

Document Pack

**Committee and Members' Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



16th November, 2009

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Councillor

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room (Room G05), City Hall on Friday, 20th November, 2009 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. Transition Committee Business
 - (a) Review of Public Administration Update (Pages 1 - 16)
 - (b) Review of Public Administration - PricewaterhouseCoopers Economic Appraisal (To Follow)
 - (c) Northern Ireland Office Consultation on the Filling of Casual Vacancies on District Councils (Pages 17 - 20)
 - (d) Review of Public Administration - Transition Committee (Pages 21 - 24)
3. Democratic Services and Governance
 - (a) Requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality (Pages 25 - 30)

- (b) Request for the Use of the City Hall to hold the Westminster Counts (Pages 31 - 32)
 - (c) Review of Staff Travel Policy - Attendance of Members at Conferences (Pages 33 - 34)
 - (d) Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Pages 35 - 42)
4. Finance
- (a) Update on Financial Estimates Process for 2010-11 (Pages 43 - 46)
 - (b) Update on City Investment Framework (Pages 47 - 64)
 - (c) Minutes of Meeting of Budget and Transformation Panel (To Follow)
 - (d) Framework Agreement for IT Security Services (Pages 65 - 66)
5. Human Resources
- (a) Absence Management Quarter 2 (Pages 67 - 70)
 - (b) Rightsizing Exercise (Pages 71 - 74)
 - (c) Review of Building Control Service (Pages 75 - 78)
6. Asset Management
- (a) Disposal of Land at Glen Road (To Follow)
 - (b) Disposal of Land at Templemore Avenue (Pages 79 - 80)
 - (c) Consumer Advice Centre - Renewal of Lease (Pages 81 - 82)
 - (d) Proposed Lease Variation and Easement - Woodlands Playing Fields (Pages 83 - 86)
7. Modernisation and Improvement
- (a) Approval to use the Northern Ireland Regional Area Networking for Internet Service Provision (Pages 87 - 90)
 - (b) Connection to Network NI (Pages 91 - 92)
 - (c) Infrastructure to Deliver Housing Benefit Services for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (Pages 93 - 96)
8. Good Relations and Equality
- (a) Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership of 13th November (To Follow)
 - (b) Minutes of Meeting of Memorabilia Working Group of 5th November (To Follow)

Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources (Transition) Committee
Subject:	Review of Public Administration Update
Date:	20 th November, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney, RPA Project Coordinator (ext. 6202)

1.0	<u>Relevant Background Information</u>
1.1	The Review of Public Administration (RPA) is now entering into a critical stage in the process whereby key decisions need to be taken over the next month so as to ensure that the reform programme remains on track and meets the already tight legislative timetable which is in place.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	<u>Critical Path</u>
2.1.1	Members will be aware that there still remains some concerns with regard to how the RPA programme will progress given the uncertainties which exist around the Local Government Boundaries Order (which will determine the boundaries for the 11 new councils) and the progress of the Local Government Reorganisation Bill (which will bring into effect to the reorganisation of local government), both of which need to be cleared by the NI Assembly before the Christmas recess on 9 th December 2009.
2.1.2	If there is no political agreement around these critical issues secured, then the already tight legislative timetable would be unachievable and the local reform programme (e.g. rationalisation from 26 to 11 councils) would be deferred. This would result in elections to the existing 26 Councils in May 2010 as the Secretary of State would not be minded to further extend the current term of councils. This position was echoed by the Environment Minister during his recent visit to the Council on 6 th November.
2.1.3	Within this context there is an associated risk that the NI Executive may implement a plan B which could involve taking forward some elements of modernisation. It is important to note that the majority of legislation brought forward to date (including the Miscellaneous Provisions Bill and Finance Bill) are not RPA dependant (i.e. linked to the reorganisation of councils) but rather, are pertaining to the modernisation of local government. The transfer of functions proposals, however, may be reorganisation dependant and could be deferred as a result.
2.1.4	Notwithstanding political agreement on the local government boundaries and Reorganisation Bill, the timetable, as we currently understand it, is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A final decision will be made by Christmas on the Local Government Boundary Order which will set out the boundaries for the new Councils. ▪ Decision on funding for RPA reform programme needs to be made in early 2010 and negotiations with DFP are ongoing ▪ Statutory Transition Committees come into effect by February 2010 ▪ Members severance scheme agreed - February/March 2010 ▪ Staff severance scheme agreed - February/March 2010 ▪ Appointment of Senior posts (designate) for new Councils by March-May 2010 ▪ Agreed staff transfer scheme by June 2010 ▪ Initial indicators of the level of funding to be made available through the Comprehensive Spending Review for those functions to transfer to local government – October 2010 ▪ Elections to new Councils – May 2011

2.2	<u>Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh</u>
2.2.1	Discussions are ongoing between representatives from the Lisburn/Castlereagh Transition Committee and the Belfast Transition Committee with two constructive meetings held to date including a meeting on the 27 th October, 2009 (a copy of the minute of the meeting is attached at Appendix 1).
2.2.2	The purpose of these meetings is to identify and discuss those transition related issues which need to be addressed and to explore how such issues could be taken forward through formal engagement between both Transition Committees with a shared view to ensuring service continuity for the citizen.
2.2.3	At the meeting on 27 th October, 2009 an initial programme of scoping work was agreed (copy attached at Appendix 2) which would inform future discussions between both Transition Committees. Relevant reports will be submitted to the Committee for consideration as the discussions with Lisburn and Castlereagh Transition Committee move forward.
2.2.4	In considering the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Bill (which will bring into effect the Statutory Transition Committees), the Committee for the Environment agreed that there must be direct political representation from Castlereagh and Lisburn councils on the incoming Belfast 'Statutory' Transition Committee which is to come into effect in early 2010.
2.2.5	Officials from the Department of the Environment have been tasked with working up the mechanism and model through which this representation would be secured and the Minister will be issuing instructions in this regard. A separate report on this issue is to be considered later in the Agenda.
2.3	<u>Engagement with Transferring Function Departments</u>
2.3.1	Members will note that each of the key Transferring Function Departments has nominated senior officials (refer to Appendix 3) to engage with the Council in taking forward detailed consideration and discussions in regard to the transfer and assimilation of functions. Council officers are currently engaging with these officials to map out the key issues which need to be addressed in moving forward and it would be the intention that a detailed report will be submitted for the consideration of the Committee in early 2010.
2.3.2	At a regional level the Chief Executive chairs a Transfer of Functions Working Group which has been established under the auspices of the Regional Transition Co-ordination Group, to examine and provide clarity on the detail of the agreed suite of functions transferring to local government (refer to Appendix 4). As this detail emerges, further reports will be submitted for the consideration of the Committee.
2.4	<u>Community Planning</u>
2.4.1	Members will be aware that one of the key proposals of the RPA is the introduction of community planning. Community planning is the process whereby councils, statutory bodies, agency bodies and sectors work together to develop and implement a shared vision of promoting the well-being of their area and pave the way for the most efficient use of scarce resources.
2.4.2	In 2011, the Executive will introduce legislation making community planning a statutory responsibility. The legislation will place a duty on local councils to lead the process and on other public bodies to participate and promote community planning. Through the priorities which Members have already set for the Council, the organisation has been putting in place many of the foundations upon which an effective community planning process can be built. In particular partnerships have been developed around key issues that will impact upon well-being such as community safety, good relations and health improvement.
2.4.3	Moreover the Council is working to improve the ways in which it engages with local people to inform the way plans are developed and to create robust local information systems that have the potential to provide the kind of evidence that will help prioritise local issues and address local needs. Discussions that Members have had about the potential to support regeneration and development across the city on a North, South, East and West basis must also be built upon to progress meaningful areas-based planning in a way that is connected to the resources that are available and the most deliverable opportunities that exist. However, community planning will present a number of challenges for this and other Council's including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the development of effective partnership and governance arrangements at all levels; ▪ ensuring effective representation across the various stakeholders and sectors; ▪ creating effective plans that are linked to available resources and for which there is clear accountability; ▪ ensuring the maximum appropriate and effective level of involvement of communities; ▪ ensuring that implementation makes a real impact on the ground and that the process does not become an end in itself.
2.4.4	Emerging guidance from the Strategic Leadership Board that is overseeing the progress of the RPA at a regional level is that a foundation programme to address the range of issues associated with community planning will be rolled out to support its introduction in 2011. This programme will aim to support transition committees to prepare for the introduction of the community planning duty and identify the key issues that should be addressed in guidance which will be developed to support its implementation. It is anticipated that the Council in developing its own thinking around community planning will have the opportunity to avail of this programme.
2.4.5	In order to explore these issues with Members in more depth we propose that we will engage with party groups to seek their views on the issues involved with a view to taking a more detailed report back to the Committee to agree a project plan for taking forward the issue of community planning and agreeing key principles which will allow us to communicate in a more effective fashion with the numerous stakeholders who are already seeking the Council's view.
2.5	<u>Local Government Reform Joint Forum (HR)</u>
2.5.1	Clearly there a number of very important HR related matters which need to be progressed as a matter of urgency (e.g. agreed process for filling posts in new organisations; staff transfers schemes; staff severance) with greater clarity required in regard to how and when such critical issues are to be addressed.
2.5.2	Members will be aware that a new HR Local Government Reform Joint Forum (LGRJF) has been established (comprising of representatives from the Employers and Trade Union Sides) to take forward detailed consideration and negotiation on HR matters and to develop detailed guidance on how councils and Transition Committees should address such issues in the lead up to the RPA. Both Cllr Tom Hartley and the Head of Human Resources are represented on this Forum nominated by the Joint National Council (JNC) and Northern Ireland Joint Council (NIJC) respectively. A copy of the latest communications bulletin released by the Joint Forum is attached at Appendix 5). Members will be kept fully informed of the discussions and emerging guidance prepared by the Joint Forum.

3.0 Resource Implications

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

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (a) note the contents of this report
- (b) consider and agree the proposal to hold a series of party group briefings to seek members views on Community Planning (refer to 2.4.5)

5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Minutes of joint meeting between Lisburn/Castlereagh Transition Committee and Belfast Transition Committee

Appendix 2: Initial programme of work for Joint Transition Committees

Appendix 3: Transferring Functions Departmental nominations

Appendix 4: Agreed Transfer of Functions recommendations

Appendix 5: Local Government Reform Joint Forum Communications Bulletin 4 (October 09)

Joint meeting between representatives of the Belfast Transition Committee
and the Lisburn/Castlereagh Transition Committee

Tuesday, 27th October, 2009
Held in the Lavery Room, City Hall, Belfast

Elected Members present: Belfast City Council
Councillor Hartley (Chairman); and
Councillors Attwood, Hendron, Newton and
Rodgers.
Lisburn City/Castlereagh Borough Council
Aldermen Porter and Rice; and Councillors
Craig, Hanvey, Henderson and Walker.

Apology: Councillor Crozier.

In attendance: Belfast City Council Representatives
Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Improvement;
Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mr. K. Heaney, RPA Change Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator (minutes).
Lisburn and Castlereagh Representatives
Castlereagh Borough Council
Mr. E. Patterson, Acting Chief Executive,
Lisburn City Council
Mr. J. Rose, Director of Leisure Services;
Mr. C. McClintock, Director of Environmental Services;
Miss E. Shields, Assistant Director of Corporate Services; and
Mr R. Jackson, Change Manager.

1.0	Context
1.1	<p>The chairman set out the context of the meeting which was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“discuss and identify those Review of Public Administration (RPA) transitional related issues which need to be jointly progressed and examine the associated governance arrangements and process necessary to ensure that such issues are taken forward in an effective and timely manner;</i> ▪ <i>joint aim is to ensure service continuity throughout the RPA process and, where possible, support service improvement for the citizen; and</i> ▪ <i>recognise that these discussions are taking place within the context of any final decision being taken by the Environment Minister and NI Executive with regard to the proposed revised Local Government Boundaries”</i>
1.2	The Group approved the context of the meeting.
2.0	Proposed Governance Arrangements
2.1	Mr. Millar submitted for the Group’s consideration a diagram showing the proposed Governance arrangements for the joint Transition Committee Forum, which was similar to the operation of Councils and Committees whereby officials would be tasked with compiling necessary reports for the consideration and direction of elected Members.

	It was proposed that a Joint Management Team be given responsibility for taking forward a politically agreed programme of joint work with any emerging reports being submitted to the joint meetings of the Transition Committees for consideration.																		
2.2	Councillor Craig pointed out that, during a recent visit by the Environment Minister to the Lisburn/Castlereagh Transition Committee, the Minister had indicated that he would be submitting proposals for a reformed Statutory Transition Committee for Belfast which would have direct political representation from both Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Councils.																		
2.3	Whilst it was accepted that the proposed Governance arrangements might have to be changed when Transition Committees are given a statutory basis, it was agreed that there was no reason at this stage why some issues could not be brought forward through the proposed joint management team on the understanding that there were a number of matters on which no decisions could be taken since there was no statutory authority to do so. It was agreed that such preparatory work would enable a more informed discussion on key issues to be undertaken at a later stage.																		
2.5	<p>The Group agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to approve the draft Governance Arrangements; • agree that officers from the three councils work collaboratively to examine relevant transitional related issues; and • that meetings of the Joint Management Team be attended by both Change Managers and, given the time commitment involved and dependent upon the types of issues to be discussed at each of the meetings, that it be a matter for each of the 3 Chief Executives to decide on a meeting by meeting basis which other officers should attend. 																		
3.0	Short/Medium-Term Actions and Indicative Programme of Work																		
3.1	Mr. Millar indicated that there was a number of short to medium-term actions which the Joint Committee could begin to address and he submitted for the Group's approval the following indicative programme of work:																		
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Deliverables</th> <th>Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Consider and agree proposed governance arrangements for taking forward consideration of Transition related issues.</td> <td>27 October 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Agree schedule of joint meetings between Transition Committees</td> <td>27 October 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Agree indicative programme of work</td> <td>27 October 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Agree a process for taking forward joint communications activities; identifying the key milestones in the process, the key messages which need to be conveyed and the proposed methods of delivery. Submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.</td> <td>December 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Undertake a service audit and examine potential harmonisation issues and submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.</td> <td>December 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Undertake a detailed Asset and Liabilities Audit and submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.</td> <td>December 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Examine potential staff transfer issues (taking into account wider discussions and emerging Guidance released by the Local Government Reform Joint Forum) and submit a report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.</td> <td>February 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8. Examine the potential financial implications (including the impact on the rate) resulting from the proposed boundary changes and identify possible options for how these issues could be addressed. Submit a report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.</td> <td>February 2010</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Deliverables	Date	1. Consider and agree proposed governance arrangements for taking forward consideration of Transition related issues.	27 October 2009	2. Agree schedule of joint meetings between Transition Committees	27 October 2009	3. Agree indicative programme of work	27 October 2009	4. Agree a process for taking forward joint communications activities; identifying the key milestones in the process, the key messages which need to be conveyed and the proposed methods of delivery. Submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.	December 2009	5. Undertake a service audit and examine potential harmonisation issues and submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.	December 2009	6. Undertake a detailed Asset and Liabilities Audit and submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.	December 2009	7. Examine potential staff transfer issues (taking into account wider discussions and emerging Guidance released by the Local Government Reform Joint Forum) and submit a report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.	February 2010	8. Examine the potential financial implications (including the impact on the rate) resulting from the proposed boundary changes and identify possible options for how these issues could be addressed. Submit a report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.	February 2010
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	Mr Millar stated that if the Group was minded to agree the Work Programme then the Joint Management Team, which had been approved as part of the Governance Arrangements,																		

	would undertake a scoping and baseline assessment exercise in relation to items 4-6 and would report back to the Group in December, with a further report on items 7-8 being submitted to its February, 2010 meeting.
3.2	A Member suggested that consideration also be given to ongoing and future regeneration schemes and other capital related commitments.
3.3	Several Members referred to the difficulties that Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Council faced in relation to the boundaries and other issues since both had to agree their own positions as well as agreeing a joint position through their Transition Committee. Therefore, any views of the representatives on the Joint Group would only be indicative.
3.4	The view was expressed for the need to communicate, at an early stage, to the staff of all 3 Councils the fact that both voluntary Transition Committees are proactively engaging on transitional related issues and have agreed an indicative programme of work.
3.5	The Group approved the indicative programme of work and agreed that correspondence, signed by the Chairmen of both Transition Committees, be forwarded to all members of staff of the 3 Councils setting out the fact that both voluntary Transition Committees are proactively engaging on transitional related issues through the Joint Committee Forum and that an indicative programme of work has been agreed..
4.0	Engagement with the Department of the Environment
4.1	Mr McNaney emphasised the need for the Group to engage with the Department of the Environment and suggested that officials from the Department be invited to a future meeting so that the Members could seek clarification on a number of issues such as the transfer of assets, liabilities and staffing as well as exploring options around potential rates support..
4.2	The Group agreed that officials of the Department of the Environment be invited to the February 2010 meeting of the Group.

