

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 5th March, 2010

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hartley (Chairman);  
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Lavery); and  
Councillors Adamson, Attwood, Austin, D. Browne,  
W. Browne, Campbell, Convery, Hendron, N. Kelly,  
C. Maskey, McCann, Newton and Rodgers.

Also attended: Councillor Jones.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;  
Mr. L. Steele, Head of Committee and  
Members' Services;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Improvement Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator.

### Apology

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

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19th February were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st March, subject to:

- (i) the omission of that portion of the minute under the heading "Security Unit Update" insofar as it related to the control room which, at the request of Councillor Rodway, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- (ii) the amendment of the minute under the heading "Publication of Members' Information" to provide that a report be presented to the Committee setting out the extent of the information included in the Council's Publication Scheme in relation to all payments made to Council officers and comparing and contrasting that with the information to be published in relation to Members.

### Security Unit Update

(Mr. G. Wright, Head of Facilities Management, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered further the minute in relation to the Security Unit Update, a copy of which is set out hereunder:

*"The Committee considered the undernoted report:*

**'Relevant Background Information**

*The Committee may recall that, during its meeting of October 2009, a number of questions were raised by individual members in respect of matters concerning the security unit. These questions related to the provision of CCTV in the City Hall, working conditions in the Control Room and more general issues surrounding the unit's operations. As a consequence, the Head of Facilities Management agreed to bring a report in early 2010 updating the Committee on all relevant issues and the relevant details are set out below.*

**Industrial Relations**

*Members will recall that a package of changes to numbers, working hours, duties, locations, pool cover, pay & grading and contractual overtime arrangements etc. was developed and put to staff by way of ballot in late 2009. The Security Officer grade (30 staff) voted overwhelmingly to accept the proposal and it was duly implemented. The Control Room grade (8 staff) initially rejected the proposal - largely due to issues around the requirement for some modest lone-working in the new shift structures - but in a subsequent ballot have recently also voted to accept the package, which has now been implemented. These changes will not only result in enhanced efficiency and flexibility but will also reduce overall overtime expenditure by approx. £75,000 per annum.*

**CCTV infrastructure**

*Most of the CCTV cameras in place inside the City Hall until 2007 were removed during the recent refurbishment. The opportunity was also taken at that time to enhance cabling in order to permit the use of IP-based CCTV cameras (meaning that the images could be viewed using standard internet protocols from anywhere with a broadband connection) and a provision of £225,000 was made in the capital programme to purchase replacement cameras and associated infrastructure and hardware.*

*However, in the light of emerging financial constraints and the consequent need to re-prioritise the projects within the capital programme, the CCTV item was removed following discussions with the then Director of Corporate Services.*

*This in turn meant that, for a relatively brief period of time, the building has had to operate with a “skeleton” CCTV system which is limited in coverage and is clearly not ideal. However once this situation arose it became necessary to consider possible alternatives, and it has been identified that the BCC Waste Transfer Depot at Duncrue has a modern, relatively new and fully functional CCTV control matrix and associated equipment which has recently been decommissioned, as this property has now transferred to the corporate land-bank.*

*We have sought and obtained permission to transfer this CCTV equipment to the City Hall, and this will allow us to provide CCTV coverage both inside and outside the building, providing coverage almost as comprehensive as before, and for a revenue cost of just £18,000 (including the purchase of some new high-resolution monitors etc). This equipment is IP-compatible and will therefore allow us to improve the system over time by means of relatively modest additional revenue expenditure without the need for a large capital financing requirement, and this is obviously a highly desirable outcome as it has resulted in a saving to the council of nearly £¼m.*

#### **Control Room**

*It is also our intention to proceed with a fairly significant refurbishment of the Control Room area, in order to render it more useable for staff. This will involve increasing the size of the area by opening up the adjacent room (formerly the emergency management room) and re-designing the area to re-position and improve kitchen and other facilities.*

*It is recognized that the Control Room is not an ideal location for staff as it is located in the basement, has no natural light and can be quite restrictive in terms of its size and layout. This project will make significant improvements in terms of increased size, enhanced kitchen and washroom facilities, better lighting and air-conditioning, rationalized layout and the removal of old cabling and infrastructure etc, but it must be emphasized that it is not a complete refurbishment as it is constrained by the available revenue funding of approx. £80,000. Control Room staff will be consulted about design and layout issues before the plans are signed off and work commences, which we anticipate will be mid-April 2010.*

**New Security Manager**

*Members will be aware that we have had no Security Manager in post for quite some time, and that this role has been covered by temporary arrangements of various types, with varying degrees of success. We are therefore very pleased to confirm the appointment of Mr Maurice Baillie, formerly Security Manager at Queens University, to the post. Mr Baillie commenced employment on 8th February 2010.*

**Key Issues**

*The Committee is asked to note and endorse the actions, planned improvements and associated expenditure as set out above.*

**Resource Implications**

*The costs associated with the installation of the transferred CCTV equipment and some additional procurement of monitors and cameras will be approx. £18,000. The building and associated work necessary on foot of the refurbishment of the Control Room will be in the order of £80,000.*

*Both sums are provided for in the relevant revenue budgets of the Section, and it will not now be necessary to seek capital funding for the replacement of the CCTV back-office infrastructure.*

**Recommendations**

*It is recommended that:-*

- (a) the Committee notes and endorses the transfer of existing CCTV equipment to the City Hall together with the associated expenditure; and*
- (b) the Committee approves the carrying out of a substantial refurbishment programme in the Control Room area, together with the associated expenditure.*

