited) to be held to be *ultra vires*⁵.
25. I should say that I have helpfully been furnished with advices which were previously provided to the Council in relation to a similar issue by Nicolas Hanna QC. These advices were sought in 2002 when the Policy and Resources Committee of the Council

⁴ (1880) 5 App Cas 473 at 487.

⁵ See *Re Local Government Auditor* [2005] NIQB 52 at paragraph 15.

(what is now the SP&R Committee) was asked to provide funding to the Mater Infirmorum Trust to enable it to undertake public campaign and also to undertake a consultation exercise to ascertain the views of the public in relation to the proposed closure of certain services at the Mater Hospital. In the event, the Committee resolved to provide funding to the Trust in the sum of £5,000 providing that it would not be used to fund publicity. The advices which are set out below broadly accord with the views expressed by Mr Hanna.

26. I have not been directed to, and have been unable to find, any statutory provision which gives the Council any direct role in the provision of health care within its district. This is plainly a matter for the Department and the relevant Board and/or Trusts making such provision with the Council area.
27. Resort must therefore be had to more general powers of the Council which may permit it to provide funding to the RJMLC. There appear to me to be two powers which are potentially relevant – those contained in sections 108 and 115 of the 1972 Act respectively.
28. Section 108 (contributions to other voluntary bodies) provides:
- “(1) A council may contribute to the funds of any voluntary body which provides any public service in Northern Ireland.
 - (2) A council may contribute under subsection (1) towards the funds of a voluntary body in respect of publicity only where the publicity is incidental to the main purpose for which the contribution is given.”
29. Section 115 (expenditure for special purposes) provides:
- (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (5), a council may make any payment for any purpose which in its opinion is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to –
 - (a) the council;
 - (b) its district or any part of its district;
 - (c) the inhabitants of its district or any part of its district.
 - ...
 - (3) A council shall not make any payment under subsection (1) –
 - (a) for a purpose for which the council is, either unconditionally or subject to any limitation or to the satisfaction of any condition, authorised or required under any other statutory provision to make any payment or
 - (b) unless the direct benefit accruing to its district or any part of its district or to the inhabitants of its district or any part of its district will be commensurate with the payments to be made.
 - (4) In any case where-
 - (a) by virtue of paragraph (a) of subsection (3) a council is prohibited from making any payment for a particular purpose; and

- (b) the power or duty of the council to make any payment for that purpose is in any respect limited or conditional (whether by being restricted to a particular group of persons or in any other way),

the prohibition in that paragraph shall extend to all payments to which that power or duty would apply if it were not subject to any limitation or condition.

- (5) A council may make a payment under subsection (1) on publicity only by way of assistance to a public body or a voluntary body where the publicity is incidental to the main purpose for which the assistance is given.”

29. As to section 108, the first question is whether the RJMLC is a “voluntary body”. This phrase is defined in section 148(1) of the 1972 Act as meaning “any association carrying on or proposing to carry on any activities otherwise than for the purpose of gain by the association or by individual members thereof”. It is debatable whether the RJMLC in fact meets this definition since the papers disclose that “the RJMLC is made up of users and patient representatives, facilitated by Belfast Trust maternity staff”. It might be thought, therefore, that the constituency comprising the RJMLC does stand to gain from its campaign, unless the term “for the purpose of gain” is interpreted in a narrow way as precluding only the pursuit of direct financial gain.
30. In any event, I think it is also unlikely that the RJMLC is a voluntary body “which provides any public service in Northern Ireland”. It is a lobbying group which no doubt believes that its campaign is in the public interest; but it does not seem to me that it is providing a public service within the meaning contemplated in section 108(1) of the 1972 Act. The Council would be wise to proceed, in my view, on the basis that section 108 does not provide a basis for providing funding to the RJMLC.
31. The ability to incur special expenditure under section 115 is more wide since it can be made “for any purpose” which the Council considers (in its discretion) to be in the interests of and bringing direct benefit to the Council itself, its district or the inhabitants of its district, or any part thereof.
32. Authority suggests that the purpose of this section is to allow a council to spend money for purposes of their own, so as to give them more scope for enterprise and experiment. The question whether the expenditure is in the interests of the district or of its inhabitants is one of fact for the council, not one of law. Anything which relates in any way to the legitimate interests of the district or its inhabitants may be considered to fall within the section, provided that the council satisfies itself that the payment is in the interests of the council or of its district etc., that there will be a direct benefit flowing from the expenditure and that the direct benefit is commensurate with the payment to be made⁶.
33. I have been provided with a copy of criteria adopted by the Council in 2004 to assist it in determining proposed expenditure under section 115. These are:

⁶ See *Re Local Government Auditor* [2003] NIJB 207, especially at paragraph 14. That case concerned expenditure on a staff Christmas party.

- (1) Whether there are sufficient funds remaining in the Council's Special Expenditure budget for the relevant year⁷;
 - (2) Whether the application for financial assistance links to any of the Council's Corporate Objectives;
 - (3) Whether the direct benefit to be obtained is specific to the Council or its district or inhabitants;
 - (4) Whether the activity or initiative in respect of which assistance is being sought is being promoted by a person or organisation living or operating, or otherwise having a direct connection with, the City;
 - (5) Whether the request for financial assistance relates to an event or initiative which falls within the remit and statutory power of any other Committee of the Council (in which case it should be so referred);
 - (6) Whether the request relates to a specific event, activity or initiative as distinct from a request for a contribution to general funds;
 - (7) Whether the benefit to be obtained will be commensurate with the payment to be made.
34. These criteria appear to me to be permissible considerations which the Council can lawfully take into account⁸ in determining a request for special expenditure under section 115 of the 1972 Act.
35. In relation to the RJMLC, it is open to the Council⁹ to make a payment under section 115 assuming that the Council is of the view that the expenditure is in the interests of, and will bring a direct benefit to, the Council, its district, or inhabitants of its district, or any part thereof. This is a matter for the Council to consider and its substantive conclusion is likely to be upset by the Court only on the grounds of *Wednesbury* irrationality. In considering this issue, the Council would also wish to take into account the prospects of RJMLC's campaign succeeding (either with or without the Council's assistance) and reach its own view on this.
36. Discussion of this issue in the present case is simplified, in my view, however, by the provisions of section 115(5) which make clear that section 115 funding can only be attributed towards publicity "[where the publicity is incidental to the main purpose for which the assistance is given](#)"¹⁰. For these purposes publicity is defined in section 148(4) of the 1972 Act in the following terms:

⁷ The amount being limited by virtue of section 115(2), which I have not set out above.

⁸ And, in respect of criteria (1) and (7) must, irrespective of the Council's own policy, take into account.

⁹ Subject to the effect of section 115(5) to which I return below.

¹⁰ It might be argued that section 115(5) does not strictly apply to the provision of funding in this case since it only relates to payments made "by way of assistance to a public body or a voluntary body", neither of which the RJMLC actually is. This is a difficult issue however. If the RJMLC is neither, but is a private organisation with private, it makes it very difficult to justify how providing it with funds would bring "direct benefit" to the Council, its district or inhabitants. If, on the other hand, the RJMLC is a voluntary body, section 115(5) clearly applies.

“For the purposes of this Act references to “publicity”, “publish” and “publication” are references to any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public.”

