

Document Pack

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



16th March, 2012

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, 23rd March, 2012 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
- (c) Declarations of Interest

2. **Modernisation and Improvement**

- (a) Local Government Reform – Moving Forward (Pages 1 - 10)
- (b) Governance Proposals in the Local Government Reorganisation Bill (Pages 11 - 94)

3. **Democratic Services and Governance**
 - (a) Documentary on Lord Mayor - Request to Film Council Meeting (Pages 95 - 96)
 - (b) Invitation to Commemoration Ceremonies - Government of the Irish Republic (Pages 97 - 98)
 - (c) Requests for the use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality (Pages 99 - 104)
 - (d) Request to use the City Hall to mark the centenary of the Signing of the Solemn League and Covenant - Co-operation Ireland (Pages 105 - 106)
 - (e) National Association of Councillors – Community Sport and Leisure Conference (Pages 107 - 110)
 - (f) Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Leaders Forum of 16 February (Pages 111 - 112)
 - (g) Minutes of Meeting of Members Development Steering Group of 29 February (Pages 113 - 128)
4. **Finance/Value-for-Money**
 - (a) Delivering the Belfast Investment Package (Pages 129 - 134)
 - (b) Super-connected Cities (Pages 135 - 184)
 - (c) Minutes of Meetings of Budget and Transformation Panel (Pages 185 - 188)
 - (d) Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel of 13th March (To Follow)
5. **Human Resources**
 - (a) Employability Initiatives (Pages 189 - 192)
 - (b) Unauthorised Disclosure of Data (To Follow)
6. **Asset Management**
 - (a) Belfast Welcome Centre - Relocation (Pages 193 - 270)
 - (b) Disposal of former Civic Amenity Site at Boucher Road (Pages 271 - 276)
 - (c) Former Grove Primary School Site and Old Grove Leisure Centre - Copy (Pages 277 - 288)
 - (d) Permission to invite tender - Bobbin coffee-shop facility (Pages 289 - 292)
 - (e) Connswater Community Greenway – Governance Review (Pages 293 - 324)
 - (f) Capital Programme Update - Dargan Crescent In-Ground Gas Extraction System (Pages 325 - 326)

7. **Good Relations and Equality**

- (a) Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership of 5th March (Pages 327 - 346)
- (b) Request from POBAL to address the Committee (Pages 347 - 354)

8. **Cross-Cutting Issues**

- (a) Age Friendly Approach and Declaration (Pages 355 - 364)
- (b) Cooperation Ireland Seminar (Pages 365 - 370)
- (c) Nomination to the Northern Ireland Policing Board of Independent Members (Pages 371 - 372)
- (d) Right Service, Right Place Consultation on Proposals to Reshape Maternity Services in Belfast - Request to Brief the Committee (Pages 373 - 374)

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

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Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Local Government Reform – Moving Forward
Date:	23 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney (Ext. 6202)

1.0	<u>Relevant Background Information</u>
1.1	Members will be aware that the NI Executive's draft Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, contains a clear commitment to proceed with local government reform and to transfer key functions (e.g. planning, regeneration and community planning) to councils as part of the reform process.
1.2	The Environment Minister has recently written to all councils requesting that they restore necessary implementation structures to support the operational delivery of local government reform at the local level (copy of correspondence received is attached at Appendix 1).
1.3	At the SP&R Committee on the 2 March, there was an initial discussion with Members on local government reform; examining some of the key challenges in moving forward including the need to inform/shape emerging legislation, establish appropriate governance and implementation structures and effectively engage with Lisburn and Castlereagh. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the issue until its next meeting on 23 March to enable Members and Political Parties to give further consideration in advance of taking decisions.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	At the SP&R meeting on 23 March 2012, Members views will be sought on the following key issues:-
2.2	(i) <u>Belfast voluntary Transition Committee</u>
2.2.1	<p>Members are asked to give consideration to the political composition of the Council's voluntary Transition Committee (vTC) which will provide political oversight and co-ordinate the Councils activities around local government reform. Potential options include:</p> <p>Option 1: SP&R Committee designated as Belfast vTC with 1 monthly meeting dealing with reform related matters; (would ensure proportionality)</p> <p>Option 2: SP&R Committee, with the addition of a PUP nomination to ensure cross party representation, designated as Belfast vTC with 1 monthly meeting dealing with reform related matters;</p> <p>Option 3: Belfast vTC to consist of Party Group Leaders and Chairs and Deputy Chairs of all Standing Committees (would ensure proportionality)</p> <p>Option 4: Any other political composition which SP&R and Council agree appropriate.</p> <p>Depending on the option chosen, consideration would have to be given to whether there was any impact on the Councils proportionality arrangements and whether any change was required to Standing Orders. In any event it is recommended that the vTC meet once a month to discuss reform related issues.</p>

2.2	(ii) <u>Transfer of Functions</u>
2.2.1	Members' authority is sought for the Council to intensify its discussions with DOE, DoE Planning Service and DSD regarding the potential initiation of a Belfast pilot which seeks to integrate planning and regeneration functions within the context, among other things, of the delivery of the Belfast Investment Programme. This has already been discussed when a BCC cross-party delegation recently meet with the Environment Minister and a meeting is now being sought with the DSD Minister
2.2.2	Authority is sought also to develop a joint training programme with the Planning Service to build the capacity of both Councillors and officers in relation to planning and their future statutory role.
2.3	(iii) <u>Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh</u>
2.3.1	Members are asked to consider whether the Council should formally write to both Lisburn and Castlereagh councils seeking to meet with them to discuss matters of mutual interest and to start to plan for any proposed boundary changes and associated challenges (e.g. ensuring service harmonisation, transfer of assets and liabilities, mitigating potential financial risks, minimising the impact on rates etc). A piece of work has already been authorised by the Committee to look at service needs in relation to future leisure provision.
2.4	(iv) <u>Funding Local Government Reform</u>
2.4.1	There is growing opposition across local government to the NI Executive's decision not to fund local government reorganisation but rather seeking local government to fund reform. How such costs are identified, planned and budgeted for on a potential 'invest to save' basis will be crucial. It is understood that the DoE are considering what financial instruments could be put in place to give councils greater flexibility to fund specific one-off costs of reform.
2.4.2	The Council has received correspondence from the National Association of Councillors (copy attached at Appendix 2) setting out the Association's concerns in regards to the absence of central government funding for key elements of the reform process including severance payments for members who may be displaced by the proposed reduction in the number of local councils in 2015. The Association has sought clarification from local government if they believe they can fund the reform programme or whether they expect central government to provide part funding.
2.4.3	The Council will need to consider whether it is willing to fund elements of the reform programme which offer the potential to secure future efficiency savings or service improvements for the Council.
2.4.4	It may be that Members would wish to support a lobby led by NILGA requesting the NI Executive to provide additional funding to enable Councils to deliver on the RPA (see Appendix 3 for a copy of recent NILGA press release). It is advised that the Council also seek authority for an increase in Special Responsibility Allowance from the DOE, to permit Belfast to fund the additional Member involvement which will be required by the RPA process if the NILGA lobby is unsuccessful.
2.5	(v) <u>Governance proposals and Council's decision-making processes</u>
2.5.1	<p>The Council must ensure that it engages with DoE and informs the emerging legislative proposals relating to the future governance and decision-making processes of Councils. Such proposals are to be set out in the draft Local Government Reorganisation Bill which it is expected to be issued for consultation by December 2012. Detailed consideration needs to be given to the practical and operational implications of any proposals relating to, in particular,:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Weighted Majority Voting' (e.g. 80% of Council members present and voting). Understanding that decisions relating to the statutory duties of the Council, e.g. striking the rate and those of a quasi judicial nature such as making bye-laws would be excluded from qualified majority voting. • 'Decision call-in' procurements (e.g. a call-in trigger being 15% of total Council membership).

	We need to ensure that adequate consideration is given to the practical implications
2.5.2	Members will note that a separate report on this matter is on the Committee's agenda for discussion.
3.0	<u>Proposed next steps</u>
3.1	Following discussion among Members at the Committee meeting, a detailed project plan dealing with, among other things, the various issues outlined above will be developed and brought back to a subsequent meeting of the Committee for consideration and approval.

4.0 Resource Implications

There will clearly be financial and Human Resources implications for the Council in preparing for RPA; however, the scope and scale of these remain somewhat uncertain in the absence of further detail from the NI Executive and clarification on potential funding options.

If the Committee agree to seek authority from the Environment Minister to extend the limit of its Special Responsibilities Allowance, any additional funding allocated towards this will be secured through realignment of existing budgets.

5.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to consider and agree:

- i. the political composition of the Belfast voluntary Transition Committee (vTC);
- ii. that the nomination process to the Belfast vTC would sit outside the formal Committee appointment process as set out within the Council's Standing Orders;
- iii. that the Belfast vTC meets at least once a month;
- iv. that the Council now actively engages with DoE, Planning Service and DSD regarding a Belfast pilot;
- v. Council officials work with DoE Planning Service officials to develop proposals for a joint training and capacity building programme around planning;
- vi. to formally write to both Lisburn and Castlereagh councils seeking an initial meeting to identify and discuss matters of mutual interest resulting from any proposed changes to Belfast's boundary;
- vii. whether the Council would be willing to fund key elements of the local government reform programme on a potential 'invest to save' basis and to respond to the correspondence received from the National Association of Councillors accordingly; and
- viii. whether the Council should write to the Environment Minister seeking authority to extend the limit of its Special Responsibilities Allowance scheme.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 Correspondence received from the Environment Minister

Appendix 2 Correspondence received from the National Association for Councillors

Appendix 3 Recent NILGA press release

APPENDIX 1: Correspondence received from Environment Minister

From the office of the
Minister of the Environment



Department of the
Environment
www.doeni.gov.uk

DoE Private Office
8th Floor
Goodwood House
44 - 58 May Street
BELFAST
BT1 4NN

Telephone: 028 902 56019

Email: private.office@doeni.gov.uk

Your reference:

Our reference: SUB/184/2012

15 February 2012

Dear Council Mayors and Chairs

As you will be aware, the Executive decided in November 2011 that the reform of local government would be delivered on the basis of an 11-council model. As Minister responsible for implementation of the local government reform programme, I shall manage this decision in line with the 2015 timetable proposed in the Programme for Government 2011-2015. As a result, I will now be working to refresh this major initiative in partnership with the local government sector.

Consequently, I would ask you to restore, as soon as it is possible, the 11 Voluntary Transition Committees which are a key aspect of the implementation structures needed to bring about operational delivery of the programme in the council groupings. I would ask that the VTC for your constituent councils is established if possible by the end of March 2012 and confirm by e-mail to Linda MacHugh, Director of Local Government Policy Division (email linda.machugh@doeni.gov.uk) that the Committee has been re-established together with the name of the Chair, the Chief Executive (to act as the main point of contact for correspondence), the Transition Manager and a list of Transition Committee and Transition Management Team Members. I recognise this process will be more straight forward for those VTCs that have continued to meet.

Previous guidance circulars issued to Councils during 2008 and 2009 for Transition Committees will be refreshed accordingly to bring them into line with the reform programme going forward and re-issued as soon as possible. However, in re-establishing your Committee you should in the meantime, continue to follow the guidance in Circular LG 16/08 about the formation and membership of Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams, as it remains relevant to an extent. You should also note that Circular LG 19/08 about Transition Committee Funding is withdrawn. This is as a consequence of the Executive's decision that local government should bear responsibility for the implementation costs of the reform programme. I confirm that central funding will not be provided to support the work of

Transition Committees moving forward. This is a matter for the amalgamating councils to provide the resources necessary to undertake this work.

I appreciate that, in re-establishing the Transition Committees, this may entail additional duties for Councillors. Therefore, I draw your attention to the system of allowances under Section 36 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, which provides Special Responsibility Allowances for members.

For the purposes of leading the transition process, I will soon put in place a Regional Transition Committee to provide high level political leadership for the implementation of the programme. I will write to you again to set out the terms of reference, membership and date of the first meeting of the Regional Transition Committee and to invite the Chair of your Voluntary Transition Committee to join that Committee as a member.

Finally, I plan to visit each Voluntary Committee to discuss how, together, we take forward this important work.

I have copied this letter to the President of NILGA, Council Chief Executives, the Local Government Staff Commission, the Chair of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum, the Chair of the Public Service Commission, the Chair of SOLACE, the Chair of the National Association of Councillors and the Chair of the Environment Committee.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Attwood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ALEX ATTWOOD MLA
Minister of the Environment

APPENDIX 2: Correspondence received from National Association of Councillors

National Association of Councillors
Northern Ireland Region



8 February 2012

Mr Peter McNaney
Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Donegall Square
Belfast BT1 5GS

Chief Executive's Office		
Date	10/2/12	
Seen by	GA	
Referred to		
AGX	Corp Comms	Dem Serv
GR	SPP	Bus supp
Dev	F&R	H&ES
P&L	P&P	Other
Ref	McN 38/02	

16/2
Emailed to
KHeaney
smcroy

Dear Mr McNaney

RE: FUNDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Further to our earlier letter regarding severance payments to councillors displaced by local government reorganisation, we are concerned that the Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, has now made it clear to us that he expects the entire cost of reorganisation, including transfer of functions, additional member training, amalgamation of councils, transition committees and severance payments, to be borne directly by the councils with no funding input from central government.

We are concerned that local councils will not have sufficient resources to carry through all these changes adequately. We would be interested in knowing whether you believe this to be possible or whether you expect central government to provide at least part of the necessary funding.


Yours faithfully

Cllr Ronnie Ferguson
Regional Secretary, NAC

Krum,

Refer to this in RPL
paper for H&E, so
we can send a
response.

Administrative Assistant: Nick Rogers
National Association of Councillors, Sketrick House, Jubilee Road, Newtownards BT23 4YH
Phone 028 9181 9413 Email: naoc@btconnect.com
Regional Secretary: Councillor R Ferguson
c/o The Council Offices, 2 Church Street, Newtownards BT23 4AP 028 9182 4000 Fax 028 9181 9628

National Association of Councillors
Northern Ireland Region 

29 November 2011

Mr Peter McNaney
Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Donegall Square
Belfast BT1 5GS

File: RPA
Severance arrangement

Dear Chief Executive

Our members are increasingly concerned that as yet there is no clear agreement about the award of severance payments to those councillors who will be displaced by the proposed reduction in the number of local councils in 2015.

Severance payments have been promised by a number of ministers going back to 2005, but the current Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, has told the NAC that unlike previous ministers he is not minded to approve severance payments.

Given this new uncertainty, we would be grateful if you and other chief executives of local councils could press the Environment Minister for a clear commitment to the award of severance payments on the same basis as those council officers who may also be displaced by the restructuring.

Yours faithfully



R FERGUSON
Secretary, NAC, Northern Ireland Region

RPAfile

Chief Executive's Office		
Date	11/12/11	
Seen by	[initials]	
Referred to		
ACX	Corp Comms	Dem Serv
GR	PP	Bus Supp.
Dev	F&R	H&ES
P&L	P&P	Other
Ref	McN 04/12	

11/12/11
Remailed 6/12
Corn Wilson
H McNaney

Administrative Assistant: Nick Rogers
National Association of Councillors, Sketrick House, Jubilee Road, Newtownards BT23 4YH
Phone 028 9181 9413 Email: naoc@btconnect.com
Regional Secretary: Councillor R Ferguson
c/o The Council Offices, 2 Church Street, Newtownards BT23 4AP 028 9182 4000 Fax 028 9181 9628

Appendix 3: NILGA Press Release



PRESS RELEASE 28th February 2012 COUNCIL REFORM NEEDS UP FRONT INVESTMENT FROM ASSEMBLY OR WILL “FAIL THE CUSTOMER”.

An intensive debate after the NILGA Annual Conference of 23rd February has galvanised Councillors across the Association’s 26 Council membership.

NILGA members called for a “serious, evidence based, cross-party summit” involving the DoE and wider Assembly interests to solve a clear barrier to progress i.e. getting the up-front investment needed to kick start, develop and achieve local government reform on time, by April 2015.

Derek McCallan, NILGA’s Chief Executive, referred to the collective will expressed by NILGA’s members. “Councils and NILGA were written to in mid February and told at conference that a legislated reform programme which is a target in the Programme for Government will have no investment provided by the Executive to achieve it. Similarly, the Environment Minister has offered a mechanism to achieve reform which needs to be further refined and understood - one which many Councils, officers and NILGA have fundamental reservations about.

Since November last year NILGA has sought a task and finish approach to reform, offered an investment partnership to achieve it, presented new ways to shape Council services around local people, worked to reduce costs and improve the quality of services through a formal programme with all Councils participating and negotiated the transfer of functions of other departmental functions in a business like, customer driven manner.

We do not want a “take it or leave it” approach and told we have to sweat the asset of local government even more – with nothing other than legislation and warnings coming from the Assembly. We don’t want to fail the customer – local ratepayers should not bear the full cost of legislative policy.”

Having presented ways in which elected members, officers and the Department can come together, in a dynamic, mutually supportive and results driven partnership, through modernisation and reform working groups, NILGA has been told that these are not statutory and would supplement other structures being set up.

He added “contemporary evidence from NILGA has confirmed that Challenge and Transformation funds in Wales and Scotland, and a dynamic, inclusive, task and finish partnership involving Ministers, Local Government Departments, LGAs and Councils completed what was required in these jurisdictions after legislation and local government’s responsibilities and a collective investment fund were agreed, in partnership. To succeed we want to work together to prepare a list of responsibilities, design a plan, co-invest and deliver a programme of work, on time. NILGA has offered to co-ordinate this type of successful model, has 26 council support and yet, Councils have been offered an outline plan which defines certain processes and affirms that investment will be borne by Councils exclusively in terms of reform process costs”.

NILGA has sought to meet the Minister, has resolved to meet Executive Ministers, and the Assembly Environment Committee has offered an open invitation for the Association to work with it, with Committee members from all 5 political parties present at NILGA's Panel debate last Thursday stating that Reform needed central government investment.



Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Governance Proposals in the Local Government Reorganisation Bill
Date:	23rd March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
Contact Officer:	

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 2nd March, 2012, agreed that a short report should be prepared setting out the current position with regard to the latest thinking on governance arrangements in the new Councils following the Review of Public Administration.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Committee, at its meeting on 18th February, 2011, had approved a response to a Consultation Document on Local Government Reform which had been issued by the Department of the Environment. A copy of the Consultation Document and the Council's response are attached at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.
2.2	The main governance considerations contained in the 2011 Consultation Paper are set out in Section 3 of Appendix 1. These proposals cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making Structures, including scrutiny arrangements; • Sharing power and responsibility (Proportionality); • Checks and balances, including weighted majority voting and call-in; and • Increased transparency, including the development of a Council Constitution.
2.3	The Council's initial comments on the Consultation Document, as approved by the Committee in February, 2011, are set out in Appendix 2.

2.4	Essentially, things have not moved on very far from the position in February, 2011. No new proposals have been produced by the Department and officials have confirmed that the Minister is currently examining the responses to the 2011 Consultation Paper. It is expected that the Minister's position on Local Government Reform will be presented to the Environment Committee in April. At that point, the Council will have an opportunity, if it so wishes, to respond to the Environment Committee on the Minister's proposals either in writing or by appearing before the Committee to give evidence.
2.5	A further report setting out the Minister's proposals for Local Government Reform will be presented to the Committee once they have been published.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	None associated with consideration of the policy proposals.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	To note the contents of the report and that a further report will be presented to the Committee once the Minister has published his proposals.

6	Decision Tracking
None.	

7	Documents Attached
<p>Appendix 1 – Consultation Document on Local Government Reform (November, 2010)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Council response to the Consultation Document (February, 2011)</p>	



Department of the
Environment

www.doeni.gov.uk

Local Government Reform

Policy Proposals

Consultation Document

30 November 2010

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM CONSULTATION ON POLICY PROPOSALS

This consultation document seeks views on the Department's policy proposals for
local government reform.

Comments should be sent by 11 March 2011 to:

**Policy and Legislation Unit
Local Government Policy Division
Department of the Environment
8th Floor, Goodwood House
44-58 May Street
Belfast, BT1 4NN**

E-mail: LGPDConsultations@doeni.gov.uk

Fax No: 028 9025 6080

Textphone: 028 9054 0642

The following persons will be able to answer queries in relation to the proposals:

	Name	E-mail	Telephone
Governance; and Partnership Panel	John Murphy Lynn McCracken	john.murphy@doeni.gov.uk lynn.mccracken@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6048 028 9025 6074
Ethical Standards	Mylene Ferguson Phyllis Mulholland Julie Broadway	mylene.ferguson@doeni.gov.uk phyllis.mulholland@doeni.gov.uk julie.broadway@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6086 028 9025 6087 028 9025 6094
Service Delivery and Performance Improvement	John Murphy Lorcan O'Kane Damien Dean	john.murphy@doeni.gov.uk lorcan.o'kane@doeni.gov.uk damien.dean@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6048 028 9025 6045 028 9025 6836
Community Planning; and Power of Well-being	John Murphy Damian McKevitt	john.murphy@doeni.gov.uk damian.mckevitt@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6048 028 9025 6050
Reorganisation	John Murphy Julie Broadway	john.murphy@doeni.gov.uk julie.broadway@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6048 028 9025 6094

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CONTENTS

	Page
Ministerial Foreword	1
Purpose of the Consultation Document	2
Background	2
Policy Proposals	
• Governance Arrangements	5
• Ethical Standards	17
• Service Delivery & Performance Improvement	28
• Community Planning	37
• Power of Well-being	40
• Partnership Panel	41
• Supervision of Councils	43
• Reorganisation of Local Government	45
Human Rights	51
Equality	51
Regulatory Impact Assessment	51
Rural Proofing	51
Freedom of Information Act 2000	51
Alternative formats	52
Consultation	52
Annex A - Glossary	54
Annex B – The Freedom of Information Act 2000 - confidentiality of consultations	57
Annex C – List of Consultees	59

Foreword

by Edwin Poots, Minister of the Environment



I am pleased to be launching this public consultation on policy proposals for the reform of local government. The Executive's decisions on the future shape of local government provide the foundation to develop strong, effective local government that will deliver improved outcomes for everyone in Northern Ireland.

Our vision is of a strong, dynamic local government that creates vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe and sustainable communities that have the needs of all citizens at their core. Central to that vision is the provision of high-quality efficient services that respond to people's needs and continuously improve over time.

To deliver on this vision and to realise the full potential of local government, councils will take on a significant range of functions from government departments and other bodies. In addition, councils will work within a new statutory governance framework and ethical standards regime, will have a new statute-based community planning process and will have available a power of well-being.

The purpose of this consultation is to look at the proposals for constructing the new governance framework to provide for efficient, fair and transparent decision-making in councils, within a regime to ensure that the highest standards of behaviour are maintained. It also looks at proposals for the framework for the new community planning process and the introduction of a new regime to support improvement in how councils deliver services to their ratepayers.

I encourage you to have your say by responding to these proposals.

Edwin Poots MLA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM CONSULTATION ON POLICY PROPOSALS

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

- 1.1. The Department of the Environment is seeking your views on its policy proposals for the reform of local government. These policy proposals flow from the Executive's decisions of 13 March 2008 on the future shape of local government.
- 1.2. A glossary of terms used in this consultation document is provided at Annex A.

BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Following the restoration of devolution, the Executive, at its meeting on 5 July 2007, agreed proposals for a review of the previous Administration's decisions on the Review of Public Administration as they related to local government. This review was taken forward by an Executive Sub-Committee chaired by the then Minister of the Environment, Arlene Foster MLA. The Executive Sub-Committee took the review forward in three strands. The first developed a shared vision for local government. The second considered the number of councils and the third focused on the functions to transfer to local government. The review also considered, as cross-cutting issues, the decisions of the previous administration to develop a council-led community planning process and to introduce a power of well-being.

2.2. At the Executive meeting on 13 March 2008, the recommendations from the Sub-Committee were agreed. In summary, the Sub-Committee recommended:

- rationalising the current 26 district councils to create 11 new district councils;
- introducing new governance arrangements for councils to ensure the protection of the rights of all people and also provide for fair, transparent and efficient decision-making;
- developing a new council-led community planning process and introducing a power of well-being;
- transferring a range of functions from central to local government; and
- developing appropriate performance management systems for district councils.

2.3. In addition to the specific recommendations, the review signalled the desire of the Executive to work in partnership with local government to deliver the priorities and actions set out in the Executive's Programme for Government and thereby improve outcomes for everyone.

2.4. While the Review of Public Administration was progressing, the Department of the Environment was developing proposals to modernise certain procedures in councils. One of these related to providing a new ethical standards regime for local government.

2.5. Following Minister Foster's announcement of the Executive's decisions on the future shape of local government, structures were put in place to support the development of policy and

implementation proposals, to give effect to those decisions. The top tier of the structure, and key driver of the programme, was the Strategic Leadership Board, chaired by the Minister of the Environment. The membership of this Board comprised elected representatives from the five main political parties, led by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association President (who was vice chair), senior advisers from local government and senior officials from those departments transferring functions to local government. The Strategic Leadership Board was supported by three policy development panels which also comprised representatives from the five main political parties and advisers from central and local government. The broad remit of each of the panels was:

- Panel A – Governance and Relationships;
- Panel B – Service Delivery; and
- Panel C – Structural Reform.

2.6. These panels, in the intervening period, developed policies for local government reform and this consultation document reflects their work.

2.7. Although it has not been possible to create the 11 new councils, or to transfer new functions to them in 2011, as had originally been planned, the Executive agreed, at its meeting of 18 November 2010, that in order to maintain momentum towards local government reform, the policy proposals contained in this document should be issued for public consultation.

POLICY PROPOSALS

Governance Arrangements

3.1. Good governance (i.e. management and control arrangements) lies at the heart of effective and efficient local government. It provides for best practice in policy development, decision-making and the delivery of quality services. Governance arrangements must ensure that district councils:

- operate to high standards;
- pursue equality and fairness within a framework of checks and balances; and
- conduct their business with openness and transparency.

3.2. The existing framework for the role of elected representatives in political decision-making in district councils is set out in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (as amended). This framework is, therefore, almost 40 years old and needs to be updated.

3.3. The objectives underpinning the proposals for new political governance arrangements for district councils after reorganisation, are that they should provide for:

- efficient and effective decision-making;
- checks and balances to support equality and fair treatment;
- proportionality in allocating key positions;
- transparency and oversight of decision-making; and
- the effective and efficient creation of new local government.

3.4. Research has been carried out on local government decision-making in other regions. This has been used to inform the proposals set out in this consultation document. The research includes the executive arrangements introduced in England and Wales by the Local Government Act 2000, and the streamlined committee structure adopted by the majority of councils in Scotland. The local government sector and the main political parties have also had a significant involvement in the formulation of the proposals through their engagement in the Policy Development Panel on Governance and Relationships.

Decision-making Structures

3.5. At present, in most councils, an issue that requires a decision is delegated to a committee of the council which considers all the relevant material and ultimately makes a recommendation to the full council. The committee has no responsibility or authority to make the final decision (unless the council has specifically delegated a decision-making power to it). It is for the council to consider the recommendation from the committee when the minutes of that committee come before the council for ratification. The ratification of the minutes of the committee signifies the council's endorsement of the recommendation. There is, therefore, a delay between a recommendation being made and a final decision being taken.

3.6. In considering proposals for the new arrangements, the Department takes the view that it is important to build in choice and permit flexibility in relation to the development of new decision-making structures by councils, rather than introducing a single structure for all councils. The Department proposes that a short list of decision-

making structures should be available to councils. A council would then be able to select the most appropriate structure. The decision-making structures which the Department proposes should be available to councils are:

- the cabinet-style model: executive responsibility for all operational decisions would be devolved from the full council to a relatively small committee of councillors;
- the streamlined committee model: a central policy committee and a limited number of other committees would be established with executive responsibility for specific decisions being devolved from the full council to those committees; and
- the traditional committee structure: individual committees would be established to consider specific issues and make recommendations on appropriate courses of action, for decision by the full council.

3.7. To provide a check and balance on the operation of the cabinet-style and streamlined committee models, which devolve decision-making from the full council, the Department proposes that structures should be supported by effective internal scrutiny arrangements. These arrangements will include the provision of a call-in procedure, which will allow decisions taken under devolved arrangements to be reviewed. It is also proposed that councils which choose to operate one of the systems of devolved decision-making should be required to establish a scrutiny committee. Flowing from the principle of checks and balances, this committee will be able to scrutinise the work of the cabinet-style model or streamlined committees and will consider the outcome of the review of any decision subject to a call-in, in defined circumstances.

Further details on the operation of the call-in procedure are outlined in paragraphs 3.18 to 3.23.

3.8. To provide for the eventuality that a district council cannot agree the adoption of a particular decision-making structure, the Department proposes that a default model should be provided for. The key elements of the default model will be:

- the operation of a committee-based system;
- the opportunity to devolve powers from the full council to a committee or committees;
- the establishment of a scrutiny committee, if powers are devolved from the full council to committees; and
- the establishment of a central policy committee.

3.9. For the operation of the devolved decision-making systems, the Department also proposes specifying a list of core issues on which decisions must be taken by the full council. This list will cover strategic issues that would have an impact across the whole local government district and include, for example, striking the rate, borrowing, governance arrangements, the corporate plan, the community plan, etc.

Question 1:

Do you agree that a list of alternative decision-making structures should be available to councils?

Question 2:

Where decision-making is devolved to a committee of the council, do you agree that effective internal scrutiny arrangements should be required?

Question 3:

If a list of decision-making structures, as set out, is provided, do you support the proposal that a default option should be available?

Question 4:

Should a list of core issues, for which decisions must be taken by the full council, be specified? If so, what are your views on the issues that should be included in this list?

Sharing of Power and Responsibility

3.10. The members of a council, when it is established and on an annual basis after that, are required to select a councillor to act as chair of the council; they may also choose to select another councillor as vice-chair. They will also select individual members to take on the roles of chair and vice-chair of any committees that they create to have responsibility for specific issues. In addition, a number of public bodies appoint councillors to their management boards, and in so doing, seek nominations from the relevant councils.

3.11. To ensure that power and responsibilities are shared amongst elected members, it is proposed that a number of methods should be available to councils for the allocation of these key positions

within the council and for its representative positions on external bodies. The methods which the Department proposes should be available are:

- the D'Hondt and Saint-Lague divisor systems which use a formula for determining the order in which political parties will make their selection of the position that they wish to hold; and
- the Single Transferrable Voting system, where each councillor will vote for the individual that they wish to hold a position.

3.12. The D'Hondt system will be the default approach if the political parties on a district council fail to agree on the system to be adopted. The Department proposes to set out the precise method of application of each the systems that will be available to ensure consistency of approach across councils.

Question 5:

Do you support the proposal that a limited number of methods for ensuring the sharing of positions on a council, its committees, and external appointments should be made available? Are the methods identified appropriate?

Question 6:

Should the D'Hondt system be specified as the default model, for use in the absence of agreement?

Question 7:

Do you support the proposal that the Department specifies the method for applying each of the available systems?

3.13. The key positions to which the process for the sharing of power and responsibility will apply will include:

- mayor / council chair;
- deputy mayor / council vice-chair;
- committee chairs;
- committee vice-chairs; and
- positions on a cabinet-style executive (where that model of decision-making is adopted).

3.14. The Department does not propose to specify that the cabinet-style model should require the inclusion of elected members from each of the political parties represented on the council. It will be a matter for a political party to determine whether it wishes to participate in such a committee or select other positions of responsibility on the council.

3.15. The use of divisor methods, such as D'Hondt and Saint-Lague, for allocating positions would potentially favour bigger political parties within a council, if selection is applied in each year of the council. To minimise this potential, the Department proposes that the agreed method will be applied to all positions of responsibility within a council (including nominations to external bodies) over its full four-year term. A list of the key positions covering each year for the full council term of office will be used to allocate all positions whenever the council is first established.

3.16. The order in which positions should be allocated will not be specified, but rather the selection of a position and the year of appointment will be matters for each political party in the council to determine, against its own priorities. The allocation of additional positions, where a new committee is established or a new appointment to an external body is identified following the initial allocation of positions, will use the agreed approach starting from the point at which the last position was allocated.

Question 8:

Do you agree that the Department should specify the list of positions that would be allocated using these methods?

3.17. It will be important to ensure that the membership of council committees reflects the representation of the various political parties on the council. The Department proposes that councils should be given a choice of two methods to determine the number of positions to be allocated to each party. These are the Quota Greatest Remainder and Droop Quota methods which use slightly different formulae for calculating the basis for the sharing of positions across the political parties.

Question 9:

**What are your views on the proposal for ensuring proportionality in the membership of council committees?
Are the methods to be used appropriate?**

Checks and Balances

3.18. In order to ensure the fair treatment and representation of everyone served by a council, the Department considers that there is a need for a system that provides checks and balances in relation to the council decision-making processes.

3.19. The Department, therefore, proposes that a call-in procedure should be introduced. This would apply to decisions taken but not yet implemented under devolved arrangements and decisions waiting to be endorsed by a council through the ratification of minutes from a committee. The call-in procedure would be used in the following circumstances:

- where procedures used in reaching a decision are questioned, i.e. to ensure that all the established steps were followed and account was taken of council policies; and
- where there is an issue in relation to the protection of political minorities in the council district.

3.20. The call-in procedure would operate in a similar manner to the 'petition of concern' procedure in the Assembly, in other words, a number of councillors would be able to join together to request that a specific decision is reviewed. It is proposed that the trigger for a call-in will be set at 15% of the total council membership, with the resultant figure always rounded up to the nearest whole number. For example, in a council with 40 members, a call-in would require the support of 6 councillors.

3.21. It is further proposed that, where a decision is the subject of call-in on procedural grounds (see paragraph 3.19), the outcome of the subsequent investigation will be considered, as appropriate, by either:

- the scrutiny committee (where one has been established because the council has opted to devolve a range of decisions);
or
- the full council.

3.22. A scrutiny committee would have no authority to overturn a decision. It would only be able to confirm the original decision or refer it back to the committee that made the decision for further consideration. Council committees would, however, be required to have regard to any report from a scrutiny committee. In cases where a council has opted to retain the traditional committee system, any decision that is called in on procedural grounds would be considered by the full council.

3.23. Where the call-in procedure is used in seeking to protect political minorities from adverse impact in the council area (see paragraph 3.19), the Department proposes that a process to assess if the call-in is valid would be put in place. This process would be external to the council to avoid the potential for disputes between councillors. It is further proposed that all decisions subject to call-in on this basis would be referred to the full council for a final decision.

3.24. As a further safeguard to council decision-making, the Department also proposes to introduce qualified majority voting (or weighted

majority voting) for specified strategic decisions to be made by district councils. Examples of these decisions would include:

- decision-making structures;
- major capital projects; and
- programmes that impact across a number of wards.

The use of qualified majority voting would also be available to councils for decisions that had been the subject of a legitimate call-in.

3.25. Decisions relating to the statutory duties of a council, e.g. striking the rate, and those of a quasi-judicial nature, e.g. making bye-laws, will be excluded from qualified majority voting. For the operation of qualified majority voting, it is proposed that a straightforward threshold, set at 80% of council members present and voting, will apply, rather than a system of cross-community voting (such as the one operated by the Northern Ireland Assembly).

Question 10:

Should a call-in procedure be introduced to provide a check and balance for council-decision making?

Question 11:

Do you support the proposal for such a call-in to be available in the two circumstances outlined, and for how it would operate?

Question 12:

Do you agree that 15% of council membership should be the trigger for a call-in?

Question 13:

Should the use of qualified majority voting be introduced to provide safeguards in the council's decision-making processes?

Question 14:

Do you agree that 80% of council membership should be the threshold for qualified majority voting?

Transparency

3.26. Section 23 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 provides that, subject to certain conditions, every meeting of a council shall be open to the public. To ensure the continued transparency of the decision-making process and take account of the proposed new structures, these provisions will be updated to provide for improved access to council meetings and documents.

3.27. In addition to updating the provisions in relation to the transparency of the decision-making process, the Department proposes that a council will be required to prepare and publish a constitution that sets out details of how it operates. This constitution would provide details of:

- the council's decision-making structures and how decisions are reached;

- the council's standing orders, the production of which will be mandatory;
- the scheme of delegation in operation for decision-making by officers;

and will provide links to the Corporate and Business Plan.

Question 15:

What are your views on the proposed steps to enhance transparency and openness in the operation of a council and its decision-making?

Ethical Standards

Background

4.1. Northern Ireland is the only jurisdiction in the United Kingdom which does not have a mandatory code of conduct for district councillors. The current Northern Ireland Code of Local Government Conduct was introduced in April 2003 and provides guidance to councillors on the standards of conduct expected of them in carrying out their official duties and in maintaining working relationships with fellow councillors and council employees. It is a guidance document only and there are no formal mechanisms for dealing with cases where the Code might not have been adhered to.

4.2. The administrations in England, Wales and Scotland have each developed and introduced ethical standards frameworks for local

government to encourage appropriate levels of conduct and to build public confidence. These frameworks include mandatory codes of conduct for elected representatives of local authorities, with associated processes for investigating and adjudicating on alleged breaches of the codes.

4.3. The Committee on Standards in Public Life's Tenth Report entitled "Getting the Balance Right - Implementing Standards in Public Life" (published in January 2005) included two recommendations in relation to local government in Northern Ireland which were agreed by the United Kingdom Government, namely:

- Recommendation 15: Following the Review of Public Administration, and upon the restoration of the Assembly in Northern Ireland, a Statutory Code of Conduct for Councillors should be introduced with a proportionate and locally-based framework for enforcement, drawing upon experience of other parts of the United Kingdom; and
- Recommendation 29: The three principal regulators (the Standards Board for England, the Local Government Ombudsman for Wales, and the Standards Commission for Scotland) should put in place formal arrangements for the sharing of experiences and best practice. This should be extended to include the body with designated responsibility for enforcement of a new statutory framework in Northern Ireland.

4.4. In 2005, a Code of Conduct Working Group (CCWG) was set up by the Department to review the current Code of Conduct and to

consider options for monitoring the application of the Code, including investigation, enforcement and appeals procedures.

