

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 14th December, 2012

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);  
the High Sheriff (Alderman M. Campbell);  
Alderman Newton;  
Councillors Attwood, Convery, Corr, Haire,  
Hanna, Hendron, Jones, Lavery, Maskey, McKee,  
McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Muilleoir  
and A. Newton.

Also attended: Councillor Hussey.

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

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Reynolds.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 9th and 23rd of November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes were adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd December, subject to:

- (i) the decision of 23rd November under the heading "Flying of the Union Flag at Belfast City Hall" be amended to provide that this Council should adopt the practise of flying the Union Flag on designated days, as applied at Parliament Buildings. This reflects the agreed sovereignty of Northern Ireland confirmed in the Good Friday Agreement and accepted by all its signatories. By doing it regularly and with dignity, we recognise that we live in a society and City made up of people who are British, Irish and both.

The designated days' solution does justice to these principles; the agreement by all on British sovereignty; the fact of a shared society; the need for respect and avoiding

all triumphalism and the arrangements currently operating at Stormont. It also reflects the preferred determination of the Equality Commission; and

- (ii) the amendment of the decision of the 23rd of November under the heading "Flying of the Union Flag at the Belfast City Hall" to provide that the Council's Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group be requested to consider a proposal that the Union Flag be flown 365 days a year in the civic space in the Garden of Remembrance in the grounds of the City Hall with a view that a report thereon be submitted for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on its meeting of 14th December.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

#### **Investment Programme**

##### **Area Working Groups - Expenditure and Governance Procedures**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **"1.0 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 **At the Council meeting on 3 December 2012, it was agreed that a report be submitted for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee at its meeting on 14 December to provide assurances regarding the governance and expenditure procedures overseeing the work of the Area Working Groups.**

##### **2.0 Key Issues**

##### **2.1 Investment Programme governance**

**At its meeting on March 23 2012, SP&R Committee agreed that it had full responsibility for the delivery of the Investment Programme, including the allocation of resources, in line with Council's current Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation. In this context, it agreed to establish Member-led Area Working Groups to assist in the identification and prioritisation of projects, and to make recommendations to SP&R on the allocation of resources at a local level.**

## **2.2 Area Working Groups (AWGs) – terms of reference**

At its meeting in April 2012, the SP&R Committee agreed the terms of reference for the Area Working Groups to:

- i. Act as community advocates to identify local priorities and support effective ‘place-shaping’;
- ii. Make recommendations to SP&R Committee on investment decisions for the local area;
- iii. To offer advice and guidance to SP&R Committee and officers in the development and implementation of local projects;
- iv. Participate in and facilitate community engagement and communications activities with a wide range of groups on investment in local areas;
- v. Consider other area-based issues as referred by SP&R Committee;
- vi. To monitor progress and produce an annual report on performance.

Members should note that although the AWGs have no delegated decision-making powers, they are still subject to the Council’s governance arrangements including its corporate declaration of interests policy.

## **2.3 Development of the AWGs**

As anticipated, the operations and issues for consideration by the individual AWGs continue to evolve. Three key issues have resulted from this early work. Firstly, the role of the AWGs in the identification of emerging Council Capital Programme projects. Secondly, the governance arrangements supporting the allocation of monies through the Local Investment Fund (LIF) and Belfast Investment Fund (BIF). Finally, the equality obligations in of the Council in relation to the implementation of the LIF. These issues are examined below.

## **2.4 Council Capital Programme**

As agreed in the terms of reference, AWGs are able to make recommendations to SP&R Committee on investment decisions, not limited to LIF or BIF. In the case where an AWG

identifies the need for potential investment in a Council-owned asset, the AWG must make a recommendation to SP&R to include the proposal as an emerging project under the Council's Capital Programme. These proposals will then be subject to the governance arrangements in place to support the allocation of capital programme resources, like any other proposal.

This will include the development of an outline business case for the consideration by the relevant Service Committee and subsequently SP&R.

## **2.5 Local Investment Fund**

The Local Investment Fund (LIF) initiative was developed to support the delivery of key local regeneration projects in neighbourhoods and as a means for Members to connect with local communities across their area, in preparation for their formal role in community planning under the Review of Public Administration (RPA).

SP&R Committee agreed on 23 March 2012, there was a minimum level of investment through the LIF of no less than £15,000 and unlikely to exceed £250,000 to ensure focus on more local investments and the opportunity for a broad spread of investment across the city. North, South, East and West Area Working Groups (AWGs) were allocated £1,127,500 each, with a proportionate amount of £490,000 for the Shankill area.

Further information on the AWGs and the LIF process was agreed by SP&R Committee on 22 June 2012, integrating legal advice from Senior Counsel. This report is appended for Members' information.

## **2.6 Role of SP&R Committee**

Notwithstanding the important role for AWGs, Members are reminded that SP&R Committee agreed that it retained full responsibility for the Investment Programme and has a key role to play in challenging, improving and prioritising capital projects, in line with the Council's current constitution and Standing Orders, and determines all matters relating to capital and revenue financing and borrowing.

A separate report examining the governance implications of the reform of local government and area working is also being presented to Committee for their consideration.

**2.7 Decisions to date**

**54 LIF projects have been approved in principle by SP&R Committee at its meetings in June, August, September, October and November. The first letters to groups have been issued to clearly outline the conditions of the offer in principle and to seek clarification in respect of detailed project elements and the ability of groups to meet any additional conditions arising from specific AWG recommendations. The provision of support is subject to agreement of detailed terms and conditions and final confirmation that the proposed works fall within the scope of the Local Investment Fund eligibility.**

**2.8 Due diligence**

**In order to move towards finalising support for project proposals, groups are asked to provide written confirmation and clarification of issues identified or detailed information that remains outstanding. This includes:**

- Governance: constitution; appropriate policies; minutes of Board meeting to confirm grant application**
- Security of tenure: confirmation of ownership and/or permission to carry out the proposed works and occupy the land**
- Capacity to deliver the proposed project and approach including timescales**
- Proposed approach to procurement**
- Financial: dedicated bank account; audited accounts; insurance cover; VAT eligibility; evidence of match funding offer(s); contract documentation and any conditions attached to partner funding**
- Statutory consents: site plan; details of site appraisal; confirmation of planning permission; building control approval; adherence to Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007**
- Sustainability: whole life costs; community use plan; maintenance plans; business plan/project management plan/marketing plan**
- Legal provision to support the proposal – Vires**

- Accessibility and secured community access
- Equality/good relations screening
- Any other supporting evidence e.g. topographical surveys, contaminated land surveys.

The checks will also ensure that the support is eligible under the Local Government Finance Act 2011 and the Local Government Accounts and Audit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

Confirmation will also be sought in relation to the anticipated project delivery method and who will be appointed to undertake delivery, including whether there is any anticipated support needed from the Council.

The individual projects will be assessed by a Due Diligence Group which has been established, comprising Officers from relevant disciplines (for example, legal; financial) to scrutinise documentation from groups and ensure that the Council's investment is properly protected. This will be prior to the final letters of offer being issued by the Director of Finance. Members are asked to note that no payments will be made to project promoters until the letter of offer and legal agreements are signed by both parties. This is in accordance with the financial governance arrangements for LIF agreed by Committee at its meeting on 21 September 2012

## **2.9 Equality process**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was carried out at the outset of the Investment Programme. Now, as part of the due diligence process, officers will equality screen all the LIF projects, both individually and as a whole programme. Where any adverse equality impact is identified, either at individual project level, or at a programme or area level, mitigating actions will be devised for inclusion in the letter of offer, and/or for the consideration of the AWGs.

## **2.10 Legal Agreement**

Officers are also undertaking further work on the appropriate payment schedules, performance management and potential claw back arrangements for inclusion in the formal of legal agreements that will need to be drawn up between the Council and the project proposers. These agreements will ensure that

the Council is able to provide defined support to the project proposals and monitor the ongoing community benefit of the proposed investment. Any significant modifications to the proposals arising from the additional consideration under due diligence or arising from changes proposed by the group will be brought back to the AWG for further consideration and ratification of the original decision to provide support.

#### **2.11 Council-owned property and/or assets**

At its meeting on the 22 June 2012, the S&PR Committee was referred to guidance previously issued to Members whereby the LIF was to 'only fund capital projects which are not owned by the Council.' In general terms, the view had been taken to date that projects which fall within this category are likely to be funded through the Council's own capital development scheme and should therefore be ineligible for funding through LIF. However the SP&R Committee clarified that a proposal in respect of a Council asset could be eligible if it was subject to a lease of reasonable duration from the Council. There are now various projects in LIF both approved and pending which involve Council assets. Some of these are being delivered by the Council directly on behalf of the third party group with no additional funding requirement or may not require a lease as a condition of match funding.

Previous experience in the Council has shown that granting a lease to a third party group may not always be the most appropriate way forward either for the group itself, the Council or the wider community in terms of wider public access issues, the ability of the group to take on the various responsibilities and legal liabilities that come with the ownership and management of the asset and its long term sustainability.

At its meeting on the 12 November 2012, the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed a draft policy in relation to the use of playing pitches and pavilions by the third sector/community groups. In the report it was highlighted that the draft policy reflects the environmental and governance changes, the principles of the Investment Programme, the LIF and evolving area working and project management boards. It was highlighted that there are at present a variety of arrangements in place including Facility Management Agreements (FMAs), leases, licence arrangements, funding agreements, project management agreements, 'out of hours use' agreements, agreements for service provision and agreements for individual club use. It was felt that any new arrangement needs to find a balance

between preserving the best interests of the public access and the dedicated use by a particular organisation. The Committee agreed to authorise officers to continue with the next steps as outlined in the report and move towards 'Agreements for Use' for grass pitches and pavilions.