**Decision Tracking**

*If approved the new CCTV system should be fully operational by 31st March 2010, and the refurbishment of the Control Room should commence in April and be complete by June 2010.'*

*Several Members expressed concern that the installation of the closed circuit television equipment had not been included within the contract for the refurbishment of the City Hall and sought clarification in this regard.*

*In response, the Head of Facilities Management pointed out that while, the procurement of monitors, cameras and other equipment had not been included in the contract, the rewiring associated with the installation of the equipment had. He explained that the Waste Transfer Depot at Duncrue had been declared surplus to requirements and therefore the equipment at that property was no longer required. The closed circuit television equipment which was being relocated to the City Hall was approximately two and half years old but contained all the features which were necessary in order to offer adequate protection to the City Hall.*

*With regard to a number of questions in relation to the re-staffing of the Security Unit, he indicated that the operational changes and associated financial settlement had resulted in a one-off buy-out cost of approximately £250,000. However, this would effect savings of approximately £100,000 in the first year, with savings of £75,000 to £80,000 per annum thereafter. He explained that the new structure provided sufficient cover for a standard working week but that overtime payments would be required to be paid depending on the types of events and functions which were being held in the City Hall.*

*After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.”*

The Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 19th February to adopt the recommendations.

### **Major Projects**

#### **Titanic Signature Project Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **“1.0 BACKGROUND**

**1.1 Members will recall that on 19th February 2010 the Committee agreed that a Special Meeting would be held, with Members of the Development Committee in attendance, to receive a progress update on the Titanic Signature Project and the Memorandum of Understanding with Titanic Quarter Limited. The key issues to be covered include:**

- (i) to receive an update on the Titanic Signature Project construction process;**

- (ii) to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding and associated governance arrangements; and
- (iii) to receive an update on the emerging proposals with regard to marketing and tourism activities in 2012 around the Titanic Signature Project.

1.2 Members have previously noted that for legal and tax reasons, a charitable company known as Titanic Foundation Limited (TFL) has been formed to oversee the building and operation of the Titanic Signature Project. The TFL Board consists of seven independent trustees. The present Chairman of the board is Jonathan Hegan, a past chairman of RPS Consulting Engineers. The acting Chief Executive of TFL is Brian Gregory and he will attend the Committee meeting to update the Committee on progress. Titanic Foundation Limited is required by the legal agreements to regularly keep the funders updated on progress and TFL has confirmed it will be happy to address the Committee on a regular basis to keep the Council apprised of the progress of the project.

1.3 Titanic Quarter Limited (TQL) is the company taking forward the development of the Titanic Quarter in a joint venture with the owners of the land, Belfast Harbour Commissioners. As a condition of the legal agreements, TQL entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council, which sets out its commitment to actively work with the council, key government departments and the community to optimize the city and community benefits of the development of the Titanic Quarter. Mike Smith, the Chief Executive of TQL, will be present at the meeting to update Members on the work of TQL on engaging with the community.

## 2.0 KEY ISSUES

### CONSTRUCTION UPDATE (Design & Build)

- Work on the Titanic Signature Project commenced on site on 28th May 2009 at risk by Titanic Quarter Limited and Harcourt Construction.
- Financial commitments from funders secured, legal agreements and construction contracts signed on 27th November to enable the TSP to go live.
- Work is progressing well and construction is now emerging above ground level.

- There is a rigorous project management regime in place, and the project is on programme for delivery by 31st March 2012 in time for RMS Titanic's centenary.
- The Director of the Council's Property and Projects is represented on the TSP Project Board which is overseeing the design and build construction contract. The Committee will be kept fully informed of project progress and costs.
- Harcourt Construction has been proactive in implementing the social benefit clauses in accordance with the contract requirements.
- Six out of the seven work packages let relating to the TSP have been placed with local companies.
- The focus is now on the content of the build and main exhibition. A Storyline and Content Working Group has been established, which includes representation from the Council (i.e. Tourism, Culture and Arts).
- A specialist advisor on the operation of major visitor attractions has been appointed to review the operational aspects of the design and to assist in the appointment of an operator.
- The procurement process for the appointment of an operator will be two stages, namely 1. Pre-qualification; and 2. Tender. The anticipated timescales are:
  - Publication of OJEU Notice – early March 2010
  - Pre-qualifications returns – April 2010
  - Short-listing and invitation to tender – April/May 2010
  - Operator appointment – October/November 2010
- A specialist branding/communications company has been appointed by Titanic Foundation Limited (TFL) to develop its brand and positioning of the TSP.

2.2 Brian Gregory, the Chief Executive of Titanic foundation Limited, will be in attendance at the Committee to present to Members a detailed update.

