

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 25th January, 2013

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman); and
Councillors Reynolds, Browne, Campbell, Newton,
Attwood, Convery, Corr, Haire, Hanna, Hussey, Jones,
Lavery, Maskey, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín,
Ó Muilleoir and Newton

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Estates Manager;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apology

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

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Haire declared an interest in item 4(a), viz., Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality, in so far as it related to the application by County Grand Orange Lodge in that he was a member of the Lodge.

Finance/Value-for-Money

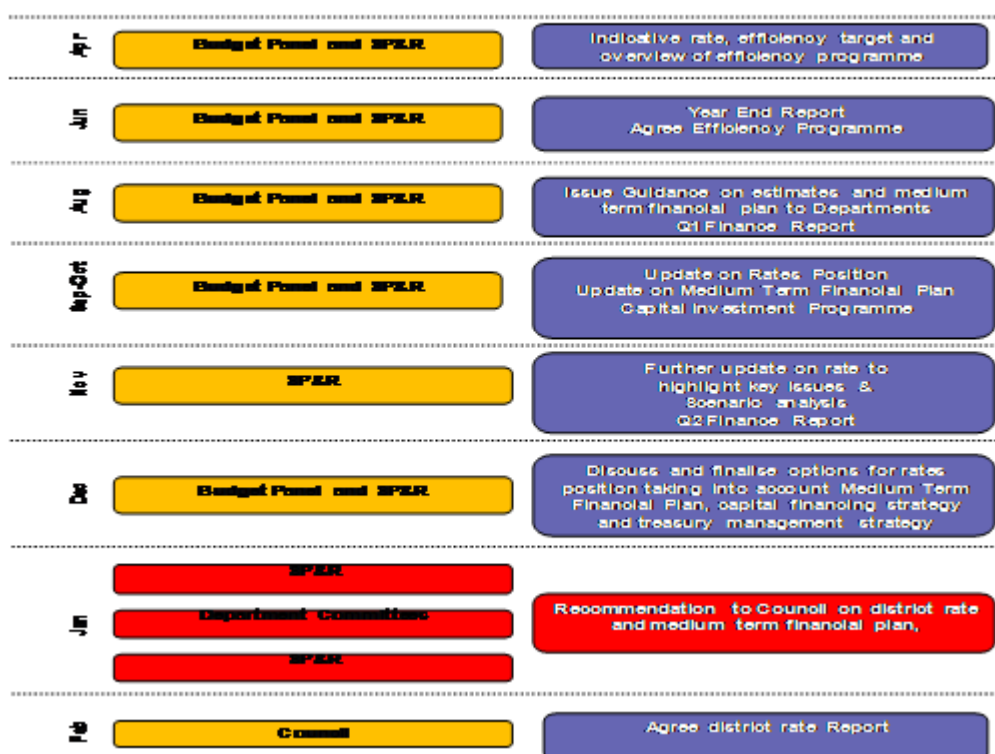
Financial Estimates and District Rate 2013/14

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will recall that the following process has been agreed for the setting of the district rate and agreeing the estimates for 2013/14.**

Agreed rate setting process for 2013/14



1.2 At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 11 January 2013, Members approved the following recommendations in relation to the 2013/14 revenue estimates, which would result in a zero increase in the district rate for 2013/14:

1. That the total amount to be raised through the district rate for 2013/14 of £129,716,357
2. That the revenue estimates for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the cash limit for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of £32,514,524 for 2013/14.
3. That the cash limit for the Town Planning Committee of £10,000 for 2013/14.
4. That the following departmental cash limits should apply for 2013/14:
 - Health and Environmental Services Department £39,221,866
 - Parks and Leisure Department £23,631,236
 - Development Department £19,229,488

5. That the general reserves will not be enhanced through the district rate in 2013/14
6. That a central budget of £843,000 to make provision for a 1% pay rise. This budget will be retained centrally under the control of the Director of Finance and Resources and only released to departments on the basis of a nationally agreed pay award.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to consider the district rate increase for 2013/14, including the domestic and non-domestic rate increase, following the presentation of the detailed revenue estimates reports and cash limits to the to the standing committees.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The table below summarises the revenue estimates for Belfast City Council for 2013/14 based on a Zero District Rate increase.

<u>REVENUE ESTIMATES</u>	<u>2013/14</u>
	£
Policy and Resources Committee	32,514,524
Development Committee	19,229,488
Parks and Leisure Committee	23,631,236
Health and Environmental Services Committee	39,221,866
Town Planning Committee	10,000
Employee Pay Rise	<u>843,000</u>
NET DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE	115,450,114
WASTE FUND CONTRIBUTION	2,600,000
CAPITAL FINANCING	10,137,676
BELFAST INVESTMENT FUND	6,000,000
LESS GENERAL EXCHEQUER GRANT	<u>(4,471,433)</u>
AMOUNT TO BE RAISED THROUGH DISTRICT RATE	<u>129,716,357</u>

2.2 Standing Committees

Detailed reports on the revenue estimates and departmental cash limits were considered and agreed by each Standing committee during the period 10 - 16 January 2013

2.3 Key Messages

A summary of the key messages and lines to take in relation to the setting of the district rate for 2013/14 has been prepared by the Head of Corporate Communications and included as Appendix A to this report.

2.4 Impact on Ratepayer

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%. A zero rate set by the council will mean that a ratepayer's total bill will increase by 1.49%. The table included in Appendix B illustrates the monetary impact on average property types.

3 Recommendations

3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report and agree:

- **That the increase in the district rate for 2013/14 should be zero, based on an Estimated Penny Product of £4,800,110 which means that the domestic rate for 2013/14 is recommended to be 0.3094p and the non domestic rate to be 27.0236p."**

Moved by Councillor Attwood,
Seconded by Councillor McVeigh,

That the Council be recommended to approve the expenditure contained within the Departmental Estimates and, further to this, that the following District Rate be fixed to meet the estimated expenditure of the several Committees of the Council for the Financial Year commencing 1st April, 2013:

Non-Domestic Rate – 27.0236 pence
Domestic Rate – 0.3094 pence

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

North Foreshore: Tender for Repair and Maintenance Contract for Landfill Gas Monitoring

The Committee approved the commencement of a tendering exercise in relation to the procurement of a repair and maintenance contract for landfill gas infrastructure, leachate monitoring stations and minor site maintenance at the North Foreshore site for a period of three years.

The Committee noted that, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, the contract would be awarded by the Director of Property and Projects to the most advantageous tender submitted.

Tender for the Supply and Delivery of Tyres and Tubes

The Committee approved the commencement of a tendering exercise for the supply and delivery of vehicle and mobile plant tyres and tubes, at an estimated cost of £105,000 per annum, for a period of one year, with an option to renew annually up to a maximum of three years. In accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, the contract would be awarded by the Director of Property and Projects to the most advantageous tender submitted.

The Committee noted that the current contract had been due to terminate on 31st January, 2013 and, in order to allow the new contract to be put in place, agreed to extend the existing contract at current prices until 31st March, 2013.

Replacement of the Lord Mayor's Official Vehicle

The Committee agreed to defer, for a period of six months, consideration of a report in relation to the replacement of the Lord Mayor's official vehicle.

Proposed Package of Support to Businesses

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

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At its meeting on 11 January, the SP&R Committee considered information about the impact of flag demonstrations on local businesses, including feedback which had been received from a number of local traders and representative organisations. In response, Committee agreed that the Lord Mayor and Chair of SP&R would convene a number of meetings with key stakeholders within the retail and hospitality industries to explore how the Council could provide support to the retail and hospitality industries and mitigate any negative impacts on the image and reputation of Belfast.**

- 1.2 An initial meeting was convened with representatives from the retail and hospitality sectors on Jan 15th which was also attended by party leaders or their representatives. Attendees outlined the impact that they had felt since the protests began, with the hospitality industry stating that they had lost 25-30% of business since the beginning of December. It was agreed at the meeting that a recovery programme was required for Belfast to drive footfall back into Belfast and to counteract the negative media of recent weeks across the world. In addition to a longer term recovery programme, immediate short term actions were considered vital.**
- 1.3 Immediate issues raised by stakeholders in attendance at the engagement session included:**
- The need for additional promotional and animation activity to drive footfall back into the city – businesses highlighted that decline in cash-flow was linked to the decline in footfall;**
 - The need for representation to be made to the VAT and rates authorities in terms of payment plans and the exploration of potential for a workable hardship scheme;**
 - The need for a series of counterbalancing activities and messages aimed at getting local people back into the city;**
 - The need to quantify impact in order to assess the efficacy of interventions;**
 - The need to for urgency in taking forward the actions identified.**
- 1.4 In this context, and as directed by the Committee, Council officers have been engaging with stakeholders to create a proposed programme of interventions to address these issues. This has included work with Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, Chamber, Pubs of Ulster, NI Hotels Federation and other agencies to create a bespoke marketing campaign and city animation programme to drive footfall into businesses. Discussions have also been held with the Department of Finance and Personnel and Land and Property Services. This report sets out proposed interventions including:**
- 1. Cash Flow Assistance**
 - 2. Promotion – Marketing Support Plan (Backin’ Belfast)**
 - 3. City Animation Programme**
 - 4. Local Area Support**
 - 5. Medium Term Actions**

- 1.5 The report will also address the resource implications of the plans, media and communications and monitoring of outcomes. The report is also being brought before the SP&R Committee because the Committee is being asked to approve funding for the interventions from the Council's reserves.