37. Assuming the Council was minded, under its discretion to provide funding under section 115(1), to provide monies to the RJMLC, it would have to consider whether that money was being used for publicity and, if so, whether this was incidental to the main purpose for which the assistance was given. Section 115(5) is consistent with the wide-ranging restrictions (contained in sections 115A and following) on councils engaging in party political publicity campaigns. Obviously, these restrictions would be negated if the Council could simply fund external organisations to engage in publicity campaigns, although section 115(5) is not limited to party political publicity. Another obvious reason for a provision such as section 115(5) is that the Council has control over any publicity it provides itself, but does not have similar control where it funds someone else to provide publicity.
38. I am obliged to say that, from the papers with which I have been provided, it seems clear that the RJMLC are seeking funding for the very purpose of publicity. They wish to fund a poster and postcard campaign (including the printing of 2000 posters, three PVC banners and 10 ‘pop-up’ stands) and seek funding towards “general publicity and information events”. These all appear to be addressed to the public at large or a section of the public. Any suggested decision that the funding sought was not for the purposes of publicity appears to me to be highly vulnerable to challenge.
39. Similarly, although it is a matter for the Council to determine, I also think it would be difficult to say that publicity would be incidental to the purpose for which the funding was given – since (as I have said above) the mounting of a publicity campaign appears to be the very essence of the funding request made the RJMLC to the Council. If the Council takes this view, section 115(5) represents, in my view, a clear bar to the funding being granted.
40. This is not to say that the Council cannot support the RJMLC’s cause in other ways. Indeed, the passing of the motion on 1 July 2008 no doubt gave its campaign a boost. The Council can also, for instance, facilitate meetings with the Minister and apply political pressure. Where the question of expenditure arises, however, the constraints of section 115(5) will have to be borne in mind.
41. Mr Hanna QC’s opinion deals with this in some detail. He suggests that exercises such as a consultation exercise could be carried out or funded pursuant to section 115 of the 1972 Act but that “it would, however, be necessary to take care to ensure that the consultation process was not simply being used as a thinly-veiled disguise for what was, in reality, a publicity campaign”. For my own part, I would incline to the view that a consultation exercise (where materials were distributed and addressed to the public or a section of the public) would constitute publicity within the terms of the meaning set out in section 148(4)¹¹ and so be precluded from being funded by the Council through assistance to another body by virtue of section 115(5).
42. The suggestion might, of course, be made that – rather than providing funding to the RJMLC – the Council should simply run its own publicity campaign. I am not convinced this approach would avoid the difficulties discussed above, however. Expenditure of

¹¹ Set out at paragraph 36 above. I note that Mr Hanna does not cite this definition of publicity in his advices.

monies from the district fund must still be related to, and underpinned by, one of the Council's statutory functions¹². As I have said above, it appears to me that the only basis on which the Council could spend money for this purpose (whether by giving it to another organisation by means of funding or the Council simply spending the funds itself) is likely to be section 115 of the 1972 Act.

43. Put another way, if the Council funded its own publicity campaign and the Local Government Auditor asked what statutory function or provision these funds were being spent in relation to, the Council's best (and probably its only) answer is section 115 of the 1972 Act.
44. If the Council ran its own campaign, the expenditure thereby incurred would still have to be within the cap for special expenditure and the Council would still have to determine (pursuant to section 115(3)(b)) that the benefit accruing was commensurate with what was being spent. The key difference with this approach, however, is that section 115(5) does not appear to apply to the Council spending its own money on publicity. Rather, it relates to the Council making payments "by way or assistance to a public body or a voluntary body".
45. What the Council itself can do by way of publicity is governed by section 115A of the 1972 Act, which precludes party political publicity campaigns. This does not preclude it from mounting other publicity campaigns which are not party political, provided:
 - (i) That this is authorised by some statutory provision, which can include section 115¹³;
 - (ii) That, where the publicity is authorised by section 115(1), the expenditure incurred is considered (in the usual way) to be of direct benefit to the Council, its inhabitants, or its district or any part thereof and commensurate with that interest;
 - (iii) That regard is had to any code issued by the Department in relation to Council publicity¹⁴; and
 - (iv) That any such expenditure is separately accounted for¹⁵.

CONCLUSION

46. I am a conscious that the above advices are lengthy. However, I can summarise my advices briefly as follows:
 - (a) The Council does not appear to have any express power to provide funding to the RJMLC other than its discretionary funding powers in sections 108 and 115 of the 1972 Act.
 - (b) I do not consider that section 108 of the 1972 Act provides an adequate legal basis for the Council to fund the RJMLC in the way in which they have requested.

¹² See section 60 of the 1972 Act, set out at paragraph 19 above.

¹³ Section 115D(1).

¹⁴ Section 115B(1). I am unsure whether there is such a code.

¹⁵ Section 115C(1).

- (c) Section 115 of the 1972 Act provides a much wider basis for the incurring of special expenditure in the exercise of the Council's discretion. Provided it was satisfied that the tests in section 115 were met, and this judgment was not *Wednesbury* irrational, the Council could provide funding to assist the RJMLC in its campaign under section 115.
 - (d) Section 115(5), however, prohibits funding being provided under this section where its purpose is for publicity, unless this purpose is merely ancillary to the purpose for which funding is being sought. In my view, the funding being sought by the RJMLC is for the purpose of publicity and it is very difficult to say that this is merely an ancillary purpose in the request.
 - (e) Accordingly, if the Council were to provide the funding sought in the purported exercise of its powers under section 115 of the 1972 Act, I consider that it would be vulnerable to successful legal challenge or action by someone aggrieved by the decision with sufficient interest to bring judicial review proceedings or by the Local Government Auditor.
 - (f) The Council can still provide support to the RJMLC where this does not involve the incurring of expenditure from the district fund by the Council¹⁶.
 - (g) The Council could also mount its own publicity campaign using its own funds¹⁷. This would again have to be under the statutory authority of section 115 (but would have an added advantage since section 115(5) does not appear to apply to the Council spending its own money). In determining to do so, the Council would still have to satisfy itself that the expenditure would be of direct benefit to it, its district or its inhabitants and that the amounts to be spent were commensurate with that benefit. It would further have to ensure that the publicity campaign it mounted complied in all respects with the provisions of sections 115A to 115C of the 1972 Act.
47. I trust the above is of some assistance. If I can be of any further assistance, the Director of Legal Services should not hesitate to contact me.

David A Scoffield
Bar Library
11 November 2008

¹⁶ As in the case of Omagh District Council.

¹⁷ Which appears to be the approach which Lisburn City Council has adopted.

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Safer Belfast Plan 2009-2011.
Date:	12 th December 2008.
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Head of Environmental Health, ext. 3281
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Environmental Health Manager, Community Safety, ext. 3275

Relevant Background Information

Community safety is one of the main concerns of the people of Belfast and hence is an issue of considerable importance to the Elected Representatives. Consequently it is a key element of the *Supporting People and Communities* theme of the new Corporate Plan.

Members will be aware that the Council takes the lead role in supporting the Belfast Community Safety Partnership (CSP) which brings together representatives from various agencies and sectors to work collectively on programmes and strategies to improve safety in the City. The current membership of the CSP is detailed in appendix ii of the attached Safer Belfast Plan.

The Belfast CSP has produced a draft Safer Belfast Plan 2009–2011, which prioritises four main themes, tackling anti-social behaviour, reducing alcohol fuelled violent crime, dealing with hate crime and to help Belfast feel safer. These four priority areas were chosen following a review of official data and community consultation in 2007. The consultations included Belfast City Council's public consultation and the safer city research which was commissioned jointly by Belfast CSP and Belfast District Policing Partnership (DPP).

The landscape for the public sector is changing and preparation for community planning is challenging us to develop a more holistic and sustainable approach to developing a Safer Belfast. Therefore the approach adopted this year in developing the 2 year plan has been more ambitious than previous years, the intention being that this new plan represents an overarching plan for a Safer Belfast that all of the partners will work to and be part of. The plan must not only describe the projects and initiatives across Belfast that both the Council and the other 50 participating agencies contribute to but we also want it to provide the framework for all the agencies engaged in this agenda to work towards and this should be reflected in each organisation's corporate plan. We want it to be a stimulus to the agencies working better together and joining up resources to deliver services together in a way that complements each organisation's core business to achieve an overall aim. This could be viewed as the beginning of a

'community planning' approach to creating a safer Belfast.

The Safer Belfast themes are taken forward by interagency, intersectoral city wide thematic groups. The thematic groups assess how we tackle anti-social behaviour, reduce alcohol related crime, deal with hate crime and help Belfast feel safer and develop new interventions and solutions when we need them.

