

## Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 23rd November, 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, Corr, Haire,  
Hanna, Hendron, Jones, Lavery, Maskey,  
McKee, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín,  
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.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

#### **Mrs. Jill Minne - Award for Advancing Diversity in the Work Place**

The Chairman advised the Members that, earlier that week, Mrs Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources, had won the award for Advancing Diversity in the Work Place – Public Sector category at the Women in Business NI Awards 2012.

The Committee congratulated Jill and her team on her achievement.

#### **Investment Programme**

##### **IBM Smarter Cities Challenge**

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 19th October, it had authorised his attendance, and that of the Lord Mayor and Councillor Hargey, at the IBM Smarter Cities Global Conference in New York. He reported that Belfast had been selected as a smarter city and had been awarded in kind consultancy from IBM worth approximately \$400,000. That would provide the Council with access to some of IBM's top experts to analyse and make recommendations on a key city problem. He indicated that he would bring a further report on the issue to the Committee early in the New Year.

Noted.

## **Belfast Investment Fund**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

#### **1.1 The existing objectives for the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) were agreed in December 2007:**

- create a focal point for the Council to play a leading role in the development of the city;
- create a ‘can do’ attitude amongst its citizens and create a sense of place and pride;
- encourage investment from and engagement of public, private and voluntary sectors, in the achievement of that aim; and
- to contribute to the Council’s priorities and vision for the city.

To date, £16million has been allocated to four iconic projects (Titanic Belfast; Connswater Community Greenway; Lyric Theatre and the MAC) which has levered in over £160 million.

#### **1.2 At its meeting on 23 March 2012, SP&R Committee reviewed and confirmed the objectives for the next phase of BIF. Given both the changed needs of the city as well as the broader economic context, it was agreed that BIF support was extended to include programmes of capital investment (or clusters) as well as single iconic projects, which can demonstrate a cumulative iconic or transformational impact.**

#### **1.3 At its meeting on 19 October, SP&R Committee gave some initial feedback on the process for identifying the next series of priorities for BIF investment.**

### **2.0 Key Issues**

#### **2.1 Moving forward with the next phase of BIF, there remain a number of key issues for discussion, outlined below for Members’ consideration.**

**2.2 Long-list for consideration**

As part of the consultation process on the Investment Programme, the Council published a long-list of 'Emerging Partnership Projects' and no further projects were identified during the consultation process. In order to expedite decisions to invest, it is suggested that this long-list is provided to the Area Working Groups (AWGs) again to allow a short period of time (e.g. up until mid-December) for them to engage locally on priorities for investment with key stakeholder groups in their area. In addition to this, the long-list would be published on the Council's website.

In line with the process outlined in the appendix, the AWGs would then forward their preferred short-list to SP&R Committee in early January.

**2.3 Decision-making process**

It was noted at the previous SP&R Committee that the AWGs have played a key role in the decisions related to the Local Investment Fund. It is proposed that the AWGs continue to play a central part in the decisions related to the BIF as outlined in para 2.4 below. It should be noted however that decisions in relation to the allocation of the finance will remain with the SP&R committee in line with the council's constitution.

**2.4 Key stages**

Based on the advice from the Department for Finance and Personnel's (DFP) current guidance on the appraisal, and approval of investments, there will be 3 key stages for the appraisal of projects:

**Stage 1 – Emerging Projects – Strategic Outline Case (SOC)**

The SOC is a very brief preliminary analysis which introduces the basic project concept and contains enough detail to support an informed decision on whether to proceed the next stage. It should include a preliminary assessment of strategic fit, options, value for money, affordability and achievability.

**Stage 2 – Uncommitted Projects – Outline Business Case (OBC)**

The OBC requires a much more comprehensive analysis. It should provide fuller assessment of strategic fit, option appraisal, achievability, assumptions about costs, benefits, risks and funding. The OBC should determine the preferred option in terms of the level and form of service provision, and should recommend a particular procurement route.

**Stage 3 – Committed Projects – Full Business Case (FBC)**

The FBC should provide all the information needed to support a decision to award a contract and commit actual funding, and should provide a basis for the necessary project management, monitoring, evaluation and benefits realisation. It includes a final review of strategic fit, options, value for money, affordability and achievability, as well as final plans for monitoring, evaluation and benefits realisation.

SP&R Committee has already agreed that the principles of appraisal must be applied with proportionate effort to all proposals that involve spending or saving public money, or changes in the use of public resources.

These 3 stages are integrated into the decision-making process outlined in the appendix and Members will receive a summary of the documentation outlined above.

**2.5 Prioritisation framework**

SP&R Committee previously agreed that the 4 principles which are to guide all Council's investments are: affordability inc. consideration of available match funding; deliverability; feasibility; and sustainability.

In this next phase, SP&R has agreed that 'clusters' of projects might be considered where they have a cumulative iconic or transformational impact. Projects will therefore be appraised on an individual basis but the cumulative impact of a cluster to contribute to the city's strategic, social, cultural and environmental infrastructure will also be considered.

Investments will be rigorously and independently tested in line with standard 'Green Book' economic appraisal requirements, to test the socio-economic and social benefits of projects to the city of Belfast, as well as financial returns to the city, in terms of the rate base and attracting further investment.

A prioritisation framework based on the information contained within the appraisals will allow SP&R Committee to consider investments on a like-for-like basis across the city. This framework will be presented to SP&R for their consideration, in due course.

#### **2.6 Match funding**

One of the key objectives of BIF is to lever investment from the private and public sectors, as it did on the 4 previous BIF investments. It is agreed that there is merit in proposing an indicative match-funding ratio e.g. that the Council contribution is no more than % of the total cost of the project. This is particularly pertinent in the context of the Social Investment Fund. Previously at SP&R, there were a range of % values indicated from 50% up to 75%.

Advice is sought from Members on the acceptable match-funding ratio.

#### **2.7 Revenue implications**

It is agreed that the appraisal demonstrates that there are no ongoing revenue cost implications for the Council, in advance of decision to invest, and that investments are self-financing at the benefits realisation stage.

#### **2.8 Sustainability of outcomes**

A key political ambition in the Investment Programme is to derive maximum community benefit to ensure that investments benefited all the citizens of the city.

It is recommended that legal agreements with partners are aligned to the emerging corporate outcomes framework (linked to community planning) and include the use of social clauses, as well as contracting, measuring and monitoring secured community access in the benefits realisation period of the project.

## **2.9 Next steps**

Following discussion at Committee, officers will prepare the necessary information for AWGs' consideration and an appraisal/prioritisation framework for SP&R.

## **3.0 Resource Implications**

Financial: up to £20m by March 2015

Human: none at present

Assets: none at present

## **4.0 Equality Implications**

As part of the OBC documentation, a screening will be carried out on each project to indicate potential equality and good relations impacts and any mitigating actions needed.

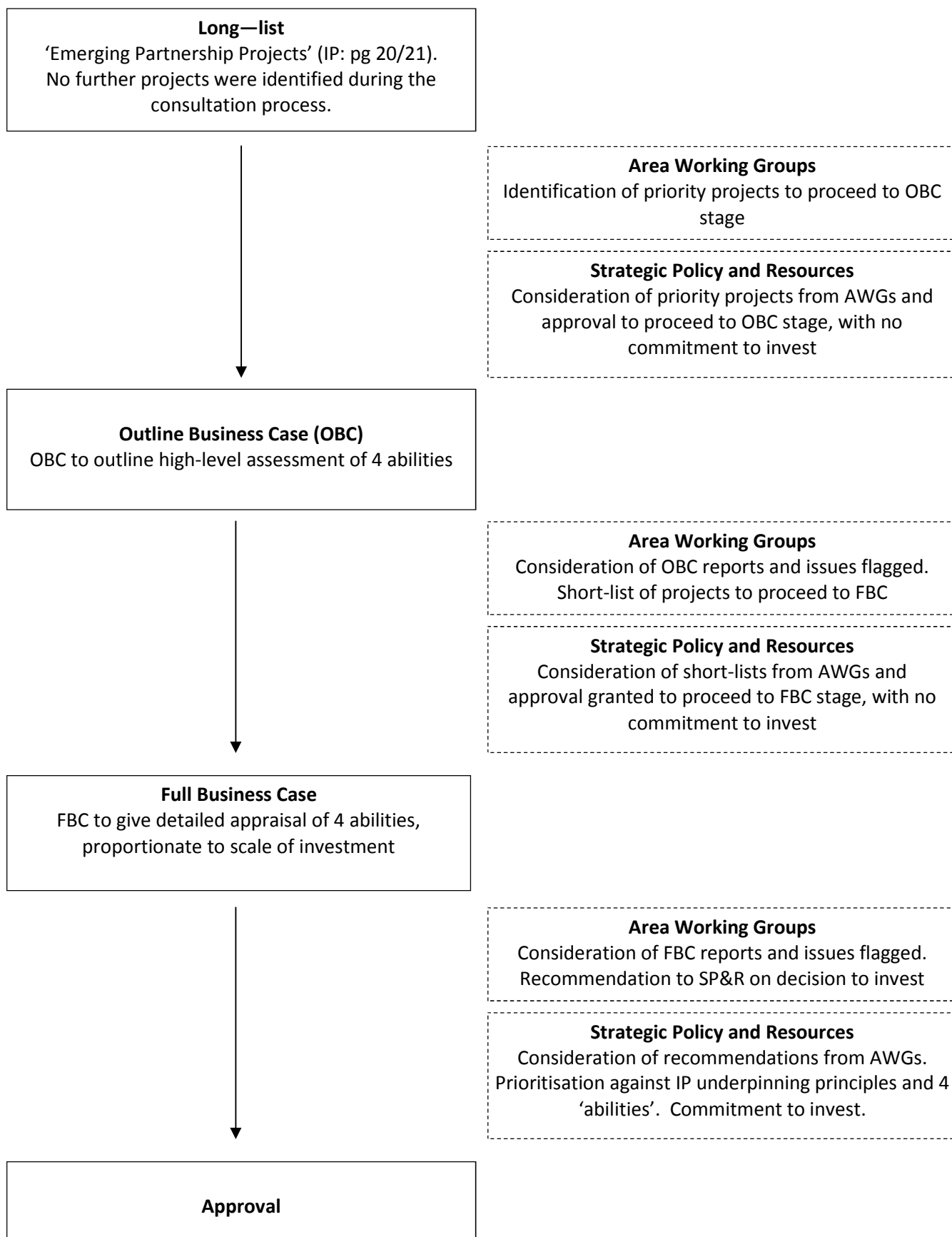
## **5.0 Recommendations**

5.1 Committee is asked for their feedback on the issues raised above, in particular, the match funding ratio; and

5.2 Committee is asked to agree that the preliminary information for AWGs' consideration is prepared on the basis of the long-list in the Investment Programme and priorities should be forwarded to SP&R for its January meeting.

## **6.0 Appendix**

Belfast Investment Fund (BIF): Approval process



After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that further consultation be undertaken in relation to seeking expressions of interest for other projects to be included within the programme and that a report be submitted to the Budget and Transformation Panel outlining how that could be publicised. It was agreed also that the match-funding ratio be limited to a maximum of 50%.

### **Local Investment Fund Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 The Local Investment Fund (LIF) has been developed to support the delivery of key regeneration projects in neighbourhoods and also as a means for Members to connect with local communities, in preparation for their formal role in community planning under RPA.**

**2.0 Key Issues**

**2.1 Area Working Group (AWG) recommendations on LIF proposals**

**At the most recent round of AWG meetings, officers updated Members on the external meetings they have facilitated on the LIF proposals. In accordance with Council procedures, individual Members declared any conflicts of interest and this was noted in the minutes of the AWG. Members are asked to note that only the South and Shankill AWGs have met in time for the preparation of this report and put forward project recommendations.**

**On the basis of the information presented, the South and Shankill AWGs have made the following recommendations for the consideration of the Committee:**



Proposal	Ref No.	Up to £	AWG Comments
<b>SOUTH AWG</b>			
May Street Presbyterian Church -	SLIF007	£200,000	Subject to seeking match funding
Purchase of derelict shop at Sandy Row	SLIF011	£51,000	
FASA	SLIF019	£150,000	
Mornington Community Project	SLIF052	£200,000	Subject to further detail including plans and a cost breakdown to be provided by end of March 2013
St Malachy's Youth Centre **	SLIF054	£40,000	Committee is asked to note that it previously approved in principle (in June) £30,000 for this project. Subsequent discussions with the Group have revealed a gap in funding and the South AWG has recommended that they receive an additional £40,000 to make up this shortfall
<b>SOUTH sub-total</b>		<b>£641,000</b>	
<b>SHANKILL AWG</b>			
Highfield/Springmartin floodlit Astroturf sports	ShLIF009	£50,000	Committee is asked to note that it previously approved in principle (in October) up to £100,000 for this project subject to discussions with DSD for additional funding. Subsequent discussions have revealed a gap in funding and the Shankill AWG has recommended that they receive an additional £50,000 to make up this shortfall
West Belfast Orange Hall		£50,000	
<b>SHANKILL sub-total</b>		<b>£100,000</b>	

All of the above have been assessed against the prioritization matrix and the summary has been circulated. It is recommended that Committee approves the above projects subject to confirmation of costs, clarification of legal issues, sustainability etc.