2 **Key Issues – proposed interventions**

Cash Flow Assistance

- 2.1 As Members will be aware a number of the proposals coming forward from traders for support included exploring the potential for a “rates holiday” or reduction in rates bills for affected businesses. The Finance Minister, on 14 January, stated that the proposal coming forward in relation to rates would require changes to rating policy which would require consultation and primary legislation.
- 2.2 Stakeholders also asked for information and advice on payment plans and the potential to re-profile rates and VAT payments. Council officers have been liaising with officials in the relevant agencies about how this information can be disseminated and support provided. A communication plan is being developed to ensure that all those affected are aware of the sources of advice and support on these issues and are made aware of the options available to them.

Promotion – Marketing Support Plan (Backin’ Belfast)

- 2.3 At the Committee’s meeting on 11th January, Members had been concerned that any response to the economic impacts being felt by local traders should be developed in liaison with those affected. BVCB along with their contracted agencies produced a draft marketing campaign which was considered at a stakeholder meeting on 18th January. Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Pubs of Ulster, NI Hotels Federation and N Ireland Independent Retailers Association were invited to review the proposals. The meeting agreed that in the short term the focus had to be on support for the evening economy especially the pubs, restaurants and hotels. Objectives were agreed as follows:
- To drive footfall back into the city
 - To restore confidence amongst the citizens and businesses
 - To harness and build civic pride
 - To create positive experiences and messages

- 2.4 The resulting campaign, entitled ‘Backin’ Belfast’ is aimed at the people of Belfast primarily, including residents and commuters. It is intended that implementation begin immediately and run to 31 March 2013. The potential for extension beyond this initial phase will be considered as the campaign unfolds.**
- 2.5 John Keane, Managing Director of Ardmore Advertising will be available to present a short overview of the programme at the Committee meeting. As Members will see, the approach involves a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure an integrated, co-ordinated and consistent promotional campaign across all available marketing platforms including, social media, radio, television, digital, press, outdoor promotions (e.g. building wrap, posters etc...) as well as fully integrated and supporting PR and promotional activity around events, promotions animation and endorsements. Owing to the need to make immediate impact, there will be an initial a focus on social media. The campaign has included input not only from stakeholders in the hospitality and retail sectors but also communications and marketing experts.**
- 2.6 The campaign has already received considerable support from the sector with widespread buy-in from individual businesses as well as the representative bodies. Indeed the proposed programme is the culmination of the industry’s proactive response to the process initiated by Council at the meeting on 15 January. An information session hosted by BVCB on the evening of 23 January was well attended by the industry and there was strong support for the proposals and for them to be put forward to the Council and central government for consideration and funding.**
- 2.7 Budget required for Marketing Campaign: The promotional campaign ‘Backin’ Belfast’ has been costed at £750,000 for delivery until 31 March. The key costs are taken up with the costs of design, production and broadcast/communication of key elements of the campaign.**
- 2.8 The Finance Minister and Economy Minister have now met with representatives from the trade associations and stated that £600k will be made available through DETI to support the campaign. It is recommended that the Council provide the balancing finance of £150k.**

City Animation Programme

- 2.9 In order to support the promotional campaign it is essential that a city animation programme is put in place to create a welcoming atmosphere and act as additional drawing points to attract people back into the city. This is a similar approach to the intervention which Members agreed before the Christmas period to boost trade figures. Intensive work has been underway to develop a further animation programme which will be integrated with and complementary to the marketing campaign. Presently the Council is ready to commence a major programme of activity which will embody and reflect the messages of the “Backin’ Belfast” campaign. The animation programme will centre around the weekends over the campaign period between now and 31 March.
- 2.10 A wide range of ideas have already been collated, sifted and assessed for suitability to date and a report containing more detail with respect to the animation programme will be brought to the Development Committee for consideration at its meeting on 29 January. Programming will take place in both indoor and outdoor spaces within the city centre such as the Castlecourt, Victoria Square, St Georges Market, Council facilities as well as within restaurants and bars that have entertainment licences; Proposed outdoor spaces to be used include City Hall grounds (non grass areas) , squares such as Bank square, St Anne’s. Square, Cotton Court and Cornmarket.
- 2.11 The Council is also offering support to pubs, restaurants and hotels in programming additional activity and in matching potential animation activity with new spaces and places across the evening economy sector.
- 2.12 Budget required for Animation Programme: A budget of up to £250,000 is required to deliver the level of animation programme required to have a significant impact over the coming weeks. It is proposed that the cost of the animation programme is covered by the Council since this programme is key to attracting the footfall needed to improve the situation for local traders.

Impact on traders outside the city centre

- 2.13 Members have also emphasised the importance of addressing the impact of the demonstrations in other parts of the city. Therefore, additional meetings have taken place between BCC officers and representatives of East Belfast traders. The

Traders are supportive of the 'Backin' Belfast' campaign but are seeking Council support for a Shop Local/Spend Local campaign centred on the East as an immediate way of dealing with the downturn in trade. This campaign would complement and augment the Backin' Belfast campaign in an area significantly impacted by the protests, cost is unlikely to exceed £20,000.

- 2.14 Members have also made officers aware of requests for support from traders in other parts of the city. It is therefore recommended that a report on local support for traders is brought to the Development Committee and that interventions are supported, as far as possible, through the Development Department's budgets. The SP&R Committee will be updated on progress and any resource issues which arise.

Impact and Monitoring

- 2.15 Information on the impact of the demonstrations continues to be collected so that this can inform the targeting of campaigns and help monitor the impact of interventions. Feedback from traders and representative organisations continues to point to significant detrimental impact on footfall in the city centre at specific times, notably on Saturday afternoons and on evenings when social media reports suggest there will be blockages in the city.
- 2.16 In order to assess the on-going impact and the extent to which interventions such as 'Backin' Belfast' are working, action is being taken to provide robust monitoring information that can be used for on-going planning purposes, action includes:
- Collation of information from across the hospitality sector to provide a qualitative and quantitative indication of business performance during Christmas period and early January (this is being collated by the industry).
 - At present, BVCB is conducting a phone survey of their 500 members and will undertake a similar follow up survey after the first phase of activity to gauge impact.
 - BVCB have also engaged STR Global who will provide monthly reports on hotel performance in the city by the 20th February (for January), 20th March (for February) and so on.
 - The Hotel Federation and Pubs of Ulster are collating information from their members and these will be forwarded to Council on a weekly basis. This will

- include occupancy figures, room rates and revenue.
- Through the Council's Tourism Monitor contract with Millward Brown Ulster, we have incorporated a number of questions onto the NI omnibus survey to ascertain impact on decisions to visit the city. These surveys are conducted monthly.
- Information from Translink on passenger numbers.

Communication and media - announcement

- 2.17 If it is decided today to provide financial support for the Backin' Belfast campaign, it is proposed that a press announcement would take place immediately after the committee meeting.
- 2.18 It is suggested that the media be invited to the reception area of City Hall at 1pm for the announcement. It is important that the Lord Mayor, Party Group Leaders, and the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee are represented at the announcement.
- 2.19 The media will be offered individual interviews and photo-opportunities immediately afterwards. We will also have representatives of the business community present to welcome the announcement. The Head of Corporate Communications will be in attendance at the Committee meeting on 25th January to discuss the logistics in detail

Longer-term promotional activity and addressing the impact on the wider tourist and visitor market

- 2.20 Whilst it is necessary to react with urgency to the immediate impact being felt by businesses and to focus on getting the people who live in and work in Belfast back into the city, it is important that a coherent, integrated, strategic approach is taken to managing the impact on the image of Belfast in the longer term and in the wider tourism market. Consequently, officers are working with government departments and other key agencies, such as the BVCB, NITB and Tourism Ireland Limited to develop an overall approach to overcoming any negative impact on the broader tourism market. This will include consideration of the role which each organisation will play in image and reputation management moving forward. This work will be brought, as it emerges, to the Development Committee so that Members can be fully involved in its development.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

It is proposed that the Council's contribution to the promotional and animation activities totalling £400k is provided from Council reserves. This is one-off non-recurring expenditure to meet an unplanned and critical need at a time of deep economic distress for businesses in Belfast. Action is being taken in order to meet this need and also mitigate the risk of a significant future impact on the Council's rates base with attendant risks to the Council's ability to deliver services and invest in the city. It is also to mitigate against job loss and business closure which would ultimately undermine the city's visitor offer.

