

# Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section  
Chief Executive's Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**



Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2010

## **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, 22nd October, 2010 at 10.00 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

1. **Routine Matters**
  - (a) Apologies
  - (b) Minutes
2. **Transition Committee Business**
  - (a) Review of Public Administration Update - Transforming Functions (Pages 1 - 82)
  - (b) Review of Public Administration - Suspension of Transition Funding (Pages 83 - 100)
3. **Finance**
  - (a) Update on Revenue Estimates 2011/2012 (Pages 101 - 112)
  - (b) Capital Programme (Pages 113 - 126)
  - (c) Proposals on Use of 2010/2011 Underspend (Pages 127 - 132)

- (d) Minutes of the Budget and Transformation Panel (Pages 133 - 134)
- (e) Update on Debt Management (Pages 135 - 138)
- (f) City Investment Strategy (Pages 139 - 146)
- (g) Notice of Motion - Financial Planning in an Economic Downturn (Pages 147 - 148)
- (h) Approval to Invite Tenders (Pages 149 - 152)

4. **Democratic Services and Governance**

- (a) Use of the City Hall and Provision of Hospitality (Pages 153 - 156)
- (b) Proportionality for the Offices of Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor (Pages 157 - 160)
- (c) Live Streaming and Archiving of Council Proceedings on the Internet (Pages 161 - 164)
- (d) Election Update (Pages 165 - 166)
- (e) National Association of Councillors Annual General Meeting (Pages 167 - 168)

5. **Asset Management**

- (a) Land at Slievegallion Drive (Pages 169 - 178)
- (b) Lease of Land at Ormeau Park to Northern Ireland Water (Pages 179 - 188)
- (c) Licence Agreement and at Ormeau Park (Pages 189 - 198)
- (d) Future Use of City Hall (Pages 199 - 202)
- (e) Connswater Community Greenway (Pages 203 - 210)
- (f) Peace III Capital Bids (Pages 211 - 216)

6. **Good Relations and Equality**

- (a) Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership of 15th October ( to follow)
- (b) Consultation on Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy (Pages 217 - 238)

7. **Cross-Cutting Issues**

- (a) Consultation on the Justice Bill (Northern Ireland) 2010 (Pages 239 - 242)
- (b) Consultation on Sustainable Development Strategy Draft Implementation Plan (Pages 243 - 252)



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## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Public Administration – Transferring Functions Update
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kevin Heaney (ext. 6202)

1.0	<b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>
1.1	Members will be aware that as part of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) process, that a Transfer of Functions Working Group had been established comprising of senior officials from both central and local government and chaired by the Chief Executive of Belfast City Council. Its purpose was to examine the package of functions proposed to transfer from central to local government and to provide greater clarity in terms of the scope of the transferring functions; the resources (or otherwise) attached to the functions; and to examine those operational (practical) issues which needed to be addressed prior to transfer.
2.0	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
2.1	This work had cumulated in the development of a suite of initial draft baseline report which gave detailed consideration to those issues relating to each of the transferring function areas (e.g. DoE Planning, DSD etc). A copy of the baseline report is attached at <b>Appendix 1</b> . Members will note that that are a number of critical issues, particularly relating to resources, which would have to be resolved in advance of any formal transfer of functions.
2.2	The recent deferral of a decision by the NI Executive on 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2010 in respect to the future of the RPA and the subsequent decision to hold elections to 26 and not 11 councils in May 2011 has further reinforced the uncertainty in regards to transferring functions.
2.3	There is clearly a need for a continued political conversation in respect to any future prospect of transferring functions, the scope of such transfer and the operational and financial implications for councils. As part of its deliberations on the future of local government reform, it will be important that the NI Executive reaffirms its commitment (or otherwise) to the transfer of functions from central to local government and provides clarification on the proposed timetable for implementation.
2.4	Given the current economic climate, the pending departmental budgetary cuts and growing pressures on the public sector to do more with less, there is an opportunity to reconfigure the conversation with central government departments to focus on the need for and benefits off service integration at the local level. There is a need to explore the potential scope for greater co-design and co-delivery of services.
2.5	In an attempt to initiate and/or inform such discussions, the Transfer of Functions Working Group has prepared a platform report (copy attached at <b>Appendix 1</b> ) which provides an update on discussions to date, outlines the key outstanding issues which still need to be addressed and presents a case for the need for greater service integration. The report also recommends that consideration be given to the initiation of a number of integrated area-based pilots which would bring together, for example, regeneration, planning, community development, economic development. Such an approach would go towards strengthening the relationship between central and local government and could offer a managed response to dealing with the budgetary pressures facing the entire public sector whilst limiting the impact on services.

2.6	It would be the intention that the Transfer of Functions report (subject to any proposed revisions by Members) would be submitted to the Environment Minister with a view to securing Ministerial support for the initiation of a number of integrated area-based pilots.
2.7	Notwithstanding, the Council will need to continue to engage at both a political and officer level with relevant central government departments and Ministers in regards to the transfer of functions issue and to explore the potential for integrated area-based pilots or partnership projects in advance of any formal transfer. Members may also wish to consider discussing with Party and Ministerial colleagues the potential for Belfast to take forward area pilots. The Council has already successfully established integrated service delivery models in the areas of, for example, health and community safety. Any consideration given to potential area-based pilots would need to be integrated with the Council's approach to community planning.

<b>3.0 Resource Implications</b>
There are no Human Resource or financial implications contained within this report

<b>4.0 Recommendations</b>
Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) note the contents of this report</li><li>ii) support the proposal that the Council advocate for the potential initiation of integrated area-based pilots and that Members lobby for a Belfast pilot; and</li><li>iii) agree that the attached report be submitted to the Environment Minister, subject to any revisions proposed by Members</li></ul>

<b>5.0 Documents Attached</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>   Transfer of Functions Working Group report

# Transfer of Functions Working Group

DRAFT REPORT

OCTOBER 2010

WORKING DRAFT

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WORKING DRAFT



## **1 Executive Summary** *[to be reviewed at later stage]*

The Transfer of Functions Working Group, comprising of senior officials from central and local government, had been established to examine the package of functions proposed to transfer from central to local government and to provide clarity in terms of the scope of the transferring functions; the resources attached to the functions; and to examine those operational issues which needed to be addressed prior to transfer.

While the level of engagement between central and local government had been constructive and progressive; it has become apparent that there remain a number of fundamental issues (e.g. resource implications; enabling legislation) which still need to be addressed.

In the absence of clarity from the NI Executive on the way forward for local government reform, with elections to 26 councils and not 11 councils in May 201 as planned, there remains uncertainty in respect to transferring functions.

It is therefore important that the NI Executive provides early clarification on its commitment to the transfer of functions to local government and on the proposed timetable for implementation.

There is clearly a need for continued dialogue and engagement between central and local government in respect to any future prospect of transferring functions to local government, the scope of such transfers and the practical and financial implications for councils.

Given the current economic climate, pending budgetary and growing pressures on the entire public sector to do more with less, there is now a real opportunity to reconfigure the conversation between central and local government to explore the potential opportunities to secure greater service integration at the local level. There is a need for a rounded discussion in respect to exploring what opportunities exist for local government to work with and support central government in delivering services at a local, sub-regional and regional level.

This report recommends that a process needs to be put in place to initiate a number of integrated area based pilots which integrate core functions (e.g. regeneration, planning, and community development) at the local level.

Such an approach would be an essential building block to creating strong local government and would enhance service provision to the citizen. It would reinforce and strengthen the central and local government relationship and help enhance the joint capacity to deliver. It would also

provide an opportunity and platform to test assumptions and work through any practical or operational issues on the ground prior to formal transfer of functions. This is a 'Preparing for Success' model.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- i) provide a brief summary on the current position in respect of proposals for the transfer of functions from central to local government;
- ii) highlight those strategic issues which need to be progressed if the necessary platforms and foundations are to be put in place to enable the transfer of functions to local government at anytime in the future;
- iii) examine the current operating environment and key drivers in moving forward; and
- iv) suggest how the transferring functions conversation should be progressed

## 3. Background

A Transfer of Functions Working Group (ToFWG) was established consisting of senior officials from both transferring function Departments and local government. Its purpose was to provide clarity on scope of the functions to transfer to local government; the resources attached; and to identify those operational and implementation issues which needed to be addressed prior to transfer.

### 3.1 What is the status of discussions on transferring functions?

While a baseline report had been produced by the ToFWG and submitted for the consideration of the Regional Transition Coordinating Group in February 2010 (copy of which is attached at Annex 1), it was clear at that stage that there remained a number of outstanding issues (e.g. particularly pertaining to establishing the true cost of delivering the functions and the level of resources to transfer) which still need to be progressed.

Since, the local government reform landscape has changed significantly. While NI Executive discussions are ongoing in respect of reframing the delivery timetable for local government reform within NI, the context for moving forward any further consideration in respect of transferring services has also changed.

To date, the working assumption has been that the transfer of functions would be on an 11 council basis, however, the proposed 11 council model will no longer be implemented in 2011 as originally anticipated but rather

elections will take place to the exiting 26 councils. Furthermore, in the absence of the new governance and ethical standards regime being put in place (linked to the pending Reorganisation Bill), it is unlikely that there will be any imminent transfer of functions to local government.

Within this context, and given the current financial pressures facing NI public spending, there is now an opportunity to reconfigure the discussions relating to specific transferring functions towards a broader conversation in pursuance of integrated service delivery. The purpose of such a conversation would be to explore the potential efficiency and effectiveness gains to be realised through such an approach and to pilot new forms of integrated service delivery at a local level.

### **3.2 What is required from the NI Executive?**

As part of its deliberations on the way forward for local government reform, the NI Executive need to provide early confirmation in respect to the future intention for transferring functions and put in place a structured implementation timetable.

Notwithstanding, it is suggested that two ways forward could include:

- 1 PILOTS:** Initiate integrated pilots to explore the potential for the co-design and joint delivery of services (including, for example, planning, urban regeneration, economic development, community development etc) at the local level and the alignment of resources to maximise outcomes and deliver value for money. Any such pilots would need to be underpinned by an agreed SLA between central and local government which provides the necessary governance, audit and assurance regime.
- 2 LEGISLATION:** Central government, working in partnership with the local government sector, now need to begin to put in place the required legislative and policy infrastructure which will underpin the future transfer of functions to local government. Important enabling legislation (e.g. such as Finance Bill, Local Government Reorganisation Bill, Planning Reform Bill, Community Planning etc..) may also facilitate and support the implementation of interim local delivery arrangements (e.g. councils delivering services and administering resources on behalf of departments) by putting in place essential governance and accountability arrangements.

It is important to note that some transferring function departments have

already brought forward, or had been in the process of developing, draft legislation (e.g. Regeneration and Housing Bill), which was intended to underpin the transfer of some DSD functions to local government. Clarification is sought in terms of the next steps for such legislation and if indeed it is intended to proceed.

#### **4. What is the operating environment?**

In moving forward, there is a growing economic pressure for both central and local government to find more efficient and effective ways of commissioning and delivering integrated services. It will be important that all efforts are taken to minimise any potential duplication, align activity and consolidate service delivery where possible

Collectively central and local government must strive to '*change the focus of service delivery from one of administrative boundaries to addressing the needs of people and working together to deliver better experiences and outcomes*'<sup>1</sup>.

It is important to recognise that central government departments are entering into a new Comprehensive Spending Review period with budgetary cuts anticipated in the region of 20% on revenue and 35% on capital, with an overall minimum £1.2 billion cut in public expenditure for the province<sup>2</sup>. The NI Executive is also considering the next Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

With such unprecedented cuts to the NI Executive block grant looming, Ministers and their departmental officials now face the challenge of delivering more with less – finding ways of ensuring that priority frontline services can be protected while reducing their spending plans.

In fact, responsibility for implementing cuts and finding efficiency savings will impact upon the entire public sector within Northern Ireland. It is the responsibility of everyone to seek to 'do more with less' and find innovative ways of working that can reduce costs while minimising any potential negative impact on vital services.

#### **4.1 Commitment to Improvement, Efficiency & Collaboration**

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<sup>1</sup> Draft Programme for Government 2008-2011

<sup>2</sup> Oxford Economics; *cutting carefully – how repairing UK finances will impact NI*; NICVA Report; July 2010

Local government has committed to an improvement, collaboration and efficiency agenda to deliver tangible benefits to citizens and service users by providing good quality value for money services. Such work should not be limited to either simply redesigning services to make leaner and more efficient working practices within councils or securing collaborative practices across local government.

If this is to be meaningful and the citizen is to see real benefits, this conversation should not be limited to local government. A broader discussion needs to take place with central government to examine the potential opportunities for securing greater collaboration with and between local and central government with a genuine focus on 'Place' and enhancing outcomes for citizens.

With public sector budgets under pressure, it is more important now than ever that we seek to institute reforms that seek to ensure the most targeted, integrated and efficient responses to local needs. In doing so, we must identify and utilise the most efficient and effective forms of service delivery.

Now is the time to look at ways of increasing the resources available for public services. It will be important that all efforts are taken to create a mutually beneficial environment whereby local government works in a structured and supportive partnership with the Executive, its Departments and agencies to release as much energy as possible to align priorities, resources and activity in pursuit of shared outcomes.

There are already clear synergies and linkages between the priorities of the NI Executive, central government departments and those of local government.

Local government already has a proven track record in the successful delivery of local services across key areas such as, for example, local economic development, culture and tourism, community safety, health improvement and regeneration.

Local government continues to strive to provide value for money services to the citizen and has worked with central government (e.g. through initiatives such as working with Land and Property Services to undertake vacancy reviews), to maximise the resources available to deliver the outcomes that matter locally.

## 4.2. Principles for moving forward

What is needed is jointed-up/integrated government and a shared commitment to achieve the following common principles:-

- i) **Responsive public services:** seek to deliver public services to meet the needs of citizens, not the convenience of service providers.
- ii) **Value for money:** provision of high quality, efficient and effective services that provide value for money for the ratepayer.
- iii) **Councils at the heart of local coalitions:** providing civic leadership and acting as a junction box to channel and align public services at the local level, linked to a wider community planning agenda.
- iv) **Collaboration;** work across organisational boundaries to deliver services that are shaped around user needs and policies that take a holistic approach to cross-cutting problems
- v) **Co-production** – working with partners to design the delivery of more integrated and sustainable public services at the local level
- vi) **Focus on delivery:** ensuring that the appropriate resources are in place to deliver the outcomes that matter on the ground.
- vii) **Outcome based approach:** a focus on outcomes will encourage delivery bodies (both central and local) to work together where potential synergies can be developed and outcomes maximised.
- viii) **Removal of unnecessary bureaucracy:** seek to minimise any unnecessary bureaucratic processes or structures which may stifle innovation , creativity or partnership working
- ix) **Co-operation** – explore potential opportunities for greater integration and co-operation between Government Departments and councils on a sub-regional basis.

Such principles are visionary and ambitious and driven by the need to make services user- or citizen centred rather than driven by the needs and agenda of individual delivery organisations. We must deliver services and programmes that are not only efficient and effective but also joined up and responsive.

The TOFWG proposes that the Executive and local government should work together to implement this as the central pillar of a new central /local government partnership.

This approach would reinforce the Executive's commitment to creating Strong Local Government and enable the existing councils in the transition period to:

- set a vision for their area, possibly linked to community planning, and create local coalitions to deliver shared outcomes
- link core service delivery to the realisation of wider regeneration, economic and social priorities of the NI Executive and Government Departments;
- arrange for the delivery of services at the right level to meet local needs, and
- align the delivery of services and the allocation of resources around Place.

The outcomes would be:

- support the evolution of new forms of service delivery and joint working between central and local government which deliver value for money
- provision of integrated, efficient and responsive public services which meet the needs of the citizen
- strengthen local decision-making and political leadership capacity
- maximise the potential benefits and synergies through the alignment and integration of services at local level
- demonstration of joined-up government in action

It will require real political leadership both at council and at Executive level to develop the trust, enthusiasm and common purpose that could lead to the sharing of resources, skills and expertise across agencies, Departments and councils.

## 5. Next Steps

The work to date of the ToFWG has identified a number of key issues and potential opportunities which it is suggested would benefit from further constructive engagement between central and local government. It is suggested that while such discussion would evolve incrementally, it should take advantage and build upon the momentum and relationships created through the work of the ToFWG.

What remains clear is that the status quo cannot be pursued within the current financial climate. The strong message in this report is that there is a need to progress discussions on those key issues which will add value in making a difference in the coming months.

Initial discussion would suggest the working group, subject to endorsement,

should progress on the basis of the following 2 workstreams:

### **WORK STREAM 1: URGENT ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED**

Suggested projects include:

- i. **Area Plan coverage** - central and local government working in partnership to deliver up to date local area plans and address the absence of coverage in particular areas. A whole system approach should be adopted whereby all relevant stakeholders are involved in taking this process forward.
- ii. **Reformed Planning System** – local government assists the department in implementing and testing (possibly through pilots) the reformed planning system.
- iii. **Review of the future priorities of planning** – local government influences the future approach to land use planning which addresses local needs and is connected to a wider community planning processes.
- iv. **Delivering joined up urban regeneration** – local government supporting the department in aligning and consolidating resources to deliver the desired outcomes at the local level [in the context of the new Framework for Urban Regeneration and Community Development currently being developed?]. This could be tested through some pilot working.
- v. **Integrated community development** – local government works with departments (e.g. DSD and DARD) to streamline and enhance the co-ordination of community development and associated support activities (e.g. funding community networks, community support programme) across urban and rural areas.
- vi. **Enhancing economic development activity** – local government supports central government to maximise potential synergies and identify and avoid overlap /duplication in terms of economic development activity.
- vii. **Implementing Local Transport Plans** – local government informs and inputs into the future planning, prioritisation and implementation of local transport plans as part of wider strategic planning process around 'Place'. This needs to be considered within the context of the future interchange and relationship between central and local



*government.*

## **WORK STREAM 2: SUPPORTING INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY**

### **viii. Programme for Government and ISNI**

As previously discussed, the NI Executive and departments are about to enter into a new comprehensive spending review cycle and are in the process of considering the future priorities for the Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Clearly it is important that local government is engaged and has an opportunity to inform such considerations. The aim should be to strengthen the relationship between central and local government and, insofar as possible, align priorities and activity so as to deliver greater VFM outcomes for the citizen. The potential benefits to be realised include the better use of resources and improved service delivery.

### **ix. Local integrated service delivery**

This is indisputably a key feature of modern and effective governance. It is therefore imperative that a process is put in place to consider the potential to take forward a number of integrated area based pilots which integrate core functions (e.g. regeneration, planning, and community development) at the local level.

There is a need for a rounded discussion in respect to exploring what opportunities exist for local government to work with and support central government in delivering services at a local, sub-regional and regional level.

Further work is required to explore the potential viability and associated business case for specific functions to transfer to local government in advance of reform and to examine possible and viable delivery model options (e.g. could councils, individually or on a cluster basis, deliver specific services on behalf of departments).

Any delivery model(s) would need to be underpinned with appropriate governance and accountability arrangements for the delivery of outcomes.

Such an approach would be an essential building block to strong local government and would enhance service provision to the citizen. It would reinforce and strengthen the central and local government relationship and help enhance the joint capacity to deliver. It would also provide an opportunity and platform to test assumptions and work through any practical or operational issues on the ground prior to formal transfer of functions. This is a 'Preparing for Success' model.

## **6. Moving Forward**

It is suggested that if this work is to be progressed, the remit and membership of the Transferring Functions Working Group may need to be reviewed and a detailed work plan agreed. Clearly this will need to take into account the outworking of the pending NI Executive discussions on the future of local government reform.

## **7. Conclusion**

It is clear that discussions between central and local government should continue over the coming months to address those important outstanding issues which will impact upon the future delivery of key functions.

As we enter into a period when resources will inevitably be constrained, with budgetary pressures facing the entire NI public sector, there is growing pressures on delivery bodies to 'do more with less' and find more innovative ways of working that can reduce costs while preventing a negative impact on vital frontline services.

It is incumbent upon all of us to provide value for money services and deliver the outcomes that the citizen expects and deserves. This can be achieved to a degree on an individual basis, however, greater outcomes can be delivered if central and local government work in partnership to deliver more integrated and outcome based services.

Within this context, it is suggested that the conversation in respect of transferring services needs now to be reconfigured to explore what opportunities exist for councils to support central government in delivering and integrating services at the local level. There is a need to recognise the potential role of local government in supporting the NI Executive and departments to deliver upon the priorities and targets which will be set out within the new Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

There are clearly opportunities over time to reassess the way that services are managed, commissioned and delivered and where the business case is compelling to consider changes in service arrangements which may involve delivering services in a different way or transferring services to local government. In part, this will be dependant upon the willingness and commitment locally to explore new and more innovative ways of delivering services.

## TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS WORKING GROUP REPORT

**Summary:** This report provides details of strategic and cross-cutting issues relating to the Transfer of Functions together with recommendations for moving forward.

**Action:** The Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG) is asked to:-

- discuss and agree the detail of the report;
- consider and identify those key issues which may require further consideration and political direction; and
- consider and agree the emerging recommendations contained within this report

### BACKGROUND

1. Minister Foster's statement of 31 March 2008, on the future shape of local government, provided a high level summary of functions transferring to local government. Further to this an urgent need was identified for engagement between central and local government to develop further clarity on the detail of the functions transferring and to consider how such functions could be integrated and delivered by local government while ensuring service continuity and improvement for the citizen.
2. A Transfer of Functions Working Group (TFWG) with associated task and finish sub groups was established, initially reporting to Policy Development Panel C (PDPC) and subsequently to RTCG, comprising of senior officials from transferring function departments and local government.
3. Constructive discussions have been continuing over recent months to scope the transferring functions; the resources attached; and to identify those operational and implementation issues which need to be addressed or require further clarification prior to transfer.

### INTRODUCTION

4. The ongoing work of the TFWG has raised a number of strategic and cross-cutting issues for consideration by RTCG and SLB. The following paper seeks to highlight those overarching strategic issues which will affect the overall transfer of functions from central to local government and, where appropriate, recommends a way forward. It also highlights those pertinent issues related to specific transferring functions which need further consideration.
5. It should be noted that considerable work remains to clarify the detail on individual transferring functions. Attached at Annex 1 are detailed reports prepared by each of the transferring function sub-groups providing a summary (as known) of functions to transfer to local government and highlighting pertinent issues and recommendations on the way forward.

## **STRATEGIC ISSUES**

6. In considering the transfer of functions to local government it is important to reaffirm the shared commitment of the NI Executive to create 'Strong Local Government' and the associated agreed vision of: *"a strong, dynamic local government creating communities that are vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe, sustainable and have the needs of all citizens at their core"*.
7. The vision recognises the requirement for citizens' needs to be at the centre of service delivery and the need to integrate these services to serve the public more effectively and efficiently. A joined up system of government with clarity of responsibility and alignment of purpose while ensuring that services are delivered by those parts of the system which are best placed to meet the needs of the citizen must be the long term aim.
8. With the increased financial demands and spending constraints on the NI public sector, there will undoubtedly be greater pressures for both central and local government to find more efficient and effective ways of commissioning and delivering services in the future. Therefore, within the context of considering transferring functions and the future role of local government in community planning, it is suggested that all efforts be taken to optimise any potential for aligning priorities, initiatives and resources.
9. The TFWG would suggest that there is a need for discussions with DoE, OFMdfM and DFP to clarify the involvement of local government in the process of establishing future Programmes for Government and in setting priorities and agreeing targets for those relevant functions transferring to councils.
10. It will be equally important that local government work in partnership with Central Government on the imminent Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) process to ensure that a compelling and robust case is put forward to secure adequate resources for the functions to transfer and minimise the potential impact of local rates. The TFWG suggest that consideration be given to the potential of securing a single budget line within the CSR for RPA transfer of functions rather than individual transferring function departments bidding on a separate basis. In capital terms bids will be required to be placed to secure capital budgets in line with the Executive's Investment Strategy within Northern Ireland and early engagement with SIB on the process is necessary.

## **PROCESS OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

11. A key principle emerging with the transfer of functions to local government is the central retention of policy formulation and oversight. There is a requirement for formal effective engagement between central and local government in the development of such policy to ensure due consideration is given to the practicalities of implementation.
12. It is important to note that there are already a number of policy frameworks and programmes under development (e.g. Urban Regeneration and Community Development, Planning Reform) and strategic reviews and consultation processes underway or imminent (e.g. Barnett Review, midterm review of Neighbourhood Renewal, DFP's review of Noble Indices of Multiple Deprivation, review of the local Enterprise Agency network) which are pertinent to discussions in relation to the transfer of functions and will inevitably impact upon the future delivery of such functions. Local government must be actively engaged as a key partner in these processes and would ask that the

Environment Minister raise this issue with his Ministerial colleagues.

## **GOVERNANCE**

13. As the focus of the RPA reform process now shifts from policy development to the implementation phase, there needs to be greater clarity of roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders in the reform process and to distinguish between the strategic and operational levels. It is also important that there is recognition of the strategic role of Transition Committees in driving the process forward at the local level. It will be the Transition Committees and councils who will be responsible for the resources, accountable for ensuring service continuity and the delivery of outcomes.
14. The TFWG is conscious that there remain a number of high level decisions still to be progressed at a regional level, particularly pertaining to funding, which will undoubtedly set the broad principles/framework which will underpin the transfer of functions to local government.
15. The proposed Regional Transition Committee supported by the Regional Transition Management Team would provide a necessary mechanism for joint working, liaison and exchange of information between the Transition Committees and other organisations including transferring departments.
16. It is understood that legislation creating the Statutory Transition Committees is unlikely to be in place before June delaying the establishment of the RTC and RTMT until (probably) September 2010 just 7 months before the proposed transfer of functions. At this stage in the process the absence of any co-ordinating regional bodies involving the TCs and TMTs undermines the feasibility of meeting the May 2011 deadline for transferring functions to the new Councils.
17. The RTCG should consider how Transition Committees can be engaged and inform this process. This is necessary to draw out the potential linkages and synergies between the functions transferring and those services already delivered by councils. This work will inform any future consideration given by Transition Committees to potential service operating models.

## **FUNDING AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY OF TRANSFERRING FUNCTIONS**

18. The development of service delivery models for transferring functions cannot be progressed in isolation from crucial decisions yet to be finalised on:-
  - a. Funding the reform programme
  - b. Establishing the true costs of the transferring functions
  - c. Future sustainability of funding for transferring functions
  - d. The disaggregation of funding and resources
  - e. Confirmation of transferring staff numbers and grades where possible

### **Funding the Reform Programme**

19. The TFWG is conscious that given the current financial climate and the budgetary constraints facing the NI Executive, it is highly probable that local government will be expected to fund a proportion of the costs of the RPA reform programme. While recognising the strong lobby from local government that the reform programme should be centrally funded and the ongoing discussion with Ministers, it is unlikely that this position remains viable or realistic.

20. There also needs to be a recognition and acceptance that there are potential efficiencies and benefits to be gained by local government in the medium/longer term through the transition and reform process (e.g. rationalisation of assets; rightsizing of staff, convergence of processes and systems etc). There is no doubt, however, that Transition Committees will require initial up-front central government funding to support the transition process and enable the potential efficiencies to be realised.
21. It is suggested that consideration be given to the potential for central government to fund the necessary up-front costs while securing the necessary assurances that local government will fund specific elements of the reform process over the medium/longer term. This will enable councils to plan for, manage and moderate any potential impact on the rate base.
22. Local Government now need to enter into a process of conversation and negotiation with the Environment Minister, the DoE and DFP in relation to the funding of the RPA and, in particular, how councils may fund elements of the reform programme whilst ensuring that any impact upon the rate is moderated and planned for. Potential options (but not definitive) which could be examined include:
- Provision of loan funding by central government with conditions for repayment negotiated and agreed, possibly linked to an efficiency statement, with individual Transition Committees
  - As part of ongoing Ministerial discussions it is understood that consideration is being given to the possibility of a funding model based around extending the Capital Loan Regime to cover revenue costs, with loan repayments linked to the savings achieved
23. In considering the funding contribution which may be made by local government towards the overall reform programme it is suggested that the following principles should be applied.
- The reform process should be cost neutral to the rate payer and any potential impact should be managed and moderated
  - Where there is no financial benefit to local government, costs should be met by Central Government.
  - Councils may make a contribution where benefits will be accrued. Contribution will be apportioned based on the level of benefit that is to be gained.
  - Central Government should provide up-front funding on a conditional loan basis (e.g. established payback model), however, such conditions should be discussed and agreed with local government and Transition Committees
  - Central Government should fund activities where equity across the sector is required (e.g. Elected Member severance)
  - Any funding provided by central government will not jeopardise the financial autonomy of local government.

- The final programme costs and the apportionment must be negotiated based on a robust and mutually agreed business case.
- The final programme costs must be affordable.
- Repayment of any loans from central government to local government should only be considered when councils have made demonstrable savings.

24. A paper is to be presented to the Strategic Leadership Board meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February outlining Local Government's initial view on funding the programme and the outcome will be fed into ongoing discussions with DFP.

#### **Establishing accurate costs of the transferring functions**

25. Issues around the transfer of resources and budgets are becoming increasingly complex as the process of due diligence continues to highlight the lack of clarity/detail on the true cost of delivering the services. For example: corporate support costs such as ICT and necessary infrastructure and business support; notional on-costs; accommodation costs; staff costs.

26. Such costs should not only be quantified in terms of the current steady state of delivering the functions, it will be important that they are also considered within the context of the future service delivery models within councils post transfer and key decisions (still yet to be taken) with regard to the staff transfer scheme and the funding methodology for those functions transferring to local government..

27. The TFWG would suggest that within this context there is an opportunity to identify potential areas for efficiency at point of transfer (e.g. identification of synergies and rightsizing). Such savings could be realigned to support the delivery of the functions. Consideration should also be given ability to identify and validate liabilities at the point of transfer. Clearly there needs to be a consistent approach applied in capturing this information to ensure that all efforts are taken to minimise the marginal impact on councils

28. The TFWG is aware that a number of these finance issues are being considered by the Finance and Estates Implementation Group. Given the obvious linkages, the TFWG would suggest there needs to be discussion between FEIG, and transferring functions to ensure that all the necessary costs are captured. TFWG is keen to explore the scope for joint working and hopes to meet with FEIG soon to explore how best to take forward these cross cutting issues.

#### **Future sustainability of funding for transferring functions**

29. As referred to above, there remain significant uncertainties around the future level and sustainability of funding attached to the transferring functions given the fact that a large number of the proposed functions to transfer will be subject to the new CSR in 2011.

#### **The disaggregation of funding and resources**

30. The TFWG is aware there has been limited bilateral engagement and negotiation within central government including DFP, on the future funding regime for transferring functions and the impact this might have on local rates. It is understood that the emerging proposals relate to the majority of

funding transferring to local government initially on a grant basis, however, this proposition has not yet been discussed with local government.

31. Further detail should be provided by transferring function departments with regard to the staff proposed to transfer including grades, locations etc. This is necessary to inform any future consideration to be given to potential organisation design and service delivery models. The TFWG considers that there is a need for early engagement and negotiation with central government and, in particular, DFP regarding the future funding regime for transferring functions and the means by which budgets and resources are to be disaggregated across the 11 new councils. It is suggested that the two core principles for going forward should be:

- i. there should be no adverse impact on the rate at point of transfer; and
- ii. service continuity is paramount

32. It should be noted that the transfer of funding by way of grant, may necessitate Departments/NDPBs retaining some accountability functions for the monies being transferred and this may have an impact on the level of funding for staff transferring to local government.

### **Staffing**

33. In particular, the TFWG is acutely aware of the impact on transferring staff of the remaining uncertainty over funding regimes and service delivery models.

34. From the outset, the TFWG has emphasised the importance of communicating with and ensuring that staff are considered in all key decisions affecting them. With local government reform now just over 14 months away it is absolutely critical that progress is made in order to maintain the confidence, motivation and good will of staff

## **SPECIFIC ISSUES RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL TRANSFERRING FUNCTIONS**

### **DARD**

#### ***Integrated approach to community development and rural development / regeneration***

35. The Reform proposals provide an opportunity to build integration between DARD's role in Rural Development and rural community development, the current DSD role in Urban Regeneration and community development, and the various new and existing functions of councils post 2011.

36. Under current policy, DSD has a remit for towns of 4,500 populations plus while DARD has responsibility for the EU Rural Development Programme which is targeted on smaller towns and settlements. RPA provides the opportunity to provide a more integrated approach to regeneration of urban and rural areas.

37. A major part of a place shaping agenda is the ability to work with local towns and villages to enhance their environment and therefore regenerate the town and enhance its economic fabric. There will be opportunities for better co-ordination post 2011 when, with new powers, Councils can maximise the opportunities provided under the village renewal aspects of the DARD Rural Development Programme led by Local Government.

38. There is a similar opportunity for community development. To date, DARD has been using the Rural Community Network, Sub Regional Networks and the NI Rural Women's Network to deliver rural community development activity. Again, RPA provides the opportunity to build integration



between DARD, DSD and local government towards a long term strategy for community development.

39. While it is recognised that some early work on integrated working has been started this needs to continue on a formal basis.
40. Similarly, Rural Tourism and Rural Business Support cannot be delivered in isolation of the tourism and business networks at a district and regional level. Local Government can deliver improved co-ordination and integration with its revised powers post 2011.
41. The TFWG suggests that a formal mechanism to be put in place, under the sponsorship of the TFWG, to enable detailed consideration to be given to how greater synergies could be achieved within the area of rural development, regeneration, and community development (and associated initiatives/programmes) through the integration of the functions within councils.

#### **DoE: Planning Service**

42. The transfer of planning functions to local government is the single largest transfer in staff terms, and will place the bulk of planning decisions within the remit of the new Councils.
43. The transfer of planning powers to Councils and their integration and alignment with wider urban regeneration, local economic development, roads and community planning powers would give councils greater capacity to impact upon the quality of life within an area. Planning Service (PS) has committed to working closely with local government colleagues through the implementation structures, and specifically by focusing effort through the TFWG and Planning Sub Group.
44. It is important to note that there is a large amount of work still to be progressed in a very short timescale in regards to both the reform of Planning and the transfer of functions to local government.
45. PS is currently preparing the Key Principles document for circulation to the Planning Sub-Group, for discussion and agreement prior to forwarding to SLB. It is intended that this document would set the agreed context of the planning reform and transfer. Planning Service has indicated also that they are currently in the process of developing a high level implementation milestones/key tasks document, and will share the draft with TFWG to further develop it.
46. This document will set out the task list, responsible owners, milestones/checkpoints, interdependencies and delivery dates for all the implementation tasks set out in this paper. At this stage, and subject to finalisation of the detailed implementation plan, we are aiming to have the major tasks implemented by end February 2011 or earlier if possible.
47. At this stage, while PS is not yet aware of either the final Organisational Design structures of local government, nor of the final agreed PS transfer model, the PS has stated that they are planning on the assumption of 11 local councils delivering planning as a local function.

48. Consideration is given to arranging a planning event which brings together representation from the TFWG, Joint Forum and FEIG together to develop a detailed implementation plan.

#### **DSD**

49. Investment Fund: DSD has indicated that consideration is currently being given to the possible establishment of an investment fund (N.B. also referred to within the PwC draft report) which would administer funds partly generated from some central government assets to priority regeneration projects across N. Ireland.
50. Consideration is also being given by DSD to the possible retention of a large proportion of capital funding (subject to CSR bids being secured this potentially may be in excess of £25m) against which councils would submit bids for projects. Funding would be allocated on the basis of agreed criteria which remain to be finalised but are likely to include a project's impact on the relevant Council area and the wider region, contribution to meeting PSA targets and on its leverage of other funding.
51. The TFWG considers it critical that if such a fund is put in place, caution should be taken not to over bureaucratise the process which will be costly and cause delays. It is considered that further clarification is required from the DSD Minister on the current proposals for the creation of an investment fund and how it would be created, governed, administered and evaluated as well as any views regarding possible impact upon the transfer of assets to local Government.

#### **DETI**

52. **Regional Coordination Mechanism:** Several of the programmes transferring may require some form of regional coordination. Options considered include selection of a lead Council, a consortium approach or establishing an agreement (whether informal or via an SLA) with a third party organisation. Invest NI have indicated that they would be willing to undertake a degree of coordination in the initial period should Councils request them to do so. It should be noted any significant role to be undertaken by Invest NI in the interim will have resource consequences. TFWG will consider the proposition made by Invest NI which will be considered within the generic debate on-going on the most appropriate mechanism for regional coordination of services where applicable.
53. **European / Match Funding potential:** Contained within the INI programmes transferring is the sum of £1m ERDF which presently forms part of the 'Go for It' programme. Given the revision of EU programmes, this sum cannot be guaranteed beyond 2011. The baseline of £7.38m is the total core budget for all the INI programmes transferring. Since this is 'core' budget, there is the potential for this to be used to attract other match funding through leverage of other funds including European sources. For this to be a meaningful possibility, TFWG will consider the ring-fencing of appropriate monies in future European programmes agreed at NI / DFP level to permit subsequent bidding by Councils for additional resources.

#### **DCAL**

54. There is currently a consultation on Arts Funding which proposes that funding will be allocated to councils on a per-capita basis with weightings for deprivation and an additional weighting for Belfast and Londonderry on the basis that an approved Culture/Arts Plan is in place. The consultation also proposes that the Arts Council would manage the process provide oversight and

monitoring.

55. The consultation has issued to all district council Chief Executives, Transition Committees, ACNI, SOLACE, CLOA, NILGA and FLGA. There will be further consultation with arts organisations commencing around April/May 2010. The Department hopes to finalise proposals after the consultations and obtain approval on the way forward from Minister McCausland around September 2010. The TFWG will continue to liaise with DCAL on this through the Task and Finish Sub Group.

#### **DRD**

56. Panel C met in December to discuss the TFWG's recommendation that DRD's external contracts for car parking enforcement should be extended until October 2012. The Panel's recommendation that the contracts should be extended, was agreed at the SLB meeting on 9 December. Action to extend the contracts has now been completed by DRD.

57. Local Government now needs to consider the future delivery of the parking enforcement function. Options for this may include a central body or lead council delivering the function on behalf of the 11 councils. Key issues that, inter alia, will be taken into account are that, from May 2011, the sector needs to be in position to begin procuring new enforcement contracts so they are in place by October 2012, requirement on how to deal with issue of income received from parking in some areas cross-subsidising parking across other council areas; and whether or not the cost of the adjudication service would be managed via central or local government.

#### **CONCLUSION**

58. While the work undertaken by TFWG and its associated sub groups to date has clarified some key issues, it has also identified a number of areas that require further work. It is clear that discussions around the transfer of functions will continue over the next 6-12 months.

59. The outcome from further work can only be productive if immediate decisions are taken on a number of cross cutting strategic issues such as funding, the future relationship between local and central government and other governance issues.

60. While it is recognised that discussion and agreement on the way forward may not always be straightforward and that there are complex and possibly difficult decisions to be taken, the TFWG remains committed to the concept of a 'Strong Local Government' and the opportunity that this first stage local government reform offers to citizens. It is worth reiterating the Ministerial commitment that the strengthening of local government is "a process and not an event" and that a further review will be carried out 12 months after the new councils become operational.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

61. It is recommended that RTCG :-

- a. discuss and agree the detail of the report;
- b. agrees that the TFWG should continue to progress outstanding work;
- c. highlights to SLB the impact of delays with decisions on both funding of the overall reform programme and the funding regime for transferring functions;

- d. considers the requirement for engagement with TCs and TMTs at a regional level and if necessary secures the endorsement of SLB on a way forward;
- e. recommends to SLB the requirement for local government, DoE, OFMdfM and DFP to meet to clarify the involvement of local government in CSR, future Programmes for Government and in agreeing targets for those public services delivered by local Councils;
- f. reiterates the requirement for a tripartite meeting between representatives from the FEIG, TFWG and DOE;
- g. notes specific issue relating to transferring function and proposed way forward; and
- h. considers requirement for further clarification from DSD on the current proposals for the creation of an investment fund.

**TFWG Joint Secretariat**  
**February 2010**

# **Transfer of Functions Working Group**

## **Detailed Sub-Group Reports**

### **Content**

- Annex 1: DoE Planning Sub Group Report
- Annex 2: DRD Roads Sub Group Report
- Annex 3: DSD Sub Group Report
- Annex 4: DARD Sub Group Report
- Annex 5: DCAL Sub Group Report
- Annex 6: DETI Sub-Group Report

**PLANNING TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP**

**Interim Report to Transfer of Functions Working Group**

**Summary:** The purpose of this interim report from the Planning Technical Sub-Group is to update the Transferring Functions Working Group (TFWG) on current discussion between local government and the Department of the Environment Planning Service and setting out a proposed process for taking forward outstanding issues.

**Action:** The TFWG is asked to note the current position.

## **Context**

1. The Transfer of Functions Planning Sub-Group has been tasked with reporting to the main Transferring Functions Working Group on the following areas:-
  - Detail the planning functions transferring to local government and establish the potential synergies with other functional areas delivered by councils with a view to informing future integration discussions.
  - Consider the reform proposals for the Planning System and identify any associated implications for the transfer of functions to local government
  - Establish the current cost of delivering the planning functions to transfer to local government and the estimated cost of the reformed functions to transfer
  - Establish the current sources of funding the delivery of the transferring functions and examine potential future funding sources
  - Develop guiding principles and a framework around which the agreed planning functions may transfer to local government
  - Identify any outstanding issues which still need to be addressed in moving forward and make recommendations as to how such issues should be progressed.

This interim report sets out the position on current discussion between the Planning Sub Group and the Department of Environment Planning Service and highlights where further detail and

discussion is required on specific functions to allow for the development of efficient and effective options for operational delivery.

## Update and Way Forward

### Background

The Planning Sub-Group has met twice since early November, and presents this paper as an update.

The transfer of planning functions to local government is the single largest transfer in staff terms, and will place the bulk of planning decisions within the remit of the new Councils.

Planning Service has committed to work closely with Local Government through the range of Local Government Reform Implementation structures, and specifically through the Planning Sub-group to take forward the detailed implementation planning and delivery tasks.

Given the size and complexity of the issues involved, it was not feasible for the Planning Sub-group to have resolved them by December. The group is committed to a process of continued engagement over the coming months which will deliver the necessary steps for the transfer of the reformed planning system.

### Assumptions

This paper is predicated on the following assumptions. Firstly the transfer of planning functions will take place in the context of 11 local councils each of which will have a separate planning function. Secondly, that the planning functions which are to transfer are those which were set out by the Environment Minister in March 2008, which are that district councils will take on responsibility for delivering the following key planning functions:-

- local development planning, which replaces the current Area Plan arrangements;
- development management (formerly known as development control) – in practice this will involve the councils making decisions on over 90% of planning applications; and
- enforcement.

Other responsibilities will include:

- conservation area designation / consents.;
- temporary listing of buildings, including non-statutory local listing and control of demolition or works to listed buildings (following consultation with the Department);
- dealing with hazardous substances consent; reviewing old minerals permissions; control of advertisements; tree preservation orders; issuing completion notices; preparing simplified planning zone schemes;
- revoking, modifying or discontinuing planning permissions and consents;
- compensation liabilities arising from district council planning functions;



- responding to purchase and blight notices; issuing certificates of alternative development value; and
- maintaining a register of applications, consents, notices, certificates etc.

Following the transfer of powers to local government, the Department will retain responsibility for:-

- planning policy and guidance;
- planning legislation;
- processing regionally significant planning applications;
- fee setting and the power to make grants;
- applications for Crown or other development where national security issues are raised or urgent works are necessary;
- performance management / monitoring; and
- oversight.

