

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 18th May, 2012

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);  
the High Sheriff (Alderman M. Campbell);  
Aldermen Browne and R. Newton; and  
Councillors Attwood, Convery, Garrett, Haire,  
Hanna, Jones, Lavery, Maskey, McKee, McCarthy,  
McVeigh, Ó Muilleoir, A. Newton and Reynolds.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;  
Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;  
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### Apology

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

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 25th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st May, subject to:

- (i) the rejection of the decision under the heading "Request to Use the City Hall: Ulster Centenary Committee – To Mark the Centenary of the Signing of the Ulster Covenant", the Council accordingly agreed to grant the use of the City Hall and the Covenant Table for the event; and
- (ii) the submission of a report on the live site screen at the front of the City Hall to the next meeting of the Committee.

### Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were reported:

- (i) in respect of item 4(e) Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce/Orangefest – Request for the Use of the City Hall, Councillor Haire indicated that he was Chairman of Orangefest; and

- (ii) with regard to item 8(a) the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership, Councillor Reynolds indicated that he had declared an interest at that meeting in so far as he had worked for an organisation which had submitted an application for funding under the "Peace III – Strategic Grants Programme".

### **Investment Programme**

#### **Area Working Groups – Update**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 2nd April, had approved the establishment of the five Area Working Groups, on an advisory basis, in order to inform the implementation of the Belfast Investment Programme. It was reported that the five Groups had all held their initial meeting and a copy of the minutes of the meetings in that regard have been circulated for the information of the Members. It was pointed out that discussions were continuing in order to develop the long list of Local Investment priorities in each of the five areas and officers would meet with local groups over the next three weeks in order to ascertain further details on the projects which had been listed. An overview of the projects on the long list which had been provided to date and which was a work in progress had been circulated for the information of the Members.

The Director of Property and Projects indicated that, as of 11th May, the position of each of the Groups was as follows:

- West – projects fairly well identified with further to follow;
- East – ongoing engagement with community/voluntary representatives;
- Greater Shankill – comprehensive list;
- South – some additional projects identified with further to follow; and
- North – further work needed on the long list.

He encouraged the Members to provide, over the coming days, details of any additional projects to the Democratic Services Section so that the long lists could be finalised. He pointed out that work had commenced to prepare proposals for the next meetings of the Area Working Groups.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided, approved the minutes of the meetings of the Area Working Groups and agreed that a report on area profiles and other funding sources/projects relating to each of the five areas be provided to the August meetings of the Working Groups.

#### **Funding for Exhibition and Conference Facilities at the Belfast Waterfront Hall - Operational Issues**

(Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1** Belfast City Council’s Investment Programme was launched on 2 February 2012. It commits the Council to an ambitious programme of investment, including an investment of £150M in capital projects. One of the key projects highlighted in the Programme is a proposal to invest £20M to extend Belfast Waterfront to provide dedicated conference and exhibition facilities which will help strengthen Belfast’s offer to the market.
- 1.2** The Belfast Waterfront (the Waterfront) is a large purpose-built arts and entertainment centre which opened for business in 1997. It was constructed at a total cost of £37M.
- 1.3** The facilities offered within the existing building include:
  - Auditorium of seating capacity in excess of 2,200;
  - Studio with a seating capacity of 380;
  - 20 small meeting rooms;
  - Two bars;
  - A Fully Licensed Restaurant;
  - A Gift Shop; and
  - A Box Office.
- 1.4** In addition to the above public space, the venue includes office space for staff; dressing rooms for performers; technical areas; and 2 small kitchens.
- 1.5** The Waterfront is located on the banks of the River Lagan and adjacent to the Belfast Courts Complex, Hilton Hotel, and BT Tower in an area which is now considered a business hub within Belfast.
- 1.6** In 2008, Belfast City Council commissioned a Feasibility Study for the development of a Convention Centre in Belfast. The key driver behind this Feasibility Study was that despite experiencing considerable success as a conference destination, the Waterfront was unable to attract a significant number of events from within its key target market i.e. the Association Conference Market. This study concluded that the provision of a larger conferencing facility in the City could attract additional conferences, resulting in significant economic benefits being realised.
- 1.7** In February 2011, the Development Committee agreed to commission a Business Case to explore the feasibility of creating a link between the Waterfront and the vacant Level 0 and Level 1 at the Lanyon Quay Building.

- 1.8** The Business Case concluded that the development of a link bridge and the conversion of Level 0 and Level 1 would provide the venue with significant additional space, thereby providing the potential to attract large scale international conferences.
- 1.9** Following the completion of the Business Case, the Committee subsequently agreed to commission a Full “Green Book” Economic Appraisal to consider the most appropriate option for the development of integrated conferencing facilities in Belfast. An Executive Summary of the Economic Appraisal has been circulated.
- 1.10** Since 2008 there has been a significant decline in the number of conferences hosted in Belfast. The number of conferences hosted at the Waterfront over the last 3 years has decreased by circa 36%. The corporate market has stayed largely consistent during this period, with the largest decline in the GB and International Association market, which has seen a 59% decrease.
- 1.11** Stakeholder consultation has indicated that the key reason for this decline is the lack of appropriate facilities. The issues highlighted with the Waterfront Hall include:
- There is insufficient exhibition space available on site. Exhibition space requirements range from 1,500 sq/m to 5,000 sq/m (3,000 delegate conference);
  - The exhibition space that is available is split over 3 levels, which is not appropriate for the majority of exhibitions;
  - There is a lack of appropriate sized breakout space at the venue;
  - There is no banqueting facility available on site, which some associations prefer. As with exhibitions, in the past the Waterfront has offered St George’s Market as a potential location for exhibitions, but as it is a separate building a short distance from the plenary sessions this has been poorly received.
- 1.12** Given the above constraints, the following requirements were identified by those consulted:
- An integrated convention centre with a clear span exhibition space across one level with a minimum of 2,000 sq/m;

- A minimum of 5 rooms that can accommodate breakout that can accommodate larger groups i.e. 200 plus; and
- Banqueting space that can accommodate up to 750 people.

1.13 The Economic Appraisal considered a long list of 10 project options which reflected variations in location, scale and specification of the proposed development. Following further consideration this long list was reduced to a shortlist of 4 Options:

**Option 1 - Do – Nothing**

This option provides a comparator against which all other options will be assessed, as per HM Treasury “Green Book” Guidance. Under this option no capital works will take place and the Waterfront will continue to operate under its current remit and strategy.

**Option 2 - Linking the Waterfront (via link bridge) to the Lanyon Quay Building, Lanyon Place.**

This option would require Belfast City Council to:

- Purchase Level 0 and Level 1 of the adjacent Lanyon Quay Building,
- Construct a link bridge being from Bar Level 1 of the Waterfront to Level 1 of the Lanyon Quay Building;
- Internally refurbish and fit out of both floors of the Lanyon Quay Building;
- Remodel Bar Level 1 of the Waterfront.

**Option 3 - Two Story Extension of the Waterfront over the Service Yard to the rear of the Venue**

This option will require the following capital works:

- Construction of a 2 Storey Extension. over the Service Yard at the rear of the current building;
- Provision of primary access to the Venue through the existing studio area, which will be demolished, creating an entrance and lobby area;
- Provision of additional space, at Ground floor level (potential storage space or units to let) on the Lanyon Place Waterfront.

**Option 4 - Two Story Extension of the Waterfront over the Service Yard to the rear of the Venue, with further extension over River**

This option would require the following capital works:

- Construction of a 2 Storey Extension over the Service Yard at the rear of the current building;
- Provision of primary access to the Venue through the existing studio area, which will be demolished, creating an entrance and lobby area; and
- Provision of additional space, at Ground floor level (potential storage space or units to let) on the Lanyon Place Waterfront.

- 1.14 The Development Committee considered the above options as set out in the Economic Appraisal at its meeting on 6 February 2012 and endorsed the recommendation that Option 3 represented the most beneficial option with an associated capital cost of £20M. It was further agreed that officers should develop an implementation plan and that officers should consult with a range of potential partners in the interim.
- 1.15 An application has since been made to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board for funding of £12M made up of a £2M application to the Tourism Development Scheme (TDS) and £10M to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).
- 1.16 Council and NITB officials are also exploring the possibility of the valuation of the land required for the extension being included within the project costs. The land is valued at approximately £1.6M. If this were to be deemed eligible a further grant allocation of approximately £800K could possibly be secured from the ERDF should there be an underspend on other ERDF Programmes.

## **2 Key Issues**

### **Financial Issues**

- 2.1 Councils are required by Section 1 of the Local Government Best Value Act to provide best value services, by continuously improving services having reference to the three E's of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Each year the Council has to make a return to the Local Government Auditor indicating how it is meeting this duty.
- 2.2 The development of new, state of the art conference and exhibition facilities at the Waterfront Hall is one of the most significant elements of the Belfast Investment Programme 2012 -2015. The programme commits the Council to an investment of £150M capital infrastructure, the promotion of economic growth and job opportunities whilst keeping the rates below inflation and delivering £20M in savings. This project has the potential to deliver a number of the key objectives of the programme namely:-

1. Create an additional 200 jobs within the city
  2. Reduce the operating deficit of the Waterfront Hall thus freeing up resources which can support funding for other capital projects across the city such as the renewal of our leisure estate
  3. Contributing to keeping any rate increase below inflation
  4. Improving operational efficiencies with the Council
- 2.3 The affordability, deliverability and sustainability of this project is wholly dependent upon the Council's ability to draw down external funding totalling £12M, £2M from the NITB's Tourism Development Scheme (TDS) and a further £10M from the ERDF.
- 2.4 The project is also time bound in that the project must be completed by the end of June 2015 in order to be able to draw down all of the eligible funding before the closure of the ERDF Programme on 31 December 2015.
- 2.5 The Council has now submitted a full 'Green Book' Economic Appraisal to NITB as part of its application for both TDS and ERDF funding. NITB is not only responsible for the administration of the TDS scheme but will also act as the sponsor of the application to the ERDF. NITB Officials have indicated that due to the fact that the Economic Appraisal has been developed by external consultants and is very comprehensive it is probable that the application can be accelerated through the approval processes. The appraisal process consists of a detailed review of the business case by NITB with a further review conducted by DFP Economists to ensure the application meets the requirements of the EU Commission. It is anticipated that subject to the Council being able to address any queries raised during the process that the appraisal could be completed within 12 weeks. Timely approval will be critical to delivering the project within the time constraints of the ERDF Programme.
- 2.6 Given the scale of the funding involved both NITB and DFP Economists will require the Council to demonstrate that the project represents value for money and delivers the highest possible economic return for the city. To do this the business case is required to demonstrate that the options selected will maximise visitor numbers, visitor spend and job creation in the tourism and hospitality sectors as a result.
- 2.7 To satisfy the requirements of the DETI and DFP Economists it was necessary to include within the Council's Economic Appraisal an assessment of the various options for the

management and operation of the new facilities. In order to address this two options have been considered:-

- a) The Council manages the facility itself
- b) A Management Contract is entered into with an established Conference Operator

2.8 Option 3(b), (Two Story Extension of the Waterfront over the Service Yard to the rear of the Venue which is externally operated) is estimated to provide a substantially greater economic return to the city whilst at the same time allowing for a significant reduction in the current annual operating deficit of the Waterfront Hall as compared to option 3a (Council manages the facility).