#### Total LIF Commitment to date

- 2.2 48 LIF projects have been approved in principle by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R) at its meetings in June, August, September and October. To date (including the recommended projects at 2.1 above) the amount that had been committed in principle is £4,100,893.40. This is subject to confirmation of detailed costings and sustainability as well as seeking authority from the relevant Committees on leasing arrangements.

AWG	Total LIF allocation	Agreed in principle SP&R June	Agreed in principle – SP&R Aug	Agreed in principle – SP&R Sept	Agreed in principle – SP&R Oct	Add. Proposals (Para 2.1)	Amount remaining**
East	£1,127,500	£280,852		£580,000			£266,648
South	£1,127,500	£60,000	-	£173,541.40		£641,000	£252,958.60
West	£1,127,500	£250,000	£816,000	-	£61,500		£0
North	£1,127,500	£100,000	£530,000	-	£300,000		£197,500
Shankill	£490,000	£100,000	£108,000	-	£100,000	£100,000	£82,000
Sub total	-	£790,852	£1,454,000	£753,541.40	£461,500	£741,000	-
TOTAL	£5,000,000						£799,106.60

\*\* Assuming the above projects at 2.1 are approved by Committee and ratified at Council.

### Reopening of LIF

Members will recall that they previously agreed that a cut-off date of the 22nd June should be put in place for LIF project proposals due to the volume of proposals which were received and the officer time needed to process these. At this time it was agreed that the Fund could be reopened again later in the year, subject to funding still remaining, to allow for further proposals. Since this time officers have processed the projects proposed and these have been discussed by Members at the appropriate AWG. In the interim Members have been approached with other project proposals and a number of AWGs have requested that the Fund is now reopened and it is recommended that this is agreed by SP&R.

### Feasibility Fund

- 2.3 The SP&R Committee, at its meeting on 22nd June, approved the establishment of a Feasibility Fund up to the value of £500,000. The Fund is intended to be used to move projects to a stage where Members can make decisions regarding future financing.
- 2.4 The following projects have been recommended for progressing to feasibility –

SOUTH AWG - Projects proposed for Feasibility Funding	
<i>Project Ref</i>	<i>AWG Recommendations</i>
SLIF015 – LORAG Watersports facility	All the proposed Lagan Canal projects to be combined into one Feasibility Study
SLIF028 – The River Lagan Corridor	
SLIF048 – Lagan River Walk	
SLIF057 – Bryson Lagan Sport	

SHANKILL AWG - Projects proposed for Feasibility Funding	
<i>Project Ref</i>	<i>AWG Recommendations /comments</i>
ShLIF010 – Ainsworth Avenue – replacement community centre	Feasibility study

- 2.5 As outlined to Committee at its meeting on 21st September, any feasibility work undertaken will be commissioned, procured and led by the Council through the Property & Projects Department. If the above projects are agreed, Council officers will progress these to the next stage.

**Update on Area Working Group Workshops**

- 2.6 At its meeting on 22 June, SP&R Committee agreed to a series of workshops examining the role of Members in place-shaping and community engagement, in the context of the LIF, as well as the wider context of community planning.
- 2.7 The first round of these workshops, which were facilitated by Jon Huish, took place during the last week of August and the first week of September. The objective of the initial workshops was to develop a shared understanding the local area, its assets, issues and existing investments. A joint workshop, to which all Members were invited, was then held on 24th September. This workshop explored best practice around place-shaping and started to identify the capacity and processes needed to undertake effective community engagement.
- 2.8 The next series of workshops, which are taking place on during the last two weeks of November, are focusing on –
- agreeing draft priority outcomes,
  - agreeing priority projects going forward into the Social Investment Fund and the Belfast Investment Fund
  - identifying the best mechanisms for community engagement

### 3.0 Equality Implications

The overall programme of LIF investments will be screened at regular intervals to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its obligations as part of the Equality Scheme, as well as ensuring that it is in line with the Investment Programme's underpinning principles related to good relations and balanced investment.

### 4.0 Resource Implications

**Human:** Resources are currently being allocated to individual projects.

**Financial:** As outlined in para 2.2 above

**Assets:** Further work to be completed. Will be presented to the Committee for agreement in due course.

### 5.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. endorses the South and Shankill AWG project recommendations in paragraph 2.1;
2. notes the current remaining levels of LIF allocation as set out in paragraph 2.2;
3. agrees that the LIF is reopened for new project proposals subject to remaining funding;
4. endorses the South and Shankill AWG Feasibility Fund recommendations as set out in paragraph 2.4; and
5. notes the update on the ongoing Area Working Group workshops"

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

## Physical Investment Programme – Update

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

### "1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Physical Investment Programme which the Council has set itself under the Investment Programme over the next three years is ambitious and challenging and includes:

- £75m in council facilities – delivered through the Council's Capital Programme and financed through a

combination of one-off revenue payments, loans, grants and capital receipts.

- £20m in partnership projects and £50m levered from sources outside of the council – delivered through the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) and financed through an annual £6m rate contribution and capital receipts. Additional private investment will also be explored.
- £5m in smaller regeneration partnership projects – delivered through the Local Investment Fund (LIF) and financed through re-allocation of existing resources.

1.2 A breakdown of the current status of physical investment projects in terms of progress that the Property and Projects Department is involved with has been circulated.

2.0 Update on delivery progress

Capital Programme

2.1 The Council is making significant progress on a range of major capital projects including the £4million upgrades to Dunville and Woodvale Parks and the £3million upgrade to the Mary Peters Track. These projects are both on time and on budget and should all be completed by June 2013. In addition work is ongoing on the upgrade of the fuel depot at Duncrue, the installation of new mercury abatement cremators and expansion to the cemetery at Roselawn, completing Phase 2 of the alleygating programme and continuing to deliver the Renewing the Routes programme.

2.2 Preparatory work is also well advanced for a wide range of projects including new pitches and changing facilities under Phase 1 of the Pitches Strategy, the Girdwood Community Hub, the Mountain bike track at Barnett Demesne, Hammer and Marrowbone pitches, demolition of the old Grove Centre, the Zoo Playground, Clement Wilson Bridge and the relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre. Contracts for these projects are expected to be let during the first half of 2013 with projects due to be on the ground from the summer onwards. In addition finalisation work is ongoing on a number of projects including the City Hall, the Titanic Memorial Garden and the Ulster Hall which continue to take up officer time.

**Local Investment Fund (LIF) and Area Working Groups (AWGs)**

- 2.3 Members are aware that a £5million Local Investment Fund was established under the Investment Programme to support the delivery of key regeneration projects in neighbourhoods and also as a means for Members to connect with local communities, in preparation for their formal role in community planning under RPA. To date the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee has approved nearly £3.4million on 48 projects under this Fund. This leaves a further £1.6million to be allocated.
- 2.4 Establishing LIF and its associated processes including setting up and servicing the 5 Area Working Groups (which have met more than 30 times since their establishment in May) and undertaking a substantial number of informal meetings with Groups has absorbed a significant amount of Member and officer time. LIF is now moving into delivery phase which will require substantial amount of officer time to ensure that the correct information is received from groups in order to be able to process payments and work with Groups on delivery. A small cross departmental team has been established to ensure the successful delivery of the LIF projects which have been approved in principle to date.

**Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)**

- 2.5 In October Committee agreed to test proposals for the revised objectives and operational principles of this Fund. A further paper on this will be brought for the attention of Committee in due course following party group briefings. In the interim, officers are continuing to meet with organisations and advocates for projects across the city that might be eligible for assistance once the final decisions on the processes for this Fund have been agreed by Committee.

**Feasibility Fund**

- 2.6 Committee, at its meeting on the 22 June, approved the ring fencing of £500k to provide for a Feasibility Fund to enable initial feasibility work to be undertaken on proposed projects to bring them to a point where Members could decide if they should be progressed for financing. To date 6 feasibility projects (5 in North and 1 in Shankill) have been approved for funding by SP&R Committee. Feasibility work for these will be commissioned and procured through the Project Management Unit. Council officers are currently working on the processes required for these and updates on these projects will be taken to AWGs and Committee in due course.

**Planned Maintenance Programme and non-recurrent capital spend**

- 2.7 The Council has over 260 assets which all require ongoing maintenance. In order to ensure that this is carried out in a value for money, effective way, the Council has moved towards a planned maintenance programme. Although this remains approximately on target, Members are aware that unplanned maintenance issues will arise e.g. the recent closure of Avoniel Leisure Centre and problems with the water and electricity supplies at Belfast Zoo. This work is on-going and while there will be as yet unknown cost implications, it is not impacting significantly on the planned maintenance programme.
- 2.8 Members were informed at their meeting on 22nd June that the incremental nature of capital expenditure arising from the Investment Programme provides the opportunity to finance a programme of non-recurring projects, including improvements to council facilities provided there is no recurrent expenditure associated with these. £1.8m under-spend/wish-list works was identified and procurement has already commenced in respect of a number of these. It is anticipated that approx. 70% of this work will be completed within the current financial year with the remainder completed in 2013/14.

**Property and asset management update**

- 2.9 The Council is a major landowner with approx 12% of the total land area of Belfast being in Council ownership. There is inevitably a wide range of property and estates issues that continue to be dealt with on an ongoing basis including property advice, valuations, leases, licences, rent reviews and acquisitions and disposals. A number of the major projects within the Investment Programme are dependent on the resolution of land and legal issues and work is progressing in agreeing the terms of the new lease for the Welcome Centre; land acquisition and variation of legal agreements at the Waterfront; acquisition of land for the Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) and the Innovation Centre as well as leases for the Hammer and Marrowbone pitches and a number of other projects. The Council is also a major landlord with responsibility for managing over 280 leases at Duncrue, Gasworks, Balmoral Industrial Estates, St. Georges and Smithfield markets and a number of miscellaneous rents with a total income of approximately £6.7million. In addition officers are progressing work on a number of potential acquisitions including the former Grove Primary School site and the School of Music premises at Donegall Pass and disposals including Glen Road, Colin Glen, McClure Street, Boucher Road, Seapark Drive and Primrose Street former civic amenity sites.

- 2.10 Work has also been progressed on the issuing of Development Briefs for Wilmont House, leisure and cultural uses at the North Foreshore and the City Cemetery Gate Lodge. In addition work is ongoing on progressing an options appraisal for the Windsor/Olympia stadia development and developing initial options in relation to Council accommodation. Further updates on these will be taken to Committee in due course. Other key areas of work include the Review of Public Administration (RPA) transfer of assets and liabilities, implementation of the asset management strategy, the 'One Public Estate' initiative and student housing

**Social Investment Fund**

- 2.11 Members will be aware OFMDFM have established the £80million Social Investment Fund (SIF) which has been designed to reduce poverty, unemployment and physical deterioration through area based interventions of significant scale which will be delivered in partnership with communities. Steering Groups have been established within each of the 9 SIF zones which have been tasked with managing the design, delivery and development of an Area Plan. The timetable for SIF is extremely tight with all area plans to be produced by the end of December, signed off by January 2013 and all expenditure committed by June 2015. All the Belfast Steering Groups have now held their initial meetings and consultation to inform the draft area plans is now well underway across the four Belfast zones.

- 2.12 There is at least one Belfast Councillor on each Steering Group along with a Director which will be a useful opportunity for Members to strategically align the work of the Council, including the Area Working Groups, to inform and influence the emerging action plans. Members and officers are meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> November to ascertain the Council's position and way forward in relation to the Social Investment Fund and to ensure the opportunities are maximised. In addition the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) are considering potential delivery mechanisms for SIF projects including the potential for the Council to be a key delivery agency.