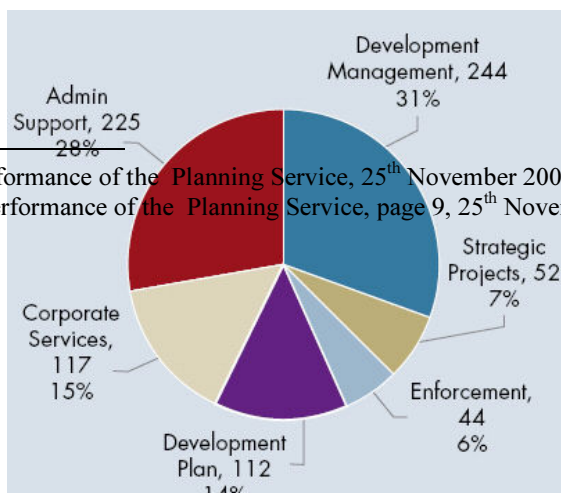
Whilst the Planning Service has estimated that at present approximately 600-650 staff are involved in delivering the functions that will transfer to local government and we anticipate those staff transferring with the functions, the precise numbers of staff transferring is uncertain at this stage and will need to be firmed up as a matter of urgency.

Staff are currently based in 9 locations (HQ in Belfast, 6 Divisional Offices in Ballymena, Belfast Craigavon, Downpatrick, Londonderry and Omagh and 2 sub divisional offices in Enniskillen and Coleraine).

At present Planning Service does not have available information on the expected allocations of existing staff to the proposed 11 new planning authorities. Given that the existing planning function is spread across six divisional offices plus HQ, there will be a detailed process to undergo in terms of mapping staff to the new structures. This will need to cross-reference with the ongoing work of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum which has been established to take forward HR related matters. In Appendix A (Detailed Analysis of Transferring Functions) of the PWC paper, detailed staff breakdown by professional planners and administration staff, by grade is supplied, along with indicative staff costing.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office recently published a report examining the performance of the NI Planning Service<sup>1</sup>. Within the report it is estimated that at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009, the staff complement within the Planning Service was 850, with 794 in post. The report provided a breakdown of the staff complement across the main business areas e.g. please see below.

Figure 1<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> NIAO report, The Performance of the Planning Service, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009

<sup>2</sup> NIAO report, The Performance of the Planning Service, page 9, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009

**Current Costs of Delivering the Planning Function**

	<b>Current Costs £ (000)</b>
Staff Costs	24,690
General Admin Expenses (e.g. non salary expenses, travel etc)	2,320
Other Costs	4,760
Notional Costs e.g. covers areas such provision of HR and Finance support which are provided centrally at present but are not "hard charged"	9,260
Income	(17,700)
<b>NET COSTS</b>	<b>23,330</b>

In making its submission to PwC,

Planning Service estimated the future costs of delivering the planning function across the 11 areas. This analysis did not attempt to allocate individual staff to location, and it was predicated on the assumption of overheads as a gross amount. It does not take account of any future synergies in councils post-transfer. The data submitted is replicated below:

**Estimated Future Costs of Delivering the Planning Function**

	<b>Proposed Costs £ (000)</b>
Staff Costs	
Professional & Technical	14,000
Admin Staff	4,550
HQ Staff	1,620
e-PIC Staff	250
Legacy Departmental Staff	4,770
GAE Costs	2,320
e-PIC Maintenance Cost	640
Other Costs	4,760
Notional Costs	9,270

Income	(17,700)
NET COSTS	<b>24,480</b>

It should be noted that fee income has dropped over the recent period to reflect the economic downturn. This has placed a resource constraint on Planning Service and must be factored into the transfer.

The initial work carried out by PS suggests a net increase in cost (as expected) from delivering the planning function over 11 centres. In addition, it should be noted that it is likely that additional costs may attach to the delivery of the 'reformed' planning system which will transfer to Councils.

However, as set out above this data makes no assumptions on either the organisational design or potential future efficiencies, as it is predicated on 11 functional planning units transferring to the new councils.

### **Detail**

There are two timeframes which this paper considers: firstly the immediate requirement to develop and agree a high level implementation plan, including the broad areas of work, for the transfer of the planning function to councils, and, secondly a detailed methodology for Planning Service and local government to engage through the Planning Sub-group to translate the high level plan into operational development to cover the agreed areas of engagement.

**Stage 1**, to be agreed by the Planning Sub-group and discussed at ToFWG, should establish the issues which need to be resolved, and the associated actions.

Key issues to be resolved are:

- Human Resources
- Finance/Funding
- Estates/location issues
- IT systems
- Capacity building
- Transitional arrangements prior to 2011 (including Pilot Development Plan work)
- Organisational Design options including the role and structure of the core planning function which remains with central government.

### ***In more detail***

#### **Human Resources**

The transfer of over 600 staff from Planning Service will be a significant HR process, and when combined with the task of amalgamating existing council staff, will be a challenge for the Transition Committees and Planning Service. Initial analysis of staffing numbers and grading

has been supplied for the PWC analysis and will form the basis for consideration and refinement. Further detail regarding location and allocation of staff to the new councils will be necessary and will be influenced by the development of Organisational Design principles. We expect this engagement to continue throughout the calendar year 2010, with significant tasks being:

- staff communication,
- staff workshops,
- staff awareness and training (cross training with council staff to be included in the programme),
- agreement on high level OD,
- engagement with DFP CPG in relation to the agreed central government guidance for staff transfers and terms and conditions,
- engagement with individual Transition Committees regarding detailed OD and staffing numbers, grades and locations.

### **Finance/Funding**

Planning Service is required to provide an initial costing of the new planning arrangements as part of the Policy Memorandum to be attached to an Executive Paper on planning reform to be considered in the New Year.

This will be shared with the sub-group when available, and will form the basis of more detailed work, including the development of Regulatory Impact Assessments which must accompany the new legislation. PS has agreed to engage with Local Government on this work

PS is also committed to carrying out a piece of external consultancy in early 2010 to examine the management information requirements which councils should meet to enable the Department to carry out its oversight role and to inform the future review of planning fees. This work will also involve direct and meaningful engagement with Local Government.

Integration of this work with the wider finance sub-group will also be required, especially in relation to the issue of funding allocations post 2011 and the issue of income allocation across the 11 new councils.

### **Estates/Location Issues**

Again, this work needs to be considered in the context of the existing estates strand, Key issues here include the location of the planning functions on day one, integration with council premises, cost issues and specifically the location of the new planning function in the Mid-Ulster council area which does not presently have any physical planning presence. As with HR these issues are closely linked to the OD outcomes.

## **IT Systems Issues**

Planning Service is presently in late testing stages of the e-PIC project, which will be implemented in 2010/11. PS is committed to engaging with councils as soon as possible to ensure the smooth integration with new council systems. In terms of Management Information Systems, further consideration needs to be given to the interface between Local Government and the retained planning function in the centre in terms of sharing relevant information.

## **Capacity Building**

This will be an ongoing process which has already started through PS partnership with RTPI in recent events. Two strand approach – need roll out internal PS training in preparation for the planning reforms, while working closely with the local government sector (e.g. Transition Committees, Transition Management Teams, NILGA, SOLACE etc) SOLACE and other groups to ensure a programme of capacity building and awareness is carried out. The timing of elected member capacity building must consider the expected turnover of member at election and through member severance.

## **Transitional Arrangements**

PS is committed to working with Transition Committees in preparation for the new Development Plan arrangements and has identified Council clusters areas for pilot projects. This process will include links to other workstreams especially community planning.

## **Organisational Design**

This is a key work area for the sub-group, and will include design options for local and central planning functions. It is recommended that early engagement takes place to establish a set of core principles for the new planning function in councils, as this will have a significant bearing on organisational arrangements. These principles should be agreed with the ToF group and SLB. Initial tasks will be to ensure that the added value which the planning function will bring to councils is understood and that OD options are then developed which will allow the new councils to maximise the benefits across the range of council functions (ie synergies with other existing or new functions).

It is recommended that a wider engagement with transferring functions is sponsored by the Transfer of Functions Group, which would seek to build on the cross cutting stakeholder engagement in Phase 1 of the PWC study, and be used to directly develop OD options for consideration. This would serve to provide initial options to assist Transition Committees, and should take place early in the New Year. It is important to note that there will be a legislative requirement for councils to carry out the planning function which will place certain obligations and duties on the new authorities which in turn will have an impact on the OD models.

**Stage 2** should then consider the detailed engagement and agreement of targets to jointly address the issues during 2010. Significant engagement has taken place between Planning Service and local government through the implementation structures, including the PDPs and SLB, as well as engagement with NILGA and SOLACE.

It is recommended that the primary focus of continuing engagement should be through the ToF Planning sub-group, with representatives continuing to engage locally with Transition Committees. This two strand approach will allow the regional issues to be considered and provide local points of reference for each Transition Committee. It is hoped that the flow of information to Transition Committees will be enhanced by the revised implementation structures. It is recommended that an early planning event should be arranged to bring together the strands identified above and produce a detailed implementation timetable.

## **Context**

A number of key events are due to occur in the coming weeks and months which will have a bearing on the process. These include the introduction of the new Boundaries Order, legislation must be introduced to the Assembly before the end of June 2009 covering Planning Reform and the Local Government Reorganisation, the legislation creating Statutory Transition Committees will be commenced, and the new statutory bodies will continue to make the necessary preparations for 2011, including appointments of Chief Executives designate. The position of the PwC report and the wider funding issues for local government reform will also be clarified.

These are important steps which must be factored in to the detailed examination of stage 2.

## Way forward

Planning Service is committed to working closely with LG colleagues through the implementation structures, and specifically by focusing effort through the Transfer of Functions working group and planning sub group.

Planning service is currently preparing the Key Principles document for circulation to planning sub-group, for discussion and agreement prior to forwarding to RTCG/ SLB. It is intended that this document would set the agreed context of the planning reform and transfer.

Planning Service is in the process of developing a high level implementation milestones/key tasks document, and will share the draft with ToFWG to further develop it.

This document will set out the task list, responsible owners, milestones/checkpoints, interdependencies and delivery dates for all the implementation tasks set out in this paper. At this stage, and subject to finalisation of the detailed implementation plan, we are aiming to have the major tasks implemented by end February 2011, or earlier if possible. We have

arranged two key internal planning events to move the process forward and will seek to engage with TFWG on the draft implementation plans.

At this stage, while PS is not yet aware of either the final OD structures of LG, nor of the final agreed PS transfer model, we are planning on the assumption of 11 local councils delivering planning as a local function.

# **DRD TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP**

**Interim Report to Transfer of Functions Working Group**



## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this Interim Report from the Department of Regional Development (DRD) [Roads Service] Transfer of Functions Task & Finish Technical Sub Group is to update the Transfer of Functions Working Group (TFWG) on progress made to date exploring the detail of the Roads Service functions transferring from Central to Local Government, and to highlight areas which need further clarification.

## **Action**

The TFWG is asked to note the current position

## **Introduction**

1. The Transfer of Functions Technical Sub Groups have been tasked with reporting to the TFWG on the following areas:-
  - To provide clarity on the detail for the functions transferring from Central to Local Government
  - To consider arrangements for integrating these functions within Local Government
  - To develop initial Guiding Principles around which the agreed functions may transfer
  - To identify any outstanding issues which still need to be addressed and
  - To make recommendation as to how to progress
2. The Interim Report sets out the current position following ongoing discussions between DRD and Local Government and highlights where further detail and dialogue is required in order to progress the development of effective and efficient options for service delivery post 2011.

## **Agreed Suite of Functions to Transfer from DRD to Local Government**

- Pedestrian Permits
- Alley Gating
- Permitting Local Events on Roads
- Off Street Car Parking and
- On street Parking Enforcement

## DETAIL ON WHAT IS TRANSFERRING

### Pedestrian Permits

- Enforcement of unauthorised stationary vehicles in pedestrian zones is currently handled as part of the existing NSL Enforcement Contract
- Policy Guidelines relating to the authorisation of pedestrian permits will transfer to Local Government and can be altered at a local level subject to observation of the due legislative process

### **Staff and Budget**

- It is proposed that **£8k** budget will transfer to local government
- There are no staff transferring with this function

*NB this covers administrative costs only – it does not include additional costs such as IT support etc*

### **OUTSTANDING ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

There is an administrative requirement for Councils to print off & issue permits – consideration needs to be given to adoption/ development of an appropriate IT system

### Local Events on Roads

- This has recently commenced the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage in the Legislative process and is being progressed through the Miscellaneous Provisions Bill
- Councils may be able to charge the promoter for such events – potential income stream for Local Government

### **Staff and Budget**

- There is **no** associated resource attached to or identified for transfer in relation to this function

### Alley Gating

- Roads Service currently facilitates this function for alleys which are adopted
- Councils may receive applications iro non adopted alleys
- This is primarily a Belfast issue but there are some in Londonderry & elsewhere in the Province
- The organisation of the scheme & associated costs are borne by the promoter in the community
- DRD currently has limited input – approval & issue of Traffic Regulation Order – but will still need to be consulted and will have final say

### Staff and Budget

- There is **no** associated resource attached to, or identified for transfer in relation to this function

**Recommendation:** *That consideration is given to where this might fit within the Community safety process*

### Moving Traffic Offences

- This function is currently the responsibility of the PSNI
- DRD were working on taking powers to de criminalise moving traffic offences in bus lanes, however this is no longer being progressed by the Department

### Staff and Budget

- There is **no** associated resource attached to, or identified for transfer in relation to this function

**Recommendation:** *Responsibility for this remains with the PSNI for the interim period*

### Off Street Car Parking

A Model Transfer Scheme is currently being developed by the Finance & Estates Implementation Group to transfer the car park assets

#### **OUTSTANDING ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

- DRD to check wording in legislation iro requirement to retain transferred car park **for the purpose for which it was transferred (i.e. a car park)**
- DRD to check actual costs iro maintenance of car parks and to provide information on
  - Historical spend
  - Title deeds
  - Access agreements,etc
- DRD to provide clarity on public liability cover for car parks
- DRD to provide detailed information regarding established / new access agreements iro amenities / utilities
- DRD will consider possibilities around option for councils to vary current local tariffs – this will form part of the 'influencing model'

### On Street Parking

- Policy responsibility for deciding on-street parking regulations will remain with DRD.
- This includes Residents Parking Zones – these Zones will be approved by DRD and enforced by Councils (via the NSL contract initially)

- NB Enforcement by NSL is for stationary vehicles only, any moving offences in a pedestrian zone are a criminal offence and enforced by the PSNI

#### **OUTSTANDING ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

- Fine detail around service delivery, and in particular enforcement, still to be explored, e.g.,
  - Process for issue of paper permit by Council after DRD approval (this refers to resident's parking zones only)

### **Car Parking Enforcement**

- Enforcement activity is currently managed through contracts with NSL and SPUR (IT support).
- Following PDP C approval, and SLB endorsement, both contracts have now been extended to October 2012
- It is essential that detailed discussions take place between local and central government officials to agree how the enforcement function will be delivered from May 2011

**Staff and Budget – approx 60 staff to transfer along with the car parking function – budget to be confirmed**

### **Debt Recovery**

- Outstanding debts (tickets etc) will transfer to Local Government at Transition

#### **Staff and Budget**

- There is **no** associated resource attached to this function

#### **OUTSTANDING ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

- Work is ongoing on a Memorandum of Understanding between ROI and DRD to share keeper details – this needs to be followed through in the period prior to Transition
- NB Finance & Estates Implementation Group are looking at policy around debt

### **Influencing Model**

Early discussion has taken place as to what this framework might look like and DRD recently presented initial thoughts to the Task & Finish Technical Sub Group. Work is ongoing.

### **Next Steps**

It is envisaged that DRD and Local Government will meet again in February 2010 to revisit the outstanding issues and to feed back to the ToFWG any emerging recommendations for consideration,. Particular attention should be given to the financial arrangements between councils to fund enforcement operations.

**DSD TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP**  
**Interim Report to Transfer of Functions Working Group**

**Summary:** The purpose of this interim report from the Department for Social Development Transfer of Functions Task and Finish Technical Sub-Group is to update the Transferring Functions Working Group (TFWG) on current discussion between local government and the DSD and to highlight where further detailed discussion is required. This report builds on the previous report submitted to the TFWG in April '09.

**Action:** The TFWG is asked to consider the contents of this report and the issues contained therein and agree the continued engagement between central government and local government officials.

## **INTRODUCTION**

2. The Transfer of Functions Technical Sub-Groups have been tasked with reporting to the main Transferring Functions Working Group on the following areas:-

- Provide clarity on the detail of the functions transferring from central to local government;
- Consider arrangements for integrating these functions within local government
- Develop initial guiding principles around which the agreed functions may transfer to local government
- Identify any outstanding issues which still need to be addressed in moving forward and make recommendations as to how such issues should be progressed.

This interim report sets out the position on current discussion between local government and the Department for Social Development and highlights where further detail and discussion is required on specific functions to allow for the development of efficient and effective options for operational delivery.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2. The following section provides a brief overview of the proposals in regards to the proposed DSD functions (and associated resources) to transfer to local government. It sets out the key issues identified by the Technical Sub-Group as part of their consideration of the technical and operational implications associated with the transfer proposals.

### **Proposed Functions and Resources to Transfer**

4. The following DSD related functions are to transfer to local government.

- Tackling Urban Deprivation;
- Town and City Centre Regeneration;
- Local Community Development;
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs);
- Housing Unfitness;
- Local energy conservation; and
- Living Over the Shop Initiative

### Budget and Staff

5. Table 1 below provides a summary of the budget and staff attached to the functions proposed to transfer to local government. It should be noted the revenue for 2010/11 is subject to confirmation of baselines following the NI Executive review of Spending Plans for 2010/11 as part of CSR process.

Function	Budget (Rev/Capit Grant) £'000	Staff Costs £'000	Accom Costs £'000	Other Costs £'000	Incom e £'000	Staff Nos £'000
Tackling Urban Deprivation	20,000	2,780			(400) <sup>4</sup>	79
Town and City Centre Regeneration	44,000	2,040	-	-	-	58
Local Community Development	7,000	176	-			5
Houses in Multiple Occupation	-	700	-	500	(500) <sup>5</sup>	33
Housing Unfitness	-	81	-		-	-
Local Energy Conservation	-	-	--		-	-
Living Over the Shop Initiative	tbd	tbd	-	-	-	tbd
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,000</b>	<b>5,704</b>	<b>658k<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>500+</b>	<b>(900)</b>	<b>175</b>

**Notes:**

1 - Salary Equivalent Cost

2 - £428k notional cost and £230k direct cost

3 - £229k notional costs in respect of land and property services, legal services, IT costs and business development costs.

4 - URCDG generates approx £400k from rental income.

5 - This could increase to £700k by 2011.

**Other Notes:**

- Capital Income to fund the capital programme in line with ISNI strategy varies. In 2009/10 the Capital Income Budget is £16.7m compared with £108m for 2010/11.



- £132m (This figure may decrease) of Working Capital Assets are to transfer for the benefit of all Councils. There may be an issue in respect of the ability for Councils to retain asset receipts to acquire new assets. DSD is considering a regional investment fund for transferring assets.

### Issues requiring further consideration

- **Funding:** Concerns about the future sustainability of funding as the majority of functions to transfer may be subject to efficiency savings and it may be necessary to secure bids in the next Comprehensive Spending Review to establish an appropriate baseline to transfer. (CSR process will commence in Spring 2010 and approved in early 2011. Need for urgent discussions between DSD, DFP and local government to quantify the level of resources to be secured for the future delivery of the functions post 2011.
- **Budget allocation methodology:** Ongoing consideration is being given to how resources will be disaggregated across the 11 new local Councils. This issue will need to be considered within the context of the overall funding regime for new Councils, both in the short and long-term post RPA
- **Grant funding:** Whilst no decision has been taken yet on how funding will transfer to local government, the DSD has indicated that in the short-term funding for DSD functions will be on a grant basis. Within the recent draft 'Economic Appraisal' report prepared by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC), which it should be noted has no status at the stage of drafting this report, it is recommended that a grant fund regime should be implemented for the period to 2015 and the Executive sub-committee agreed in November 2009 to grant funding
- **Policy Framework:** DSD is currently reviewing its strategy and policy framework for urban regeneration and community development and for the housing functions being transferred. This may have potential implications for the future allocation and prioritising of funding.
- **Role Clarity;** in moving forward it will be important that there is clarity between the respective roles of DSD and councils as well as a shared understanding of the joint relationship. The principle should be that DSD sets the policy and local government delivers on the ground.
- **Staff transfer model:** Ministers have indicated their support for allowing temporary transfer arrangements. As stated by the NI Executive Sub-Committee, the starting position for central government will be those arrangements employed for staff transferring to the new health bodies earlier this year, but the final decision will be one for Ministers.
- **On-costs & Accommodation:** Under the current accounting arrangements within central government a large range of support services and accommodation costs are funded directly through DFP. How such costs are

paid for in the future needs to be examined further within the context of transfer of functions. The status of offices currently used to house those DSD staff who will transfer will need to be determined.

- **Asset Transfer:** DSD currently hold very significant working assets including land banks. DSD has stated that the assets will be transferred for the benefit of councils. More detailed discussion on this will be required. Consideration needs to be given to the future flexibility for councils in relation to transferred assets. Local government would advocate that the assumption in moving forward is that assets will be transferred to councils as a further commitment to securing strong local government.
- **Investment Fund:** DSD has indicated that consideration is currently being given to the possible establishment of an investment fund (N.B. also referred to within the PwC draft report) which would administer funds partly generated from some central government assets to priority regeneration projects across N. Ireland. Local Government would seek further clarification on thinking with regard to how such a fund would be created, governed, administered and evaluated as well as any views regarding possible impact upon the transfer of assets to local government.
- **Pre-existing commitments for 11/12 and beyond** – consideration will need to be given to the transition process for projects/schemes which bridge the 2011 proposed transfer date. The early engagement of representatives of the new Councils' in the developmental stages of such schemes would support a more efficient and effective handover and strengthen the sustainability of such projects.
- **Capital schemes / regeneration projects:** in terms of the transition process, consideration will need to be given to the process to be put in place to effectively manage the assignment of agreements/ contracts to successor organisations and the assignment of agreements/ contracts to Councils where boundary changes mean that the future council custodian of a project changes
- **Urban regeneration projects jointly managed with OFMdfM:** Local government would seek ongoing engagement with the Department in regards to the future of key sites such as Girdwood in North Belfast and the ILEX development company in Derry/Londonderry which is currently managed/owned by DSD and OFMdfM.
- **Role of BSO:** the PwC report proposes that a specialist resource to handle Large Capital Projects could be housed in a centralised Business Services Organisation (BSO). Local government suggest that further consideration should be given to other delivery options for this function including, for example, a lead council approach.

- **Capacity Building:** it was agreed that capacity building across councils and transferring Departments would be essential. This could include joint working, staff exchanges, familiarisation sessions etc....
- **Performance indicators** – consideration of the level of oversight DSD will require for each transferring function. Including building this into a performance management and service improvement regime in such a way that promotes clarity and minimises bureaucracy.
- **Community Planning:** DSD and councils will need to agree the linkages between the work which is being transferred out and the new requirement placed on Councils to lead a Community Planning process.

## **DETAILED REPORT**

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

- The DSD Minister will retain responsibility for setting the strategic and policy framework for the functions transferring and the Department will therefore retain staffing and resources to administer these responsibilities together with sufficient structures and resources to ensure proper governance arrangements are in place between the Department and local Councils and that sufficient safeguards and controls are in place to ensure that public money is properly managed.

### **PROPOSED FUNCTIONS TO TRANSFER**

#### **i. Tackling Urban Deprivation**

##### **Context**

- The primary vehicle for tackling urban deprivation within DSD is through the 'Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy' which targets over 250,000 people. Neighbourhood Renewal operates mainly in 36 designated areas that are within the most deprived ten percent of urban wards in Northern Ireland, as defined by the Noble Indices of Multiple Deprivation (currently under review).
- Based on the current DSD Strategy and Policy framework which focuses on need and deprivation, the geographic allocation of urban regeneration funding is approximately, 60% is in Belfast, 20% in the North West and 20% across other regional towns and cities.

##### **Staff and Budget**

- While the resource budget for Neighbourhood Renewal (2010/11) is **£20 million** currently this may be subject to efficiencies as part of the NI Executive Spending Plan Review for 2010/11, future funding beyond 2011 will be subject to a bidding process as part of the next round of CSR, as will the capital element of the programme. It is proposed that NR funding will be allocated to

councils using the existing methodology which is based on the Noble Indices of Multiple Deprivation [etc ]

- There are **79 staff (WTE)** delivering the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy which will transfer. They are currently housed in 8 different locations: the Department's development offices (James House, Howard Building, North City Business Centre, Woodstock Road (Belfast) Orchard House (Derry) Church Street (Ballymena), Banbridge Jobs and Benefits Office and Kevlin Avenue (Omagh).

**DSD – Tackling Urban Deprivation**

	<b>Costs (£'000)</b>
Budget (Revenue Grant)	20,000
Staff Costs	2,780
Income	(400)
<b>Staff currently involved in this function</b>	<b>79 WTE</b>
<i>Not: Staff Costs are based on the overall Urban Regeneration staff costs on a per capita basis.</i>	

**Issues for further consideration**

- The Department is currently reviewing its strategy and policy framework for urban regeneration and community development which may impact upon the future allocation and focus of funding. The anticipated completion date for this work is early Spring '10.
- Local government will be consulted as part of this process.
- Noted that other variables which may impact upon the emerging policy include the mid-term review of Neighbourhood Renewal recently completed by the Department and the review underway by DFP of Noble Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

**ii. Towns and City Regeneration**

**Context**

The status of the offices currently used to house DSD staff who will transfer will need to be determined.

- This relates to the physical regeneration work carried out by Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO), Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate (BCCRD), the North West Development Office (NWDO); and the Regional Development Office (RDO) to re-vitalise towns and cities across Northern Ireland. This work is currently undertaken in four ways:
  - the creation of masterplans and development schemes;
  - site assembly for developments;
  - investment in major public realm schemes and environmental improvement schemes as part of a wider regeneration plan; and
  - the provision of direct grant to the private sector to try to tackle areas of market failure.

- **Masterplans** are designed to provide a clear strategy and process for managing the physical, economic and social transformation of an area. Masterplanning work typically involves the commissioning by the Department of independent expert consultancy firms comprising a range of specialists, for example urban designers, landscape architects, road engineers, etc, to develop masterplans for designated areas. This could range from spatial masterplans which cover a whole (or a large part of a) town to smaller site specific masterplans for particular sites, some of which may be in public ownership. Work on developing masterplans invariably involves a range of other statutory bodies including the local Council, Roads Service, Planning Service, NIHE as well as the private sector and should be considered within the wider community planning function to be undertaken by Councils.
  - **Comprehensive Development schemes** are carried out under the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991. The acquisition of land and property can be achieved by agreement or through compulsory purchase by way of vesting. In addition DSD may also use powers to create a Development Scheme – particularly when a change to the Area Plan is required.
  - **Urban Development Grant** is a discretionary grant, governed by the terms of the Social Need (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. It can be operated by the Department in different ways - different levels of subsidy, different spatial application, support for different types of development etc. Its objective is the encouragement of private enterprise and investment through the development of vacant, derelict or underused land or buildings.
  - **Public Realm/Environmental Improvement (EI) schemes** are covered by the Social Need (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. They are targeted at the neighbourhoods, with funding contributing towards site clearance costs, the removal of sectarian graffiti, resurfacing schemes, tree planting and the upkeep and maintenance of land. More significant are public realm schemes, particularly in town and city centres. Such schemes are intended to improve the physical appearance of towns and cities with the overall aim of contributing to the regeneration of an area and attracting new investment.
- Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate** implements the Department's regeneration objectives for Belfast City Centre, dealing in some cases with major schemes that give rise to particularly complex legal and financial matters some of which have an impact beyond Belfast. The Directorate also manages the legacy of the Laganside Corporation including the Lagan Lookout, the weir and the Laganside Events programme.

### Staff and Budget

- The Department would intend to place bids in the next budget cycle equating to **£40m to £50m** of capital in line with existing baselines to fund the development of new schemes by the new Councils.
- There are **58 staff (WTE)** involved in physical regeneration functions currently located in 6 offices (James House and Lesley House (Belfast), Orchard House

(Derry) Church Street (Ballymena), Banbridge Business Centre and Kevlin Buildings (Omagh).

- It is proposed by DSD that funding will be made available for each local council to provide capital assistance to deliver certain minor capital projects, to make environmental improvements through public realm, to encourage regeneration by way of urban development grants or to supplement funding raised for more significant schemes.
- Whilst the methodology for the allocation of capital funding is still to be agreed, it is suggested that the funding be distributed across all councils who could then direct these resources as they see fit to meet local requirements within agreed overall priorities. Belfast would receive an additional allocation to reflect its regional status and its ongoing commitments in respect of Laganside. Based on current budgets this would be something in the order of £2 million per new Council with an increased figure of about £4 million for Belfast to reflect its regional status (plus an additional £1 million for Laganside).

**DSD – Town and City Regeneration**

	<b>Costs (£'000)</b>
Budget (Capital Grant)	40,000
Budget (Revenue)	4,000
Staff Costs	2,040
<b>Staff currently involved in this function</b>	<b>58 WTE</b>
<i>Note: Staff Costs are based on the overall Urban Regeneration staff costs on a per capita basis.</i>	

**Issues for further consideration**

- The capital budget that will transfer and the methodology for allocation to the new local councils in 2011 is subject to discussion and agreement with DFP
- Work is underway in DSD to establish the options available by which the capital budget might be distributed to the new councils.
- This consideration includes an analysis of the potential for establishing an investment fund that would distribute funds generated from central government assets and the private sector to priority regeneration projects across Northern Ireland.
- Local Government would seek further clarification on the current thinking with regard to how such a fund would be created, governed, administered and

**Issues for further consideration (continued)**

- DSD indicated that consideration is being given to the allocation of a specific funding amount to each council to undertake minor capital projects (based on current budgets this would be £2m per council with £4m in Belfast to reflect its regional status (and an additional £1m for Lagan side).
- DSD intend to oversee a large capital budget (e.g. potentially in excess of £25m) as a challenge fund to which councils can submit bids for projects.
  - If such a challenge fund is put in place, caution should be taken not to over-bureaucratise the process which will be costly and cause delays.
  - It is intended that funding to enable local Councils to take forward large scale developments would initially be held centrally by the Department with the new local Councils being required to put forward bids.
  - Funding would be allocated on the basis of agreed criteria which remain to be finalised but are likely to include a project's impact on the relevant Council area and the wider region, contribution to meeting PSA targets and on its leverage of other funding.
  - Local Government will be consulted in the development of any necessary policy/framework for the challenge fund.

**iii. Local Community Development Support****Context**

This function comprises two programmes currently delivered by DSD:

- The **Community Support Programme** (previously known as the District Councils' Community Services Programme) aims to strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion. To this end it provides funding for community groups, activities within communities and local advice/support services. The programme is a collaboration involving the Department for Social Development, District Councils, local community groups, voluntary groups and local advice organisations; and
- The **Community Investment Fund** was established to deliver a longer-term, strategic commitment to supporting community development. The Fund has been set up in the context of a number of existing central and local government funding initiatives which support community development activity. The Fund is aimed at sub-regional and multi-neighbourhood organisations that provide support services, or co-ordination for smaller local community groups, and which are capable of developing their provision of support & services to such groups on a wider scale.

### Staff and Budget

- The 2010/11 revenue budget for the Community Support Programme and the Community Investment Fund is **£7 million** with **5 WTE staff** allocated to the latter function.
- The current funding breakdown is **£5m** (approx) for Community Support Programme and **£2m** (approx) for Community Investment Fund. This funding is subject to confirmation of baselines from the NI Executive review of Spending Plans 2011 and maybe subject to revision based on efficiencies to be identified post 2011.

#### DSD – Local Community Development

	Costs £'000
Budget (Revenue Grant)	7,000
Staff Costs	176
<b>Staff involved in this function</b>	<b>5 WTE</b>
<i>Not: Staff Costs are based on the overall Urban Regeneration staff costs on a per capita basis.</i>	

#### Issues for further consideration

- Any future funding will be subject to CSR bidding process.
- The review being undertaken on behalf of the DSD (referred to previously) on the strategy and policy framework for urban regeneration and community development is a variable that should be noted. Again local government should be engaged within this review process.

## iv. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

### Context

- There are around 12,000 HMO properties in Northern Ireland.
- NIHE has powers in terms of: tackling overcrowding; determining and enforcing (in association with the relevant authorities) appropriate standard as regards health and safety, hygiene and fire safety; and addressing the physical condition of properties and their management.
- The HMO registration scheme helps to reduce the risks associated with HMO properties and provides a list of good quality private rented properties which are maintained to an acceptable standard.
- The registration scheme implementation programme requires a comprehensive programme of inspections and action plans. HMO grants are



processed by the Housing Executives' grants offices and the budget for making these grants available will not transfer to the district councils.

- The function complements Councils' environmental health role, which includes fitness inspection of private rented sector properties, and their anticipated new community planning and general well-being responsibilities.

### Staff and Budget

- There are **33 staff (posts)** involved in HMO functions currently located in 2 offices (Coleraine and Anne Street, Belfast).
- It is proposed that **£700,000** revenue costs (i.e. salary costs) will transfer with this function.
- There is an anticipated registration fee income of £500,000 (2008/09) which the Housing Executive currently use to finance activities which deal with problems associated with concentrations of HMOs such as Community Safety Wardens Schemes etc.

#### DSD – HMOs

	Costs (£'000)
Staff Costs	700
Other activities	500
Revenue from Registration Fees	500
<b>Staff involved in this function</b>	<b>33 WTE</b>

#### Issues for further consideration

- Whilst the majority of HMO staff is currently located within the Belfast and Coleraine offices, they cover all HMO activity across Northern Ireland and, therefore, further consideration will need to be given to the allocation of both staffing and resources post transfer.
- Within the next 12 – 18 months the Housing Executive also proposes to reallocate some staff in the Craigavon Grants Office to deal with the registration of the significant number of HMOs in the South East area of Northern Ireland.
- Consideration is currently being given to potential options for the transfer of the HMO responsibility to Councils. Options being considered (as set out within the PwC Phase II report) include:

#### **Options for Transfer**

- **Option 1: DSD HMO Function – Full Transition:** This option involves the full transition of this function to councils, however the funding and staff would be allocated on the basis of current/ emerging need, rather than an arbitrary
- **Option 2: DSD HMO Function – Collaborative Delivery:** This option involves the delivery of the function at a regional level, where all councils would have access to the HMO service but staff could be located in offices where need is greatest. If this option is taken forward then negotiations

## **v. Housing Unfitness**

### **Context**

- The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) has a statutory obligation to identify and address unfitness in housing across all tenures. It employs a number of methods to tackle the problem ranging from issuing Closing Orders for individual properties, through to Demolition and Clearance Orders to full urban renewal schemes.
- Financial penalties are imposed on persons who continue to occupy, or permit others to occupy an unfit property. This is essentially a regulatory function but it could lead on to the provision of grant aid under the Private Sector Grants Scheme or the Group Repair Scheme.
- Local Councils' Environmental Health Officers, under the new Private Tenancies Order, have the same powers as those which the Housing Executive possesses in terms of identifying unfitness and drawing up schedules of work required to make relevant properties fit. The Rent Officer for Northern Ireland is empowered to apply interim rent control to unfit properties until such times as they are made fit.

### **Staff and Budget**

- There is no staff resource directly allocated to this function.
- The estimated salary costs which are dispersed across a number of staff is £8,000.

### **Issues for further consideration**

- Provision of Grants – work is underway in the Department to determine the future role and scope of the private sector grants scheme.

## **vi. Local Energy Conservation**

### **Context**

- Under the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995), the Housing Executive was designated as Northern Ireland's sole Home Energy Conservation Authority. The Act required the Housing Executive, in 1996, to develop a strategy to significantly improve the energy efficiency of the entire housing stock and to submit annual progress reports thereafter.
- While the NIHE will retain its current functions the new local Councils will be responsible for bringing forward local initiatives. To some extent this will formalise what has already been happening on a limited basis with some local Councils.

### **Staff and Budget**

- Whilst it has been agreed that local energy conservation activity will transfer to councils, it should be noted that this is more a role and not a function transferring.
- There is no staff or resources attached to the transfer of this function.

### **vii. Living Over the Shop Initiative (LOTS)**

#### **Context**

- The overall purpose of the Living Over the Shops (LOTS) initiative is to encourage people back to live in villages, towns and city centres, as a contribution to broader regeneration.
- Introduced on pilot basis in 2002, LOTS provides grant support for work carried out to make properties over shops fit to live in and, in the case of most flats, fit for the number of people who live there.
- LOTS has to date been a targeted initiative available only in certain areas.

#### **Issues for further consideration**

- The future use of the LOTS scheme as a regeneration initiative will be considered as part of the work to establish a new Urban Regeneration and Community Development strategy and policy framework.

### **NON-TRANSFER of Travellers' Transit Sites**

- It should be noted that based on the announcement made by the Minister for Social Development, Margaret Ritchie MLA on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009, the management of Travellers' Transit Sites will not transfer to councils as part of the RPA process.
- The function will remain within the remit of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- It is recommended that this Group should continue to meet over the next few months to examine the outstanding issues and feedback to the Transfer of Functions Working Group any emerging recommendations for consideration.

#### **Recommendation**

- It is recommended that the Transfer of Functions Working Group notes the current position.



# **DARD TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP**

## **Interim Report to Transfer of Functions Working Group**

## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this Interim Report from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Transfer of Functions Task & Finish Technical Sub Group is to update the Transfer of Functions Working Group (TFWG) on progress made to date exploring the detail of the DARD functions transferring from Central to Local Government, and to highlight areas which need further clarification.

## **Action**

The TFWG is asked to note the current position

## **Introduction**

1. The Transfer of Functions Technical Sub Groups have been tasked with reporting to the TFWG on the following areas:-

- To provide clarity on the detail for the functions transferring from Central to Local Government
- To consider arrangements for integrating these functions within Local Government
- To develop initial Guiding Principles around which the agreed functions may transfer
- To identify any outstanding issues which still need to be addressed and
- To make recommendation as to how to progress

2. The Interim Report sets out the current position after recent discussion between DARD, DSD and Local Government and highlights where further detail and dialogue is required in order to progress the development of effective and efficient options for service delivery post 2011.

## **Agreed Suite of Functions to Transfer from DARD to Local Government**

The three main functions transferring from DARD to Local Government have been identified as:-

- Axis 3 of the 2007-13 Rural Development Programme (RDP)
- Community Development Strand of DARD Anti Poverty / Social Inclusion Programme
- Village Renewal / Regeneration

***NB – No staff will transfer with these functions***

## **Detail**

### **The Rural Development Programme (RDP)**

The RDP 2007-2013 is jointly funded by the European Union, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

The Programme aims to protect and enhance our rural environment and contribute to the development of competitive and sustainable rural businesses and thriving rural communities. It is worth over £500million and represents one of the largest ever investments in rural communities in Northern Ireland.

The RDP is split into three main areas:

- Axis 1 - Farming and Food;
- Axis 2 - Environment and Countryside; and
- Axis 3 - Rural Life

## **Axis 1**

Budget = £45million

Aim = to improve the performance of Agriculture and Forestry businesses by:-

- funding farm modernisation projects,
- helping businesses to improve their processing and marketing skills
- supporting projects that will strengthen supply chain partnerships

Advice, mentoring and training is also available for farmers and their families.

Currently this programme is delivered jointly by DARD and an Agent (Countryside Agri Rural Partnership) contracted up to 2013

## **Recommendations –**

- **That the current contract / delivery mechanism would continue until 2013**
- **That DARD would engage with Local Government early in the development the 2014/2020 programme to consider options for future delivery**

## **Axis 2**

Budget = £390million

Aim = to help farmers to manage the land more sustainably and deliver important outcomes on biodiversity, landscape and climate change.

Currently this programme is delivered by DARD

## **Recommendation –**

- **That DARD would continue to deliver this programme until 2013**

## **Axis 3**

Budget = £100million

Aim = to improve the quality of life in rural areas by supporting a wide range of projects which include:-

- diversification
- business creation
- tourism

- basic services for rural communities
- village renewal
- conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage.

Currently this programme is delivered via the LEADER approach (an EU 'bottom-up' approach to local rural development A formalised joint service delivery mechanism (via the Local Government Order (Northern Ireland) 2009) is in place comprising seven joint council clusters (see map at Annex 1) which are responsible for the appointment & monitoring of a Local Action Group (LAG) to implement a rural development strategy.

**Recommendations:**

- **That the current delivery mechanism continues until 2013**
- **That DARD would engage with Local Government early in the development the 2014/2020 programme with a view to aligning new structures from 2014 onwards**

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- DARD will explore options around legal continuity of current LAGs until 2014
- Further consideration needed around how the RDP / LAG delivery mechanism will fit with Community Planning process post 2011

**Community Development (DARD Anti Poverty / Social Inclusion Programme)**

DARD supports a rural community development infrastructure which provides access to and feedback from approx 800 rural community groups, and to this end has been funding:-

- The Rural Community Network (RCN)
- 11 Rural Support Networks (RSNs)
- The Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)

These groups facilitate a vital link between the rural community, DARD and other Departments.

**Recommendations**

- **That a collaborative approach to community development is adopted, which brings together the bodies with the complimentary responsibilities below:**
  - **DARD** – rural community development
  - **DSD** – voluntary & community sector
  - **Local Gov** – community planning / community relations
- **That a structured change programme is supported, comprising all of the above bodies, in order to better align all strands of community development with the new councils.**
- **That local rural community development funding and activity will transfer to local government**



OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- DARD will clarify the resource (funding) transferring with local rural community development
- DARD will consider the future role of the regional elements of the rural community development infrastructure – RCN and NIRWN
- DARD, DSD and Local Govt will consider how best to engage with current rural community development organisations to achieve the changes required by 2011

**Village Renewal / Regeneration**

Funding (£12m) for renewal of towns and villages with populations below 4500 has been made available to the 7 Council clusters / Local Action Groups through the 2007/2013 RDP.

**Recommendation**

- **That Local Gov, in partnership with DARD and DSD, in planning the 2014/2020 RDP, ensure strategic alignment with the regeneration powers transferring from DSD to affect an integrated approach to urban & rural regeneration post 2011**

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- DSD to clarify detail of regeneration powers transferring to local government
- DARD and Local Govt to further explore how the RDP measure can maximise the opportunities for village renewal / regeneration post 2011

**Next Steps**

It is envisaged that DARD and Local Government will meet again in early New Year to revisit the outstanding issues and to feed back to the ToFWG any emerging recommendations for consideration

**ANNEX 1**

**See attachment**

## **DCAL TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP**

### **Interim Report to Transfer of Functions Working Group**

**Summary:** The purpose of this interim report from the Culture Arts and Leisure Transfer of Functions Task and Finish Technical Sub-Group is to update the Transferring Functions Working Group (TFWG) on current discussion between local government and the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and to highlight where further detailed discussion is required.

**Action:** The TFWG is asked to note the current position.

### **Introduction**

3. The Transfer of Functions Technical Sub-Groups have been tasked with reporting to the main Transferring Functions Working Group on the following areas:-
  - Provide clarity on the detail of the functions transferring from central to local government;
  - Consider arrangements for integrating these functions within local government
  - Develop initial guiding principles around which the agreed functions may transfer to local government
  - Identify any outstanding issues which still need to be addressed in moving forward and make recommendations as to how such issues should be progressed.
3. This interim report sets out the position on current discussion between local government and the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and highlights where further detail and discussion is required on specific functions to allow for the development of efficient and effective options for operational delivery.

### **Agreed Suite of Functions to Transfer**

1. The functions within DCAL which have been identified for transfer to local government are as follows:
  - Armagh Country Museum
  - NI Museum Council
  - Local Arts
  - Local Sports
  - Local Water Recreational Facilities

**Detail**

**Armagh Country Museum (ACM)**

**Context**

1. The Armagh Country Museum is currently managed by the National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) under the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998.

**Functions Transferring**

2. It is proposed that all functions of the ACM will transfer from NMNI to the new Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council by 2011.

