

Document Pack

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



7th December, 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, 11th December, 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) Apology
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Memorabilia Working Group - Exhibitions in the City Hall (Pages 1 - 2)

To consider further the minute of the meeting of 20th November under the heading Memorabilia Working Group which, at the request of Councillor Hendron, was referred back to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 1st December (extracts herewith)

2. Transition Committee Business

- (a) Review of Public Administration Update (Pages 3 - 4)

3. Democratic Services and Governance

- (a) Requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality (Pages 5 - 10)

- (b) Northern Ireland Local Government Association Annual Conference 2010 (Pages 11 - 12)
 - (c) Developing Elected Members 2010 Conference and Workshop (Pages 13 - 14)
 - (d) Transitional Governance Arrangements for the Education Sector (Pages 15 - 17)
4. Finance
- (a) Budget Monitoring Report (Pages 18 - 21)
 - (b) Update on Financial Estimates and District Rate 2010-2011 (Pages 22 - 29)
 - (c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel (Pages 30 - 35)
 - (d) Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Panel (Pages 36 - 45)
5. Human Resources
- (a) Appointment of Director of Property and Projects (Pages 46 - 47)
 - (b) Rightsizing Exercise (Pages 48 - 55)
 - (c) Standing Order 55 - Employment of Relatives (Pages 56 - 57)
6. Asset Management
- (a) Disposal of Beechmount Leisure Centre Site (Pages 58 - 63)
 - (b) Connswater Community Greenway Update (Pages 64 - 69)
7. Good Relations and Equality
- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of the Good Relations Partnership (Pages 70 - 81)
 - (b) Minutes of the Meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group (Pages 82 - 85)
8. Cross-Cutting Issues
- (a) Assault in City Hall Grounds (Pages 86 - 87)
 - (b) New Regional Hospital for Women and Children Working Group (Pages 88 - 91)
 - (c) European Union Funded Senior Volunteering Programme (Pages 92 - 97)
 - (d) Consultation Response to Draft Sustainable Development Strategy (Pages 98 - 111)
 - (e) Participation in the World Wildlife Fund Earth Hour 2010 (Pages 112 - 113)
 - (f) Communications Update (Pages 114 - 129)

Extract from minutes of -

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

20th NOVEMBER, 2009

“Minutes of Memorabilia Working Group

In considering the minutes of the meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group of 5th November, a Member drew the Committee’s attention to a decision of the Group that exhibitions on the United Irishmen, Reflections and Images and the Orange Order be held in that order in the City Hall. The Member expressed concern that the exhibition on the Orange Order had been introduced into the Working Group’s discussion without prior warning.

Following a lengthy debate it was

Moved by Councillor C. Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor McCann,

That the minutes of the meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group of 5th November be approved and adopted, subject to the decision regarding the exhibitions to be held within the City Hall being amended to provide that the United Irishmen exhibition be installed first, followed by the Images and Reflections photographic exhibition, then the Unkindest Cut and finally the exhibition entitled Celebrated Literary Belfast and that a process as to how an exhibition concerning the Orange Order might be held in the City Hall should be considered as part of the Members’ brain-storming session on memorabilia issues which was to be held on 30th November.

On a vote by show of hands nine Members voted for the proposal and ten against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Accordingly, the minutes of the meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group of 5th November were approved and adopted.”

Extract from minutes of –

MEMORABILIA WORKING GROUP

5th NOVEMBER, 2009

"2.13	<p>It was advised that a decision was now required on borrowing an exhibition from the Linenhall Library and an associated programme of lectures and debates organised.</p> <p>Of the exhibitions available at the Linenhall Library, Anne advised the Group of their first and second preferences. Based on the popularity with Members, it was suggested that the United Irishmen exhibition be installed first, followed by the Images and Reflections (photographic exhibition 1970s), then Unkindest Cut (historic political cartoons) and finally an exhibition entitled Celebrated Literary Belfast.</p> <p>(Cllr. Kyle left the meeting)</p>
2.14	<p>Some Members felt that the Images and Reflections exhibition would be more likely to capture the public's imagination and that this should be exhibited first. However, a Member was of the view that this would not address the issue of balance if the order was changed and he would not be supportive of this. A Member made the suggestion that the United Irishmen exhibition could be displayed first as part of a package that would include Images and Reflections next and then an exhibition on the Orange Order. It was decided to put this suggestion to the vote.</p>
2.15	<p>Cllr. McCausland proposed that exhibitions on the United Irishmen; Images & Reflections; and the Orange Order should be exhibited in the City Hall (in that order) with appropriate events programmed to promote discussion on the subjects. This was seconded by Cllr. Kirkpatrick.</p> <p>Votes in favour: 3 Votes against: 2</p> <p>The proposal that exhibitions on the United Irishmen, Reflections & Images & the Orange Order should be exhibited in the City Hall (in that order) was therefore declared carried."</p>



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources (Transition) Committee
Subject:	Review of Public Administration Update
Date:	11 th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney, RPA Project Coordinator (ext. 6202)

1.0	<u>Relevant Background Information</u>
1.1	Discussions are ongoing within the NI Executive with regard to the future progress of the RPA process and the associated reform of local government. Members will be aware that the Environment Minister, Edwin Poots MLA is locked in ongoing negotiations with Ministerial colleagues within the NI Executive regarding proposed modifications to the independent Boundary Commissioners' recommendations for the new Belfast City Council boundary post RPA.
1.2	If there is no political agreement around these critical issues secured within the coming weeks, then the already tight legislative timetable would be unachievable and the local reform programme could be at significant risk.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	<u>Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh</u>
2.1.1	Notwithstanding that a final decision has yet to be taken on boundaries, discussions are ongoing between Council officers and their counterparts in Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Councils to scope out the transition related issues which need to be addressed in moving forward and to collate the relevant baseline information necessary to inform future political discussions.
2.1.2	An initial joint project planned has been agreed and is attached at Appendix 1. Members should note that officials from Lisburn and Castlereagh had requested that given the added complexity that they face with having to engage with each other as well as with Belfast, could the timetable for the initial outputs (e.g. baseline reports on assets and liabilities; service harmonisation issues etc) be extended by a month from January to February 2010.
2.2	<u>Community Planning</u>
	Over recent weeks there has been an upsurge in the number of stakeholders from across the city who have approached the Council to seek initial views with regard to community planning. As agreed by the Committee, at its meeting on 20 th November, a series of briefing sessions are to be scheduled over December '09 and January '10 with party groups and Members to seek their views on how the Council should move forward the issue of community planning and to agree the key principles and process for supporting this.

3.0 Resource Implications

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

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report

5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Joint programme of work with Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Councils

Lisburn/Castlereagh and Belfast Transition Committee Indicative Programme of Work (Version 2)

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	Mar 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.							
	5. Undertake a service audit and examine potential harmonisation issues and submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.							
	6. Undertake a detailed Asset and Liabilities Audit and submit report to Joint Transition Committee for consideration.							
	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.							
	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.							

**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:	11 th December, 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.

Recommendation

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.

Document Attached
Schedule of Applications

**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	Meet the Buyer Workshop Dinner 21 st April, 2010 Approximately 260 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 workshop will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes 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 £1,040
Queen's University Belfast	'Geographies of Orthodoxy' International Conference Dinner 10 th June, 2010 Approximately 60 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 £240
Queen's University Belfast	17 th Australasian Irish Studies Conference Reception 4 th July, 2010 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a 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 £400
British Psychological Society Division	Conference Reception 15 th September, 2010 Approximately 250 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a 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 Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £1,000
Belfast Media Group	Belfast's Top 40 under 40 4 th March, 2010 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.	This event seeks to acknowledge the achievements of the emerging leaders of Belfast. by recognising the top 40 individuals from across the City who are under the age of 40. The event will actively promote the achievements of people working in a range of fields and aims to recognise	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits . Approximate cost £300

			<p>excellence and best practice, encourage potential and promote the message that no challenge is too great.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together, 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.</p>	
Youth Link	<p>Youth Link Presentation Ceremony</p> <p>23rd June, 2010</p> <p>Approximately 600 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and sandwiches</p>	<p>Youth Link is an inter-church youth service which aims to provide support and training for youth workers whilst improving community relations experiences for young people.</p> <p>The Awards Ceremony seeks to recognise the achievements of those who have completed programmes such as the 'Leadership in youth work programme' and the 'Inter-Cultural learning programme', which are organised by Youth Link.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better Support for People and Communities' 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 tea/coffee and sandwiches</p> <p>Approximate cost £2,100</p>
The Masters in Business Administration (MBA) Association - Belfast Chapter	<p>The 2010 MBA Awards Ceremony</p> <p>29th May, 2010</p> <p>Approximately 350 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 Association aims to promote excellence in Business Administration and to acknowledge the significant contribution made by individual graduates, lecturers, academic institutions and supporting organisations to the success of the private and public sector and non-profit-making organisations in Belfast and beyond.</p> <p>The event also aims to promote the benefits of staff development and the professional standing of the Masters in Business Administration qualification.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes 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 £1,400</p>

<p>The Abbeyfield Belfast Society Ltd</p>	<p>50th Anniversary Celebration 8th September, 2010 Approximately 200 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 seeks to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Abbeyfield Belfast Society and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'Better Support for People and Communities', 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Services – listening and delivering'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits . Approximate cost £400</p>
<p>Millar Memorial Flute Band</p>	<p>100th Anniversary Gala Dinner 19th November, 2011 Approximately 180 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>This event seeks to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Millar Memorial Flute Band and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'Better Support for People and Communities'.</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 £720</p>
<p>Belfast City Council Parks and Leisure Department</p>	<p>City of Belfast International Rose Trials Dinner 14th July, 2010 Approximately 200 Attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality in the form of a Civic Dinner</p>	<p>The City of Belfast International Rose Trials will be held during Rose Week. The Trials are renowned worldwide for attracting international rose growers in addition to a significant number of visitors. 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 a Civic Dinner Approximate cost £7,000</p>

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Northern Ireland Local Government Association Annual Conference 2010
Date:	11 th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)
Contact Officer:	Mrs. Julie Lilley, Members' Liaison Officer (extension 6321)

Relevant Background Information

The Northern Ireland Local Government Association is holding its Annual Conference in the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle from Thursday, 18th till Friday, 19th February, 2010.

The theme of the NILGA 2010 Annual Conference is 'Delivering Change – A Local Government for Tomorrow'. The main focus of the Conference will be on the progress achieved in implementing the reform of Local Government and the major hurdles which remain to be overcome in order to ensure that the 2011 deadline is met.

Attendance at the conference would provide an opportunity for Councillors to network with other Elected Members and consider how the vision for a modern Local Government system can be achieved within the designated timeframe. In addition, Members will be able to participate in the Northern Ireland Local Government Awards Ceremony which will be held on the Thursday evening. The Local Government Awards aim to recognise exceptional performance and achievement by both officers and Members.

Key Issues

As Members may be aware the Council is represented on NILGA by sixteen Members and both the Council and NILGA are taking steps to ensure that the views of Belfast City Council are taken account of properly. Attendance at the conference by Members will provide a further opportunity to ensure that the Council has a strong voice in the debate around the future of Local Government and the role to be played by NILGA and Councils in achieving satisfactory outcomes.

Resource Implications

Northern Ireland local Government Association Annual Conference

Delegate Fee:	£200
Hotel Accommodation:	£90
Travel:	£30
	—
Total per delegate:	£320

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to authorise:

- the attendance at the NILGA Annual Conference of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Committee, the Head of Committee and Members' Services (or their nominees) and the Council's representatives on NILGA ; and
- the payment of the appropriate travelling and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

Decision Tracking

Mr Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services, will organise registration of delegates as appropriate before 15th January, 2010.

Key to Abbreviations

N/A

Documents Attached

N/A



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	‘Developing Elected Members 2010’ Conference and Workshop
Date:	11 th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members’ Services (extension 6325)
Contact Officer:	Mrs. Julie Lilley, Members’ Liaison Officer (extension 6321)

Relevant Background Information

The Local Government Chronicle, supported by the IDeA, is organising an Elected Member Development Conference and Workshop from Tuesday, 26th until Wednesday, 27th January. The event will be held in the America Square Conference Centre, central London.

The Conference and Workshop will focus on how Members can best be supported and developed, particularly as their roles and responsibilities evolve.

Benefits to be gained from Members’ attendance at the event include:

- a better understanding of the importance of Member development in the context of community leadership
- learning from best practice from a wide range of Local Authorities
- accessing networking opportunities with Member peers from across England, Scotland and Wales
- learning what Members feel they need from induction training.

The Conference will be addressed by a number of expert speakers who have specialised knowledge of Member development issues and will examine specifically the area of Member induction training. It will involve case studies, discussion sessions and small group work.

Key Issues

The Council has actively promoted Member development and has been innovative in introducing Personal Development Plans for Councillors. Members have recognised that taking responsibility for their own development can have significant advantages and allows them to enhance skills which ultimately help them to undertake the multi-faceted role of a Councillor. The Conference and Workshop will allow Members to explore further how they can work with officers, and each other, to ensure that they are provided with the best possible development programmes and opportunities.

Resource Implications	
Delegate Fee:	£579
Accommodation:	£250
Travel:	£250
	—
Total per delegate:	£1079

Recommendation
<p>It is recommended that the Committee agrees to authorise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the attendance at the Elected Member Development Conference and Workshop 2010 of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Committee and the Head of Committee and Members' Services (or their nominees), together with a Member from each of the Party Groups not represented by the aforementioned Members; and▪ the payment of the appropriate travelling and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

Decision Tracking
<p>Mr Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services, will arrange for the attendance of delegates as appropriate before 13th January, 2010.</p>

Key to Abbreviations
<p>N/A</p>

Documents Attached
<p>N/A</p>



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Date:	Friday, 11th December, 2009
Subject:	Transitional Governance Arrangements for the Education Sector
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)

Purpose of Report

To determine a response to correspondence received from the Minister for Education regarding the transitional governance arrangements for the education sector.

Background

Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Education explaining that the Education Bill provides for the replacement of the five Education and Library Boards with a new Education and Skills Authority. However, the legislation has not yet been passed by the Assembly and accordingly the commencement date of 1st January 2010 which had been agreed by the Executive for the establishment of the new body is not achievable and interim governance and management arrangements will have to be put in place.

The Minister has decided to reduce the size of the Education and Library Boards and under the transitional arrangements the Council has been allocated four places on the Belfast Board.

However, in order to comply with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, which states that at least two nominees should be sought for each vacancy, the Minister has invited the Council to put forward at least eight Councillors who would be willing to sit on the Board during the transitional period. Each Councillor would be required to complete an application form detailing how he or she would meet the key requirements for appointment to the posts. The application forms would be subject to eligibility sift followed by "conversations with a purpose" with candidates to confirm and validate suitability. The final decision on appointment would be made by the Minister with a view to achieving a balance in terms of diversity of skills and experience. All appointments made would be for the transitional period prior to the establishment of the new Education and Skills Authority.

The Minister is seeking a response from the Council by 16th December.

Key Issues

The Council currently has 14 representatives on the Belfast Education and Library Board. These are:

Sinn Féin

Councillor Breige Brownlee
Councillor Tierna Cunningham
Councillor Tom Hartley
Councillor Danny Lavery

DUP

Councillor Diane Dodds
Councillor Nelson McCausland
Councillor Rodway

UUP

Councillor David Browne
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Councillor Bob Stoker

SDLP

Councillor Tim Attwood
Councillor Patrick Convery
Councillor Cathal Mullaghan

All

Councillor Máire Hendron

These Party Group appointments were determined using the Council's d'Hondt process immediately following the Local Government Elections in May, 2005 and were approved by the Council at its Annual meeting on 1st June, 2005 for the period to end on the date of the Local Government Elections, then anticipated to be held in May, 2009, though obviously, for a variety of reasons, the names of the Council's representatives have changed from time to time. The Committee, in January of this year, agreed that, as a consequence of the extension of the existing Council term, all appointments to outside Bodies should be extended to the date of the next Local Government Elections in May, 2011.

The original d'Hondt process involved appointments being made to a wide range of organisations and involved more than 90 selections being made by the Group Leaders. Obviously, choices are influenced by various factors and those organisations which are considered by the Party Group Leaders to be most important in terms of the life of the City are foremost in the order of selection. Education obviously took high rank in the original process and membership of the Belfast Board is highly valued among the Members.

At its meeting on 19th August, 2005 the Committee agreed to continue the application of the original d'Hondt process for the filling of appointments which became necessary throughout the life of the Council and this has been applied successfully. However, the current proposal is to reduce the existing 14 representatives of the Council to 4, and there would appear to be two options.

Firstly, to determine the Council's representatives using a one-off selection process based on d'Hondt. The current strength of the Party Groupings would result in the undernoted choice sequence:

SF choices 1, 5 and 7
DUP choices 2, 6 and 8
UUP choice 3
SDLP choice 4

It is important to note that the first four choices fall to the largest Party Groupings and if the Council were being asked to nominate only sufficient Members to fill the number of places which the legislation stipulates must be allocated to the Local Authority then the representatives of those Groupings would be the Council's nominees.

Secondly, to take the view that the Council has already nominated its representatives on the Belfast Education and Library Board using the d'Hondt process and if the Minister wishes to reduce this figure from 14 to 4 then she should make her selections from that pool of Councillors. In putting this forward as an option, though, the Minister should be reminded that, in the interests of fairness, equality and justice, the 4 places on the new Body should be filled by representatives of the 4 largest Party Groupings on the Council.

It should be noted that, because of the deadlines set by the Minister, any decision made by the Council would have to be conveyed to her prior to ratification by the Council and it will also be necessary for the Party Groupings to name their representatives at this stage.

Recommendation

To consider the options put forward and to take such action thereon as may be determined.

Officers to contact: Mr. Liam Steele
Head of Committee and Members' Services

Decision Tracking

The Committee's decision will be conveyed to the Minister prior to the deadline date of 16th December.

Key to Abbreviations

N/A

Documents Attached

N/A



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Budget Monitoring Report
Date:	11 th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Paul Starkey, Management Accounting Manager

Relevant Background Information

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has requested that it receive regular updates on budgetary performance throughout the year and the most recent report on the 2009/10 position was presented on 23 October 2009. This report updates Members on the current year's position at period 7, the forecast outturn for the financial year and highlights budget risk areas.

Key Issues

Revenue Budget Position to October 2009
 BCC has a net departmental budget of £70.2m for the period to October. The outturn for the year to date is £67.9m giving an under-spend of £2.3m. The reasons for this under-spend are explained below.

Forecast Revenue Outturn 2009/10
 The forecast outturn for 2009/10 is an under-spend of £3.9m. There have been several factors which have contributed to this forecast:

1. Increased rate income has been forecast by Land and Property Services of some £834k - this is an area which Belfast City Council officers have been focusing on in recent years, particularly in relation to vacant properties.
2. The pay rise for 2009/10 was settled at a lower amount than previously budgeted (original budget was for 2.5% compared to base settlement of 1%)
3. There have been a number of adjustments within Departmental Budgets to reflect the up to date financial position
4. A comprehensive review of capital financing has been carried out in preparation for the 2010/11 rates setting process

This forecast includes the voluntary redundancy exercise for ISB (which has a net impact of some £700k in 2009/10 after in year savings) but excludes the remainder of the potential voluntary redundancy costs which are the subject of a separate SP&R report and are discussed further below.

Budgetary Risks / Pressures

The register of all the budget risk areas, their financial implications and the action required to manage the risks is updated monthly.

A number of the key risks that have been included in the overall financial forecast above and are putting pressure on the current year's budget are:

1. If the current low level in interest rates prevail to the end of the year, this is likely to cause a £460,000 loss of income in terms of interest on Council reserves.
2. Building Control show a loss of income due to the downturn in the housing market. This has resulted in a loss of external income of £234,670 for the year to date.
3. ISB has experienced a loss of external income of £145,500 at Period 7.

Impact on Reserves

As reported at the SP&R Committee of 20 November, the planned reserves at the end of 2009/10 were some £2.7m (after planned contributions from reserves to the 2009/10 rate of £2.4m). If the forecast under-spend of £3.9m above is achieved, this would lead to reserves at 31 March 2010 of £6.6m.

However, a paper on the voluntary redundancy exercise is being separately presented to the SP&R Committee today. If Members agree to implement this VR exercise, then the inclusion of the £2.3m of estimated costs in 2009/10 would reduce the year end reserves to some £4.3m. Given the ongoing savings generated by VR, this is viewed as acceptable at this stage.

We will continue to refine the 2009/10 financial position and regularly update Members. However, the Council's reserves will need to be replenished which will have an impact on the setting of the District Rate for 2010/11 and future years. This is discussed within the separate paper on the Financial Estimates for 2010/11 presented to the SP&R Committee today.

Capital Programme 2009/10

The draft Capital Programme for 2009/10 and future years outlines a programme of expenditure of £10.2m for 2009/10 to be financed by loans plus £2.1m to be financed by revenue contributions, giving a total budgeted expenditure for the year of £12.3m.

Expenditure for the period to October amounts to £11m. The most significant areas of expenditure are Ulster Hall Major Works of £1.6m and City Hall Major Works of £2.8m.

Forecast Capital Outturn 2009/10

The forecast capital financing requirement for the year can be met by the existing budget. The total actual capital expenditure for 2009/10 is forecast to be some £18.5m. This is £6.2m over the approved budget and relates mainly to an under-spend in 2008/09 of £5.1m which has rolled forward to 2009/10. There have also been a number of new schemes added to the capital programme since the original capital programme was planned. Due to the timing of taking out of loans, this additional expenditure can be financed within the capital financing budget.