2.9 The benefits arise from the fact that established operators are likely to have lengthy experience of running similar facilities, are established in the market place with a reputation for delivery, have an existing broad customer base and operate conference and exhibition facilities as their core business.

2.10 Table 1 below sets the potential economic benefit of the two operating models as identified in the Green Book Economic Appraisal:-

Table 1

Projected Economic Benefit

Option	Projected Economic Benefit (per annum)
3a (In House Operator)	£21m
3b(External Operator)	£39m

Table 2 below summarises the estimated net annual savings / (deficit) after deducting the annual financing cost of the net capital expenditure. The net capital expenditure, after grants received, for option 3 is estimated at £8M. It should be noted that the savings in the annual operating deficit do not include the impact of any compensatory payment which may be required by the Hilton, as part of the extension agreement, and any additional costs which may be incurred through the transfer of relevant staff to an external operator as an estimate of these costs and whether they would be one off or recurring is not possible at this stage.



**Table 2**

**Net Annual Savings / (Cost) after Financing Costs**

Option	Annual Capital Financing Cost (for 25 years)	Savings in Annual Operating Deficit	Net Savings / (Cost) to the Council
3a In House Operation	£680k	£465k	(£215k)
3b External Operator	£680k	£1,591k	£911k

The net savings to the council of option 3b of £911k would equate to a 0.72% reduction in the district rate (2012/13).

Alternatively the net savings could be allocated to either the City Investment Fund or used to finance additional capital projects as part of the Councils Capital Programme such as the review and renewal of leisure facilities. If allocated to the City Investment fund the £911k, would provide an additional £2.7m contribution to the investment fund over each 3 year period, whereas if the £911k was used to finance loans for the capital programme this could provide the scope for further capital projects of up to £10m.

**2.12 HR Issues**

Given the fact that Option 3(b) i.e. the engagement of an experienced external operator would appear to yield a greater economic benefit the funders have indicated that they will require the Council to demonstrate that they have fully examined both operating options and can fully justify whichever option it ultimately selects.

- 2.13** If the Council does proceed with plans to develop conference and exhibition facilities at the Waterfront there will be HR implications irrespective of which operating model the Council decides to proceed with. If the new facility is to achieve the projected income set out in the Economic Appraisal the business model for the Waterfront will have to fundamentally change from that of an entertainment venue to that of a conference centre.

- 2.14 It is therefore proposed that officers should now be authorised to examine the potential HR implication of both options. Trade Unions have already been advised that the requirements of the Best Value legislation and the conditions attached to securing external funding have required the completion of a Green Book Economic Appraisal and that a report on the issue is to be presented to the SP&R Committee.
- 2.15 The Trade Unions were further assured that any decision that might impact on future staffing would have to be dealt with through the appropriate Council HR policies and relevant employment law. The Trade Unions were also advised that they would be fully consulted on all potential issues impacting on staff in accordance with good practice. Approximately 50 staff are currently employed within the Waterfront Hall.

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 There will be significant resource implications depending on which operational model is chosen both in terms of funding the extension to the Waterfront Hall and the overall capacity of the Council to fund the entirety of the Investment Programme and to provide further capital investment in relation to its existing estate.
- 3.2 Members will wish to satisfy themselves that the basis of the analysis in the Economic Appraisal is robust and officers will be happy to organise a briefing session with the authors of the report to enable them to explain its methodology and answer any queries.

### **4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

- 4.1 None

### **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 In line with the Council's legislative requirement to achieve Best Value it is recommended that officers are authorised to conduct a detailed assessment of the HR legal and financial implications of the two operating models and report back to Committee so that the matter can be further considered.

### **6 Decision Tracking**

A further detailed report will be brought back to the SP&R Committee in August 2012."

During discussion, it was suggested that a study visit could be undertaken to view similar facilities in other locations, including Liverpool, Birmingham and the new Conference Centre in Dublin. In addition, it was pointed out that as part of that visit the Members might wish to consider visiting the Dublin Canal and a digital hub also.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that a report on proposed visits to similar venues in Dublin and other areas be submitted to the Committee in due course.

### **Communications Plan**

(Mr. E. Deeny, Head of Corporate Communications, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The investment programme was launched in February 2012 in Belfast Waterfront and also at a number of smaller events throughout the community. It was warmly received by most of the media and also by the Northern Ireland Executive, business leaders, trade unions and local communities.**

**The main challenge thrown down following the launch was that people wanted to see projects on the ground and being delivered. It is vital that we not only plan and start to deliver the package but that we are seen to be achieving our aims. That is where communications is vital across the board – we need to keep politicians, staff, communities up to date with progress – and by the same token no amount of communications or ‘spin’ will provide cover for failure to deliver on the programme.**

**To retain the good will built up at the launch and our credibility, we need to develop a clear plan of action as soon as possible and publicise it with as much detail as we can – when projects will start, finish, where the money is coming from, where they will be and what difference they will make in the local communities, to the business sectors and the city as a whole.**

**Our politicians have been at the forefront of developing and launching the package and it is their credibility that is most on the line in relation to delivery – so we need to ensure that ownership of the package is closely identified with them.**

**The communications plan, a copy of which has been circulated, outlines the suggested communications approach, which will be delivered by Corporate Communications.**

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The main messages we need to deliver are summarised in the plan, a copy of which has been circulated, but centre around this being a joint initiative supported by all the political parties. Underneath that, the main information we will need to disseminate will be the level of investment and the projects it is supporting, the number of jobs and placement opportunities being created, value for money, city-wide benefits and underlining the fact that the council is a delivery organisation.

The main activities highlighted in the plan are:

- Timetable of projects - when projects will be on the ground, key milestones in terms of progress, expected completion date, cost, financial source – regularly updated.
- Branding - All I activity branded ‘as part of the Investment Programme’ or ‘an Investment Programme project’. Brand to appear on hoardings and signs, publications, on-line etc. It is suggested that major projects should carry the strapline juxtapositioned with the council logo of ‘at the heart of the city’ for major projects and ‘at the heart of the community’ for local projects. Proposed designs and strapline are attached.
- Media activity press releases, platform pieces, one-to-one briefings with journalist, six monthly updates on progress.
- Other Communications activity – use of council meetings to promote investment programme, website, social media, City Matters, display boards, hoardings on sites of major projects to provide local community information (as seen at Skainos project)
- Role of Members - Party leaders leading on the big projects, supported by chair of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, with roles for committee chairs and local councillors.
- Area Working Groups - Work to be supported by identifying work in local areas and using website and social media to keep communities updates, weekly newspapers and repeating local launch events at appropriate time.
- Super Connected Cities Project – The submission to the Urban Broadband Fund requires comms and marketing activity, consideration given to development of a website, branding and a limited number of publications. Extra staff and budget resources will be required.

- **Internal Communications** - Regular information in team briefings, information session, Interlink, internal screens and Intercom.

### **3 Recommendations**

#### **3.1 The Committee is asked to approve:**

- The communications approach as outlined at Appendix One, a copy of which has been circulated for the information of the Members; and
- The branding and strapline per designs, as appended to the report (including a mock-up of how they will look in situ)”

During discussion, a Member suggested that the signs be amended to reflect that the projects were part of the Council’s Investment Programme. In addition, Members suggested that the signs for the projects in the Gaeltach Quarter should be bi-lingual and printed in both the Irish and English languages.

Accordingly, it was

Moved by Councillor Ó Muilleoir,  
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Committee agrees that, in line with the decision of the Development Committee regarding the City dressing plan, hoardings and signs to be displayed in the Gaeltacht Quarter would be in both Irish and English.

On a vote by show of hands eleven Members voted for the proposals and five against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Subject to the foregoing additions, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Review of Public Administration**

#### **Local Government Reform (RPA) Update**

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committee’s consideration the undernoted report:

##### **“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

- #### **1.1 Since the last update provided to the Committee in April 2012, there has been a number of further developments in regards to the Local Government Reform process, as outlined below, which Members should be made aware of.**

**2.0 Key Issues**

**2.1 *Local Government Boundaries***

**2.1.1** Members will recall that an independent Boundaries Commissioner had been appointed in 2009 to consider and make recommendations as to the proposed boundaries for the 11 new councils. The Boundaries Commissioner published his Final Recommendations Report on 26 June 2009. In terms of the Boundaries Commissioners' report recommended:

(i) the new Belfast boundary would incorporate parts of the adjoining Castlereagh Borough, Lisburn City and a small part of North Down District Council areas i.e.

- Castlereagh –Tullycarnet, Gilnahirk, Braniel, Hillfoot, Merok, Cregagh, Wynchurch, Glencreagh, Belvoir
- Lisburn – Colin Glen, Poleglass, Lagmore, Twinbrook, Kilwee & Dunmurry
- North Down - inclusion of part of Cedar Grove, Knocknagoney

(ii) the number of electoral wards, and therefore councillors, would increase from 51 to 60, with an average of 40 electoral wards for the other 10 new council areas

(iii) as a result, the new Belfast City Council would increase its population base from 277,000 to 315,000 (approximately).

**2.1.2** On 24 April 2012, the Environment Minister submitted for the consideration of the NI Assembly, a draft Local Government (Boundaries) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012. This legislation will confirm the boundaries of the eleven new local government Districts (including Belfast) as well as the number, boundaries and names of the wards into which each district will be divided. A copy of the draft Order has been circulated.

**2.1.3** Members should note that with NI Executive agreement, there are two modifications set out within the draft Order in respects to the boundary between the new Belfast district and Lisburn and Castlereagh district. The proposed modifications are detailed in a 'Statement of Reasons for Modifications of the Recommendations of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner' which has been submitted to the Assembly alongwith the draft Order. The modifications relate primarily to the non-transfer of Forestside and Castlereagh Civic Headquarters into the new Belfast boundary.

**2.1.4** Now that the draft Boundary Order has been laid in the NI Assembly, work will commence with Land and Property Services to undertake a detailed analysis of the impact of the boundary change on the Belfast rates base. This analysis will facilitate early modelling of EPP scenarios and enable the Council to start to plan for any financial implications resulting from the extension to the Belfast boundary. There are a number of rating issues which need to be addressed as part of the RPA transition process as outlined below.

- (i) Rates Convergence** - One of the key issues that needs to be addressed is how the convergence of District Rates within each new Council area will be managed. Based on work previously undertaken by DFP and DoE in 2009, some of the differences between the estimated rates of the new councils versus the rates of the legacy councils varied greatly. Much work is needed to ensure that the overarching principle of the rates neutrality of the reform process is maintained. There is a requirement to review and refresh this work and provide options for how rates convergence can be achieved.
- (ii) Legacy Issues** - Legacy rating policy decisions will be required to determine the management of legacy debt write-offs and rating appeals.
- (iii) Data sharing** - The successful management of rates transition will be underpinned by the availability of information about the new councils' rates base. At present, all rates information is held by LPS. It is recommended that a protocol for sharing data between LPS and councils is developed as a matter of urgency.
- (iv) LPS Accountability** - Currently, LPS is accountable to the Minister of Finance and Personnel for its rates collection performance. It is recommended that consideration is given to how LPS accountability to local government in the context of 11 district councils can be enhanced.