In parallel to the Safer Belfast Plan the Council has also been working *internally* to build the capacity of the Council to lead on the development of a Safer Belfast and provide a *Safer City Framework* for more effective cross Council working. The framework will act as a platform to integrate Council services, resources and expertise to ensure that the council is 'fit for purpose' to lead Belfast Community Safety Partnership, and to deliver the Council's key responsibilities under the 2009-2011 Safer Belfast plan. Proposed structures to drive the process forward within the Council are being developed including mechanisms to involve elected members.

The Community Safety Partnership gains its political legitimacy through all party representation from the Council, with six Members sitting on the Strategic Tier. It also has been accountable through the Health and Environmental Services Committee. However given the cross-cutting nature of the draft Safer Belfast Plan, it is important that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is able to comment on the general direction of the plan and agrees those elements of the plan which relate to the role of Belfast City Council.

The Ministerial review of the future for CSP's and DPPs is likely to have an impact during the review of public administration. However in recognition of the need for closer working between both partnerships there has been significant representation from the various structures within the Belfast DPP throughout the Safer Belfast process.

Key Issues

Key features

This Safer Belfast Pplan encompasses much more than Belfast CSP has taken into consideration before. In addition to the delivery of partnership funded projects it includes the core work of partner organisations which relates to community safety.

The sustainability and adaptability of the new CSP approach is considerably strengthened by our investment in a Safer Belfast Analyst to provide relevant and up to date information about community safety issues, and the development of mature performance management systems to measure and deliver continuous improvement.

Performance against the projects and targets will not only be based on trend statistical data by the thematic groups but will also take account of independent monitoring and evaluation, professional judgement and self assessment from community safety projects.

The plan is also drawn up with a degree of flexibility built in to balance strategic programmes with an ability to respond to emerging problems. A process and structure have been put in place to identify emerging themes based on operational information and quality data so that if necessary resources could be re-directed (see appendix iii of the attached report for the Safer Belfast structures.

Communities are at the heart of the Safer Belfast Plan and the Belfast CSP has adopted a range of community engagement principles and processes. These are

outlined in detail in appendix v of the attached draft plan. However it is recognised that there is a need to continue to develop our approaches to engagement . The real engagement of communities, reflecting their lived experiences within their local areas is a key concern to the CSP and further consideration of how this could be made more meaningful is being considered.

Communication, marketing and awareness raising of the plan is paramount, and it is important that there are clear and consistent messages which are sensitive to community issues and the perceptions of crime and antisocial behaviour. Responsible reporting and use of the information we have through the Safer Belfast analyst gives us a responsibility to use that information wisely and deliver it to the media in a positive and responsible way.

Action Plan

The Draft plan attached to this report lays out the action plan for the delivery of the four thematic areas with detailed projects or initiatives listed in tables. The plan is currently at a high level and there is still much work to be done to finalise the projects, organisation contributions and delivery mechanisms.

There is also some work still to be done in securing funding for some of the project areas or to agree final budget provision from participating organisations. Between now and the next meeting of the CSP on 17th December, members of the community safety team will be holding meetings with member organisations to agree funding and firm up contributions to the plan. Behind each project plan there will be a more detailed action plan for delivery which will focus on the key tasks, objectives, and targets. These will be ready for the roll out of the plan by the end of March 2009.

This plan has to be finally agreed through the Belfast CSP strategic tier by the end of December and will be submitted to the Northern Ireland office on 19th December in order to secure the indicative allocation of approximately £380Kper year.

The tables from page 12 of the attached report gives the title and the estimated total cost of running each project until March 2011. It also gives a brief description of each project and identifies key risks. The next two columns identify resources from Belfast Community Safety Partnership's indicative allocation – in bold and blue. It also identifies some (not all) of our other partners who should or could have a role to play in that project. This will be part of the conversations that we will have with them in the next few weeks.

The antisocial behaviour action plan builds on the antisocial behaviour forums and is designed around a more localised community led approach. We have attempted to identify the risks to the delivery of the plan. In many cases they relate to the level of youth services and community expectations. Additional work around this theme is being considered on a separate but related agenda within and outside the Council.

The plan will place us in a much better position to tackle environmental antisocial behaviour when the clean neighbourhoods legislation is brought back onto the legislative timetable as it has the potential to assist the process of alleygating as well as providing additional enforcement powers for dealing with such issues as fly positing and graffiti etc. The biggest projects in this section in terms of resources are wardens and alleygates. Other significant projects include the programme for tackling antisocial behaviour on council sites and venues, youth outreach and community safety small grants.

Reducing Alcohol fuelled violent crime work focuses on the supply of alcohol (this relates to antisocial behaviour as well) and compliance with proper standards. Much of the work will be delivered through the Get Home Safe Partnership (a sub partnership of the CSP) and the Council's new antisocial behaviour officers and structures. The projects primarily aim to embed and widen out key aspects of the 'Get Home Safe' work which has been hugely successful. Margaret Ritchie's assembly statement around liquor licensing policy and legislative proposals will also have a bearing on how this work goes forward.

The **dealing with hate crime** work covers sectarianism, racism, religious hatred, disability and sexual orientation. We will work closely with our Good Relations structures and staff and peace III to deliver actions. The tension monitoring aspect of the work is really important because it will provide a mechanism and process by which we can intervene in areas before the tensions become actual problems.

Helping Belfast feel safer underpins, and is underpinned by, the other three aspects of the plan. The various information projects across the plan will be coordinated through the CSP's information and communication officer. CCTV should perhaps be included here but to do so it needs some strategic leadership and direction because it is such an expensive and significant piece of work.

Resource Implications

Financial

Indicative funding for the overall costs of each project is highlighted within the draft plan. Negotiations to agree these resources are underway. The NIO Community safety Unit will provide in the region of £380 K through grant funding for projects with an additional £123 K for staff posts.

The Council's contributions have been included in the revenue estimates for 2009/2010

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Indicate its support for the main elements of the Safer Belfast plan 2009-11;
2. Agree to support the Council's input and role as leading the Safer Belfast Plan 2009-2011.
3. Note that there is also a complementary plan being developed to ensure that the Council can internally deliver on the Safer Belfast plan through better cross-departmental working arrangements.

Key to Abbreviations

CSP- Community Safety Partnership
DPP- District Policing Partnership

Documents Attached

Draft Safer Belfast Plan 2009-2011

Safer Belfast 2009/2011



Safer Belfast

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Introduction to Safer Belfast

*“Our vision is to listen to local issues and bring about a Safer Belfast by working together to **tackle antisocial behaviour; reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime; deal with hate crime; and help Belfast feel safer**”*

Belfast Community Safety Partnership, 2008

Belfast Community Safety Partnership decided to focus on four issues after reviewing statistics and considering community consultations from 2007. The consultations included Belfast City Council’s public consultation and the Safer City Research which was commissioned jointly by Belfast Community Safety Partnership and Belfast District Policing Partnership.

The issues which are the Safer Belfast themes are antisocial behaviour; alcohol fuelled violent crime; fear of crime and hate crime. (Appendix i; the executive summary of the Safer Belfast Strategic Assessment for more detail)

Creating a safer city is clearly a priority issue for the public. As a result of our previous success Belfast Community Safety Partnership has the relationships and the experience to significantly contribute towards developing a Safer Belfast.

The landscape for the public sector is changing and preparation for community planning is challenging us to take a more holistic approach to developing a Safer Belfast.

Therefore we have designed this process to widen participation in the planning and sustainability of our work. We work with over fifty organisations and groups from across the city.

Our commitment to community engagement, as we develop a Safer Belfast will ensure that we continue to grow and support more people to work together.

In central government community safety sits with the Northern Ireland Office, but will likely fall into the new Department of Criminal Justice within the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on its devolution to The Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont.

The ministerial review of the future for Community Safety Partnerships and District Policing Partnerships is likely to have an impact during the review of public administration. However in recognition of the need for closer working between both partnerships there has been significant representation from the various structures with Belfast District Policing Partnership through out the Safer Belfast Process.