**Key issues**

**2.13** Although the Council is making significant progress on the physical investment programme as outlined above, as can be seen from the financial reports which are also on the agenda for discussion at Committee today, there is some slippage in the Capital Programme expenditure profile and in other areas of physical investment. Reasons for this are varied depending on the particular projects however there are a number of common issues which have had an impact on both on the expenditure and the overall delivery. These are outlined below for Members.

**Resources**

**2.14** When the Investment Programme was launched it was recognised that the Council was not sufficiently resourced with the type of roles, number of people to undertake these roles or the skills sets necessary to ensure its successful delivery – not just in terms of the delivery of projects on the ground but also in the supporting processes that are required for good project management (that is, legal services, financial services, communications etc.). The SP&R Committee therefore granted authority to recruit for these posts as necessary. Recruitment for these levels of posts are lengthy procedures requiring assessment centres and then interviews. Each recruitment took approximately 3 months from advertisement to the last interview which is the average for filling most Council positions. Once appointed it was at least a month or longer before successful applicants were able to take up posts due to notice periods etc.

**2.15** Members are asked to note that all the recruitment exercises have now been completed. The majority of the roles are now in post however the full complement of staff will not be in place till December which is a lag time of nearly 9 months since the launch of the Investment Programme. This has had a knock-on effect on the capacity of the Council to deliver in the interim period. Resources and capacity issues in other areas, particularly around the supporting processes of legal advice, have also had an impact on delivery.

**2.16** It is important that these roles are recognised as Council roles and not departmental specific resources. To ensure successful delivery, all of the roles will require a substantial amount of cross-departmental working, as well as working with external stakeholders across the city. There is also a challenge to the organisation going forward to ensure the ongoing sustainability

and success of projects which the Council is investing heavily in now. For assets to be successful and make a real change to people's lives they need to be properly programmed and resourced from the outset to ensure that they deliver on their objectives and outcomes. Going forward this may involve looking at how existing roles can be refocused or realigned to support ongoing project delivery.

**Processes and project definition**

2.17 The SP&R Committee is the Council's investment decision maker. In order for the Council to ensure that it is able to monitor all capital spend, all capital related decisions must be taken to SP&R Committee. Members are aware that they have already agreed a Stage process for capital programme projects at their meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> June as outlined below –

<p>Stage 1 - Emerging Projects - <i>Strategic Outline Case</i></p>	<p>Approval of SP&amp;R is required to enable a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to be prepared for a project proposal. This will enable the prioritisation of emerging projects and recommendations as to which projects should be moved to the uncommitted stage. An SOC must be agreed by SP&amp;R before it can move to the next stage</p>
<p>Stage 2 - Uncommitted Projects - <i>Outline Business Case</i></p>	<p>Once an SOC has been prepared, SP&amp;R approval is required to commence work on progressing the project to ready stage (i.e. tender stage for a capital project). The Options Appraisal must be agreed by SP&amp;R before it can move to the next stage</p>
<p>Stage 3 - Committed Projects - <i>Full Business Case</i></p>	<p>Approval of the Outline Business Case by SP&amp;R is required to get a project committed. Procurement, tendering exercises etc. should not be commenced without the approval of SP&amp;R at this stage.</p>

2.18 However there have been a number of occasions recently across the Council where capital projects have been taken to Standing Committees and not be reported through SP&R (for example the Zoo playground). This has a knock-on impact on the capital programme as resources for these projects then have to be secured which means that other projects fall down the list. Another key issue is Departments working off estimates for projects which have been provided by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties which then turn out to be significantly underestimated and where additional money then has to be secured within the Council.

- 2.19 Going forward it is recommended that all capital projects (capital programme, Belfast Investment Fund etc.) and revenue projects which are related to the Investment Programme must go through the Stage process above where decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R Committee. This will bring a robustness to the process, will ensure that all capital and revenue decisions are taken on the same basis, will ensure that projects and will be fully open and transparent. A further report on this will be brought to Committee in the New Year along with realignment proposals in regard to the overall capital programme.
- 2.20 In order for a project to be successfully delivered it needs to be properly defined and scoped out from the outset. However there are still occasions where resources, energy and time have been dedicated to projects which do not have a clear definition or outcomes. Often these have been where external funding sources are available and there is pressure on the Council to avail of these e.g. the Innovation Centre and the Digital Hub. These are still concept projects which have not been fully scoped out and there is a consequential lack of progress.

#### Partners and Community Engagement

##### 2.21 External partners

- 2.22 There are a number of external partners who are key to ensuring the delivery of the Investment Programme, including the Planning Service, Roads Service and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). By their nature physical investment projects include a long process of tendering, design, engagement and planning before work can start. Many of these processes the Council leads on and can control however a critical element of the process, the planning process, is outside the remit of the Council. Planning delays have had a substantial impact recently on proposed schemes. Members will be aware that Asda recently pulled out of the proposed Loughside development. The planning application for this proposal was lodged in 2009 and was held up in the planning system for over 3 years. Asda cited this delay as a key reason for this decision.
- 2.23 Members will be aware that some of the projects under the Investment Programme are dependent on time bound funding from a range of streams including EU funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Peace III, central government from Invest NI, the NI Tourist Board and lottery funding. Delays in obtaining planning permission for these projects will mean that they may not be delivered within

the timescales required by funding partners and exposes the Council to huge liability and reputational damage if the full funds cannot be drawn down. Recognising this, the Council has already been in early and positive discussions with the Planning Service, Roads Service etc. regarding a number of projects to ensure there are no unnecessary hurdles which would significantly delay these.

- 2.24** In addition because many of these projects (including the Conference and Exhibition Centre, the Innovation Centre, the infrastructure for the wider Girdwood site) are reliant on central government funding there is a requirement for the use of the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). The Council has previously raised concerns over the use of CPD in major projects (for example, the Connswater Community Greenway and the development of the Girdwood Community Hub) as its processes can significantly lengthen timescales, add costs, protract decision-making and can have a consequential impact on the delivery of projects. The Council has a track record of successfully delivering major capital projects including the Grove Wellbeing Centre, Falls Leisure Centre and the refurbishments of the City and Ulster Halls which were all delivered on time and in budget. In addition, the Council also routinely works closely with other government departments and partners on delivering major capital projects. The Council's ability to lead on these has been proven in relation to the contracts for the work on the £4million refurbishment programmes of Dunville and Woodvale Parks with DSD where the Department agreed that the Council would lead on these and did not require the use of CPD processes and services. Members are aware that delivery of projects and the use of CPD was raised at the Voluntary Transition Committee meeting on 2 November which was attended by the Minister of the Environment and it was agreed that officers would work up a paper on this which will be brought to Committee in due course.
- 2.25** Contractual disputes can also have an impact on the timescale for delivery of projects (for example, the Connswater Community Greenway) and reinforces the need for projects to be fully scoped at the outset along with having good contract management and governance arrangements in place.

### Community Engagement

- 2.26 An integral part of delivering projects is engaging with the community to ensure that projects deliver on their objectives and outcomes and meet the needs of local communities. However the level of community engagement needs to be balanced against the timescales for delivery for a project. For example there have been a number of projects recently where lengthy community engagement processes have had an impact on the overall delivery of projects e.g. Falls Parks, the Waterworks. A key role of the new project sponsor officers will be to develop a community engagement plan for projects which will ensure that an appropriate level of consultation is undertaken but also that the project is delivered on time.

### Forward planning

- 2.27 As outlined above there is always potential for slippage in the capital expenditure programme and other investment streams. The Property and Projects Department is currently working on developing a list of 'oven-ready' projects that have a Strategic Outline Case and Outline Business Case which then can be progressed through to tender stage should the Committee agree and where capacity arises within the capital finance budget.

## 3.0 Resource Implications

Financial: up to £150m by 2014/15

Human: Significant officer time will be required to deliver the projects in the Investment Programme

Assets: As the Council estate is expanded there will be additional ongoing maintenance and running costs.

## 4.0 Equality Implications

The Investment Programme will be screened in accordance with the obligations set out in the overall equality document for the Investment Programme.

## 5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 The Committee asked to note the contents of this report."

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that, as part of the Council's Investment Programme, there was a commitment to pursuing European Regional Development funding in support of the City's economic infrastructure. That included the development of a green business park on the North Foreshore and an Innovation Centre at Springvale. In this regard, the Council had submitted to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment an application for funding, through the European Regional Development Funding Programme, for infrastructure on the North Foreshore, and it was anticipated that a reply as to whether or not the bid had been successful would be received by April, 2013. In addition, an application for the development of an Innovation Centre would be submitted in 2013 in line for the deadline for submissions to the aforementioned Department to allow sufficient planning and construction time.

The Director pointed out that applications through the Fund had to be contractually committed between the grant recipient, that is, the Council, and the grant funder, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, by 31st December, with all projects which were approved for funding having been completed with all the requisite paper work submitted by 31st December, 2015.

The Director of Property and Projects explained that the projected costs for the delivery of the projects exceeded the legislative procurement thresholds contained within the European Directive for Service Contracts. Consequently, these contracts would be required to be advertised in the European Journal, which typically took three months to process from preparation of documentation through to the award of the contracts.

He pointed out that the Planning Service had indicated that the projects would be dealt with within the Belfast office and it was reasonable to programme for a six month turnaround time. However, it was known that both sites had inherent contamination issues which would require detailed analysis and a requirement to satisfy the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. In addition to those delays, because the projects were being funded through the Central Government structures, the Central Procurement Directorate rules would likely apply. That would inevitably lengthen the process by restricting the use of procurement frameworks which it had previously approved and dictating the forms of contract.

In order to expedite these projects and achieve the delivery date of December, 2015, it would be advantageous to appoint an integrated design team through an appropriate European Journal qualifying competition method. It was proposed that those appointments would be subject to relevant break clauses and would be restricted to achieving full Planning Permission for the proposals should insufficient funding not materialise.

The Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 21st September, it had been advised that it was initially anticipated that the Innovation Centre would be released as a development brief. However, subsequent legal advice now meant that the

Council must lead on the project if it was to avoid the “State Aid” regulations. In order for the Innovation Centre to be provided, it first needed to be successful in attracting Regional Development funding. However, there was a risk that even if it was successful a combination of procurement, planning timescales and mitigating contamination measures would restrict the opportunity for delivery. The North Foreshore infrastructure, whilst also subject to a bid for funding, had less risk attached to it. That was because it would always have to be developed in order to make the site viable and attract investors into the Green Business Park. The Director indicated that a reasonable budget for progressing the applications to full planning stage would be required.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to approve, prior to confirmation of funding:

- (i) the appointment of an integrated design team for the North Foreshore road infrastructure as detailed in the report; and
- (ii) the appointment of an integrated design team for an Innovation Centre at Springvale as set out in the report.

**Investment Programme –  
Job Opportunities and Employability**

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

The Head of Human Resources submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

**“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 To update Members on progress with the job opportunities and employability targets set out in the Investment Programme and to seek agreement to ‘ring-fence’ five vacant Business Support Clerk (BSC) posts to people not in employment.**

**2.0 Background**

**2.1 Members will be aware that one of the main ways to deliver the 200 job opportunities committed to in the Investment Programme is to reduce long-term, perpetual dependency on agency usage and create directly employed council posts. At its meeting on 24 August 2012, Members agreed to create and recruit up to 40 permanent basic - entry ‘peripatetic’ BSC posts for that specific purpose.**

- 2.2 As well as delivering job opportunities, the Council is also committed to providing suitable work experience opportunities to help people get 'job ready' to apply for the job opportunities in the Council, and elsewhere, as and when they become available. Members will also be aware that discussions with our employability partners have indicated that while the provision of work experience and other employability interventions have merit, ring-fencing posts or a percentage of available posts is an essential element of any long term unemployment intervention to give the long term unemployed a real chance of being able to compete for jobs.
- 2.3 The recruitment of the first tranche of these vacant BSC posts (up to 20 posts) provides a significant opportunity for the council to deliver a targeted employability initiative by purposely ring-fencing a number of them to people not in employment
- 2.4 Further information on progress against the specific job opportunities and employability targets set out in the Investment Programme, along with details on this specific recruitment and ring-fencing initiative, are set out below.

### 3.0 Key Issues

#### 3.1 Job opportunities

Progress against the job opportunity targets previously agreed with Members are as follows:

Year	Target	Actual to date
1	110	109 permanent and 33 temporary posts
2	60	
3	30	

49 of the publicly advertised permanent job opportunities posts have been newly created posts and sixty have been permanent posts arising from staff turnover (pre- Investment programme these were likely to have been frozen). 22 of the temporary posts have been 'newly created' job opportunities and eleven have been temporary posts arising from staff turnover.