**MARKETING AND TOURISM UPDATE**

- 2.3** The Northern Ireland Tourism Board (NITB) has established a Working Group to develop and agree a Marketing and Communications Plan for Titanic in 2012. The group representatives from Belfast City Council (Tourism, Culture and Arts as well as Events Units), Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, National Museums Northern Ireland, Tourism Ireland Limited and Titanic Foundation Limited.
- 2.4** An initial meeting took place in January 2010 and a draft Marketing and Communications Plan is currently being finalised. A further meeting is scheduled for 5th March 2010. Once agreed the Plan will run from now until (and throughout) 2012 as part of the Integrated Tourism Plan for the City.
- 2.5** Additionally, Belfast City Council, NITB and DSD are discussing the development of a Maritime Heritage Plan for Belfast as part of the Integrated Tourism Plan for the City to ensure that the Titanic Signature Project connects to the wider Maritime Heritage assets across the City. The aim is to complete this work by end of June 2010.
- 2.6** As referred to above, a Storyline Working Group has been established (including representation from Belfast City Council) to input into the development of interpretation within the TSP. These meetings will be scheduled every 6 weeks up to the end of October 2010 and will look at the overall storylines within each of the galleries and how this is communicated to the visitor.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH TQL**

- 2.7** A copy of the briefing on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provided to Members on 30 October has been circulated. The MoU, entered into by Titanic Quarter Limited and the Council, sets out a clear commitment from both parties to actively work towards creating the necessary conditions to optimise the city and community benefits of the TQ development.
- 2.8** The MoU sets out the proposed governance structure and management arrangements for taking this process forward and the associated oversight and scrutiny role of the Council within the process. Whilst the covering MOU agreement between Titanic Quarter and the Council has been endorsed and signed, the thematic action plans attached are indicative at this stage and cover six priority areas of:



- 1) Employment, Education and Skills (*TQ Work*)
- 2) Accessibility and Transport (*TQ Access*)
- 3) Housing (*TQ Housing*)
- 4) Community outreach (*TQ Outreach*)
- 5) Tourism development and promotion  
(*TQ Tourism*)
- 6) Quality Open Space and Public Art (*TQ Space*)

#### Governance Arrangements and oversight role of the Council

- 2.9 The Memorandum of Understanding sets out a three tier governance structure to take forward the work on the thematic action plans. The purpose of the structure is to try and bind all the key stakeholders who will need to continue to the delivery of the objectives set out in the action plans.
- 2.10 Essentially this involves a Strategic Advisory Board, a Co-ordinating Steering Group and Thematic Action Groups. Crucially the Council will exercise an oversight role to ensure that the benefits of the Memorandum of Understanding are fully realised. This will involve detailed reports being brought to Committee twice a year setting out progress against the action plan and the contribution being made by the key stakeholders. TQL have indicated that they will be happy to attend Committee on these occasions to discuss progress. Finally, the MOU itself provides for an annual review.
- 2.11 At the Committee meeting on the 19 February, it was agreed that Party Group Briefings would be offered in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding. In the first instance, we thought it would be helpful to give Members a broad overview of the project and Party briefings will then be arranged during March, so that the matter can be further considered at the Committee's meeting in April. We will also have to discuss the roles of the Development Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in taking the various work streams forward. It is suggested that the Development Committee should take the primary role in relation to the implementation of the MoU, in the key areas of employability, access and transport, arts and tourism. The Strategic Policy and Resources will be required to exercise oversight of the construction and funding elements. Given the significance of the project for the city, it is also suggested that joint meetings of both Committees (to which all Councillors should be invited) should be held twice a year to exercise oversight and influence over all the key stakeholders who will need to work together to ensure that the development of the Titanic Quarter benefits all of the city.

### Resources

2.12 Council officers have been engaged in ongoing discussions with Titanic Quarter Limited, community representatives and relevant Government Departments (e.g. DETI, DEL, DE etc) to firm up the governance and management arrangements for the MOU and to examine the potential to realign mainstream activities/programmes (e.g. access to employment and training initiatives) and resources to support the implementation of the MOU. This has resulted in:

- Secondment from the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL): funding has been secured from DEL to employ a full-time fixed term secondee (Roisin Sloan) who is located within the Council's Economic Development Unit and is proactively working with all relevant stakeholders to support and co-ordinate the developmental work around the employment, education and skills thematic action plan.
- Exploring and maximising existing and upcoming opportunities (e.g. Premier Inn coming on site in November creating 50/60 Jobs) for long-term unemployed gaining access to employment opportunities. Lisa Toland, the Economic Development Manager, will be at the special meeting and the briefings with Party Groups.
- Departmental involvement in the delivery of the MOU: A letter has been issued to all relevant Government Departments seeking their participation in both the Strategic Advisory Board and Thematic Action Groups. The successful implementation of the MOU will be dependant upon the level of engagement and commitment provided by the relevant Central Government Departments in terms of the thematic areas identified for action.
- Financial commitment from TQL of £100K: TQL has committed a minimum of £100K per annum, made up of both cash and in-kind support, to assist in enabling the full benefit of the MOU and thematic action plans to be realised.
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the East Belfast Partnership Board: A SLA has been put in place with the East Belfast Partnership to act as a managing agent on behalf of the BAPs, to assist with the overall coordination of the MOU process at an operational level and to facilitate wider city-wide community engagement processes.

Titanic Quarter Limited has agreed to fund the total £30K support cost for the SLA with the East Belfast Partnership Board in addition to its other funding commitments as part of the MOU.