Resource Implications

As outlined above

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the current revenue and capital financial positions to date and the forecast outturns. In addition, Members are asked to note the implications for reserves and the potential to fund the costs from the voluntary redundancy exercise, should this be agreed through the separate SP&R report presented today.

Decision Tracking

Regular updates on the financial position in 2009/10 will continue to be provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
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Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

None.

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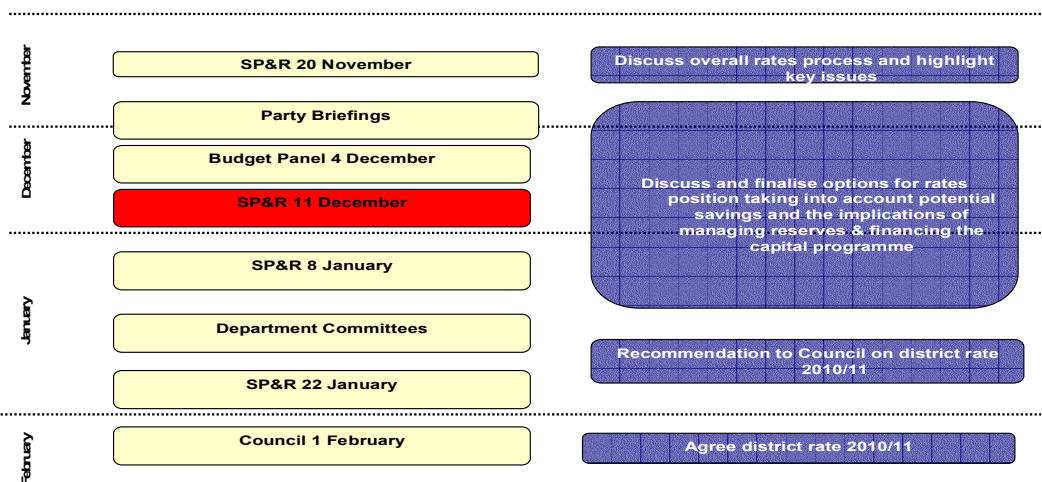
Belfast City Council

Report to: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject: Update on Financial Estimates and District Rate 2010/11
Date: 11 December 2009
Reporting Officer: Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer: Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources

Relevant Background Information and Purpose of Report

Members will recall that, at the last meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the following process was agreed for setting the district rate and agreeing the estimates for 2010/11.

Timetable for Rate Setting Process 2010-2011



The purpose of this report is to:

- update Members on progress; and,
- discuss a number of options for further consideration.
-

Key Issues

1. Objectives

It is proposed that the overall strategy for setting the district rate for 2010/11 should be to achieve the following objectives:

- To agree a district rate which is acceptable to Members
- Strengthen the Council's financial position, most notably the district reserves

- Establish cash limits for department estimates and deliver efficiency savings
- Provide affordable and sustainable financial arrangements to deliver Members' capital programme and City Investment Strategy aspirations.

In this context, Members will need to consider the following before finalising the district rate and estimates for 2010/11:

- The reserves position of the Council
- How the capital programme and City Investment Strategy will be financed
- Department estimates and efficiency savings
- Thematic Budget
- The EPP position

2. Summary of Current Position for 2010/11

The table below summarises the current position in terms of the key factors which will influence the rate setting decision for 2010/11. As can be seen from the table, the current overall impact on the district rate is a 7.81% increase which equates to a 3.28% increase to the ratepayer. For the average capital domestic value this will mean a £24.38 increase in the ratepayer's annual rate bill. Of the 7.81% increase on the rate, some 5.73% relates to investment in the capital programme or in reserves and just over 2% of the increase relates to Departmental Estimates.

Current Estimated Rate Increase 2010/11		
	2010/11 Increase	% Rate Increase
Departmental Estimates	2,912,649	2.17%
CIF	1,000,000	0.75%
Revenue Contributions to capital	955,180	0.71%
Capital Financing	812,060	0.61%
General Exchequer Grant	(125,960)	(0.09)
Rate Increase before Reserves		4.15%
Movement in Reserves	4,900,000	3.66%
District Rate Increase	10,453,929	7.81%
Average impact on ratepayer	24.38	

Each main element of the table is discussed in more detail below.

(a) Department Estimates

This is money required by departments to deliver services and typically covers expenditure on headings such as salaries, supplies and services. All departments have prepared estimates for 2010/11. As a consequence net expenditure is budgeted to rise by £2.9m which equates to a 2.17% increase on the rate. This has been mainly driven by increased utility costs (£786k), superannuation contributions (£700k) and landfill tax (£542k) along with the loss of external income (£1.3m). Despite these uncontrollable cost increases, the proposed departmental increase is the lowest for some time and this has been achieved by reducing costs in areas such as consultancy, use of external facilities and office equipment. Details of department's estimates will be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January prior to submission to the individual Departmental Committees.

The department increase of 2.17% compares to the latest government inflation figure of 1.5%. However, this figure reflects prices at October 2009 and does not include a forecast element for 2010/11. The HM Treasury, "Forecast for the UK economy" forecasts that inflation by 2011 will be in the range of 1.6% to 2.7%.

(b) 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.

To date, the Council has committed funding to four key iconic projects across the city:

- (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 the investment of £1m, £2m and £3m over a three year period. 2010/11 is the third year of this arrangement and therefore an additional £1m of funding to cover the city investment strategy will be required.

(c) Capital Programme

Up to this year the council has been able to pay for its capital expenditure through revenue contributions and use of internal cash. In basic terms this means the council was able to pay for capital schemes with its own money rather than having to borrow. The financial position of the organisation, as previously has been reported, has now changed. This means that the organisation must borrow up to £58m to finance current committed schemes in the capital programme. All the money does not need to be borrowed at one time but it does mean there will have to be a stepped increase in the rate over the next four years in order to meet this financial commitment. For 2010/11, capital financing will need to be increased by £1.77m which is the equivalent of a 1.32% increase in the rate.

(d) Reserves

At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 20 November 2009, Members were informed that the forecast for reserves at the end of 2009/10 was £2.7m. Since this meeting a detailed review of the balances has been carried out and the revised year end forecast for reserves is now £4.3m. Members should note that this closing position also allows for £2.3m of voluntary redundancies to be financed during 2009/10, should this be agreed. (Both the voluntary redundancy exercise and the 2009/10 financial position are discussed in more detail in separate reports which are also being discussed by committee today.)

There is therefore a need to build reserves up to a more acceptable level for an organisation of this size. This needs to be set in the context of future external financial pressures such as RPA and the implications of the regional rate for 2011/12. In addition, the implementation of the Local Government Finance Bill could mean a more prescriptive approach to the level of reserves and therefore BCC needs to have a sound reserves position as it moves forward.

Best practice guidance from CIPFA and advice from the local government auditor would indicate that reserves should be in the range of £8m to £10m. We would therefore recommend to Members that, as a minimum, a contribution should be made to reserves from the rate over the next three years as follows:

- 2010/11 £2.5m
- 2011/12 £1.5m
- 2012/13 £1.0m

(e) Thematic Budget

This budget heading was first established by Members in 2009/10 in recognition that the cross-cutting work which the Council is trying to encourage could not be solely delivered within functional budgets. It was agreed that the budget of £500,000 should be used to kick start projects and build the infrastructure required to deliver thematic working. In June 2009 the Strategic Policy Resources Committee agreed to allocate the budget to as follows:

- Older People £87,000
- Health & Well Being £100,000
- Safer City £145,000
- Better Care for the Environment £57,000
- Children and Young People £100,000.

Examples of how the budget has been used in 2009/10 include:

- Fuel Stamp Scheme
- Good Morning Project
- Older Peoples Convention
- Community Safety Warden posts
- Development of Safer City Plan
- Joint funding with Public Health Agency and Health and Social Services Trust for Health and Well Being posts
- Alcohol and obesity projects
- Neighbourhood Programme for young people
- City Centre Programme for young people
- Biodiversity DVD
- Waste Categorisation Survey

Members will need to decide on the size of this budget for 2010/11 and how it will be allocated. Proposals will be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 8 January 2010 as to how the budget could be allocated in 2010/11. £500k has already been factored into the rates position described above for thematic budgets.

(f) 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 as 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.

Summary of the Current Position

To summarise, the current position is that a 7.81% increase in the rate will allow Members to:

- Meet the cost requirements of delivering planned services to the population of Belfast;
- Improve the reserves position by £2.5m;
- Deliver the rate financing requirements of the city investment strategy and the **current** capital programme.

3. Options for Savings

The outstanding issue which requires discussion is efficiency savings. The voluntary redundancy exercise, if agreed by Members will generate £1m of savings in 2010/11. These are not included in the 7.81% rate increase described above.

In addition, the organisation has been working hard on a number of efficiency projects, such as the review of the centre, better procurement, improved use of technology and the mini budget review. These projects have not been fully developed but is estimated that savings in the region of £1m could be generated. Again, these potential savings do not form part of the 7.81% rate increase. It is proposed that Members ask officers to bring a report back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 8 January identifying, in further detail, the areas where £1m of savings could be achieved in 2010/11 and the implications of the savings proposals. This report will have to contain measures which can be achieved in a short timeframe with minimal additional costs. At the next meeting, Members will be requested to approve the efficiency programme and by doing so it means that the £1m savings can be factored into the 2010/11 estimates process.

If the potential savings for 2010/11 (£2m) were applied to the rate, then the rate increase of 7.81% would fall to 5.52%. The rates position, however, is different from other years because a significant proportion of the rates increase for 2010/11 must be used for replenishing reserves and financing current capital expenditure. This means that there is little headroom for Members to do new things such as expanding the current capital programme. Members may therefore wish to consider alternative uses for the potential £2m efficiency savings. For example:

- applying £1m of the savings to finance additional capital borrowing would result in a further £10m being available to apply to new capital schemes;
- given the uncertainty over RPA financing Members could decide to accelerate the replenishment of reserves by applying a proportion of the savings to this area.

If new investment is agreed to be put into new capital borrowing, the Director of Property and Projects will then work with Members to agree the prioritisation of the schemes to be funded from such investment.

4. Implications for the Overall Rate Position

The tables overleaf summarise the potential rate options discussed above and their impact on the ratepayer.

Summary of Potential Rate Increases

	District Rate Increase	Total Rate Increase	Impact on Ratepayer
Current Position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional capital finance outside current programme • £2.5m investment in reserves • No VR / other savings 	7.81%	3.28%	£24.38
Current Position plus £2m efficiency savings applied to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional capital finance for new programme • Additional Reserves 	7.81%	3.28%	£24.38
Current Position minus £2m efficiency savings applied to the rate but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional capital finance outside current programme • £2.5m investment in reserves 	5.52%	2.32%	£17.25

Implications for Ratepayers

PROPERTY	Ave Capital Value	Increase in Rate Bill		
	/NAV	5.52%		7.81%
Domestic Properties	£	£		£
Terrace House	86,425	12.96		18.32
3-Bed Semi-Detached House	132,173	19.83		28.02
4-Bed Detached House	293,843	44.07		62.29
Apartment	83,379	12.51		17.68
Average Capital Value	115,000	17.25		24.38
Non-Domestic Properties				
Office Property	12,728	166.74		235.47
Retail Property	10,247	134.24		189.57

5. Key Questions

Members will need to address the following questions:

- (a) Do they agree that a further £1m should be invested in the City Investment Strategy?;
- (b) Do they agree that a minimum of £2.5m should be set aside as a contribution from the rates to reserves?;
- (c) Should further work be done by officers to develop an efficiency programme to meet a target of £1m and a report brought back to the next P&R meeting?; and
- (d) Should the VR exercise efficiencies and efficiency programme savings (£2m in total), if agreed, be used to reduce the 2010/11 rate or be invested in the capital programme or reserves?

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report;
2. Consider whether they wish to finalise the answers to each of the key questions in section 5 above; and
3. Agree to receive a report at the 8 January 2010 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the allocation of the thematic budget 2010/11, the council's efficiency programme, the breakdown of the Departmental Estimates and the overall rate position.

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Budget and Transformation Panel

Minutes of Meeting No. 6

4 December 2009

Present:

Cllr T Hartley	Sinn Fein (Chair)
Cllr D Browne	UUP
Cllr M Browne	Sinn Fein
Cllr P Convery	SDLP
Cllr M Jones	Alliance
P McNaney	Chief Executive
J Thompson	Director of Finance & Resources
G Millar	Director of Property and Projects
J Minne	Head of Human Resources
R Cregan	Improvement Manager

Apologies:

Cllr R Newton	DUP
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1. 2009/10 Financial Position and Reserves

The Director of Finance and Resources updated Members on the forecast revenue outturn for 2009/10 and the impact on reserves as follows:

- The forecast outturn for 2009/10 is an under-spend of £3.9m. There have been several factors which have contributed to this forecast including increased rate income, a lower pay rise than originally assumed and a comprehensive review of the costs of financing the capital programme in 2009/10.
- If the forecast under-spend of £3.9m above is achieved, this would lead to

reserves at 31 March 2010 of £6.6m. However, if Members agree to implement the VR exercise, then the inclusion of the £2.3m of estimated costs in 2009/10 would reduce the year end reserves to some £4.3m. The VR exercise was discussed separately later in the meeting.

2. Estimates and District Rate 2010/11

The Director of Finance and Resources took Members through the presentation which is being used to brief Party Groups on the Estimates and District Rate 2010/11. She summarised the current position to be a 7.81% increase in the rate will would allow Members to:

- Meet the cost requirements of delivering planned services to the population of Belfast;
- Improve the reserves position by a further £2.5m;and
- Deliver the rate financing requirements of the city investment strategy and the **current** capital programme.

The key elements of the 7.81% were discussed with Members in terms of:

- **Department Estimates** - All departments have prepared estimates for 2010/11. As a consequence net expenditure is budgeted to rise by £2.9m which equates to a 2.17% increase on the rate.
- **City Investment Strategy** - In December 2007, it was agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the City Investment Strategy would be funded through the investment of £1m, £2m and £3m over a three year period. 2010/11 is the third year of this arrangement and therefore an additional £1m of funding to cover the city investment strategy will be required.
- **Capital Programme** - the organisation must borrow up to £58m to finance current committed schemes in the capital programme. All the money does not need to be borrowed at one time but it does mean there will have to be a

stepped increase in the rate over the next four years in order to meet this financial commitment. For 2010/11, capital financing will need to be increased by £1.77m which is the equivalent of a 1.32% increase in the rate.

- **Reserves** - there is a need to build reserves up to an acceptable level for an organisation of this size. This needs to be set in the context of future external financial pressures such as RPA and the implications of the regional rate for 2011/12. In addition, the implementation of the Local Government Finance Bill could mean a more prescriptive approach to the level of reserves and therefore BCC needs to have a sound reserves position as it moves forward.

Best practice guidance from CIPFA and advice from the local government auditor would indicate that reserves should be in the range of £8m to £10m. We would therefore recommend to Members that, as a minimum, a contribution should be made to reserves from the rate over the next three years as follows:

- 2010/11 £2.5m
- 2011/12 £1.5m
- 2012/13 £1.0m

- **Thematic Budget** - this budget heading was first established by Members in 2009/10 in recognition that the cross-cutting work which the Council is trying to encourage could not be solely delivered within functional budgets. It was agreed that the budget of £500,000 should be used to kick start projects and build the infrastructure required to deliver thematic working. Members will need to decide on the size of this budget for 2010/11 and how it will be allocated.
- **Estimated Penny Product** - 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.

3. Voluntary Redundancy Exercise

The Chief Executive updated Members on progress - 55 applications have been assessed against the agreed criteria and there is a potential for 25 employees to be released on the grounds of VR. The Director of Finance and Resources informed Members that the one-off cost of releasing the 25 staff would be £2.3m with £1m being saved each and every year. However, in order for the savings to be realised for 2010/11 a number of structural reviews would need to be urgently carried out.

4. Savings

The Director of Finance and Resources also informed Members that the issue of additional efficiency savings needs to be factored into the setting of the rate for 2010/11. The voluntary redundancy exercise, if agreed by Members, will generate £1m of savings in 2010/11 and there is also the potential to deliver a further £1m from a number of efficiency projects, such as the review of the centre, better procurement, improved use of technology and the mini budget review. These are not included in the 7.81% rate increase as described above.

After discussion, Members suggested that officers should bring a report back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 8 January identifying, in further detail, the areas where £1m of savings could be achieved in 2010/11 and the implications of the savings proposals.

5. Options for Use of Savings

The Director explained that the rates position for 2010/11 is different from other years because a significant proportion of the rates increase for 2010/11 is proposed to be used for replenishing reserves and financing current capital expenditure. This means that there is little headroom for Members to do new things such as expanding the current capital programme. Members agreed that they will have to carefully consider alternative uses for the potential £2m efficiency savings. For example:

- applying £1m of the savings to finance additional capital borrowing would result in a further £10m being available to apply to new capital schemes;
- given the uncertainty over RPA financing Members could decide to accelerate the replenishment of reserves by applying a proportion of the savings to this area.

6. Date of Next Meeting

21st December 2009 @ 10.00am

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Audit Panel

Wednesday, 25th November, 2009

MEETING OF AUDIT PANEL

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

In attendance: Mrs. J. Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. A. Wilson, Head of Audit, Governance and
Risk Services;
Mrs. J. Minne, Head of Human Resources;
Mrs. G. Ireland, Corporate Risk and Governance Manager;
Mr. A. Harrison, Acting Corporate Assurance Manager;
Mr. T. Wallace, Financial Accounting Manager;
Mr. H. Downey, Committee Administrator;
Mr. J. Buchanan, Chief Local Government Auditor; and
Mr. S. Knox, Local Government Auditor.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Kyle and Dr. Smith.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd September were taken as read and signed as correct.

Director of Finance and Resources

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. J. Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources, to her first meeting of the Audit Panel.

Update on Telephony/Mobile Phones

(Mr. P. Gribben, IS Portfolio Manager, Information Services Belfast, attended in connection with this item.)

The Panel was reminded that, at its meeting on 2nd September, it had considered a report in relation to the use of mobile telephones within the Council. The report had indicated that, in November, 2008, the internal audit section had completed a review on the use of mobile telephones, which had determined that:

- in August, 2008, there had been 842 Council-issued mobile telephones in operation;

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**Audit Panel,
Wednesday, 25th November, 2009**

- expenditure of £195,000 had been incurred on mobile telephones during 2007/2008;
- there had been no single point of contact/responsibility within the Council for the management of mobile telephony;
- there was a need to review corporate policy and procedures in relation to mobile phones and to improve the administration process;
- there were numerous accounts in place with three suppliers; and
- improvements to mobile telephony arrangements should be seen in the context of implementing other improvements and efficiencies in the wider telephony environment.

The Director of Finance and Resources explained that Audit, Governance and Risk Services had completed recently a follow-up audit in respect of mobile telephones. This had indicated that, of the recommendations outlined within the original report, one had been implemented fully, eight had been implemented partially and three had yet to be completed.

She provided an overview in relation to this work, which had included the delegation to the Head of Information Services Belfast of responsibility for the management of mobile telephony contracts. A group had been established also in order to draft a policy for the use of mobile telephones and to rationalise the costs associated therewith. She highlighted various aspects of the policy which would cover issues such as purchasing telephones, the replacement of lost or broken handsets, conditions of use and private use. Importantly, the policy would set out stringent criteria to be met by any officer requesting a mobile phone as part of their duties. She explained that the policy had now been approved by the Chief Officers Management Team and would be circulated to staff, following notification to the Trades Unions.

The Director of Finance and Resources informed the Members that significant work had been undertaken also to streamline the billing process for both landlines and mobile telephones. The Council had now moved to the BT One Bill method of payment, which would require the Central Transactions Unit to process one invoice on a quarterly basis rather than having to deal with several hundred on a monthly basis and would provide business managers with improved information in order to ensure the correct usage of all BT landlines. She added that Information Services Belfast, in conjunction with the Office of Government Commerce Buying Solutions, had now moved all landline and network leased lines to an Office of Government Commerce framework, which it was anticipated would create annual savings of between £60,000 and £70,000. A similar approach was being taken in relation to the Council's primary mobile telephone operators, both of which would, in the near future, be consolidating all accounts onto single bills for centralised payment. The Council was investigating the possibility also of establishing a corporate contract with the Office of Government Commerce Buying Solutions.

During discussion, the Panel voiced concern in relation to the high number of mobile phones in operation currently within the Council and stressed the need to see a reduction in this number. In response, the Director of Finance and Resources pointed out that the new mobile phone policy set out strict guidelines to be met by Council officers requiring mobile telephones, which would be likely to lead to a reduction in the numbers in use within the Council.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided and that a further report in respect of telephony would be submitted to its next meeting.

Belfast City Council Financial Accounts 2008/2009

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to bring Members of the Audit Panel up to date with the position regarding the external audit of the 2008/09 accounts, the Local Government Auditor’s annual audit letter and management letter.

Relevant Background Information

The Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 require Belfast City Council to approve by resolution the statement of accounts as soon as reasonably practical and in any event before the 30th June immediately following the end of the financial year. The draft accounts were approved by the Audit Panel on 15th June, 2009 and Strategic Policy and Resources on 19th June, 2009.

The accounts have now been audited and formally published.

The Local Government Auditor (LGA) is due to issue his annual audit letter and draft management letter by the end of November. The annual audit letter will be presented to the Audit Panel after it is received.

The draft management letter, once received, will be considered by management, and then submitted to the Audit Panel, together with an action plan to implement any audit recommendations.

Key Issues

1. Overall Audit Opinion

The Chief Local Government Auditor has provided an unqualified opinion on Belfast City’s accounts for 2008/09.