#### 3.2 Recruitment and ring-fencing initiative

The recruitment process for the BSC posts does not require applicants to possess formal qualifications or experience.



Instead, their skills and competence are tested by a series of computer-based tests, followed by paper-based skills tests, followed by interviews.

3.3. The Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI) has confirmed that it would be fully supportive of five of the 20 BSC posts being ring-fenced to people not in employment providing the rationale is clearly outlined, the approach and timeframe are well planned and that best practice is strictly adhered to.

3.3.1 **Rationale:** this relates to the Council's commitment to helping to stimulate the local economy through the job creation and employability outreach measures as outlined in our three year Investment Programme. In particular, reaching out to those furthest removed from the labour market will purposely allow the Council to target assistance where it is most needed. The recruitment process, that is the use of skill tests instead of formal qualifications and the number of posts available make this an appropriate recruitment exercise in which to apply this specific targeted employability outreach initiative.

3.3.2 **Approach and timeframe:** The ECNI and the Department for Education and Learning (DEL) are fully supportive of the proposed two-strand recruitment approach with coordinated testing, selection and appointment processes:

- (i) a mainstream recruitment campaign for fifteen of the BSC posts will be publicly advertised in November 2012 with testing taking place in January and February 2013, and interviews taking place in March / April 2013; and
- (ii) a ring-fenced recruitment campaign for five of the BSC posts will be open only to those people who have not been in employment for six months and who have been chosen for and successfully completed a pilot pre-recruitment training programme with the Council to help them become 'job-ready' to apply for the post of BSC. It is proposed that approximately 45 places will be available for the pre-recruitment programme and the Council will work with DEL, the ECNI and other employability partners across the city to ensure fair selection of participants. The normal testing and interview processes will follow for those who have successfully completed the programme and the people with the top five scores after interview will be recommended for appointment to the five ring fenced BSC posts.

3.3.3 **Best Practice**: The ECNI is content that this selection process demonstrates best practice and it recommends that the approach is implemented on a pilot basis to allow for full evaluation. The ECNI has also advised that the programme should be open to both those in receipt and those not in receipt of benefits and that the six month 'not in employment' eligibility timeframe should be applied to everyone regardless of age. The Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) has also confirmed full support for this employability initiative.

3.4 **Next Steps – job opportunities**

Another area of work that has had sustained significant and consistent use of agency staff is the post of Cleansing Operative. Any decision to replace agency workers with permanent Cleansing operatives will however depend on the outcome of an ongoing review of Waste Collection. More information on the potential for creating job opportunities in Cleansing will be provided to Committee at a later date.

3.5 The creation of job opportunities in front line services continues to be a priority and while there is potential to create some front line jobs from reducing reliance on agency workers and from structural reviews, the focus will have to be on reducing overtime to create more of these types of jobs. This is a complex piece of work and may have far reaching implications for some existing staff. Therefore, the potential job opportunities in front line services expected from a reduction in overtime will take longer to achieve.

3.6 **Employability targets**

The Council has provided 102 work placements since the start of April 2012 for a range of people and organisations including schools, colleges and universities, the Youth Justice Agency and disability organisations. This figure also includes 10 young people participating in the second year of the Young Person's Employment Initiative (YEPI). Please see Appendix 1 for further detail.

3.7 At its meeting on 24 August 2012, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee received information on the following government led programmes and the placements being provided in the council for each of the following programmes :

- Steps to Work

- Programme Led Apprenticeships
- Graduate Acceleration Programme
- Youth Employment Initiative

DEL and its lead contractors are in the process of allocating sixty council placements and the first clients are expected to be in place in the council over the next few weeks. Further opportunities will be advertised when the current sixty placements have been taken up. Information on the government programmes and placement targets for each year of the Investment Programme is attached at Appendix 1.

### **3.8 Next Steps – employability targets**

The Property and Projects Department has identified the potential to create and sustain a number of craft apprenticeships and is in the process of developing a business case to secure the necessary resources.

The possibility of further work placement opportunities is currently being explored with the Cleansing Section. The section currently uses agency workers to cover its temporary seasonal requirements and there may be potential to provide valuable work experience for the long term unemployed on a seasonal basis. More detail on this will be presented to Committee at a later date. The Council will continue to work to explore existing and potential funding to support the Council's employability targets and with employability partners citywide to raise awareness and promote the opportunities being provided.

### **4.0 Resource Implications**

#### **4.1 Human Resources**

The applicant response for the mainstream BSC posts could be huge and the effective management of this project will require significant human resource input. In addition, the software licence for the online testing application expires in early February 2013, meaning that all applicants need to be tested by then. In light of the anticipated volume of applicants and time constraints, it is proposed that the terms of application for the BSC posts make it clear that there can be no re-scheduling of testing and/or interview arrangements for applicants under any circumstances.

#### 4.2 Financial

The PCs for testing are already available but some installation and configuration may need to take place out of hours to meet the required timescales.

#### 5.0 Equality Implications

5.1 The planned approach to the recruitment of the BSC posts, including the ring-fencing of five of the 20 posts to people not in employment has been agreed with the ECNI.

#### 6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the progress in relation to job opportunities and employability targets; and
2. Agree the planned approach and timeframe for recruiting BSCs, including the ring-fencing of five vacant posts to people not in employment for six months.

#### 7.0 Documents Attached

Appendix 1-Type and number of placements being offered for Year 1 of the Investment Programme; and

Type of placement	No. of placements	Description
School	40	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 week placements or 1-2 day per week over an extended period
Disability	31	<input type="checkbox"/> Special needs schools and disability organisations <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week placements or 1-2 days per week over an extended period
College/ university	30	<input type="checkbox"/> Range of placements-1-2 week placements; 1-2 days per week over an extended period; up to 16 weeks for some universities
PBNI/YJA	6	<input type="checkbox"/> Work experience for placements required to carry out community service orders <input type="checkbox"/> 40-240 hours community service

Type of placement	No. of placements	Description
<p><b>Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP)</b></p> <p>DEL programme delivered by Business in the Community</p>	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> For graduates from QUB and University of Ulster</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work placement programme lasts up to 26 weeks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Graduates complete project/ piece of work alongside studying for an Educational Development International (EDI) certificate</li> </ul>
<p><b>Steps to Work</b></p> <p>Delivered by DEL lead contractors across the city</p>	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 18+ years old</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work experience placements- range from 8-26 weeks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> £15.38 training allowance (paid by DEL ) in addition to current benefits</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No cost to employer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Additional support, guidance and training provided by DEL advisors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Programme Led Apprenticeships</b></p> <p>Delivered by DEL lead contractors across the city</p>	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 16-17 year olds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work experience placements- up to 104 weeks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Receive EMA - non means tested (currently £40 per week); travel expenses; child care expenses (if applicable)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No cost to employer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mixture of work experience and training provided by college</li> </ul>
<p><b>Youth Employment Scheme</b></p> <p>Delivered by DEL</p>	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary programme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 16-24 year olds (mixture of NEETS and employed young people)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2-8 week placements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Retain benefits; travel expenses; child care expenses (if applicable)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> £250 grant available to council (conditions apply)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Young Persons Employment Initiative (YPEI)</b></p> <p>Delivered by Bryson Future Skills</p>	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 year olds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work placement programme lasts up to 26 weeks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No cost to employer</li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170"</b>	

After discussion, regarding job opportunities, employability initiatives, ring-fenced posts and the possibility of creating apprenticeship posts, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Investment Programme –  
Communications Update**

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

The Head of Corporate Communications reminded the Committee that, following the launch of the Investment Programme in February, a communications plan had been approved by the Committee at its meeting on 18th May. In the intervening period, a short-term communications plan had been drawn up and implemented and to date there had been media, City Matters and website coverage for a number of initiatives including:

- Super Connected Cities;
- Mary Peters Track;
- Dunville and Woodvale Parks;
- the Local Investment Fund;
- the jobs target (110 jobs and 170 placements this year); and
- plans for the Belfast Waterfront Hall.

Internally, there had also been regular updates to staff through the Intercom magazine, Interlink (intranet) and team briefings and, in addition, signage had been erected at the Mary Peters Track and the Dunville and Woodvale Parks.

The Head of Corporate Communications explained that, with the first anniversary of the launch of the Investment Programme approaching in February, it was vital that communication was stepped up and that the contents of the original document were revisited and updates on any progress were pulled together. He expressed the need to highlight projects on the ground that were being delivered and the progress on the headline developments, such as the Belfast Waterfront Hall and the Mary Peters Track and that the Council demonstrated that it was achieving its aims.

He explained that the purpose of the report was to inform Members of plans to build on the original communications strategic approach paper and produce a fully developed action plan. One of the issues to date had been the gathering of updated information on the progress from the various strands but the appointment, earlier in the month, of the Investment Programme Communications Officer and the recent appointments of the Programme Managers would resolve that ongoing difficulty.

A communications group of officers involved in delivering the projects, led by the Director of Finance and Resources and the Head of Corporate Communications, had been set up and would develop the action plan, which would be submitted to the Committee for approval in January. In addition, a quarterly report on communications issues would also be submitted.

He stressed the importance of communications being politically-led. Therefore, the Communications Group would report through the Budget and Transformation Panel to the Committee.

In addition, individual parties had requested access to the Council's photographic images to allow them to include publicity about the Council's Investment Programme in their own publications. It was possible for that to be provided and the Committee was requested to consider if that should be made available on request, through Corporate Communications, to Political Parties with the proviso that the Investment Programme should always be referred to as a cross-party Council initiative. That would be in keeping with the Council's stated position that the Investment Programme was politically-led.

He requested also that the Committee reaffirm the protocols around lead representatives in photo calls and press releases in relation to the Investment Programme. The following had been suggested in the original communications strategic document:

- Party Leaders on the big projects delivered by the Council, such as the Belfast Waterfront Hall and the Mary Peters Track, at the announcement and completion stages. If for logistical reasons only one person could be used in a press release or photo call, the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would represent the Party Leaders as a whole;
- the Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee or Lord Mayor, on agreement with Party Leaders, on partnership/Citywide projects which were not owned by the Council or only partly involved the Council and on events that required civic presence and other events where the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister or other Ministers attended and official openings;
- Committee Chairs at Departmental projects and also at key milestones (other than announcement and completion) of major projects; and
- Other Councillors – local projects, where possible, to be made cross-party and all local representatives where possible.

After discussion, the Committee noted the establishment of the Communications Group and that a fully developed Communications Action Plan would be submitted to the Committee in January for approval, followed by quarterly update reports. In addition, the Committee approved:

- i) making Council-owned photographic images available through Corporation Communications to Political Parties for use in their own publications, subject to any use always referring to the Investment Programme as cross-party Council initiative; and
- (ii) the protocols in relation to Council representatives in Investment Programme press releases and photographs.

**Democratic Services and Governance**

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

The Committee was advised that the undernoted Requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality had been received:

<b>Organisation/ Body</b>	<b>Event/Date Number of Delegates/Guests</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Law Society of Northern Ireland	The Law Society of Northern Ireland Council Dinner  29th September, 2013  Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to provide an opportunity for representatives from the judiciary, business, voluntary and community sectors to come together to acknowledge the achievements of the Society. The event aims to highlight best practice and to develop relations with key stakeholders.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £500
Queen's University Belfast	British Forum for Ethnomusicology and the International Council for Traditional Music Conference Reception  4th April, 2013  Approximately 150 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 event will take place within the city.  This event would contribute to the Council's key theme of 'City Leadership – strong, fair, together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £500
<b>Organisation/ Body</b>	<b>Event/Date Number of</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>



	Delegates/Guests			
Corrymeela Football Club	25th Anniversary Event 13th April, 2013 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Corrymeela Football Club and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city.  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 red/white wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £500
St. Malachy's Primary School	Silver Jubilee Celebration 21st June, 2013 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of St. Malachy's Primary School and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city.  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 red/white wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £500
Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure	DCAL – Outline of priorities and opportunities 20th December, 2012 Approximately 200 attending	Use of the City Hall	This event aims to provide a platform for the Minister and staff of the Department to consider its work over the past twelve months as well as focus on the priorities and opportunities for the next twelve months.  Much of the event will showcase the vibrancy and ambition of Belfast, by specifically focusing on the recent arrival of the Olympic and Para-Olympic torches to Belfast in 2012; the World Police and Fire Games in 2013; and the major capital investment in three Belfast stadia - Casement Park, Ravenhill and Windsor Park.  Due to the intrinsic relationship between these projects and the Council, the Department will be extending invitations to	Use of the City Hall

			<p>Members of Council and relevant Officers who would find attendance at the event useful.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better opportunities for success'.</p>	
NI4Kids Limited	<p>Ni4Kids Family Awards</p> <p>23rd May, 2013</p> <p>Approximately 250 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will recognise the individuals and companies who constantly strive to improve the lives of families with young children. Among the awards presented will be: Family Visitor Attraction of the Year; Primary School Teacher of the Year; Family Support Organisation of the Year; and Family Event of the Year. The individual family member award categories are an opportunity to recognise outstanding achievements in overcoming adversity and dedication by individuals to their families.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £625</p>

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Children's Heartbeat Trust – Hospice March**

A Member advised the Committee that the Children's Heartbeat Trust was holding a march from the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children to Linenhall Street in order to highlight the current threat to children's heart surgery in Northern Ireland. The event would take place on Saturday, 8th December from 12.00 noon and the organisers had requested that the Council grant the use of the Reception Hall following the march and provide hospitality in the form of a finger buffet for the 150 guests who would be in attendance. The organisation would be putting on a Santa and face-painting to entertain the children who would be attending the event in the City Hall.