**Resource Allocation**

3. The current budget of the Armagh Country Museum is £312K (approx), with a staff complement of 7.5 staff.

**Outstanding Issues**

- Uncertainty remains with regard to how the annual budget will transfer to local government. Discussions ongoing with the Department of Finance and Personnel as to the means of transfer.
- DCAL has issued a draft staff transfer scheme and sent to NMNI for consultation.
- Staff transfer scheme is dependant on the regional discussions around pensions transfer e.g. will staff be permitted to remain in the PCSPS.
- NMNI has recently released draft legal documentation which contains some conditions which may impact upon the transfer of the asset. The Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council Transition Committee are currently considering this paper and will respond to NMNI.

**Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC)**

**Context**

- The Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC) is a company with charitable status established in 1993 which is funded in the main by DCAL but also from its membership which includes local government. The NIMC provides a range of functions including (but not exclusively): advice and training; assistance with accreditation; awarding of small grants; research; strategy building; policy advice; and fund raising.

**Functions Transferring**

- Whilst it has been decided that the functions provided by the NIMC would transfer to local government, consideration is currently being given to the practicalities of how the NIMC would transfer to local government.

### **Resource Allocation**

- The Northern Ireland Museums Council has a budget of £279K (approx.) with a staff complement of 4 FTE staff.
- Given the relatively small size of the NIMC it is not considered appropriate to decentralise it across the new 11 council model.
- Noted that the PwC draft Economic Appraisal of options for local government service delivery puts forward a proposal that the transfer of the NIMC to local government should be on the basis that it “moves across to the new Local Government Association (LGA) and the costs are included in the overall operating costs of the new LGA”.
- There are potential legal issues which would not make this a viable option i.e. you cannot transfer functions (i.e. impose liabilities on) to a non statutory body such as the LGA. . The new BSO may be a more appropriate home for NIMC functions.

### **Outstanding Issues**

- No decision taken on the means of transfer of the NIMC to local government.
- Consideration being given to how the transfer of NIMC fits with the proposals emerging from the PwC Phase II Report in regard to the establishment of a Business Services Organisation (BSO).
- DCAL have developed an options paper examining the role/function of the NIMC, which the minister is now considering. Local Government will be consulted on the outcome.
- A number of possible delivery options put forward by the paper for further consideration include:
  - i) Postpone transfer for 5 years
  - ii) Transfer to DCAL
  - iii) A regional service delivery model e.g. Transfer to the proposed Business Services Organisation if it goes ahead or to LGA
  - iv) Transfer of the specialist services of NIMC to the National Museums Northern Ireland

## LOCAL ARTS

### Context

- DCAL provides funding for the arts in Northern Ireland, sets arts policy and supports arts based initiatives at a local level.

### Transferring Functions

- It is proposed that funding for Local Arts and Culture Projects would be transferred from the Arts Council Northern Ireland to local government

### Resource Allocation

- The funding awarded by the Arts Council NI to organisations for local arts and culture projects varies year on year, however the funding budgeted for 2009/10 amounts to approximately **£1.1m.**
- It should be noted that currently the majority of funding (85%) has been allocated to projects in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. These projects could not continue without ongoing funding.

### Outstanding Issues

- DCAL and the Arts Council have considered how Local Arts funding could be allocated in the future. There remain issues in regard to how funding will be disaggregated across local government whilst ensuring that existing/planned funding commitments are delivered.
- A policy paper has been developed and is currently out for consultation (until 10<sup>th</sup> March) with the Transitional Committees and other key stakeholders on the detailed arrangements for the transfer of funding. The Arts Council will then consult with the relevant local arts organisations between May and August 2010.
- Proposals will be finalised and Ministerial approval sought in September 2010.
- The Department and the Arts Council will then work with district councils to prepare for the transfer of the function in May 2011. The amount of funding to transfer is expected to be in the region of £1m based on the Arts Council's expenditure on local arts activity in 2009/10.
- It is proposed that funding will be allocated to councils on a per-capita basis with weightings for deprivation and an additional weighting for Belfast and Londonderry. This would ensure that funding for local arts could be disbursed more equitably across councils (currently 5 of the new council areas do not have any organisations in receipt of local arts funding from the Arts Council).

~~▪ The DCAL Sub-Group raised concerns with regard to any future scrutiny role of the Arts Council over the activities of councils. Stated that DCAL should not sanction~~

the activities or plans of councils but rather provide advice and assistance as necessary.

## Local Sports

### Transferring Functions

- There is no transfer of function relating to local sports. It is recommended that local government would have greater involvement in the determination of local sports activity.
- Under the Active Communities Programme, the 11 councils will have direct responsibility for allocation of slightly over £3m per annum and within the framework of the set KPIs, local government has the autonomy to decide how to spend this money in response to identified local need. This programme advocates closer working relationships with councils and supports the community planning process.

### Outstanding Issues

- It is the view of Sport NI that there is already effective engagement with local government through the Council Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) and they feel that they have exceeded their RPA commitment with the **Active Communities** programme
- The view of CLOA has been sought and they will provide a formal response after their meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> February.

## Local water recreation facilities

### Context

- DCAL has permissive powers in the Water Order 1999 to provide Water Recreation facilities for public use. This function transferred to DCAL from DARD under the (Transfer and Assignment of Functions) Order (NI) 1999. DCAL also inherited certain responsibilities for abandoned navigations under the Inland Navigation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954.

### Functions Transferring

- At present, there are 21 sites, of which eight are owned by the Department, nine are leased, and four are of no clear ownership. DCAL have indicated that in all three categories the sites will transfer, with legal advice indicating that the latter will transfer with “possessory title”.
- There are ongoing local negotiations to resolve any outstanding ownership issues.

- The 21 sites proposed to transfer include riverside walks and paths, car parks, slipways and canoe steps. These are currently maintained on DCAL's behalf by the Rivers Agency under a Service Level Agreement.

### **Resource Allocation**

- No staff will transfer to local government with this function. The transfer of resources relates only to assets and associated maintenance budgets which is estimated at £52,000 per annum (approx).
- Consideration should be given to the potential integration of maintenance duties within the Councils own maintenance work teams.

### **Outstanding Issues**

- Negotiations ongoing between DCAL and relevant councils regarding the transfer of responsibility for sites.
- Detailed mapping exercise currently being undertaken by DCAL on the locations of the 21 sites.
- The potential liability and insurance risks for local government was highlighted. Noted that DCAL currently self insure.

### **NEXT STEPS**

1. There are a number of key issues which need to be considered further including the outcome of the options paper on the transfer of the Northern Ireland Museums Council; the feedback following consultation on the policy paper on how local arts funding will be administered in the future; and feedback from Council Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) on effective working relationships with SportsNI.
2. Clearly the local government sector will need to remain fully engaged in the process, reviewing the merging proposals on the above issues and in determining the best way forward.
3. It is recommended that this Group should continue to meet over the next few months to examine the outstanding issues and feedback to the Transfer of Functions Working Group any emerging recommendations for consideration.

### **Recommendation**

1. It is recommended that the Transfer of Functions Working Group notes this current position.



**JOHN BRIGGS**

Chair of Culture Arts and Leisure Transfer of Functions Technical Sub Group  
Date: Janaury 2010

# **DETI TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP**

## **Interim Report to Transfer of Functions Working Group**

**DRAFT**

## Introduction

This report presents the current state of progress on the DETI Transfer of Functions package. It sets out:

### Section 1

- the original suite of functions proposed for those under the DETI family incorporating local economic development (transfers from Invest NI) and local tourism (transfers from NITB)

### Section 2

- A clear and refined description of the actual or specific activities transferring including financial resources activity and an analysis of issues and recommendations arising from of the DETI Transfer of Functions sub-group.

### Section 3

- Recommendations from the DETI Transfer of Functions sub-group on how to move forward

**Section 1**

Proposed Functions Transferring (Minister Foster statement of 13 Mar 08)	Actual / Detail of Functions Transferring ( ToF Sub-Group Oct 09)	Budget Transferring / Current Resource	Funding Commitment beyond 2011
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>			
Start a Business programme	<b>Enterprise Development programme</b> (formerly Start a Business programme)	£4,750,000	Secured up to March 2012
Enterprise Week		£195k over 3 years, plus £100k from DE up to 2011	Budget approval to November 2011.
Enterprise Shows	<b>'Go For It'</b> marketing campaign (in full) marketing element behind Enterprise Development programme	£1,200,00 p/a	Budget approval to March 2012
Youth Entrepreneurship such as Princes Trust & Shell Livewire	<b>Disadvantaged Youth Entrepreneurship</b> (formerly Princes Trust)	£600,000	TBC in terms of programme detail, budget and timescales.
	<b>Advantage NI</b> (formerly Shell Livewire)	£300,000	
Social Entrepreneurship	<b>Social Entrepreneurship</b>	£900,000	Budget approval to June 2012

Investing for Women	No specific programme – <i>subsumed into Enterprise Development programme</i>	0	No separate budget – <i>subsumed into Enterprise Development Programme</i>
Neighbourhood Renewal Funding relating to Enterprise Initiatives	No specific programme – <i>subsumed into Enterprise Development programme</i>  Ringfenced inside EDP contract ie neighbourhood renewal targets	0	No separate budget – <i>subsumed into Enterprise Development Programme</i>
<b>TOURISM</b>			
Small scale tourist accommodation	No specific programme – but one-off funding allocation transferring	£330,000	No specific programme – annual funding allocation transferring
Local tourism marketing Local tourism product development Visitor Servicing Providing business support including business start-up advice along with training & delivery of customer care schemes Providing advice to developers on tourism policies & related procedures	No specific programmes : one-off funding allocation transferring	£1,000,000	No specific programme – annual funding allocation transferring

## **Section 2**

### **1. Enterprise Development Programme – (formerly Start a Business / Small Business Programme)**

A new contract for delivery commenced in January 2009 for two years and three months until March 2011.

There is a break clause which permits termination of the contact or any part of the services by giving three months written notice. There is the potential for a further two one year extensions from 2011 which means the contract could be extended up to 2013. Funding has been approved up to March 2012 only. KPMG are the overall monitoring agent with a contract for all five INI regions. Invest NI issued a single letter with five separate contracts to Enterprise NI for delivery.

#### **ISSUE**

Each Council will have to decide how to deliver the EDP beyond March 2011. This will mean the EDP budget will have to be capable of being split across 11 Council areas. A method of distribution will have to be determined. Councils may collectively decide to share resources and deliver this together. In either event it is considered necessary to have a regional coordination mechanism.

Such a mechanism could potentially be provided via Invest NI assisting 11 Councils through a Local Area Agreement / SLA type approach as part of the wider Community Plan. Invest NI have indicated they are willing to undertake coordination if requested for 2011/12 year as part of the transition process. Decision will have to be made in context of the 'Options for Service Delivery' / PWC report. Assuming a budget for EDP beyond 2012 is secured, there is an option of renewing contract of Enterprise NI for a further year from 2012 subject to performance.

Prior to the instigation of the Independent Review of Economic Policy (Barnett Review) in December 2008, DETI had commenced the preparation of a NI Enterprise Strategy. The overall output was intended to be an enterprise pipeline of support with clear areas of responsibility and focus assigned to create a co-ordinated approach to enterprise development.

Work on the NI Enterprise Strategy was put on hold pending the outcome of the Barnett Review. The Barnett Review has called for the creation of a new regional economic strategy. It is unclear at this stage how this will impact on the proposed NI Enterprise Strategy.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Transitional Councils permit the contract for the Enterprise Development Programme to continue through the break clause at 2011 and agree in advance a one year extension from April 2011 to 2012.

## 2. Go For It Campaign

Invest Northern Ireland currently deliver a centralised marketing campaign known as Go For It - this will transfer in full to Councils. Go for it is the marketing operation behind the Enterprise Development Programme and consists of a centralised above the line marketing campaign utilising various media channels (including TV, Radio, Press and online channels) to ensure regional media coverage. The campaign budget for promotion of the Go for it - Start up campaign is approximately £800,000 per annum.

In addition to the centralised campaign delivered by Invest Northern Ireland, Enterprise Northern Ireland co-ordinate a below the line regional marketing campaign utilising the Local Delivery Agents which address the local market conditions, delivering broad messages about entrepreneurship and starting a business across NI. The regional marketing budget is included in the Enterprise Development Programme Budget line illustrated in point 1 and is approximately £500,000 per annum.

The EDP advertising requirements were delivered under contract by the Leith Agency. The contract which commenced in June 2009 for an initial period of two years was mutually terminated in December 2009. Invest NI are currently working with CPD to put in place a tender competition for a new supplier to deliver the EDP advertising and design requirements. Invest NI believe the new contract will be in place by April 2010 for an initial period of 12 months, with the possible extension for a further 12 months to March 2012. In line with the recommendation below Invest NI can add a further 3 month extension to ensure the period up until and including June 2012 is covered by any new contract.

In addition to the EDP Advertising contract a contract is currently in place with Message Pad, Holywood, County Down. The Business case for the approval of the call centre contract is for £25,000 per annum. The contract was awarded on 29 August 2009 and the new supplier took up the contract from 13 September 2009 for a period of one year, with the option to extend for 6 months until March 2011, and then an option to extend for a further 12 months until March 2012.

**ISSUE**

Whilst it would be possible to split delivery of the **sub**-regional campaign activity across 11 Councils (£0.5m), there may remain a need for a regional campaign to ensure best value is achieved through TV media. Options for delivery of the regional campaign include Councils contracting with one lead Council, Invest NI or another organisation to manage the regional campaign.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Recommend a regional marketing campaign continues up to June 2011 until current contract expires. Councils collectively should consider approving one year extension to June 2012 to allow evaluation of approach and consideration of future options for delivery (*is funding in place to June 2011 or 2012?*)

Subject to project availability, from June 2012 Councils should approve a regional marketing campaign and agree an appropriate mechanism such as a lead Council to coordinate and deliver this on behalf of Councils. Sub-regional marketing should be delivered by each Council as an additional conduit to meet local needs.

**3. ENTERPRISE WEEK**

Activity under this heading has changed significantly over the last year with the introduction of a Northern Ireland aspect to the Make Your Mark Challenge and Clubs. This offers NI the opportunity to be part of a worldwide celebration of enterprise with the added benefits of:

- Using the marketing and programme materials developed by Enterprise Insight. This represents a considerable resource saving on an annual basis; and
- Benefitting from the accumulated learnings from Enterprise Insight, the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Enterprise who have run the Make Your Mark Challenge over a number of years. This will ensure that many of the risks that might occur in a 'Pilot' project are mitigated.

The target audience for this programme is 14-19 years old. A phased rollout of a NI Make Your Mark Challenge and Clubs project is underway with a Memorandum of Understanding with Enterprise Insight (UK initiative) in place for three years from 2009 – 2011.

£195k has been committed by Invest NI over three years along with £100k from the Department of Education for the first two years.

**ISSUE**

Given the nature of the MoU, it may be necessary to continue with delivery of this initiative at a regional level. Councils will need to agree an appropriate regional coordination mechanism.

**RECOMMENDATION**

To be confirmed.



#### 4. Start-up Shows / Sponsorship Events

No longer a separate budget or activity as this has been subsumed into the Go For It campaign.

#### 5. Youth Entrepreneurship (Princes Trust)

#### 6. Disadvantaged Youth Entrepreneurship (Advantage NI)

**Advantage NI** – contract expires in March 2010.

**Princes Trust** contract expires in March 2010.

Invest NI has commissioned Cogent Management Consulting LLP ('Cogent') to conduct an Economic Appraisal of a proposed New Youth Entrepreneurship Programme encompassing a disadvantaged youth element, which would complement and add value to the enterprise support that is provided under EDP.

Whilst a budget has not been established (pre-appraisal) for the delivery of the proposed programme, it is anticipated by Invest NI that the total budget would be substantially less than the combined budgets for the two existing programmes. Furthermore, given planned changes relating to Local Government's responsibility in a number of areas of economic development, it is anticipated that funding for a New YEP would only be sought for a maximum of a 3-year period.

Should a basis for a future programme emerge from the appraisal work, this will require a formal casework submission and DETI / DFP and Ministerial approval and a tender procedure.

Specific clauses around duration and management will be drafted by Invest NI in consultation with Councils over the next few months. The new programme will be suitable for local shaping to act as conduit to engage this age-group (16-25 years old) to the wider EDP programme.

#### **ISSUE**

May be difficult to find provider to accept just one year of guaranteed business pending new Councils in May 2011.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

To be confirmed

## 7. Investing in Women

No separate budget or programme

## 8. Social Economy

Social Entrepreneurship programme will transfer to Councils.

Contract awarded to Enterprise NI from April 2009 to March 2010 with the option to extend for a further two one-year extensions.

### ISSUE

Presently a single contract but could be split into 11 post 2011. Could also be amalgamated with Enterprise Development Programme.

### RECOMMENDATION

To be confirmed

## 9. Neighbourhood Renewal

No separate budget or programme

## 10. Smaller-scale Tourist Accommodation

Responsibility will transfer to Councils with a token budget. Recently no funds are committed to this as the original scheme was funded by International Fund for Ireland, which has now been exhausted. The Barnett Review, recommends that responsibility for financial support for all tourism accommodation projects should transfer to another suitable body.

### Budget Transferring

The total budget proposed for transfer is £9.465m, this is made up of £8.065m per annum for the local economic development activity (Invest NI programmes) and £1.4m for the local tourism activity (NITB and Invest NI). It should be noted that identified programmes are subject to regular evaluation and economic appraisal which may result in changes being made to the activities (and associated budgets) which are currently identified for transfer.

The original budget proposed for LED transfer was £10.1m which was made up of £5.7m Invest NI baseline and £4.4m EU funding. The £8.065m now proposed has the advantage of being entirely baseline. Included within this sum is £1m of ERDF funding for the 'Go For It' campaign which may disappear under future funding, thus reducing the transferring baseline budget to £7.065m. This sum has the potential to be used for match funding drawdown of ERDF.

### **ISSUE**

DETI and Invest NI have a robust approach to policy and programme evaluation and programmes are regularly reviewed to ensure they are still meeting identified need. Since the RPA decisions were announced in March 2008 some changes have been made to the programmes originally announced to transfer and these have been reflected in this paper. There remains a possibility that some of the identified transferring programmes may be further amended as the transfer date approaches.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Representatives of the local government side should be involved in the evaluation of relevant programmes and should be consulted as decisions are made which may impact on those activities which are to transfer.

### **ISSUE**

Future matching funding may be able to be secured for elements of the Invest NI programmes transferring against £7.065m.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Provision will have to be made by DETI / INI for Councils to access and draw-down EU budget for such activities. This could be facilitated by having a specific 'budget line' created in the NI block of future EU funding programmes.

## Section 3

### Issues of Significance beyond DETI Sub-Group

The preceding sections have identified a range of issues which are specific to those activities which will transfer from DETI's agencies (Invest NI and NITB) to local government in May 2011.

During discussions of the Task & Finish Group, a number of wider outstanding issues have been identified. Reaching conclusions on these issues are out-with the remit of the Task & Finish Group but whatever decisions are reached will have an impact on a number of the specific outcomes/recommendations identified previously. It is likely that the issues identified below will also be relevant to the final conclusions of other Task & Finish Groups.

#### **1. Regional Coordination Mechanism**

Several of the programmes transferring would merit some form of regional coordination. Options considered include selection of a lead Council, a consortium approach or establishing a Service Level Agreement with a third party organisation such as Invest NI whom have indicated that they would be willing to undertake a degree of coordination in the initial period should Councils request them to do so. Obviously this issue has to be considered within the generic debate on-going on the most appropriate mechanism for regional coordination of services where applicable.

#### **2. Financial Transfer Mechanism**

Consideration has been given to the most suitable mechanism for the transfer of monies from Central Government or agencies to Councils under the RPA implementation. Whilst the DETI sub-group is aware that this issue is being considered generically, it wishes to highlight the need for an early resolution as the final decision taken will have an impact on how exactly the LED and Tourism activities will transfer. Following an analysis of options, the local government representatives have expressed a preference for monies to be transferred through the 'rate' mechanism as this would aid more flexibility in delivery. Practically speaking, it is likely to be necessary to use the 'grant' mechanism in initial years as it may be less complex to administer.

A decision needs to be taken with respect to how changes as a result of the current budgetary pressures are dealt with. It may be that the resources originally identified for transfer in 2007 and agreed in 2008, may be reduced as a result of CSR as we approach the 2011 transfer date.

Resources devoted to particular activities/programmes/functions may also change as the result of completed evaluations and changing Economic Development Priorities. Agreement is required regarding how agreed (prior to transfer) changes to identified activities should be handled. The issue of how the transferring resources are to be divided between the 11 new councils also needs to be addressed.

### **3. Budget Security beyond 2011**

The DETI Sub-group is conscious that limited funding exists within Central Government budgets beyond 2011. The CSR 2011 process in its early stages and will determine budget allocations for transferring programmes. The table submitted as part of this report has identified the status of budgets. It will be important for Councils to be able to work in partnership with Central Government on implementing the CSR process so that adequate budgets continue to transfer in future years in parallel with the transferring responsibilities.

### **4. European / Match Funding potential**

Contained within the INI programmes transferring is the sum of £1m ERDF which presently forms part of the 'Go for It' programme. Given the revision of EU programmes, this sum cannot be guaranteed beyond 2011. The baseline of £7.065m is the total core budget for all the LED programmes transferring. Since this is 'core' budget, there is the potential for this to be used to attract other match funding through leverage of other funds including European sources. It is possible the £1.4m Tourism transfer may also attract European match funding. However, in order for this to be a meaningful possibility, consideration should be given as to ringfencing of appropriate monies in future European programmes agreed at NI / DFP level to permit subsequent bidding by Councils for additional resources.

### **5. Future Economic Strategy / Enterprise Policy**

The policy background of economic development is undergoing significant change at present, which has implications for the future form and extent of programme design and delivery. The proposed NI Enterprise Strategy was put on hold pending the outcome of the Barnett Review. While the DETI Minister has endorsed the need for a new Regional Economic Strategy to be developed by a newly established Executive sub-group, this proposal is now being considered by the full Executive. Regardless of the outcome of the Executive's deliberations, the need for some kind of 'Local Economic Development Framework' through which the responsibilities of local and central government post RPA can be clearly defined is needed. Such a framework will need to complement the new Community Planning powers of councils and take account of the role of other stakeholders such as the Local Enterprise Agencies whose future role will be shaped by the ongoing review of the Local Enterprise Agency network.

### **6. Tourism**

Whilst some engagement ensued in the early period between NITB and the Transfer of Functions Sub-group, progress has been slow. Detailed debate was put on hold in the context of the work being taken forward by DETI and NITB on the creation of a new Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland. Once the new Tourism Strategy is sufficiently progressed, the Task and Finish sub-group will seek to re-engage with NITB and DETI on tourism aspects of transfer and the implications of the new Strategy for the new councils.

DRAFT



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	RPA: Suspension of Transition Funding
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kevin Heaney (ext. 6202)
<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>
1.1	Members will be aware that in order to facilitate the Review of Public Administration reform process, voluntary Transition Committees (vTC) had been set up in each of the proposed new 11 council areas (including Belfast). In terms of the Belfast vTC, it was agreed that the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would undertake this role with a second Committee meeting scheduled each month to deal with transition related business.
1.2	The vTCs had been established to work towards setting up the new 11 council model through undertaking the required preparatory work to facilitate the convergence of amalgamating councils and the transfer of functions from central to local government. This was intended to pave the way for Statutory Transition Committees, to have been established early in 2010, to take key decisions in advance of the new councils coming into effect in May 2011.
1.3	In order to support the work of voluntary Transition Committees, the DoE allocated £150k annual transition grant to fund Members allowances for participation on the vTCs (i.e. £2,700 Member allowance per annum), the temporary appointment (i.e. fixed-term contract) of a Change Management Officer and any support costs directly associated with the RPA transition process (e.g. commissioning specialist advice, training and development etc). A copy of the DoE funding letter of offer is attached at <b>Appendix 1</b> .
1.4	On 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2010, the NI Executive deferred its decision on the future of the RPA, which has resulted in elections to the existing 26 councils in May 2011 instead of 11 councils as planned. Consequently there are uncertainties in regards to the future of the RPA reform process, the timeframe for implementation, funding of any reform programme and the transfer of functions.
1.5	Despite this uncertainty and in response to the current financial austerity, local government has sought to maintain momentum and develop its own proposals in respect of an 'Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency' programme for the sector. The intention would be to support councils in delivering more efficient and value for money services to the citizen.
<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
2.1	The Chief Executive has recently received a letter from the DoE Minister, Edwin Poots (copy attached at <b>Appendix 2</b> ), informing councils that given the absence of clarity on the way forward for the RPA and the current financial pressures facing the Department, a decision has been taken to suspend the funding for council voluntary Transition Committee's with effect from 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2010.
2.2	In his correspondence, the Minister has indicated also that the funding for Change Managers would continue up until 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011 to support councils in their endeavours to find potential efficiency savings; and that the established RPA implementation structures (e.g. Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels) be stood down from immediate effect.

2.3	The removal of DoE transition funding and the standing down of the RPA delivery infrastructure reinforces the uncertainty in respect to any future prospect of local government reform, the future of transition committees and may in fact subvert any engagement between cluster councils which may be occurring.
2.4	The decision by the Environment Minister to suspend transition funding will result in the removal of the Transition Committee allowance currently paid to Members of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with affect from 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2010. This equates to approximately £225 per member per month up until March 2011, totalling £1,125 during this period.
2.5	Members will note that the Transition Committee allowance was 100% grant funded by DoE and is not a reduction in Members' basic allowance of £9,738 (which is inline with DoE guidance) or amounts paid under the Council's special responsibility allowance.
2.6	While the decision to schedule a second monthly meeting of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had been predicated on dealing with transition/modernisation related business, Members may wish to consider retaining the two meetings per month up until the end of this financial year as scheduled. This would provide the Committee with further scope to consider important corporate issues such as the development of the new corporate plan; financial planning and efficiency; capital programme; city investment; performance management; organisational development etc. alongside other routine Committee business.
2.7	Alternatively, Members may wish to consider reverting back to the position prior to the establishment of the voluntary Transition Committee whereby there would be only one scheduled Strategic Policy and Resources Committee per month. This would not prevent special meetings being arranged as required (e.g. as requested by the Committee; to received representation from outside bodies; or to deal with specific corporate issues such as corporate plan, city investment, capital programme etc.

### 3.0 Resource Implications

The decision to suspend funding for voluntary Transition Committees (vTC) will result in the removal of the allowance paid to those Members on the Council's vTC. This equates to £225 per month per Member up until March 2011, totalling £1,125 during this period.

### 4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

- i) note the contents of this report and, in particular, the removal of funding for Council's voluntary Transition Committees with affect from 31<sup>st</sup> October;
- ii) consider whether a letter should be issued to the Environment Minister outlining the Councils concerns in regards to the impact that such a decision may have on any future prospect for local government reform; and
- iii) consider whether two meetings of Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee should be retained for the remainder of the financial year as scheduled.

### 5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: DoE Letter of Offer re: Funding Transition Committees

Appendix 2: Correspondence received from the Environment Minister, dated 13<sup>th</sup> October, notifying of the suspension of funding for Council's voluntary Transition Committees





Department of the  
**Environment**  
[www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk)

Local Government Policy Division  
Goodwood House  
44-58 May Street  
Belfast  
BT1 4NN

Chief Executive  
Belfast City Council  
Chief Executive's Department,  
Adelaide Exchange,  
24-26 Adelaide Street,  
Belfast  
BT2 8GD

Tel: 02890 256046  
Fax: 02890 256080  
Email: [Simon.sloan@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.sloan@doeni.gov.uk)

Your Ref:  
Our Ref:

Date: 13 February 2009

## **DEPARTMENTAL FUNDING FOR TRANSITION COMMITTEES / TRANSITION MANAGEMENT TEAMS - LETTER OF OFFER**

Dear Chief Executive,

I refer to LG Circular 19/08 Transition Committees/Transition Management Teams – Funding Package. The Department is prepared to offer you funding for transition committee/transition management teams as follows:

- An Annual allowance of £2,700 per annum (pro rata for 2008/2009) for each member of your transition committee. In addition, expenses may be claimed and travelling will be paid in accordance with the rates determined by the Department under the Local Government (Travelling and Subsistence Allowances to Councillors)(No2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1973, as amended.
- Up to £100,000 per annum (pro rata for 2008/2009) for the salary and expenses of the Change Management Officer and any support costs directly associated with the Change Management Team (such as secretarial or consultancy support). This Letter of Offer, including Annexes, is a legally binding contract and you should read it carefully before accepting the offer of funding. This offer is subject to the conditions set out below.

### **1. Financial Assistance**

- 1.1.** The funding offer is as detailed above and is payable for costs that are wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in conducting the functions of the Transition Committee and the Transition Management Team.
- 1.2.** The functions of the Transition Committee and the Transition Management Team are as described in their respective terms of reference (LG Circular 16/08, Annexes 1 and 2)

- 1.3. Precise funding amounts will be based on invoiced costs and financial assistance is payable on production of validated invoices and authentication process as determined by the Department.
- 1.4. The above offer is the maximum amount payable and will not be increased in the event of an increase in costs.
- 1.5. The Department shall only provide financial assistance based on outputs delivered in accordance with the terms of reference for Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams (LG Circular 16/08, Annexes 1 and 2).
- 1.6. Financial assistance will only be paid provided that progress reports demonstrate that the outcomes stated in the respective terms of reference (LG Circular 16/08, Annexes 1 and 2), have been realised.
- 1.7. This offer of financial assistance is not transferable to any other project or organisation.
- 1.8. Definitions of terminology used in this Letter of Offer are given at Annex 1.

## **2. Claims for Financial Assistance & Payments**

- 2.1. Financial assistance will not be payable until constituent councils have:
  - 2.1.1. agreed a resolution to establish their Transition Committee and agreed on the date for the first meeting of their Transition Committee;
  - 2.1.2. nominated members of their Transition Committee (names, parties and council);
  - 2.1.3. appointed officers to their Transition Management Team (names, council and job title);
  - 2.1.4. agreed on the lead council and nominated a person in that council for purposes of budget, banking and financial matters;

Councils must provide the Department with written confirmation of all the above information.

- 2.2. In advance of payment in respect of costs arising from change management, the Department must receive satisfactory evidence of work undertaken by a Transition Management Team i.e. evidence such as minutes of meetings etc., as outlined in [section 10](#), below.

- 2.3. No substitution arrangements should be made for members of Transition Committees, and therefore no funding will be paid in respect of substitutes.
- 2.4. Payments in respect of the allowances and salaries element of the grant will be paid quarterly in advance. Allowances and expenses should be paid, in the first instance, by individual councils/lead council. Claims should be co-ordinated by the lead council and submitted to the Department for reimbursement.
- 2.5. Claims for payment in respect of other expenditure, supported by copy invoices etc. should be submitted to the Department and will be paid quarterly in arrears.
- 2.6. All payment claims should be made on the official forms issued by the Department. No other forms shall be accepted. Specimen copies of these forms are provided at Annex 3. Claims must be accompanied by supporting original documentation.
- 2.7. The lead council shall provide the Department with further information and clarification in relation to any aspects of the Transition Committee and Transition Management Team as the Department may from time to time request.
- 2.8. Payment of funds will be made directly into the lead council's bank account. (see paragraph 12.1)
- 2.9. There shall be no obligation on the Department to make payment in respect of claims, which are received more than 3 months after the end date of the financing period.
- 2.10. The Department accepts no liability in respect of any loss attributable to any delay in the payment of funding or to any suspension, reduction or cancellation of financial assistance.

### **3. Withholding/Repayment of Financial Assistance**

- 3.1. The Department reserves the right to suspend, defer or withhold or clawback any or all of the payment and/or require the lead council to repay part or all of the financial assistance if:
  - the conditions of this offer are not met; or
  - any information given to the Department on behalf of the lead council in connection with the application or claim for financial assistance is found to be false or misleading or there has been a failure to disclose any material fact which would have had a bearing on the Department's consideration of the application; or
  - there is a substantial or material change in the nature, scale or timing of the project; if the project is used for purposes other than those specified in the application; or

- if the project has in any other way not been implemented in accordance with these conditions of offer.

#### **4. Default**

##### **4.1.** The following events of default will apply:

- The constituent councils are in breach of any of its obligations under this Letter of Offer and have failed to remedy such breach within 28 days of a written request from the Department to remedy the breach.
- The constituent councils fail to repay to the Department any sum due by it whether under these terms and conditions or otherwise.
- The constituent councils are for any reason no longer able to implement the Project.
- If any other event occurs in relation to the constituent councils that it might be reasonable to expect it to materially and adversely affect their ability to comply with the obligations of this contract.

**4.2.** Then in any such event the Department may suspend or terminate the agreement made between the Department and the lead council in this Letter of Offer and its acceptance. Then the Department shall be entitled to seek repayment from the constituent councils. The amount repayable shall be the total payment of Transition funds (other than those received from another source), or such lesser amount as the Department at its discretion may determine.

#### **5. Changes to the Project**

**5.1.** The funding provided by the Department shall only be used for the purposes of the project as defined in the terms of reference for Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams (LG Circular 16/08, Annexes 1 and 2) and approved for financial assistance by the Department under the terms and conditions detailed in the Letter of Offer.

**5.2.** Any proposed or anticipated changes over the lifetime of the project must be notified in writing at an early stage to the Department. Continuation of financial assistance will be subject to the written approval of the Department and formal amendment to this Letter of Offer.

**5.3.** Failure to inform the Department of any changes and obtain its approval in writing may result in the termination of the funding and the Department may require the lead council to repay any monies paid.

**5.4.** Any notification to the Department detailing changes to the project must include:

- The reasons for the change
- Details of the change itself
- An explanation of how the project still meets its objectives
- Reasons why the project still merits funding from the Department

## **6. Financial Management Systems**

- 6.1.** The lead council must demonstrate effective controls and present clear audit trails of all transactions of total expenditure relating to the project.
- 6.2.** The lead council must immediately inform the Department in the event of the identification of any administrative errors in the project funding, acts of fraud and/or any circumstance that has caused or is likely to cause a loss or misuse of funding. The lead council must submit a full and detailed report in writing to the Department.
- 6.3.** The lead council's accounting records must separately record all monies received and expended under this Project.
- 6.4.** The lead council must have documented internal procedures for expenditure and financial control including bank account details, cheque signatories, and expenditure authorisation levels.

## **7. Insurance**

- 7.1.** The lead council shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Department against all actions, proceedings, costs, claims, demands, and liabilities arising out of or resulting from all or any of the activities associated with the Project.
- 7.2.** The lead council shall maintain such insurances as are necessary to cover all possible liabilities and will ensure that adequate insurance is obtained for any asset purchased and maintained in force during its lifetime. The lead council should ensure it has appropriate employee liability insurance if applicable.

## **8. Nominated Contact/Officer**

- 8.1.** A duly authorised and empowered official of the lead council must accept this offer on behalf of the constituent councils in of the Transition Committee. The lead council's nominated representative shall be known as the Nominated Contact/Officer. The lead council must advise the Department if the Nominated Contact/Officer changes. The Department's written acknowledgement will be forwarded to the lead council.
- 8.2.** The Nominated Contact/Officer shall sign all subsequent communications to the Department, including claims for payment.

**8.3.** If before the Project has been satisfactorily completed the Nominated Contact/Officer wishes to resign, retire or otherwise disassociate him/herself from the Project, (s)he shall immediately inform the Department and liaise with the Department in relation to the appointment of a new Nominated Contact/Officer. Until that appointment has been approved by the Department (in writing) and the new Nominated Contact/Officer has acknowledged that (s)he is liable and contractually bound to the Department as if (s)he had been named in the original Letter of Offer, the Nominated Contact/Officer at the time of this offer shall remain liable to the Department whether or not (s)he is still actively associated with the Project.

## **9. Disclosure**

**9.1.** The Department reserves the right to publish details of the project and financial assistance referred to in the Letter of Offer at any time.

## **10. Inspection & Reporting**

**10.1.** The lead council must keep and make available on request records relating to the work of the Transition Committee and Transition Management Team, to report on progress against targets, as defined in the respective terms of reference (LG Circular 16/08, Annexes 1 and 2), and in accordance with any other guidance which may be issued by the Department.

**10.2.** Minutes of the meetings of the Transition Committee and Transition Management Team must be submitted to Local Government Policy Division.

**10.3.** The Department/agents of the Department shall have the right to inspect the Project at any time and to require such further information to be supplied as they think fit and to be provided with such documents or items as they shall require.

## **11. Equality and Neutrality**

**11.1.** No aspect of the activity being funded should be party political in intention, use or presentation; or likely to be perceived as discriminatory on grounds of religion, colour, race, gender or disability. Any activities, such as campaigning, by the constituent councils must be in furtherance of, and ancillary to, its main purposes. The Department shall judge as to whether or not any activity of the constituent councils offends against this clause.

## **12. Bank Account**

**12.1.** All Departmental monies for the Project will be lodged in the lead council's bank account. Details of the bank account should be forwarded to the Department. The lead council shall ensure that all Departmental funding relating to the project is identifiable as such.

**12.2.** Any changes to the bank account details must be notified to the Department in a letter signed by the Project Principal. All such changes must be notified to the Department before implementation.

**13. Acceptance of Offer of Financial Assistance**

**13.1.** Please confirm that both the above Letter of Offer and the terms and conditions contained in it are acceptable (pro-forma attached – Annex 2). The completed letter should be returned to Simon Sloan, Local Government Policy Division, Department of the Environment, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Goodwood House, 44-58 May Street, Belfast, BT1 4NN.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Maye', written in a cursive style.

**Ian Maye**  
**Local Government Policy Division**  
**Department of the Environment**

## DEPARTMENTAL FUNDING FOR TRANSITION COMMITTEES / TRANSITION MANAGEMENT TEAMS

### Definitions of Terminology

Terminology	Meaning
“Letter of Offer”	The letter to which these terms and conditions are attached, setting out the details of the Project for which interim funding is available from the Department.
“establishment of the Transition Committee”	The latest date on which the constituent councils resolve to form a Transition Committee.
“The Department”	The Department of the Environment (in Northern Ireland).
“Constituent councils”	Councils establishing Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams
“Lead council”	One of the constituent councils, as agreed between them, to be responsible for finance, record keeping and reporting functions.
“Funding”	Financial assistance paid to the constituent councils for the purpose of member allowances and functions delivering the outputs identified in the Letter of Offer and in the terms of reference for Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams (LG Circular 16/08, Annexes 1 and 2).
“The Project”	The project as described in the Letter of Offer and terms of reference for Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams (LG Circular 16/08, Annexes 1 and 2).
“Outputs”	The targets defined in the terms of reference for Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams (LG Circular 16/08, Annexes 1 and 2). These form the basis of payments to councils.
“Nominated Contact/Officer”	A representative to be nominated by the lead council for signing this Letter of Offer, subsequent communications with the Department and payment claims.
Local Government Policy Division (LGPD)	A Division of the Department of the Environment. Based in Goodwood House, May Street, Belfast at the time of issue of this Letter of Offer.



**DEPARTMENTAL FUNDING FOR TRANSITION COMMITTEES / TRANSITION  
MANAGEMENT TEAMS**

**Letter of Acceptance**

Dear Mr Maye,

I accept the terms and conditions of the Department of the Environment's Letter of Offer and its Annexes dated \*th February 2009. I confirm that I am duly authorised and empowered to sign this letter of acceptance.

**Project Principal**

<b>Signature 1</b>	_____	<b>Date</b>	_____
<b>Name</b> <sup>Ⓣ</sup>	_____	<b>Position</b> <sup>Ⓣ</sup>	_____
<b>Council</b> <sup>Ⓣ</sup>	_____		_____
<b>Address</b> <sup>Ⓣ</sup>	_____		
<b>County</b> <sup>Ⓣ</sup>	_____	<b>Postcode</b> <sup>Ⓣ</sup>	_____

(<sup>Ⓣ</sup> – Print in block capitals)

TRANSITION COMMITTEE.....

**Table 1**

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2009**

Committee Members*	Amount paid £
<b>Total payments</b>	
<b>Advance payment by Department</b>	
<b>Balance due</b>	

\*Please advise the Department immediately of any change in membership.  
I certify that the information given above is correct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Authorised officer (nominated officer)*

EXPENSES CLAIM FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2009

Payee	Description	Invoice/ Travel Claim date (copy attached)	Amount Claimed £
<b>1. Travel Expenses</b>			
<b>2. Other Expenses</b>			
		<b>Total</b>	

Claims must be supported by copy invoices/travel claims  
I certify that the information given above is correct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Authorised officer*

OFFICIALS' REMUNERATION CLAIM FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2009

Name	Basic Salary £	Employer's national insurance contribution £	Employer's superannuation contribution £	Total Salary costs £
			Total	

Claims must be supported by documentary evidence  
I certify that the information given above is correct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Authorised officer (nominated officer)*

OFFICIALS' EXPENSES CLAIM FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2009

Payee	Description	Invoice/ Travel Claim date (copy attached)	Amount Claimed £
<b>1. Travel Expenses</b>			
<b>2. Other Expenses</b>			
		<b>Total</b>	

Claims must be supported by documentary evidence  
 I certify that the information given above is correct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Authorised officer*

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To: Chairs of Transition Committees  
Vice Chair and Members of the Strategic  
Leadership Board  
Chairs of the Policy Development Panels  
President of NILGA

DoE Private Office  
Room 717  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8GB

Telephone: 028 9054 1166

Email: [private.office@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@doeni.gov.uk)

Your reference:

Our reference: SUB/579/2010

13 October 2010

Dear Colleagues

At my meeting with the local government representatives on 15 September 2010, the work of the Transition Committees was discussed in the context of future governance options for leading the sector's Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) programme.

During the discussions I explained that my Department was facing severe financial pressures and that it would be necessary to make a decision on the future of Transition Committees, in advance of the Governance Working Group's Report on governance structures.

I undertook to reflect not only on the Transition Committees but also the other elements of the current reform structures namely the Strategic Leadership Board and the Policy Development Panels.

In the absence therefore of clarity from the Executive on the way forward with the local government reform programme I have decided today to announce the suspension of the funding for Local Government's 11 Voluntary Transition Committee's with effect from 31 October 2010.

As you know the Committees were set up to work towards the new 11 council model, however with the May 2011 deadline no longer achievable and the uncertainty around reframing the RPA timetable, I have decided to take this decision.

From my meetings with the sector in recent months it has become apparent that no significant role was envisaged for Transition Committees in their collaboration plans. I understand many of the Committees were no longer meeting as they felt they carried out no useful function towards reorganisation.

In light of the budgetary pressures faced, it is hard to justify my Department's continued funding. Some Committees may decide to continue to meet but this will have to be on a voluntary basis without the support of DOE funding.

However, I am keen that Change Managers continue with their valuable efforts to find efficiency savings within their Council groupings. I have therefore decided that funding for Change Managers will continue until 31 March 2011.

I remain committed to the reform programme and when a new delivery timetable is determined and a role for Transition Committees is decided by the sector we can then revisit the responsibility the Committees might play in the reform programme.

It is also difficult because of the lack of clarity to justify the continuation of the Strategic Leadership Board and the Policy Development Panels. It is my intention therefore to stand down these bodies from today.

I would appreciate if you could ensure that all members of your respective Transition Committees and Policy Development Panels are advised of my decision.

Copies of this letter have also been sent to Council Chief Executives, the Chair of SOLACE and to the Trade Union Side lead representative.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwin Poots', written in a cursive style.