Lisburn/Castlereagh and Belfast Transition Committee Indicative Programme of Work (Version 1)

RAG KEY:	Delivery on schedule	Delivery likely, however, some minor issues need to be addressed.	Delivery unlikely with immediate correction action required
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	DELIVERABLES	OCT 2009	NOV 2009	DEC 2009	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	STATUS -RAG-
Governance	1. Consider and agree proposed governance arrangements for taking forward consideration of Transition related issues.	27 th					
	2. Agree schedule of joint meetings between Transition Committees	27 th					
	3. Agree indicative programme of work	27 th					
Scoping and Baseline	4. Agree a process for taking forward joint communications activities; identifying the key milestones in the process, the key messages which need to be conveyed and the proposed methods of delivery. Submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.						
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	8. Examine the potential financial implications (including the impact on the rate) resulting from the proposed boundary changes and identify possible options for how these issues could be addressed. Submit a report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.						

**Nominated Departmental Officials from
Transferring Function Departments**

Department	Representative(s)
Department for Social Development	Jackie Johnson, Diorector BRO Elaine Wilkinson, Director BRO
Department for Regional Development Roads Service	Mr Tom McCourt, Divisional Roads Manager for Eastern Division
Department of the Environment Planning Service	Neil Dunlop, Divisional Planning Manager: Belfast Division.

**From the office of the
Minister of the Environment**



Department of the
Environment

www.doeni.gov.uk

Councillor John Mathews
NILGA President
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Telephone: 028 9054 1166

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Your reference:

Our reference: COR/275/09

Dear John

29 September 2009

You will be aware that the Local Government Reform Executive Sub Committee, which I chair, met on Tuesday 15 September 2009. I will update you on our discussions at the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) meeting on 16 October. In the interim, I thought it would be helpful to write to you and provide a brief résumé of the key points the Sub Committee agreed.

We discussed the recommendations, outlined in Arnold Hatch's letter and enclosures dated 30 April 2009, about the marginal changes to the package of functions announced for transfer, from central to local government, in the Assembly on 31 March 2008. You will recall that the key areas involved were the public realm aspects of local roads functions (Department for Regional Development), "Living Over the Shop" grant scheme (Department for Social Development), and Travellers' Transit Sites (also Department for Social Development). I can confirm that:-

- Minister Murphy has accepted local government's proposal that the following public realm functions should transfer (pedestrian permits, alley gating, permitting local events on roads, off street car parking and on street parking enforcement). This is subject to his Department retaining policy ownership of the on street parking enforcement function;
 - Minister Murphy has also confirmed that he is content for his Department to retain the following functions which local government advocated should not transfer (maintenance of amenity areas, salting of footways, grass cutting/weed spraying, gully emptying and street lighting);
 - Minister Ritchie has accepted the local government proposal that the "Living Over the Shop" grant scheme should transfer; and
 - Minister Ritchie has not accepted the sector's recommendation that Travellers' Transit Sites function should remain with the NIHE.
-

I know that Minister Ritchie has carefully considered the views of local government on the Travellers' Transit Sites issue but is not convinced by the argument that the transfer of responsibility for this function would adversely impact on the traveller community. Indeed, the new councils will have a responsibility equal to that of the NIHE to protect the rights of minority groups. The Executive Sub Committee supports Minister Ritchie's position.

The Sub Committee also received an update on current thinking on community planning and the programme of activities involved in supporting its introduction in 2011. I emphasised the strong views, expressed by SLB members, about the need for Departments to commit to engaging with local government as the programme progresses. I can confirm that Executive Sub Committee members do appreciate the importance of community planning and expressed their full support to the required engagement between central and local government as implementation of the programme is taken forward. I will also write to all other Ministerial colleagues seeking their commitment to this engagement process.

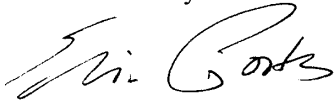
I updated the Sub Committee on the work that is being taken forward, through the assessment of options for local government service delivery project, to support a bid to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) for funding of our implementation programme. I explained that it was likely to be mid October of this year before PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) had completed the economic appraisal of delivery options and SLB had the opportunity to consider the key findings. The Sub Committee members are all well aware of the budgets constraints that the Executive is working within and the many competing priorities for resources. It is clear that DFP will require a very clear assessment of the costs and benefits of implementation along with details of how these pressures might be funded. We agreed, therefore, that it would be helpful to let Ministers have sight of the PwC report as soon as possible.

The Sub Committee also discussed the issue of transfer arrangements for civil servants whose functions will transfer to local government in 2011. We reviewed the arguments for and against the two main options i.e. permanent transfer and temporary transfer arrangements based on those applied in the case of the Department of Health Social Service and Public Safety (DHSSPS) staff whose functions transferred to the new Health and Social Care bodies on 1 April 2009. We noted that the intention is for similar arrangements as those applied in the Health sector to be adopted by the new Education and Skills Authority – due to be established in January 2010.

Our view is that temporary transfer arrangements would have a number of advantages, particularly in terms of flexibility in managing the workforce and thus is consistent with the Executive's commitment to make every effort to avoid redundancy costs and it also facilitates business continuity. It was decided that the temporary transfer model that applied to DHSSPS staff will, therefore, be the starting position for the central government representatives in discussions and negotiations at the Local Government Reform Joint Forum.

I do hope you find this update helpful. I am copying this letter to SLB members for information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin Poots". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edwin" and the last name "Poots" clearly distinguishable.

EDWIN POOTS MLA
Minister of the Environment

ORIGINAL FUNCTIONS PROPOSED TO TRANSFER as AT 31st MARCH 08

- **Planning:** local development plan functions, development control and enforcement.
- **Public Realm aspects of Local Roads**
 - streetscaping;
 - town and city centre environmental improvements;
 - grass cutting and weed spraying;
 - gully emptying;
 - street lighting;
 - off-street parking;
 - pedestrian permits;
 - maintenance of amenity areas;
 - alley-gating (traffic regulation orders facilitating alley-gating to avoid antisocial behaviour);
 - permitting local events to be held on roads; and
 - salting of footways.
- **Urban Regeneration and Community Development:**
 - functions associated with physical development (such as environmental improvement schemes, comprehensive development and urban development grant)
 - area based regeneration (such as neighbourhood renewal)
 - some community development programmes for the voluntary and community sectors.
- **Housing:**
 - registration of houses in multiple occupation
 - housing unfitness responsibilities, including repair and demolition notices
 - energy conservation at local level
 - responsibility for travellers' transit sites.
- **Local Economic Development** (transfer from Invest NI):
 - Start a Business Programme and Enterprise Shows
 - Youth Entrepreneurship (such as Prince's Trust and Shell Livewire)
 - Social Entrepreneurship
 - Investing for Women
 - Neighbourhood Renewal funding relating to enterprises initiatives.
- **Local Tourism:**
 - small scale tourism accommodation development
 - local tourism marketing
 - local tourism product development
 - Visitor Servicing
 - Providing business support including business start up advice along with training and delivery of customer care schemes; and
 - providing advice to developers on tourism policies and related issues.
- Delivery of the EU Rural Development Programme;
- Authority to Spot List to enable Councils to add a building to the statutory list on a temporary basis, subject to ratification by the DOE;
- Authority to draw up local lists of buildings that are of architectural and/or historic interest;
- Armagh County Museum;
- local water recreational facilities;
- local sports;
- functions of the NI Museum Council;
- local arts;
- local festivals; and
- Donaghadee Harbour

MARGINAL CHANGES TO TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

The following changes were agreed by the Executive Sub-Committee in **September 2009**

Department for Regional Development

Minister Murphy has now approved the transfer of the following public realm functions –

- Pedestrian permits
- Alley Gating
- Permitting events on local roads
- Off street parking and;
- On street car parking enforcement.

Minister Murphy has indicated that the decision to transfer on street parking enforcement is subject to his Department retaining policy ownership for this function.

Department for Social Development

- Living over the Shop (LOTS) is a Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) initiative which is intended to encourage people to live in properties over shops in certain areas of town centre regeneration within certain towns and cities. Minister Ritchie has approved the transfer of the Living over the Shop Scheme from Central to Local Government.
- Responsibility for provision of travellers Transit sites should transfer to the new councils. There is a degree of commonality between Transit Sites and the Councils' existing responsibilities for caravan and amenity areas and it would be more closely related to the Councils' Environmental Health responsibilities.
- The Housing Executive will retain responsibility for permanent housing, group housing and serviced sites.

The Transfer of Functions Working Group will now reconstitute in order to provide clarity on the detail of the revised suite of functions transferring from Central to Local Government.

LGRJF

Local Government Reform Joint Forum

JOINT COMMUNICATION BULLETIN

CIRCULAR LGRJF/01—VACANCY CONTROL SYSTEM AND CIRCULAR LGRJF/02 LOCAL CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION FORUMS

Circular LGRJF/01 was agreed by the Joint Forum and issued by the Local Government Staff Commission as a statutory recommendation for adoption by councils from 1 October 2009.

In accordance with the NI Executive's Guiding Principles all employing authorities should immediately engage

with their local NIJC recognised Trade Unions to consider application and implementation arrangements and in accordance with the provisions of Circular LGRJF/02

The Joint Forum, in liaison with the Staff Commission, are currently examining the structure of the 'at risk'

group and will issue an Information Bulletin in the near future to provide further guidance on the application of Vacancy Controls to the 'at risk' group.

Further advice will be issued as necessary.

AWARENESS SEMINAR—HR IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES THURSDAY 10 AND FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER 2009

The Joint Forum, in partnership with the Staff Commission, SOLACE and the Public Service Commission, are facilitating an event focusing on reform implementation issues.

The event will be held on Thursday 10 and Friday 11 December 2009. More details will be available shortly.

The seminar will be an opportunity for chief executives, senior managers, HR managers and trade union representatives to consider aspects of the work of the Joint Forum including:

- Vacancy Controls
- Establishment of the Local Forum
- Staff Severance Scheme
- Filling Posts in the New Organisations

COMMUNICATING HR ISSUES TO STAFF

Councils are encouraged to circulate copies of the Joint Communication Bulletin to all employees including those on any form of leave from the organisation eg long-term sickness, maternity leave, secondments and any agreed career breaks. Relevant employment legislation must be taken into account e.g. in relation to maternity leave.

CHANGES TO JOINT FORUM MEMBERSHIP

Wesley Shannon, newly appointed Director of Local Government Policy Division, will replace Ian Maye and represent the NICS on the Employers' Side.

"...facilitating local government reorganisation...."

Priority Issues for the Joint Forum:

Local Government RPA Staff Severance Scheme

System for Filling Posts in the New Council Structures

Staff Transfer Scheme

Consultation and Negotiating Arrangements Post 2011

Contact Details:

Independent Secretariat (LGSC):
Commission House
18-22 Gordon Street
Belfast, BT1 2LG
Tel No. (028) 90313200
Email: lgrjf@lgsc.org.uk



INFORMATION ON THE JOINT FORUM

More on the Joint Forum can be accessed on the dedicated web page at:

<http://www.lgsc.org.uk/new-initiatives/local-government-reform-joint-forum/>

The following details are now available for information:

Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements

Agreed Minutes

Membership Details

Joint Communication Bulletins

Agreed Circulars

The next Joint Forum meeting will be held on

Wednesday 4 November 2009

*“...facilitating local
government
reorganisation...”*

JOINT COMMUNICATION BULLETIN

RPA STAFF SEVERANCE SCHEME FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Joint Forum agreed to establish a short-life Task Group to develop an RPA Staff Severance Scheme that will apply to all local government staff under the scope of the Forum, i.e:

- 26 district councils (including Environmental Health and Building Control Group Committees)
- Arc21 and SWaMP 2008
- Any staff employed by Transition Committees
- Staff in the 11 new councils

The Group has met on two occasions and considerable progress has been made and Forum members considered a further draft of the Scheme at the meeting held on 14 October 2009. The Scheme is based on the provisions of the NI Executive's 5th Guiding Principle as recommended by the Public Service Commission 'Voluntary Severance Arrangements'.

It was agreed that following a meeting with NILGOSC to discuss pension issues the Scheme could be finalised and issued by early November. It will be available for use from the date of Agreement, however, the introduction of Severance will be phased and expressions of interest will be invited from specific groups of staff at the appropriate time in the phasing process.

AT THE MEETING ON 14 OCTOBER 2009 THE FOLLOWING PROGRESS WAS ALSO MADE:

Filling Posts in the New Organisations

Members have considered an early draft of a system for filling posts in the new council structures. The Joint Forum has requested further legal advice specifically to address concerns on the use of restricted recruitment pools and the equality implications thereof.

Work is currently progressing on the preparation of a draft, generic job descriptions and person specifications for the new chief executive posts.

A Project Plan in relation to the filling of the chief executives posts is currently being prepared by the Secretariat.

LGRJF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM JOINT FORUM

facilitating local government reorganisation

Independent Secretariat (LGSC)

Adrian Kerr

Linda Leahy

Diana Stewart

Lisa O'Neill



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Date:	Friday, 20th November, 2009
Subject:	Northern Ireland Office Consultation on the Filling of Casual Vacancies on District Councils
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)
Contact Officer:	Mrs. Julie Lilley, Members' Liaison Officer (extension 6321)

Purpose of Report

To submit for the consideration of the Committee a report regarding the consultation paper which has been issued by the Northern Ireland Office entitled 'Filling Casual Vacancies on District Councils'.