A detailed report on the aforementioned rating issues will be brought back to the Committee for future consideration.

## **2.2 Regional Transition Committee**

**2.2.1** The first meeting of the reform programme's Regional Transition Committee (RTC) took place on 25 April 2012 and had been attended by the Chair of the Committee, Councillor Deidre Hargey and the Chief Executive. The RTC has been

established to provide political leadership to the overall reform programme and to link in with the new Council clusters who will be responsible for delivering reform at the local level.

2.2.2 Whilst DoE will issue an official minute of the RTC discussions which will be circulated to Members, an internal note of discussions has been circulated for Members' information. Some of the high-level points raised during discussions included:

- Environment Minister stated the wish of the Department to work in partnership with local government to take forward the reform programme and highlighted the need to take a structured and disciplined approach to implementation
- Environment Minister informed the group that the draft Local Government (Boundaries) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012 has been submitted to the NI Assembly
- some elected Members advocated the need for central government to provide an element of funding to kick-start reform albeit recognising the need for further work around the nature of any such funding;
- clear recognition of the need for transferring functions to be fit-for-purpose and rate neutral at point of transfer
- Minister stated that it will be important that there are adequate resources within planning offices to ensure service continuity and to create certainty in terms of the contribution of planning in supporting wider economic and regeneration activity
- Environment Minister informed the group that work is underway to identify the optimum level of resources required to deliver the planning function over the next three years – this will ensure that the function is adequately resourced at point of transfer
- Environment Minister acknowledged the need to build capacity among all parties over the coming years to ensure the planning function is adequately delivered post transfer.

2.2.3 *Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh*

During discussions at the RTC, an elected Member from Lisburn City Council enquired as to the current position regarding (i) potential representation from Lisburn and Castlereagh on the Belfast voluntary Transition Committee and (ii) process for discussions among Lisburn/Castlereagh and Belfast regarding potential transfer of assets and liabilities.



2.2.4 The DoE Deputy Permanent Secretary outlined the current position in regards to these issues i.e.:

- (i) stating that there is no requirement for representation from Lisburn and Castlereagh on the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee; however, there will be a requirement for representation on the Statutory Belfast Transition Committee albeit this representation will need to be representative of the areas to transfer.
- (ii) stating that the current position regarding the potential transfer of assets and liabilities from Lisburn and Castlereagh to Belfast, is that discussions will be taken forward on the basis of negotiation.

2.2.5 Cllr Deidre Hargey outlined the Council's desire, as previously stated by the SP&R Committee, to engage at an early stage in discussions with both Lisburn and Castlereagh to progress a number of transition related issues.

#### 4.0 Resource Implications

There is no HR or financial implications contained within this report.

#### 5.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree that the key pieces of rating work, as set out at paragraph 2.1.4, be now progressed."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Transfer of Planning

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### "1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The transfer of planning related functions to local government as part of the wider RPA reform process presents both its challenges and opportunities. Working in partnership with the planning service and Environment Minister, the Council must ensure that planning is fit-for-purpose and adequately resourced at point of transfer. It is equally as important that adequate capacity exists to support the effective delivery of planning when transferred to councils.

- 1.2 The integration of planning with other key place-shaping functions such as regeneration, local economic development and community planning will significantly enhance the ability of the Council and members to support sustainable development locally and improve the quality of people's lives.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 Members will note that the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 is now enacted and represents the most significant changes to the planning system in the last 30 years. The Act in addition to reforming the operation of the current system will, when brought in force, also transfer the majority of planning functions and decision making responsibilities to local government.

- 2.2 The proposed transfer will encompass the three main areas of planning - local development plans, development management and enforcement. At the point of formal transfer, the Council will no longer be a consultee in the planning process; but become the regulatory planning authority, responsible for drawing up its own development plans and making the vast majority of planning decisions. The transfer of planning will also require the introduction of new governance arrangements for councils, including a new ethical standards regime and a system of checks and balances to underpin the planning decision-making process

- 2.3 The Environment Minister has stated that the formal transfer of planning related functions to councils will take place in 2015 when the new 11 Councils become operational. The extent of the required preparatory work for transfer along with the relatively short lead in time to Shadow Authority status (i.e 2014) emphasises the need for the process to be effectively managed. The cultural, structural and procedural changes required by the Council to support this transition cannot be underestimated and need to be addressed as a matter of priority.

Moving Forward

- 2.4 In anticipation of the Act being brought into effect the Council needs to prepare for the transition from a consultative body within the planning process to taking on responsibility for the professional delivery of statutory planning and enforcement. It is therefore suggested that a number of interim actions require consideration:

**A. Organisational Change within the Council**

Significant organisation change will be required to support a move from the reactive consultative role to a proactive decision-making role in planning. Consideration will therefore need to be given to how the statutory planning function will be integrated within the Council along with the associated governance and operational arrangements required to support the enhanced role. Consideration will also need to be given to the future role of the Town Planning Committee within this context.

To begin this process, it is intended that a report be submitted to the Town Planning Committee seeking Members views on the broader changes alongside the potential to review or refocus the current monthly meeting schedule of the Town Planning Committee. The changed focus could seek to balance consideration of (i) operational/routine business and (ii) strategic /developmental business.

**B. Capacity Building**

Members have previously highlighted the need to develop a structured capacity building programme for Council (Members and officers) to prepare them for their new roles within the planning process, and to develop the organisational capacity to administer this important statutory function. This work needs to address how DoE Planning Service is linked into a capacity programme. The Environment Minister recently indicated that some financial resources may be made available to support the implementation of a capacity programme -albeit no timescales for delivery have been identified.

The roll-out of a foundation learning programme aimed at equipping Members with a shared understanding of the current planning system; alongside an exploration of the short, medium to longer term changes proposed would be a critical initial stage addressing the respective roles or relationships between the various stakeholders in the planning process. This work would enable specific areas of concern and key developmental requirements to be identified and linked to the Members' Development Programme.

Some initial proposals regarding a capacity programme which has been prepared in liaison with the Belfast Planning Manager has been circulated for the Committee's information. This is intended to be brought before the Town Planning Committee for consideration.

Given the significance and potential impact of planning on both the governance and operational aspects of the Council, consideration will need to be given as to how any developmental initiatives can be extended to all Members; linked to the Members' Development Programme and focused capacity events. It is suggested that the suggested foundation programme be open to all Members.

**C. Working with the Department of Environment**

It is vital that the Council builds a strong co-operative relationship with the Department to effectively manage the transfer of the planning function. Critical to this will be agreement between the Council and the Department on the staffing levels which will be required to deliver an effective planning service for the city at the point of transfer.

In discussions with the Department, it is recognised that a dedicated resource will be needed to facilitate this work and build organisational capacity within the Council. The present Divisional Planning Manager for the city is due to retire in October 2012. It is proposed that negotiations take place with the Department to determine whether it might be possible to consider retaining the present postholder on a part-time basis – 20 hours a week – and second him to the Council to assist with the transfer of the planning function.

**3.0 Resource Implications**

**3.1** The Council presently has an RPA related budget to support capacity related activities for Members linked to planning and to match fund any resources to be made available by DoE. This budget could complement potential resources available under the Members' Development Programme.

**4.0 Recommendations**

**4.1** Members are asked to:

- (i)** note that a report is to be submitted to the Town Planning Committee setting out initial proposals for Members consideration on (i) refocus the Committees dual monthly meetings and (ii) an initial capacity building programme linked to planning;
- (ii)** agree that the initial capacity foundation programme be extended to all Members;
- (iii)** note that a budget has been allocated to support Members development activities linked to planning and RPA;

- (iv) agree that the Chief Executive approach the Department to seek a secondment resource from the Planning Service to assist with preparation work for the transfer of functions.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association –  
Proposed Amendment to Constitution**

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association requesting that the Council consider a proposed amendment to the Association’s constitution.

The Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor indicated that the Association acted as a voice and representation body for Elected Members from Local Government, provided a forum for collective discussion on regionally significant policy issues and assisted with the formation of collective policy positions as necessary. The Association was supported by all the main Political Parties, with twenty-five of the twenty-six Local Councils being current members. The Northern Ireland Local Government Association was comprised of 147 elected representatives and a 27 (plus 5 observers) Executive Committee, including a President and four Vice-Presidents. The Council had seventeen Elected Members nominated onto the Association, with one Member designated as an Office Bearer and three Members on the Executive Committee.

He explained that, as part of the current Association constitution, nominations to the Executive Committee were through a political nomination process and not by Councils themselves. Each Political Party was given a designated number of seats on the Executive which was based on Party strengths and it was a matter for the Party to designate which Members were nominated. That had resulted in some Councils not being represented on the Executive, albeit they were invited to attend as observers with no voting rights. In the spirit of seeking to be inclusive of all Councils, the Association was proposing to make a minor amendment to its Constitution to provide those Councils with observer status with the ability to vote at Executive meetings. In terms of governance, any such amendment to the Association’s Constitution must be consulted upon with all Member Councils. The Association had stated its intention to undertake a more detailed review of its Constitution in parallel with the creation of a new eleven Council model within Northern Ireland and the proposed Elections to Shadow Councils in 2014 and the Council would be consulted on any such review.

The Committee agreed to the proposed amendment to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association Constitution, subject to a more detailed review being undertaken in due course with consultation to be undertaken with the Council as part of that process.

**Democratic Services and Governance**

**Requests for the Use of the City Hall  
and the Provision of Hospitality**

The Committee considered the undernoted requests which had been received for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality:

<b>Organisation/ Body</b>	<b>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Queen's University Belfast	Infection and Immunity in Chronic Respiratory Disease Conference Dinner  11th June, 2012  Approximately 30 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £150
Employers for Childcare Charitable Group	Childcare Works Awards 2012  23rd September, 2012  Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	This event will promote the adoption of family friendly working practices and will recognise and reward examples of excellence by businesses and other organisations.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits  Approximate cost £250
Ulster Journals Limited	Ulster Tatler People of the Year Awards 2012  13th September, 2012  Approximately 360 attending	The use of the City Hall	This event aims to highlight and recognise those individuals who have excelled in their chosen field.  The awards ceremony will acknowledge those individuals who have demonstrated significant achievement in categories such as Business Man/Woman of the Year, Arts Personality of the Year and Hotelier/Publican of the Year.  The event will also pay tribute to an individual by way of the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' that has previously been presented to Dame Mary Peters, Sir James Galway, Brian Friel and Gloria Hunniford.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Wave Trauma Centre	Trauma Training Learning Pathway Awards  2nd October, 2012  Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits	This event seeks to promote the success of those who, due to their experiences during the troubles have returned to education and training through the support of WAVE Trauma Centre.  Accredited certificates will be awarded on the night to individuals who have successfully completed Open College Network courses through WAVE.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'Better opportunities for success across the city', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits  Approximate Cost £375
Irish Football Association	Irish FA McDonald's Grassroots Football Awards 2012  21st November, 2012  Approximately 110 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event seeks to recognise and celebrate all those individuals who have significantly contributed to grassroots football in communities across Northern Ireland. The event will particularly recognise the important role that grassroots football plays in bringing people together to play the game irrespective of race, gender, religion and other barriers which exist within society.  The awards will be presented to volunteers, parents, coaches, clubs, caretakers etc who give their time to delivering grassroots football.  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

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Appointments to the Belfast Education and Library Board**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1     Relevant Background Information**

1.1     Members will recall that, at the meeting on 19th August, 2011 the Committee agreed to employ a one-off d’Hondt process for the nomination of eight Members to fill the four places on the Belfast Education and Library Board. This resulted in three Sinn Fein nominations, three DUP nominations and one nomination each from the SDLP and Alliance.