It is therefore considered that the LIF criteria regarding Council assets should be amended to provide that a proposal is eligible in respect of an asset which is subject either to a lease from the Council to a third party or the most appropriate alternative arrangement between the Council and the third party depending on the particular circumstances. This could for example include 'Agreements for Use' type arrangements as agreed by the Parks and Leisure Committee at its meeting on the 12 November 2012 or other similar arrangements.

#### **2.12 Belfast Investment Fund**

It is agreed that the AWGs continue to play a central part in the decisions related to the BIF. They will prioritise potential investment, which will be rigorously and independently in a 3-stage appraisal process, 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.

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.

The final decision to invest remains with SP&R Committee.

#### **2.13 Maximising impact**

Work is ongoing in relation to a corporate outcomes framework and, in a series of workshops, the AWGs are in a process of identifying priority outcomes for their areas, and any gaps in delivery.

Further to this, Members and officers are closely involved with the area planning process for the OFMDFM Social Investment Fund (SIF). This is to ensure that maximum benefits for each area and the city are delivered, and the appropriate synergies are created with the Belfast Investment Fund and Local Investment Fund.



Consequent to a decision of SP&R, a meeting was convened with party group leaders and those Members participating on the SIF Steering Groups. It was agreed that it was a useful meeting and, following the publication of the draft SIF area plans, another meeting with this group should be arranged to ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach across the city.

#### **2.14 Conclusion**

In a relatively short space of time, Members have enthusiastically embraced the potential presented by local area working. It is an evolving process and regularly presents issues for existing Council processes and procedures.

Officers continue to review and monitor the processes established to ensure that they can facilitate the shared political ambition to deliver change at a local level as well as being fit for purpose, value for money and fulfil the Council's current legal, financial and audit frameworks and obligations.

#### **3.0 Equality Implications**

The overall programme of AWG investments is to 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**

There are no resource implications arising directly from this report. Resources for the delivery of the Local Investment Fund (up to £5m) and the Belfast Investment Fund (up to up to £26.5m by March 2015) have previously been agreed by SP&R Committee.

#### **5.0 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the information above, specifically:
  - Role of the AWGs in the identification of emerging Council Capital Programme projects (2.4)
  - Governance arrangements under authority of the SP&R Committee (2.6)

- LIF due diligence process (2.8)
  - Equality screening process (2.9); and
2. Agree that the LIF criteria regarding Council assets be amended to provide that a proposal is eligible in respect of an asset which is subject either to a lease from the Council to a third party or the most appropriate alternative arrangement between the Council and the third party depending on the particular circumstances.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **City Development Agenda Conference**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To review and agree the approach to the proposed conference on city development. The proposed date for the conference is end March 2013.

#### **2.0 The Background**

- 2.1 As part of the Investment programme, Members set out their intention to have a conference to promote the city to potential investors. Subsequently, Members met with Ministers from the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss a series of strategic issues, including the review of the draft Masterplan for Belfast, which had been commissioned by the Council to inform the city development debate.
- 2.2 During these Ministerial meetings it was suggested that the launch of the draft Masterplan for consultation would provide a useful introduction to the broader debate on the city development, economic growth, competitiveness, regeneration and the potential for attracting future investment. This report, therefore, sets out a proposed approach to a city conference, building on the State of the City Development Debates, to attract a wide range of stakeholders to discuss ways in which to improve the competitiveness and success of Belfast.

### 3.0 Key Issues

#### Proposed Objectives of the Conference

#### 3.1 The following are suggested as objectives for the conference:

- To provide a mechanism for engagement with key stakeholders about the priorities for city development in the context of the return of regeneration and place-shaping powers to the Council;
- To begin a wider conversation with stakeholders about the key value drivers within the city (city centre, new economic sectors, core infrastructure, transportation, access and connectivity) and to align activity with an over-arching vision;
- To communicate progress in delivering the Investment Programme to date and engage with stakeholders in relation to the potential for a sustained focus on delivery on a cross organisational basis (guiding coalition or similar mechanism linked to delivery boards or thematic operational frameworks).
- Opportunity to take stock of the city development during the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

#### 3.2 The final workshop session would address the:

Engagement of stakeholders in focussed delivery discussion with the emphasis on specific lobbying positions being created and processes for taking forward the key projects or initiatives being identified. The workshops would address specific projects or initiatives based on recent experience around examples such as Titanic Belfast or UU Campus relocation. The areas of focus could include:

- A integrated regeneration strategy for the city centre;
- Maximising the strategic opportunities from development proposals such as the stadia;
- Development of the leisure estate and tackling health inequality;

- The essential infrastructure to support accessibility, investment, competitiveness and quality of life (including flood prevention);
- Connectivity digital infrastructure and new economic sectors ;

Sustainability, energy efficiency and environmental assets.

- 3.3 This aspect of the conference would seek to ensure commitment from key stakeholders and recognition of the need to establish shared delivery mechanisms to support a shared vision. The key outcomes will be shared ownership of the initiatives and a pathway to driving them forward through such mechanisms as ISNI/ and the Programme for Government; coalescence towards a common vision for development and creation of a guiding coalition.
- 3.4 In concluding the conference it will be important to create a process through which momentum can be maintained. OECD have previously carried out analysis for the Council on Belfast's economy, this may be an appropriate time to ask the organisation to refresh this work in the context of the RPA and the Masterplan.
- 3.5 In the light of the above, it was proposed that the approach to the conference could follow a tiered structure providing the context as an introduction to practical outcome related workshops.

#### Proposed Conference Structure

- 3.6 It is proposed that the tiered initial sessions would comprise:
- Introduction to the regional city context: - introduction from the First Minister and Deputy First Minister with a focus on the importance of Belfast as the regional driver.
  - Benchmarking Belfast – how do we compare?- input to this session would be from Alex Jones, Chief Executive of the Centre for Cities. This would provide the overview, highlighting strategic indicators such as those produced by the Centre for Cities and using the Cities Outlook Data due to be published in January 2013. This data reinforces some of the key issues for cities such as economic infrastructure; employability

**and skills development; tourism; business growth and competitiveness; neighbourhood investment and quality of life.**

- **Review of Investment Programme to date and launch of key elements of the updated ‘Investment Programme II’: Picking up on session by Alex Jones, this aspect of the conference will highlight the Investment Programme as a response to some of the key issues identified in the Cities Outlook Data. Demonstrating the importance of the Investment Programme as an initial response to the challenges faced in the City – the promotion of growth and investment alongside regeneration and balanced development. A reflection on delivery of the Investment Programme to date and look forward to the next challenges and opportunities. This will then segue into discussion of the Masterplan/City Development agenda.**
- **Launch of the Masterplan Review (City Development Agenda) for consultation: focus on the existing elements that are still applicable, such as the need to grow the population and the importance of the city centre as an economic driver. This would begin to focus on the inter-relationships between the key and supporting projects in the Masterplan, many of which are included in the Investment Programme, along with the identification of the challenges in taking key projects forward and the necessity for partnership delivery.**
- **It is proposed Paul McTiernan, the consultant responsible for the revision of the Masterplan would do a short presentation at this point with other contributions/responses from city stakeholders, also connecting in related pieces of work such as those on city financing and the IBM Smarter Cities project.**

### **Leadership**

- 3.7 The delivery needs to highlight that this is an Investment Conference; the emphasis being on ensuring more effective and coordinated delivery of projects to maximise Belfast’s potential in driving economic growth for the region.**
- 3.8 It was a powerful symbol of confidence in Belfast when the Minister and Deputy First Minister launched the Investment**

Programme and their input to the 2013 conference would be extremely valuable in providing continuity to the Investment Programme process one year on as well as reinforcing Belfast's regional significance. Given the importance of the Department of Regional Development and the Department of Social Development in city regeneration, it would be extremely beneficial to have the Ministers responsible for these departments contribute to the conference.

3.9 The role of elected Members in the conference will be vital – it is proposed that the Lord Mayor would act as MC and that the Chair of SP&R Committee would provide the update on the Investment Programme. Key roles will also be played by the Chair of the Development Committee and other elected Members. This conference report will also be submitted to the Development Committee in January for information.

#### 4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 The event is likely to cost £20,000 and has been budgeted for from within current 2012/13 Departmental estimates.

#### 5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Agree that the 'City Conference' as outlined above should take place at the end of March 2013 and the costs associated with the conference, its organisation and retention of expert contributors;
- Agree that the First Minister, Deputy First Minister, Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Social Development should be invited to participate in the conference."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### Update on Bursary Scheme

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd June, a report regarding the proposed bursary scheme had been submitted. At that meeting, the Members had been appraised of a range of similar schemes and a proposed pilot approach for year one of the Belfast Scheme had been presented as a means of commencing the scheme in the current academic year. The proposal involved channelling support through the Belfast Metropolitan College for Further and Higher

Education and the Prince's Trust for other support to access education, training and employment. An indicative split of £30,000 to the Prince's Trust and £70,000 to the Metropolitan College had been proposed.

The Director of Development explained that both organisations had been proposed due to their respective commitments to cover the administrative overheads attached to the scheme, as well as their ability to provide the required levels of financial accountability. A commitment to monitor the impact of the intervention and to review the scheme before year two had been given. He advised the Committee that the Development Committee, at its meeting on 20th November, had received an update on the progress of the Bursary Scheme as part of the overall Development Department update. Some Members had raised concerns regarding the need to brand and to raise the profile of the Council's investment in the scheme and had requested that a further update on the progress be submitted to the meeting of the Development Committee on 4th December.