- 4.5. The CCWG compared the current ethical standards arrangements for local government in Northern Ireland with those in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland and also with the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 4.6. As ethical standards and the Code of Conduct are governance issues, the policy development and recommendations of the CCWG were subsequently presented to the policy development panel on governance and relationships for consideration.
- 4.7. The Department proposes to introduce a new ethical standards regime for local government which would include the introduction of a mandatory Code of Conduct for councillors with supporting mechanisms for investigation, adjudication and appeals. This would initially involve all complaints regarding breaches of ethical standards in district councils being referred to the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints (the Commissioner) to decide whether a case should be referred to the relevant council for local resolution or whether the matter should be retained for investigation by the Commissioner's Office.

Question 16:

Do you agree that a statutory ethical standards framework should be introduced for members of district councils in Northern Ireland?

Code of Conduct

4.8. The Department proposes to introduce a mandatory Code of Conduct to replace the current Northern Ireland Code of Local Government Conduct. The Code will set out the conduct which is expected of all councillors and co-opted members in Northern Ireland.

4.9. The Department proposes to specify in the Code the general principles which will provide a guide for councillors' behaviour in the execution of their duties and which will underpin the mandatory Code. It is intended that the principles to be specified in the Code will be:

- the seven principles of public life (the Nolan Principles) which are a recognised set of principles used across the public sector i.e. selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership; and
- four additional principles which were adopted by the Northern Ireland Assembly on 12 October 2009, i.e. respect, equality, good working relationships and promoting good relations.

Question 17:

Do you agree that the principles mentioned above should apply to councillors and co-opted members?

4.10. It is proposed that the Department should be required, before issuing the Code of Conduct, to consult with councils and bodies representative of councils, councillors and council officers.

4.11. In addition, it is proposed that, before taking up office, a councillor should be required to serve on the clerk of the council a declaration of acceptance of office which would include an undertaking that the councillor will observe the Code.

4.12. It is proposed that the Code should include sections dealing with:

- the key principles of the Code of Conduct and general obligations expected;
- interests – personal, financial and prejudicial interests;
- registration of interests, gifts and hospitality;
- declaration of relevant interests and dispensations;
- lobbying and access to councillors;
- a protocol for relations between councillors and officers of councils; and
- dealing with planning applications (after land-use planning has been transferred to local government).

Question 18:

Do you agree that a mandatory Code of Conduct should be introduced and that all council members should give a written undertaking to comply with it before accepting office?

Complaints

- 4.13. It will be the responsibility of councillors to make sure that they are familiar with the provisions in the Code and that they comply with those provisions.
- 4.14. The Department proposes that all complaints regarding alleged breaches in ethical standards in district councils would initially go the Commissioner for consideration. An advantage of placing this role with the Commissioner is that the Commissioner's Office is already well established and trusted and this is likely to increase public confidence in the new system.
- 4.15. A complaint would be assessed to determine whether there appeared to be any case to answer or whether it appeared to be a minor or a serious breach in standards. This would then determine how the subsequent investigation and adjudication of the case would be taken forward i.e. either referred to the relevant council for local resolution (which should happen in the majority of cases) or retained by the Commissioner's Office (i.e. serious, complex or high profile cases).

Question 19:

Do you agree that all written complaints concerning alleged breaches of the Code should be sent in the first instance to the Commissioner for Complaints to determine how they should be investigated?

Question 20:

If you do not agree, what other suitable alternative would you suggest?

Investigation and Adjudication

4.16. As indicated above, the Department proposes that the duties of the Commissioner should be extended in relation to the new ethical standards framework and that the Commissioner should receive all complaints of alleged breaches of the Code. We would propose that the Commissioner's Office should investigate more serious, complex or high profile cases and should report and make recommendations on the outcome of the investigation. Where a breach of the Code has occurred, the Commissioner would also adjudicate on what sanction is to be taken against the councillor or co-opted member. The Commissioner would also facilitate the hearing of any appeals relating to cases that have been adjudicated on by a council standards committee (see paragraph 4.24).

Question 21:

Do you agree that the Commissioner for Complaints should only deal with those cases that are deemed to be serious or high profile?

Question 22:

Alternatively, would you prefer the Commissioner for Complaints to be responsible for all types of cases? What would you consider to be the advantages of this?

- 4.17. The Department proposes that each council should have an independent monitoring officer and a standards committee to deal with complaints referred to it by the Commissioner. Where a complaint appears to be a less serious breach of the Code or where there may be no case to answer, it is intended that the Commissioner would refer the matter to the relevant council's standards committee for local resolution.
- 4.18. If a case is referred to a council for local resolution, the independent monitoring officer would investigate and report to the standards committee to assess whether a breach had occurred and, if necessary, to adjudicate on the matter.
- 4.19. The Department proposes that an independent monitoring officer should be appointed or assigned for each council. The main roles of an independent monitoring officer would include:
- providing advice and guidance on the ethical standards framework and Code of Conduct within the council, including establishing contact with other monitoring officers within Northern Ireland and the Great Britain to share and develop best practice;

- carrying out investigations of relevant complaints and supporting and assisting the council's standards committee in the processing of cases and maintaining appropriate records; and
- ensuring that the council establishes and maintains a register of members' interests and a register of gifts and hospitality and has procedures for dealing with declarations of interest.

4.20. The Department proposes to specify in legislation the way in which independent monitoring officers should deal with matters referred to them.

4.21. It will be the duty of each council to establish a standards committee to promote and maintain high ethical standards. The Department proposes that the functions, procedures and membership of standards committees should be specified in legislation. The Department further proposes that:

- a standards committee's role in considering the reports and recommendations of independent monitoring officer;
- the actions which the committee may take against any councillor who is subject to such a report or recommendation; and
- the committee's adjudication function and the penalties which it can hand out;

should also be provided for in legislation.

4.22. In order to gain public confidence in the system and to promote openness and fairness, it is proposed that standards committees should include independent members.

Question 23:

Do you agree that each council should be required to establish a standards committee?

If so, do you agree that each Standards Committee should include independent members and that an independent member should chair the committee?

4.23. It is proposed that, when a case is referred by the Commissioner to a standards committee, it will be for the committee to decide if the matter should be investigated by the independent monitoring officer and, if so, the monitoring officer will submit a report on his/her findings to the standards committee for consideration. The standards committee will decide whether any sanction should be taken against the council member.

Question 24:

Do you agree that complaints concerning less serious breaches of the Code should be dealt with by the relevant council's standards committee;

Do you agree that the council's independent monitoring officer should undertake any necessary investigation;

Do you agree that the standards committee will consider all cases on the basis of the monitoring officer's reports and on the evidence presented; and

Do you agree that the council's standards committee should decide what sanctions, if any, should be taken against the members concerned?

Question 25:

Do you agree that monitoring officers should be independent of councils or do you think that they should be council officers who, in addition to investigating less serious complaints, might be better placed to support the development of an ethical culture within councils?

Do you agree that an independent monitoring officer should be appointed to each council?

If not, what alternative would you propose?

4.24. The Department proposes that, where a councillor is found to be in breach of the Code, either the Commissioner or the council's

standards committee (depending on how serious the complaint is) may impose a sanction. The Department further proposes that a councillor may appeal:

- to the Commissioner concerning a decision taken by the standards committees; and
- through the Court system concerning a decision taken by the Commissioner.

Question 26:

Do you agree that sanctions should be available to standards committees and the Commissioner for Complaints where breaches of the Code have occurred?

Question 27:

Do you agree that members should have a right of appeal to the Commissioner for Complaints concerning decisions taken by standards committees and to the Court system concerning decisions taken by the Commissioner for Complaints?

Service Delivery & Performance Improvement

5.1. The Local Government (Best Value) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002, (the 2002 Act) placed a duty on councils for continuous improvement in the delivery of their services. The overriding purpose of best value is to establish a culture of good management for the delivery of efficient, effective and economical services that meet users' needs. The principle of continuous improvement is the

ongoing effort to seek incremental improvements in the delivery of these services over time.

- 5.2. The 2002 Act, however, provides no specific mechanisms to enable councils to demonstrate their accountability to ratepayers or Ministers for the delivery of their services or improvements to those services. The reorganisation of local government, the transfer of functions from departments to councils, and the introduction of community planning and the power of well-being provide an appropriate opportunity to strengthen the framework for councils' service delivery and performance improvement.
- 5.3. Performance management (and within it, best value), community planning and the power of well-being are closely linked. Local government should view them as such in seeking to plan and deliver quality services that are responsive to the needs of the people who use them. For example, use of the new flexibilities and freedoms offered by the power of well-being (see paragraphs 7.1 – 7.3) should be influenced significantly by issues identified through the community planning process. Similarly, best value considerations should influence a council's choices in using the power of well-being and how it engages with its community planning partners.
- 5.4. The Department proposes that a new service delivery and performance improvement framework should be introduced for local government. This would include a broader duty in relation to securing best value and continuous improvement. This would be supported by a requirement to publish an annual improvement plan to provide accountability to ratepayers and Ministers. The new

framework would also enable Ministers, through the Department of the Environment, to:

- issue guidance on the delivery of continuous improvement;
- set performance indicators and standards for the delivery of services; and
- intervene in a council's delivery of a service if its performance falls below acceptable standards.

Revised Best Value Duty

5.5. The Department proposes that the current best value provisions should be replaced and that:

- councils should be required to secure best value, which will be described in terms of the continuous improvement of the council's performance of its functions;
- councils, in securing best value, should be expected to maintain an appropriate balance between the quality of performance of their functions, the cost of performing those functions, and the cost to persons of any services provided on a wholly or partly rechargeable basis;
- in maintaining that balance, councils should be required to have regard to efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equity;
- councils should be required to discharge their duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development; and
- councils should have regard to outcomes when measuring improvement in their performance.

Question 28:

Do you agree that a newly defined best value (continuous improvement) duty should be placed on councils?

Best Value Guidance

5.6. It will be important to ensure a consistent approach to service delivery and performance improvement across all councils. For that reason, the Department would propose to issue guidance to underpin the best value duty and the delivery of continuous improvement and to consult with councils and other representative organisations of local government in the preparation of the guidance. It is anticipated that the guidance should cover:

- how to make best value arrangements;
- what is to be included in best value arrangements; and
- how to implement the best value duty.

5.7. It is proposed that councils should be required to have regard to any departmental guidance in the performance of its duties about best value. Councils would also be expected to have regard to other general guidance on arrangements for securing best value (unless it conflicts with the guidance produced by the Department).

Question 29:

Should the Department be able to issue guidance in relation to best value?

Question 30:

Should councils be required to have regard to any guidance issued?

Performance Indicators and Standards

- 5.8. It is proposed that departments should be able to specify performance indicators for the delivery of council functions. These would allow the measurement of councils' performance in exercising the functions. The performance standards which councils will be expected to meet in relation to those performance indicators would also be specified. We propose that departments should take account of the different circumstances that exist between councils when setting performance indicators and standards.
- 5.9. The aim in specifying performance indicators and standards would be to promote efficiency, effectiveness and economy in the way that councils carry out their functions.

Question 31:

Do you agree that the Department should be able to specify performance indicators for the delivery of council functions?

Public Performance Reporting: A Corporate and Improvement Plan

- 5.10. The Department proposes to place a requirement on councils to produce a corporate plan, which would include an improvement plan

for service delivery and performance improvement. Councils will be required to publish their performance indicators in this plan. This would enhance local accountability and enable comparisons to be made between councils.

5.11. It is proposed that the Department should be able to specify the elements that must be included within a corporate plan and the associated improvement plan, and to issue guidance on the form and content of plans, including the manner in which they should be published.

5.12. This should ensure that a council's corporate and improvement plans achieve three primary aims:

- to summarise how successful the council was in meeting its objectives and performance targets for the previous year;
- to inform local people of the council's performance targets for the following year and future years; and
- to set out the council's progress in meeting any longer term targets and, where it is not on course to meet them, to give an outline of what action it is taking to remedy the situation.

The information to be reported in the plan would also enable comparisons to be made between councils.

Question 32:

Do you agree with the proposals for the public reporting of a council's performance improvement?

A Statutory Audit of the Corporate and Improvement Plan

5.13. The Department proposes that the role of the local government auditor should be extended to include the audit of a council's corporate and improvement plan. This would ensure that the plan has been prepared in compliance with any future legislative framework and any supporting guidance issued by the Department. This would provide Ministers and ratepayers with independent assurance that a council's improvement plan stands up to scrutiny and gives independent verification of any improvements.

5.14. We would propose that, in scrutinising a council's corporate and improvement plan, the auditor should:

- certify that the plan has been audited;
- consider the extent to which the plan meets specified requirements;
- recommend any remedial action that the auditor judges necessary for a council to take where its plan does not comply with the legislative requirements or guidance; and
- in cases where the auditor considers there to be serious deficiencies and failures in a plan, recommend the appropriate follow-up action. This may take the form of an examination by the auditor or, in the most serious cases, by the relevant government department (depending on the functions concerned) under its proposed powers of intervention.

5.15. The auditor should also be required to report publicly on the results of his assessment. In turn, when a council receives an auditor's

report on its corporate and improvement plan it will be required to publish the auditor's report.

5.16. The Department also proposes that the local government auditor should be able to carry out examinations aimed at assessing compliance with the requirements of the best value legal framework. To enable the auditor to undertake these examinations, we propose that:

- the relevant government department should have the power to direct the local government auditor to carry out an examination of a council in respect of its delivery of functions transferred by that department;
- the auditor should have powers of access to documents and information and to have reasonable rights of access to premises; and
- a report outlining the auditor's findings would be published.

Question 33:

Should the local government auditor have a role in providing external assurance in relation to a council's improvement plan?

Question 34:

Is the proposed role for the local government auditor as comprehensive as might be required?

A Power of Intervention/Enforcement

5.17. We recognise that there may be occasions, albeit limited, when an inspection of a council makes information available to Ministers which gives them cause for concern about whether a council is discharging its responsibilities as required.

5.18. To provide for such occasions, the Department proposes that Ministers should be allowed to intervene if a council fails in delivering a particular service or services. The powers, which would be exercised by Ministers through their departments, would be wide ranging. These failures in service delivery would include matters which are of a procedural nature, and others which require more substantive action. This action might be either:

- on the part of the council concerned (for example, it might be required to arrange for another organisation to carry out a function on its behalf); or
- on the part of a department (which might, in extreme cases of failure, intervene to exercise a function of the council itself or through a nominee).

5.19. Where a department intends to take action against a council, it would normally be required to allow the relevant council to make representations both about the recommendation itself and the remedial action that is proposed. In exceptional cases, where a department judges the failure to be so serious or the immediate risk to sections of the community to be so great, it would have the power to give a direction to the council without allowing time for representations. If a department chooses to exercise this power, it would be obliged to inform both the council concerned, and any

appropriate representative body, of the direction and the reason why it was given, without recourse to the normal procedure for representations.

- 5.20. In cases where a department intervenes directly in a council, and in doing so assumes responsibility for delivering a function, a regulatory power would be made available to the department. This power could be used to make alternative provision for the delivery of the service. A department would then be able to make necessary alternative arrangements where it intervenes in a function which already provides recourse to that department, either through appeal or otherwise.

Question 35:

Do you agree that Ministers should be able to intervene if a council is failing to deliver services?

Community Planning

- 6.1. A key theme underpinning the reform of local government is the Executive's vision of a strong, dynamic local government creating communities that are vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe, sustainable and which have the needs of all people at their core. Central to this vision is the provision of high quality, efficient services that respond to the needs of people and continuously improve over time.
- 6.2. The introduction of an effective community planning process, led and facilitated by councils, is seen as critical to the delivery of this

overarching objective. Community planning would enable councils to work in partnership with a full range of other sectors, for example public bodies, businesses, and community and voluntary organisations. This would facilitate linking the delivery of services in their districts to provide a joined-up approach to meeting the needs and aspirations of local communities. The Department proposes that the community planning process to be introduced would not be overly prescriptive, to take account of the range of situations that exist across the region and within individual districts. This would provide individual councils with the flexibility to act at a local level to best meet local needs.

- 6.3. To ensure that councils are placed firmly at the hub of the process, the Department proposes that they should be required to make arrangements for community planning. To do this, councils would be expected to consult and co-operate with all bodies responsible for providing public services in the district. They would also be expected to engage with the community and other bodies and individuals in planning the provision of public services. Councils would also be required to ensure that their community plans are reviewed and revised, as appropriate, to meet changing circumstances and needs in their districts.

Question 36:

Do you agree that councils should lead and facilitate community planning and that a requirement should be placed on them to do so?

- 6.4. The effectiveness of the community planning process and the delivery of improved outcomes will, to a very large extent, be grounded in the establishment and maintenance of effective relationships between councils, departments and other public sector organisations. This is the experience in Scotland, England and Wales, where community planning has been in place for a number of years.
- 6.5. Whilst effective working relationships already exist with public bodies, businesses and community and voluntary organisations in some districts, the Department proposes that these bodies/organisations should be required to support and participate in the process. It is proposed that government departments should be required to promote the use of community planning and have regard to community plans. Other identified public bodies would be required to participate in and assist community planning.

Question 37:

What are your views on departments and statutory bodies being required to participate in and support community planning?

- 6.6. The Department proposes that district councils should be required to publish reports on community planning. These reports would include information about improvements in public services. The form, content and frequency of such community planning reports would be specified by the Department.

Question 38:

Should councils be required to publish community plans for their districts, and to review these as necessary?

- 6.7. Experience in the other jurisdictions would indicate that delivering on the potential of community planning will present a range of challenges for district councils and the Department would therefore propose to issue detailed guidance to support the effective operation of the flexible approach that is being put forward.

Question 39:

Do you agree that the Department should be able to issue guidance to support community planning, and in relation to the format and content of a council's community plan?

Power of Well-Being

- 7.1. The transfer of responsibility for the delivery of a range of new functions, and the introduction of the community planning process will enable councils to begin addressing the needs and aspirations of local communities. However, councils can only do what legislation enables them to do. In responding to issues that may be identified through community planning, a council may wish to take an action that is not specifically provided for in legislation. In order

to provide for such an eventuality, the Department proposes that councils should have a new power of well-being.

- 7.2. The proposed new power would enable councils to take any action not already the responsibility of another agency (unless that agency has given explicit agreement) to promote or improve the well-being of their district. It would not, however, be an unrestricted power for councils. A council would not be able to use the power of well-being to do anything that it is unable to do because of any other legal prohibition, restriction or limitation on their powers.
- 7.3. As with the proposals for the introduction of community planning, the Department proposes to issue detailed guidance in support of the exercise of the power of well-being which councils would be required to have regard to.

Question 40:

Do you agree that a power of well-being should be introduced for councils, and that the Department should be able to issue guidance to support its operation?

A Partnership Panel

- 8.1. The Executive's vision for the future delivery of its Programme for Government recognises the need for a partnership approach between departments and local government if the desired outcomes for everyone are to be delivered. The proposed community planning powers will require departments and agencies to work with

councils in developing and delivering on the themes and targets identified in community plans. A partnership approach to the delivery of the Executive's Programme for Government will also require a mechanism for government departments to agree and monitor a number of regionally determined performance indicators for service delivery by district councils.

- 8.2. The existing relationships between departments and their agencies and the local government sector, whether at a representative level through the Northern Ireland Local Government Association or at a local level with individual councils, are informal, ad hoc and inconsistent. They do not provide a firm foundation for a more strategic approach to the delivery of joined-up services.
- 8.3. Against this background, the Department proposes that a Partnership Panel for Northern Ireland should be established. This panel would formalise the relationships between the Executive and district councils and provide a forum for the collective consideration of strategic issues. The Partnership Panel would consist of Northern Ireland Ministers (especially where their departments have a significant policy relationship with local government) and representatives from councils.
- 8.4. The proposed Partnership Panel would be purely advisory, recognising the separate and distinct legal authority of departments and local government. It would not hamper the discretion of the Executive or of an individual Minister, or the operational discretion of local government. Accordingly, the Department proposes that the panel's remit would be to:

- give advice to Ministers about matters affecting the exercise of any of their department's functions;
- make representations to Ministers about any matters affecting, or of concern to, those involved in local government in Northern Ireland; and
- give advice to those involved in local government in Northern Ireland.

Question 41:

Should a Partnership Panel be established to formalise relations between central and local government?

Question 42:

What are your views on the proposed remit of the Panel?

Supervision of Councils

9.1. Sections 127-129 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 contain powers to enable the Department to supervise how councils exercise their functions. Those powers, which have rarely been used, would enable the Department to:

- require a council to make reports and give information about the exercise of its functions to the Department;
- cause local or other inquiries to be held or investigations to be made in connection with any matters relating to the functions of a council; and

- take action where a council has failed to discharge any of its functions (including empowering a departmental official to exercise the function in question).

9.2. Responsibility for policy and legislation in relation to local government functions falls to a number of Northern Ireland departments. Consequently, it is proposed that the above powers should be extended so that the department concerned (rather than the Department of the Environment) may exercise these powers where necessary. This will be particularly important when functions over which particular departments have policy responsibility are transferred to local government.

Question 43:

Do you agree that the supervision powers currently available to the Department of the Environment should be made available to all departments?

The Reorganisation of District Councils

Creation of new councils and dissolution of existing councils

10.1. The Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 sets out the broad boundaries of the new local government districts and provided for the appointment of a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner to review and make recommendations on the boundaries of the new local government districts and their

constituent wards. The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner presented his report to the Department of the Environment on 22 June 2009. When Executive decisions have been made about the timetable for local government reorganisation, the Department will bring forward legislation to the Assembly to give effect to the Boundaries Commissioner's recommendation, with or without modification. This legislation will specify the boundaries of the new local government districts and wards.

10.2. Legislation will then be required to:

- abolish the current local government districts;
- dissolve the current district councils; and
- establish a council for each of the new local government districts.

10.3. Section 2 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 enables a district council to submit a petition to the Secretary of State to request the granting of a charter designating the district of the council as a borough. Also, section 132 of the 1972 Act made provision at the time of the previous local government reorganisation in 1973 for a new council, in certain circumstances, to keep the borough status of an old council (i.e. one which was to join with other councils to form the new council). It is proposed that similar provisions to those in section 132 should be made to allow a successor council to keep the borough or city status of an existing council which is to join with another council (or other councils) to form the new council.

Transfers of staff, assets & liabilities

10.4. The proposed reduction in the number of councils from 26 to 11 will affect the employment position of some 9,900 local government staff, and require the transfer of the ownership of assets and liabilities from the current district councils to the new district councils. Around 1,000 Northern Ireland Civil Service staff will also be affected by the transfer of central government functions to local government.

10.5. The Department proposes that each department transferring functions to local government will be responsible for effecting this transfer through either legislative provisions or an appropriate transfer agreement. To ensure consistency in the transfer of all affected staff, assets and liabilities to local government the department concerned would be able to make schemes for the transfer of all affected staff, assets and liabilities to the new council structure from:

- the Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- the existing 26 councils and associated bodies; and
- other bodies as applicable (for example, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive).

10.6. Such a scheme (or schemes) may contain details concerning interests in and rights over property, employment contracts and other incidental matters. The Department proposes that the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, which provided for the transfer of staff, property rights and liabilities of the affected bodies

to the Northern Ireland Library Authority, should be used as a model for the local government transfer schemes.

10.7. In particular, staff transfer schemes would make provision for:

- identifying the transferring employees (whether by name or otherwise);
- the date of transfer, post and location;
- contractual terms and conditions to be protected;
- securing pension protection for transferring employees;
- dispute resolution; and
- the payment of compensation to any transferring employee who suffers a loss or detriment in consequence of the scheme.

Staff Transfer Schemes

10.8. Further consideration needs to be given to where the responsibility for making a staff transfer scheme might lie. To ensure a consistent approach in the transfers, the Department proposes that model transfer schemes are prepared. These model schemes will follow the precedent already established in previous RPA-related staff transfers and cover issues including the statutory protection of rights under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) and pension rights. Where necessary, the schemes could be tailored, through schedules to the scheme, to meet the differing needs across departments and local government. Model schemes would be subject to consultation with transferring departments, existing councils, representatives of receiving councils and any other appropriate body.

Question 44:

Do you agree that model transfer schemes should be developed?

Question 45:

Who should be responsible for preparing any model transfer schemes?

Assets and Liabilities Transfer Schemes

- 10.9. The dissolution of the current 26 councils, and the creation of the proposed 11 new councils, will require the transfer of legal title to assets and the legal responsibility for any liabilities from a current council to its successor council. The Department proposes that transfer schemes, in line with previous RPA-related transfers, would be put in place.
- 10.10. Legal title for any assets and legal responsibility for any liabilities associated with the transfer of functions from departments to local government will also need to be transferred to the 11 new councils. The Department proposes that a scheme in relation to such a transfer would create, for the department concerned, interests in or rights over assets transferring, to ensure that assets are used for the purpose for which they were intended, following transfer. It would also address issues such as liabilities. Arrangements would be made to enable the transfer, for example, of property that a council or department would not otherwise legally be entitled to transfer, such as property purchased or

donated with clauses (e.g. buyback) limiting the ability for this property to be passed on through sale or transfer.

- 10.11. The Department also proposes that there should be a mechanism whereby interests in, or rights over, property could be clarified. This would be undertaken through the issue of a certificate by the department concerned. The transfer of assets and liabilities would be effected by legislation and the issue of a certificate would only be required in the event of, for example, an ownership challenge.

Question 46:

Do you agree that transfer schemes in relation to property and assets of government departments transferring to the new councils should provide for a continuing interest for the department concerned?

Financial Arrangements

- 10.12. Current legislation applicable to local government provides that councils may only incur expenditure for carrying out functions for which they have responsibility. Prior to the reorganisation of local government, there may however be a requirement for existing councils to incur expenditure in relation to matters that would not fall into this category, for example, expenditure in relation to elections to their successor councils.
- 10.13. The Department therefore proposes that existing district councils should be able to incur expenditure on behalf of their relevant successor councils. For accounting purposes, it is proposed any

expenditure incurred in this way would be recoverable from the new councils once they are established.

Question 47:

Do you support the proposal that existing district councils should be able to incur expenditure on behalf of the new council to be established for that area?

HUMAN RIGHTS

11. The Department believes that the proposals are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

EQUALITY

12. Under the terms of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department carried out screening for equality impact and is satisfied that the proposed legislation will not lead to discriminatory or negative differential impact on any of the section 75 groups. A copy of the screening form can be viewed on the Department's website http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/equality_unit.htm.

REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13. The Department has not conducted a regulatory impact assessment as the proposed legislation does not give rise to any associated costs or savings on business, charities, social economy enterprises or the voluntary sector.

RURAL PROOFING

14. The Department has assessed the proposed measures and considers that there would be no differential impact in rural areas or on rural communities.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF CONSULTATIONS

15. The Department may publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read Annex B on the confidentiality of consultations. It gives guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

ALTERNATIVE FORMAT

16. This document is available in alternative formats. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

CONSULTATION

17. Comments should be sent by 11 March 2011 to Local Government Policy Division at the address below or by e-mail to LGPDConsultations@doeni.gov.uk.
18. If you have any queries in relation to the proposals, you should contact the following:

	Name	E-mail	Telephone
Governance; and Partnership Panel	John Murphy Lynn McCracken	john.murphy@doeni.gov.uk lynn.mccracken@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6048 028 9025 6074
Ethical Standards	Mylene Ferguson Phyllis Mulholland Julie Broadway	mylene.ferguson@doeni.gov.uk phyllis.mulholland@doeni.gov.uk julie.broadway@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6086 028 9025 6087 028 9025 6094
Service Delivery and Performance Improvement	John Murphy Lorcan O’Kane Damien Dean	john.murphy@doeni.gov.uk lorcan.o’kane@doeni.gov.uk damien.dean@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6048 028 9025 6045 028 9025 6836
Community Planning; and Power of Well-being	John Murphy Damian McKeivitt	john.murphy@doeni.gov.uk damian.mckevitt@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6048 028 9025 6050
Reorganisation	John Murphy Julie Broadway	john.murphy@doeni.gov.uk julie.broadway@doeni.gov.uk	028 9025 6048 028 9025 6094

19. This Consultation Document is being circulated to persons and bodies listed in Annex C and is also available to view at: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/local_government/.

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GLOSSARY

Best value	The establishment of a culture of good management for the delivery of efficient, effective and economical services that meets users needs.
Cabinet-style model	Executive responsibility for all operational decisions is devolved from the full council to a relatively small committee of councillors.
Call-in	<p>A process to allow a specified number of councillors to request that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a decision taken but not yet implemented under devolved arrangements; and • a decision to be endorsed by the council through the ratification of minutes from a committee <p>be looked at again, under specified circumstances.</p>
Central policy committee	A central committee that will be responsible for developing the policies by which a council will operate.
Checks and balances	A system of principles of an organisation that ensures the correct operation of structures and that no one person or group has too much power or influence.
Continuous improvement	Ongoing effort to seek regular improvements in the delivery of these services over time.
D'Hondt	A formula developed by the Belgian mathematician D'Hondt which is used to ensure that positions of responsibility can be allocated relative to political parties electoral strengths.
Decision-making structures	The structures operating within an organisation to enable relevant participants to be in a position to make a decision.

Devolved decision-making	A decision-making principle where a specified committee or officer makes the final decision on issues within their remit.
Droop Quota method	A formula for allocating positions, taking into account the electoral strengths of political parties. Similar to quota greatest remainder but with a greater divisor.
Executive responsibility	Having sole authority and responsibility for taking an action or making a decision.
Full Term	The period of time (usually four years) a council regularly meets and carries out its formal duties.
Mandatory cross-party committee	A committee which is required to have membership drawn from more than one political party elected to the organisation.
Proportionality	The principle of recognising the relative electoral strengths of the political parties in the allocation of positions of responsibility.
Qualified majority voting	A voting method that requires a specified minimum level of votes to be cast in favour of the proposal for it to be accepted.
Quota Greatest Remainder	A formula for allocating positions taking into account the electoral strengths of political parties.
Saint Lague	A formula developed by the French mathematician Saint-Lague which has a similar purpose to D'Hondt but where the divisor is greater.
Scrutiny committee	A committee established under the principle of checks and balances to scrutinise the work of devolved decision-makers and make recommendations in relation to council policy review.
Streamlined	Executive responsibility for specific decisions is

committee model	devolved from the full council to a central policy committee and a limited number of other committees.
STV	Single transferable vote where a voter has a single vote but may express a preference for the person to whom that vote should be transferred if his/her first preference has more votes than is required to be elected.
Traditional committee structure	Individual committees are established to consider specific issues and return recommendations on appropriate courses of action, for decision by the full council (unless authorised by full council to make that decision).

THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 CONFIDENTIALITY OF CONSULTATIONS

1. The Department may publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.
2. The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential.
3. This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:
 - the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in

connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;

- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature; and
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

4. For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>).

LIST OF CONSULTEES

This is not an exhaustive list but it is indicative of the organisations to whom the document has been issued

All Northern Ireland District Councils

arc21

Association for Public Service Excellence

Association of Local Government Finance Officers

Belfast Solicitors Association

Chief Local Government Auditor

Civil Law Reform Division

Community Relations Council

Confederation of British Industry

Courts and Tribunal Service

Equality Commission for NI

Federation of Small Businesses

Food Standards Agency

HM Council of County Court Judges

HM Revenue & Customs

Human Rights Commission

Judge McKibbin District Judge (Magistrates Court)

Law Centre (NI)

Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland

MEPs

Ministry of Defence

MLAs

MPs

National Association of Councillors

NI Assembly, Committee for the Environment

NI Association of Citizens Advice Bureau

NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry

NIACRO

NIC/ICTU

NIPSA

Northern Ireland Chamber of Trade

Northern Ireland Court Service

Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission

Northern Ireland Law Commission

Northern Ireland Local Government Association

Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee

Northern Ireland Political Parties

NWRWMG

Participation & the Practice of Rights Project

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

School of Law

Secretary - Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland

Section 75 Groups

SOLACE

Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards

SWaMP2008

The Executive Council of the Inn of Court of NI

The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

The Law Society of NI

The NI Council for Voluntary Action

The Queens University of Belfast – School of Law

University of Ulster - School of Law



Belfast City Council Response to 'Local Government Reform – Policy Proposals' Consultation document

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Belfast City Council is fully supportive of the need for local government reform within Northern Ireland and welcomes the opportunity to respond to the '*Local Government Reform – Policy Proposals*' issued for consultation by the Department of the Environment.
- 1.2 The Council has a number of general comments to make in regard to reform proposals as well as detailed commentary on the individual questions set out within the consultation document. The response is intended to be constructive and seeks to ensure that the policy proposals take account of the associated operational and implementation issues within local government. It will be important that all efforts are taken to ensure that the reform proposals are both progressive but realisable.

2.0 GENERAL COMMENTS

- 2.1 The Department will be aware that the Council has proactively engaged within the local government reform process to date and has inputted into the policy development process. . Many of the comments, as set out within this response, therefore reinforce previous views expressed by the Council.
- 2.2 Belfast City Council notes the ambition as set in the Ministerial Forward to the consultation document so "*look at proposals for constructing the new governance framework to provide for efficient, fair and transparent decision-making in councils, with a regime to ensure that the highest standards of behaviour are maintained*". The Council believes that this is particularly important within the context of any potential future transfer of new functions to councils.

Alignment and Integration of Legislation

- 2.3 The Council is aware of the separate, but associated pieces of legislation (e.g. Planning Bill, Local Government Finance Bill) currently under consideration within the NI Assembly and which will inevitably impact upon the future remit and operation of local authorities. The Council would commend that further consideration be given to the interconnections between these pieces of legislation and the local government reform policy proposals.

Capacity Building

- 2.4 Belfast City Council is surprised to note that there are a number of key areas in relation to the reform which are not covered in this consultation. The Council would highlight, in particular, the critical need for sufficient capacity within both central and local government to ensure that the reform proposals are implemented in an effective way. Supporting Members' development should therefore be a critical component of any reform programme brought forward. This is further necessitated by the fact that the proposed local government reform policy proposals (e.g. new governance, decision making, ethical standards and performance regime) will coincide with the transfer of new functions to councils including community planning.

Resource Implications

- 2.5 The Council also points out that there is no reference in the consultation document to the resource and financial implications for councils of implementing the policy proposals and would seek further engagement with the Department in this regard.

Governance arrangements

- 2.6 Whilst the Council fully supports and recognises the importance of ensuring that decision making processes are efficient, fair and transparent, it would highlight the potential for some of the current governance proposals to create unnecessary tensions and delays in the decision making process in councils. For example, the proposals in respect to suggested % triggers for both call-in (i.e. 15% of total council membership) and quality majority voting (i.e. 80% members present), may make it practically impossible for a decision to be made in some councils.
- 2.7 Clearly such proposals will be for political consideration and individual Party Groups are likely to have their own views. It is suggested however that consideration be given to the viability and practical implications of implementing the proposals within a working council. It would be important to subject such proposals to a test on decisions which are actually made by councils to determine whether it would work. It may be beneficial to consider other options for % thresholds.

Ethical Standards

- 2.8 Belfast City Council has consistently supported the establishment of a statutory ethical standards framework and a mandatory code of conduct for all Councillors and would therefore welcome, in principle, the proposals set out within the consultation document. The Council recognises the role that such frameworks provide in reinforcing the trust in councils and in local democracy and that this is particularly important in the context of any future transfer and delivery of new functions by councils. The Council would seek further engagement with the Department in developing such frameworks.

Service Delivery & Performance Improvement

- 2.9 The Council would be concerned with the over reliance within the consultation document, on best value to drive service improvement rather than setting the performance framework in the context of community planning and providing councils with appropriate flexibility to address local needs. The Council would highlight the current policy shift in the rest of the UK whereby there is a retrenchment in centralised scrutiny/inspection and move towards greater sector self-regulation.
- 2.10 Whilst the Council recognises the potential need for local and central government to jointly agree a small number of outcomes which may be delivered locally; possibly linked to certain transferring functions or aligned with the Programme for Government priorities, it would be concerned about the proposal to bestow to departments the ability to specify performance indicators for the delivery of council functions. The setting of performance indicators should be left to local authorities in the context of community planning.

Community Planning

- 2.11 The Council would fully support the proposal that local authorities lead and facilitate community planning and would view this as a key enabler for the integration of services to address local needs. The effectiveness of the community planning process and the delivery of improved outcomes will be dependant upon the strength of relationships between councils, departments and other public bodies. There should be a shared commitment to align plans and resources to address identified needs. The Council would therefore recommend that similar to other jurisdictions there be a statutory duty placed upon relevant public bodies and statutory agencies to participate and contribute to the community planning process.

Power of Well-Being

- 2.12 The Council would support, in principle, the proposal to introduce a power of well-being as this would provide appropriate freedoms for council to improve service provision and to contribute to the wider economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. The Council would however, take this opportunity to highlight the recent legislative shift, linked to the introduction of the new Localism Bill for England and Wales, to establish a power of general competence rather than a power of well-being.
- 2.13 Belfast City Council would therefore request that further consideration be given as to whether the proposed power of well-being should be replaced with a power of general competence.

A Partnership Panel

- 2.14 Belfast City Council recognises the need for a strengthened and formal relationship between central and local government and believes that the proposals to streamline the number of local authorities in NI presents a real opportunity to create a more effective interface between central and local government. The Council would support the proposed establishment of a Partnership Panel as a positive way forward, however, would seek further clarification and engagement in respect to the representation, operation and remit of such a Partnership Panel.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Belfast City Council reiterates its overwhelming support for modernising local government in Northern Ireland and view these initial policy proposals as a positive step in moving forward. The Council recognises that the consultation document is dealing with indicative proposals at this stage and that an informed assessment of the likely impact of the proposals and the potential consequences for councils and citizens in the future will be difficult until the proposals are finalised further.
- 3.2 The Council would take this opportunity to reiterate the need for a closer working relationship with the Department in taking this process forward and on the further development of the policy proposals and drafting of any subsequent legislation.