“Our vision is to listen to local issues and bring about a Safer Belfast by working together to tackle antisocial behaviour; reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime; deal with hate crime and help Belfast feel safer”
Belfast Community Safety Partnership 2008

These changes bring with them more challenges and opportunities, but our process is laying the foundations for a sustainable and effective mechanism which can continue to develop a Safer Belfast.

Belfast Community Safety Partnership

Belfast Community Safety Partnership is a vibrant and ambitious partnership, committed to working together to develop a Safer Belfast; so much so that it decided to attempt a "community planning" approach.

For us, the community planning approach means that Belfast City Council acts as the civic leader, and we work with different agencies and sectors to plan how we deliver services together in a way that compliments each organisations core business.

The partnership gains its political legitimacy through all party group representation from Belfast City Council and is accountable through the Health and Environmental Services Committee. Belfast City Council has been working internally to build the capacity of the council to continue to lead on the development of a Safer Belfast.

Most statutory agencies participate in the community safety partnership with a drive to find practical solutions. The community sector is represented through area partnership boards and along with the representatives from the voluntary sector ensures the community is at the heart of community safety.

The current process has resulted in much wider participation with over fifty organisations working together to develop a Safer Belfast. To capture and maintain this energy and commitment Belfast Community Safety Partnership will review the structures and process around direct representation by revisiting the Partnership Agreement in 2009.

The current membership list is detailed in appendix ii with the structure in appendix iii and roles in appendix iv.

The Safer Belfast Process

This is the “community planning approach” by which partner organisations and stakeholders cooperate to develop a Safer Belfast. The process operates through a number of mechanisms but is designed to be sustainable, relevant and adaptable to allow us to focus on developing a Safer Belfast that people can see and feel. Please see appendix iii for the structures and appendix iv for the roles of these structures.

The Safer Belfast Process has many strands to it including the political legitimacy and strategic leadership provided by the strategic tier and the coordination and delivery of solutions by the operational tier.

The Safer Belfast themes were set and taken forward by interagency, intersectoral city wide thematic groups. The thematic groups assess how we tackle antisocial behaviour, reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime, deal with hate crime and help Belfast feel safer and then develop new interventions and solutions when we need them.

The last community safety plan was inflexible and we were unable to respond to emerging issues. This time we have developed a tasking process; the tasking group has been designed to allow us to react and respond to emerging issues by using the existing resources of partner organisations and by working better together. In addition, a small resource from the NIO indicative allocation has been ring fenced to fund other actions required by the tasking group.

The sustainability and adaptability of this process comes from our investment in a Safer Belfast Analyst to provide relevant and contemporary information about community safety issues; and the development of mature performance management systems to measure and deliver continual improvement.

Safer Belfast encompasses much more than Belfast Community Safety Partnership has taken into consideration before. In addition to the delivery of partnership funded projects it includes the core work of partner organisations.

To succeed as an interagency intersectoral process which is committed to developing a Safer Belfast, it must challenge partners, create better ways of working together and bring added value to current activity; as well as show innovation to meet new and increasing demands.

Safer Belfast is the process by which we can realise our ambition of evidence based, effective collaborative working to help Belfast be safer and feel safer.

Communities at the heart of a Safer Belfast

Belfast Community Safety Partnership has adopted a range of community engagement principles which guide our engagement from consultation to partnership delivery of services and interventions. Please see appendix v for more detail.

To keep communities at the heart of community safety, each of the thematic groups is responsible for hearing the results of the different mechanisms of community engagement in relation to antisocial behaviour; alcohol fuelled violent crime; hate crime; and feeling safer.

As with all Safer Belfast endeavours, the partnership will utilise the community engagement structures which currently exist like Belfast District Policing Partnership and the Housing Executive's community involvement framework. This will allow us to bring community safety into other agendas across the city.

The Community Safety Partnership's community engagement subgroup has oversight of this work and is currently working through the practicalities of mapping and linking with structures that will achieve this aspiration to keep communities at the heart of a Safer Belfast.

Awareness of Safer Belfast

Communication

Belfast Community Safety Partnership will build and maintain relationships with the public by working with the media, for example with articles in Belfast City Council's City Matters magazine and the Community Telegraph's Safer Belfast series.

In addition we will communicate and engage with the wider voluntary and community sector across the city by publishing quarterly Safer Belfast news sheets and an annual report as well as maintaining our website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/saferbelfast

The Safer Belfast plan contains a number of awareness raising projects and these will be coordinated by the Communication and Information Officer to ensure clear consistent messages are communicated.

Marketing/Publicity

This new approach to developing a Safer Belfast demands clear communication; clear communication requires an appropriate marketing/publicity policy.

We will endeavour to work with marketing teams of partner organisations to develop and agree how we present the body of work that is Safer Belfast and the composite projects.

It is anticipated that this agreed approach is implemented from April 2009, as per the "go live date" for projects.

Measuring progress towards a Safer Belfast

Belfast Community Safety Partnership has developed a performance management system to measure and deliver continual improvement.

The four thematic groups act as interagency, intersectoral, city wide forums that will measure our progress towards the aims for a Safer Belfast (appendix vii). Having determined what success looks like for each aim; they will regularly determine our status and track our progress over time.

In determining how close we are to achieving the Safer Belfast aims, the thematic groups will have **statistical analysis reports**. These analysis reports will reflect information from partner organisations; however progress can be baldly reflected by comparing 2007 data and 2011 data from recorded police figures and the results of research carried out by Belfast City Council through its public and Safer City research. Using these measures our Safer Belfast targets are to reduce the level of recorded antisocial behaviour by 15% by 2011; to achieve a 5% reduction in alcohol fuelled violent crime by 2011; to have 5% fewer recorded incidents of hate crime by 2011 and for 5% more people to report that they feel safer in their area in 2011 than they did in 2007.

Independent **monitoring/evaluation forms** as well as self assessments from community safety projects will for part of the progress deliberations. We will move towards all Safer Belfast projects completing monitoring forms and utilising core evaluation questions so information from all relevant projects can be included and compared.

Thematic groups will also take into consideration what they are hearing through the **community engagement** processes; the knowledge of their organisations and their **professional judgement**.

The thematic groups will drive continual improvement by utilising the tasking process to respond to emerging issues with existing resources; or as a key stakeholder group they will develop new interventions.

The four reports for the tackle antisocial behaviour reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime; deal with hate crime; and help Belfast feel safer thematic groups will be collated into one Safer Belfast performance management report by the operational tier. This will be presented to the Strategic Tier of Belfast Community Safety Partnership and published electronically on the website.

The Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/2011

Each Safer Belfast Thematic Group went through a process of identifying and prioritising projects which best suited the needs and answered the problem profiles identified by the Safer Belfast Analyst.

These have been reviewed by the Community Safety Partnership's Operational Tier to ensure complementarity and cohesion into one Safer Belfast Plan 2009/2011.

Table one provides more detail about each project that the community safety partnership intends to fund from its allocation from the NIO's Community Safety Unit.

Table two reflects work that is delivered through joint working by members, but is not funded directly by the community safety partnership.

Both of these sections contain "work in progress" which will be populated with information as it becomes available; particularly in relation to financial contributions and in-kind resources from partners. The amount of resources which are detailed in the "title/total" column cover both years of operation; and where no total amount is listed, the project is already included in the work of the organisation.

In the "resources" column the blue bold number is the contribution to the project from the NIO indicative allocation. Where this column reports 'approach' it is our intent to have discussions with the organisation about the project; when it reports 'confirm' there has been an expression of interest by that organisation in supporting the project, but it how much and in what way needs to be confirmed.

The figures indicated as contributions from Belfast City Council are contained in different departmental estimates for 09/10. As the estimating process for 2010/11 will begin in autumn next year, Belfast City Council's contributions have been maintained.

Table three indicates some of the core work of partner organisations and how it contributes to developing a Safer Belfast. The information about projects and programmes in this section are provided directly from partners; as more information becomes available it will be added to this section.

It is clear that this document is fluid and developing. As the discussions and negotiations between members and within member organisations result in confirmed commitments this document will be updated.