2. Adjustments

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

The material amendments are as follows split into presentational adjustments and adjustments which impacted on the District Fund Reserve position:

Presentational Adjustments

- Pension provision was reduced by £624k as a result of the incorrect Market Value Adjustment factor being used to calculate the provision.
- Both the VAT Account and other debtors were overstated by £524k.
- Both Assets under construction and buildings were amended by £8.4m as a result of correcting for the contribution to the Grove Leisure Centre.
- A sinking fund was established to meet the future costs of repaying loans.
- The District Fund, Note 3 and the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses were amended by £1.6m to reflect pension movements.
- The District Fund and Note 3 were amended by £1.4m to reflect loan interest to the loans pool.
- Expenditure and income were increased by £244k as a result of grossing up the general grant figure.
- Both the Bank Account and VAT account were amended by £696k.
- An analysis of amounts in the cash flow were amended.

Adjustments Impacting on the District Fund Reserve

- Loan interest has been increased by £252k as a result of accruing for the interest for the period February and March 2009.

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- Expenditure on the landfill provision was amended by £1.4m and the landfill provision was discounted resulting in a further reduction of £572k in the provision.
- The above landfill provision movement resulted in reducing the Renewal and Repairs reserve by £2.8m and increasing the District Fund by £2.8m.
- Following discussions at audit, the legal provision was reduced by £430k.
- Additional funding of £711k to clear the deficit of the Gas Pension Fund.

The overall impact of these amendments resulted in the District Fund Reserve balance being increased by £2,279k and now stands at £5.3m.

The presentational adjustments were made in conjunction with the Local Government Auditor in line with ensuring comparability with other Councils, apart from the Pension Provision adjustment. This was due to incorrect information being supplied by NILGOSC at the time of the preparation of the accounts. The correct information was subsequently supplied but after the accounts had been approved and submitted. We will be liaising with the Local Government Auditor over the next few months in order to minimise these type of adjustments for 2009/10.

The adjustments impacting on the district fund were also agreed with the Local Government Auditor. The main area being the level of provision for the closure of the landfill site. It was agreed with the Chief Local Government Auditor that the level of provision was too high and should be reduced. This then released monies to the District Fund Reserve on the understanding that part of this would be used to clear the deficit on the Gas Pension Fund.

Resource Implications

None.

Recommendation

The Audit Panel is requested to note the outcome of the annual audit of the 2008/09 accounts.”

During discussion, the Panel highlighted in particular a number of personnel-related issues arising from the Annual Accounts. Members requested information regarding the reasons for the increases in the number of employees and in the number of officers entering the top salary band compared to the previous year.

Clarification was sought also in relation to the costs associated with employing agency staff and the numbers of employees classified as supernumerary. Several Members expressed the view also that, following the abolition of the Personnel Sub-Committee, such issues were no longer being afforded the importance they merited within the Committee process and that reports on personnel issues were not discussed at great length during meetings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee due to the number of items on that agenda.

In response, the Head of Human Resources informed the Panel that many of the issues which had been highlighted were being considered currently by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of a rightsizing exercise within the organisation. She undertook to submit to the next meeting of the Audit Panel a report providing clarification in relation to those matters which had been raised by the Members.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided in relation to the Council's Annual Accounts for 2008/2009 and the comments of the Head of Human Resources thereon.

Local Government Auditor's Management Letter 2007/2008

The Panel was reminded that, at its meeting on 28th April, it had been advised that the audit of the Council's financial accounts for 2007/2008 had been completed and had resulted in an unqualified opinion. The Director of Finance and Resources reported that, during the course of his work, the Local Government Auditor had identified a number of issues which the Council needed to address and these had been set out in interim and end-of-year management letters. She explained that, of the thirteen recommendations contained within the interim letter, eleven had since been implemented fully. In relation to those recommendations which had been partially implemented, she indicated that the segregation of duties within the payroll section was being addressed as part of the Review of the Centre and that a single sign-on feature for IT equipment was due to be rolled out in December, following which a review of the Council's password policy would be undertaken.

The Director of Finance and Resources reported further that the end-of-year management letter had contained thirty recommendations, of which twenty-seven had been now implemented fully. She provided an update in relation to the remaining three recommendations, which related to the reconciliation of the VAT account, the matching of staff numbers between the Payroll and Human Resources Sections and the verification of vehicles to the asset register and indicated that these were in the process of being completed. She added that the annual audit of the Council's accounts for 2008/2009 had now been completed and that the Local Government Auditor's management letter for this period would contain any recommendations not addressed in respect of the 2007/2008 management letter.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

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Audit, Governance and Risk Services Progress Report

The Panel considered a report regarding the work which Audit, Governance and Risk Services had undertaken between September and November, 2009.

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services reported that, during the period, three follow-up audits had been completed in relation to purchasing and accounts payable, computer use and compensation claims and that audit reports had been finalised in relation to budgetary control, the Connswater Greenway Project and the pre-implementation review of performance management. He explained that a number of audits were being undertaken currently, which included travel and subsistence, Peace III, the Tourism Unit/Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, capital projects and value-for-money reviews of utility costs and advertising. Value-for-money reviews relating to publications and the use of consultants were planned to commence in December. He provided also details regarding fraud investigation work being carried out by the Service and pointed out that fraud awareness training had been delivered to seventy-five staff across a number of sections during the month of October. He highlighted also the work being undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services in relation to the areas of risk management, business continuity management and pandemic planning.

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

Report of Chief Local Government Auditor 2008/2009

The Acting Corporate Assurance Manager informed the Panel that the Chief Local Government Auditor was required, under the provision of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, to produce an annual report which summarised, from an external audit perspective, the key issues which had arisen in all Councils across Northern Ireland. He advised that the report had been circulated to Chief Officers, Heads of Service and business and finance managers requesting that they review the relevant sections therein and consider if any of the issues raised required to be addressed. In addition, at the request of the Chief Executive, assurances had been sought from Council officers that the issues raised in the report were being managed effectively.

The Chief Local Government Auditor explained that the report had raised a wide variety of issues arising from the audits, in areas such as accounting and finance, contracts, tendering and procurement, grants, partnerships and companies and staff. He highlighted a number of relevance to the Council and, in particular, the success of the Council's E-procurement initiative, which had been included within the report as an example of good practice.

After discussion, the Panel noted the contents of the report of the Chief Local Government Auditor and agreed that a copy of the document be circulated to all Members of the Council.

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**Audit Panel,
Wednesday, 25th November, 2009**

Payment of Invoices

The Chairman reported that he had been made aware of media coverage which had highlighted long delays on the part of the Council in processing invoices supplied by creditors. He made the point that, in view of the current economic climate, it was important to ensure that such payments were made as a matter of urgency. Accordingly, the Director of Finance and Resources undertook to submit to the next meeting of the Panel a report setting out the timescale in relation to payment of invoices by the Council.

Absence Management

The Head of Human Resources informed the Panel that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th November, had considered a report outlining the Council's performance in managing absence during the period from July till September. The report had indicated that, during the quarter, 3.26 days had been lost per employee, compared to 2.79 days over the same period in the previous year. Importantly, the figure represented an increase of 0.54 days over the first quarter in the current year, which meant that the Council was not on target to reduce its overall sickness absence to 10.50 days by 2010/2011. The Committee had been advised that the Council had made substantial progress in reducing absence by an average of 4.5 days over the last three years and that, in order to ensure that this progress was maintained, the Committee had agreed that the issue of absence management be referred to the Audit Panel for further discussion in order to ensure that appropriate action was taken to address the matter.

The Head of Human Resources outlined the extent of the work which had been undertaken within the Council in relation to absence management. She informed the Panel that an analysis of the reasons for absence had been undertaken in those areas which had exhibited increased levels and that this had included the drafting of an improvement plan. In response to a question from a Member, she confirmed that all Council staff had been made aware of the absence management arrangements.

After discussion, during which Members stressed the need to continue to manage effectively absence levels within the Council, the Panel agreed to receive at its next meeting an update on the matter.

Audit Panel Training

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

The Panel agreed to this suggestion and noted that the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services would liaise with Panel Members in order to identify a suitable date for the training.

**Audit Panel,
Wednesday, 25th November, 2009**

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Dates of Future Meetings

The Panel agreed that it would hold its next two meetings on Monday, 15th February and Monday, 7th June, commencing at 1.00 p.m.

Chairman

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Appointment of Director of Property and Projects
Date:	11th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive

Relevant Background Information
<p>At its meeting on 23, October 2009, the committee agreed that, in the interests of making an early appointment to the post of Director of Property and Projects, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the selection panel, to offer the post to the recommended candidate with the outcome of the process being reported back to the committee for notation.</p> <p>The post was trawled within the Council on 26 October for 2 weeks with a closing date of 6, November 2009.</p>

Key Issues
<p>Two applications were received and, following short-listing, both applicants were invited to attend an assessment centre on Friday 13, November 2009. Following the assessment centre one applicant was invited to attend for final interview on Monday 16, November 2009.</p> <p>As a result of the final interview, the selection panel unanimously recommended the appointment of Mr Gerry Millar, on the appropriate point of the salary band, £85,133 - £97,283 per annum.</p>

Recommendations
<p>The committee is asked to note the appointment of Mr Gerry Millar to the post of Director of Property and Projects with effect from 1 December 2009.</p>

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Belfast City Council

Report to: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Subject: **Rightsizing Exercise**

Date: 11th December, 2009

Reporting Officer: Peter McNaney, Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources, ext 6083
Jill Minne, Head of HR, ext 3220

Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that in preparation for the 2010/11 budget setting process, Members authorised the carrying out of a mini budget review to:

- Identify the likely year end (2009/10) financial position; and
- Identify options for political consideration for reducing expenditure.

In this context, Members further authorised a trawl for voluntary redundancy directed towards the identification of efficiency savings taking into account the significant downturn in certain areas of business caused by the recession, ongoing structural reviews within departments and the review of central support units.

The Committee was advised in November, 2009 that 64 formal applications had been received for VR and that these were being evaluated against the criteria/principles previously agreed by Committee.

It was agreed that a further report would be brought back in December, in the context of the rate setting process, setting out the cost of the VR exercise; options for how it might be funded and the savings that such an exercise would realise.

These issues are addressed below.

Key Issues

1. In the first instance the 64 applications were individually assessed against a payback period of 3.25 years, this being a best practice payback period.
2. Of the 64 applications, 9 employees do not meet the 3.25 payback period and will therefore be declined, leaving 55 applications for evaluation by departments as to whether or not the posts in which these staff are employed may be declared redundant.

3. Following assessment of these 55 applications against the agreed criteria and principles, departments have indicated that there is potential for 25 employees to be released on the grounds of VR. Further work continues to be undertaken on the remaining 30 applications to establish whether or not these posts could represent a saving through, for example, a transferred redundancy to manage a supernumerary employee.
4. The one off cost to the Council of releasing the 25 staff would be some £2.3 million. It is estimated that this initial investment will lead to staff savings of some £1 million each and every year (i.e. leading to £5m after 5 years), after making the structural changes needed to facilitate the release of some staff.
5. If Members agree that this exercise should proceed, the estimated costs of implementing the VR exercise can be accommodated within the financial position for 2009/10, as set out in today's report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the Financial Position for 2009/10.
6. If the savings are to be secured for the 2010/11 rate setting process, then the staff will need to be released by 1 April 2010 (with most needing a three month notice period).
7. In order to achieve this, we would need to move quickly to review the organisation structures in relation to each of the relevant areas (as set out in Appendix 1) and therefore ensure that all the financial and HR implications of releasing the staff are fully identified. This work has already been completed for Building Control. Members can be assured there will be full consultation on the Committee and Members' Services review, as this impinges on their support arrangements and the corporate governance process.
8. Members will therefore need to address the following questions:
 - 8.1 Do they wish to release the 25 staff at a cost of £2.3M with a payback of 2.3 years and a saving over 5 years of £5m?
 - 8.2 If the release is authorised, in order for the savings to be captured for the 2010/11 financial year the redundancies will need to be approved so that most of them can take effect by the end of April 2010.
 - 8.3 In these circumstances authority is sought to conduct the structural reviews identified at Appendix 1, so that consideration can take place with the Trade Unions, the precise costs can be identified and staff who have volunteered for redundancy can be released in accordance with the provision made for them in the estimates.
 - 8.4 To ensure that these reviews deliver the efficiency savings identified, it is recommended that the Committee direct that the reviews be conducted in a manner that achieves the following targets:
 - Net saving of £1M to be achieved in 2010/11;
 - Total cost to be no more than £2.3M with a payback period of no more than 2.3 years;
 - Supernumerary staff to be managed in a time bound manner and resolved by the end of the financial year. ;
 - Reviews will be conducted and implemented in accordance with BSS HR policies and procedures;
 - Trade Unions will be fully consulted and agreement sought in relation to all releases and structural changes;
 - Regular reports will be made to Committee on the progress of this exercise with final structures being reported to Committee for

- notation; and
 - Delegated authority being given to the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Budget and Transformation Panel, to release staff on voluntary redundancy subject to the principles set out above and the agreement of final staff structures in the areas set out in Appendix 1 which achieves the necessary savings.
9. The situation with supernumerary staff is currently being managed in line with the Committee's decision. However the costs and savings will not be known until these staff are either redeployed into vacant posts or made redundant. There is therefore a need to resolve this matter in time to impact on the Council costs for 2010/11.

Resource Implications

Financial -as outlined above: HR – within existing provision; Other assets – n/a

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that Committee:

1. Agree to the voluntary redundancy exercise being implemented subject to the targets and principles set out in paragraph 8
2. Agree to the implementation of the completed Building Control review, given the costs and savings which have already been identified as set out in Appendix two
3. Agree the undertaking of detailed structural reviews in the areas set out in Appendix 1
4. Agree that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Budget and Transformation Panel, to release staff on VR subject to the principles set out in paragraph 8 and the agreement to final staff structures in the areas set out in Appendix 1 which achieve the necessary savings.

It is also recommended that the work that is currently taking place with supernumerary staff, officers and trade unions is progressed as a matter of urgency to ensure that actions taken to resolve this matter are implemented by 1 April 2010.

Decision Tracking

Regular reports will be made to committee on the progress of this exercise with final structures being reported to committee for notation.

Key to Abbreviations

VR- voluntary redundancy

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – priority areas for review.
Appendix 2– Building Control Review Report

Priority areas for structural reviews

Appendix 1

- **Chief Executive's Department (Members Services; Business Support; Corporate Communications; Records Management and Legal Services Department)**– Consideration has been given to making functional changes in Committee and Members' Services which will allow the deletion of posts with limited further structural changes. This is mainly due to the revised governance and new committee arrangements which have reduced the workload within this area and the transfer of DPPs to Health and Environmental Services. Release of staff in Corporate Communications and Records Management will require some, but relatively limited, structural change. It is proposed that the Council should downsize one department, with Legal Services becoming part of the Chief Executive's Department and the Director of Legal Services being given day to day management of legal and governance matters. This will allow the creation of one Business Support unit for all of these sections, it will be necessary to make some further limited changes within the Legal services structure.
- **Corporate Services (Finance; BIS; HR)** - It is proposed to delete one post in BIS with no other structural change at this time. Further work however on the BIS service is being considered as part of the HR review. Changes within Finance will require further detailed consideration on how to best structure this service. For example, there is a need to examine how strategic financial management; the efficiency programme and performance management should be best delivered given the alignment between these issues.
- **Parks and Leisure (Business Support and Parks operational management)** - One post can be deleted with no impact on other aspects of the structure; a review of the department's business support unit needs to be undertaken and consideration has been given to revising the operational management arrangements in Parks.
- **Health and Environmental Services (Building Control)** - members are aware of this structural review which has been agreed by the Health and Environmental Services Committee and will result in deletion of 11 posts, the creation of 6 posts, therefore achieving a net reduction of 5 posts. The structural review in this area has already been undertaken and the costs and savings have already been identified.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Health & Environmental Services Committee
Subject:	Review of Building Control Service
Date:	4 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	William Francey, Director of Health & Environmental Services
Contact Officer:	Trevor Martin, Head of Building Control Ext: 2450

Relevant Background Information

At your meeting of 5 August 2009, you granted permission to the Head of Building Control to ask 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 reduced costs and created savings in the past few years 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. 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 Building Control provide to its customers, the Council and the ratepayer.

Following the Committee decision in August 2009, the Service made initial enquiries with staff who would be willing to apply for voluntary redundancy and a number of staff (6 No) 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.

Additionally, the Service had some anomalies in its structure that 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 were 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.
- The post of Business Support Assistant looking after the Land & Property Service duties needs to be permanently catered for but is self funded.

BIS have produced a comprehensive report (Appendix 1) for the Committee with recommendations at Section 4 together with the financial implications for the Council. The Trade 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.

Proposals

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)
- 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;

Actuarial and Redundancy Costs (£)	Current Salary and Superannuation Savings (pa) (£)	Clawback Period
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 for the Building Control Service and is asked to agree that the proposals should be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for 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.

Decision Tracking

The person responsible for carrying out the decision is the Head of Building Control in conjunction with BIS and Human Resources.

Key to Abbreviations

ISB – Information Services Belfast BIS – Business Improvement Section LPS – Land & Property Services
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Documents Attached

BIS “Review of Building Control” (October 2009) Report
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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives
Date:	11th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources, ext 6083
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources, ext 3220

<p>Relevant Background Information</p> <p>To inform the Committee of delegated authority exercised by the Director of Finance & Resources to the employment of individuals who are related to existing officers of the Council.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources has authorised the appointment of the following individuals who are related to existing officers of the Council in accordance with the authority delegated to her by the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee on 27 June, 2005. The Committee is asked to note the appointments authorised by the Director under Standing Order 55.</p>

NAME OF NEW EMPLOYEE	POST APPOINTED TO	RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING OFFICER	NAME OF EXISTING OFFICER	DEPARTMENT
Trevor Rankin	Pool LGV Driver/Loader (Scale 4)	Brother	Kenneth Rankin	Health & Environmental Services
Jennifer Kirk	Casual Receptionist / Cashier (Sc 3)	Daughter	Emily Wilson	Core Improvement Team
Karen Thompson	Casual Receptionist / Cashier (Sc 3)	Sister	Elaine Finlay	Parks and Leisure
Bartosz Nicklewicz	Leisure Attendant	Partner	Dorota Safaryn	Parks and Leisure
Clare Byrne	Casual Leisure Attendant	Daughter	Jayne Byrne	Chief Executive's
Patrycja Szebista	Casual Leisure Attendant	Partner	Philip Taylor	Parks and Leisure

NAME OF NEW EMPLOYEE	POST APPOINTED TO	RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING OFFICER	NAME OF EXISTING OFFICER	DEPARTMENT
Christopher Johnston	Casual Leisure Attendant	Husband	Elinore Johnston	Parks and Leisure
Blair Elliott	Casual Leisure Attendant	Son and Brother	John Elliott and William Elliott	Parks and Leisure
David McVeigh	Casual Leisure Attendant	Son	Trevor McVeigh	Parks and Leisure
Sarah Montgomery	Casual Leisure Attendant	Daughter	Laura Montgomery	Parks and Leisure
Christopher McCann	Casual Leisure Attendant	Brother	Cormac McCann	Parks and Leisure

Resource Implications

Financial

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

Human Resources

There are no Human Resource considerations. All appointments have been made on the basis of merit in accordance with the Council's Recruitment Policies.

Asset and Other Implications

There are no other implications.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the appointments authorised by the Director of Finance and Resources in accordance with Standing Order 55.

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents Attached

None.

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Proposed Disposal – Beechmount Leisure Centre
Date:	11 December 2009
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext. 6217
Contact Officer:	Ken Anderson, Estates Surveyor, Ext. 3496

Relevant Background Information

The proposed Disposal of the main portion of Beechmount Leisure Centre site to the Trustees of Coláiste Feirste has been the subject of several previous reports to the Parks and Leisure Committee and its predecessor Committees. In October 2006 a disposal price of £3.685 million was reported to the Community and Recreation Sub-Committee as agreed with the (then) Valuation and Lands Agency who acted for the scheme funder (Department of Education – DENI). In the interim there have been a series of discussions with the school Trustees, DENI and their advisers in an effort to agree the detailed arrangements including those associated with potential future public use of the Coláiste Feirste facilities.

A Special meeting of the Parks and Leisure Committee on 27 January 2009 set out a series of criteria for the proposed land transfer. These included proposals in relation to future public use and disposal of the land by way of a Freehold sale, but subject to the necessary review of the previously agreed disposal price in line with DENI requirements.

Current position:

- i) A report on the current position has been provided to the December meeting of the Parks and Leisure Committee and the Director of Property and Projects will provide Members with an update in relation to the outcome from that meeting.
- ii) A revised disposal price has been agreed with Land and Property Services acting for DENI. The agreed price of £2.325 million is subject to approval by Council and DENI and incorporation of detailed terms in a legal agreement to be drawn

up by the Director of Legal Services. The price reflects a downturn in the market since the previous submission in 2006.

- iii) The disposal will be way of an outright sale rather than lease as agreed by the Special Parks and Leisure Committee on 27 January 2009.
- iv) The Council is close to agreement on the draft terms of a Service Agreement with the Trustees of Coláiste Feirste. The Agreement would provide for public use of a range of new facilities to be developed on the site, including a sports hall and Gaelic Athletic pitch. The public use would be available outside school hours and during school holidays. The arrangement would be reviewable after the first year of operation and every third year thereafter to ensure it remains viable. If the provision of public use ceases to remain viable the Council would have the option to either commence financial support of the public use or withdraw from the arrangement.
- v) The provision of replacement handball courts and alternative long term arrangements for the weight lifting club remain issues which are being considered by the Parks and Leisure Committee. While it does not impact directly on the land disposal the provision of replacement facilities may be a notional draw upon the capital receipt. The provision of replacement facilities remains subject to Capital Programme Prioritisation and the Council's 'Gates' processes.