Detailed Commentary on Questions

QUESTION	BELFAST CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS
Section 3 - Governance Arrangements	
<i>Section - Decision making structures (Paragraphs 3.5-3.9 - Pages 6-9)</i>	
<p>Question 1: Do you agree that a list of alternative decision-making structures should be available to councils?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council agrees that alternative decision-making structures should be available to councils. - The Council would seek clarification if proposed decision-making models as set out within the consultation document prohibit other types of committees being established by councils (e.g. area committees, thematic committees).
<p>Question 2: Where decision-making is devolved to a committee of the council, do you agree that effective internal scrutiny arrangements should be required?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council supports the need to ensure that effective scrutiny arrangements are in place to underpin the decision making processes within councils. However, the Council would urge caution about being overly prescriptive in terms of both the form and scope of such scrutiny arrangements. It is vital that any scrutiny arrangements do not result in the orderly and efficient transaction of business being made more difficult.
<p>Question 3: If a list of decision-making structures, as set out, is provided, do you support the proposal that a default option should be available?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Question 4: Should a list of core issues, for which decisions must be taken by the full council, be specified? If so, what are your views on the issues that should be included in this list?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council believes that the starting point for identifying a core list of decisions which are to be reserved for decision by full council, should be those outlined within the Local Government 1972 Act (e.g. the striking of the rate, borrowing money and the acquisition and disposal of land). It will be for political consideration as to whether this list is to be revised.

Section - Sharing of power and responsibility (Paragraphs 3.10-3.17 –Pages 9-12)	
Question 5: Do you support the proposal that a limited number of methods for ensuring the sharing of positions on a council, its committees, and external appointments should be made available? Are the methods identified appropriate?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In order to provide for a degree of consistency, it would be beneficial if a limited number of systems of proportionality were outlined and the Council would support the choice of the Quota Greatest Remainder and Droop Quota being offered. - Belfast City Council has for a number of years successfully operated a system of proportionality which uses the Quota Greatest Remainder and d'Hondt systems to allocate places on Committees to party groupings based upon the strength of the groupings on the Council.
Question 6: Should the D'Hondt system be specified as the default model, for use in the absence of agreement?	<p>Yes</p>
Question 7: Do you support the proposal that the Department specifies the method for applying each of the available systems?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council believes that there would be advantages in the application of a consistent methodology across local government. However, the Council would request further information on the exact details of the proposed method and would seek further engagement with the Department on the proposed methods before coming to a decision.
Question 8: Do you agree that the Department should specify the list of positions that would be allocated using these methods?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would suggest that consideration be given to the following positions being allocated on the basis of proportionality, as currently applied by the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor • Positions on the Cabinet and/or Committees • Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Cabinet/Committees • Positions on Outside Bodies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council has for several years operated a system of proportionality which separates the various positions of authority into separate pools and appoints Members for different periods of time based upon what is deemed to be appropriate. Following the elections in May this year, the Council will divide the positions of authority into three pools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor - for each year of the 4-year term; • Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the six standing committees for one year only. This is then re-run each year (could be expanded to include choices for each year of the 4-year term); • Positions on outside bodies for the full 4-year term. This is seen to be advantageous in providing for consistency of approach and to allow the Members appointed to develop a degree of expertise. - The Council would urge that the Department should not require that all of these positions be grouped together into one pool nor should it specify the period of time of the appointments, but rather it should be left to each individual council to decide how best the application of proportionality should be carried out.
<p>Question 9: What are your views on the proposal for ensuring proportionality in the membership of council committees? Are the methods to be used appropriate?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council fully supports the use of either the Quota Greatest Remainder or Droop Quota for ensuring proportionality in the membership of committees.
<p>Section – Checks and Balances (Paragraphs 3.18-3.25 –Pages 13-16)</p>	
<p>Question 10: Should a call-in procedure be introduced to provide a check and balance for council-decision making?</p>	<p>Yes, in certain defined circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would suggest that given the potential delay that the introduction of call-in could create in the democratic decision making process, such provisions should only be introduced in limited circumstances (e.g. one party overall control within a council) or where a council chooses to apply them. - The Council would highlight that it can be demonstrated that a system which embraces the principles and spirit of proportionality in its decision-making

	<p>structures can, over time, develop methods of reaching agreement across different political parties without the need for rigid structures for checks and balances. Decisions reached by mature debate and, where possible, consensus or agreement are much more robust and provide for better decision-making than those achieved through regulation.</p>
<p>Question 11: Do you support the proposal for such a call-in to be available in the two circumstances outlined, and for how it would operate?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council has no objections to the principle of “call in” being available in the two circumstances outlined; i.e. where procedures used in reaching a decision are questioned, and where there is an issue in relation to the protection of political minorities in the council district. However, the Council would urge that the Department liaises with local authorities in order to develop and agree robust and clear definitions around the criteria for each of the two circumstances and to examine and detail the practicalities and process for implementing such procedures. - The Council would be concerned that, in their current form and without more detailed definition, there is a risk that the policy proposals may result in a high percentage of committee decisions being subjected to call-in and thereby making effective decision making more difficult.
<p>Question 12: Do you agree that 15% of council membership should be the trigger for a call-in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly such proposals will be for political consideration and individual Party Groups are likely to have their own views. - It is important to note from a practical perspective that under the current proposals (i.e. 15% trigger) , 8 members of Belfast City Council can call-in a decision. - It is suggested, however, that consideration be given to the viability and practical implications of implementing the proposed 15% trigger for call-in within a working council and it is suggested that other trigger options should be further considered.
<p>Question 13: Should the use of qualified majority voting be introduced to provide safeguards in the council’s decision-making processes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly such proposals will be subject to political consideration and individual Party Groups may wish to express their own views.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would highlight, however, that local government within Northern Ireland has operated for many years on the basis of a simple majority vote and this system has been successfully used in Belfast over the past years. The introduction of qualified majority voting proposed within the consultation document is suggested without any supporting evidence being presented to prove that it is desirable or even necessary. - It is suggested at para. 3.24, that qualified majority voting should be applied to “<i>strategic decisions</i>” without any definition being given to what this actually means. The Council would therefore seek further clarification on this.
<p>Question 14: Do you agree that 80% of council membership should be the threshold for qualified majority voting?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Again such proposals will be subject to political consideration and individual Party Groups may wish to express their own views. - Whilst suggesting that qualified majority voting may not be appropriate (refer to question 13 above), the Council would suggest that if introduced, due consideration should be given to the appropriateness of the proposed 80% threshold and the practical implications of implementing this within a working council and the impact it would have on a council’s ability to take decisions. - In practical terms, the implementation of the proposals as currently outlined would mean that at a full council meeting in Belfast with all 51 councillors present, 41 would need to vote in favour of a proposal before it could be agreed. Again, it is suggested that this may create unnecessary tensions, delays and possibly stifle the decision making process.
<p>Section - Transparency (Paragraphs 3.26 & 3.27 – Pages 16 & 17)</p>	
<p>Question 15: What are your views on the proposed steps to enhance transparency and openness in the operation of a council and its decision-making?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would support, in principle, the proposals to enhance the transparency and openness in the operation and decision-making processes within councils. However, would highlight the fact that limited information is contained within the consultation document as to the detail of any such proposals and would seek further clarification from and engagement with the Department on this point.

Section 4 - Ethical Standards	
<i>Section – Background (Paragraphs 4.1-4.7 –Pages 17-19)</i>	
Question 16: Do you agree that a statutory ethical standards framework should be introduced for members of district councils in Northern Ireland?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council has consistently argued that a statutory ethical standards framework and a mandatory code of conduct for all Councillors should be introduced within Northern Ireland. - The Council recognises the role that such frameworks provide in reinforcing the trust in councils and in local democracy and that this is particularly important in the context of any future transfer and delivery of new functions to councils. - The Council would seek further engagement with the Department in developing such frameworks.
<i>Section – Code of Conduct (Paragraphs 4.8-4.12 –Pages 20 & 21)</i>	
Question 17: Do you agree that the principles mentioned above should apply to councillors and co-opted members?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would commend the proposed principles as set out within the consultation document and would suggest that they inform the development of any Code of Conduct which may be introduced.
Question 18: Do you agree that a mandatory Code of Conduct should be introduced and that all council members should give a written undertaking to comply with it before accepting office?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council has consistently argued that a mandatory code of conduct should be introduced for all Members and would seek further engagement with the Department whilst further developing these policy proposals. - The Council would also suggest that consideration be given to creating a Code of Conduct for Members of Public Bodies similar to the Model which has been successfully established in Scotland.
<i>Section - Complaints (Paragraphs 4.13-4.15 –Pages 22 & 23)</i>	
Question 19: Do you agree that all written complaints concerning alleged breaches of the Code should be	<p>Yes</p> <p>This would ensure independence in the initial consideration of alleged breaches and a</p>

sent in the first instance to the Commissioner for Complaints to determine how they should be investigated?	consistency of approach in how such initial consideration is undertaken.
Question 20: If you do not agree, what other suitable alternative would you suggest?	N/A
<i>Section – Investigation and Adjudication (Paragraph 4.16-4.24 –Pages 23-28)</i>	
Question 21: Do you agree that the Commissioner for Complaints should only deal with those cases that are deemed to be serious or high profile?	Yes - The Council notes that the consultation proposes that the Commissioner should only deal with cases that are ‘deemed to be serious or high profile’ The Council would highlight, however, the current absence of any definition or criteria of what would constitute a ‘serious’ or ‘high profile’ case, and would seek further clarification on who would determine this and the mechanisms for such determinations.
Question 22: Alternatively, would you prefer the Commissioner for Complaints to be responsible for <u>all</u> types of cases? What would you consider to be the advantages of this?	No - Councils should be responsible for those cases which are not of a ‘serious’ or ‘high-profile’ nature (which are still to be defined).
Question 23: Do you agree that each council should be required to establish a standards committee? If so, do you agree that each Standards Committee should include independent members and that an independent member should chair the committee?	Yes - The Council has consistently supported the establishment of a firm legislative basis supported by codes of practice to ensure equitable and fair representation of all interests in the future. The Council continues to believe that consideration should be given to an appropriate enforcement and sanction system, for example, through a two-tier system; firstly at a Council level through the creation of Standards Committees and secondly at an external level through either the creation of an independent Standards Commission or through extending the present responsibilities of the Commissioner for Complaints.
Question 24: Do you agree that complaints concerning less serious breaches of the Code should be dealt with by the	Yes

<p>relevant council's standards committee;</p> <p>Do you agree that the council's independent monitoring officer should undertake any necessary investigation;</p> <p>Do you agree that the standards committee will consider all cases on the basis of the monitoring officer's reports and on the evidence presented; and</p> <p>Do you agree that the council's standards committee should decide what sanctions, if any, should be taken against the members concerned?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would request that further clarity (and potential guidance) be provided in respect of the potential sanctions which could be imposed and in what circumstances.
<p>Question 25: Do you agree that monitoring officers should be independent of councils or do you think that they should be council officers who, in addition to investigating less serious complaints, might be better placed to support the development of an ethical culture within councils?</p> <p>Do you agree that an independent monitoring officer should be appointed to each council?</p> <p>If not, what alternative would you propose?</p>	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is already a Council officers job to advise the decision making process, wherever a decision is within the Councils powers and also on whether a decision is being made in accordance with the law and standing orders, financial regulations and other matters governing the process of decision making. - The Council would recommend that monitoring officers should be an appropriate council officer, for example, in the case of Belfast the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor could undertake this role. - It may be more appropriate to give councils the choice, within their own decision-making process, as to whether they wish to appoint an internal officer or an independent person.
	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It should be left to a council's own discretion, within established decision making processes, to make the appropriate appointment of a monitoring officer.
<p>Question 26: Do you agree that sanctions should be available to standards committees and the Commissioner for Complaints where breaches of the Code have occurred?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would point out that further clarity (and potential guidance) in respect of the potential sanctions which could be imposed and in what circumstances, would be beneficial.

Question 27: Do you agree that members should have a right of appeal to the Commissioner for Complaints concerning decisions taken by standards committees and to the Court system concerning decisions taken by the Commissioner for Complaints?	Yes
Section 5 – Service Delivery & Performance Improvement	
<i>Section – Revised Best Value Duty (Paragraph 5.5 –Pages 30 & 31)</i>	
Question 28: Do you agree that a newly defined best value (continuous improvement) duty should be placed on councils?	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would be concerned with the apparent over reliance within the consultation document, on best value to drive service improvement rather than setting the performance framework in the context of community planning and providing councils with appropriate flexibility to address local needs. The Council would highlight the current policy shift in the rest of the UK away from overly bureaucratic and centralised scrutiny/inspection regime and move towards greater sector self-regulation, subject to the achievement of a set of agreed targets or outcomes with central government.
<i>Section – Best Value Guidance (Paragraphs 5.6-5.7 –Pages 31 & 32)</i>	
Question 29: Should the Department be able to issue guidance in relation to best value?	<p>No, unless it is developed with Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In light of the Council’s response to question 28 above, the Council would be of the view that such guidance is unnecessary. - Notwithstanding, if such guidance is to be progressed the Council would reinstate the purpose of best value as set out within the consultation document is to establish a culture of good management for the delivery of efficient, effective and economical services that meet users’ needs. As it will be the responsibility of councils to deliver the duties as set out within any revised best value regime introduced, it is essential that local government contribute to the design and implementation of the process – as was the case with the development of the current best value duty.

<p>Question 30: Should councils be required to have regard to any guidance issued?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If introduced, the Council would agree that local authorities should be required to have regard to any guidance issued but would highlight the need for Councils to be involved in developing and agreeing both the process and the associated guidance.
<p><i>Section – Performance Indicators and Standards (Paragraphs 5.8 & 5.9 –Page 32)</i></p>	
<p>Question 31: Do you agree that the Department should be able to specify performance indicators for the delivery of council functions?</p>	<p>No, unless it is developed with Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whilst the Council recognises the potential need for local and central government to jointly agree a small number of outcomes which may be delivered locally; possibly linked to certain transferring functions or aligned with the Programme for Government priorities, it would be concerned about the proposal to bestow to departments the ability to specify performance indicators for the delivery of council functions. - The Council believes that the setting of performance indicators should be left to local authorities and set within the wider context of community planning and in developing integrated solutions to local needs. - Rather than introducing an overly bureaucratic and centralised performance regime, a more supportive approach should be developed. Local and central government should work together to develop and implement a more progressive approach to performance and service improvement including, for example, the creation of performance tools such as peer review, self assessment and benchmarking. - The performance of other public sector organisations involved in improving outcomes at a local level through community planning should be taken into consideration within any policy proposals. The Council would stress that any performance framework which is implemented should be based on the following principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Councils are accountable to their ratepayers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Councils are responsible for their own performance and for leading on the delivery of services and improving outcomes for the people they serve. ▪ A range of assessment methods including self assessment, peer review and performance indicators should be used. ▪ The burden of inspection, data collection and reporting to be kept to a minimum. ▪ The framework should provide value for money, be affordable, transparent and fair, easily understood and capable of implementation.
<p><i>Section – Public Performance Reporting – A Corporate and Improvement Plan (Paragraphs 5.10-5.12 –Pages 32 & 33)</i></p>	
<p>Question 32: Do you agree with the proposals for the public reporting of a council’s performance improvement?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council fully supports the need for local government to be open, transparent and accountable and recognises the importance of effective planning, performance and communication. - The Council would therefore welcome the proposal that local authorities should publish a corporate plan which gives due consideration to service improvement and performance management.. Belfast City Council’s Corporate Plan is already publicly available on the Council’s website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/corporateplan - The Council firmly believes that the content of Corporate Plans and Improvement Plans should be decided by local authorities (not the Department) and take account of local need and circumstances. - Whilst the Council would be opposed to the introduction of a more prescriptive and one size fits all approach to corporate planning by councils, there may be potential benefit in the development of supporting guidance which would outline the core areas plans should address based on the need for councils to deliver efficient, economic and equitable services.
<p><i>Section – A Statutory Audit of the Corporate and Improvement Plan (Paragraphs 5.13-5.16 –Pages 34 & 35)</i></p>	
<p>Question 33: Should the local government auditor have a role in providing external assurance in relation</p>	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whilst the Council fully recognises the role and importance of the local government

to a council's improvement plan?	auditor and the independent scrutiny/assurances provided, the council does not agree that the role of the local government auditor should be extended to include auditing local authorities corporate and/or improvement plans as this would undermine the local democracy process. This role should be the role undertaken by elected Members who set the priorities for the organisation and should oversee deliver against these priorities.
Question 34: Is the proposed role for the local government auditor as comprehensive as might be required?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed use of the external auditor in this regard contradicts what is happening in the rest of the UK. The Council would urge that further consideration needs to be given to resource and capacity implications resulting from any proposed extension to the role of the local government auditor. - The Council would see potential benefit in the local government auditor being asked to provide assurance on the implementation of the agreed framework.
<i>Section – A Power of Intervention/Enforcement (Paragraphs 5.17 – 5.20 – Pages 36 & 37)</i>	
Question 35: Do you agree that Ministers should be able to intervene if a council is failing to deliver services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would question the need for this. Section 129 of the Local Government Act already provides for this and the Council believes that this power, which should continue to be viewed as an action of last resort, is sufficient.
Section 6 – Community Planning <i>(Paragraphs 6.1 -6.7 – Pages 37-40)</i>	
Question 36: Do you agree that councils should lead and facilitate community planning and that a requirement should be placed on them to do so?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would fully support the proposal that local authorities lead and facilitate community planning and would view this as a key enabler for joining-up services to address local needs. - Local councils are uniquely and ideally placed to lead and facilitate community planning. Democratically accountable to local people and with a broad remit to protect and enhance their district area, community planning is a natural extension of this role. - The Council is committed to the principle of “co-producing” improvements to quality of life across the city with local people and would welcome the development of a statutory community planning framework which would further enhance this work. The Council therefore welcomes the Department’s stated intention that “the

	<p><i>community planning process to be introduced would not be overly prescriptive, to take account of the range of situations that exist across the region and within individual districts. This would provide individual councils with the flexibility to act at a local level to best meet local needs.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council already has in place many innovative and effective ways of engaging and involving local people and connecting them to service planning and delivery. There are many excellent examples of joined-up working and partnership (e.g. community safety and district policing partnerships, community development and regeneration partnership working, health and well-being initiatives). It is imperative that councils are given the flexibility to build on this work in a way which works best locally. Statutory obligations and guidance must therefore be flexible and not unduly restrictive.
<p>Question 37: What are your views on departments and statutory bodies being required to participate in and support community planning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council firmly believes that for community planning to work, all partners must be statutorily obliged to participate and contribute to the process. There should be a shared commitment to align plans and resources to address identified needs. - Whilst there are many examples of effective partnership working and excellent relationships between Belfast City Council and its partners, it is essential that a shared responsibility to develop and, more importantly, deliver the community plan is contained within the legislation. Belfast City Council therefore strongly recommends that public bodies / statutory agencies must be required to support and participate in the community planning process with shared responsibility for implementation. - The Council is disappointed to note that paragraph 6.5, page 35 of the consultation document only places a duty on government departments to <i>“promote the use of community planning and have regard to community”</i>. The Council would strongly urge that similar to other jurisdictions there should be a statutory duty placed upon relevant public bodies and statutory agencies to participate and contribute to the community planning process. This is important not just from a resources and planning point of view but also to ensure that regional government is better connected to local issues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would point out the provisions set out under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 equality duty whereby statutory bodies must have due regard for the duty and would urge that the current policy proposals be reviewed.
<p>Question 38: Should councils be required to publish community plans for their districts, and to review these as necessary?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whilst the Council supports this proposal, it notes the envisaged role proposed for the Department in specifying the <i>“form, content and frequency”</i> of community planning reports. - In such circumstances, it will be important that any emerging guidance or process put in place are not unduly bureaucratic and can take account of local circumstances and need. Local government should be fully involved in the design of the community planning framework for the region including the reporting and monitoring arrangements.
<p>Question 39: Do you agree that the Department should be able to issue guidance to support community planning, and in relation to the format and content of a council’s community plan?</p>	<p>Yes, but the guidance needs to be flexible enough to adopt to different local authority circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council believes that it is essential that any such guidance is based upon an understanding of the current practice in partnership working within local council areas and any learning emerging from this, including any on-going “pilot” work with respect to community planning. Community planning is an evolving process and by its nature will require compromise and flexibility. This will need to be reflected in any guidance. - Again, the Council would urge that local government must be fully involved in the development of the community planning framework and associated guidance to ensure that local government experience and knowledge is taken into account. This will not only ensure that the framework is achievable but will set the basis for ongoing partnership working between local and central government. - The Council would point out the potential benefits of creating a supporting resource for councils (e.g. good practice toolkits and technical support) to assist were necessary in the community planning process. The Council would refer to the Scottish Community Development Centre as a good example of this.

Section 7 – Power of Well-Being (Paragraphs 7.1-7.3 – Pages 40 & 41)	
Question 40: Do you agree that a power of well-being should be introduced for councils, and that the Department should be able to issue guidance to support its operation?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council would support, in principle, the proposal to introduce a power of well-being as this would provide appropriate freedoms for councils to improve service provision and to contribute to the wider economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. However, the Council would take this opportunity to highlight the recent legislative shift, linked to the introduction of the new Localism Bill for England and Wales, to establish a power of general competence rather than a power of well-being. Belfast City Council would therefore request that further consideration be given as to whether the proposed power of well-being should be replaced with a power of general competence. - No matter which power is introduced guidance would be required to clarify the operation of this new power, providing both clarity and protection for councils and local people. Local councils should be involved in developing this guidance in partnership with the Department.
Section 8 – A Partnership Panel (Paragraphs 8.1 -8.4 – Pages 41-43)	
Question 41: Should a Partnership Panel be established to formalise relations between central and local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council recognises the need for a strengthened and formal relationship between central and local government and believes that the proposals to streamline the number of local authorities in NI presents a real opportunity to create a more effective interface between central and local government. The Council would support the proposed establishment of a Partnership Panel as a positive way forward, however, would seek further clarification and engagement in respect to the representation, operation and remit of such a Partnership Panel.
Question 42: What are your views on the proposed remit of the Panel?	
Section 9 – Supervision of Councils (Paragraphs 9.1-9.2 – Pages 43 & 44)	
Question 43: Do you agree that the supervision powers currently available to the DoE should be made available to all departments?	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Given that these powers are so rarely used, the Council does not understand why this power should be expanded to other departments

Section 10 – The Reorganisation of District Councils	
<i>Section – Staff Transfer Schemes (Paragraphs 10.6 – 10.8 – Pages 46 - 48)</i>	
Question 44: Do you agree that model transfer schemes should be developed?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff Transfer Schemes - Yes the Council would agree that model transfer schemes should be developed. - Assets and Liabilities Transfer Schemes – See answer in Question 46 below
Question 45: Who should be responsible for preparing any model transfer schemes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In relation to ‘Staff Transfer Schemes’, the Council believes that the Department should be responsible for preparing any model transfer scheme to be agreed through the appropriate negotiating machinery - Assets and Liabilities Transfer Schemes – See answer in Question 46 below
<i>Section – Assets and Liabilities Transfer Schemes (Paragraphs 10.9 – 10.11– Pages 48 & 49)</i>	
Question 46: Do you agree that transfer schemes in relation to property and assets of government departments transferring to the new councils should provide for a continuing interest for the department concerned?	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council does not agree that departments should have a continuing interest in transferred property & assets. If strong local government is a key outcome of RPA then these proposals would appear to significantly weaken local government’s autonomy & decision making process in relation to their estates & assets. Assets follow function, and if a function and associated legislative power is to transfer to councils then so too should the resources and assets associated with that function also transfer. The assets are key to service delivery and to do otherwise would be at odds with strong local government and the democratic process. - The Council would note that as part of the previous RPA deliberations, it was proposed that the Local Government (Re-Organisation) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 would provide a ‘standard’ rule for the transfer of assets and liabilities from the 26 council structure to the new 11 council structure. This would avoid the need for Transfer Schemes for the majority of local government assets. - The Transfer Schemes were therefore only to capture the transfer of property, rights, and liabilities that were outside this standard rule arrangement as set out in the legislation. It was proposed that the legislation would provide that all existing

	<p>assets & liabilities of the merging councils would transfer to the respective new council structure, with the exception of those councils with split areas arising from the Local Government Boundaries Act (NI) 2008, believed to affect only Belfast, Lisburn & Castlereagh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In such exceptions a Transfer Scheme would be required. They would also be required for the scheduling of assets in joint ownership of two current Councils who may not be part of any new cluster arrangement. It was also intended that individual Transfer Schemes would be used to transfer property, rights, and liabilities associated with specific central government functions transferring to local government. - Belfast City Council had previously asserted that all existing assets & liabilities of the present Belfast City Council would transfer to the new Belfast City Council. Any assets held for local government purposes situated within the transferring areas of Castlereagh & Lisburn (and which are to be assimilated within the new Belfast City Council area) would transfer to the new Belfast City Council area, as well as any liabilities specifically referable to the transferring assets.
<p><i>Section – Financial Arrangement (Paragraphs 10.12 & 10.13 – Pages 49 & 50)</i></p>	
<p>Question 47: Do you support the proposal that existing district councils should be able to incur expenditure on behalf of the new council to be established for that area?</p>	<p>Yes, in certain circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council recognises that there may be occasions whereby existing councils may need to incur expenditure in preparation for the formation of the new council and that appropriate provisions need to put in place to enable this. The Council would urge, however, that further detail and potential guidance should be developed to provide clarity in respect to both the scope and nature of such expenditure and the associated governance and decision-making process.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Documentary on Lord Mayor – Request to Film Council Meetings
Date:	23rd March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6414)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6314)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Committee will recall that, at its meetings on 18th November, 2011 and 20th January, 2012, it had granted authority for a film company, Waddell Media, to record the proceedings of the December, 2011 and March, 2012 Council Meetings, respectively, as part of a documentary it was producing on behalf of the British Broadcasting Company on the Lord Mayor's year in office.
1.2	The Company has, in order to show some of the day to day business of how the City is run, now requested permission to film also the full proceedings of the following Council meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday, 2nd April, 2012 • Tuesday, 1st May, 2012 • Friday, 1st June, 2012.
1.3	It is understood that the company would require two personnel to be in attendance to carry out the filming. One camera would be used, operating from both fixed and non-fixed positions.

2	Key Issues
2.1	If the Committee is minded to accede to the request, it should be noted that the Company would be attendance after the minutes of the Council minutes have been adopted at the April meeting and at the commencement of the May and June meetings.
2.2	It should be noted also that the meeting on 1st June will be the Annual Meeting and requests are normally received from broadcasting companies to film the election of the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor.
2.3	As indicated, the Council agreed to the previous requests from Waddell Media and has agreed to similar applications from other companies producing documentaries on the Lord Mayor and the City in general.
2.4	The filming of the proceedings of the Council meeting will not cause any disruption to the proceedings and staff from the Corporate Communications Section will liaise directly with the production team to make them aware of the rules and protocols to be observed.

3	Resource Implications
	None.

4	Equality Implications
	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is recommended to accede to the request for the filming of the Council meetings as outlined.

6	Decision Tracking
Mr Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager	
March, 2012.	



Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Invitation to Commemoration Ceremonies - Government of the Irish Republic
Date:	23rd March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
Contact Officer:	

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Council, at its meeting on 4th January, 2012, passed the undernoted resolution:
1.2	“This Council, in consultation with the Royal British Legion, wishes to extend an invitation to the Government of the Republic of Ireland to participate, following normal protocols, from 2012 onwards in the Commemoration to mark the Battle of the Somme and the Remembrance Sunday Ceremony at the Cenotaph in Belfast.”

2	Key Issues
2.1	A meeting was held recently with the President of the Royal British Legion who confirmed that, at its Northern Ireland Executive Committee meeting on 16th February, there was unanimous support for the Council's resolution. The Royal British Legion also wished to convey its appreciation to the Council for the fact that it had sought its views on the matter before proceeding.
2.2	Given that the Legion is in full support of the Council's resolution, a letter will now be sent to the Government of the Irish Republic inviting it to participate in both the Commemoration to mark the Battle of the Somme and the Remembrance Sunday Ceremony.

3	Resource Implications
	None.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is requested to note the support of the Royal British Legion.

6	Decision Tracking
Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager April 2012	



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
Date:	Friday, 23 March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (Ext. 6314)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ext. 6316)

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	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.
2.	Key Issues
2.1	The revised criteria has been applied to each of the requests contained within the appendix and recommendations have been made to the Committee on this basis.
3.	Resource Implications
3.1	Provision has been made in the revenue estimates for hospitality.
4.	Equality Implications
4.1	N/A
5.	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations as set out in the Appendix.

6.	Decision Tracking
Officer responsible – Gareth Quinn	

7.	Key to Abbreviations
Not applicable.	

8.	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Schedule of Applications	

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Probation Board Northern Ireland	Conference Dinner 25th October, 2012 Approximately 160 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better Services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Queen's University Belfast	Euromicro International Conference Reception 27th February, 2013 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the City'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce	Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce Presidents' Banquet 28 th November, 2012 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall only	This event aims to provide a networking opportunity in order to encourage investment and business development opportunities for Belfast and beyond. The event, which will include representatives from both Local and Central Government, also seeks to facilitate discussion on economic and social regeneration. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better Services – listening and delivering' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall
IN! Magazine	The IN! Awards 3 rd November, 2012 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall	This event aims to promote and celebrate the positive achievements of Northern Ireland's leaders in the fields of sport, music, fashion and film & television. This event, which has previously had considerable media coverage, will recognise individuals from the aforementioned fields who have excelled and promoted Northern Ireland both nationally and internationally.	The use of the City Hall

			<p>This years event will be hosted by Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Lansford and previous recipients of the awards include Darren Clarke, Nadine Coyle, Katie Larmour and Graeme McDowell.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	
Pubs of Ulster	<p>Pub of the Year Awards</p> <p>14th November, 2012</p> <p>Approximately 380 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	<p>This Awards ceremony seeks to recognise the best licensed trade establishments across Northern Ireland. Categories include 'Best Neighbourhood Pub' and 'Best Tourism/Visitor Pub'.</p> <p>The event aims to improve the industry by recognising best practice through the development and introduction of a robust set of retailing standards.</p> <p>Furthermore the organisation has a close working relationship with Belfast City Council as was demonstrated by their involvement in both the 'Get Home Safe' campaign and 'Counter Measures' training programme over recent years.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better Services – listening and delivering'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
The Boy's Brigade (Northern Ireland)	<p>Gala Dinner to Celebrate The Boy's Brigade (Northern Ireland)'s 125th Anniversary</p> <p>6th September, 2012</p> <p>Approximately 250 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	<p>This event seeks to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of The Boy's Brigade (Northern Ireland) 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', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
The Linenhall Library	Gala Dinner to Celebrate	The use of the City Hall and	This event seeks to celebrate the 225 th	The use of the City Hall and the

	<p>Linenhall Library's 225th Anniversary.</p> <p>11th May, 2013</p> <p>Approximately 400 attending</p>	<p>the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception</p>	<p>Anniversary of the Linenhall Library 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>provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Active Communities Network	<p>UK Launch of Urban Stars Programme</p> <p>15th May, 2012</p> <p>Approximately 100 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event, which will launch the Urban Stars Programme, seeks to deliver grass roots sporting projects in areas affected by poverty and anti-social behavior to reduce crime, promote citizenship and offer alternative pathways for participants.</p> <p>During this period of economic hardship this programme will aim to bring additional resources to what is classed as 'hard to reach areas' and it will seek to target the resources in a joined up and effective manner. The programme will draw together community partners, the private sector and individuals who want to make a difference on the ground.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £250</p>



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request to use the City Hall to mark the centenary of the Signing of the Solemn League and Covenant - Co-operation Ireland
Date:	Friday, 23 March February, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
Contact Officer:	Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6316)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group, at its meeting on 13 January, agreed that any applications for the use of the City Hall for events associated with the decade of centenaries should be dealt with in the normal way and be subject to the existing Council policy on the use of the building and also the principles already agreed by the Historic Centenaries Working Group which are attached as Appendix 1.
1.2	A request to mark the centenary of the Signing of the Solemn League and Covenant, at an event on 27 September, 2012, has been received from Co-operation Ireland.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Co-operation Ireland has submitted an application form requesting the use of the City Hall to hold an event entitled 'Entwined Histories – The Ulster Covenant Screening and Reception' on 27 September, 2012.
2.2	The purpose of this event is to show six films which have been produced by six groups of young people on a particular aspect of the signing of the Ulster Covenant in 1912. The films, which were produced collectively by Co-operation Ireland and Cinemagic, will seek to demonstrate our shared histories and entwined lives. Furthermore, the young people have produced the films in such a way as to demonstrate the different opinions and perspectives which existed then and now.
2.3	The event aims to provide opportunities to include a range of different perspectives and ideologies, rather than a single viewpoint, aiming to increase understanding and appreciation of other perspectives and identities. It will do this by including historical experts from Queen's University Belfast and perspectives from the Orange Order. The young people will also have access to tours of the City Hall, Ulster Museum, Schomberg Museum and the resources available at the Ulster Hall and on the Public Records Office website.

2.4	The young people, who will come from schools which reflect the full educational spectrum in Belfast, will represent different communities, will collaborate in exploring their own identity and understanding of events, now and in the past, through a managed contact process.
2.5	The organisers are seeking to ensure that the event is non-exclusive and welcoming to all sections of the community in Belfast by inviting the young people, their parents, their school teachers and governors, the academic and historical experts, members of Belfast City Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs (ROI) and the representatives of Co-operation Ireland and Cinemagic.
2.6	Based on the information received, the application appears to satisfy both the criteria on the use of the City Hall and the principles agreed by the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group on 13 January.

3	Resource Implications

4	Equality Implications
4.1	N/A

5	Recommendations
5.1	The committee is recommended to grant the use of the City Hall for the event on 27 September, 2012.

6	Decision Tracking
Officers responsible: Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer April 2012	

7	Key to Abbreviations

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 : Principles agreed by the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group	



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	National Association of Councillors – Community Sport and Leisure Conference
Date:	Friday, 23rd March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6314)
Contact Officer:	Mrs. Julie Lilley, Democratic Services Officer (extension 6321)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The National Association of Councillors (NAC) is holding a weekend Training Conference in Scarborough from Friday, 13th until Sunday, 15th April.
1.2	The theme of the conference is Community Sport and Leisure. As we approach the 2012 Olympic Games there is an increased focus on the importance of sport and leisure to local communities. The conference will present an opportunity for members to discuss innovative ways to refurbish and improve sports facilities to ensure they are fit for purpose and have the potential to make a real difference to the lives of citizens.
1.3	The council has been represented at NAC events for a number of years and representatives attending previous conferences have felt that their attendance gave them a valuable opportunity to meet with Local Government Representatives from throughout England, Scotland and Wales to discuss issues which are impacting on Local Authorities.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The business of the conference falls within the criteria set out in Section 34 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which will replace Section 38 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland with effect from 1 st April, in that it involves issues connected with the interests of the inhabitants of the district or any part of it.

3	Resource Implications										
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>Delegate Fee:</td> <td>£350</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accommodation Costs:</td> <td>£120</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Travel:</td> <td>£212</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>-----</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total per delegate:</td> <td>£682</td> </tr> </table>	Delegate Fee:	£350	Accommodation Costs:	£120	Travel:	£212		-----	Total per delegate:	£682
Delegate Fee:	£350										
Accommodation Costs:	£120										
Travel:	£212										

Total per delegate:	£682										

4	Equality Implications
	N/A

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee authorises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the attendance at the NAC Training Conference of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors, Northern Ireland Region, the Democratic Services Manager (or their nominees) and a representative of each of the Parties on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members; and ▪ the payment of the appropriate travelling and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

6	Decision Tracking
Officers responsible:	
Mrs. Julie Lilley, Democratic Services Officer	

April, 2012

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Party Leaders Forum, 16th February 2012**Apologies**

Robin Newton, Hugh Smith, Davy Brown

Given absence due to illness, it was agreed to give guidance only in broad terms

Role of the PLF

- PLF worked well together, with officers, and with partners over Investment Package
- Need to learn from this and capitalise on momentum
- Need to develop a lobbying strategy, individually and collectively
- Need to get consistent information to and from partners in a structured way
- Need to be clear about our long and short term ambitions
- Need to be outward looking, maybe engage in dialogue with forum and focus groups
- Needs to be formally described, both as individuals and collectively - leading to role description development - but must act at strategic level, integrate with groups and work with officers
- Need to think about discussion stages, supported by briefings by Chief, officers and JH as appropriate
- The relationship between PLF and other Governance structures needs to be evolved
- Discussion to be undertaken at next PLF - which should be an away day

Member Development

- Congratulations on Member Charter
- Need to think about impact of RPA
- PDP process due to start shortly - needs to begin with discussion between Party Leaders & JH, followed by process of 1-2-1 discussions between members and JH, together with Group Leaders
- The Belfast Members Academy should be delivered, tailored to different delegate groups, for example first term members, younger members, chairs and vice chairs etc.
- There should be a set of higher level courses, such as management, economics, finance and the environment, that could lead to an accredited qualification, maybe a Diploma

Next Meeting

- Should be an away day, possibly at Malone House
- The day should be split into two elements - part member only, part with officers
- To include an element of development
- Other possible elements for inclusion - role of PLF & governance; relationship with officers; ambition and vision for future; the economic climate; the impact of RPA (Individually and Corporately); delivering on the Investment Package

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Member Development Steering Group**Wednesday, 29th February, 2012****MEETING OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP**

Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman);
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors Convery, McCabe and Robinson.

In attendance: Mrs. Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources;
Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager;
Mrs. Karen Russell, Human Resources and
Organisational Development Manager;
Mr. Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer;
Mrs. Julie Lilley, Democratic Services Officer.

Apology

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

Minutes

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

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Member Development Update

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Steering Group that, at its meeting on 30th August, 2011, it had agreed to review the Members' PDP process in line with the Council's approach to the Member Development Charter and to take account of best practice approaches to personal development planning (Appendix 1).

He advised the Members that, in order to deliver the revised PDP process, a procurement exercise had been conducted to secure an independent provider who would assist in the design of the PDP process and also conduct the one-to-one meetings with Members. In addition, the independent provider, as part of the process, would ensure that officers were developed in order to have the capacity to conduct the PDP process in-house in subsequent years.