City-wide Context

- 2.13 To ensure that the opportunities which emerge as part of the Memorandum of Understanding process and the development of the Titanic Quarter is made fully accessible to all parts of the city, as requested by Elected Members as a condition of any Council funding committed to the TSP project, the East Belfast Partnership Board has put in place an agreed protocol of engagement with the other Area Partnership Boards.
- 2.14 This protocol provides for an effective mechanism to ensure that relevant stakeholder groups (including neighbourhood partnership boards) across the city are kept fully engaged in the process and that emerging opportunities are considered within an overall city-wide context.
- 2.15 The BAPs (as a collective forum) have nominated a lead Partnership Board, to participate, on behalf of all the Partnership Boards, on each of the Thematic Groups i.e.
- Employability – North Belfast Partnership Board
  - Access and Transport – West Belfast Partnership Board
  - Housing – East Belfast Partnership Board
  - Tourism – South Belfast Partnership Board
  - Art and Open Space – Greater Shankill Partnership Board
- 2.16 The lead Partnership Board will be responsible for ensuring that the key issues emerging from the local discussions/engagement undertaken by each of the Partnership Boards across the city inform the discussions within the Thematic Groups and that the emerging decisions and opportunities are communicated.
- 2.17 This approach provides the opportunity to effectively engage, disseminate information and seek local views on the Memorandum of Understanding and wider Titanic Quarter development; optimising already established structures and avoiding the need to create anything new.

### **3.0 Resource Implications**

#### **Financial and Human Resources**

**There will clearly be resource implications in terms of the Council committing both officer and member time in engaging and overseeing the established governance arrangements for both the TSP and MOU. This resource would be secured through the realignment of existing activities.**

### **4.0 Recommendations**

#### **4.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report. Further note that Party Group Briefings on the operation of the Memorandum of Understanding will be conducted during March and that a further report will be brought back to Committee in April.”**

It was reported that Mr. B. Gregory, Chief Executive of the Titanic Foundation Limited, and Mr. M. Smith, Chief Executive of Titanic Quarter Limited, were in attendance to provide updates on the project and engagement with the community and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Smith provided an overview of the development site and the types of buildings which would be located around the visitor attraction, including a residential complex, gateway offices, the Belfast Metropolitan College, the Public Records Office Northern Ireland, four hotels and a financial services centre campus.

Mr. Gregory outlined the progress which had been achieved to date in terms of the construction of the site and the development of the Titanic Signature building. He reviewed the attractions and facilities which would be located in the building, which would include a Titanic experience exhibition, a theatre, a Titanic-themed banqueting suite, community, arts and educational facilities, temporary exhibition space and cafes, restaurants and shops. He provided details of the key programme dates and stated that the project was on schedule for completion by 31st March, 2012. He concluded by outlining the key project benefits and outcomes, which were as follows:

- 400,000 visitors per annum providing £24 million direct income to the local economy and between £30 and £40 million indirect income;
- the regeneration of the now derelict shipyards;
- the creation of a positive image of Northern Ireland and Belfast as a place to invest;
- the creation of approximately 165 direct jobs on the opening date;
- the achievement of a major change in tourism; and
- a financially sustainable project which would benefit the citizens of the City.

Mr. Smith referred to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and Titanic Quarter Limited and reviewed each of the six priority themes for action. He concluded by highlighting the next steps required, which would involve the monitoring and review of the progress achieved in the project and the need for all the stakeholders to be held accountable for their individual contributions.

The deputation then answered a number of questions from the Members in relation to employment, accessibility and transport to the Titanic Signature Project, housing and community outreach. Mr. Smith stated that a member of his staff was involved directly in community outreach initiatives and was working with the East Belfast Partnership Board, which in turn had an agreed protocol with the other Area Partnership Boards, to ensure that the benefits of the project were communicated to and enjoyed by all parts of the City. He assured the Members that the outreach worker would be in contact with them to address any concerns which they had regarding community engagement.

With regard to employment opportunities, he explained that the project had a timeline of between 18 and 24 months and that jobs would be promoted City-wide. He emphasised that the inclusion on the site of the Belfast Metropolitan College would provide further education, training and employment opportunities.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the Department for Education and Learning had agreed to second a Member of staff to the Council's Economic Development Unit and that Roisin Sloan had recently started work in that role and was working proactively with all the relevant stakeholders to support and co-ordinate development work around the employment, education and skills thematic action plan.

Mr. Smith recognised the need for a high-quality transport infrastructure to ensure access to the site. He stated that an effective public transport was of paramount importance and the proposed new rapid transport system would be central to the provision of high-speed access to the site. With regard to housing, he explained that the development was at the design stage and would provide up to 500 affordable housing units.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive reminded the Committee that detailed briefings on the Project would be provided to each of the Party Groupings and any concerns which the Members had could be identified and addressed at a future meeting. He stated that it was proposed to establish a Strategic Oversight Board which would give the Council an external scrutiny role and allow it to hold the various stakeholders to account.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, issue a press statement outlining the Council's support for the Titanic Signature Project and its satisfaction with the rate of progress achieved to date.

The Chairman thanked the Members of the deputation for attending and they retired from the meeting.

**Transition Committee Business**

**Review of Public Administration Update**

The Committee was reminded that as part of the PricewaterhouseCoopers Economic Appraisal, which had identified potential options as to how the Review of Public Administration reform programme could be funded, there had been a proposal to establish two regional organisations: a Business Support Organisation to deliver a number of core functions on a shared service basis; and a Strategic Waste Authority. The report had indicated that the reform programme, including the establishment of the proposed regional organisations, would require funding of £118 million, with a return of £438 million over a twenty-five year period.