The Director of Development reported that, to date, a letter of offer had been signed and agreed with the Prince's Trust for their activity. Around £10,000 had already been allocated to 57 young people from disadvantaged areas of Belfast, with an average age of the recipient being twenty-one years. Seventy-nine percent of those awards had been provided to young people living in the top 25% of deprived wards in Belfast and 96% (55 Awards) have been provided to young people who had been unemployed. In terms of outcomes, 87% of young people who had received an award had achieved a positive outcome either moving into education, training or employment. However, now that the programme was fully operational, it was expected that there would be an increased level of activity over the remainder of the financial year, with over 42 Awards currently in the pipeline over the next few months.

With regard to the Belfast Metropolitan College's work, eligibility criteria had been established: individuals must be resident in the Belfast City Council area; aged 16-24 at the date of the application; must meet the criteria set out by the College for the Higher Education bursary fund; and must be preparing to study or currently studying on a full-time further/higher/vocational education training course at levels 2-5 of one of the 20 priority courses which had been identified. It was anticipated that the awards would be to a value of £500 and would be allocated only if it could be confirmed that the student completed at least 80% attendance at all classes and all appropriate examinations and assessments.

The Director reported that, given the timing of the programme, the Metropolitan College had not been able to include advance promotion of the scheme in any of its promotional literature for courses. As a result, the funding available was not able to act as an incentive towards a particular course of study as had been initially intended. However, the college was making progress in identifying those students who would potentially meet the eligibility criteria for the awards. Following an update which had been provided at the meeting of the Development Committee on the 4th December, that Committee had proposed that the £70,000 amount allocated to the Belfast Metropolitan College bursaries for the current academic year be held and carried forward into the next financial year to allow greater profiling of the awards and to incentivise more young

people to study in priority skills areas. The Committee had requested also that consideration be given to the household income criteria set by the College for its existing bursary programme (currently £55,000) and suggested that the Council scheme should be set at a lower threshold however this decision required the agreement of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and acceded to the request by the Development Committee that the £70,000 allocated to the Belfast Metropolitan College bursaries for the current academic year be carried forward into the next financial year.

### **Recruitment of Craft Apprentices**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the range of employment opportunities and employability obligations set out in the Investment Programme. One very effective way of helping to meet these obligations is through the creation of craft apprenticeships, which provide opportunities for young people to learn valuable and marketable skills working alongside qualified craftspeople, often with the possibility of guaranteed employment at the end.**
- 1.2 Members will also be aware that the Facilities Management Section has, on 3 separate occasions in the relatively recent past, taken on craft apprentices in a number of disciplines in both the Property Maintenance and Fleet Management units, with a total of 21 apprentices having successfully completed their training in the period 2000-2009. Opportunities to provide such apprenticeships are, however, often problematic because of the quite significant costs involved.**
- 1.3 Members will also be aware that one of the likely implications of the Review of Public Administration will be the transfer of property assets from other councils (and potentially also from central government departments). In addition, the council's own Investment Programme and Pitches Strategy etc will itself generate significant new maintenance obligations, so that the recruitment of craft apprentices at this time could potentially align well with the significant increases in maintenance obligations which will come on-stream from 2015 onwards, thus raising the possibility of permanent employment for at least some of the successful apprentices.**



- 1.4 In the light of the above, the Director of Finance & Resources has confirmed that it will be possible, on a non-recurring basis, to make provision to fund a number of craft apprenticeships to commence in the 2013/14 financial year. In the light of this the Section is proposing to create 7 craft apprenticeships (3 x Electrician, 2 x Painter and 2 x Fleet fitter).
- 1.5 These apprenticeships will be full apprenticeships of 3 years duration (4 years for Electricians), and will involve 3½-days per week of on-the-job training plus 1½-days of academic study. Apprentices will also have the opportunity to acquire the ECDL basic ICT course and will be supported in terms of sitting the standard driving test.
- 1.6 The direct cost of providing these opportunities for 7 apprentices on the basis described (incl. on-costs) is set out below:-

Post	No. posts	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	TOTAL
Painter	2	£15,385	£39,100	£44,184		£98,669
Electrician	3	£26,341	£66,888	£75,579	£70,264	£239,072
Fitter	2	£17,561	£44,592	£50,386		£112,539
	<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>£59,287</b>	<b>£150,646</b>	<b>£170,249</b>	<b>£70,264</b>	<b>£450,446</b>

- 1.7 ***NB: these apprentices would be recruited on the basis that if vacant posts exist in the relevant disciplines at the time of successful completion these will be offered to the apprentices first; where there are more apprentices than posts a ring-fenced selection procedure would be necessary. This would mean that, if RPA etc proceeds as anticipated, the structure would be increased at the appropriate time and this would create vacancies to be offered to the apprentices; if not we can simply certify the apprenticeships as complete and make no offer of employment in the normal way.***
- 1.8 The recruitment of apprentices involves a long lead-time and consequently the process would need to start in February 2013 if we are to have the individuals tested, selected and in place and the academic places booked etc by September 2013, hence this report.
- 2.0 **Key Issues**
- 2.1 The key issue is whether or not the Committee wishes to make the necessary resources available at this time to fund craft apprenticeships of the types suggested herein. It must be emphasized that at time of writing the resources can only be made available on a non-recurring basis, i.e. there can be no

guarantee that the apprenticeships will evolve into permanent posts. This is certainly a possibility, but will depend in large measure on the out-workings of the RPA process.

- 2.2 If the property portfolio of the council expands significantly on foot of RPA and the other factors set out above there will be a clear need for additional resources at a number of levels, however should this not occur – or the scale and scope of change be less than that currently envisaged – then it may not be possible to make offers of permanency.
- 2.3 It should however be emphasized that even where no offer of permanency can be made, the apprenticeships offered by the council are of high quality and are generally recognized as such, and will therefore equip the successful apprentices with both an excellent skill-set and also formal qualifications in much sought-after trades, all of which will enhance their employability considerably.

### 3.0 Resource Implications

- 3.1 As illustrated above, the recruitment of 7 craft apprentices will involve staffing costs of approx. £450,000 plus the various other costs (academic training, ECDL, driving test etc) over a four year period. The resources are available only on a non-recurring basis as part of the Investment Programme financing package.

### 4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Committee authorise the Director of Property & Projects to recruit 7 craft apprentices on the basis and in the disciplines set out above, on a non-recurring basis.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

## Democratic Services and Governance

### Review of Governance - Political Management Arrangements

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

**“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 In recognition of the evolving role of the council and elected Members within the city and to take account of known emerging drivers for change, as set out below, Members have indicated that it would be timely to review the political management and operational governance arrangements within the council to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose in this new context as set out below:**

- (i) Local government reform and associated legislative and governance changes.**
- (ii) Transfer & delivery of new statutory functions e.g. planning and regeneration and a duty to lead and facilitate community planning within the city.**
- (iii) Shift towards thematic and area-based working.**
- (iv) Enhanced relationships with external delivery agencies; with a growing focus on co-design and co-delivery.**

**1.2 On 5 October the council’s Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R) agreed that Jonathan Huish prepare, in liaison with Members and taking into account good practice elsewhere, an initial discussion paper regarding potential future political management options which may be available.**

**2.0 Key Issues**

**What is the changing role of Members?**

**2.1 It is important to recognise the evolving roles undertaken by the council and councillors in terms of:**

- delivering key statutory and discretionary functions and services within the city;**
- acting as civic leader and working in partnership for the betterment of the city and its citizens;**
- investing in the city and its infrastructure; and**

- working at an area level to address identified local priorities and to improve the wellbeing and quality of lives of citizens across the city.

2.2 It is therefore important that regardless of any future political management arrangements considered, they must embrace and enable the following four broad roles to be undertaken by Members.

FOCUS	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
1. Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political leadership and oversight</li> <li>• Develop policies and corporate priorities</li> <li>• Guide the allocation of resources</li> <li>• Scrutinise policy and performance</li> <li>• Ensure value for money and effectiveness</li> <li>• Drive continuous improvement</li> </ul>
2. External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic Leadership and advocacy</li> <li>• Co-design and co-delivery with partner agencies</li> <li>• Encourage/stimulate investment into the city</li> <li>• Representational role on external agencies</li> </ul>
3. Regulatory & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the delivery of statutory responsibilities e.g. licensing, regulatory environmental health issues, waste cleansing, building control, registration of births/deaths/marriage, burials etc.</li> <li>• Establishing standards and undertaking audit and scrutiny roles</li> <li>• Future delivery of statutory planning functions including creation of development plans, adjudication of planning applications and enforcement against breaches to planning decisions.</li> </ul>

<p>4. Community /Area Working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community leadership and advocacy</li><li>• Facilitating community planning process and community engagement</li><li>• Place-Shaping and regenerating local areas</li><li>• Improving quality of life and well-being of citizens</li><li>• Responding to constituents enquiries and representations</li><li>• Informing the prioritisation and allocation of resources at a area level (e.g. local investment fund)</li></ul>
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**What is good governance?**

- 2.3 Governance in local government is currently defined by CIPFA/SOLACE and the Audit Commission as follows:

*'Governance is about how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes for the direction and control of local authorities through which they account to, engage with and lead their communities.'*

**Effective political management principles?**

- 2.4 A key element of good governance is ensuring that effective political management arrangements are in place which deliver an appropriate balance across the following core principles:

- Clear political leadership and oversight
- Democratic inclusiveness
- Enhanced role of elected Members in strategic decision making
- Effective and timely decision making and implementation
- Greater co-ordination and alignment of activities
- Clear accountability

- Effective scrutiny of policy and performance
- Adaptability to changing political, legal or governance circumstances
- Outward focused and responsive organisation

#### **Political Management and Operational Governance Options**

- 2.5 The council's current system of governance has served the organisation well and has led to a gradual move towards a more integrated and strategic approach by the council to addressing some of the big challenges facing the city in recent years.
- 2.6 If however the council is to fully maximise the opportunities presented by the local government reform programme and Members are to simultaneously deliver their ambitions for the city and its communities whilst keeping rates low, there is a need to ensure our political management and governance arrangements are fit-for-purpose within this new context. With elections to the 11 new Shadow Councils scheduled for June 2014, it is therefore suggested that the possible introduction of any new political management arrangements should be considered within, and coincide with, this timescale.
- 2.7 Research has shown that there is no single preferred governance model which is applied across the board but rather a spectrum of models which take account of local political circumstances and desires. The common trend is for the introduction of a tiered form of governance based around a strategic tier and a thematic/portfolio tier supported by area/local committees with increased levels of delegation from full Council to committee and committee to officers.
- 2.8 Based on preliminary discussions undertaken with Members through the Party Leaders Forum, there appears to be three broad options emerging ranging from retaining the status quo through to a cabinet style type model.