Our intention is to launch a public facing Safer Belfast 2009/11 Plan in early 2009.

Our Approach to a Safer Belfast

Each of the thematic groups has developed a programme of projects to be implemented over the two years. The operational tier has done considerable work to ensure the projects are complimentary and deliver one Safer Belfast Plan.

To **tackle antisocial behaviour** we will focus on developing more localised (north, south, east and west basis), community led interventions which are better coordinated.

The plan builds on the interagency forums with structures that engage communities in identifying and delivering prevention as well as working together to respond to antisocial behaviour.

To **reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime** we will invest in a range of projects which target the inappropriate supply and promote the proper use of alcohol, on strengthening current initiatives and industry standards. Much of the work will be managed through the Get Home Safe Partnership, and the antisocial behaviour structures detailed above.

To **deal with hate crimes** we will work closely with Belfast City Council’s Good Relations Team however we will focus on preventing and dealing with hate crimes and their impact, as opposed to their motivations.

When we think of hate crime we often think of those motivated by racism, religion, disability and sexual orientation. However it is important to note that 65% of incidents within the hate crime categorisation are motivated by sectarianism.

This action plan recognises that the work of the other three groups will contribute to **help Belfast feel safer**, but that further activity needs to be delivered with this express purpose in mind.

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/11

Table one – projects funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership to tackle antisocial behaviour

Title/Total	Description	Resources	Source
Antisocial behaviour structures £20,000	Engage communities and work together to tackle antisocial behaviour. Risk Managing community expectations	14 000 Antisocial Behaviour Officers and costs (200 000) Interagency ASB Forums Community coordination	BCSP BCC NIHE/PSNI/BCC/YJA Community structures
Youth outreach £120,000	Provide project/programme cost for outreach youth workers to work with young people. Risk Not enough outreach youth workers in post	70 000 50 000	BCSP BCC
Small grants £140,000	Open two rounds of small grants per year to support community groups in developing a Safer Belfast Risk Repeat service delivery which has been successful vs. expectation for continual development	100 000 40 000	BCSP BCC
Youth inclusion £70 000	Improve the services provided by the voluntary youth sector by providing training for young leaders and some resource for application of training Risk Level of youth provision is not adequate or appropriate across the city	50 000 approach	BCSP DSD

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/11

Table one – projects funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership to reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime

Title/Total	Description	Resources	Source
Off Licence work £20,000	To provide enough materials for the maintenance and development of the code of practice and to provide training for off licence staff "Off Limits" Risk There is an opportunity to charge for the training	10 000 approach	BCSP Health board
Transport project £20,000	To deliver a taxi based night time transport project. Risk There may not be enough customer demand to sustain the project once established	20 000 Taxis and drivers 20 000	BCSP Taxi companies sponsorship
Joint enforcement £40,000	Work with local communities to identify and deliver better enforcement of on-street drinking prohibitions. As part of the project communities will be made fully aware of the legislation. Risk Heavy reliance on volunteer BCC staff. High community expectations	20 000 confirm staff	BCSP NIO BCC
Safe Spaces £60,000	This project reduces the likelihood of alcohol fuelled violence when people leave pubs and clubs. Risks Spaces where this is possible might be limited	20 000 confirm 20 000 approach approach	BCSP PSNI BCC DSD (EDAW) Peace 3
Vintners work	Support the development of Vintners Forums Provide training for bar staff Risk There is an opportunity to charge for the training	5 000	BCSP
SoS Satellite Service	Develop the SoS Bus to provide its services in areas across the city Risk	20 000 confirm confirm	BCSP SoS Bus PSNI

	Ensuring compliance with funding terms and conditions has been difficult		
Get Home Safe marketing campaign £180,000	Marketing campaign Risk Ensure targeting of campaign	60 000 confirm confirm 30 000	BCSP NIO PSNI BCC
Parental awareness campaign £74,000	Information, education and support for parents to talk to their children about alcohol misuse Risks There needs to be a significant recruitment drive	20 000 54 000	BCSP EDACT
Belfast Against Night Time Disorder	Civil exclusion scheme that will ban people causing antisocial behaviour from licensed premises Risk High demand and public expectations	20 000 in kind legal costs confirm 10 000	BCSP BCCM PSNI sponsorship

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/11

Table one – projects funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership to deal with hate crime

Title/Total	Description	Resource	Source
Tension monitoring £100,000	Introduce tension monitoring in Belfast to identify rising tensions likely to lead to hate motivated antisocial behaviour and crimes Risk Keeping community safety's role focused on hate crime	50 000 confirm staff community participation approach	BCSP SBPB BCC Community structures OFMDFM
Awareness/publicity marketing £70,000	Deliver a zero tolerance campaign and ensure it gets to the right people Risk Through the Communication and Information Officer. Must link with work by partners	18 000 confirm 6 000 approach approach	BCSP PSNI BCC NIHE Peace 3
Intervening with perpetrators £100,000	Work with existing programmes to target perpetrators of crime and antisocial behaviour caused by hatred Risks New programmes may need to be developed which are tailored to each kind of hate crime	45 000 approach	BCSP Peace 3
Annual Hate Crime Convention £4,000	Host an annual convention around the topic of hate crime; this provides an opportunity to ensure appropriate participation and programmes Risk Need to coordinate with wider group of partners	4 000 confirm approach approach	BCSP BCC – good relations PSNI NIHE

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/11

Table one – projects funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership to help Belfast feel safer

Title	Description	Resource	Source
Information and Communication Officer £80,000	Maintain the communication Risks Very high volume of work and must also coordinate the key antisocial behaviour messages campaign and the hate crime publicity campaign	80 000	BCSP
Youth Awards £50,000	Hold high pr awards to recognise the contributions that young people make to Safer Belfast Risk Ensuring that our youth partners nominate young people	25 000 confirm approach confirm	BCSP DPP HAZ BCCM
Good practice £50,000	Improve practice in communities by holding good practice learning events around Safer Belfast themes Risk Coordinating with similar events from other partners to avoid fatigue	20 000	BCSP
Training and information £60,000	Deliver and develop training programmes to build community capacity to develop a Safer Belfast. Signpost them to the necessary community development resources Risk The density of the sector	35 000	BCSP
Research £15,000	Develop ways to research feeling safer in "real time", in relation to activity across the Safer Belfast Plan Risk Identifying the appropriate agent	15 000	BCSP
Good Morning projects £800,000	Contribute to the development and delivery of a Good Morning Project for Belfast Risk Challenge is to maintain the joint working between projects	10 000 confirm approach	BCSP DSD BCC

<p>Inter- generational project</p> <p>£50,000</p>	<p>Continue to support the intergenerational project which brings together older and younger people</p> <p>Risk We need to incorporate the work around the sustainability of intergenerational work</p>	<p>10 000 40 000 confirm confirm confirm confirm</p>	<p>BCSP NIO Beth Johnston F'dation Youth Council Age Concern Atlantic Phil'</p>
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Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/11

Table two – projects/programmes which are jointly delivered by members of Belfast Community Safety Partnership to tackle antisocial behaviour