Summary of the Consultation Document

The consultation paper seeks to examine proposals for reforming the process used currently in Northern Ireland for the filling of casual vacancies arising on District Councils in light of the implementation of the Review of Public Administration in 2011 and the reduction in the number of Councils from 26 to 11. In addition, the paper also looks at the impact of the possible introduction of a Severance Scheme for Members in advance of the next Local Government elections and how co-options should be dealt with in this context.

Key Issues

Introduction

Casual vacancies arising in District Councils in Northern Ireland can be filled by means of co-option. In most circumstances, District Councils have generally acted within the spirit of the legislation and co-opted a replacement from the same Political Party as the vacating Member, thereby maintaining the Party balance on the Council. However, there have been recent occasions when failure to agree on co-option has led to by-elections, which have resulted in costs accruing to the ratepayer. Because proportional representation is the method used to count votes polled in Local Government in Northern Ireland, by-elections are likely to be won by a candidate from the strongest Party within an Electoral Area and not necessarily by the Party which had won the seat

in the original electoral contest.

These two issues – cost and maintaining political balance as determined by the electorate – will be even more important following the Review of Public Administration and the Northern Ireland Office has put forward a number of alternatives and options for change.

Other Methods for Filling Vacancies Identified in the Consultation Paper

Amend Requirement for Unanimous Agreement to Co-option

Although strictly speaking not an alternative to co-option, this method would involve relaxing the requirement for unanimous agreement to be achieved before a co-option can take place. Instead, a percentage threshold for agreement could be introduced to ensure that a relatively small number of dissenting Members could not prevent a co-option. However, it must be borne in mind that even with this change to the current procedures there would remain scope for a dominant Party to manipulate this rule to its advantage.

Party Nomination

In February 2009, changes were made to the method of filling vacancies arising in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The new method provides for the Nominating Officer of the Political Party to which the vacating Member belonged at the time of the original election to nominate a replacement to fill the vacant seat. Independent Members may provide the Chief Electoral Officer with a list of up to six substitutes who will be asked, in ranked order, to fill the seat in the event that it is a position held by an Independent Member which becomes vacant. Similar changes are also being progressed for the filling of vacant Northern Ireland seats in the European Parliament.

The Countback Method

In certain other jurisdictions the “countback” method of filling vacancies is used. This generally involves the re-examining of the ballots cast at the previous election, but under the assumption that the vacating Member was eliminated, in order to identify who the electorate’s next preferred candidate would have been. Alternatively, the vacating Member’s individual ballot papers can be re-examined, with the next preferred candidate invited to fill the vacant seat. This method is used currently in some Australian states and in the Maltese Parliament. Such a system would not be guaranteed to yield a reliable result since presumptions of voters intentions must be made which may not be accurate.

Options for Reform

A key objective for the filling of vacancies arising in District Councils is to ensure that the balance of representation secured at the time of the election is maintained. This allows Councils to continue to reflect the values and aspirations of the communities they serve. By-elections can potentially distort this balance and the aim is to minimise these as far as possible. The options below set out potential alternatives to by-elections:

- A.** retain the current co-option method
- B.** amend the current co-option method to introduce a percentage threshold of agreement from Members of a District Council before a co-option can take place
- C.** replace the current co-option method with a Party Nomination system
- D.** adopt the ‘Countback’ Method selecting the next preferred candidate.

It would appear that the most fair and equitable option of those listed above is Option C, the Party Nomination system. However, to ensure that electoral primacy is maintained it will be important to have clarity and rules as to how Party nominations are managed where a vacating Member has changed Political affiliation during the term of the Council. It would seem that the most obvious solution, should this situation arise, would be to ask the Nominating Officer of the Political Party to which the vacating Member belonged at the time he or she was elected to nominate a replacement, particularly since it is evident that voters in Northern Ireland tend to be swayed more by the Parties to which candidates belong rather than the individual views of the candidates themselves.

In order to ensure that Party nominations are managed and controlled effectively within each Council, it would be appropriate that nominations be sought from a Party representative within the affected Local Authority.

Short-term Legislative Reform

Severance Scheme for Members

The Department of the Environment undertook recently a consultation on proposed severance arrangements for Councillors. The Department indicated strongly that the introduction of a Severance Scheme for Members should be accompanied by a reform of the system for filling vacancies on District Councils partly because of the potential to have large numbers of Councillors choosing to retire on or before the reduction in the number of District Councils and the possibility of numerous resulting by-elections. The Northern Ireland Office is strongly of the opinion that, should a Severance Scheme be introduced in advance of the May 2011 Local Government Elections, special provision would be required to deal with vacancies arising from Members availing of the scheme.

Alternatives to By-Elections

The consultation paper presents two options in relation to how to deal with vacancies should a Severance Scheme for Members be introduced in the short term. These are:

1. allow the current co-option rules to apply but carry vacancies until the next election if any co-option fails; or
2. carry all vacancies until the next election.

Option 1 would avoid the need for costly by-elections and all the associated administration which needs to be put in place. In Belfast the existing co-option policy has worked well and has been accepted by all the Political Parties as the most efficient and democratic way to deal with vacancies arising.

Option 2 could result in some Councils having to operate for a period prior to 2011 with a severely reduced number of Members. However, the consultation paper suggests that a solution could be to introduce a provision to ensure that membership of a Council does not drop below two thirds in the period prior to the elections in 2011.

Given the level of support which has been shown by Parties in respect of the Council's co-option policy, of the two options suggested in the consultation paper, Option 1 would appear to offer the best process for the period up until May 2011. However, the timing of the introduction of the Severance Scheme will impact upon this. If the Severance Scheme were to be introduced so that it is available for a specified period of time, then a situation could arise where one Party on a Council could gain agreement to co-options for any of its Members who wished to resign and at a later stage object to co-options proposed by another Political Party, which would mean that the vacancies could not be filled and the second Party would have to operate with a reduced number

of representatives. Clearly this would be anti-democratic and, while it may not be likely to happen – certainly in Belfast City Council, where the voluntary co-option policy has been operated successfully and fairly by all the Parties for many years – nevertheless it would appear to represent an anomaly which would be best avoided. This could be achieved by introducing the Severance Scheme in such a way that applications would have to be received by a particular date so that all vacancies arising would occur on the same day. The Council would then have to decide whether it wished to approve all or none of the casual vacancies arising from the Severance Scheme.

On the other hand, on the basis that the Party Nomination system can be recognised and acknowledged as being the most appropriate option for dealing with casual vacancies within a Council following the Review of Public Administration, and as no justifiable reason is provided as to why this system could not be applied in the interim period, I would take the view that this should be the process adopted as the Council's preferred option for the period up until May 2011.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to the comments outlined in this report being submitted to the Northern Ireland Office as the Council's formal response on the filling of casual vacancies on District Councils.

Decision Tracking

Officer responsible: Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services

Date action to be completed by: Following approval at Council on 1st December, the Council's response will be submitted to the Northern Ireland Office.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Transition Committee
Date:	20th November, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services
Contact Officer:	Robin Boyd (extension 6323)

Relevant Background Information

Transition Committees have been established and are operating on a voluntary basis.

The previous Environment Minister, Sammy Wilson, gave approval for the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to be designated as Belfast's Review of Public Administration Transition Committee.

There has been engagement by officers and Members from Belfast with the Castlereagh/Lisburn Transition Committee to discuss issues of mutual concern in relation to the run up to the implementation of the Review of Public Administration.

Key Issues

The draft Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill makes provision for the setting up of Statutory Transition Committees. Emerging from this Bill, the new Environment Minister, Edwin Poots, will have the power to make directions in regard to the establishment and membership of the Statutory Transition Committees.

While the Council has already submitted a response to the Bill, there are a number of points which it would be important to make at this stage of the process.

- 1) In considering the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Bill, the Committee for the Environment agreed that there must be direct political representation from Castlereagh and Lisburn Councils on the incoming Belfast 'Statutory' Transition Committee. Department of the Environment officials have been tasked with working up the mechanism and model through which this representation will be secured and the Minister will be issuing instructions in this regard.
- 2) Since the proposed areas to be transferred do not consist of complete Electoral Areas and in some cases include only portions of existing Wards, there is no clear means to identify the political make-up of these areas. It is important that Councillors from Castlereagh and Lisburn appointed to the Belfast Transition Committee should represent, as far as possible, the

political makeup of the areas to be transferred. Such representation would have to be determined by the two Councils concerned.

- 3) All Members of the Transition Committee will enjoy full voting rights.
- 4) There should be no dual membership of Transition Committees.
- 5) To date, the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has acted as the Belfast Transition Committee but the legislative requirements for the appointment of the Statutory Transition Committee are likely to require that the Committee will have to be reconstituted on a one-off basis and for a period to run until the Local Government Elections currently scheduled to be held in May, 2011.

Options for Representation on the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee

The Boundaries Commission recommendations (which have yet to be confirmed) would result in an anticipated change in electorate which would see Belfast increase from approximately 158,000 (currently) to 190,400 (post RPA). This represents an increase in the Council's electorate of approximately 17%.

Early indications from Department of the Environment officials are that Belfast would be permitted to retain its current number of representatives on the Transition Committee (that is, twenty Members) and that the representation from Castlereagh and Lisburn Councils would be additional to this. It has been suggested that the additional representation from Castlereagh and Lisburn Councils would be either two or three Members. This would result in a Belfast Transitional Committee comprising either 24 or 26 Members.

The additional Membership from the other two Council areas could reasonably be based on the percentage electorate to be transferred to Belfast.

The electorate within the proposed additional areas to be transferred are:-

14,000 (approx.) from Castlereagh

18,400 (approx) from Lisburn

Representation from Castlereagh and Lisburn Councils on the new Belfast Council would, as has already been mentioned, comprise approximately 17% of the total electorate of the proposed new Council area. The breakdown of this representation in terms of the electorate would be approximately for Belfast 158,000 (82.99%), for Castlereagh 14,000 (7.35%) and for Lisburn 18,400 (9.66%).

Accordingly, based on the electorate to be transferred, the number of representatives from Castlereagh should be 1.76 (rounded up to 2) and from Lisburn should be 2.32 (rounded down to 2). This would result in a Belfast Transition Committee of 24 Members. However, the Department of the Environment officials have indicated that it is likely that 3 Members may be appointed from each of the other Councils, which would mean that 26 Members would sit on Belfast Transition Committee, resulting in a significant minority of Members from outside Belfast. The justification which there might be for this level of representation is not clear, but the final decision will rest with the Minister.

The political balance of the Committee will of necessity be affected by the inclusion of representatives from the other two Councils.

All options would require a review of the membership and governance arrangements for the Transition Committee. Issues such as a protocol for Council ratification of decisions, delegation of decision making, and election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman will require to be addressed.

Resource Implications

None.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the comments set out in this report be forwarded to the Minister for the Environment requesting that he consider the points raised when issuing direction on the appointment of the Statutory Transition Committee for Belfast.

Decision Tracking

Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services
2nd December, 2009

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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, 20 th November, 2009
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

Members will recall that the Committee, at its meeting on 26th September, 2003, agreed to the criteria which would be used to assess requests from external organisations for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality. Subsequently the Committee at its meeting on 7th August, 2009, further amended the criteria so as to incorporate the new Key Themes as identified in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Key Issues

The revised criteria has been applied to each of requests contained within the appendix and recommendations have been made to the Committee on this basis.

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

Decision Tracking

If the Committee approves the recommendations, the organisations will be notified and the necessary arrangements put in place following ratification by the Council.

Officer responsible – Gareth Quinn.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Applications

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**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 Tourist Board	Northern Ireland Business Tourism Expo Gala Dinner 15 th January, 2010 Approximately 120 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £480
Business and Professional Women UK Ltd	Annual National Conference Dinner 24 th April, 2010 Approximately 75 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £300
Belfast District of the Methodist Church in Ireland	Methodist Conference Reception 10 th June, 2010 Approximately 250 attending	The provision of hospitality in the form of a finger buffet reception.	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The provision of a finger buffet reception. Approximate cost £2,500
University of Ulster – School of Criminology, Politics and Social Policy	6 th Irish Criminology Conference Dinner 21 st June, 2010 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £600
Queen's University Belfast	Society for Social Medicine Conference Dinner 7 th September, 2010 Approximately 180 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £720

<p>University of Ulster – School of Computing</p>	<p>Computing in Cardiology Conference Dinner 26th September, 2010 Approximately 400 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception.</p>	<p>Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £1,600</p>
<p>The Ulster Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society</p>	<p>Joint Ulster / Canadian Conference Dinner 30th September, 2010 Approximately 100 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.</p>	<p>Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £400</p>
<p>The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Environment and Planning Law Association</p>	<p>Planning and Development Forum – Planning Functions Post RPA 3rd March, 2010 Approximately 150 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>The Review of Public Administration (RPA) represents a fundamental change programme in itself and the transfer of planning functions under RPA is being taken forward as an integral part of the reform programme. As part of RPA the bulk of planning functions will no longer rest with the Planning Service. Instead these powers will be devolved to District Councils which, through their elected representatives, will be responsible and accountable for planning decisions. This event aims to discuss in detail the planning functions which will be devolved and to consider the implications of such for Belfast City Council. Furthermore, due to the importance of this matter, invitations will be extended to all Members of Council The purpose of this event is integral to the future functions of the Council and would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Services – listening and delivering'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>

<p>Belfast Area Domestic Violence Partnership</p>	<p>Launch of the Belfast Area Domestic Violence Partnership</p> <p>26th January, 2010</p> <p>Approximately 70 Attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.</p>	<p>This event will mark the launch of the Belfast Area Domestic Violence Partnership which will aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide integrated and effective services to support victims and their children, • Share best practice, experience and knowledge and • Raising awareness of the impact of domestic violence in the community. <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits .</p> <p>Approximate cost £140</p>
<p>Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister</p> <p>Central Anti-Poverty Unit</p>	<p>Launch of national programme for the 2010 year of combating poverty and social exclusion</p> <p>24th March, 2010</p> <p>Approximately 200 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>This event aims to showcase the work taking place at both a local and regional level to tackle social exclusion and seeks to raise awareness of the initiatives currently in place to tackle poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>
<p>The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants</p>	<p>The President's Dinner and Awards Ceremony</p> <p>16th April, 2010</p> <p>Approximately 120 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.</p>	<p>The Institute aims to promote excellence in Management Accounting and to make a significant contribution to the success of both the private and public sector in Belfast and beyond.</p> <p>This event seeks to recognise the contribution made by individual teachers, training organisations and other organisations in the public and private sectors to the skills and professional standing of Management Accountants.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks.</p> <p>Approximate cost 480</p>

<p>Belfast County Guides</p>	<p>County Awards Ceremony 6th May, 2010 Approximately 150 attending</p>	<p>The use of City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-event drinks reception</p>	<p>Girl Guiding is an international, multi-cultural, inter-denominational organisation for young girls and women which promotes good leadership and citizenship amongst its members. A number of prestigious awards will be presented including the Queen's Guide, Baden Powell for Guides and Long Service for Leaders.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of soft drinks. Approximate cost £300</p>
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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request to use the City Hall for two of the four Belfast Counts in the 2010 Westminster Parliamentary Election
Date:	Friday, 20 th November, 2009
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

The Belfast Area Electoral Officer has submitted a request for the use of accommodation in the City Hall in respect of the Westminster Counts for two of the four Belfast Constituencies, namely, Belfast South and Belfast West.