The Democratic Services Manager explained to the Steering Group that an important element of the PDP process was the 'Political Skills Framework' (Appendix 2) which would be used by Members to undertake a self assessment of their development needs in advance of a one-to-one PDP meeting. The framework, which was originally designed by the IDeA, has now been updated to ensure it was aligned to the priorities of the Council.

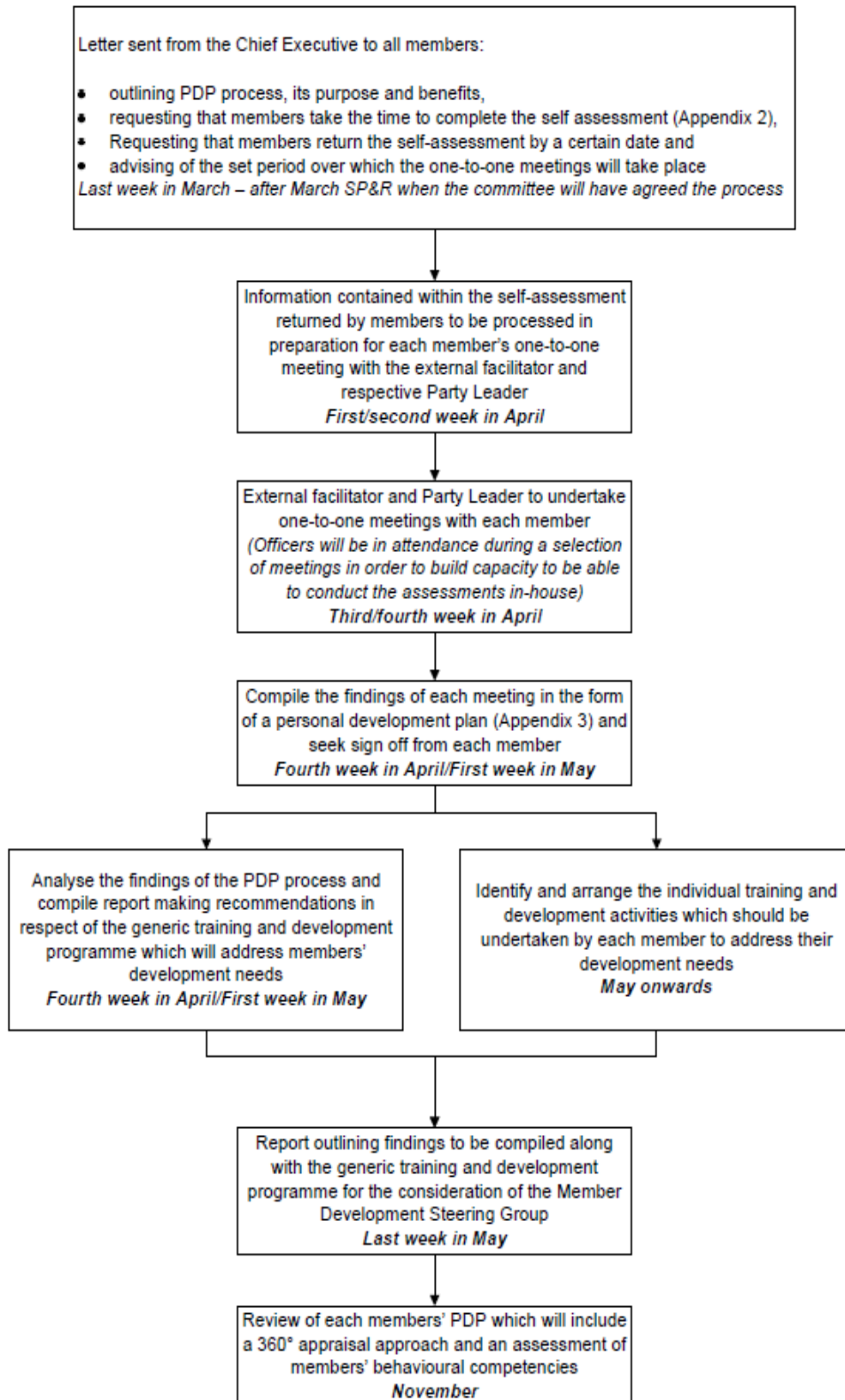
He advised the Members that, following the self-assessment and the subsequent one to one meeting, each Member would have a personal development plan drawn up based on a standard template. He explained further that an analysis of the development needs identified would then be undertaken and a plan would be produced to both meet individual training needs and the generic training needs of Members.

The Democratic Services Manager explained to the Steering Group that, while the skills framework set out the required skills to effectively carry out the role of an elected Member, best practice suggested that the PDP process should also include a behavioural aspect which could be addressed through a 360° appraisal approach. He advised Members that the 360° approach would not assess competence around behaviours in a positive/negative way but rather identify preferred styles and intrinsic skills. Further details of the approach to be taken regarding this 360° 'behavioural' appraisal would be presented to the Steering Group in due course.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that, in addition to the PDP process, it was proposed to design a Member capacity building programme aligned to the delivery of the Investment Programme and the development of newer Members of the Council. He advised the Members that an initial draft of this development programme was currently being designed and that, on completion, a draft would be presented to the Steering Group for its consideration.

The Steering Group discussed the involvement of the Party Group Leaders in the personal development planning process and the PDP meetings and after discussion agreed that this should be by agreement between each Party Leader and each member of their party. The Steering Group agreed the revised personal development plan process for Members, noting the above, and approved the updated political skills framework and self assessment.

PDP Process



political skills framework for elected members

political skills indicator self-assessment

Please read the enclosed 'Skills framework for elected members', which is aligned to the below proforma,

and tick next to each skill indicator whether **you** feel your development needs are:

1. **Fully Met** – No development activity is required
2. **Adequately Met** – Development activity would be useful in enhancing skills
3. **Partly Met** – Development activity is required.

community leadership	1	2	3
1. Engages enthusiastically with the community in order to understand their needs.			
2. Keeps up to date and acts upon issues of local concern.			
3. Represents all sections of the community fairly.			
4. Listens to all parties involved in a specific issue.			
5. Held in a position of trust by the community.			
6. Mediates effectively on contentious issues			
understanding the council	1	2	3
7. Follows meeting protocols.			
8. Evaluates arguments according to evidence and makes impartial judgements.			
9. Makes objective and informed decisions that balance ward/ area needs with those of the wider community.			
10. Monitors performance and progress and intervenes where necessary			
11. Prepares well in advance for meetings.			
12. Balances council work and other commitments.			
13. Chairs meetings effectively and keeps process on track (Chairs only)			
14. Builds professional and effective working relationships with Council officers			

**political skills indicator
self-assessment**

scrutiny and challenge	1	2	3
15. Provides objective challenge to processes, decisions and people.			
16. Adopts an appropriate questioning style.			
17. Analyses and assimilates complex information.			
18. Presents arguments in a concise manner.			
19. Maintains focus and distinguishes between important, less important and inaccurate information.			
20. Provides constructive feedback.			
communication skills	1	2	3
21. Listens sensitively, uses appropriate language and checks for understanding.			
22. Communicates regularly with the community using a range of methods, such as Email, letters, social media and leaflets.			
23. Speaks clearly and confidently in public.			
24. Provides regular feedback and keeps people informed.			
working in partnership	1	2	3
25. Builds positive relationships with the wider community, colleagues, officers and external agencies			
26. Makes other feel valued and included.			
27. Works collaboratively with others to achieve goals.			
28. Recognises when to delegate or provide support.			
29. Takes a long-term view in developing partnerships.			

**political skills indicator
self-assessment**

political understanding	1	2	3
30. Acts ethically and with integrity when representing Group views and values			
31. Works across Group boundaries without compromising political values.			
32. Understands how Central and Regional Government policy impacts on local issues and Council functioning.			
33. Supports party colleagues in public forums.			
34. Identifies new ways of engaging the public.			
party leaders			
excellence in leadership	1	2	3
35. Provides visionary leadership.			
36. Inspires trust and gains commitment to policies and decisions.			
37. Is well prepared, able to juggle conflicting responsibilities.			
38. Shapes a culture of excellence.			
39. Works across political and Council boundaries.			
40. Builds professional and effective relationships and liaises directly with the Chief Executive and Chief Officers			

skills framework for elected members self-assessment

<p>community leadership engages enthusiastically and empathetically with the community in order to learn, understand and act upon issues of local concern. Mediates fairly and constructively, encouraging trust by representing their district electoral area and the city as a whole.</p>	
<p>positive indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides civic leadership and demonstrates a proactive approach in the development of local initiatives • engages proactively with community, canvasses opinion and seeks new ways of representing others • keeps up-to-date with community and issues of local concern, drawing information and resources from a range of sources and people • approachable, is empathetic and understanding and encourages trust • provides a voice and develops effective relationships with council officers and partnerships with external organisations • mediates fairly and constructively between people and communities • campaigns with enthusiasm, courage and persistence on behalf of others 	<p>negative indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not provide leadership and fails to be proactive in developing local initiatives • does not engage in community activities and can be difficult to contact • keeps a low public profile and is not known to members of the community • is exclusive in approach, and does not focus equally on community groups or issues • does not have detailed understanding of local issues and needs • concentrates more on council processes and meetings rather than constituents • underestimates what is achievable and does not deliver on promises/undertakings

**skills framework for elected members
self-assessment**

understanding the council understands and executes role by following standing orders and protocols and by evaluating arguments and making decisions that balance public needs and local policy. Ensures progress by monitoring and intervening where necessary.

positive indicators

- evaluates arguments according to evidence, makes independent, informed and impartial judgements
- chairs meetings effectively, follows protocol and ensures business is conducted effectively and efficiently
- follows governance arrangement processes, balancing public needs and aspirations with corporate priorities
- monitors performance and intervenes as appropriate to ensure progress
- seeks to improve on own performance and engages in learning and development activities
- builds professional and effective working relationships with Council officers
- has a clear understanding of the distinct yet complementary role of members and officers

negative indicators

- does not declare personal interest and makes decisions for personal gain
- does not check facts or consider opposing arguments, makes subjective and uninformed judgements
- leaves monitoring and checks on progress to others
- makes decisions without taking advice or considering regulations and wider development frameworks
- fails to recognise or address limits of own knowledge and expertise
- misses deadlines, leaves business unfinished and lacks balance between council work and other commitments
- fails to engage with or build professional and effective working relationships with Council officers

**skills framework for elected members
self-assessment**

scrutiny and challenge acts as a critical friend by seeking opportunities for scrutiny and providing constructive feedback. Analyses information quickly and presents arguments in a concise, meaningful and easily accessible way.

positive indicators

- quickly analyses and assimilates complex information, taking account of the wider strategic context
- presents arguments in a concise, meaningful and easily understood way
- inquisitorial, asks for explanations and checks for implementation of recommendations
- objective, rigorous and resolute in challenging process, decisions and people
- acts as a critical friend, provides constructive feedback and acknowledges the success of others

negative indicators

- does not prepare thoroughly or check facts, uses selective information and draws subjective or biased conclusions
- fails to recognise or engage in scrutiny as part of their role
- assimilates new information slowly, focuses on detail and does not distinguish between important, less important and inaccurate information
- adversarial in style, aggressive and confrontational when challenged
- fails to work collaboratively for the good of the council, abuses scrutiny processes for personal or political gain

**skills framework for elected members
self-assessment**

communication skills listens sensitively, uses appropriate language and checks for understanding. Communicates regularly with individuals and groups in the community, speaks clearly and confidently in public, and makes sure that people are informed.

positive indicators

- communicates regularly with community via advice centres, newsletters, phone calls and local media
- listens sensitively, checks for understanding and adapts style as necessary
- builds relationships with local media and creates opportunities for communicating key decisions, activities and achievements
- speaks clearly and confidently in public, uses accessible language and avoids jargon or 'council-speak'
- provides regular feedback, keeps people informed and manages expectations
- uses appropriate language to communicate key points verbally and in writing (eg letters, reports, interviews and presentations)
- regularly attends meetings of outside bodies and other relevant groups

negative indicators

- interrupts, appears not to listen and uses inappropriate or insensitive language (eg shouting, being rude or abusive)
- communicates reactively and is slow to respond when approached by others (eg public, colleagues, officers or media)
- fails to listen to others' views and presents rigid and inflexible arguments
- uses information dishonestly to discredit others and is unwilling or unable to deliver unpopular messages
- fails to participate in meetings and lacks confidence speaking in public
- presents subjective and confused arguments using poor language and style
- fails to attend meetings of outside bodies and other relevant groups

**skills framework for elected members
self-assessment**

working in partnership builds positive relationships by making others feel valued, trusted and included and by working collaboratively with the council's many stakeholders to achieve corporate priorities. Maintains calm and focus and is able to take a long-term view in developing partnerships.

positive indicators

- builds good relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and the wider community
- works effectively with council officers to deliver corporate priorities
- achieves goals by co-ordinating others, maintaining task focus and persisting in the face of setbacks
- empowers others to take responsibility and knows when to provide support
- makes others feel valued, trusted and included, recognises and is inclusive of people from different communities and backgrounds
- patient, takes a long-term view in developing networks and partnerships maintains calm and focus when criticised or under pressure

negative indicators

- uses status and position to exert control or impose solutions, fails to involve people in decisions
- exclusive in approach, fails to utilise diverse skills and perspectives of others
- unable to work across political divide and places political gain before collaborative working
- acts alone rather than seeking help or working as part of a team
- uses divisive tactics to upset relationships, council policies and decisions
- defensive when criticised, blames others for failure and does not admit to being wrong

**skills framework for elected members
self-assessment**

political understanding acts ethically, consistently and with integrity when communicating values or representing group views in decisions and actions. Works across group boundaries without compromising values or ethics.

positive indicators

- actively represents group views and values through decisions and actions
- helps develop cohesion within the group and contributes to constructive communication between the group and the council
- communicates political values through canvassing, electoral campaigning and by effectively engaging the public
- committed to developing own political intelligence and understanding of local and national political landscape
- acts ethically, understands and communicates political values to others
- works across party boundaries without compromising political values

negative indicators

- demonstrates inconsistent political values, lacks integrity and tends to say what others want to hear
- has poor knowledge of party values and objectives and council priorities
- puts personal motivations first, behaves in a 'maverick' fashion or changes beliefs and values for political self gain
- acts alone and fails to support colleagues in public forums
- fails to translate group values into ways of helping the community
- lacks understanding of how central government policy impacts on local issues and council functioning

Skills framework for elected members

self-assessment

party leaders

excellence in leadership provides visionary and charismatic leadership, is well prepared, able to troubleshoot and juggle conflicting responsibilities. Works to shape a culture of excellence by liaising with the party on policy matters and speaking on behalf of the party. Encourages co-operation and communication within the party, across parties and amongst members and officers.

positive indicators

- provides visionary and charismatic leadership, inspires trust in others and gains commitment to policies and decisions
- shapes a culture of excellence and acts as a role model for appropriate behaviour, ethical practice and democratic process
- builds strong relationships with other party leaders and senior officers based on open communication, co-operative working and trust
- collectively with the other party leaders, acts as the public face of the council by championing council needs to key stakeholders such as the Northern Ireland Assembly
- works across political and council boundaries to foster communication and encourage co-operation
- well prepared and able to troubleshoot, judges what to get involved in and when to say 'No'
- committed to learning, developing others and sharing best practice
- effectively 'juggles' numerous, potentially conflicting, responsibilities
- builds professional and effective relationships and liaises directly with the Chief Executive and Chief Officers

negative indicators

- maintains personal control by imposing views and being overly directive
- demonstrates partiality for own party members and uses position to promote party agenda to the detriment of wider council needs
- defensive, avoids making difficult or unpopular decisions and unwilling to admit mistakes
- overly reactive, fails to plan ahead or foster a sense of mission
- does not encourage communication with community or promote the council
- lacks public recognition as a figurehead
- inconsistent in style and behaviour, fails to 'walk the talk' or set an example for others
- lacks detailed knowledge of the council and fails to integrate information to provide an overview of the council functions
- does not build professional and effective relationships with the Chief Executive and Chief Officers but rather contributes to fostering a 'them-and-us' attitude

Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development – Belfast City Council Case Study

The Democratic Services Manager advised the Steering Group that South East Employers (SEE), who had awarded the Council the Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development, had invited the Council to prepare and submit a case study detailing its charter journey and the benefits which had been realised. The case study set out the key initiatives undertaken by the Council which had helped it achieve charter status and detailed also, from both a Member and officer perspective, the positive outcomes which had resulted from having implemented a robust and comprehensive member development framework.

He explained that the case study would be used by SEE to demonstrate best practice to other local authorities who are embarking on the charter journey and, given that SEE currently worked with over sixty local authorities in England, this would present the Council with an excellent opportunity to showcase its achievements and help to establish it as a leader in the area of member development.

Following consideration, the Steering Group approved the content of the draft Belfast City Council case study and agreed that South East Employers should be authorised to use it to illustrate the Council's charter journey and successful outcomes.

Development of an Online Resource for Members

The Democratic Services Manager advised the steering group that South East Employers, who had accredited the council with the Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development, had, as part of their recommendations, identified the development of an online resource for Members as an area for improvement which the Council should implement. He explained that the online resource would be used for providing greater support to Members, facilitating a significant element of the PDP process and serving as a platform for e-learning activities.

The Democratic Services Manager outlined to members the type of information which could be made available through the online resource. This included:-

- key contacts, both internal and external
- email addresses and contact telephone numbers for members of council
- easy access to member related policies and guidance notes
- direct links to relevant external websites eg. Regional Assemblies, public housing providers, government departments, public health agencies etc.
- up to the minute news bulletins
- e-learning opportunities and PDP facilitation
- details on public consultation documents.

Following discussion, the Steering Group approved the exploration of options for the development of an online resource for Members.

Accredited Training Programmes for Members

The Head of Human Resources informed members that she had been requested to provide feedback to the Steering Group on an advanced diploma course on civic leadership and community planning which was being undertaken by a number of Members at the University of Ulster.

She advised the Steering Group that those Members who were participating in the course had indicated that it was very worthwhile and served as an excellent preparation for the skills which would be required by Members when new functions, such as community planning, become the responsibility of the Council.

The Democratic Services Manager reported also that options for accredited training programmes for Members were being explored with a number of educational institutions.

The Members noted the information and agreed that a detailed report be brought to the Steering Group on the benefits of the advanced diploma in civic leadership and community planning prior to the enrolment period for the next year of the course.

Chairman

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Delivering the Belfast Investment Package
Date:	23 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Contact Officers:	Caroline Wilson, Chief Executive's Department Kevin Heaney, Chief Executive's Department

1.0	<u>Relevant Background Information</u>
1.1	<p>At its meeting (03 February 12), the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee received a presentation on the delivery of the Investment Programme. They were asked to consider a number of questions in relation to the delivery of the Investment Programme, under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overarching policy framework - City Investment Fund - Local Investment Fund - Non recurrent capital spend - Governance - Capacity to deliver - Monitoring and review <p>Following initial comments, the Committee agreed that further discussion was needed in party group briefings.</p>

2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>		
2.1	In the briefings, all Members have emphasised the need to move swiftly to implementation of the Investment Programme, delivering quick wins across the city as well as laying the groundwork for the larger investments. All parties have stressed the need to test robustly the future sustainability of investments and any future revenue implications, as well as their capacity to deliver 'quality of life' outcomes as described in the Council's corporate objectives.		
2.2	Over the next 3 months, the key milestones for the Investment Programme are: <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td>2 April</td> <td>Council authority for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy framework for use of non-recurrent capital programme projects - Policy framework for City Investment Fund - Policy framework for Local Investment Fund </td> </tr> </table>	2 April	Council authority for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy framework for use of non-recurrent capital programme projects - Policy framework for City Investment Fund - Policy framework for Local Investment Fund
2 April	Council authority for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy framework for use of non-recurrent capital programme projects - Policy framework for City Investment Fund - Policy framework for Local Investment Fund 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic governance framework
20 April	<p>Presentation to SP&R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of political governance framework inc. Area Working Groups; Party Group Leaders' Forum; and Standing Committees - Prioritisation matrices - Non recurrent capital spend
May	Establishment of Area Working Groups
22 June	<p>Presentation to SP&R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First prioritisation of projects from Area Working Groups - Final Investment Programme (inc. consultation responses) - Partnership principles for supported projects (inc. claw-back clauses; social return on investment; secured community access; revenue implications)
2.3	<p>Overarching policy framework – principles</p> <p>All party groups support an over-arching framework which guides all the Council's investment decisions. It is recommended that the four principles are used as the basis of any capital investment prioritisation matrix:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - affordability inc. consideration of available match funding; - deliverability; - feasibility; and - sustainability inc. consideration of complementarity, deprivation and need. <p>Further work will be undertaken on this basis, if agreed, to develop detailed prioritisation matrices, and brought back to Committee for approval in April.</p>
2.4	<p>City Investment Fund</p> <p>The existing objectives for the City Investment Fund (CIF), agreed in December 2007, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To create a focal point for the Council to play a leading role in the development of the city; create a “can do” attitude amongst its citizens and create a sense of place and pride in Belfast; - To encourage investment from and engagement of public, private and voluntary sectors, in the achievement of that aim; - To contribute to the Council's priorities and vision for the city. <p>CIF enables us to take a lead role and work in partnership to deliver key investment projects which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the image of Belfast as a place to visit - Enable and/or promote the city as a place in which to do business - Bring financial or other economic returns to the city which help to build the city's rate base. - Promote Belfast as a city in which its citizens have pride and belief in a brighter future. - Enhance the city's strategic, social, cultural and environmental infrastructure. - Provide a lasting legacy for future generations.

Having reviewed this with all party groups, it is recommended that these objectives remain in place for the next phase of CIF. However, given both the changed needs of the city as well as the broader economic context, **it is recommended that CIF support is extended to include programmes of capital investment (or clusters) as well as individual projects, which can demonstrate a cumulative iconic or transformational impact.**

In order to ensure a balanced investment across the city, given the scale of investments, it is suggested that the time horizon for CIF is over three terms of Council, from 2007 when CIF was initiated through to 2019/20.

2.5 Local Investment Fund

In discussion with party groups, there appears to be an emerging consensus on the following issues, in relation to the implementation of the Local Investment Fund (LIF):

- This is a one-off fund and there should be an even split of investment across the city within this Council term;
- It is a pot for smaller-scale projects not owned by the Council. There will not be an open call for projects; projects will be identified by the proposed Area Working Groups;
- The overarching principles – outlined above at 2.1 – will be used by the proposed Member Area Working Groups to determine priorities within their local area;
- There should be a minimum level of investment – projects should be no less than £15,000;
- There should be a maximum level of investment – support for one project is unlikely to exceed £250,000, to ensure a spread of investment across the city.

In terms of allocating the £5 million across the proposed Member Area Working Groups, there are a number of options for Members' consideration:

Option	Area	% split	Fund Allocation (£)	Comment
1.	4 areas – North, South, East and West – based on Westminster constituency boundaries	25% of total LIF allocated to each area	North - 1,250,000 South - 1,250,000 East - 1,250,000 West - 1,250,000	Even distribution across the city, which is a core principle for the Investment Programme.
2.	5 areas – North, South, East, West and Central. (Recently agreed at the Development Committee in its review of the allocation of funding for advice services.)	It uses the latest deprivation data (MDM 2010) and the most recent population estimates to determine proportional allocation. It is weighted towards those SOAs that are in the 10% to 30% most deprived in the city. The 10% 'Central' allocation	North – 32.07% South – 18.14% East – 14.89% West – 34.90%	Does not distribute evenly across the city, which is a core principle for the Investment Programme. Also, need measured and weighted at SOA level rather than at NSEW area level.

		has been proportionally reallocated to NSEW.		
3.	4 areas + Shankill based on Parliamentary electoral boundaries and Shankill area defined as Court District Electoral Area	A proportionate allocation based on number of elected Members in Court DEA to Shankill top-sliced from total LIF. Remainder allocated as 25% to each area.	North – 1,127,500 South - 1,127,500 East - 1,127,500 West - 1,127,500 Shankill – 490,000	Participation of Councillors for Court in North and West area working groups would need to be determined.
4.	4 areas + Shankill based on Parliamentary electoral boundaries and Shankill area defined as Court District Electoral Area	25% of total LIF allocated to each area and a proportionate allocation to Shankill top-sliced from West and North allocations.	North – 1,054,000 South - 1,250,000 East - 1,250,000 West - 956,000 Shankill – 490,000	As above. Proportion deducted from North and West based on Crumlin and Woodvale in the North and Glencairn, Highfield and Shankill in the West.

It is suggested that money is allocated to the Area Working Groups on an annual basis and they prioritise accordingly.

Further work will be undertaken to develop detail of partnership arrangements e.g. claw-back clauses; social return on investment; secured community access; revenue implications, etc. and brought back to Committee for approval.

2.5 **Non recurrent capital spend**

Members support the need for a neighbourhood improvement scheme as part of the Investment programme, to improve attractiveness in local areas. They also agreed on the need to support planned maintenance and IT investment. The neighbourhood improvement package is likely to include:

- Cleansing initiatives such as graffiti removal, land clearance, community clean-ups, etc.
- Renewing the Routes
- Community safety programmes such as alley-gating, anti-dog fouling projects, etc.
- Environmental improvement budgets including Belfast in Bloom, Neighbourhood Renewal, etc.
- Parks outreach programmes such as community gardens, multi-use games areas, meanwhile projects, etc.

Further work is needed on this and a developed proposal will be brought to Committee for

consideration in April.

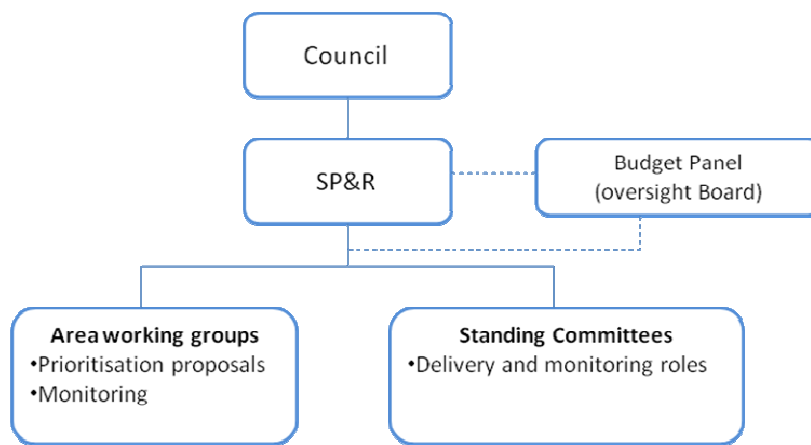
2.6 Governance arrangements

All party groups agreed that the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee retains full responsibility for the Investment Programme and has a key role to play in challenging, improving and prioritising capital projects.

In relation to the proposed Member Area Working groups, all parties have expressed support for a role in prioritising and monitoring capital projects on a local basis, and to enable wider Member participation in the Investment programme.

It is suggested that the governance framework is:

Investment Programme Governance



In the project management cycle, it is recommended the key points of involvement for the Member Area Working groups would be:

- Project identification (including consideration of those additional projects which have been identified as part of the public consultation and party group briefings)
- Prioritising short-list, on the basis of deliverability and affordability, for design and concept development
- Making recommendation on the investment decision to SP&R Committee, on the basis of feasibility and sustainability,
- Monitoring progress and supporting community engagement, where appropriate
- Official launch and communicating success.

This was broadly welcomed in the Member briefings. Further work will be undertaken on this basis to finalise the terms of reference and officer support required for these working groups. If agreed, it is anticipated these groups would convene in May.

2.7 Internal capacity to deliver

Members reinforced the need to ensure that the Council is ‘fit for delivery’. Work is ongoing in relation to the internal capacity to deliver and officers are examining the potential for the re-allocation of human resource within the organisation to facilitate its delivery. It is therefore recommended that Committee delegates authority to the Chief Executive to ensure that the appropriate resources are aligned to meet the demands of the Investment Programme at no

	<p>additional cost to the ratepayer.</p> <p>Members have also expressed interest in receiving training in project management as well as awareness sessions on potential external funding and other topics relevant to the successful implementation of the Investment Programme.</p>
2.8	<p>Partners' capacity to deliver</p> <p>As previously agreed by Members, work is underway to establish an inter-agency, politically-led Belfast Implementation Forum. It will oversee the development of a prioritised and resourced delivery plan for key investment projects within the city.</p> <p>When the structure of the Belfast Implementation Forum becomes more developed, further information will be brought to Committee for consideration.</p>

3.0	Resource Implications
	<p>Human – to be determined</p> <p>Financial – to be determined</p> <p>Asset – to be determined</p>

4.0	Equality Implications
	The overall Investment Programme will be equality screened.

5.0	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked for their feedback on the issues raised above, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Extension of City Investment Fund to support transformational/iconic <u>programmes</u> (or clusters) of capital investment as well as single iconic projects; – the upper and lower thresholds for the Local Investment Fund; – the preferred model for the allocation of the Local Investment Fund across the city; – proposed role of proposed Area Working Groups; and – delegated authority to the Chief Executive to ensure that the appropriate resources are in place to meet the demands of the Investment Programme at no additional cost to the ratepayer. Subject to regular reports being brought to Committee to update them on progress.

6.0	Officers to contact
	<p>Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources</p> <p>Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects</p> <p>Caroline Wilson, Chief Executive's Department</p> <p>Kevin Heaney, Chief Executive's Department</p>

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**Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting
9 February 2012**

1. Attendance

Members:

Cllr Tim Attwood
Alderman David Browne
Cllr Deirdre Hargey (Chair)
Cllr Maire Hendron
Cllr Jim McVeigh
Alderman Hugh Smith

Apologies: Alderman Robin Newton

Officers:

Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Sharon McNicholl, Strategic Policy Manager

2. Investment Programme update

Members agreed that the main launch of the Investment Programme in the Waterfront was a major success and that the press coverage had mainly been positive. The CX was requested to pass on the Panel's gratitude to all officers involved in organising the event.

Members agreed who would be attending and speaking at the community launches. It was also agreed that the North Belfast launch would take place in the Crumlin Road Gaol and that, for logistical reasons, the planned event in Grove Wellbeing Centre would not be required.

Members agreed that attention must now turn to delivery and that party group briefings would be held in February and March to discuss the main implementation issues including:

- The policy frameworks for the City Investment and Local Investment funds
- Project prioritisation framework
- Governance arrangements including area-based working groups
- Building the capacity to deliver the Investment Programme

The Belfast Delivery Forum as a mechanism to align central government resources to the delivery of the Investment Programme and resolve implementation issues was endorsed by the Panel. It was agreed that the Chief Executive should arrange meetings with the relevant government Ministers to progress the implementation of the forum.

3. Quarter 3 Finance Report

The Director of Finance and Resources outlined the financial position of the organisation at the end of 31 December 2011.

4. Green New Deal

The Director of Finance and Resources highlighted a proposal put forward by Green New Deal which would provide loans to householders falling outside the 'Warm Home Scheme' for the purpose of installing energy saving improvements such as insulation. The scheme would be financed through £2.4m from the council, £12m from central government, and a £40m bank loan.

The Director stated that council officers had worked closely with Green New Deal to find a sustainable proposal but at this stage had not found a way to overcome the impact of a potential debt default rate of around 11%.

Members agreed that, at this stage, it would not be feasible to proceed with the investment at this stage.

**Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting
8 March 2012**

1. Attendance

Members:

Cllr Tim Attwood
Alderman David Browne
Cllr Deirdre Hargey (Chair)
Cllr Maire Hendron
Cllr Jim McVeigh
Alderman Hugh Smith
Alderman Christopher Stalford

Officers:

Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

2. RPA

The Chief Executive advised that the Environment Minister had recently written to councils requesting that they restore necessary implementation structures to support the operational delivery of the local government reform at a local level. He reminded Members that initial discussions on local government reform had taken place at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 2 March 2012. At this meeting the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the issue until its next meeting on the 23 March 2012 to enable members and Political Parties to give further consideration in advance of taking decisions.

Members agreed that a paper should be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 23 March 2012 which would seek the views of Members on the options for the composition of the Belfast voluntary Transition Committee as well as Belfast proposals for progressing the following aspects of the local government reform:

- Transfer of Functions
- Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh
- Governance Proposals and Decision Making Process
- Development of Project plan

In response to questions, the Chief Executive confirmed that the voluntary Transition Committee would have no statutory powers and that the makeup of the voluntary Transition Committee was a matter which could be agreed by the Members, however the makeup of the Statutory Transition Committee would however be defined by statute.

3. Data Protection

The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources provided an overview of the actions taken by officers following the release of the personal data, including the communication with and advice provided to Members. The Chief Executive advised that as soon as the breach had become apparent, the communication with Members by telephone

had commenced, however it was clear that more resources should have been applied to this task to ensure that all members were advised as soon as possible and he apologised for the delay in ensuring that all members were made aware of the situation.

The Director of Finance and Resources agreed to provide briefings for Members on an individual or group basis and that these would be co-ordinated through the Party group Leader.

The Chief executive also confirmed that an update on the incident and the management investigation would be provided to Members at the SP&R meeting on the 23 March 2012.

4. Investment Programme

The chief Executive presented a summary of the key milestones for the Investment Programme for the period March – June 2012. These included:-

Political Agreement on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Frameworks (Capital Programme, CIF and LIF) • Prioritisation Framework • Political Governance Framework 	By 2 April 2012
Design of Political Governance framework	By end of April 2012
Operation of Framework	By end of May 2012
First Prioritisation of Projects	By end of June 2012
Production of Final Investment Programme document	By end of June 2012

While Members agreed that the Local Investment Fund should encourage project proposers to obtain matched funding for their projects, it was recognised that this could prohibit valuable projects being progressed where proposers did not have the capacity to seek out and attract partners or where partner funding streams were difficult to obtain. It was therefore suggested that the scoring criteria for the prioritisation of projects should reflect the sustainability benefits of partnership funding, but that matched funding should not be a mandatory criteria for the Local investment Fund.

It was noted that options for the split of the Local Investment Fund on an area basis would be considered at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 23 March 2012.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Budget and transformation Panel would be on Thursday 5 April 2012 at a time to be confirmed.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Employability Initiatives
Date:	23 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources, ext 3220
Contact Officer:	Catherine Christy, Principal HR Advisor, ext 3226

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update members on progress with employability initiatives contained in the Investment Programme and • seek agreement to remove existing limitations in relation to the facilitation of work experience placements in the Council.
1.2	<p>As part of the Investment Programme members have committed to 400 placement, apprenticeship and internship opportunities in the Council and to the creation of 200 job opportunities at no additional cost to the rate payer. Progress in taking these initiatives forward is outlined at paragraph 2.1.</p>
1.3	<p>Clearly, it is important to ensure that work placement opportunities with the Council are widely accessible to all. The Council's community outreach programme was launched in 1998 to promote Belfast City Council as an attractive, equal opportunities employer with wide and varied job opportunities. Initially activity focused on young people (mostly students and school children) and people with disabilities. Outreach activity however has been extended over the past few years to focus on the long term unemployed and ex- offenders and these initiatives have been particularly successful. Committee approval was sought to engage in these initiatives which did not meet existing work experience placement requirements. Members are asked to consider two issues which have in the past prevented some people from availing of work placement opportunities with the Council. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indemnity arrangements and • involvement in government led training programmes.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p data-bbox="328 331 560 367">Progress to date</p> <p data-bbox="328 405 1380 602">To build upon the council's existing work experience programme and to look to extend the remit of it, a number of meetings with potential partners are currently taking place. These partners include DEL and their lead contractors who deliver employability programmes and Local Employment Intermediary Services (LEMIS) across the city, the Employment Services Board as well as Belfast Metropolitan College. The purpose of these meetings is to:</p> <ul data-bbox="363 640 1374 949" style="list-style-type: none"> • identify opportunities to provide more placements and internships • explore how we can work with partner organisations to support young people needing work experience as part of existing apprenticeship programmes • consider how a council specific apprenticeship scheme might be developed • explore how we can best prepare the long term unemployed to compete for council positions as they become available and • agree plans to provide this support. <p data-bbox="236 981 1361 1189">2.2 A number of suitable immediate vacancies have already been identified and support is being targeted at the long term unemployed through the Job Assist Centres. Work has started to develop a recruitment plan and a programme of targeted timely support. This support will include work placements, site visits, motivational talks, information and training on the council's recruitment and selection procedures, mock interviews etc.</p> <p data-bbox="236 1218 1139 1254">2.3 Indemnity arrangements for work experience placements.</p> <p data-bbox="328 1292 1369 1592">The current indemnity arrangements for work experience placements were agreed by the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee at its meeting on 28 June 2004. At that time it was agreed that the Council accept work experience students from those educational establishments which either sign the council's form of indemnity or provide an alternative form of indemnity. In the past this has prevented certain people from taking up work experience placement opportunities in the Council; individuals without their own insurance provision and participants from small community or voluntary organisations with limited resources.</p> <p data-bbox="236 1621 1380 1964">2.4 The Council has however, in the past agreed to self insure certain placements where individuals do not have their own indemnity or where organisations are not in a position to sign the Council's indemnity form, i.e., placements for people with disabilities, a community service pilot for ex offenders and for the long term unemployed. Requests for the Council to self insure individuals have been presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on a case by case basis for approval. Where organisations require the Council to sign their indemnity forms and associated insurance arrangements, advice is sought from Legal Services and Audit Governance and Risk Services regarding any implications for the Council.</p> <p data-bbox="236 1993 1337 2029">2.5 The Council's insurance brokers are of the view that the risk to the Council of</p>

	claims arising from injuries sustained by students during work experience placement is relatively low and could be minimised through good risk management practice. Processes have already been put in place to help manage and minimise risk.
2.6	In order to increase the number of placements that the council can facilitate while endeavouring to mitigate against the risk, Legal Services has recommended that the Council's default position should be to self insure, unless the Council is aware that the sponsoring organisation is in a position to provide its own indemnity arrangements.
2.7	New Deal and Job Skills initiatives At Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee on 22 September 2003 it was agreed that all requests for work experience placements linked to the government's New Deal or Job Skills initiative would be referred to the sub committee for consideration.
2.8	Involvement in government led training programmes will be an essential element of our employability activities, not only to deliver on our commitments but to reach those who most need assistance. Programmes like Steps to Work and Training for Success (which have replaced New Deal and Job Skills) can provide the council with a platform to reach those furthest removed from the labour market and provide placement opportunities for the long term unemployed and apprentices. (The Department of the Environment has already committed to providing a large number of placement opportunities through the Steps to Work programme). It is proposed therefore that the commitment to employability initiatives outlined in the Investment Programme will remove the requirement for Committee to consider case by case requests for government programme work placements.
2.9	Members will of course receive regular reports on progress with the delivery of all our employability initiatives. Specific proposals will be presented to Committee in May.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	Financial When placements are unpaid or externally funded there is no direct financial implication although the self- insurance aspect is a financial risk. Due to the stringent risk assessment approach being carried out, this risk will be managed. Any additional resources identified will be agreed as part of the Investment Programme.
3.2	Human Resources There are no human resource implications as all work experience placements within the Council are dependant on the relevant department having the capacity to accommodate such a request and all the placements are offered and accepted on the basis that no permanent offer of employment will follow, without adherence to the council's recruitment and selection processes.