#### **Option 1: Traditional Committee System (Status Quo)**

- Council business and decisions are progressed through a number of Standing Committees (normally linked to functional areas).

- **Majority of decisions taken by Standing Committees remain subject to ratification by Full Council. The Full Council may agree to delegate certain decisions to a particular Committee (for example, Licensing and Town Planning).**
- **Strategic Policy and Resources Committee provides a Member led focus on strategic planning and resource allocation.**
- **The role and remit of each Committee and relationship with Full Council is clearly defined within the Council's Standing Orders.**
- **All elected Members are represented, based on the principle of proportionality, across all Council Committees.**

**Option 2: Cabinet Style System**

- **Executive responsibility for all operational decisions is devolved from the Full Council to a relatively small, defined group of Members.**
- **Clear separation between the role of the Cabinet, which acts as the political executive and decision-making body; and the Full Council which normally agrees policy and holds the cabinet to account.**
- **The Council would delegate the Executive powers to be undertaken by the cabinet; with all decisions taken by the cabinet being a decision of the authority.**
- **The Cabinet may choose to identify individual portfolio holders from within its membership to lead and make decisions within specific themes.**
- **Decisions of a non strategic nature are normally delegated to officers.**
- **Non-Cabinet members undertake a scrutiny role – both in terms of pre-cabinet policy development and performance scrutiny.**

- Additional scrutiny mechanisms (that is, committee) are built into the governance arrangements. – with representation from non-cabinet Members.

#### Option 3: Streamlined Committee System

- This model is an evolution of the council's current Committee system.
- It enables a strategic Committee/Board, a defined group of decision makers, to operate in a strategic manner with a degree of delegated authority from Full Council for certain decisions.
- The strategic Committee/Board can further delegate to designated thematic and/or area Committees who make decisions within defined policies/framework
- These Committees are normally engaged in both policy development and scrutiny
- Members would be nominated to the central Strategic Committee and/or other Committees on a proportional representation basis.

2.9 The table below provides an initial high-level summary of the perceived pros and cons of each model.

#### Advantages and disadvantages of each model

##### Traditional Committee System

##### Advantages:

- Minimal change and disruption
- Inclusive/participatory based model with all councillors directly involved in making and influencing decisions
- Politically accepted and known system



**Disadvantages:**

- There is a risk of decisions being made in silos as cross-cutting issues can be difficult to identify and address
- reduces the strategic role of elected Members
- Slow decision making and overly focused on operational matters rather than policy and results
- May not be resilient within the changing operational environment emerging as a result of local government reform

**Cabinet Style System**

**Advantages:**

- Member driven process
- Speed of decision making
- Reduced meetings; releasing Member capacity to discuss strategic issues
- Works effectively in majority councils
- Clear political leadership and accountable decision making
- Provides a mechanism to establish specific working groups or panels to explore defined issues which may emerge

**Disadvantages:**

- Difficult to operate in hung councils
- Requires strong party discipline/trust
- Not inclusive/participatory decision making – Executive decisions taken by a limited number of Members

- Need for a parallel scrutiny process to be built into the governance model
- Potential distance/tensions between members of the cabinet and Full Council

### **Streamlined Committee System**

#### **Advantages:**

- More inclusive/participatory based model
- Streamlined and timely decision making processes
- More strategic and integrated approach to key decisions
- Reduced meetings; releasing Member capacity to discuss strategic issues
- Degree of delegation to Committees can evolve over time
- Can accommodate a focus on thematic and/or area-based working
- Provides a mechanism to establish specific working groups or panels to explore defined issues which may emerge

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Political accountability for decision making not as strong as in cabinet model
- The degree and type of executive decisions to be delegated must be agreed through political consensus within Full Council

Annex 1, a copy which has been circulated, attached sets out an initial benchmark assessment of each of the aforementioned models against the proposed principles of 'effective political management arrangements' set out at paragraph 2.4 above.

2.10 Clearly there are a number of important detailed issues which need further development to inform any consideration given by

**Members in regards to potential future political management and governance arrangements. As a phase II detailed work will be progressed, in liaison with Members and Party Groups on the following key areas:**

- **Defining the roles and responsibilities of the various tiers of governance.**
- **The number, size and proportionality of any Committees put in place.**
- **The degree and nature of delegated decisions introduced.**
- **Frequency of meetings and associated decision making processes.**
- **Relationship and interface between the tiers of internal governance put in place.**
- **Relationship between internal Committees and any external governance arrangements which may be put in place e.g. community/area committees.**
- **Members' remuneration and allowance schemes aligned to any new political management arrangements.**

#### **Party Briefings**

**2.11 In advance of moving forward with phase II of any detailed work around potential political management arrangements, it is suggested for Members consideration that briefings take place with Party Groups in January 2013 to discuss the report in more detail.**

#### **3.0 Resource Implications**

**There are no financial or HR implications contained within this report**

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

**Members are asked to:**

- (i) note the contents of this report;**

(ii) agree that briefings be held with Party Groups in January 2013 to explore with Members in more detail and to capture initial views.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Dates of Committee Meetings in 2013**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details of the dates and times of the meetings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for 2013.

**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:

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Biennial Delegate Conference 2013 Reception  2nd July, 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 wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £500
National Deaf Children's Society	Young Authors and Artists Prize Day  15th May, 2013  Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.	This event seeks to celebrate and recognise the artistic achievements of deaf children and young people in the areas of creative writing and visual art.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.  Approximate cost £325

<p>Ulster Journals Limited</p>	<p>Ulster Tatler People of the Year Awards 2012</p> <p>19th September, 2013</p> <p>Approximately 360 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>This event aims to highlight and recognise those individuals who have excelled in their chosen field.</p> <p>The awards ceremony will acknowledge those individuals who have demonstrated significant achievement in categories such as Business Man/Woman of the Year, Arts Personality of the Year and Hotelier/Publican of the Year.</p> <p>The event will also pay tribute to an individual by way of the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' that has previously been presented to Dame Mary Peters, Sir James Galway, Brian Friel, Phil Coulter and Gloria Hunniford.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>
<p>Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities</p>	<p>Ethnic Minority Women in Northern Ireland</p> <p>2nd February, 2013</p> <p>Approximately 60 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.</p>	<p>This event, which will include speakers, a panel discussion and workshop, is designed to provide information and the opportunity for discussion on issues of discrimination against women living in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.</p> <p>Approximate cost £150</p>

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Post 19 Lobby Group - Request for Deputation**

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Post 19 Lobby Group requesting an opportunity to make a presentation to the Committee to highlight its work. The Group was made up of parents and carers of children and young people with severe learning disabilities and 21 special schools across Northern Ireland. The group would like to raise awareness of some of the issues surrounding the transition from childhood for those children with severe learning difficulties.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request.

### **Minutes of Party Leaders' Forum**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Leaders' Forum on 21st November.

### **National Association Of Councillors – Localism Act and Neighbourhood Planning Conference**

The Committee was advised that the National Association of Councillors was holding a 'Localism Act and Neighbourhood Planning' conference in Carlisle from 11th till 13th January, 2013. The conference would focus on the concept of neighbourhood planning and how it was to be implemented to ensure communities became involved at a local level in shaping and influencing plans for their areas. The conference would be particularly relevant to Members given the central role Elected Representatives would have in community planning. The approximate cost per delegate of attending would be £610.

The Committee authorised the attendance at the conference of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland region) and a representative of each of the Parties on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members.