Human Resources

None at present.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 Interventions have the potential to improve good relations.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are requested to approve that a total sum of £400k, financed from reserves, be made available, of which £150k will support the promotional campaign 'Backin' Belfast' in order to:

- drive footfall back into the city
- restore confidence amongst the citizens and businesses
- harness and build civic pride
- create positive experiences and messages

This will match a sum of £600k being provided by DETI.

5.2 The remaining £250k will provide animation activity, as outlined, to augment and complement this campaign, building on the animation activity funded by Council in the run-up to Christmas.

5.3 Detailed reports on the animation programme and potential local interventions and will be brought to the Development Committee."

It was reported that Mr. J. Keane, Managing Director, Ardmore Advertising, and Mr. G. Lennon, Chief Executive of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, were in attendance to make a presentation regarding this matter and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

With the assistance of visual aids, Mr. Keane reviewed the Marketing and Support Plan for the “Backin’ Belfast” campaign. He outlined the current position and the objectives which were:

- (i) to drive footfall back into the City now;
- (ii) to restore confidence amongst the citizens and businesses;
- (iii) to harness and build civic pride; and
- (iv) to create positive experiences and messages.

He then highlighted some of the offers which had been received to assist with the campaign, the channels through which it would be communicated and the delivery plan, the social media activity, the public relations and events to promote the campaign.

Mr. Keane and Mr. Lennon then answered a number of questions from the Members, following which the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked them for attending and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee approved a total sum of £400,000, to be financed from reserves, to be made available for the campaign and agreed that £150,000 would be used to support the promotional campaign “Backin’ Belfast”, with the remaining £250,000 to be utilised to provide animation activity, as outlined, to augment and complement the campaign, building on the animation activity which had been funded by the Council in the run-up to Christmas.

The Committee noted also that detailed reports on the animation programme and potential local interventions would be submitted to the Development Committee in due course.

Investment Programme

Outcome of Area Working Groups’ Meetings

(Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts, attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of Contracts submitted for the Committee’s consideration the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At its meeting in April 2012, the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee agreed to convene the Area Working Groups (AWGs) to support effective ‘place-shaping’ and make recommendations to SP&R Committee on investment decisions for the local area including the Local Investment Fund and the Feasibility Fund.**

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Over the past month, all the AWGs have met to discuss outcomes and emerging area plans. A number also made recommendations for SP&R Committee consideration, outlined below.

2.2 West AWG

West AWG agreed that the following projects be recommended to SP&R Committee for feasibility support:

Project	Ref No.	Comments
Glencolin Community Centre / Kids Together	WLIF009 / 037	Potential for a combined feasibility Study
Falls Bowling Club/Holy Child Primary School	WLIF038	Feasibility Study
Donegal Celtic	WLIF049	Feasibility Study
Clonard Community Centre	WLIF053	Feasibility Study

2.3 Greater Shankill AWG

On the basis of the information presented, the Shankill AWGs agreed to recommend to the SP&R Committee the following as feasibility projects:

Project	Ref No.	Comments
Lower Shankill Skate Area	SHLIF020	Feasibility study
Welcome Church, Cambrai Street	SHLIF022	Feasibility study
Argyle Business Park	SHLIF024	Feasibility study for development/expansion*

* ***Councillor Kingston declared an interest in this project and took no part in the discussion***

In relation to the Local Investment Fund, the Greater Shankill AWG made the following recommendation for the consideration of the SP&R Committee:

2.4 East AWG

The East AWG considered the potential for feasibility support and recommend to the SP&R the following as feasibility projects:

Project	Ref No.	Comments
Templemore Avenue	ELIF012	Feasibility study
Bloomfield Community Association	ELIF 024	Feasibility study

The AWG also discussed the availability of other funding streams, and the Council review of Leisure in consideration of what could be available to the area and the necessity for a planned approach to maximise the potential impact for the East of the City.

2.5 North AWG

On the basis of the information presented, the North AWG made the following recommendation for the consideration of the SP&R Committee:

Proposal	Ref No.	Up to £	AWG Comments
Westland Community Centre	NLIF014	£65,000	Subject to match funding being obtained within 12 months
Deanby Youth Club	NLIF 030	£70,000	Subject to match funding being obtained within 12 months
Jolly Roger Community Centre	NLIF044	£32,219	
Courtyard (Small Steps)	NLIF055	£30,281	Subject to match funding being obtained within 12 months

2.6 South AWG

As part of the outcomes workshop, South AWG noted the potential opportunity available at the Ulidia Resource Centre on the Ormeau Road. The South AWG considered the potential for feasibility support and recommend to the SP&R the following as a feasibility project:

Project	Ref No.	Comments
Ulidia Resource Centre	SLIF063	Feasibility study

3.0 Equality Implications

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

4.0 Resource Implications

Human: Resources are currently being allocated to individual projects.

Financial: Proposed allocations as outlined in the report and summary detailed below:

AWG	(A) Total LIF allocation	(B) Amount Allocated June - Dec 2012	(C) Proposals in this report	(D) Projected Allocation (B) + (C)	Remaining Allocation (A) - (D)
East	£1,127,500	£860,852.00	£0.00	£860,852.00	£266,648.00
South	£1,127,500	£874,541.40	£0.00	£874,541.40	£252,958.60
West	£1,127,500	£1,127,500.00	£0.00	£1,127,500.00	£0.00
North	£1,127,500	£930,000.00	£197,500.00	£1,127,500.00	£0.00
Shankill	£490,000	£408,000.00	£30,000.00	£438,000.00	£52,000.00
TOTAL	£5,000,000	£4,200,893.40	£227,500.00	£4,428,393.40	£571,606.60

5.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

1. Endorse the Feasibility Fund recommendations, arising from the individual Area Working Group, as set out above; and
2. Approve in principle the allocation of Local Investment Funding, as agreed by the Greater Shankill Area Working Group and North Area Working Group."

The Head of Contracts reported that, subsequent to the report having been issued, two of the Working Groups, that is, the East and West Area Working Groups, had held meetings and were looking to have the undernoted decisions approved by the Committee:

- **East Area Working Group**

The East Area Working Group had agreed, at its meeting on 23rd January, to add application number ELIF011- Development of a New Ballymac Friendship Centre to the list of projects being subjected to a feasibility study which was to update the Ballymac Friendship Centre's 2011 Economic Appraisal.

- **West Area Working Group**

The Committee was reminded that it had previously agreed to provide £100,000 of intervention funding to each of the Area Working Groups for specific initiatives relevant to their particular areas. Whilst most of the Groups were still considering the use of the fund, the West Area Working Group had agreed to use the monies to lever in funding for an integrated multi-agency plan to address anti-social behaviour, criminal activity and environmental degradation in the Lower Falls area. This was due to start this weekend with a community clean-up in the area, with some environmental improvements being included in the near future.

The Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report and approved the two additional projects which had been submitted on behalf of the East and West Area Working Groups.

North Foreshore Giant's Park – Site Disposal

The Committee was reminded that it had agreed previously that the North Foreshore should be developed for waste management, bio-economy and recreational uses. The regeneration bio-economy proposals comprised the development of an environmental resource park to create an innovative "Green Technology Business Cluster" for Belfast. That would have the benefit of diversifying the economy to encourage investment and job creation. The development of a green technology business park at the North Foreshore was included within the Investment Programme 2013 - 2015 and the Council had submitted a £8 million European Regional Development Fund application to develop the infrastructure for that environmental resource park. Invest NI and the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment were currently assessing the application and a decision was expected in Spring 2013.

The Estates Manager reported that the Council had already started the regeneration of the North Foreshore with the development of a waste transfer station; a landfill gas electricity generation power plant; and an agreement for a lease with arc21/NWP for an in-vessel composting facility. Within the area reserved as an environmental business park, the Council had approved also the release of a Development Brief for the disposal of a site for a commercial anaerobic digestion facility. An independent financial due diligence exercise on the submissions which had been received was currently underway. In addition, and following the Committee's approval on 24th August, 2012, a Development Brief had also been issued for a commercial leisure and cultural development on land to the west of the North Foreshore site and submissions had been due to be returned by 24th January, with reports to be submitted to the Committee on both those proposals in the near future.

The Estates Manager explained that the proposals for an environmental resource park and the creation of a cleantech cluster were generating a lot of interest from private companies and investors wishing to invest in new cleantech technologies, particularly in the production of renewable energy. The recent release of the Development Brief for the anaerobic digestion facility had generated further queries for potential cleantech renewable energy investment and development opportunities, particularly from the biogas renewable energy sector. There was now an opportunity to capture that cleantech investment interest and promote the development of the environmental technology renewable energy business cluster. In order to test the market and harness the interest which had been recently expressed, it was proposed to release on the open market a further Developers Brief for the disposal, by way of lease, of a three acre site for a cleantech use utilising biogas renewable energy technology.

