

# Document Pack

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



1 November 2011

## **MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room (Room G05), City Hall on Friday, 4th November, 2011 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. Democratic Services and Governance**

- (a) Governance Update - Development of Council Constitution (Pages 1 - 4)
- (b) Consultation on Private Member Bill Special Advisors (Pages 5 - 12)
- (c) Northern Ireland Local Government Association Conference (Pages 13 - 14)

#### **3. Finance**

- (a) Efficiency Programme (Pages 15 - 20)
- (b) Local Government Finance Act (Pages 21 - 24)
- (c) Tender for the Peace III Phase II Programmes Promoting the Positive Expression of Cultural Heritage and Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project (Pages 25 - 26)

4. **Asset Management**

- (a) Update on the Review of Future Use and Management of the City Hall  
(Pages 27 - 42)

5. **Cross-Cutting Issues**

- (a) NIHE Consultation on the Establishment of a City Centre Waiting List (Pages  
43 - 72)

**To: The Chairman and Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**



## Belfast City Council

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee                                 |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Governance Update – Development of Council Constitution</b>           |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 4 November 2011  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Ciaran Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor             |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Ciaran Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor (Ext. 6083) |

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>   |
| 1.1        | Over the last few years the Council has been putting in place the frameworks and structures needed to make it a <i>'fit for purpose'</i> local authority which can deliver the effective, value for money services that our citizens deserve. An important element of this has been the review of those key governance documents which underpin how the Council operates and makes its decisions.   |
| 1.2        | As agreed previously by Members, work has been ongoing over recent months to develop a draft Council Constitution which would bring together into one document the key governance instruments which explain and govern how the Council operates; and to do so in a presentable and accessible way.  |
| 1.3        | Members will note that the DoE issued a consultation document, on 30 November 2010, setting out local government reform policy proposals including the requirement for each council within Northern Ireland to prepare and publish a constitution. Whilst this legislative requirement does not currently exist, it is considered that the work underway will enable the Council to be more transparent and democratic, and will encourage and foster more efficient working practices. |
| 1.4        | The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current status of the Constitution and to set out a clear timetable scheduling when key strands of work will be submitted for the consideration of Committee.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>   |
| 2.1        | <b>Council Constitution</b> - This is a key governance document which covers <b>'Who we are'</b> , <b>'What we do'</b> , <b>'How we do it'</b> and <b>'Our Values'</b> . It will be a living document and, once in place it, along with its supporting documents will be reviewed, on a regular basis to ensure they remain up-to-date.   |
| 2.2        | There is a number of supporting governance documents which will form an integral part of the Council's Constitution, and which are currently under review to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose. These include:   |
| 1          | <b>Corporate Plan</b> The Council's key strategic planning document setting out the vision and strategic objectives of the Council. As Members are aware work is progressing on the development of the new Corporate Plan 2012-2015.  |

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| 2   | <b>Standing Orders</b>   | The rules which regulate the transaction of the business of the Council and its Committees and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation.  |
| 3   | <b>Financial Regulations</b>   | Provides the framework and processes for managing the council's financial affairs. Currently being updated to take account of the requirements emerging from recent legislative changes including the ' <i>Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (NI) 2011</i> ' - need for capital financing and treasury management strategies and a medium term financial plan.                                       |
| 4   | <b>Scheme of Delegation</b>  | Sets out the types of decisions, with a key focus on operational /routine matters, which designated officers can take on behalf of the Council. The scheme is being reviewed to update it to take account of organisational change that has taken place over the last number of years. There are no proposals to extend delegated powers merely to rationalise them.   |
| 5   | <b>Conflicts of Interest Policy</b>  | Seeks to establish a register of Members interests and to provide clarity in respect to declarations of interests and provide advice on the declaration of private pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests at Council and Committee meetings. A separate, but related complementary paper will address the matter of Council representation on outside bodies and the role of Members on such bodies. Work is progressing on this. |
| 6   | <b>Equality Scheme</b>   | The Equality Commission published a revised Equality Guide for Public Authorities in April 2010. As part of this, the Council is required to submit a revised Equality Scheme and Action Plan.   |
| 7   | <b>Code of Governance</b>  | Under the ' <i>Local Government (Accounts and Audit) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2006</i> ' the Council is required to conduct a review each year of the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement.   |
| 8   | <b>External Relations Strategy</b>   | Setting out how the Council engages and works with key strategic partners to the betterment of the city. Work is progressing on this   |
| 2.3 | Work is also ongoing on a number of other related strands of work including Members and officers codes of conduct and Member-officer relationship protocols.   |  |
| 2.4 | Members will appreciate the complexity of each of these key governance instruments and the significant amount of work required to review and update these important documents. A proposed timetable for this is set out below for Members consideration. |  |

## PROPOSED COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

| Supporting doc                      | Comments   | Committee Timetable                                  |         |                |                |              | Who  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--|
|                                     |  | Nov '11  | Dec '11 | Jan '12        | Feb '12        | March'12     |  |
| <b>Constitution</b>                 | Overarching framework  | Initial report – 4 <sup>th</sup>                     |         | Update report  |                | Final draft  | Chief Executive's Dept - Legal Services Section            |
| <b>Corporate Plan</b>               | Member engagement ongoing to inform the development of new Corporate Plan                    |  |         | Update report  |                | Final draft  | Chief Executive's Dept                                     |
| <b>Standing Orders</b>              | Work underway to update in-line with recent governance changes                               |  |         | Initial report |                | Final update | Democratic Services / Legal Services                       |
| <b>Financial Regulations</b>        | Work underway to update in-line with new legislative requirements                            |  |         |                |                | Final update | Finance and Resources                                      |
| <b>Scheme of Delegation</b>         | Work underway to update in-line with recent governance changes                               |  |         |                |                | Final draft  | Legal Services Section                                     |
| <b>Conflicts of Interest Policy</b> | Declaration of Interests Policy  | Final report - 18 <sup>th</sup>                      |         |                |                |              | Democratic Services / Legal Services / Policy and Planning |
|                                     | Council representation on outside Bodies   |  |         |                | Initial report |              |  |
| <b>Equality Scheme</b>              | Draft Equality Scheme and Interim Action Plan  | Out for consultation until 16 <sup>th</sup> December |         |                |                |              | Good Relations Unit  |
| <b>Code of Governance</b>           | Revised Code of Governance and Corporate Risk Register endorsed by Audit Panel in June 2011. |  |         |                |                |              | Audit, Governance and Risk Services                        |
| <b>External Relations Strategy</b>  | Under development in-line with emerging new Corporate Plan                                   |  |         |                | Update report  |              | Policy & Planning / Corporate Comms. / Development Dept    |

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| <b>3.0</b> | <b><u>Going forwards</u></b>  |
| 3.1        | In order to inform the development of this work, there will be continued engagement with Members through established mechanisms including the Party Leaders Forum, the Budget and Transformation Panel and, as required, Party Group briefing sessions.   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b><u>Resource Implications</u></b>   |
| 4.1        | The updating of the relevant supporting governance documents will require resourcing from Departments. Lead officers from the relevant departments have been identified to update these. A central resource from the Chief Executive's Department is co-ordinating this work and the overall collation and presentation of the Constitution |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b><u>Recommendations</u></b>   |
| 5.1        | Members are asked to note the content of this report and the proposed timetable when reports will be submitted to Committee for consideration.  |



**Belfast City Council**

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee                |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Private Members Bill on Special Advisors</b>         |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 4th November, 2011                                      |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314) |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314) |

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>   |
| 1.1      | Correspondence has been received from Mr J H Allister MLA, QC seeking the Council's views on his proposal to introduce to the Assembly a Private Members Bill on the subject of the appointment of Special Advisors (copy attached at Appendix 1). |
| 1.2      | Responses to the consultation are required by 30th November, 2011.   |

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| <b>2</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>  |
| 2.1      | The appointment of Special Advisors to a Minister in the Assembly is not a matter over which the Council has any responsibility. It must also be accepted that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to reach a consensus on this matter where there is likely to be different or opposing views taken by the various Parties. The Council's accepted practice in such circumstances is not to make a corporate response but rather to leave it to each of the Political Parties to respond. |

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| <b>3</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|          | None                         |

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|----------|---|
| <b>4</b> | <b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b> |
|          | None.   |

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| <b>5</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 5.1      | The Committee is recommended to refer the consultation document to the individual Political Parties on the Council. |

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| <b>6</b>                                     | <b>Decision Tracking</b> |
| Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager |                          |
| November, 2011                               |                          |

**CONSULTATION PAPER on Proposal for a Special Advisers Bill**

**Issued by Jim Allister MLA**

Deadline for responses: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Please respond to:

Jim Allister MLA

Room 252

Parliament Buildings

Stormont

Belfast

BT4 3XX

Email Address: [info@jimallister.org](mailto:info@jimallister.org)

Tel. No.028 90 521461 or 028 25 640250

## **INTRODUCTION**

The appointment in May 2011 of a person convicted of murder as Special Adviser to the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure caused considerable public controversy, leading me to explore the adequacy of the law relating to such appointments.