## **Finance/Value-for-Money**

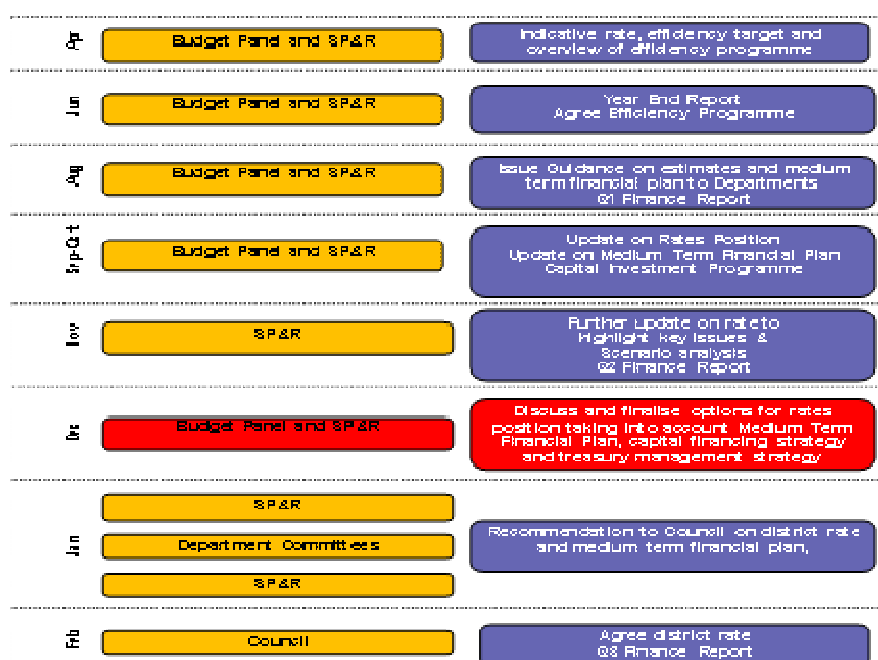
### **Rate Setting 2013-14**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1.0 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 This report provides an update for Members and considers final options for the 2013/14 revenue estimates, in line with the summary of the rate setting process for 2013/14 outlined in figure 1 below.**

Agreed rate setting process for 2013/14



## 2.0 Key Issues

2.1 At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 23 November 2012, Members considered two scenarios for the setting of the 2013/14 District Rate. These were:-

### Scenario 1 - District Rate increase of 0.86%

A net increase of £1.1m in the revenue estimates based on the estimates prepared by departments and the removal of £2.1m of efficiencies from departmental budgets.

### Scenario 2 - District Rate increase of 0%

This report details how this scenario can be achieved.

## 2.2 Scenario 2: Zero District Rate

### Revenue Estimates

Since the report to Committee in November 2012, the following adjustments to the Revenue Estimates have been made:

1. The council has been advised by the Department of Finance and Personnel on the 5 December 2012 of an increase in the de-rating grant for Belfast amounting to £317,000.
2. The decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to allocate the waste fund balance to specified reserves has enabled department estimates for 2013/14 to be reduced by £394,000.
3. Further detailed work on future waste costs has also been completed which indicates that the stepped increase in the waste fund contribution could be reduced further by £400,000.

### Investment Programme Commitments

#### 2.3 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.

#### 2.4 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.

#### 2.5 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.



**2.6 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.

**2.7 Rate Base**

As advised to the Committee in November 2012, there is ongoing work with LPS to determine the risks and trends associated with the rate base for the city in advance of confirmation of the final Estimated Penny Product (EPP) which will be used for the calculation of the District Rate for 2013/14.

**2.8** Given the current economic environment, ongoing rates appeals and the level of outstanding debt and write offs, the risk of a decline in the rate base remains high. However, the vacant property work being undertaken by the council's Building Control service, has proved to be invaluable in mitigating the risk of reduced income by adding around £3m to the collectable rate over the past two years.

**2.9** Taking into account all of these factors, it is concluded that the rate base of the City is expected to have no growth in 2013/14.

**2.10** In summary a zero rate for 2013/14 is deliverable in the context of:

- 1. Meeting the running costs of the organisation.**
- 2. Delivering the financial commitments detailed in the Investment Programme.**
- 3. The Estimated Penny Product (rate base) remaining at the 2012/13 level.**
- 4. Appreciating that any additional capital financing, such as the leisure estate, could only be delivered in the context of future efficiency savings and the realignment of current capital investment programmes.**

### 3.0 Impact on Ratepayer

3.1 A rates bill in Belfast is made up of 55% Regional Rate and 45% District Rate. The Regional Rate, subject to Executive approval, is due to increase by 2.7%. If the council sets a zero rate, this means the ratepayer's total bill will increase by 1.49%. The table below shows the monetary impact on average property types.

PROPERTY	Annual increase in	Weekly increase in
	rates bill	rates bill
<b><i>Domestic Properties</i></b>		
	£	
Terrace House	8.86	0.17
3-Bed Semi-Detached House	13.56	0.26
4-Bed Detached House	30.13	0.58
Apartment	8.55	0.16
Average Capital Value	11.79	0.23
<b><i>Non-Domestic Properties</i></b>		
Office Property	108.14	2.08
Retail Property	87.06	1.67

### 4.0 Recommendations

4.1 In order to prepare the rates report for the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2013 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, Members are requested to agree the following:

1. Officers prepare the department cash limits report based on a zero district rate as discussed in Section 2 above;
2. Base rate calculations on zero growth in the Estimated Penny Product as discussed in paragraph 2.9 above"

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that the Director prepare the rates report for the 11th January Committee meeting, based on a zero % district rate and provide a briefing note on possible scenarios to deliver a district rate below zero.

**Notice of Motion - Online Rates Receipt**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st November, had considered the undernoted Notice of Motion which had been proposed by Councillor Hussey and seconded by Alderman Stalford:

**“This Council is committed to transparency in how it spends Rate Payers’ money. Every Rate Payer has the right to know what we spend their money on. This Council believes that the principle of transparency is meaningless unless we present our published financial information in a way that is accessible and relevant to rate payers.**

**To this end; we will provide an online service to every rate payer which will show them, in a comprehensible way, the services and capital projects on which their money is spent. This breakdown will include the pro-rata monetary share of their own rates bill spent on these items alongside the total amount spent by this Council. A comprehensive breakdown of the costs of delivering those services and capital projects will be contained within that breakdown.”**

The Committee had been advised that, in accordance with Standing Order 11(e), the motion had been referred without discussion to the Committee.

Councillor Hussey, who was in attendance regarding this item, requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining possible options in relation to how an online rates receipt could be implemented.

The Committee agreed to this course of action.

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

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 6th December.

**Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel of 11th December.

**ICT Update**

The Committee noted that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

**Suffolk Football Club –  
Proposed Changing Facilities**

The Committee was reminded that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 15th November, had considered a report outlining proposals from the Suffolk Football Club and recommending that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee include on the Capital Programme list of uncommitted projects the provision of a two room changing pavilion and meeting area at the Suffolk Playing Fields. That Committee had agreed to defer consideration of the matter to enable clarification to be obtained on the process for referring projects between Area Working Groups and Standing Committees.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, subsequently, Council; at its meeting on 3eDecember, had amended the decision to provide that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee include the abovementioned project within its list of uncommitted programmes.

The Committee agreed to the advancement of the proposal for a two room changing pavilion and meeting room at the Suffolk Playing Fields through the Gates governance process as an uncommitted proposal, with further reports being presented at relevant stages for further consideration for inclusion in the Capital Programme against financial resource availability and prioritisation against other emerging proposals.

**Tender - Gasworks Shuttle Bus**

The Committee granted the authority for the commencement of a tendering exercise for a shuttle bus service operating between the City Centre and the Gasworks site. The Committee noted that there would be no cost to the Council as it would be recovered from the tenants through the annual service charge. The Committee noted further that the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the authority delegated to him, would be awarding a contract, after evaluation, to the most advantageous tender received.

**Approval to Seek Tenders –  
Various Goods and Services**

The Committee approved the commencement of tendering exercises and delegated authorities to the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to accept the most advantageous tenders received in respect of the following:

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Estimated Value per year</b>	<b>Period of Contract</b>
Small building alterations and repairs to brickwork, plastering and general external works	£40,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Installation of new metal fencing	£80,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Repair, maintenance and minor works for Intruder and Fire alarm Systems	£55,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Installation of soft flooring	£75,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Repair, maintenance and Minor works for small engineering	£30,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Repair, maintenance and minor works to swimming pool filtration and ozone generation	£75,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Supply of Uniforms	£90,000	1 year, with 2 years renewal

**Additional Promotional Support  
for Belfast City Retail  
and Hospitality Business**

The Director of Development tabled, for the information of the Members, the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 Members will be fully aware that since 3<sup>rd</sup> December, there has been significant protests and civil unrest across Northern Ireland, but in Belfast in particular.**
- 1.2 As a result of the ongoing protests, the blocking of arterial routes into the City at peak times and the high levels of negative media coverage there has been a substantial downturn in visitor numbers to the City Centre and other retail and entertainment areas of the City. This has had a major impact upon businesses within the City and the Council has been contacted by members of the business community, who are asking the Council to consider giving whatever support it can to ensure the message gets across that the Belfast is open for business, the City is operating as normal and continues to offer Northern Ireland’s best shopping experience.**

## **2.0 Key Issues**

- 2.1** 2012 has been a very difficult year for retail businesses in Belfast. Rising unemployment, reduced levels of real disposable income and the continuing trend towards internet shopping has resulted in businesses continuing to close within the City, both in the City Centre and on the arterial routes and many of those which survive struggle to make a profit.
- 2.2** For many retail stores up to 70% of their annual sales occur in the month of December. Given the ongoing difficult trading environment, the 2012 Christmas shopping period is critical to the survival of many city traders.
- 2.3** The ongoing protests taking place across the City are having a profound effect on businesses. On Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> December, the day of the protest outside City Hall, City Centre trade was down between 25% and 35% in comparison with the same day last year. On Saturday alone this amounted to a loss of around £3.8m. This trend has continued during the course of the week as people have avoided travelling into the City due of the ongoing blocking of arterial routes by protesters.
- 2.4** At the request of a number of traders, including the managers of both Castle Court and Victoria Square, officers have engaged with BCCM and BVCB to see how the Council might help businesses encourage people to come into the city and promote the fact that the City Centre continues to operate as normal. We have also been asked to discourage major employers, including the public sector, from advising their staff to leave the City early to avoid disruption.
- 2.5** In response to these requests, Members are being asked to consider a programme of activity to support the promotion of the retail and hospitality sectors in the City. This consists of 3 areas of work:
- Supplementing BVCB's current promotional campaign;
  - Animating the City Centre with a programme of activities.
  - Associated Public Relations Activity

## **2.6 Promotional Activity**

- 2.6.1** It is recommended that a marketing and PR campaign is urgently activated, with a concentration on those media channels which can communicate widely that Belfast is busy and buoyant, and continues to offer fantastic retail, dining and entertainment options.