1.2     The Committee agreed also to advise the Department of Education that the application of the Council’s system of proportionality would provide for the first four of those eight choices being two Sinn Fein representatives (choices 1 and 3), one DUP representative (choice 2) and one SDLP representative (choice 4).

1.3     The names of the Members to be nominated were sought through the Party Leaders on the Council and only six names were received. The Democratic Unionist Party, which was entitled to nominate three of its Members, indicated that it was prepared to nominate only one Member as it maintained that the Minister should appoint that Member in line with the Council’s system of proportionality on the appointment of Members to Outside Bodies. Accordingly, the remaining two choices fell to Sinn Fein (choice 9) and SDLP (choice 10).

**2     Key Issues**

2.1     Correspondence has been received from the Department of Education indicating that, following the selection process, which involved the completion of application forms by the nominees, an eligibility sift of applications against the criteria and, for those who met the eligibility criteria, a conversation with a purpose, the outcome was that three of the nominees did not progress beyond the eligibility sift stage and one candidate withdrew from the process.

2.2     This has resulted in only four eligible candidates remaining in the process and the Minister for Education has asked for the current pool of candidates to be augmented before he makes his choice of candidates to be appointed. The Department is therefore requesting the Council to submit an additional four nominations, who will be required to undergo the same selection process as that set out above. It should be noted that those Councillors who were previously nominated and who did not progress beyond the eligibility sift would not be eligible for re-nomination.



2.3 If the Council follows the same process as that established in October, 2012 then the additional four nominations will be as follows:

2.4 Choice 11 – Democratic Unionist  
Choice 12 – Sinn Fein  
Choice 13 – Democratic Unionist  
Choice 14 – Alliance

2.5 However, if the Democratic Unionist Party maintains its previous position of only submitting one candidate (which it has already done as part of the process in October, 2011), then the nominations from the Parties willing to supply names would fall to:

2.6 Choice 12 – Sinn Fein  
Choice 14 – Alliance  
Choice 15 – Ulster Unionist  
Choice 16 – Sinn Fein

### 3 Resource Implications

3.1 None.

### 4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

4.1 None. The identification of those Parties entitled to nominate Members for consideration for appointment is based upon the Council's accepted system of proportionality.

### 5 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is recommended to seek the names of four additional nominees for positions on the Belfast Education and Library Board from the political parties as set out in Section 2.4 above. If, however, the Democratic Unionist Party indicates that it does not wish to supply the names of any additional nominees, then the names will be sought from the political parties as set out in Section 2.6

5.2 In order to be consistent with the approach taken when considering appointments to the Interim Belfast Education and Library Board in 2009 and those to the Belfast Harbour Commissioners in June, 2011, the Committee is recommended also to advise the Department of Education that the application of the Council's system of proportionality would provide for the first four of the eight choices being two Sinn Fein representatives (choices 1 and 3), one DUP representative (choice 2) and one SDLP representative (choice 4)."

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Minister be requested to make as many appointments as possible from those candidates who had already been deemed to be appointable, in line with the Council's d'Hondt system of proportionality which provided that the four appointments should comprise two Sinn Féin Party representatives and one each from the Democratic Unionist and Social Democratic and Labour Parties, with any places remaining unfilled using this process to be selected from those Parties which had not been offered their entitlement. In addition, the Committee agreed that should the Minister not agree to make such appointments, then the recommendations as set out in the report be adopted.

### **Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 Members will recall that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 17th February 2012, agreed to adopt the recommendations of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group in relation to a programme to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. At that time, the programme of events was at a planning stage.**

**1.2 This report seeks to update Members on the final programme of events.**

#### **2 Key Issues**

##### **2.1 Sunday 3rd June**

**A Service of Thanksgiving to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee will be held in St Anne's Cathedral Belfast at 11 00 a.m. on Sunday 3rd June. All Members of Council will be invited to attend this Service.**

##### **2.2 Sunday 3rd June**

**The theme throughout the UK on Sunday 3rd June will be the 'Big Sunday Lunch' where local communities will be encouraged to celebrate through street parties and other activities. A small grants scheme with a budget of £30,000 has been successfully administered whereby groups registered with the Council applied for funding to organise Jubilee events over the Jubilee weekend. A total of 122 groups across all areas of the city will receive funding through this small grants scheme. The Lord Mayor will attend a street party in the North, South, East and West of the city and these occasions, organised at a local level, should also provide elected Members with the opportunity to attend events in their constituencies.**

**2.3 Sunday 3rd June**

The Lord Mayor will host a Diamond Tea Party in the Banqueting Hall at City Hall from 3.00 p.m.– 4.30 p.m. for couples currently living in Belfast and celebrating a 60th wedding anniversary in 2012. This event is by invitation only and will take the form of an afternoon tea culminating in a short concert by a pianist and singer performing music from the 1950's.

**2.4 Sunday 3rd June**

A special screening of the film 'The Queen' will be held in the Group Space, Ulster Hall on Sunday evening. Archive footage of the Queen's visits to Northern Ireland over the last 60 years will also be shown at this event.

Tickets are free for this film and a small number of tickets are still available.

**2.5 Monday 4th June**

A 'Coronation Carnival' will take place at City Hall. This is a free event, open to the public from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and tickets are not required.

All function rooms throughout the building will accommodate a full programme of activity for all ages and will include archive film footage, craft sessions, novelty photo booth, photographic exhibition, balloon modelling, face painting, story-telling, children's games from 1950's, 'nearly true tours', music, dancing demonstrations and mini fashion shows from the era.

The Bobbin will be open for refreshments and the Continental Market will be in the grounds of City Hall from Friday 1st to Monday 4th June.

**2.6 Monday 4th June**

Themed tea dances will be held in the Ulster Hall at 2.00 pm and 7.00 pm. This is a free event although tickets for the public have all been allocated.

**2.7 Monday 4th June**

The Council had agreed previously to take part in a UK-wide Beacon Lighting event. At that time the Cave Hill had been agreed as a notional location but a number of other locations were also under consideration. Since the meeting in February, further details have been provided by the

Co-ordinator for the lighting of the beacons across the UK. Just over a month ago we were advised that Belfast was to be given a lighting time after 10.30 pm and concerns about the suitability of the Cavehill from a health and safety perspective have been raised. The concerns include safe access for elected Members and the public wishing to attend and witness the lighting of the beacon considering that the event will take place late in the evening. As a result, officers have been actively considering a number of other sites to find the most appropriate location that will provide for a safe event to which the public can be invited to attend.

Discussions have been held with the Department for Social Development in relation to the possibility of the beacon being located at the Lagan Weir and the event being jointly hosted by the Department and the Council. The Department is in the process of refurbishing the millennium island as part of an ongoing maintenance programme and this work will be completed before 4th June. The Minister has indicated that he would be delighted to have a joint event with the Council and to locate the beacon at that location. This is an ideal location which will allow the event to be opened up to the public. Also, by sharing the costs with the Department, we will be able to include a better programme around the event itself.

It is recommended therefore that the Jubilee Beacon is located at the Lagan Weir and that the event is organised jointly with the Department for Social Development.

**2.8 Tuesday 5th June**

There are no planned events on this date due to the build schedule for the arrival of the Olympic Torch outside the front of City Hall on Wednesday, 6 June.

**2.9 Tuesday 12th and Thursday 14th June**

Four tree planting events will take place in the North, South, East and West of the city. The first event will take place in Orangefield Park on Tuesday 12th June at 10.00 a.m. followed by Blythfield that afternoon at 2.00 p.m. On Thursday 14th June a tree planting event will take place at Glencairn at 10.00 a.m. and at Grove at 2.00 p.m. that day.

A plaque will be unveiled at each tree planting location by the Lord Mayor and representatives from each local community will be invited to these events. Small containerised oak trees will be presented to local school children and other community representatives who will attend these events.

Members will be invited to the tree planting event within their constituency.

**3 Resource Implications**

**3.1 Financial**

The programme of events will be delivered within the agreed budget of £56,600.

**3.2 Human Resources**

There may be some staff costs associated with attendance at the events over a Bank Holiday period but these will be met from within existing budgets.

**3.3 Asset and Other Implications**

None

**4 Equality Implications**

**4.1 None**

**5 Recommendation**

**5.1 The Committee is asked to approve the final programme to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee as set out above."**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Additional Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,  
Seconded by Alderman Campbell,

That the Committee agrees, in addition to the Beacon Lighting event to be held at the Lagan Weir, that a second beacon be placed on the Cave Hill, in accordance with any health and safety requirements.

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

**Applications for the Use of the City Hall for Events associated with the Decade of Centenaries**

The Democratic Services Manager submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

**"1 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 The Committee, at its meeting on 20th January, 2012, agreed that any applications for the use of the City Hall by outside organisations in relation to events connected with the Decade**

of Centenaries should be dealt with in the normal way by the submission of an application form.

- 1.2 The organisation applying for the use would be required to demonstrate how the event would contribute substantially to the achievement of one or more of the Council's key themes as outlined in its Corporate Plan. In addition, given that the event was connected to the Decade of Centenaries, the organisers would be required to also demonstrate on the application form how the event met the principles which had been agreed by the Historic Centenaries Working Group in relation to all centenary events.
- 1.3 Since that time, four applications for the use of the City Hall for such events have been received. Three of these, from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, from Co-Operation Ireland and from the Ulster Centenary Committee, have been approved by the Council. However, the other application, from the 36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association, was referred to the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group for further consideration in order to assess if the application was entirely consistent with the principles established by that Working Group.

## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group met to discuss this application on 10th May.
- 2.2 There was a constructive debate at the Working Group on the specific application from the 36th (Ulster) Division. There was also considerable discussion about developing some general diversity guidelines to ensure an improved and consistent approach to such applications for the use of the City Hall by outside organisations in the future.
- 2.3 The Working Group agreed that the principles which had been established by the Historic Centenaries Working Group had been intended primarily to be applied to centenary events which were being organised directly by the Council. It was acknowledged that to strictly apply these principles to events which were being organised by outside organisations might not also be appropriate. It was considered that an alternative set of principles for such events should be prepared for discussion by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to determine whether they might be more appropriate.