Key Issues

Members should be aware that the Chief Electoral Officer has made it clear that the Westminster Count will take place through the night following the close of poll. Furthermore, while no definite announcement has been made, it is widely anticipated that the Westminster Election will be held in the Spring of 2010.

Although, in principle, there would appear to be no reason to object to the two Belfast Counts being held within the City Hall, it is important to ensure that the building can accommodate the expected volume of people, along with the technical requirements as outlined by the Electoral Office and that such use would not contravene any of the health and safety measures which are currently in place.

Members will be aware that in 2005 the Westminster Counts for the four Belfast Constituencies were held in the City Hall as no alternative venue was available within the City.

However, Members will also be aware that, at its meeting on 23rd March, 2001, the Committee had decided not to permit the Westminster Counts to be held in the building on the grounds that if the Local Government Elections were to be scheduled on the same date it would be doubtful whether the building would be able to cope with the large number of people who were expected to attend. Therefore, should a Local Government Election be scheduled on the same day as a Westminster Election it would not be appropriate for the City Hall to be used for the counting of the votes in respect of the Westminster Election.

Resource Implications

Any expenditure which is incurred as a result of the Count being held in the City Hall would be recouped from the Electoral Office.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to agree in principle to the use of the City Hall for the Westminster Counts in respect of the constituencies of Belfast South and Belfast West on the condition that the building can accommodate the specific needs of the Electoral Office and that the appropriate health and safety requirements are adhered to. Furthermore, the Count will only be permitted to take place within the building so long as the City Hall is available and that the Local Government Elections are not being held on the same day as the Westminster Elections.

Decision Tracking

If the Committee adopts the recommendation the Electoral Office will be advised of the decision and asked to contact Facilities Management once the date of the Election has been confirmed.

Officer responsible – Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of Staff Travel Policy – Attendance of Members at Conferences
Date:	20th November, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Mr. L. Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services
Contact Officer:	Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator (extension 6313)

Relevant Background Information

The Committee, at its meeting on 24th October, 2008, approved the Policy for Staff Attending Events.

The policy was developed to ensure that the approval and control processes for staff attending training events, conferences, study visits, etc., were robust and that attendance at such events provided value for money for the ratepayers of Belfast.

However, when approving the policy the Committee agreed to the inclusion of the following at paragraph 2.7:

- Any event which is also to be attended by a Councillor must have Committee and Council approval prior to the event.

This has caused difficulties in recent months in that on a number of occasions Chief Officers have been unable to recommend the attendance of Members at conferences/awards ceremonies since notification of the events had not been received in sufficient time for both Committee approval and Council ratification to be obtained.

The Council, at its meeting on 2nd November, agreed that, since the current policy governing the attendance of Members at conferences can in certain circumstances prove unduly restrictive, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to review that policy at an early date.

Key Issues

Whilst it was the intention to devise a robust policy governing the attendance of staff at events, it is the Elected Members who have been curtailed in their attendance at certain events.

For example, if a Chief Officer receives an invitation, at short notice, to attend a ceremony at which a Council Service is due to receive an award and there is insufficient time for both Committee and Council approval to be obtained for the attendance of an Elected Member(s) and appropriate officers, the policy still permits the Chief Officer to authorise the attendance at the event of up to three officers.

Key Issues (continued)

Awards ceremonies, where the work and endeavours of the Council are being recognised, by their very nature involve judging of entries and decisions being reached at a late stage and accordingly there may not always be time to comply with the current terms of the policy as set out in point 2.7. It is inappropriate in these circumstances for the Council not to be represented by Elected Members, who authorise and oversee all work carried out by the Council. Obviously this is an anomaly which the Committee might wish to rectify.

Prior to the introduction of the new policy, the Council had delegated authority to both the Chief Executive, in consultation with the appropriate Committee Chairman, and to all Committees to approve attendance at certain events. If the Committee were minded to reintroduce the delegated authority, then it is recommended that the following would apply:

- Authority be delegated to all Committees to approve attendance at conferences, seminars or similar events in the United Kingdom and Ireland where there is not time for formal Council notification to be obtained; and
- Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the appropriate Committee Chairman, to approve the attendance of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) at any conference, seminar or similar events held in Northern Ireland where there is insufficient time for Committee approval to be obtained.

Resource Implications

There are no human resource or financial implications associated with this report.

Recommendation

It is recommended that, with effect from 2nd December, 2009, authority be delegated as outlined for attendance at events where there is insufficient time for the obtaining of full Committee and Council approval.

Decision Tracking

Officer Responsible: Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources.

Date action to be completed by: The amended policy will be implemented with effect from 2nd December, 2009.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Ciaran Quigley, Director of Legal Services – Ext 6038
Contact Officer:	Blanche Thompson, Play Development Officer – Ext 3524

Purpose of the Report

To provide further information to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in relation to certain matters affecting Members pursuant to the Council Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults.

Relevant Background Information

The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, at its meeting of 18 September 2009, considered a report concerning the provision of training for Elected Members on the Council's revised Policy & Procedures for the Protection of Child and Vulnerable Adults. The Committee adopted the recommendation to include in the Members' Training Plan the provision of awareness sessions on the protection of children and vulnerable adults, and also agreed that a further report on whether Elected Members were required to be screened under the Council's Child Protection Policy be submitted to a future meeting.

Current Position

The policy and procedures for the protection of children and vulnerable adults were adopted by the Council on 3 June 2002. The policy was subsequently reviewed and the revised version was agreed by Council on 1 September 2009.

The policy and procedures provide information and guidelines on:

1. what is abuse
2. recognising signs and symptoms
3. recording and reporting procedures
4. training for staff.

Leisurewatch

The Council agreed at its meeting on 1 September 2009 to become a member of the Leisurewatch scheme. This will involve awareness training for staff regarding adults who may

potentially use public facilities such as leisure centres to gain access to children and young people. A site audit is undertaken, which examines physical, design and security issues and ensures that materials (including signage) are provided in order to confirm that the premises comply with Leisurewatch criteria.

The main difference between Leisurewatch and Child Protection is that the former is about perpetrator awareness. Under this initiative, staff are trained to be aware of potential sex offenders who may come onto the premises to gain access to children. This may include a person hanging around a centre or park specifically at times when children are about. Concerns are fed to the police at an early stage as a precautionary measure. Child Protection deals specifically with the situation where a child or young person may have been harmed or exposed to harm.

Vetting

Following the recommendations of the Bichard Inquiry which reviewed vetting procedures in the United Kingdom, two new systems were introduced replacing the former criminal convictions checks scheme and DHSS checks scheme regarding the Disqualification Lists. A copy of a presentation providing more detailed information on the two new systems is included at Appendix 1.

A. AccessNI

Became operational from 1 April 2008. It provides a more comprehensive system for carrying out checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work directly with children and young people.

B. Vetting and Barring Scheme

Launched in October 2009 and to be rolled out from July 2010. This scheme involves the establishment of a register under the Independent Safeguarding Authority – (ISA). The ISA register will provide a minimum standard and will exclude anyone who has a violent or sexual conviction against a child or vulnerable adult. It will apply to those who have contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Key Issues

Current Procedures

Belfast City Council currently carries out checks on staff and volunteers that directly work with children or vulnerable adults through AccessNI. Belfast City Council will also be required to have the staff and volunteers registered with ISA. AccessNI checks will continue to be carried out on staff and volunteers following the introduction of the ISA register to enable more comprehensive information to be ascertained.

Elected Members

In England and Wales, Elected Members will be required to be ISA registered as Social Services falls within their remit. This currently does not apply to Northern Ireland.

The relevant legislation states that the following will need to be ISA registered:

1. Those individuals who work or manage staff that are considered to be in a regulated position are required to be checked. A number of posts within Belfast City Council would come under the definition of “regulated position”, as they work directly with children and young people.
2. Individuals that may regularly come within a facility defined as a specified place. This includes education facilities and some community services provision where there is a service registered with Social Services (for example pre-school playgroups, after school clubs, SureStart).

The issue of vetting of Elected Members is being considered by other district councils. Both Craigavon Borough Council and Lisburn City Council are currently discussing the possibility of introducing the requirement for Elected Members to be ISA registered. The AccessNI checks would only be applicable if they Members were to work directly with children or vulnerable adults.

The recommendation is to defer a decision until the ISA register is operational as the implementation of the scheme is still in progress. This will enable additional information to be obtained and to ascertain the range and responsibilities of individuals being vetted.

Resource Implications

Financial

To take place within existing resources.

Human Resources

No implication on the current allocation

Asset and Other Implications

There is no impact on any physical BCC asset.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- a) note the contents of the report, and
- b) approve the recommendation to defer a decision regarding the vetting of Elected Members until the ISA register is operational.

Decision Tracking

Key to Abbreviations

ISA – Independent Safeguarding Authority

Documents Attached

Copy of a Presentation on AccessNI and ISA

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New Vetting Procedures

- Previous System
- Bichard Inquiry
- New Procedures
- Access NI
- ISA

Previous System

1. Criminal records checks
2. Checks against
 - a. the Disqualification from Working with Children List [DWC (NI) List] or
 - b. Disqualification from Working Vulnerable Adults List [DWVA (NI) List].

Bichard Inquiry

- Examined
 - effectiveness of relevant intelligence-based record keeping
 - vetting practices
 - information sharing with other agencies.
- Recommendations
 - introduction of new arrangements requiring those who wish to work with children or vulnerable adults to be registered
 - an enhanced system of disclosure

New Procedures

- Access NI
 - Similar to Criminal Record Bureau and Disclosure Scotland
 - Introduced April 2008
- ISA
 - To establish a system of registration
 - To be introduced Autumn 2009

Access NI (ANI)

- A new independent body set up in NI to deal with requests for an individual's criminal history.
- Established by the Northern Ireland Office as a result of the introduction in Northern Ireland of Part V of the Police Act 1997
- Will carry out more comprehensive checks regarding criminal records of those who intend to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Levels of Checks

- Basic
 - Anyone can apply for basic disclosures – employers will need individuals consent to do so.
- Standard
 - Exempted Question (ROA). Anyone with any level of contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- Enhanced
 - Will be working with children (regulated post) or vulnerable adults (care position) within their normal duties as under POCVA.

Disclosures

- Basic Disclosure
 - An individual may apply for their own criminal record certificate which will disclose any unspent convictions recorded on police systems.
- Standard Disclosure
 - Provides criminal record information including spent and unspent convictions and cautions.
 - If the post involves work with vulnerable groups, it will also provide UK Disqualification List information.
 - Does not provide Police soft intelligence information.

Enhanced Disclosures

- Provides UK criminal record including
 - spent convictions
 - UK Disqualification List information
- Provides UK Soft Intelligence
- All regulated positions under the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

- Individuals wanting to work with children and vulnerable adults in either a paid or voluntary capacity must become ISA registered.
- The register would confirm that there is no known reason why an individual should not work with these client groups.

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

- The new register would be administered by a central body, which would take the decision, subject to published criteria, to approve or refuse registration on the basis of all information made available to them by the police and other agencies.
- The responsibility for judging the relevance of police intelligence in deciding a person's suitability will lie with the central body.

ISA Register

- Employers will be unable to employ an individual in either a paid or voluntary capacity unless they are ISA registered.
- Individuals not considered suitable to work with children and young people are barred from the scheme.
 - those barred on current lists
 - individuals will be placed on barred list if convicted or cautioned for certain offences or following a decision by Independent Safeguarding Authority (this may involve use of soft information)

ISA Register

- Barring from Scheme
 - Two categories
 - Appeals **may** be considered after a five or ten years. This is dependent on reason of bar and severity of crime.
- Those who are not members of the scheme
 - those on barred list
 - those who have not applied to be a memberEmployers will not be told which applies – only that a person is not on the list.

ISA

- ANI (Access NI) checks
 - Carried out as part of ISA registration
 - Once registered – ANI checks may still be required
- Continual review of new relevant information
- Enables more up to date risk assessments
- Employer informed

Implications

- Employees (paid or unpaid) who want to work with children or vulnerable adults will have to become registered with ISA
- Cost – may be paid by individual or employer
- Application must be made before starting work
- Need to only apply (and pay) once



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Update on Financial Estimates Process for 2010/11
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources
Purpose	
<p>At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Budget and Transformation Panel in October 2009, Members were informed that the setting of the district rate 2010/11 would be difficult given the current economic climate and the number of factors which would need to be considered. The purpose of this report, as requested by Members, is to outline the process for identifying savings and agreeing the revenue and capital budgets for 2010/11 and to highlight the key issues which Members will need to address as part of this process.</p>	

Key Issues
<p>The following are the key issues which Members will need to consider when setting the rate for 2010/11. More detail will follow on each of these for the December Strategic Policy and Resources meeting.</p> <p>Reserves – at the start of 2009/10 district fund reserves amount to £5.3m. However, during 2009/10 these reserves are planned to fall by £2.4m to subsidise the rate, as was agreed when the rate was set last year. Also, £0.3m has been specified for use on projects which were carried over from 2008/09. We further need to consider the voluntary redundancy exercise in relation to how this will be funded, the payback to the Council and the implications for reserves. Therefore, a key element of the rate setting process will be to agree a strategy to secure the Council's reserves position over the next few years. Members will need to consider the implications for the rates of increasing the level of reserves to a more sustainable level.</p> <p>City Investment Strategy – this was developed by the Council to help deliver Members aspirations by supporting major iconic projects in the city and to act as a mechanism for the Council to help lever additional money into the city.</p> <p>To date, the Council has committed funding to four key iconic projects across the city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Titanic Signature Project - £10m committed (ii) The Mac - £550,000 committed (iii) The Lyric - £1.25m committed (iv) The Connswater Community Greenway - £4.2m committed.

Together these 4 projects have levered in over £153million of investment in the city. The committed cost for the Council (up to 2013) for these four projects is £16m of which nearly £4.5m has so far been raised by 1 April 2009. In December 2007, it was agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the City Investment Strategy would be funded through a 1% increase in the rate over a three period. 2010/11 is the third year of this arrangement and therefore a 1% increase in the rate to cover city investment strategy funding will be required.

Capital Programme – this already has 57 committed schemes which will require financing of up to £56m. Up to now the affordability in terms of borrowing is £45m. In addition, a detailed paper on the capital programme will be presented to Members at today's meeting which will discuss further capital schemes with a potential further financing requirement of up to £35m. A capital financing strategy is currently being prepared for Members consideration which will help them to maximise capital expenditure in a prudent, affordable and sustainable manner. This strategy will be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in December so that it can be considered in the context of the overall rate setting process.

Department Estimates – this is money required by departments to deliver services and typically covers expenditure on headings such as salaries and supplies and services. All departments have prepared a first draft estimate for 2010/11. The key drivers of cost increases are:

- 1.5% increase in salary costs to cover nationally agreed pay rises;
- an increase of £700,000 in employer superannuation contributions;
- loss of external income from fees and charges and investments of over £1m;
- normal inflationary increases based on the Consumer and Retail Price Indices.

As department estimates account for 95% of the Council's expenditure any increase will have a significant impact on the rate and limit Members ability to finance other priority areas such as the capital programme.

Thematic Budget - amounts to £500,000 in 2009/10. This budget was established to help kick start work on thematic priority areas such as safety, health, younger people and older people. This objective has now been achieved and Members may wish to consider realigning this budget to other priority areas such as reserves or the capital programme.