In responding to the proposals in the PricewaterhouseCoopers report, the Local Government Sector had challenged the financial assumptions and projections made and had stated its consensual opposition to the establishment of a Business Support Organisation. Belfast City Council, in line with its current policy, had supported the establishment of a Strategic Waste Authority. At the meeting of the Strategic Leadership Board, which had been held in December, 2009, and more recently at the Northern Ireland Local Government Association Annual Conference, the Environment Minister, Mr. Edwin Poots, M.L.A., had challenged Local Government to provide an alternative solution to the establishment of a Business Support Organisation and to make alternative proposals to achieve efficiency savings in the order of the figure referred to by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The Chief Executive reported that in recent weeks work had been ongoing to prepare an initial response to the Minister's challenge. The premise of the emerging Local Government response was that the sector should be set an efficiency target which would be linked to the drawdown of an upfront 'seed funding' to finance the Review of Public Administration reform programme. That would provide Transition Committees and Councils with the autonomy to deliver their own efficiency programme to meet the agreed targets within a specified period. He stressed that the Local Government Sector recognised that delivering value-for-money to the ratepayer was one of its key objectives.

The Chief Executive pointed out that underlying the £438 million savings projected by PricewaterhouseCoopers there were two types of ongoing annual savings, that is, transition and transformation savings:

- transition savings: PricewaterhouseCoopers reported that transition savings of £10.7 million could be secured mainly from the reductions in the senior management teams and Councillors in the new Councils;
- transformation savings: the ongoing transformation savings which had been identified under the preferred Option 5 in the PricewaterhouseCoopers report had amounted to £52.9 million approximately, which had been profiled on the basis of 20% being achieved in 2012/2013, a further 40% in 2013/2014 and the remaining 40% in 2014/2015.

In the initial response which had been submitted for the Environment Minister's consideration at the meeting of the Strategic Leadership Board on 25th February, the Local Government Sector had indicated its willingness to consider how the £52.9 million efficiency figure could be achieved. It had been proposed that each Council/cluster of Councils, through their Statutory Transition Committees, would carry out detailed design work on the costs associated with transition and transformation.

The costs broken down on an indicative eleven Council basis would be:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Annual Efficiency Target per council</b>	<b>Cumulative Target per council</b>	<b>Cumulative Target per sector</b>
	£m	£m	£m
2012/13	0.96	0.96	10.58
2013/14	1.92	2.88	31.74
2014/15	1.92	4.80	52.90

However, a more detailed and sophisticated analysis would have to be undertaken in order to identify the costs associated on a Council cluster basis so that overall efficiency targets could be agreed and attributed to each Council.

The Chief Executive pointed out that a range of key principles which it was proposed should underpin the target-based approach had been put forward by the Local Government Sector and welcomed by the Minister. However, it had been agreed that further work needed to be undertaken between the Sector and Department of Environment officials in order to:

- (i) develop further work on the figures; and
- (ii) engage with Transition Committees to seek agreement on the strategic direction of the Local Government proposals, that is, a target-based approach.

A joint Northern Ireland Local Government Association/SOLACE workshop had been arranged for 12th March for political representatives of the Transition Committees and Chief Executives to discuss the emerging Local Government counter proposals to the establishment of a Business Support Organisation and the potential implications for Councils and the Chief Executive recommended that any Member of the Transition Committee who so wished be authorised to attend.

After discussion, the Committee:

- (i) agreed, in principle, to the proposed target-based approach to securing efficiencies within Local Government, subject to a further detailed report being submitted to the Committee setting out the possible implications for the Council;
- (ii) authorised the attendance of all Members of the Transition Committee at the Northern Ireland Local Government Association/SOLACE workshop to be held on 12th March; and

- (iii) agreed that the special meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 12th March to receive representatives from Libraries Northern Ireland and from the Trades Unions in connection with the consultation on the future of Libraries be rearranged for an alternative date.

### **Human Resources**

#### **Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives**

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Order 55 and the authority delegated to her, the Director of Finance and Resources had authorised the appointment of a number of individuals who were related to existing officers of the Council.

Noted.

### **Asset Management**

#### **Beechvale Farm Letting**

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee noted that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 11th February, had agreed to renew the letting agreement with the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute by way of a five-year lease in respect of land at Beechvale Farm commencing on 1st December, 2009. The rent under the new lease had been agreed at £8,000 per annum and the lease would contain provisions which would allow the Council to terminate the agreement on six months notice.

#### **Glen Road – Rent Review**

The Committee was advised that the former Community Services Committee, at its meeting on 10th August, 1992, had agreed to provide Sport and Leisure Football Club with a fifty-year lease for 6.1 acres of land on the Glen Road to be used as a sports pitch. The lease provided for an annual rent reviewable every five years. The current rent of £1,850 per annum had been due for review from 1st April, 2009, and a revised rent of £2,250 per annum had now been agreed with Sport and Leisure Football Club.

The Committee approved the revised rent with effect from 1st April, 2009.

#### **Appropriation of Clara Street Civic Amenity Street**

The Committee was advised that the Health and Environmental Services Committee, at its meeting on 4th November, 2009, had declared the Clara Street Civic Amenity Site surplus to its operational requirements and had agreed that it be transferred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion within the Corporate Landbank.

The Committee noted the appropriation of the aforementioned land from the Health and Environmental Services Committee.



**Use of City Hall Grounds –  
Red Bull Formula One Event**

(Mr. G. Wright, Head of Facilities Management, and Mr. G. Copeland, Events Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was advised that a request had been received for the use of the grounds of the City Hall for a promotional event on 20th March. The event would involve bringing the well-known formula one racing driver David Coulthard and two Red Bull formula one cars and the support team to Belfast in order to give potentially thousands of spectators an opportunity to view the car in Belfast City centre and to meet a current formula one driver. This would be one of only two such events worldwide.