- 2.4 The Working Group agreed that these principles should seek to ensure that any events to be held in the City Hall but organised by another agency should, in so far as was practicable, be inclusive, include different perspectives and be historically accurate. It was agreed also that, in the spirit of supporting diversity, the principles should allow for the holding of events which could be perceived as being single identity so long as they were not triumphalist in nature and did not seek to exclude sections of the community.
- 2.5 A draft statement on diversity and a set of draft principles has been circulated for the Committee's consideration.
- 2.6 In relation to the specific application which had been referred to the Working Group for consideration, it was noted that a meeting between the organisers and representatives of the Sinn Fein Party on the Council would be held during the week commencing 14th May and that the organisers would be willing to meet any other political party to discuss the application. It was acknowledged that any such meetings would require to be held prior to the date of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18th May. Accordingly, it was agreed that the application from the 36th (Ulster) Division would be considered again by the Committee at that meeting and a copy of the original report has been circulated.
- 2.7 The Working Group discussed how applications for the use of the City Hall by outside organisations for Decade of Centenary events might be dealt with more consistently in future. It was agreed that when such an application is received it would first be assessed by the officers to ensure that the event met the conditions for the use of the City Hall and also the principles established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for such centenary events. Officers would liaise with the organisation to clarify any issues and to suggest any necessary amendments to the proposed event to bring it in line with the principles. Once the final application was with the officers, they would prepare a report and, where time permitted, circulate it for information to the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group. If there were any major concerns in relation to a particular application, then it was agreed that the Working Group could meet to discuss it in the first instance before it was submitted formally to the Committee for decision.

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 None.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

**4.1 None. The conditions for the use of the City Hall by outside organisations will be applied consistently.**

**5 Recommendations**

**5.1 The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1. Consider the statement on diversity and the set of principles to be applied to applications from outside organisations for the use of the City Hall for events associated with the Decade of Centenaries and consider whether they wish to adopt or amend the principles.**
- 2. Approve the use of the City Hall for the 36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association for an event to mark the formation of the Young Citizen Volunteers of Ireland.**
- 3. Agree that any future applications for the use of the City Hall by outside organisations for events associated with the Decade of Centenaries will, where time permits, be first circulated for information to the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group with the decision on the matter being taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee."**

A Member pointed out that his Party had requested a meeting with the organising Committee for the event to mark the formation of the Young Citizen Volunteers but that had not taken place. Therefore, in the absence of such a meeting his Group would still be opposed to the application.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,  
Seconded by Councillor Campbell,

That the Committee agrees to approve the use of the City Hall for the 36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association for an event to mark the formation of the Young Citizen Volunteers of Ireland.

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

The Committee accordingly agreed that the application be rejected.



The Committee agreed further that the statement on diversity, the set of principles to be applied to applications from outside organisations for the use of the City Hall for events associated with the Decade of Centenaries and the process to be established for dealing with future applications of this type be referred to the Joint Party Group Leaders and Historic Centenaries Working Group.

**Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce/Orangefest –  
Request for the Use of the City Hall Grounds**

(Councillor Haire left the meeting while this item was under consideration.)

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, in Partnership with Orangefest, Belfast City Centre Management and Taste of Ulster, seeking permission to use the grounds of the City Hall from 9.00 a.m. until 7.00 p.m. on 12th July, 2012 for an event designated to be complementary to the traditional Twelfth celebrations. The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that, for a number of years, the Orange Order had been permitted to use the grounds of the City Hall, specifically the Cenotaph area, for a short commemorative ceremony, following which the participants re-joined the main procession.

The request from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce envisaged a significantly larger event, which would be funded through Peace III. This would be family-focused and involve the creation of a family food and regional produce event organised by Taste of Ulster and would take place alongside a range of craft activities, children's dance groups, face painting and balloon modelling. As part of the same event, the Festival of Fools street theatre group would be on the streets of the City centre and would be staging a range of performances by artists of different cultures who would reflect the diversity of the emerging Belfast in a post-conflict environment.

The Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce had confirmed that Belfast City Centre Management would be facilitating the opening of a large number of shops in the City centre, with a view to creating a City which was open for business and which maximised the commercial potential arising from the Orangefest celebrations. The overall aim of the project was to generate at least 1,000 additional visitors to the City centre in 2012 (over and above the estimated 12,000 who normally attended to watch the procession) rising to 1,500 in 2013, which could potentially benefit local businesses and improve the image of the City.

The Committee approved the use of the City Hall grounds for the event as outlined.

**Unauthorised Release of Members'  
Personal Information**

The Town Solicitor/Assistant Chief Executive submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided an update in relation to the unauthorised disclosure of personal information relating to Members.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Finance/Value-for-Money**

**Minutes of Meeting of Budget and Transformation Panel**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 10th May.

**Human Resources**

(Mrs. J. Minne, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with this item.)

**Policy on Protection of Staff from Workplace Violence and Abuse from the Public**

The Head of Human Resources reminded the Committee that in May, 2010 the Council's Dog Warden Service had seized a "pit-bull type" dog from premises. Following extensive investigations and Court proceedings, Belfast County Court had ruled that the dog should be destroyed. Subsequently, a media campaign had been launched by the defendant and supporters in which the Council and the Court were heavily criticised for their respective roles in the case. In the course of the campaign, or contemporaneous with it, abuse, harassment and intimidation was directed towards Council staff, including on-line harassment and physical attacks on property and people. Both matters had been referred to and are being investigated by the Attorney General. As a result of the inappropriate conduct experienced in this case, the Human Resources Section had been asked to review the Council's Policy and Procedures to protect staff from abuse by members of the public.

She reported that the review had highlighted that, while a procedure was in place for staff to report such attacks, a Council policy needed to be developed and procedures updated to take account of, for example, changes in new media. Accordingly, she submitted for the information of the Members a draft policy which had been written with significant contribution from the Corporate Health and Safety Team, Legal Services and the Trades Union Co-ordinators. It had been equality screened and agreed by the full Joint Consultative Committee. In line with best practice, it recommends that a zero tolerance approach to workplace violence and abuse from the public.

The Committee approved the policy on the protection of staff from workplace violence and abuse from the public.

**Asset Management**

**Belfast City Hall Live Site Screen**

(Mr G. Copeland, Events Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- Seek permission from Members for the planned programme of activities and broadcasts connected to the Live Site Screen at City Hall.
- Seek approval from Members for the Live Site Screen to be left in situ until a permanent site can be created. This would be connected to plans for the Donegall Square public realm, which the Department of Social Development are currently undertaking.

**1.2 In April 2010 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee agreed that a Live Sites Screen should be positioned in the grounds of City Hall for a three year period. The Screen is part of 22 ‘live site’ LED screens locations across regional capitals and key cities in including Derry~Londonderry, which is part of its preparations for the City of Culture in 2013.**

The Council has agreed to allocate £20,000 per year connected to the screens maintenance and security. For Members’ information the screen is operated in partnership with: BCC; LOCOG; BBC; DCAL and associated London 2012 commercial sponsors – BT; Lloyds TSB and Cisco. With events animation funded via DCAL and LOCOG at the cost of £25,000 per year.

**1.3 Members are now being asked to approve the outline programme of activities (See Appendix 1) inclusive of the use of the City Hall grounds connected to broadcasting on the Live Site events. And to consider whether the Live Site Screen should stay in situ beyond its existing planning consent which will expire at the end of April 2014. Such a decision would be subject to NI Planning Service approval.**

**2 Key Issues**

**2.1 Process for the Use of the Grounds of City Hall**

As Members will be aware, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee have delegated authority for routine requests for use of the City Hall grounds to the Director of Property & Projects on the basis of an agreed set of criteria. This process is based on a clear criteria which was agreed by Council August 2006 and would apply to the Live Site activity. This criteria is as follows:

- be primarily for non commercial purposes
- if the event is operated by an external group no funding or other significant resources from the Council will be required
- be non-offensive and comply with the Council's equality and good relations obligations
- have the potential to help promote Belfast City Council and/or the city of Belfast
- not unduly affect the day-to-day operation of the building, or involve significant risk of damage to buildings infrastructure and/or fabric
- broadly be considered to contribute to one or more of the Council's corporate strategic objectives
- provide the Council with appropriate insurance cover and/or indemnities etc. where appropriate

Although the vast majority events would fit within this criterion Officers would seek approval from Members for the attached programme alongside finances to enable these events to be staged.

## **2.2 2012 Live Site Events**

Appendix 1 highlights the current proposed events that would involve the Live Site screen and the usage of the ground of City Hall. The potential events range from activity connected to London 2012 competitions, Gaelic games and Euro 2012 Championships and Ulster and Irish Rugby competitions. Members are asked to note that there are certain events that cannot be broadcast. These are:

- Golf's Irish Open in June 2012 cannot be broadcast as the broadcast rights sit with Sky Television
- Heineken European Rugby Cup cannot be broadcast as the broadcast rights sit with Sky Television
- Latter stages (semi-final & final) of the All-Ireland football and hurling matches are subject to Ulster counties qualifying

**2.3** Councillors should be aware that editorial control does not sit with BCC, but is subject to the BBC's editorial broadcast policy.

## **2.4 Additional Costs for Proposed Events**

A number of additional large sporting events have been identified including the Soccer European Championship games of England and the Republic of Ireland, GAA matches involving Ulster counties and Ulster and Ireland Rugby games – Members are requested to determine whether they wish these events to be shown and, if so, agree the additional financing of £27,000 which will be required.

## **2.5 Live Site Planning Consent**

NI Planning Service has granted planning consent, for the Live Site screen, to stay in situ until April 2014. However, Members are being requested to permit BCC Officers to seek an extension to this date. Such a request is based on planned refurbishment of the Donegall Square by the Department of Social Development as part of phase two of the Streets Ahead programme. It is anticipated that any agreed public realm plans would be completed by the start of 2015. Therefore, the future location of the Live Site screen could be considered in the context phase two of the Street Ahead programme.

## **3 Resource Implications**

**3.1** The following are the key resource implications for Council.

### **3.2 Financial**

The Council has agreed to finance £20,000 annually for maintenance and security of the Live Site Screen. This was approved by the Development Committee at its October 2009 meeting.

In addition the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) have agreed to fund up £25,000 for 2012/13 in order to assist events, connected to the Live Site Screen, which the Council would deliver on their behalf. The DCAL finance is time bound and will only be available up the end of the 2012/13 year.

However, in order to deliver other sporting events via the Live Site the Council would be required to finance an additional £27,000 as per the programme in Appendix 1.

### **3.3 Human Resources**

The City Events and Venues Section would assist with the deliver of events connected to the programme in Appendix 1.

### **3.4 Asset and Other Implications**

Use of the City Hall grounds and occasional usage of function rooms within City Hall.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

4.1 As with all major civic events, public events like the above have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

**5 Recommendations**

5.1 Members are requested to agree and recommend.

- the existing process of approval for the use of the City Hall grounds be applied to the use of the London 2012 Live Site Screen events subject to Council ratification
- the attached programme in Appendix 1 and whether they wish the additional events to be shown with the requirement for additional financing of £27,000
- that Officers seek permission to extend the planning consent for the Live Site screen and for the future position of the screen to be considered as part of the DSD's Streets Ahead (Phase 2) plans.