The Committee agreed to the request.

**Special Responsibility Allowance**

The Committee was reminded that the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 provided that the maximum amount which the Council was permitted to spend on Special Responsibility Allowance was £82,000 per annum. The Committee, at its meeting in June, 2011, had agreed to the allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance to cover the Chairmen and the Deputy Chairmen of the Standing Committees and the office holders within the Political Parties on the Council.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that part of the allowance paid to each Party Leader was based upon the number of Members of their Party on the Council. An amount of £194.48 per Member was allocated and that covered fifty of the fifty-one Councillors. As Alderman McCoubrey was an Independent Member he had not been included in the calculations. However, as Members would be aware, the Chief Executive had, on 14th November, received a letter from the Rt. Honourable Peter D. Robinson, MLA, informing him that Alderman McCoubrey had, from that date, become a Member of the Democratic Unionist Party. That meant that the allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance must be reviewed as Party strengths had altered with the Democratic Unionist Party now increasing to sixteen Members. The result of the recalculation was that the amount allocated for each Party Member had reduced from £194.48 to £190.66, as set out hereunder:



The Committee agreed to adopt the amended allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance with effect from 1st December, 2012.

**Joint Meeting of the Lord Mayor,  
Party Leaders and Committee Chairs**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Lord Mayor, Party Leaders and Committee Chairs which had been held on 24th October.

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association Conference,  
Exhibition and Local Government Awards**

The Committee was advised that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association would be holding its Annual Conference and Exhibition on Thursday, 28th February, 2013 in the Everglades Hotel and, similar to previous years, the event would incorporate also the Local Government Awards.

The Director of Finance and Resources reported that the theme of this year's conference was "Jobs and People First! Economic Growth Through LOCAL Economies". The aim of the Conference was to showcase and advocate the roles and future roles of community centred, effective and innovative Councils in Northern Ireland. The event would seek also to encourage the sector to be pioneering in its delivery of the Local Government Reform Agenda, whilst keeping a key focus on the efficient delivery of quality services to citizens and sustaining local economies.

As indicated, the Local Government Awards would be held in the evening of the event. Those sought to recognise and showcase the best examples of service provision, new initiatives and outstanding commitment from Councillors, Councils and officers. The Awards offered public recognition and awarded excellence for all those who shaped and delivered frontline Local Government services and he outlined the seven categories which the Awards covered.

The Committee authorised the attendance at the Northern Ireland Local Government Association Annual Conference and Exhibition of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Committee and the Council's representatives on the Association, together with the Chief Officers (or their nominees).

**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 12th November.

**Financial Report – Quarter 2**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“Relevant Background Information**

**The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed on  
18 June 2010 that:**

- The Council would produce financial reporting packs for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and each Standing Committee on a quarterly basis
- The Budget and Transformation Panel would also receive monthly financial updates if there were any significant issues to report.

The reporting pack contains a summary dashboard of the financial indicators and an executive summary explaining the financial performance, a copy of which has been circulated. It also provides a more detailed explanation of each of the relevant indicators covering outturn to the second quarter, payment of creditors and recovery of debt. The reporting of procurement compliance to Members as part of the quarterly financial reporting was introduced in quarter 1 of 2012/13.

The style and layout of the financial reporting pack reflects the discussion and feedback arising from the Members' financial training at the end of September 2010.

Central finance and departmental management teams have worked together to develop the information within the reporting packs.

### Key Issues

#### Current and Forecast Revenue Position for 2012/13

The financial position for the Council at the end of Quarter 2 is a net departmental under-spend of £1.228m (2.1%). The forecast year end departmental position is an under-spend of £1.277m (1.1%), which is well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

The key elements of the year to date net under-spend relate to:

- Programming and lead time for Invest to Save projects (£180k)
- Pension costs below half year budget (£101K)
- In Health and Environmental Services, £392k due to delays in commencement of agreed programmes of work and unfilled posts in Environmental Health and receipt of additional income and unfilled posts in Building Control
- In the Development Department, reduced community services transport costs (£129k) delays in recruitment and reductions in the use of casual staff (£103k) and additional net income for Events 2012 (£135k)

There are four main components of the forecast year end position of a £1.27m under-spend. These are:

- A potential under-spend of £200k in the central pensions budget

- A £594k under-spend in the Health and Environmental Services budget due to slippage in the commencement of agreed programmes of work, mainly arising from the delay in establishing Police and Community Safety Partnerships as well as vacancies and unfilled posts and additional income from recyclable materials.
- An under-spend in the Development Department budget of £568k due to vacant posts arising during the structural reviews, reduced transport costs and delays in the commencement of planned projects.
- An over-spend of £350k in Parks and Leisure Services for increased utility costs and reduced external income.

Members should note that efficiency savings in excess of £2.1m will be included in the 2013/14 estimates and this will assist in addressing many of the areas where under-spends have occurred this year

The financial reporting pack contains more detail on both the overall Council position and the financial performance in each of the Committees.

It should be emphasised that the current forecast is made on the basis of the half year position and that there are considerable uncertainties which could impact on the forecast, for example, the level of rates income received. Nonetheless the forecast should be helpful to Members in making financial decisions for the remainder of 2012/13 and in considering the 2013/14 rate setting exercise.

### Capital Financing

The capital financing budget is £10.14m and is forecast to be fully utilised at the year end.

The forecast capital financing expenditure of £10.14m is made up of £2.05m to finance existing loans relating to the City Hall, Ulster Hall and Grove Wellbeing Centre projects with a further £7.02m used to finance other committed capital programme projects. The balance of the budget will be used to finance feasibility work to support the Investment Programme (£0.15m) and non-recurrent expenditure works (£0.92m).

### Rate Income

The level of rate income received remains a high risk area for the Council, especially given the level of claw back experienced by the Council in recent years, together with the current economic environment and the level of outstanding appeals and bad debt relating to the City. Given these factors the forecast outturn has been maintained at the position reported to members at Quarter 1 of £138k favourable. Officers will continue to monitor this forecast throughout the year and will report back to Committee.

To mitigate the risk of a potential rates claw back, it is recommended that no reallocation of the forecast under spend be made at this stage.

### Reserve Movements

It is recommended that the unallocated Waste Fund balance be applied to the following specified reserves, in line with the previous decisions made by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R).

	<u>£</u>
Giro d' Italia	400k
Tall Ships	1,260k
Boxing Strategy	600k
Special Events	64k
Pipe Band Championships	240k
Area Pilots	<u>436k</u>
Total	3,000k

The allocation of the above amounts together with other reserve movements mean that the council is forecast to have year-end Specified Reserves of £4.5m and General Reserves of £13.6m. Members should note that by aligning resources in this way, the burden on the ratepayers is minimised for future years.

### Investment Programme

The performance report has been updated to include key financial information for Members on the progress of the Investment Programme.

Committed expenditure approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for the 3 year Capital Programme stands at £26.7m, leaving £48.3m of schemes within the 3 year programme at the uncommitted or emerging project stage. A separate report, which will be considered at this meeting, provides an update on the physical progress of projects within the Capital Programme.



Committed expenditure on the Local Investment Programme (LIF) projects at Quarter 2 totals £3m, leaving a balance of £2m in the local investment fund. It should be noted that the committed expenditure excludes the expenditure on additional projects approved at SP&R on the 19 October 2012.

The amount of levered external funding for the Investment Programme which has been agreed in principal increased to £16.8m at Quarter 2, with £15.5m of these funds confirmed through letters of offer.

Actual capital expenditure at Quarter 2 was £2.6m with a year-end forecast spend of £10.9m against an annual budget of £19.4m, while non-recurring expenditure is forecast at £0.9m for the year end against a budget of £1.8m.

#### **Better Services: Creditors and Debtors**

The average number of creditors paid within 28 days was 70.7% at the end of Quarter 2, which was slightly above the target for the period. As part of the Investment Programme a target of 75% has been set for 31st March 2013. To ensure that this target is achieved a project team has been set up to implement improvement actions during 2012/13. Progress in implementing these improvements will continue to be reported to Members as part of the quarterly financial reporting during 2012/13.

The level of Council debt at the end of Quarter 2 is £3.5m compared to £3.7m at the end of Quarter 2 last year. The Quarter 1 average for debt under 90 days old is 60.4% which is below the target of 65% and 58.2% of debt has been collected within 30 days, against the target of 60%. Staff in the Central Transaction Unit are monitoring those accounts where payment terms have been exceeded and legal action is being taken, where appropriate, to ensure debt is recovered.

#### **Better Services: Procurement Compliance**

Procurement compliance refers to purchases that are made in compliance with the Council's standard procure to pay process. These processes help ensure that our creditors are paid in a timely fashion and our accounts are accurate and up to date. Two compliance indicators have been set for 2012/13 and although these indicators are monitored by management on a monthly basis and from quarter 1 2012/13 are now reported to Committee.

**Indicator 1 – compliant purchases.** This indicator shows how often goods or services are ordered with a valid purchase order being created prior to the order being placed. A target of 85% was set for this indicator with the council achieving 84% compliance at the end of Quarter 2.

**Indicator 2 – timeliness of goods on the system.** This indicator shows when goods are received into the council whether they have been marked on the system as received (compliant) or whether the operator has waited for the invoice before marking the goods as received (non-compliant). A target of 65% was set for this indicator for Quarter 2, with the Council achieving 56.5% compliance at the end of the period.

The improvement plan being implemented to increase the number of creditors paid within 28 days will include improvements in both purchase ordering and goods receipting compliance.

### **Treasury Management**

The mid-year report on the council's treasury management activities and indicators has been circulated for the information of the Members.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendations:-

- That the unallocated Waste Fund 2012/13 balance be applied to the following specified reserves, in line with the previous decisions made by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

	<u>£</u>
Giro d' Italia	400k
Tall Ships	1,260k
Boxing Strategy	600k
Special Events	64k
Pipe Band Championships	240k
Area Pilots	<u>436k</u>
Total	3,000k

- That no reallocation of the forecast under spend be made at this stage so as to mitigate against the council's exposure to the risk of a potential rates claw back."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

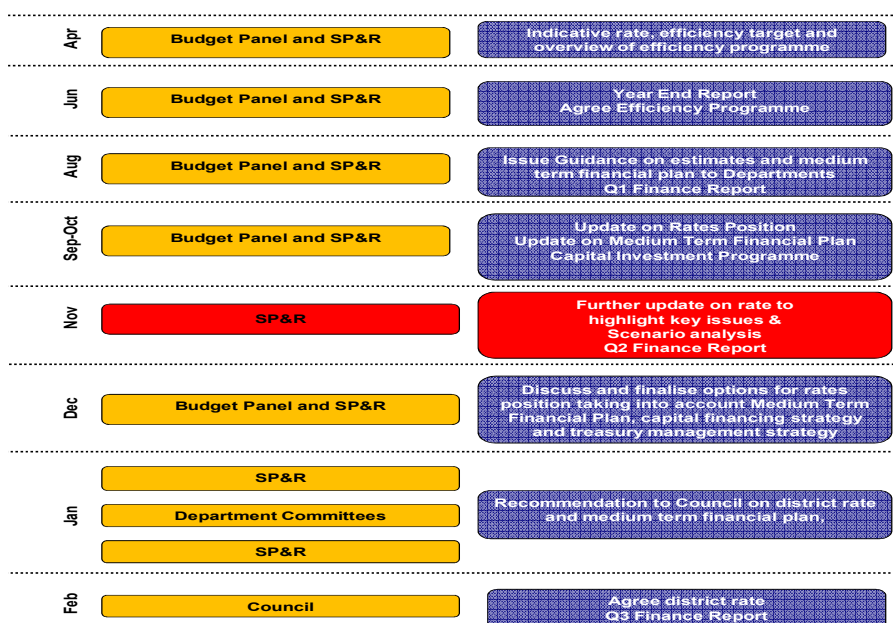
### Rate Setting 2013-14

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

#### “1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 This report provides an update for Members on the development of the 2013/14 revenue estimates, in line with the summary of the rate setting process for 2013/14 outlined in Table 1 below.