4.0	Equality Implications
4.1	Consultation on the Investment Programme is ongoing. An EQIA report, together with a full report on the consultation process will be submitted to assist final decision making in the Investment Programme. Any employability initiatives delivered as part of the Investment Programme will be on a city wide basis and all opportunities will be widely promoted across all Section 75 groups.

5.0	Recommendations
	<p>The committee is asked to agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the council's default position should be to self insure work experience placements, unless the Council is aware that the sponsoring organisation is in a position to provide its own indemnity arrangements (see paragraphs 2.3 to 2.6) and that • the requirement to refer decisions to Committee regarding participation in government led training programmes is removed (see paragraphs 2.7 & 2.8)

6.0	Decision Tracking
	Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources, will be responsible for taking forward any actions related to this report.

7.0	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>DEL - Department of Employment and Learning LEMIS - Local Employment intermediary Service</p>

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Disposal of former Civic Amenity Site, Boucher Rd
Date:	23 rd March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds Estates Manager, Property & Projects, Ext: 3493 Celine Dunlop, Estates Surveyor, Property and Projects, Ext: 3419

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The former Civic Amenity site at Boucher Road, Balmoral Industrial Estate is a 0.588 acre site with frontage on to the Boucher Road close to its junction with Stockmans Lane, as shown outlined red on the plan attached at Appendix '1'. On the 18 th March 2011 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee granted approval to placing the subject land on the open market to let by way of long lease (subject to 5 yearly rent reviews).
1.2	Balmoral Industrial Estate contains a large number of sites which are leased from the Council by way of long leases, usually 125 years, subject to the payment of reviewable ground rents. The rents receivable from this estate represent a valuable income stream for the Council with a rental income in 2011/12 of approximately £3,142,000, which is an increase from £1,390,000 in 2001/02. This represents a c.126% increase over the 10 year period. The leases within the estate are proactively managed by the Estates Management Unit to ensure rent reviews and lease terms are adhered to and optimised for the benefit of the Council.
1.3	It is worth noting that an Economic Impact Study undertaken by IPSOS MORI in 2007 highlighted the important role that both Balmoral and Duncrue Industrial Estates played in supporting the continued urban and social regeneration of Belfast, as well as contributing significantly to employment in the wholesale and retail sectors within Belfast. In 2007 the total turnover in the two estates was estimated at approximately £680m per annum, employing 6495 people with over 2.2m customers visiting the estates per annum.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Following the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee approval the site has been extensively marketed by Ardmore Commercial Property Agents on behalf of the Council. Following an open market bidding process during which bids were received from a number of different parties two bids as outlined below emerged significantly above the others.
2.2	<p>Potential tenant: McKinney Land Ltd Use: Drive Thru Restaurant with McDonalds as the occupier Rent: £46,000 per annum exclusive. Conditional on planning. Rent free: The tenant will require 6 months rent free from the lease commencement date Rent review: 5 yearly with a minimum uplift of 10% at the first review Conditions: Conditional upon planning which could potentially take up to 2 years to include an option to appeal. Conditional upon Council accepting full responsibility for any pre-existing environmental/contamination issues and all remedial costs associated with same.</p>
2.3	<p>Potential tenant: Boucher Enterprises (Mr Harry Diamond) Use: Potential mixed use retail/restaurant development or solely for the use as a restaurant. Rent: £45,000 per annum exclusive. Unconditional on planning. Rent free: No rent free period required. Rent review: 5 year review in line with market conditions. Conditions: None</p>
2.4	The Boucher Enterprises bid is not conditional on planning and nor is there a rent free period proposed. Therefore, over the 5 year period to next review the total income to the Council will be £225,000. The total rental income to the Council over the same period for the McKinney Land bid is £138,000 on the basis of the 6 month rent free period and assuming 18 months to obtain planning. The offer from Boucher Enterprises therefore represents best price in accordance with the requirements of Section 96(5) of the Local Government (NI) 1972 in that no conditions are attached and the rent will be payable immediately on completion of the lease. The marketing agents, Ardmore Commercial have also advised that, in their opinion, the offer received from Boucher Enterprises should be accepted.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u> The £45,000 per annum rental will supplement the rent roll for Balmoral Industrial Estate and will assist in benchmarking for future rent reviews of other sites within this estate. This open market rental represents an excellent return to the Council even in this period of economic downturn. The rent will be subject to review in accordance with the terms of the lease every five years.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u> Staff resource from the Estates Unit & Legal Services will be required to complete the lease. Staff resource within Estates Unit to thereafter manage this leased site as part of the wider asset management of Balmoral Industrial Estate.</p>

3.3	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> The leasing and future redevelopment of this site accords with effective asset management and further contributes to the important economic role this estate plays within Belfast in terms of services and employment.</p>
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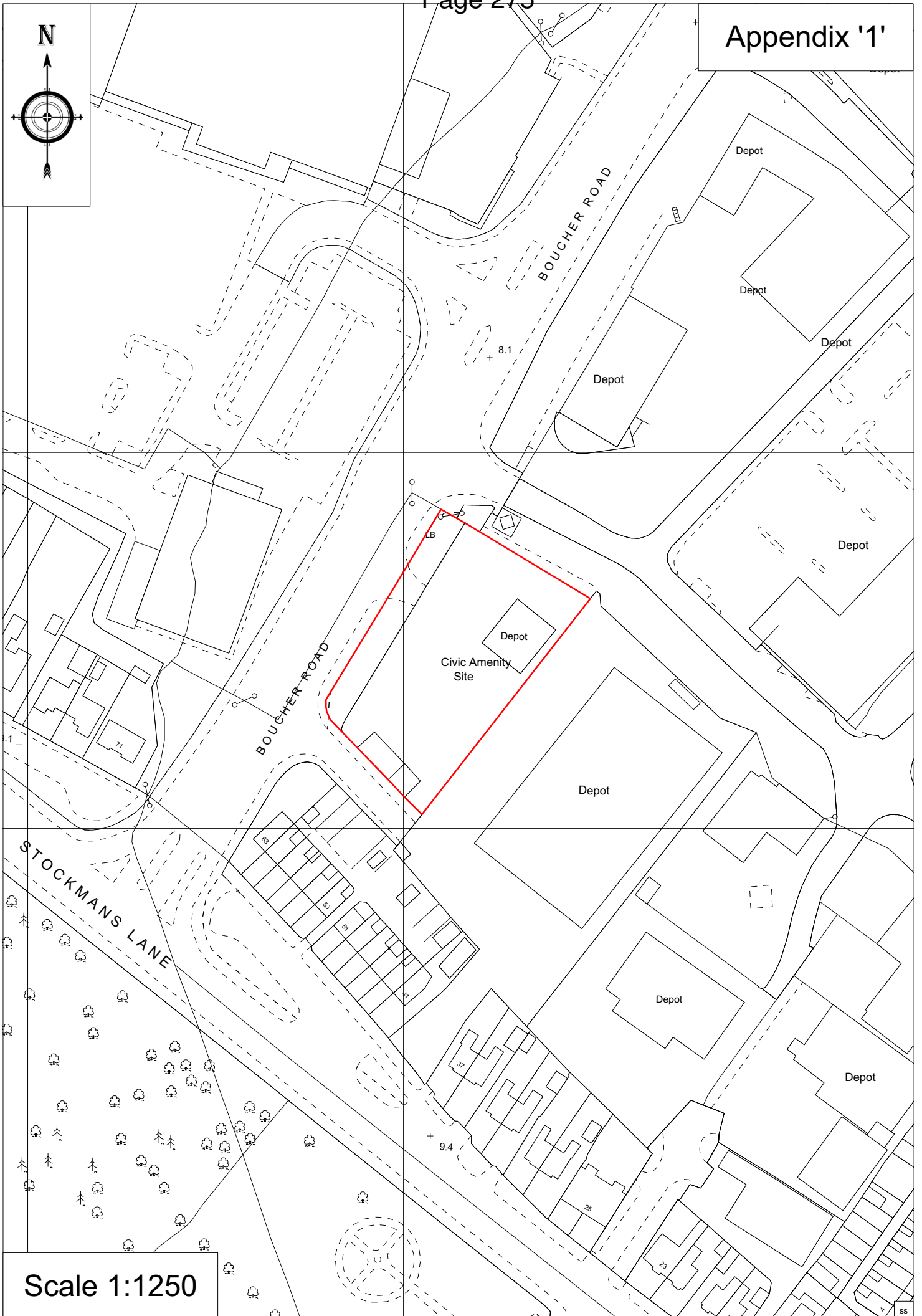
4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are no equality implications to this proposal.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is requested to approve the letting of this site at Boucher Road at £45,000 per annum, as outlined above, on the basis of a 125 year lease with 5 yearly rent reviews and with terms to be incorporated in an appropriate lease agreement.

6	Decision Tracking
6.1	The Director of Property & Projects and the Director of Legal Services to action by the 1 st July 2012.

7	Documents Attached
7.1	Plan at Appendix '1

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Former Grove Primary School Site & Old Grove Leisure Centre
Date:	23 March 2012
Reporting Officers:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officers:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext 3479

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The former Grove Primary & Nursery School site at North Queen Street was recently declared surplus to the requirements of BELB. The buildings on site have been demolished and the site is currently fenced. The site which extends to approx 2.5 acres directly adjoins the Council owned Grove Playing Fields & is opposite the Old Grove Leisure Centre. Map attached at Appendix 1.
1.2	LPS trawled availability of the site amongst public sector bodies (including the Council) and there was a tight timeframe for responding to LPS. The Council expressed an initial interest in the site given that it adjoins the playing fields and is directly opposite the former Grove Leisure Centre, which the Council were considering in terms of future development options.
1.3	LPS have now provided an indicative value for the site of £130,000. This is however very much an indicative value & will be subject to a further more detailed valuation to take account of any relevant planning, title and site survey issues, and it would also be subject to negotiation.
1.4	In terms of the Old Grove Leisure Centre site (which is located directly opposite the school site) a report was previously brought to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 21 October 2011 and approval was given to demolition of the building; to undertaking an updated needs analysis report for business accommodation & incubation space in Belfast focusing on this particular location; and approval for officers to take forward discussions with BELB regarding any scope for joint disposal/development options for both the old Grove Leisure Centre site and the school site. A copy of the minutes is enclosed at appendix 2.
1.5	However, at the request of Alderman Browne this decision was taken back for further consideration by the Council on 1 November 2011. The Director of Property & Projects subsequently met with various elected members from the area & the DSD Minister, Nelson McCausland. There were concerns that demolition of the building may lead to problems with anti social behaviour. It was proposed that a workshop be convened in the New Year to explore development opportunities at both this site & other sites in the area, with participants at the workshop to include BCC, DSD, BELB,

	<p>DRD & NIHE. The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, on 9 December 2011, agreed to this approach and demolition of the former Grove Leisure Building was to be considered following the outcome of the workshop. The Director of Property & Projects has since met with DSD, who were to lead on the proposed workshop, but to date there had been no workshop.</p>
1.6	<p>There remain, however, two potential (unsolicited) interests in the former Grove Leisure Centre site, one from North City Business Centre and the other from the Ashton Centre. North City Business Centre are a local enterprise agency and are considering expansion of their current social economy business park located at Duncairn Gardens and potential redevelopment of a further site. They advise that their current business park is 99% let and has a wide range of businesses located there. They had also enquired about the possibility of the Grove School site being available. The Ashton Centre have also registered an interest in the former leisure centre site and are potentially interested in developing the site to include office, retail and workshop units and a childcare centre.</p>
1.7	<p>There are ongoing security & maintenance issues with the Old Grove Leisure Centre building with continual break ins and this has an associated staff and financial resource, as well as potential liability issues for the Council.</p>
1.8	<p>In the interim period BELB have progressed with declaring their school site surplus and if there is no public sector interest shown via the LPS trawl process the next stage will be to advertise it for sale on the open market.</p>
1.9	<p>If the Council were to now acquire the former Grove Primary School site, subject to further investigation as to the site's development potential and planning status it could potentially also be offered for disposal via a Development Brief process in tandem with the former Grove Leisure Centre site. Planning will however be key in determining future development potential and this will need to be investigated further. This Development Brief process would essentially offer the sites on the market for disposal/development (often by way of long lease) subject to certain criteria; a development agreement would be entered into with the successful applicant/developer requiring them to develop within a certain timeframe & subject to certain criteria, and on practical completion title would be granted, which could be on the basis of either a capital premium or alternatively a ground rent (as with Balmoral & Duncrue Industrial Estates) or an equity rent (as with the Gasworks Business Park).</p>
1.10	<p>The Development Department are currently undertaking an updated needs analysis report on business accommodation and incubation space in Belfast (to also focus on this particular area) and it would inform the Development Brief process.</p>
1.11	<p>Demolition & progressing of future use/redevelopment options for the old Grove Leisure Centre site is included within the Council's draft Investment Programme 2012 -2015. Given the delay in DSD taking forward the proposed workshop of the wider stakeholder group and the continued interest by potential parties in the redevelopment of the site it is now being recommended that members give approval to proceed with demolition of the Old Grove Leisure Centre building and thereafter take forward disposal via a Development Brief process.</p>
1.12	<p>In addition, it is also being recommended that members grant approval to progress with negotiations to purchase the BELB former Grove Primary School site. This will be subject to further investigations in relation to title; site surveys, planning etc as well as agreement on valuation and a report would be brought back to committee on this. If agreement is reached on the purchase of this land, then subject to further investigation as to development potential and its planning status, it could potentially also be offered for disposal via this Development Brief process.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed purchase by BCC of former Grove Primary School site. Approval is being sought from Members to progress negotiations. • Demolition and future redevelopment /disposal of old Grove Leisure Centre site is in the Council's draft Investment Programme 2012-2015. • Members are being asked for further approval to demolish the old Grove Leisure Centre site & progress thereafter with disposal of the site via a Development Brief process. This could potentially also include the former school site. • Two parties have already expressed a potential interest in the Old Grove Leisure Centre site; North City Business Centre and the Ashton Centre. The recommendation is to openly market the site via a Development Brief process.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>An indicative value of £130,000 has been provided by LPS for the BELB site, but this is very much indicative and is subject to further investigations & negotiations. The Director of Finance & Resources has advised that funding can be made available to purchase.</p> <p>The Council's uncommitted Capital Programme shows a provisional estimate of £500,000 for demolition of the old Grove Leisure Centre & associated works, although this is subject to a detailed invasive survey of the building. The cost will be offset in part by the ongoing costs of insuring and maintaining the existing building. Any financial return on disposal of the site will reflect that the developer/purchaser will not have to undertake demolition</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Staff Resource, primarily from Property & Projects in progressing negotiations for purchase of the BELB site & in progressing demolition & future use/disposal options for the Old Grove Leisure Centre site.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Asset & Other Implications</u></p> <p>Future redevelopment should have economic, regenerative & financial benefits.</p>

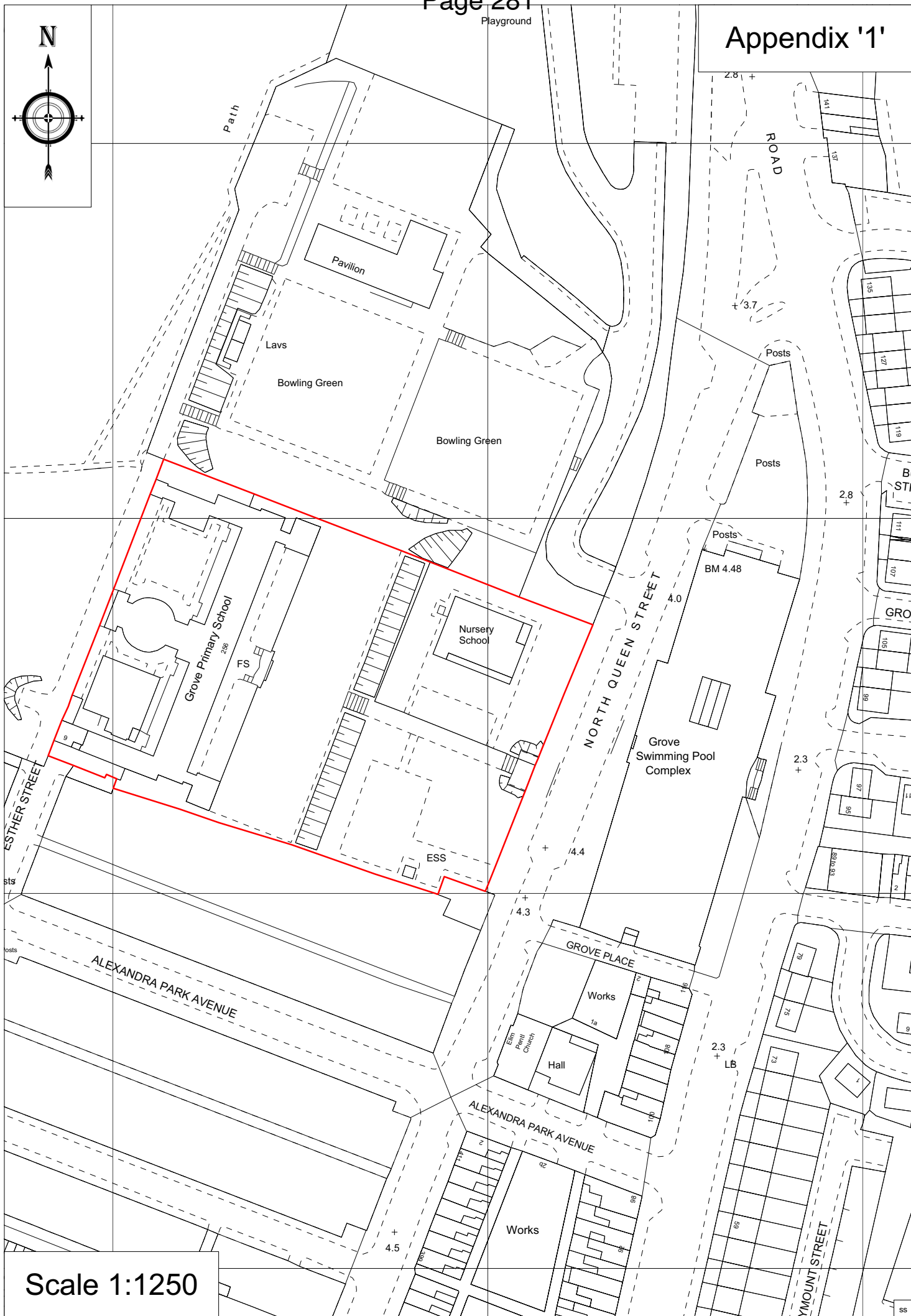
4	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked to approve that the Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Progress with negotiations to purchase the BELB owned former Grove Primary School site, with a further report to be brought back to Committee on the proposed terms of acquisition and ii) Progress with the demolition of the Old Grove Leisure Centre building and proceed with the invitation of tenders for the demolition works and the award of contract to the most economically advantageous offer received and

- | | |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| iii) | Thereafter progress with disposal via a Development Brief process with a further report to be brought back to Committee with details of the Development Brief criteria and process |
| iv) | |

6	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Location Map
	Appendix 2: Copy Strategic Policy & Resources Committee minutes 21 October 2011

Playground

Appendix '1'



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Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the

*Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st October, 2011*

Former Grove Leisure Centre

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1** *The issue of the former Grove Leisure Centre was raised at the September Committee and an update report was requested.*
- 1.2** *The former Grove Leisure Centre currently sits within the Councils Corporate Landbank, held by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee & managed by the Property & Projects Department, pending future use options being considered by Committee. The site extends to approximately 1.27 acres; a location map is enclosed at Appendix 1.*
- 1.3** *Demolition of the building had previously been proposed for inclusion in the Capital Programme with a budget estimate of £500k but it is currently sitting as an uncommitted proposal, pending a decision on funding availability. Demolition had not therefore progressed due to there being no identified funding and also on the basis of previous planning advice which had indicated that from a highway perspective there could be advantages in the building remaining in place prior to submission of a planning application. This was because the associated traffic with the previous use could potentially be factored into a planning application, whereas a cleared site might mean that ‘nil-use’ could be deemed for the site and no discount could be applied for ‘committed/previous’ trip in any Transport Assessment. This has been the position taken in respect of Maysfield for example, which has additional planning issues in relation to the adjacent apartment block, based on the advice of planning consultants. However, more recent advice from the planning consultants has indicated that this is not as relevant in the case of the former Grove Leisure Centre site which will entail a much smaller scale of development*
- 1.4** *It is expected that the demolition and associated works could be undertaken within the provisional budget estimate of £500,000, although this is subject to a detailed invasive (in that the fabric of the building will need to be opened up) survey of the building to identify issues, such as asbestos, which would need to be removed by specialist contractors.*
- 1.5** *The Director of Finance & Resources has confirmed that funding could now be made available for demolition of the building should Members wish to proceed from revenue contributions to non loan funded capital schemes on the Committed Capital Programme. It is worth noting that the cost of demolition would inevitably have to be borne by the Council either as a direct cost now or by way of a reduced financial return for the site in the event of it being disposed as any purchaser or developer would factor the cost of demolition into any offer they would make.*

- 1.6** *Members may wish to note that the total initial cost of securing the building, blocking of doors, windows and skylights and fencing off pool areas etc; retaining essential services (electricity, intruder and fire alarms); removal of contaminated water, chemicals, heating oil, de-gassing of fuel tank & cleaning contaminated areas was £34,000. The costs from November 2008 to date of insuring the building; keeping it alarmed; key holding and call out services and intermittent maintenance required has been approximately £21,250.*
- 1.7** *In terms of future disposal and/or development options for the site Members may wish to note that a planning appraisal & site contamination report have recently been undertaken in order to assess future use options and any potential constraints. The planning assessment identified that a range of development mixes could be delivered on the site, potentially incorporating a range of commercial & community uses such as serviced office accommodation, related to local enterprise/social economy uses, or retail, restaurant or entertainment uses with residential development on upper floors. It also indicated that the site is suitable for a higher density residential led mixed use development. NIHE have, however, confirmed that the site is not located in an area of identified social housing need. The planning consultants had also commented that the former Grove Primary & Nursery School site could be suitable for complementary development.*
- 1.8** *Members may also be aware that a report was undertaken in 2009 by Colin Stutt Consulting on behalf of the Council to assess business accommodation and business incubation in Belfast. This study was one of the actions identified in the Council's Local Economic Development Plan 2006 – 2010. A number of conclusions & recommendations were made in this report regarding the Council's role in relation to business accommodation & incubation provision & potential proposals for a new business centre. The report had considered the availability of business incubation space and the role of the Local Enterprise Agencies in Belfast. One of the recommendations was that the Council may want to consider developing proposals for one or more sectorally focused business development centres in areas of the city requiring regeneration. Given that the work on the report was carried out in June 2009 which considered the economic climate and demand at that time, it is considered that there would be merit in getting an update on this needs analysis and there could be a focus on this location in North Belfast, with a view to potential consideration of the former Grove Leisure Centre site as a location for a business development centre or a social economy project.*
- 1.9** *Members may also wish to note that North City Business Park, a local enterprise agency, are considering expansion of their current social economy business park (located at Duncairn Gardens) and potential development of an additional site. Whilst their proposals are still at a relatively early stage and they are considering various sites, they have however indicated an interest in this particular location. Given the current property slump there is likely to be limited demand generally for development sites such as the Grove*

site and whilst there has been this potential interest by North City Business Park it is only an initial expression of interest and equally

there may potentially be other interest in the market. North City Business Park are aware of the Council's procurement & legislative requirements in terms of any disposal; and any recommendations that will subsequently be brought to Committee in relation to disposal or development will be in accordance with those requirements. Disposal by way of a Development Brief may possibly be one option but a more detailed report will be brought back to Committee in the near future with proposals on the way forward.

1.10 *Members may also be aware that Grove Primary & Nursery Schools, located opposite the Grove former leisure centre site are now closed and have been earmarked for disposal. There may, therefore, be scope for joint consideration of disposal/development options of both sites and an initial preliminary discussion has taken place with BELB on this potential.*

2.0 **Key Issues**

2.1 *Demolition of the building had previously been proposed for inclusion in the Capital Programme but it is currently sitting as an uncommitted proposal, pending a decision on funding availability. Demolition was not therefore progressed due there being no identified funding and also on the basis of previous planning advice in relation to the effect demolition might have on any future planning applications.*

2.2 *The cost of demolition would ultimately be borne by the Council either as a direct cost now or by way of a reduced financial return on disposal of the site if purchaser/developer were to undertake demolition.*

2.3 *A previous report commissioned by the Council back in 2009 on business accommodation & incubation space in Belfast recommended that the Council consider developing proposals for a business development centre in areas of the city requiring regeneration. In order to inform the future use options for the subject site and following on from this 2009 report, it is recommended that an updated needs analysis is undertaken, which could focus on this particular location, with a view to potential consideration of the former Grove Leisure Centre site as a location for a business development centre or a social economy project. In addition, the terms of reference for the business case (as detailed above) that is being taken forward for a digital hub could include consideration of specific locations including the subject site.*

2.4 *It is also recommended that officers take forward discussions with BELB regarding any scope for joint consideration of disposal/development options for both the Council's site and the adjacent former schools site.*

2.5 *It is proposed that a future report will be brought back to Committee in the near future with proposals for future use options based upon the updated market analysis on business accommodation; as well as property demand generally; the business case findings in relation to a potential digital hub; the discussions with BELB, and any potential funding opportunities.*

3.0 **Resource Implications**

Finance

- 3.1 ***A provisional estimate of £500,000 for demolition was shown in the uncommitted capital programme. It is expected that the demolition and associated works could be undertaken within this budget estimate cost of £500,000, although this is subject to a detailed invasive survey of the building to identify issues, such as asbestos, which would need to be removed by specialist contractors.***
- 3.2 ***This cost will be offset in part by the ongoing costs of insuring & maintaining the existing building. Any financial return on disposal of the site will reflect that the developer /purchaser does not have to undertake demolition of the building.***

Human Resources

- 3.3 ***Staff resource, primarily from Property & Projects in progressing demolition & future use/ disposal options.***

Asset & Other Implications

- 3.4 ***Demolition of the building should diminish health & safety risks associated with an old vacant building, as well as improving the area from an aesthetic perspective. Consideration of future use disposal and/or development options should have economic, regenerative & financial benefits.***

4.0 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

- 4.1 ***None at this time.***

5.0 **Recommendations**

Members are asked to recommend:

- 5.1 ***To progress with the demolition of the building and proceed with the invitation of tenders for the demolition works and the award of contract to the most economically advantageous offer received.***
- 5.2 ***In order to inform future use options for this site that an updated report be undertaken on a needs analysis for business accommodation and incubation space in Belfast, which would also focus on this particular location.***
- 5.3 ***Officers take forward discussions with BELB regarding any scope for joint consideration of disposal/development options for both the subject site and the adjacent former schools site.***
- 5.4 ***A report will be brought back to Committee in the near future with proposals for future use options for the site based on the foregoing.***

6.0 **Decision Tracking**

- 6.1 ***The Director of Property & Projects to progress the above within 4 months."***

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and noted that the report in relation to future options would be submitted to the Committee after consultation with the locally elected representatives. The Committee agreed also that a report on the costs associated with maintaining the former Maysfield Leisure Centre be submitted for consideration.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Permission to invite tender (Bobbin coffee-shop facility)
Date:	23 rd March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	George Wright – Head of Facilities Management (Ext. 5206/6232)

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p><u>Contractual issues</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Bobbin coffee-shop facility in the City Hall was originally let to the current operator, Castle Catering Ltd, in 2009 on the basis of a one-year contract with an option to extend by a further one year. This option was exercised by the council and the contract was duly extended to 30th September 2011.</p>
1.2	<p>A report was brought to the Committee in June 2011 seeking permission to initiate a public tender process in relation to the franchise as the end of the contract was approaching, but the Committee instead decided to grant a further extension of up to 9 months. This was done primarily on the basis that the ongoing review of City Hall management might produce recommendations in relation to the Bobbin and indeed in respect of catering issues in general, and that these ought to be taken into account before committing the council to a new 2-year arrangement.</p>
1.3	<p>This final offer of extension was made to and accepted by the current operator, however this extension runs out on 30th June 2012. Consequently a decision needs to be made in relation to the operation of the Bobbin facility.</p>
1.4	<p>Members will recall that a report was submitted in November 2011 dealing with the management of City Hall and that, following some discussion, it was agreed that party briefings would be useful in relation to some of the issues raised, including the operation of the Bobbin facility. Unfortunately, and largely due to the many other pressing strategic and financial issues facing the Committee (notably the investment programme and rate-setting etc), it has not yet been possible to schedule these briefings, however the Bobbin issue must now be addressed in the light of the imminent end of the existing contract.</p>

1.5

Internal v. external provision

During previous discussions on this matter some members raised the issue of whether or not externalisation of the Bobbin facility was desirable, and whether or not the facility could potentially be operated internally by the council's own catering staff.

This matter has been considered in some depth by the department and, while it is certainly feasible to do so, there are a number of financial and legal issues which must be recognized if this course were to be pursued, most notably:-

- it is likely that a public tender would produce a significant increase in the amount which any external franchisee would be willing to pay to the council, given that the facility is now well-established and popular with significant goodwill;
- it is clear from the analysis that up to 4 additional staff would be required by BCC to operate the facility (it could not be covered by existing catering staff);
- the cost of employing these staff would be considerably higher than the comparative private sector costs: our analysis shows that even assuming that any contractor complied with all statutory requirements in relation to minimum wage rates, holiday entitlement and SSP etc the cost of employing the staff would be in the order of **£30K** per annum greater for BCC;
- this is caused by the fact that national NJC rates for catering staff are 28% above the minimum wage level, employers' pension contributions are currently at 19% as opposed to zero in the private sector, BCC staff enjoy higher holiday and sick-pay entitlements and nationally-agreed terms (i.e. week-end enhancement and shift allowance) apply in relation to Saturday working etc
- providing in-house staff would therefore mean either trying to ensure a corresponding increase in existing turnover to cover the increased costs (which would be difficult) or potentially moving into a loss-making scenario overall; *and*
- the provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations (TUPE) may apply if the facility were to be brought in-house, meaning a potential forced transfer of some/all of the existing staff from Castle Catering to the council.

1.6

It is also worthy of note that no other catering outlets in buildings owned and operated by the council (notably Malone House, Belfast Castle, Waterfront Hall, Stables Restaurant, Leisure Centres etc) are operated with BCC staff; all are franchised to the private sector and the financial and other issues set out above no doubt help to explain this situation.

It is the view of the department that bringing the facility in-house would not only mean foregoing the potential additional income to be derived from a public tendering exercise but also that the most likely outcome would be to incur a loss in the operation of the facility which would have to be passed on to the rate-payer.

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The key issue is obviously whether the Committee wishes to proceed to invite tenders for the franchise of the Bobbin catering and giftware operation or wishes to provide this service internally.
2.2	<p>The options available to the Committee at this time would appear to be:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to approve the invitation of tenders for the franchise of the Bobbin facility; 2. to offer a further 3-6 month extension of the existing contract to Castle Catering Ltd and to expedite the 'Management of City Hall' report and recommendations; <i>or</i> 3. to allow the existing contract to expire on 30/6/2012 and to agree that the facility be operated as a council-run operation thereafter, staffed by additional BCC staff. <p>The direction of the Committee is therefore sought.</p>

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	<p>If the facility is publicly tendered there is a likelihood that the annual fee payable to the council will increase, although it is impossible to forecast by how much. If the facility is brought in-house it will require additional staff (2 x full-time and 2 x part-time) costing an estimated £66,002 (incl. on-costs but excluding overtime) per annum and these additional costs – unless accompanied by a very significant increase in turnover – must be met from the existing operating profit and may therefore result in the council incurring a loss.</p> <p>It should also be noted that no provision has been made in the 2012/13 revenue estimates for these staff, although this could of course be remedied in 2013/14 and beyond.</p>

4.0	Recommendations
4.1	The Committee is recommended to adopt option 1 as set out above on the basis of contractual and cost effectiveness.

5.0	Decision Tracking
<p>If a decision is taken to publicly tender the franchise the relevant documentation is ready and the invitation to tender will appear within 4-6 weeks. Alternatively, if a decision is taken to internalise the facility the recruitment process must commence immediately and be given a high priority.</p>	

6.0	Key to Abbreviations
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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Connswater Community Greenway – Governance Review
Date:	23 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks & Leisure
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks & Leisure

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) Scheme is a £32 million investment in East Belfast. The project has been developed by the East Belfast Partnership (EPB) and is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Belfast City Council, Rivers Agency/DARD and the Department for Social Development.
1.2	In 2007 Belfast City Council (BCC) agreed to manage and maintain the CCG once delivered for a period of 40 years. In 2010, it was agreed that in order to reduce the financial risk to the project, BCC would become the grant holder, working in partnership with East Belfast Partnership (EBP) to deliver the scheme.
1.3	The governance structure for the scheme was adjusted in 2010 to reflect the Council becoming the grant holder as grant holder, supported by a management agreement between EBP and BCC. In 2011 the key stakeholders agreed to review the CCG programme governance structure, to better reflect accountability and risk, decision making and controls and the partnership relationship between BCC and EBP. The governance paper attached at Appendix 1 reflects the draft governance structure and if approved will supersede the 2010 structure. This will be supported by a revised management agreement between EBP and the Council. This will require approval from the Council, EBP, Big Lottery Fund, Rivers Agency/DARD and DSD.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Connswater Community Greenway programme will be delivered as an integral part of the Council's Investment Programme. The decision making authority will follow the Council's Scheme of Delegation with strategic direction and decisions being made by the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
2.2	At Officer level decisions will be made through the authority delegated to the Corporate Management Team of the Council and the Senior Responsible Owner

2.3	<p>of the CCG, the Director of Parks & Leisure.</p> <p>Authority will also be delegated to the Programme Manager (the Assistant Director of Parks & Leisure) to oversee the operational management of the Greenway projects as chair of a programme board consisting of three strands managed by a Communication & Engagement Team, a Capital Works/ Land Assembly Team and a Management & Maintenance Coordination Team as is necessary for the successful completion of the Greenway project. Each level of delegated authority will be required to work within financial and project tolerances that will require exception reporting to the CCG Oversight Group should the project move outside these tolerances.</p>
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3	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Financial</u> The review of governance does not impact on existing budgets established for the delivery of CCG. The proposals will provide robust financial management and risk management arrangements. Independent assurance on the proposals has been provided by CIPFA.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> No impact</p> <p><u>Assets</u> The Connswater Community Greenway will create a 9km linear park through East Belfast, following the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers, connecting the open and green spaces and remediating the Connswater River itself. The Greenway will reconnect the communities of East Belfast and restore the rivers as community assets. It will create vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible parkland for leisure, recreation and community events and activities</p>
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4	<p>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</p> <p>There are no equality implications.</p>
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5	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Committee is asked approve the new governance arrangements for the dedelivery of the Connswater Community Greenway and Flood Alleviation Scheme.</p>
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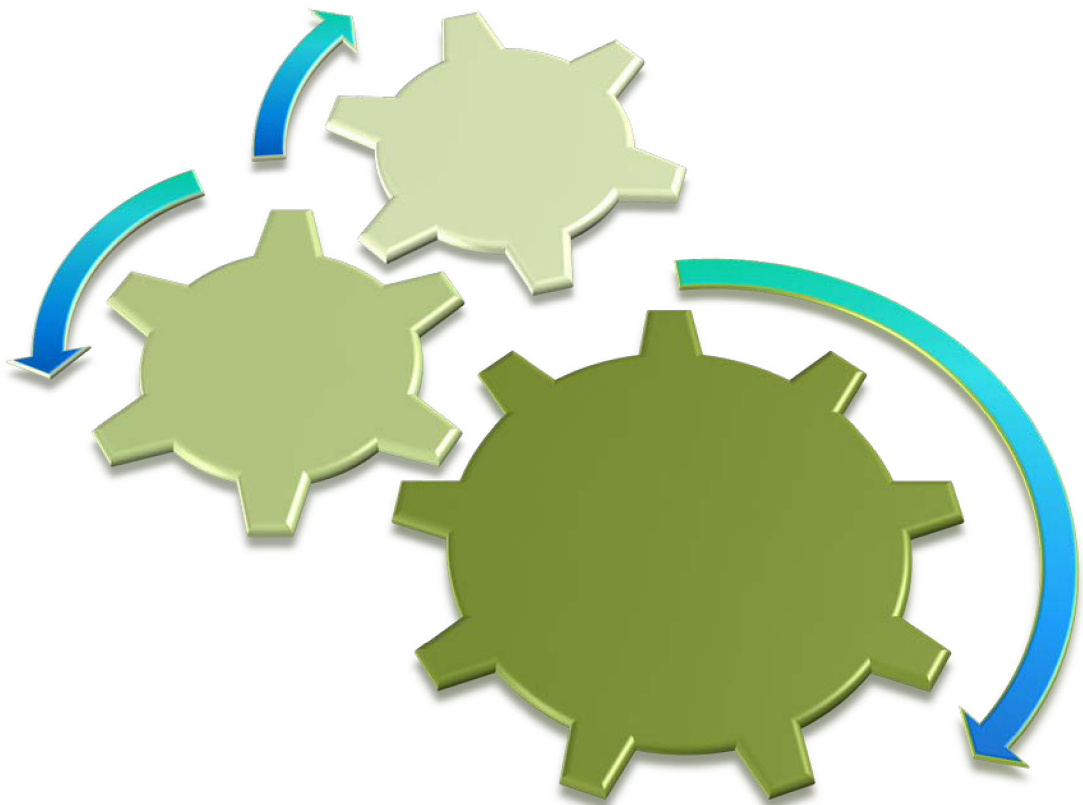
6	<p>Decision Tracking</p> <p>The responsible officer for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations will be the Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure.</p>
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7	<p>Key to Abbreviations</p> <p>CCG Connswater Community Greenway EPB East Belfast Partnership DSD Department of Social Development DARD Department of Agriculture and Rural Development CIPFA Chartered Institute Public Finance and Accountancy</p>
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8	<p>Documents Attached</p> <p>Appendix 1 Draft CCG Governance Arrangements</p>
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Connswater Community Greenway

Governance Arrangements
DRAFT



Contents

■ Introduction	2
■ Governance Structure	5
■ Principles for Working in Partnership	6
■ Terms of Reference	8
■ Project Risk Management Framework	20
■ Project Assurance Framework	21

Appendices

■ Programme Delivery Progress Report	ii
■ Programme Delivery Proposal Outline	iv
■ Protocols for Connswater Community Greenway	vi
■ CCG Key Performance Indicators	viii

Introduction

The Connswater Community Greenway is a £32 million investment in East Belfast. The project has been developed by the East Belfast Partnership and is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Belfast City Council and the Department for Social Development.