The Committee granted approval for the release of a Developers Brief for the disposal, by way of lease, of a site at the North Foreshore for a cleantech use utilising biogas renewal energy technology and noted that a report would be submitted to the Committee in due course following the receipt and evaluation of any submissions.

Leisure Estate Review Update and Next Steps

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant background information

1.1 Under the Investment Programme Implementation Plan, agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2012, it was agreed that a project would be initiated to enable the re-development of the leisure estate and that research would be undertaken to develop options.

1.2 Deloitte was appointed to undertake a piece of work to provide an evidence base on Belfast’s leisure estate needs, specifically the current status of the leisure estate and outline options drawing on best practice, in the context of the Review of Public Administration.

2. Key issues

2.1 Deloitte report

The Deloitte report is nearing final draft form. It is recommended that the full report is presented to a special joint meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Parks and Leisure Committee, to which all members of Council will be invited, in early February.

The Deloitte report has six main sections which are outlined below:

1. *Urgency of internal case for change* – costs; aging assets; delivering outcomes; terms and conditions; not fit for modern purpose
2. *Urgency of external case for change* – strategic opportunities esp. stadia; health inequalities horizon; customer and partner expectations
3. *Guiding principles*
4. *Options for going forward* – status quo, etc. and assessment against principles
5. *Models for delivery* – NPDO (Non Profit Distributing Organisation e.g. social enterprise or trust), private sector, internal transformation programme, etc. and assessment against principles
6. *Conclusion* – need for transformation plan and speedy, bold decisions.

Agreement on the guiding principles will facilitate the next stages of the review process, in particular, the development of a financing strategy to meet Members' ambitions for the transformation of the leisure estate.

2.2 Member feedback

In informal discussions with Members, the following points have been raised in relation to the review of leisure:

- There is a need for urgent action on the leisure estate, particularly regarding the Windsor and Casement stadia developments as phase 1 of that process;
There is a need to reduce the cost to the rate-payer and to re-focus the service towards delivering health outcomes;
Importance of working in partnership, including with schools and universities;
There is a need for a sustained and positive engagement with the trade unions, to enable a fundamental review of working practices as well as provide job security;
The need for balanced investment across the city and there was no 'one-size-fits-all' provision model.

The Executive Summary strongly emphasises the Members' and partners' opinion that there is an urgent case for change

2.3 Drivers for change

There are four key drivers for change:

Financial: the subsidy for leisure services and average annual cost to the ratepayer is currently £8.01 million. The physical improvement of the leisure estate is dependent on the Council's agreed medium term financial strategy, the success of service improvements and the future business model. Cash savings within the leisure budget will form a key element of the strategy to finance future physical investments.

Health outcomes: the worst nine wards in Northern Ireland in terms of health deprivation are in Belfast. There needs to be a sharpened focus on improving health outcomes – getting more people, more active, more often – and the transformation of the physical leisure estate will only partially achieve the Council's ambitions in this regard.

Strategic opportunities: there are a number of imminent strategic opportunities for the Council to maximise its investment in the future provision of a fit-for-purpose leisure estate, including the stadia developments, Girdwood, health estate review and Social Investment Fund.

Review of Public Administration: from 2015, Belfast will incorporate large areas of Castlereagh and Lisburn district councils. Plans need to be made now to ensure adequate leisure and recreational facilities are available, particularly with the likelihood that the rate burden in these areas will be increased to be brought into line with the rest of the city.

2.4 Guiding principles

Deloitte recommend the following guiding principles to inform future decisions regarding leisure provision:

Quality: Council leisure facilities should be fit for purpose, attractive and welcoming.

Focus on health and well-being outcomes: Working with others to improve the health of the population, especially those most in need, and those with the most to gain, is an essential priority to improve individual and community quality of life and if we are

to limit the cost to our society and our economy of avoidable ill-health.

Value for money: Future Council investment in its leisure estate should focus on provision of a value for money leisure service demonstrated through user numbers, health and well-being outcomes and financial metrics. The physical asset base will need to maximise efficiency and income generation opportunities across Council assets and, ultimately, the wider public estate.

Balanced investment and accessibility: There should be sufficient provision within each quarter of the city of wet, dry, health and fitness facilities that cater for a diversity of activity and meets the needs of different ages and abilities. The facilities should be well-connected, welcoming and safe, and promote connectivity, cohesion, 'shared-ness' and access for all.

Partnership: Partnering opportunities (for example, with adjacent Councils, private sector, education estate and universities etc) and strategic opportunities should be actively explored, pursued and integrated into the transformation plan.

Affordability: A capital financing strategy will be required to support the building of a new leisure estate. This strategy will need to be considered in the context of current capital financing requirements and the commitment, as part of the Investment Programme, to set the district rate at inflation or below for the next three years. Financing will need to include revenue savings generated from within the leisure budget. A key element of the transformation of leisure provision will be to ensure its sustainability, in terms of programming and ongoing running costs.

These sit within the context of the Investment Programme principles.

2.5 Physical Investment

Members have stressed the need to maximise the opportunities for joint investments, to deliver greater collaboration between organisations and value for money for rate-payers. The emerging physical transformation plan includes the following strategic opportunities:

Phase	Transformation of Leisure Estate
1.	<p>Strategic asset opportunities under Investment Programme:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Windsor and Casement Stadia; Girdwood; Whiterock Community Corridor; Templemore Baths</p> <p>Potential partners: DCAL; IFA; GAA; DSD; Health Trust; SEUPB</p>
2.	<p>Strategic asset opportunities under reform of local government including:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Avoniel; Robinson Centre; Andersonstown; Lagmore/Poleglass and Brook Activity/Colin</p> <p>Potential partners: Castlereagh BC; BMC; SIB; Lisburn City Council</p>
3.	<p>Strategic asset opportunities towards a 'One Public Estate'⁽¹⁾ approach including:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ballysillan; Ozone; Shankill; BCC community centres</p> <p>Potential partners: Community sector; QUB; DE</p>

External funders such as DCAL and SEUPB have strict funding timeframes which determine an uncompromising project delivery timeline. For example, a decision to commit to the stadia opportunities as phase 1 of the leisure estate review will have to be made by May 2013.

A separate report on the stadia is on the agenda for this Committee. This contextualises the stadia as Phase 1 of the leisure transformation process and references the principles outlined above.

2.6 Service Transformation

1. *Outcomes*

Members have outlined an ambition to substantially increase the focus on delivering better health outcomes. While it is acknowledged that there are some excellent examples of health-focused participation programmes run in leisure centres including examples such as the Healthwise referral programmes; Active Communities schools and youth programme; and the recent Olympic legacy programme, there is further opportunity to increase this work and tailor these outcomes to local need.

2. Finance

The second key element of the service transformation programme will be the realisation of cash savings from the leisure budget which will be required to part-finance Members' capital investment ambitions. This will include increased income, reduced running costs and improved participation levels and partnership funding.

In order to deliver these two elements, aligned and integral to the physical investment programme, it is recommended that there is a complementary plan, which will make provision for:

- Business model for delivery
- Programming and participation
- Partnership development
- Ways of working e.g. terms and conditions
- Marketing and membership sales
- Online capacity
- Performance management.

Further political discussion is needed to fully explore service transformation including the business model options presented.

2.7 Staff and trade union engagement

Staff and trade unions have been and continue to be briefed on the review process. They are aware of the unsustainable levels of subsidy going into leisure services each year and the increasing public and political pressure to provide a value for money service which demonstrates significant delivery of health outcomes.

Job security is a key driver for staff and intensive engagement with staff and the trade unions over the coming months will be a key strand of the development of the transformation plan.

2.8 Process to develop Transformation Plan

It is proposed that over the coming months, on the basis of in-depth consultation with Members and partners, and seeking external advice and expertise as deemed appropriate, a transformation plan needs to be developed to realise the opportunities in the leisure estate review. This will examine two work-streams, over three phases (as at 2.5):

Defining the physical investment programme including political agreement on financing strategy and phasing of developments; and
Defining service transformation programme including political agreement on business model and efficiencies.

Based on this engagement, a draft transformation plan will be presented for consideration by both the Parks and Leisure Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee by May 2013. This implementation-focussed plan will inform Committee in order to make the necessary decisions to invest in the stadia, as part of Phase 1 of the transformation plan.

2.9 Next steps

These two work-streams, over the next 3 months, will include significant engagement with Members and stakeholders, including party group briefings and workshops with input from relevant experts and other local authorities.

2.10 Conclusion

The potential scale of the change presented by the review of leisure, and the ambition of Members to deliver a re-vitalised, fit-for-purpose leisure provision, present both enormous opportunities and challenges to the Council. This is alongside major programmes of work in relation to the commitments in the Investment Programme as well as the reform of local government. The resource implications for successful implementation of the two work-streams over the three phases for review of leisure will be fully assessed as part of the development process for the transformation plan and regular reports brought to Committee for their consideration.