**8 Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – 2012/13 Live Site Programme of Activity

**Appendix 1**

<b>Live Site Events</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
Olympic Rings Spectacular Unveiling	19th May 2012
100 days to go to Paralympics	21st May 2012
Diamond Jubilee events	3rd & 4th June 2012
Torch Relay Evening Celebration	6th June 2012
Radio One Hackney Music concert	23rd or 24th June 2012
<i>Cisco Wimbledon Finals</i>	7th to 8th July 2012
Olympic Opening Ceremony	27th July 2012
Games Time (LOCOG Priority)	27th July to 12th August 2012

Live Site Events	Dates(s)	
Olympic Closing Ceremony	12th August 2012	
Paralympics Flame Festival Evening Celebration	25th August 2012	
Paralympics Opening Ceremony	29th August 2012	
Games Time	29th August - 9th September 2012	
BBC Proms (screen only)	8th September 2012	
Paralympics Closing Ceremony	9th September 2012	
<b>Total Events costs</b>		<b>£25,000.00</b>

**Events 2012/13 Requiring Additional BCC Funds**

Gaelic & Hurling – Ulster & All Ireland Finals	August and September 2012 x 4 events	£6,000.00
European Championships	Potential 6 Rep. of Ireland games	£9,000.00
	Potential 6 England games	£9,000.00
Ulster & Ireland Rugby Games	April 2012 to March 2013	£3,000.00
<b>Total Additional Event Costs</b>		<b>£27,000.00”</b>

After a lengthy discussion in the matter, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed further that investigations be undertaken to ascertain whether future games involving the Northern Ireland Football Team could be screened also on the live site screen.

**Asset Management**

**Ulster Bank at Andersonstown Leisure Centre - Rent Review**

The Committee was advised that the Council leased premises at the Andersonstown Leisure Centre to the Ulster Bank Limited for a term of 99 years by lease dated 2nd November, 1983. Under the terms of the lease, the rent was due for review every seven years. The current rent of £38,000 per annum had been due for review from 1st April, 2009.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, following protracted negotiations between the Estates Management Unit and the Ulster Bank's valuer, the bank had made a referral to the Lands Tribunal to determine the rent at review. However, despite referral to the Lands Tribunal, negotiations had continued and prior to any formal proceedings a revised rental of £46,350 per annum had been agreed provisionally from the review date, subject to the Committee's approval. As part of the agreement to settle the rent review, the Ulster Bank had requested a Deed of Variation to formalise the basis on which the agreement had been reached.

The Committee agreed to a revised rent of £46,350 per annum for a seven year period from 1st April, 2009 until 31st March, 2016 and that a Deed of Variation be entered into with the Ulster Bank Limited, the terms of which would be subject to approval by Legal Services.

**Seymour House, 9 Gloucester Street –**  
**Appropriation to Corporate Landbank**

The Committee was advised that Seymour House in Gloucester Street had until recently provided accommodation for a number of Council services. However, those services have now relocated to other premises and subsequently the building was empty. Consequently, the premises were now surplus to the operational requirements of ISB and it was proposed to transfer Seymour House from the Management of ISB to the Corporate Landbank to be managed by the Estate Management Unit pending any further decision to be taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee agreed that Seymour House be transferred to the Council's Corporate Landbank.

**Surrender of Lease –**  
**Torr Heath Playground**

The Committee was advised that the Council held approximately 0.23 acres of land at Torrens Crescent from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive by way of a twenty-five year lease dated 8th October, 1998 at an annual rent of five pence (if demanded).

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, following a request from the Housing Executive, the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 13th January, 2011, was presented with options in relation to the future use of the site and had agreed that, in view of the potential development costs and limited remaining term of the lease, surrender of the lands to the Housing Executive represented the best option, subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders.

He pointed out that, following the decision of the Parks and Leisure Committee, the District Valuer had been requested to provide a valuation which would form the basis of the surrender. That was duly provided in December, 2011 and the Housing Executive Board had now approved the acquisition of the Council's interest at the District Valuer's valuation of £22,500. In accordance with Standing Orders, the Committee was now being requested to approve of the disposal.



After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,  
Seconded by Councillor A. Newton,

That the Committee agrees to reject the decision of the Parks and Leisure Committee to dispose of approximately 0.23 acres of lands at Torrens Crescent and agrees that the site revert to its previous use as a playground.

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

Accordingly, the Committee approved the disposal of the land at Torrens Crescent to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, in the sum of £22,500, by way of a Surrender of Lease, subject to an appropriate legal agreement to be drawn up by Legal Services.

### **Review of Security Unit**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“Relevant Background Information**

Members will be aware that the Property & Projects Department was created in April 2010, and that it involved the merging of a number of existing services including Estates Management, Procurement, Project Management and Facilities Management. The Facilities Management Section is the largest of these sections, spending approx. £15m per annum and employing nearly 260 staff across 6 distinct business units.

Since the creation of the new Department, as well as delivering ongoing business to satisfactory levels, most of the business units within the Department have been the subject of efficiency reviews of one sort or another, as illustrated by the table below.

<b>Business Unit</b>	<b>Current situation</b>
<b>Property Maintenance</b>	<b>an internal review has been carried out by the Efficiency Unit of the Finance &amp; Resources Section, and the agreed recommendations are currently being implemented;</b>
<b>Fleet Management</b>	<b>an external review has been commissioned and is approaching completion; a report will shortly be tabled to the Committee setting out the main findings and recommendations;</b>
<b>Business Support</b>	<b>a new structure has been agreed which will introduce a new, more streamlined directorate business support function and the various posts are being categorized at present by HR/OD;</b>

<b>Business Unit</b>	<b>Current situation</b>
<b>City Hall Management</b>	a report has been tabled to the Committee in respect of changes in the use and management of the City Hall which will potentially have operational and staffing implications for most of the sub-units within the Facilities Unit, namely Civic HQ management, Cleaning & Portering and Catering Services.
<b>Project Management Unit</b>	Further adjustments are being made to the shape and direction of this Unit to ensure delivery of the physical projects within the Investment Programme.
<b>Procurement</b>	An external review of the procurement activity of the Council and the role of the Procurement Unit in providing strategic direction in this area was completed and reported to Committee. A new post of Head of Contracts was created to drive procurement forward in terms of funding efficiency savings, directing expenditure more to local businesses and ensuring greater regulatory compliance.

All of this illustrates that one of the few sections in the Department which has not undergone any form of review since the creation of the new Department is the Security Unit.

However, as some members may be aware, the Security Unit underwent an internal review several years ago. A new structure was approved in October 2006 however the full implementation of this was deferred in light of the closure of the City hall for refurbishment from 2007-2009, and interim arrangements were agreed with the trades unions.

Immediately prior to the re-opening of the City Hall in 2009 a package of changes was developed in consultation with the trades unions, approved by the Committee and subsequently put to staff in workplace ballots. This package was eventually accepted by both groups of staff (i.e. the Security Officers and the Control Room Operatives) and was implemented in late 2009. This package of changes achieved the following outputs:-

- staff numbers needed to carry out all current activities were confirmed as being 30 Security Officers, 8 Control Room Operatives, 4 Duty Officers and 1 Security Manager;
- shift rotas were brought in line with the Single Status Agreement by reducing working hours from 40 per week to 37 per week and by 'buying out' staff rights to the associated 3hrs per person per week contractual overtime on the agreed basis of 3 times the annual detriment;
- the new rotas also negated the need for what had previously been referred to as 'compulsory overtime' in that the old shift patterns were seemingly compiled in a way which required overtime cover on 8 Saturdays/Sundays (12 in the Control Room) all paid at enhanced rates;

- staff were required for the first time to rotate around all 5 principal buildings (i.e. City Hall, Duncrue, CWB, ISB and Adelaide Exchange);
- staff were required for the first time to participate in a system of 'pool' cover whereby each officer takes a regular turn in the pool and can be deployed as needed in order to cover gaps in shifts left by holidays and sickness etc;
- new job descriptions and an enhanced role were agreed and a re-grading took place in order to offset most of the losses staff would otherwise have suffered on foot of the above;
- an element of lone-working was introduced in the Control Room where it was safe and appropriate to do so, thereby reducing unnecessary overtime costs;
- an overtime ladder was introduced following consultation with the trades unions in order to have a more equitable, consistent and controllable method of managing overtime.

These changes secured tangible reductions in overtime costs, although it should be noted that overtime costs are beginning to increase again within the unit and that this is only partially due to an increase in function work and also increased sickness levels.

### Key Issues

Given that the Security unit is the only main facet of the Facilities Management Section which has not been subject to a review since being incorporated into the Property & Projects Department and that rising costs to some extent remain a problem for the unit, the key issue is whether or not to subject the unit to a further review at this time.

Given the emphasis on efficiency and value for money, it is felt that there is potentially significant benefit to be gained by such a review at this time. The suggested terms of reference for the review would be as follows:-

'to consider the costs, cost-drivers, operations, structures and methods of the current approach to manned guarding and CCTV/alarm monitoring within the Council, with a view to making recommendations which will secure an enhanced level of service at no additional cost or secure current levels of service at a lower cost or otherwise identify an optimal cost-effective position'.

Such a review could be delivered either by suitably qualified external consultants or internally, by the Council's Efficiency Unit. Given the specialized nature of the service it may be more cost-effective to use a tightly-controlled external process.

### Resource Implications

The overall estimated annual cost of the in-house Security Unit at present in terms of providing manned guarding at the 5 premises covered (i.e. City Hall, CWB, ISB, Duncrue and Adelaide Exchange) plus CCTV & alarm monitoring at City Hall is as follows:-

Manned guarding (30 x Security Officers)	£958,766
CCTV & alarm monitoring (8 x Control Room operatives)	£275,897
Management/supervision (4 x Duty Officers & 1 Manager)	£248,384
Other overheads	<u>£ 68,484</u>
	TOTAL £1,551,531

Members may also be aware that the Security Unit has recently let a contract with an estimated annual value of £719,050 in respect of the provision of manned guarding at a number of other prestige Council sites (including Belfast Castle, Malone House, Waterfront Hall, Belfast Zoo, Gasworks etc) to G4S Ltd.

Overall, then, the Council spends nearly £2.3m per annum on security services of the type referred to herein (this doesn't include expenditure on event security and out-of-hours first responder services etc) and consequently it is felt that this function should be subject to the same scrutiny as other services in the search for corporate efficiencies. This is all the more important in the context of the Investment Programme, which requires ongoing efficiencies to be realised if the organization is to have the capacity to deliver on the its stated obligations.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agree to commission an immediate, externally-delivered review of the Security Unit on the basis of the suggested terms of reference set out herein. The conclusions and recommendations of the review will subsequently be presented to the Committee for consideration and approval as appropriate.