It is proposed that this is done via the following programme of activity:

- 1. upweight and extension in the existing booked Christmas media;**
- 2. up-to-the minute daily broadcast of '60 Seconds in the City';**
- 3. similarly-styled '60 seconds in the City' press advertorials;**
- 4. a programme of '60 Seconds in the City' radio broadcasts;**
- 5. press advertorial;**
- 6. digital updates on Facebook and Twitter;**
- 7. supporting PR activities.**

This will enable us to communicate in real time, Christmas events, retail offers and good news stories for the day of broadcast and the following day to effectively convey the sheer breadth of activities that are planned in the City between now and Christmas Eve. It is critically important to present visitors with compelling images of people having a good time in Belfast.

Messaging will be strong, clear and concise and convey the positive communications and images of the City, its products and visitor experiences. There will be no reference to the protests or safety issues in any communications. We will seek to show people are visiting and enjoying the City on a daily basis, availing of great value retail, visitor attractions, entertainment, hotel and restaurant offers.

The marketing and PR communications will operate seamlessly and in tandem, complementing and reinforcing the range of positive messages. A detailed programme from 15 December to 24 December is set out in Appendix 1 at a cost of £80,000

## **2.7 City Centre Street Animation**

- 2.7.1** A programme of street animation is proposed for the period from Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> December until 24 December, 2012. This will take place in Donegall Place, Castle Place, Cornmarket and outside City Hall. This activity will be integrated with activities planned by both Castle Court and Victoria Square Shopping Centres.

The activity would include street entertainers, acrobats, Christmas characters in the streets, buskers, street traders, dance, street opera and choirs.

In order for this to be of a scale which is likely to have an impact this will require an investment of somewhere in the region £40,000.

## **2.8 Christmas Market**

- 2.8.1** The traders within the Christmas market have also suffered a major downturn in their turnover in comparison to last year. Most traders have reported a downturn of around 30% and licensed premises down 40%. The operator of the Christmas Market, MPEL, has been approached with a view to extending the period of their stay up at City Hall from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> December. A decision is due to be made following a meeting with traders on the morning of 14 December. A number of operators will have made arrangements to travel home, however, their stands will be offered to local traders at little or no cost.

## **2.9 PR Activity**

- 2.9.1** The Development Department and Corporate Communications will work alongside BVCB and its PR advisers on supporting this activity with key media and public messages. These will highlight why Belfast is the place to be in the run up to Christmas and its accessibility by public transport, car, on foot and cycling. One of the main areas, of course, will be promoting late night shopping opportunities, which has been hardest hit due to workers leaving early and shoppers avoiding town due to road blocks.



**2.10 Voucher Campaign**

**2.10.1** A further proposal put forward by the PR Team for consideration by members is the idea of issuing 100 £10 vouchers on each of the 10 days leading up to Christmas. These could be redeemed against purchase in stores/restaurants agreeing to provide offers to attract shoppers into town. The winners would be photographed with the photos placed on social media to encourage people to visit the city. The total cost of this proposal would be around £13,000.

**3.0 Resource Implications**

**3.1** It is anticipated that the cost of an effective promotional, PR and animation programme is likely to be in the region of £120,000.

**3.2** The voucher programme if run over 10 days would cost around £13,000

**3.3** The cost of the above activity would have to be met from the projected underspend in the current financial year.

**4.0 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

**4.1** There are no equality and good relations implications.

**5.0 Recommendations**

**5.1** The Committee is asked to approve the programme of activity set out above.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Human Resources**

**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.

The Committee noted the appointment.

**Asset Management**

**Belfast City Hall - Live Site Screen**

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**1 Relevant Background Information**

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

- Gain approval from Members to enable Officers to appoint, via publicly advertised expressions of interest process, a new content and screen management provider for the Belfast Live Site Screen. Officers would seek Members approval that the decision 'to appoint' is delegated to either BCC's Chief Executive or Director of Development.
- Approval from Members to enable the Belfast Live Site Screen team to join a consortium with up to twenty-one other Local Authorities within the Live Site Network
- Subject to the above approval to seek permission from Members to allow the screening of away games featuring Northern Ireland (including 2014 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers) and agree costs associated with screening these games.

**1.2 In April 2010 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee agreed that a Live Sites Screen should be positioned in the grounds of City Hall for a three year period. The Screen is part of 22 'live site' LED screens locations across regional capitals and key cities in including Derry~Londonderry, which is part of its preparations for the City of Culture in 2013. In May 2012 Members also agreed that the screen should stay in situ and be considered as part of DSD's Streets Ahead (phase 2) programme.**

**1.3 Members are reminded that the Council has agreed to allocate £20,000 per year connected to the screens maintenance and security. For Members' information the screen is operated, up to December 2012, in partnership with: BCC; LOCOG; BBC; DCAL and associated London 2012 commercial sponsors – BT; LlyodsTSB and Cisco. Events animation at the Belfast screen was funded via DCAL and LOCOG at the cost of £25,000 for the 2012 year. From January 2012 to September 2012 over 200,000**

attended a variety of events at the Belfast screen, which were delivered with the above partners. In the summer of this year over 35,000 people watched the Olympic and Paralympics Games on the Live Screen. This covered events around Belfast Olympian and Paralympic athletes at the London Games. In addition the screen was used for the screening of the Euro 2012 championships, Ulster teams in the All-Ireland GAA competitions and events connected to the Titanic Centenary programme.

- 1.4 Currently the BBC is the content provider for the Live Screens network. Unfortunately this position will change and the BBC will now only run the screen management and content process until March 2013. This recent piece of communication, from the BBC, is due to budgetary constraints within broadcaster. Unfortunately this is a significant change of position from the original project concept presented by the BBC and LOCOG back prior to April 2010. Therefore, Members are now being asked to review options and provide guidance on this matter.
- 1.5 Subject to the above approval that Committee endorse the screening of away games featuring Northern Ireland (including 2014 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers) and agree costs associated with screening these games.

## 2 Key Issues

### 2.1 Future content management provider

The BBC has been involved as the content and screen management provider since the screens inception and in the planning of the Belfast Live site. However, this process will terminate at the end of March 2013 due to BBC budgetary constraints. Members are asked to note that there are five main options on the table and Council is being asked to select one of these. They are:

- Option 1: Decommission the screen.
- Option 2: Operate the screen as an individual local authority.
- Option 3: Operate the screen as part of a regional or small grouping.
- Option 4: Be part of a larger UK association.

- Option 5: Appointment of a new content provider via publicly advertised expressions of interest call

**2.2 Option 1: Decommission the screen.**

The removal of the screen would only happen if the Council cannot indicate how the screen content will be managed post 2012. The final arbiter, on this matter, will be LOCOG. If an agreement cannot be reached the Council will be liable for the removal costs of the screen and the screen will stay in the ownership of LOCOG. The estimated costs of removal would be £50,000, which is inclusive of reinstatement of the City Hall grounds.

**2.3 Option 2: Operate the screen as an individual local authority.**

Each Local Authority involved will need to resource and provide screen content and management. Currently there are not the personnel or skill-sets for this service within BCC. The Screen Network partners estimate that this would cost circa £25,000 per annum. In addition the Council would need to maintain specialist insurance and service arrangements, which is estimated at £20,000. Therefore the total cost for Option 2 is £45,000 per annum.

**2.4 Option 3: Operate the screen as part of a smaller regional grouping**

Each of the Authorities could search/investigate new partnerships/sponsors inclusive of a content provider e.g. UTV, Sky. This arrangement would need to cover the staffing costs of co-ordinating the project between each of the regional members. In addition maintenance agreements will need to be put/kept in place for the screens and operating system will need to be put in place which can link the screens. It is estimated that the cost of this option would be in the region of £50,000 to £60,000.

**2.5 Option 4: UK Live Screens Network Association Limited**

The 22 Live Screens could potentially work together to form a network consortium. The consortium would source content, sponsors and arrange maintenance contracts. LOCOG and the BBC have confirmed that the central coordination equipment can be gifted to an association, which would provide the operating system for the entire network. This process would mean that BCC would need to enter into a legal contract with a

newly formed consortium. The consortium would have a full-time management team to oversee content of the screens network and administer the requirements of each local authority. It is estimated that the maximum cost for this option would be £50,000 per local authority per year and would include maintenance and insurance costs.

**2.6 Option 5: Appointment of a new screen management and content provider via publicly advertised expressions of interest call at zero cost to Council**

This option would see Officers seek approval to go to a public tender for a content/management provider. This would be predicated on a zero cost to Council and could possibly create an income stream from the equipment. The type of possible companies who may be interested in this concept would operate in the broadcast, media and technology industries.

**2.7** Members are reminded that if BCC cannot identify an appropriate content management system for the screen that LOCOG may not transfer the screen to Council's ownership. This means that BCC will be liable for the costs to remove the screen at an estimated cost of £50,000. The annual cost to maintain the screen, insure it and programme events to BCC is £45,000 per year.

**2.8 Northern Ireland Football Games**

At this year's May Committee Members requested that Officers investigate the screening of Northern Ireland football matches. Therefore, Officers have clarified arrangements with the live broadcast rights holder to the games, BSYB, and the Irish Football Association. The Irish Football Association has expressed their opposition to home games being screened, due to a potential loss of revenue for Windsor Park. However, the Association have given their approval and support for screening away games. They have also offered their assistance to promote these screenings to the public and their involvement in any planned promotions to highlight this facility.