#### Agreed rate setting process for 2013/14



## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The report is presented in the context of the commitment given by Members, as part of the Investment Programme, that the council would set a district rate at no more than the rate of inflation. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) annual inflation stands at 2.7 per cent in October 2012, up from 2.2 per cent in September. CPI is forecast to be around 2% in 2013.

- 2.2 Departmental Estimates – This is the money required by departments to deliver services and typically covers expenditure on headings such as salaries, supplies and services. The departments have all completed their estimates for 2013/14 and the outcome is that an increase of £1,111,900 (0.86%) is required for 2013/14. This increase comprises of the net effect of the following factors:

Table 2: Departmental Increase

	£	%
Uncontrollable Costs	2,468,500	
Less Efficiency Savings	(2,117,200)	
Net Uncontrollable Costs	351,300	0.27%
Inflation and Other Departmental Growth	760,600	0.59%
Overall Departmental Increase	1,111,900	0.86%

- 2.3 The following paragraphs provide further information on the departmental increase summarised above.

An analysis of the £2.5m of uncontrollable costs, which departments will incur, is provided in Table 3 below. This includes provision of a central budget to cover the potential for a 1% pay rise.

Table 3: Uncontrollable Costs

	£
Superannuation	564,000
Pay Rise	843,000
Pay Increments	300,000
Energy and Fuel Costs	469,000
Income Risk (North Foreshore Electricity)	292,500
Total Uncontrollable Costs	2,468,500

- 2.4 In August 2012, it was reported to Committee that the efficiency programme would generate £2.0m of savings from the 2013/14 revenue estimates. As the result of ongoing work in this area, further savings of £117k have been identified meaning that departmental efficiencies totalling £2.1m have been taken out of departmental budgets. The efficiency savings mean that the net impact of the uncontrollable costs has been reduced £351,300.

A summary of the efficiency savings by theme has been included as Table 4 below.

Table 4: 2013/14 Efficiency Savings by Theme

	£
Assets and Land	127,100
Budgetary Challenge	1,167,200
ICT	200,900
Income Generation	330,100
Procurement	189,400
Service and Employee Costs	102,500
Total Savings	2,117,200

#### Capital Expenditure Plans

- 2.6 **Capital Programme:** This is used to pay for enhancements to existing council assets or for the provision of new assets owned by the council. The capital programme is financed through an annual budget of £10.14m and this budget is sufficient to meet the £75m spending commitment included in the council's investment programme.
- 2.7 A stagnant rate base, rising uncontrollable costs and the pressure to keep the District Rate at below inflation has implications for the future financing of capital investment. This means that efficiencies will be required not just to keep the District Rate at an acceptable level but also to finance capital investment. For example, £2m cash savings on revenue costs would lever an additional £20m of capital investment. Therefore any future significant capital investment proposals, such as the leisure estate, will require an element of self-financing through efficiencies.
- 2.8 **Belfast Investment Fund –** This is used to finance investment package schemes for non-council assets. As part of the rate setting process in 2012/13, the annual contribution to the fund was increased from £3m to £6m to ensure that £20m of Belfast Investment Programme funding is available by 2014/15. There is therefore no requirement to increase the current level of contribution to the Belfast City Investment Fund during 2013/14.
- 2.9 **Local Investment Fund –** This is used to fund neighbourhood capital projects for non-council assets. The £5m fund has been fully financed and there is therefore no requirement to make additional contributions through the District Rate during 2013/14.

- 2.10 Reserves – The council’s general reserves position at the year end is forecast to be at least £13.6m by the end of 2012/13. As this is above the minimum requirement of £10m, as set out in the council’s reserve strategy, there is no requirement to include an additional contribution to general reserves in the District Rate for 2013/14.
- 2.11 Rate Base – council officers are currently working with the Land and Property Services Agency (LPS) on the rates forecast Estimated Penny Product (EPP) for 2013/14. At this stage we are not in a position to provide an accurate figure but it is likely that the rate base will not be showing growth. Update reports on the rate base position will be provided to the Budget and Transformation Panel and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as work with LPS progresses.

#### Scenarios

- 2.12 Scenario 1: This option summarises the current position of the revenue estimates prepared by departments and allows for a net increase in the revenue estimates of £1.1m which would represent a District Rate increase of 0.86%.
- 2.13 Scenario 2: This option takes into account the proposed allocation of the waste fund balance to specified reserves (as recommended in the separate Quarter 2 Financial Report being considered at this committee meeting), which would assist in reducing increases to departmental estimates. Further detailed work on the future waste costs has indicated that it may be possible to reduce the stepped increase in the waste fund contribution during 2013/14 and work is ongoing in this area. Departmental growth proposals will be also be subject to challenge. The combination of these initiatives could result in no increase to departmental budgets and hence a Nil increase in the District rate for 2013/14.

### 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to:
- (a) note the contents of the report;
  - (b) agree that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee consider a detailed rates report at its December meeting based on the two scenarios outlined in paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13 above.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### Request for Funding –

### **City of Belfast Youth Orchestra**

The Committee was advised that a request for financial assistance had been received from the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra towards the cost of a tour to Italy.

The Director of Finance and Resources explained that, under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Council had a discretion to consider exceptional requests for financial assistance. A small, special expenditure budget (Grants and Subscriptions) within the Finance and Resources Department made provision for such requests providing:

- the Council had the statutory authority to make such payments; and
- assistance was not available from the remit of another Committee.

He pointed out that the request for funding met the criteria previously agreed by the Committee and it was recommended that a contribution of £5,000 be made.

Accordingly, it was

Resolved – That expenditure of £5,000 in respect of the aforementioned event be approved under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to, the District and its inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefits so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made.

### **Capital Programme Update – Hammer Complex and Marrowbone 3G pitches and Barnett Demesne Mountain Bike Trail**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 Following a recommendation from Parks and Leisure Committee, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R) at its meeting on 9 December 2011 approved three schemes, to be partially funded under Sport NI Community Capital scheme, for inclusion in the Council’s Capital Programme. The schemes were –**

- A 3G pitch at the Hammer Complex in partnership with Shankill United

- A 3G pitch at Marrowbone Millennium Park in partnership with the Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum
- A mountain bike trail at Barnett Demesne in partnership with Outdoor Recreation NI

- 1.2 The maximum grant anticipated for each scheme under Sport NI funding was £245,000. SP&R Committee agreed a maximum total capital financial support of £375,000 (a notional £125,000 per project) towards these projects. Committee agreed however that the allocation of money to each particular project should include a degree of flexibility as necessary to assist each club achieve its project objectives.
- 1.3 SP&R Committee further approved the advancement of the three projects to tender and delivery including award of contracts, subject to the maximum total capital above and the requisite legal agreements being in place to satisfy the requirements of Sport NI.
- 1.4 At its meeting on 22 June 2012 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee received an update report on the three schemes in relation to the legal agreements, which included the delivery agreements through which the Council would deliver the project on behalf of the applicants.

## 2 Key Issues

### 2.1

An update in relation to the current status of these schemes is outlined below for Members.

#### Hammer 3G Pitch

- 2.2 No planning was required for this project therefore the Council asked Sport NI to agree to commence works in this financial year. Having initially rejected acceleration of delivery, Sport NI has now agreed for works to commence in March 2013. This has also been agreed with the Shankill United.
- 2.3 Budget estimates prepared by the Council's design team indicate that the initial costs provided by Shankill United were underestimated and site investigations have revealed that ground stabilisation measures will need to be included in the proposal. The estimated cost of project delivery has therefore increased by £100k, taking the total capital funding request from the Council to £225k and Committee is therefore asked to agree this difference in funding.



**Marrowbone 3G Pitch**

- 2.4 An initial proposal estimate of £500k was provided by Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum (AYPF) with their application to Sports NI (SNI). Anticipated SNI funding of £245k meant that this left a projected shortfall of £255k with a notional £125k of this coming from the Council.
- 2.5 However an economic appraisal undertaken by the Council indicates that the estimated gross project cost of £500K has been underestimated in the original proposal and the anticipated projects costs are likely to be £765k. These costs will not be firmed up until the design is complete and pre-tender estimates can be prepared.
- 2.6 Planning permission for the proposal was granted to AYPF subject to some negative conditions related to potential contamination on the site. The Council has carried out the requisite investigations and have forwarded a report to the Planning Service and has written to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) asking for its requirements in relation to any contamination found on the site.
- 2.7 Although Sport NI had initially indicated that they were willing to fund this project they subsequently withdrew their funding on the grounds that the *“project did not fully demonstrate a satisfactory state of readiness, as previously defined by SNI, by the deadline of 29 June 2012”*. A copy of the SNI letter withdrawing their funding support has been circulated.
- 2.8 Due to the shortfall in funding that this left, a meeting was held with the Minister of Culture and Arts on 23rd October to examine other possible avenues of obtaining funding for this project. The Council was party to these discussions and have submitted an indicative delivery programme to the Minister, subject to a number of conditions including funding being secured from other external sources.
- 2.9 The Council has now been informed that the Department for Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) have indicated that they will seek to obtain £245,000 of funding to this project. The Department for Social Development (DSD) have also informed Council staff that they intend to provide £250,000 to Marrowbone. This leaves a shortfall of £270,000 less the £125,000 already committed by Council and Committee is asked to approve additional funding of £145,000 to the Marrowbone project. This will be subject to a letter of confirmation of funding being secured from DCAL and from DSD.

2.10 Although design work is continuing on the project, Members are asked to note that a contract for this work will not be let until letters confirming funding are received.

**Barnett Demesne Mountain Bike Trail**

2.11 Tenders for this scheme have recently been returned with the most economically advantageous tenderer being awarded the contract. Formal offers of grant have been received from Sport NI and the Rural Development Partnership leaving a net Council funding contribution for the delivery of this project at £95.4k.

**3 Resource Implications**

3.1 The SP&R approval of December 2011 was for a Council contribution of up to £375k comprising a notional £125k for each project.

3.2 A summary of the financial position for the projects is:

Project	Total Estimated Cost	External Funding		BCC funding (Dec 2011)	Shortfall
Hammer 3G Pitch (estimate only)	£470k	£245k (SNI)		£125k	£100k
Marrowbone 3G Pitch (estimate only)	£765k	£245k (DCAL)	£250k (DSD)	£125k	£145k
Barnett Demesne Mountain Bike Trail (based on tender return)	£445.4k	£225k (SNI)	£125k (RDP)	£95.4k	-£29.6k
Current projected Council contribution				£345.4k	
Approved Council capital contribution (Dec 2011)				£375k	
Outstanding shortfall and additional capital contribution requested					£215.4k
Total Council contribution				£590.4k	

3.3 A contract for the Mountain Bike Trail has already been awarded; however, in order that the other two schemes can progress to completion, additional estimated funding of £215,400 from the Council is required.

3.4 The Director of Finance and Resource has confirmed that there is capacity within 2013/14 Capital Programme to accommodate the increase in the Council's funding commitment for these projects to £590,400 should all the schemes progress.

#### 4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no Equality Implications for these projects.

#### 5 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to:

- approve in principle the additional £100,000 towards the Hammer 3G pitch
- approve in principle the additional £145,000 towards the Marrowbone scheme. This is dependent on confirmation letters being received from DCAL and DSD that they will fund £245,000 and £250,000 respectively towards this project and it still being economically feasible following recommendations from NIEA in relation to existing site conditions
- note that this means an additional £215,440 of funding towards these schemes which brings the Council's overall contribution to £590,400
- note that tender award for the mountain bike trail at Barnett Demesne"

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### Capital Programme: Clement Wilson Bridge Replacement

The Committee was reminded that a proposal for the replacement of the Clement Wilson Bridge had been included as a committed project in the Capital Programme at an estimated gross cost of up to £200,000. The current bridge structure had been identified in recent condition surveys as beyond its useful life expectancy and posed a potential health and safety risk. Some repairs had been carried out on the bridge but a full replacement was being progressed as a priority.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that a condition report, which had been undertaken by structural engineers in October, had highlighted several issues with the bridge. The report indicated that further deterioration had taken place since it had previously been surveyed resulting in a number of latent trip hazards presenting themselves where timbers had rotted and the mesh covering had been left to span the gaps. The bridge presented a potential safety risk to users and some remedial work had been undertaken to mitigate the risk as a short-term fix.