**EDWIN POOTS MLA**  
**Minister of the Environment**





### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Revenue Estimates 2011/12
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Head of Finance and Improvement

#### Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Council is statutorily obliged to set a district rate by 14 February every year. It is important to note that the rates bill received by ratepayers contains two principal elements. The first is the district rate which is set and received by local Councils. The district rate accounts for 45% of the total rates bill. The second element is the regional rate which is set and received by the Northern Ireland Executive and this accounts for the remaining 55%. In terms of the district rate, this provides 74% of the total funding of Council activities; the remaining amount comes from fees, charges, derating support and specific grants.
- 1.2. The rates bill, including both the district and regional elements, is levied by the **Land and Property Service (LPS)** which is an executive agency of the Department of Finance and Personnel. Rates are a property tax, based on the valuation (the NAV) of how much the property would be rented for in the case of business premises, and how much it would be sold for (capital value) in the case of domestic premises.
- 1.3. Each year, normally in November, the **LPS** will issue to local Councils an estimate of how much it expects to raise from the total rate collected from their area. This amount is known as the **estimated penny product (EPP)**. Economic conditions obviously play a major role in the growth or decline of the rate base. In times of economic prosperity the rate base will normally rise, whilst in times of recession the rate base will fall as businesses close and the level of bad debt increases. However neither of these things happen immediately as it takes time for new properties to be put on the rate base and similarly it takes time for properties to come off the valuation list.
- 1.4. Members will note that the amount to be collected by way of the rate is always an estimate. This means that once the rate is actually collected for the year of account, an **actual penny product (APP)** will be established and a **finalisation** figure will be provided by the LPS to the Council. This will mean either that less has been collected than estimated, in which case the Council will be required to pay money back to the LPS, or more has been collected than estimated, which means that the LPS will pay a balance payment to the Council. **Members will be happy to note that the finalisation figure for 2009/10 has now been received from the LPS and shows a slight positive surplus of around £200k.**

1.5. Apart from the notification of the **EPP** and **APP** the other main variables in setting the rate are the agreement of:

- (i) the departmental estimates
- (ii) the level of the capital programme
- (iii) the level of the city investment strategy
- (iv) special contingency budgets, eg Waste Plan
- (v) the level of reserves.

1.6. The agreed Council process for setting the rate for 2011/12 is set out in the table below:

Mar	Budget Panel and SP&R 19 March	Agreement on rates process for 2011/12 and Overview of efficiency programme
May	Budget Panel and SP&R May	Indicative rate and efficiency target For 2011/12
Aug		Issue rates guidance to Depts. Progress efficiency programme
Sept	Member briefing on capital prog. Budget Panel 2 Sept Corporate Plan workshop 8 Sept SP&R 24 September	Preparation of draft estimates by Department Discussion on capital programme & SRFs Discussion on corporate priorities Financial position 2010/11 Update on efficiency programme
Oct	Budget Panel 12-14 Oct SP&R 22 Oct	First cut on rates position 2011/12
Nov	Member briefings Budget Panel	Second iteration of rates position Impact of Spending Review and EPP
Dec	Budget Panel and SP&R December	Discuss and finalise options for rates position taking into account potential savings and the implications of managing reserves & financing the capital programme
Jan	SP&R January Department Committees	Recommendation to Council on district rate 2011/12
Feb	Council February	Agree district rate 2011/12

### Proposed rates setting process for 2011/12

1.7. The Committee agreed at its meeting on 21 May 2010 that an upper target for the indicative rate for 2011/12 should be set at 2.5%, followed by a direction to officers to work up three scenarios within this limit of 0%, 1% and 2.5%.

1.8. In addition an indicative efficiency target of £1.7m was agreed and officers were directed to develop an efficiency programme which in so far as possible would not impact upon the delivery of frontline services.

1.9. The purpose of this report is to give an initial assessment on the range of scenarios for the rates of 2011/12. It is important to note that much more detailed work is required and there is a range of external variables, most notably the EPP, which are still not fully established. More detail on these variables is set out at paragraph 3 below. The figures presented within this report are therefore **subject to change and will be refined in the period between now and Christmas**. Nonetheless Members have expressed a desire to engage early in this process and the initial scenarios are presented to assist Members in the party briefings and consideration of the capital programme which will take place over the coming weeks.

1.10 Members will also need to consider the issues arising from two other reports on the agenda: The Proposals for Use of the 2010/11 Underspend and the report on the Capital Programme.

## Key Issues

### 2.0 Current Position

#### 2.1 Scenario 1 – zero growth in the rates

The first scenario for the consideration of Members is one which means zero growth in the rates. Based on current estimates, this scenario would mean the following:

	2011/12 Increase £m	% Increase
Departmental Estimates	2.3	2.01%
City Investment Strategy	0.0	0.00%
Capital Programme	0.7	9.47%
Waste Plan	1.3	106.35%
<b>Rate Increase before Reserves</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.40%</b>
Movement in Reserves	-4.5	-100.00%
<b>District Rate Decrease</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-0.18%</b>

**2.1.1 Departmental Estimates** – This is the 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 2011/12 and these are subject to ongoing review and challenge. Based on current estimates, this scenario would mean that **net expenditure is budgeted to rise by £2.3m** which equates to some 2% increase from 2010/11. Two of the main elements are increases in landfill tax and gate fees (£1.3m) and increased pension contributions (£0.6m), both of which are outside the Council's control. There has been considerable emphasis placed on minimising departmental estimates and absorbing inflationary pressures. The indicative efficiency target of £1.7m has therefore been surpassed. In order to achieve the overall zero growth scenario, Departments have identified efficiency savings of £2.2m. These are explained in more detail in Appendix 1.

**2.1.2 Capital Programme** - There is also a separate report on the agenda on the capital programme. Most of the capital programme is currently financed through loans and therefore the rates set need to cover the cost of borrowing to the council. This scenario provides the additional £700k needed to finance existing ongoing schemes in 2011/12 and to finance the **Mercury Abatement at the Crematorium and developments at Dunville and Woodvale Park. Additional capital schemes which are subject to Members' prioritisation cannot be funded from this current zero growth scenario.**

**2.1.3 City Investment Strategy** – This scenario assumes **no growth** from the £3m per annum currently invested in the City Investment Strategy. This fund has been put in place to support major iconic projects and help lever in additional money into the city. This fund is currently supporting the Titanic Signature Project, the MAC, the Lyric and the Connswater Greenway. There is a separate report on the agenda on Investment in the City.

**2.1.4 Waste Plan** – The costs of managing waste continue to rise. Indeed, it is estimated that costs to Belfast City Council will be some £5m higher in 2014/15 compared to 2010/11. The council needs to prepare financially for this increase in order to avoid a one off hike in the rates in 2014/15. The zero growth rates scenario therefore assumes a stepped increase of some £1.3m to help meet this financial commitment in 2014/15, building on the £1.2m set aside in 2010/11. This money will primarily be directed to actions which enhance recycling, thus reducing the amount of waste for landfill and assisting the Council to meet its landfill diversion targets. Future reports will provide more information on the financial implications of the Waste Plan.

**2.1.5 Reserves** – Members will recall that a significant element of the rate increase in 2010/11 was attributable to the need to increase reserves to an acceptable level. Given that approach and the 2010/11 underspend, this zero growth scenario assumes that there does not need to be a contribution from the rates to reserves in 2011/12.

### **2.1.6 Summary**

Taking into account departmental cost increases, the additional financing needed for the capital programme and the funding needed for the Waste Plan, reductions of almost £8m are needed in order to achieve this zero growth rate scenario. These reductions represent some 6% of rateable income.

### **2.2 Scenario 2 – 1% growth in the rates**

This scenario reflects the same position as scenario 1, except that it also allows some £1.5m to be made available to fund City Priorities. These could be used to fund additional revenue projects and/or additional capital projects. For ease of reference, the £1.5m would fund some £15m of capital expenditure if it was all invested to finance capital schemes.

### **2.3 Scenario 3 – 2.5% growth in the rates**

This scenario reflects the same position as scenario 1, except that it also allows some £3m to be made available to fund City Priorities. These could be used to fund additional revenue projects and/or additional capital projects. For ease of reference, the £3m would fund some £30m of capital expenditure, if it was all invested to finance capital schemes.

**2.4** The separate report on the agenda on the capital programme sets out potential capital projects which could be prioritised for investment within scenario 2 or 3 and Appendix 2 sets out some information on potential options for investment in revenue programmes on a local area basis.

## **3.0 Future Variables Impacting on Rates Setting**

As already advised, there are some significant variables which are still uncertain at this stage which could significantly alter the scenarios outlined above. The key outstanding variables are:

**3.1 Clarity on the EPP** – the estimated penny product (EPP) is provided by LPS to the Council as an estimate of what the rates will yield in income for the Council in 2011/12. As the Council is dependent on the district rate for some 74% of its income, this figure can make a significant difference to the rates that the council needs to set in order to cover its planned expenditure. The EPP will only be available in November, although engagement is continuing in the interim with LPS officials.

**3.2 Effects of cuts in government funding** – the implications of the Spending Review on the council for 2011/12 are not known at this stage but should external funding be withdrawn, this would have an impact on council services and potentially staff. Further work is needed around the risks to external funding as the situation becomes clearer.

**3.3 Decisions on the use of the 2010/11 underspend** – there is a separate report on the agenda on this issue. If the proposals within the report are agreed, they would provide £700k of additional savings in 2011/12 which are not factored into the scenarios above.

**3.4 Review and Challenge** – much work is still ongoing to review the figures presented and ensure their accuracy.

**3.5 Level of the Regional Rate** – whilst this has no direct impact on the estimated expenditure of the council, the regional rate represents some 55% of the rates bill experienced by rates payers. It will therefore be a relevant factor in determining the level of district rate and is currently unknown.

#### **4.0 Proposed Process For Moving Forward**

It is recognised that this is only an initial assessment of the current position and that much more work and engagement is needed with Members in the coming weeks and months to provide Members with the necessary information and advice to support their decisions about the level of rates to be set.

In particular more work is planned on:

- Obtaining greater clarity on the future variables;
- Developing the detail on what can be achieved within the various scenarios;
- Working up proposals for any investment in City Priorities, including prioritisation of the capital programme;
- Providing further advice and information on the Waste Plan;
- Providing further advice on reserves.

This will enable the scenarios to be worked up in more detail for Members' consideration. Ongoing engagement is planned with Members during November through the Budget and Transformation Panel, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and party briefings. A further report will be provided to Members for the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on 19 November.

#### **5.0 Decision Required**

To note the information provided and that a further report will be provided to Committee at its meeting on 19 November.

#### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- (a) note this update report on the rates and that further engagement is planned on this issue in the coming weeks and months;
- (b) agree that the efficiency programme should achieve a minimum of £2.2m in 2011/12 in the areas outlined; and
- (c) approve the appointment of a permanent graphic designer in order to facilitate the achievement of some of these efficiencies

<b>Documents Attached</b>
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Appendix 1 – Efficiency Programme – 2011/12 Appendix 2 – Options for investment in City Priorities
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## Efficiency Programme – 2011/12

**Table One** below presents the latest position in relation to the capturing the efficiency savings and presents the actual versus target position. As you can see from the table the actual figures have surpassed the required £1.7m efficiency target.

**Table One**

Efficiency Split	Target £'000	Actual £'000
Assets / Land	200	294
Budgetary		
Challenge	388	769
ICT	195	98
Income Generation	122	245
Procurement	357	320
Service Review	440	522
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>2,248</b>

The following sections provide an overview of the type of projects/activities that have been completed across departments to highlight the diversity of work that has been completed to deliver the 2011/12 Efficiency Programme.

### Assets & Land

A total efficiency saving of £294k has been identified under this theme. The efficiencies are made up from a range of areas, including reviewing car parking arrangements, reductions in rental costs/rates/premises costs and a reduction on the corporate land bank costs for unused properties.

### Budgetary Challenge

Significant savings of £769k are proposed to be realised through challenging budgets across the Council. Some examples of this type of savings are:

- More co-ordinated approach to graphic design - £135k
- Reductions in planned costs of conferences - £77k
- Consultancy - £292k
- Reductions in printing and stationery requirements - £38k
- Reductions in materials needed - £55k

A temporary graphic design post has been employed for the last year in Corporate Communications and has made savings in external design agency costs. It is therefore proposed that a permanent post is created, costing some £35k, and this will achieve savings of £135k per year. Committee approval is needed to create this permanent post.

### ICT

Efficiencies have been identified totalling £98k. These relate to various initiatives, for example integration of the invoice register, consolidation of utility bills, and e-invoicing. They will reduce the requirement for manual processing and therefore reduce agency staff costs. Server virtualisation and the roll-out of the print strategy will also achieve savings through a reduction in electricity and toner expenditure respectively.

## **Income Generation**

A total of £245k has been identified under this theme. For example, additional income is proposed to be generated by ISB from external sales of existing ISB products and an increase in Crematorium fees and charges (subject to committee approval).

## **Procurement**

The total efficiency saving from the procurement theme is £320k and some of the key areas making up this figure are:

- Advertising vacancies;
- Floral displays;
- Consultancy;
- Catering supplies;
- Banking contract; and
- Playground/sports equipment.

## **Service Reviews**

A major challenge for the organisation is to find ways to deliver better value for money services. Members have already made it clear that priority should be given to streamlining back office functions such finance, HR, Payroll, Business Support etc.

Service review efficiencies totalling £522k are being proposed, around half of which have been identified in Finance and Resources Department. Parks & Leisure Department will make operational service efficiencies, which will absorb much of the additional costs of the Connswater Community Greenway in 2011/12. A range of service reviews have been completed within the Health & Environmental Services Department. These included completing a review of the shift patterns in the Recycling Centres which reduced the requirements for overtime. Within the Development Department, savings are proposed from reductions in overtime costs and a reduction in posts.



### Options for investment in City priorities

Members asked for information about what could be achieved should the Council decide to go for growth options in the rate. The following issues and opportunities have been identified:

#### Mitigating risks to external funding

The assumption inherent within the current estimates, that other things remain equal, carries with it some degree of risk in what is volatile financial environment. Commentators have noted that the Northern Ireland economy continues to show a decline in key economic indices and in terms of confidence. A number have suggested that the worst effects of the recession will be felt when the impact of public expenditure cuts hit the system. Whilst the impacts of the CSR will take some weeks to become clear, it would be prudent to plan our finances in such a way that mitigates the risk to future service delivery and investment of reductions in funding.

A key area where there is potential for CSR to impact is on those services which are grant funded by central government departments, including food safety, community safety and good relations. **A crude approximation of the impact of a 20% reduction in this funding is that it could mean a shortfall of £500k in 2011/12 on the basis of current estimates.** Other risks also exist with respect to the impact of the economic downturn on the rates base and on income from Council services, such as that already being felt by building control.

#### Continuing Capital Investment

There is a separate item on the agenda on the capital programme which sets out proposed priorities for the capital programme. For information, **approximately £1m of additional capital financing (approximately 1% in the rate) will provide £10m of capital schemes** and would permit Members to agree further capital commitments.

#### Investing in local areas

At the workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> September, Members reinforced the need to make a difference to local people on the ground during these difficult times. Members were frustrated by the lack of a co-ordinated approach to regeneration locally and at plans that had no resources devoted to their delivery in local areas. A growth scenario in terms of revenue provides opportunities for Members to consider the following:

- Enhance thematic working across the city – this budget has been held at £500,000 in the current estimates.
  - Potential projects include: Youth Diversionary Projects as part of community safety/young people themes; ensuring the future sustainability of the community safety warden scheme; further work to improve public behaviour in waste minimisation and littering through targeted education programmes; enhanced good relations programmes, such as the “City Hall for all” programme and local projects;

- Create enhanced programmes to ensure maximum value is derived by local communities from any new capital spend, for example programming activity to support the parks redevelopments at Woodvale and Dunville; this will of course be dependent on delivering the capital projects.
- Pilot new and innovative approaches to integrated service delivery at a local level and the engagement of local people in improving their areas. Working in collaboration with Members, on a North/South/East/West basis, a sum, notionally £250,000, could be committed to facilitating local planning, delivering local programmes and events and environmental improvements in the North, South, East and West of the city. All content would be determined by Members in engagement with local communities (Appendix A).
- Boosting the local economy and supporting regeneration projects; for example piloting new and innovative approaches to local regeneration; addressing dangerous or dilapidated properties; building the Council's capacity on development planning; enhanced community tourism initiatives and city events.

These proposals and others can be worked up in more detail for Members' consideration.

## **Appendix A: Growing the “City of Neighbourhoods” model - A new way of planning with local people**

### **1. Members want better local planning and integration of local services**

At the workshop on corporate planning on 8<sup>th</sup> September members made a number of points about the current corporate plan and the changes that they wanted to see in the new plan. In particular Members said:

- That the Council’s interventions in the city must be seen, felt and touched by local people and communities;
- The local people are frustrated by local planning processes that are not linked to resources available to deliver them;
- That the Council must work towards facilitating and improving services and areas with people rather than simply for people;
- That we must work to better integrate services locally, firstly as one Council and then with partner organisations.

These are aims which may take us the life-cycle of the next corporate plan to fully realise. Experience has shown that trying to change the entire system can be laborious and can take a long-time to yield results. It is therefore proposed that a specific project is created which symbolises and tests our ability to deliver on all the principles set out above which has the potential to yield real results for local people in the first year of the new plan.

### **2. We know that people’s priorities differ across the city**

The NSEW workshops held with Members, our most recent survey and the experience of front-line services show that different issues are important in different parts of the city. For example, our public survey showed East prioritising Value for Money; South the Economy, West, Safety and North, young people. This proposal will support Members to empower local people to get things done about the kind of low cost/high impact issues that matter to them, within the context of a specified budget which will allow the Council to get local people involved in decisions about local budgets in a manageable way, whilst the longer-term infrastructure and capacity to deliver full participatory budgeting is being developed.

This approach - doing with local people, rather than for – also allows the local communities to capitalise on the skills, experiences, professional expertise, networks, time of local people to improve local areas. Services and activities are created together so that there are mutual benefits for the user, for the neighbourhood and for the Council.

Without tapping into the enormous resources that the public already possess, we are missing a huge opportunity to improve our programmes, services and facilities, and offering programmes that people and value and use – where people can give something and get something back. Tapping into this is the ultimate efficiency.

We want to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the organisation, which allows good practice to flourish be recognised. In turn, this will help us deliver better for the city.

**Making the most of our capital assets**

The Council has a number of assets, which are incredibly important across the city. However, as Mike Morrissey has highlighted<sup>1</sup>, you can only sweat the asset so far; the real efficiencies are derived from doing business differently. For example, the Grove WBC has still room to develop and could be further enhanced by drawing community services into what is an attractive, welcoming building. A key aim of this project would be to allow for the co-facilitation of multiple services and programmes across a variety of BCC venues and to start to bring ore consistency to usage terms, opening hours etc...so that it is simple and easy for local people to know what they can expect.

**The proposal**

Our aspiration is to better connect with local people and to build capacity within the organisation and the city to influence and address local issues, tackle inequalities and improve relationships. A new integrated neighbourhood working approach would develop clear **outcomes, values and processes** which will steer our approach to working in and with local neighbourhoods.

Through this neighbourhood delivery approach, we will ensure that the ‘business as usual’ of the organisation has a substantially increased profile, and ensure that the various functions and services of the organisation work cohesively in local neighbourhoods, delivering the Council’s quality of life agenda.

Over the period April 2011 – March 2012, it is therefore proposed, that we actively pursue an integrated planning model, across all departments. The objectives of the project are to:

- use integrated planning at a neighbourhood level as a tool to improve regeneration, community cohesion, community safety and health and well-being outcomes;
- develop 4 integrated plans using all of the Council’s resources to work in and with local neighbourhoods in a co-ordinated manner;
- enable and empower local people to actively participate, through planning and volunteering opportunities, in the area plans;
- enable local people to determine small-scale capital enhancement programme and programmatic budget priorities;
- establish an inter-community and statutory forum to design and oversee the linked area plans; and
- compare and contrast a range of neighbourhood approaches to engaging with other statutory partners.

**4. Indicative activities and budget**

Spatial planning facilitation (4 areas)	100,000
Local programmes and events (participatory budgeting)	400,000
Small-scale capital enhancements	400,000
Learning and development (city-wide staff and volunteers)	20,000
Marketing and communications	<u>20,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£940,000</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Good Relations in a changing urban environment (May2010) M. Morrissey



### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	Capital Programme Prioritisation and Financing
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Michael Stanley, Capital Programme Manager

#### Relevant Background Information

**1.0** The purpose of this paper is to outline the current status of the Capital Programme and to seek approval for a number of urgent schemes. The report will also provide Members with an indication of potential future schemes that could proceed depending on Members' decisions relating to the level of rate and the amount of loan finance it would support.

#### Context

**1.1** In order for a capital scheme to get underway in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations two fundamental decisions are required by SP&R Committee:

- a) Departmental Committees will consider schemes and request the SP&R Committee to approve the scheme as part of the indicative capital programme and
- b) the SP&R Committee must separately make available funding for the scheme as part of the Council's overall financial planning – through agreeing the level of the rate and/or through agreeing some other type of funding packages such as Grant Aid

Depending on the type of project there may be a number of other Committee and Council decisions such as particular options, grant submissions etc, associated with the financing of the project.

The Capital Programme therefore consists of three types of projects:

### **1.2 Committed and funded**

These are projects that have been approved by the Departmental Committee, SP&R Committee and Council and for which loan funding has been made available through provision in the rates or other means. The vast majority of these schemes are underway and will be completed in the next few years. A list of the current committed and funded schemes is attached herewith as **Appendix 1**.

### **1.3 Committed but not yet funded**

These are projects which have been approved by the SP&R Committee and Council but for which funding in terms of rate increases to support borrowing have not yet been agreed. A proposal to make provision of £700k is built into the zero rate scenario, which if accepted would permit these schemes to proceed. Schemes included here are projects deemed necessary in the coming years eg cemetery provision, mercury abatement at the crematorium, Dunville and Woodvale Parks etc. A list of these schemes is included at **Appendix 2**.

### **1.4 Uncommitted and unfunded**

These projects are schemes that the various standing committees and departments would like to progress. The projects are being worked through the Gates process which challenges the need, the scope and addresses necessary economic appraisal issues should the SP&R Committee give approval to fund loans. The process to date has refined this list of schemes and further decisions are needed by Members on prioritisation and the implications for the setting of the rate. These schemes are listed at **Appendix 4**.

## **2. Finance Position**

**2.1** The committed and funded projects loan requirement will be £45m by 2011/12. If the committed and unfunded projects are also funded the loan requirement would rise to £62m by 2015/16 based on current estimates of project costs. This would require additional funding to be put in place, which would require support through the rate. In the case of Mercury Abatement and Dunville/Woodvale Parks £700k has been provided in the estimates this year which would permit these schemes to proceed, if other conditions are met. In the case of new cemetery provision further work is presently being undertaken which may result in changes in current provision.

However the Committee also needs to be aware of a number of other developments which will have an impact in the medium term.

**2.2** Firstly, the financing of the capital programme for 2011/12 is being considered as part of the rates setting process. When the new corporate plan is agreed a longer term capital financing strategy will be needed as part of the development of the medium term financial plan for the council.

**2.3** Secondly, the capital programme is made up of physical projects which are based on estimated costs and include a number of external uncertainties relating to land acquisition, planning, site remediation, community/user agreements, grant aid and so on. This means that the programme is a dynamic process that does not always precisely align to the forecast capital financing which sometimes leaves additional capacity for smaller schemes.

2.4 Thirdly, as planned projects are worked up internal factors mean they can change radically in terms of scale and scope and consequently required financing. The Gates process is a means of controlling this ensuring we have tighter specifications, more accurate estimates, realistic timetables and a reduction in the need for variations or compensation events. The most current example of this is the new cemetery provision which is committed but unfunded but has a forecast estimate of £13.6m. The Cemetery Working Group is now considering various options which may result in a recommendation to Committee for a major reduction in regard to this level of financing.

### **Additional Financing**

#### ***2.5 Provision for Committed but not yet funded***

The current rate setting process will provide the necessary funding for 2011/12 to meet the required financing of those projects that have not yet been funded but which commence during this financial year. This is currently estimated to be approximately £700k of additional capital financing. This will be dependent on the progression of existing schemes and all the necessary approvals being in place for any schemes that will commence. It should be noted this financing includes the Mercury Abatement Scheme for the crematorium and Dunville and Woodvale Parks up to a total of £1m each subject to match funding of £2m being provided by the DSD. The DSD have bid for this funding as part of the CSR process.

#### ***2.6 Impact of £1m Reserves Position***

In the current financial year £4.5m was included to support the Council's Reserves position. It was agreed at Committee on 11 December 2009 that £1m of this money be redeployed to finance new capital commitments. At this point this money has not yet been allocated to capital schemes but some portion could be used to advance urgent schemes this year as detailed later in this report (priorities for immediate approval).

#### ***2.7 Outcome of Options Evaluations on Existing Projects***

Should the options being considered for existing projects (eg. The Cemetery Above) achieve any reduction in the forecast estimate for projects then any shortfall could be applied to new projects within the prioritisation list. However, the financing of these schemes will of course have to be linked to the broader rates questions and allocation of resources.

### **3.0 Priorities for Immediate Approval**

Of those projects that have been put forward as part of the indicative capital programme we would now seek approval to proceed with the four listed below for reasons outlined. This would require the use of approximately £300k of the existing £1m held as a reserve for the potential use of the capital programme;

**3.1** Re-use facilities at Household Recycling Centres must proceed to avail of the available grant funding of approx. £100k with a net cost to the Council of £16k otherwise the grant will be lost.

**3.2** Clement Wilson Bridge replacement with a net cost to the Council estimated at £180k. At present there is a health and safety risk which will become seriously detrimental if not addressed soon.

**3.3** Waterworks / Westland – Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) with a net cost to the Council of £NIL as Groundwork NI have sourced 100% grant aid via SEUPB but require Council to undertake the works.

**3.4** In order to be ready for the World Police and Fire Games in 2013 the Mary Peter's Track 2013 (8 lane track and spectator stand) with a current net estimate of £3m cost to the Council needs to be in a position to commence construction if Council give approval to fund this as part of the rate setting process. Committee is asked to agree that officers work with others in DCAL and Sports NI to establish if any further funding is available. It would also be sensible to undertake a number of design stages which will have some related cost so that if it is agreed to support this project as part of the capital programme there is sufficient time to undertake actual construction next year.

#### **4.0 Other Issues on Prioritisation**

**Appendix 4** contains a list of schemes on the indicative capital programme that are uncommitted and unfunded.

The number of schemes that can be progressed will depend upon agreement on how the schemes might be funded.

Two issues are presently being considered by the Council that might impact upon this. Firstly, the use of the underspend on one off non recurrent issues, which serve to reduce base costs in future years. If for example the Council agree to fund a further targeted redundancy programme and other savings proposals as part of the underspend proposals for 2010/11, this could release £700k which would fund a further £7m borrowing.

Secondly, the level of the rate which is set for 2011/12. Members have already been advised that a 1% rise would provide £10m additional funding and a 2½% rise would provide up to £30m additional funding (if the additionality is all invested in the capital programme).

**4.1** A series of Party Briefings will take place between now and the end of November which will request Members to prioritise the capital programme related to each rate scenario provided, ie 1% and 2½%. A further report will then be made to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration at the same time as the level of rate is being decided.

#### **4.2 Vehicle Replacement Programme**

Given the financial constraints that exist and the demand for available finance within the Capital Programme we would propose to carry out a Value For Money review of the Vehicle Replacement Programme. This will ensure that the limited monies available for capital investment are spent in the most cost effective manner by the Council.

#### **Resource Implications**

Decisions on the number and cost of schemes to be financed under the capital programme will have an impact on the level of the rate needed to support the borrowing



required. Essentially 1% on the rate equates to funding of £10m of capital spend.

**Recommendations and Decisions**

Members are requested to:

- 1 In accordance with paragraph 3, agree to the allocation of £300K, from the £1m of reserves allocated for potential support to the capital programme, to progress the capital scheme outlined in Appendix 3; namely the Clement Wilson Bridge, Waterworks/Westland MUGA, Re-use Facilities at Recycling Centre and necessary preparation work for the Mary Peter's Track;
- 2 Agree a series of Party briefings on the prioritisation of the capital programme before the end of November;
- 3 Agree a value for money study review of the vehicle replacement programme.

**Decision Tracking**

**Key to Abbreviations**

None

**Documents Attached**

- Appendix 1 – Committed and Funded
- Appendix 2 – Funding Being Sought in Current Rate-setting Process
- Appendix 3 - Uncommitted but Priorities for Immediate Approval
- Appendix 4 - Other Schemes

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**COMMITTED AND FUNDED**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Waterfront Hall - Main Auditorium Stage Elevators & Suspensions	about to be finalised
Palmerston Road HRC : Demolition and Extension	about to be finalised
Ormeau Park - Depot Office/Bothy (Linked to Park Road HRC)	about to be finalised
Transfer Station at Dargan Road and Associated Infrastructure Development	about to be finalised
Belfast Castle - Garden Wall	about to be finalised
Olympia Pitch Replacement	about to be finalised
Cavehill Path Restoration - Phase 1	about to be finalised
St George's Market - Heating and Ventilation System (including solar control film)	about to be finalised
Ulster Hall Major Works	defects period
Grove Leisure Centre - New Well-Being Centre/Equipment	defects period
Falls Swim Centre	about to be finalised
Strangford Avenue PF - Changing Accommodation - Phase 2	defects period
Belfast Castle Playground - Public Toilets/Office	about to be finalised
Cremators at Roselawn - Upgrade for LPG	about to be finalised
The Zoo Souvenir Shop	about to be finalised
Alexandra Park Depot Development/Upgrade Refurbishment (including Parks Depot)	about to be finalised
WFH Fire Alarm System	about to be finalised
Computerised Leisure Management System	ongoing
Ancillary Equipment - Computer Services for I.S. Strategy	ongoing
Ancillary Equipment - Telecommunications Enhancement	ongoing
Ancillary Equipment - Other Software Support	ongoing
City Hall Major Works	about to be finalised
Development of staff Toilets and Changing Facilities at Recycling Centres	about to be finalised
Broadway Roundabout Sculpture	underway
New Cemetery: Legal /Recognition Fees / Ground Investigations	ongoing
Outdoor Skate Park Facility	commencement imminent
Gasworks Northern Fringe: Planning and Ground Investigations	ongoing
Duncrue Industrial Estate In Ground Gas Extraction System	about to be finalised
Maysfield Demolition and Clearance	ongoing
Replacement of Fuel Station - Duncrue Complex	underway
Ballysillan Leisure Centre Refurbishment of Synthetic Pitch	about to be finalised
Grosvenor Community Centre: Provision of Synthetic Pitches	about to be finalised
Roselawn Extension/Development; Site Development	commencement imminent
Alleygates Phase 2	commencement imminent

Corporate Telecoms/IS System	ongoing
IT Security - DLP Encryption / Device Control	ongoing
IT Security - Security Log Analysers	ongoing
IT Security - Single Sign On	ongoing
IT Security - Virtualised Data	ongoing
Duncrue Industrial Estate - Waste Heat Utilisation	in procurement
Loop River - New Facilities	in procurement
Denmark Street CC - Extension and Refurbishment	about to be finalised
Park Road HRC (linked to Ormeau Park Bothy)	about to be finalised
Falls Park Refurbishment	about to be finalised
McCorry Park Playground	about to be finalised
Dargan Road Landfill Gas Utilisation - Electric Cable Installation	about to be finalised
Financial Systems Development	ongoing
Time Attendance and Management System	ongoing
Blythefield Playing Fields - New Sports Pitch	about to be finalised
Vehicles - 2008/09 Rolling Replacement Programme	about to be finalised
Vehicle Rolling Replacement Programme - 2009/10	about to be finalised
Vehicle Rolling Replacement Programme - 2010/11	underway
Eversleigh Street Playground	about to be finalised
Loughside Recreation Centre	feasibility
Belfast Zoo - Mountain Tea House Reinstatement	in procurement
Sliabh Dubh Playground	deferred; pending grant
Replacement Floor for Shankill Leisure Centre	about to be finalised
Springfield Avenue Site A Childrens' Playpark	underway

**FUNDING BEING SOUGHT IN CURRENT RATE-SETTING PROCESS****COMMITTED, BUT NOT YET FUNDED**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Progress</b>
City of Belfast Crematorium - Mercury Abatement System	in procurement
Dunville Park Refurbishment	feasibility
Woodvale Park Refurbishment	feasibility
New Cemetery and Crematorium Provision	ongoing
Roselawn: Site Development Section Y	planned for 2011
Roselawn: Site Development Section Z1	planned for 2015
Roselawn: Site Development Section Z2	planned for 2020
Roselawn: Site Development Section Z3	planned for 2025
Roselawn: Site Development Section Z4	planned for 2030

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**Uncommitted but Priorities for Immediate Approval**

- to be met from monies set aside from reserves for capital projects this year

Project	Gross Cost	Nett Cost
Clement Wilson Bridge – Replacement	£200,000	£180,000
Waterworks/Westland – MUGA	£375,000	£0
Re-use facilities at Household Recycling Centres	£117,000	£15,600
Mary Peters Track 2013 Preparation work	£65,000	£65,000

## Appendix 4

## Other Schemes

<b>Project</b>	<b>Gross Cost</b>	<b>Nett Cost</b>
Pitch Provision - Pitches and Changing Accommodation Strategy	£8,730,000	£8,730,000
Mary Peters Track	£3,000,000	£2,000,000
Alleygates - Phase 3	£700,000	£700,000
Gasworks Northern Fringe - Site Development	£1,675,000	£1,675,000
Botanic Gardens - Tropical Ravine	£4,000,000	£1,500,000
Welcome Centre Re-location	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
Titanic Memorial Gardens	£120,000	£120,000
Wireless Bin Monitoring System	£217,000	£217,000
Zoo - Floral Hall Refurbishment (2)	£3,565,000 to £5,000,000 depending on option	£1,500,000
Cliftonville Playing Fields Redevelopment	£605,000	£151,250
Development of New Recycling Centre (Springfield Road)	£2,900,000	£2,900,000
Barnetts Demense - Mountain Bike track	£336,000	£75,000
Grove Demolition and Clearance	£500,000	£500,000
Northforeshore Business Park Infrastructure	£28,860,000	£24,497,500
Public convenience strategy	£1,000,000	£1,000,000
Andersonstown LC - Handball Courts and Spectator Accommodation	£655,000	£0
St Georges Market - rewiring and emergency lighting	£142,500	£142,500
Skegoniel site incorporation into Grove Park	£600,000	£600,000
New Leisure Centre - North	£14,850,000	£14,850,000
New Leisure Centre - South	£14,850,000	£14,850,000
New Leisure Centre - East	£14,850,000	£14,850,000
Waterfront Hall: Conference Centre	£25,000,000	£8,000,000
Vehicle replacement programme 2011/12	£1,900,000	£1,900,000
City Hall Changing Places	£250,000	£250,000
Automatic Public Toilet Facility - Boucher Crescent	£138,000	£138,000
Public Toilet Facilities - Shaws Bridge	£258,000	£258,000
Tommy Patton Memorial Park - Public Toilets	£212,750	£212,750





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**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Proposals for Use of the 2010/11 Underspend</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Head of Finance and Performance

**Relevant Background Information**

As discussed at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 24 September, there is a potential forecast underspend of £2.9m in 2010/11. Given the early stage of the year it was agreed that up to £1.9m of this underspend is subject to debate at this stage, with any remaining underspend considered at a later point in the year, when the financial position is clearer.

In terms of the utilisation of the £1.9m forecast underspend to be discussed at the moment, it was agreed that Members would take into account:

- (a) that this is an in year underspend which should be utilised to support **one off revenue initiatives rather than ongoing revenue expenditure**, to avoid an implication for the 2011/12 rates setting exercise; and
- (b) in order to maximise the benefit for the 2011/12 rates setting exercise, it would be preferable if such one off revenue initiatives **either pulled expenditure forward** into 2010/11 from 2011/12 (eg. invest in reserves in 2010/11 rather than as part of 2011/12 rates setting etc ) or **lowered the cost base** of the council in 2011/12 (invest to save type initiatives); and
- (c) the **monies** must be **capable** of being planned for and **spent by 31 March 2011**

It was agreed that Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would consider a report on specific proposals for the utilisation of the £1.9m underspend at its meeting on 22 October 2010 and Members were asked to liaise with officers regarding any such proposals.

**Key Issues****Proposals for Utilisation of £1.1m of the 2010/11 Underspend**

A range of proposals have been developed for the consideration of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which would utilise some £1.1m of the underspend. These are set out in the table below and are described more fully in Appendix 1.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Cost £k</b>	<b>Cost £k</b>
<b>Savings Proposals</b>		
Targeted Voluntary Redundancy	800	
Energy Savings	110	
Water Savings at the Zoo	60	
Subtotal		970
<b>Investment Proposals</b>		
Investing in Local Places	100	
Dealing with Derelict Properties	60	
Subtotal		160
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1130</b>

As set out in Appendix 1, the specific utilisation of the Investment proposals would be worked up with the relevant Standing Committee, if approval is given by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to proceed on this basis.

**Implications for Rates Setting for 2011/12**

Together these saving proposals are estimated to make some £700k savings available for consideration as part of the 2011/12 rates setting process and would provide additional services in relation to local areas and derelict properties. For information, £700k of savings could finance £7m of capital expenditure. Given the mid point of the year, approval is sought for the above proposals so that the savings can be achieved for 2011/12 and/or the services provided by 31 March 2011.

**Consideration of the Remaining £0.8m Underspend at this time**

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed on 24 September that up to £1.9m could be considered for utilisation at this stage of the year. Therefore, Members can identify and agree additional proposals (which meet the criteria) of up to £0.8m or indeed, replace any of the above proposals. Party groups are asked to liaise with the Director of Finance and Resources urgently regarding any such alternative proposals, so that, if agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its next meeting, they can be actioned by 31 March 2011. If there are no further proposals, any unutilised underspend can be considered in the Financial Report for Quarter 3 2010/11, as set out below.

**Consideration of any Unutilised Underspend**

Should the actual outturn remain at £2.9m, there will still be an unutilised underspend, the scale of which will depend on the extent of proposals agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee above. It is proposed that decisions on the utilisation of this remaining underspend should wait until the Financial Report for Quarter 3 2010/11, but

possible uses could include:

- as first priority, investment in the District Fund Reserve, thus avoiding any further contribution to the District Fund Reserve in the rates setting process for 2011/12. Strategic Policy and Resources Committee was advised on 11 December 2009 that the reserves of Belfast City Council should be in the range of £8m to £10m. Some £1m of the 2010/11 underspend would be needed to provide District Fund reserves of £10m by 31 March 2011;
- investment in other reserves such as Repairs and Renewals Fund (which allows the Council to financially plan for the cost of future major repairs), Election Fund, City Investment Strategy etc; and
- offsetting any reductions in the planned level of rate income in 2010/11 from the write off of rates debt.

**Resource Implications**

Proposals have been identified which would utilise some £1.1m of the 2010/11 underspend and achieve savings of £700k from 2011/12. Based on current estimates, this would leave some £1.8m of unutilised underspend at this stage.

**Recommendations**

Members are recommended to :

- (a) consider and approve the proposals set out in Appendix 1, which would utilise £1.1m of the 2010/11 underspend:
  - £248k is used for the VR exercise in Parks;
  - agree that work is now undertaken with the Council's departments to identify any areas of potential redundancy with a view to a report being brought back to standing Committees and SP&R in relation to any detailed proposals for VR up to a maximum cost of £1.2m, including the type and number of posts; redundancy costs; payback period and potential savings.
  - £110k is used to secure energy savings at a number of council properties;
  - £60k is used to secure water savings at the Zoo;
  - £100k is used to improve the tourism offer in local areas;
  - £60k is used to carry out a pilot programme to more proactively manage derelict properties.
- (b) liaise with the Director of Finance and Resources regarding any further proposals, which would be considered at the next Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, up to a maximum of £0.8m; and
- (c) agree that any remaining unutilised underspend is considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in the Financial Report for Quarter 3, 2010/11

**Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Proposals for Utilisation of £1.1m of the 2010/11 underspend

1. Voluntary Redundancy

**Estimated one off costs - £1.2m (£400k already within 2010/11 budgets)**

**Estimated ongoing savings - £600k**

Departments have indicated that there may be areas of their workforce which could be downsized through voluntary redundancy at an estimated one off cost of £1.2m with the following advantages:

- Reductions in the cost of the workforce, generating estimated ongoing savings of £600k for consideration as part of the 2011/12 rates setting exercise;
- Improving the effectiveness of service delivery with no detriment to front line services; and
- Avoiding unnecessary staffing costs following service reviews or reductions in external revenue

Some £400k out of the £1.2m estimated requirement is already available within the 2010/11 corporate budgets for voluntary redundancy. Therefore it is estimated that some £800k of the 2010/11 underspend could be utilised for this purpose.

However, it is not proposed to undertake a further Council wide rightsizing exercise (i.e. seeking VR applications across all at risk groups) but rather to work up **targeted** business cases for any posts subject to voluntary redundancy. This work would be completed in consultation with the trade unions, with controls in place on payback periods and to ensure that redundant posts are then not refilled by alternative means.

Redundancy terms were agreed by Council in 2007 and provide voluntary redundancy compensation up to a maximum of 66 weeks. These terms represent value for money for the Council and provide reasonable compensation to individuals. Indeed, they are already in line with the current Government proposals which substantially reform redundancy payments to Whitehall civil servants.

It should be noted that a report was discussed at the Parks and Leisure Committee on 14 October which proposed changes to the Team Leaders structure. By reducing 26 posts to 20, there is a potential to save some £98k with a one off cost of £248k and a payback of 2.5 years. **It is proposed that Members of SP&R should consider if the one off costs of £248k should be funded from the 2010/11 underspend (as included in the £1.2m total estimated cost above).**

Early indications would suggest that other areas for examination may be Leisure Services; Finance and Resources; Facilities Management; and Building Control. **It is proposed that work is now undertaken with the Council's departments to identify any areas of potential redundancy with a view to a report being brought back to standing Committees and SP&R in relation to any detailed proposals in this regard up to a maximum cost of £1.2m, including the type and number of posts; redundancy costs; payback period and potential savings.**

## 2. Energy Savings

**Estimated one off costs - £110k**  
**Estimated ongoing savings - £50k-£80k**

It is important that the council takes steps to manage its energy consumption in order to reduce energy costs and minimise future Carbon Reduction Charges, which come into effect next year. In that regard it is proposed that some £110k could be spent on a number of energy efficiency measures such as:

- Installation of ½ hour electricity meters so that we can monitor more closely some 92% of our total energy consumption (rather than some 70% currently);
- Changing ISB from oil to gas –fired heating, which is currently 25% cheaper than oil and offers similar savings in carbon emissions;
- Upgrading the boiler in Ligoniel Community Centre which is currently 25 years old;
- Installing/upgrading cavity wall and roof insulation to approximately 10 buildings;
- Upgrading the Building Energy Management System in 40 locations in order to secure better energy management by local staff;
- Replacing oil heating of water at Blanchflower Stadium with gas fired point of use water heaters

Indicative savings estimates, should these initiatives be approved, would be some £50-£80k per annum, representing a payback of less than 2 years.

## 3. Water savings at the Zoo

**Estimated one off costs - £60k**  
**Estimated ongoing savings - £50k**

Currently Belfast Zoo obtains two thirds of its water from the local water table via a bore hole at no cost, with the remaining mains supply costing £50k per annum. Until recently this figure was actually 100% i.e. all free water. However recent collapses within the bore hole and possible reductions in the water table combined with possible underground leaks have resulted in a shortfall of up to 50 cubic metres per day from the bore hole that has to be made up from mains water supply. If the bore hole was to fail completely, the Zoo would have to obtain all its water from mains supply at an approximate cost of £230k per annum.

The proposal is to carry out a hydro-geological survey of the Zoo site to identify a suitable location for a second bore hole and to subsequently provide same at an approximate cost of £30K. In addition, an underground survey and the repair of identified major leaks will assist in returning the zoo to dependency on the bore hole(s) alone for water supplies, at a further cost of approximately £30K. Together these will in the first instance offer a potential saving of £50K per annum with a payback of less than a year. In the event of the existing bore hole failing it will offer an alternative source of supply to the Zoo without incurring the cost of mains water supplies.