### Decision Tracking

It is anticipated that - if approval to conduct the review on the basis recommended is given - the final report will be available by September 2012 for Committee consideration and approval. Implementation thereafter will take place subject to the Council's standard policies and procedures."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **City Hall Security Breach**

During discussion on the previous item, a Member sought clarification as to what measures had been taken by the Police Service of Northern Ireland to apprehend the intruder who had broken into the City Hall on two occasions in 2011. He pointed out that he understood that a clear image had been provided of the intruder to the Police Service but at this stage no action had been taken and he suggested that the Committee agree to write to the Police requesting that the case be pursued as a matter of urgency.

The Committee agreed to this course of action.

### **Girdwood Community Hub – Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to an update on the Girdwood Community Hub:

#### **“1.0 Relevant background information**

- 1.1 Members were informed at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee meeting in 18th November that the SEUPB Priority 2.1 Steering Committee has recommended the Girdwood Community Hub project for funding and that it had been forwarded it to the two governments’ accountable departments for approval.**
- 1.2 In correspondence (03 Feb 12), SEUPB highlighted that the Priority 2.1 Steering Committee and the accountable departments need further assurance by 31 May 2012 on the risks identified, that is:
  - a) An implementation plan for the Hub and masterplan for the wider site; and**
  - b) Updated business plan and programme for the Hub with the strategic partners.**
  - c) Public support for the project.****

**They noted there are other projects pending if the Hub is deemed unrealistic in June 2012.**

#### **2. Key issues to be addressed**

- 2.1 Since January, in the context of the Belfast Investment Programme, officers have met with the Member of Parliament and the Members of the Legislative Assembly for North Belfast. In discussions with them, the need for an updated and agreed concept plan for the Girdwood site was raised, to satisfy the requirements from SEUPB.**

In line with the vision of original Girdwood masterplan, and in the context of wider regeneration in North Belfast, the group of elected representatives are committed to a place for learning, living, working and playing. They agree that the site must be safe and accessible for all, and support the Community Hub as an important catalyst for the entire site's development as a shared space.

- 2.2** At a workshop with the interim Community Hub Forum in January, they indicated that their preferred location for the Hub was in the centre of the site as it was the least contentious position. They emphasised the success of the Hub depended on the entire site being vibrant, shared, safe and accessible for all.
- 2.3** In light of these discussions and the new economic environment, DSD has updated the concept plan, and offered the Council a central location for the Hub. The emerging outline plan has been circulated for information. There is still work to be completed in finalising the concept plan and its implementation but it is unlikely that the location of the Hub will change significantly.
- 2.4** At a recent meeting with Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of SEUPB, he stated that it has been agreed that the Council is granted permission to work outside the normal requirement to use the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). This will allow the Council to maximise community input to the build as well as expedite the construction process. He emphasised that the Council will therefore carry the risks associated with the procurement process.
- 2.5** In terms of strategic partners, Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC) and the Prince's Trust are considering the relocation of some of their programmes for essential skills and job training schemes in the Hub. Both partners believe that the Hub offers high-quality learning in modern facilities, and is an ideal location given the educational and employment needs in the area. BMC is now preparing a business case for consideration by their Board of Governors in May.

As part of the good relations revenue programme for the Hub, funded by SEUPB up to the end of 2014, it is proposed that the Council will offer a portion of the fund available to BMC to develop good relations and 'shared space' programmes for students.

Pat Colgan also indicated that the support of the MLA Group, Belfast City Council and the Girdwood Community Forum was strong evidence of public support for the scheme.

- 2.6 In preparation of the final submission to SEUPB, work is ongoing in relation to the business plan and programming for the Hub, as well as preparation for community engagement on the design of the Hub. A community benefits plan, including social clauses, will also be developed in consultation with the Community Hub Forum.
- 2.7 Following an internal assessment, SEUPB will forward the information to the departmental economists in DSD. They anticipate doing this by mid- to late June. DSD will review the information in line with HM Treasury Guidelines (green book appraisal) and seek final sign-off from the Department of Finance and Personnel. It is hoped that this process will be completed by the end of September.

When SEUPB issue their final letter of offer with conditions, a further report will be brought to SP&R for consideration.

### 3.0 Decisions required

Members are asked to note the location of the Hub in the emerging outline plan and other related work to prepare the final submission for 31 May 2012.

### 4.0 Resource Implications

Human: None

Financial: The Council will carry the risks associated with the procurement of the design and construction contracts.

Assets: Property and Projects Department, in liaison with other departments, will oversee the land acquisition issues and construction programme and seek the appropriate approvals from Committee in due course.

### 5.0 Equality Implications

The Committee previously approved the Equality Strategy for the Girdwood Community Hub. It outlines how the Council will fulfil its equality obligations during the development of the Girdwood Community Hub and the Hub's likely impact and outcomes in terms of equality and good relations."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

## Connswater Community Greenway - Contract Update

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 25th April, it had considered a report in relation to the current position regarding the contract for the Connswater Community Greenway/Flood Alleviation Scheme.

After considering the report, the Committee had authorised the Director of Property and Projects and the Town Solicitor to:

- (i) accept the Conciliator's outcome (that is, the independent recommendation of the external Conciliator as to how the Council and Connswater Joint Venture should proceed in relation to the contract);
- (ii) pursue mutual termination in the best interests of the Council in the event that the contractor, Connswater Joint Venture, should reject the outcome;
- (iii) seek unilateral termination on the advice of the Council's Senior Counsel; and
- (iv) commence re-procurement of the scheme.

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Members with an update in relation to the negotiations and the settlement agreement. He pointed out that representatives from the Council had met with the representatives of Connswater Joint Venture on 3rd May, 2012 and had reached an agreement substantially on the basis of the Conciliator's recommendation but with the additional undertaking that the contractor would not (in any form) attempt to tender for future work on the project. The agreement included that the sum agreed would be paid to Connswater Joint Venture Company promptly and that the agreement would be covered by a comprehensive confidentiality clause.

He stated that the terms of the agreement were settled by Quigg Golden on the Council's behalf having taken advice from Senior Counsel. The agreement had been reviewed by the Conciliator who had identified that it represented a fair and appropriate settlement and her recommendation was adjusted to include it. The agreement had subsequently been executed on Friday, 11th May, 2012.

The Director of Property and Projects explained that the option now existed to re-tender the design and construction of the project, subject to the agreement with all the funders who had so far responded positively to the recent agreement and were supportive of the Council delivering the project. Discussions were ongoing with the funders and the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland's Capital Central Procurement Directorate as to the best option in regard to a re-procurement exercise. He pointed out that it was expected to have a contractor on site by the end of 2012/2013, with a start date of mid-2013 and completion in 2015.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that a report on the lessons learned from the matter be submitted to the Committee in due course. The Committee agreed further that representatives of the East Belfast area be provided with an update in relation to the Flood Alleviation Scheme.



## Good Relations and Equality

### Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 8th May.

### Equality Impact Assessment Reports regarding the Policy on the Flying of the Union Flag and City Hall Memorabilia

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th June, it had granted approval to:

- the carrying out of a formal Equality Impact Assessment on the City Hall Memorabilia by an independent external consultant;
- the refreshing/updating of the Equality Impact Assessment on the Council's Policy of Flying the Union Flag by an independent external consultant; and
- the updating of both legal advice and advice from the Equality Commission on the matter by the Town Solicitor.

The Chief Executive stated that, subsequently, the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group had received two presentations on the draft Equality Impact Assessment reports entitled: Policy on the Flying of the Union Flag; and Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment. Party briefings had also been provided by consultants on both reports. Subsequently, the Committee, at its meeting on 25th April, had agreed to proceed with the consultation process on the Equality Impact Assessment draft reports, based upon the best advice available from the Equality Commission.

The Chief Executive explained that when undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment, the Council followed closely the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in 2004 which recommended that there should be seven steps in the process:

- Step 1: Definition of the aims of the policy – completed
- Step 2: Consideration of available data and research – completed
- Step 3: Assessment of potential and actual impacts – completed
- Step 4: Consideration of measures – completed
- Step 5: Formal consultation
- Step 6: Decision and publication of the results of the EQIA
- Step 7: Monitoring for adverse impact.

The two separate reports set out the findings of the first four steps of the process.

The Chief Executive stated that both reports set out the available data, relevant policies and research, including a survey of visitors to the City Hall which had been carried out by special consultants over a two week period in September, 2011.

There was an assessment of the potential and actual impacts. In addition, the reports also contained updated legal advice in relation to both matters. The final reports included a number of issues raised by the Political Parties, including an analysis of the trends regarding employment by community background at senior levels in the Council.

He explained that the Equality Impact Assessment process required that, if it was decided that the policy had an adverse impact on one or more of the nine equality categories, then a series of alternatives should be put forward for consideration and an assessment of the possible impact of those alternatives be undertaken. The Council must consider measures which might mitigate the adverse impact and alternative ways of delivering policy aims which would have a less adverse impact on the relevant equality category or which better promoted the opportunity and good relations. Both reports presented a series of policy options for the purpose of formal consultation. The Chief Executive explained that, in line with advice which had been received from the Equality Commission, the following timeline had been agreed by the Committee on 25th April for the two Equality Impact Assessment Consultations to run concurrently:

18 May ( <i>originally 4 May – cancelled SP&amp;R meeting</i> )	Consideration of EQIA reports by SP&R Committee
1 June	Ratification of documents for consultation by Council
6 June	Issue for 16 week consultation period (inc. extra 4 weeks over holiday period)
27 Sep	Close consultation
28 Sep – 12 Oct	Process and integrate consultation responses Draft implementation and resource plans
19 Oct	Presentation to SP&R
1 November	Ratification by Council Policy implementation as politically directed

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland had confirmed that there was no definitive requirement regarding consultation as long as the consultation was timely, open and inclusive. A series of focus groups and staff questionnaires would be facilitated as part of the process. The Equality Commission had recommended also that a press release should be issued to make the public aware of the Equality Impact Assessments and information should be placed on the Council's website so that members of the public could also submit their views. At the close of the consultation period, officers would analyse the responses and present recommendations to the Committee in October for its consideration.

The Committee authorised the issue of the draft Equality Impact Assessment reports on the Flying of the Union Flag; and Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment for public consultation.