**2.9** Officers have also been in contact with BSKYB, who have the live broadcasting rights for Northern Ireland games, in order to obtain costs for the screening of the away matches live. Currently BSKYB cannot provide an exact written cost per game, but a maximum fee of £4,000 per away game has been quoted. Therefore, the three remaining away games for the FIFA World Cup would total £12,000. Members are asked to note

that this cost would be subject to further discussions and a legal agreement with BSKYB. There would also be an additional cost for stewarding any matches alongside site facilities (toilets and barriers, etc.), which would be a maximum of £1,000.00 per game. Members are asked to note that screening of future Ulster Rugby Heineken Cup games, which are screened only via BSKYB, would have a similar cost of £5,000 approximately.

### **2.10 Live Site Planning Consent**

Members are reminded that NI Planning Service has granted planning consent, for the Live Site screen, to stay in situ until April 2014 and that Members have agreed that the screen should be considered as part of the refurbishment of the Donegall Square, to be undertaken by the Department of Social Development, as part of phase two of the Streets Ahead programme.

## **3 Resource Implications**

### **3.1 Financial**

The following are the key resource implications for Council.

### **3.2 The costs attached to the Live Site Screen content provision are:**

- Option 1: Decommission the screen. £50,000
- Option 2: Operate the screen as an individual local authority. £45,000
- Option 3: Operate the screen as part of a regional or small grouping. £50,000 to £60,000
- Option 4: Be part of a larger UK association. £50,000
- Option 5: Appointment of a new screen management and content provider via publicly advertised expressions of interest call at zero cost to Council

### **3.3 Estimated cost, to BCC, for Northern Ireland football away games would be circa £4,000 (per game). Plus an additional cost for event management arrangements in the region of £1,000. Therefore, each Live Site screening of a Northern Ireland away football match, by BSKYB, would be approximately**

£5,000. The Council would incur similar costs for other football and rugby events that Sky has the broadcast rights.

- 3.4 Members are asked to note that events animation costs for the Live Site screen are contained in the City Events Unit draft budgets for the 2013/14 period at a cost of £25,000, plus an additional £20,000 for maintenance and insurance i.e. £45,000 cost to Council.

3.5 Human Resources

The City Events and Venues Section would coordinate this matter in conjunction with Corporate Communication within existing resources. However, if Option 3 and 4 are selected by Council, there would be a need to fund a post to assist in BCC's content to the Belfast Screen.

3.6 Asset and Other Implications

The decommissioning of the screen would see the screen equipment stay in the ownership of LOCOG. Therefore, if BCC cannot identify an appropriate content management system LOCOG will not transfer the screen to Council's ownership. So as per Option 1 BCC will be liable for the costs to remove the screen at an estimated cost of £50,000. The annual cost to maintain the screen, insure it and programme events, to BCC, is £45,000 per year.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

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

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are requested to agree and recommend.

- To approve an option in regard to the Live Site screen management and content system. If Option 4 is selected BCC would enter into a Live Site Screen consortium with up to twenty-one other Local Authorities within the Live Site Network
- Subject to the above approval agree to screen Northern Ireland away games live, on the Belfast screen at City Hall, subject to agreement with B SkyB. Such

**agreement would be inclusive of associated broadcast and event costs estimated at £5,000 per game.”**

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt a combination of option 4 and 5 that a report thereon be submitted to the Committee in due course. It was agreed also to screen the Northern Ireland away games, subject to the appropriate agreements.

**Legal and Access Arrangements  
for Works at Cavehill**

The Director of Properties and Projects submitted for the Committee’s consideration the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 15 September 2011 the Parks and Leisure Committee noted the potential external funding available for proposed paths and related works at Cavehill Country Park and Ligoniel Park. At that time funding had been confirmed from the Lagan Rural Partnership in respect of one of the conservation paths on Cavehill and a decision on a second tranche of funding was expected. Committee was also recommended to agree the Council enter into a 10 year Deed of Dedication in respect of the proposed works, subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as necessary to meet the anticipated funding requirements. Finally Committee was recommended to approve the works should be put forward to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of the Capital Programme.**
- 1.2 As things transpired it became clear that the funding was not available to Councils and needed to be routed via a voluntary group in this instance Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP). BHP have been successful in drawing down £107,000 to undertake works to the Council’s asset.**
- 1.3 As part of the above funding BHP require the Council to enter into a Development Agreement (their name for the relevant Deed of Dedication referred to in the 15 September 2011 Committee minute). The Development Agreement is for a period of 10 years from completion of the proposed works and requires the Council to manage and maintain the funded assets and public access to them for 10 years following their satisfactory completion. The scope of the works is outlined later in this report.**



- 1.4 Capital Programme: Project Management Unit have advised that as no Council capital funds are involved and the proposed works are to be carried out by a third party, then the scheme would sit outside the Capital Programme.**
- 1.5 Licence Agreement(s): As the schemes are not to be placed on the Council's Capital Programme and are instead to be carried out by a contractor employed by BHP, then in order to allow the works to commence, BHP will require a Licence Agreement from the Council which would set out the location, timing and nature of works to be undertaken, plus access arrangements and the respective liabilities and responsibilities of the parties. Indeed if the works are to be split up into constituent parts with potentially several different contracts running at different times, then a series of Licence Agreements will be required.**

**2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 The total funding package available to Belfast Hills Partnership, in respect of capital works on Council owned land may be broken down as follow:**
- 2.2 Under Letter of Offer from Lagan Rural Partnership Joint Council Committee, to BHP, dated 14 March 2011 - £34,000.**
- 2.3 This covers the following works:**
- i) Installation of approx. 470 metres of new path at McArt's Fort.**
  - ii) Installation of Interpretation Panels (1No. at Carr's Glen and 1No. at Ballyaghagan Cashel.**
- 2.4 Under Letter of Offer from Lagan Rural Partnership Joint Council Committee to BHP, dated 17 September 2012 - £73,000.**
- 2.5 This covers the following works:**
- i) Installation of new access gate and associated fencing at the Horseshoe bend access to Cavehill Country Park.**
  - ii) Installation of approx. 250 metres of new path at Ligoniel Park.**

- iii) Installation of new junior orienteering course at Cavehill Country Park at location to be agreed by Parks and Leisure Department.
  - iv) Installation of 6 No. visitor counters at the main entrances to the castle estate portion of Cavehill Country Park plus one 'mobile' counter to identify use by cyclists at different points around the Castle Estate.
  - v) Installation of approx. 1000 metres of new path around the Limestone Quarry at Cavehill Country Park.
  - vi) Installation of approximately 14No. directional signs at designated locations to link walking opportunities at Ligoniel Park via the Horseshoe Bend entrance, to Cavehill Country Park.
  - vii) Installation of a view point at the Limestone Quarry in Cavehill Country Park.
- 2.6 The Development Agreement (mentioned above) would allow approximately 18 months for completion of all the proposed works and run for a further 10 years thereafter. The detailed terms of the Development Agreement remain subject to discussion and agreement between BHP and the Council's Estates Management Unit and Legal Services.
- 2.7 Capital Programme:
- 2.8 The scheme(s) are externally funded and to be delivered by a third party and thus sit outside the Capital Programme.
- 2.9 Licence Agreement(s):
- 2.10 Parks and Leisure Department and BHP are keen to commence the work on the McArt's Fort path which is funded via the Letter of Offer dated 14 March 2011. The Licensee will be responsible for all security arrangements related to plant and materials and will be responsible for public liability and other insurances during the course of the works. The Council will become responsible for Public Liability Insurance following satisfactory completion of the works. BHP will be required to minimise any disruption to other Park users during the course of the works. The access route to carry out the works and any contractor's compound area required, remains subject to agreement between BHP and Council officers.

2.11 Separate Licence Agreements on similar terms will be put in place in relation to the works associated with the Letter of Offer dated 17 September 2012.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial**

3.2 No capital funding is being sought from the Council for any of the proposed works. The Council will however be required to maintain the installed assets for a minimum of 10 years. Parks and Leisure Department confirm that because of the nature of the works and the nature of the environment, the installed assets will require little in the way of maintenance and any costs can be met from within existing budgets.

#### **3.3 Human Resources**

3.4 Resources from Estates Management Unit, Legal Services and Parks and Leisure Department will be required to set up and agree the detailed terms of the Development Agreement and (if necessary) Licence Agreements. A Council team will also oversee work specifications.

#### **3.5 Asset and Other Implications**

3.6 All the proposed works contribute to either to the physical accessibility of Cavehill Country Park and Ligoniel Park or help guide and inform users. Together they aim to increase the numbers of users and the accessibility to this portion of the Belfast hills.

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

4.1 There are no known equality or good relations issues associated with this report.

### **5 Recommendations**

5.1 Committee is recommended to:

1. Note that the works will be undertaken by BHP in consultation with Council officers.
2. Authorise the Council enter into a Development Agreement with Belfast Hills Partnership, on detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager and Town

**Solicitor, in respect of all the works being carried out through the grant funding referred to in this report.**

- 3. Authorise the Council enter into Licence Agreements with Belfast Hills Partnership (such Licences to be drawn up by the Town Solicitor) to regulate the access and other arrangements, including satisfactory completion, for BHP and their contractors on to Council owned land for the various works as set out in this report.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Windsor Park Stadium - Update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update in relation to the Windsor Park Stadium, redevelopment and the ongoing discussions between the Council, the Irish Football Association, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Linfield Football Club regarding the feasibility study which was being undertaken to consider potential options for a more integrated approach to the overall development of the combined sites at the Olympia Leisure Centre, Midgley Park and Windsor Park and that a further report would be submitted to the Committee following the completion of the initial feasibility study.