External Factors - As well as considering the internal issues outlined above Members will also have to bear in mind a number of external factors when setting the rate. These will include:

- 2010/11 will be the last year of the three year freeze on the regional rate.
- 2010/11 will be the last rate set before RPA if the timetable goes ahead as planned. At this stage the financial impact of RPA on the Council is unknown both in terms of transferring functions, boundary changes and assets and liabilities.
- The NI economy is still in decline and this may lead to further reduced levels of external income, increased rate write-offs and delays in rationalising assets.

Estimate Penny Product (EPP) – this provides an estimate of what the rates will yield in income for the Council for 2010/11. As the Council is dependent on the district rate for 74% of its income it is essential that an accurate as possible EPP is provided by Land and Property Services (LPS). A first draft EPP has been received from LPS and this shows a 1.2% increase from last year. This is better than expected given the current economic climate and it would appear that the work Council officers are doing in conjunction with LPS to try to maximise the collectable rate is starting to bear fruit. Officers will meet with the LPS over the coming weeks to ensure that the EPP is as accurate as possible before finally being presented to Members in December.

Opportunities for Savings – In summary, setting the rate for 2010/11 will not be a straightforward exercise as there are many competing priorities combined with the need to secure sufficient reserves and ensure financing is available for the capital programme. Three related exercises are therefore currently underway which will identify potential ways of reducing the departmental burden on the rate and provide options for financing other areas of expenditure. These are:

- Voluntary redundancy exercise.
- Mini budget review of budgets, particularly employee costs
- Review of the Centre.

Options in relation to these exercises will be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its 11 December meeting.

Rate Setting Process

Given the degree of complexity involved in agreeing the estimates and the district rate for 2010/11 the following process is recommended:

SP&R 20th November – agreement on overall process and discussion around the key issues which Members will need to address.

Party Briefings week commencing 30th November– discussion on options for savings, the revenue estimates, capital programme and the district rate.

Budget Panel 4th December, SP&R 11th December and SP&R 8th January – assessment of rates position, options for savings, approach to increasing reserves and capital financing strategy.

Department Committees (January) - agree on department revenue estimates.

SP&R 22nd January - agreement on recommendations to Council on setting the district rate for 2010/11.

Council 1st February - consider/agree on SP&R recommendations made at 22nd January meeting.

Recommendations
1. Note content of report
2. Agree to the process outlined above.

Decision Tracking

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Update on City Investment Framework (incorporating the Capital Programme, City Investment Strategy and update on assets)
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext: 6217

Purpose

Members will recall that a paper was taken to the September meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on the proposed development of an overall City Investment Framework within the context of what investment the Council could currently support given the existing budget, people and political constraints.

At this meeting it was agreed that the Director of Improvement would bring an update report back to Committee in November. The purpose of this report is to present –

1. a first cut of a prioritised Capital Programme for political discussion and direction which will need, in due course, to be subject to affordability considerations
2. seek approval to explore options for how the ongoing maintenance backlog is dealt with in the council
3. an update on the current position with regard to the City Investment Strategy
4. an update on sources of funding for investment (loans, grants and alternative sources of financing) which will be further explored in a Capital Financing Strategy being prepared for December.

Members will acknowledge that these are serious and complicated issues for the Council and will involve some difficult decisions over the coming months.

Background

Why Belfast needs a City Investment Framework

Belfast City Council has repeatedly stated its ambitions to take a leadership role in the city to help improve the quality of life of its citizens through place shaping and a number of other measures which are set out in our Corporate Plan 2008/11. The physical aspects of place shaping are contained in some of the projects within the council's Capital Programme; the commitments by the council to a City Investment Strategy; the emerging priorities from the North, South, East, West debates and the various discussions ongoing with other agencies both within, and outside of, the ongoing RPA discussions relating to assets and projects.

As Members are aware however, resources, particularly money, are in short supply and this situation is unlikely to ease over the next few years. This situation is also likely to be further compounded over the coming years as public sector spending is further squeezed at a time when the Council will be assuming wider roles and responsibilities under the RPA.

This financial situation is no different to many Cities in Great Britain where as a result government is encouraging Council's to take a more proactive approach to working with the private sector and taking on more risk.

In addition as a result of the departmental shake-up resulting from the RPA there have been calls for various delivery vehicles to be set up outside the role of the Council with responsibility for development and regeneration. In this situation it is important that Members reflecting on their political mandate set out a clear agenda for the investment in the City that others can buy into so that Belfast optimises all potential resources and sets clear focus and goals against which delivery can be targeted.

Key Issues

1. Update on Capital Programme and first draft of prioritised Capital Programme matrix

Under the Standing Orders, the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee has full responsibility for the Capital Programme and has a key role to play in challenging, improving and prioritising capital projects. The council's Capital Programme is basically made up of three types of projects –

1. basic facility replacement to enable service delivery e.g. depots or health & safety
2. people based facilities e.g. centres, pitches and alleygates
3. investment schemes e.g. Gasworks, North Foreshore, demolition of Grove, Maysfield

In addition planned maintenance within the Council is difficult to deliver because of the way maintenance budgets are structured which leads to the capital programme requiring a significant number of schemes which are enhancement works to existing facilities.

As it currently stands the Capital Programme has 150 projects, all of which require financing which will include rate financed loans. 57 of these projects are already committed which will require financing of up to £56million. In addition to this there are additional 36 uncommitted projects which, if they all went ahead, could potentially require a further £70m-£100m of expenditure. Some of these uncommitted projects can make strong business cases e.g. a heat recovery proposal on the North Foreshore with a short payback period; Woodvale and Dunville Parks which have a large percentage of grant funding or alley gates which are socially and politically viewed as value for money.

However as Members are aware our affordability limit in terms of borrowing as deemed by Financial Services is £45m. Therefore there is already an £11m shortfall on committed projects under the capital programme and this is before any of the uncommitted projects are taken into consideration. The financing of the Capital Programme therefore needs to be fully explored and it is planned to provide a paper on a Capital Strategy for the meeting in December.

At the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 18th September it was agreed that officers would make a first cut at prioritising the uncommitted projects in the Capital Programme for 2010-2011. Members are asked to note that the prioritisation exercise looked at all the uncommitted projects collectively. A prioritisation matrix and assessment criteria was developed (attached at Appendix 1) which prioritised and weighted projects in terms of –

- political/social need
- strategic fit with council objectives
- legislative compliance
- wholelife costs
- funding sources
- investment return
- reputational risk

This prioritisation exercise has now been carried on all the uncommitted projects in the capital programme. Using this methodology the top 14 'priority' schemes have emerged. These are listed below for the attention of Members. This table also shows the approx. cumulative costs of these schemes (in total over £35,000,000m). Members are asked to note that in accordance with the Gates process (which looks at the feasibility of an individual project) all these projects, if they do proceed, will still be subject to an

economic appraisal and further consideration to the projects would have to be given at that stage.

Table 1 – First cut of prioritised capital programme

Weighting	25	20	10	10	20	10	5				
Project Name	Strategic Fit	Legislative Compliance	Whole Life Cost	External Funding	Political / Social Need	Investment	Reputational Risk of not proceeding	Weighted Score	Gross Cost	Net Cost	Cumulative Cost
Alleygates Phase 2	4	1	3	2	4	1	2	270	500,000	500000	£500,000
Dunville Park Refurbishment	3	1	2	2	4	1	3	240	2,000,000	1000000	£1,500,000
Woodvale Park Refurb	3	1	2	2	4	1	3	240	2,000,000	1000000	£2,500,000
Woodlands Park Pitch	2	1	3	4	3	3	2	240	1,500,000	0	£2,500,000
Development of New Recycling Centre (Springfield Rd)	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	225	2,900,000	2900000	£5,400,000
Waterworks/Westland - Playing Field and MUGA	2	1	4	1	3	3	2	220	375,000	375000	£5,775,000
Northlink Playing Fields	3	1	2	3	2	1	1	200	2,375,000	400000	£6,175,000
Cavehill Path Restoration - Phase 2	1	3	4	2	2	1	2	205	400,000	200000	£6,375,000
Gasworks Northern Fringe - Site Development	3	1	2	1	2	4	1	210	1,675,000	1675000	£8,050,000
Northforeshore Business Park Infrastructure	4	1	1	1	1	4	1	205	28,860,000	24497500	£32,547,500
10 New 3G Pitches	2	1	3	3	2	3	1	205	8,700,000	3180000	£35,727,500
Clement Wilson Bridge - Replacement	1	3	4	1	2	1	2	195	200,000	180000	£35,907,500

As can be seen from the table above the first cut at prioritising the Capital Programme has identified projects which are closely in keeping with the Members priorities for the city – creating a cleaner, greener and safer city.

Further detail on the remaining uncommitted projects and how they scored in the prioritisation exercise is attached at Appendix 2.

In order to prioritise the use of officer time, Members are requested to confirm at this stage whether these are the schemes on which more detailed economic appraisals should be developed. Members are also asked to consider if they are satisfied with the ranking of these schemes as actual delivery will be subject to the affordability limits Members set through the rates and as previously stated, such proposals will also need to be considered in light of an affordable and sustainable Capital Financing Strategy which

is currently being developed.

2. Maintenance Issues

One of the key issues that kept arising during this prioritisation exercise and the discussions regarding this is the cost of maintaining existing council assets. Many of the council's assets are ageing and so are incurring major ongoing maintenance costs. This has the potential to be a massive capital liability for the Council e.g. the leisure centres and the parks estate. This has also highlighted the need to ensure that 'whole life' costs are considered from the outset for any capital projects moving forwards.

Currently departments are responsible for holding their own maintenance budgets and allocating this towards projects. As a result the Council's maintenance programme has tended to be carried out on an ad-hoc, reactive basis and not considered strategically. The need to move away from this towards a more planned maintenance framework has been recognised in order to ensure that the Council's buildings are fit for purpose and that maintenance is carried out in a value for money, efficient and effective way.

Members are aware that an Asset Management Strategy is currently being developed and one of the options that is being considered in this is how the Council might move towards a planned maintenance programme. In the interim it is important that officers explore further the options for how maintenance budgets are held in the Council, investigate how to maximise the use of these budgets (eg could these budgets be alternatively used to raise more finance for the Council) and start to look at how the ongoing maintenance costs for all the council's assets could be quantified.

3. Update on City Investment Strategy and N/S/E/W Emerging Priorities

The City Investment Strategy was developed by the Council to help deliver on the aspirations expressed above, to support major iconic projects in the city and to act as a mechanism for the Council to help lever additional money into the city. The fund is financed through an annual % rate contribution and capital receipts obtained through the realisation of assets.

To date, the Council have committed funding to four key iconic projects across the city under the Fund –

- (i) Titanic Signature Project - £10million committed
- (ii) The Mac - £550,000 committed
- (iii) The Lyric - £1.25million committed
- (iv) The Connswater Community Greenway - £4.2million committed.

Together these 4 projects have levered in over £153million of investment in the city. The committed cost for the Council (up to 2013) for these four projects is £16m of which nearly £4.5m has so far been raised as of 01/04/09. This currently leaves a funding gap of £11.8m to be found by 2013.

The current position in relation the City Investment Fund is highlighted in Table 2 below.

CIF Funding Profile						
	Spend to Date	2009/10	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/2013	Total Project
CIF Spend						
Connswater	(93,683)	(106,317)	(700,000)	(1,650,000)	(1,650,000)	(4,200,000)
MAC		(180,000)	(180,000)	(190,000)		(550,000)
Lyric		(416,667)	(416,667)	(416,667)		(1,250,000)
Titanic TSP	(25,092)			(10,000,000)		(10,025,092)
	(118,775)	(702,984)	(1,296,667)	(12,256,667)	(1,650,000)	(16,025,092)
CIF Opening Balance	3,503,885	4,385,110	5,682,126	7,385,460	18,129,000	
CIF Income						
From Rate	1,000,000	2,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	
Asset Realisation Projection				20,000,000		
CIF Total at Year End	4,385,110	5,682,126	7,385,460	18,129,000	21,129,000	

Members will be aware that a series of briefings has taken place over the last few months to identify other area based projects and priorities. Arising out of these debates, other project ideas that have been suggested for funding under the City Investment Fund include the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau; the Lagan Canal; Belfast Hills projects, Belfast Stadia and the Convention Centre.

Members will be aware that the Council agreed that the City Investment Fund should benefit all areas of the city building to a total of £29m by 2012, funded by a 1% increase in the rate for 3 years from 08/09 to `11/12 and asset realisations. Details of sums to be derived from asset realisations are set out at Appendix 3 and are projected to raise £20m by year end 2012. The fund is therefore broadly on target, subject to the risk that the volatile economic conditions may affect the overall value of the assets which will be realised. In these circumstances it is recommended that officers be authorised to continue to explore options for alternative forms of financing such as Accelerated Development Zones (ADZ's), Local Asset Backed Vehicles (LABV's) and Private Sector Development Contributions.

4. Update on sources of funding for investment

In the paper that was presented to Committee in September it was highlighted that there are four key sources of funding for investment available to the council – loans,

capital receipts, grants and public private partnership (alternative sources of financing). This section updates the Committee on the current position in relation to these areas.

(1) **Loans** – As highlighted above there is provision made in the Council budget for an affordability limit of £45m of capital. Current committee schemes amount to £56m with an aspiration to spend up to £35m more if the schemes set out in Table 1 are prioritised. Options for financing this level of expenditure are presently being reviewed in the Capital Finance Strategy which will be reported to committee at its December meeting and decisions will then have to be made on overall affordability in the context of other priorities and the rate setting process for this and coming years.

(2) **Capital Receipts through Asset Realisation** - One of the key sources of funding that is available to the Council is raising capital receipts through asset disposals. There are currently a number of disposals of council assets which are being progressed or where Committee approval has already been obtained for disposal. (See Appendix 3 for details). Reports have been taken to Committee on an individual basis on these disposals.

There are also a number of additional assets that have been previously identified as being potentially suitable for disposal or have development potential, subject to appropriate appraisals and approvals. Members are asked to note that some of these assets may not currently be surplus to either the operational requirements of the current holding Committee and /or to Council requirements. Details of these assets are outlined in the table below along with some of the main issues which will require further investigation before any decision is taken on disposal.