**4. Investing in Local Places Cost £100k**

One of the main themes of the draft Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework (BISTF) 2010 - 2014 due to be finalised this November is a 'bottom-up' approach to tourism development across the city, growing the tourism offer and spreading the benefits from the city centre to city wide communities and neighbourhoods. The BISTF 2010 – 2014 expands the concept of outer areas into Local Tourism Destinations, which not only looks at East, North, Shankill, South and West Belfast but specific clusters of product and assets that could act as attractors to drive visitors and income into the area

This proposal is for some £100k to initiate Bringing Tourism into Neighbourhoods and demonstrate some early wins to Members and Stakeholders as part of the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014. Based on a preparatory economic appraisal, research, consultation and agreement of priorities some pilot projects could be delivered by March 2011. The pilot projects would be agreed by Development Committee but would need to be easily delivered and reflect East, North, Shankill, South and West Belfast. Every effort will be made to achieve an equitable spend across the five sectors of the city however the ability to do so will be dependent upon a range of factors which may not necessarily be within the Council's control.

**5. Dealing with Derelict Properties Cost £60k**

Derelict properties are now becoming more widespread in the city due to the economic downturn, as evidenced by the number of requests made to Building Control to deal with such properties having almost doubled in the last two years. This leads to areas looking dilapidated leading to complaints from people living nearby and can even put potential investors off investing in a particular area.

There is potential for the Council to be more proactive about such properties by establishing a budget to carry out a pilot programme in 2010/11 in a number of areas to assess how effectively the problem can be dealt with and test out some of the legal processes and definitions. The extent of the works could range from carrying out minor superficial works to the property to reduce its negative impact on the area, through to demolition in certain circumstances.

It is proposed that a pilot be commenced by targeting a number of specific areas, some of which have already been raised through the North, South, East and West briefings with Members.

It is estimated that £60k could deal with approximately 6 such properties during 2010/11, using a variety of means. If approval is granted, a detailed survey will be carried out by the Building Control Surveyors and further work with Members will take place through the ongoing North, South, East and West briefings to identify and prioritise suitable properties, linking them with other regeneration programmes where possible. The proposed list which will identify suitable properties across the city and classify the potential works into short, medium and longer term, will be agreed through the Health and Environmental Services Committee before works commence.

This would be an opportunity to more proactively approach a long standing problem and lead to positive neighbourhood regeneration at a local level.



## Budget and Transformation Panel

**Thursday 14 October 2010**

Cllr I Crozier	DUP(Chair)
Cllr D Browne	UUP
Cllr M Browne	SF
Cllr M Jones	All
Cllr P McCarthy	SDLP
Cllr R newton	DUP
P McNaney	Chief Executive
J Thompson	Director of Finance and Resources
A Hassard	Director of Parks and Leisure
S McNicholl (minutes)	Strategic Planning and Policy Manager

### 1. Estimates 2011/12

The Director of Finance and Resources outlined the current position with respect to the financial estimates for 2011/12, including issues relating to departmental estimates, the capital programme and efficiency. Members discussed the information presented, together with future variables which might impact on final figures such as potential cuts in government funding.

#### **Action Required:**

Members agreed that the Director of Finance and Resources should:

- Submit a report on the revenue estimates to SP&R Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, setting out the current level of the estimates and the variables which may come into play during the rate-setting process;
- Make recommendations to the Committee as to how Members will be engaged in finalising the revenue estimates for 2011/12.

### 2. Proposals for use of the underspend in 2010/11

The Director of Finance and Resources reminded Members that, as discussed previously with the Panel and SP&R Committee, there is a potential forecast underspend of £2.9million in 2010/11. Given the early stage of the year it was agreed that recommendations should be made as to how up to £1.9 million of this underspend should be utilised. She reminded the Panel that since this is an in-year underspend, proposed expenditure needed to be non-recurrent, maximise benefit to the 2011/12 rate-setting exercise by pulling expenditure forward or lowering the cost-base of the Council in 11/12 (invest to save) and that the expenditure must take place by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Members considered proposals relating to targeted voluntary redundancy; energy savings; water savings at the zoo; investing in local places and dealing with derelict properties.

**Action Required:**

Members agreed that the Director of Finance and Resources should:

- Submit the recommendations on utilisation of the projected underspend to SP&R Committee together with a process for engaging Members in identifying opportunities to utilise the balance of the projected underspend before end March 2011.

**3. Capital Programme**

The Chief Executive outlined the key issues with respect to the capital programme, outlining the fact that there were three types of schemes – committed and funded; committed and unfunded and uncommitted and unfunded. He outlined the unfunded schemes listed and said that of these there were four which the Director of Property and Projects wished to have expedited due to either pressing health and safety issues, potential risk to funding or challenging timescales, these were: the Clement Wilson Park Bridge, the Waterworks/Westland MUGA, the Mary Peters track and reuse facilities at household recycling centres.

**Action Required:**

Members agreed that the Director of Property and Projects should:

- Submit a report on the capital programme to the SP&R Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> October and in this report outline for Members the level of investment and subsequently expenditure growth required, to progress the unfunded projects listed. The Panel also recommended that there should be further engagement with Members on prioritisation of the capital programme.



**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Debt Management</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance & Resources, Ext. 6083
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Trevor Wallace, Financial Accounting Manager, Ext. 6097

**Relevant Background Information**

Members will recall that at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 24 September 2010 the Quarter 1 2010/11 Financial Reporting was discussed.

Included within this report was information relating to the Council's debt position and debt performance indicators.

	Days Q4 09/10	Days Q1 10/11
% debt recovered 30 days average	23	36
% debt under 90 days old	57	47

It was agreed that a report would be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in October outlining the current debt position as well as proposals for improvements to the billing and collection of outstanding accounts.

In 2007, a new financial system (SAP) was introduced and the debt collection process within the Council was centralised into a Central Transactions Unit (CTU). This provided the Council with a degree of transparency around the debt position of the council that previously did not exist.

This has resulted in the debt recovery process being documented and streamlined and reductions in the debt levels year on year.

As a result the overall debt figure has continued to fall on a yearly basis:

31 March 2008	£10.0m
31 March 2009	£7.5m
31 March 2010	£5.0m
30 June 2010	£3.9m
30 September 2010	£3.6m

### Key Issues

As well as the overall level of debt reducing, the level of debt over 90 days has also reduced from £2.1m at 31 March 2010 to £1.9m at 30 September 2010. However, the level of debt over 90 days has not reduced as quickly as we would like.

In light of the current economic climate, customer debt is becoming harder to collect and recover, especially as the number of customers in bankruptcy and liquidation has increased over the last two years.

Steps that have been undertaken so far to improve the debt position are:

- The introduction of performance indicators as reported previously to committee are helping to monitor the effectiveness of the recovery position and help to target areas for improvement;
- Regular meetings are held with the service departments and/or Legal Services representatives to analyse the debt position and to gather information and advice on how best to proceed on a case by case basis;
- Facilitating payment by credit card;
- Payment plans have been introduced, in conjunction with departments, to enable customers to pay their outstanding invoices over a period of time, whilst continuing to pay current invoices; and
- Referring customers to the Small Claims Court.

In order to improve the councils overall debt position further we are looking at the following areas:

- Improving billing information by ensuring accurate billing data is collected at first point of contact and sufficient information is included on the invoice to enable the customer to pay without having to request additional information;
- Reviewing and reducing the timeline in relation to the sending of reminder letters;
- Exploring the possibility of allowing customers to pay over the internet;
- Promoting the use of direct debit as a means of paying invoices for regular

customers.

Some of the above areas can be actioned and implemented quickly whilst others will require some development work, specifically around systems. The level of debt will continue to be monitored monthly within the service and reported on a quarterly basis through the Financial Reporting framework.

#### **Outstanding Accounts – Provision of Services to Associated Companies**

A report was taken to Health and Environmental Services Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2010 considering whether the Council could restrict services to an associated company of a business which has gone into liquidation that had outstanding accounts with the Council, particularly where directors of the company in liquidation are also directors of the associated company. This issue affects the entire Council and therefore also needs to be referred to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

As limited companies are separate legal entities, the Council would not normally have recourse against a company which continued to trade, where the directors were also directors of a company in liquidation. However the Town Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive has advised that, in certain circumstances, the Council could consider withdrawing services to an associated company where the directors were also the sole or substantially the same directors of a company in liquidation which had amounts owed to the Council.

Such decisions would, however, be required to be taken on an individual basis and would need to consider whether the company had a statutory right to the service, such as Building Regulations, or if it was in the interests of the Council to continue the service, for example Regulatory or Licensing services. The business nature of the service may also need to be considered, for example Commercial Waste Collection, where businesses pay a commercial charge for the service. Where the Council perceives that there is a risk of further financial loss in dealing with an associated company, alternative payment methods may be considered, rather than foregoing potential external income. In such cases, the relevant Director would assess, taking advice from Legal Services where appropriate whether withdrawal of service or alternative payment method is appropriate.

The Town Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive has also advised that there is no requirement to restrict publication of the details of individual outstanding accounts which have been written off by the Council and as such the restriction could now be removed from the Committee reports.

#### **Resource Implications**

Level of debt at 30 September 2010 is £3.6m.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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Members are requested to note the key issues around the management of debt, and note the advice of the Town Solicitor & Assistant Chief Executive regarding the provision of services to companies, whose directors are also directors of a company in liquidation which owe amounts to the Council.
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<b>Decision Tracking</b>
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None
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<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
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None
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Item No:

## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	City Investment – Physical Infrastructure Projects
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217
<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>
1.1	There is no doubt that the current economic climate and budgetary pressures (squeeze) facing the entire public sector within Northern Ireland will have an adverse impact upon the future level of investment within the City. It should be noted that central government departments are anticipating cuts of 8% in flat cash term over the next CSR period, which will amount to around 20% in real terms. The biggest cut however is anticipated in capital expenditure with reductions of up to 40% being anticipated over the period. This will undoubtedly affect the level of public investment in the city.
1.2	City investment is important in terms of the City tax base (i.e. rates), the Council's principal source of income. Investing in necessary infrastructure also provides a platform for growing the City's economic competitiveness, while the rates growth allows enhancement of public service delivery and further improvements to quality of life.
1.3	Despite the recent economic downturn, the Council has continued to invest in the development of the City including, for example, the recent refurbishments of the City Hall and Ulster Hall as part of its capital programme, and continued investment in new and improved facilities and services (e.g. leisure, community development, community safety, waste and recycling, parks and open spaces, supporting good relations etc.). The Council has also developed a City Investment Fund to support major projects that will leave a lasting legacy for future generations.
<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
2.1	Belfast has benefited substantially from the amount of private and public investment in the city over the past 5 years. However the present recession, coupled with the cut in public expenditure, poses a real threat to continued investment. In these circumstances real civic leadership is now required from the Council to engage with Government and work with individual departments in a mutual endeavour to support further investment in the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the city.
2.2	The commitment of the Council in investing in the continued development of the City was highlighted with a recent notice of motion moved at Council by Councillor Rodway on 5 <sup>th</sup> October, - <i>"This Council acknowledges that the United Kingdom is facing the most severe economic downturn for many decades and that, in such times, there is an obligation on the Council to retain its vision of strategic, equitable and sustainable development of the City. To this end, the Council recognises that adequate funding needs to be made available in the medium to long term and accordingly agrees to plan for year upon year increases in the Council reserves"</i> . It was agreed that the Notice of Motion would be passed to the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

2.3	Two important levers which underpin the Council's continued investment within the City is its Capital Programme and City Investment Fund.
	<p><b>1) Capital Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funded through rates based loans, this is a rolling programme of capital investment which either improves/replaces existing facilities/assets/infrastructure (e.g. parks improvements; leisure; civic buildings) or provides new facilities/investment property (e.g. Gasworks, leisure provision, pitch provision etc).</li> <li>▪ While there are growing affordability pressures on the capital programme and an ongoing need to secure greater efficiencies, it is important to strike a balance by taking a long-term strategic approach and continue to invest in the development of our City and important Council facilities. Major issues such as safety, healthy lifestyles, culture, sport, the environment can all be usefully supported via the capital programme.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) City Investment Fund</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The establishment of the City Investment Fund (CIF) is a clear demonstration of the Council's commitment to action and its wish to contribute to the vibrancy, prosperity, competitiveness and attractiveness of the City. It seeks to support the development of major iconic capital projects and lever (pump-prime) additional public and private sector investment into the City.</li> <li>▪ The CIF is currently financed, up to a ceiling of £30m, through an annual % rate contribution and capital receipts obtained through the realisation of surplus assets.</li> <li>▪ To date, the Council has committed £16million (approx.) under the CIF, profiled up until 2012-2013, to four iconic projects including Connswater Community Greenway; Titanic Signature Project; Lyric theatre and the Mac which will have major impacts on communities, tourism, culture and the economy.</li> <li>▪ The CIF investment has levered in access of £160million of public and private sector investment in the City.</li> <li>▪ Members' engagement will continue over the coming months to further explore and identify other potential CIF projects and to secure political consensus on project priorities.</li> </ul>
2.3	<p><b>City-Wide Projects</b></p> <p>Members previously authorised officers to have discussions with other public service providers (including Government Departments and the Strategic Investment Board) to discuss the potential of creating a joint framework for city investment and to deliver key strategic projects for the city (e.g. provision of rapid transit system; stadium; tourism &amp; cultural infrastructure; further regeneration of the City Centre; investment in gateways etc). Through working in partnership with key stakeholders, the Council seeks to establish a common understanding of the needs of the City and a shared commitment to investing in 'Place'.</p>
2.4	<p>It is becoming clear that a City Investment Framework that resonates with the new Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI II) would help to support investment into the City. Furthermore, a greater shared understanding of the planned investment activities by government departments and the Council would be a step forward and enable potential opportunities for collaborative solutions with added benefit to emerge.</p>
2.5	<p>Work on the Framework, and discussions within the political process have now reached the stage where it is important that the Council now engages at a political level with the Ministers of relevant Departments. The Committee has already expressed its wish to meet with relevant</p>



	Ministers on a systematic basis (eg those Ministers with responsibility for DoE, DSD, DRD, DCAL and DARD) to discuss the current economic challenges facing the City, potential risks to future infrastructure investment and to explore how delivery can be progressed. <b>Appendix 1</b> outlines the immediate issues Members may wish to discuss with particular Ministers.
2.6	Derry/Londonderry and Ilex has recently produced a draft Regeneration Plan and has sought professional advice on examining potential funding options to support the implementation of the Plan.
2.7	In line with a Committee's previous decision, preliminary discussions have been initiated with Derry City Council and ILEX to examine their approach to city development and to jointly consider potential opportunities for alternative forms of funding models such as Accelerated Development Zones (ADZ) (whereby a local authority is allowed to ring-fence future business rate growth within a designated area to pay for borrowings to fund enabling infrastructure in that area).
2.8	It is also understood, that work is currently underway to develop a strategic framework/strategy and resources plan for the regeneration of the Maze/Long Kesh site.
2.9	It is clear that there is going to be much less money available in Northern Ireland as a whole and it will be important that Belfast seeks to maximise the level of investment in the City. In progressing the development of a City Investment Framework and given the competing pressures from Derry/Londonderry/Ilex and Maze/Long Kesh, it will be important that we are clear on the focus and unique selling proposition of the city. There can only be one creative media centre, one financial services hub, possibly a few agreed Accelerated Development Zones (ADZs). It will be important that Belfast elected Members meet with their counterparts at Ministerial level on a range of issues, immediate, medium and longer term.
2.10	Place Shaping is a key civic leadership issue and Members may wish to consider the establishment of a cross-party Members' Working Group to drive these important issues forward. It is suggested that this Group comprise the Chairs of the relevant Committees or their nominees, together with one other Member of each of the political groups represented on the Council. This Group could then seek a series of meetings with Government Ministers on the City Investment Framework and related issues. <b>Appendix 1</b> outlines some of the issues Members may wish to raise.
2.11	To further inform its thinking on a City Investment Framework, the Committee may wish to receive a full briefing on the experiences of other good practice exemplar cities such as Manchester, which has made substantial progress in recent years (now seen as the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Core City in the UK ahead of cities such as Birmingham and Liverpool) and Edinburgh, which is also making good progress in this area. Members may also wish to consider the potential benefits of a cross-party delegation undertaking a site visit to Manchester and/or Edinburgh to explore experiences and lessons learnt.
2.12	<b><u>EUROPEAN FUNDING</u></b> Officers are continuing to explore other options regarding potential European funding including a Jessica. It is understood that the ERDF is underspent by £22m which in theory is ringfenced for local economic development monies, but in the absence of fully thought through plans forthcoming from councils, a Jessica may be a better use of the funds.
2.13	Other possibilities include monies (i.e. under the European Recovery Fund) for green energy projects and the North Foreshore is a key potential beneficiary from such funds. The new Members' Steering Group for the North Foreshore will be fully appraised of these options at its first meeting.

2.14	<p><b><u>PEACE III</u></b></p> <p>Work is also underway to explore opportunities for potential capital funding under the Peace III Priority 2.1 'Creating Shared Public Spaces'. While the Council had made a number of submissions to the first call for bids, only the Girdwood submission had been deferred to enable further consideration to be given to the deliverability of the project. The Council will need to make a decision by around January 2011 if it would intend to progress or not, otherwise the tight delivery timetable for the project may not be possible.</p>
2.15	<p>A second call for Peace III projects is reopening in November 2011 and is dealt with in a separate report on the Committee's Agenda.</p>
2.16	<p>In addition, officers have also acted on the suggestions made by Members on consideration of the delay in the RPA process, that the Council should now actively consider how it might strengthen its relationship with key government departments. Discussions are ongoing between Council and Departmental officials to explore the potential to initiate a number of voluntary integrated area based pilots. A separate report on this work is included on the Committee agenda for discussion.</p>

### 3.0 Resource Implications

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

### 4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and:

- i) agree that the Council push forward with the development of a City Investment Framework;
- ii) agree to continue to explore the potential linkages with the regeneration proposals for ILEX/Derry/Londonderry and Maze/Long Kesh and work with Government Departments/agencies to try to get a consolidated approach to the limited investment opportunities which exist;
- iii) consider the proposed establishment of a cross-party Members' Working Group to progress consideration and engagement in respect to City Investment, and to arrange a series of meetings with Government Ministers to progress the issues outlined in the Appendix; and
- iv) consider a best practice visit to Edinburgh and/or Manchester, to look at emerging urban regeneration funding models.

### 5.0 Documents Attached

**Appendix 1:** List of potential issues to discuss with Departmental Ministers

**DISCUSSION POINTS**

The following table provides a high-level programme of issues that Members may wish to take up with their Ministerial colleagues in an effort to focus and drive investment and resources to Belfast. It would be the intention that detailed briefing papers on such issues would be prepared for Members in advance of any formal Ministerial meetings which may occur.

<b>Minister</b>	<b>Possible Issues (indicative only)</b>
Minister A. Attwood <b>DSD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>• Potential scope for joint projects and integrated area-based pilots</li> <li>• City Investment Framework                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Future matched funding for Dunville and Woodvale</li> <li>○ Proposals for Girdwood Masterplan and infrastructure</li> <li>○ Royal Exchange</li> <li>○ Gaeltacht Quarter</li> <li>○ Anderstown Gateway</li> <li>○ Glen 10</li> <li>○ Shaftesbury Square</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Future sustainability of grant support for community development</li> <li>• BCC Regeneration Directorate</li> <li>• Examining alternative funding mechanisms</li> <li>• Funding of Neighbourhood Renewal</li> <li>• Community Support Programme</li> <li>• Alcohol and Licensing Legislation</li> </ul>
Minister E. Poots <b>DOE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>• Potential scope for integrated area-based pilots, involving planning, regeneration and development</li> <li>• Local Government Reform</li> <li>• Waste</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reform of Planning Service</li> <li>• Planning Policies</li> <li>• Delay in planning applications and impact on the local economy</li> <li>• Role and Relationship between NIEA and Local Government</li> <li>• Emergency Plannig</li> </ul>
Minister C. Murphy <b>DRD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>• Potential scope for integrated area-based pilots</li> <li>• Belfast Rapid Transit</li> <li>• DRD Public Transport Reform re: Transport Bill</li> <li>• Local Transportation Plans</li> <li>• Belfast on the Move</li> <li>• Sydenham Bypass/Connsbank Junction</li> <li>• Gateways</li> <li>• Grosvenor Road Transport Hub</li> </ul>
Minister A. Foster <b>DETI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>• Potential scope for joint projects and integrated area-based pilots</li> <li>• Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland – role of local government</li> <li>• ERDF funding for Local Economic Development activities</li> <li>• Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau / Convention Facilities</li> <li>• Energy/Green industries at North Foreshore</li> <li>• Creative Industries/Media Centre</li> <li>• Financial Services Centre</li> <li>• 2012 Events</li> <li>• Transfer of LED Functions</li> <li>• Support to Implement Integrated Tourism Strategy infrastructure</li> </ul>
Minister N. McCausland <b>DCAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>• Potential scope for joint projects and integrated area-based pilots</li> <li>• Stadium Progress</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Windsor</li> <li>○ Casement</li> <li>○ Ravenhill</li> <li>● Central Library</li> <li>● Pitch Provision</li> <li>● Future grant support</li> <li>● Support Funding for Mary Peters Track</li> <li>● Lagan Navigational Gateway</li> <li>● Preparations for the World Police and Fire Games in 2013</li> </ul>
Minister R. Empey <b>DEL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>● Potential scope for joint projects and integrated area-based pilots</li> <li>● UU Campus</li> </ul>
Minister M Gildernew <b>DARD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>● Future Rivers Agency funding for flood alleviation works on the Connswater, Loop and Knock rivers.</li> <li>● Integrated approach to Urban and Rural Regeneration</li> </ul>
First Minister P. Robinson <b>OFMDFM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>● Proposals for Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood</li> </ul>
Minister M. McGimpsey <b>DHSSPS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>● Health inequalities</li> </ul>
Minister S. Wilson <b>DFP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>● Alternative Funding (e.g. ADZs, JESSICA)</li> </ul>
Minister Ford <b>Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Securing support for Belfast City Masterplan</li> <li>● Justice Bill</li> <li>● Future of DPP and CSP</li> <li>● Community Safety</li> </ul>

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**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Notice of Motion re: Financial Planning in an Economic Downturn</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> October
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6314)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer (extension 6313)

**Relevant Background Information**

At the Council meeting on 4th October the undernoted Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Rodway and seconded by Councillor W. Browne.

“This Council acknowledges that the United Kingdom is facing the most severe economic downturn for many decades and that, in such times, there is an obligation on the Council to retain its vision of strategic, equitable and sustainable development of the City. To this end, the Council recognises that adequate funding needs to be made available in the medium to long-term and accordingly agrees to plan for year upon year increases in the Council reserves.”

In accordance with Standing order 11e, the motion stood referred without discussion to the Committee.

**Recommendations**

To consider the Notice of Motion and to take such action thereon as may be determined.

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## BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Approval to Invite tenders</b>
<b>Date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	1. George Wright, Head of facilities Management (Ext.5526/6262) Maurice Bailie, Security Manager (Ext.2537) 2. Valerie Cupples, Procurement Manager (Ext.3625)

### 1. Tender for Supply of Security Services

#### Relevant background information

The Committee will be aware that, under the revised Scheme of Delegation, approval must be sought from the relevant Committee prior to inviting tenders for the supply of any goods or services.

Members will be aware that security cover for the 5 main council buildings (City Hall, CWB, Adelaide Exchange, ISB and Duncrue) is provided by the council's in-house security team. In terms of manned guarding, Members will also be aware that a number of additional and often high-profile council properties are covered by contracted security, currently provided by G4S Ltd.

The main or 'core' sites currently covered externally are as follows:-

Belfast Castle	Malone House	Wilmont House*
Waterfront & Ulster Halls	Gasworks site	Dunbar Link*
Belfast Zoo	Dargan Crescent*	St George's Market
Smithfield Market	Seymour House*	Learning & Development Centre

*\* discussions with building occupiers are ongoing in relation to the potential to reduce cover at these sites and this has the potential to secure significant cost savings for the council.*

The in-house Security unit is responsible for the procurement and overall management of the necessary security services, and the manned guarding tender value will be in the order of **£885,000** per annum, based on current trends (and subject to discussions about levels of cover).

Two other Security-related tenders will also require to be re-let, in respect of events & stewarding (approx. value **£60,000** per annum) and a first response/key-holding service (approx. value **£16,000** per annum).

As the existing tenders will terminate from August 2011 the Security unit wishes to

undertake a tender exercise to procure each of the necessary services on the basis of an initial contract length of 2 years plus a one-year optional extension exercisable by the council based on satisfactory performance.

This is felt to provide the optimal balance between regularly testing the market to obtain the keenest price and minimising the administration and cost associated with the procurement process.

**Key Issues**

Tenders will be evaluated using the council's standard price/quality model with criteria approved by the Procurement unit.

**Resources Implications**

Financial

Provision has been made in 2011/12 revenue estimates for the provision of external security services.

Human Resources

There are no direct HR implications in respect of this report.

Asset and other implications

In order to maintain a modern and efficient security service it is essential that the council secures contracts for the services identified in order to protect the integrity of BCC's built assets and provide a safe and secure environment for members, staff, customers and visitors.

**Recommendations & Decisions**

The Committee is recommended to approve the invitation of the submission of tenders in respect of the services specified above.

**Key to Abbreviations**

None.

**Documents attached**

None.

**2. Tender for Stationery Supplies and Computer Print Consumables**

**Relevant background information**

The Council currently has in place a contract for the provision of office stationery supplies (including paper) and computer print consumables. This contract was established as a framework agreement whereby other Councils could purchase from the framework. This collaborative procurement approach has been very successful

in attracting other councils. At present there are approximately thirteen other authorities using this framework. During the financial period 09/10 the spend was as follows:

- Stationery consumables (including paper) - £283,853
- Printer consumables - £201,852

The current tender is due to expire on 30 June 2011 and the Procurement Unit wishes to undertake a tender exercise to procure necessary supplies for a maximum period of three years. It is proposed to let this contract as a framework whereby other local authorities can avail of its use.

**Key Issues**

Tenders will be evaluated using both cost and quality and awarded to the most economically advantageous tenders.

**Resources Implications**

Financial

Provision has been made in 2011/12 departmental revenue estimates for the provision.

Human Resources

There are no direct HR implications in respect of this report.

Asset and other implications

None

**Recommendations & Decisions**

The Committee is recommended to approve the invitation of the submission of tenders in respect of the services specified above and that under the scheme of delegation the Chief Officer is given delegated authority to accept the successful tender.

**Key to Abbreviations**

None.

**Documents attached**

None.

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**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
<b>Date:</b>	Friday, 22nd October, 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext. 6314)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr. Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6316)

**Relevant Background Information**

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

**Key Issues**

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

**Resource Implications**

Provision has been made in the Revenue Estimates for hospitality.

**Recommendations**

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

**Key to Abbreviations**

Not applicable

**Decision Tracking**

Officer responsible – Gareth Quinn  
2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2010

**Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Applications

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

<b>Organisation / Body</b>	<b>Event / Date – Number of Delegates / Guests</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Queen's University Belfast	12 <sup>th</sup> Annual Conference Dinner of Association of Education Assessment - Europe 11 <sup>th</sup> November, 2011 Approximately 120 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'Better opportunities for success across the city' 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 £500
Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland	Institute Conference Dinner for Council Members and Executives 25 <sup>th</sup> November, 2011 Approximately 400 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 Themes of 'Better opportunities for success across the city' 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 £500
St. Gall's Gaelic Athletic Club	Centenary Dinner 11 <sup>th</sup> December, 2010 Approximately 350 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality.	This event seeks to celebrate the 100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Gall's Gaelic Athletic Club and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city.  The Committee, at its meeting on Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> , May 2010, considered a Notice of Motion in relation to the achievement of St. Gall's Gaelic Athletic Club, in this its centenary year, in becoming the first team from Belfast to win an All-Ireland Senior Gaelic Football Club Championship.  The Committee was advised that the Club was this year celebrating its 100th Anniversary and was seeking to use the City Hall for that event and if the Committee were minded then discussions could be undertaken with the Club to establish how its achievement could be recognised by the Council at that event.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality up to a maximum of £5,000.  Approximate cost £5,000

			<p>Following discussions with the organisers the Committee is recommended to make a contribution of £5,000 towards the cost of the Centenary Dinner</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	
Irish National Foresters	<p>125th Anniversary Dinner</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> August, 2011</p> <p>Approximately 300 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 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Irish National Foresters and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Citizens Advice Belfast	<p>Volunteer Award Presentation</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2011</p> <p>Approximately 200 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-event drinks reception.</p>	<p>This event seeks to recognise those volunteers who have demonstrated a commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society, their community, the environment or individuals.</p> <p>The event also seeks to promote the positive effect which volunteering has in combatting poverty, helping those who are disadvantaged and promoting social inclusion.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-event drinks reception.</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Belfast Media Group	<p>Belfast Sports Volunteer Awards</p> <p>23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2011</p> <p>Approximately 150 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-event drinks reception.</p>	<p>This event seeks to recognise the achievements of people and the subsequent contribution made by these individuals who gave of their time voluntarily to help support their sport and insure young people can enjoy their games and fulfill their ambition.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-event drinks reception.</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>





### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Introduction of Proportionality to the Appointment of Lord Mayors and Deputy Lord Mayors</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)

#### Relevant Background Information

The Committee, at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> August, agreed that a report be submitted for its consideration concerning the possible extension of the d'Hondt system of proportionality to the offices of Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor.

The Council has for a number of years accepted the principle of proportionality for the allocation of places on Committees and on outside bodies and for the allocation of Chairmanships and Deputy Chairmanships of Committees and these arrangements are included in the Council's Standing Orders. However, the election of the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor is not currently included in the proportionality arrangements and it could be argued that it would be in keeping with the principle of proportionality to extend the scheme to cover the Civic Dignitaries. If the Committee were minded to include these positions within the proportionality arrangements, then it would be necessary to do so at the beginning of a Council Term. Elections to the new Council are expected to be held in May, 2011.

#### Key Issues

Unlike the appointment of Members to Committees and outside bodies, or the allocation of Chairmanships and Deputy Chairmanships of Committees, the election of the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor is subject to statutory regulation. Section 11 (1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 makes it a requirement for these positions to be "elected" annually by the Council and, in order to fulfil this requirement, it is necessary for the election of the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor to appear as separate items on the summons for the Annual Council Meeting. The introduction of proportionality to the process cannot override this legal obligation.

The Committee would, however, be entitled to establish a protocol as to how the election of the Civic Dignitaries should be administered. After the Local Government Elections, officers meet with the Party Group Leaders to decide on the allocation of Committee places, the appointment of Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees and the appointment of Members to outside bodies. At the moment, these appointments are dealt with in separate “pools” and the d’Hondt system is used to allocate the order of choices to Party Groups, based upon their strength within the Council. Should the Committee so wish, the identification of the Party Groups entitled to nominate Members to fill the positions of Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor on an annual basis for the full 4-year term could be determined as a separate “pool” at the same meeting of Party Group leaders. This would give 8 places (4 Lord Mayors and 4 Deputy Lord Mayors) over the 4-year term.

As pointed out earlier, the Member allocated to each position each year would still require to be formally “elected” at the Annual Council meeting and the protocol cannot prevent a Member of Council from nominating a different Member at the Annual meeting. In such circumstances, a vote would have to be taken at the Annual meeting to decide upon the appointments.

It would seem not to be appropriate to include the High Sheriff position within these arrangements as this is not an appointment made by the Council. Although custom in practice determines that the Council submits one name only for consideration to the Secretary of State, this is decided annually by the Council and he/she would be entitled to reject that nominee and require the Council to submit alternatives. It is the Secretary of State and not the Council who then makes the appointment. For these reasons the process for the appointment of the High Sheriff is different from that for the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor and it is considered that this nomination should continue to be decided annually by the Council.

There are, essentially, two decisions which the Committee is required to consider:

1. Does the Committee wish to establish a protocol to extend the proportionality arrangements to cover the identification of the Party Groups which will be entitled to nominate Members to fill the offices of the Civic Dignitaries? Members should note however that a formal vote on this would be required at Council if more than one nomination for the positions was received.
2. If so, does the Committee wish the position of High Sheriff to be excluded from these arrangements?

**Resource Implications**

None.

**Decisions**

1. The Committee is requested to decide if it wishes to agree to the extension of the proportionality arrangements to include the identification of those Party Groups which will be entitled to nominate Members to fill the offices of Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor on an annual basis for the full 4-year term. If so, the Committee

is requested further to agree that these appointments be considered as a separate "pool" which will be allocated at the meeting of Party Group Leaders immediately following the Local Government Elections every 4 years.

2. Does the Committee wish the position of High Sheriff to be excluded from these arrangements? Members should note that whatever decision is taken, the Local Government Act requires a formal vote on the election of Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor if more than one nomination is received.

**Decision Tracking**

Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager

May, 2011.

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### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Live Streaming and archiving of Council proceedings on the internet
<b>Date:</b>	Friday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext. 6314)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr. Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6316)

#### Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that the Committee, at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2010, agreed in principle to the provision of a system to facilitate the live streaming of Council meetings on the internet, subject to a further report setting out the costs being submitted for its consideration in due course.

#### Key Issues

The live streaming of the Monthly Meetings of the Council would enable anyone who has access to the internet to watch and listen to the proceedings as they take place. The process of archiving the video footage of the meetings would enable individuals to view past meetings via the internet at any point in time.

The Committee is reminded that, at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2008, it adopted a set of recommendations of the Audit Panel in relation to a Code of Governance for the Council. Part of that Code committed the Council to “taking informed, transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny....” It is certainly the case that the live streaming and archiving of Council Meetings would be in line with this commitment. Furthermore, the Council's promotion of a Customer Focus approach commits it to providing the public with as much information as possible about the Council's decision-making processes and the live streaming and archiving of meetings would be consistent with such a customer focussed service delivery.

The Council is in the process of developing a number of strategies around improving services and information for its customers in terms of consultation and engagement. New technology is the link between all these strategies. Citizens want news and information and, in particular, access to services 24 hours a day. The ‘nine to five’ culture of service delivery is a thing of the past and it is vital that the council adopts a digital approach and maximises the use of modern technology to provide the full range of services and information on-line.

However, the Committee will be mindful of the current challenging financial environment and the need to exercise prudence and to challenge costs which are to

be incurred by the Council.

If Belfast City Council decides to proceed with the live streaming and archiving of Council meetings it would be the first Council to do so in Northern Ireland and would be showing leadership to other Councils.

Whilst it remains vital that Belfast City Council continues to develop its progressive approach to the traditional forms of communications, it would now appear to be appropriate for the Council to consider investing more time and resources in new channels of communications, particularly with younger and older audiences which are regarded as harder to reach.

Following initial research, primarily with the Northern Ireland Assembly and Dublin City Council, in respect of their live streaming and archiving systems, it has been identified that there is a diverse range in relation to the type of systems available. The following outlines the options which are available to the Council.

### **Option 1**

The Northern Ireland Assembly, due to its obligation to record meetings of a suitable quality so as to be broadcast by the BBC, operates an extremely elaborate live streaming and archiving system. However, this system, which would cost the Council between £250,000 and £400,000, is extremely advanced and greatly exceeds the functionality which would be required by the Council.

### **Option 2**

The system used by Dublin City Council would seem to be effective in delivering the service. This system provides live streaming of high quality video feed from moveable cameras, providing viewers with on-screen information, including details of the meeting agenda and of individual speakers, and will archive the footage in a manner that can be retrieved and viewed through the Council's website.

The system would be leased from a company which specialises in providing this service. There would be no initial capital cost but it would require an annual leasing charge of approximately £20,000. It would be the responsibility of the company providing the service to update the equipment and to provide maintenance when appropriate. These costs are included within the aforementioned figure. This option could result in an approximate cost to the Council of £60,000 over three years.

### **Option 3**

The Council could also chose to purchase the required equipment up front at an approximate cost of between £40,000 and £50,000. An additional maintenance cost of approximately £10,000 would be payable annually and, depending on advancements in technology, it may be necessary to upgrade the equipment. Furthermore, as this equipment would be owned and maintained by the Council, technical staff will have to be trained and deployed as and when appropriate. This option could result in an approximate cost to the Council of £80,000 over three years.

Option 2 appears to be the most advantageous to the Council and is the method which has been utilised by over forty Local Authorities across the United Kingdom.

Members should be aware that, in addition to the costs outlined in all of the options above, there would be a requirement for a member of staff to be trained and for them to be present to operate the equipment during the Council Meetings.

Furthermore, as a result of the Committee's decision of 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2010, provision has been made within the draft 2011/2012 revenue estimates to cover the costs

associated with the implementation of a system which will permit the live streaming and archiving of Council proceedings on the internet.

**Resource Implications**

Option 1 – £250,000 - £400,000

Option 2 - £60,000 over three years

Option 3 - £80,000 over three years

Provision has been made within the draft 2011/2012 revenue estimates for the costs which would be incurred with the purchase of such a system.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is requested to consider if it wishes to proceed with the live streaming of Council meetings on the internet.

If so, the Committee is recommended to choose Option 2 as set out in the report as the most effective option available, approve the invitation of tenders and under the scheme of delegation, to delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor to approve the successful tender. Tenders will be evaluated in line with both cost and quality criteria and awarded to the most economically advantageous tenderer.

**Decision Tracking**

Officer responsible – Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

1<sup>st</sup> April, 2011

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### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Elections Update</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)

#### Relevant Background Information

Discussions have been taking place between the Chief Electoral Officer and political parties.

The following is an update on the current proposals for elections in 2011.

#### Key Issues

##### Dates of Elections

Members will be aware that elections to both the Local Councils and to the Northern Ireland Assembly are to be held in 2011. In addition, it is expected that a national referendum will also be held regarding the introduction of changes to the method of voting at General Elections.

It is important that these events are co-ordinated as much as possible. The current position is that the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly will be held on the first Thursday in May, that is 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2011. The Northern Ireland Office has indicated that the setting of the date for the Local Council elections will be included in a General Amendment Order which is to be laid in Parliament in the Autumn. It is anticipated that the date will also be set for 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2011. The date of the national referendum will appear in the Bill to be introduced to Parliament but, again, it is anticipated that the referendum will also be held on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2011. This will mean that Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 will see elections to both the Local Councils and the Northern Ireland Assembly and also the holding of the national referendum.

##### Timing of Counts

Until the dates of the elections and referendum are confirmed it is difficult to predict what might happen at the close of poll. Assuming that all 3 events are held on 5<sup>th</sup> May, then it is anticipated that all papers from the two elections and the referendum will be

held in a secure location overnight. On the morning of Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May all ballot boxes will be opened for the verification process to take place. When this is completed the ballot boxes for the two elections and the referendum will be separated and, potentially, taken to different count venues.

The timing of the referendum count will have to be the same throughout the United Kingdom and is still being considered by the Chief Counting Officer. Any decision reached might impact on the timing of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Local Council counts. Setting the referendum count aside, it is anticipated that the Assembly count will commence on the afternoon of Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May and be completed by the evening of Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May. The Local Council counts will commence on the morning of Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May and, in Belfast, conclude on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May. As indicated earlier, the decision of the Chief Counting Officer with regard to the timetable for the counting of the referendum, might impact upon the other timings.

#### Changes to Local Government Election Law

A General Amendment Order is expected to be laid before Parliament in November which will establish the date of the Local Council elections. It is anticipated that the Order will also make some changes to the law governing local elections. At the moment, the extent of these changes is unknown. A further report will be presented to the Committee once details have become available.

#### Northern Ireland Assembly Legislative Proposals

The Northern Ireland Assembly have recently considered a Private Members Bill proposing that once a Member is elected to the NI Assembly, they are not permitted to continue to serve as a Councillor. Clearly if this legislation is passed it will impact upon the membership of the new Council.

#### **Resource Implications**

None

#### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note the information provided.

Item No.



**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	<b>Strategic Policy and Resources Committee</b>
Date:	<b>Friday, 22nd October, 2010</b>
Subject:	<b>National Association of Councillors - Annual General Meeting and Conference</b>
Reporting Officer:	<b>Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext. 6314)</b>
Contact Officer:	<b>Mrs. Julie Lilley, Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6321)</b>

**Relevant Background Information**

The National Association of Councillors is holding its Annual General Meeting and Conference in Leeds from Friday, 26th until Sunday, 28th November.

The theme of this years Conference is 'Working with the New Coalition Government'. The Conference will consider how Local Government can best work in partnership with the new administration at Westminster in order to maximise benefits for citizens. The Conference will also include a 'Question Time' session which will consist of a panel of MPs from all the major Parties and a leading journalist.

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

**Key Issues**

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

**Resource Implications**

Delegate Fee:	£350
Travel:	£155
Accommodation:	<u>£110</u>
Total per delegate:	£615

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to authorise:

- the attendance at the Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors, Northern Ireland Region, the Democratic Services Manager (or their nominees) and a representative of the Party Groupings on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members; and
- the payment of the conference fees and the appropriate travelling and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

**Decision Tracking**

Officer responsible – Julie Lilley, Democratic Services Officer

2nd November, 2010

Item No:



### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Land at Slievegallion Drive
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mr Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects (ext. 6217)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ms Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Property & Projects (ext. 3493)

#### Purpose

To consider the decision of the Parks & Leisure Committee of 14 October 2010 in relation to land at Slievegallion Drive.

#### Relevant Background Information

A report was taken to the Parks & Leisure Services Committee on 14 October 2010 regarding the site of the former Social Security Offices at Slievegallion Drive which adjoins Council owned land at Slievegallion Drive. A copy of the Parks & Leisure Services Committee Report is attached at Appendix 1, and a location map at Appendix 2.

The report sets out the various issues in relation to an initial expression of interest previously made by the Council to LPS in respect of this site, with a view to potentially developing this site together with the Council's existing land, for the purpose of a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Gaelic hybrid pitch, changing facilities and car parking. This was on the basis that further detailed consideration would be required in terms of working up costs, ascertaining its strategic fit with the emerging Pitches Strategy and affordability and prioritisation within the Council's Capital Programme.

However, the NIHE via their nominated Housing Association is also interested in acquiring the site for social housing purposes and North & West Housing Association has been nominated to develop the site in the event that they can acquire the lands. DSD have indicated that funding would be available for site acquisition in this financial year although North & West Housing Association have indicated that as their acquisition would be subject to planning and appointment of design team etc it is essential that they commence this process within the next couple weeks.

Given the site's suitability for housing, LPS have confirmed that the value of the site will be based on housing value and not open space/recreational values. The indicative site valuation provided by LPS is £1M/£1.25M. It should also be noted that there are

considerable differences in level between the Council's land & the subject site, which would result in significant increased development costs & a requirement for retaining structures as well as ball stop & additional perimeter fencing.

Detailed costings to acquire & develop this site can only be prepared when there is more clarity on nature & specification of any facilities to be provided and an agreed valuation for the site. However, indicative figures at this stage would indicate a cost of circa £3.5/£3.7M which reflects that the land value will be based on housing land values; development of a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation hybrid pitch (with additional costs due to level differentials between the two sites), retaining structures, changing facilities, and demolition of the existing offices. In addition, empty rates would be payable in respect of the social security offices pending demolition.

LPS have advised that a Ministerial Briefing was held recently in respect of this site and following this it was agreed that, in light of the two competing interests, a timetable must be put in place to ensure that the decision making process of assessing which interested party has the greatest need is completed as soon as possible. LPS have advised that the Council are required to prepare a business case for the proposed use by 10 November and confirm that funding is available for the transfer this financial year. Both parties are to submit their business case and the Minister will have to agree which need has the greater priority. If no business case is available from the Council by 10 November its interest will be withdrawn and a transfer to the nominated Housing Association will be progressed accordingly.

Due to the tight timeframes no decisions have been made as to the suitability or prioritisation of this site as a potential Gaelic pitch and there is currently no identified funding for development of these lands.