3.0 Decisions required

Committee is asked:

To agree the principles for going forward (above at 2.3);
To agree the three phases of the physical asset transformation plan (above at 2.5), with a complementary service transformation process;
To agree to a special joint meeting with the Parks and Leisure Committee, to receive a presentation on the full Deloitte report; and
To authorise officers to facilitate party group briefings on the leisure review, as requested.

4.0 Resource Implications

Human: This will be a major physical and service transformation process and the resource implications for implementation will be fully assessed as part of the development of the transformation plan.

Financial: The costs for any external support required to develop the transformation plan will be made within existing departmental revenue budgets.

Depending on political agreement, there is potentially capital costs of up to £60m over a period of 5 years which will have to form part of the Council's medium terms financial planning arrangements.

Assets: None at present.

5.0 Equality Implications

The Leisure Estate Review will be screened at periodic intervals in line with the Council's equality obligations."

During discussion in the matter, a Member referred to a previous decision of the Council to close the Maysfield Leisure Centre and that a proposed replacement of that centre with a facility at the Ormeau Park had not been realised. He made the point that there were limited leisure facilities for the people in the area surrounding Maysfield and that that had not been addressed within the report.

In response, the Director of Parks and Leisure explained that there would be a phased approach to the review of the leisure estate and that there was a need to look, in association with other partners, at what was required by communities and that the area surrounding Maysfield would be considered in due course.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Windsor Park and Casement Park Stadium Developments: Inclusive Strategies for Olympia and Andersonstown

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Under the Investment Programme Implementation Plan, agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2012, it was agreed that a project would be initiated to enable the re-

development of the leisure estate. Deloitte were appointed by the Council to assist in undertaking research to develop options. There is a separate report on this review at Committee this month.

- 1.2 The significant investment by DCAL, IFA and GAA into the stadium developments at Casement Park and Windsor Park fits with the review of the leisure estate and presents major strategic opportunities for the Council to begin a transformation plan for the estate.**
- 1.3 The NI Executive has committed significant investment towards local sports facilities including £25.2m to the IFA for the redevelopment of Windsor Park and £61.4m to the GAA for the redevelopment of Casement Park, which is further supported by other funding. Appointment of a contractor for Windsor Park is planned for July 2013 and for Casement Park by September 2013.**
- 1.4 Recent public consultation by IFA and GAA on the stadia designs and feedback from members highlighted interest in potential synergy with the council's assets in proximity, in particular:**
 - Windsor Park – Olympia Leisure Centre/Community Centre, Boucher Road Playing Fields, and**
 - Casement Park – Andersonstown Leisure Centre.**
- 1.5 On 14 June 2012 the Parks & Leisure Committee received a report on these stadia developments and was updated on a report by Deloitte commissioned by the Council on potential added value and regeneration impact.**
- 1.6 On 22 June 2012 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee received a report on both stadia. Committee gave approval in principle for:**
 - an access for construction traffic at Windsor Park;**
 - a feasibility study on Windsor/Olympia/Midgley;**
 - and**
 - consideration of the future development of leisure facilities at Andersonstown in the context of the wider strategic review of leisure.**
- 1.7 At a special meeting of the Parks & Leisure Committee on 12 November 2012 the IFA provided a presentation on the Windsor Park development.**

1.8 On 14 December 2012, the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee received a stadia update and agreed that:

- A further report and timetable would be submitted to the committee in line with the leisure review report which was due in January;
- GAA would be invited to make a presentation to Council on Casement Park;
- Officers will continue working on a strategy with DCAL, IFA and GAA to ensure the greatest mutual benefit in terms of community gain from these projects and to report back in January in the context of the leisure review.

2 Key Issues

Potential opportunities

- 2.1 The new stadia will impact on the entire city, however Members have emphasised their aspirations that the Council works to ensure enhancements for communities adjacent to both stadia. This is an opportunity to realise the potential socio-economic benefits and work towards an enhanced community provision.
- 2.2 The new iconic stadia are on an aggressive timeline for delivery. There is a limited window of opportunity for the Council to take advantage of the potential regeneration opportunities arising from these massive projects.
- 2.3 DCAL has recently insisted that both major refurbishments demonstrate strong community benefits and has now approached the Council for support. In anticipation of this, the Council has been working on potential options for the sites. DCAL will need details of any inclusive Council regeneration and a decision on any agreed funding commitment for new centres and associated works by the end of May 2013.
- 2.4 DCAL's Regional Stadium Programme requires the development of opportunities for the stadia to be a catalyst for change, sharing facilities with all of the local community and developing participation as integrated organisations.
- 2.5 In their report Deloitte recommend the following principles to inform future decisions regarding leisure provision:
- **Quality:** Council leisure facilities should be fit for purpose, attractive and welcoming
 - **Outcomes-focussed:** Working with others to improve the health of the population

- **Balanced investment and accessibility:** A hierarchy of provision within each quarter of the city, safe and well-connected
- **Partnership:** Partnering and strategic opportunities will be actively explored and pursued
- **Affordability:** A financial strategy for the renewal of the estate in the context of current capital financing requirements and the commitment, as part of the Investment Programme, to set the district rate at inflation or below for the next three years. Financing will also need to include revenue savings generated from within the leisure budget.
- **Value for money:** demonstrated through user numbers, health and well-being outcomes and financial metrics.

2.6 Members will be aware that in 2011 Deloitte was commissioned by the Council to look at the potential for wider regeneration impacts that might be achieved through the Stadia projects. This was shared at the time with the relevant Government departments and sports governing bodies. Due to government processes and the need for the IFA and GAA to meet delivery dates it is only now that DCAL, IFA, Linfield, GAA and DSD have all shown support for inclusive regeneration around the stadia. DSD's Belfast Regeneration Office has also recently approached the Council expressing an interest in partnership delivery through complementary public realm activity.

2.7 Discussions are underway with Invest NI and DCAL on the development of procurement opportunities for local companies in the supply chain management for DCAL's three stadia projects. Associated with this, a paper on social benefit clauses within the stadia contracts and their impact will also be brought to the Development Committee in February regardless of a decision on our investment within the inclusive stadia strategies.

2.8 A paper will be brought to Development Committee next month updating Members regarding current and potential future community provision at Olympia Community Centre and surrounding area.

2.9 Potential opportunities for the Council could include:

- **Delivery of a range of potential social and economic benefits for the surrounding communities and the city as a whole;**
- **Addressing three council facilities nearing the end of their economically useful life namely Olympia**

Leisure and Community Centre which is 30 years old and Andersonstown Leisure Centre which is 33 years old;

- Facilitating a new prominent boulevard style entrance to the new stadium at Windsor Park providing a more welcoming and visually pleasing entrance from Boucher Road;
- Possible enhanced access to community services through relocation of Olympia Community Centre to a more appropriate location closer to the community;
- The potential creation of a modern 'sports village' at Windsor Park/Olympia through integrated leisure facilities available to the public within the new stadium;
- Integration of a number of public leisure facilities within the new Casement Park stadium;
- The possibility to consider the enhancement of the Andersonstown leisure offering;
- Exploring options to reconfigure the pitch at Midgley Park to enhance stadium access, subject to agreement with Linfield;
- Creating the potential to free up land for valuable commercial opportunities on both Boucher Road and Andersonstown Road, this could potentially include possibilities such as a new hotel or retail space- subject to planning.

Consultation to date

2.10 Clearly the views of the local communities need to be taken into account when developing and considering options for both sites. The IFA and GAA held public consultations in October and November 2012 on the stadium developments. IFA report that no objections were raised to Windsor Park's proposed design, but there were concerns over the construction phase and the management of events. The planning application has since been lodged and highlights a 'construction charter' and an 'event management plan' which aim to address these issues. The SP&R Committee has already agreed that a special meeting be arranged for GAA to present their progress on Casement Park to Members.

2.11 Members will note from the timetable attached at appendix 2 that time has been allowed for the Council to carry out public consultation around proposals for both sites starting in February

Progress

2.12 As per Committee direction, progression of options for the two Council assets is ongoing as Phase 1 of the emerging Leisure Review. Work on Windsor Park / Olympia is more developed at present due to the advancement of the stadium's planning application process and the proximity of Council property.

2.13 Windsor Park / Olympia

- The council commissioned Hamilton Architects, who are also architects for the stadium, to carry out a feasibility study on a range of options that would allow for a more integrated approach and improved access. Options range from simply providing an enhanced pedestrian access to the side of the existing leisure centre, through to an integrated sports village concept with new public leisure and community facilities within the west stand of the stadium. A copy of the initial options has been circulated.
- In line with the emerging leisure estate principles (to be confirmed over the coming months), Options 1 and 2 would appear to be the best fit in terms of maximising socio-economic factors and outcomes, including good quality facilities and social benefits.
- In order to meet Members' aspirations in terms of maximising opportunities, an economic appraisal is being commissioned to provide further analysis of the options in the context of their technical, planning and cost implications and socio-economic impact.
- Departments are working to identify the appropriate recommendation to be brought to Committee regarding the Olympia community services facility. This may include retention at Olympia, relocation to an existing community facility elsewhere in the area, or a new facility.
- Provision of play areas in the local area is a key consideration in the re-development of the area. Preliminary discussions have been initiated to ensure that there are adequate and well-located play facilities in the immediate locality.
- Officers are also working with stadia partners to identify specific requirements for a potential new leisure facility.