A Planning Application had been submitted, with a view to the commencement of works to replace the bridge in March/April, 2013, and a procurement process had been commenced to enable a contractor to be in place once planning permission had been received. The Director of Finance and Resources had confirmed that there was capacity in the Capital Expenditure Budget to progress the project.

Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee approves:

- the advancement of the Clement Wilson Bridge replacement proposal with a full commitment to invest up to £200,000; and
- the invitation of tenders and implementation, with authority being delegated to the Director of Property and Projects, to award on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders submitted on the basis of cost and quality.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### **Lobby for Future European Structural Funds**

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

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that the European Union Unit had been leading on an Urban Lobby on behalf of Belfast and other surrounding Councils, that is, Lisburn, Castlereagh, Newtownabbey, North Down and Carrickfergus, known as Comet, with a view to securing an enhanced role with respect to the design and delivery of the EU Structural Funds Programmes 2014-2020. To that end, the Unit had commissioned external consultants to consult with the Council and City Regional Stakeholders with regard to the emerging EU programme regulations and priorities. The outputs of the work undertaken by the consultants included a report outlining challenges facing the Greater Belfast Urban Region post-2013, the implications and opportunities for the region aligned to the emerging EU Structural Funds Programmes, an analysis of the Comet strategies and plans and recommendations for an EU plan and delivery for the Comet region post-2013.

He explained that, on 20th June, the Chief Officers had considered the consultant's report and subsequently, on 31st October, the Lord Mayor had hosted a breakfast meeting with the Mayors and Chairs of Development and Chief Executives of the Comet Councils. The purpose of that meeting had been to discuss the consultant's paper and reach a consensus on the way forward with respect to the EU urban lobby.

At that meeting, the Group had discussed at length the need to lobby Central Government to maximise and devolve EU funding to capacity Councils for the period 2014-2020. Agreement had been reached to submit a lobby position to those Departments and the Assembly Committees to request that EU funding was devolved to the Comet region through the use of the new proposed Integrated Territorial Investment model. That was a new EU model whereby European funding could be devolved to local

authorities to deliver a pre-determined Integrated Urban Strategy for a defined economic, urban area. It had been agreed also to reconvene in the New Year to discuss the appropriate geographical boundary for an Integrated Territorial Investment and to do that in the context of the Review of Public Administration and in conjunction with the Departments of Finance and Personnel, Enterprise, Trade and Investment and Employment and Learning, as authors of the future EU programmes for Northern Ireland.

After discussion, the Committee granted approval for the Council to prepare and submit a lobby position to the Northern Ireland and United Kingdom Government, on behalf of the Comet Councils, to seek to maximise the role of EU funds delivery for the Greater Belfast urban area through the devolved use of European funding for the period 2014-2020.

### **Human Resources**

(Mrs. J. Minne, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with these items.)

#### **Request from the Council's Trade Unions** **- Payment to Staff**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th October, it had agreed to defer consideration of a one-off payment of £250 to employees who earned less than £21,000 per annum to enable clarification to be sought in relation to such a payment which had been made by another Northern Ireland Council.

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that, since that meeting, he had received a further communication from the Council's Trade Unions requesting an opportunity to discuss further the matter and, accordingly, he undertook to submit a further report in this regard to the Committee in January.

Noted.

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

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Order 55 and the authority delegated to him, the Director of Finance and Resources had authorised the appointment of a member of staff who was related to an existing officer of the Council.

Noted.

### **Asset Management**

#### **Relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre and** **Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 The Strategic Policy Resources Committee on Friday 23 March 2012, agreed to progress the proposal for the relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre (BWC) and Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) as a committed scheme in the**

**Capital Programme and Investment Programme 2012-2015 and to the allocation of Council capital funding of £810k (50% of the, then, estimated cost of £1.62m), and to Officers completing the lease negotiations on 8-10 Donegall Square North, Belfast.**

**2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Scheme design proposals have been developed for the project with a programmed delivery date of July 2013, to coincide with the end date of current lease for the existing premises in Donegall Place on 31 July 2013**
- 2.2 The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has agreed to support this project through their Tourism Development Scheme with funding sourced from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).**
- 2.3 As the design has developed into specific proposals, and following building condition inspections, the overall budget for the project has increased to £1.86m based on a programme for delivery in July 2013**
- 2.4 The Council expects to receive a letter of offer from the NITB during week commencing 19 November with funding support capped at £747,310**

**The programme for delivery remains very challenging and contingency arrangements are being prepared in case delays are incurred. These include;**

- Extending the current lease for a further three months to 31 October 2013. A further quarter's rent would amount to £40,000 plus service charge and rates. However due to a nine month rent free period agreed for the new premises this contingency option would mean that there would only be contemporaneous rental payments on the two premises for a period of one month;**
  - Accelerating the procurement programme;**
  - Providing for phased delivery of the BWC and the BVCB elements.**
- 2.5 The next stage of the process is to invite tenders and appoint a contractor for the works and other associated capital elements of the project. To increase the possibility of delivering finished premises for the World Police and Fire Games (August 2013) and minimise the possibility of extending the lease, varying options are being considered to shorten the delivery programme.**

- 2.6 One of the options to achieve this is to shorten the procurement processes for the appointment of a building contractor; however, this would require special consideration with regard to Standing Order 64, which requires the open advertisement of tenders, to permit the application of a simplified procurement process (such as that which has been introduced by the Central Procurement Directorate) and would involve randomly selecting six contractors registered with the Constructionline Government certification service and invite them to tender without open advertisement. This would potentially have the net effect of shortening the overall delivery process by 4 weeks. Following this process would not impact on the grant aid.
- 2.7 The lease for the new premises in Donegall Square North is being finalised by Legal Services, the Estates Management Unit and the landlord's solicitors with an anticipated lease commencement date of 1 January 2013 (with 9 month initial rent free period).

### 3 Resource Implications

#### 3.1 Financial summary:

<b>Total Cost of Project</b>	<b>£1,860,000</b>
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
NITB	£747,310
BCC	£1,112,690
Amount of current Capital allocation	£810,000
Additional Capital allocation required	£302,690

As with other lease cessations, the relocation will incur costs for dilapidations in the current premises.

The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that there is capacity within the 2012/13/14 Capital Programme to accommodate the required increase in the Council's capital funding commitment of £302,690 over that previously reported.

The further quarter's rent of £40,000 plus service charge, rates and dilapidations will be funded from revenue.

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

4.1 None.

#### **5 Recommendations**

5.1 The Committee is recommended to note:

- the progress on the proposed lease arrangements;
- the anticipated grant offer from NITB;
- the proposed programme for delivery set out above;

and agree to:

- the proposed contingency lease extension arrangements in order to keep the BWC/BCVB facility operating without interruption;
- advance the project to the invitation of tenders, to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous (evaluated on cost and quality criteria) tenders received and full commitment to deliver;
- waive Standing Order 64 to permit the use of a simplified procurement process; and
- the allocation of an additional £302,690 of capital funding to the project budget."

After discussion, during which a Member expressed his concern at the rising cost of the project, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### **Loughside Playing Fields Development**



The Director of Property and Projects reported that, subsequent to a report on the Loughside Playing Fields development having been issued, the Environment Minister had announced that planning permission would not be granted for the scheme.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to accept the Minister's decision and not to pursue the matter further.

### **Connswater Community Greenway – Land Acquisition Update**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, as part of the City Investment Strategy, had agreed to co-ordinate the acquisition of lands to enable the Connswater Community Greenway Programme to proceed. The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee further that, at its meeting on 17th June, 2011, it had approved the acquisition of an area of 0.029 acres of land off the Montgomery Road from the local branch of the Royal British Legion for £1,250. In addition, the Committee, at its meeting on 24th August, 2012, had approved the acquisition of a portion of land from the Belfast Metropolitan College to allow the Council to transfer the said land as a compensatory strip to the Royal British Legion.

The Director reported that that arrangement was vital in order to allow the construction of the Greenway at that location. Without the additional land on the College side of their site, the Trustees of the local British Legion Club could not have rebuilt their club premises without compromising the position of the Greenway. He explained that the route of the Greenway, adjacent to the Royal British Legion, had proven difficult to agree and there was little scope for an alternate route at that location. Following further negotiations with the Legion and the Trustees of the club, it had now been agreed that the Council would exchange a strip of land for the Royal British Legion's land. As both areas of land were considered to be of equal value, the Council would not have to pay the Legion the monies as previously approved.

The Committee granted approval for the exchange of lands with the British Legion as outlined.

### **Proposed Lease Arrangements at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park and Belfast Castle**

The Committee was advised that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 15th November, had considered a report on the proposed lease arrangements at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park and the conversion of accommodation at the Belfast Castle and agreed:

1. to approve the grant of a lease to Belfast City Marathon Limited of an area of land at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park for one year and year to year thereafter, at a combined rent and service charge of £12,000 per annum, upon the terms set out and subject to a suitable legal agreement to be drawn up by the Town Solicitor;
2. to accept the termination of the lease dated 16th December, 2010 between the Council and Belfast City Marathon Limited, from a mutually agreed date, in accordance with any relevant contractual and statutory obligations as may be legally necessary to achieve this and subject to a suitable legal agreement (as may be required) to be drawn up by the Town Solicitor;

3. to note the proposed marketing of the vacated first floor offices area above the Stables Restaurant, with the proposed terms of any letting to be reported to Committee in due course; and
4. to authorise further work by officers to establish the feasibility of converting 2nd floor accommodation at the Belfast Castle for potential commercial letting purposes.

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee approved the proposed lease arrangements.

### **Good Relations and Equality**

(Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager, attended in connection with these items.)

### **Minutes Good Relations Partnership**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 5th November.

### **Equality Impact Assessments on Belfast City Hall – Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment and the Flying of the Union Flag**

(Ms. D. Wheatley, Consultant, attended in connection with these items.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 18 May 2012, it considered and authorised the issue of two draft Equality Impact Assessment reports (EQIAs) on ‘*Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment*’ and the ‘*Flying of the Union Flag*’ for a period of public consultation. The draft reports set out the evidence gathered for each EQIA at that stage and preliminary conclusions. The public consultation period ran for a 16 week period from 11 June – 1 October and allowed for an additional 4 weeks over the holiday period.

The EQIAs and the related consultation process, including the design of the associated questionnaires, were undertaken in accordance with the advice of the Equality Commission and best practice regarding survey methodology.

#### **Key Issues**

Information regarding the EQIAs was circulated widely, not only to Equality Scheme consultees, but to encourage members of the public to submit their views. A variety of methods used included

information on the Council's website, a press release, a public advertisement and an article in the September edition of City Matters. Questionnaires related to each of the 2 EQIAs were available to facilitate the process but respondents were advised that they could make their comments in any format.

The views of the Council's own employees were also sought as part of the EQIA process, since three Council buildings were affected by the policies. This staff survey was well advertised internally and both an on-line survey and a hard copy questionnaire were available. Arrangements were also made for the 1000 (approx.) front line staff who do not normally have access to a PC to have an opportunity to submit a response. All employees were assured of confidentiality.

#### Analysis of consultation responses

At the close of consultation on 1 October over 2,200 responses were received to both EQIAs, plus a petition of over 14,000 names. The responses came in a wide variety of formats – i.e. on-line questionnaires, e-mails, hard copy letters and a petition.

To ensure that all views expressed were considered appropriately, the responses were analysed by an independent external consultant with a good track record in survey methodology to ensure impartiality and a professional input.

The consultants have assessed the range of varying views received and the potential differential impacts of the various options considered and have incorporated the findings from the consultation into the EQIA Final Decision Reports.

### Joint Diversity Group

The Joint Diversity Group of the Party Group Leaders' Forum and Centenaries Working Group considered the EQIA Final Decision Reports at their meeting on Friday 16 November 2012. The Consultants who had completed the EQIAs were in attendance and made short presentations on their findings. The Joint Diversity Group made the following decisions in respect of each EQIA:

#### Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment

In relation to this EQIA, the Joint Group agreed to re-affirm the principles contained within the Final Decision Report. The Joint Group also acknowledged that the development of a properly resourced action plan was the next critical step in the process.