Key Issues

- Disposal price agreed at £2.325 million.
- Service Agreement for continued public use is close to finalisation. The Council will enter into a legal arrangement which would allow for commencement of the Service Agreement following completion of development on the site.
- Parks and Leisure Committee have previously agreed that the preferred location for replacement handball courts from Beechmount is the Andersonstown Leisure Centre site. (12 March 2009 Committee). A figure of £655000 has been included in the uncommitted section of the capital programme for this purpose. These schemes remain subject to the Capital Programme Prioritisation and the Council's 'Gates' processes.

Resource Implications

Financial

The disposal provides a capital receipt. Disposal also provides some revenue savings associated with site security and grounds maintenance (the Leisure Centre closed at the end of December 2008).

Human Resources

Human resource issues associated with the Centre closure have previously been dealt with by Parks and Leisure Committee. No Council human resources are to be utilised to provide the future public use associated with the proposed Service Agreement.

Asset and Other Implications

The site has been deemed surplus to Parks and Leisure requirements but subject to the preservation as far as possible of public use of similar leisure facilities at this location and within the locality. The proposed disposal relates to approximately 9.567 acres of a total site area of approximately 10.82 acres. The remaining 1.253 acres is being retained with a view to potential disposal to Forbairt Feirste whose proposals remain at an early stage of development.

Recommendations

Committee is recommended to approve disposal of approximately 9.567 acres of the Beechmount Leisure Centre site (as outlined red on the attached map) to the Trustees of Coláiste Feirste for the sum of £2.325 million subject to appropriate terms to be included in a legal agreement to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services and agreement on the detailed terms of a Service Agreement also to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services.

Decision Tracking

Director of Property and Projects to ensure the Council does not impede completion of disposal by 31 March 2009.

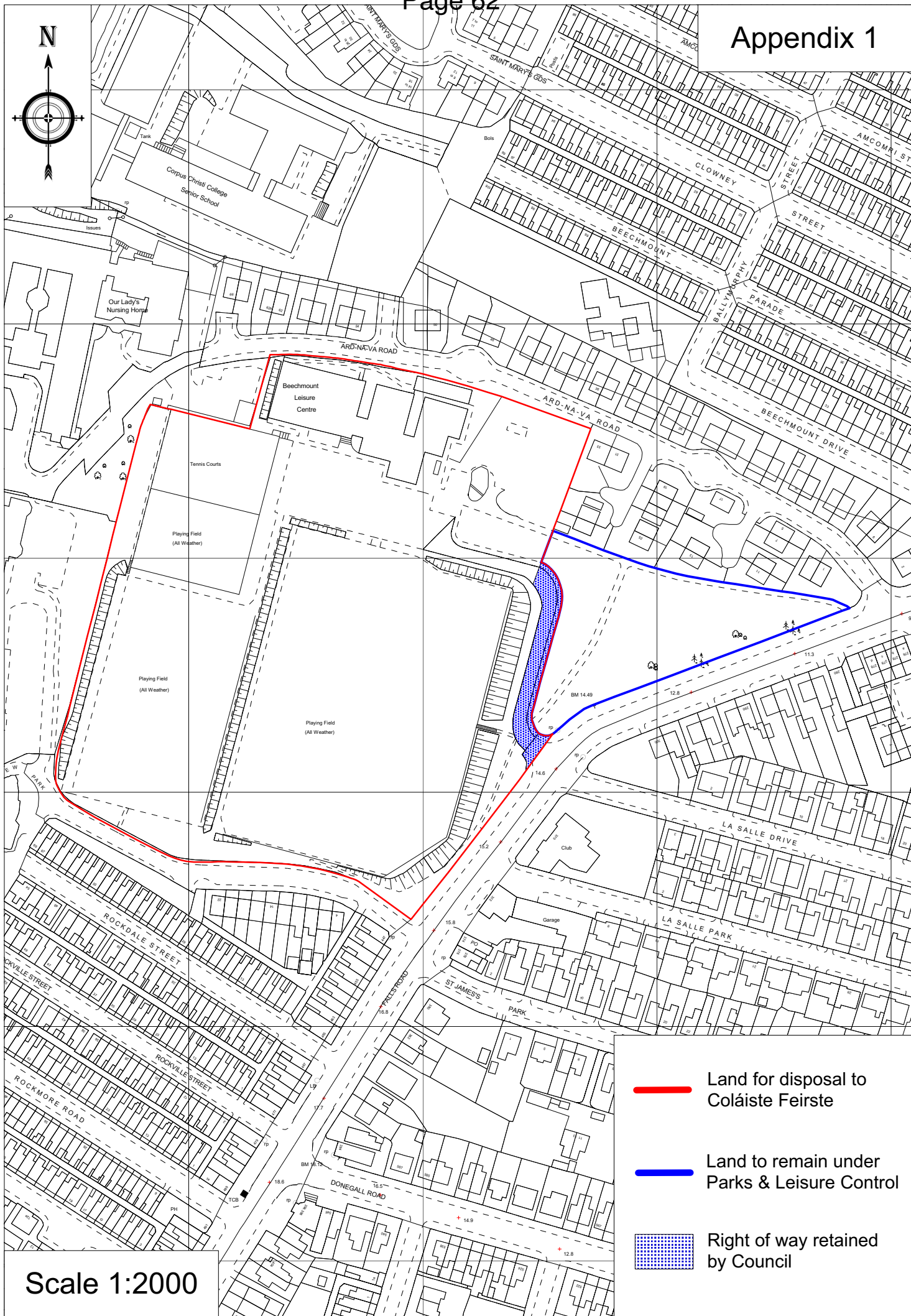
Key to Abbreviations




DENI – Department of Education, Northern Ireland
Sport NI – Sport Northern Ireland
LPS – Land and Property Services

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Map showing, outlined red, the 9.567 acres to be disposed of to Coláiste Feirste. The Council will retain a right of way over the portion of access road shaded blue in order to service the 1.253 acres, outlined blue, which will remain under the control of the Council's Parks and Leisure Committee for the time being.

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-  Land for disposal to Coláiste Feirste
-  Land to remain under Parks & Leisure Control
-  Right of way retained by Council

Scale 1:2000

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Connswater Community Greenway Update
Date:	11th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Celine Dunlop, Estates Surveyor, Property and Projects, Ext: 3419

Relevant Background Information

Belfast City Council, as part of the City Investment Strategy, has agreed to coordinate the acquisition of lands to enable the Connswater Community Greenway Programme to proceed. The Council will secure rights over the land needed for the Greenway and shall be responsible for the management and maintenance of this land and any assets on the land. The Greenway must be accessible for 40 years to comply with the Big Lottery Fund letter of offer, although the intention is to secure rights for longer if possible.

Key Issues

1. The area of land off Ladas Drive outlined red on the attached plan at Appendix '1' consisting of 0.67 acres has been identified as being required for the Connswater Community Greenway. Council officials have agreed, subject to Committee approval, to purchase a 99 year lease of this area of land from the Police Board for Northern Ireland for £10,000 and subject to a peppercorn rent.
2. The area of land on either side of the Connswater River and adjacent to Airport Road shown outlined red on the attached plan at Appendix '2' consisting of 32.5 sq metres has been identified as being required in order to construct a pedestrian bridge from Victoria Park to Airport Road for the Connswater Community Greenway. Council officials have agreed, subject to Committee approval, to purchase a 99 year lease of this area of land with an annual rent of 5 pence if demanded from the Belfast Harbour.

Resource Implications

Financial

These proposals requires an expenditure of £10,000 plus legal and agents fees to purchase the land required. Land purchase costs are included within the Connswater Community Greenway budget included in the City Invest Fund and there will be no additional cost to Council.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

The additional land will form part of the Connswater Community Greenway which when complete will be managed and maintained by the Council.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee grant approval to the purchase of the lands outlined red on the plans attached at Appendix '1' and Appendix '2'.

Key to Abbreviations

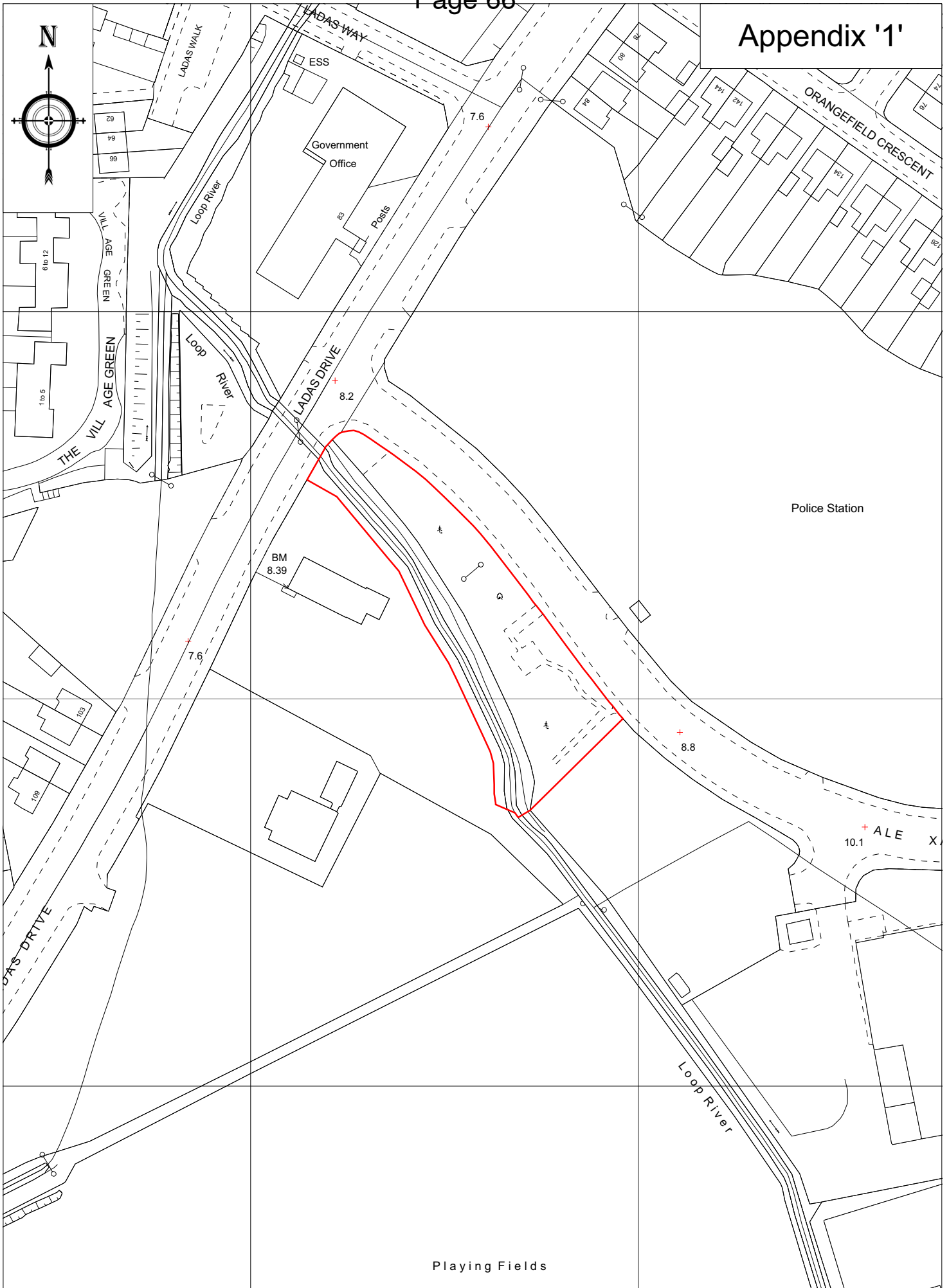
N/A

Decision Tracking

Action by Celine Dunlop to be completed by March 2009.

Documents Attached

Plans - Appendices '1' and '2'.



Scale 1:1250

Connswater Community Greenway - Plots 69 & 70

Area 0.67 acres

SS

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TK

AIRPORT ROAD

Mud

CONN'S WATER

Sloping Masonry



Issues

Scale 1:1000

Connswater Community Greenway - Plots 4 & 3b

Area 32.5 sq m

SS

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GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

FRIDAY, 4th DECEMBER, 2009

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman); and
Councillors Kyle, C. Maskey and McCarthy.
- External Members: Mr. R. Galway, Bombardier Aerospace/
Confederation of British Industries;
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Rev. J. Rea, Methodist Church;
Mr. L. Reynolds, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church; and
Ms. May de Silva, Voluntary/Community Sector.
- Also attended: Ms. P. Perry, Community Relations Council/Pobal.
- In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager; and
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Stoker and Messrs. P. Mackel and P. Bunting, Ms. M. Marken and Ms. E. Wilkinson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th November were taken as read and signed as correct.

Presentation by Mediation Northern Ireland

The Partnership was advised that Messrs. Peter O'Reilly and Mike Gaston, representing Mediation Northern Ireland, were in attendance to address the Members regarding the Mediation Capacity Building Project which had received Peace III funding.

Mr. O'Reilly informed the Partnership that the Programme was being delivered by a consortium of organisations, namely Mediation Northern Ireland, Tides Training, Belfast Interface Project, Belfast Reconciliation Network and North and West Belfast Parades and Cultural Forum. The aims of the scheme were to promote and facilitate dialogue, mediation and inter-community engagement, particularly around issues of division such as parades, flags, derelict sites etc., by working with a range of agencies. He informed the Partnership that the Programme's main objectives were:

- (i) to deliver a series of bespoke model dialogue processes with residents and relevant statutory agencies in neighbourhoods which were located at interfaces;

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- (ii) to support the network of community practitioners to design, develop and deliver cross-community capacity-building programmes;
- (iii) to increase the availability of, and access to, mediation resources within the City through supported networks; and
- (iv) to organise a City-wide conference which would examine good practice in mediation and stimulate on-going discussion.

Mr. O'Reilly advised the Members that one of the Project's targets was that, by the end of February, 2010, it would have trained 80 persons. He pointed out that the number of people signed-up for advanced training was double that which had been anticipated originally and, due to the interest which had been shown, the organisations were endeavouring to ascertain how more training could be undertaken.

Mr. O'Reilly concluded his presentation by outlining a number of the agencies which the Mediation Capacity Building Programme intended to meet with and sought guidance from the Partnership on how local politicians could be involved in this process.

Messrs. O'Reilly and Gaston then answered various questions from the Members and retired from the meeting.

Peace III – Implementation Update

The Partnership considered a report detailing the progress which had been achieved to date in respect of the implementation of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. The report highlighted the work which had been carried out under the various Peace Plan themes and actions, including Shared City centre, Transforming Contested Space, Shared Cultural Space and Shared Organisational Space.

The Peace III Programme Manager informed the Partnership that a training session on compliance issues which had been held the previous day had attracted representatives from eighteen organisations. He pointed out that the Partnership had been invited to attend a conference on 10th December which had been organised by the Consortium of Pobal and the Community Relations Council entitled "Learning the Lessons, Planning for the Challenges Ahead" which would reflect on the experience of the Peace III Partnership to date. In addition, he recommended that the Partnership receive at its January meeting a presentation regarding the Citizenship Project.

After discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendation regarding the presentation and noted the information which had been provided.

Minority Integration Report

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

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“Relevant Background Information

Under the objective of Shared Cultural Space, the Belfast City Council Peace Plan seeks ‘to lead a project in association with a range of agencies to establish a city-wide forum and support network for migrant workers in Belfast, and support advice groups to ensure that adequate information and advice on a range of issues is available for migrant workers.’

The Partnership will be aware that as part of Belfast City Council’s Peace III bid, the Good Relations Unit has established a Migrant and Minority Ethnic Support Project. This is all funded at 100% under the Peace Programme.

The project now wishes to commission a suitable organisation to develop and deliver a training programme to support the integration of new communities in Belfast.

Key Issues

The successful applicant will

- Develop and deliver a training programme aimed at encouraging the integration of new communities in Belfast
- Deliver the training programme to at least 100 people from a migrant or minority ethnic background
- Train at least 10 other people to deliver the programme to migrant and minority ethnic communities.

The content of the training programme should address key issues that will assist new communities in Belfast to integrate, including modules on:

- Rights
- Responsibilities
- Access to services, including health, education, housing, banking, transport, leisure facilities etc
- Working in Northern Ireland
- Governance issues including the role of local government
- Community Safety
- Understanding Belfast’s History
- How to get involved in the community.

Procurement

Submissions for this work will be invited in line with the Council’s standard procurement procedures.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria to be used in the assessment of submissions received are:

Criteria	weighting
Calibre and competencies of project team	20%
Methodology	20%
Value for Money	20%
Ability to work in partnership	20%
Ability to meet timescales	20%

Timeline

It is proposed to issue invitations to tender immediately for return within 21 days. It is anticipated that the tender panels will convene the week beginning 4th January.

Resource Implications

The budget for this programme is £29,500. All costs may be recouped at 100% from the Peace III Programme.

Recommendation

The Good Relations Partnership is requested to approve this programme relating to key actions within the Plan.”

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Peace III Childcare Costs

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th November, the Peace III Programme Manager had undertaken to investigate the current provision for childcare within existing projects.

The Programme Manager reported that there were, currently, four small grants where childcare costs had been included within the budget, amounting to £7,000. In addition, £10,000 had been allocated for childcare provision in the larger projects.

The Partnership was advised that the Special European Union Programmes Body had issued recently a clarification note which stated that, whilst childcare costs were eligible in circumstances where the provision of such childcare was essential to the implementation of any project, only invoices from registered childminders would be approved. The Programme Manager stated that, at the Partnership's request, a letter would be issued to the Programmes Body expressing the Members' concerns that the need to employ registered childminders only might have a detrimental impact on some projects, given the lack of registered childminders in certain areas of the City.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information provided.

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**Peace III Strand 2.2 – Building Institutional Capacity
for a Shared Society**

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th August, 2008, it had agreed that a formal proposal for a training and learning programme be developed and submitted to the Special European Union Programmes Body under Peace III Strand 2.2 – Building Institutional Capacity for a Shared Society.

The Good Relations Manager reported that the initial bid had been referred back for further consideration and, after revision, had been re-submitted to the Programmes Body. She reported further that this bid had been successful and the Programmes Body had agreed to support the project at 100% by offering the Council funding of approximately £300,000. She pointed out that the project still required approval from both the British and Irish Governments. However, she did not anticipate that this would present any difficulties or delay the project.

Members were advised that the project, entitled “Growing a Learning Organisation” had been designed to enhance the Council’s capacity to support the transformation of a City emerging from conflict and division through community planning by:

- (i) engaging the political leadership of the City in dialogue on issues relating to segregation, duplication of service delivery, shared space and improving connectivity;
- (ii) developing staff capacity to support change in the City and address the legacies of division in the new community planning context;
- (iii) measuring the progress of change in the organisation through a diversity audit; and
- (iv) developing further a collaborative agenda on good relations between the different agencies in preparation for community planning.

The Good Relations Manager indicated that confirmation of the detail of the offer was expected shortly and when full details of the resources available were in place work would commence with the relevant Council Departments to ensure that the project was implemented in order to produce the expected results. She pointed out that an Action Plan regarding the project would be submitted to a future meeting of the Partnership.

St. Patrick’s Day 2010 – Small Grants Scheme

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Partnership will recall that at its meeting on the 15th August 2008, it agreed that the Council should support community and voluntary groups who wish to organise small-scale local events to

mark St. Patrick's Day through the Good Relations Grant-Aid Fund in 2009 and in future years. The total budget was not to exceed £32,000; the upper limit for each application to be £1,000 and criteria based on standard Good Relations criteria to apply.

This decision was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting in September and was adopted by Council at its meeting in October 2008.

For the 2010 round, applications and guidelines were drawn up and letters were distributed to previous applicants as well as Councillors informing groups of the existence of the fund. Notifications were also forwarded to the Community Relations Council e-bulletin and the NI Council for Voluntary Action Grant Tracker website. The information was also made available on the Belfast City Council website. This year, a Patrick's Day toolkit was produced in order to assist potential applicants to improve the quality of their applications.

Key Issues

The St. Patrick's Day fund has again proved extremely popular. At the closing date of 12 noon on Friday 30th October 2009, 105 applications for grant-aid had been received, with a total amount requested of £88,634, which greatly exceeds the £32,000 available.

There was a good geographical spread with applications received from all over the city.

BT1	1	1%
BT2	6	6%
BT4	8	7.5%
BT5	10	9.5%
BT6	4	4%
BT7	2	2%
BT11	5	4.5%
BT12	21	20%
BT13	18	17.5%
BT14	10	9.5%
BT15	15	14%
BT36	5	4.5%

Activities proposed are wide-ranging and for all ages and include educational visits to sites associated with St. Patrick; performing a play on the life of St. Patrick; evening entertainment with music and traditional dance; commissioning of a poem on St. Patrick; arts and crafts workshops; lectures, talks and quizzes around the life of St Patrick, and exhibitions on the life of St. Patrick.

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A scoring matrix was devised to assess applications against the Good Relations objectives. All the applications were assessed and it is proposed that successful applications receive funding proportionate to the score obtained following assessment against the criteria established, as follows:

Marks	Max Award £	No. of groups	Total allocation £
0-5 marks	Up to £150	3	450.00
10-20 marks	Up to £200	21	4,165.00
25-30 marks	Up to £300	34	10,200.00
35+ marks	Up to £350	17	5,950.00
40-50 marks	Up to £500	19	9,500.00
55+ marks	Up to £700	5	3,500.00
60+ marks	Up to £1000	6	5,901.40
Total		105	39,666.40

Although this exceeds the approved figure of £32,000, the Partnership should note that grant-aid is paid on receipted expenditure only and experience indicates that it is likely that some groups will not spend their full allocation. Last year, for example, the total sum approved was £39,100 but the actual figure paid out was £26,247. It is envisaged that this will be the same in 2010.