- Discussion is ongoing with Linfield on options at Midgley Park in order to facilitate more comprehensive site planning and access.

2.14 Casement Park / Andersonstown

- Concept sketches are being prepared by the stadium architects Consarc on potential layouts to incorporate dry leisure facilities within the stadium. Development of options and an economic appraisal will provide further analysis for Members, aligned with the work underway on Olympia.
- Parks & Leisure department and Property & Projects are also working to identify requirements for a potential new leisure facility taking account of potential public leisure provision within the new Casement Park stadium.
- Discussion is also to take place with local education and sports providers in and around Casement Park to ensure that the appropriate level of
- Any commercial opportunities on the leisure centre site will also be identified alongside a planning appraisal.
- This work on potential options for inclusive stadia regeneration is in line with ongoing discussions with Members on the Leisure Review.

Proposed consultation

2.15 Attendees at the stadia consultations were interested in implications for adjacent Council venues. The Deloitte report on potential added value and regeneration impacts of the stadia highlighted that *'the economic impact of the stadium projects on surrounding neighbourhoods is likely to be minimal without the Council utilising its civic leadership role to prioritise wider investment and to work with local communities to determine positive outcomes that will have long-term, sustainable effect.'* It will be important for the Council to engage with Members, staff and the public now that options are beginning to be developed further.

2.16 Council staff will meet Members to discuss these potential regeneration projects and this will continue into February/March 2013 alongside a period of public consultation. Options on the Windsor Park/Olympia site and initial concepts around Casement Park/Andersonstown will be displayed and wider opinion sought through an engagement process. This will

involve public displays of potential options, local public consultations, stakeholder meetings and online feedback. A further period of consultation would be envisaged in April/May 2013 on more detailed proposals.

Delivery

2.17

- Members have stressed the urgency of this and it will require urgent decisions.
- Members will play an important role in addressing community concerns in consultation.
- The proposed timetable to develop options to the point of delivery is at Appendix 2, and the proposed process is at Appendix 3.
- To ensure inclusive regeneration of council facilities can be undertaken in tandem with these major developments, it would be necessary to advise DCAL regarding any funding commitment from Belfast City Council prior to the anticipated appointment of contractors in May 2013.
- A potential inclusive strategy is dependent on decisions regarding the future of Olympia Community Centre, the leisure requirements for Olympia and Andersonstown, land agreements with Linfield and arrangements with IFA and GAA on potential public use of the stadia.
- Continuity of public service provision and human resource issues are both of paramount importance during any potential construction or relocation of services.
- There are land valuations, legal and planning matters to be addressed, which will all feed into the economic appraisal process.
- In order to fully realise the vision of Phase 1 of the Leisure Review, it is also necessary for Members to consider sufficient funding be in place for all the potential associated works and redevelopment of the lands adjacent to Windsor and the Andersonstown site.
- When Council has received more detail on cost implications through an economic appraisal, the Director of Finance and Resources will be in a position to advise Members as to how this would be provided and the level of funding required.
- To meet these timelines, it is envisaged that the Council will avail of the tendering and contracts overseen by DCAL to execute and deliver any work associated with the stadia, however this would be

subject to CPD approval. Additional Belfast City Council contracts would be required for any other works.

- If Members are minded to approve in principle the redevelopment of both leisure centres, reports will be brought back following consultation, completion of economic appraisals, costing of options and consideration of risks.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

Unquantified at this stage but likely to involve significant financial investment.

3.2 Human Resources

There will be significant staff resource requirements from relevant departments in order to develop each project in line with DCAL's tight timeframe.

3.3 Potential staffing issues will be examined as part of the overall review of the leisure estate. Any resultant HR issues will be managed in accordance with the Council's processes, policies and procedures for dealing with HR matters and TU consultation.

3.4 Asset and Other Implications

Unknown at this stage, however comprehensive regeneration of the significant stadium developments should lead to improved services and benefits for the community and aesthetic improvements at Council sites.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 It is envisaged that both inclusive regeneration stadium strategies progress in parallel, enabling a wider positive impact across the city.

4.2 The phases of the overall Leisure Estate Review will be subject to equality screening. This will include the periodic screening of the stadia developments as part of phase 1 of the Leisure Estate Review to identify differential impacts and any mitigating actions required, in accordance with standard Council procedures.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Committee is asked:

- i. To note the potential for comprehensive regeneration at both sites through collaborative developments, and the wider social, physical and economic benefits possible through maximising the major DCAL investment, as a key element of Phase 1 of the Council's Leisure review;**
- ii. To approve in principle the redevelopment of both the Olympia Leisure Centre and Andersonstown Leisure Centres and associated assets to form Phase 1 of the citywide Leisure Review, which will allow progression to Stage 2 options appraisal as part of the capital programme;**
- iii. To approve the proposed timetable (Appendix 2) and proposed process (a copy of which has been circulated at Appendix 3) for concurrent development of options for both sites;**
- iv. To note the proposed approach to public engagement on all options presented, and the progress made with external partners at both sites;**
- v. To approve the progression of further analysis of Options 1 and 2, emerging from the feasibility study on Windsor Park / Olympia / Midgley Park by Hamilton Architects including options regarding the Olympia community facility;**
- vi. To note the continuing development of initial concepts around Casement Park / Andersonstown by Consarc Design Group.**

**Appendix 2: Inclusive stadium redevelopments DRAFT
Timetable**

Date	Activity
January 2013	Engagement: Initial consultation with members and internal departments on options for Windsor Park / Olympia and for Casement Park / Andersonstown
25 January	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Report
February / March	Engagement: Public consultation period including public meeting(s) for Andersonstown site, details to be confirmed, and public meeting(s) for Olympia site, details to be confirmed
February	Development Committee Update on Olympia Community Centre
February	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee (Special) Presentation from GAA on Casement Park stadium, all members to be invited, details to be confirmed
14 February	Parks & Leisure Committee Update on progress
22 February	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Update on progress
14 March	Parks & Leisure Committee Update on progress
22 March	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Update on progress
11 April	Parks & Leisure Committee Update on progress
19 April	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee FUNDING DECISION
April	Engagement: Feedback to public
May	DCAL advised of any funding decision
24 May	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Update on progress

June - September	Progression to tendering and contract stages
September	<i>DCAL construction at Windsor Park scheduled</i>
January 2014	<i>DCAL construction at Casement Park scheduled</i>

”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Update on Bursary Scheme

The Director of Development submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that a number of reports have recently been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources and Development Committees in connection with development and implementation of the Council-sponsored education bursary programme – one of the key projects within the economy section of the Investment Programme.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 22 June 2012, Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee considered a number of potential ways forward in relation to development of the £300,000 bursary fund and reached agreement on a preferred approach for the first year. Members agreed to two different types of bursaries working in conjunction with Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC) and the Prince's Trust.**
- 1.3 With an annual budget of £100,000, an indicative split of £70,000 to BMC and £30,000 to the Prince's Trust was agreed for year 1. Members are aware that bursaries channelled through the Trust will be used to help disadvantaged young people aged 16-25 access education, training or employment. Awards provided via the College are intended to incentivise young people to choose a specific course of study which will lead them towards employment in key growth sectors.**
- 1.4 On 14 December 2012 Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee received a full update on delivery of the bursary scheme including progress which had been achieved by both organisations. It was reported that through the Prince's Trust, Development Awards had been provided to 57 disadvantaged young people aged 15-25 in Belfast City Council area with 87% of those achieving a positive outcome by moving into education, training or employment.**

- 1.5 Members were also informed that in the case of the BMC, eligibility criteria for the scheme had been established and priority courses identified. However no bursaries had been allocated as yet given that the College had not been able to include advance promotion of the scheme in any of its promotional literature for the 2012/13 academic year. As a result, the funding earmarked for year 1 was not able to act as an incentive towards a particular course of study as had been initially intended.
- 1.6 In light of the above, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee therefore agreed to Development Committee's proposal that the £70,000 allocated to the BMC bursaries for the current academic year be carried forward into the next financial year to allow greater impact and to incentivise more young people to study in priority skills areas. Committee also recommended that consideration be given to lowering the household income criteria set by the College for its existing bursary programme (currently £55,000).

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 This section of the report sets out a number of issues relating to the bursary scheme in particular the need to:

- revise the eligibility criteria for those wishing to receive financial support via the BMC bursary, particularly those focusing on household income thresholds and targeting priority courses;
- consider appropriate levels of assistance for year 2;
- consider proposed arrangements for increased engagement with the public, private and community and voluntary sectors in promoting and collaborating with the council on this scheme;
- raise the profile of the Council's investment in the scheme.