## **BACKGROUND**

In Northern Ireland ministerial Special Advisers are appointed in accordance with Article 3(2)(b) of the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 as amended (the 1999 Order). Each minister of the Executive, including junior ministers, is entitled to make one appointment, but the First Minister and deputy First Minister can appoint three each. Thus, at present there are 19 appointees.

A Code of Practice, prepared by the Department of Finance and Personnel and dated March 2011 indicates any such appointment made by a Minister terminates when the relevant Minister ceases to hold office. Such appointments are therefore temporary, making them in that regard significantly different from other civil servants.

Special Advisers have access to government papers and senior civil servants. They are not subject to security clearance. Article 3(1) of the 1999 Order provides that a person shall not be appointed to a situation in the Civil Service unless "*the selection of that person for appointment was made on merit on the basis of a fair and open competition.*" Though Special Advisers acquire the status and benefits of Civil Servants, under their appointment process they are exempted from the merit principle by Article 3(2) of the 1999 Order.

Thus, their appointment lies in the gift of their minister. Special Advisers are paid within one of two salary bands. Band A: £36,320-£51,775 and Pay Band B: £57,300- £90,000 pa, with the appointing minister determining the level of salary paid, which is not made public. Most Special Advisers are paid within Band B.

At Westminster the appointment and conduct of Special Advisers is now governed by The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. This law provides for a code of conduct for special advisers and the roles, responsibilities, numbers and costs of Special Advisers, including a system of annual reports on the numbers and costs involved.

**THE ISSUE**

Is it a) compatible with maximising public confidence; b) consistent with respecting victims of crime; and c) acceptable that a person with a serious criminal conviction can be appointed to such a significant public office?

The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 (the 1978 Order) limits requirements to disclose previous convictions for rehabilitation purposes. However, this only relates to ‘spent convictions’, a concept which does not apply where the sentence is greater than 30 months.

Moreover, is there a case for introducing in Northern Ireland provisions akin to those contained in The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010?

**THE PROPOSAL**

It is proposed that a Bill should be introduced in the Assembly to prohibit any person with a serious criminal conviction from holding the position of Special Adviser. It is suggested that anyone who on conviction received an immediate custodial sentence of five years or more should be so prohibited, though the severity of triggering sentence is one of the issues upon which views are being sought.

It is proposed that when the law comes into force, anyone holding office who has a serious criminal conviction would lose that position. This would be applied in keeping with the right to a fair process under Article 6 ECHR.

**Question 1**

Do you agree that there is a case for reform of the system through legislation?

Yes                       No                       Unsure

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is proposed that anyone with a serious criminal conviction should be prohibited from holding the position of Special Adviser.

**Question 2**

Do you agree?

Yes                       No                       Unsure

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is suggested that the threshold for disqualification should be a custodial sentence of 5 years. Alternatives could be 10 years or a sentence of life imprisonment, or another tariff.

**Question 3**

Which do you think is appropriate as the sentence which should trigger disqualification?

5 years       10 years       Life Imprisonment       Alternative suggestion:

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is proposed that the prohibition on holding office, because of a serious criminal conviction, should apply not just to new appointees but also to those already in post.

**Question 4**

Do you agree?

Yes                       No                       Unsure

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is proposed to include provisions as to procedural fairness for any affected person already in post so as to comply with Article 6 ECHR. Such could include a timeframe of notification, a right to make representations and a body to verify due process.

**Question 5**

Do you agree?

Yes                       No                       Unsure

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have suggestions to make as to the process which would be appropriate then provide below: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 6**

Should we introduce legislation, as in GB, to govern the appointment and conduct of Special Advisers including annual reports on numbers and costs.

Do you agree?

Yes                       No                       Unsure

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Human Rights & Equality Implications**

**Question 7**

How do you think the proposed legislation will impact on human rights?

Positively               Negatively               Not at all/not significantly               Unsure

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 8**

How do you think the proposed legislation will impact on equality of opportunity?

Positively       Negatively       Not at all/not significantly       Unsure

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 9**

Do you have any comments on the likely cost / financial implications of the proposed legislation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 10**

Do you have any other comments on the proposed legislation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Your Contact Details:**

**Name:**.....

**Name of Organisation (if relevant)**.....

**Address**.....

**Tel No:**.....

**Email:**.....

**Privacy statement**

Following the end of the consultation we may publish a paper summarising the responses. Information you provide in your response to this consultation, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The Northern Ireland Assembly will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and this will mean that if you request confidentiality your personal information will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you request confidentiality



**Belfast City Council**

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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Northern Ireland Local Government Association – Annual Conference and Exhibition</b> |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 4 November, 2011  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)                                 |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   |   |

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>   |
| 1.1      | The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) will be holding its Annual Conference and Exhibition on 23rd February, 2012 in the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick. The event will also incorporate the Local Government Awards. |

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| <b>2</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>   |
| 2.1      | The theme for the conference is ‘ 2012 – Positively Local’ which will be aimed at showcasing and advocating the future role of efficient, effective and innovative councils in Northern Ireland.              |
| 2.2      | The Council is normally represented at the Annual Conference by its NILGA representatives and the Chief Officers. This year, the Lord Mayor will also be invited by NILGA to attend the event as their guest. |

|                     |   |               |      |         |      |                     |             |
|---------------------|---|---------------|------|---------|------|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>3</b>            | <b>Resource Implications</b>  |               |      |         |      |                     |             |
| 3.1                 | <table> <tr> <td>Delegate Fee:</td> <td>£145</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Travel:</td> <td>£ 25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total per delegate:</td> <td><u>£170</u></td> </tr> </table> | Delegate Fee: | £145 | Travel: | £ 25 | Total per delegate: | <u>£170</u> |
| Delegate Fee:       | £145  |               |      |         |      |                     |             |
| Travel:             | £ 25  |               |      |         |      |                     |             |
| Total per delegate: | <u>£170</u>   |               |      |         |      |                     |             |

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| <b>4</b> | <b>Equality Implications</b> |
|          | N/A                          |

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| <b>5</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 5.1      | <p>It is recommended that the Committee authorises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ the attendance at the NILGA Annual Conference and Exhibition of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on NILGA and the Chief Officers (or their nominees).</li></ul> |

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| <b>6</b>  | <b>Decision Tracking</b> |
| <p>Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>December, 2011</p> |                          |