Resource Implications

Financial

Provision for this expenditure has been made in the Unit's current revenue budget.

Recommendation

The Good Relations Partnership recommends that the following projects fulfil the St. Patrick's Day Small Grants criteria and that grant-aid is awarded, up to these amounts, to the groups listed below:

a. Up to £1,000

426/1603	Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group
346/1668	Greater Shankill Partnership
735/1678	The First Step Drop-in Centre
439/1685	Upper Springfield Development Trust (up to £950.70)
379/1725	South City Resource & Development Centre
876/1736	Upper Springfield Safer Neighbourhood Project (up to £950.70)

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b. Up to £700

634/1598	The Ullans Academy
243/1601	Ballymacarrett Arts & Cultural Society
661/1605	Blackie Community Groups Association
378/1661	St. James Residents Association
373/1672	Ballymac Friendship Centre

c. Up to £500

319/1588	Short Strand Community Forum
397/1594	Inner East Youth Project
850/1595	Royal Irish Rangers Old Comrades Association
308/1596	Star Neighbourhood Centre
621/1607	Malvern Primary School
863/1653	Cullingtree Senior Group
643/1658	Manor Street/Cliftonville Community Centre
865/1662	Carrick Hill Residents Association
741/1664	Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association
646/1677	Action on Disability
539/1679	Docksiders Senior Mens Group
725/1682	Upper Springfield Resource Centre
374/1700	Society of St. Vincent de Paul
337/1705	Divis Community Centre
568/1709	Sandy Row Residents Association
278/1714	Wheelworks
874/1729	Sandy Row Community Centre
439/1737	Upper Springfield Development Trust

d. Up to £350

387/1597	Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre
521/1602	Sailortown Regeneration Group
635/1610	Ballysillan Community Forum
620/1669	Nubia South Belfast Eagles
718/1670	St. Mary's Ladies Group
328/1680	Walkway Community Association
598/1693	Tar Anall
273/1696	Voluntary Service Bureau
544/1698	St. Kevins Senior Citizens
531/1699	VSB – the volunteer centre for Belfast & Castlereagh
434/1701	Knocknagoney Community Centre Committee
869/1708	Whiterock Children's Centre
870/1710	Tar Isteach
872/1716	Acorn Arts
450/1728	Highfield Fifty Plus Group
607/1733	North Belfast Women's Initiative & Support Group (NBWISP)
524/1735	Artability NI Ltd

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e. up to £300

723/1599	Solway Stars FC
851/1600	Joanmount Open Door Ltd
537/1604	Mountpottinger Presbyterian Senior Citizens Group
853/1612	MARA (Connswater Community & Leisure)
788/1652	Crusaders Youth Football Club
739/1654	Ballygomartin Presbyterian Church
864/1655	Silver Threads (Camberwell Court)
431/1656	Clonard/Springfield Senior Citizens Group
731/1657	Men United
563/1659	Lower Shankill Group Welfare
752/1663	Ulster-Scots Community Network
560/1665	Quality User Group Seniors
389/1666	174 Older Peoples Group
866/1671	Ardavon Park Senior Citizens
645/1674	Indian Senior Citizens 50+ Club
442/1675	Tearmann Fold Tenants Association
556/1676	West Belfast District Scout Council
526/1681	Sherbrook Senior Citizens
522/1684	Willowfield Parish Community Association
867/1686	Middle Andersonstown Festival Group
566/1687	Hammer Community Complex Committee
421/1692	Whitecity Parent & Toddlers Group
612/1703	Woodvale Young at Heart 50+ Group
868/1707	Ravenlink Women's Group
871/1712	Pottinger Historical and Cultural Society
422/1713	Newhill Youth & community Centre Association
873/1717	Parent Teacher Association of Naiscoil & Bunscoil
637/1718	Corpus Christi Services
569/1723	Arts Ekta
738/1726	Sydenham Cross Community Support Centre
380/1730	South Belfast Malecare
737/1732	Ardcarn Residents & Tenants Association
519/1734	Denmark Street Community Centre
878/1740	Tigers Bay Men's Group

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f. up to £200

636/1608	Avoniel over 50s
733/1611	Glenbank Community Association
447/1628	Clara Park Tenants & Residents Association
551/1651	Friends of Mullan Mews (up to £165)
736/1660	Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
627/1667	Glen Colin Residents Association
417/1673	Midland Senior Citizens Club
644/1683	Brookvale Senior Citizens Association
732/1688	Families Beyond Conflict
413/1694	Trinity New Lodge Senior Citizens Club
416/1697	Shore Crescent Friendship Club
393/1702	Whitecity Community Development Association
407/1704	Whitecity Over 50s Group
372/1715	Lagan Legacy
797/1719	Twaddell Women's Intercommunity Group
424/1721	Ballymacarrett Community & Cultural Engagement Project
548/1724	Silverthreads (Coolfin Street)
561/1727	North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
875/1731	Newtownards Road Historical Society
877/1738	Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association
322/1739	Lower Shankill Community Association

g. up to £150

527/1695	Belles of Belmont Ladies Club
638/1720	Ballysillan Senior Citizens Association
746/1722	Greater Shankill Partnership Early Years Partnership"

The Partnership adopted the recommendation contained within the foregoing report.

Arising from discussion in this matter, it was suggested that it would be useful for the Members if representatives of some of the groups which had received funding were to make presentations to the Partnership regarding how their attitude to celebrating St. Patrick's Day had changed in recent years.

The Partnership agreed with this suggestion.

Journeys Out Programme

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

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“Relevant Background Information

The *Journeys Out* Project is a programme aimed at building the capacity of emerging community leaders to explore the debate about dealing with the legacy of conflict on an inter-community basis and to engage their local communities in important and challenging discussions on dealing with the past issues.

The project is delivered by INCORE (United Nations Conflict Research Institute), based at the University of Ulster, in partnership with the Peace and Reconciliation Group, Derry/Londonderry, Intercomm, Belfast, and the Glenree Centre, Co. Wicklow.

It is funded at 100% under the regional strand of the Peace Programme.

Key Issues

The purpose of the Journeys Out project is to advance a bottom-up approach to dealing with the past in Northern Ireland and the Border Region by:

- Building the capacity of community leaders to engage in the debate about dealing with the past on an inter-community basis;
- Assisting local communities in identifying and addressing their needs in terms of dealing with the past; and
- Documenting community leaders' journeys from conflict to participation and sharing lessons from these journeys locally, nationally and internationally.

This is being delivered through a programme of training, workshops, an international study visit and action research, to build the capacity of the emerging leaders to 'deal with the past' on an individual and community basis. Over its duration, the project will work with 44 emerging community leaders from a range of target areas in Northern Ireland and the Border Region who have become engaged in community development and community relations work within the past twelve years.

The Senior Good Relations Officer has been acting as a mentor to the group of emerging leaders in Year 1. This has included participating in local workshops and facilitating support meetings.

She has also been invited to accompany the group on their 5-day study visit to South Africa in February 2010. The purpose of that visit is to examine community processes in dealing with the legacies of conflict, understand the complexities of remembering in a divided society and explore the lessons for Northern Ireland.

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Participation in the study visit by a member of staff from the Good Relations Unit would develop useful links with relevant institutions and be useful in supporting the emerging leaders from Belfast. It would also be beneficial for the Council in identifying practical actions that others are taking, and in sharing good practice.

Resource Implications

Financial

The project is fully funded by SEUPB under its regional Peace III Programme and no cost will be incurred by the Council.

Decision required

That the Good Relations Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that the Senior Good Relations Officer continues to act as mentor to this project, including accompanying the group on its 5-day study visit to South Africa in February 2010.”

Following discussion, the Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Senior Good Relations Officer continue to act as mentor to the Journeys Out Programme, which would include accompanying the group on a five day study tour to South Africa in February, 2010.

Dates of Future Meetings

The Partnership noted that its meetings during 2010 would be held on the following dates:

15th January	13th August
12th February	17th September
12th March	15th October
16th April	12th November
14th May	3rd December
11th June	

Chairman

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MEMORABILIA WORKING GROUP

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER 2009

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Hendron Chairman
 Councillor McCausland Deputy Chairman
 Councillor McCarthy
 Councillor C. Maskey
 Councillor Stoker
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Hazel Francey Good Relations Manager
 Anne Deighan Good Relations Officer
 Sam McGivern Business Support Assistant (minutes)
 George Wright Head of Facilities Management
- APOLOGIES:** Cllr Kyle
 Maureen Mackin Consultant

1.0	ROUTINE MATTERS (MINUTES OF MEETING OF 05 NOVEMBER 2009)
1.1	The minutes of the meeting of 05 November were taken as read and signed as correct.
1.2	Arising from the minutes Hazel advised that the decision on which order the exhibitions would be exhibited in the City Hall had been the subject of a vote at Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 20 November and the item had been referred back at 1 December Council to the main Committee.
1.3	Hazel also noted that the plaques erected temporarily in the City Hall East Entrance had now been taken down and a decision would be made regarding these at a later date when more information became available.
2.0	MEMORABILIA IN THE CITY HALL – NEXT STEPS AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK
2.1	Hazel apologised on behalf of Maureen Mackin, who was ill. She told the group that Maureen’s report with an action plan should be ready at the end of January. Hazel tabled the notes from the Brainstorming session held on Monday 30 November and commented on how amicable the session had been. Members agreed that the session had been very positive, open and honest and the Chairman, Cllr Hendron, thanked all those involved in the organisation of the session. The comments made would be incorporated into the consultant’s report.
2.2	In response to a query regarding funding for a programme of activity within the action plan, Hazel reported that she had had preliminary discussions with a representative from the Heritage Lottery Fund and that these had been very positive. The Working Group granted formal authority for her to seek external funding for the action plan and programme of events.

3.0	CRITERIA FOR EXHIBITIONS IN THE CITY HALL
3.1	Hazel referred to the report, previously circulated, outlining the criteria currently used for exhibitions in the City Hall by outside groups, as agreed by the (then) Policy & Resources Committee in August 2006. She reminded the Working Group that in the past these decisions had been made by the Policy & Resources Committee and that authority had then been delegated to the (then) Director of Corporate Services.
3.2	The Memorabilia Working Group had agreed to discuss the present criteria, to be adjusted/amended if required.
3.3	<p>The current criteria in respect of the use of the building by outside groups for exhibitions are that they should:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be primarily for non-commercial purposes • require no funding or other significant resources from the Council • be non-controversial in political, cultural or religious terms • have the potential to help promote Belfast City Council and/or the city of Belfast • not unduly affect the day-to-day operation of the building, or involve significant risk of damage to the building's infrastructure and/or fabric • broadly be considered to contribute to one or more of the Council's corporate strategic objectives <i>and</i> • provide the Council with appropriate insurance cover and/or indemnities etc. where appropriate. <p>The Good Relations Manager suggested that, to illustrate diversity, the 3rd bullet point above would have to be amended from "non-controversial" to be replaced by "be non-offensive and comply with the Council's equality and good relations obligations".</p>
3.4	<p>She reminded the Working Group that in general, the Council has also agreed that the City Hall and its displays should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • welcoming • attractive • interesting • representative of the history and heritage of Belfast • representative of the diversity of the city • of good quality and • in accordance with the status of the City Hall setting.
3.5	The Good Relations Manager requested the views of the Members on the current criteria. After general discussion the Group agreed that 'non offensive' would be a preferable form of words and the revised criteria can be kept under review.
3.6	The Working Group also agreed to recommend to the Strategic & Policy Resources Committee that authority regarding the decisions on what will go on display should remain delegated to the Director of Finance and Resources, with a regular report on the schedule of displays being presented to the Memorabilia Working Group for their information.
3.7	There was some discussion regarding the need for future exhibitions to have more substance and that the level of promotion should be proportionate to the scale of exhibition. The Head of Facilities Management reminded the group that in most cases the Council is not responsible for the

	promotion of the exhibitions, since this is the responsibility of the organisers.
4.0	SOMME RESOLUTION
4.1	<p>The Good Relations Manager reminded the Working Group that the wording of the Annual Somme Resolution had been the subject of considerable discussion in early 2009, with the item being referred to Party Groups, but with no agreement reached.</p> <p>At the Working Group's meeting in August 2009, the issue had been raised again and a Member had suggested that one possible solution was to hold a ceremony on another day to recognise the service of Irish people in other battles such as Passchendaele. The Working Group was of the view that this could not be regarded as inclusive.</p> <p>Since the subject was a sensitive issue it had not been placed on the agenda in September and October, to avoid any controversy in the approach to Remembrance Day, but Members had agreed to attempt to resolve the issue again in December.</p> <p>After a short discussion the Working Group agreed that the current text and the three variations of it should be referred direct to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee as agreement could not be reached at Working Group level and it would have to be determined by a vote at Committee.</p> <p>Accordingly the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee is requested to consider the following variations in text and to agree a revised wording for use from 1 July 2010 onwards.</p> <p>The current resolution is:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the >th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their Province, and whose heroism will never be forgotten so long as the British Commonwealth lasts.</p> <p>The variations of text that each party group (as at March 2006) finds acceptable are set out below, with amendments shown in bold and underlined:</p> <p><u>DUP and UUP</u> preferred text:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the >th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, <u>the 16th (Irish) Division and the sons of Ulster in other forces¹</u> who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their Province, and whose heroism will never be forgotten so long as the British Commonwealth lasts.</p> <p><u>PUP</u> preferred text:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the >th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, <u>the 16th (Irish) Division and other forces</u> who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their Province, and whose heroism will never be forgotten so long as the British Commonwealth lasts.</p>

¹ Wording used in the book *The Great War*, published by the Council in 1991, on the 75th anniversary of the Somme Battle

	<p>Alliance /SDLP / Sinn Féin preferred text:</p> <p>That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the >th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, the 16th (Irish) Division and other forces who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their people, and whose heroism will never be forgotten.</p>
5.0	ASSESSMENT PANEL
5.1	Hazel informed the Working Group that a Panel would be required to assess the submissions for the artwork reflecting Irish history and heritage and she suggested that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Memorabilia Working Group (Cllrs Hendron and McCausland), along with the Chairman of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee (Cllr Hartley) should be included. The Group agreed with this suggestion.
5.2	Hazel also circulated the proposed dates of the Memorabilia Working Group's meetings in 2010.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	ASSAULT IN CITY HALL GROUNDS
Date:	11 th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	G Wright – Head of Facilities Management
Contact Officer:	G Wright (Ext. 5206/6232)

Relevant Background Information

Members may be aware that Mr Jim McDowell, northern editor of the Sunday World newspaper, was assaulted in the grounds of the City Hall at approx. 5.35pm on Wednesday 25th November 2009, while visiting the Continental Market. Mr McDowell was punched from behind by two assailants; he then fell to the ground and was kicked and punched repeatedly.

This assault was covered fairly extensively by the local media, and was given particular prominence on BBC Radio Ulster's 'The Nolan Show'. In the relevant segment, criticism was aimed at both the PSNI and the council, on the basis that security stewarding must have been insufficient and CCTV footage should have been available to assist in apprehending the perpetrators.

Members will be aware that the security arrangements for the Continental Market are the responsibility of the hirer, Continental Markets (Europe), and are made through local security suppliers on a commercial basis. A risk assessment is also required of the hirer prior to the event and this assessment is reviewed and validated by the council's own Workplace Health unit, although it would appear that the question of the appropriate level of security stewarding is not considered in any great detail.

On the night in question the Markets Development Officer has confirmed that 5 security stewards were on duty, supplied by EventSec Ltd and under the control of Continental Markets (Europe). This is the agreed level of staffing. The council's own security staff have no responsibility for the patrolling of the Continental Market, although reciprocal arrangements do exist to allow co-operation between EventSec staff and the BCC Security Unit at special events (including a radio link and the sharing of telephone numbers for Team Leaders and the Control Room etc) in order to facilitate an escalation process in appropriate circumstances.

However this incident happened very quickly and would have made it impossible for these measures to be triggered on this occasion.

Upon being notified of the assault the BCC security team leaders reviewed the council's CCTV footage of the area and secured footage of the actual assault taking place (although the video quality is not good), and also approached the operators of the Belfast Wheel who were able to provide footage of the two assailants making their escape. All of this material is being copied and collated, for onward transmission to the PSNI in order to assist in their investigation.

The duty officer employed by Continental Markets (Europe) attended the scene shortly after the incident. The PSNI were also called and attended to take witness statements. Mr. McDowells's condition is not known at time of writing.

Key Issues

It is important to note that the council's CCTV system did capture the assault taking place, and also that the agreed level of staffing was in place at the relevant time. Escalation procedures between private sector and council security staff do exist and have been in place for some time, although the sudden nature of this incident would not have allowed them to be implemented.

It is, of course, possible to review and tighten up the risk assessment process and the level of liaison between council and private-sector security even further, and this will be pursued, but overall it is difficult to see what more the council can do in these circumstances to prevent or deter what appears to have been an entirely opportunistic and unprovoked attack.

The Chief Executive has spoken to Mr McDowell to express the Council's regret over the incident and the Council is liaising with the PSNI to offer support to its ongoing criminal investigation.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

Decision Tracking

N/A

Key to Abbreviations

None.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	New Regional Hospital for Women and Children Working Group
Date:	11th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Eamon Deeny, Head of Corporate Communications Ext. 6285
Contact Officer:	As above

Relevant Background Information

Members of the working group will recall that the Council, at its meeting on 1st July, 2009, passed unanimously the following Notice of Motion:

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

The Council calls on the Minister of Health and the Executive to secure the resources now for clearing the site, which is an essential first step in progressing the new hospital for children and women. The Council agrees to work in partnership with the Royal Maternity Hospital Liaison Group to lobby the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly to secure the capital funds necessary to build the new regional hospital for children and women.’

A series of discussion followed leading up to a meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 12th December, 2008, at which the following was agreed, and ratified at the full council meeting in January 2009:

- (a) expenditure, up to a maximum of £20,000, in respect of the above-mentioned campaign to be approved under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to, the District and the inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefit so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made;
- (b) a fixed-term Working Group, comprising one Member from each of the Political Parties represented on the Council, be appointed to consider the most appropriate means of taking forward the campaign; and

- (c) a report on the recommendations of the Working Group in this regard be submitted in due course for the consideration of the Committee.

On 19th May the Members of the Working Group undertook a visit to the Royal Maternity Hospital and received a presentation from representatives of the Belfast Trust which had been attended also by Maternity staff and a representative of the Royal Jubilee Maternity Liaison Committee. In addition, the Chairman (Councillor Attwood) and other Member of the Working Group had, on 24th August met with the Health Minister, Mr. Michael McGimpsey, in order to outline the Council's support for the provision of a new regional hospital. The Minister had indicated that, due to funding constraints, the Department could not progress the development at the Royal Group of Hospitals site earlier than 2015. However, the Department was actively seeking the Executive's support to accelerate the process.

The working group asked the Head of Corporate Communication to develop a potential action plan and consider how best to utilise the small budget of £20,000 to promote a campaign aimed at bringing the date forward for the building of the hospital. This paper offers some suggestions as to how an action plan to support the campaign might look.

Key Issues

The working group discussed the most effective approach and decided that the £20,000 that council agreed should be spent on supporting the management of a sustained campaign, the purchasing of materials, such as bannering, and the placing of any required advertising. This would be supplemented by web, media and design activity which could be provided from within the existing resources of Corporate Communications.

It is proposed that an action plan involving activities on a monthly basis be developed and among the proposals put forward by the Head of Communications are:

- Lord Mayor visit first baby born in the Royal Victoria in 2010 (first child of the decade) and makes a statement saying that she hopes it won't be the beginning of the next decade before the new Maternity and Children's Hospital is in place.
- Meeting with local media to discuss how they might support the campaign
- A feature in City Matters providing information and a platform for the case to be made for the hospital.
- Develop an information section on our web site
- The council is currently successfully utilising Twitter and Facebook and we could announce a new forum to allow members of the public to put forward their views on this issue.
- A letter is written to all other local authorities in Northern Ireland asking for their support for the campaign on the basis that this is to be a regional hospital.
- Take out an advertisement in all three daily newspapers in which all councillors sign up to calling for work on the hospital to be brought forward
- Negotiate with broadcasters for a potential 'on air' debate on radio or television
- Host an exhibition in the City Hall in the coffee shop area or in Rotunda, showing plans for the hospital and ask public to sign a petition supporting it.
- Press could be updated as numbers signing up reach significant figures.
- Dress the City Hall in banners highlighting the campaign and subsequently moved to the roads approaching Stormont
- Timed press releases – for example at Christmas time saying that the best

present for children of Belfast would be new hospital.

- Platform pieces from health/paediatric spokespersons and politicians in local press
- Political lobbying, meetings with Ministers and associated publicity
- Letters to the editor
- 'Open letters' to the Executive released to the media
- Good news stories about children being treated for illness
- Visits to the maternity/children wards at key times
- Responding to news stories/assembly debates.

It is further proposed that the all party Working Group continues to meet to oversee the campaign, approve activities, oversee expenditure and evaluate its success.

Resource Implications

£20,000 already approved by Council in January, 2009

Recommendations

The committee approves:

- The Working Group's recommendation that the funding agreed by the council be used to support a sustained communications campaign by undertaken and managed by Corporate Communications
- The continuation of the Working Group to oversee campaign activities, expenditure and evaluation.