Table 3 – Schedule of Assets and Options/Recommendations

Corporate Landbank or Non Operational Asset	Recommended Course of Action
Maysfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Undertake planning assessment and site appraisal inc COMAH issues (ii) Ascertain potential Council requirements inc. accommodation; conference centre etc (iii) Progress discussions with external stakeholders (inc Translink & adjoining landowners) (iv) Legal /Title issues (v) Demolition issues
Grove former Leisure Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Undertake planning assessment & site appraisal (ii) DSD wider area master planning

	(iii) Demolition issues
Duncrue Car Compound & Adjoining 'Option Site'	(i) Undertake Planning Assessment & Site Appraisal inc access issues (ii) Decision on long term lease versus outright disposal (iii) Progress discussions with previous interested party
Ravenhill Road former PC's & Rest Garden	(i) Undertake planning assessment and site appraisal inc access issues
Gasworks Northern Fringe	(i) Continue with master planning process
Shore Road (adj Whitewell Tabernacle Church	(i) Undertake planning assessment & site appraisal

<i>Operational Assets/Assets currently held by Service Depts which may have development potential</i>	<i>Recommended Course of Action</i>
Stranmillis Car Park	(i) Undertake planning assessment, inc dBMAP enquiry implications (designated as public open space as part of Lagan Valley Regional Park) (ii) Site appraisal /constraints
Ormeau Avenue Car Park	(i) Undertake planning assessment (ii) Ascertain status and impact re proposed road scheme
Cathedral Gardens	(i) Operational Asset held as Open Space - departmental /service requirements to be ascertained (ii) Planning Assessment & Site Appraisal to be undertaken (iii) Ascertain proposals of adjoining landowners inc UUJ.
Skegoneill Avenue former Health Centre (adj. Grove	(i) Departmental /service requirements to be ascertained

Well Being Centre)	<p>(ii) Obtain costs for redevelopment</p> <p>(iii) Undertake planning assessment & site appraisal</p>	
Dunbar Link Depot	<p>(i) Operational asset - departmental /service requirements to be considered.</p> <p>(ii) Cost benefit analysis to determine if economic case for relocation;</p> <p>(iii) Relocation options to be considered in context of overall cleansing depot requirements</p> <p>(vi) Planning Assessment to ensure any premium reflects optimal development potential</p> <p>(v) Progress discussions with adjoining landowners</p>	
Seymour House & ISB building Gloucester Street	<p>(i) Consider as part of the Council's overall corporate accommodation requirements</p> <p>(ii) Undertake cost benefits analysis of disposal versus costs of relocation</p> <p>(iii) Undertake site appraisal and planning assessment to determine optimal site development</p>	
Old Zoo, Antrim Road	<p>(i) Ascertain departmental / operational requirements</p> <p>(ii) Undertake Planning Assessment & Site Appraisal</p> <p>(iii) Ascertain impact of Tree Preservation Orders</p>	
Land at Ballymacarrett Walkway	<p>(i) Undertake planning assessment and site appraisal</p> <p>(ii) Ascertain status of road scheme</p> <p>(iii) Ascertain wider development</p>	

	proposals for area
Ballygomartin Road South /Upper Whiterock Road	<p>(i) Undertake planning assessment and site appraisal</p> <p>(ii) Ascertain if any departmental /service proposals</p> <p>(iii) Legal /Title Issues</p>
McClure Street Open Space	<p>(i) Undertake planning assessment including dBMAP enquiry implications</p> <p>(ii) Undertake site appraisal</p>

In terms of market demand, funding availability and resultant capital return, the current economic climate is not favourable to asset disposals. However, this does provide us with an opportunity to plan and resolve many of the issues that invariably slow down any disposal including planning issues/constraints; financial considerations; legal and title restrictions; environmental/contamination issues; site constraints; co-dependencies with other agencies and external stakeholders etc, as well as ascertaining council, department and service requirements including longer term accommodation requirements.

It is therefore proposed that a cross departmental Assets Realisation Project Team is set up and a structured asset realisation plan is prepared to address the issues identified above for each asset with a view to having the assets highlighted above being '*market ready*' when the economy picks up or if any proposals are presented to the Council in the interim. There may also be other assets which may subsequently be declared surplus to departmental requirements or where development potential is identified and in these instances the Asset Realisation Team will undertake the necessary assessment and report back to Committee accordingly.

All options for disposal will be reported to SP&R for consideration and decision.

(3) **Grants** - One of the other sources of funding available to the Council is through grants. Grant aid may be a key factor in moving some projects ahead of others, especially given the Council's limited loan options. Not all projects will be eligible for grant funding and often a condition of grant funding is that it is matched and front loaded and so the Council must fund the expenditure upfront. However it is important for the council to maximise grant funding to help achieve its objectives and therefore allowance will need to be found in the council's capital financing strategy to provide necessary match funding for agreed projects.

As Members are aware the Council has submitted a number of applications for 100% grant funding under '*Priority 2.1 – Contributing to Shared Space*' of the Peace III initiative. Details of these are outlined below –

1. Development of a 'Community Hub' facility on the Girdwood site
2. Cultural Corridor project
3. Gasworks Bridge
4. Crusaders/Newington bid at the North Foreshore

These application forms were submitted on the 13th November and it is likely to be early in the New Year before the Council is informed of the outcome. The Committee will be kept informed of the outcome of these bids.

The Council will continue to seek out grant opportunities, including looking at new and innovative sources where possible, to maximise their benefit.

(4) **Alternative sources of financing** – The tightening of the public purse, the increased pressure on the public sector to provide value for money service and the challenges presented by the current economic climate means that local authorities elsewhere are increasingly looking at alternative and innovative sources of financing to take forward capital investment. This includes the use of mechanisms such as Local Asset Backed Vehicles (LABVs), Accelerated Development Zones (ADZs) and JESSICAs. However these are all longer term options which will take time to establish and implement.

As Members may be aware some of these options have been explored further in the economic appraisal consultation report which was recently published by the PwC on behalf of the Department of the Environment – "*Economic Appraisal of options for local government service delivery in its entirety*". In addition PwC and King Sturges have talked with a number of English local authorities and Core Cities in advancing these options.

The All Party Urban Development Group at Westminster has produced a paper "Regeneration and the Recession – Unlocking the Money" which further recommends government action on ADZ's and for City authorities to take a proactive approach to working with the private sector.

More details on the operation, advantages and disadvantages of these models will be made available in the Capital Financing Strategy paper in December.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and

1. *Capital Programme* – Consider the first cut of the prioritised capital programme so that officers can start to develop more detailed economic appraisals for these schemes. Any further commitments in the Capital Programme are subject to the development of an affordable and sustainable capital financing strategy. This

strategy is planned to be presented at the December meeting so that it can be considered in the context of the revenue estimates and district rates report which will be presented at the same meeting.

2. *Maintenance Programme* – note that officers will explore further the options for how maintenance budgets are held in the Council, investigate how to maximise the use of these budgets and start to look at how the ongoing maintenance costs for all the council’s assets could be quantified

3. *City Investment Strategy* – to note the current funding profile, its dependency on asset realisations and the risk associated with these realisations due to the volatile economic conditions and the need to consider this strategy in the context of other competing priorities.

4. *Assets* – agree that a cross departmental Assets Realisation Project Team is established and an Asset Realisation Strategy is developed to undertake further appraisal and assessment of the assets listed above or any other assets that are subsequently declared surplus to requirements or identified as having development potential, with a view to bringing forward for disposal, when the market improves, those assets which have development potential and which are surplus to Council requirements

5. *Alternative sources of financing* – agree that officers continue to explore the alternative sources of financing that may be available to the Council and note that this will be further explored in the proposed Capital Financing Strategy. As normal, Officers will be available to brief Members in detail as required and a detailed report will be brought back to committee in due course.

Decision Tracking

Documents Attached
Appendix 1: Capital Project Prioritisation Matrix and Assessment Criteria
Appendix 2: First cut of a prioritised Capital Programme
Appendix 3: Schedule of assets for disposal or where disposal negotiation are underway

Appendix 1 - Project Prioritisation Matrix and Assessment Criteria

This document provides guidance in respect of project prioritisation. It uses a numerical assessment based on a number of criteria. Each project should be assessed using all the assessment criteria.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria	Description	Score
Political/Social need	High	4
	Medium	3
	Low	2
	None	1
Strategic Fit	High – Essential to achievement of BCC Objectives	4
	Medium – Alignment with strategic objectives but not essential	3
	Low – Minimal linkage to strategic objectives	2
	None	1
Legislative Compliance	High – Essential to meet compliance, statutory or contractual need (1-2yrs)	4
	Medium – Necessary to meet compliance, statutory or contractual need (2-5yrs)	3
	Low – Needed to meet compliance, statutory or contractual need (5-8 yrs)	2
	None	1
Whole Life Costs	< £1m	4
	£1m - £5m	3
	£5m - £10m	2
	>£10m	1
External Funding	100% external funding	4
	51% - 99% external funding	3
	26% - 50%external funding	2
	0% - 25%	1
Investment Return	High Return	4
	Medium Return	3
	Low Return	2
	No Return	1
Reputational Risk	High	4
	Medium	3
	Low	2
	None	1

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Appendix 3 – Schedule of Assets

Disposals already agreed

Asset	Disposal Sum
Land adj. Beechmount	Previously valued at £3.685m but awaiting an updated valuation from LPS on behalf of DENI (likely to be lower)
Loughside	£14m (net £8m)
Land at Glen Road adj. St Teresa's GAC	£647,000 (net receipt)
Primrose Street former CAS	£85,000
Seapark Drive former CAS	£70,500

Proposed Disposals – Negotiations/Discussions underway:

Asset	Total Value
Land at Glen Road (Large Site)	
Land at Colin Glen	Total circa £8/9m
Land at Templemore Avenue	
<i>Potential total</i>	Approx £20m

Note: This assumes however that all above sales proceed at current values, but given the current economic conditions and volatile property market these sale prices and potential for all sales to complete at these figures must be treated with caution.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Approval to seek Tenders for a Framework Agreement for IT Security Services
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of ISB, ext 4200
Contact Officer:	Paul Gribben, IS Portfolio Manager, ext 4237

Background

Infrastructure security protection addresses the critical need to minimise the risk to business operations from external and internal threats by protecting IT infrastructure, applications and data, and by minimising the vulnerabilities that enable attacks.

The threats to our IT infrastructure are changing rapidly, as are the approaches, applications and technologies that we must use to mitigate these threats. Infrastructure protection covers protection strategies, technology selection and deployment best practices and affects the following areas:

1. Network security
2. Messaging security
3. Mobile security
4. Data security
5. Vulnerability management
6. Application security
7. Endpoint security

The Council's IS/IT strategy sets out the needs to have independent IT security services to support and provide assurance for the above areas.

The current framework agreement is due for renewal.

Key Issues

Given the complexity of the threat to our IT infrastructure and the importance of minimising the risk to our business operations we require specialised managed security services to provide expertise in managing the security of our multifaceted IT infrastructure.

Resource Implications
<p><u>Financial Issues</u></p> <p>Framework agreement for approximately £25,000 per annum for a period of 3 years with an option to renew for a further 1 year.</p> <p>Above expenditure is to be funded from ISB's revenue budget.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
Recommendations
<p>It is recommended that the council invites tenders to establish a new framework agreement for the supply of IT security services.</p>
Decision Tracking
<p>Officer responsible: Rose Crozier, Head of ISB</p> <p>Action to be completed by: March 2010</p>
Documents Attached
None



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Absence Management: Quarter 2
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources, ext 3220
Contact Officer:	Jackie Leslie, Principal Consultant, ext 2418
Purpose	
<p>The purpose of this report is to inform members of the council's performance in managing absence during quarter two, July – September 2009.</p>	
Relevant Background Information	
<p>In 2008/09 the average number of days lost per full time employee was 11.22 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed an overall Council target to reduce to 10.50 days by 2010/11.</p>	
Key Issues	
<p>Absence Management Performance Quarter Two July – October 2009</p> <p>The following are the key absence performance indicators for quarter two, July – September 2009. Appendix one provides absence rates at corporate, department and service levels against target and performance for the same time last year, as requested by members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average number of working days lost per FTE for quarter two for this year is 3.26 days • The average number of working days lost per FTE for last quarter (quarter one) was 2.72 days • The average number of working days lost per FTE for the same quarter last year (quarter two 2008/09) was 2.79 days. • This represents an increase of 0.54 day from quarter one this year and 0.47 day from the same time last year. • This means that at quarter two the council is not on target and has increased on the same time last year 	

- 72.09% of staff had no absence during quarter two of this year. This represents a decrease from the same time last year when 75.72% of staff had no absence.
- 6.04% of the council's staff were categorised as long term absent. This represents an increase of 0.94 % from the same time last year when the figure was 5.10%.

As agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee swine flu is categorised separately to other absences. HR has undertaken an analysis for the reasons for absence (swine flu does not account for the increase); has undertaken a compliance audit of those areas (particularly the Parks and Cemeteries Section) whose absence is increasing; and has set out areas for improvement for these sections. Every area that has increased has developed an improvement plan but it is also proposed that the matter of absence management is referred to the Council's Audit Panel for detailed consideration to ensure that all appropriate action is being taken to rectify the upward trend.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the performance figures for quarter two 2009/10 and agree that absence management is referred to the Council's Audit Panel for further consideration to ensure all appropriate action is being taken.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Quarter two performance indicators

APPENDIX 1	Number of employees (FTE for quarter two) July – Sept 2009	% of BCC's workforce	Target for quarter two 2009/10 (average days absence per employee)	Actual average days absence per employee for quarter two 2009/10	Average days per employee for quarter two last year
BCC	2414		5.43	6.00	5.52
Chief Executive's	85.49	3.54	5.37	4.25	6.35
Corporate Communications	18.70	0.77	7.94	5.24	10.37
Committee & Member Services	32.81	1.36	5.43	2.03	7.63
Good Relations	17.48	0.72	3.11	0.92	4.46
Legal Services	22.22	0.92	2.00	0.78	1.72
Corporate Services	495.43	20.52	4.58	4.60	4.00
Human Resources (includes BIS)	66.15	2.74	3.01	2.52	2.38
Financial Services	48.14	1.99	6.53	4.85	8.31
ISB	118.25	4.90	3.49	2.58	2.21
Facilities Management	227.76	9.43	5.57	6.54	4.49
Directorate Support	17.62	0.73	4.85	4.34	7.41
Audit, Gov & Risk Services	11.51	0.48	1.42	0.19	1.33
Projects & Corporate Systems	6.00	0.25	1.71	0.67	1.50
Health & Environmental Services	838.12	34.72	5.44	5.9	5.98
Environmental Health Services	173.47	7.19	4.83	4.64	4.72
Building Control	70.54	2.92	2.87	2.34	3.10
Waste Management	101.91	4.22	6.06	8.12	7.61
Directorate Support	17.70	0.73	2.44	0.79	1.16
Cleansing	474.50	19.66	6.05	6.59	6.69
Parks and Leisure	639.22	26.48	6.38	8.58	6.00
Leisure	301.09	12.47	6.97	7.23	6.7
Parks & Cemeteries	325.17	13.47	6.00	9.88	5.48
Directorate Support	12.96	0.54	1.92	7.41	1.24
Development Department	276.69	11.46	4.95	4.85	5.9
Economic Initiatives	47.43	1.96	5.33	4.59	7.14
Community	118.21	4.9	6.04	6.01	7.21
Waterfront & Ulster Hall	58.42	2.42	3.07	0.84	4.31
Directorate Support	52.63	2.18	4.15	6.96	6.06
Core Improvement	57.50	2.38	4.36	3.97	5.02
Core Improvement Team	30.73	1.27	2.35	5.31	1.91
Estates Management	7.14	0.30	4.91	0.42	4.79
Procurement	9.63	0.40	12.00	4.99	18.15
Project Management	10.00	0.41	1.58	1.40	1.50

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Rightsizing Exercise
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources.
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, ext 3220

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update members on the three elements of the organisational rightsizing exercise, i.e. voluntary redundancy; vacancy control; and the management of supernumerary employees.

Relevant Background Information

Members agreed an approach to organisational rightsizing at its meeting on 21 August 2009 and asked for further information on vacancy control at its meeting in October 2009.