**Report to:** Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

**Subject:** **Efficiency Programme**

**Date:** 4 November 2011

**Reporting Officer:** Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources

**Contact Officer:** Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources

|          |  |
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| <b>1</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>   |
| 1.1      | Members will be aware that to date the corporate efficiency programme has delivered savings of some £12m across the Council. At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 15 April 2011, it was agreed that a further indicative efficiency target of £2m per year for 2012-13 and 2013-14. In June 2011 Members agreed the areas where the efficiency savings should be targeted for 2012-13. |
| 1.2      | The purpose of this report is to present to Members the cash savings which have been identified and captured and to seek agreement on including them in the departmental budgets as part of the estimate setting for 2012-13.  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>  |
| 2.1      | Members should be aware that the programme has been developed in consultation with all departments and the Trade Union Efficiency Consultative Forum. We have used the same efficiency theme headings as previously agreed by SP&R Committee in May 2010. These cover the areas suggested by the HM Treasury as the fundamental key drivers for developing successful efficiency programmes.             |
| 2.2      | These themes are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assets and Land</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Budgetary Challenge</li> <li>• ICT</li> <li>• Service Reviews</li> <li>• Income Generation</li> </ul>   |
| 2.3      | <b>A total of £2.3m of cash savings have been identified and captured for 2012-13.</b> The proposed split of the £2.38m efficiency target across the efficiency themes is set out in Table One below.  |

| <b>Efficiency Type</b> | <b>£</b>         |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Assets / Land          | <b>198,000</b>   |
| Budgetary Challenge    | <b>560,934</b>   |
| ICT                    | <b>122,060</b>   |
| Income Generation      | <b>755,923</b>   |
| Procurement            | <b>226,663</b>   |
| Service Reviews        | <b>516,882</b>   |
| <b>Council Total</b>   | <b>2,380,462</b> |

2.4 A summary of the savings under each theme within the proposed 2012-13 programme is provided at Appendix One.

2.5 **2013/14 Efficiency Programme**

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2011 agreed a £2m efficiency target for both 2012-13 and 2013-14. Table Two below shows that the council will have delivered £14m cash savings for the period 2006-07 to 2012-13. This means that cash savings for 2013-14 will become more difficult to identify and take longer to realise. For these reasons work has already started to identify potential cash savings for delivery in 2013-14. This includes:

- A review of vacant posts, agency work and overtime;
- The development of a terms of reference for a review of senior management arrangements;
- A review of Fleet Management by an independent expert is near completion;
- The implementation of recommendations emanating from an independent review of procurement;
- The development of a programme to deliver further energy savings;
- The development of terms of reference to review the council's internal marketing arrangements;
- The further development of an asset management efficiency programme; and
- The further development of an ICT efficiency programme;

2.6 Further information on the development of the 2013-14 efficiency programme will be brought back to Members once the rate for 2012-13 has been set.

| <b>Year</b>  | <b>Efficiency Savings</b> |
|--------------|---------------------------|
|              | <b>£</b>                  |
| 2006/07      | 1,154,000                 |
| 2007/08      | 1,500,000                 |
| 2008/09      | 1,220,000                 |
| 2009/10      | 3,010,000                 |
| 2010/11      | 2,002,000                 |
| 2011/12      | 2,900,000                 |
| 2012/13      | 2,380,000                 |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>14,166,000</b>         |

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| <b>3</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 3.1      | <p>Members are requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the contents of the report.</li> <li>• Agree that the £2.38m cash savings identified by the efficiency programme for 2012/13 should be captured in the departmental budgets as part of the estimates setting for 2012-13.</li> </ul> |
| <b>4</b> | <p><b>Decision Tracker</b><br/> Responsible Officers:<br/> Director of Finance &amp; Resources and Head of Finance &amp; Performance</p>  |
| <b>5</b> | <p><b>Documents Attached</b><br/><br/> Appendix 1 – Efficiency programme 2012/13</p>  |

## **Appendix One: Summary of the types of projects included under each theme within the proposed 2012/13 Efficiency Programme**

### **Assets and Land**

The types of projects under this theme include:

- Energy conservation projects in City Hall, CWB and Duncrue complex
- Cash savings from our fleet in advance of the wider review into Fleet provision across the Council.

### **Budgetary Challenge**

In identifying savings in this area departments were asked to complete a review of their 2010/11 year end position against their 2011-12 budgets to identify scope for further efficiencies.

Savings identified include:

- Reductions in consultancy, agency staff and supplies and services budgets
- Reductions in facility costs, external training budgets, staff travel and utility costs
- Reduction in recruitment advertising
- Reduction in print costs including a reduction in the number of Intercom copies printed

### **ICT**

The types of projects included under the theme are:

- Reduction in the number of printers and colour printing
- Introduction of duplex printing and electronic payslips
- Use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to reduce telephony costs
- Reduction in the costs of managing the server estate through server consolidation/virtualisation
- Savings on postage by using electronic mail
- Reviewing mobile phone contracts and reviewing the need for IT licenses

### **Income Generation**

This theme has seen significant growth from the 2011-12 year as departments have been seeking more innovative ways to maximise their income which in turn will reduce the need for budget reductions.

The types of projects include:

- Additional revenue from installing advertising hoardings on council owned sites
- Managing vacancy advertising on behalf of the NI local government sector
- Selling council professional services such as Legal Services to other organisations
- Additional revenue from the Council's materials recovery facility (MRF)
- Additional Port Health income through increased import inspections
- Introduction of legislation allowing local authorities to retain revenue from fixed penalty notices for dog enforcement.
- Undertaking rent reviews
- Introduction of room hire charges for City Hall functions

## **Procurement**

The Procurement Unit worked closely with departments to review a number of procurement tenders which resulted in lower unit costs and increased income streams across many of these tender areas which include:

- Corporate water contract
- Stationery & IT
- Corporate cleaning materials
- Toilet hygiene
- Fire safety testing & equipment
- Key holding
- Cash Collection
- Manned Security
- Cleaning provision at Malone House and Belfast Castle

Additional efficiencies were identified through the following procurement exercises:

- Tendering of the council's bank services provision
- More effective procurement of uniforms for Parks & Leisure frontline staff

## **Service Reviews**

Under this theme there has been a wide range of projects identified which will lead to more efficient use of resources and better staff utilisation. These include:

- Roll out of inner city food waste collection and change to black bin collections.
- Providing future schools education through existing Waste Management resources.
- Review of Projects and Corporate Systems
- Review of Property Maintenance provision
- Property & Projects Business Support review
- Replacement of the cremators at Roselawn
- Review of Parks & Leisure marketing and communications to remove duplication and enable more effective planning
- Review of operating practices within Parks & Leisure
- Processing improvements within CTU

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**Belfast City Council**

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|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee        |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Local Government Finance Act 2011</b>        |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 4 November 2011                                 |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources |

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|------------|--|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>   |
| 1.1        | The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the implications of the introduction of the new Local Government Finance Act 2011.  |
| 1.2        | The Act modernises the legislative framework relating to Local Government Finance and Councillors' remuneration. It introduces a new capital finance system and sets out the legislative framework within which the council may manage its finances. It allows the council greater freedom to manage its own finances without having to obtain consent from the Department of the Environment. |

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| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>   |
| 2.1        | <b>Annual Budget</b><br>The full council is still required to set an annual budget, however, the Act now requires the Director of Finance and Resources to submit to the council a report on the robustness of the estimates and the council must have regard to this report when considering the estimates for the next financial year. The first report of this kind will be presented to the council as part of the rates setting process for 2012/13. |
| 2.2        | <b>Reserves</b><br>The Director of Finance and Resources is now required to provide the council with a report on the accuracy of its reserves when Members are considering the estimates and setting the rate. The first report of this kind will be presented to the council as part of the rates setting process for 2012/13.   |