Title/Total	Description	Resources	Source
Wardens £1,600,000	Field four teams of community safety wardens across Belfast, with a floating team for a higher level interventions Risk Expectations from communities and partners	confirm confirm confirm confirm approach confirm confirm	BCC DSD PSNI NIHE NIFRS NIO QUB
Tackling antisocial behaviour at council sites and venues £600 000	Applying the learning from the Safer Neighbourhood Project, Belfast City Council's Parks and Leisure Department is proactively working in partnership to tackle antisocial behaviour. Risks Ensuring this work ties into the overall Safer Belfast work	600 000 tbc.	BCC - parks
Parenting and early years interventions	Support and consider the work Belfast Trust is doing to map, understand and support parenting and early years interventions	confirm approach	Belfast Trust DSD
Alley gates £1,000,000	Erect gates at alley ways to prevent antisocial behaviour Risk Need to coordinate the proposed regional alley gate scheme to deliver added value for Belfast	500 000 tbc approach confirm	BCC DSD NIO
Citizenship education	Partners work together to ensure that all schools have access to and take up citizenship education Risks Participation in education is voluntary	In kind In kind	PSNI – CASE NIFRS
Environmental Projects	Support the development of environmental improvements that will help reduce environmental antisocial behaviour Risk Need to better understand the existing structures e.g. the interagency graffiti	Via small grants	BCC – cleansing

	group		
Key antisocial behaviour messages campaign £24,000	Ensure that there is coordinated communication in relation to antisocial behaviour Risk Through the Communication and Information Officer; must be easy for the public to understand and use	24 000	BCC
Tailored individual programmes for problem people	Coordinate the use of individually tailored programmes for people involved in repeat/serious antisocial behaviour Risk Too difficult to coordinate the commissioning of these programmes, resulting in less resources invested in them	confirm confirm 20 000 approach approach	NIHE Belfast Trust BCC PSNI DSD
Integrated services for Children and Young People			Belfast Health Action Zone
Greater Shankill Community Safety Network			Greater Shankill Community Safety Network
West Belfast Community Safety Forum			Ni Housing Executive

"Our vision is to listen to local issues and bring about a Safer Belfast by working together to tackle antisocial behaviour; reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime; deal with hate crime and help Belfast feel safer"
 Belfast Community Safety Partnership 2008

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/11

Table two – projects/programmes which are jointly delivered by members of Belfast Community Safety Partnership reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime

Title/Total	Description	Resources	Source
Licensed Premises group	Joint inspections LPG meetings and follow up actions	Building control, health and safety, legal and Safer City staff Licensing Officers	BCC PSNI

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/11

Table two – projects/programmes which are jointly delivered by members of Belfast Community Safety Partnership deal with hate crime

Title/Total	Description	Resource	Source
Media engagement	Develop relationships and contacts within the media that will allow a meaningful response and support sensitive reporting of hate crime Risk Working with the media	Corporate communication team	BCC
Hate Incident Practical Action Initiative (HIPA)			N.I. Housing Executive

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/11

Table two – projects/programmes which are jointly delivered by members of Belfast Community Safety Partnership help Belfast feel safer

Title	Description	Resource	Source
Sign posting	<p>Develop a method of communication and information that allows us to signpost individuals and organisations to services supplied by other partners e.g. victim support, women's aid, niacro, engage with age etc.</p> <p>Risk Reliant on partners providing the information and maintaining it appropriately</p>	Staff time	BCSP Partner orgs
Neighbourhood Watch	<p>To develop new neighbourhood watch schemes across the city and sustain existing schemes. Development officer in post until June 2010.</p> <p>Risk Loose the development officer Freeze on investment from Community Safety Partnership and DPP</p>	<p>8 000 Salary for development officer Match and overheads 2 000 5 000</p>	<p>NIO/PSNI/NIPB PSNI BCC PSNI BCC</p>
£60,000			
CCTV	<p>To bring partners together to consider future development of a Community Safety CCTV System in Belfast</p> <p>Risk Needs a high level strategic driver and considerable investment</p>	approach	BCC PSNI DSD NIO
Safety of Seniors			Belfast City Council

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/2011

Table three – other projects/programmes which contribute to tackling antisocial behaviour

This table has been populated with information provided by partners in response to the community safety questionnaire.

Lead Partner	Project/programme title
Belfast City Council	Night Time Noise Service
Victim Support	Supporting People affected by Crime
NI Housing Executive	Neighbourhood Warden Service
NI Housing Executive	Neighbourhood Officer Service
NI Housing Executive	Housing Executive Mediation Service
NI Housing Executive	Mediation and Community Support Programme (MACS)
Belfast Health Action Zone	Parent Support Project

“Our vision is to listen to local issues and bring about a Safer Belfast by working together to tackle antisocial behaviour; reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime; deal with hate crime and help Belfast feel safer”
Belfast Community Safety Partnership 2008

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/2011

Table three – other projects/programmes which contribute to reducing alcohol fuelled violent crime

This table has been populated with information provided by partners in response to the community safety questionnaire.

Lead Partner	Project/programme title
Victim Support	Supporting people affected by Crime

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/2011

Table three – other projects/programmes which contribute to dealing with hate crime

This table has been populated with information provided by partners in response to the community safety questionnaire.

Lead Partner	Project/programme title
Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordination Team	Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordination Team
Chinese Welfare Association	Community Safety Chinese Project
Victim Support	Supporting People affected by Crime

Safer Belfast Action Plan 2009/2011

Table three – other projects/programmes which contribute to helping Belfast feel safer

This table has been populated with information provided by partners in response to the community safety questionnaire.

Lead Partner	Project/programme title
Belfast YMCA	Youth Programmes
Victim Support	Supporting People affected by Crime
Belfast City Council Community Services	Belfast City Council Community Services

Investment in a Safer Belfast

Significant resources are invested into developing a Safer Belfast.

Tackle antisocial behaviour

Indicative allocation (NIO) spend for 09/11 is £234 000

Other funding confirmed: £610 000 (£500,000 of which is subject to economic appraisal)

For this part of the plan to be delivered an estimated further £2 130 000 is required; this includes the cost of Alleygates and Community Safety Wardens

Reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime

Indicative allocation (NIO) for 09/11 is £195,000

Other funding confirmed: £104 000

For this part of the plan to be delivered an estimated further £95 000 is required

Deal with hate crime

Indicative allocation (NIO) for 09/11 is £117 000

Other funding confirmed: £6 000

For this part of the plan to be delivered an estimated further £151 000 is required

Help people feel safer

Indicative allocation (NIO) for 09/11 is £195,000

Other funding confirmed: £15 000

For this part of the plan to be delivered an estimated further £201 000 is required

The remaining indicative allocation (NIO) will be controlled by the Safer Belfast Tasking Group; bringing a small amount of added resource to achieve the four Safer Belfast priorities across the City. This will be matched in-kind by existing resources from the member organisations.

Implementation

Following agreement at the strategic tier meeting on the 19th November 2008, the community safety team and the thematic groups will work up specific project plans which detail match funding and confirmed roles for partners.

It is the responsibility of partners to take the aspects of the plan that relate to their organisation through the appropriate channels for formal approval. This should include confirmed contributions from partners as well as confirmation of their level of participation in the safer Belfast process and structures.

The strategic tier will sign off the plan on the 17th December 2008 and this will be submitted to the NIO by the 19th.

Procurement calls need to be issued for all projects by mid January 2009 to prepare for the "go live" date of 1st April 2009.

Appendices

- I. Safer Belfast Strategic Assessment; executive summary
- II. Belfast Community Safety Partnership Membership List
- III. The Safer Belfast Structures
- IV. The Roles of the Safer Belfast Structures
- V. Community Engagement Principles
- VI. Current “map” of structures to facilitate community engagement
- VII. Descriptions of success; Safer Belfast Aims

I. Safer Belfast Strategic Assessment; executive summary

Tackle Antisocial Behaviour

- Antisocial Behaviour is a significant problem for Belfast.
- PSNI dealt with over 23,000 antisocial behaviour incidents between 01/08/2007 and 31/07/2008 in Belfast¹.
- Belfast City Council dealt with over 8,000 antisocial behaviour incidents between 01/08/2007 and 31/07/2008.
- Antisocial Behaviour negatively impacts on feelings of safety.
- On average, there was one antisocial behaviour incident reported to PSNI per 11.5 people living in Belfast (based on 2001 Census²).
- A comparison of 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 PSNI figures for antisocial behaviour shows a 4.5% increase³.
- The main causes of antisocial behaviour in Belfast, as identified by the Thematic Group, are alcohol, youths and a lack of cohesive approach to tackle it.

Reduce Alcohol Fuelled Violent Crime

- Two thirds of alcohol-related assaults were within or in the vicinity of licensed premises based on PSNI information⁴.
- Alcohol fuelled violence creates a negative image of the city centre.
- Alcohol fuelled violence is a particular problem at weekends.
- The main causes of alcohol fuelled violence in Belfast have been identified by the Thematic Group as excessive alcohol consumption, certain licensed premises, closing times and the lack of public transport which results in a large number of people gathered in the city centre at the same time.