2.2 Eligibility criteria for the BMC Bursary

Members will be aware from its December meeting that eligibility for the scheme had previously been established including:

- individuals must be resident in the Belfast City Council area;
- aged 16-24 at the date of application;
- must meet the criteria set out by the College for the hardship fund; and

- must be preparing to study or currently studying on a full-time further/higher/vocational education training course at Levels 2-5 on one 25 priority courses identified.
- 2.3** 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.
- 2.4** The College has recently made progress in identifying those students who could potentially meet the eligibility criteria for the courses of study previously identified and detailed in an earlier Committee report i.e. courses in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, computing, renewables, creative media and travel, tourism and hospitality. However given the sheer volume of expected applications - approx 925 students, with up to 460 eligible for the awards (based on 2012/2013 entry information) it is proposed that the Council uses the scheme to target the same priority areas of study but reduces the number of eligible courses from 25 to 10, a copy of which has been circulated.
- 2.5** To ensure the scheme is targeted at students from families where income levels are low, it is also proposed the household income criteria set by the college for its existing HE bursary programme (currently £55,000) is reduced to £19,204 – bringing the Council’s bursary programme in line with the threshold currently set by Student Finance NI for access to grant finance. It will also facilitate administration of the scheme by the college, as opposed to having to operate to a range of income levels for different schemes.
- 2.6** If Members agree to reducing the number of eligible courses and lowering the income threshold, it is envisaged the BMC will be able to offer approx 240 awards of £500 to new first year students entering in September 2013 to undertake a further/higher/vocational education training course at levels 2-5 of one of the 10 priority courses identified. Whilst it is difficult to predict the exact number of student applications to be received in 2013/14, these figures which have been forecast are based upon current entry information.
- 2.7** This approach will help ensure that financial assistance is given to lower income families and the volume of the bursaries will be of sufficient value to truly incentivise someone to participate in a particular course of study in further or higher education.

2.8 Levels of assistance

Assuming an annual budget of £100,000 for year 2; consideration will need to be given to agreeing a split between funding allocated towards supporting further/higher education initiatives (through BMC) versus funding to help individuals access training or education (not at further or higher levels) or employment (administered through Prince's Trust).

2.9 With regard to the Prince's Trust, it is anticipated that, during the first year, the Development Awards programme will support 145 young people and help over 80% of those who receive an award to achieve a positive outcome, progressing into education, training or employment.

2.10 In planning for year 2 the Prince's Trust has given a non-formal commitment that it may have the capacity to increase the number of awards provided, assuming appropriate levels of funding are in place.

2.11 Officers are currently exploring a range of options in terms of what volume of bursaries might be feasible to deliver on an annual basis e.g., increasing the volume of awards by two-thirds and providing approx 241 awards at a cost to the Council of £50,000.

2.12 It is clear than any change in budget to the Prince's Trust would have implications for the funding available under the BMC-element of the bursary, given the overall annual budget of £100,000 for this initiative.

2.13 It is also important to note that, at this stage, it is impossible for the council to make a financial commitment to students beyond the next academic year of study, given that budgets are set on an annual basis. It is therefore proposed that the BMC bursary is made available to first-year students only within the selected areas of study and that consideration is given - at a future date - to whether the next round of funding (for academic year 14-15) is allocated to the same students or whether a new batch of eligible first year students receive the award.

2.14 Increasing engagement with the private sector

While the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has introduced a number of incentive schemes for employers to provide work placements, these are targeted at those who are not in employment, as opposed to students. However when

students conclude their studies, they very often have no practical experience to fall back on or to demonstrate their capabilities when seeking employment.

2.15 In response to this challenge, early discussions on the subject of creating placement opportunities for those young people availing of the Belfast bursary have taken place with various trade bodies representing small digital, ICT and catering and hospitality businesses. Early feedback would suggest that a placement/apprenticeship scheme would be very attractive to each of the industries however there is still a lot more work to do to tie down the logistics of this approach with potential employers and with the college.

2.16 To add value to the programme, the Council will continue to investigate any opportunities that might exist to secure practical work experience for those young people who benefit from a Belfast bursary but will look beyond the private sector, extending their talks to the public, community and voluntary sectors.

2.17 Branding

Whilst the Belfast Bursary Scheme will be branded within the context of the Investment Programme, an individual name will be developed which will help create a unique identity for the programme and reinforce the Council's investment in the scheme. This identity will be repeatedly communicated in multiple ways throughout the lifetime of the programme and officers are currently working alongside Corporate Communications to finalise the design work.

2.18 An event to promote the Bursary Scheme will be hosted by the Lord Mayor, in conjunction with the Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, on Wednesday 27 February in City Hall. Details of this event will be shared with Members shortly.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 An overall budget of £300,000 was allocated to the bursary scheme over a 3 year period 2012-2015.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 No specific equality and good relations considerations at this stage.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the update on proposals for year 2 of the bursary scheme.
- Consider and agree the proposed income threshold for those in receipt of the BMC bursary, setting this at £19,204 – in line with Student Finance NI threshold.
- Note the proposal to allocate up to £50,000 of year 2 finance towards the bursary scheme managed by Prince's Trust, with £50,000 allocated to BMC. This will mean that BMC will administer £120,000 in the current financial year (£70,000 carried forward from year 1 plus £50,000 from year 2).
- Consider the proposal to set the bursary at £500 for Belfast-based students meeting the eligibility criteria and undertaking a course of study in one of the selected areas (see Appendix 1).
- Note the proposal to pursue work placement opportunities for those students availing of the bursary.
- Note the proposed launch of the scheme in February 2013.”

During discussion in the matter, several Members made the point that the engagement with the private sector to get involved in the Bursary Scheme needed to be expedited.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations, subject to the proposed income threshold being set at £23,820. It was agreed also that letters be forwarded to the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and Belfast City Airport in order to commence formal engagement with those organisations regarding involvement in the Bursary Scheme.

**Investment Programme –
Employability Update and Funding Application**

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the employability aspects of the Investment Programme and to seek approval, in principle, to apply jointly with partners across the city, for European funding to assist with the provision of apprenticeships.

2.0 Background

2.1 As part of the Investment Programme the Council has committed to the provision of 400 placement, apprenticeship and internship opportunities and the creation of 200 job opportunities. Members have received regular updates on the number of placements and job opportunities; up to date figures are provided below.

2.2 Corporate Human Resources has been working with colleagues in the European Unit, to research funding opportunities that might allow the Council to provide further work experience and apprenticeship opportunities. One such potential funding opportunity, the call for proposals for social policy experimentations under PROGRESS 2012, is outlined below.

3.0 Key Issues

Update on job opportunities and work placements

3.1 The number of job opportunities publicly advertised to date is 139 permanent job opportunities and 37 temporary job opportunities This exceeds the target of 110 set for year one.

3.2 A total of 149 work experience placements have been provided and HR continues to work with DEL and other partners to maximise the opportunities that the Council can offer.

3.3 The Property and Projects and Parks and Leisure departments have recently confirmed budget provision to create a number of apprenticeship opportunities (seven craft apprentices and three

horticultural apprentices) and the recruitment process for these will begin shortly.

- 3.4 Members will recall the approval for five ring fenced Business Support Clerk posts to the long term unemployed and the provision of a two week pre recruitment programme for 45 people. This pre recruitment programme is being advertised week commencing 20 January 2013 and will start on 25 February 2013. The programme will consist of one week of work experience in a council department, one week of classroom based training and a mock interview.

Potential European funding

- 3.5 The call for proposals for social policy experimentations under PROGRESS offers financial support to experiment with innovative social policy changes and reforms before implementing them on a wider scale. It is aimed at public authorities acting as policy makers at national, regional or local level and three themes are supported under the call:

- i) promotion of youth activation measures to tackle youth unemployment and exclusion
- ii) provision of childcare services
- iii) promotion of active and healthy aging

- 3.6 €1 million has been allocated to the youth theme and requests for grants should be between €700 k and €1 million. 20% co-financing is required. The deadline for applications is 15 February, 2013 with project duration of 24-36 months.

- 3.7 Preliminary discussions with a number of employability partners in the city, DEL, BMET, Belfast Partnership Board and some of the LEMIS providers in the city indicated a desire to collaborate on an application under the first theme , with a focus on barriers to labour market entry faced by young people within the Belfast area.