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| 2.3 | <p><b>Borrowing Powers</b></p> <p>The new Act retains the power to borrow but removes the requirement for prior approval being sought from the Department of the Environment. Instead the council must now comply with a regulatory framework, known as the Prudential Code, which is already being used by local authorities in the rest of the UK. The Code requires the council to demonstrate that its borrowings are prudent, affordable and sustainable. In order to comply with the Code the council must now agree a set of Prudential indicators which include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The impact of borrowing decisions on the level of the district rate;</li> <li>2. The balance between capital financing and the revenue estimates;</li> <li>3. The maximum amount of borrowing the council can take on.</li> </ol> <p>The council will also be required to agree a Treasury Management Strategy which will set the boundaries for how the council borrows and invests its money.</p>  |
| 2.4 | <p>In summary, the Act reflects the need for the finances of the council to be aligned to the delivery of its priorities in an affordable, prudent and sustainable manner. In future, the current rates setting process will be supplemented by the agreement of the Prudential indicators and Treasury Management Strategy. To support Members in implementing these new requirements officers have been working with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on developing a draft set of Prudential indicators and the Treasury Management Strategy. It is intended to present these to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in December for consideration and to present them for formal agreement at the January meeting.</p>  |
| 2.5 | <p><b>Capital Programme</b></p> <p>One of the main benefits of the new Finance Act is that the council will have greater flexibility in the way it manages the Capital Programme. At present, the annual cost of the loan repayment for a scheme is budgeted for at the point when the scheme is committed to the Capital Programme. There are times, however, when schemes are delayed for reasons such as planning permission difficulties, land issues, and scheme design problems, etc. This means that the need to borrow for such schemes is delayed. With the new Act, if the full budget for the capital programme loan repayments is not needed in a particular year, that element of the budget which is not required may be reallocated in that year to pay for other capital schemes, on a one-off basis. Members will therefore be able to re-prioritise schemes which the council had not previously been able to commit to for affordability reasons. This will create more flexibility in implementing the Capital Programme, however, we will need to amend how smaller capital schemes are progressed through the Capital Programme approval process.</p> <p>Council officers will be working with Members over the coming months to define and agree this revised process.</p> |
| 2.6 | <p><b>Members Allowances</b></p> <p>The Department of the Environment has just issued draft Guidance on Councillors Allowances for consultation and this will be discussed with Members in December.</p>  |

|  | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
|--|--|
|  | Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree to consider a draft set of Prudential indicators and Treasury Management Strategy in December. |

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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | To seek approval to go out to tender for the Peace III Phase II programmes 'Promoting the Positive Expression of Cultural Heritage' and 'Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project' |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 4 November 2011   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager   |

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>   |
|          | Members will be aware of the Council's Peace III programme, Phase II of which is currently being developed. Members will also be aware that all of the projects within the Phase II programme were assessed and were subsequently approved for delivery by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on September 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2011.   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>  |
|          | All proposed projects within Phase II of Peace III require official Council approval to seek tenders and to delegate authority to the relevant Chief Officer to award the most economically advantageous submission which fulfills the requirements of the project.<br><br>This report seeks such authority for the specific projects 'Promoting the Positive Expression of Cultural Heritage' (ref: 034050) and the 'Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project' (ref: 034058) which will be delivered by the Good Relations Unit. |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b>   |
|          | The 'Promoting the Positive Expression of Cultural Heritage' project is a £300,000 project and the 'Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project' will cost £150,000 to deliver. Both projects will run over two years. The costs associated with both projects will be 100% recoupable from EU funding administered by SEUPB under Phase II of the Belfast Peace Plan.   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>  |
|          | This report seeks to ensure proper procedures are being followed in relation to procurement of SEUPB funded projects. Both projects seek to promote positive expressions of cultural heritage across all communities within the City.  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
|          | It is recommended that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Committee grant authority to seek tenders for the delivery of the 'Promoting the Positive Expression of Cultural Heritage' and 'Migrant and Minority Ethnic' projects</li> <li>2. Delegated authority is granted to the Assistant Chief Executive to award tenders to the most economically advantageous submissions that fulfils the criteria of both projects</li> </ol>   |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Officer to contact for more information</b>   |
|          | David Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer, Ext: 6030   |



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Belfast City Council

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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Consultation on the establishment of a Belfast City Centre waiting list</b>   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 4 November 2011   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Peter McNaney, Chief Executive  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Sharon McNicholl, Strategic Policy and Planning Manager (Ext. 6009)   |
| <b>1.0</b>                | <b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>   |
| 1.1                       | To bring to the attention of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee a draft response to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) consultation document ‘Establishment of a Belfast City Centre Waiting List attached at Appendix one. The closing date for consultation responses is Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2011. A copy of the consultation document is attached at Appendix two.  |
| 1.2                       | A report summarising the consultation document for Members and outlining some of the key issues that the Council may wish to consider in relation to the consultation document, was presented to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September. Members agreed to defer consideration of a response to enable Political Party briefings to be undertaken by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.   |
| 1.3                       | Following communication with Party Leaders, offering all parties briefing sessions, the following party briefings were organised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October at 10.30am – Ulster Unionist Party</li> <li>• Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November at 2.00pm – Sinn Fein</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2.0</b>                | <b><u>Summary of the Consultation Document</u></b>  |
| <b>2.1</b>                | <b><u>Introduction</u></b> <p>Documentation issued by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive recommends the establishment of a new Common Landlord Area (CLA), which would be used to manage a waiting list of applicants seeking housing in the Belfast city centre area. The document states that the four main objectives of a city centre waiting list would be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To take advantage of development opportunities for social housing to address housing need</li> <li>2. To contribute to Planning Services and DSD policies and strategies aimed at regenerating the city centre</li> <li>3. To support the wider Good Relations agenda</li> <li>4. To ensure that city centre living is an option for everyone in the wider Belfast area. The document outlines that the establishment of a city centre waiting list would allow the option of city centre living to be accessible to everyone on the waiting list for Belfast and the wider urban area.</li> </ol> |

## 2.2 Current Situation

The Housing Executive administers and maintains a Common Waiting List which is the 'gateway' into all social housing in Northern Ireland. Applicants applying for housing or requesting a transfer normally select two locations, known as Common Landlord Areas (CLAs), where they wish to be housed.

The area which includes Belfast city centre is currently covered by eight district CLAs which were created in 2001 and are based on inner city single identity communities. These eight CLAs are:

- Cromac/Markets, South Belfast
- Sandy Row, South Belfast
- Donegall Pass, South Belfast
- Carlisle New Lodge, North Belfast
- Carrick Hill, North Belfast
- Brown Square, Shankill
- Hamill/John Street, West Belfast
- Bridge End, East Belfast.

## 2.3 Housing Market Context

The document advises that recent research by the Housing Executive has identified potential for 11,500 apartments to be located in the city centre of which 3,900 are completed (3,000 private and 900 social), and 1,048 are under construction with a further 6,400 apartments with planning approval or planning applications pending. The document highlights that this has now created new opportunities for social housing.

A number of potential social schemes have been identified by the Housing Executive which will be delivered as either stand alone social housing schemes or as part of a larger comprehensive development site. The document highlights the following examples:

Stand Alone schemes identified

- 93 Great Victoria Street (57 apartments)
- The annex adjoining the Obel building (49 apartments)

Potential development sites identified

- Titanic Quarter
- Former Sirocco Works.

## 2.4 Options and their consideration

Three options were assessed in terms of meeting the objectives (outlined above):

### **Option 1 – Do Nothing**

Does not address objectives 2, 3 or 4 and only partly addresses objective 1. For example in relation to the potential acquisition of accommodation for social housing in the Obel complex, with the current boundary arrangements allocations would be made solely to applicants on the Carlisle/New Lodge waiting list. Similarly, 93 Great Victoria Street (57 apartments) is currently located within Sandy Row (CLA).

### **Option 2 – Belfast City Centre including existing single identity communities**

The boundary of the new Common Landlord Area (CLA) in this option mirrors the boundary of Belfast city centre as defined by Planning Service in the Belfast Metropolitan Plan (BMAP). The document states that this option only partially meets the objectives. It would assist in contributing to regeneration strategies and promoting shared space. However, it stresses that this option may be

unacceptable to a large number of applicants who would wish to be housed in a particular single identity estate.

**Option 3 – Belfast City Centre excluding single identity communities**

This option is similar to option 2 but excludes the established single identity social housing estates outlined above. The document considers that this option best meets all the objectives in terms of making the best use of development opportunities, assisting regeneration strategies and promoting shared space and widening the opportunity of living in the city centre. Applicants requesting rehousing in the city centre CLA would be considered for all new social housing and future relets for schemes completed after 2011. The Housing Executive believes that this option would give applicants a definitive choice and clearly demarcates the city centre from the single identity CLAs surrounding the city centre.

The document recommends that a Belfast city centre waiting list is created on the basis outlined in Option 3.

**3.0 Resource Implications**

N/A

**4.0 Equality Implications**

**EQIA Screening**

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive equality screened the consultation document with the following findings:

The Equality screening concluded that there were some minor impacts identified but that these were addressed in Option 3. On that basis it was decided that an Equality Impact Assessment was not required.