The Connswater Community Greenway will create a 9km linear park through East Belfast, following the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers, connecting the open and green spaces and remediating the Connswater River itself. The Greenway will reconnect the communities of East Belfast and restore the rivers as community assets. It will create vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible parkland for leisure, recreation and community events and activities.

It will provide immediate benefit to the 40,000 people living in the wards adjacent to the river. Specifically, the Connswater Community Greenway will directly improve the living environment, reinstating a valuable amenity for local people and provide opportunities for improving health and well being. The Project will act as a catalyst for physical and economic development and improve access and connections for local communities to open spaces.

There are a number of open spaces along the course of the river which are underused because they are inaccessible, unsafe and unconnected to the communities in their hinterland. These people have turned their back on the river which is currently dirty and smelly and inhibits positive uses. This Project will deliver benefits from the Castlereagh Hills to Belfast Lough and beyond, turning a seriously underused, and at intervals, blight on the landscape into a community asset that will become an immediate living landmark.

Vision

The vision is to develop a safe, accessible, sustainable greenway which is an inspirational living landmark that improves the quality of life for the people of East Belfast, now and for future generations.

Objectives

The key objectives identified for the Connswater Community Greenway are to:

- Improve the access, safety and quality of green and open space in East Belfast for the people of this community, improving the living environment for present and future generations.
- Remediate the Connswater River and transform it into a community asset for East Belfast.
- Increase the pedestrian and cycle facilities and links in East Belfast and provide alternative and healthier transport options.
- Improve health and well-being through providing a better living environment and enhanced exercise and recreation opportunities, accessible by all.
- Provide vision, resources, hope and a sense of pride and identity for communities in East Belfast.
- Build and strengthen relationships between fragmented local communities
- Develop connections and linkages between buildings, people and places in East Belfast.
- Provide space for walking trails, heritage trails, public art and in which wildlife can thrive.
- Realise the potential of the river as an educational asset for current and future generations

Outcomes

The Outcomes of developing the Connswater Community Greenway for the people of East Belfast will be:

- A stronger, safer community.
- An improved urban environment.
- Healthier and more active people and communities.
- Better life chances.
- Better access to training and development.

Who will benefit?

We are primarily improving the quality of life for the people of East Belfast now and for future generations. These include:

- 40,835 residents who live in the wards bordering the Connswater River,
- The pupils attending the 26 schools in the proximity of the river
- Visitors and tourists to East Belfast / Belfast
- Those who chose to work and invest in East Belfast
- Future generations in East Belfast

Key Physical Outputs

- A 9km linear park, a wildlife corridor
- Connecting 124Ha of open space
- 43 new bridges
- Serving 26 schools and colleges
- 19kms of foot and cycle paths
- 5kms of clean rivers
- 6 tourism and heritage trails
- A civic square

CCG Governance History

In 2005 - 2006 East Belfast Partnership (EBP) developed the concept for the Connswater Community Greenway (CCG). In November 2007, East Belfast Partnership secured £32.5m funding for the Connswater Community Greenway project, including £23.5m from the Big Lottery's Living Landmarks programme. EBP were one of three organisations in the UK, and the only Northern Ireland project, to secure Living Landmarks funding. Flood alleviation works, at an estimated cost of £11m, were incorporated into the project after serious flooding in east Belfast in 2007 and 2008.

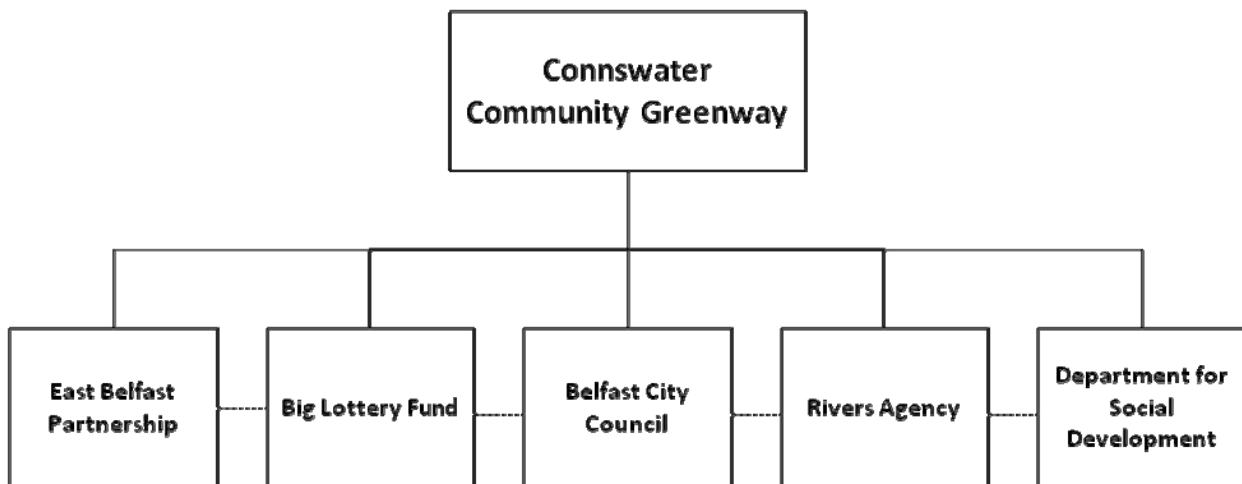
In 2007 Belfast City Council (BCC) agreed to manage and maintain the CCG once delivered for a period of 40 years. In 2010, it was agreed that in order to reduce the financial risk to the project, BCC would become the grant holder, working in partnership with EBP to deliver the scheme. The project managers for the construction of the CCG and Flood Alleviation Scheme are a consultancy team led by McAdam Design.

The governance structure was adjusted in 2010 to reflect BCC as grant holder, supported by a management agreement between EBP and BCC. In 2011 key stakeholders agreed to review the CCG programme governance structure, to reflect accountability and risk, decision making and controls and the partnership relationship between BCC and EBP during the construction of the Connswater Community Greenway and Flood Alleviation Scheme. This governance paper reflects the revised governance structure and will supersede the 2010 structure, supported by a revised management agreement between EBP and BCC. This will require approval from BCC, EBP/CCGT, Big Lottery Fund, Rivers Agency/DARD and DSD.

The CCG is integral to the delivery of East Belfast Partnership’s regeneration strategy. EBP has delegated responsibility to the Connswater Community Greenway Trust (CCGT) to ensure that working in Partnership with BCC, the CCG outcomes are delivered and opportunities maximised to improve the quality of life for local people. The CCGT will report to the EBP on a quarterly basis against agreed CCG KPIs as listed in Appendix 4.

Connswater Community Greenway – Key Stakeholders

The Greenway is funded from a variety of sources and the following diagram illustrates the five key stakeholders in the development of the Connswater Community Greenway.



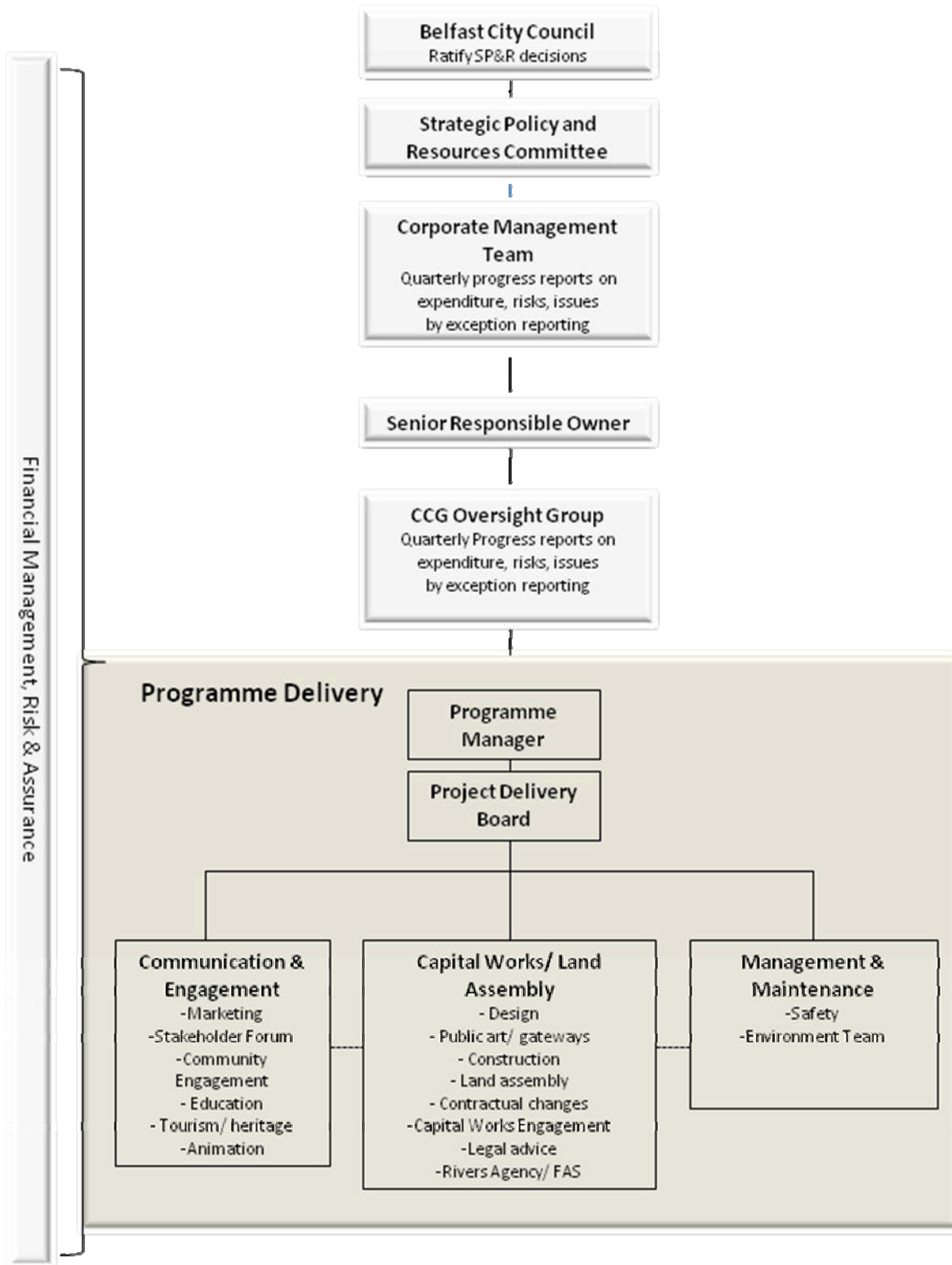
Focus of this document

Governance is the control framework through which programmes deliver their change objectives and remain within corporate visibility and control.

A programme needs clear and open governance if it is to be successful. It will need to negotiate the resources it wants, manage the resources made available to it and adjust to changing organisational contexts whilst delivering to its agreed outcomes and benefits.

The focus of this document is therefore on the governance framework and controls put in place to manage the delivery of the Connswater Community Greenway programme.

Connswater Community Greenway Project Governance Structure



Principles for Partnership Working

In the delivery of the Connswater Community Greenway, Belfast City Council is the accountable body, ensuring economic, physical and social regeneration are delivered efficiently and to the appropriate legal, procurement and financial standards.

Given the genesis of the project, this will be based upon appropriate consultation with East Belfast Partnership Board as a unique partner, as laid out in the governance framework.

With this, we will recognise each other's different organisational culture and practice, as well as appreciate each other's distinct contribution. As a common purpose, both partners agree we:

1. Want what is right for the community
2. Want the development to become sustainable in its own right
3. Want to optimise existing assets and resources
4. Need each other and will strive for consensus.

To deliver the maximum benefits from the Connswater Community Greenway, together we will build collaborative relationships, communicate in an open and transparent manner, be open to compromise and deal with conflicts promptly.

For this unique partnership, the principles for governing the Connswater Community Greenway project are:

- Focussing on the purpose of the project and the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a shared vision for the local area;
- Partners working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions, roles and responsibilities;
- Promoting values for the partnership and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- Taking informed transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- Developing the capacity and capability of the partnership team to be effective and ensuring that all have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively;
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability;
- Ultimately, being accountable to the authority of the Council in fulfilling its legal, financial and audit responsibilities.

We expect the two organisations to:

- Understand the needs of the local community, visitors and stakeholders of the CCG and prioritise these;
- Agree, own, promote and communicate a shared vision;
- Work together in a transparent manner and behave in an open manner;
- Adhere to agreed planning, risk management and decision-making processes;
- Regularly monitor partnership processes to review whether they are effective and efficient;

- Plan and allocate our combined resources to deliver more effective and efficient programmes;
- Demonstrate the actions that we carry out produce the intended outcomes and objectives; and
- Achieve better outcomes made possible only through working together.

Both organisations are committed to dealing with conflict promptly and constructively. In the first instance, matters are to be raised at the Project Delivery Board for resolution and, when necessary, with the Senior Responsible Officer and the CCG Oversight Group.

The appendix includes a detailed protocol on specific service standards. These are included in draft format and will be finalised at an early meeting of the Project Delivery Board, for presentation to the CCG Oversight Group.

Terms of Reference

Delegated Authority

The Connswater Community Greenway programme will be delivered as an integral part of the Council's Investment Programme. The decision making authority will follow the Council's Scheme of Delegation with strategic direction and decisions being made by the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

At Officer level decisions will be made through the delegated authority of the Corporate Management Team of the Council and the Senior Responsible Owner of the CCG, the Director of Parks & Leisure.

Authority will be delegated to the Programme Manager (the Assistant Director of Parks & Leisure) to oversee the operational management of the Greenway projects. The Programme Manager can subsequently delegate authority to the Communication & Engagement Team, Capital Works/ Land Assembly Team and the Management & Maintenance Coordination Team as is necessary for the successful completion of the Greenway project. Each level of delegated authority will be required to work within financial and project tolerances that will require exception reporting to the CCG Oversight Group should the project move outside these tolerances.

Membership of Groups

There Terms of reference for the various groups of the CCG Governance Structure are constructed of the following categories:

- **Membership** - defined as those required to contribute to the strategic and operational decisions that will ensure the successful delivery of the programme
- **Reporting Role** - defined as those representing the Project Delivery Board that are required to attend all meetings to report progress on work streams
- **Advisory Role** - defined as the technical advisors that will attend when required and give technical advice that will enable the appropriate decisions to be made.

The persons required to attend each group on this basis are indicated below.

Corporate Management Team

This is the programme sponsoring group representing those managers who are responsible for:

- The investment decisions
- Defining the direction of the programme
- Ensuring the ongoing overall alignment of the programme with the strategic direction of the organisation.

Accountability for the programme is delegated to the SRO from the Corporate Management Team. The sponsoring group supports the SRO and is formally involved with:

- Authorising the vision
- Providing and ensuring the organisational context for the programme
- Authorising the programme mandate and programme definition
- Authorising funding for the programme (subject to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Council approval)
- Resolving strategic and directional issues
- Authorising the progress of the programme against strategic objectives
- Leading by example to implement the values of the programme
- Providing continued commitment and endorsement in support of the programme

objectives at executive level

- Appointing, advising and supporting the SRO
- Authorising delivery and sign-off of the programme.

Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) – Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure, Belfast City Council

The Senior Responsible Owner will have full delegated decision making responsibility and is accountable for the programme, ensuring that it meets its objectives and realises the expected benefits.

The SRO's key responsibilities are:

- Creating and communicating the vision for the programme
- Providing clear leadership and direction throughout its life
- Securing the investment required to set up and run the programme
- Ensuring the programme delivers a coherent capability, achieves its strategic outcomes and realises its benefits
- Establishing programme governance arrangements and ensuring appropriate assurance is in place
- Ensuring the viability of the business case
- Maintaining an interface with key stakeholders and liaising directly with CCGT and the NI Rivers Agency, keeping them engaged and informed
- Monitoring the key strategic risks facing the programme
- Maintaining alignment of the programme with the organisation's strategic direction
- Commissioning audit and assurance reviews
- Ensuring the effectiveness and performance of the programme
- Appointing, chairing an setting priorities for the Oversight Group
- Ensure all appropriate persons comply with the terms and conditions of funding

CCG Oversight Group

Membership

Andrew Hassard (BCC) – Chair & Senior Responsible Owner
 Gerry Millar (BCC)
 Ciaran Quigley (BCC)
 Ronan Cregan (BCC)
 Maurice Kinhead (EBP)
 Kyle Alexander (Chair of CCGT)
 Mark O'Donnell (DSD)
 Pat Aldridge (Rivers Agency)
 Big Lottery

Reporting Role

Rose Crozier (BCC)
 Bob Beggs (BCC)
 Wendy Langham (EBP)

Advisory Role

Michael Stanley (BCC)
 Colin Campbell (BCC)
 Philip Hynds (BCC)
 Emma McCracken (CPD)

McAdam Design

Meeting format & decision making

Meetings will be scheduled on a quarterly basis to discuss progress through monitoring and evaluation reports, exception reports, financial/ expenditure reports and changes to the project. When required, emergency meetings may be called by the Senior Responsible Owner at short notice.

While the Senior Responsible Owner will have full decision making authority within the remit set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the SRO will seek to gain consensus on decisions with the CCG Oversight Group. When consensus cannot be reached, the Senior Responsible Owner will make the final decision.

Responsibilities

This is the Programme Delivery Board with responsibility for the delivery of the Connswater Community Greenway programme. The board is established by the SRO and its prime purpose is to drive the programme forward to deliver the outcomes and benefits. Responsibilities will include:

- Defining the acceptable risk profile and risk thresholds for the programme and its constituent projects
- Ensuring the programme delivers within its agreed boundaries, on time and within budget
- Resolving strategic and directional issues between projects which need the input and agreement of senior stakeholders to ensure progress of the programme
- Assuring the integrity of benefit profiles and realisation plans
- Maintaining focus on the development, maintenance and achievement of the blueprint
- Providing assurance for operational stability and effectiveness through the programme delivery
- Give appropriate advice to the SRO and the Council's Corporate Management Team to enable fully informed decisions to be made that help ensure the successful completion of the Connswater Community Greenway and associated work streams
- Within the authority delegated by Council, make recommendations to Corporate Management Team on contract decisions concerning negotiations, dispute and termination
- Approve the annual work plans of the 3 project teams
- Receive monitoring and evaluation reports from the Programme Manager
- Discuss CCG issues as reported by exception reports from the project board and make recommendations, when necessary, to the Councils Corporate Management Team
- Approve quarterly update reports for bring to Corporate Management Team and SP&R Committee
- Communicate project progress to key stakeholders
- Ensure the development of the CCG is progressing towards achieving the original objectives of the Greenway project
- Ensure all appropriate persons comply with the terms and conditions of funding

Assurance & Risk

- To agree the risk management framework for the programme
- To set the risk appetite for the programme
- To agree the key programme risks
- To review the key programme risks quarterly
- To receive quarterly assurance from the Programme Manager that programme risks are being managed.

- To agree the assurance framework for the programme
- To specify the areas where independent assurance is required and how it is to be obtained
- To receive independent assurance reports and to ensure that any recommendations arising are implemented promptly

Financial Management

- To ensure that immediate action is taken in the event of receiving reports that the programme is at risk of exceeding the approved limits and keeping funders informed as appropriate
- To ensure that there are appropriate escalation procedures
- To approve the scheme of delegation for the programme
- To approve the budget allocations for the programme within the terms and conditions of funding and on the basis of the project work plans
- To ensure that the expenditure is kept within approved limits and is regular
- To ensure that all elements of the budget have an assigned budget manager
- To review financial reports quarterly along with the progress reports and consider any issues arising regarding variances
- To agree the change control process for the project taking into account terms and conditions of funding in addition to significance of the change
- To receive recommendations for change from the Project Delivery Board, considering the financial implications of changes and the options available
- To make recommendations on change control to funders and Council who must authorise such changes
- To define the financial reporting requirements of the group (level of analysis / detail, cashflow, forecasting, commitments, profiling, narrative, links with progress report, information on early warnings / compensation events etc)
- To keep the risk and contingency sum for the project under review, taking timely action where appropriate
- To ensure that the CCG asset is appropriately accounted for
- To seek assurances that the necessary financial returns are being provided to the funders
- To ensure that audit requirements are met including LGA and audits on behalf of funders

Programme Manager – Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure, Belfast City Council

The Programme Manager is responsible for leading and managing the setting up of the programme through to delivery of the outcomes/new capabilities/benefits and closure. The programme manager has primary responsibility for establishing governance arrangements. Responsibilities include:

- Day to day management of the programme
- Being day to day agent on behalf of SRO
- Planning and designing the programme
- Developing and implementing the programme’s governance framework
- Effective coordination of the projects and their interdependencies
- Managing and resolving any risks or other issues that may arise
- Maintaining overall integrity and coherence of the programme
- Maintaining the programme’s budget, monitoring the expenditures and costs against benefits as the programme progresses
- Facilitating the appointment of individuals to the project delivery teams

- Facilitating the development of the blueprint
- Ensuring outputs meet the requirements in line with the programme blueprint and projects dossier – are of appropriate quality, on time and within budget
- Managing the performance of the programme team
- Managing the efficient allocation of resources
- Managing internal and external suppliers to the programme
- Managing communication and engagement with stakeholders
- Initiating extra activities and other management interventions wherever gaps in the programme are identified or issues arise
- Reporting progress at regular intervals to the SRO
- Ensure all appropriate persons comply with the terms and conditions of funding.

CCG Project Delivery Board

Membership

Rose Crozier – Chair & Programme Manager
 Wendy Langham (EBP)
 Gerry Millar (BCC)
 Fiona Holdsworth (BCC)
 Philip Hynds (BCC)
 Rosaleen Curran (Big Lottery Fund)

Meeting format & decision making

Meetings will be scheduled on a monthly basis to discuss progress through monitoring and evaluation reports, exception reports, financial/ expenditure reports and changes to the project. When required, emergency meetings may be called by the Programme Manager at short notice.

While the Programme Manager will have full decision making authority within the remit set out by the Senior Responsible Owner, they will seek to gain consensus on decisions with the Project Delivery Board. When consensus cannot be reached, the Programme Manager will make the final decision.

Responsibilities

This is the project board working with the Programme Manager responsible for the day to day management and delivery of the Connswater Community Greenway programme. The board is established by the Programme Manager and its prime purpose is to manage the delivery of multiple projects within the programme, the delivery of the outcomes and benefits to plan and within budget. Responsibilities will include:

- Supporting the Programme Manager
- Developing the programme plan and supporting project plans
- Identifying and managing risks
- Delivering outputs to agreed plans
- Managing interdependencies between projects, resolving issues and conflicts
- Monitoring and evaluating performance against agreed targets and outcomes
- Assuring the integrity of benefit profiles and realisation plans
- Maintaining focus on the development, maintenance and achievement of the blueprint
- Providing assurance for operational stability and effectiveness through the programme delivery
- Give appropriate advice to the SRO and the CCG Oversight Group to enable fully informed

decisions to be made that help ensure the successful completion of the Connswater Community Greenway and associated work streams

- Approve the annual work plans of the Communication & Engagement Group, Capital Works Group and Management & Maintenance Coordination Group before referring to the CCG Oversight Group
- Coordinate the delivery of the work plans of the 3 project groups and ensure any changes give due consideration of the other strands of work within the programme and the Council
- Receive monitoring and evaluation reports from the project groups
- Discuss CCG issues as reported through exception reports from the project groups and make recommendations, when necessary, to the Councils Corporate Management Team
- Prepare quarterly update reports for bringing to the CCG Oversight Group, Corporate Management Team and SP&R Committee
- Agree a range of KPI's

Assurance & Risk

- To review the initial Group risk registers and risk action plans
- To receive monthly assurances from the Chair of each Group as to the management of risk
- To decide which risks from the Group risk registers should be included in the Programme risk register
- To identify, evaluate and manage the key Programme risks
- To review the Programme risk register and risk action plans at least monthly
- To provide the relevant Council Directors with the Programme risk register for the purpose of informing their departmental risk registers
- To report to the CCG Oversight Group on programme risk management quarterly
- To provide the CCG Oversight Group with quarterly assurance that programme risks are being managed.
- To develop and implement the assurance framework for the programme
- To receive independent assurance reports and to ensure that any recommendations arising are implemented promptly

Financial Management

- To Liaise and seek approval from funders and Oversight Board for programme budgetary allocations within the terms and conditions of funding
- BSM to prepare the budget in line with agreed objectives of the programme and the objectives and project plans for each of the 3 main projects / groups
- BSM to prepare the budget on the basis of an agreed programme of work for the construction elements and over the life of the project for non-construction elements
- PDB review and agree the budget allocation in line with objectives of the programme and the objectives and project plans of each of the 3 main projects / groups
- Budget Expenditure Lines to be agreed in terms of what expenditure may be coded to each line and developed in line with objectives of the programme
- To ensure that there is a robust system in place for completely and accurately recording income and expenditure on the project
- Develop a process for the Costing of Risk and Contingency that is in line with best practice (as advised by PMU with reference to any requirements of NEC option A)
- To keep the risk and contingency sum for the project under review, taking action where appropriate
-
- Change Control process to be documented, agreed and approved by Funders and Oversight Group / CMT

- BSM to develop the financial procedures for the Programme as whole, including those for use by the work groups and PDB in line with BCC and Funders requirements to include:
- Reconciliation processes, ordering, goods receipting, approval of invoices, requisitions, segregation of duty etc
- Limits to be set for any virements of spend between and within group allocations
- Level of delegated authority to be clearly defined including procurement, virement, reporting
- Financial Reporting Requirements to be defined and developed
- To ensure that the expenditure is kept within approved limits approved by the CCG Oversight Group
- To ensure that all elements of the budget have an assigned budget manager
- To review financial reports monthly along with the progress reports and consider any issues arising regarding variances
- To define what is a significant variance (in absolute and % terms)
- To agree the change control process for the project taking into account terms and conditions of funding in addition to significance of the change
- To receive recommendations for change from the Chair of each Project Team / Group, considering the financial implications of changes and the options available
- To decide on whether to accept or reject the recommendation and to refer the matter to CCG Oversight Group for decision?
- To provide the CCG oversight group / CMT with their financial reporting requirements as defined by them
- To provide the funders with the required financial returns
- To ensure that grant claims are complete, accurate, timely and appropriately approved
- Anything re closing the project? Or closing the construction stage of it?
- To ensure that procurement rules and procedures are developed that are compliant with terms and conditions of funding and Councils policy.
- To ensure that payments are made in compliance with the terms and conditions of contract and council policy
- To ensure that the filing system for financial documents is clarified and agreed (e.g. who keeps original invoices?)
- To escalate financial issues to the CCG Oversight Group as set out in the defined escalation procedure

Communication & Engagement Group

Membership

Wendy Langham (EBP) - Chair
 Barry Donaldson (Castlereagh Borough Council)
 Steven Stockman (BCC)
 Caroline Dixon (BCC)
 Victoria Law (BCC)
 Amanda Doherty (Big Lottery Fund)
 BCC – Community Services
 BCC – Development Department

Advisory Role/ Reporting Function

Lynne McCreery (BCC)
 Sean Brannigan (EBP)
 Heather Chesney (EBP)
 Stephanie Meenagh
 BIG
 Rivers Agency

Meeting format & decision making

Meetings will be scheduled on a monthly basis to discuss progress against the agreed plan of work. As deemed appropriate by the Chair, the Group may be sub divided into small working groups to undertake discrete pieces of work.

The Communication & Engagement Team will have full decision making authority within the parameters agreed with the Programme Manager. Decisions will be sought through consensus; when consensus cannot be reached, the Chair of the Team will refer the final decision to the Programme Manager.

List of key responsibilities

- Reporting to the CCG Oversight Group through the Programme Manager and Project Board, responsible for the CCG Communication and engagement during construction.
- Developing a communication and engagement plan for CCG construction phase, with annual plans for approval by the CCG Oversight Group including KPIs.
- Providing monthly progress reports against agreed annual plan to the CCG Project Board.
- Monitor progress against agreed KPIs and provide information for CCG interim and annual reports.
- Develop and agree protocols for communication and information sharing between key partners.
- Promote CCG and engage with stakeholders through an agreed marketing, communications and engagement strategy and campaigns, including social and digital media, keeping them informed of the construction programme and progress.
- Support ongoing community and stakeholder engagement through public and stakeholder meetings, CCG outreach centres, CCG Activity Grants Programme, volunteering opportunities.
- Develop and manage a CCG education programme for schools and colleges, including a small education grants programme.
- Develop a greener, cleaner area through the support and delivery of training in amenity horticulture, including volunteering opportunities and community gardens.
- Work with stakeholders and the community to improve the quality of the Connswater, Knock and Loop river corridors and achieve fair ecological status.
- Develop Tourism and Heritage opportunities along the CCG, working with key stakeholders, including establishing CCG trails, signage and interpretation, linking with other attractions.
- Support and co-ordinate the positive use and animation of the CCG area by customers and suppliers through activities, events and programmes.
- Encourage and support the use of CCG and Greenways for physical activity through walking and cycling activities.
- Secure additional funding as required.
- Work with BCC Good Relations and Community Safety Team to ensure CCG is a safe, accessible place for everyone to enjoy.
- Work in liaison / coordinate with the Capital Works / Land Assembly Group and the Management and Maintenance Group to ensure the design is practical to deliver the CCG outcomes and support future use and long term management and maintenance of the CCG.

Assurance & Risk

- To identify, evaluate and manage the key Group risks
- To nominate team risks for inclusion in the Programme risk register
- To review the Group risk register and risk action plans at least monthly
- To report monthly to the Project Delivery Board on team risk management
- To provide the Project Delivery Board with monthly assurance that Group risks are being

managed.

- To implement the assurance framework for the programme
- To promptly implement any recommendations arising from independent assurance reports

Financial Management

- Financial Reporting requirements to be defined by PDB in the context of the overall programme requirements and financial procedures
- To ensure that expenditure is kept within approved limits and is regular, i.e. the approved budget for the approved project plan
- To comply with financial procedures for the project
- To review financial reports monthly and to provide explanations to the PDB, in the required format, for significant variances
- To provide forecast position as required
- When change control events are identified to comply with agreed processes that require, financial implications to be identified along with options and presented to the PDB
- To procure in line with agreed procedures and to retain evidence of following procurement procedures (quotations etc)
- To support the BSM in the preparation of financial reports (e.g. commitments reporting)

Capital Works Group

Membership

Gerry Millar (BCC) - Chair
 Bob Beggs (BCC)
 Paul Barr (BCC)
 Colin Campbell (BCC)
 Maurice Kinkead (EBP)
 Gerry McAreavey (DSD)
 Alasdair MacDonald (EC Harris/ Big Lottery Fund)
 Stephen Dawson (Rivers Agency)

Advisory Role/ Reporting Function

Wendy Langham (EBP)
 Emma McCracken (Central Procurement)
 Alastair McDonald (Jacobs)
 Employers Agent

Meeting format & decision making

Meetings will be scheduled on a monthly basis to discuss progress against the agreed plan of work. As deemed appropriate by the Chair, the Group may be sub divided into small working groups to undertake discrete pieces of work.

The Capital Works/ Land Assembly Team will have full decision making authority within the parameters agreed with the Programme Manager. Decisions will be sought through consensus; when consensus cannot be reached, the Chair of the Group will refer the final decision to the Programme Manager.

The Director of Property & Projects, Gerry Millar, has been given full delegated authority to negotiate the CCG contract, including termination if required.

Responsibilities

- Reporting to the CCG Oversight Group through the Programme Manager, responsible for

managing the successful delivery of the CCG construction contract

- Develop an annual plan to be approved by the CCG Project Delivery Board for the activities to be undertaken within the remit of the capital works of the CCG project.
- Report by exception on a monthly basis to the CCG Project Delivery Board, through the Programme Manager, on the progress of the project and any changes to the design brief for noting.
- Undertake contract negotiations as required
- Report to the Programme Manager and the CCG Project Delivery Board, when appropriate, any tolerance threats to the successful completion of the project.
- Undertake communication exercises with residents and land owners about upcoming construction work.
- Consider reports from McAdam Design and give appropriate instruction to McAdam Design to ensure the successful completion of the CCG project.
- Ensure capital works decisions are made within the agreed 2 week time constraint as per agreed in the construction contract.
- Participate in the BCC Gateway Reviews and ensure actions and recommendations are addressed in a timely manner.
- Adequately manage any construction related risks.
- Approve final design plans, ensuring they do not stray outside the agreed construction contract.
- Undertake the design and commissioning of public art along the Greenway, in liaison with the Communication & Engagement and Management & Maintenance Groups
- Ensure regular communication with the Rivers Agency over areas of overlap with the Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Work in liaison with the Management & Maintenance Coordination Group and the Communication & Engagement Group to ensure the design brief is practical for the long term management and maintenance of the Greenway

Assurance & Risk

- To determine whether the use of Monte Carlo analysis / P2net is appropriate, bearing in mind contractual terms and conditions, and to employ these methods if appropriate
- When provided, to review the contractors risk register and to take action as appropriate
- To identify, evaluate and manage the key Group risks
- To ensure that any programme risks that are fully / partly owned by the Rivers Agency are communicated and agreed with the Rivers Agency
- To nominate Group risks for inclusion in the programme risk register
- To review the Group risk register and risk action plans at least monthly
- To report monthly to the Project Delivery Board on Group risk management
- To provide the Project Delivery Board with monthly assurance that Group risks are being managed.
- To implement the assurance framework for the programme
- To promptly implement any recommendations arising from independent assurance reports

Financial Management

To be discussed, including contractual payments

Financial Reporting requirements to be defined by PDB in the context of the overall programme requirements and financial procedures

- To ensure that expenditure is kept within approved limits, i.e. the approved budget for the approved project plan

- To comply with financial procedures for the project
- To review financial reports monthly and to provide explanations to the PDB, in the required format, for significant variances
- To provide forecast position as required
- When change control events are identified to comply with agreed processes that require, financial implications to be identified along with options and presented to the PDB
- To procure in line with agreed procedures and to retain evidence of following procurement procedures (quotations etc)

Financial management – specific to construction contracts:

- To approve payments to contractors in line with agreed PMU procedures and to retain all necessary evidence
- To process requests for payments to contractors in compliance with terms and conditions of contract
- To monitor timeliness of payments to contractors
- To keep the risk and contingency sum for the project under review, highlighting to the PDB / PM where action is required

Management & Maintenance Coordination Group

Membership

Fiona Holdsworth (BCC) – Chair
 Maurice Kinkead (EBP)
 Steven Stockman (BCC)
 Gareth McKibbin (Roads Service)
 David Miskelly (Roads Service)
 Castlereagh Borough Council
 Rivers Agency

Advisory Role/ Reporting Function

Bob Beggs (BCC)
 Wendy Langham (EBP)

Meeting format & decision making

Meetings will be scheduled on a monthly basis to discuss progress against the agreed plan of work. As deemed appropriate by the Chair, the Group may be sub divided into small working groups to undertake discrete pieces of work.

The Management & Maintenance Coordination Team will have full decision making authority within the parameters agreed with the Programme Manager. Decisions will be sought through consensus; when consensus cannot be reached, the Chair of the Team will refer the final decision to the Programme Manager.

Responsibilities

- Ensure the coordination of the management and maintenance plans for the Greenway
- To ensure the BCC 40 year management and maintenance plan is communicated to the relevant parties to ensure the smooth operation of the Greenway pre and post construction
- Work in liaison with the Capital Works Team and the Communication & Engagement Team to ensure the design brief is practical for the long term management and maintenance of the Greenway
- To ensure that the design of the Greenway gives due consideration to the safe use by the

public and employees once the construction is complete

- Ensure that the environmental aspect of the Greenway, both during and post construction is given full consideration.