Key Issues

Voluntary redundancy (VR)

1. The council initiated a trawl for expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy. This trawl related only to those staff in areas that are potentially affected by the review of centre, ongoing structural reviews, and/or significant revenue losses.
2. 64 formal applications for VR have been received.
3. The attached pro-forma is being used to assess every application. Members will note that the pro-forma sets out the criteria and principles which members agreed in relation to the implementation of the VR exercise – i.e. the decision to release anyone on VR is dependent on the needs of the council and we retain the right to decide whether or not to accept an employee's application for VR in accordance with the following principles:
 - Prioritisation of VR requests will be based on available finance and the level of savings which may be delivered
 - The VR will avoid the need for compulsory redundancy
 - The employee's post must be redundant or a one to one transferred redundancy can be identified with a clear audit trail linking the person to be redundant with the post to be deleted.
 - The potential for redeployment
 - The need to ensure that essential skills and expertise are maintained

- All other relevant options have been considered.
4. In addition, departments have been asked to identify any vacant posts in their staffing establishment as this is a crucial element of both managing supernumerary staff and assessing whether or not employees may be released on the grounds of VR.
 5. Consultation with TUs is ongoing throughout the process. Individual redundancy consultation is ongoing with supernumerary employees.

Vacancy control

1. In conjunction with the VR exercise we must consider filling posts on a permanent basis in the context of the organisation's need to 'right-size' and/or create an effective corporate centre.
2. Consequently, any vacancy in an area affected by the VR exercise will be held until such times as the outcome of the VR exercise / resultant structural changes are clearer;
3. If the vacant post is unaffected by the VR exercise it will be considered as a potential redeployment opportunity for supernumerary employees or whether or not it could be internally trawled to mitigate against potential redundancy.
4. Only if none of these mechanisms are appropriate, will consideration be given to filling the post via public advertisement.
5. We are also required to implement the RPA vacancy control system, i.e. the council now has to consider trawling some posts in the most appropriate RPA 'restricted pool'.
6. The Council's TUs are consulted throughout the Council's approach to vacancy control.
7. Since the instigation of the VR exercise only 'front-line/ service delivery' posts have been recruited. The higher graded, support type posts (e.g. business support/finance/HR posts) have been put on hold until the outcome of the VR exercise and resultant structural changes are clearer.
8. In addition HR is currently working with departments, BIS and Financial Services to undertake an analysis of staff numbers, budget and spend with a view to agreeing a format for regular reports to committee on this matter. This proposed format will be presented to members in the near future.

Supernumerary staff

1. Supernumerary staff are employees who do not have a substantive post in the organisation structure. Consequently the cost of these salaries is in addition to established salary budgets.
2. Such staff may be released with redundancy payment at any stage while they have supernumerary status; however the Council is actively seeking suitable alternative employment for supernumerary employees.
3. Should suitable redeployment not be found within a reasonable timeframe the Council will have to consider compulsory redundancy for any remaining supernumerary staff.

Decisions

Members are asked to note the process to date and agree that a further report will be brought to December's meeting once evaluation of all the criteria and financial information has been complete.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - VR Evaluation Pro Forma

EVALUATION FORM - VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY

PERSONAL	
Name:	
Section:	Department:
Employee No:	Job Title:
Service at 31/3/09	Age at 31/3/09:
Hours of work:	Spinal point:
Current grade:	Substantive grade:

ELIGIBILITY	
Review of centre:	
Ongoing structural review:	
Reduction in income:	
Business Support:	

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:	
Superannuation benefit + retirement allowance:	
Statutory redundancy + compensation payment:	
Actuarial cost to Council:	
Total cost of redundancy:	
BCC salary:	
Payback period:	

Is the post redundant – i.e. will the department certify that the post is redundant and therefore will be deleted from the structure?

Why is the post redundant - i.e. has the work ceased, if so why?

Is the post a one to one transferred redundancy? If so give details, i.e. link the person to be made redundant with the post to be deleted.

Could this person be redeployed? If not why not?

Will the VR avoid the need for compulsory redundancy? If so, please detail how.

Has this employee a level of skills/professional/technical competence which if lost to the council now would have a long-term detrimental impact on service delivery?

How soon after the statutory redundancy notice period (1 week per year of service up to a maximum of 12 weeks) can the department release this individual?

Will arrangements be needed to cover any residual work on an on-going basis either while the re-structuring is taking place or longer-term? Will they involve expenditure which affects the payback period? (identify what the arrangements are and the cost in a full year)

Director's statement

I confirm that, based on the above information, the department can declare this post redundant and it will be deleted from the structure in accordance with the corporate arrangements for this VR exercise. On this basis I support the application for redundancy going forward to the corporate panel for consideration.

Signed _____ Director of _____

Date

Decision of Corporate Panel

A. Application rejected

B. Application approved.

Statutory redundancy notice to take effect from _____

Members of Panel	Signature
Director of Finance and Resources	
Head of Human Resources	
Departmental Representative	
Date	

Extract from minutes of:-

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

4th November, 2009

—
“Building Control

Review of Building Control Service

(Mr. C. Thompson, Principal Consultant, Business Improvement Section, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

At the Committee meeting on 5th August, approval was granted to the Head of Building Control to request the Business Improvement Service (BIS) to undertake a structural review of the Service. This was because the global recession had precipitated a significant downturn in the construction industry and the subsequent loss of building regulation fee income to the Service.

As part of the Council’s efficiency programme, Building Control has, in the past few years, reduced costs and created savings in the region of £600K. This was through a number of measures, including reducing expenditure, not filling establishment posts, redeployment of staff to other areas of the Council and accessing additional income streams. This has made the realisation of further cost savings in areas other than staffing less achievable. As staff costs in Building Control account for 60% of overall costs, it was considered reasonable to commission BIS to examine the Service’s structure and the potential for a reduction in the number of posts to realise further savings. The Committee supported the recommendation that a review be undertaken to determine how the Service could be ‘right-sized’ to reduce expenditure whilst sustaining the quality of service which Building Control provides to its customers, the Council and the ratepayer.

Following the Committee decision in August, the Service made initial enquiries with staff who would be willing to apply for voluntary redundancy and a number of staff (6 in total) made themselves available should this option present itself. These include the Business Support Manager, Assistant Building Control Manager and four Building Control Surveyors. In considering whether these redundancies could be accommodated, whilst some are made possible due to decreases in workload, others would need some realignment of duties to enable those posts to be taken out of the current establishment.

- 2 -

Additionally, the Service had some anomalies in its structure which require to be regularised. One of these was the Business Support Assistant who was employed as a seconded post to carry out project work under the data sharing exercise with Land & Property Services. That project is now four years old and mainstreamed into the Service's workload with its accompanying income stream of £200K but needs to be made permanent.

The Service has also been sourcing additional work and a series of initiatives under areas such as the enforcement of Energy Performance Certification, the Fire Risk Assessments, surveys for Council Departments and vacancy inspections for rating purposes will bring more opportunity to reduce expenditure.

This was the background under which BIS was commissioned to carry out the structural review.

Key Issues

The Key issues are as follows:

- the Building Control Service has carried out all possible measures to reduce expenditure and the removal of posts is the next logical step;*
- there has been a significant reduction in Building Control's income and the Service needs to factor that loss of consequent workload into its structure;*
- 6 postholders have declared an interest in voluntary redundancy and the structure can be realigned to release them; and*
- the post of Business Support Assistant looking after the Land & Property Service duties needs to be permanently catered for but is self funded.*

BIS has produced a comprehensive report which sets out its recommendations, together with the financial implications for the Council. The Trades Unions have been consulted at each stage and are satisfied with the recommendations of the report.

The outcomes take into account the future direction of business support functions and provide for the corporate efficiency agenda and will contribute to the goals set by the Budget & Transformation Panel.

We should be mindful, however, of the need to avoid an excessive or unnecessary loss of experienced personnel, whereby the Service does not fulfil its statutory obligations and from which it cannot recover, if and when the recession ends.

BIS Recommendations

BIS has developed the recommendations outlined below to address the key issues identified:

- ***deletion of three Building Control Surveyor posts (PO4) due to the economic downturn – In the event of an economic recovery the Service can, under delegated authority, recruit additional posts if required provided there is an increase in income;***
- ***deletion of the one vacant Building Control Surveyor post (PO4). The Service has already factored this removal in current year estimates;***
- ***deletion of one CAD Technician post (Scale 4). The Service has already factored this removal in current year estimates;***
- ***deletion of one Building Control Surveyor post (PO4) from the Business Development unit. This is the post that currently carries out Customer Services/Relations and internal review work;***
- ***deletion of one Assistant Building Control Manager post (PO7);***
- ***deletion of the Business Support Manager post (PO5);***
- ***re-designation of the Assistant Business Managers (PO3), to carry out newly aligned functions and take on the strategic role vacated by the Business Support Manager;***
- ***re-designation of the Technical Support Officer in the Business Development Unit to Training Support Officer (SO2);***
- ***creation of two Senior Business Support posts (SO2) to support operational delivery;***
- ***creation of four Business Support Assistants (Scale 5/6) to carry out the LPS work; to support the transfer of the Regulatory Services administration function; to support the diversification of work; to support the transfer of the customer function from Business Development; to help manage the transfer of the enforcement process; to support the Corporate Gazetteer and EPC projects, and, to carry out internal improvement work. (Three of these posts will be created by the reduction of 3 Clerk/WPO posts); and***
- ***deletion of 3 Clerk/WPO posts.***

The immediate net impact of implementing these recommendations is an ongoing annual saving of £181,307 with a decrease of 5 posts overall off the current establishment.

Resource Implications

Financial

The implementation of the above recommendations will result in the following costs and savings:

<u>Actuarial and Redundancy Costs (£)</u>	<u>Current Salary and Superannuation Savings (pa) (£)</u>	<u>Clawback Period</u>
368,512	181,307	2 years

If these recommendations are accepted, savings of £181,307 per annum after 2 years will be realised.

Benchmarking has identified that the clawback period is well below that used by other public sector organisations where a payback period of 3.25 years has been defined as acceptable.

Human Resources

Detailed consultation will now take place with all relevant stakeholders including HR, Trade Unions and staff to develop an implementation plan which is fully in accordance with all relevant HR policies and procedures. However Committee should note that all parties have been consulted throughout this process and are in agreement.

It is acknowledged that some postholders will be required to sign and agree amended job descriptions. In addition, a recruitment exercise will need to be undertaken for some new posts, as appropriate.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note and endorse the BIS recommendations as listed above in respect of the Building Control Service and is asked to agree that the proposals should be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its approval.

Members are asked that, should the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee approve the proposals and, if no written objections are received, the Service can proceed directly to implementation stage without further referral back to Committee."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations."

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Asset Management: Land at Templemore Avenue
Date:	Friday 20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Mr Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement (ext. 6217)
Contact Officer:	Ms Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager (ext. 3493)

Relevant Background Information

The subject site (previously the site of former public conveniences, now demolished) was previously declared surplus to Council requirements by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, and outline planning approval was subsequently granted for demolition of the former public conveniences and redevelopment to provide a residential development of 6 no. townhouses.

The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, at their meeting on 20 March, 2009, agreed that discussions be held with other public sector bodies regarding the disposal of the site, with a report thereon to be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Subsequent discussions took place with the Libraries Authority (NI) and the Department of Education & Learning as both departments have buildings adjoining the subject site, although neither party expressed an interest in acquiring the subject land. However, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive confirmed that there was a need for social housing at this location and a Housing Association has subsequently expressed an interest in acquiring.

Key Issues

- 0.12 Acre site with planning approval for 6 no. townhouses.
- NIHE advised that there is a social housing requirement in the area.
- Potential interest by a Housing Association in acquiring.
- In order to test the market value it is proposed to place on the open market with an agent; the Housing Association interested can make a bid for the site accordingly.
- Proposed disposal terms will be reported back to committee in due course for approval.

Resource Implications
<u>Financial:</u> Disposal of the land will result in the capital receipt for the Council, which could be used in furtherance of the City Investment Framework or other corporate priorities. <u>Human Resources:</u> Staff resource required in Estates Unit & Legal Services Department to bring forward the proposed disposal. <u>Asset & Other Implications:</u> Disposal of this surplus site and redeployment of capital receipt towards other Council priorities represents a better use of resources & accords with effective management of the Council's assets.

Recommendations
The Committee is asked to grant approval to placing the site on the open market for sale, subject to a further report being taken to Committee in due course for approval to any disposal.

Decision Tracking
The Director of Improvement to ensure that the marketing process is followed up within three months of the Committee decision.

Key to Abbreviations
None

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Asset Management: Consumer Advice Centre, Wellington Place - Lease Renewal
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement Ext 6217
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Surveyor Ext 3493

Relevant Background Information

The Council's Consumer Advice Centre occupies premises at Wellington Place by virtue of a 10 year lease from 1 August 1999 (subject to 5 yearly rent reviews). The rent payable for the 5 years from the 1 August 2004 is £35,200 pa. The Consumer Advice Centre has occupied the premises from 16 May 2006 following vacation by the former Belfast First Stop Shop, who had previously held the lease. The lease of the premises was due for renewal on 1 August 2009 and protracted negotiations have subsequently taken place between the Landlord's Agent and the Estates Management Unit.

Key Issues

- Initial proposals from the Landlord's Agent were for a further 10 year term at a rent of £60,000 pa with five year rent reviews. However, following negotiations a revised rent of £42,300 pa on a 5 year term with break options at the end of years 1, 2 and 3 has been provisionally agreed.
- The shorter lease term and break options provide greater flexibility in terms of the Council's future occupational requirements.

Resource Implications

- Financial

Revised rent of £42,300, an increase from the passing rent of £35,200 which was last reviewed on 1st August 2004. The Health & Environmental Services Department are responsible for payment of the rent.

- Human Resources

Estates Management & Legal Services resources required to progress lease renewal.

- Asset and Other Implications

Shortened lease term and break clause provide increased flexibility to the Council if occupational needs change in the short term.

Recommendations

Committee is recommended to grant approval to the renewal of the lease for the Consumer Advice Centre, Wellington Place on the terms as outlined above, subject to a suitable legal agreement being approved by Legal Services.

Decision Tracking

The Director of Improvement & Director of Legal Services to ensure that the lease renewal process is completed within 6 months.

Key to Abbreviations

Documents Attached



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Proposed Lease Variation and Easement, Woodlands Playing Fields
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Core Improvement, Ext. 6217.
Contact Officer:	Ken Anderson, Estates Surveyor, Core Improvement, Ext. 3496.

Relevant Background Information

By a lease dated 11 December 1998 the Council disposed of land at Woodlands Playing Fields to the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education. As part of the legal arrangements the use of site was restricted to school use and use of the access road was restricted to use in connection with the school.

The school has been approached by NI Water to provide access along the school's access road to a pumping station situated on adjoining land close to Orchardville Crescent. NI Water have agreed to pay a small premium for the grant of a right of way over the access road. The Council's agreement to the Grant of right of way is required as it is contrary to the terms of the 1998 lease.

Outline terms have now been agreed between the school, NI Water and the Council which would allow NI Water use of the access road provided that such use was restricted to the operational necessities associated with inspection and maintenance of the pumping station.