**5.0 Recommendations**

To consider the draft consultation response and to approve the response to the consultation document and its submission to NIHE

**6.0 Documents attached**

Appendix One – Draft consultation response – NIHE “Establishment of a Belfast City Centre Waiting List”

Appendix Two – Consultation document – NIHE “Establishment of a Belfast City Centre Waiting List



**Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Consultation on the 'Establishment of a Belfast City Centre Waiting List'**

**Belfast City Council Draft Response**

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  | <p>Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the NIHE consultation on the Establishment of a Belfast City Centre Waiting List.</p> <p>The Council welcomes the recommendation in the consultation document to promote shared housing in the city centre and this is in line with current council policy objectives in creating a vibrant, inclusive, safe and accessible city centre. We acknowledge reference in the document that the establishment of a city centre waiting list will assist Belfast City Council in its strategy to secure shared city centre living.</p> <p>The Council has revised its Good Relations Plan for the next three years. The plan highlights that the Council believes that equality and good relations are central to the economic regeneration and city development agenda. In order to attract talent, sustain inward investment, generate tourism and tackle poverty, it is critical that we maximise the potential of the city centre as a shared space in which everyone can participate. One of the key principles of the plan is that the Council will work with other partners across the city to support initiatives that will consolidate existing shared spaces and create new shared spaces within the city.</p> <p>The Council recognises that the NIHE's preferred option, Option 3 - to create a Belfast city centre waiting list excluding single identity communities, would encourage more people to live in the city centre and would be a significant step forward for the city in terms of creating shared space.</p> <p>We support the option of a Common Landlord Area in the city centre, which does not preclude the choice of those citizens wishing to reside in single identity areas. We welcome this new proposal to be an additional choice designed to meet the needs of those people who have expressed a preference to reside in a shared housing area. Combined with other developments that are planned for the city, we believe that there would be benefit in developing an enhanced and integrated strategy for housing in Belfast, which supports a positive mix of tenure as well as ensuring that the appropriate facilities and infrastructure are in place to support city centre living.</p> <p>The Council recognises the importance of a shared, welcoming and accessible city centre to economic growth and the success of the city. By encouraging and enabling people to live in the city centre, this will have implications for infrastructure and broader regeneration for residents to ensure the 'live-ability' in terms of access to appropriate facilities and services, e.g. playgrounds.</p> <p>The Council has a very positive working relationship with the NIHE on a range of areas, including the promotion of good relations. We currently support the Housing Executive's Local Area Networks Programme, which seeks to link neighbouring communities across</p> |

interface areas. This is supported through the council's Peace III funding programme. This proposal for city centre work would be a fruitful extension of this partnership. Previous initiatives that the Council has worked in partnership with NIHE, include the Town Centre Living Initiative (also known as 'Living over the Shops') on arterial routes. Through this, we sought to animate arterial routes to put life back into the street and re-establish a community presence in the area, particularly after shop opening hours. On this rationale, it is anticipated that the proposed approach will deliver similar outcomes such as increased perceptions of safety and increased footfall after dark in the city centre.

The Council is in ongoing negotiations with NIHE and the Department of Social Development (DSD) about a Housing Renewal approach in the Holyland area of the city, which could involve the conversion of some properties to make them suitable for single occupancy use and then making them available to those on the social housing list. This development should be considered in respect of the creation of a city centre waiting list.

Belfast City Council welcomes the focus on creating a shared city centre space in Belfast and promoting shared living and good relations in the city. The Council recognises that the recommendation in the document would widen the opportunity for city centre living to the greater Belfast area as well as supporting existing city centre regeneration strategies.

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Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Consultation on the establishment of a Belfast city centre waiting list, July 2011

# **Consultation on the establishment of a Belfast city centre waiting list.**

**July 2011**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to outline the analysis and recommend the establishment of a new Common Landlord Area (CLA), which would be used to manage a waiting list of applicants seeking housing in the Belfast city centre area.
- 1.2 The creation of a city centre waiting list has four main objectives;
- To take advantage of development opportunities for social housing to address housing need.
  - To contribute to Planning Service and DSD policies and strategies aimed at regenerating the city centre.
  - To support the wider Good Relations agenda.
  - To ensure that city centre living is an option for everyone in the wider Belfast area.
- 1.3 The downturn in the housing market has increased the opportunity to develop new social housing within Belfast city centre. However, the absence of a defined city centre waiting list restricts how new social housing can most effectively meet housing need and meet the objectives set out above.
- 1.4 Developing a city centre waiting list is integral to promoting shared housing in the city centre. It will assist in promoting shared living and shared space for all, irrespective of religion or ethnic background. It recognises that the city centre is not the sole preserve of those communities surrounding the city centre. The establishment of a city centre waiting list would allow the option of city centre living to be accessible to everyone on the waiting list for Belfast and the wider urban area.
- 1.5 This proposal introduces a new approach to the creation of a Common Landlord Area (CLA) and a detailed equality screening report is attached. (Appendix 1)

## **2.0 Current situation**

- 2.1 The Housing Executive administers and maintains a Common Waiting List which is the 'gateway' into all social housing in Northern Ireland. Applicants applying for housing or requesting a transfer normally select two locations, known as Common Landlord Areas (CLAs), where they wish to be housed.

2.2 For administrative purposes the area which includes Belfast city centre is currently covered by eight distinct CLAs. These CLAs were created in 2001 reflecting previously long established Estate Allocation Areas and are based on inner city single identity communities. These eight CLAs are;

- Cromac/Markets, South Belfast.
- Sandy Row, South Belfast.
- Donegall Pass, South Belfast.
- Carlisle New Lodge, North Belfast.
- Carrick Hill, North Belfast.
- Brown Square, Shankill.
- Hamill/John Street, West Belfast.
- Bridge End, East Belfast.

These are set out in Map 1.

### 3.0 Strategic context

Living with diversity and difference in spatial planning terms is a central challenge for urban living around the world. The majority of UK cities have designed strategic policies to enhance inclusion and community cohesion.

#### 3.1 Planning Context

The planning context for Belfast is set out in the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025; Shaping our Future and the Belfast Metropolitan Plan (BMAP) due to be adopted this year. Their objective is to create a thriving metropolitan hub centred on a revitalised Belfast city. The plans' housing strategies include the following aims;

- To accommodate as much housing as possible within the existing footprint rather than expansion of the suburbs.
- To create balanced local communities by providing housing choice through mixed tenures.
- To support the role of city and town centres, arterial routes and urban villages and encouraging city centre living.

#### 3.2 Housing Market Context

Until recently residential property surrounding the city centre was either located in a number of long established single identity communities or was new luxury private residential developments concentrated in the Lagside locality.

The post millennium property boom was characterised by a rapid expansion of high density apartment developments on brownfield sites within the city centre. Recent research by the Housing Executive has identified potential for 11,500 apartments to be located in the city centre of which 3,900 are completed (3,000 private and 900 social), and 1,048 are under construction with a further 6,400 apartments with planning approval or have planning applications pending. The economic downturn which began in late 2007 slowed the expansion of high density residential development in the city.

This has created opportunities for social housing. A number of potential social schemes have already been identified. These new homes will be delivered either as stand alone social housing schemes, for example 93 Great Victoria Street (57 apartments) and the annex adjoining the Obel building (49 apartments) or as part of a larger comprehensive development site such as Titanic Quarter and the former Sirocco Works site in East Belfast.

### 3.3 City Centre Regeneration Context

Regeneration in Belfast city centre has been largely focused on comprehensive development of strategic schemes, such as Laganside, the Gasworks, Lanyon Place, the Victoria Centre and Titanic Quarter. DSD's Belfast City Centre Regeneration Strategy, while focusing on promoting and facilitating regeneration that reinforces economic development and improvement to the public realm, also recognises the potential for housing and inner city living as part of mixed used developments for individual 'Quarters', such as Northside and Westside. These envisage mixed tenure housing with the Housing Executive promoting shared future for social housing.