Assurance & Risk

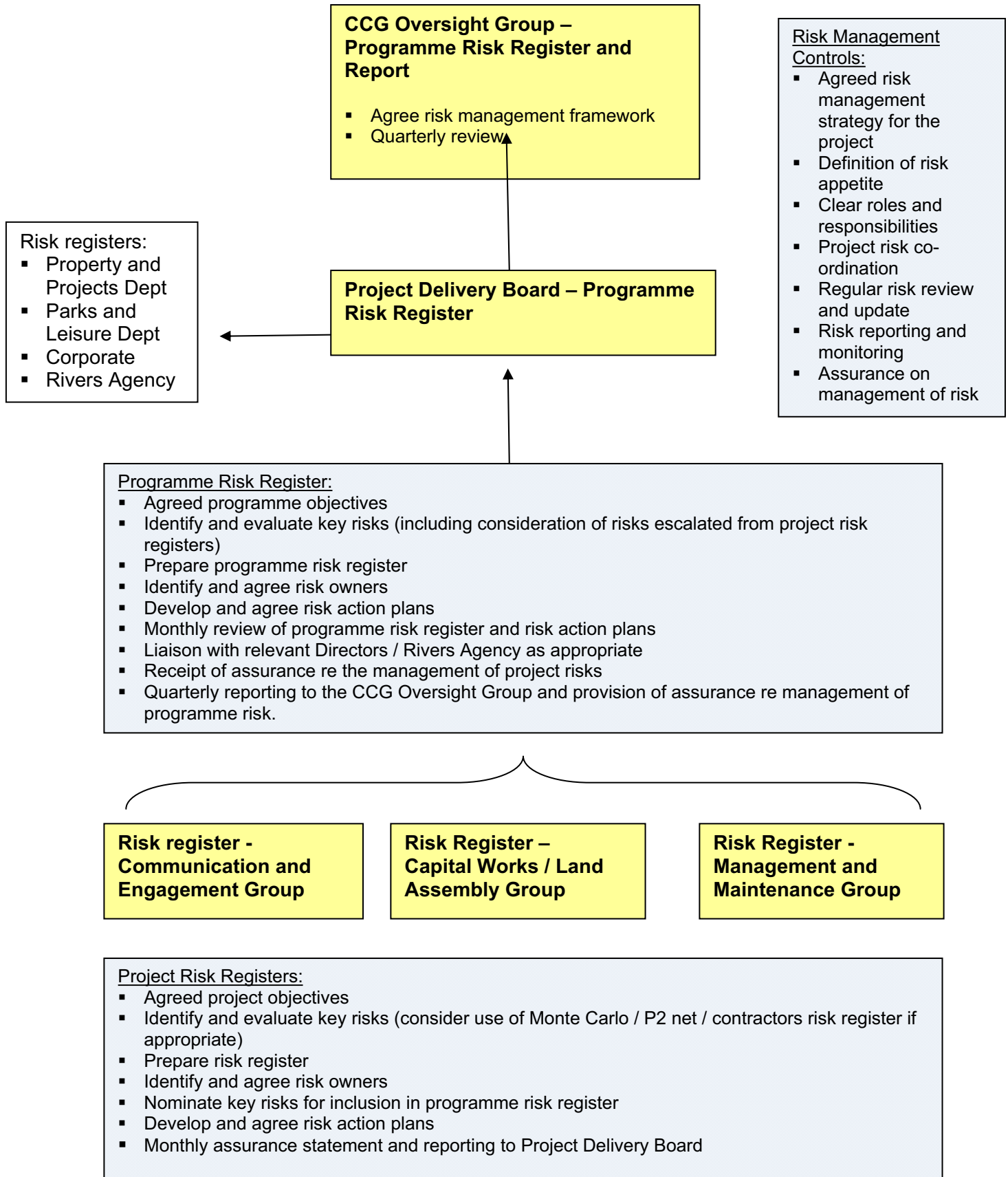
- To identify, evaluate and manage the key Group risks
- To nominate Group risks for inclusion in the programme risk register
- To review the Group risk register and risk action plans at least monthly
- To report monthly to the Project Delivery Board on Group risk management
- To provide the Project Delivery Board with monthly assurance that Group risks are being managed.
- To implement the assurance framework for the programme
- To promptly implement any recommendations arising from independent assurance reports

Financial Management

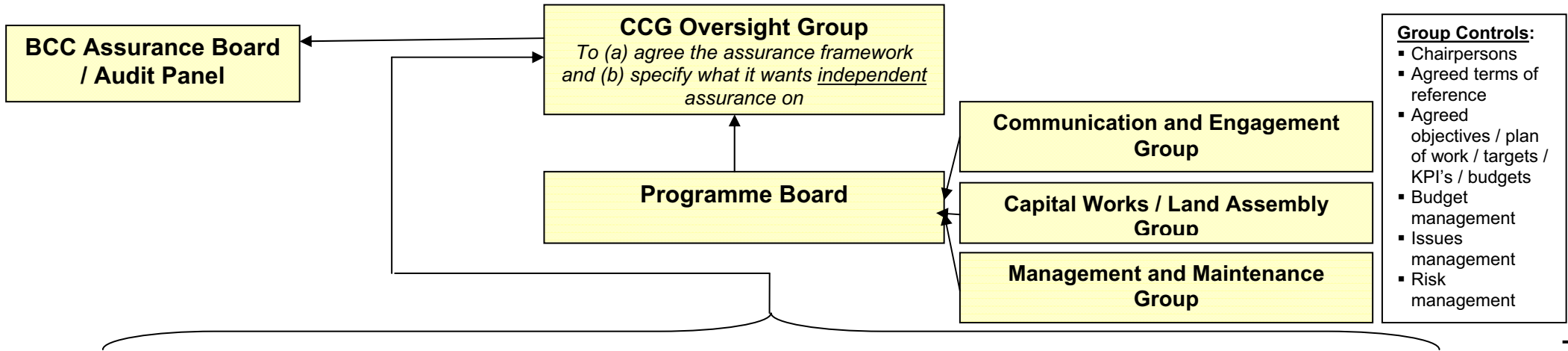
Financial Reporting requirements to be defined by PDB in the context of the overall programme requirements and financial procedures

- To ensure that expenditure is kept within approved limits, i.e. the approved budget for the approved project plan
- To comply with financial procedures for the project
- To review financial reports monthly and to provide explanations to the PDB, in the required format, for significant variances
- To provide forecast position as required
- When change control events are identified to comply with agreed processes that require, financial implications to be identified along with options and presented to the PDB
- To procure in line with agreed procedures and to retain evidence of following procurement procedures (quotations etc)
- To ensure that the financial capacity to delivery this project exists within the BCC budget provision

CCG Programme Risk Management Framework



CCG Programme Assurance Framework



FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES – HERE IS AN EXAMPLE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROGRAMME

Assurance needed on, for e.g.:	Progress and quality of construction works	Delivering the project within budget and ensuring value for money	Compliance with contract / contract negotiations?	Delivery of agreed outcomes	Management of project risks	Other risks ...
Sources of assurance:	Employers agent (Project Manager) McAdam Design Contractor	Business Manager, Property and Projects Dept Chairs of: ▪ Communication and Engagement ▪ Capital works / land assembly ▪ Management and maintenance	Legal Services, Belfast City Council Quigg Golden, construction specialists Director of Property and Projects	Chair of communication and engagement group?	Chair of Programme Board Chairs of: ▪ Communication and Engagement ▪ Capital works / land assembly ▪ Management and maintenance	
Basis of assurance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly progress reports from Employers agent ▪ Monthly reports from Contractor ▪ Weekly meetings? ▪ Issues management procedures? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed budget ▪ Delegated authority for budgets ▪ Regular financial reports to Board ▪ Documented financial procedures ▪ Procurement rules ▪ Approval of tenders by Board? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of advice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed KPI's and reporting on same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk register ▪ Risk action plans ▪ Monthly assurance statements 	
<p>Questions to be answered by the CCG Oversight Group - Is <u>independent</u> assurance required on each of these areas? Who is the source of independent assurance? What is the basis of the assurance?</p>						

Appendices



CCG PROGRAMME DELIVERY Progress Report

Project Name:		Date:
Report Author:		
Project Stage (please delete as appropriate):		
Current Position:		
Issues / Risks:		
Decision Required:		

Outcome:

Signed:

(Chair of Programme Delivery Board)

Date:



CCG PROGRAMME DELIVERY Proposal Outline

Project Name:				
Report Author:				Date:
User Ref:	SENIOR USER	SPONSOR	PROJECT MANAGER	PROJECT DELIVERY BOARD only
Name:				Ref No:
Telephone:				Rec'd date:
Signature:				Acknowledged:
Date:				Date of Group meeting:
Decision Required				
Project Background:				
<p><i>Note:</i> This document may be treated as a summary and each section supported by backup documentation as required. The nature and scale of the project will determine the level of detail. Further guidelines on completing this form are available on BeINET.</p>				

Justification for Project: (Business case, including anticipated benefits or savings).	
Any further comments/information and suggestions for Project Team nominations:	
Estimated Costs for Acquisition, Development and Implementation:	
CCG Commentary/Conclusions/Recommendations	<i>For</i>
<i>PROJECT DELIVERY BOARD Use Only</i>	
DAT E:	PROJECT DELIVERY BOARD Chair Signature:

Protocols for Connswater Community Greenway

To be finalised by the Project Delivery Board and presented to the CCG Oversight Group for ratification.

Purpose: to support the effective implementation of the governance and outlines expected service standards for the partnership between Belfast City Council and East Belfast Partnership.

1. Dealing with queries and information

- On receipt of email/telephone message, acknowledgement of query within **x** days
- Answer/follow up within **x** days of original message

2. Project personnel

- Extended periods of annual leave should be communicated in advance and delegated authority/agreed contingency in place

3. Managing meetings

- Annual calendar in advance of scheduled meetings of the CCG Oversight Group, programme team and all relevant work-streams.
- Any re-scheduling will be kept to a minimum and done in consultation with partners
- Papers will be circulated **x** days in advance and minutes will be issues within **x** days of the meeting.
- Meeting papers will use the agreed pro forma/templates

4. Meeting Agenda

- The agenda for the CCG Oversight Group will be drafted for the Senior Responsible Officer by the Programme Manager. The Chief Executive of the East Belfast Partnership Board will raise any items for discussion with the Senior Responsible Officer, for inclusion on the agenda.

5. Building consensus at meetings

- In the event of a consensus not being reached, relevant issues should be recorded in the meeting record pro forma, and forwarded to the Project Delivery Board meeting for its next agenda.
- In the event this is a time critical matter, the Programme Manager will convene the Project Delivery Board at the earliest opportunity or consult by email.
- The final decision lies with the Senior Responsible Officer, accountable to the Corporate Management Team and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

6. Communications

- The Programme Manager in conjunction with Project Delivery Board and when necessary with Senior Responsible Officer, agrees consistent external messages and determines way forward
- Incidents of counter-briefing/ hearsay, will be raised at the Project Delivery Board and resolved by the Programme Manager with the Senior Responsible Officer, in conjunction with the Chief Executive of East Belfast Partnership when necessary

7. Inter-dependent issues

- Decisions which have an impact across 2 or across the 3 work-streams will have implications, or on the overall outcomes, are discussed at Project Delivery Board and a consensus on the matter is facilitated by the Programme Manager.
- If this is not possible, the Programme Manager will consult with the Senior Responsible Officer on raising this at the CCG Oversight Group.

8. Business planning

- Each sub-group is expected to produce an annual plan describing its objectives, planned activities, resources required and performance measures.

9. Change Control

- Change control requests (i.e. those actions outside of annual plans) will be standardised across all 3 sub-groups and forwarded to the Programme Manager for agreement, as described in the scheme of delegation.
- Any changes controls are within parameters agreed with the council and the funders' conditions of offer
- It is the sole responsibility of the Programme Manager and the Senior Responsible Officer to seek agreement for changes with funders

10. Management of Risk Register

- The Programme Manager is responsible to the Senior Responsible Officer for the maintenance of the Risk Register. This will be a standardised format and will record all change controls for the purposes of audit and transparent decisions.
- Programme sub-group chairs will be responsible to the Programme Manager for annual risk workshops and the subsequent maintenance of the risk register.
- Each sub-group has a live risk register which is a standard item on agenda and information is forwarded to the Programme Manager in standardised format.
- The Risk Register will be a regular item of the Project Delivery Board meetings and risks actively managed. The CCG Oversight Group will monitor the risk register quarterly.
- On behalf of the Senior Responsible Officer, the Programme Manager will liaise with the external bodies e.g. Rivers Agency for their respective risk registers.

CCG Monitoring and Evaluation

Table 1: Evaluation Report March 2011

Outcome	Themes	KPI No:	Objectives	Baseline	Target Project end	Project Team	
Improved urban environment	Environmental	OBJECTIVE 1 To improve the environment in the CCG area by developing the CCG in line with the agreed design programme					
		1.1	Area of additional and improved accessible green and open space provided available	0	13.3 Hectares	CW	
		1.2	Kilometres of improved cycle and walking paths	0	16kms	CW	
		1.3	Number of new or improved bridges & crossings	0	30	CW	
		1.4	Weight of rubbish removed from rivers	0	1.5 tonnes	CW	
		1.5	Perceptions of Rubbish / Litter lying around	3	4	CE	
		1.6	Perception of Vandalism/ Graffiti/ Damage to Vehicles or Property	3	4	CE	
		1.7	Area of semi-natural habitat created	0	TBC	CW	
		1.8	Management and control of invasive species	Mapped extent	Control Procedures	CW	
		1.9	Water Environment - Ecological Status	Poor	Fair	CW/CE	
		1.10	Improvement to River Corridor	None	TBC	CW	
		1.11	Number of Gateway Markers/ Pieces of Public Art pieces	0	4	CW/CE	
		1.12	Satisfaction of Local Area	2	1	CE	
1.13	Number of Native Trees planted	0	TBC	CW			
Healthier and More Active People and Communities	Social	OBJECTIVE 2 To promote physical activity to improve health and wellbeing in the CCG area					
		2.1	Total number of pedestrian and cycle users and anglers (PARC and CCG)	1,425,422	1,781,778	CE	
		2.2	As 1.2				
		2.3	Walkability (PARC) WI = Walkability Index	23 Wards with med - high WI	28 Wards with med - high WI	CW/CE	
		2.4	Play and recreation in CCG Area (SOPARC)	285 people / hour	314 people / hour	CE	
		2.5	Self reported general health	72.60%	82.50%	CE	
		2.6	Proportion of population meeting physical activity weekly target	60%	65%	CE	
		2.7	Mobility - level of use of 'active' transport methods	29.9mns	33mns	CE	
		OBJECTIVE 3 To encourage participation in the CCG project by the community and by schools and colleges using the CCG as a resource					
		A stronger safer community	3.1	Number of community members and community groups engaged in specific CCG activities	7 groups 100 people	35 groups 500 people	CE
		Better access to training and development	3.2	Number of schools, colleges, students engaged in specific CCG activities	0	30 schools 3000 students	CE
		A stronger safer community	3.3	Engagement with key stakeholder groups (% of stakeholder groups informed about CCG)	95%	95%	CE
		Better life chances	3.4	Number of CCG activities / events held	3	30	CE
A stronger safer community	3.5	Strength of social networks	TBC	TBC	CE		
	3.6	Safety of the area from crime	2	2.5	CE		
	3.7	Measure of trust in neighbours	2	2.5	CE		
An improved urban environment Better access to training and development Better life chances A stronger safer community Better access to training and development An improved urban environment	Economic	OBJECTIVE 4 To contribute to the economic regeneration of East Belfast through investment, employment and tourism					
		4.1	Total capital expenditure attributable to CCG	0	£38.2m	OG	
		4.2	Management and maintenance expenditure on CCG	0	TBC	MM	
		4.3	Direct employment and training arising from CCG	7	18	CE	
		4.4	Number of visitors to CCG	85,525	171,051	CE	
		4.5	Number of CCG Tourism and Heritage Trails	1	6	CE	
		4.6	No. people CCG media coverage and PR activities reaches	1m	4m	CE	
		4.7	Volunteer hours/ value	250 hours £1483	1000 £6000	CE	
4.8	Number of properties protected from flooding	0	1700	CW			



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Capital Programme Update : Dargan Crescent In-Ground Gas Extraction System
Date:	23 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects – ext 6217
Contact Officer:	Donal Rogan, Head of Contracts – ext 2460 Michael Stanley, Capital Programme Manager – ext 3483

Relevant Background Information

In June 2009 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee approved a budget of £513,000 for the installation of an in-ground gas extraction system on the Dargan Crescent area of the Duncrue Industrial Estate as a capital project.

Financial Regulation D9 permits Chief Officers to approve variations in the approved sum of a capital scheme up to 5% or £15,000 (whichever is lower) and individual spending committees to approve additional sums up to 10% or £50,000 (whichever is lower). The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee is the relevant spending committee for capital projects.

Key Issues

The work has been completed and the final account has recently been agreed; the final outturn cost is £561,250 which exceeds the approved budget by £48,250 or 9.41%. The contract conditions require that the Council pays the outstanding amounts to the contractor.

Reasons for the variation include the relocation of gas manifold units due to legislative requirements, upgrading inspection chamber covers due to Health & Safety requirements, additional gas sampling apparatus and design revisions due to unforeseen ground conditions.

Resource Implications

An initial budget of £513,000 was approved; however, allowance for the increased final expenditure of £561,250 has been advised to the Director of Finance & Resources and can be accommodated within the capital financing budget for the current financial year.

Recommendations

Although this is a retrospective request, formal approval from the Committee is required and therefore it is recommended that the Committee approve the additional cost incurred of £48,250.

Decision Tracking

This project has been completed and will be closed upon final payment being made to the contractor.

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

None

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**MONDAY, 5th MARCH, 2012****MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman); and
Councillors Attwood, Kyle, McVeigh and Reynolds.
- External Members: Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;
Mr. R. Galway, Bombardier Aerospace/
Confederation of British Industry;
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Council;
Mr. B. McGivern, Belfast City Centre Management;
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church;
Ms. M. De Silva, Voluntary/Community Sector; and
Mr. U. Tok, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum.
- In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Stoker, Mr. S. Brennan, Archdeacon B. Dodds, Mrs. M. Marken, Mr. M. O'Donnell and Ms. J. Peden.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th February were taken as read and signed as correct.

New Members

It was reported that Councillor McVeigh and Mr. Ugur Tok had replaced Councillor Maskey and Ms. S. Bhat respectively on the Partnership. The Chairman, on behalf of the Members, welcomed them to their first meeting and thanked Councillor Maskey and Ms. Bhat for the contribution which they had made during their time on the Partnership.

Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were reported:

- In respect of item 7, viz., Peace III - Strategic Grants Programme, Ms. M. De Silva indicated that her organisation, namely, Women into Politics, worked in partnership with the Training for Women Network, which had submitted an application for funding under the Programme; and

119

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

- Regarding item 8, viz., Good Relations Grand-aid Fund, Ms. M. De Silva advised that her organisation, namely, Women into Politics, had, in association with Downtown Women's Group, submitted an application under the Fund.

Conflicts of Interest Policy

(Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership was informed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 13th December, had approved a Conflicts of Interest Policy for Members. The Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor provided a brief overview of the Policy, which had been formulated in accordance with the Nolan Principles governing standards in public life. He explained that the Policy applied to all Councillors, together with any member of a Working Group or Panel, including the Good Relations Partnership, who was not a Councillor. The Policy covered three main areas, namely, the general principles for dealing with Conflicts of Interest within the Council, formal registration of interests and procedures for declaring and managing conflicts. He explained that, should a person consider themselves to have an interest in an application or other matter, as defined by the public perception test, they should declare that interest in advance of the matter being considered and take no part in discussions. Declarations of Interest reported would, subsequently, be recorded fully within the minutes of the meeting.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Update on Roots of Empathy Project

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th May, 2010, it had approved in principle a Roots of Empathy Project which would be delivered to pupils in primary schools across the City and funded under the Peace III Theme of Shared Cultural Space.

It was reported that Ms. M. Morgan, representing the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, one of the participating organisations in the Project, was in attendance in order to provide an update on the initiative and she was welcomed to the meeting. Ms. Morgan informed the Partnership that the Roots of Empathy Project sought to engender a positive understanding of diversity, teach children to respect one another, build a culture of caring, develop empathy and enable children to recognise the need for inclusion. It sought also to value participatory democracy and encourage non-violence and anti-bullying.

She reported that the Project had now been extended to include twenty schools from the most deprived areas in the City and that it was being delivered in each school by trained instructors, who were drawn from participating organisations such as the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, the Public Health Agency and Queen's University Belfast. She explained that instructors' meetings were held five times a year in order to

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

120

discuss any issues arising from the operation of the Project and that a School Principals' Forum would take place in October. She added that Queen's University Belfast had undertaken assessments of children before and after their participation in the Project in order to evaluate its effect upon them. Results had shown that the initiative had contributed to their development in terms of managing their emotions, building successful relations and shaping their attitudes towards others.

After discussion, during which Ms. Morgan answered a number of questions which had been put to her by the Partnership, she was thanked by the Chairman and retired from the meeting.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Outcome of Research on Interface Barriers in Belfast

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that Dr. J. Byrne, University Of Ulster, had published recently the outcome of his research entitled "The Belfast Peace Walls: The Problems, Policies and Politics of the Troubles Architecture" on the impact of peace walls/barriers upon communities across the City. She reported that Dr. Byrne was in attendance in order to outline his findings and he was welcomed by the Chairman.

Dr. Byrne explained that, since 1969, peace walls/barriers had become commonplace in Loyalist and Republican working class communities in the City, which were characterised by high levels of unemployment, social and economic deprivation, poor housing and a lack of investment. He reported that it had been recognised as far back as the early 1970s that significant work was required to encourage opposing communities to engage in dialogue in order to create the confidence, understanding and friendships necessary for the removal of peace walls. However, it had only been over the past two years that a new political and community focus had resulted in an evolving, yet tentative, process to address the difficult and sensitive issues surrounding peace walls.

He informed the Partnership that his research had shown that there was no evidence to suggest that physical barriers would simply disappear and, therefore, public policy decisions would, at some point, be required to address their existence. Such decisions would be required to take into consideration concerns raised by both Loyalist and Republican communities around community safety, parades/bonfires/flags, demand for space, housing issues and population changes and would require also political agreement and public support. He highlighted the various initiatives which were being undertaken by organisations and agencies, including the Council's Interface Strategy, to address the issue of peace walls, together with the associated challenges, and stressed that a co-ordinated approach was required to ensure their success.

Dr. Byrne's research had concluded that the Council was best placed to lead that work, since it was regarded as being crucial both at a political and community level in the evolving discourse and action planning on peace walls. He pointed out that peace walls required support and intervention at local government level and, in his view, the Council had in recent years tackled consistently and addressed successfully politically sensitive and contentious issues.

121

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

Dr. Byrne then answered a number of questions which were put to him by the Partnership and retired from the meeting.

Noted.

Peace III Implementation Update

The Partnership considered a report which provided an update in respect of the implementation of Phase I of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. The Peace III Programme Manager provided a brief overview of each of the approved Phase II Projects contained within the Plan and reported that expenditure to date had been approximately £124,000 less than anticipated for this stage of the Programme. That had arisen due to delays in the completion of economic appraisals relating to the Youth Engagement and the Tension Monitoring Programmes, and in project implementation arising from issues involving recruitment, stakeholder consultation, detailed project planning and finalisation of delivery options. He explained that, in line with the requirements of the Peace III Programme, budgets would be re-profiled and would be submitted in April to the Special European Union Programmes Body for approval. The monitoring of budgets at project level would continue on a monthly basis in order to ensure that expenditure targets were met and regular updates would be submitted to the Good Relations Partnership for its consideration.

The Peace III Programme Manager reported that, following an independent economic appraisal of the Youth Engagement and the Tension Monitoring Programmes, the Council had now received formal confirmation from the Special European Union Programmes Body that both Programmes had been granted approval. A presentation on each initiative would be delivered to the Good Relations Partnership meeting in June. He pointed out that the Peace III Steering Committee would, at its meeting on 22nd March, consider the additional interfaces proposals which had been agreed by the Partnership at its meeting on 7th November. An update on the outcome of the Steering Committee's deliberations would be submitted to the Partnership in due course.

Forthcoming Events

The Partnership noted that the following events had been arranged:

- 28th March – Community Relations Council Offices, Dungannon (10.30 am.) – Chairpersons' and Managers' Forum
- 18th April – Belfast City Council Learning and Development Centre (9.30 a.m.) – Information and Networking Session for Projects and Key Stakeholders

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012

122

Peace III – Proposed Budgetary Changes

(Ms. K. Sweeney, Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager and Ms. J. Smith, Tourism, Culture and Arts Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of report

This report seeks approval for the proposed change request to the Creative Legacies (034064) and City of Festivals (034060) Projects.

Background

Belfast City Council’s Development Department is the project promoter for two projects under the theme of Shared Cultural Space namely Creative Legacies (034064) and City of Festivals (034060). The promoter has requested approval for budgetary changes to the two projects.

Key Issues

Following consideration of the available delivery options and the stringent compliance requirements of running projects with a large number of delivery partners, the promoter has requested that the budgets are re-profiled to allow for recruitment of one dedicated co-ordinator employed across both projects with the requisite expertise to manage the workload and programme requirements. The delivery approach has also been revised to procurement of delivery partners in line with Programme procurement requirements rather than grant aid.

The overall costs for both projects remain unchanged.

The proposed recruitment would be in line with Council’s standard recruitment procedures, a draft job description has been prepared and evaluated by Human Resources and confirmed as PO1 grade. The promoter has been advised of the need to accurately record time spent by the co-ordinator on both projects to ensure eligibility of expenditure.

The timescale of the Creative Legacies project has been revised with a new start date of May 2012. Both projects are scheduled to complete by 30th September, 2013. Subject to approval the project officer will be appointed in May 2012 for 18 months.

The promoter is of the opinion that the projects will not be able to run as outlined without the requested changes.

123

Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012

Budget Revision

The revised budgets and timetables have been assessed by the PEACE III Team as reasonable. The changes mainly impacts upon advertising/ marketing and communications costs and a reduced number of forum meetings and training events (given the reduced timescale). Anticipated outputs and outcomes will remain substantially unaltered in terms of numbers of festivals supported, target areas and target groups and the promoter has indicated that they will cover any decreases in communications and marketing in kind. The proposed budget revisions are as follows:

Creative Legacies (034064)

Budget Line	Total project budget (originally approved)	The new applied total budget-	Variance per budget line compared to the original budget	Transfer between Budget Lines
1. Creative Legacies 15 Development and Outreach Projects	247,500	240,000	-7,500	-7,500
2. Coordinator	15,000	27,000	+12,000	+12,000
3. Events (workshops, forums, exhibition, 5 training events)	20,500	18,000	-2,500	-2,500
4. Evaluation	5,000	5,000	0	0
5. Communications	12,000	10,000	-2,000	-2,000
TOTAL COSTS	300,000	300,000	0	0

The most notable reduction is the - £7,500 from the 15 Creative Legacies projects, this is a reduction of £500 each, however the new project officer will in return provide significant support to each project.

Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012

124

City of Festivals (034060)

Budget Line	Total project budget (originally approved)	The new applied total budget–	Variance per budget line compared to the original budget	Transfer between Budget Lines
1. Large festival support	210,000	210,000	0	0
2. Small festival support	50,000	45,000	-5,000	-5,000
3. Coordinator post	15,000	27,000	+12,000	+12,000
4. Communications (advertisements, advice clinics, marketing)	5,000	0	-5,000	-5,000
5. Festivals Forum support (cross-border networking, skills development, audience development)	20,000	18,000	-2,000	-2,000
TOTAL COSTS	300,000	300,000	0	0

Resource Implications

Financial Implications

Eligible costs can be 100% recouped from the PEACE III Programme. It is proposed that the project promoter absorbs some of the marketing costs.

Equality Implications

None at present.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to approve the proposed change request and note that the proposed budgetary changes will also need to be approved by the Special European Union Programmes Body.”

After discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendations.

125

Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012

Peace III – Strategic Grants Programme

(Ms. M. De Silva left the room whilst this matter was under discussion.)

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of report

To update the Partnership on the assessment of applications received under the open call for the Strategic Grants Programme.

Background

There was an open call for applications to the Strategic Grants Programme within the Belfast PEACE III Plan which opened on 21st October and closed on 16th December, 2011. The purpose of the open call was to identify project ideas which:

- demonstrate a meaningful focus on peace and reconciliation;
- demonstrate active partnership in development and delivery of the activity;
- demonstrate robust financial and administration systems;
- complement existing and/ or planned activity in the city with particular reference to partner led projects within the Phase II Plan;
- will take place between 1st April, 2012 and 30th September, 2013 with activity beginning no later than 30th September, 2012; and
- have a robust methodology for monitoring and evaluation of activity in line with the PEACE III Aid for Peace Framework.

The strategic grants programme is aimed at properly constituted organisations with sound management and good governance arrangements with a track record of successful delivery who can demonstrate the management and administrative capacity to deliver large scale projects involving multiple stakeholders. Projects identified in this call will be expected to work closely with other projects supported under the Belfast PEACE III Plan.

The fund for the Strategic Grants Programme is approximately £1million with projects expected to demonstrate significant peace and reconciliation outcomes with budgets of between £75,000 and £125,000.

Applications received

There were 52 applications received by the published closing date. An overview of the individual project applications has been forwarded to the Partnership.

Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012

126

Assessment

The Assessment Process was developed in line with guidance from the SEUPB and consists of the following steps:

- Receipt of signed and completed application form by the deadline with late applications not accepted.
- An initial eligibility check whereby each application must meet the following criteria:
 - the project activity must be within the eligible area;
 - all sections in the application form must be completed accurately and in full;
 - applications must be submitted on time (in the case of a published closing date);
 - if the project involves partners, the willingness for project partners to engage in the partnership must be fully demonstrated in the application; and
 - the project must be in accordance with the governing EU Regulations (in particular, rules on the eligibility of expenditure of Structural Funds support in relation to public procurement, state aid, environmental assessment and equal opportunities).
- Each application was scored against programme, priority and thematic criteria and cross cutting themes of the programme in line with the project selection criteria issued by the SEUPB, weighted as follows:
 1. PEACE III Programme criteria- 30% weighting
 2. Priority and Theme criteria- 30% weighting
 3. Efficiency and Effectiveness and the cross cutting themes of equality, sustainable development; impact on poverty and partnership - 40% weighting

An application must score a minimum of 65% under Programme and Priority Criteria and efficiency and effectiveness objectives as well as under the cross cutting themes before it can be considered for funding under the PEACE III Programme.

52 applications were received by the deadline on 16th December. One application was received after the deadline and was not assessed. Following receipt one application was deemed to be incomplete and was not scored.

127

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

An initial independent assessment of all applications received by the closing date was considered by an assessment panel consisting of members of the Good Relations Partnership supported by Council officers. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest were declared. The panel considered the project applications in detail along with the initial assessment and commentary. All documentation relating to the process including original applications forms and supporting documents along with assessment notes are available for inspection.

The recommended score under each of the criteria for each application following this process is attached as an appendix. A total of 30 applications have recommended scores above the quality threshold of 65% and would be eligible for funding under the Peace III Programme.

Budget

The allocation for the strategic grants call is approximately £1 million. The total amount requested by those applications scoring above the minimum quality threshold is approx. £3.3 million.

Applications by location

The geographic location of the lead applicant by post code is as follows:

BT Code	Number of Applications	%
1	10	19%
2	2	4%
3	-	0%
4	3	6%
5	1	2%
6	3	6%
7	7	13%
8	-	0%
9	3	6%
10	-	0%
11	1	2%
12	8	15%
13	2	4%
14	2	4%
15	8	15%
16	-	0%
17	1	2%

Other	1	2%
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**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

128

In addition to the incomplete application 21 projects failed to score over the quality threshold. These are listed below along with a summary of where the application was considered weak.

Ref	Applicant Organisation	Project Title	Summary
35712	Ardoyne Shankill Health Partnership	YEHA 'Doing Diversity' Project	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with local action plan.
35864	Arts for All	CAST Community Arts Strengthening Ties	Application was incomplete.
35865	Community Change	Collaborative Communities Building Change	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria
35786	Co-operation Ireland	The Keep	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria
35715	Falls Women's Centre	Falls Women's Centre Counselling Training Support Project	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria
35791	GEMS Northern Ireland Limited	LOCATE (Looking Outwards Changing Attitudes To Engagement)	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria
35824	Glentoran Partnership	Levelling the Playing field	Applicant failed to meet quality threshold under efficiency and effectiveness criteria.
35781	Groundwork NI	Burning Issues	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with local action plan.
35836	Inner East Youth Project	Given a chance	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with local action plan.
35670	Inter Church Addictions Project	Addiction Counselling Service for Young People	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria
35885	Irish Congress of Trade Unions	A shared workplace, a shared future	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with local action plan.
35875	Lower Shankill Community Assoc.	CARIS Initiative	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria

129

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

Ref	Applicant Organisation	Project Title	Summary
35888	Northern Ireland Anti poverty Network	Rights to unite	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria
35878	Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities	Tackling & Preventing racial hatred crime in Belfast	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria
35839	Northern Ireland Youth Forum	Belfast Future Leaders Project	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with local action plan.
35816	Ocean Youth Trust	Sailing through Time	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria.
35887	Solas	Youthpodcast A Bridge Building Programme in South & East Belfast	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with local action plan.
35705	Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group	Suffolk Lenadoon Youth Council	Applicant failed to meet quality threshold under efficiency and effectiveness criteria.
35831	Willowfield Parish Community Association	The Next Step	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with local action plan.
35794	Women's Resource and Development Agency	Reclaiming women's Heritage	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria.
35694	Workforce Training Services	Cross Community Integration	Applicant failed to demonstrate sufficient fit with PEACE III Programme Criteria.
35838	Youth Enterprise Northern Ireland	Primary Master Class	Applicant failed to meet quality threshold under efficiency and effectiveness criteria.

The applicant organisations will be invited to avail of a debrief meeting on their application. It is also anticipated that applicant organisations will be able to be signposted to other sources of support and assistance. The SEUPB has established a review procedure for the entire programme and details of this procedure will be communicated to applicants.

Thirty projects were scored over the quality threshold. These projects have been scored and ranked as follows along with a summary of the geographic focus of the proposal.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

130

Ref.	Applicant Organisation	Project Title	Score	Area of Focus
35901	Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG)	Botanic Shaftesbury Ballynafeigh (BSB) Cohesion Network	79.75%	South
35854	Northern Visions Ltd	A Century Later	77.75%	Citywide
35695	Ashton Community Trust	REAL Project	77.00%	North & West
35652	Belfast Interface Project	Inner East Outer West	77.00%	East & West
35871	Mediation Northern Ireland	Belfast Interface Mediation Delivery Programme	76.25%	Citywide
35841	PeacePlayers International	Belfast Interface Olympics	75.75%	North/East/West
35827	Forthspring Inter Community Group	Cross Interface Planning Group	75.50%	West
35709	Public Achievement	WIMPS Belfast	73.50%	Citywide
35886	Small Steps	Walk of Faith II	72.25%	North & West
35904	Training for Women Network	Visions of Peacebuilding	72.00%	Citywide
35884	Fellowship of Messines	Citizens for Peace	72.00%	Citywide
35651	Upper Springfield Community Relations Partnership	Upper Springfield Community Relations Programme	69.25%	West
35675	WOMEN'STEC	Bits & Pieces and Beyond	69.00%	North & West
35678	NI Community of Refugees & Asylum Seekers	Inclusive Neighbourhood Project	68.50%	South/West/East
35877	Workers' Educational Association	Diversity Challenge Programme	68.00%	Citywide
36106	Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre	Your Isms	67.50%	Citywide
35861	The Terry Enright Foundation	Transforming Lives	67.50%	East/North/West
35900	Ardoyne Youth Club	Engaging Young People, Building Relationships - Ardoyne/Woodvale Interface	67.25%	North
35631	Beyond Skin	My Place Our Space	67.25%	South/West/East
35855	Early Years	Media Initiative for Children & Roma Community	67.25%	Citywide
35805	East Belfast Mission	Deepening the Conversation - making space for difficult interface dialogue.	66.50%	East
35776	Youth Initiatives	Future Building	66.25%	North/East
35792	Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	Ballynafeigh Champions - Sustaining A Shared Neighbourhood	66.00%	South

131

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

Ref.	Applicant Organisation	Project Title	Score	Area of Focus
35894	Opportunity Youth	Crossroads	66.00%	Citywide
35627	Belfast Metropolitan College	SCOPE (Schools & Community Outreach Progressive for e3)	66.00%	West
35897	Intercomm	Ambassadors for Conflict Transformation - Interface Leadership Programme	65.75%	Citywide
35807	MENCAP	BID - Building Inclusion & Diversity	65.75%	North/ East/ West
35899	Exit	Consulting, engaging and working together across the interface in East Belfast	65.00%	East
35823	Falls Community Council	Re-Engaging Communities	65.00%	Citywide
35601	Women's Information Northern Ireland	Women- Conflict & Peace	65.00%	

It is proposed that pre-contract and site visits are conducted and prioritised according to rank order for each of the projects identified above and subject to available funding. Funding agreements will be prepared subject to the satisfactory conclusion of all the required pre-contract checks with an update to be brought back to the Partnership at its April meeting. These pre-contract checks will include a site visit, meeting with applicant organization management and project staff to cover issues such as legal status of organisation; audit, governance and risk management, previous audit activity (internal and external), organisation structure, details of partners and partnership agreement, previous experience and track record of applicant; details of relevant policies and procedures – e.g. recruitment, equal opportunities, employment terms and conditions, health and safety, redundancy etc; insurance details; publicity requirements; document retention and storage; VAT status; financial procedures; procurement; bank arrangements; cashflow management; payroll systems; grant claim systems and accounting systems.

Advance funding

Advance funding has been available under previous calls but with the significantly increased financial risk attached to implementation of a PEACE III Project advances will only be made available in exceptional circumstances where a sound value for money case can be made backed up with guarantees at the appropriate level. The pre-contract check stage should identify if this issue is likely to arise.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

132

Reserve List

It is proposed that following completion of the pre-contract checks and preparation of funding agreements that a reserve list of potential projects for support consisting of project applications scoring above the threshold will be put in place, subject to review by the Partnership.

Resource Implications

Financial Implications

Eligible project costs can be 100% recouped from the PEACE III Programme. Under the programme there is potential for advance funding subject to risk assessment and provision of appropriate guarantees.

HR Implications

None at present

Equality Implications

None at present.

Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to note the assessment process, approve the recommended scores as presented and approve also the commencement of pre-contract checks.”

During discussion, the Peace III Programme Manager confirmed that projects would be subjected to robust scrutiny throughout the application process and in project delivery to ensure that they complied fully with the relevant criteria and legislation. Those organisations which were successful in obtaining funding would be required to enter into a written agreement, which would set out clearly their roles and responsibilities over the course of the project, and to put in place appropriate safeguards against potential financial and reputational risks.

The Partnership adopted the recommendations and noted that further updates on the Strategic Grants Programme would be submitted to the Partnership in due course.

133

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

Good Relations Grant-aid Fund

(Ms. M. De Silva left the room whilst this matter was under discussion.)

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 28th November, it had approved expenditure in the sum of £80,385 under the third call of Good Relations Grant-Aid Funding for 2011/2012. The Good Relations Manager reported that a fourth call for applications had been made on 9th January, with a closing date of Friday, 3rd February. She advised that, at the closing date for the receipt of applications, a total of sixty applications had been received, requesting in total £217,699. Following the assessment of the applications using pre-agreed criteria, forty-six submissions had been recommended for funding.

Accordingly, the Partnership agreed that grant-aid of £89,915 be awarded under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive to the following organisations:

Ref No	Organisation	Recommended Amount, up to £
627/2601	Glencolin Residents Association	3,000
1188/2614	NICHHS	1,000
1054/2640	Deanby Youth Centre	1,000
1027/2658	Woodvale Football Club	1,640
607/2652	North Belfast Women's Initiative & Support Project	1,000
1200/2650	Skegoneill & Glandore Common Purpose	1,000
678/2636	North Belfast Alternatives	3,000
890/2607	Ulster Hall	3,000
308/2649	Star Neighbourhood Centre	1,000
1206/2662	East Belfast Alternatives	3,000
1202/2653	Fight Academy	850
733/2660	Glenbank Community Association	1,000
264/2599	East Belfast Area Project	3,930
1205/2661	Adullam Ministries	900
373/2627	Ballymac Friendship Trust	3,500
602/2631	Tinderbox Theatre Company	2,500
609/2606	Village Focus Group	3,000
1129/2656	Belfast Sparta FC	310
740/2628	Culturlann McAdam O Fiaich	6,500
690/2645	Di-verse	800
590/2642	Indian Community Centre	2,000
405/2611	St. John Vianney Youth Centre	5,000
1190/2618	The Law Centre (NI)	5,000
1189/2616	Bryson Intercultural	4,000
1198/2647	Polish Mission Church	585
1197/2641	Falls Women's Centre	1,000
1187/2608	Northern Ireland Dialogue Society	1,380
1196/2634	Replay Theatre Company	1,000

Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012

134

Ref No	Organisation	Recommended Amount, up to £
598/2638	Tar Anall	3,284
792/2602	Teach na Failte	1,200
782/2637	Upper Andersonstown Limited Youth Network	2,500
908/2626	The Belfast Boxing Ring	4,000
1033/2612	COPE	1,000
603/2646	Corpus Christi Youth Centre	4,180
186/2605	Amazing Brains	600
1191/2619	36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association	1,000
1192/2620	Rainbow Health Ltd (Rainbow Project NI)	1,000
425/2622	Round Tower Community Project	1,000
1193/2623	Tiger's Bay History Group	1,000
1194/2629	Macara	930
923/2632	Ballysillan Youth for Christ Drop-in Centre	1,000
1201/2651	Albert Foundry FC	900
1203/2654	Grove United Football Club	950
1204/2655	Belfast Primary Schools Football Association	846
816/2657	Loughside Football Club	1,200
1195/2630	Women into Politics/Downtown Women's Group	1,430
TOTAL		89,915

Seminar – Awareness of Human Trafficking

The Partnership was informed that the issue of human trafficking had been identified by the Police Service of Northern Ireland as being a growing organised crime issue in Northern Ireland. From April till December, 2011, twenty-five people from countries such as China, the Czech Republic, Ghana, Hungary and Zimbabwe had been rescued from traffickers.

The Good Relations Manager reported that the Good Relations Unit, in partnership with the organisation Migrant Help, had, in June 2011, organised a one-day seminar to raise awareness of the issues surrounding human trafficking. She explained that Migrant Help, a United Kingdom national charity, had been founded in 1963 to provide support and advice to migrants in distress and that it was the principal service provider in Northern Ireland for the care of victims of human trafficking. Since February, 2011, it had, in partnership with Women's Aid, been contracted by the Department of Justice to provide physical, psychological and emotional support to victims of human trafficking.

She informed the Partnership that, at the seminar in June, the Good Relations Unit and Migrant Help had been requested to host a follow-up event in order to enable further discussion to take place on the issue. That event would take place on 6th March in the Mount Business and Convention Centre and would seek to increase knowledge of the extent and nature of human trafficking, increase skills in identifying victims of trafficking, suggest ideas for future action at community level and encourage information-sharing amongst partner organisations. A number of agencies, including

135

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Queen's University, would be in attendance. The cost of staging the seminar would be approximately £3,000, 75% of which could be recouped through the Council's Good Relations Programme.

The Partnership granted approval for the hosting of the seminar.

Broadway Murals and Artwork

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the Council had, over a number of years, been working with local communities, initially through the Brighter Belfast Initiative and, more recently, the Arts Council's Re-imaging Communities Programme, to remove and replace murals. She reported that the Re-imaging Communities Programme was suspended at present, however, the Arts Council had confirmed that it hoped to obtain sufficient funding to re-open the Programme in the near future.

She informed the Partnership that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was in the early stages of undertaking a major housing redevelopment scheme in the Village area of South Belfast. The Housing Executive had been working closely with community and voluntary groups in that area on all aspects of the scheme, including identifying ways of building a more positive cultural identity for the area. She reported that two paramilitary murals in the Broadway area had been highlighted as having a negative impact upon the redevelopment programme and that the Housing Executive had been working with Mr. Ross Wilson, a respected local artist, who had been instrumental in progressing detailed and sensitive community engagement work with key stakeholders in the area on the matter. The Housing Executive was committing significant funding to the housing programme and, in the absence of funding from the Re-Imaging Communities Programme, had requested financial assistance from the Council to meet the costs associated with the removal and/or the replacement of the murals by more acceptable images. To this end, it was proposed that the Council allocate funding of not more than £7,000 towards those costs, 75% of which could be recouped from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

The Partnership approved the allocation of funding in relation to the re-imaging of the Broadway murals, subject to ratification by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Launch of Public Lectures on the Decade of Centenaries

The Partnership was reminded that the Council was developing, through its Historic Centenaries Working Group, a programme of events to mark the Decade of Centenaries. The Good Relations Manager reported that other organisations/agencies across Northern Ireland were involved also in such work and that the Community Relations Council, in association with the Heritage Lottery Fund, had organised a series of ten public lectures on various aspects of the Decade. Those would be taking place in the Stranmillis College and the Ulster Museum over the next two to three months.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 5th March, 2012**

136

She reported that a formal launch of the lectures would take place in the Ulster Museum on Thursday, 8th March and that an invitation had been extended to the Members of the Good Relations Partnership and the Historic Centenaries Working Group.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

International Women's Day

The Partnership noted that Thursday, 8th March had been designated as International Women's Day and that the Council would be hosting in the City Hall on that day an event for female employees, the theme which would be "Our Role in Creating and Seizing Opportunity".

Chairman



Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Request from POBAL to address the Council
Date:	Friday 23 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager

1.0	Relevant Background Information
	Members will be aware that POBAL, established in 1998, acts as the umbrella organisation for the Irish language community and seeks to raise the profile of Irish.

2.0	Key issues
2.1	The Chief Executive of POBAL has recently written to our Chief Executive pointing out that it monitors the use of Irish and the law around language rights (original e-mail attached, plus English translation). She has noted that the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has published its Third Report, which contains three specific proposals which, it feels, should be implemented immediately.
2.2	The first of these proposals (paragraph 146) centres on the "failure to adopt legislation on the Irish language due to a lack of political consensus in the Northern Ireland Assembly". The Committee will be aware that the adoption of such legislation falls outside the authority of the Council.
2.3	The second proposal (paragraph 148) relates to "a lack of promotion of the Irish language and culture". The Committee may be aware that the language policy adopted by Council in 2006 specifically refers to the European Charter for Minority or Regional Languages and consequently incorporates a higher rating for the Irish language.
2.4	The third reference (paragraph 158) which "regrets the decision of Belfast City Council to reject in March 2011 a proposal to erect bilingual signs" relates to a decision regarding a proposal from the Department for Regional Development, an external body.
2.5	The Committee may recall the background to this decision. At the Council meeting on 1 February 2011, a Notice of Motion, welcoming the release of a consultation document by the Department for Regional Development on the proposed introduction of bi-lingual traffic signs was referred to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration. At its meeting on 18 February, the Committee voted by 10 to 6 <u>not</u> to support the proposal to introduce the policy. At the full Council meeting on 1 March, an amendment to <u>support</u> the introduction of such a policy was moved but defeated 21 to 23.

2.6	The Committee will be aware that the use of the Irish language is currently one of the items under discussion within the Joint Working Group of Party Group Leaders and Centenaries Working Group, which is examining broader diversity issues within the Council.
2.7	The POBAL request to make a presentation to the Council on the question of the Irish language in public life was reported on 9 March to this Joint Diversity Group, who agreed that a decision on this was a matter for the principal Committee.

3.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	The Council's current language policy was subject to equality screening in 2006 and screened out. The Council remains committed to building positive relationships in Belfast and the Good Relations Unit has supported a number of initiatives round the Irish language.

4.0	Resource Implications
	None at this stage.

5.0	Recommendations
	To agree that Ms Muller be invited to make a presentation to the Council on the question of the Irish language in public life at the earliest opportunity.

6.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 Copy of original request and translation.

From: Janet Muller [mailto:jmuller@pobal.org]
Sent: 02 March 2012 10:35
To: Peter McNaney
Subject: cruinniu agus cur i lathair don Chomhairle

APPENDIX 1

Peter McNaney,
Príomhfheidhmeannach
Comhairle Cathrach
Béal Feirste

2.3.12

A Peter, a chara,

Tag: Tuairisc an Choiste Comhairleach ar cur i gcríoch an Chreatchoinbhinsiún Um Chosaint na Mionlaigh Náisiúnta

Mar is eol duit, déanann POBAL monatóireacht leanúnach ar an Ghaeilge agus ar chur i gcríoch ionstraimí idirnáisiúnta dlí a bhaineann le cearta teanga. I 2011, bhuaill muid le hionadaithe An Choiste Comhairleach ar an Chreatchoinbhinsiún thuas luaite. D'ullmhaigh muid tuairisc chuimsitheach scríofa chomh maith agus cuireadh roimh an Choiste Comhairleach í.

Foilsíodh Tríú Thuairisc an Choiste Comhairleach ar na mallaibh, ina déantar cur síos ar thorthaí agus ar mholtaí an Choiste ar fhorfheidhmiú an Choinbhinsiúin sa thréimhse monatóireachta reatha. Mar thoradh ar an fhianaise a chuir POBAL i lathair an Choiste i 2011, rinne Comhairle na hEorpa trí mholadh shonracha atá 'le cur i bhfeidhm láithreach', lena n-áirítear an moladh seo a leanas:

'Develop comprehensive legislation on the Irish language in Northern Ireland and take resolute measures to protect and implement more effectively the language rights of persons belonging to the Irish-speaking community.'

Dar leis an Choiste,

146. The Advisory Committee is deeply concerned by the failure to adopt legislation on the Irish language due to a lack of political consensus in the Northern Ireland Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that this was a commitment taken by the Parties to the St Andrews Agreement of 2006. It also finds it worrying that some of the authorities in Northern Ireland have expressed their opposition to the preparation of a bill on the Irish language or of an overall strategy to promote the use of the Irish language, invoking a potentially harmful effect on community relations and budgetary considerations.

147. Moreover, the Advisory Committee regrets that, in addition to a lack of clear legal guarantees for the use of the Irish language, there is a lack of promotion of the Irish language and culture. It understands that, in practice, very little is done to promote the use of Irish in the public sphere and that, although some Irish language officers have been appointed in a few municipalities, the possibilities to use this language in relations with local administrative authorities remain limited. It is also concerned that the overall climate in Northern Ireland does not encourage Irish speakers to use and develop their language freely. 28 The Advisory Committee was disconcerted to hear that some representatives of the authorities consider that promoting the use of the Irish language is discriminating against persons belonging to the majority population. Such statements are not in line with the principles of the Framework Convention, and in particular with the provisions of Article 10. It also reiterates that, in line with Article 4.2 and Article 4.3 of

the Framework Convention, implementation of minority rights protected under the Framework Convention are not be considered as discriminating against other persons (see remarks under Article 4).

Tagraíonn an Choiste Comhairligh chomh maith do thionchar díobhálach an easpa reachtaíochta ar an Ghaeilge agus go háirithe luaitear easpa cearta agus easpa comharthaíocht Ghaeilge (alt 158). Tagraítear go háirithe do Chomhairle Bhéal Feirste,

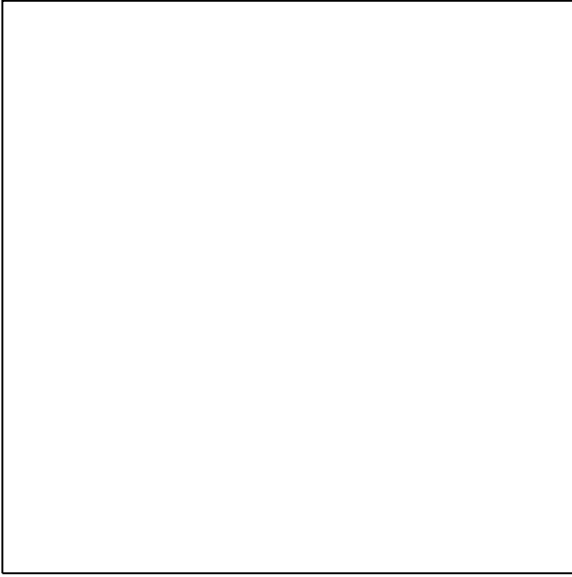
158. In Northern Ireland, the Advisory Committee regrets that only limited progress has been made regarding the erection of bilingual signposting and topographical indications, particularly road signs, despite the fact that there is, reportedly, a demand for this in a number of municipalities. Additionally, it finds it problematic that the official policy is to limit the erection of such signs to certain areas where the issue would not raise controversies. The Advisory Committee regrets the decision by Belfast City Council to reject in March 2011 a proposal to erect bilingual signs in this city (in English and Irish or Ulster Scots). The Advisory Committee is concerned that this approach is not in line with the spirit of the Framework Convention and, in particular, the provisions of Article 11, the aim of which is to value the use of minority languages, including through the setting up of bilingual signposting, with a view to promoting more tolerance and intercultural dialogue in society.

Is cúis mhór imní dúinn go bhfuil easpa gníomhartha ar an Ghaeilge ag tarraingt droch-chlú ar Chomhairle Bhéal Feirste agus ba mhaith liom bualadh leat leis na ceistanna seo a phlé. Chomh maith, ba mhaith liom cur i láthair a dhéanamh don Chomhairle ar cheist na Gaeilge sa saol poiblí chomh luath agus is féidir.

Janet Muller
Príomhfheidhmeannach

POBAL,
Aonad 6,
Teach Uí Chorráin,
Ionad an Dá Spuaic,
155 Sráid Northumberland,
Béal Feirste,
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Tá POBAL ina chuideachta faoi theorainn ráthaíochta.
POBAL is a company limited by guarantee.

Tag. carthanachta XT27908
Charity Ref. XT27908

From: Janet Muller [mailto:jmuller@pobal.org]
Sent: 02 March 2012 10:35
To: Peter McNaney
Subject: meeting and presentation to the Council

Peter McNaney
Chief Executive
Belfast City Council

2.3.12

Dear Peter,

Reference: Report of the Advisory Committee on the execution of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

As you know, POBAL continuously monitors the Irish language and the execution of international instruments of law concerning language rights. In 2011, we met with representatives of the Advisory Committee about the above mentioned Framework Convention. We also prepared a comprehensive written report and submitted it to the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee's Third Report was recently published, in which are described the results and proposals of the Committee on the implementation of the Convention in the current monitoring period. As a result of the evidence which POBAL submitted to the Committee in 2011, the Council of Europe made three specific proposals which are 'to be implemented immediately', including the following proposal:

'Develop comprehensive legislation on the Irish language in Northern Ireland and take resolute measures to protect and implement more effectively the language rights of persons belonging to the Irish-speaking community.'

The Committee thinks,

146. The Advisory Committee is deeply concerned by the failure to adopt legislation on the Irish language due to a lack of political consensus in the Northern Ireland Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that this was a commitment taken by the Parties to the St Andrews Agreement of 2006. It also finds it worrying that some of the authorities in Northern Ireland have expressed their opposition to the preparation of a bill on the Irish language or of an overall strategy to promote the use of the Irish language, invoking a potentially harmful effect on community relations and budgetary considerations.

147. Moreover, the Advisory Committee regrets that, in addition to a lack of clear legal guarantees for the use of the Irish language, there is a lack of promotion of the Irish language and culture. It understands that, in practice, very little is done to promote the use of Irish in the public sphere and that, although some Irish language officers have been appointed in a few municipalities, the possibilities to use this language in

relations with local administrative authorities remain limited. It is also concerned that the overall climate in Northern Ireland does not encourage Irish speakers to use and develop their language freely. 28 The Advisory Committee was disconcerted to hear that some representatives of the authorities consider that promoting the use of the Irish language is discriminating against persons belonging to the majority population. Such statements are not in line with the principles of the Framework Convention, and in particular with the provisions of Article 10. It also reiterates that, in line with Article 4.2 and Article 4.3 of the Framework Convention, implementation of minority rights protected under the Framework Convention are not be considered as discriminating against other persons (see remarks under Article 4).

The Advisory Committee also refers to the harmful influence of the lack of legislation on the Irish language and the lack of Irish language rights and signage is specially mentioned (paragraph 158) Belfast Council is specially referred to.

158. In Northern Ireland, the Advisory Committee regrets that only limited progress has been made regarding the erection of bilingual signposting and topographical indications, particularly road signs, despite the fact that there is, reportedly, a demand for this in a number of municipalities. Additionally, it finds it problematic that the official policy is to limit the erection of such signs to certain areas where the issue would not raise controversies. The Advisory Committee regrets the decision by Belfast City Council to reject in March 2011 a proposal to erect bilingual signs in this city (in English and Irish or Ulster Scots). The Advisory Committee is concerned that this approach is not in line with the spirit of the Framework Convention and, in particular, the provisions of Article 11, the aim of which is to value the use of minority languages, including through the setting up of bilingual signposting, with a view to promoting more tolerance and intercultural dialogue in society.

It is a matter of great concern to us that lack of action on the Irish language is gaining Belfast City Council a bad reputation and I would like to meet you to discuss these matters. In addition, I would like to make a presentation to the Council on the question of the Irish language in public life as soon as possible.

Janet Muller
Chief Executive

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Age Friendly Approach and Declaration
Date:	23 rd March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Damien Connolly, Environmental Health Manager Ext 3361
Contact Officer:	Adele Faulkner, Environmental Health Officer ext 3607

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Northern Ireland, like many other European Countries, has an increasing number of older people. The demographic structure has changed from a population largely under 50 to one where people over 50 account for around a third of the population and where people over 60 are estimated to outnumber people under 16 within the next few years.
1.2	In Belfast 19.65% of the population is over 60. With life expectancy rising dramatically in the last 50 years, annual improvements in survival rates and falling levels of fertility it is estimated that by 2030 25% of people in Belfast will be over 65 years of age. As a City we must address this and be prepared for an increasingly ageing society and plan for how this will affect our City economically, socially and culturally e.g. the number of retired people will increase and therefore tax payers decrease; the costs of pensions, benefits and health care will also increase significantly.
1.3	The World health Organisation (WHO) has a global Network of Age Friendly Cities. WHO regards active ageing as a life long process shaped by several factors that alone and acting together, favour health, participation and security in older adult life. The WHO has produced a guide and checklist to engage Cities to become more age friendly. If a City meets a list of criteria and makes an application to the WHO a City can be awarded "Age Friendly" status.
1.4	An age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs. In an age friendly city policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age actively. The outdoor environment have a major impact on the quality of life of older people and an age friendly city will have to consider; outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing , social participation, civic participations and employment, communication and information, community support and health services.
1.5	A discussion paper outlining the process for gaining Age Friendly status was taken to the All Party Reference Group on older people on 24 th January 2011. The group were keen on starting this process by undertaking a baseline study of the City and investigating potential

1.6	<p>resources to lead the project. Since then officers have been progressing the Age Friendly process by developing networks and relationships with other Age Friendly Cities, undertaking a baseline study of Belfast's Age friendly status, investigating potential resources to lead the project and outlining the benefits to the City of becoming Age Friendly.</p> <p>A further paper outlining the Age Friendly approach and signing of the declaration was taken to the Reference Group on Older people on Tuesday 21st February and a decision to seek committee approval for supporting the signing of the declaration for Belfast, was fully supported by the members in attendance.</p>
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2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The Building the WHO Global Network 1st International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities was held in the Burlington Hotel in Dublin on 28-30th September 2011. Councillor Pat McCarthy and Adele Faulkner from Health and Environmental Services attended the conference. At the conference a number of Cities and regions signed an Age Friendly declaration including Dublin, New York, Edmonton, Mexico and Manchester.</p>
2.2	<p>Due to the late notice of the conference, Belfast was not in a position to sign the declaration at that time. Since then we have developed alliances with Co Louth, the first age friendly County in Ireland and Manchester the first UK Age Friendly City. Both have offered their support to Belfast in the process of adoption of Age Friendly status. Conversations have also started with Newry and Mourne District Council who are exploring the development of an Age Strategy and becoming Age Friendly.</p>
2.3	<p>Supporting the adoption of Belfast as a city that supports and promotes the focus on its status as 'age-friendly' is linked into the supporting people and communities priority of the Investment programme. It is a work stream within the Belfast Strategic partnership and can be supported and delivered in conjunction with the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) which is part funded by Council. The signing of the declaration will be the first step in working towards improvements and access to services that benefit health. It is closely aligned to the work undertaken through our active Belfast programmes. The next step will be to lever European funding streams to support this work.</p>
2.4	<p>The first step in the process for Belfast becoming an Age Friendly City is to sign the Age Friendly declaration. The Age Friendly Declaration will formally commit Belfast's support to the principles of Age Friendly Cities. The Declaration contains a set of basic principles and commitments to make communities more age friendly. The commitments are summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promoting the Declaration in appropriate forums and adhering to the principles b) Collaboration including participating in the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities (including a 5 year assessment and plan of improvement) c) Development of communication channels and network with other cities and communities to promote equal rights and opportunities for older citizens <p>A full copy of the declaration is attached. The declaration would be signed by the Lord Mayor of Belfast. It is proposed that if this committee approves this approach the Declaration will be signed and publicised in conjunction with the 2012 Seniors Citizens Convention on 15th May 2012.</p>

3	Resource Implications
	<p>Officers within the Environmental health Service will continue work with our European unit to seek EU funding to support developing and progressing with the approach once the age –friendly declaration is signed.</p> <p>Funding from the current and future thematic budget will be used to host events, consultations and the Seniors Citizens Convention.</p>

4	Recommendations
4.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support progress with Belfast status as an Age Friendly Approach 2. That the Lord Mayor will sign the Age Friendly Declaration which will commit Belfast to participating in the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly cities.

Key to Abbreviations
WHO – World Health Organisation

Documents Attached
Age Friendly Declaration

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AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



THE DUBLIN DECLARATION

Dublin, September 2011

THE AGE-FRIENDLY CITY AND OLDER PEOPLE

DECLARATION

On the occasion of the 1ST International Conference 'Building the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities', held in Dublin, Ireland on 28-30 September 2011, **the undersigning cities recognise that:**

1. Ageing is a matter that affects all of us, at an individual level but also at the level of society. In a world in which life expectancy is increasing at the rate of over two years per decade, and the percentage of the population over 65 years is projected to double over the next forty years, the need to prepare for these changes is both urgent and timely.
2. Making the world a better place to grow old in will require a major shift in the way old age and older people are conceptualised in order to focus on the opportunities as well as the challenges of an ageing population. What is needed is new thinking and practice, supported by evidence, that focuses on promoting quality of life and well-being, valuing the contribution older people make in their communities, promoting their functional capacity, and removing the barriers which limit or inhibit their choice and ability to live life to the full.
3. Where we live, our physical, social and cultural environment, greatly impacts upon how we live. The significance of 'place' in all our lives cannot be overestimated. The built environment impacts on the quality of all of our lives and can make the difference between independence and dependence for all people, but especially for those growing older. Place is inseparable from our sense of identity and this is true for people of all ages, including older people.
4. Cities must equip themselves with the necessary means and resources and systems of resource distribution to promote equal opportunities and the well-being and participation of all citizens, including their older citizens. By 2030, two-thirds of the world's population will be living in cities, and the major urban areas of the developed world will have 25 per cent or more of their population people aged 60 and over. However, many older people in developed and developing countries live and will continue to live in rural and sometimes remote communities. These communities must also develop the capacity to promote the health, well-being and participation of their older citizens.
5. An age-friendly city and/or community encourages active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. Developing age-friendly processes and practices will vary from place to place. Solutions that work in more developed countries may need to be radically adapted for less developed countries and vice versa, because of the different issues and challenges each faces. Developing age-friendly processes will also need to recognise the gender aspect of ageing and develop solutions to meet the varying needs of women and men as they age.
6. It is the challenge of the community and its social organisations to promote more favorable conditions for the full development of all persons, including that of older people, avoiding or removing all causes that hinder or prevent such development. In doing so, it is necessary to consider the differences between citizens, including age differences, as a part of the diversity of which society is made up, designing services and structures so that they can be used by everyone, and making unnecessary, as far as possible, the existence of specific elements for older people. There is a need for enhanced international co-operation to protect and promote the human rights of older people at community, city and state level.

7. An age-friendly city, in accordance with the framework developed by WHO¹, is one in which service providers, public officials, community leaders, faith leaders, business people and citizens recognise the great diversity among older persons and the importance of health to them, promote their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life, respect their decisions and lifestyle choices, and anticipate and respond flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences.
8. There is a need to recognise that a significant proportion of our older population, many of them living in developing countries, are at greater risk of living in poverty. Planning for poverty reduction at all levels needs to meaningfully address the concerns of older people and develop policies which include specific measures to alleviate poverty among older people.
9. Planning for environmentally, economically and socially sustainable communities is a crucial concern for local government, and such planning needs to take account of the ageing of populations and the role older people can play as a key resource, and meet the specific needs of older people outlined in this Declaration.

COMMITMENTS

Therefore, the undersigning cities and communities make the following commitments that shall be known as the Declaration of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, and they commit in the first place to:

- a) Promote the Declaration of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in appropriate national and international forums, fostering the maximum adherence possible to its principles and premises, and promote the enactment of regulations at all levels which will establish what is required, in terms of plans, programmes and resources, in order to implement the commitments in this Declaration within a reasonable period of time.
- b) Initiate processes of collaboration to support the full application of the commitments in the Declaration of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, including participating in the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities. This will involve commencing a 5-year cycle of continual assessment and improvement to make their community and city more age-friendly, and throughout the process, participating in the Network to support its role as a platform for mutual support, discussion and learning.
- c) Develop communication channels and networks between the various cities and communities to stimulate and support advances in the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for older citizens and to share learning about advances in policies and practices which improve their lives.

The undersigning cities and communities also commit, where it is within their area of responsibility and economically feasible, to implement the following specific actions:

¹ World Health Organization (2007). Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide. Geneva: WHO

- I. Promote among the general public **awareness of older people**, their rights, their needs, their potentials, and highlight the positive social, economic and cultural contribution they make.
- II. Ensure that the views and opinions of older people are valued and listened to and that structures and **processes of citizen-centred engagement** are developed to ensure that older people have a meaningful involvement in decision making and are actively involved in the design and creation of innovation and change.
- III. Adopt measures to develop **urban and other public places** that are inclusive, sharable and desirable to all, particularly older people, and ensure that publicly used buildings promote the dignity, health and well-being of users of all ages, and are fit for purpose to meet the changing needs of an ageing society.
- IV. Promote and support the development of neighbourhoods and communities for all ages that are diverse, safe, inclusive and sustainable, and that include **housing** for older people that is of the highest quality. Particular attention should be given to the housing needs of older people in assisted living, residential care and nursing homes where their dignity and autonomy is at greater risk.
- V. Work to establish **public transport systems** that are available and affordable to older people, and are 'seamless' within and across the various modes of transport that exist. The transport system should also promote and facilitate personal transport use such as cycling and driving by older people. As these become more difficult, personal alternatives such as affordable taxis and car pooling, which interconnect with the public system, should be made available.
- VI. Promote the **participation of older people in the social and cultural life** of their community by making available a diverse range of events and activities that are accessible, affordable and tailored to be inclusive of them and promote their integration into the community. This should include the promotion of intergenerational activities.
- VII. Promote and support the development of **employment and volunteering opportunities** for older people and recognise their positive contribution, to include the provision of lifelong learning opportunities in order to empower them and promote their autonomy.
- VIII. Ensure that a comprehensive and integrated range of affordable, easily accessible, age-friendly and high quality **community support and health services** is available to older people, to include health promotion and prevention programmes, community-based support services, primary care, secondary acute hospital, rehabilitation services, specialist tertiary, long-term residential and end of life care.

SIGNATURES OF CITY AND COMMUNITY MAYORS AND LEADERS:

DECLARATION ENDORSED BY:

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES

IRELAND'S AGE-FRIENDLY COUNTIES PROGRAMME

THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ON AGEING

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Cooperation Ireland Seminar
Date:	23 rd March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Adele Faulkner, Environmental Health ext 3607
Contact Officer:	Adele Faulkner, Environmental Health ext 3607

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>2012 is the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between the Generations. Co-operation Ireland's Local Authority Forum in association with the EY year of Active ageing has organised a seminar entitled, "The Role of Local Government in the Ageing Agenda" in Armagh City Hotel on 3rd May 2012.</p> <p>The aim of the seminar is to explore the role of local government in the ageing well agenda and to examine latest initiatives and best practice being taken by local government within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.</p> <p>The seminar is open to Councillors, Staff of Councils/Local Authorities, Agencies working with local government in the delivery of ageing well services and relevant organisations.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>The Co operation Ireland which is an all Island Local Authority Forum, through its social inclusion sub-group has invited Belfast City Council to show case its work at the seminar on 3rd of May in Armagh. In particular the work of the Council in working with partners across the City and including initiatives such as Seniors Info, Senior Citizens Convention and Age Friendly consultations.</p>

3	Resource Implications
	Attendance at the conference is free of charge. Mileage will be the only cost incurred.

4	Recommendations
4.1	The Committee is asked to agree

	1. That Councillor Kelly or a nominated representative from this committee attends and speaks at the seminar
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Documents Attached
Seminar invitation

Seminar:

The Role of Local Government in the Ageing Agenda

Organised by **Co-operation Ireland's Local Authority Forum**

In association with the



European Year for **Active Ageing**
and **Solidarity between Generations 2012**



Date: Thursday, 3rd May, 2012

Venue: Armagh City Hotel

Aim of Seminar:

2012 is the **European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between the Generations**, which provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate the role and contribution of an ageing population to society.

This seminar will explore the role and opportunities for local government in the ageing well agenda and will highlight examples of local government initiatives as well as providing opportunities for shared learning between colleagues in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Who Should Attend: This seminar is open to Councillors, Staff of Councils/Local Authorities, Agencies working with local government in the delivery of ageing well services and relevant NGO organisations.

There is no fee for this seminar.

To register your place, please email: pmadigan@cooperationireland.org with your name, title and organisation

Seminar Schedule:

12.00 – 12.50	Registration & light lunch
12.55 – 13.05	Welcome address by Minister of the Environment, Alex Attwood MLA
13.15 – 13.30	Introduction: Claire Keatinge , Northern Ireland’s Commissioner for Older People
13.30 – 14.00	<p><u>Setting the Context:</u></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Roger O’ Sullivan, Director Centre for Ageing Research & Development in Ireland “Ageing across Ireland, north and south – key considerations” Anne Connolly, Director The Ageing Well Network The role of the Ageing Well Network in translating the WHO Guidelines for an Age Friendly City into a programme tailored to work in an Irish context.
14.00 – 14.15	Questions & Answers
14.15 – 14.45	<p><u>Local Government Initiatives:</u></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conn Murray, County Manager, Louth Louth Age-Friendly County Initiative Cllr Bernie Kelly, Chair of All Party Reference Group on Older people, Belfast City Council Healthy Ageing Belfast, a partnership approach
Tea/coffee break	
15.00 – 16.00	<p>Panel Discussion:</p> <p>Chaired by Anne Connolly, Ageing Well Network</p> <p>Questions & Answers</p>
16.00 – 16.30	<p>Closing Remarks:</p> <p>Ronan Toomey, Department of Health & Children & Coordinator of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between the generations, ROI</p>





PRESENTERS:

Claire Keatinge has been appointed as the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland and took up the post in November 2011. Prior to her appointment as Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland, Claire Keatinge was the Director of the Alzheimer's Society in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Roger O'Sullivan is the Director of CARDI. He has previously worked in Queen's University Belfast and the regional rural organisation, Rural Community Network. He is currently joint convener of the UK Funders Forum on Ageing, guest editor of the journal Quality in Ageing and Older Adults and was recently rapporteur for the Ditchley Foundation's international conference on the Impact of Ageing on Developed Economies.

Anne Connolly is the Director of the Ageing Well Network - an independent organisation which brings together heads of organisations and units across the ageing sector to reframe the agenda on ageing and act as a catalyst for change. It is funded by Atlantic Philanthropies. It operates a number of national initiatives such as the Age Friendly Counties Programme and OPRAH (Older People Remaining at Home)

Conn Murray's career commenced 30 years ago in his native County Meath. He has worked in nine different Local Authorities including Clonmel, Limerick City, and Cork City and was appointed City Manager in Waterford in September 2003. Conn held the position until September 2007, when he was appointed to his current position as Manager of Louth County Council.

Cllr Bernie Kelly, SDLP was elected as Councillor to represent the Balmoral Area in May 2005 and May 2011. Councillor Kelly was elected as Deputy Lord Mayor in June 2007 and currently serves on the following committees: Development Committee Parks and Leisure Committee (Deputy Chairman) Housing Forum as well as chairing the Belfast City Council, All Party Reference Group on Older people.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Nomination to the Northern Ireland Policing Board of Independent Members
Date:	23rd March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health and Environment Services, Ext. 3260
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Head of Environmental Health, Ext. 3281

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Council is required, under Part 3 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to establish the Belfast PCSP and the four DPCSPs. The legislation requires that a Public Appointments process is undertaken in order to appoint the Independent Members to the Partnership and, in accordance with the Statutory Code of Practice on the Appointment of Independent Members to the PCSPs/DPCSPs, the Council has appointed a short-listing and interview panel for the purpose of determining which of the independent applicants are deemed to be suitable for appointment.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The interview panel has now completed its work and has drawn up a list of appointable candidates. The Statutory Code, at paragraph 64, requires the Council to formally nominate to the NIPB those persons deemed to be suitable for appointment by the interview panel. Furthermore, paragraph 64 of the Statutory Code states that in considering the names submitted by the interview panel, the Council should note that they are “applications in confidence” and should not seek to place the names in the public domain.
2.2	To maintain this confidentiality an alphabetical list of applicants considered appropriate for nomination to the Belfast PCSP and the four DPCSPs will be tabled at the meeting for approval and will be collected at the end of the meeting.

2.3	Members will recall that due to the tight timescales that the NIPB is working to in relation to this appointment process, the NIPB's Interim Chief Executive had written to all Council Chief Executives requesting that, providing that the appropriate Council agreement can be secured, Councils try to expedite this element of the process as quickly as practicable.
2.4	To ensure that the NIPB's final appointment panels can proceed with the appointment stage without undue delay, the Committee agreed, at its meeting held on 17th February, that the Council recommend to delegate authority to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to approve, on behalf of the Council, the list of suitable candidates for consideration by the NIPB as Independent Members of the Belfast PCSP and the DPCSPs. This recommendation was subsequently ratified by Council at its meeting held on 1st March.

3	Resource Implications
	None

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None

5	Recommendations
	The Committee is recommended to formally nominate, on behalf of the Council, the list of those found suitable by the interview panel for consideration by the NIPB as Independent Members of the Belfast PCSP/DPCSPs.

6	Key to Abbreviations
	PCSP – Policing and Community Safety Partnership DPCSP – District Policing and Community Safety Partnership NIPB – Northern Ireland Policing Board

7	Decision Tracking
	Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services 24th March, 2012



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Right Service, Right Place - A Consultation on Proposals to Reshape Maternity Services in Belfast – Request to Brief the Committee.
Date:	23rd March, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6414)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6314)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	In 2008, the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust launched its New Directions consultation document, which was the commencement of a process to examine how the Belfast Trust would deliver health and social care services over the next decade.
1.2	As part of that process, the Trust had issued previously a number of consultations, for example, Excellence and Choice: Adult Mental Health Services, to which the Council had submitted responses.
1.3	The next stage is to undertake a formal consultation on specific proposals for service change in the delivery of maternity services and to this end the Trust has issued the “Right Service, Right Place – a consultation to reshape maternity services in Belfast”.
1.4	The consultation will take place from 1st March until 31st May, 2012 and, as part of the consultation process, Mr Colm Donaghy, Chief Executive, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, has written to Council offering to brief the Committee on the proposals.
1.5	A copy of the consultation document and the associated Equality Impact Assessment has already been circulated to all Members of Council.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Committee has a close working relationship with the Trust and has received presentations previously on major issues which could affect the Health Services provided to the citizens of Belfast.
3	Resource Implications
	None.

4	Equality Implications
	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that a briefing session, to which all Members of the Council are invited, be held for this purpose.

6	Decision Tracking
Mr Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
April, 2012.	