The recommendation made to the Parks & Leisure Services Committee was on the basis that, given the current proposed site acquisition costs, the Committee inform the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that this does not represent a value for money proposition for pitch provision and that the expression of interest should, therefore, be withdrawn. In this scenario site acquisition and development of this land would not therefore be included as part of the Council's Programme.

However, at this meeting of the Parks & Leisure Services Committee on 14 October 2010, Members recommended that the Council's expression of interest should not be withdrawn.

#### **Key Issues**

- Site of former Social Security Offices at Slievegallion Drive, declared surplus by DFP, trawled to all public sector bodies by LPS. Adjoins Council owned land currently used as informal open space.
- Initial expression of interest made to LPS, with a view to potentially developing this site together with the Council's existing land, for the purpose of a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Gaelic hybrid pitch, changing facilities and car parking.
- NIHE via their nominated Housing Association also wish to acquire land for purposes of social housing.
- Business Case to be submitted to LPS by 10 November, together with confirmation that funding will be in place this financial year.
- Indicative site acquisition and development costs are likely to be in the region of £3.5M /£3.7M.
- The subject site has not been prioritised as a Gaelic pitch in terms of the emerging Pitches Strategy and there is currently no identified funding in the Capital Programme for site acquisition or development of these lands. The acquisition and development of these lands would have to be considered as part of the

Council's Capital Programme, but a decision on this needs to be made prior 10 November when the Council are required to submit their business case and confirm that funding is in place.

- The report taken to the Parks & Leisure Services Committee advised that if the land value for the site was based on open space (recreational use) this would be a reasonable acquisition for future pitch provision, but given the site's suitability for housing and the LPS indicative valuation of £1M/£1.25M it does not appear to be value for money for pitch provision given the limited funds available for capital works. It should be noted that the valuation has not been agreed yet and will be subject to negotiations between LPS and the purchaser.
- The Parks & Leisure Services Committee, at their meeting on 14 October 2010, recommended, however, that the Council's expression of interest should not be withdrawn.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

Detailed costings to acquire & develop this site can only be prepared when there is more clarity on the nature & specification of any facilities to be provided and an agreed valuation for the site. However, indicative figures at this stage would indicate a cost of circa £3.5/£3.7M, with future ongoing maintenance and renewal cost implications. There is currently no identified funding in the Capital Programme for this proposal.

#### Human Resources

Staff Resource to progress any proposals.

#### Asset and Other Implications

The development of the subject land together with the Council's adjoining lands would result in an improved recreational facility for this area.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to consider the decision of the Parks & Leisure Services Committee of 14 October 2010; and to indicate if they wish to have site acquisition & development of this site included as part of the Capital Programme on the basis that LPS are seeking confirmation that funding for the acquisition is available this financial year, with a business case to be submitted by 10 November 2010.

If Members decide that they wish to acquire the site and develop as a third generation pitch, this will have a £3.5m/£3.7m financial consequence which will require provision in the Rate to fund.

<b>Decision Tracking</b>
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Director of Property & Projects to implement decision of the Committee by 10 November 2010
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<b>Documents Attached</b>
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Appendix 1: Parks & Leisure Services Committee report 14 October 2010.
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Appendix 2: Location Map
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**Belfast City Council**

**Report to:** Parks and Leisure Committee  
**Subject:** Land at Slievegallion Drive  
**Date:** 14 October 2010  
**Reporting Officer:** Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure  
**Contact Officer:** Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Property and Projects

**Purpose**

To update Members on the position in relation to the site of the former Social Security Offices at Slievegallion Drive, adjoining an area of Council owned land; and to ascertain if they would wish to have the acquisition and development of this site considered as part of the Council's Capital Programme, to be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Relevant Background Information**

The site of the former Social Security offices at Slieveban Drive/Slievegallion Drive was recently declared surplus by the Department of Finance & Personnel, and the availability of the site was trawled to all public sector bodies under the LPS Central Advisory Unit trawling process. The subject site extends to an area of 0.93ha (2.3 acres) and adjoins Council owned land at Slievegallion Drive which is currently used as informal open space. A location map is enclosed at Appendix 1.

Members will be aware that a pitches strategy is currently being prepared by officers for their consideration, and whilst it is indicating a need for Gaelic pitches, the Council's land at Slievegallion hasn't been specifically prioritised. The Council's land could accommodate a soccer pitch without the need for additional lands, but it is not big enough for a Gaelic pitch. Historically a Gaelic pitch was marked out on the Council's site; however this did not meet the current minimum size requirements of the GAA.

Given the tight (3 week) timeframe for lodging expressions of interest with LPS, an initial expression of interest was therefore made to LPS by Council Officers in respect of the Social Security Offices site, with a view to potentially developing this site together with the Council's existing land, for the purpose of a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Gaelic hybrid pitch, changing facilities and car parking. This was on the basis that further detailed consideration would be required in terms of working up costs, ascertaining its strategic fit with the emerging pitches strategy and affordability and prioritisation

within the Council's Capital Programme. Expressions of interest to LPS are not binding in any way but provide a further timeframe within which more detailed consideration can be given as to whether the land should be acquired.

However, the NIHE via their nominated Housing Association is also interested in acquiring the site for social housing purposes and North & West Housing Association has been nominated to develop the site in the event that they can acquire the lands. DSD have indicated that funding would be available for site acquisition in this financial year although North & West Housing Association have indicated that as their acquisition would be subject to planning and appointment of design team etc it is essential that they commence this process within the next couple weeks.

Given the site's suitability for housing, LPS have confirmed that the value of the site will be based on housing value and not open space/recreational values. The indicative site valuation provided by LPS is £1M/£1.25M. It should also be noted that there are considerable differences in level between the Council's land and the subject site, which would result in significant increased development costs and a requirement for retaining structures as well as ball stop and additional perimeter fencing.

Detailed costings to acquire and develop this site can only be prepared when there is more clarity on the nature and specification of any facilities to be provided and an agreed valuation for the site. However, indicative figures at this stage would indicate a cost of circa £3.5/£3.7m which reflects that the land value will be based on housing land values; development of a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation hybrid pitch (with additional costs due to level differentials between the two sites), retaining structures, changing facilities, and demolition of the existing offices. In addition, empty rates would be payable in respect of the social security offices pending demolition.

Council officers have also been in discussion with the principal of the de La Salle College with a view to ascertaining potential for developing a soccer pitch on the Council's Slievegallion site. Discussions on this are at a preliminary stage and whilst funding will remain an issue, the cost of development of the Council's site for soccer will be considerably less than the estimated cost of £3.5/£3.7m (as above) as there will be no site acquisition costs, demolition costs or increased costs as a result of site level differentials.

There are other sites in the area which could be suitable for GAA pitches, for e.g. the Council's land at North Link, which is within close proximity of Slievegallion.

LPS have advised that a Ministerial Briefing was held recently in respect of this site and following this it was agreed that, in light of the two competing interests, a timetable must be put in place to ensure that the decision making process of assessing which interested party has the greatest need is completed as soon as possible. LPS have informed the Council that they are required to prepare a business case for the proposed use by 10 November and confirm that funding is available for the transfer this financial year. Both parties are to submit their business case and the Minister will have to agree which need has the greater priority. If no business case is available from the Council by 10 November its interest will be withdrawn and a transfer to the nominated Housing Association will be progressed accordingly.

Members should be aware that given the tight timeframes no decisions have been made as to the suitability or prioritisation of this site as a potential Gaelic pitch and

there is currently no identified funding for development of these lands. The acquisition and development of these lands would have to be considered as part of the Council's Capital Programme which will need to go the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

### **Key Issues**

- Site of former Social Security Offices at Slievegallion Drive, declared surplus by DFP, trawled to all public sector bodies by LPS. Adjoins Council owned land currently used as informal open space.
- Initial expression of interest made to LPS, with a view to potentially developing this site together with the Council's existing land, for the purpose of a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Gaelic hybrid pitch, changing facilities and car parking.
- NIHE via their nominated Housing Association also wish to acquire land for purposes of social housing.
- Business Case to be submitted to LPS by 10 November, together with confirmation that funding will be in place this financial year.
- Indicative site acquisition and development costs are likely to be in the region of £3.5M /£3.7M.
- The subject site has not been prioritised as a Gaelic pitch in terms of the emerging Pitches Strategy and there is currently no identified funding in the Capital Programme for site acquisition or development of these lands.
- If the land value for the site was based on open space (recreational use) this would be a reasonable acquisition for future pitch provision and therefore the committee could ask the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider acquiring the site as part of this year's capital programme. However, given the site's suitability for housing and the LPS indicative valuation of £1m/£1.25m it does not appear to be value for money for pitch provision given the limited funds available for capital works.
- This land is shown as white land in the BMAP and whilst this has no specific zoning as it lies within the development limit and has been previously developed the presumption will be in favour of development. However it should be noted that the valuation has not been agreed yet and will be subject to negotiations between LPS and the purchaser.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

Detailed costings to acquire and develop this site can only be prepared when there is more clarity on the nature and specification of any facilities to be provided and an agreed valuation for the site. However, indicative figures at this stage would indicate a cost of circa £3.5/£3.7m, with future ongoing maintenance and renewal cost implications. There is currently no identified funding in the Capital Programme for this proposal.

#### Human Resources

Staff Resource to progress any proposals.

#### Asset and Other Implications

The development of the subject land together with the Council's adjoining lands would result in an improved recreational facility for this area.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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It is recommended that, given the current proposed site acquisition costs, the Committee inform the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that this does not represent a value for money proposition for pitch provision and therefore the expression of interest should be withdrawn.
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<b>Decision tracking</b>
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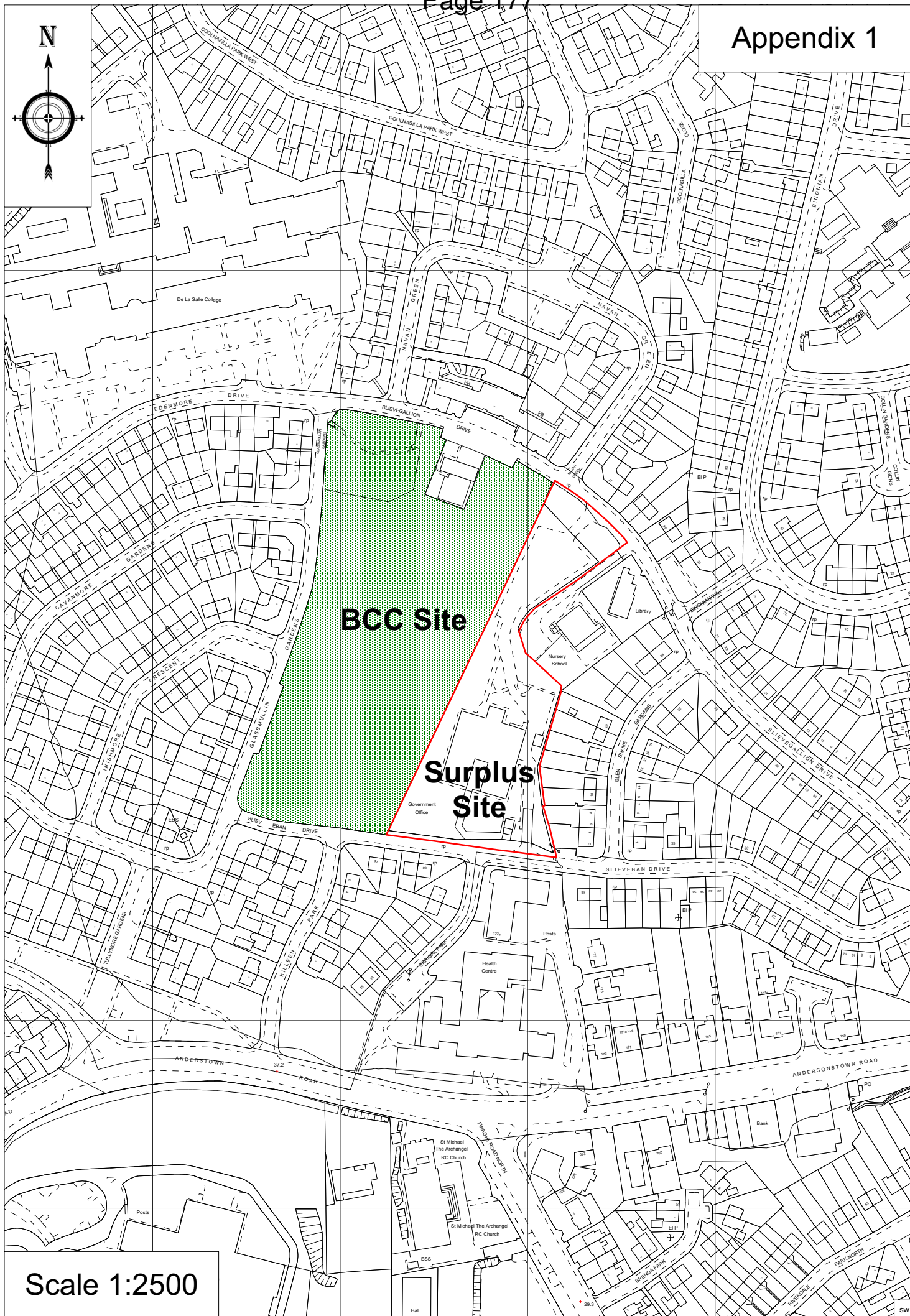
Director of Parks and Leisure to implement decision of the committee by 11 November 2010.
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<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
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LPS: Land & Property Services NIHE: Northern Ireland Housing Executive
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<b>Documents attached</b>
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Appendix 1: Location Map
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Scale 1:2500

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### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Lease of Land to Northern Ireland Water at Ormeau Park
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext 6217.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext. 3493.

#### Relevant Background Information

At it's meeting on 14 October 2010 the Parks and Leisure Committee is being asked to approve the grant of a 99 year lease to NI Water to allow them to install two cabinets, a large access cover, and a ventilation shaft adjacent to the main gates in Ormeau Park.

A copy of the Parks and Leisure Committee report, including Appendices thereto is attached at Appendix 1. The report sets out the background to the proposed lease and various terms, such as landscaping, future access to the site and maintenance responsibilities.

#### Key Issues

The total of the areas to be leased to NI Water, including a short access path to be installed by them, is approximately 42 square metres (0.01 acres). The map attached shows the areas to be leased outlined red with the path area shaded yellow. NI Water will pay the Council an agreed capital sum of £500 for the grant of the lease.

#### Resource Implications

##### Financial

Small capital receipt arising from grant of lease. No Council expenditure required. NI Water will entirely fund installation, maintenance and reinstatement. A right to

compensation will also arise in due course from installation of associated underground plant within the Park.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

The proposed lease ensures appropriate regulation of NI Water's intended occupation of the Park. The proposals have some impact on visual amenity within the Park, however the impact has been minimised following a series of meetings between NI Water and Council officers (from Parks and Leisure and Property and Projects Departments).

**Recommendations**

Committee is recommended to approve the grant of a 99 year lease to NI Water, of the lands outlined red, and right of way (see Appendix 1) in accordance with the outline terms contained in this report and the decision of the Parks and Leisure Committee of 14 October 2010.

**Decision Tracking**

Director of Property and Projects to ensure completion of lease by 31 December 2010.

**Key to Abbreviations**

NI Water – Northern Ireland Water

**Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Copy of report brought to Parks and Leisure Committee on 14 October 2010, including Appendices thereto.



**APPENDIX 1**



**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Lease of Land at Ormeau Park
<b>Date:</b>	14 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Walker, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager

<b>Purpose of Report</b>
The purpose of this report is to obtain Committee approval to dispose of small portions of land within Ormeau Park to NI water to facilitate work to improve the quality of the sewage infrastructure and to facilitate future management and maintenance of the structures required.

<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
<p>Northern Ireland Water wish to upgrade the storm overflow plant currently installed underground near the main entrance to Ormeau Park. The purpose of the works is to improve the quality of any storm overflow waters which enter the River Lagan from the sewerage system. The work includes installation of a series of new underground pipes, cables and ducts as well as a substantial underground chamber.</p> <p>Normally all these works would be carried out under NI Water's statutory powers and there would be no requirement to enter into formal Wayleave or other legal arrangements. In this case the normal approach will apply to all the 'below ground' installations, however there are some elements which will have a long term presence at ground level and above ground. In the case of these elements the Council will lose use of small areas of the Park. Council officers wish to ensure that the visible structures required are adequately maintained by NI Water at this important location close to the 'Listed' gates which form the main entrance to the Park. For these reasons NI Water has agreed to take small portions of land on lease from the Council with the lease stipulating requirements in relation to repair, graffiti removal and decoration.</p>

There has been discussion with NI Water and their consultants to optimise the location of the structures and to minimise their size and visual impact. NI Water has also agreed to carry out agreed landscaping works around the above ground structures. NI Water will carry out all works at their own expense, including installation of an access path and re-surfacing of the main driveway following completion of the installations. The attached Planting Schedule (Appendix 2) shows the agreed new planting areas (shaded green) and species of plants which have been agreed with the Park Manager.

During the course of the works NI Water intend to set up a site compound immediately inside the main entrance gates to the Park. Pedestrian access to the Park will be maintained during the course of the works which are anticipated to last for a period of approximately 9 months. Following completion of the works NI Water will require periodic access to maintain their installations. This is likely to involve pedestrian access twice a month. In the unlikely event of out of hours access being required this would be by arrangement with the Park Manager who will remain as keyholder for the site.

### **Key Issues**

It is proposed to lease to NI Water the three small portions of land outlined red on the attached map (Appendix 1). On the southern side of the main entrance the land will contain a surface level access cover and surrounding plinth in total measuring 4.2 metres x 1.8 metres. The northern area will house a steel cabinet measuring 3.1 metres x 1.0 metres x 1.58 metres high and surrounding concrete base. The small circular area shows the approximate location of a 4 metre high x 150 mm diameter vent stack which will be located among taller trees. NI Water will be granted a right of way to the steel cabinet via the area shown shaded yellow and will be responsible for construction of a path and its subsequent maintenance.

The lease arrangement agreed with NI Water (subject to Committee approval) would be for 99 years with NI Water paying to the Council a one off capital amount of £500. Use of the land other than for management of Storm Overflows will not be permitted and NI Water would be given the option to terminate the arrangement and reinstate the land should they no longer require the relevant equipment at this location.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

Modest capital receipt would become payable by NI Water on grant of the lease. All capital costs to be met by NI Water. No additional maintenance costs to the Council are anticipated.

#### Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

#### Asset and Other Implications

While ideally the Council would wish to preserve the integrity of this part of Ormeau Park the proposed arrangements minimise the impact of the proposed NI Water scheme which is seen as being in the wider public interest.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee agree to the disposal of the portions of land outlined in red together with a right of way shaded yellow on the attached map (Appendix 1) to NI Water, on a 99 year lease for the sum of £500, subject to detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager, Property and Projects Department, a suitable legal agreement to be drawn up by the Town Solicitor and subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60.

**Decision Tracking**

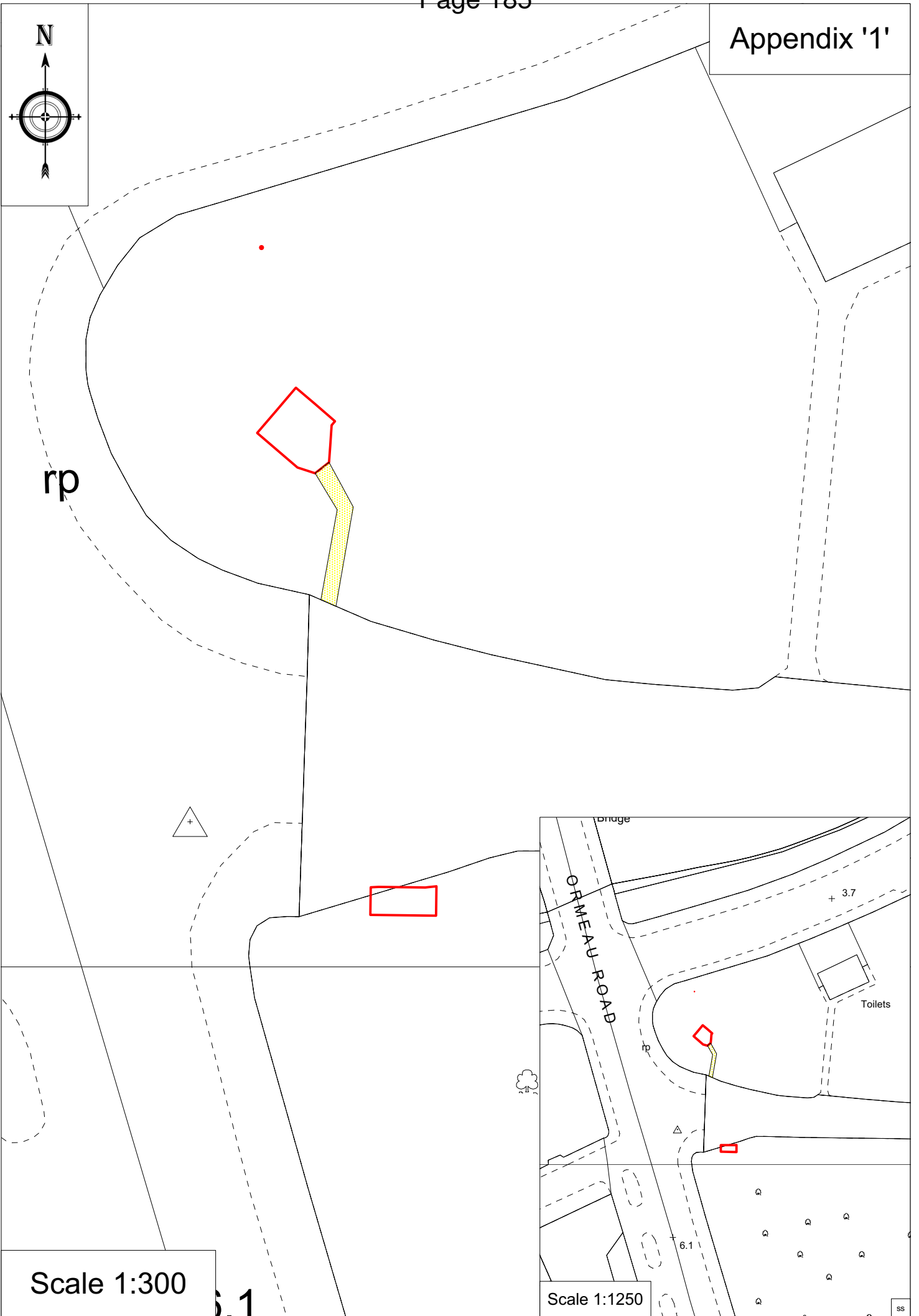
The Director of Property and Projects to provide a report to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee before the end of November 2010.

**Key to Abbreviations**

NI Water – Northern Ireland Water

**Documents Attached**

- Appendix 1: Land areas to be leased to NI Water shown outlined red.  
Proposed right of way for NI Water shaded yellow.
- Appendix 2: Planting Schedule around proposed structures.



Scale 1:300

Scale 1:1250

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KEY

- Existing tree to be retained\*
- Proposed shrub and rose planting see Plant Schedule for details
- Existing shrubs and rose bed to be retained\*
- Existing grass to be retained\*

\* Care to be taken when working in proximity to existing trees, grass and shrubs. Please see Notes for further information.

- NOTES
- Please refer to Landmarks Management Drafting Note 1.0 for details on the retention of trees, shrubs and grasses. Proposals for retention are subject to the approval of the Council.
  - Proposed areas to be planted at a minimum of 300mm to the existing ground level. Areas to be retained shall be marked with a 100mm wide line.
  - Contractor to hand file with a minimum of 100mm to the existing ground level. Areas to be retained shall be marked with a 100mm wide line.
  - Areas of disturbed grass to be re-vegetated with grass seed as required.
  - Bank mulch to be applied to new shrub and rose beds.

Rev.	Description	By	Date/Chk. of Auth.

For Information  
 Purpose of Issue  
 A. Issues  
 B. Date  
 C. Authorised

**ATKINS**  
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Project  
 ORMEAU PARK CSO UPGRADE

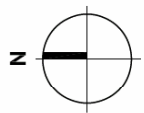
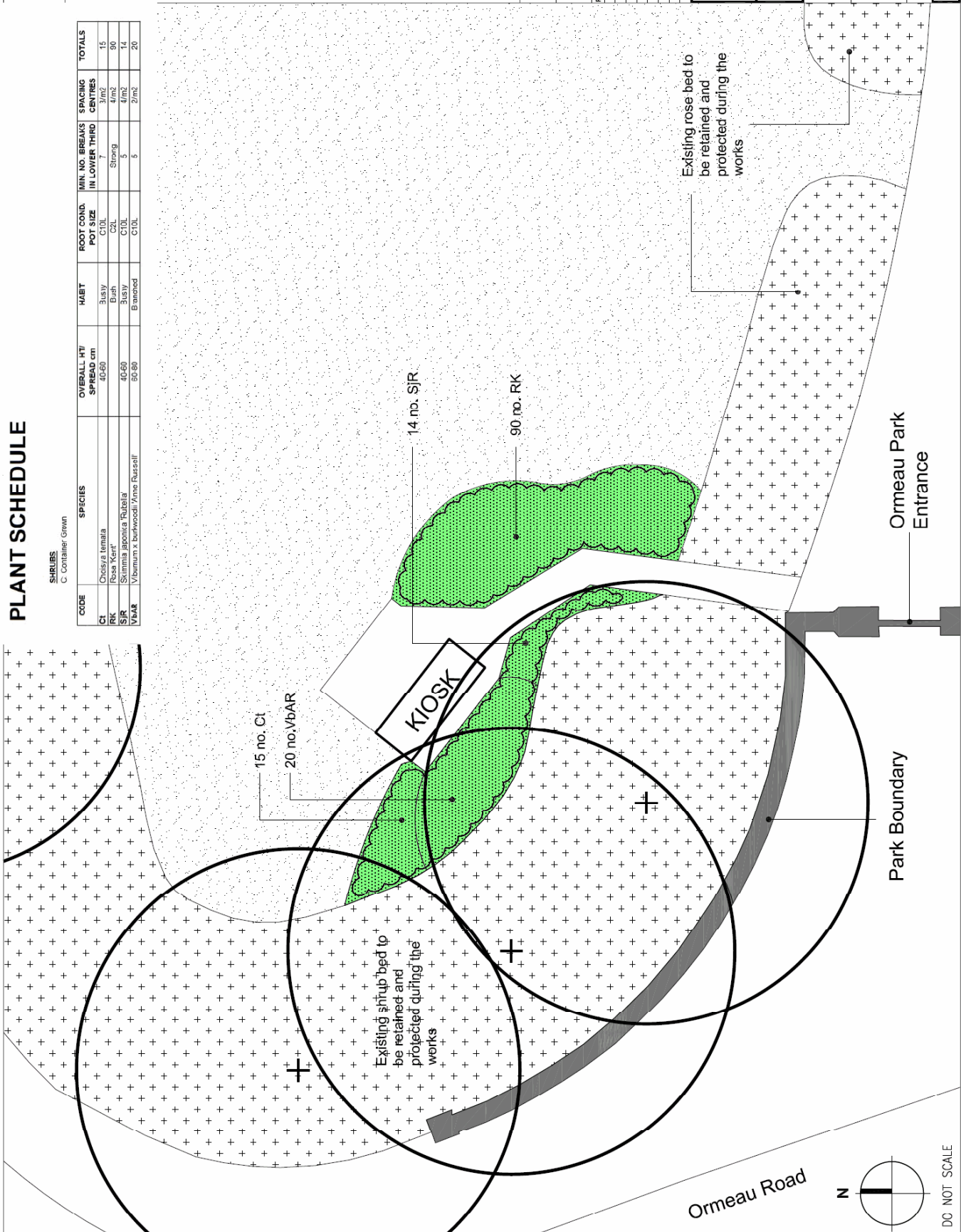
Title  
 PLANTING PROPOSALS PLAN

Drawing Scale 1:1,000	Checked by MS	Authorised by A3
Drawing Number 5054682.64-DWG-441	Date 09.08.10	Date 11.08.10
Rev.		

PLANT SCHEDULE

SHRUBS  
 C. Container Grown

CODE	SPECIES	OVERALL HT/ SPREAD cm	HABIT	POT SIZE	MIN. NO. BREAKS IN LOWER THIRD	SPACING CENTRES	TOTALS
CT	<i>Cercis japonica</i>	40-60	Bushy	C10L	7	3/m <sup>2</sup>	15
RK	<i>Rosa 'Kent'</i>	90	Bush	C2L	Strong	4/m <sup>2</sup>	90
SJR	<i>Skimmia japonica 'Rubella'</i>	40-60	Bushy	C10L	5	4/m <sup>2</sup>	14
VbAR	<i>Viburnum x burkwoodii 'Anne Russell'</i>	50-80	Branches	C10L	5	2/m <sup>2</sup>	20



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### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Licence Agreement at Ormeau Park
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext. 6217.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext. 3493

#### Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 14 October 2010 the Parks and Leisure Committee is being asked to approve the grant of a short term temporary Licence Agreement to Marian Hunter, for use of part of the Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion. Use will be for child care playgroup purposes on three mornings per week at a Licence Fee of £110 per week. The Director of Property and Projects will provide a verbal update to Members on the outcome of the Parks and Leisure Committee Meeting.

A copy of the Parks and Leisure Committee report, including Appendices thereto, is attached at Appendix 1. On the understanding that approval to the proposed Licence Agreement is provided by Parks and Leisure Committee, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee are being asked to approve the grant of a Licence, in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60, on the terms outlined in the attached report (Appendix 1).

#### Key Issues

Following a decision of the Parks and Leisure Committee on 14 October 2010, approval is sought to the grant of a short term Licence Agreement, to Marian Hunter, at the Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion, for three mornings per week, for the period up to the end of March 2011, at a Licence Fee of £110 per week.

#### Resource Implications

Financial

The fee of £110 per week will be charged over the period of the Licence Agreement on Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion. This will cover provision of the accommodation plus lighting and heating costs.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required although in relation to the proposed Licence Agreement on the Bowling Pavilion, Parks personnel will be required to open up and close up the building and the access gates from Park Road on the three days per week the building will be used by the Playgroup.

Asset and Other Implications

The proposed Licence Agreement is designed to protect the Council's relevant property assets.

**Recommendations**

Committee is recommended to approve the grant of a temporary Licence, to Marian Hunter, to occupy part of Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion at a fee of £110 per week and subject to a suitable Licence Agreement to be prepared by the Town Solicitor.

**Decision Tracking**

Subject to Committee and Council approval, Director of Property and Projects to arrange for completion of Licence Agreement before the end of November 2010.

**Key to Abbreviations**

**Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Copy of report, plan and map, submitted to the Parks and Leisure Committee of 14 October 2010.

APPENDIX 1



**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Proposed Licence Agreement at Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion
<b>Date:</b>	14 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Walker, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager

**Relevant Background Information**

At its meeting on 10 December 2009 the Parks and Leisure Committee approved the renewal of a lease on the former Elderly Men's shelter at Ormeau Park, to Marian Hunter, for use as a private sector Playgroup Centre. A 5 year agreement at £2,940 per annum was subsequently drawn up and completed on 18 March 2010. On account of the accumulation of some previous arrears the tenant requested that the new lease provide for monthly rental payments. This was duly done and all payments are currently up to date. All previous arrears were cleared immediately prior to commencement of the new lease.

The above mentioned tenant, Marian Hunter, has recently approached the Council for temporary use of the Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion. Use is envisaged from 8.30am to 1.30pm, three days per week, until the end of March 2011. The need for additional accommodation has arisen due to increased numbers of children seeking places with the playgroup. In addition a nearby church hall which will provide the necessary overflow accommodation is currently undergoing upgrade work to facilitate the playgroup. It is envisaged the church hall will be available for occupation early in the new year.

Marian Hunter's use will include the Main Club Room and ancillary kitchen facilities plus the Ladies Toilet area (all hatched blue on the attached Plan (Appendix 1). All these areas will be cleared at the end of each session. A small, partly enclosed 'office' area will be used for the storage of equipment at all times during the period of the Licence. Access to the various rooms within the building will be via the area shown shaded yellow on Appendix 1.

Pedestrian access to the building will be via the route shown shaded blue on the attached map (Appendix 2). The gate on Park Road which leads to this area will

be opened and closed by Parks staff before commencement and the end of each session.

Given the urgent need of the playgroup the Director of Parks and Leisure has agreed an interim arrangement under delegated authority pending a formal agreement from Committee.

### **Key Issues**

Use of Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion has been requested by a private sector playgroup for three mornings per week for the period up to the end of March 2011. Use is to be regulated by a Licence Agreement and subject to an agreed fee of £110 per week, payable in advance, to include the costs of heating and lighting. The Council's Fire Safety Officer and Insurance Officer are content that the building is adequate for the intended purpose, however responsibility for compliance with all necessary regulations governing child care arrangements will remain the responsibility of the Licensee (Marian Hunter).

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

Modest financial receipt for limited period. No Council expenditure required to make the building suitable for purpose.

#### Human Resources

No additional human resources required although Parks personnel will be required to open up and close up the building and the access gates from Park Road on the three days per week the building will be used by the Playgroup.

#### Asset and Other Implications

Regulation of the occupation by way of a Licence Agreement will protect the Council's property asset.

### **Recommendations**

Committee is recommended to approve the grant of a Licence Agreement within the portion of Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion shown hatched blue on Appendix 1, to Marian Hunter, for use as a Playgroup Centre three mornings per week until the end of March 2011, subject to the payment of a monthly Licence Fee of £110 per week, with detailed terms to be incorporated in a legal agreement to be drawn up by the Town Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive and the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60.

### **Decision Tracking**

Director of Parks and Leisure to liaise with the Director of Property and Projects with a view to obtaining the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in the October 2010 Committee cycle.

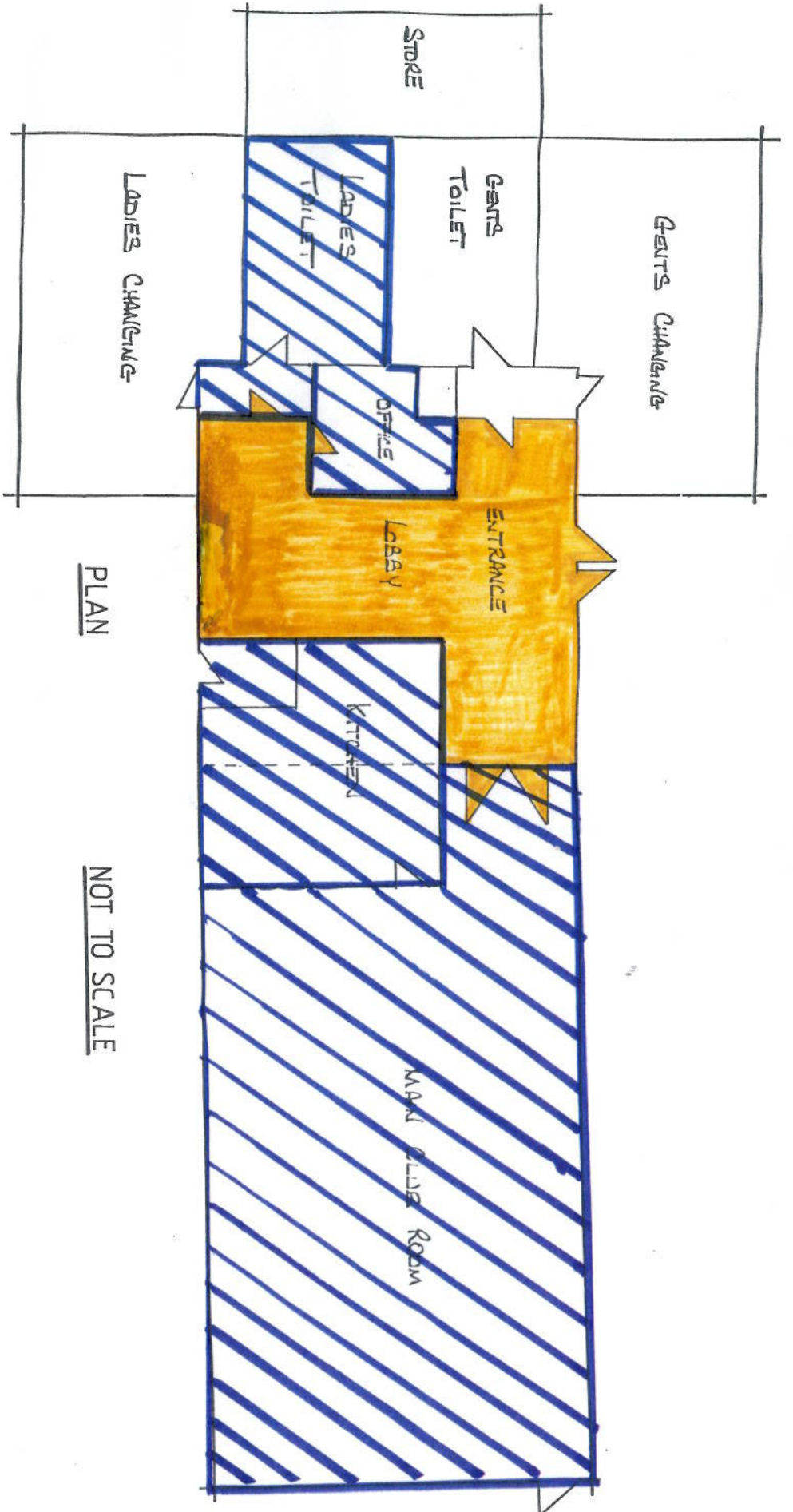
<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
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None.
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<b>Documents Attached</b>
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Appendix 1: Plan showing the rooms to be used by the Playgroup (hatched blue) and access to the rooms (shaded yellow).
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Appendix 2: Map showing the Bowling Pavilion (shaded green) and the designated access to it (shaded blue). The surrounding land in Council ownership is shaded yellow.
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Belfast City Council  
 Client Services Department  
 Property Services Section  
 4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BP  
 Tel: 01232 320202 - Fax: 01232 314927

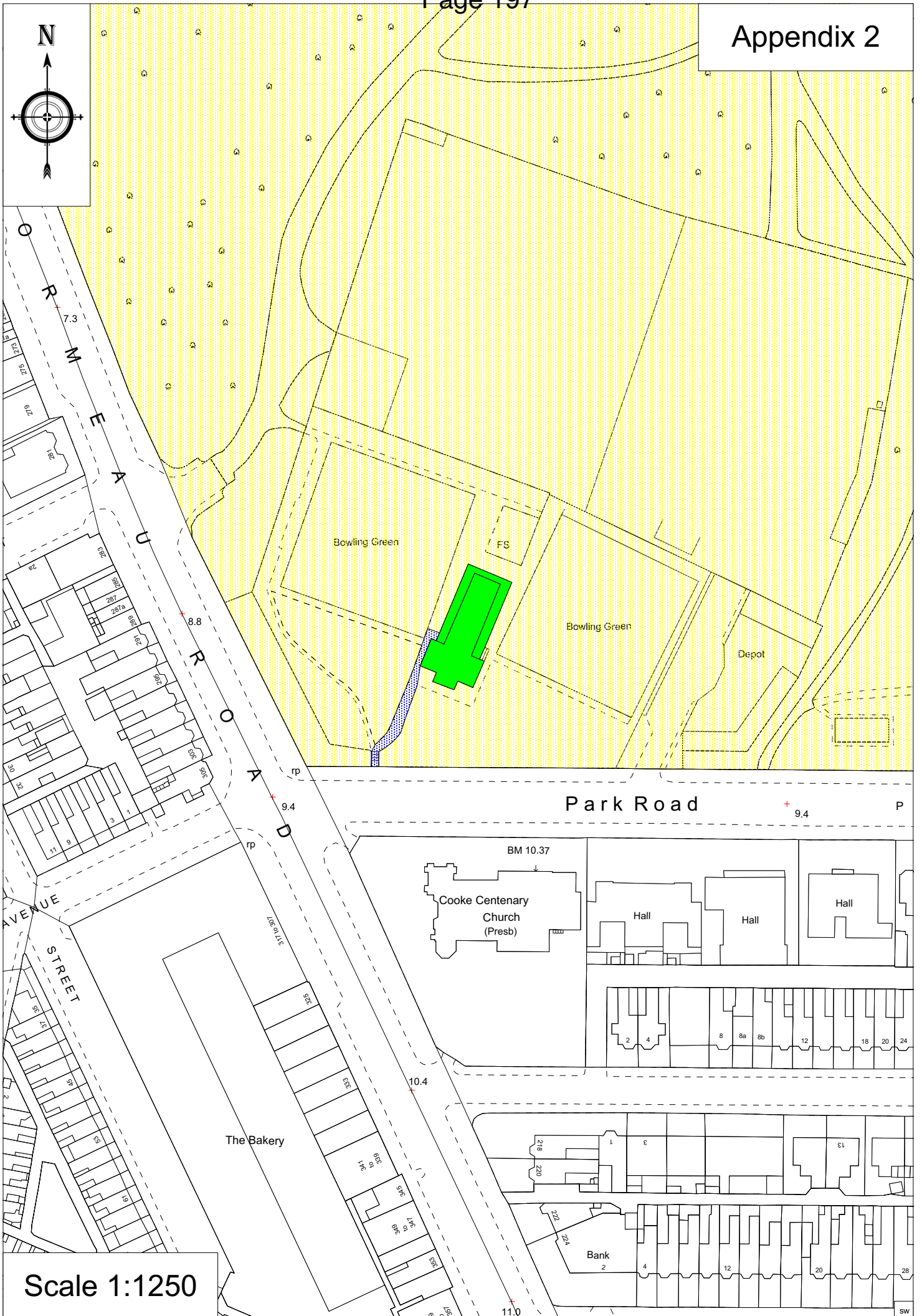
Project Title:

ORMEAU PARK  
 BOWLING PAVILION

Client:

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Scale 1:1250

Bowling Green

FS

Bowling Green

Depot

Park Road

+ 9.4

P

BM 10.37

Cooke Centenary Church (Presb)

Hall

Hall

Hall

The Bakery

Bank

SW

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<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of future use and management of the City Hall</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects
1.0	<b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>
1.1	The City Hall is the most prestigious building in the city of Belfast and is one of the most instantly recognisable symbols of the city. It has a unique, iconic status and is very much seen as the 'heart of the city'. Constructed at the turn of the 20th century, it was opened officially in 1906 and celebrated its centenary in 2006. It was closed temporarily in October 2007 for a period of 2 years for an £11m refurbishment programme and was reopened in October 2009. It is a Grade A listed building.
1.2	The City Hall is a working building which is in daily use as the civic headquarters of the Council. One of its key uses is to facilitate the 51 Elected Members of the Council in their role as civic leaders for the city. It also provides an office base for approximately 200 staff as well as offering a number of services to the public including a new exhibition area, visitor information point and coffee-shop. It also houses the Birth, Deaths and Marriages suite.
1.3	The building has three prestigious function rooms, namely the Great Hall, the Banqueting Hall and the Reception Hall, all of which are heavily booked for both civic and non-civic functions. These rooms typically generate around <b>600 functions</b> per annum, attracting over <b>30,000 guests</b> each year. There are also exhibitions occasionally held in the City Hall. The grounds of the City Hall are frequently used for high profile public events including the Christmas and Spring Continental markets. The City Hall is open to the public Monday to Saturday and offers public tours with tour numbers and participants increasingly significantly over the past number of years
2.0	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
2.1	<p>The City Hall is the Council's most high profile and impressive asset; however, due to historic reasons and with the passing of time the lines of accountability and responsibility for the use and management of the building and its grounds have become blurred. There are no explicit, transparent policy frameworks in place for a number of key areas in relation to the management of the City Hall including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the booking of functions rooms which has led to a degree of confusion over who is responsible for what – for both internal and external events.</li> <li>- the charging for room hire</li> <li>- the catering of events</li> <li>- the use of the grounds</li> </ul> <p>This lack of clarity re accountability and responsibility is a high risk for the Council.</p>
2.2	Many of the functions held in the City Hall are non-civic and booked by external organisations. In such circumstances, approval is based on compliance with a number of fairly general and

	<p>somewhat dated criteria. Members will note that complaints have recently been received from the commercial sector, asserting that providing free access to the City Hall is unfairly and unnecessarily depriving local businesses of commercial opportunities.</p>
2.3	<p>At present there is no income generated from any of these events and, in fact, up until June 2010 the Council offered an uncapped level of civic hospitality for particular events in the form of drinks receptions and dinners. The level of hospitality provided in such circumstances has now been capped to £500 by Committee in June 2010.</p>
2.4	<p>Within this context, a review of the overall management and use of the City Hall and its grounds had been initiated a few months back. An initial draft options paper is being finalised which considers the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-General issues in respect of the management &amp; governance arrangements for the City Hall</li> <li>-Use of City Hall facilities (including grounds) and the associated process for booking</li> <li>-Tours</li> <li>-Scope to introduce a potential scale of charging for functions in the City Hall</li> <li>-Catering for events</li> </ul> <p>This options paper has taken into consideration best practice in civic buildings elsewhere in the UK and Ireland.</p>
2.5	<p>Members are asked to note some of the emerging issues from the initial review including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The fragmented nature of the management and governance for the booking of City Hall functions and the inconsistency in approach to dealing with internal and external functions</li> <li>- The lack of a single point of accountability in relation to the management and use of the City Hall</li> <li>- The criteria for use of the City Hall is somewhat dated</li> <li>- Establishing a clear role for the SP&amp;R Committee in approving usage</li> <li>- The need to test the appetite for the option to potentially introduce some form of commercial charge (in particular circumstances) for the use of City Hall function rooms and/or City Hall tours</li> <li>- Detailed financial modelling needs to be undertaken to explore the emerging options and any associated scale of charges</li> <li>- Future accommodation requirements and the future role of City Hall will have to be clarified.</li> </ul>
2.6	<p>Members will appreciate that this is a complex piece of work. Essentially it raises the issue of 'what is/should be' the role of the City Hall? E.g. do we continue to expand its accessibility to, and usage by, the general public? Should it remain an open free building for all, should we ensure that costs are covered, or should it operate on a more commercial basis? This is linked to ongoing discussions in respect to the future accommodation needs of the Council.</p>
2.7	<p>While a detailed Phase I report is currently being finalised and will be submitted for the future consideration of the Committee, Members are asked to consider the appropriateness of scheduling a series of Party Group briefings to enable Members to inform the options paper being developed. Alternatively, the proposal to establish a Members' Accommodation Working Group could be utilised to progress this issue.</p>

### 3.0 Resource Implications

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

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- i) note the contents of this report and, in particular, that a further detailed options paper will be submitted for the consideration of Committee in November 2010
- ii) consider the appropriateness of scheduling Party Group briefings to enable Members to be briefed on and input into the emerging options paper or alternatively consider whether this issue could be progressed by the Members' Accommodation Working Group

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**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Connswater Community Greenway Update
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	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.