Deal with Hate Crime

- Sectarian crimes accounted for around two thirds of all reported hate crime to PSNI⁵. Sectarian hate crimes are a particular problem at interface areas.
- There was one racist incident reported for every 10 people from non-white ethnic groups, based on the 2001 Census⁶.
- Hate Crime affects a small percentage of the population but it targets the most vulnerable.
- Dealing with all types of Hate Crime will assist in supporting a peaceful society and help make people feel safe.

¹ http://www.psni.police.uk/monthly_asb_statistics__final_2007-08_.pdf

² <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>

³ http://www.psni.police.uk/monthly_asb_statistics__final_2007-08_.pdf

⁴ This information has been sourced from operational police databases and is subject to amendment or update.

⁵ http://www.psni.police.uk/3._hate_incidents_and_crimes-4.pdf

⁶ <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>

- The main causes of hate crime in Belfast have been identified, by the Thematic Group, as lack of understanding/intolerance, changing population and vulnerable groups.

Help Belfast Feel Safer

- According to the Ipsos MORI Safer City Consultation in Belfast⁷, around 75% of Belfast residents feel safe in their local area.
- The Belfast City Council Residents' Survey 2007⁸ found that 96% of respondents felt safe in their local area during the day however this dropped to 63% at night-time.
- The DPP Survey found that almost two thirds of respondents feel safe in their local community⁹.
- 23% of residents said that they feel less safe than 3 years ago according to the Safer City Consultation in Belfast.
- 42% of residents do not go into the city centre at night because they do not feel safe there, according to the Safer City Consultation in Belfast.
- The 2007 Belfast City Council Residents' Survey found that 82% of respondents feel safe in the city centre during the day however this drops to 29% at night. More than two fifths of respondents feel unsafe in the city centre at night.
- Visible policing, activities for teenagers and a reduced level of crime were the main areas which required improvement, according to the Safer City Consultation in Belfast.

⁷ Ipsos MORI Safer City Consultation in Belfast is available on request from the Community Safety Team, Belfast City Council, Cecil Ward Building, 4 – 10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BP.

⁸ See <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/citymatters/pdf/spring08.pdf> for further information.

⁹ This figure has been calculated using the DPP Survey results for East, North, South and West Belfast and is an indication. <http://www.districtpolicing.com/>

II. Belfast Community Safety Partnership Membership List

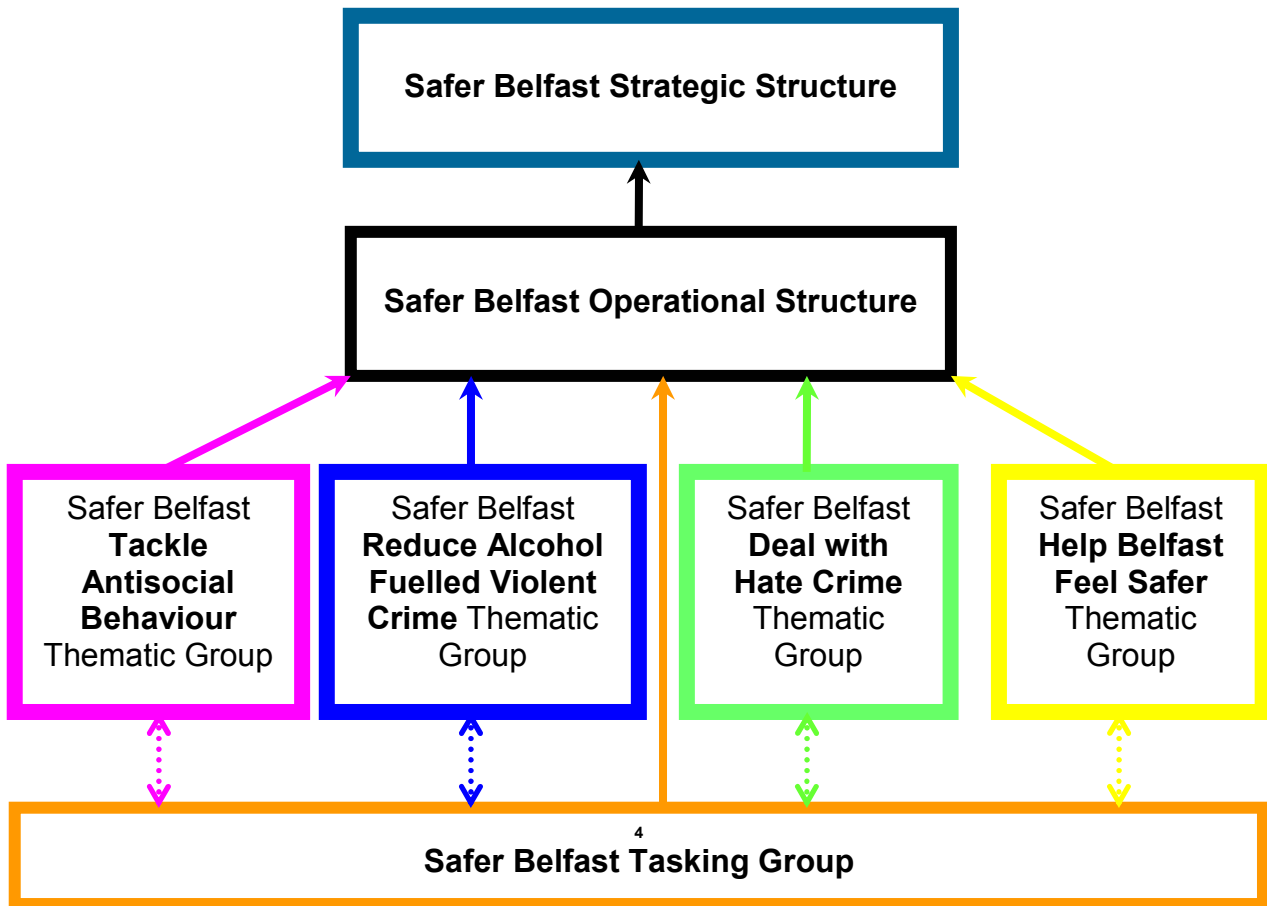
	Strategic Tier	Operational Tier	Tackle antisocial behaviour	Reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime	Deal with hate crime	Help Belfast feel safer
Belfast City Councillors						
Alliance Party: Cllr. Naomi Long	*					
Democratic Unionist Party: Cllr. Robin Newton	*					
Progressive Unionist Party: Cllr. John Kyle	*					
Social Democratic Labour Party: Cllr Pat Convery	*					
Sinn Fein: Cllr. Conor Maskey	*					
Ulster Unionist Party: Cllr. Jim Rodgers	*					

Statutory Sector						
Belfast City Council (BCC)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Belfast District Policing Partnership (DPP)	*	*	*			*
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (Belfast Trust)	*	*	*	*	*	
Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO)	*	*	*	*		*
Eastern Drug & Alcohol Coordination Team (EDACT)		*		*		
Eastern Health and Social Services Board (EHSSB)	*					
Health Action Zone (HAZ)	*	*	*			
Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS)	*	*	*	*		*
Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Probation Board of Northern Ireland (PBNI)	*	*		*	*	*

Youth Justice Agency (YJA)	*	*	*	*		*
Community Sector						
Belfast Area Partnership Boards (BAPS)	*	*	*			*
East Belfast Area Partnership Board		*	*			
North Belfast Area Partnership Board		*	*			
Shankill Area Partnership Board		*				
South Belfast Area Partnership Board		*	*			
West Belfast Area Partnership Board		*	*			
Voluntary Sector						
Engage with Age		*				*

Institute for Conflict Research		*				
Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)	*		*		*	
Victim Support	*	*	*	*	*	*
Women’s Aid		*		*		
Business Sector						
Belfast City Centre Management	*	*		*		*
Business in the Community	*					
Translink	*	*		*		