Key Issues

- Right of Way sought by NI Water over land to which restrictions on use apply.
- Outline terms agreed between South & West Belfast Integrated College, NI Water and Belfast City Council.

Resource Implications

Financial

Small financial premium to be paid by NI Water to South & West Belfast Integrated College Limited (as successors in title to the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education) and Belfast City Council. No other financial impact.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required. Resources in Legal Services Department and Estates Management Unit required to bring the matter to a conclusion.

Asset and Other Implications

Encompassing the proposed Right of Way within appropriate legal documentation will safeguard the Council's position in relation to the overall restrictions on use of the site for school purposes.

Recommendations

Committee is recommended to approve the variation of the lease dated 11 December 1998 to allow the grant of a right of way to NI Water along the access road to the South and West Belfast Integrated College, subject to the payment of a fee of £750 to the Council and incorporation of the arrangements in a suitable legal agreement to be approved by the Director of Legal Services.

Decision Tracking

Director of Improvement to ensure legal documentation completed by 30 April 2010.

Key to Abbreviations

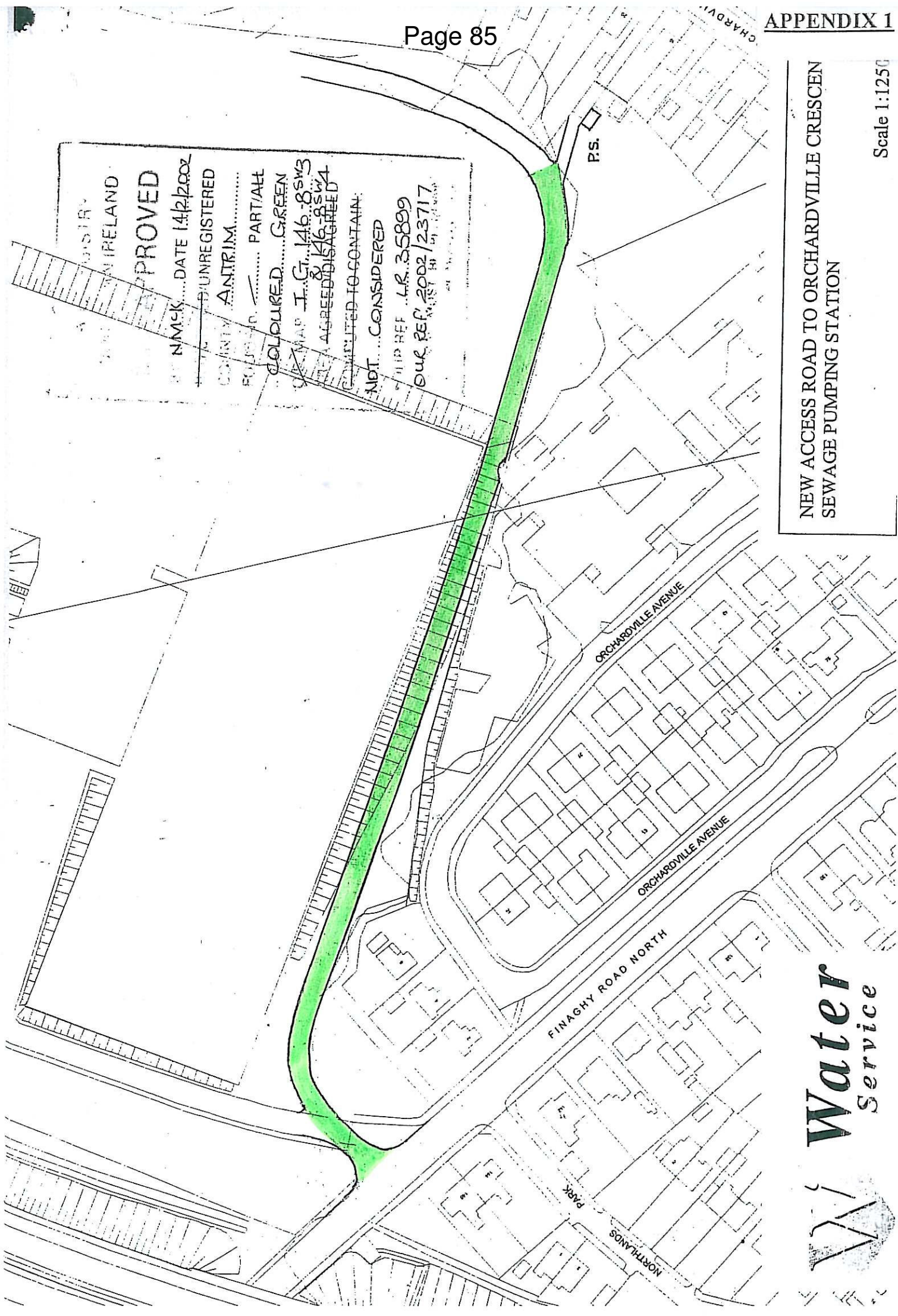
NI Water – Northern Ireland Water Limited

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Map showing route of proposed Right of Way shaded green.

NEW ACCESS ROAD TO ORCHARDVILLE CRESCENT
SEWAGE PUMPING STATION

**Water
Service**



IRELAND

APPROVED

NMCK... DATE 14/2/2002

BUNREGISTERED

COUNTY ANTRIM

PARTIAL

COLOURED GREEN

MAP I.G. 146-8SW3

ALREADY DISAGREED

LIMITED TO CONTAIN

NOT CONSIDERED

MAP REF LR 35809

DUC REF 2002/23717

P.S.

ORCHARDVILLE AVENUE

ORCHARDVILLE AVENUE

FINAGHY ROAD NORTH

PARK

NORTHLANDS

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	To seek Committee approval to use the NIRAN Public sector framework agreement for the renewal of the Council's Internet Service Provision.
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of ISB, ext 4200
Contact Officer:	Paul Gribben, IS Portfolio Manager, ext 4237

Background

The current contract for internet service provision is due to be renewed.

This service provides access to:

1. The internet from all PCs on the council's network,
2. External Email services,
3. Council hosted websites to public users of the internet e.g. www.belfastcity.gov.uk
4. Remote IT services e.g. access to council's network for home working.

The current cost of internet service provision is £20,000 per year and is paid out of revenue.

A new public sector framework agreement has been established by Queens University for the provision of internet services in the region. The Northern Ireland Regional Area Network (NIRAN) was developed as a broadband computer network for the tertiary education and public sector in Northern Ireland.

The NIRAN network delivers high-speed internet access to some thirty education and public sector institutions across the region. Whilst its core membership lies in higher and further education, NIRAN can also provide internet connectivity to a broader range of customer including libraries, local authorities, and lifelong learning organisations.

NIRAN provides cost effective high speed internet access which compares favourably to larger internet service providers.

Key Issues

The bandwidth of the current internet service provider (ISP) is 10Mbits. This is a single circuit coming in to ISB at the Gloucester Street premises.

The service from NIRAN provides a 100Mbits service offering 10 times the capacity of the current service.

As report to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd May 2008 set out the benefits of having a 2nd connection to the internet (called a point of presence or POP) based at the 2nd server site at the Duncrue complex. The main reason for having a 2nd internet connection at Duncrue is to have a contingency for external access to the internet (and thus backup web page and email services) in the instance of the Gloucester St site being lost for any reason.

The low cost of the NIRAN offering will allow ISB to implement the 2nd point of presence, improving resilience and increasing capacity and performance for the same annual cost as the current arrangement which only provides for a single circuit.

There will be a requirement to implement additional security equipment in the form of a firewall to secure the 2nd POP at Duncrue. A firewall is a part of a computer system or network that is designed to block unauthorised access while permitting authorised communications. The cost of implementing a second firewall will have an initial cost of £20,000 with an annual support cost of £2,000.

Given that a public sector framework is already in place the Council will not have to go to public tender. This has been verified by the Council's Procurement Manager.

Resource Implications

Financial Issues

2 x internet circuits (Contracted for 3years)

Installation Costs:	£10,000
Annual Rental:	£19,000

Firewall to secure 2 nd POP:	£20,000
Annual support and maintenance:	£2,000

Total initial cost to be funded from revenue	£30,000
Total Annual cost to be funded from revenue	£21,000

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council procures 2 circuits for internet service provision off the NIRAN framework to enable a second POP to be implemented at Duncrue and to increase internet bandwidth from 10Mbits to 100Mbits.

It is also recommended that a firewall is procured to provide security at the second site.

Decision Tracking

Officer responsible: Rose Crozier, Head of ISB

Action to be completed by: February 2010

Documents Attached

Key to Abbreviations

ISB Information Services Belfast
NIRAN Northern Ireland Regional Area Network
ISP Internet Service Provider
POP Point of Presence

Documents Attached

None

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Council's connection to Network NI
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of ISB
Contact Officer:	Paul Gribben, IS Portfolio Manager

Relevant Background Information

Currently each of the 26 councils in Northern Ireland has its own network and telecoms systems linking various locations. These networks are independent of each other and provide no interconnectivity outside an individual council area. Although these arrangements have been effective in supporting the operation of the individual councils, they have not been designed with a wider local government perspective in mind.

In the context of the reorganisation of local government, and the transfer of functions from central government, this approach will not be sustainable post 2011. New councils will require connectivity to functions transferring from Central Government for example the centrally based Planning Service.

There is also no current means of network connectivity between councils, a particular problem for amalgamating councils needing to share applications and information and who require communications links between offices and depots within the enlarged district.

The new Local Government arrangements will require the Council to have greater connectivity beyond the boundaries of the existing Council area. The existing network infrastructure precludes this as there is no interconnectivity between council areas and other agencies.

Network NI is a managed common network service. It is the regional communications 'backbone' infrastructure procured by NI Civil Service (provided by Eircom NI) and currently in operation across the NI Civil service. Connection to this 'backbone' would provide the required connectivity within new council areas, across councils and to centrally delivered services.

PDP B has agreed in principle to utilise the Network NI infrastructure. A process to connect to Network NI (On Boarding) has been agreed to bring additional public sector bodies (including councils) on to the service. The on boarding process is considerable and requires connecting organisation to achieve certain security standards.

By connecting to Network NI the requirements for connectivity to transferring functions and inter council connectivity would be met.

Key Issues

1. The network is owned and managed by central government.
2. Each council will be required to sign up to a code of connection that would require them to implement ISO 27001 within 2 years.

The purpose of ISO 27001 is to help organisations establish and maintain an information security management system.

3. There will be a requirement for further investment in information security to achieve ISO 27001. The on boarding process will help establish gaps in requirements and begin the move to achieving ISO 27001.
4. The alternative to connecting to Network NI would require the Council to assess communications infrastructure requirements for the new Council and its new locations and potentially invest significantly in procuring and implementing new infrastructure.

Resource Implications**Financial**

One off Installation cost £39,000
Annual recurring license cost £25,000

Connection: £19,500 (per connection)
 Annual support and maintenance: £12,500 (per connection)

The Council will require at least 2 connections to ensure resiliency.

Installation costs are provided for in the capital programme.
 Annual costs will be paid for from ISB's revenue budget.

Human Resources

No additional impact on staff is anticipated.

Recommendations

Approve the Council connecting to network NI and beginning the on-boarding process.

Decision Tracking

Officer responsible: Rose Crozier, Head of ISB

Action to be completed by: March 2010

Key to Abbreviations

ISB Information Services Belfast

Documents Attached

None



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Infrastructure to deliver Housing Benefit services for NIHE
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of ISB
Contact Officer:	Paul Gribben, IS Portfolio Manager

Relevant Background Information

ISB delivers hosting, managed application and software development services to the NIHE supporting payment of Housing Benefit, Rate Relief and Lone Pensioner Allowances to claimants across the region. The annual income for delivering these services is approximately £1.7 million.

In providing these services we aim to ensure the timely payment of £469,000,000 to over 139,000 claimants annually. Given the current economic circumstances both the amounts being paid and the number of claimants requiring these benefits are increasing each month, putting an additional strain on the infrastructure that is required to support the IT systems and increasing the risk of damage to the Council's reputation if services were not provided.

Over the last two years there have been increases in both the number of users accessing the systems and the hours of access required by NIHE staff. Upgrades to the applications have provided additional functionality to end users but have created a further strain on the current infrastructure. In hosting this service there is a requirement to provide access to test, development and training databases.

In order to protect the income generated by ISB and the IT services it delivers to the NIHE, a refresh of infrastructure is required to ensure that service quality is maintained. This is particularly important in ensuring that Housing Benefit, Rate Relief and Lone Pensioner Allowances are paid promptly across the whole of Northern Ireland.

Key Issues

There are concerns about the current infrastructure in terms of performance and capacity. ISB in conjunction with our software suppliers (Northgate) have carried out a benchmarking exercise to determine if the current hardware is fit for purpose. Indications are that the live server is more than adequate to host the housing executive systems for the next three to four years but that the older test and development servers are struggling with additional workloads and are expensive in terms of support and maintenance.

Resource Implications

Financial

Option 1: No Improvement: Investment of £40,000 for licenses plus recurring cost of £63,844

If the infrastructure for delivering IT services to the NIHE is left unchanged ISB will continue to pay the current costs of:

Support & maintenance: £32,644; Oracle licensing: £31,200.

There will also be a requirement to pay an additional capital investment of £40,000 in oracle licensing as we move to per processor licensing. This increase is a result of new versions of the housing benefit system requiring access to the latest oracle back-end database.

Also there will not be enough storage capacity to meet requirements for test, training and development environments which have a real impact on security:

1. Development, test, and operational facilities should be separated to reduce the risks of unauthorised access or changes to the operational system.
2. If they are not implemented correctly there will be an increase in the risk of access being misused to commit fraud, or to introduce untested or malicious code, which could cause serious operational problems.
3. It could also pose a threat to the confidentiality of sensitive information.

We will also not be in a position to cater for future changes in capacity and performance.

Option 2: Upgrade test and development servers and implement shared storage:

This requires investment of £50,000 realising an annual saving on recurring cost of £35,110 and no additional spend on licenses

Cost for new hardware: £50,000 (Capital investment)

Support & maintenance: £15,534; Oracle licensing: £13,200

This option will reduce third party hardware and software support and maintenance costs by £35,000 per year and would remove the need to spend an additional £40,000 on oracle licensing.

It would future proof the infrastructure for the next 3 to 4 years, providing for both increased user numbers and data storage requirements.

It will enable the separation of the test and development environments. This will facilitate improved testing and allow easier creation of test and development environments. To ensure:

1. Development, test, and operational facilities are separated to reduce the risks of unauthorised access or changes to the operational system.
2. A reduction in the risk of access being misused to commit fraud, or to introduce untested or malicious code which could cause serious operational problems.
3. The protection of confidential and sensitive information.

<p>Human Resources No additional impact on staff is anticipated.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Option 2 is recommended on the basis that it is more cost effective and is critical to ensuring continued service quality, security of information and future proofing of service provision to NIHE.</p> <p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of the report. 2. Support option 2 and agree to tender for new shared storage to support the services provided to NIHE.
<p>Decision Tracking</p> <p>Officer responsible: Rose Crozier, Head of ISB</p> <p>Action to be completed by: February 2010</p>
<p>Key to Abbreviations</p> <p>ISB Information Services Belfast NIHE Northern Ireland Housing Executive</p>
<p>Documents Attached</p> <p>None</p>

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