The BIG Lottery Fund (BIG) have agreed to the Council becoming the employer and authority was granted at the S&PR Committee meeting of the 24<sup>th</sup> Sept for the Chief Executive to sign the transfer agreement on the Council's behalf. The contract for the construction of the Greenway has been awarded to SIAC/Galliford Try and it is intended that the Council will become the employer and take ownership of the contract by November 2010.

**Key Issues**

The first phase of construction will be from Cregagh Glen to Montgomery Road with work programmed to commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010. Under the terms of the contract the Project Manager needs to be in a position to hand over the land within the extent of works for this section to the contractor on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010.

(i) An area of land at Cregagh Glen consisting of 2.54 acres and shown outlined red on the attached plan at Appendix '1' has been identified as being required for the Connswater Community Greenway. Council officials have agreed to purchase these lands from Mrs Rea for £ 14,115. Mrs Rea's solicitor has not been able to provide Legal Services with title to a portion of the lands and they will need to do further title checks prior to accepting a statutory declaration to the effect that Mrs Rea and her predecessor in title have occupied the said lands to the exclusion of all others since 1920.

- (ii) There may not now be enough time before 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2010 to complete the conveyancing and put in place the statutory declaration. Officers would, therefore, propose that the Council take a licence to allow the contractor access to the land with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2010. The licence will terminate on formal completion of the acquisition of the land from Mrs Rea.
  
- (iii) The area of land consisting of 0.534 acres shown outlined red on the attached plan at Appendix '2' has been identified as being required for the Greenway. Council officials have agreed to purchase this area of land from Castlereagh Borough Council for £ 8,010. On checking title it became apparent that the developer of adjoining land has wrongly registered part of Castlereagh Borough Council's land within the adjoining folio. Both parties recognise the error and are taking steps to have the matter rectified following which the land will be transferred to BCC for the Greenway.
  
- (iv) As the rectification of title at Land Register can take some time, officers would propose that the Council take a licence from Castlereagh Borough Council to allow the contractor to take possession of the site on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2010 to commence work on the Greenway. The licence will terminate on formal completion of the acquisition of the land from Castlereagh Borough Council.
  
- (v) The project manager would intend to hand over the remainder of the land required for the Greenway to the contractor in accordance with the following programme of work; Phase 11 (Montgomery Road to Beersbridge Road) on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011, Phase 111 & 1V (Glen Road to Dixon Park and Beersbridge Road to Sydenham bypass) on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and Phase V (Victoria Park) on the 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2013. Land assembly for the phases 11-V is progressing well and it is intended that all acquisitions of land will be in place before commencement of phase 11.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

These proposal requires expenditure of £22,125 to purchase the land and acquire the licences plus associated reasonable professional and legal fees.

The purchase costs for all of the land required for the Connswater Community Greenway are included in the Connswater Community Greenway budget of the City Investment 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.



<b>Recommendations</b>
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(i) It is recommended that the Committee grant approval to the purchase of the lands outlined red on the plan attached at Appendix '1' from Mrs Rea for £14,115
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(ii) It is recommended that the Committee grant approval to taking a licence from Mrs Rea's for the land shown outlined red on the plan attached at Appendix '1'.
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(iii) It is recommended that the Committee grant approval to the purchase of the lands outlined red on the plan attached at Appendix '2' from Castlereagh Borough Council for £8010.
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(iv) It is recommended that the Committee grant approval to taking a licence from Castlereagh Borough Council for the land shown outlined red on the plan attached at Appendix '2'.
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<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
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N/A.
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<b>Decision Tracking</b>
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Action by Celine Dunlop to be completed by December 2010.
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<b>Documents Attached</b>
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Plans at Appendix '1' and Appendix '2'.
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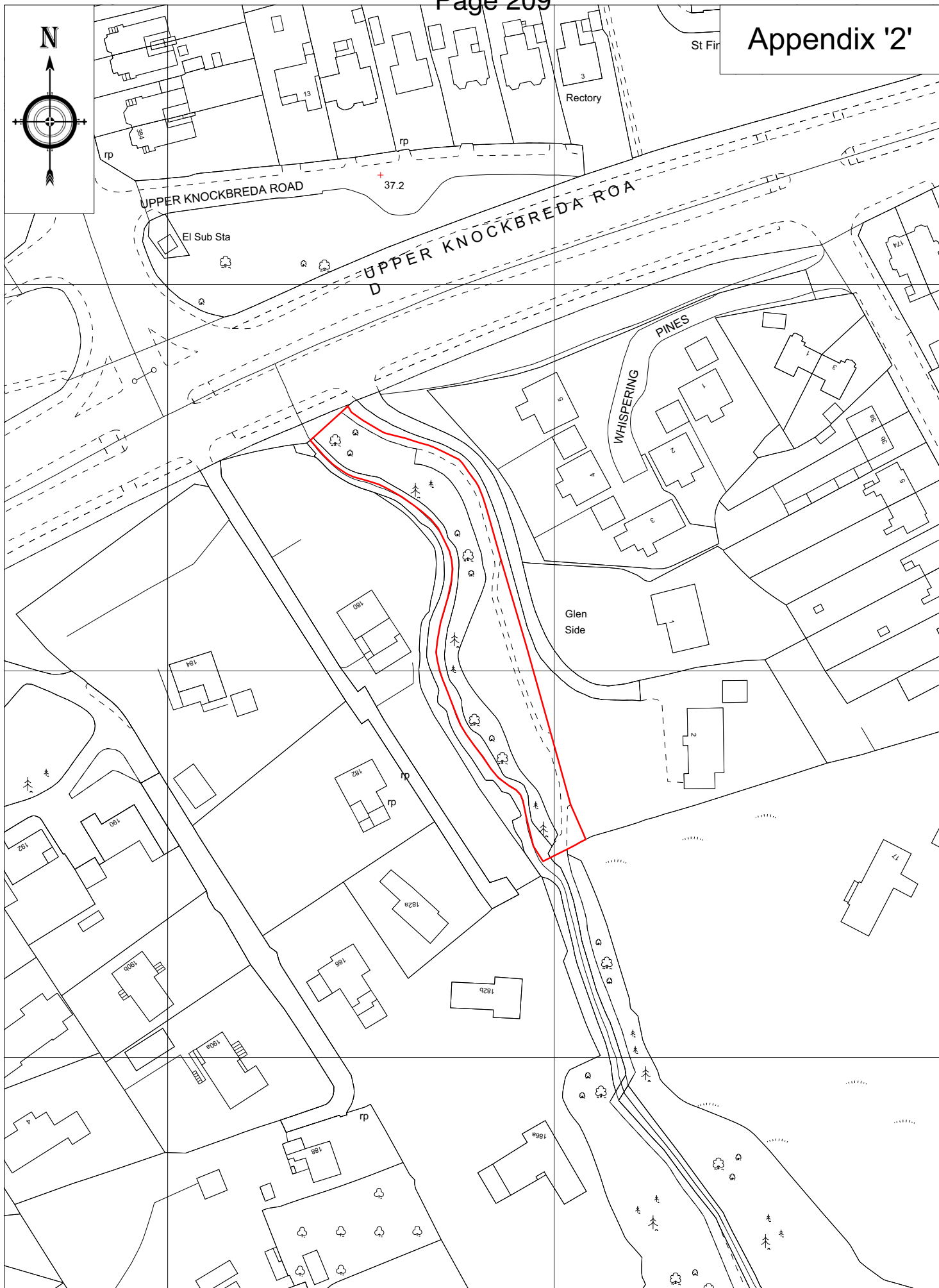


Scale 1:1250

Connswater Community Greenway - Plot 80a

Area 2.54 acres

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Scale 1:1250

Connswater Community Greenway - Plot 79

Area 0.534 acres

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### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Reopening of call for Peace III Priority 2.1 Capital bids for Shared Space</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217

#### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to update Members on the reopening of the Peace III Priority 2.1 '*Creating Shared Public Spaces*' call for capital projects.

#### Relevant Background Information

Last month's Strategic P&R Committee was informed that SEUPB intended to reopen the call for bids under Priority 2.1 '*Creating Shared Public Spaces*' of the Peace III programme. Members are asked to note that SEUPB formally reopened this call on 1<sup>st</sup> October with a closing date for applications on **MONDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2011**.

Under this priority SEUPB is seeking strategic physical project submissions that can be easily recognised as a Peace III project after the programme completes in 2015. The central issue that projects need to demonstrate is their ability to deliver peace and reconciliation outcomes and to be iconic, transformational projects that would provide a lasting legacy to the PEACE III programme. All monies under this call have to be committed by December 2013 and spent by 2015 so the timescales are extremely tight for capital projects.

Members agreed last month that it was important that the learning from the previous rounds of Peace III applications is taken on board if any new projects are submitted under this reopened call. The application process is an onerous one and the Council weakens its chances of success with the submission of multiple bids. It was therefore agreed that the Council should only submit 1 or 2 very well defined projects under this call in order to maximise its chances of getting a successful application under this call.

Members were also reminded that previous Council led submissions have failed on their capacity to be iconic, transformational and have had an insufficient focus on peace and reconciliation. Therefore it is vital that any projects which are submitted under this call need to -

- clearly demonstrate their peace and reconciliation outcomes
- be iconic and transformational
- provide a lasting legacy to the Peace programme in Northern Ireland,
- clearly identify the need for the project and be fully worked up and costed

Members also agreed to the establishment of a short term Member Group to develop an influencing strategy and make use of the existing Member experience with SEUPB.

Members will recall that the Council submitted 4 applications under the last call for this Priority in

November 2009. Of these 3 were rejected by SEUPB – the Sports Village at the North Foreshore, the North Belfast Cultural Corridor and the Gasworks Bridge while the Girdwood Community Hub application was deferred pending further information. Members are asked to note that work on the Girdwood Hub submission is continuing.

## Key Issues – Reopening of the call

### Update on Projects

Following the SP&R Committee meetings in August and September and the Party Group briefings on the new Corporate Plan in early September, Members have identified a number of projects that could potentially be submitted under this call. These are detailed below along with some points for Members to note and recommendations in relation to each project.

1. *Sports Village at the North Foreshore* – the development of a cross community facility aimed at promoting good relations via sport, recreational training and education on the North Foreshore site. The Council would lead and develop this bid with the support of Crusaders/Newington Football Clubs. As Members are aware the original Sports Village bid got through to second phase but was rejected on grounds of limited peace inputs and gaps in the business plan. These areas would have to be reworked in any new submission

*Recommendation – That officers work up this proposal in greater detail and continue to progress discussions with Crusaders/Newington Football Clubs*

2. *'Belfast Story' at Belfast Central Library* – Members will recall that the Strategic P&R Committee at its meeting in June 2010 considered the decisions made by the Libraries NI Board in terms of library closures and agreed that the Council should continue discussions with Libraries NI in relation to potential future collaboration opportunities. Members were informed at the SP&R Committee meeting in September that initial discussions had been held with Libraries NI staff re the opportunity of a potential space to host the 'Belfast Story' in the Belfast Central Library. Members are also aware that Library is being considered as a potential option for the future location of the Welcome Centre. An Outline Business Case for the Central Library is currently being prepared by Libraries NI and this is due to be finalised by the end of December. Members are asked to note that there could potentially be a number of issues with the proposal in that the delivery of the Belfast Story within the Library will be contingent on Libraries NI receiving funding go-ahead for the overall project and that this might be deemed as a high risk by SEUPB. Members are asked to consider that the central premise of Priority 2.1 is to deliver major, iconic, transformational capital projects and that this project may not be deemed to fit with the aspirations of this programme.

*Recommendation – That officers do further work on this proposal to assess its suitability and viability in relation to aims and objectives of the Priority 2.1 programme in light of the issues raised above and continue to progress discussions with Libraries NI re this project with an update to be taken to Members next month.*

3. *Ulster Sports Museum* – As Members are aware the Ulster Sports Museum Association (USMA) has been working for a number of years towards establishing a permanent museum by 2012 to celebrate Ulster's greatest sports men and women building on the success of the temporary exhibition which was launched in the City Hall in Dec 2009. The Association had previously considered a building in College Square North however for a variety of reasons, including cost, the USMA, was unable to proceed with that proposal. Earlier this year the USMA advertised to identify potential partners interested in hosting the museum. They interviewed a number of applicants and have narrowed it down to three potential locations – Belfast (former Bank of Ireland building at the corner of North Street and Royal Avenue), Bangor and Newtownabbey. Consultants have been appointed to assess the feasibility of each location. Council officers have met recently with the USMA to discuss their proposals and the USMA have highlighted that there are strong arguments for locating the sports museum in Belfast City Centre. It has been stressed to the USMA that the Council could not, given the current economic situation, contribute directly to the financing of this project. The USMA is therefore looking at exploring other funding avenues. Further consideration would need to be given to the location of this project, potential links with the 'Belfast Story'/Central



Library project etc. Members are asked to note that an update paper on this project was taken to the Parks & Leisure Committee on 14 October.

*Recommendation – That officers do further work on this proposal to assess its suitability and viability in relation to the aims of the Priority 2.1 programme and progress discussions with the USMA*

4. *North Belfast Cultural Corridor* – As Members are aware the Cultural Corridor was knocked out by SEUPB in the last call at the first stage – i.e. it did not meet the thresholds for progressing to economic appraisal. SEUPB had advised that they felt the Corridor project was much more of an environmental and tourism project and that it was weak in demonstrating peace and reconciliation outcomes and their feedback was that the Corridor project would be unlikely to meet the aims of the Priority 2.1 programme. However provision for parts of this project have now been made under the Council's recent submission to Peace III Priority 1.1 'Building Positive Relations at a Local Level' and will be taken forward through this and potentially renewing the routes options.

*Recommendation – SEUPB have already advised that it is unlikely that this project will meet the aims of the Priority 2.1 programme and as provision for elements of this projects have been made under Priority 1.1 it is recommended that this project is not resubmitted under Priority 2.1*

5. *Gasworks Bridge* – Members are aware that like the Cultural Corridor project above the Gasworks Bridge also did not meet the threshold scores for progressing to economic appraisal stage in the last round and was knocked out by SEUPB in the initial stage. Subsequent discussions with SEUPB indicated that this project fell down on its demonstration of peace and reconciliation outcomes and its ability to provide a lasting legacy to the peace programme. It was also considered weak in terms of its ability to act as a catalyst and be transformational. Concerns were also raised over the value for money and the need for the project. SEUPB drew comparisons with the Peace Bridge in Derry which had successfully received funding under an earlier call for this priority highlighting that this was seen as a project which had an impact on the whole city whereas it was considered that the impact of the Gasworks proposal would be much more localised and therefore less iconic and transformational. Members are asked to note that the Council has been contacted by Sustrans in relation to the Connect2 project which could be an alternative avenue of funding for the development of this project.

*Recommendation – that this project is not resubmitted following the feedback from SEUPB. Members are asked however to agree that officers explore the potential for the development of this project under the Connect 2 project in conjunction with Sustrans*

6. *North Foreshore Bridge* – As Members are aware the North Foreshore Bridge was submitted under one of the previous calls to Priority 2.1 in 2007 and was narrowly rejected at economic appraisal stage. Members are however asked to note SEUPB's feedback in relation to the Gasworks Bridge in relation to this proposal and the need for the project to demonstrate its impact at a city level.

*Recommendation – that no further action is taken in relation to this project under Priority 2.1 in light of the feedback from SEUPB on the Gasworks Bridge project and that this project has previously been rejected*

7. *HMS Caroline* – Members will be aware that there have been ongoing discussions re the future of the HMS Caroline over the past few years and that this project was previously rejected by the Strategic P&R Committee as potential project under the last round of funding. Members are asked to note that the SS Nomadic restoration project received £2.27million of funding under a previous call under this priority and feedback from previous discussions with SEUPB on other projects would indicate that they are reluctant to fund 2 or more projects of a similar nature.

*Recommendation – no further action at present – it is unlikely that SEUPB will fund two similar applications under this funding programme*

8. *Black Mountain Shared Space Project* – Officers from the Council met recently with representatives from the Black Mountain Shared Spaces project which is an innovative

project being developed on a cross-community and cross-sectoral basis. The Black Mountain Shared Spaces Project has recently written to the Council asking that the Council be the lead statutory partner in this project. The Black Mountain has, over recent years, become the focus of anti-social behaviour mainly, but not exclusively, on the part of young people from both sides of the community. The Black Mountain Shared Spaces project proposes a number of elements including education, employment and youth provision, building good relations and development of a social economy project of benefit to the area, Belfast and beyond. Members are asked to note however that this project is still in the developmental stage and it is unlikely that it will meet the tight timeframe for submission under this call of funding. Officers from the Council will continue to work closely with reps from this Group on bringing this project forward and advising on other potential funding streams.

*Recommendation – not recommended for submission under this call – the Black Mountain Shared Spaces project is still in the very early developmental stages and is therefore unlikely to be developed sufficiently in time to meet the tight timescales under this call. Following the recent request by the BSSP the Council will be the lead statutory partner in this project.*

9. *Interface areas* – Officers from the Good Relations Unit have held some initial discussions with both the Belfast Interface Trust and the Belfast Interface Project who have produced some ideas for interface areas in Belfast. Work on this is continuing under Priority 1.1 and the Council is actively working with all partners/ relevant stakeholders on this area to progress this

*Recommendation – not recommended for submission under this call as work is continuing, in conjunction with partners and other stakeholders, under Priority 1.1.*

A summary of the projects and recommendations for these is contained below for the convenience of Members. Members are asked to consider these recommendations and are further asked if there are any other projects they wish to be wished to be considered at this stage. Members are asked however to bear in mind the tight timescales for the submission of projects and the fact that Members had previously agreed that the Council should only submit a maximum of 1 or 2 clearly defined bids under this call.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Sports Village at North Foreshore	Further detail to be worked up
Belfast Story at Central Library	Further detail to be explored to assess the suitability and viability of this project as well as ongoing discussions with Libraries NI with an update to be taken to Committee in November
Ulster Sports Museum	Further detail to be explored to assess the suitability and viability of this project as well as ongoing discussions with USMA with an update to be taken to Committee in November
North Belfast Cultural Corridor	No further action – SEUPB feedback was that this project did not fulfil the aims of Priority 2.1. Elements being progressed under Priority 1.1.
Gasworks Bridge	No further action – SEUPB feedback was that this project did not fulfil the aims of Priority 2.1. Officers to explore the potential for progressing this project under the Connect2 programme
North Foreshore Bridge	No further action – this project has previously been rejected and it is therefore unlikely to be successful. Officers to explore the potential for progressing this project under the Connect2 programme
HMS Caroline	No further action – unlikely that SEUPB will fund two similar projects under this funding programme

<p>Black Mountain Shared Spaces Project</p>	<p>No further action – this project is still in the early stages of development and so will not meet the tight timeframe for the submission of applications. The Council is now taking a lead in this project and officers from the Council will continue to work with representatives from the project on bringing this proposal forward and potentially securing other avenues of funding</p>
<p>Interface Areas</p>	<p>No further action – being progressed by the Council in conjunction with the Belfast Interface Trust and the Belfast Interface Project under Priority 1.1.</p>

<p><b>Resource Implications</b></p>
<p><u>Financial</u> None at present.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Additional officer time will be required to progress work on applications that the Council wishes to proceed with.</p>

<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
<p>The Committee is asked to note the information in this report and to –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. note that SEUPB have formally reopened the Priority 2.1 call with the deadline for submission of applications being MONDAY 17 JANUARY 2011</li>   <li>2. consider the recommendations in relation to the projects listed above and agree that further investigation be undertaken in relation to the Sports Village, the Ulster Sports Museum and the Belfast Story at Central Library and that no further action is progressed in relation to the other projects</li> </ol>

<p><b>Abbreviations</b></p>
<p>SEUPB – Special European Union Programmes Body</p>

<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
<p>None.</p>

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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Cohesion, Sharing and Integration – proposed response to consultation document</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>22 October 2010</b>
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	<b>Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext 6020</b>

### Relevant Background Information

The Committee will be aware that this long-awaited document *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration* (CSI) was launched by the First and Deputy First Ministers at the end of July 2010 for public consultation. The draft programme outlines the proposed framework for co-ordination across Government Departments for action against sectarianism and racism and aims to “build a shared and better future for all based on fairness, equality, rights, responsibilities and respect”.

The CSI document lists a series of goals for achieving this future, including, in summary:

- addressing physical divisions at interfaces
- ensuring the safety of vulnerable groups
- tackling visible manifestations of racism and sectarianism
- zero tolerance for hate crime attacks
- promoting equality and tackling disadvantage
- providing shared spaces
- celebrating cultural diversity
- better frameworks for dealing with parades and protests etc.

The intention is that the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFM/DFM) will drive the agenda by co-ordinating input from all government departments and agencies (e.g. councils, community and voluntary sector) involved in its delivery. The importance attached to the programme by the Executive is signalled by the fact that its implementation will be overseen by a Ministerial Panel chaired by OFM/DFM Ministers and cross-departmental activities will be co-ordinated through a Senior Officials’ Steering Group.

The paper lists a number of “themes for action” which include:

- ensuring that good relations considerations are embedded in all government policy making
- reducing and eventually eliminating segregated services
- addressing interfaces and encouraging shared neighbourhoods.

### Key Issues

This corporate response is in the format set out by the OFM/DFM and was compiled from comments received from a number of Departments, since the CSI document refers to a wide range

of issues – people and places, young people, community safety, local communities etc.

A series of public meetings was held as part of the consultation process and the Belfast meeting attracted an audience of over 100, despite it being held on a wet Monday evening. This level of attendance reflects the widespread interest in the proposals and general support for greater dialogue, agreement and joint working in tackling these serious issues, which continue to erupt into open violence, as demonstrated in events in Belfast over the past summer.

Members will be aware from media comments that the CSI document has already been widely criticised as being very aspirational in nature, full of good intentions and impressive sound bites<sup>1</sup> but light on detail regarding detailed mechanisms of delivery and incorporating few references to timescales or resources. There are many references to survey results e.g. from the NI Life & Times, rather than hard data on the actual cost of division and dual provision.

The paper stresses the need to share space and services and concentrating on the potential economic benefits of greater sharing of public facilities in an era of increasingly scarce public resources could be more clearly highlighted. Last week, Owen Paterson, Secretary of State, said at a Conservative Party Conference fringe meeting that the NI Executive must address the cost of segregation if it is serious about saving money and providing better services; he said the "British taxpayer should not continue to subsidise segregation".

The CSI document is less progressive than the previous *Shared Future* policy which stated emphatically that "separate but equal is not an option". A report recently published by the Rowntree Trust says that the goal of reconciliation appears to have been replaced by one of "mutual accommodation" and the CSI proposals may not go far enough to heal old divisions.

However, the actual publication of the document itself is to be welcomed and it seems that dialogue is beginning within the NI Executive about the sort of future we want to see for NI. We welcome the fact that difficult issues like sectarianism and racism are being discussed openly rather than ignored or avoided as in the past.

It appears that the paper is intended as an initial skeleton framework policy, with the details to be fleshed out at a later date. Officers from the OFM/DFM have emphasised that the feedback from the public consultation process is essential to provide these details so the Council's response at this stage is crucial.

**Resource Implications**

None at this stage.

**Recommendations**

This draft response was approved by the Good Relations Partnership at its meeting on 15 October; the Committee is requested to approve this response, giving comments where required, so that it may be submitted to the Department by the closing date of 29 October 2010.

**Officer to contact for further information**

Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext 6020

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Mark Davenport "motherhood and apple pie" and Prof. Colin Knox a "woolly benign document"

**Belfast City Council Corporate Response****Consultation on Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration****September 2010****Introduction**

The Council welcomes the publication of this draft Programme. We have noted that no action plan has been attached and we understand that this will be developed at a later date. We assume therefore that this offers an opportunity for dialogue and for the Council to have an opportunity to be involved in shaping the development of the Programme.

The promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations have been key objectives of the Council over the past few years and our recent public survey demonstrates that Belfast residents also regard good relations as an area of continuing concern. The document recognises that the Government cannot tackle problems of prejudice and hate, sectarianism and racism alone and the Council is committed to playing its part at city level.

**Unique Position of Belfast**

The Council would advocate that the Programme acknowledges the unique situation of Belfast. There is clear evidence that Belfast was disproportionately affected by the years of conflict and many areas are still characterised by ongoing community tensions and entrenched divisions, manifested through murals, flags etc. Although the document does refer in general terms to the link between areas which suffered most from the legacy of the conflict and areas of high deprivation, this is most obvious in Belfast which has 9 of the 10 most deprived areas in terms of multiple deprivation. These areas are marked by low levels of educational achievement, poor health, high unemployment and low levels of mobility. These factors have contributed to the creation of a vicious circle of low self and community esteem and such areas are often located at interfaces or at flashpoints.

As a result of the conflict, Belfast has over 80 peace walls or interfaces, by far the greatest number anywhere in NI. Erected originally to improve security, they remain almost 40 years later and have contributed to the perpetuation of the cycle of division and segregation. Mayor Bloomberg, for example, referred to the continued presence of interfaces as clear evidence that things are still not quite normal in Belfast. He said it was "in the interests of peace and prosperity" to remove the barriers "and the sooner the physical barriers come down... the sooner the flood gates of private investment will open."

**Role of Local Government**

Since a substantial part of the OFM/DFM's current good relations programme is already delivered by local government through the existing District Councils Good Relations Programme, it is disconcerting to note that our work does not even get a mention until page 52 of the document. The paper does acknowledge the "unique placement" of Councils and their valuable role and states that Government is committed to supporting the current Programme. Belfast's good relations work has developed initiatives which have then been rolled out in other areas – e.g. work around bonfire management, re-imaging of murals, interfaces, migrants' forum etc. – and we would be happy to take on an enhanced role, subject to being resourced accordingly.

Apart from its specific Good Relations Unit's activities, Belfast City Council is already involved in active delivery of various other parts of the CSI agenda, by work in other areas e.g. community services, community safety, children and young people, events, leisure, parks and open spaces,

capital developments and the creation of shared space etc. We would therefore like to see more explicit reference made to the key role of Councils at local level.

### **Shared Space**

The Council welcomes the commitment to ensure that all spaces and facilities are “shared and welcoming” (para. 3.35) and would point out that as most of the spaces mentioned are not within the remit of central government, all agencies, including the voluntary, community and private sectors, must work together in the delivery and maintenance of these shared spaces.

In Belfast there has been a general acceptance of dual provision of public services across the city, with the associated increased costs. With increased pressure on public expenditure, there is a real urgency now for all levels of government to look at ways of working together to deliver services and maximising the use of current, and future, assets and resources.

The Council would highlight, as a model which could be replicated, the successful example of partnership working at the Grove Wellbeing Centre, where health, leisure and library services are delivered under one roof. We would seek to ensure that a joined-up approach becomes the norm in future, to minimise the duplication of services and to provide the efficient, effective and value for money services that our citizens deserve. We would advocate that the delivery of shared services itself should become a central and explicit objective in the programme.

The ability to travel freely and access key facilities is vital in an open city. Many people live in areas that are highly territorial and their “mental maps” can affect their daily choices of where to live, work, shop, socialise etc. We need to increase people’s confidence in accessing services located in areas perceived as being outside their traditional comfort zones. Access and connectivity of proposed new developments should be analysed with regard to their potential to transform existing patterns of use since these will be important in facilitating mobility across a segregated city. The Council would therefore urge the Government to move forward with the implementation of the proposed Rapid Transport System since this would probably contribute much more to Belfast’s becoming a shared city than many of the other measures mentioned.

### **Implementation**

Although the aspirations in the draft CSI Programme are commendable, there is very little detail on when, how or by whom these will be achieved. In particular, the Council has concerns round the absence of a proposed action plan, timescale, targets, outputs and outcomes and the mention of a specific resource to support delivery and implementation of the programme, especially at a time of unprecedented financial pressure within NI. We believe that for any programme to be successful, a detailed action plan against which progress can be measured is essential. We would seek a commitment from central government that resources will be ring-fenced and protected for delivering actions under this Programme given its strategic importance.

The Council would seek an assurance that the aims of this programme are being aligned and mainstreamed into the ongoing work of all central government departments, given the tangible and intangible links with housing, community development, neighbourhood renewal, children and young people.

We would like an assurance that the programme’s aims will be embedded and reflected in any new policies/strategies that are developed and would seek clarification on how existing and future policies will be measured against the aims of this strategy.



**RESPONSE TO OFMDFM CONSULTATION QUESTIONS:**

I am responding:	as an individual	
	on behalf of an organisation	✓
Name:	Hazel Francey	
Job Title:	Good Relations Manager	
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**GOALS**

Chapter 2 sets out the key goals of the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration as follows:

- To urgently address the physical and community division created by interfaces with the support of communities;
- To ensure and promote the safety of vulnerable groups;
- To tackle the visible manifestations of racism, sectarianism, intolerance and other forms of prejudice;
- To adopt a zero tolerance approach to all incidences of, and reasons for, attacks motivated by sectarian, religious, racist or hate prejudice, including those on symbolic premises, cultural premises and monuments;
- To promote equality of opportunity and tackle disadvantage;
- To provide and expand safe and shared spaces;
- To build a society where cultural diversity is embraced and celebrated and to promote pride in who we are and confidence in our different cultural identities;
- To create a new and improved framework for the management and regulation of public assemblies including parades and protests;
- To achieve the full participation of all sectors in all aspects of society;
- To support the local community to resolve local issues through local solutions; and
- To take action which will address sectarian behaviour at spectator sports events.

Do you agree/disagree with the key goals of the programme?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – is there anything that has not been included/should be omitted?

We agree with the stated goals and welcome the opportunity to build greater alignment between our current programme of work and that proposed through this CSI strategy.

However, we have some concerns:

- Some goals would be more properly described as cross-cutting themes.
- They are ambitious, may be difficult to measure and may represent a lack of focus.
- The Programme is not set in context - there is little recognition of current work or that of groups over the past 25-30 years. There has been no attempt to evaluate previous programmes or to assimilate previous learning.
- The programme needs to be realistic and long-term in nature; as a society we may not have moved as far ahead in the last decade as has often been supposed and serious fundamental issues have often been avoided rather than being directly addressed.
- The document appears to be concerned to treat the symptoms of the division- e.g. flags, interfaces, rather than examining their causes and the underlying problems of division.
- Some groups are entirely omitted from the document e.g. victims, ex-prisoners, women, churches etc.
- Where does this strategy fit in the hierarchy of other government strategies? If addressing issues of division and sectarianism are the primary goal of NI society does the CSI programme take precedence?
- Are the CSI goals integrated within the Programme for Government? Only by tackling these issues that NI can seriously deliver solid economic sustainability and a prosperous future.
- The paper states that the current good relations indicators will be used (2.5) but any new programme of intervention will require new PIs to facilitate measurement of outcomes

What exactly does “to achieve the full participation of all sectors in all aspects of society” mean? This is too broad and general a statement to be meaningful.

We feel that the strategy could benefit from an emphasis, particular in the current economic climate, on encouraging shared services as well as shared spaces. This is perhaps even more appropriate now in view of probable reductions in funding for major capital infrastructure work.

Tackling “the visible manifestations of racism and sectarianism” are of course important but the invisible damage to victims of such forms of prejudice also needs to be addressed.

A “zero tolerance” approach to hate crime is laudable but there is no mention of how this will be enforced, in view of reducing PSNI budget; no changes are proposed to the current legislation or court system.

In these challenging economic times, it is even more essential that all levels of government work together to deliver shared solutions to problems. We would advocate that this partnership approach is reflected more strongly in the document to ensure shared aims and objectives and where appropriate the alignment of priorities and resources. The Council has 2 key Partnerships - Belfast Community Safety Partnership and Good Relations Partnership – which have worked together in developing initiatives and adopting a coordinated approach.

**THEMES FOR ACTION**

Chapter 2 states a number of themes for action as follows:

**Short Term**

- Developing 'Shared Space';
- Enhancing community capacity to play a full role in implementing the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration;
- 'Crisis Intervention' and the need for a mechanism to co-ordinate multi-agency rapid responses to tackle sectarianism and racial violence and all forms of hate crimes;
- Ensuring good relations considerations are embedded within all government policy making;
- Early and strategic intervention to tackle anti-social behaviour and tensions around interfaces; and
- Promoting Cohesion, Sharing and Integration through a process of community renewal.

**Medium Term**

- The relationship between young people and the community;
- Providing a new and improved framework for the resolution of public assembly disputes; and
- Ensuring the sharing of best practice projects aimed at improving cohesion, sharing and integration across all areas where appropriate and when required.

**Long Term**

- Interfaces;
- Encouraging shared neighbourhoods;
- Reducing and eventually eliminating segregated services;
- Tackling the multiple social issues effecting and entrenching community separation, exclusion and hate; and
- Cultural identity, including issues around flags and emblems, murals, bonfires, cultural expression, language and popular protest.

What are your views on the themes for action currently identified?

The Council is generally supportive of the themes and timescales outlined (2.6) but it is difficult to comment meaningfully without greater detail as they are fairly broad. The wide focus of the Programme needs to develop a clear framework aligned to that of other departments and strategies.

There is some inconsistency round interfaces; these are to be addressed "urgently" (2.3) but are listed (2.6) as a long-term theme for action.

The Belfast Community Safety Partnership would commend as a model of good practice in a multi-agency rapid response approach (2.6) its establishment of a tension monitoring process, which allows for sharing of information in real time and the development of coordinated responses to address situations where tensions are identified either geographically, by issue or on a group basis.

**GOOD RELATIONS AND THE RACIAL EQUALITY STRATEGY**

The Programme for Cohesion Sharing and Integration is not intended to supersede or replace the Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-10, which was endorsed by the motion made by the Assembly on 3 July 2007. Rather, it provides the framework for the delivery of aspects of that strategy relating to good race relations in a co-ordinated, joined up process (paragraph 1.10).

Do you agree/disagree the programme will complement the delivery of the Racial Equality Strategy?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

How could the relationship between the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration and the Racial Equality Strategy be strengthened?

The paper refers to existing policies like the Racial Equality Strategy but states that it is not intended to supersede or replace it. It appears to assume that this Strategy is still fully functional; however it only runs until 2010 and has in reality been shelved for the last number of years.

Where does this leave the Racial Equality Strategy and the departmental action plans that were to stem from it? Will the goals of the Race Equality Strategy remain and will there be new departmental action plans? It would be useful if discussion around the current status of the Race Equality Strategy formed part of the consultation around CSI.

The Council would recommend that the Race Equality Strategy should be re-visited and evaluated to judge what progress has been made in the past 5 years. The Strategy would also need to be revised to take account of the opportunities and challenges brought about by recent inward migration.

(1.14) The Council notes with interest the comment regarding those who have "no recourse to public funds" and welcomes the support that may be given here.

**PEOPLE AND PLACES**

The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration aims to make a difference to both people and places across our society (Chapter 3). The key aims for people and places are:

- Public spaces, thoroughfares, community facilities and town centres should be safe, shared and welcoming to the whole community;
- All public authorities, including District Councils, should discharge functions and deliver services equally and inclusively recognising the diverse nature of the community they serve and the barriers which can be experienced by minority ethnic people in particular;
- Unnecessary duplication of services should be targeted through the enhanced delivery of shared services on the basis of objective need;
- Safe and secure shared community spaces should be developed in a culture of fairness, equality, rights, responsibilities and respect; and
- Displays of flags and emblems, graffiti or murals, parades or public assemblies or festivals should be held in an environment which respects individual and community rights.

Do you agree/disagree with the proposed aims for people and places?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – is there anything that has not been included/should be omitted?

Belfast City Council generally agrees with the proposed aims but would welcome greater clarity on how and when change will be affected.

**Places**

The Council is a substantial landowner in Belfast and has considerable physical and environmental assets at its disposal. We welcome the paper's emphasis on shared space and are proud of the fact that many of our own facilities, including the City Hall, Waterfront and Ulster Halls, the Zoo, parks, leisure centres, playing fields, playgrounds etc are regarded as shared, safe and accessible and are used by all communities.

Perceptions are also important; all Council facilities are open to all but some people have the perception that it is not safe for them to use particular facilities. Such perceptions must be addressed. Parallel service provision may in fact reinforce patterns of segregation and Belfast's current public transport system indirectly contributes towards continued separation. Mobility and connectivity must be improved if shared services are to become a reality.

We welcome the focus on creating shared space and would advocate that government play a leading role by encouraging the use of secure by design principles in new developments, which should be open and welcoming to all.

**People**

The paper notes that equality legislation has been instrumental in bringing about positive good relations outcomes in the workplace (3.8-3.9). No reference, however, is made here to the role played by Trade Unions, which has been considerable in challenging discrimination and promoting respect. The Council has found some tension between this duty, usually regarded as neutrality, and the need to create a "good and harmonious environment" (3.36), where

expressions of diversity are welcomed; we are already examining this area of debate.

The paper is confusing as occasional references to individual actions by Government Departments are inserted (presumably following inter-Departmental consultation, prior to publication); the reference here to DFP's procurement policy (3.11) is rather bizarre.

We agree that the promotion of good relations is not just the responsibility of the integrated schools sector and that all schools have a part to play (3.13-3.14). There has been substantial research which indicates that sectarian attitudes in NI are imprinted from a very early age in our society. The Programme may therefore need to consider emphasising the importance of work with younger children.

Opportunities for greater sharing and engagement should be supported in Belfast at this time when the rationalisation of the school estate is being seriously considered. Surveys indicate public support for this approach. Schools can help shape attitudes and promote positive views on difference and cultural attitudes and values and we believe all schools in NI should prepare pupils for a shared society.

The Council recognises that health and well-being is largely determined by the social, economic, physical and cultural environment and that links between health and deprivation are well documented. The development of a healthier city is one of our key priorities and we have developed an integrated plan to improve health and wellbeing.

Earlier this year we set up a special Belfast Health Development Unit, bringing together 3 sponsoring partner organisations – Council, Health & Social Care Trust and Public Health Agency - to ensure maximum impact. The Unit's initial priorities include developing effective action with disadvantaged neighbourhoods experiencing the sharpest inequalities in health; as stated in the paper, these are found particularly in the areas that suffered most during the conflict (3.19).

The Council has been heavily engaged in and supported local efforts to remove/reduce displays that could be perceived as being sectarian e.g. flags, murals, bonfires etc (3.32-3.34) and is happy to consider adopting a revised Flags Protocol.

One of the Council's current key delivery mechanisms is in supporting local initiatives at a community level through Good Relations small grants. Getting relevant programmes running at a local level involves providing resources to those groups that are delivering important work 'on the ground'. Working in this way involves working with local elected representatives, community workers, locally based community organisations and residents.

We are also supporting a range of local initiatives, some funded through our Peace III Programme, to promote local partnership work with the NI Housing Executive, develop community gardens and local festivals; all these contribute to the concept of shared space.

We would seek clarification on the timeframe for the DRD's revised Regional Development Strategy regarding guidance on city and town centres as shared spaces (para 3.40) and how this will be aligned with the DSD's city and town centre master-planning programme (para 3.37).

Graffiti should be removed from the final list on p.23 – this is usually simply an act of vandalism and should not be considered as equivalent to the other items.

### Empowering the Next Generation

The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration proposes a number of specific aims to empower the next generation (Chapter 4):

- Under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (see Chapter 2 & 10), establishing a major initiative aimed at developing a longer term strategic approach to helping marginalised young people;
- Supporting young people to increase their civic responsibility including facilitating and empowering youth groups to work together on civic responsibility projects;
- Focusing on education and promoting greater understanding of shared values; and
- Establishing multi-agency partnerships between indigenous and minority ethnic and migrant worker communities to address the specific needs of the young people in those populations.

Do you agree/disagree with the proposed aims for empowering the next generation?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – is there anything that has not been included/should be omitted?

The Council agrees with the paper's emphasis on empowering the next generation. We are keenly aware of the exceptionally limited resource currently available to support the youth sector, particular in view of recent cuts in the education budgets, and welcome the opportunity to identify new opportunities to support work in this field. However, most of this chapter appears unduly negative, depicting young people as a problem to be dealt with, not as a bright resource for the future.

The Council seeks to promote citizenship and civic participation by linking young people to governance decision-making structures and processes at neighbourhood, city, national and international levels. The Council's Youth Forum acts as a mechanism that gives practical expression to the concepts of civic engagement and civic responsibility and may be of wider interest in regard to promoting cohesion, sharing and integration.

By using its political influence to shape policy and better integrate service provision in conjunction with other providers in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors across the city, the Council is keen to promote a long-term framework for children and young people under which a range of programmes and projects can be initiated that address directly issues of division.

The Council invests considerable funding through annual summer schemes for young people in community centres, leisure centres, parks, community safety and good relations. We particularly welcome the recognition (4.4) that "we progress beyond a short-term year-on-year approach" in regard to diversionary/intervention programmes and have already begun work in this regard, aiming for better co-ordination and targeting of funding for 2011. We are actively involved in supporting various projects that divert young people from possible conflict and that educate them about the reality of violence. Two major projects proposed for Phase 2 of our Peace III Plan will specifically tackle youth engagement.