III. The Safer Belfast Structures:



IV. The Roles of the Safer Belfast Structures

Strategic Tier

- Provide leadership and bring political legitimacy to the Safer Belfast Process
- Lobby, advocate and influence other structures and processes to develop a Safer Belfast
- Be responsible for achieving a Safer Belfast
- Embed a genuine commitment to a Safer Belfast within their organisation
- Connect the Safer Belfast Process to community planning, the review of public administration, local government and the NI Assembly at Stormont

Operational Tier

- Ensure the delivery of a Safer Belfast
- Coordinate the work of the thematic and tasking groups
- Ensure that community engagement is embedded across the Safer Belfast Process
- Escalate issues to and to take direction from the strategic tier

Safer Belfast Thematic Groups

- Become the interagency, intersectoral, city wide forum
- Measure progress towards the aims for a Safer Belfast
- Develop new Safer Belfast projects
- Engage communities by listening and working together
- Escalate issues to and to take direction from the operational tier

Safer Belfast Tasking Group

- Hear Safer Belfast Tactical Assessments and tweak existing resources to respond to emerging safer Belfast issues
- Highlight to thematic groups where there is a need that cannot be met within existing resource

V Community Engagement Principles

Clarity of Purpose

We will clearly outline why the engagement is occurring, and its context, in order to plan and resource an effective process clarifying who should be involved, why, how and for what end result

Involvement and Inclusiveness

We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of engagement, in order to address issues that impact most on local communities. We are committed to making appropriate use of available engagement methods, and involving not just the “usual suspects”

Communication

We believe that community engagement is primarily about communication, the two-way process of providing accurate and timely information and demonstrating that feedback is being heard.

Support for Participation

We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement and actively develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.

Planning

We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and actions to be taken

Flexibility and Responsiveness

We believe that engagement plans have to be flexible during the course of a process; timetables may change, comments may require change, different communities will respond to different techniques, and the political environment may change

Working with others

We will work effectively with all those who are key stakeholders in the process. We will reach out to socially excluded communities and groups, such as people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and young people

Monitoring and evaluation – Outcome orientated

We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes, engaging with communities in ways that lead to meaningful and tangible outcomes in terms of significant improvements to services and people’s quality of life

Openness and commitment to change

We believe that where existing practice is shown to be poor, all agencies should be open to changing their practice in order to improve service delivery

“Our vision is to listen to local issues and bring about a Safer Belfast by working together to tackle antisocial behaviour; reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime; deal with hate crime and help Belfast feel safer”

Belfast Community Safety Partnership 2008

Commitment by Government

We believe that community engagement works best when a process has the support, backing and engagement of Government Departments

VI. Current “map” of community engagement structures

This page is being constructed

East

East Belfast Area Partnership Board
East Belfast Community Development Association
East Belfast District Policing Partnership Sub-group
Inner East Forum

West

West Belfast Area Partnership Board
CRJI
Falls Community Council
St. Mary’s College, Student Union
Upper Springfield Safer Neighbourhoods Project
West Belfast Community Safety Forum/Community Confidence Forum
West Belfast District Policing Partnership Sub-group

North

North Belfast Area Partnership Board
Ardoyne Association
CARR – Cavehill and Antrim Road Regeneration
Community Empowerment Partnerships
Intercomm
North Belfast District Policing Partnership Sub-group

Shankill

Shankill Area Partnership Board
Alternatives
FASA – Forum Against Substance Abuse and Suicide
Shankill Community Safety Network

South

South Belfast Area Partnership Board
Belfast Holyland Regeneration Trust
City Centre Management – City Safe Group
Greater Village Regeneration Trust
Holylands PACT – Partners and Communities Together
Lower Ormeau Residents Action group
QUB, BMC, UU Student Unions
Sandy Row Community Forum
South Belfast District Policing Partnership Sub-group
Stranmillis Residents Association

VII Descriptions of success; Safer Belfast Aims

Tackle antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour prevented and dealt with through early intervention, communication and community led programmes

We want to support the creation of a Belfast where communities, residents and visitors are free from the fear of anti social behaviour. Young people will have desirable alternatives to anti social behaviour and be part of the process of identifying these. There will be a reduction in areas that are affected by anti social behaviour.

Confident communities with skills and awareness to identify tackle and reduce antisocial behaviour using a collaborative approach

Communities and individuals in Belfast will be aware of the role of the various agencies and partners who are working to reduce anti social behaviour. Leadership will be given around the issue of anti social behaviour by those with responsibility, and communities will be supported when they wish to address the issue.

Positive prompt responses for victims and the vulnerable

In Belfast victims of anti social behaviour and those at risk of anti social behaviour will feel more confident because services respond more quickly and people have greater awareness of the support available. Individuals who have been victims of anti social behaviour will be made aware of action taken to address their issues.

Informed balanced and proportionate partnership responses to antisocial behaviour

In Belfast there will be clear partnership processes in place to tackle anti social behaviour. These processes will allow us to take a graduated, flexible and easy to understand approach to dealing with the problems of the people of Belfast. People in Belfast will have a better understanding of how the criminal justice and local government systems work when responding to anti social behaviour.

Reduce alcohol fuelled violent crime

Belfast is a safer place to live, to visit, work and socialise in

A sensible, sociable drinking culture where people are visiting Belfast and agencies are effectively working together. Licensing trade signed up and adhering to a comprehensive code of practice.

Progress towards a Zero tolerance approach to alcohol fuelled violent crime

Agencies effectively working together in enforcement, communicating actions, with a decreased number of alcohol fuelled violent crime.

Appropriate victim support

Victims supported, referred, reassured, signposted and accessing accessible services and agencies as appropriate.

Intervention mechanisms and treatment pathways

Communities, agencies and businesses working proactively and reactively together, delivering localised strategies, whilst referring and supporting people in the prevention and suitable and adequate treatment of alcohol abuse.

Deal with hate crime

Zero tolerance approach by everyone to hate crime:

Belfast will embrace all sections of our community so that everyone can enjoy living and working in our city equally. Communities and individuals in Belfast will be confident and able to challenge hate crime and inappropriate behaviour when it occurs. Interventions will be implemented that will deter young people from developing the attitudes that lead to hate crime.

Communities that are confident educated and have an awareness of hate crime

All communities and individuals in Belfast will be more aware and tolerant of the various cultures and races that form our city. Belfast will host events that will support integration and learning across cultures, groups and communities. People will be made aware of good practice and supported in adopting it. All communities and individuals will be better able and more confident to report incidents of hate crime.

Joined up strategic approach to prevent and tackle hate crime

There will be a partnership based strategy to deal with hate crime in Belfast that reflects the needs of all relevant stakeholders. Reporting hate crime will be made easier for all those affected by it and we will encourage everyone to use the available mechanisms. We will work towards a better understanding of hate crime within agencies and the development of clear working arrangements between partners by using service level agreements and appointing single points of contact where possible.

Good relationships with the media

In Belfast we shall work closely with the media to ensure that a balanced approach is taken when reporting incidents of hate crime and addressing issues within communities affected by hate crime. We will work in partnership with groups that represent various mediums and those representing groups affected by hate crime, to develop joint responses in relation to hate crime. There will be champions within various sectors who will support us in tackling hate crime.

Help Belfast feel safer

Belfast perceived to be a safe place to live, work or visit

Belfast is a vibrant community, of all ages, with increased visitor footfall, sustainable communities, visibility of people, more frequent and accessible transport systems with an overall feel good factor.

Confident communities with good communication, education and awareness to help people feel safe

Belfast communities are accessing and engaging with services and organisations, across communities and sectors, with strong neighbour relations and a strong sense of pride.

A city centre which is attractive to all

A bright (24hr) vibrant, clean city with accessible services promoted for all.

Accessible transport methods that enable people to feel safe

A strong, frequent and accessible public and private transport system with an increased number of people visiting and moving around Belfast

Clean neighbourhoods which are accessible and encourage pride and respect

Clean neighbourhoods and environments, which are accessible to all with pride and respect.