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

None

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**Belfast City Council**

Report to: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Subject: **EU Funded Senior Volunteering Programme - GIVE**

Date: 11th December, 2009

Reporting Officer: Ms Suzanne Wylie, Head of Environmental Health (ext 3281).

Contact Officer: Sarah Jayne Smith, European Officer, (ext 3326).

Relevant Background Information.

One of the Council's current priorities is improving services to older people. To ensure that this priority is given due regard across all Council services, an All Party Reference Group on Older People was set up a number of years ago, reporting to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. A cross-departmental officer group has also developed an action plan for improving these services and as part of this action plan an opportunity was identified for involving older people in a European volunteering exchange initiative.

The "GIVE" (Grundtvig Initiative on Volunteering in Europe for Seniors) is a European initiative which was introduced in 2009. It consists of a scheme of grants to support senior volunteering projects between local organisations located in two countries participating in the European Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).

The Lifelong Learning Programme offers educational opportunities to people of all ages, to facilitate formal and informal learning. Volunteering is increasingly recognised in Europe as a very valuable learning experience for people of all ages but in particular for older people as it can promote the process of active ageing and the contribution of seniors to societies.

This project offers a new European opportunity for older people and will allow them to learn, share knowledge and experience - and to "give" - in a European Member State other than their own.

The initiative is a new form of co-operation within the Grundtvig Programme, fostering collaboration between the organisations sending and hosting volunteers. It allows organisations which join the programme to enrich their work through the exchange of good practice and create sustainable European collaboration between them.

The Programme has a number of objectives:

1. To enable senior citizens to volunteer in another European country for any kind of non-profit activity as a form of informal (and mutual) learning activity.
2. To create lasting cooperation between the host and sending organisations around a specific topic or target group.
3. To enable the local communities involved in the exchange of volunteers to draw on the potential of senior citizens as a source of knowledge, competence and experience.

Anticipated outputs are as follows:

For the volunteers:

1. Increase of personal, linguistic, social and intercultural skills and competences.
2. Contribution to the development and implementation of non-profit activities and to the community as an active citizen.
3. Acquisition / development / transmission of specific task-related skills.

For the sending and hosting organisations and the local communities in which the volunteers spend their mobility period abroad:

4. Exchange and mutual acquisition of experience, knowledge and good practice.
5. Development of European collaboration around a particular theme,
6. Intensified European outlook.

The partnership must be between 2 organisations from 2 different Member States. Each organisation will be expected to send between 2-6 volunteers and to host 2-6 volunteers during the project period. Volunteers may travel and volunteer in a group or individually. Sending and hosting may take place at the same time but does not necessarily have to do so.

In terms of volunteer profiles, the action is open to all adult citizens **aged 50** or above. Particular emphasis will be given to encouraging the participation of volunteers from socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities, thereby helping to strengthen their integration in Europe and to combat racism and xenophobia. Equal participation of both genders is also encouraged.

Volunteer placements are carried out in one continuous period of 3-8 weeks, not including the necessary preparation and debriefing phases.

Key Issues.

In August 2009, the European Unit sent out a call to other European cities asking for a show of interest should they wish to partner Belfast in this exchange. Various cities made contact; however the most suitable in terms of volunteering opportunities and best practice was Madrid.

Fundacion Voluntarios por Madrid (Madrid for Volunteers Foundation), is a non-profit entity for promotion, training and advice in the field of volunteerism. It was set up in 2005 by Madrid City Council. The Foundation is chaired by the Mayor of Madrid and has Elected Members on the Board; the overall responsibility rests with the Director for Volunteering.

The strategic objectives of the Foundation are to:

1. Promote citizen participation in the voluntary sector.
2. Encourage participation of private organisations wishing to exercise Corporate Social Responsibility.
3. Involve and support the development of social organisations.
4. Offer a quality public service to facilitate the implementation of projects promoting voluntary action.

Fundacion Voluntarios por Madrid can offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities under the GIVE programme; such as working in community centres, youth training and intergenerational training.

The Grundtvig programme offers a preparatory grant for interested organisations. This grant is to allow the organisations to participate in a 2 day exchange to review their working relationship and volunteer opportunities should they embark on the programme in 2010. The deadline for the application for preparatory visits is 11 December 2009 and so the European Unit has submitted a preparatory application form to be able to undertake an exchange visit on 21-22 January 2010. Officers from Madrid envisage visiting Belfast from 28-29 January 2010. A draft agenda for the preparatory meeting is attached as an appendix.

Pending the success of the exchange, a final application form is to be submitted at the end of March 2010. The project, if selected, will then begin in August 2010 for a period of approximately 2 years.

Resource Implications.

Financial.

The Council would be eligible for a grant to cover the full costs associated with hosting and sending volunteers, as well as the volunteer grant during their stay. The preparatory grant would also cover the costs of the initial visit. This means that the programme is 100% funded by the European Union. There would be no additional costs to the Council.

In terms of the volunteering element, the grant breakdown is as follows:

Sending; 800euro per volunteer to cover the organisations preparatory costs, cultural, linguistic and personal preparation of the volunteer and costs to cover the follow up of their experiences on return. Travel costs can be recouped as long as the duration of the stay is up to 12 weeks.

Hosting; As host organisation, the Council can access up to 390euro per volunteer received as well as a sum per volunteer to cover lodging, insurance, local travel and support to incoming volunteers. The exact amount for this is dependent upon the length of stay.

Volunteer grant: this depends on the length of the stay; it starts at approximately 1500 euro and increases on a weekly basis.

80% of the grant is received once the project is agreed, with the remaining 20% to be received once the final report has been submitted.

Human Resources.

The project lead (an officer from the Environmental Health Service who supports the Council's work on older people) would be expected to provide direction for the volunteers in terms of accommodation, ensuring they undergo the Council induction process and child protection training (where necessary) as well as complete the relevant reports and manage mentors aligned to the project. This can be managed within existing resources.

Asset and Other Implications.

N/A

Recommendations.

The Committee is requested to agree to the submission of a full application to the Grundtvig Seniors Programme.

The Committee is also requested to authorise the Chair (or nominee) of the All Party Reference Group on Older People and the Council's lead officer on older people attend the development visit to Madrid on 21-22 January 2010.

Decision Tracking.

The Head of Environmental Health will provide update reports to the All Party Reference Group on Older People and to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as required.

Key to Abbreviations.

N/A

Documents Attached.

Draft Agenda for the 21-22 January



DRAFT AGENDA

21- 22 JANUARY 2010 – PREPARATORY VISIT – GRUNDTVIG SENIORS PROGRAMME.

Host organisation: Fundacion Voluntarios por Madrid
Timescale: 2 day visit (arrival the day before, 19 January)

DAY ONE

9:00 – Welcome to the Fundacion Voluntarios and presentation of the organisation (aims and objectives and overview of work)

11:00 – Overview of Belfast City Council including the Older Peoples Working Group

12:30 – Lunch

13:30 – Cultural tour of the city

15:30 – Discussion of volunteering opportunities that may be available for participants from Belfast.

16:30 – Any other business that has arisen from Day One

17:30 – End of day one

DAY TWO

9:00 - Visit to three of the organisations that can offer volunteering opportunities, including a guided tour and overview of activities.

12:30 - Discussion of the final application form including aims and objectives and the logistics of the project including language skills etc

13:30 – Lunch

14:30 – Develop an action plan for the project as well as a time line for actions and submissions and budgets.

16:30 – Conclusion of the visit



Belfast City Council.

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Consultation response to the OFMDFM draft second Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Everyone's involved'.
Date:	11 th December 2009
Reporting Officer:	Mr. William Francey, Director Health and Environmental Services (ext. 3260).
Contact Officer:	Alastair Curran, Sustainable Development Manager (ext. 3309).

Relevant Background Information

The United Kingdom government published its most recent Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy' in March 2005 and augmented the Strategy with a framework for sustainable development until 2020 in order to provide a consistent approach and focus across the United Kingdom. This approach was agreed by the UK Government and the devolved administrations. In its commitment to the strategic framework, the Northern Ireland Office committed to the development of a Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy, which would establish a long-term regional vision of sustainable development, together with a series of high-level objectives. The Strategy was to be underpinned by an Implementation Plan, which would set out the detailed actions to be undertaken to deliver both high and lower-level objectives and targets, based upon Northern Ireland priorities.

Accordingly, on 9th May 2006, the then Secretary of State, Peter Hain launched the first Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland entitled 'First Steps Towards Sustainability'. The Strategy identified six priority action areas for Northern Ireland including sustainable consumption and production; natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; climate change and energy; learning and communication for sustainable development; sustainable communities; and governance and sustainable development. These six priority action areas each had their own strategic objectives and associated targets and their delivery was to be progressed through a series of Implementation Plans.

The Strategy recognised the crucial role of district councils in delivering sustainable development, highlighting that, following the Review of Public Administration, new councils would be at the centre of service delivery and civic life. The Strategy also stated that councils would be key to the planning and delivery of services within their areas and to engagement with communities. Such was the perceived importance of the local authority contribution towards sustainable development, government committed to the introduction of a new power of community planning, with a statutory duty on councils to initiate, maintain and facilitate a community planning process. The local authority contribution towards sustainable development was to be reinforced further via the introduction of a statutory duty on relevant public bodies to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

In November 2006, the Northern Ireland government published its Sustainable Development Implementation Plan, which transferred responsibility for sustainable development from DoENI to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). The Implementation Plan was however restricted to only three spotlight themes from the Strategy's six action areas and actions were confined to government Departments, although OFMDFM indicated that a full Implementation Plan would be developed to cover the period from April 2008. This commitment was not fulfilled and, to date, no further Sustainable Development Implementation Plans have been published. The Implementation Plan did highlight however, the commencement of the statutory duty requiring public authorities to act to promote sustainable development in the exercise of their functions. The Implementation Plan went on to confirm that OFMDFM would be liaising with local authorities and others regarding how the obligations of the statutory duty could be fulfilled. This has not occurred to date, although the Director of Legal Services has written to OFMDFM on a number of occasions requesting clarification. The Implementation Plan also indicated that the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy would be subjected to a complete review at an appropriate stage, possibly around 2010.

Key Issues.

On 22nd October 2009, OFMDFM launched the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Everyone's Involved' for consultation. OFMDFM has acknowledged that the new Strategy is a significant departure from the previous publication in terms of both format and complexity, describing the new Strategy as an enabling document that reflects the vision of the Programme for Government. However, the current Programme for Government expires in 2011 and consequently it is unclear how the Sustainable Development Strategy can reflect successfully future versions. The Strategy is underpinned nonetheless by the need to secure a balance between social, economic and environmental considerations.

The overarching United Kingdom Sustainable Development Strategy has identified four priority areas for immediate action across the UK:- sustainable consumption and production; climate change and energy; natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; and sustainable communities. The UK government has indicated that addressing these priorities will also help to shape the way the UK works internationally by ensuring that our objectives and activities are aligned with international goals. The draft second Northern Ireland Strategy appears however to have discarded these agreed objectives in favour of five alternatives:-

- Building a dynamic, innovative and responsible economy that delivers the prosperity required to tackle disadvantage and lift people in all our communities out of poverty.
- Strengthening society so that it is more tolerant, inclusive of all communities and stable and permits positive progress in quality of life for everyone.
- Driving sustainable, long-term investment in key infrastructure to support economic and social development.
- Ensuring the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment.
- Ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint.

The Strategy provides little in the way of explanation as to how these objectives are to be achieved or indeed the source and extent of funding available to support their delivery. Moreover, the Strategy contains no targets and nor does it include detail as to how progress towards each objective will be monitored and reported.

Despite identifying the crucial role of district councils in achieving sustainable development, the draft Strategy has been developed without input from local government and, therefore, focuses primarily upon actions to be delivered by government departments. Indeed, there is little or no detail regarding those actions to be delivered by local government including, for example, reference to the contribution of planning and development control to meeting the Strategy's social and economic objectives whilst protecting the natural environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the draft Strategy contains a series of commitments in relation to ethical and fair trade. The UK Fairtrade Foundation has identified the fundamental role of local authorities in its Fairtrade Towns and Cities campaign, highlighting that they must pass a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agree to serve Fairtrade products in meetings, offices and canteens. They must also participate in a Fairtrade Steering group and help to raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade across the community. Belfast is presently jointly accredited by the UK Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade Mark Ireland. The Strategy fails to recognise this contribution, instead focusing upon a central government programme to promote, establish and facilitate ethical and fair trade relations. Consequently, it is recommended that the focus of the Strategy should be expanded to reflect accurately the valuable contribution from local authorities and others towards achieving sustainable development.

Nonetheless, the Strategy does acknowledge the contribution to be made by local authorities by referring to the statutory duty to exercise their functions in the manner they consider best calculated to promote the achievement of sustainable development. OFMDFM highlights that the impact of the duty to date has been marginal, citing interpretation difficulties and an absence of guidance associated with the legislation. Although OFMDFM issued draft guidance on the duty in February 2007 to a select range of consultees, a full consultation has not been completed and final guidance has not been issued to date. It is recommended therefore, that any future guidance should be developed in consultation with local authorities and should reflect the need for local authority sustainability appraisals to be applied only to significant policies or functions.

OFMDFM has indicated that the Strategy is to be supported by the development of an Implementation Plan, which is scheduled to be published in 2009. It appears that the Implementation Plan is to be restricted to government actions and as the Strategy consultation is not scheduled to close until 15th January 2010, it is unclear how OFMDFM will be able to reflect adequately consultees' comments and concerns within the Implementation Plan.

Key Issues contd.

In terms of monitoring and reporting progress towards sustainable development, OFMDFM has committed to compiling a regular report containing indicators of Departments' progress against strategic objectives. It is unclear however, how contributions from the wider public sector, the community and voluntary sector and the private sector will be monitored and reported. Indeed, it is unclear how the Strategy will advance Northern Ireland's contribution towards the 20 United Kingdom Framework indicators, collated and reported by National Statistics and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Finally, OFMDFM has not indicated the lifespan of the draft Sustainable Development Strategy but has advised that it will be periodically reviewed. It is considered that such an arbitrary commitment is inappropriate and that the content of the Strategy should be reviewed and redefined in light of progress towards SMART sustainable development targets and objectives. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Strategy should be reviewed periodically to account for emerging obligations and priorities identified in forthcoming editions of the Programme for Government.

In publishing the draft Sustainable Development Strategy for consultation, OFMDFM has included a range of questions for consideration by consultees. Responses to those questions where applicable are included in the draft Council response provided in Appendix A.

Resource Implications.**Financial and Human Resources.**

There are no immediate financial obligations for the Council associated with the launch of the second Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy however, there may be staff time and financial commitments associated with demonstrating compliance with the statutory duty on sustainable development.

Asset and Other Implications.

N/A

Recommendations.

The Committee is invited to endorse the attached consultation response in respect of the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy and to recommend that it be submitted to the Sustainable Development Unit, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister by the consultation closing date of 15th January 2010.

Key to Abbreviations.

DEFRA	- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.
DoENI	- Department of Environment (Northern Ireland).
OFMDFM	- Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.
RPA	- Review of Public Administration.
SMART	- Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bounded.

Documents Attached.

Appendix A - Belfast City Council response to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister consultation on the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Everyone's Involved'.

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Appendix A - Belfast City Council response to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister consultation on the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Everyone's Involved'.

Question 1 - Do you agree that the draft Sustainable Development Strategy presents itself as an enabling document, which paves the way for the creation of an Implementation Plan, containing explicit plans and targets in support of sustainable development? If you do not agree, please explain why and what alternatives you would propose.

Government has determined that the goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations. Accordingly, the most recent United Kingdom Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy' was published in March 2005 and is underpinned by the UK's shared framework for sustainable development entitled 'One future – different paths', which is designed to provide a consistent approach to sustainable development until 2020. The shared framework for sustainable development comprises a shared understanding of sustainable development, a common purpose outlining what we are trying to achieve and the guiding principles that we all need to follow to achieve it, sustainable development priorities for UK action at home and internationally and the development of indicators to monitor the key issues on a UK wide basis. It also acknowledges that each devolved administration should develop its own Sustainable Development Strategy to address regional priorities as well as contributing towards the achievement of common UK goals and challenges.

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy identifies a series of shared priorities for action including:-

- Sustainable consumption and production – improving the manner in which goods and services are produced to include an assessment of impacts across their whole lifecycle and reducing the inefficient use of resources, thereby boosting business competitiveness and decoupling the link between economic growth and environmental degradation.
- Climate change and energy – securing a profound change in the way that we generate and use energy, and in other activities that release greenhouse gases.
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement – developing a better understanding of environmental limits, environmental enhancement and recovery where the environment is most degraded to ensure a decent environment for everyone, and a more integrated policy framework.
- Sustainable communities – giving communities more power and say in the decisions that affect them and working in partnership at the right level to get things done.

Government has suggested that these shared priorities will help to shape the way in which it and the devolved administrations work internationally.

Accordingly, the first Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy addressed these four priority action areas from a Northern Ireland perspective. The Strategy also identified learning and communication for sustainable development and governance and sustainable development as additional regional actions. For each of these action areas, the Strategy identified clearly a vision for Northern Ireland and went on to outline strategic objectives, key targets and delivery mechanisms.

The draft second Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy appears to have abandoned this comprehensive approach in favour of what is described as an 'enabling document, which points the way forward for our plans, rather than as a finely detailed, technically based document which is difficult to understand and of restricted interest'. OFMDFM has stated that sustainable development terminology sometimes leads to confusion, and the concept itself is often viewed as being too abstract. It should be noted however, that government departments such as DEFRA have simplified the definition of sustainable development to mitigating negative and increasing positive social, economic and environmental impacts of policies or projects. The Council is concerned that by adopting a more generalist approach and Northern Ireland specific priorities, the draft Strategy is likely to exacerbate current confusion regarding sustainable development and lose an important opportunity to stimulate action across all sectors.

For example, within the first Sustainable Development Strategy, the text clearly explained how resource efficiency, waste minimisation and materials recovery, re-use, and recycling could contribute towards improving the resource efficiency of the Northern Ireland economy to 85% by 2025. The Strategy also identified organisations and groupings that had a direct role to play in achieving this objective. This approach was replicated throughout all action areas within the first Strategy document and the Council considers that in taking a much more high-level approach to strategic direction, there is a clear risk that action will be inhibited. It is also unclear whether the numerous targets and objectives articulated within the first Sustainable Development Strategy and the actions commended in their pursuit have now been discarded.

If priority action area 5 (page 13) and its amplification on page 15 is taken as a case in point, there is a commitment to ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint. The March 2008 Department of the Environment State of the Environment Report provides a sectoral analysis of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, identifying that 34% arises from energy generation, 33% from transport, 9% from businesses, 2% from businesses and less than 1% from the public sector. The draft second Sustainable Development Strategy fails to include any characterisation of the principal sources and therefore anyone referring to the Strategy would be unlikely to appreciate the targets being pursued, the extent of remedial actions required, how to prioritise those actions and the personal contribution that they could make. Indeed, the Strategy commitment to reducing our carbon footprint also fails to make any linkage with the procurement aspects of strategic objective 1, the development aspects of strategic objective 2 and the transport provisions of strategic objective 3.

The Council urges therefore that the second Sustainable Development Strategy should include a fuller explanation of the strategic objectives and also identify the role that organisations and groupings have in achieving those objectives. The Council is also concerned at the suggestion that this action will be achieved via an Implementation Plan, to be published in 2009, given that the Plan is scheduled to conclude in 2011. It is clear that many of the strategic objectives extend well beyond 2011 and consequently, the Council considers that uncertainty regarding the content of subsequent Implementation Plans will not encourage organisations and groupings to engage with the sustainable development process. For example, in relation to climate change, the Climate Change Act 2008 introduced a long-term target of an 80% reduction in the net UK carbon account by 2050, measured against a 1990 baseline. Since this objective is unlikely to be revised for some time, the Council

considers that it should be articulated within the Strategy document rather than repeated within successive Implementation Plans. This comment is also relevant to a range of other longer-term Northern Ireland strategic government publications referred to within the Strategy such as the Regional Development and Regional Economic Strategies, etc. It is recommended however, that specific targets and contributing actions should be incorporated within the Implementation Plans, as these will be expected to vary over time and with changing local priorities.

With regard to development of the Implementation Plan, it is unclear how it will be able to reflect consultees' views, given that it is to be published in 2009 and the Strategy consultation is not scheduled to close until 15th January 2010.

Finally, OFMDFM has not indicated the lifespan of the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy, instead stating that it will be reviewed periodically as sustainable development plans are progressed. The Council takes the view that failing to provide an implementation timetable will discourage organisations and groupings from engaging effectively with the sustainable development process.

In conclusion, it is considered that the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy will not function effectively if it is merely an enabling document as it fails to provide sufficient explanation of its strategic objectives, fails to identify strategic targets and fails to identify the important steps and contributors towards those targets. Moreover, the Strategy focuses almost exclusively upon the actions of central government and has been developed without contribution from local government and others, despite an acknowledgement that there is a critical contribution to the achievement of sustainable development to be made by district councils.

Question 2 - Do you agree that the draft Sustainable Development Strategy will effectively link high-level objectives to delivery of plans? If you do not agree, please explain why and what alternatives you would propose.

The Council does not agree that the draft Sustainable Development Strategy will link successfully high-level objectives of economic prosperity, social cohesion, environmental protection and meeting national and international obligations to the delivery of plans since the Strategy document contains little explanation of the high-level objectives. The Council would also contend that the complex definitions that have been included within the Strategy (page 2-3) will do little to assist in their understanding and commitments towards 'promotion' do not adequately reflect the need for progress or action in particular areas.