The Director of Property and Projects provided also a verbal update in relation to discussions which had been held that morning with the GAA in respect of Casement Park and the potential to work with the stadium development in regard to the Andersonstown Leisure Centre site. Accordingly, the Committee agreed that:

- (i) a further report and timetable would be submitted to the Committee in line with the leisure review report which was due in January and that representatives of the GAA be invited to make a presentation on Casement Park to a future meeting of the Committee, to which all Councillors would be invited: and
- (ii) officers continue working a strategy with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Irish Football Association and the Gaelic Athletic Association to ensure the greatest mutual benefit in terms of community gain from these projects and to report back also in January as part of the leisure review.

### **Disposal of land at Glen Road**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st September, it had approved the disposal of the former traveller lands at the Glen Road (adjoining Glen Road Heights) to the Oaklee/Fold Housing Associations for the development of social

housing at a premium of £1,575,000 and subject to the terms being agreed with the Council's Legal Services and the Estates Manager. The transfer was to be progressed by Oaklee as an Advance Land Purchase under the Department for Social Development's Social Housing Development Programme.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, following subsequent discussions with representatives of Oaklee, the leading housing association, they had advised that the proposed acquisition of the Glen Road land had been conditioned by the Oaklee Homes Group Board which had indicated that it now preferred to have full planning permission for the proposed social housing scheme as a condition of completing an agreement to purchase. Given that condition, Oaklee would seek Northern Ireland Housing Executive Full Project Approval for the scheme rather than progress it as an Advance Land Purchase as previously indicated. That, in effect, meant that Oaklee would now be required to have its scheme fully approved by the Housing Executive by achieving key milestone events prior to concluding the land transfer from the Council.

The Director explained that, whilst the provision of social housing in areas of high need was generally politically supportive, the negotiation for disposal of those sites could be protracted and difficult, particularly given the current property market where there was limited demand, which housing associations often sought to exploit in terms of their proposals for acquisition through their conditions of sale, representing site development costs as abnormals. Oaklee had indicated that a conditional contract to purchase could be entered into immediately which would be completed at the previously agreed purchase premium which would become payable to the Council upon the grant of satisfactory planning consent.

The Director indicated that, given the nature of the social housing scheme and the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Key Site Requirements for the land, Oaklee representatives had indicated that their Board would seek to progress the required land transfer from the Council following receipt of full planning permission and full Northern Ireland Housing Executive Project Approval rather than completing the purchase by way of an Advance Land Purchase. The Association had indicated also that it would need to allow up to 18 months to secure full planning permission for the development. Within that 18 month period, Oaklee should have sufficient time to complete the milestone requirements for full Northern Ireland Housing Executive Project Approval of the scheme proposals.

In addition, Oaklee representatives had advised that the Board had approved a proposed social housing scheme and a full planning application for 92 social residential units had been prepared by its design team, which was ready for submission to the Planning Service. The planning application would be made as soon as a contract to purchase had been agreed and community consultations commenced. The Association had indicated further that it would execute a contract to purchase the site within 2 months of the Council's decision to proceed. The purchase would not be completed until it had secured satisfactory planning permission for its social housing development. The receipt of a satisfactory planning consent would trigger the payment of the agreed purchase premium.

The Director pointed out that, should the Council accept the conditional contract to purchase, Oaklee would be in a position to progress planning and commence community consultations within the shortest possible timeframe. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve the disposal of the lands to Oaklee Homes Group for £1,575,000, subject to detailed terms and a conditional contract to purchase being agreed with the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Primrose Street and Seapark Drive**

The Committee noted that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

### **Security of City Hall**

The Chief Executive provided the Members with an update in relation to the work which had been undertaken to the City Hall following the breach which had occurred during the demonstration at the Council meeting on the 3rd of December.

Noted.

### **Good Relations and Equality**

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

### **Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership**

In considering the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 10th December, a Member drew the Committee's attention to the decision under the heading "Bonfire Management Programme - Participant Criteria 2013" not to impose sanctions on participants on the programme who permitted the burning of flags and emblems on their bonfires. He indicated that his Party had some concerns in relation to the decision and requested that the matter be referred back to the Partnership for further consideration at its meeting in January.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that the matter be referred back to the Good Relationship Partnership for further consideration.

### **Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing omission, the Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 10th December and adopted the recommendations in respect of the following:

### **Peace III Implementation Update**

To approve the attendance at a Peace Event in Brussels on 31st January of the Chairman of the Good Relations Partnership (Councillor Hendron) and the Good Relations Manager (or their nominees) and to approve the associated costs.

### **Flying of the Union Flag - Garden of Remembrance**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd December had agreed the following:

“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd November under the heading ‘Flying of the Union Flag at the Belfast City Hall’ be further amended to provide that the Council’s Joint Group of the Party Leaders’ Forum and the Historic Centenary Working Group be requested to consider a proposal that the Union Flag be flown 365 days a year in the civic space in the Garden of Remembrance in the grounds of the City Hall with a view that a report thereon be submitted for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on its meeting of 14th December.”

The Good Relations Manager reported that the aforementioned group had met on 10th December and considered a supplementary legal opinion from Senior Council on the proposed new policy, the advice of the Equality Commission on the issue and the view of the consultant who had undertaken the associated Equality Impact Assessment. Following discussion, the Joint Group had agreed and recommended that, since the proposed new policy had not formed part of the Equality Impact Assessment, the Council should undertake an equality screening process of the proposed policy. The screening process would include scoping the policy to ensure that the policy aims and objectives were fully developed and undertaking appropriate consultations with those organisations and individuals who might be affected by the new proposal. A report outlining the proposed screening process would be submitted to the Joint Diversity Group at its meeting in January, 2013.

The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Joint Diversity Group as set out.

### **Cross-Cutting Issues**

#### **Northern Ireland Better Regulation Strategy**

(Mrs S Toland, Head of Environmental Health, attended into connection with this item.)

The Head of Environmental Health reminded Members that, in 2001, the Northern Ireland Executive had endorsed a Better Regulation Strategy which aimed to reduce the regulatory burdens on businesses, and, in so doing, to encourage and assist the competitiveness and growth of Northern Ireland businesses. To date the Strategy had focused only on the central Northern Ireland Government Departments and had not included the work of local authorities.

She pointed out that, despite not being included, the Council had recognised the potential for the “Better Regulation Strategy” to help improve public protection in a way that was fair and encouraged economic progress. Council Officers had met regularly with representatives from the Department of Energy, Trade and Investment and other Government Departments to discuss Better Regulation and the Council had been working to ensure the principles of Better Regulation were applied to all its enforcement and regulatory approaches.

The Head of Environmental Health explained that key decisions taken to date by the Council in support of Better Regulation included:

- Formally adopting “The Enforcement Concordat” in 2003 and subsequently using its principles of good enforcement as the blue print for all the Council’s enforcement policies thereafter;
- In February, 2009 agreeing, in principle, to the adoption of the “Statement of Intent” between Northern Ireland Councils, the Department of Energy, Trade and Investment and the Local Better Regulation Office. The agreement established the Council’s intentions to have regard to the principles of better regulation, Local Better Regulation Office guidance and to comply with the standards of the Regulators Compliance Code; and
- In December, 2011 the Council agreed its Regulation and Enforcement Policy formally adopting the principles of Better Regulation and aiming to ensure all its regulatory actions are proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent and targeted.

Following a review of the Northern Ireland Executive’s “Better Regulation Strategy” in 2009/2010 it was proposed that the strategy should be extended to cover the regulatory and enforcement work of local authorities. That reflected the significant regulatory responsibilities of councils, particularly in the areas of environmental health, building control and business licensing. Subsequently, earlier in the year, Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, had written to each Council in Northern Ireland to seek formal agreement to extend the scope of the Northern Ireland Better Regulation Strategy to include all of Northern Ireland’s local authorities.

As the Council had consistently worked to ensure the principles of Better Regulation were applied to all its regulatory activities, that was not seen as something new but rather a formalisation of its existing approach. It was, therefore, not envisaged that including local authorities within the strategy would impose an additional resource demand on the Council or its services.

The Head of Environmental Health explained that specifically including the work of local authorities within the strategy was seen as an important step in recognising the important work Councils did in protecting citizens and supporting businesses. It was hoped that it would help build on the existing relationships and further improve



collaboration with government departments, other regulators and stakeholders. Better regulation continued to help encourage business growth and competitiveness and support the Council's Investment Program.

The Committee agreed to:

- (i) Recommend that the Council formally agree that the scope of the Northern Ireland Better Regulation Strategy should be extended to include all of Northern Ireland's local authorities; and
- (ii) That the Lord Mayor write to Arlene Foster MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to confirm its decision.

**Response from the Minister re: Notice of Motion –  
Congenital Cardiac Services**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st November, had passed the following Notice of Motion:

“This Council calls on the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety to assure parents that the future service model for paediatric congenital cardiac services would prioritise the needs of their children; and further calls on the Minister to explore fully an all-island solution with his counterpart, Dr. James Riley.”

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Minister indicating that no decision had yet been reached on the provision of paediatric cardiac surgical services for the population of Northern Ireland and the consultation was still ongoing. The Minister had also stated that in parallel with the consultation process, the Health and Social Care Board would continue to complete a robust analysis of the current arrangements for children including those with congenital cardiac disease to determine the best way to deliver those the services.

The Committee noted the receipt of the correspondence.

Chairman