We welcome the statements about the important role of the Department of Education and its proposals regarding youth work (4.7 and 4.8) but would point out that it is difficult to foresee substantial change, given the recent major cuts in youth service funding.

We welcome the statement (4.10) regarding the Department of Education’s commitment to promoting the wider use of school premises. The Council has already worked with some schools in this and would like to explore the potential for greater partnership in the future with schools, for example re. the use of school sporting facilities such as pitches. This would not only prove efficient in financial terms but would assist schools to integrate more fully with their local communities and could promote positive community relations.

The Council is extremely supportive of more effective collaborative working. However, most multi-agency approaches, though fine in principle, have a poor track record in actual delivery. Agencies involved will need to have clearly defined lines of accountability and targets to be truly effective.

**RESPECTING CULTURES**

The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration recognises the importance of respecting the cultural diversity within our community and sets out a number of aims in relation to this (Chapter 5):

- Building a peaceful climate of fairness, equality, rights, responsibilities and respect;
- Working with and supporting the local community to resolve contentious cultural issues;
- Promoting greater understanding of cultural diversity and expressions of cultural identity;
- Encouraging greater engagement with, and understanding of, cultural diversity and intercultural relations;
- Working to eliminate attacks on cultural, sporting and other symbolic property and monuments; and
- Promoting cultural exchanges, joint events and tourism initiatives.

Do you agree/disagree with the proposed aims for respecting cultures?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – is there anything that has not been included/should be omitted?

The Council recognises the positive contribution that cultural diversity brings to society. We are committed to the concept of celebrating diversity and undertake substantial work to support this aim.

All new recruits to the Council receive training in equality and good relations, which specifically addresses the requirements of delivering services to our increasingly diverse population. includes reference to our city’s increasing diversity. The Council has also organised diversity awareness programmes for employees to encourage them to engage with and understand the needs of communities from differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds.



The Council itself promotes a number of major civic events and supports others, either through community festival grants or by supplying a suitable venue to show case events – e.g. the Mela in Botanic Gardens or the Chinese New Year celebrations in St George’s Market. We have also supported numerous smaller events for minority and ethnic groups in the City Hall through the Lord Mayor’s programme in recent years e.g. the end of Ramadan, Hanukah and Polish Cultural Week. Through our Good Relations and Peace III funding, we have supported various projects that seek to develop meaningful engagement and interaction between communities to foster understanding and respect for different cultures.

With regard to the Orangefest example quoted (5.26), we would point out that it was funding through the Council’s Peace III Programme that enabled Belfast City Centre Management to encourage shops to stay open on 12 July 2009 for the first time, not the DSD.

The Council agrees that cultural tourism can make a positive impact on the wider community and that the broader potential economic and social benefits from tourism have still not been fully capitalised. Central to this, however, is the image of NI and the need to ensure that it is seen as safe and welcoming for everyone. The Council welcomes the commitment (5.32) that action must be taken in this regard.

The needs of Irish Travellers and the Roma communities are mentioned only with regard to education; these groups require particular attention. The legal framework for much of this work is already in place but a serious commitment to enforcement appears to be lacking.

### **A SECURE COMMUNITY**

The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration recognises the need to create a secure community and sets out a number of aims in relation to this (Chapter 6):

- Encouraging community events which reflect cultural diversity and are open, welcoming and inclusive to all;
- Ensuring that all responsible agencies continue to provide a high level of community safety delivered within a rights based framework and an overarching ethos of mutual respect;
- Continuing to promote initiatives based on the principle of mutual respect, which reflect acceptance of cultural diversity and the ways in which it is expressed;
- Building community support networks across community, cultural and minority ethnic groups; and
- Building capacity of the local and minority ethnic communities to support people who have experienced hate crime.

Do you agree/disagree with the proposed aims for a secure community?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – is there anything that has not been included/should be omitted?

The Council is committed to working closely with the PSNI, local partnerships and others through its own Belfast Community Safety Partnership and other structures to build a safer community to tackle hate crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.

The Council's Good Relations and Community Safety Units are already working well together on joint projects in areas of work such as interfaces, summer intervention and local engagement and we welcome the proposed introduction of a good relations duty to the new Crime Reduction Partnership arrangements (6.12).

The strategy could also seek to tackle hate related behaviour at all public events, not solely sports events (6.15).

The Council agrees that the removal of peace walls should be a key priority (6.16-6.18) for a city that has over 80 such barriers; we would like to ensure that the special needs of Belfast are highlighted through this cross cutting programme given the number of interfaces in the city. We have already commissioned research round this and are supporting active engagement and early discussion about plans for their removal or reduction.

We already support a number of innovative projects through our Peace III funding, including work led by Falls Community Council round interface regeneration (6.17).

Current projects seeking to remove some barriers continually encounter bureaucratic hurdles, such as ownership of the barrier, traffic calming measures following removal, resources to fund barrier transformation/removal. All these require cross Departmental commitment and the CSI Programme might be useful in producing greater collaboration between Departments on these issues.

The language used is confused and contradictory – e.g. "neutral shared space" (6.21)

### **A COHESIVE COMMUNITY**

The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration recognises the need to progress towards a more cohesive community and sets out a number of aims in relation to this (Chapter 7):

- Zero tolerance for crimes motivated by prejudice and all forms of hate crime, whilst actively promoting rights and respect;
- Promoting intercultural work through the Minority Ethnic Development Fund;
- Building an inclusive community open to all, regardless of their background;
- Promoting greater understanding between established sections of the community and new arrivals;
- Working closely with the PSNI, the new Crime Reduction Partnerships and Probation Board in local areas to address racism and hate crime;
- Encouraging greater understanding of new cultures and new sections of the community; and
- Developing and supporting workplace initiatives to promote respect and understanding of cultural diversity.

Do you agree/disagree with the proposed aims for a cohesive community?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – is there anything that has not been included/should be omitted?

The Council supports the aims expressed and is already working closely in these areas through both its Good Relations Partnership and Community Safety Partnership to address sectarianism, racism and hate crime.

On the one hand, the role of criminal justice agencies is key to developing zero tolerance, along with the full use of powers to promote and encourage respect, and where necessary, to enforce appropriate behaviour. This has to be balanced along with working with communities to support positive activity and challenge negative behaviour. Our Good Relations Unit staff have designed and developed specific anti-hate crime and migrant awareness training which has been delivered both internally within the Council and externally to a range of voluntary groups. We recognise that community dynamics are complex and engage on this basis, while reinforcing the fact that violence and hatred should not be tolerated.

In addition, we are actively involved in promoting respect and understanding of cultural diversity and supporting integration initiatives between established communities and new arrivals to Belfast. We have developed a successful Migrants Forum where all agencies that are involved in providing services for migrants meet regularly to exchange information and develop joint initiatives and programmes.

The Belfast Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) has made dealing with hate crime a priority theme and in recent years has undertaken a range of activity to develop co-ordinated approaches to dealing with hate crime and promoting cohesion in the city. BCSP has supported research relating to vulnerable groups such as the Travelling Community and Transgender Community and is finalising a strategy to address hate crime and cohesion in Belfast.

The BCSP also supports initiatives such as a hate crime training programme, an annual Hate Crime Conference for Belfast (branded the *Unite against Hate* Conference in 2009) and the funding of dedicated staff to address the issue of hate motivated crime and cohesion in Belfast.

The Belfast Community Safety Partnership and Good Relations Partnership have jointly funded community safety advocates within the Chinese, Polish, and LGBT communities, with a range of other funders including NIHE and PSNI.

### Supporting Local Communities

The Programme for Sharing and Integration recognises the need to support local communities in delivering good relations and sets out aims to ensure this (Chapter 8):

- Continue to support Councils' delivery of Good Relations programmes and funding;
- Ensure the local community is integral to the Good Relations decision making and implementation process; and
- Nurturing leadership at a local level and empowering the local community to identify solutions to local issues.

Do you agree/disagree with the proposed aims for supporting local communities?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – is there anything that has not been included/should be omitted?

As democratically elected civic leaders, local Councils play a key role in championing and facilitating discussion round issues of concern to local communities. The current Good Relations Partnership in Belfast is made up of elected Members on a cross-party basis, plus representatives from a number of external bodies i.e. statutory agencies, trade unions, private business, churches, voluntary and community and minority ethnic groups. We believe this to be a good model where the Partnership members engage fully with the local community in the design and delivery of a tailored local programme.

The Good Relations Partnership also supports the work of other Council-led structures such as the Community Safety Partnership, to co-ordinate projects and to ensure that resulting service delivery is complementary.

In Belfast, our Good Relations Unit works directly with the Community Relations Unit within the OFM/DFM (8.3) and has spent considerable time developing and continually improving our own funding criteria and associated programmes, based on evaluations and best practice and submitting annual action plans (8.4). We are happy that this direct relationship should continue.

Belfast City Council has invested significant resources in community development activity and manages 22 community centres in some of the most deprived areas in the city. We work with individuals and community organisations to enhance the quality of life in our neighbourhoods. We have developed or supported programmes and activities designed to build important local skills; to foster participation; and to encourage communities to address local issues. We regard community development principles as fundamental in underpinning any CSI strategy.

We note with concern that there is no mention of the Review of Public Administration and the key role that Councils will have in the future in relation to community planning. Although the RPA may be temporarily stalled, the Council's commitment to community planning and the principles behind it remain strong. Decision-making within local communities regarding good relations issues can not and should not be made in isolation from wider decisions on other service provision. A comprehensive and collaborative approach is required so that programmes at government and local service delivery level are connected. Recognising shared goals and interdependencies at local level will be crucial to long term viability and success.

**LOOKING OUTWARD**

The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration recognises that improving relationships within our society has to be viewed in the wider context of developing strong relationships on a North/South, East/West basis and proposes that an effective outward looking dimension is part of the programme with the following aims (Chapter 9):

- Identifying key exemplar projects which have proven track records of success in promoting good relations;
- Sharing of relevant research and experiences on a North/South, East/West, European and international basis; and
- Mutual promotion of cultural diversity and encouraging better social networks on North/South, East/West, European and international level.

Do you agree/disagree with the proposed aims for looking outward?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – is there anything that has not been included/should be omitted?

The image of NI abroad is crucial since it has a direct influence on potential investment. Our divisions and conflict have a direct impact on our social and economic aims and our future prosperity. It is difficult to promote tourism and cultural programmes in a city where summer rioting is endemic and violence is never far away. The NI Executive should take the lead in sending out the message that it really leads and supports this work and that it is integral to the Programme for Government.

Belfast City Council is keen to explore opportunities for continuous learning in a wider context both in the UK and at a European level.

The Good Relations Unit in Belfast has itself been involved in a number of European based initiatives examining integration and diversity, through the Eurocities network. We often host visits from international academic or local government based organisations, who are interested in the work being done at local level in a divided city. Over the past month alone, we have had visits from Norwegian local politicians and US academics. We also respond to requests for information worldwide.

Belfast is the only Council in NI with a full-time European Unit, which up-dates staff with current activity and policy at European level and co-ordinates related Council activity. One current programme of relevance is our Open Cities project, being undertaken jointly with the British Council, which is examining how cities attract and retain economic migrants.

Belfast Community Safety Partnership has developed relationships with regional centres of learning and good practice in order to build our knowledge base and support the development of partnerships and projects. Specifically these include: Institute for Community Cohesion; Beth Johnston Foundation; Centre for Intergenerational Practice; and European Forum for Urban Safety. We continue to explore opportunities for learning at all levels.

**MECHANISM TO OVERSEE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CSI**

Chapter 10 sets out mechanisms for the co-ordination of the actions to implement the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. The key features of implementation are;

- A Ministerial Panel chaired by OFMDFM Ministers, key statutory and community partners;
- A Senior Officials Steering Group which will be tasked with co-ordinating the cross-departmental alignment of activities and allocation of resources;
- An Advisory Panel of practitioners and experts to provide advice to Government.
- A Funders Group that will advise the Ministerial Panel on good relations funding issues and seek to improve the targeting and co-ordination of funding from many different sources.

Do you agree/disagree with the mechanism to oversee the implementation of the programme?

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Strong Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Comments – are there any improvements that could be made to the proposals for implementing the programme?

It is important that the role of local government forms a strong element within any final model. The paper recognises the unique place that local authorities can play in meeting the aims of the Programme and delivering good relations at the local level.

Given the special circumstances of Belfast as the capital city and regional economic driver of the economy within NI, we would advocate a strong role for Belfast City Council within this mechanism.

The Council would request that it be represented on both the proposed Ministerial Panel and the Senior Officials Steering Group to oversee the implementation of the policy. We would point out that in our view it will be vital in this regard to ensure that politicians and senior officials are drawn from the areas principally affected by conflict and the Department should take this into account. It is imperative that Chief Executives who have faced problems and devised practical local solutions are represented at this level as there will be a very clear need to turn the aspirations of CSI into operational practice, with political support.

We expect that both the Ministerial Panel and Senior Officials Group will be attempting to find ways to eradicate sectarianism and racism and their causes rather than simply "manage" them. The Council notes that the NI Executive advocates tolerance, understanding and co-operation at community level and will expect therefore to see similar values displayed at various levels of government, both at NI and Council level.

The Council welcomes the idea of the Funders' Group, especially in a time when very substantial external funding for peace and reconciliation, from both the EU and USA, is coming to an end; this will improve co-ordination and collaboration, improve targeting and reduce duplication. We would propose that the funding role of Councils could be increased, requiring other local funders in an area to liaise with the local Council to ensure that all proposed funding activities were in

line with the Council's Good Relations Plan for that area (as already required by the OFM/DFM). It will also be important to ensure the sustainability of current programmes where there is much evidence of good practice.

We note that those on the proposed Advisory Panel will be asked to serve on a voluntary basis (10.9) and would contrast this with those who sit on the Equality, Human Rights and Parades Commissions in paid positions; we would enquire why a distinction is being made and why issues relating to good relations are continually reduced to second class status.

The Council notes with concern that there is no mention of the Review of Public Administration and the proposed key role that local authorities will have in the future in relation to community planning.

### **OPTIONS FOR THE DELIVERY OF FUNDING AND POLICY ADVICE**

Chapter 11 outlines options for the delivery of funding and advice to Government on good relations policy to support the implementation of the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. The options are as follows:

**Option 1:** Advisory panel and direct or contracted funding

**Option 2:** Services provided by organisations (procure the delivery of advice and funding from one or more organisations)

**Option 3(a):** Statutory non-departmental public body with funding function

**Option 3(b):** Statutory non-departmental public body without funding function (funding delivered direct or contracted)

Please specify which of the above options (or any alternative you may wish to suggest) represents the best choice for the future of the delivery of funding and policy advice to Government. Please provide reasons for your choice and comment on any changes that could be made to your preferred option to improve delivery of funding/policy advice.

There is a need for greater clarity round the roles of the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council - at present, public authorities are required to make annual reports on progress to the Equality Commission on both equality and good relations progress, but not to the Community Relations Council.

We believe strongly that an independent organisation, along the lines of the current Community Relations Council, is required to be able to provide expert unbiased advice and a strong challenge function to government, to offer a critique on the delivery of the programme and the contribution of government departments and to undertake relevant research. This independent body would be able to attract independent funding from non-governmental sources for certain activities.

We do not believe that the Community Relations Council should necessarily retain its funding role. There are already examples of agencies which provide advice and guidance to government that do not also have a funding role – e.g. the Equality Commission and Human Rights Commission.

In Belfast, our Good Relations Unit has a very good direct working relationship with the Good Relations Unit within the OFM/DFM and has spent considerable time developing and continually improving our own funding criteria and associated programmes, based on evaluations and best

practice. We are pleased that our innovative work in good relations is recognised and publically acknowledged; we are willing to enlarge our role and take on additional responsibility. We have already delivered funding directly on behalf of the OFM/DFM – Summer Intervention Fund in the summer of 2010 – and are happy to assume an enhanced role in future funding for organisations based in Belfast.

We would make the point that “funding” might be better described as “investment” and give the examples of summer diversionary activity and the bonfire management programme, where by investing relatively small amounts, substantial sums of public money can be saved in return.

As stated above at Q11, we would propose that the funding role of Councils could be increased, requiring other local funders in an area to liaise with the local Council to ensure that all proposed funding activities were in line with the Council’s Good Relations Plan for that area.

In view of the current economic climate we would not advocate Option 3 (a or b) as we are keen where possible to keep administrative costs to a minimum and see the establishment of a completely new structure as unnecessary. It is also essential that government is seen to be providing strategic leadership on this issue and relinquishing responsibility might result in a loss of cross-departmental commitment.

#### **OFMDFM FUNDING FOR GOOD RELATIONS WORK**

Chapter 11 sets out options for structures and mechanisms for the delivery of advice to Government and funding delivery services whilst Chapter 12 describes how OFMDFM Good Relations funding will be allocated across three strands as follows:

- Local District Council Programme;
- Thematic; and
- Targeted and Emergency

What are your views on the three strand approach for funding?

The 3 strands of funding identified - local government, thematic, and emergency - are appropriate and we support the need for work to be both planned and reactive. We would stress the need for improved co-ordination between the 3 strands, as this will be essential to ensure their effectiveness and to eliminate duplication.

We acknowledge the need for the Council’s Good Relations annual action plan to set out clear targets and expected outcomes in advance. We would point out however that District Councils must often also respond to emerging crises and their resource allocation should be sufficient and have enough flexibility to accommodate this.



**Q. 14 FURTHER COMMENTS –**

**Please see Introduction making a special case for Belfast.**

**EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY ISSUES**

We are seeking views on the equality implications of the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration and would be grateful for your comments on the following:

The proposals in this document should not impact adversely on any of the groups listed under Section 75 and in fact should have a positive impact on those groups.

There is a lack of consistency in the document – equality is often mentioned alongside fairness and human rights and is often linked with good relations. Clearer definitions would be useful.

The document also makes specific reference to a commitment to publish a strategy on sexual orientation but no similar commitment for other Section 75 groups. It would be interesting to see the rationale for this decision.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your questionnaire must arrive at the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister no later than **29 October 2010**.

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**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Draft Justice Bill (NI)
<b>Date:</b>	<b>22 October 2010</b>
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health & Environmental Services, 3260
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland, Head of Environmental Health, Ext. 3281

**Relevant Background Information**

The Department of Justice is currently in the process of developing a Justice Bill for Northern Ireland and has issued a consultation document on the 'Equality Impact Assessment for a Proposed Justice Bill'. This Bill is a key commitment of the Hillsborough Castle Agreement on the devolution of policing and justice powers. It is being introduced with the intention of improving confidence in the criminal justice system; enhancing community engagement; improving efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system; and improving access and services to the public and victims.

The draft Bill itself has not yet been released but the Executive approved the Bill for introduction on 7<sup>th</sup> October. It is intended that the Bill shall now be considered by the Justice Committee and Assembly with a view to being placed in statute by March 2011 in advance of elections in May 2011.

The consultation document on the Equality Impact Assessment provides a general overview of the areas which the Bill will cover as well as an assessment of impacts. Responses need to be returned by 4<sup>th</sup> November. The general areas covered are:

- An Offender Levy and Victims of Crime Fund
- Special Measures for Victims and Witnesses
- Live Links
- Policing and Community Safety Partnerships
- Sports Law and Spectator Controls
- Sexual Offences and Adjustments
- Adjustments to Sentencing Powers
- Alternatives to Prosecution
- Court and Bail Reform
- Legal Aid
- Court Rules and procedures.

These reforms are wide ranging and political parties are likely to consider the wider aspects of the reforms in detail. However this report is to provide Members with an overview of the proposals which are most likely to affect Council functions and services which are those relating to the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

At present the Council plays a leading role in administering both the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and District Policing Partnership (DPP). Since their establishment (in 2004 and 2003 respectively) they have had considerable achievements such as the installation of over 200 alleygates throughout the city, the launch of a city-wide wardens service, and the establishment of over 80 Neighbourhood Watch schemes across the city. Through this work, and the work of the DPP in supporting public engagement, there has been significant progress in supporting communities to engage with service providers, and in particular the PSNI, in their efforts to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. However the Justice Bill will provide enabling legislation for a new partnership arrangement which brings both partnerships together.

## **Key Issues**

### **Proposed changes to the Community Safety and District Policing Partnerships.**

Further to a specific public consultation in Spring 2010 on DPPs and CSPs, the Department of Justice (DOJ) now intends to move forward on a new model and will create the enabling powers through the proposed Justice Bill. At the time of writing the only publicly available official information on this is contained in the Equality Impact Assessment consultation document, which is available at [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/public-consultations/current-consultations/justice\\_bill\\_eqia.pdf](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/public-consultations/current-consultations/justice_bill_eqia.pdf); though it is understood that the Bill and the Explanatory & Financial Memorandum will be available on the department website from 18<sup>th</sup> October. This makes it clear that the intention is to create single Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP); however it does not give any detail on the proposed new model at this stage.

Therefore, whilst the following details are based only on early discussions or correspondence with DoJ and are not subject to consultation at this point in time, it was considered prudent to make the Committee aware of the general direction of the proposals. As these are clarified and the draft Bill is made available, further reports will be brought back to the Committee.

#### **1. Statutory Duty**

The provisions are likely to include a statutory duty on specified public service providers to consider crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety implications in exercising their duties (similar to section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 in GB).

#### **2. Proposed Partnership Model**

The proposal is to merge DPPs and CSPs whilst retaining their core functions. It is likely that a model similar to that described below will be created.

### **'Police and Community Safety Partnership' (PCSP) Membership**

A new PCSP comprised of three categories of members:

1. Elected Members (nominated by Council)
2. Independent Members (appointed by the Policing Board)
3. Service providers – a minimum of 4 representatives from delivery organisations (both statutory and voluntary sectors).

- Elected and Independent Members shall also meet separately, thus forming a **Policing Committee**, to undertake the police monitoring functions and reporting directly to NIPB on these issues.
- The Policing Committee shall have 15, 17 or 19 members (depending on local considerations); and there shall be one more elected member than independent.
- The Chair of the Policing Committee (an elected member) shall also chair the main Policing and Community Safety Partnership (at least for the first 12 months).
- There is no upper limit on the number of members comprising the overall Policing and Community Safety Partnership.
- The political members will be nominated by the Council to ensure, as far as practicable, the political members reflect the balance of parties prevailing among members of the Council.
- Independent Members will be appointed by the Policing Board. In appointing the members, the Board will, so far as practicable, ensure that independent members are representative of the community.

### **Belfast Sub-groups**

- Belfast is obviously unique in terms of its current DPP arrangements and thus specific allowance will be made in the legislation for a Belfast structure which is still consistent with the overall framework.
- It is understood that there will be provision in the legislation for a maximum of four District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs) of the main PCSP to be established in Belfast.
- The members of a DPCSP need not be members of the principal PCSP.
- The legislation also allows the PCSP to set up other delivery committees to look at specific issues, projects or neighbourhoods.

### **3. Governance**

- As per the recommendations of those who responded to the consultation it is intended that there is a more streamlined line of accountability.
- The Policing and Community Safety Partnership shall therefore report, via Council, to a Joint Committee made up of representation from the Department of Justice and Policing Board.
- The Joint committee will also ensure more joined up strategic direction and administration of funding.

### **4. Financial Assistance**

- Whilst central government spending for 2011/12 has not yet been agreed it has been articulated that that this is 'not a cost cutting exercise'.

- It is anticipated that, in line with current CSP arrangements, a grant shall be awarded to the local Council to support both the running of the new partnership and frontline service delivery. It is likely also that there will be an expectation for match funding to be sought to support this work.
- The Department of Justice has also indicated that it is likely under the new legislation / arrangements that there will no longer be specific requirements in relation to the payment of members' allowances (elected or independent); though expenses will however continue to be paid in line with NJC/ Local Government rates and conditions.

### **Resource Implications**

Central government funding has not yet been confirmed though the DOJ did indicate during its public consultation that this review was not intended as a 'cost cutting' exercise. It is also hoped that by placing a duty on public service providers this may build upon the positive contributions of partner organisations already secured by the CSP to deliver services such as wardens and Get Home Safe operations.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note the report and consider whether it wishes hold a briefing session on the draft Justice Bill and to write to the DoJ inviting a senior representative to provide an overview of the relevant aspects of the draft Bill at that session.

Officers should be directed to consider the financial consequences of these decisions to Members and to bring back a report on how this might be ameliorated by a review of Special Responsibility Allowance.

### **Documents Attached**

The Consultation Document can be viewed at [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/public-consultations/current-consultations/justice\\_bill\\_eqia.pdf](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/public-consultations/current-consultations/justice_bill_eqia.pdf)

### **Abbreviations**

DPP – District Policing Partnership  
CSP – Community Safety Partnership  
PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland  
DOJ – Department of Justice  
PCSP – Police & Community Safety Partnership



**Belfast City Council.**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
<b>Subject:</b>	Consultation on the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy draft Implementation Plan.
<b>Date:</b>	22 October 2010.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mrs. Suzanne Wylie, Director Health and Environmental Services (ext. 3260).
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Alastair Curran, Sustainable Development Manager (ext. 3309)

**Relevant Background Information.**

On 27 May 2010, the Northern Ireland Executive published a second Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Everyone's Involved'. In doing so, the Executive determined that the Strategy should function as a high-level, enabling document to be used to inform the decisions and actions of those groups progressing the sustainable development agenda across Northern Ireland. Within Northern Ireland, responsibility for sustainable development rests with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

Within the Strategy document, the Executive identified a range of organisations that have a critical contribution to make towards sustainable development, including district councils. By way of amplification, the Strategy refers to the local authority statutory duty to promote sustainable as articulated via Section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006, which requires councils to exercise their functions in the manner best calculated to promote the achievement of sustainable development.

The Strategy contains also a range of priority areas for action as follows:-

1. Building a dynamic innovative economy that delivers the prosperity required to tackle disadvantage and lift communities out of poverty.
2. Strengthening society so that it is more tolerant, inclusive and stable and permits a positive progress in the quality of life for everyone.
3. Driving sustainable long-term investment in key infrastructure to support economic and social development.
4. Striking an appropriate balance between the responsible use and protection of our natural resources in support of better quality of life and a better quality environment.
5. Ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint.
6. Ensuring the existence of a policy environment that supports the overall advancement of sustainable development in and beyond government.

In order to ensure an appropriate commitment towards these priority action areas, OFMDFM has developed a supporting Implementation Plan, outlining specific actions to be taken by central government departments, local authorities and a range of other non-governmental organisations.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is advised that the draft Implementation Plan, which has been issued for consultation, is not a finished document but instead comprises a detailed list of individual actions presented in spreadsheet format. OFMDFM has indicated that this is an interim arrangement, designed to stimulate discussion around what the final Implementation Plan should contain. Accordingly, OFMDFM has requested that consultees consider the suitability of actions to be undertaken by government departments, district councils and non-governmental bodies. In addition, consultees have been invited to propose metrics for measuring progress towards sustainable development.

OFMDFM has requested that consultee comments be forwarded using a standardised response template and has advised that they are to be received by 29 October 2010.

**Key Issues.**

In order to ensure that the local government contribution is recognised appropriately within the Implementation Plan, Solace and NILGA requested that the Council's Sustainable Development Manager represent all 26 Councils on the Ministerial led Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan Steering Group.

The Steering Group is an informal and ad-hoc high-level forum, under the joint chairmanship of Junior Ministers from within OFMDFM, which is charged with facilitating the implementation of the sustainable development priorities identified in the Sustainable Development Strategy and Programme for Government. The Steering Group advises on the structure and prioritisation of sustainability targets and provides a channel of communication to stakeholders. The Steering Group is also tasked with assisting the concept of sustainable development to achieve a higher profile in the wider community.

In addition, a high-level summary of sustainable development initiatives was sought from each local authority for inclusion within the draft Implementation Plan. Although this approach has not generated significant additionality, the actions submitted constitute, nonetheless, the current district council contribution towards the Implementation Plan. A district council facilitated consultation event was provided by OFMDFM on 28 September in order to raise awareness of, and refine the draft Implementation Plan.

Due to the manner of its development, the draft Implementation Plan is quite complex in its presentation, containing around 33 indicative actions across the 6 priority action areas. Not all are of relevance to local government. Accordingly, this consultation response does not seek to consider all 33 actions but rather address those highlighted as deficient by Council Departments. The 33 indicative actions have been included in Appendix B for information.

The Council's proposed consultation response is detailed in Appendix A.

**Resource Implications**

Financial / Human Resources.

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the district council obligations proposed within the Sustainable Development Implementation Plan.

Asset and Other Implications.

The OFMDFM proposal to enable public authorities to take into account sustainable development legislative requirements in the exercising of their functions may result in the Council having eventually to '*sustainability proof*' its policies and actions in order to demonstrate compliance with the statutory duty.

**Recommendations**

The Committee is invited to endorse the attached response in respect of the draft Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan and to recommend that it be forwarded to the Sustainable Development Unit, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister by the consultation closing date of 29 October 2010.

At the time of submission, the Sustainable Development Unit will be advised that the comments are subject to Council ratification at its meeting of 1 November 2010.

**Key to Abbreviations**

OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.
NILGA	Northern Ireland Local Government Association.
Solace	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.

**Documents Attached.**

Appendix A –	Belfast City Council Consultation Response to the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan.
Appendix B -	Sustainable Development Implementation Plan Indicative Actions.



## Appendix A.



## Belfast City Council Consultation Response to the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan.

**Priority Area for Action 2:** Strengthening society so that it is more tolerant, inclusive and stable and permits positive progress in quality of life for everyone.

### 2.2 Increase the sustainability standards of social housing.

Comments on Government Actions and metrics:

It is recommended that the Department of Social Development adopt the Housing Health and Safety Rating system as the standard for assessing the fitness/suitability for occupation for both their properties and also the rented sector (to include the private rented sector). It is considered that the current assessment standard is archaic and does not promote sustainability in dwellings. The Housing Health and Safety Rating system is a scientific risk based assessment, which requires landlords to address a range of issues in dwellings affecting occupants. More information about the Housing Health and Safety Rating System can be accessed via the following web links:-

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/3208/contents/made>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/142631.pdf>

**Priority Area for Action 4:** Striking an appropriate balance between the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment.

### 4.6 Take action to halt biodiversity loss.

Comments on Government Actions and metrics:

It is recommended that the biodiversity aspects of the Implementation Plan be aligned with both national and International targets for the protection of biodiversity. For example, earlier this year, the European Union agreed a new long-term vision and mid-term headline target for biodiversity in the EU for the period beyond 2010, when the current target expires. The new target is 'to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, restore them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss'. There is no mention of ecosystem services within the Implementation Plan, however, these are considered to be a critical contributor towards achieving the EU target. In addition, there appears to be no reference to the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy.

It is considered that ecosystem services, such as the role of soil processes in the carbon cycle and linkages to international obligations on carbon should be included within sustainable land management aspects of the plan. An opportunity exists also to include the development of Biodiversity Implementation Plans as an action for district councils. Targets for priority habitats and species and favourable conservation status of designated sites should be included within the Department of Environment section.

Invasive species are the second biggest threat to biodiversity. Currently, there is no primary legislation in relation to invasive species in Northern Ireland. The current provisions within the Wildlife Order 1985 and the proposals within the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Northern Ireland) Bill 2010 are considered inadequate to prevent further incursion of invasive species and enforce control measures.

It is considered that primary legislation is required to address the ingress of invasive species.

Finally, it is disappointing to note that the Department of Environment has proposed no actions in relation to education on biodiversity.

**Priority Area for Action 5:** Ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint.

#### 5.1 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Comments on Government Actions and metrics:

At present, it has been estimated that the Northern Ireland public sector spends around £150M annually on energy for its premises (Invest NI publication). In order to ensure that organisations make appropriate financial provisions to support the delivery of energy conservation measures, the Carbon Trust has recommended that at least 10% of an organisation's energy budget be set aside annually for energy conservation projects, which would result in typical Northern Ireland expenditure of around £15 million.

Since the mid 1980s, energy consumption by Northern Ireland public organisations has been monitored annually by the Department for Finance and Personnel (DFP) against an agreed set of targets. Over the years, these targets have evolved in line with changing environmental priorities and other policies. The current targets for the Public Sector estate were established as a result of the 1999 Climate Change Programme, which embodied the agreements contained in the Kyoto Protocol, and the 2003 Energy White Paper "Our Energy Future – creating a Low Carbon Economy". They are summarised as follows:-

- To increase the energy efficiency of the buildings on public sector estates measured in terms of kiloWatt-hours (kWh) of fuel and electricity used per square metre of building floor area by 15% by 2010/11, relative to a base year of 1999/2000;
- To reduce absolute carbon, from fuel and electricity used in buildings by 12.5% by 2010/11, relative to a base year of 1999/2000; and
- To reduce electricity consumption across the estate by 1% annually from 2007 to 2012 against the base year of 2006/07

The DFP Central Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) was established in 1993 to provide financial support through grants for energy (and latterly carbon dioxide) saving measures, which could not be financed from within Departmental budgets. The fund was extended later to the wider public sector estate in Northern Ireland. Applications to the CEEF are assessed by the Public Sector Energy Working Group (PSEWG). The PSEWG is independently chaired and comprised of representatives from a number of Departments, a member of the District Council Energy Managers' Forum and independent technical advisers.

During 2010/2011, the CEEF has made available £1M in funding to support energy conservation projects however, the fund has been heavily oversubscribed by public bodies. In addition, it should be noted that funding to Councils is offered on a 50% matched funding basis. Accordingly, DFP is encouraged to review the amount of funding available in the context of Carbon Trust recommended levels of expenditure. Due to the level of subscription, only a small number of councils choose to submit an application to the fund each year. Moreover, few are likely to be successful since grants are awarded based upon carbon savings and payback periods. Therefore, a large number of beneficial projects are not taken forward by councils because funding cannot be secured 'in house'. Furthermore, the details of the projects that are selected for grant funding are not made public, making it difficult for unsuccessful applicants to improve the quality of their submissions. It is recommended, therefore, that the assessment process should be made more transparent.

It is recommended also that the remit of the Public Sector Energy Campaign should be expanded to encourage closer working with Councils in order to disseminate knowledge on developing PSEC funding applications and information about other sources of funding and government incentives. This approach would help to raise awareness of the need for energy conservation amongst councils and assist them to develop suitable funding applications. It is considered that a more co-ordinated

approach across the public sector could prevent money being spent on numerous energy efficiency and renewable energy feasibility studies.

The Department of Finance and Personnel has indicated that many Northern Ireland councils do not submit annual energy consumption reports. It is considered that clearer district council energy conservation targets, supported by appropriate sanctions, would ensure that all councils to address energy conservation and begin to make appropriate financial provisions.

At present, Belfast City Council is the only Northern Ireland council required to participate fully in the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC EES), although a range of other large public sector bodies are involved. In order to encourage greater energy conservation, government has indicated that it intends to publish a performance league table of organisations participating in the CRC EES. It is considered that the Department for Finance and Personnel could adapt this approach to develop a Northern Ireland public sector energy conservation league table. By way of amplification, the recent Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Environment Council Questionnaire seeks to identify what energy efficiency actions councils have implemented in terms of renewable technologies, investment in energy conservation and carbon savings. It is considered that the outcome of this survey could be used to inform the 'reducing our carbon footprint' section of the draft Sustainable Development Implementation Plan.

**Priority Area for Action 6:** Ensuring the existence of a policy environment that supports the overall advancement of sustainable development in and beyond Government.

6.4 Enable public authorities to take into account sustainable development legislative requirements in the exercising of their functions.

Comments on Government Actions and metrics:

Belfast City Council has recognised already the benefits of delivering its functions and services in a sustainable manner. By way of example, the Council's current Corporate Plan 2008-2011 commits us to act sustainably through the effective and efficient use of all our resources and promotion of the principle of sustainability in all our activities. Moreover, the overarching objective of our Corporate Value Creation Map is for the Council to 'take a leading role in improving quality of life now and for future generations for the people of Belfast by making the city a better place to live in, work in, invest in or visit'.

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

It is noted that Section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 requires a public authority, in exercising its functions, to act in the way it considers best calculated to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Northern Ireland, except to the extent that it considers that any such action is not reasonably practicable in all the circumstances of the case. For the purposes of the legislation, a public authority is defined presently as a Northern Ireland department or a district council although the legislation provides for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to prescribe other persons as required.

To date, no formal guidance has been issued explaining how public authorities can comply with the duty. Accordingly, the Council invites the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister 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 the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister introduce a requirement for sustainability screening in order to demonstrate compliance with the duty, 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.

In considering mechanisms for assessing progress towards sustainable development, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister may wish to refer to the Department for Environment, Food

and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) 'Stretching the Web' toolkit which has been derived from the Better Regulation Executive Impact Assessment methodology.

(<http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/think/stretch/demo.htm>)

A similar approach to sustainability proofing has been proposed by the European Union via its 'Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities', which incorporates the provisions of the "Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities" in order to improve policy-making on integrated urban development, with a particular focus on deprived neighbourhoods. Belfast City Council has submitted recently an application to participate in the testing of this new Reference Framework for Sustainable European Cities with a view to integrating more fully the principles of sustainable development into our everyday working practices and activities. More information about the Reference Framework for Sustainable European Cities can be accessed via the following web link:-

(<http://www.rfsustainablecities.eu/>)

These comments apply also to actions proposed by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister within section 6.2 - Operate within identified and agreed best practice guidelines for sustainable development.

#### Other Comments.

##### **General comments regarding the Sustainable Development Implementation Plan format.**

Whilst the inclusion of Departmental and Northern Ireland Government Association actions within the draft action plan is 'self-selecting', the rationale for the choice of non-governmental organisations is unclear. With the exception of the Rural Community Network, all other non-governmental groups (Northern Ireland Environment Link, Carbon Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, etc.) are ostensibly environmental in nature, resulting in an under representation of the social and economic aspects of sustainable development from this sector.

It is considered that the mechanism, by which the draft Implementation Plan has been developed, i.e. detailed lists of actions submitted by government departments, local authorities and non-governmental bodies has limited the potential for creating an integrated cross-sectoral approach to sustainable development.

Moreover, as the priority action areas have been defined largely from the perspective of central government departments' outward-facing responsibilities, it may prove difficult for non-departmental bodies to identify effective actions that relate directly to these priorities.

It is noted that within the Sustainable Development Strategy, the Executive has committed to the development of SMART (specific, measurable, aligned, realistic, and time-bound) targets in order to measure progress towards sustainable development and to facilitate inter-departmental discussion on issues of mutual interest. At present, however, the draft Implementation Plan contains only a limited number of measurable actions. Indeed, many of the 'objectives' listed appear to be elaborations on the sub-priorities (e.g. 'to promote', 'to seek to ensure', 'to continue to maintain', etc.) without commitment to measurable outcomes. Consequently, Belfast City Council recommends, that in developing the final Implementation Plan, Departmental and other actions are presented in a format that enables performance management to be implemented.

In addition, it is considered that the approach of developing metrics after a full range of activities have been agreed may not be the most favourable method for advancing sustainable development. A more appropriate approach might have been to define a set of overarching, critical indicators for sustainable development and then determine what actions would be required across all government Departments and other sectors to contribute towards these indicators.

Although development of the draft Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan is being led by the Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan Steering Group that draws its membership from a range of organisations from across the social, economic and environmental sectors, the permanence of this group is uncertain once the Implementation Plan has been finalised. In order to ensure that sustainable development continues to gain prominence across all sectors, it is recommended that the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister includes a commitment to the formation of an OFMDFM led Sustainable Development Forum for Northern Ireland within Priority

Area for Action 6 - Ensuring the existence of a policy environment which supports the overall advancement of sustainable development in and beyond Government.

**General comments regarding district council contributions.**

The method of developing the draft Implementation Plan has caused district council contributions, in some cases, to be presented as a list of individual council actions, rather than a series of local authority shared objectives. In developing the format of the final Implementation Plan, there may be an opportunity to rationalise the extensive list of district council actions in order to form a smaller series of 'generic' sustainable development activities to which all councils can subscribe. This set could include, for example, the development and implementation of Environmental Management Systems such as ISO14001:2004, Community Planning, sustainable development action planning, the construction or refurbishment of Council premises to BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) standards and limiting the amount of waste that is disposed off to landfill, etc.

As with central governmental departments, there may be a need to distinguish between actions that are a general statement of existing council responsibility and specific actions for improvement.

In addition, it is considered important that appropriate resources are deployed by district councils in order to ensure progress towards sustainable development.

**Appendix B.**

**Sustainable Development Implementation Plan Indicative Actions**

- 1. Building a dynamic, innovative economy that delivers the prosperity required to tackle disadvantage and lift communities out of poverty**
  - 1.1 Increase the number of jobs in the low-carbon economy.
  - 1.2 Increase the energy efficiency and resource efficiency of businesses.
  - 1.3 Ensure that our provision of learning and skills responds to the needs of the low-carbon economy
  
- 2. Strengthening society so that it is more tolerant, inclusive and stable and permits positive progress in quality of life for everyone.**
  - 2.1 Reduce deprivation and the incidence of social exclusion and poverty, especially child poverty and increase opportunities for all children and young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, to reach their full potential.
  - 2.2 Increase the sustainability standards of social housing.
  - 2.3 Promote and improve the health and well-being of the whole population through the effective implementation of current and planned supporting strategies and partnership working.
  - 2.4 Extend the implementation of sustainable development within all schools and other educational establishments.
  - 2.5 Improve quality of life through experiencing, participating in and accessing cultural and sporting pursuits.
  - 2.6 Increase volunteering within communities.
  - 2.7 Improve community cohesion, sharing and integration and increase the proportion of the population reporting a positive perception of the community in which they live.
  
- 3. Driving sustainable, long-term investment in key infrastructure to support economic and social development.**
  - 3.1 Reduce deprivation and the incidence of social exclusion and poverty, especially child poverty and increase opportunities for all children and young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, to reach their full potential.
  - 3.2 Ensure that all of our activity in physical regeneration and new infrastructure investment meets sustainable development objectives.
  - 3.3 Ensure an integrated and accessible transport infrastructure that promotes economic growth and social inclusion across all areas while reducing emissions and adverse impacts.
  - 3.4 Provide modern, sustainable accommodation for educational establishments.
  - 3.5 Provide an infrastructure capable of facilitating the delivery of modern, sustainable, high-quality health and social care services and fire and rescue services.
  - 3.6 Provide, maintain and regulate the infrastructure necessary to deliver high quality water and sewerage services and acceptable levels of compliance with EU and other relevant standards.
  - 3.7 Increase the number of households and businesses with access to broadband, particularly among rural and disadvantaged groups.
  
- 4 Striking an appropriate balance between the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better quality environment.**
  - 4.1 Ensure an appropriate policy and legislative framework is in place supported by a regulatory regime, which will deliver statutory environmental standards in respect of air, water and other environmental pollution.
  - 4.2 Promote sustainable land management
  - 4.3 Promote sustainable marine management.
  - 4.4 Ensure our built heritage is used in a sustainable way.
  - 4.5 Improve the quality of life of our people by planning and managing development in ways which are sustainable and which contribute to creating a better environment.
  - 4.6 Take action to halt biodiversity loss.
  - 4.7 Reduce the total quantity of waste going to landfill.

**5 Ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint.**

- 5.1 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.2 Increase the proportion of energy derived from renewable sources.
- 5.3 Implement energy efficiency measures, particularly for vulnerable groups.
- 5.4 Increase energy security.
- 5.5 Adapt to the impacts of climate change.

**6. Ensuring the existence of a policy environment that supports the overall advancement of sustainable development in and beyond Government.**

- 6.1 Communicate Government policy on sustainable development.
- 6.2 Operate within identified and agreed best practice guidelines for sustainable development.
- 6.3 Exercise legislative functions, in and beyond Government, in support of sustainable development.
- 6.4 Enable public authorities to take into account sustainable development legislative requirements in the exercising of their functions.

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