### 3.4 A Shared City Centre

At a strategic level, the promotion of good relations is a statutory duty under Section 75 (2). The Programme for Government for Northern Ireland prominently recognised the need to develop a shared and better future for all in Northern Ireland. The OFMDFM is currently considering the responses to the draft CSI (Cohesion, Sharing and Integration) Programme whose main focus is to tackle sectarianism, racism and hate and promote cohesion, sharing and integration for all sections of society. The programme aims to "build a strong community where everyone, regardless of race, colour, religious or political opinion, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation can live, work and socialise".

At a local level the Housing Executive and Belfast City Council have existing strategies to promote good relations, contribute to safer, stable neighbourhoods and promote a more inclusive society.

The establishment of a city centre waiting list could draw on a wide and diverse waiting list catchment and promote shared housing which will assist Belfast City Council in its strategy to secure shared city centre living and “to secure and expand the public places of the city, from which no citizen feels excluded and through which all citizens can travel freely and safely”

The provision of shared residential city centre space also aligns with the wishes of the community who have clearly indicated their preference to live in mixed communities (80% of those questioned in the NI Life and Times survey indicate they would prefer to live in mixed neighbourhoods )

#### 4.0 Options and their consideration

- 4.1 A range of options including a ‘do nothing’ option and a number of permutations in terms of the scope and geographical boundary of a new city centre CLA were considered. Three options were assessed in terms of meeting the objectives. (See Maps 2 and 3)
- 4.2 **Option 1, Do Nothing.** The status quo does not address objectives 2, 3 or 4 and only partly addresses objective 1. The inadequacy of the existing arrangements can be highlighted on examination of the potential acquisition of accommodation for social housing in the Obel complex. The Obel development is located at Donegall Quay adjacent to Custom House Square and is clearly a city centre development. However, under the current boundary arrangements allocations would be made solely to applicants on the Carlisle/New Lodge waiting list. Similarly, 93 Great Victoria Street (57 apartments) is currently located within Sandy Row CLA. It is clear that these arrangements are not inclusive, sustainable or practical.
- 4.3 **Option 2, Belfast City Centre including existing single identity communities.** The boundary of the new Common Landlord Area (CLA) in this option mirrors the boundary of Belfast city centre as defined by Planning Service in the Belfast Metropolitan Plan (BMAP). This includes the 8 CLAs and the proposed social housing developments located within the city centre.
- 4.4 The boundary of this option is clearly defined and unambiguous. However, option 2 only partially meets the objectives in establishing a city centre waiting list. It would assist in contributing to regeneration strategies and promoting shared space. This option may be unacceptable to a large number of applicants who would wish to be housed in a particular single identity estate. Potentially, a Catholic household could be offered accommodation in Sandy Row/Donegall Pass or a Protestant household accommodation in the New Lodge. This could act as a barrier to attracting

new applicants to a city centre waiting list and again would be very difficult to manage on a practical level.

4.5 **Option 3, Belfast City Centre excluding single identity communities.** This option is similar to option 2 but excludes the established single identity social housing estates, Cromac/Markets, Carlisle New Lodge, Carrick Hill, Brown Square, Hamill/John Street, Sandy Row and Donegall Pass.

4.6 This option best meets all the objectives in terms of making the best use of development opportunities, assisting regeneration strategies and promoting shared space and widening the opportunity of living in the city centre. Applicants requesting rehousing in the new city centre CLA would be considered for all new social housing and future relets for schemes completed after 2011.

This option would give applicants a definitive choice and clearly demarcates the city centre from the single identity CLAs surrounding the city centre.

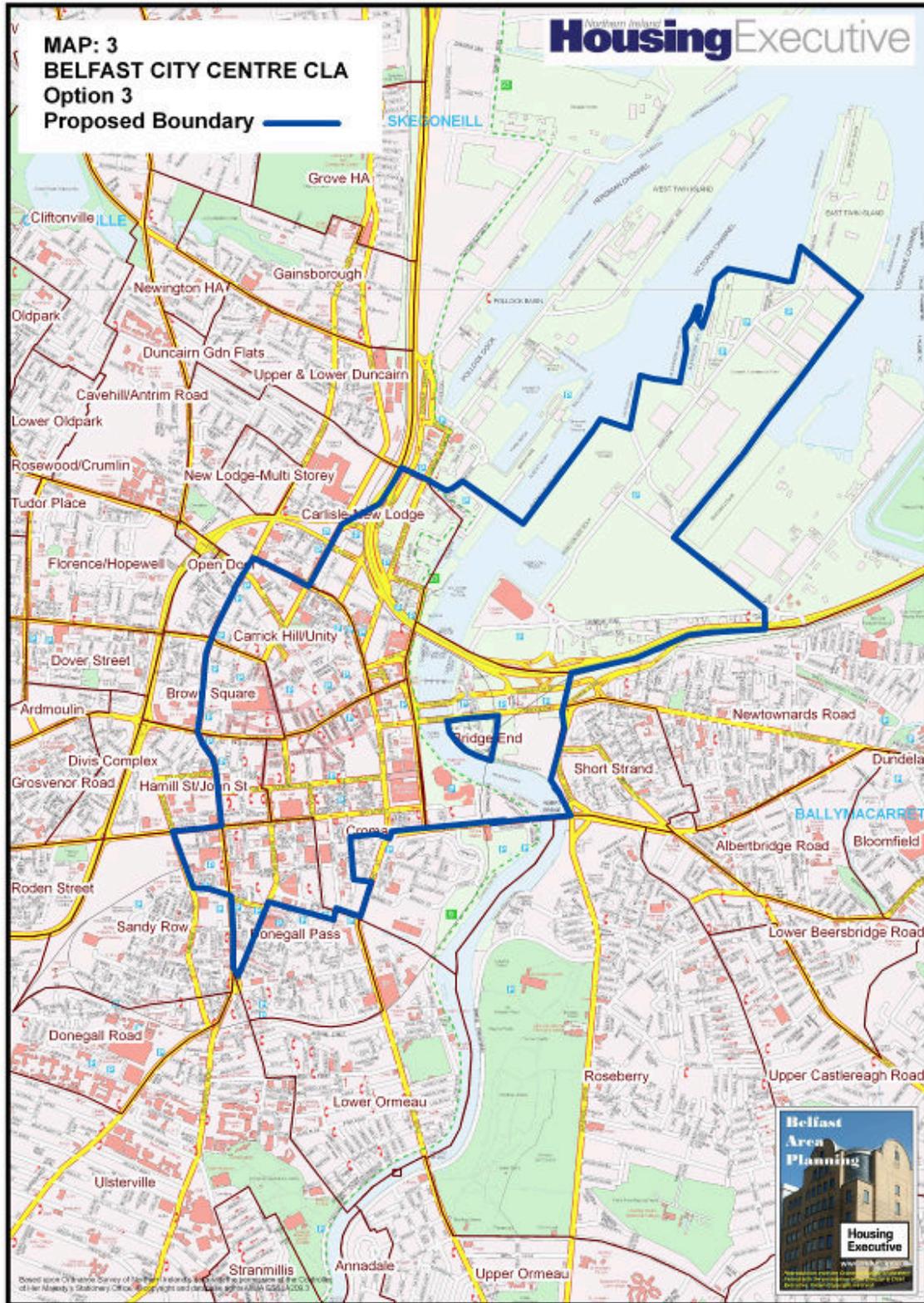
## 5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that a Belfast city centre waiting list is created on the basis outlined in Option 3. It is believed that this proposal;
- allows social housing providers to take advantage of development opportunities and favourable market conditions
  - promotes shared living and Good Relations
  - supports existing city centre regeneration strategies
  - widens the opportunity for city centre living to the greater Belfast area
  - pays due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity.





Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Consultation on the establishment of a Belfast city centre waiting list, July 2011



**Appendix 1: Housing Executive Equality Screening Template:**

This screening template is based on the Equality Commission template which was issued in April 2010.

The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations. Screening enables a public authority to identify those policies which are more relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties and on that account be considered for an equality impact assessment. It also helps to identify policies which offer better opportunities for the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties for people in any of the equality or good relations categories.