### **Cross-Cutting Issues**

#### **Cycle to Work Scheme**

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

The Director of Health and Environmental Services submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

**"1     Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1     BCC became one of the first employers in Northern Ireland to introduce a Cycle-to-Work scheme in July 2007. The Council's scheme was adopted by other Councils and employers including the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Queen's University, Translink and Bombardier and was published as a case study by Arena Network as a demonstration of how organisations can embrace Corporate Social Responsibility as part of their business operations. Well over 300 staff participated in the Council's cycle to work initiative**
- 1.2     The Council scheme was suspended in August 2010 following an HMRC determination regarding discounts offered and changes to VAT rules governing the scheme. Since then, cycle retailers have taken tax and legal advice to revise Cycle-to-Work schemes to secure optimum benefit for participants. In summary, the means by which staff can enjoy maximum financial benefit within the revised HMRC guidelines is to defer taking ownership of cycles for 4 or 5 years. Employers continue to recover the cost of cycles through deductions (payments) made by staff over a 12 month 'salary sacrifice' period. Cycles, technically, remain in the ownership of the employer/administrator and are leased, free of charge, thereafter, usually for a period of 36 months.**
- 1.3     The revised scheme remains attractive. As well as permitting participants to spread interest free repayments over 12 months, it is deemed to provide savings of up to 32% for basic rate taxpayers and up to 42% for those taxed at a 40% rate.**

**2     Key Issues**

**Demand**

- 2.1     The BCC initiative was popular and staff continue to enquire if we intend to re-introduce a Cycle-to-Work scheme. It is accepted, however, that revisions necessary to optimise the tax benefits are less straightforward than the procedure employed previously where individuals took ownership of bicycles when repayments concluded. The level of uptake for a revised scheme, where ownership of cycles could remain with BCC for up to five years, may decline.**

### Administration and Cost to Council

2.2 The costs of running the previous Council scheme almost exclusively related to administration with the loans made by the Council to purchase equipment being repaid in full by participants. Costs are offset by two factors

- (i) Reduced Employer National Insurance contributions during period of salary sacrifice.  
(Estimated notional savings to Council for previous scheme = £22,356)
- (ii) Retention of final payments made by participants on completion of salary sacrifice.  
(Estimated notional income to Council = £5,670)

The combined total estimate of savings/income realised during the 3 years in which the scheme operated was, therefore, approximately £28k. However, this needs to be offset against the cost for administration.

### Outsourcing

2.3 In view of the operational changes required for a revised scheme and to seek further efficiencies, investigations have taken place regarding out-sourcing elements of the scheme administration. Many individual cycle retailers provide bespoke cycle-to-work arrangements for organisations. There are, however, companies which provide common administrative arrangements on behalf of organisations, using a network of local, independent retailers to supply items. Such 'third party' companies offer free services to employers and employees. Overheads are recouped by commissions charged to retailers and by retention of the final payment (residual value) made by participants to take ownership of cycles.

2.4 Investigations confirm that the majority of cycle retailers used previously by the Council co-operate with scheme administration companies and could therefore continue to supply BCC employees.

The 'value for money' aspect of any decision to outsource has also been considered:

- (i) There is no cost to the Council in availing of a 'third party' service due, primarily, to commission paid by retailers.
- (ii) There would be a very small loss of income from 'residual value' payments by participants to take ownership of cycles, which the Council previously retained. (Estimated at approximately £1,500 per annum).

- (iii) Savings arising to the Council from reduced NIC payments will continue (Estimated at approximately £6,900 per annum)

The amount of staff time necessary to administer a re-introduced scheme in its entirety, including the provision of advice, is deemed well in excess of £1,500 per annum.

The advantages of using a third party supplier include:

- Such services have been in place for several years offering specialist support to thousands of organisations in the UK including Local Authorities and Government Departments
  - Provision of on-line service for staff to order cycle vouchers following Council approval
  - Includes extensive range of independent cycle providers in Belfast (9)
  - Provision of free of charge promotional materials and electronic communications
  - Availability of account management and staff helpdesk teams
  - A single payment point for Council rather than dealing with separate retailers
  - Reduction of administrative input for BCC staff resulting in cost efficiencies.

2.6 The disadvantages include

- Loss of small income stream to Council provided by final purchase payment (residual value) by participants
- Less attractive to providers due to commission charged
- Exclusion of Halfords as a local supplier (Halfords provide a bespoke scheme and do not subscribe to 'third party' schemes.)

2.7 The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

### 3 Resource Implications

#### Financial

3.1 None - Initial outlay to purchase of cycles and equipment and will be recouped, in full, through 'salary sacrifice' arrangements. The initial cost of procurement in year 1 may be up to £75k, recoverable annually.

### Human Resources

- 3.2 Some input will be required, principally from Payroll section, in co-operation with a scheme administration company.

### Asset and Other Implications

- 3.3 During the initial lease period, cycles procured belong to BCC and are a Council asset until such time as participants take possession of items.

## 4 Conclusion

- 4.1 A revised cycle-to work scheme will provide similar benefits to the Council as those acknowledged at the outset of the original scheme.

- It will demonstrate commitment to Council priorities to improve the quality of life in the city, helping to lessen traffic congestion, improve air quality, and reduce use of fossil fuels by discouraging dependency on cars to travel to work.
- The scheme contributes to the increasing role Council performs in promoting health improvement in the city including reducing obesity and collaborative initiatives such as the city bike hire project.
- It will permit the Council to maintain its Civic Leadership role on environmental and health matters.
- It provides economic benefits for local cycle provider businesses.
- It provides financial benefits for both the Council and Council employees at no cost to ratepayers.
- It provides health and wellbeing benefits for employees.

## 5 Equality

- 5.1 There are no equality considerations associated with this report

## 6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Approve the re-introduction of a Council Bike-to-Work scheme and
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Health and Environmental Services to appoint a company to assist the Council administer the scheme (at no cost) for a trial period of 12 months. This will be done in accordance with procurement guidelines.

### Key to Abbreviations

#### **NIC National Insurance Contributions”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that the Scheme be extended to include Elected Members.

### Consultation on Bi-lingual Traffic Signs

The Committee was reminded that, in January, 2011, the Department for Regional Development had issued a consultation document on “Bi-lingual Traffic Signs and Draft Policy and Draft Equality Impact Assessment”. The aim of the draft policy was to facilitate the introduction of a limited number of certain bi-lingual traffic signs in English and either Irish or Ulster-Scots for the specific purpose of promoting minority languages. A report on the consultation exercise had been submitted to the Committee and the following response had been agreed:

“This Council does not support the Draft Bi-lingual Traffic Signs Policy, and, as a nominating body, would not wish to finance the erection of such signs in the City.”

The Department had been advised of the Committee’s response.

The Chief Executive reported that the Department for Regional Development had now issued a further letter advising that the Minister had decided not to pursue the provision of bi-lingual traffic signs.

Noted.

### Update on the Establishment of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the Four Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the District Policing Partnership and Community Safety Partnership ceased operating on 31st March 2012. In their place the Council is required, under

Part 3 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to establish the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and four District PCSPs (North, South, East & West). These will be constituted as statutory bodies under the Act.

- 1.2 Guidance on the operation of the partnerships is to be agreed by a Joint Committee of the DOJ and the NIPB. The Joint Committee will also have an overseeing role.

2 Key Issues

2.1 PCSP/DPCSPs Membership

The Political Member appointments to the PCSP/DPCSPs were agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting held on 17th February. However, due to delays in recruitment by the NI Policing Board, the Independent Members offer of appointments were only recently announced by the Minister. A list of the 58 Political and proposed Independent Members of the PCSP/DPCSPs has been circulated.

As the process of appointment of the Independent Members has taken longer than expected the inaugural meetings of the new PCSP and DPCSPs are now scheduled for late-May and early June respectively.

- PCSP - Thursday, 31st May at 5.45pm in the Conor Room
- West Belfast DPCSP – Monday, 11th June at 5.45pm in the Conor Room
- East Belfast DPCSP – Monday, 11th June at 5.45pm in the Lavery Room
- South Belfast DPCSP – Wednesday, 13th June at 5.45pm in the Conor Room
- North Belfast DPCSP – Wednesday, 13th June at 5.45pm in the Lavery Room

There will also be an opportunity for Members to attend one of two induction sessions on

- Wednesday, 23rd May from 6.30-9.00 pm in City Hall
- Saturday, 26th May from 10.30 am-1.00 pm in Clifton House

Formally Designated and Locally Designated Organisations

The legislation requires that each PCSP/DPCSP must designate at least 4 organisations to the Partnership structures. These designated organisations can be made up of both DOJ designated (formally) and locally designated organisations.



The Department of Justice intends to conduct a formal consultation in the forthcoming weeks in relation to the potential DOJ designated organisations. As such the initial PCSP/DPCSP meetings will be attended by the Political and Independent Members only; after which it has been suggested that an invitation to attend future meetings will be extended to a list of agreed organisations as an interim measure.

Furthermore, in addition to the statutory organisations that are likely to be designated by the DOJ, the PCSP and DPCSPs will consider which organisations should also be locally designated. Guidance on this process is yet to be issued by the Joint Committee but it is hoped that a proposal paper will be tabled at one of the early meetings of the Partnerships.

### 2.3 Roles of the PCSP/DPCSPs

The role of the new structures are clearly outlined in the legislation i.e. to:

- make arrangements for obtaining the views of the public about matters concerning the policing of the district and enhancing community safety in the district and to consider fully any views so obtained;
- act as a general forum for discussion and consultation on matters affecting the policing of the district and enhancing community safety in the district;
- prepare plans for reducing crime and enhancing community safety in the district;
- to identify targets or other indicators by reference to which it can assess the extent to which those issues are addressed by action taken in accordance with any such plans;
- to provide any such financial or other support as it considers appropriate to persons involved in ventures designed to reduce crime or enhance community safety in the district.

However, the legislation is not prescriptive on how these objectives should be achieved. It is likely that further guidance from the Joint Committee, in the form of a Code of Practice, will be issued for consultation in the coming weeks. In the interim, however, the Chairs of the PCSP and DPCSPs have held regular meetings and have considered the roles of the various structures and a process to start getting discussions and planning under way.

## **2.4 Transitional Plans and Finance**

The Joint Committee allocated Belfast PCSP and DPCSPs £775,237 towards partnership support costs, operations (i.e. services/projects) and meeting expenses (this excludes Members' meeting expense payments which will be paid separately). The DOJ and the NIPB have indicated that the Councils need to make provision for the governance, administrative support and financial management of the new PCSPs and have included as in previous years a budget to support this. Further to discussion with the Chairs of the PCSP and DPCSPs it has been proposed that £500,000 of this allocation (as equivalent to previous years project and programme budget allocation) should be made available to support service delivery. Aspirations have also been expressed by the Chairs to ensure that DPCSPs have as much influence as possible over how this money is spent locally.

The Council also continues to make a commitment to the Partnership through its revenue estimates. This is for staff to support the projects and services and for programmes such as alcohol enforcement, wardens etc. These estimates have previously been agreed through the appropriate committees. In addition to this, the Joint Committee (DOJ and Policing Board) is likely to require the Council to provide match funding of 20% towards the money they have allocated. This has also been allowed for in the Revenue Estimates.

Until such time as the PCSP is fully operational, the Joint Committee has requested that transitional plans are put in place for a period of up to 6 months. To support this process the Chairs of the PCSP and DPCSP undertook a review of good practice to date and agreed to allocate interim funding towards a number of services over the first few months to ensure continuity of service. A breakdown of the funding allocated to date has been circulated. It is intended that the new Partnerships will begin developing longer-term Partnership Plans during the summer months.

It would be the intention to report to SP&R on the action plans and progress against them.

## **3 Resource Implications**

3.1 None

## **4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

4.1 None

**5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the progress to date and are advised that further update reports will be brought to the Committee once the Code of Practice and Financial guidelines are issued by the Joint Committee for consultation.

**6 Key to Abbreviations**

PCSP – Policing and Community Safety Partnership  
DPCSP – District Policing and Community Safety Partnership  
DOJ – Department of Justice  
NIPB – Northern Ireland Policing Board  
Joint Committee – Representatives of the Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Policing Board”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Chairman