The Head of Facilities Management outlined the details of the event, which would require the two Red Bull cars plus a high-tech support vehicle and team to be in place in the City Hall grounds from approximately 10.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m. to showcase the cars, with David Coulthard in attendance to meet and greet visitors. At approximately 8.00 p.m. the two cars would drive to and from Wellington Place/Chichester Street, a number of times, with the event ending at approximately 8.45 p.m. The site would be cleared by midnight at the latest and no access to the main building had been requested, although temporary access to the electricity supplies might be required.

He explained that, while the proposed event was neither Council-funded nor supported, the Events Unit of the Development Department had felt that it would be popular and likely to attract a large number of spectators.

From a practical point of view there would be minimal potential disruption to the normal routines within the City Hall grounds, although it should be noted that a charity event would be taking place in the building on the same evening which would need to be adequately addressed by the Red Bull event organisers in their planning.

The organisers would be required to provide an appropriate level of indemnity in respect of loss, damage or personal injury; ensure that the impact on the normal operation of the grounds would be minimal; bear all incidental costs associated with the event, including additional stewarding costs; and keep the lawns intact so far as possible and make good any damage caused.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor N. Kelly,  
Seconded by Councillor C. Maskey,

That the Committee agrees to accede to the request by the Red Bull Formula One racing team for the use of the City Hall grounds for the purpose outlined, subject to the Director of Property and Projects being satisfied as to the level of indemnity and other necessary safeguards and obligations being provided by the organisers.

On a vote by show of hands twelve Members voted for the proposal and none against and it was accordingly declared carried.

**Emergency Repairs to Bay Walls  
at the Waste Transfer Station**

The Committee agreed, in order to undertake emergency repairs to the Bay Walls at the Waste Transfer Station located at the Dargan Road, to exercise its authority under paragraph A.5 of the Council's Financial Regulations to waive the requirement for a tender exercise to be undertaken to complete emergency works to Bay 2 of the Waste Transfer Station and grant permission for the work to be completed through a quotation exercise. The Committee noted that the costs of completing the works was in the region of £35,000.

**Cross-Cutting Issues**

**City Centre Beat Initiative**

(Mrs. S. Wylie, Head of Environmental Health, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“Relevant Background Information**

**It is recognised that the image of the city centre is of vital importance in continuing to attract investors, shoppers and tourists alike. This means that the streets making up the city centre need to be clean, attractive and as free from antisocial behaviour, crime and illegal street trading as is possible.**

**The Committee will be aware that a number of years ago Belfast city centre experienced prolific illegal street trading which absorbed considerable PSNI and BCC resources to support ongoing joint enforcement operations. After a targeted approach to the problem in the area, illegal traders were largely removed from the streets. However there was a concern as to how this standard could be maintained.**

**In addition to controls on street trading, there were concerns about low level nuisance and antisocial behaviour such as on street drinking, littering, rough sleepers, graffiti, youths causing annoyance, traffic management, etc.**

**In response to this ongoing problem Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC) and Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) entered into discussions with a range of partners and secured funding from its members to provide two dedicated Police Officers for the city centre area. These Officers were provided at a subsidised cost from the PSNI, and were additional to the existing**

PSNI resource in the city centre, meaning that their work could be directed by partners to deal with the types of issues mentioned above. This arrangement was formalised through a Service Level Agreement with the PSNI which is managed and reviewed through BCCM. In line with this service level agreement the City Centre Beat (CCB) scheme operates concurrently with retail trading hours, i.e. 63 hours per week.

As a result of this approach illegal street trading has continued to be well managed in the city centre and the Council has been able to develop a more strategic approach to licensed street stalls in line with its commitment to the regeneration of the city centre area. The CCB scheme has also undertaken a number of successful operations which have resulted in a strategic approach to the number of beggars and Big Issue sellers on the streets of Belfast City Centre. The officers also deal with a large proportion of the low level nuisance and antisocial behaviour issues mentioned above and make regular referrals to BCC officers who follow up with the appropriate action.

Since 2005, the Chamber has secured the additional funding needed for the CCB scheme from its members year on year; with the SLA now focusing on anti-social behaviour, environmental management and traffic issues which have changed over time because of the Streets Ahead Project. As part of their undertaking to tackle anti-social behaviour, the CCB scheme has been responsible for managing and alleviating the problem of on street drinking, rough sleeping and begging within the city centre for a number of years.

#### Key Issues

In 2009, the Chamber has determined that in the current economic climate, and with the increasing focus of the scheme on social issues such as on-street drinking and begging, the contributing members were unable to maintain the existing level of funding for this scheme beyond 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009. A small amount of additional funding has been secured from PSNI and the Community Safety Partnership to maintain the service at its current level until the end of March 2010. However, the Chamber is of the view that it will be unable to continue its funding commitment to the scheme post March 2010 unless other partners contribute to meet any shortfall of funding.

As noted the CCB scheme is increasingly used to address issues of antisocial behaviour and traffic management and thus it is the Chamber's view that other statutory partners have a role to play in funding this scheme. In particular due to increasing issues with rough sleepers and the disruption caused through regeneration of the city centre the Chamber is keen to engage with partners such as Belfast City Council, DSD and the Health and Social Care Board.

The Department for Social Development, for example, is currently rolling out a £28million investment in new streetscape and furniture under the 'Belfast Streets Ahead' project and Belfast City Council is a key partner in this scheme. Belfast City Council is spending £1.5m per annum on cleaning the streets in the central area (incorporating the city centre) to make Belfast as clean and attractive as possible. Moreover, the Council takes a leading role in Belfast Community Safety Partnership and the District Policing Partnership; both of which have identified the city centre as a priority. As such it is the Chamber's view that Belfast City Council, and/or the Community Safety Partnership it leads, should have a role to play in, and would benefit from, the City Centre Beat Scheme being maintained.