This template acts as a record that the Housing Executive has taken equality of opportunity and/or good relations considerations into account.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Consultation on the establishment of a Belfast city centre waiting list, July 2011

## Part 1. Policy scoping

This Screening Report should be read in conjunction with the Belfast City Centre Waiting List Board paper.

Information about the policy

### **Name of the policy**

The establishment of a Belfast city centre waiting list.

### **Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?**

Revised Policy

### **What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)**

To create a Common Landlord Area (CLA) covering new housing opportunities in Belfast city centre. (Please see attached consultation paper for a more detailed explanation.)

### **Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?**

### **If so, explain how.**

This proposal will expand social and affordable housing opportunities in Belfast city centre, an area where this did not exist (to any significant level) before. Therefore this will benefit all people who would like the opportunity to apply to the waiting list for Belfast city centre. No Section 75 group will benefit significantly more than others.

### **Who initiated or wrote the policy?**

Robin Hawe, Area Planning, Belfast Area

### **Who owns and who implements the policy?**

Director of Corporate Services/Director of Housing and Regeneration

**Implementation factors**

**Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?**

NONE

**If yes, are they:**

Financial

Legislative

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Main stakeholders affected**

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

Staff

Service users

Other public sector organisations

Voluntary/community/trade unions

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

One of the objectives of this proposal is to ensure that the opportunity to live in a shared, safe city centre is open to as many people as possible from the Housing Executive's waiting list. On this basis the main stakeholders are the citizens of Belfast who have (now or in future) social housing needs.

**Other policies with a bearing on this policy**

What are they?

**Internal:**

- Housing Selection Scheme and Allocations
- Homelessness
- Supporting People
- Community Cohesion
- Strategic Guidelines for Social Housing Development Programme

**External:**

- Belfast City Council Good Relations Policy
- OFMDFM's pending Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Policy
- Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Consultation on the establishment of a Belfast city centre waiting list, July 2011

### Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

| Section 75 category     | Details of evidence/information  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Religious belief        | Waiting List and Allocations data  |
| Political opinion       | BCC Good Relations Strategy<br>General Equality and Good Relations information |
| Racial group            | Various BME reports including specific mapping studies                         |
| Age                     | Not relevant   |
| Marital status          | Not relevant   |
| Sexual orientation      | Not relevant   |
| Men and women generally | Not relevant   |
| Disability              | General information and Liaison with Disability Representative groups          |
| Dependants              | General information and Liaison with Representative groups                     |

**Needs, experiences and priorities**

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

| Section 75 category     | Details of needs/experiences/priorities   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Religious belief        | <p>The city centre is currently divided into administrative zones, each associated with the 8 bordering social housing Common Landlord areas. These CLAs are single identity areas (4 Protestant and 4 Catholic). Each of these areas perceives a territorial claim on the city centre zones linked with their CLA. If this current system remains then any new social housing allocations will be made to applicants who select the current Single identity areas. This will maintain these areas as single identity within the city centre.</p> <p>Conversely, this equality screening is conducted on the basis that the city centre CLA should be an area independent of other social housing areas, making it a unique choice for people who express a desire for living in the city centre.</p> |
| Political opinion       |   |
| Racial group            | <p>The issue of safe, accessible, housing is important for minority ethnic people, migrant workers etc. Maintaining the current status of the 8 CLAs would restrict opportunities for minority ethnic households, many of whom have no specific ties to areas of Belfast but, for whom, living close to places of employment is vital.</p>  |
| Age                     | No significant issues   |
| Marital status          | No significant issues   |
| Sexual orientation      | No significant issues   |
| Men and women generally | No significant issues   |
| Disability              | <p>Physical accessibility and good design are important features for disabled people. These issues are not directly associated with this policy but it is important to take on board the principle that any new social housing opportunities in the city centre will be</p>   |

Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Consultation on the establishment of a Belfast city centre waiting list, July 2011

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | open to disabled people.   |
| Dependants | It is important to note also that city centre living will involve high rise high density developments. This will not preclude families from living in these areas but private leisure space will be limited. |

## Part 2. Screening questions

### Introduction

This section will determine whether there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment.

The Equality Commission's guidance states that

*"If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out."*

*"If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure".*

*"If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:*

- *measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or*
- *the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations."*

**Screening questions**

| 1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none |  |          |       |            |              |                                   |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
|--|--|----------|-------|------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|----------|-------|------------|--------------|-------|--|--------|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|------|------|----|------|------|------------------|----|----|----|----|------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------------------|----|---|---|----|-----|
| Section 75 category  | Details of policy impact   |          |       |            |              | Level of impact? minor/major/none |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
| Religious belief   | This impact screening considers the three options set out in the attached Board paper.   |          |       |            |              |                                   |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
| Political opinion  | <p>The equality duty extends to all Catholics and all Protestants who have housing needs and have the potential to apply to the city centre CLA and not just those who have a link to this new area, by the virtue of the existing single identity CLA they have chosen. Option 1 (do nothing) fails to promote equality of opportunity for both Catholics and Protestants because it restricts housing allocations only to single identity CLAs.</p> <p>In terms of Option 2, of the single identity estates that makeup the 8 city centre CLAs, 4 are predominately Protestant and 4 are predominately Catholic. The religion/community background makeup of the combined waiting lists for these eight CLAs are set out below. (Table 1)</p> <p><b>Table 1: City Centre Waiting List</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Catholic</th> <th>Other</th> <th>Protestant</th> <th>Undis-closed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="6">P1A*'s on WL for Social Housing in 8 CLAs in Inner Belfast</td> <td>Number</td> <td>276</td> <td>67</td> <td>144</td> <td>135</td> <td>622</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mean Av Months</td> <td>35.6</td> <td>16.9</td> <td>23</td> <td>21.7</td> <td>27.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Median Av Months</td> <td>25</td> <td>11</td> <td>13</td> <td>11</td> <td>14.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mean Av Points</td> <td>65.3</td> <td>53.2</td> <td>32.3</td> <td>51.3</td> <td>53.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Median Av Points</td> <td>50</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion of Top 100 Ranked by</td> <td>63</td> <td>8</td> <td>4</td> <td>25</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> |          |       |            |              |                                   |  |  | Catholic | Other | Protestant | Undis-closed | Total | P1A*'s on WL for Social Housing in 8 CLAs in Inner Belfast | Number | 276 | 67 | 144 | 135 | 622 | Mean Av Months | 35.6 | 16.9 | 23 | 21.7 | 27.7 | Median Av Months | 25 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 14.5 | Mean Av Points | 65.3 | 53.2 | 32.3 | 51.3 | 53.3 | Median Av Points | 50 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | Religion of Top 100 Ranked by | 63 | 8 | 4 | 25 | 100 |
|  |  | Catholic | Other | Protestant | Undis-closed | Total                             |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
| P1A*'s on WL for Social Housing in 8 CLAs in Inner Belfast   | Number   | 276      | 67    | 144        | 135          | 622                               |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
|  | Mean Av Months   | 35.6     | 16.9  | 23         | 21.7         | 27.7                              |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
|  | Median Av Months   | 25       | 11    | 13         | 11           | 14.5                              |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
|  | Mean Av Points   | 65.3     | 53.2  | 32.3       | 51.3         | 53.3                              |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
|  | Median Av Points   | 50       | 30    | 30         | 30           | 30                                |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |
|  | Religion of Top 100 Ranked by  | 63       | 8     | 4          | 25           | 100                               |  |  |          |       |            |              |       |  |        |     |    |     |     |     |                |      |      |    |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |      |                |      |      |      |      |      |                  |    |    |    |    |    |                               |    |   |   |    |     |