#### Flying of the Union Flag

In relation to this EQIA, the Joint Group agreed that the Final Decision Report plus Appendices should be submitted to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for its consideration of the various options.

#### Recommendations/Decision required

#### Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment

The Committee is requested to approve the recommendations within the EQIA.

The Committee is requested to grant approval to proceed to draw up an appropriate Action Plan with associated budget in order to progress the work envisaged.

#### Flying of the Union Flag

The various options are listed at Section 7.30 – 7.35 of the Consultant's Report.

It may be helpful if the Committee wished to consider the position at the Duncrue Complex and the Ulster Hall separately from the position at the City Hall.

In relation to the position at the City Hall, the EQIA Report has concluded that 'it would appear that the policy options which best promote good relations are – in descending order of effectiveness:

- Designated flag days only
- Designated flag days plus specified additional days
- No flag or a neutral flag
- Two flags.'

Accordingly, the Committee's views in relation to these options are requested."

**Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment**

The Committee approved the recommendations, a copy of which is set out hereunder, contained within the Equality Impact Assessment, in relation to promoting a good and harmonious environment in the Belfast City Hall:

- “1 Existing artefacts other than statues should be removed from the main reception areas (i.e. the Marble Hall and Rotunda) and repositioned in alternative contexts so as not to detract attention from the impressive grandeur of the building itself.
- 2 The Council should be encouraged to seek expert advice on how its existing collection can be presented most effectively for those visiting the City Hall and its grounds. This should extend to specific advice on the preservation of individual items.
- 3 It is recommended that those parts of the building that are routinely visited by the public, including thoroughfares, corridors and designated display areas, should continue to portray the story of Belfast through the appropriate display of artefacts and memorabilia.
- 4 The Council will continue to work with those skilled in interpretive design to develop appropriate narratives in those parts of the building that are frequented by visitors and tours, including thoroughfares, corridors and designated display areas.
- 5 The Council shall continue to liaise with local communities to facilitate the provision and management of temporary exhibitions in the City Hall and its grounds, and to ensure that these exhibitions are deemed appropriate.
- 6 Any signage and accompanying information throughout the City Hall and its grounds must aspire reasonably to accommodate those who may not be able to access written English.

- 7 In designated work areas (e.g. staff offices, kitchens), further to the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998, an obligation should fall on the Council to provide an environment where ‘no worker feels threatened or intimidated on grounds of religious belief and/or political opinion’; the display of materials more closely associated with one community than another should be avoided in these designated work areas.**
- 8 In designated political party rooms, it is recommended that responsibility should continue to rest with each political party to provide and manage what they regard as a good and harmonious environment within that space.**
- 9 Where a Council employee may have concerns about working in an environment containing certain displays that he or she regards as likely to disrupt a good and harmonious working environment, then the Council will aspire to accommodate these concerns through an examination of his or her duties, on a case-by-case basis.**
- 10 In public function rooms, and including the Registrar’s Offices, it is recommended that the Council should continue to ensure that these environments are maintained in a welcoming manner that is not likely to cause offence to those attending functions from any section of the community.**
- 11 Displays in the Lord Mayor’s Parlour shall continue to be managed by the incumbent Lord Mayor in a reasonable manner that accommodates not only his or her freedom of expression of political opinion but also is mindful of the identities of those visiting that room.**
- 12 The Council will continue to liaise with those organisations hosting functions and events to ensure that any temporary displays are not likely to disrupt a good and harmonious environment, and are in keeping with the function in question.**
- 13 Where a Council employee may have concerns about working at a function associated with certain temporary displays that he or she regards as likely to disrupt a good and harmonious working environment, then the Council will aspire to accommodate these concerns through an examination of his or her duties, on a case-by-case basis.**
- 14 The Council Chamber should be preserved in its present form.”**

**Policy on the Flying of the Union Flag**

The Committee agreed that the decisions on the question of the Flying of the Union Flag at Council-owned properties be by means of a recorded vote.

**Duncrue Complex and the Ulster Hall**

Moved by Councillor Attwood,  
Seconded by Councillor McVeigh,

That the Committee agrees to amend its current policy in relation to the Flying of the Union Flag on Council-owned properties and accordingly that no flags be flown on neither the Ulster Hall nor the Duncrue Complex.

A poll having been taken, there voted for it thirteen Members and against it seven Members and it was declared carried:

<b><u>For 13</u></b>	<b><u>Against 7</u></b>
Councillors Hargey, Attwood, Convery, Corr, Hanna, Hendron, Jones, Lavery, Maskey, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Muilleoir.	Aldermen Browne, M. Campbell, R. Newton. Councillors Haire, McKee, A. Newton, Reynolds.

**Flying of the Union Flag at the Belfast City Hall**

Moved by Councillor Attwood,  
Seconded by Councillor McVeigh,

That the Committee agrees to amend the current policy in relation to the Flying of the Union Flag on Council-owned properties and that no flags be flown on the City Hall.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Hendron,  
Seconded by Councillor Jones,

That the Council's policy in relation to the Flying of the Union Flag at Council-owned properties be amended to provide that the Union Flag be flown on the City Hall on Designated Flag Days only.

A poll having been taken on the amendment, there voted for it two Members and against it eighteen Members and it was declared lost:

<b><u>For 2</u></b>  Councillors Hendron, Jones	<b><u>Against 18</u></b>  Aldermen M. Campbell, Browne, R. Newton. Councillors Hargey, Attwood, Convery, Corr, Haire, Hanna, Lavery, Maskey, McKee, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Muilleoir, A. Newton, Reynolds.
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**Further Amendment**

Moved by Councillor McKee,  
Seconded by Alderman M. Campbell,

That no change be made to the policy regarding the Flying of the Union Flag on the City Hall.

A poll having been taken on the further amendment, there voted for it seven Members and against it thirteen Members and it was declared lost:

<b><u>For 7</u></b>  Aldermen Browne, M. Campbell, R. Newton. Councillors Haire, McKee, A. Newton, Reynolds.	<b><u>Against 13</u></b>  Councillors Hargey, Attwood, Convery, Corr, Hanna, Hendron, Jones, Lavery, Maskey, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Muilleoir.
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**Original Proposal**

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Attwood and seconded by Councillor McVeigh was thereupon put to the meeting, that is, that the Committee agrees to amend the current policy in relation to the Flying of the Union Flag on Council-owned properties and that no flags be flown on the City Hall.

A poll having been taken on the proposal, there voted for it eleven Members and against it nine Members and it was accordingly declared carried.

<b><u>For 11</u></b>  Councillors Hargey, Attwood, Convery, Corr, Hanna, Lavery, Maskey, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Muilleoir.	<b><u>Against 9</u></b>  Aldermen Browne, M. Campbell, R. Newton. Councillors Haire, Hendron, Jones, McKee, A. Newton, Reynolds.
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**Minute of the Joint Group of the Party Group Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Group of the Party Group Leaders Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group of 16th November.



### Cross-Cutting Issues

#### Belfast Flooding Emergency June 2012

(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 The initial learning points following on from the serious flooding in June were reported to this Committee at a meeting on 10 August. Members will recall that there were particular issues regarding communication, coordination, sandbag distribution, and flood alleviation measures. The Lord Mayor, party group leaders and the Chief Executive held a meeting with the drainage agencies in July to discuss these issues and agree actions in moving forward. Following on from that meeting the Director of Health and Environmental Services provided information to the Department of Finance and Personnel's Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU), which carried out a review on behalf of OFMDFM into the performance of the responding agencies to the June event. A report of the review has not yet been published.
- 1.2 The Council's Emergency Coordination Officer hosted a multi agency debrief in the City Hall and carried out a number of internal reviews. A report of the main findings and recommendations for improvement has been circulated. The report contains the actions the Council, together with others will take forward in ensuring the impact of future flooding in Belfast is minimised and that we can respond in an efficient and effective way. It also includes the actions coming out of the multi agency debrief and the Council's emergency Co-ordination Officer will link into the relevant work streams for taking those actions forward too.

#### **2 Key Issues**

##### **2.1 Distribution of Sandbags**

Lack of agreement on the deployment of sandbags was a major issue during the June flooding and a temporary protocol was established during the response which was to be further developed. There have been a number of other incidents of heavy rain since June, which has resulted in continued

requests for sandbags. The Council has firmed up the temporary sandbag protocol and this is in place until such times as a regional Memorandum of Understanding is developed and agreed by other Councils; the current protocol has been circulated. Work to establish local sandbag stores is also ongoing and a number are already in place in the following locations:

- Ormeau Park
- Musgrave Park
- Duncrue Complex
- Avoniel Leisure Centre
- Orangefield Park (sandbag bunkers on trial)
- Sandhill Green (sandbag bunkers on trial)
- Sandhill Parade (sandbag bunkers on trial)
- Clara Way (sandbag bunkers on trial)
- Container at Orangefield Park moved to Dixon Playing Fields at Grand Parade, which provides a safer and more accessible location
- Small quantity at Knocknagoney Community Centre
- Small quantity at Salvation Army Church on Cregagh Road (operated by Age NI for older people)

**2.2** Negotiations are ongoing to set up stores in other parts of the city and all agencies have worked well together during recent incidents of heavy rain to deploy sandbags and minimise the impact of flooding.

### **2.3 Community Emergency Plans**

Another early recommendation following the June flooding was the need to develop local community resilience and self help. This approach has been piloted in a local neighbourhood in east Belfast where the worst of the flooding occurred in June and a community emergency plan has been developed. The arrangements worked well during the early hours of the morning of 18 October when the Knock River came out of bank. This work is being rolled out across the city with approaches being made to Councillors and residents in other areas where there has been repeated flooding.

### **2.4 Flood Alleviation Work**

Following the June Flooding, Members were of the opinion that there should be a greater focus on flood prevention and that the Executive should lead on this by making investment in flood defences and flood alleviation schemes a priority in flood prone areas. This and the need to appoint a lead government agency for flooding matters were put to government by the Director of Health and Environmental Services in her submission to the PEDU review on how agencies performed in June.

2.5 Additionally it was agreed at the meeting with the drainage agencies in July that the Council would lead a collective approach across agencies to review those areas of the city which continue to flood causing severe inconvenience and distress to residents; to consider the causes of the flooding and to establish if work is planned (direct or indirect) to alleviate it and in what time frame. As the drainage agencies have carried out significant investigations and are working to their own flood alleviation plans (within budgetary constraints). The Council will add value by bringing this together into a common picture of where the problems are and identifying what work is planned across the city. It is also recommended that work is commissioned to develop a strategic issues paper on the most significant flood risk areas for the city, including the city centre, which could be prone to tidal flooding, and identify what additional measures would be needed to alleviate these risks. This will highlight additional infrastructural issues that that will require investment and can be used by the Council to influence the Executive.

2.6 In respect of bespoke flood defence equipment for individual properties, work is being undertaken by the Rivers Agency to scope the effectiveness of these measures. However, at present there is no finance available for such equipment.

2.7 Future Work

A number of the actions in the report have already been completed or are ongoing and if Members are content to endorse the report it is proposed that updates will be taken to the Health and Environmental Services Committee, with progress on the Belfast Flooding Issues Paper being reported to S P and R.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 The cost of implementing the actions in the June 2012 Flooding Incident Report are being met through existing budgets. The exception to this are the costs associated with the flood alleviation infrastructure project, which at this stage are estimated to be between £60,000 and £80,000.

4 Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Endorses the key findings and recommendations in the June 2012 Flooding Incident Report.
2. Agrees the approach to reporting progress on the implementation of the actions in the report , and
3. Agrees the interim arrangements for the deployment of sandbags;
4. Approves the initiation of a tendering exercise in respect of the development of a Belfast Flooding Issues Paper.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and delegated authority to the Director to award the contract to the most advantageous tender received.

**Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action –  
Request from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust  
to Address the Committee**

The Committee was reminded that on 9th October, the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Edwin Poots, had launched Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action, a consultation document which summarised the changes proposed to Northern Ireland’s Health and Social Care system. The Committee was advised that the Minister

had asked the Health and Social Care Board to carry out a consultation process on his behalf, which would conclude on 15th January, 2012 and, accordingly, correspondence had been received from Dr. George O'Neill, Chair of Belfast Local Commission Group, offering to brief the Committee in this regard.

The Committee agreed that a briefing session, to which all Members of the Council would be invited, be held for this purpose.

Chairman