The draft Strategy acknowledges that the goal of sustainable development is to put in place effective economic, social and environmental measures to ensure that we can continue to grow our economy, improve our society and communities and capitalise on our natural resources in the years to come, although the overarching ambitions of the Strategy are living within environmental limits and ensuring a strong, healthy, just and equal society. Within the Strategy, it is unclear however, where the optimum balance should lie between social, environmental and economic considerations and how this balance should be assessed. Furthermore, although government departments will be required to

incorporate comprehensive 'sustainability scans' as a component of their Regulatory Impact Assessment process, it is unclear how the outcome of these 'sustainability scans' will be weighed alongside the conclusions of other impact assessments in the choice of options for a particular policy or strategy.

The Council notes that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has published a 'Stretching the Web' tool to help practitioners integrate Sustainable Development considerations into their policymaking, as well as project and programme work. DEFRA has characterised the tool as a means of moving away from attaining the traditional balance between economic, environmental and social impacts by opting to mitigate negative impacts, and maximise the positive impacts of a policy, project or programme.

From a local authority perspective, section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 imposes a statutory duty upon local authorities to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. The duty requires a public authority to have regard to any strategy or guidance relating to sustainable development issued by the Department of the Environment and a public authority other than a Northern Ireland department must also have regard to any guidance relating to sustainable development issued by a Northern Ireland department other than the Department of the Environment.

The draft second Strategy document acknowledges that the potential impact of the duty is significant in providing a mandate for public sector bodies to direct their activities to achieve positive sustainable development outcomes, and to do so without compromising their other existing statutory obligations. OFMDFM has identified however, that on the basis of available information, the impact of the duty to date appears to have been marginal, adding that the duty has proved difficult to interpret for public sector bodies, in part due to the absence of guidance associated with the legislation.

The Council considers the lack of final guidance from OFMDFM to have been a principal barrier to interpreting and demonstrating compliance with the statutory duty. OFMDFM has now indicated that making the statutory duty more effective in supporting the delivery of a positive contribution to the sustainable development agenda from the wider public sector will be an important aspect of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy. Accordingly, the Council urges OFMDFM to engage as a matter of priority with all local authorities regarding the statutory duty and the development of supporting guidance. The Council recommends further that should OFMDFM introduce a requirement for sustainability screening, only significant local authority policies or functions should need to be appraised. Finally, the Council recommends that any compliance reporting mechanism should be straightforward and proportionate.

Although Belfast City Council incorporates sustainable development as a key component in its forward planning, it believes strongly that the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy needs to identify explicitly financial resources to assist with the implementation and delivery of the Strategy objectives. The Council considers that this would be the single most effective way to link high-level objectives to the delivery of local authority plans.

Question 3 - Do you agree with the Principles, Priorities and Strategic Objectives identified within the draft Sustainable Development Strategy? If you do not agree, please explain why and what alternatives you would propose.

The Council notes that the draft Strategy's guiding principles have been derived from the 2005 UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy and echo those of the first Sustainable Development Strategy with the inclusion of an additional principle of promoting opportunity and innovation in order to encourage the successful exploitation of new and existing ideas to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits.

In terms of the priority areas for action, the actions articulated within the previous Sustainable Development Strategy and the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy have been omitted in favour of:-

- Building a dynamic, innovative and responsible economy that delivers the prosperity required to tackle disadvantage and lift people in all our communities out of poverty.
- Strengthening society so that it is more tolerant, inclusive of all communities and stable and permits positive progress in quality of life for everyone.
- Driving sustainable, long-term investment in key infrastructure to support economic and social development.
- Ensuring the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment.
- Ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint.

While this approach provides direct links to the 2008-2011 Programme for Government, the draft Strategy should also explain its contribution to the United Kingdom Sustainable Development Strategy shared priorities for action. Given OFMDFM's comments regarding confusing terminology and the need for governments around the world to make the concept of sustainable development 'real' for everyone, the Council is also concerned that the previous Strategy commitment towards learning and communication for sustainable development has not been retained. The Council is also particularly concerned that the commitment towards Sustainable Communities and the reference to the local authority role in community planning and the power of wellbeing has also been omitted from the new Strategy. This would be regarded as a key sustainable development delivery mechanism for local authorities.

The Council also notes that the previous Strategy commitment of addressing climate change and energy has been replaced with a commitment to ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint. This is to be achieved by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions; increasing the proportion of energy used that is produced from indigenous, and renewable sources; ensuring affordable access to energy provision and fuel and security of supply; and planning and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It is unclear whether the previous Strategy objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25% below 1990 baseline levels by 2025 and making the government estate carbon neutral by 2015 have been retained. The draft Strategy also makes no reference to Northern Ireland's contribution towards the UK Climate Change Act 2008 carbon reduction target of an 80% reduction in the UK net carbon account against the 1990 baseline by 2050.

The draft Strategy has identified that a component of ensuring responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment is effective planning that enables development to meet social and economic requirements whilst respecting our natural environment. It should be noted that the transfer of responsibility for local development plans and development control and enforcement to local authorities under the Review of Public Administration is scheduled to be completed in April 2011, although this has not been acknowledged within the draft Strategy text.

Question 4 - Do you agree the Commitments (Annex A) will be sufficient to make sure those inside and outside government contribute to the Strategy? If you do not agree, please explain why and what alternatives you would propose.

As most of the commitments summarised in Annex A relate to government departments and include requirements for sustainability scans, which will provide SMART evidence of the inclusion of sustainability criteria and for monitoring and reporting mechanisms, the Council considers that the draft Strategy would provide adequate assurance of appropriate contribution from central government on the assumption that the obligation for government departments to contribute to the Strategy will be reinforced further via the Implementation Plan.

With regard to the local government contributions towards the Strategy, Annex A contains a commitment (9) that guidance relating to the existing sustainable development duty will be appropriate in supporting government's sustainable development ambitions. In addition, commitment 13 relates to the creation of a collaborative mechanism, which will bring together representatives from the local government sector and others with the purpose of progressing sustainable development ambitions.

Given that the Strategy acknowledges that there is a critical contribution to be made towards the achievement of sustainable development by the public sector, including district councils, the Council considers it essential that the Strategy is more explicit about the details of potential contributions across the public sector.

With regard to commitment 18, government has committed to publishing a comprehensive programme to promote, establish and facilitate ethical and fair trade relations, which support sustainable growth. It should be noted that the Fairtrade Foundation is the independent non-profit organisation that licenses use of the Fairtrade Mark on products in the UK in accordance with internationally agreed Fairtrade standards. The Foundation's mission is to work with businesses, community groups and individuals to improve the trading position of producer organisations in order to deliver sustainable livelihoods for farmers, workers and their communities. Accordingly, the Foundation provides independent certification of the trade chain, licenses the use of the Fairtrade Mark as a consumer guarantee on products, facilitates the market to grow demand for Fairtrade and enable producers to sell to traders and retailers, works with partners to support producer organisations and their networks and raises public awareness of the need for Fairtrade and the importance of the Fairtrade Mark.

In order to raise public awareness regarding the need to support Fairtrade, the Fairtrade Foundation has launched a Fairtrade Towns and Cities campaign. To become accredited as a Fairtrade Town or City, five goals must be achieved as follows:-

- The local council must pass a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agree to serve Fairtrade products in meetings, offices and canteens.
- A local Fairtrade steering group must be convened to ensure that the Fairtrade Town campaign continues to develop and gain new support.
- A range of Fairtrade products must be readily available in the area's retail outlets to include shops, supermarkets, newsagents and petrol stations, and be served in local catering outlets such as cafés, restaurants and pubs.
- Local workplaces and community organisations including places of worship, schools, universities, colleges and other community organisations must support Fairtrade and use Fairtrade products whenever possible. A flagship employer is required for towns or cities with populations over 100,000.
- Media coverage and events must be delivered to raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade across the community.

A number of cities, towns and villages across Northern Ireland are presently accredited by the UK Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade Mark Ireland. Moreover, the UK government has recently also recognised the benefits of Fairtrade by agreeing to provide £12 million in funding over the next four years to the Fairtrade Foundation and its international partners in the Fairtrade Labelling Organisations.

The first Sustainable Development Strategy contained a commitment that new government contracts would specify Fairtrade products in catering facilities in all newly occupied buildings and that Fairtrade produce would be used for official hospitality. The Council contends that if the promotion of Fairtrade continues to be a strategic priority, then encouraging local authorities to support the Fairtrade Towns and Cities campaign would be an effective mechanism for ensuring its promotion.

Question 5 - Do you agree with the scope of the four broad Key Challenges for cross-sectoral engagement set out in Chapter 3? If you do not agree, please explain why and what alternatives you would propose.

With regard to the wider public sector, the Strategy identifies that there is a critical contribution to the achievement of sustainable development to be made by public sector bodies outside the direct control of the Executive, including district councils, government owned companies, arms-length bodies, etc.

The draft Strategy acknowledges that a statutory duty to promote sustainable development is provided for by section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006, which requires departments and district councils to exercise their functions in the manner they consider best calculated to promote the achievement of sustainable development. This duty commenced from 31st March 2007. The draft Strategy also acknowledges that the impact of the duty is significant in providing a mandate for public sector bodies to direct their activities to achieve positive sustainable development outcomes, and to do so without compromising their other existing statutory obligations.

As highlighted in the Council's response to Question 2, OFMDFM has identified that the impact of the duty to date appears to have been marginal, with the duty having proved difficult to interpret for public sector bodies, in part due to the absence of guidance associated with the legislation. Accordingly, OFMDFM has concluded that making the statutory duty more effective in supporting the delivery of a positive contribution to the sustainable development agenda from the wider public sector will be an important aspect of the implementation of the Strategy.

Although draft guidance in connection with the sustainable development statutory duty was issued previously for limited consultation, the Council considers the failure to develop final guidance to be an important obstacle to consistent and effective action.

Belfast City Council therefore recommends that OFMDFM should engage with all local authorities as soon as possible regarding the development of further guidance. It is also recommended that any sustainable development impact assessment should be proportionate to the extent of the likely impact and that a screening mechanism should be introduced that will ensure that only significant policies or functions need be appraised. Finally, Council recommends that any compliance reporting mechanism should be straightforward.

Question 6 - Does the draft Sustainable Development Strategy provide you or your organisation with sufficient information to facilitate the shaping of your own sustainable development plans? If you do not agree, please explain why and what alternatives you would propose.

In response to the publication of the first Sustainable Development Strategy, Belfast City Council reinforced its commitment towards sustainable development by including an objective of improving the quality of life, now and for future generations by creating a cleaner, more attractive, safer and healthier city, with a strong economy within its Corporate Plan and updates. The Council's 2008-2011 Corporate Plan continues this commitment by establishing sustainable development as the overarching objective within the Council's Value Creation Map.

Alongside the Council's corporate commitment towards sustainable development, a multidisciplinary Sustainable Development Steering Group was convened to deliver actions and projects within the Council's Sustainable Development Action Plan, which was developed to address the priority action areas of the first Sustainable Development Strategy.

Although the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy provides a list of strategic objectives on pages 13-15, the Council considers that insufficient information has been provided to enable the focus of the objectives to be accurately interpreted or prioritised. Moreover, it also notes that few of the objectives are applicable to local authorities.

For example, referring to the first Sustainable Development Strategy, the local authority obligation under the theme of natural resource protection and environmental enhancement regarding air quality management was clearly defined as meeting the health-based objectives for the seven key pollutants in the Air Quality Strategy by 2010. The Strategy went on to provide amplification regarding air quality

reviews and assessments, preparing and implementing air quality action plans and management of local air quality.

Furthermore, with regard to the development of sustainable communities, the first Strategy highlighted a commitment to ensure that community planning is implanted within the revised local authority system. The Strategy also recognised the work of local authorities in introducing measures to reduce crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce fear of crime and the local government role in delivering sustainable development in the community. There were further examples of clear direction to local authorities within the climate change and energy and governance and sustainable development sections. Accordingly, Belfast City Council considers that district councils, in common with other bodies outside central government, would be assisted greatly in shaping more effectively their sustainable development and corporate plans by a more expansive and explicit account of potential actions in support of the Strategy.

Question 7 - We will develop indicators of sustainability which will align with the Programme for Government and national and European indicators. To what else should we have regard in doing this?

The 2005 UK Sustainable Development Strategy contains a commitment to develop a new set of twenty high-level indicators, the UK Framework Indicators, to give an overview of sustainable development and progress with the priority action areas across the UK. The indicators are designed to measure progress with the Strategy's four priority action areas. DEFRA and National Statistics collate data to measure progress against these indicators and publish an annual summary report entitled 'Sustainable Development Indicators in Your Pocket - An update of the UK Government Strategy indicators'. It is unclear whether the revised priority action areas of the draft second Strategy will enable Northern Ireland to continue to make a meaningful contribution to the national indicators.

The Programme for Government 2008-2011 includes 23 Public Service Agreements (PSAs) that describe the key actions to be taken in support of the priorities, outcomes and targets to which government has committed under the five themes of:-

- Growing a dynamic innovative economy.
- Promoting tolerance, inclusion and health and well-being.
- Protecting and enhancing our environment and natural resources.
- Investing to build our infrastructure.
- Delivering modern high quality and efficient public services.

Annex one of the Programme for Government 2008-2011 provides detailed information on each of the PSAs including actions and targets. The Programme for Government also commits to putting in place a delivery framework, which establishes a robust and effective basis for monitoring and reporting of progress at a strategic level to, and by, the Executive. The Council recommends strongly that in developing appropriate indicators of sustainability, government should not simply replicate the abovementioned monitoring and reporting framework. Instead, it is suggested that OFMDFM will need to develop high-level overarching indicators that are able to reflect and summarise the social, environmental and economic contributions from the various public service agreements and present

them in a format that is both relevant to and understandable by all Sustainable Development Strategy stakeholders including the general public.

Question 8 - Do you agree that the draft Sustainable Development Strategy supports the delivery of the Executive's strategic priorities, as expressed in the Programme for Government? If you do not agree, please explain why and what alternatives you would propose.

Referring to the Programme for Government 2008-2011, the top priority has been identified as growing a dynamic, innovative economy. This is to be achieved by investing in our infrastructure, protecting and enhancing our environment and natural resources, delivering modern high quality and efficient public services and promoting tolerance, inclusion and health and wellbeing.

The Council agrees that the Strategy's objectives do support those of the Programme for Government but considers that in seeking to grow a dynamic, innovative economy, the draft second Sustainable Development Strategy should seek to incorporate the objectives of the 2009 UK Low Carbon Transition Plan - National strategy for climate and energy. The Low Carbon Transition Plan highlights that the transition to a low-carbon economy will be one of the defining issues of the 21st century but if delivered correctly, it will lead to a better quality of life, improved long-term economic health, new business opportunities in a fast-growing global sector, and, by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, greater security of future energy supplies. Spotlight issues within the Plan include transforming our power sector so as to reduce our reliance upon fossil fuels; transforming our communities by reducing emissions from homes to almost zero through greater energy efficiency and the use of low carbon energy; transforming our workplaces and jobs to use less energy and making use of clean energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; transforming transport by using energy more efficiently and moving to more low carbon forms of energy; and transforming farming and managing our land and waste sustainably.



Belfast City Council.

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.
Subject:	Belfast City Council Participation in the 2010 World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Earth Hour
Date:	11th December, 2009.
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects ext. 6217
Contact Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Finance and Resources Directorate, ext. 6084

Relevant Background Information.
<p>This paper presents a request from the World Wildlife Fund (NI) seeking Council participation in an international promotion to demonstrate support for measures to address climate change.</p> <p>The World Wildlife Fund in Northern Ireland is part of WWF-UK and seeks to progress a range of environmental matters from a regional perspective. It focuses principally on policy development and lobbying to ensure that environmental issues remain high on local political and media agendas. WWF NI's current priorities are improving the quality of rivers and oceans; promoting sustainable development; and addressing contributors to climate change.</p> <p>Internationally, WWF has been leading a global awareness campaign entitled "Earth Hour". The campaign invites individuals and organisations to turn off lights for a period of one hour at a designated time as a means of demonstrating support for tackling climate change. WWF emphasises the need for Local Government and individual citizens to play their part in addressing climate change by adopting responsible behaviours. Earth Hour aims to offer people throughout the world an opportunity to express their support and, in doing so, exert influence on political decision makers.</p> <p>The campaign originated in Sydney, Australia in 2007 when over 2 million people took part in the first Earth Hour. Since then, the initiative has grown substantially. WWF reports that one billion people in 4,000 cities and towns throughout 88 countries switched off their lights for Earth Hour in 2009. Iconic locations that participated included the Great Wall of China, San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, the Colosseum in Rome, the Sydney Opera House and the Houses of Parliament in London.</p> <p>Belfast City Council took part in the 2009 event when the Lord Mayor carried out an official "switch off" of external lighting at the City Hall including the Belfast Wheel. WWF is hoping to build upon the success of the Earth Hour initiative during 2010 and has approached the Council regarding participation in next year's event scheduled for Saturday 27 March.</p>

Key Issues.
<p>Fit with Council Policy.</p> <p>Strategic theme 3 in the Council's current corporate plan – Better care for Belfast's environment – commits us to reducing the city's impact on climate change and improving air quality. More recently, (November 2009) Council agreed to subscribe to the Eurocities Declaration on Climate Change, which obliges signatories to tackle climate change, including the development of climate change plans and monitoring greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>The Council's position on climate change is abreast with that of the NI Executive, which has consented to the expansion of the Climate Change Act 2008 to Northern Ireland and has agreed to contribute towards UK targets and budgets.</p> <p>At a UK level, government's 2009 Low Carbon Transition plan highlights the important convening and leadership role that local government has to play in achieving greenhouse gas emission targets.</p>

Key Issues contd.**Operational matters.**

The WWF request for Council participation has been discussed with Facilities Management, Corporate Communications and Events staff. It is concluded that the external lights at City Hall could be turned off without any disruption to other Council activities. (The 2009 event took place while the City Hall was unoccupied.) All necessary health and safety and fire control provisions will be addressed.

World Tourist Attractions, operators of the Belfast Wheel, co-operated with the Council and took part in the 2009 'switch off'. We will again seek the involvement of the company should the Council agree to participate in the 2010 event.

Finally, all publicity and promotional activity regarding Council participation will be overseen by Corporate Communications to ensure appropriate messages are conveyed.

Resource Implications.Financial.

Negligible – staff costs to oversee the lighting 'switch off' will be offset by the associated energy savings.

Human Resources.

None

Asset and other implications.

None

Recommendations.

It is considered that the proposal again affords the Council an opportunity to demonstrate civic leadership and to communicate its position regarding the need for cities to play an important role in addressing climate change. Furthermore, the initiative may provide a platform to progress Council's objectives on environmental matters by engaging with staff to generate ideas in support of Earth Hour.

It is recommended:

- (i) That the Committee approves Council's participation in the 2010 Earth Hour event scheduled for 27 March, commencing at 20:30 and finishing at 21:30.
- (ii) Should Earth Hour become an annual event, that the Committee agrees to delegate authority to the Director of Property and Projects to determine future participation

Decision Tracking

Council decision to be conveyed to WWF in January and arrangements, if agreed, put in place by David Cartmill

Key to Abbreviations.

WWF - World Wildlife Fund (also known as the World Wide Fund for Nature).

Documents attached.

None

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Communications Update
Date:	11th December, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Eamon Deeny, Head of Corporate Communications, ext 6285
Contact Officer:	As above

Relevant Background Information

Significant progress has been made in developing an efficient and effective communications service for Belfast City Council with a view to improving the image and reputation of the organisation. New communications channels, such as the website, Facebook and Twitter are successfully being used to reach ratepayers alongside the continued development and improvement of existing and traditional channels such as the media, City Matters and publications. All of this has been achieved while at the same realising significant savings for the council. This report sets out to outline details of progress to members.

Key Issues**Awards and recognition**

July 2009: UK Good Communications Awards (the main communications awards for the public sector in the UK) – Belfast City Council Corporate Communications was one of just four local authorities across the UK to be shortlisted for PR Team of the year and was a commended runner up.

December 2009: CIPR Awards (the PR industry's main awards of the year for both in-house and consultancy PR) – Belfast City Council was described as the most prolific winner on the night, picking up awards in a range of categories. The awards were the result of excellent team work across departments.:

Gold Award – Best Newsletter – the A-Z of Council Services

Gold Award – Best Leaflets – Information on Flooding

Gold Award – Best Website – The Zoo

Gold Award – Best Integrated Communication – Waste Management

Silver Award – Best Newspaper/magazine – City Matters

Silver Award – Best Event – the MAD Awards.

October 2009 – Belfast City Council was held up at a Social Networking Conference in the Odyssey in Belfast, attended by 400 people, as the best example of how organisations should use Facebook and Twitter to engage with customers.

Efficiencies

The Council has developed a corporate approach to effective communications, by the internal transfer of resources, delivering the 2005 recommendations while also achieving significant savings. With the support and co-operation of departments, total efficiencies in the area of communications will have amounted to over £1.265 million in the three year period ending 2009/10. See table below:

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total	
Publications		£ 60,000	£ 50,000	£650,000	
Graphic design	£180,000	£180,000	£180,000		
City Matters A-Z	£ 80,000	£160,000 £ 35,000	£100,000	£375,000	
Advertising			£140,000	£240,000	
Recruitment – reduced spend			£100,000		
Total	£260,000	£435,000	£570,000	£1,265,000	

Website

The number of unique visits to the council website has increased almost threefold in the past three years, from around 675,000 in 2006 to almost 2 million in 2009. The progress has continued this year with 135,130 visitors in April compared to almost 160,000 in September.