The Chamber believes that the cessation of the CCB scheme would result in an immediate increase in anti-social behaviour throughout the city centre through the increase and spread of on street drinking; resultant intoxicated behaviour; rough sleeping and begging.

As noted the PSNI has committed to meeting the financial shortfall for the remainder of 2009-2010 to ensure the present level of service is not diminished. Belfast Community Safety Partnership has also committed funding in the 2009/2010 financial year using slippage monies. The Chamber however has approached Belfast City Council to request that it contributes or helps to secure funding into the scheme to support its continuation beyond March 2010 and also its continued extension into the Castle Street area. Funding from other partners has not yet been secured, but the Chamber would suggest that a commitment from BCC or its Community Safety Partnership would help to lever such contributions.

This issue was raised at the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting of 11th December 2009 and the Committee requested that a report be brought back to it in due course. Members should be aware therefore that Belfast Community Safety Partnership has been working on this issue since it was first brought to its attention and has initial indications that it has secured £15,000, non-recurrent funding, as a contribution from one of its partner agencies to this scheme in 2010/2011.

It is intended that this funding would support the continuation of the scheme in 2010/2011, helping to lever in the additional support needed to deliver a dedicated approach to the city centre area, including Castle Street, during which period BCTC would be able to consider alternative options should there be a similar shortfall in funding at the end of 2010/2011.

## Resource Implications

### Financial

In 2010/2011, the City Beat Scheme will cost £150,000 to run. In previous years the total cost was made up with a £40,000 subsidy from the PSNI and approximately £80,000 from the BCTC along with other in kind contributions. However the Chamber is proposing to reduce its contribution to £45,000 per annum (see Appendix 1 for current financial statement).

Therefore the shortfall in funding needed for 2010/2011 is £65,000. It is proposed by the BCTC that this shortfall would be met through contributions from other statutory partners.

The Belfast Community Safety Partnership is likely to be able to secure £15,000 non-recurrent funding as a contribution from one of its partner agencies to this scheme in 2010/2011. No allowance for contributing financially to this scheme has been included in the Council's 2010/2011 Revenue Estimates. Any contribution directly from BCC would need to be agreed under section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 or by making a contribution to the Community Safety Partnership. However, the contribution of £15,000 from the Community Safety Partnership may be sufficient to help the Chamber lever in the remaining £50,000 needed from other agencies.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to:

- Write to the BCTC in support of the continuation of the scheme during 2010/2011; noting that the Belfast Community Safety Partnership, which is led by the Council, is likely to secure a total contribution of £15,000 non-recurrent funding.
- Authorise its officers to participate in any emerging discussions, led by BCTC, with regard to identifying sustainable resources to support this scheme.

### Decision Tracking

The Head of Environmental Health will report back to the Committee on progress with securing the full funding package required.

### Key to Abbreviations

BCC – Belfast City Council  
DCU – District Command Unit  
DSD – Department for Social Development  
PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland  
BCTC – Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Fuel Stamps Scheme

(Mrs. S. Wylie, Head of Environmental Health, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “Relevant Background Information

At its meeting of 8th May 2009 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee considered a report on the Fuel Stamps scheme that had been operating as a pilot in an area of North Belfast since 8th January 2009. The scheme forms part of the Action Plan developed by the officer group that facilitates the All Party Reference Group on Older People. Whilst the focus of the fuel stamps scheme is primarily on older people it is, in fact, available to all. It is designed to be of particular benefit to those who are in, or who are close to, fuel poverty. A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain an acceptable level of temperature throughout the home, the occupants would have to spend more than 10% of their income on all household fuel use. In 2006 38% of households in Belfast were in fuel poverty (2006 HCS), however, increasing fuel costs and continuing economic difficulties would suggest that this figure is now significantly higher.

The principle of the scheme is a relatively simple procedure whereby members of the public are given a card, on request, by a participating retailer or other outlet and they can buy stamps, at £5 each, which they then place on the card and are able to build up credit that will be accepted by specific participating oil companies towards their fuel bills.

An evaluation of the pilot was presented to the Committee in May 2009 and it was duly recommended that the scheme should be rolled out across the city and that the Head of Environmental Health should bring a further report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee once the scheme had been operating for a number of months.

The subsequent development of the scheme has involved engaging with potential outlets throughout the city, encouraging buy-in from both retailers and oil companies and facilitating the administrative arrangements for its effective delivery. Also, a project officer was appointed on a temporary basis in November 2009 to lead in the delivery of the scheme. Already there are 48 separate outlets across the city supplying stamps. Most of these are retailers and credit unions but council premises, such as leisure centres, the Cecil Ward Building and the Bobbin restaurant, also sell the stamps. In addition, 22 oil companies have signed up to the scheme. At the end of January 2010 a total of 10,551 stamps had been sold amounting to £51,250 worth of stamps. To date there has been £30,235 worth of stamps redeemed by members of the public averaging £121 per card. Users of the scheme have provided very positive feedback. Comments have included the following:-

*'It allows me to save for my oil before I have to order my next delivery'.*

*'I think the scheme is fantastic, I have been saying for years that people should be able to save for their heating with stamps. I have already redeemed one card and I continue to buy the stamps'.*