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|  |                                     |    |   |   |   |    |
|--|-------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
|  | Points                              |    |   |   |   |    |
|  | Religion of Top 40 Ranked by Points | 27 | 4 | 0 | 9 | 40 |
| <p>* Position 1 Applicant</p> <p>This clearly shows that the waiting list has a significantly higher number of Catholic households (276) when compared to Protestant households (144). The likely profile of offers based on 100 units becoming immediately available showed that 63 would go to Catholic households and only 4 to Protestant households (with 25 undisclosed).</p> <p>Option 2 implies that the city centre is the preserve of only those areas that immediately abound it and is a barrier to other city dwellers from the choice of city centre living. Also with Option 2, any relets of existing accommodation and newbuild opportunities that arise in the existing housing estates that abound the city centre would be offered almost exclusively to Catholic households which includes traditional Protestant/Unionist areas like Sandy Row and Donegal Pass.</p> <p>The existing waiting list for the eight CLAs in Option 2 does not have the capacity to sustain the potential additional supply of social housing that could be generated within the city centre area, as identified earlier in this paper.</p> <p>This option would also fail to promote equality of opportunity for both Catholics and Protestants in the wider city as the unnatural merger of single identity areas with the new city centre dilutes the appeal of a new unassociated area. It also presents a risk that housing allocations could be made to a single identity area where the applicant may not feel secure.</p> <p>A wider scenario, Option 3, was therefore considered, i.e. that the city centre living should be an optional choice for everyone who has made an application to the Common Waiting List for the wider Belfast Area. This was regarded as more reasonable as the city centre was not an optional choice for any applicant at the time they applied for housing. In this context, and particularly with Option 3, an assumption could be made, that the profile of those who would switch housing choice to the city centre CLA would mirror the general profile of the total Belfast city waiting list. Table 2 sets out the waiting list religion profile for this scenario.</p> |                                     |    |   |   |   |    |

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| <b>Table 2: Belfast City Waiting List Analysis</b>  |   |          |       |            |                  |        |  |
|---|---|----------|-------|------------|------------------|--------|--|
|   |   | Catholic | Other | Protestant | Undis-<br>closed | Total  |  |
| P1A's*<br>on WL<br>for<br>Social<br>Housing<br>in 108<br>CLAs in<br>Belfast<br>Area   | Number  | 4085     | 922   | 3478       | 1593             | 10,078 |  |
|   | Mean Av<br>Months                             | 32.2     | 18.9  | 32.0       | 24.8             | 29.7   |  |
|   | Median Av<br>Months                           | 21       | 11    | 17         | 11               | 16     |  |
|   | Mean Av<br>Points                             | 67.0     | 51.9  | 40.5       | 43.9             | 52.8   |  |
|   | Median Av<br>Points                           | 50       | 30    | 28         | 28               | 32     |  |
|   | Religion of<br>Top 100<br>Ranked by<br>Points | 53       | 11    | 21         | 15               | 100    |  |
|   | Religion of<br>Top 40<br>Ranked by<br>Points  | 21       | 5     | 10         | 4                | 40     |  |
| <p>* Position 1 Applicants</p> <p>In this analysis the waiting list contains 4085 Catholic households and 3478 Protestant households. The likely profile of allocations (based on 100 units being immediately available) would be mixed to a level that would support and sustain shared living, i.e. 53 offers to Catholic households, 21 to Protestant and a further 26 to those others or undisclosed. Option 3 which defines a city centre exclusive of existing single identity housing estates also means that any new build will not be viewed as territorially owned by one single identity area or the other.</p> <p>This approach is clearly favoured. Option 3 provides the basis for marketing the city centre as a new and unique option, not tied in any way to existing housing areas. By offering the choice to all Belfast city applicants this also assumes that the city centre is open to and accessible to everybody.</p> <p>This option takes account of the duty to promote equality of opportunity for people of different religious backgrounds from the wider Belfast area. However, at the local CLA level, the single identity areas could argue that</p> |   |          |       |            |                  |        |  |

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|                         |   |                              |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|
|                         | <p>they are losing out on opportunities that they perceive as belonging territorially to them (as set out in Option 1 and to a degree in Option 2). In equality terminology this would represent an adverse impact particularly for Catholics, but only those in the 8 CLAs. This should be mitigated by the fact that so many more people, including Catholics, would benefit from the new city centre choice.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION: MINOR IMPACT</b></p>  |                              |
| Racial group            | The recommended option (3) would ensure that the city centre option would recognise the specific needs of some BME groups, particularly migrant workers. Various research has shown that, quite often there is a reliance on walking or public transport to get to work.  | <b>CONCLUSION: NO IMPACT</b> |
| Age                     | There are no significant age issues. Children's issue are considered under the DEPENDANTS section   | <b>CONCLUSION: NO IMPACT</b> |
| Marital status          | No issues   | <b>CONCLUSION: NO IMPACT</b> |
| Sexual orientation      | No issues   | <b>CONCLUSION: NO IMPACT</b> |
| Men and women generally | No issues   | <b>CONCLUSION: NO IMPACT</b> |
| Disability              | <p>It is important to note that the size and design of social housing units would be determined by planning, DSD Design Guidelines and financial constraints. These are outside the influence of the Housing Executive or social housing providers involved in developing schemes.</p> <p>With regard to people with disabilities, physical accessibility standards will be designed into dwellings with bespoke design included for specific housing needs, where practicable. However all households, including those with disabled family members will be advised that city centre social housing will favour medium or high density living.</p> | <b>CONCLUSION: NO IMPACT</b> |

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|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Dependants  | The issue for families with children is similar. The choice of the city centre CLA will be available to them and any housing design could include three bedroom apartments or duplex dwellings. However, this type of provision restricts private leisure space (gardens). Applicants will be made aware of these considerations and the range of housing options available (outside the city centre) which would include less dense housing and/or housing with gardens. | CONCLUSION:<br><b>NO IMPACT</b>   |
| 2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? |   |   |
| Section 75 category   | If <b>Yes</b> , provide details   | If <b>No</b> , provide reasons  |
| Religious belief  |   | Option 3 pays due regard to promoting equality of opportunity with regard to these groups.                        |
| Political opinion   |   |   |
| Racial group  |   | Option 3 pays due regard to promoting equality of opportunity between people from different racial groups.        |
| Age   |   | No significant issues   |
| Marital status  |   | No significant issues   |
| Sexual orientation  |   | No significant issues   |
| Men and women generally   |   | No significant issues   |
| Disability  |   | Option 3 pays due regard to promoting equality of opportunity between people with disabilities and those without. |
| Dependants  |   | Option 3 pays due regard to promoting equality of opportunity between people with dependants and those without.   |

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| 3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none |  |                                  |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Good relations category   | Details of policy impact   | Level of impact minor/major/none |
| Religious belief  | Option 3 provides the basis for marketing the city centre as a new and unique option, not tied in any way to existing housing areas. By offering the choice to all Belfast city applicants this also assumes that the city centre is open to and accessible to everybody. This approach aligns with Government's Cohesion agenda and with Belfast City Council's Good Relations Strategy. The effect will be to create the environment for better relations. | <b>CONCLUSION: MINOR IMPACT</b>  |
| Political opinion   |  |                                  |
| Racial group  | Option 3 provides the basis for a shared housing area with no identity ties to more traditional areas of Belfast.  | <b>CONCLUSION: MINOR IMPACT</b>  |

| 4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? |  |                                |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Good relations category   | If <b>Yes</b> , provide details  | If <b>No</b> , provide reasons |
| Religious belief  | The key objectives of this proposal include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support the Good Relations agenda, and Belfast City Council and OFMDFM's position on Community Cohesion.</li> <li>To ensure that city centre living is an option for everyone in the wider Belfast area.</li> </ul> Option 3 fulfils these objectives and therefore pays regard to promoting good relations. |                                |
| Political opinion   |  |                                |
| Racial group  |  |                                |

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### Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The equality screening concluded that there were some minor impacts but that these were addressed in Option 3.

On that basis the decision is that an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced.

Option 3 pays due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity and pays regard to the promotion of good relations. No further mitigations are necessary.

### Part 4: Monitoring

Systems are in place to monitor the impact of this policy. Monitoring reports, based on the equality characteristics of waiting list applicants for the new CLA and allocations to the new CLA will be made available to Directors and the Board on a regular basis.

### Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

| Screened by:                        | Position/Job Title                             | Date |
|-------------------------------------|--|------|
| Tony Steed                          | Equality Unit Manager                          |      |
| <b>Approved by: Esther Christie</b> | Assistant Director of Corporate Services       |      |
| Gerry Flynn                         | Assistant Director of Housing and Regeneration |      |

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