Hits on the website peaked in August with 216,000 unique visitors as a result of the Tall Ships visit ensuring that Belfast City Council website was one of the top four sites for traffic among all public sector sites in the UK.

City Matters

City Matters continues to be our most successful communications tool. We continue to get up to 1,000 responses from the publication's readers including comments, feedback and requests for information, with the vast majority of these being extremely positive about the publication and about Belfast City Council.

The cost per edition is £38.5k. It is partly paid through advertising income which averages £20k per edition. City Matters is delivered six times a year but one edition will be removed from next year's budget for efficiency reasons.

A-Z of council services

Our A-Z directory highlighting all the services the council provides began distribution on 7 December and will be delivered to all ratepayers.

The income generated through advertising for this publication was £27k out of the total cost of £40.5k.

Graphic design

Out of the 207 design jobs carried out over the past six months, over half of these were completed by our in-house designer. These include:

- City Matters
- Intercom
- The City Hall reopening campaign
- Garden Gourmet campaign
- Tall Ships publications.

A second designer on a fixed contract is starting in December 2009. This means that we will significantly reduce our spend on graphic design – over £120k was spent on using external companies in 2008-09 – as we will be able to do even more design work in-house.

New media

Corporate Communications will bring forward a digital strategy for the council early in the New Year and will also develop policies and procedures around the use of new communications technologies, such as email marketing and social networking, to ensure a corporate value for money approach is adopted across the council.

- **Email marketing**

A procurement document has been sent out for an email marketing solution to ensure a corporate approach. This will provide efficiency savings by cutting down on things such as print and postage. It will also be a more targeted and measurable way of communicating.

- **Social networking**

The use of this new channel of communication is proving to be extremely successful. For example over 8,000 people said they would be visiting the continental market at Christmas through our Facebook site .We have successfully promoted events, such as Stitch and Style for Waste Week, as well as our Lord Mayor's blog on both Twitter and Facebook. Belfast City Council now has 972 followers on Twitter and 415 followers on Facebook.

Branding

Corporate Communications is working closely with BCVB on the development and roll out of the 'B' brand and developing council guidelines around its use.

Media Relations

Media enquiries – Increasing media demands, with 24 hour news bulletins and more weekly newspapers, meant that there has been a 10 per cent increase in media queries during the past six months, 1626 enquiries were dealt with – an average of just under 300 per month.

Response times - An improvement in response times indicates 71% are dealt with in less than one hour, and 11% in 1 to 4 hours.

Analysis of enquiries - During the period, analysis of figures for regional broadcast media show that BBC NI made most demands on staff time with 61% of enquiries and UTV 12% of enquiries

Media coverage - over 80% of newspaper stories are now positive

Positive media coverage that has been achieved for BCC has included the Tall Ships, the Belfast 2009 campaign highlighting the reopening of landmark buildings, such as the City Hall and Ulster Hall, alongside new developments, Safer Belfast, anti-litter and waste management campaigns, the continental market, health and leisure initiatives, economic development and older people.

Journalists recently surveyed as an part of an evaluation of the implementation of the 2005 review of communications said that the Belfast City Council media operation is among the best, if not the best, in Northern Ireland. The services we provide the media include:

- Online news facility which publishes all press releases issued by the council with accompanying photographs for press use
- Links to social networking sites, Facebook and Twitter
- RSS feeds which deliver news updates to journalists each time the website is updated

Advertising

Following implementation of many of the recommendations from the Verve 2007 report on advertising the following advertising savings have been made this year to date:

- Recruitment advertising - £100,200
- Placement of advertising - £6,500 (by booking adverts display not classified)
- City Hall opening campaign - £17k of media delivered for £10k, 41% discount
- Boost January (planned) activity – £40k of media delivered for £19,182, 52% discount
- Added value delivered such as FOC print for bus stop 6 sheet activity and FOC outdoor sites

Significant volume advertising discounts have also been negotiated with main media suppliers ensuring that the council gets value for money when placing its advertising. We have also generated advertising revenue to help cover the cost of City Matters and the A-Z directory as outlined above.

An audit report on the council's approach to advertising is currently being completed. Once it is finalised, Corporate Communication will begin to develop an advertising strategy, including defined policies and procedures. Its aim will be to further improve effectiveness and achieve further significant savings and will be brought to the committee for approval early in the New Year.

Internal Communications

The past six months, a number of major initiatives have been developed to improve communications with staff across the council, both in terms of existing and new channels

Interlink – employee intranet - News stories of interest to staff including council decisions and policies are uploaded with many new sections added regularly with information on staff offers, the staff restaurant, ISB customer zone, Waste treatment facilities and performance. The success of the site is underlined by the fact that more than 1,600 distinct staff visit the site on a monthly basis with over 7,000 hits per day, making it an effective communications tool.

Getting People Connected - A pilot, called Getting People Connected, is to run at six sites (depots, leisure and community centres) during December 2009 to get information to staff who don't have PCs. TV screens will be installed in staff canteens to display stories from interlink's homepage.

Intercom – During the past six months three editions have been produced. Among the stories features has been the 2009 MAD Awards and a pull out on the reopening of City Hall, the Tall Ships event and stories on performance and business issues such as absence and local government review updates. A reader satisfaction survey in July showed over 96 per cent of respondents rated the publication as good or very good.

Team brief - The team brief has been reviewed with the brief now issued to all departments every second month. Over 150 team briefers have been on refresher training and the new evaluation system has been running for six months.

Face to face - one council briefings – Regular staff briefings take place at City Hall informing staff of important issues, such as RPA and the many challenges facing our organisation.

Future plans – Initiatives under consideration include the use of video to get across messages to staff, further development of Interlink as a two-way communications device with staff.

A high priority will be given to exploring with Members how they want to receive information and be kept informed about operational work and activity and initiatives aligned to our corporate themes.

Resource Implications

None

Recommendations

Members are asked to note:

- The recent awards successes achieved by Belfast City Council for its communications activity, which enhances the image and reputation of the council and the city as a whole;
- The efficiencies and improvements achieved as a result of professionalising the communications service
- The efforts to embrace new communications channels, such as Facebook and Twitter, as a way of improving services and engagement with ratepayers.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Twitter details and examples
Appendix 2 – Facebook details and examples
Appendix 3 – You Tube
Appendix 4 - Flickr

Twitter

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets.

Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as followers.

Followers

We currently have **925 followers** (16 November 2009). Our followers include ratepayers, businesses, councillors, other councils and government agencies, as well as members of the press.

What do we use Twitter for?

We use Twitter to post information about council projects, events, news, jobs and tenders. We also use it during emergencies such as flooding. It is a quick and easy way to communicate key messages.

Within our messages, we always include a web link back to the council website so users can get further information.

Our followers can also communicate with us via our Twitter page, sending us queries or questions about council events and services.

Other features

- **Search facility** - this allows us to monitor what people are saying on Twitter about the council and council projects or events.
- **Re-tweet facility** - Twitter enables people to 're-tweet' our tweet to their followers so our message is spread virally to people.
- **'Follow' facility** – we can follow other users and organisations, particularly partners, to promote a joined approach



belfastcc

That's you!

Lists

Our Christmas Continental Market starts tomorrow (Tues) at 10am at Belfast City Hall. It sells food, drinks and crafts. <http://ow.ly/CGre>

less than 20 seconds ago from HootSuite

Tenders: E903 - Expression of interest for the recovery and refurbishment of goods and items deposited at the Council... <http://ow.ly/161sp3>

6:40 PM Nov 13th from HootSuite

Tenders: ST902 - Pre-qualification questionnaire for the supply and delivery of two and four wheeled waste and recy... <http://ow.ly/161sp2>

6:40 PM Nov 13th from HootSuite

Name Belfast City Council

Location Belfast

Web <http://www.belfas...>

Bio The latest news, jobs, events and tenders from Belfast City Council

31 following 923 followers 28 listed

Tweets 690

Favorites

Following



RSS feed of belfastcc's tweets

Example - Lord Mayor's blog

We are currently trialling the Lord Mayor's blog at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/lordmayorsblog

It was set up at the end of August 2009 and currently has eight postings.

On average, the blog receives around 500 visits per month but this will increase over time as we develop the section.

When a blog post is added on our website, we put a comment on Twitter directing our followers back to our website. Some of these postings are below:



These Twitter postings have generated over 300 visits to the Lord Mayor's blog on our website. This builds awareness of the Lord Mayor's role and activities as well as showcasing what the council website has to offer.

Facebook

What is Facebook?

Facebook is a global social networking website. It allows people to connect and share information with friends. Businesses and organisations can also use it to communicate key messages to their 'fans' – people who have decided to receive information and updates from a business or organisation.

Fans

We currently have **363 fans** (16 November 2009). Our fans include rate payers, businesses, councillors, government agencies and members of the press.

What do we use Facebook for?

We use Facebook to post information about council projects, events, news, jobs and tenders. We also use it during emergencies, such as flooding. Within our postings, we include web links back to the council website so users can get further information. It is a quick and easy way to communicate key messages.

Our fans can also communicate with us via our Facebook page, sending us queries or questions about council events and services. They can also comment on our postings and say whether they like it by 'giving it the thumbs up'.



Other features

- Photo and video galleries
- Events calendar
- Discussion boards.



Belfast City Council

- Wall
- Info
- Photos
- Discussions
- Events
- Boxes
- >>
- +

What's on your mind?

Attach:

Share

Options



Belfast City Council We have teamed up with the Irish Football Association to create a special five-a-side tournament for women. Futsal is a relatively new sport in Northern Ireland, offering a high-paced and exciting game for both players and spectators. Come along to Shankill Leisure Centre, Sunday 15 November at 12.30pm and show your support!

Ladies' Futsal Tournament

Source: www.belfastcity.gov.uk

Fri at 17:17 · Comment · Like · Share



Belfast City Council



Christine Bleakley and The One Show at Christmas Continental Market

Source: www.belfastcity.gov.uk

BBC's The One Show will be broadcasting a Children In Need special stunt, live from the Santa's Grotto at the Christmas Continental Market on Thursday 19 November, between 7pm and 7.30pm, when presenter Christine Bleakley will be trying to avoid being 'gunged' by Pudsey and some young local helpers!

Fri at 14:35 · Comment · Like · Share

2 people like this.

Edit Page

Promote with an advert

Activate mobile status updates

Promote with a fan box

Send an update to Fans

Add to my page's favourites

Remove from my page's favourites

Belfast City Council is the largest council in Northern Ireland, serving more than 260,000 people. Become a fan to read more about our latest events or









Example – Christmas Continental Market

We added the Christmas Continental Market to the council’s Facebook events calendar and it has received a huge response from people on Facebook.




Like Twitter, users can ‘share’ our information/events/postings with their friends and our message can spread virally. People can also invite their friends to go to our events and this is what has happened with the Continental Market. We currently have 7,850 confirmed guests (16 November 2009) for the market - the event was communicated to these people virally.

Confirmed guests

This event has [7,776 confirmed guests](#) [See all](#)

							
Rhonda Greenaway	Seliabel Unabee	Hollie Watson	Sarah Buchan	Karen Cullen	Nicola McElroy	Gary Craig	Geraldine Gray

Our fans can also post comments on our Facebook page and events. We currently have 241 posts about the Christmas Continental Market.

	Luke McGibbon wrote at 00:00 This is such a big part of my Belfast christmas. I love it I love it I love it. I'm so excited :D Report - Delete
	Natasha Lee Gracey (Northern Ireland) wrote at 23:25 yesterday THIS is what gets me excited about Christmas : D Report - Delete
	Trina McKenna wrote at 22:05 yesterday Best market + best season = best city! shall be there ;) Report - Delete

Christmas Continental Market

Christmas food, drink and entertainment!

Host: [Belfast City Council](#)
 Type: [Other - Carnival/Fun Fair](#)
 Network: [Global](#)

Start Time: [Tuesday, 17 November 2009 at 10:00](#)
 End Time: [Saturday, 19 December 2009 at 20:00](#)
 Location: [Belfast City Hall](#)
 Town/City: [Belfast, United Kingdom](#)

Phone: [02890320202](#)
 Email: markets@belfastcity.gov.uk

Description

Once again the City Hall grounds will come alive with dozens of market stalls offering a stunning range of crafts, food and decorations from across Europe, and beyond, to delight the Christmas shopper seeking original gifts.

Opening hours are:

- * Monday to Wednesday 9am to 8pm
- * Thursday to Saturday 9am to 10pm
- * Sunday 1pm to 6pm.

Please note, the market will start at 10am on Tuesday 17 November and close at 8pm on Saturday 19 December.

Food and drink includes:

- * Bratwurst sausages and German beers
- * warming gluhwein
- * gourmet burgers
- * Spanish paella
- * toasted baguettes



[Invite people to come](#)

[Promote event with an advertisement](#)

[Edit Guest List](#)

[Cancel this Event](#)

[Edit event](#)

[Update Fans of Belfast City Council](#)

[Export](#) 

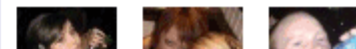
Other information

Guests are allowed to bring friends to this event.

Other invitations

Might attend (530)

[See all](#)



facebook
Settings Log out
Create Your Profile

Christmas Continental Market

Christmas food, drink and entertainment!

Host: [Belfast City Council](#)

Type: [Other - Carnival/Fun Fair](#)

Network: [Global](#)

Start Time: [Tuesday, 17 November 2009 at 10:00](#)

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Other information

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Other invitations

Might attend (530) [See all](#)

Appendix 3

YouTube

What is YouTube?

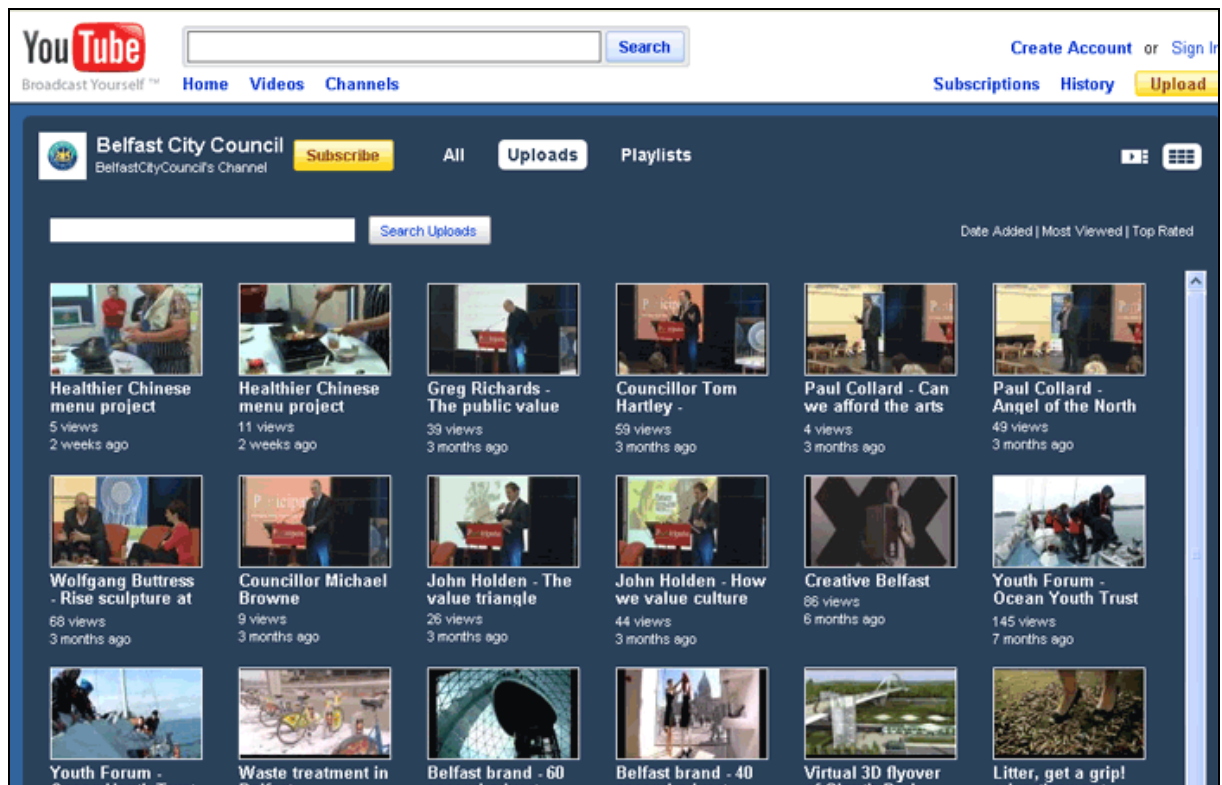
YouTube is a video sharing website on which users can upload and share videos.

What do we use YouTube for?

We have uploaded nearly 20 videos to our council You Tube account including:

- Belfast brand TV adverts
- Anti-litter TV adverts
- Youth Forum videos.

You Tube compresses and resizes videos which we can then place on our website. Videos can also be shared between users to highlight projects and events.

These include:**Advantages**

- makes use of video being produced already
- attracts a new and hard to reach audience
- reduces load on services
- allows content to be spread virally

Flickr

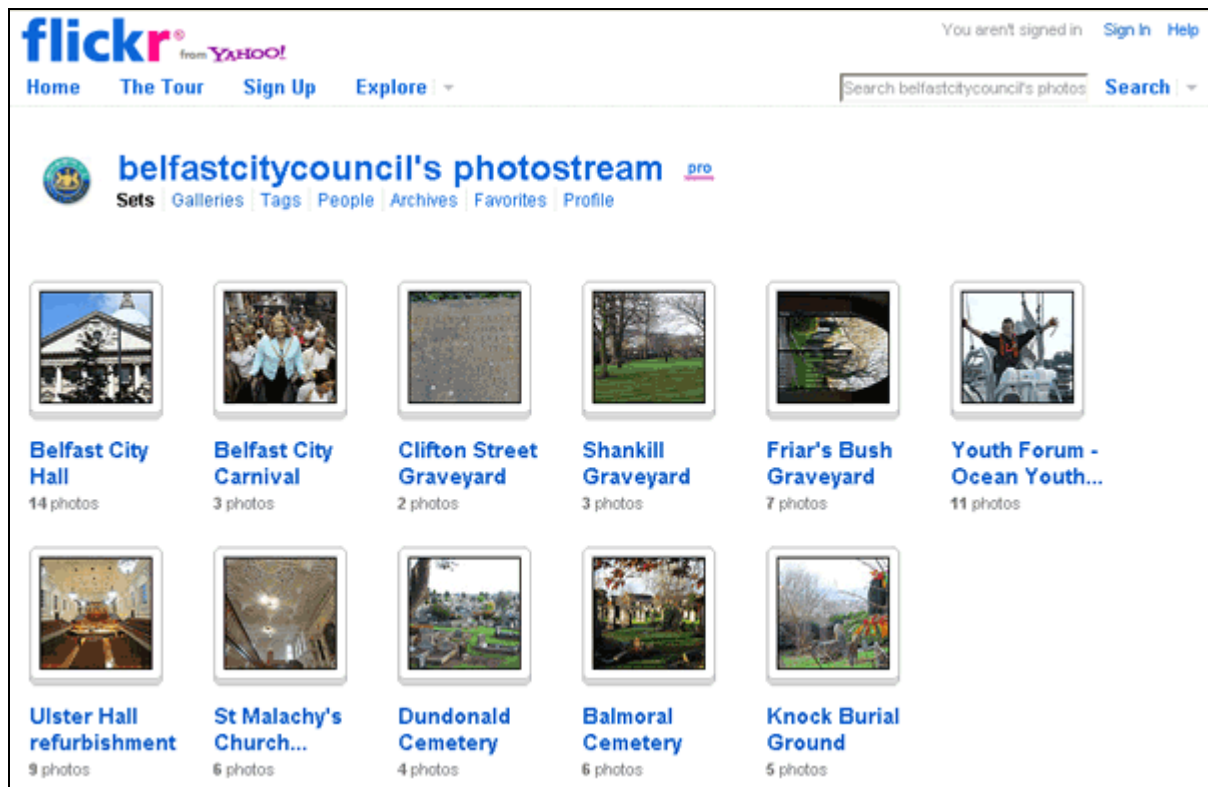
What is Flickr?

Flickr is an online photo management and sharing application.

What do we use Flickr for?

We have uploaded a number of photos to our Flickr page. Once there, we can pull the images back onto the council website as an easy to use photo gallery. This saves time and resources as Flickr will crop and resize images automatically.

Flickr is also a good way to publicise an event or council project as users can 'share' photos with each other.



Advantages

- makes use of photography being produced already
- attracts a new and hard to reach audience
- reduces load on services
- allows content to be spread virally

The market in a million

Record numbers expected to go the whole hog at continental fair

BURGLEY

by@btele.com

...ces of the Continent
...diaz yesterday — and
...million people are ex-
...ck to see it.
...ontinental Market was
...ined yesterday and
...f people were already
...to be the first to com-
...ing from croque mon-
...ells.
...n who was there with
...of David Crooks, stall-
...n counting down the
...opened, I really look
...it every year. We just
...s our lunch break but
...e will be frequent vis-
...ic next month.
...re than 82 stalls com-
...most every corner of
...he market has estab-
...if as one of Belfast's
...cess stories.
...nder through the City
...is a variety of smells
...s drift through the air,
...ing from the various
...or gift-wraps selling in-
...ces. With each step dif-
...rs and languages greet
...gives a truly continen-
...his place of Belfast.
...from all over Europe
...further afield have re-
...d 15 new stalls have



THE MARKET IN NUMBERS

750,000

People visited the market last year

82

Different stalls

8,250

Fans on the market Facebook page

33

The number of days that market is open

5

Years the market has been in Belfast

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID MCGEEHAN