*'It's fantastic I would be lost without the stamps. It's the only way I can save for oil heating. I hope the council continue to sell the stamps'.*

Retailers and participating oil companies have also expressed support. The manager of one of the Credit Unions stated:-

*'To be honest the success of the scheme within our Credit Union hasn't necessarily been down to us pro-actively promoting the oil stamps. We have found that our customers have found out about the scheme through the City Matters magazine and posters in our premises. We just happen to be in the right place where there seems to be a real demand for the stamps'.*

This scheme is different to any 'top-up' schemes operated by individual oil companies, as it still enables consumers to shop around and obtain the best price when ordering their fuel. One oil company indicated that it was very popular with young parents and older people. Another oil company stated:-

*'We love the scheme here, we have signed up to similar schemes with other councils but we have found Belfast City Council are the fastest at processing the cards and getting payment to us. We have had a great response to the oil stamps from our customers we have found people of all ages are saving for oil heating in this way'.*

The positive reaction from the various stakeholders suggests that this type of scheme is a very attractive savings option for people of limited means who wish to spread their heating costs across the year.

The scheme has been funded this year out of the thematic budget for People and Communities and it will require commitment from the Council to ensure it is expanded in 2010-2011.

#### Key Issues

- The scheme demonstrates that the Council is prepared to take a leading role in seeking to help those people, particularly the elderly, who are likely to suffer the consequences of being fuel poor.
- According to the 2006 House Condition Survey (HCS), 38% of households in Belfast are in fuel poverty but, with rising fuel costs and continuing economic problems, the 2009 figure, due in the summer or autumn of this year, is likely to be significantly higher.
- 70% of homes in Northern Ireland use fuel oil as their heating energy source.
- The fuel stamps scheme allows people to plan ahead and save to help meet their heating costs through a simple and effective year round budgeting arrangement.
- During the recent cold weather in January of this year when temperatures dropped to as low as -11°C the average price of 900 litres of oil rose by around £25. This demonstrates how exposed vulnerable people are to oil price fluctuations and how important it is that they are able to maintain a continuity of supply during periods of high usage. The fuel stamps scheme gives these people a vehicle to manage their fuel costs and heat their homes during these periods of extreme cold.
- The fuel stamps scheme is particularly targeted at older people but is available to anyone.
- The scheme has been very well received by the users, the oil companies and the retail outlets.



- £51,250 worth of stamps have been sold to the public between January 2009 and January 2010. However, it must be noted that the citywide roll out of the scheme only began in November 2009 so it is expected that the annual sales figure will increase significantly.
- The sales have increased each month since the scheme was rolled out across the city. The highest monthly sales figure was in January 2010 at £11,445. If that rate of sales was to continue throughout the year, an estimated £132,000 of stamps would be sold annually.
- The average amount of money redeemed per card is £121.
- The scheme is self targeting in that people who feel they will benefit from it are the ones who will use it.
- A total of £45,000 is required to fund the scheme from the Corporate Strategy Thematic Budget for People and Communities to continue the scheme in 2010-2011 as part of the Council's thematic approach to improving the health and wellbeing of older people. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has already approved the thematic budget for 2010 / 2011, with a total of £82,000 being allocated to work on older people's projects.
- The option of a national Fuel Stamps Scheme will be included as a proposal for consideration in a DSD public consultation on the current Fuel Poverty strategy due out in the spring of this year. This will provide the Council with an opportunity to inform the debate from a position of continuing experience of this approach to managing fuel poverty. A further report will be brought back to the Committee at this time as this approach will obviously impact on the Belfast scheme.
- Expenditure for the scheme must be approved under section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.
- The costs of the scheme will reduce over time as the systems and procedures become bedded in.

### Resource Implications

#### Financial

#### Projected costs for 2010 -2011

- Salary costs                    £35,000
- Promotional Costs            £5,000
- Running costs                £5,000
- Total                                £45,000

### Human Resources

The scheme is managed within the Public Health Unit of the Environmental Health Service. It is delivered on the ground by a full time project officer and the administrative functions are incorporated into the work of the Health and Environmental Services Department's Directorate Support. A steering group of officers, chaired by the Environmental Health Manager (Public Health), meet monthly to review progress and to provide direction for the project.

As the project develops and the outlets become established the work of the project officer will focus more on managing the delivery of the scheme and less on the expansion of the scheme across the city. The consolidation of the scheme will therefore provide an opportunity to review the priorities of the project with a view to rationalising the operational and administrative functions.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- Approves the continuation of the city wide oil fuel stamps saving scheme for a further year;
- Agrees to support a project officer post for the continuation of the scheme for a further year;
- Agrees to allocate £45,000 from the thematic budget for older people to the fuel stamps scheme using its authority under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.

### Decision Tracking

- The Head of Environmental Health will keep the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee apprised of developments in respect of a national scheme and will bring a further report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 2011 regarding the progress of the Belfast scheme.

### Key to Abbreviations

- HCS - House Condition Survey
- DSD - Department for Social Development"

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Consultation – Belfast Health and Social Care Trust:  
Excellence and Choice (Acute Inpatient Mental Health Services)**

The Committee was advised that a consultation exercise was being undertaken by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in relation to proposals to build an acute mental health facility at the Belfast City Hospital.

The Committee agreed that the consultation document be referred to the Party Groupings on the Council for individual consideration and comment to enable Members to highlight local circumstances or issues, particularly from a local service user perspective, which then could be taken into account by the Belfast Trust.

Chairman