Funding proposal

- 3.8 It is proposed that an application is submitted to fund ten paid apprenticeships for young people to work in Belfast City Council for a fixed term of two years in the areas of:

- Facilities management
- Horticulture
- Waste management
- Business administration

- 3.9 This list is not exhaustive and other subject or vocational areas that the Council could offer will be considered. The young people would also work towards an NVQ qualification. The relevant Council departments have confirmed they have the capacity to support this initiative through the provision of relevant work experience and supervision.
- 3.10 The experiment will focus on helping young people facing multiple barriers to employment to identify their potential and develop personal, employability and vocational skills as well as work experience in an occupational area direct relevant to the aspirations of the young person. The aim will be to challenge current policy around apprentices for young people (i.e. employer incentives and funding - specifically in the public sector and the predominance of class-room based apprenticeship programmes).
- 3.11 DEL has confirmed that it is content to lead the application for EU funding in principal and proposes a partnership approach with the Council, DEL, BMET, Belfast Partnership Board and LEMIS providers citywide, with DEL and the Council being the lead partners. The partners are exploring options to secure the required 20% match funding, (including whether or not 'in kind' contributions would be an 'acceptable option).
- 3.12 The project detail is still to be worked up and the application submission will be dependent upon full agreement of all partners. Full details of this will be presented to members at a later date but members are asked to agree in principal to the Council's involvement in this partnership to allow an application to be made.
- 3.13 The partnership accepts that the probability of securing funding is limited as there will be considerable competition across Europe for the amount available. However all partners feel that the discussions that have taken place to date regarding potential collaboration is good preparation for future funding calls. All agree that discussions should continue to generate further ideas for collaboration, regardless of the outcome of this particular funding application.

4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 Financial

If funding is approved there would be no financial cost to the Council as all employment and training costs would be covered by the funding. The application will be dependent upon the partners being able to secure match funding.

4.2 Human Resources

The apprentices would be employed by the council for the duration of the project therefore line management would be required to carry out normal supervision and coaching. Project management, co-ordination and administration costs will be built into the funding application.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

5.1 The recruitment and selection process will be agreed between the partners and the Equality Commission for N. Ireland and will be city wide.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 Members are asked to approve council involvement in the proposed partnership in principal and agree to the submission of a joint application.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that the Head of Human Resources undertake discussions with the Director of Health and Environmental Services regarding the establishment in the Dog Warden Section of that Department.

Democratic Services and Governance

Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality

(Councillor Haire left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.)

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
University of Ulster, School of Engineering	15th International Sheet Metal Conference Reception 25th March, 2013 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the 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
Queen's University Belfast, Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology	Workshop for the European Commission 'Seventh Framework Programme' Project Dinner 7th October, 2013 Approximately 40 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner 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
Girlguiding Belfast	County Awards Ceremony for young people and leaders 29th April, 2013 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits	This event seeks to recognise the achievements of Guides and their Leaders. Awards being presented include Queen's Guide, Duke of Edinburgh, Baden Powell Award for Guides and Long Service Awards for Leaders. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better opportunities for success' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £500

<p>Plumbing and Mechanical Services Training (Northern Ireland) Limited</p>	<p>Apprenticeship Achievers Awards Ceremony 18th June, 2013 Approximately 300 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event seeks to recognise the achievement of those individuals who have successfully completed an apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>This event provides an opportunity for the Council to show its support to an industry which is suffering due to the economic downturn whilst demonstrating support for the development of our city's young people.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together', 'Better opportunities for success across the City' and 'Better support for people and communities' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
<p>Cinemagic Limited</p>	<p>Coca Cola Cinemagic Awards 2013 28th November, 2013 Approximately 500 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event seeks to acknowledge those young people who have demonstrated the most promising and creative talent in the field of Film and Television.</p> <p>Designed for and by young people, Cinemagic caters for local people with a range of film and cultural interests.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better Support for People and Communities' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>

<p>County Grand Orange Lodge</p>	<p>150th Anniversary of County Grand Orange Lodge 18th May, 2013 Approximately 400 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event will celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the County Grand Orange Lodge and acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500</p>
<p>Boys' Brigade Northern Ireland Centenary Male Voice Choir</p>	<p>25th Anniversary Dinner 22nd May, 2013 Approximately 100 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Boys' Brigade Male Voice Choir to celebrate the centenary of that organisation and acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, 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 a pre-dinner drinks reception Approximate Cost £500</p>
<p>Crosslinks</p>	<p>Crosslinks Legacy Project 21st and 22nd April, 2013 Approximately 800 over 2 days</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>This event will provide the opportunity for young people from all communities in the city to share their experience of life in Belfast. Through two events, drama, music and dance will be the medium by which the participants will express their love for their city, their hopes for themselves and their community and the hope for a future moving forward together whilst respecting each other's values and beliefs. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>

<p>Community Relations in Schools (CRIS)</p>	<p>Launch of Model of Practice 20th April, 2013 Approximately 150 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event will provide the opportunity to promote the work of Community Relations in Primary and Secondary Schools and launch their Model of Practice which will help achieve their mission statement “to be a leading agent for change in shaping an inclusive, vibrant and safe society where everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow”.</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’ and in addition would contribute to the Council’s thematic area of Children and Young People.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
<p>Presbyterian Church in Ireland</p>	<p>‘The Big Sing’ Event 6th April, 2013 Approximately 200 attending</p>	<p>Use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>	<p>This event will provide the opportunity for different choirs of churches and other community based organisations to come together in partnership and mutual understanding for a showcase event entitled ‘The Big Sing’</p> <p>The event seeks to encourage cross-community and multi-cultural participation by giving a diverse range of people a collective voice in celebrating a ‘shared common heritage’.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council’s Key Themes of ‘City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together’ and ‘Better Support for People and Communities’.</p>	<p>Use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>

<p>Department of the Environment</p>	<p>Local Government Planning Reform Update 12th February, 2013 Approximately 300 attending</p>	<p>Use of the City Hall</p>	<p>This event will seek to provide an update on the proposed transfer of planning and planning staff to Local Government as part of the Local Government Reform Programme. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Services – Listening and Delivering'.</p>	<p>Use of the City Hall</p>
<p>Belfast City Council, Parks and Leisure Department</p>	<p>City of Belfast International Rose Trials – Judges Reception and Dinner 18th July, 2013 Approximately 150 attending</p>	<p>The use of City Hall and the provision of Hospitality in the form of a Civic Dinner</p>	<p>The annual City of Belfast International Rose Trials will be held during Rose Week. The Trials are renowned worldwide for attracting international rose growers in addition to a significant number of visitors. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together'.</p>	<p>The use of City Hall and the provision of Hospitality in the form of a Civic Dinner. Approximate Cost £4,500</p>
<p>Belfast City Marathon Limited</p>	<p>Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon Expo and Pack Collection 30th April – 5th May, 2014 Approximately 40,000 over 4 days</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>The provision of the City Hall will enable participants to come to a central point to collect their marathon packs and view the exhibitions on display. This will showcase the City Hall to the 30,000 + individuals and in particular the international entrants. It will also be of benefit to the city's economy as it is expected that many of those coming to the city will take time to sample our retail outlets, bars and restaurants.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>

			This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	
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The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Use of the Council Chamber

The Committee was reminded that the Council had agreed to support both the St. Patrick's Day festival and the Belfast 400 events in 2013. Both of those events included within their programme story telling activities and the Council's Events Team have requested permission to use the Council Chamber for those activities.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that the use of the Council Chamber for events other than the monthly Council meeting required the approval of the Committee.

The Committee approved the use of the Council Chamber for the St. Patrick's Day festival and the Belfast 400 events in 2013 from 15th till 18th March and 30th March till 2nd April, respectively.

Local Government (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012

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

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 On 27 November, 2012 the Local Government (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order (NI) 2012 (the Order) came into effect (a copy of which has been circulated).**
- 1.2 The Order provides for the circumstances in which a council may provide indemnities to any of its Members or officers including the provision to secure insurance in connection therewith.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Under the Regulations a council now has power to indemnify its Members and officers when they are carrying out any functions on behalf of the council, or at the request or approval of the council. The power to indemnify extends to circumstances where Members and officers are serving on outside bodies to which they have been appointed by the council.**
- 2.2 The indemnity does not extend to cover those acts by a Member or officers which would constitute criminal acts or any other intentional wrongdoing, fraud or recklessness.**
- 2.3 The power to provide an indemnity also extends to circumstances where a Member or officer is acting outside the**

powers of the council, or outside the powers of that Member or officer, but where they are acting in good faith. The indemnity also covers cases in which a Member or officer has made a statement (whether by the issue of a document or otherwise) which turns out to be incorrect and which subsequently leads to a claim being taken against that Member or officer.

2.4 Article 7 of the Order provides that the terms of any indemnity require to be agreed by the council. Accordingly, the Committee is recommended to request the Council to adopt the following policy on the indemnity of Members and officers.

2.5 *Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order (NI) 2012 (the Order), Belfast City Council agrees to provide indemnity to its Members and officers on the following terms:-*

1. *The indemnity will extend to any action of, or failure to act by, the Member or officer in question, which –*
 - a) *is authorised by the Council; or*
 - b) *forms part of, or arises from, any functions conferred upon that Member or officer, as a consequence of any function being exercised by that Member or officer (whether or not when exercising that function it is done so in the capacity as a Member or officer of the Council) –*
 - (i) *at the request of, or with the approval of the Council, or*
 - (ii) *for the purpose of the Council.*
2. *The indemnity can be in the nature of financial support or support in kind, and shall be provided in relation to any personal financial liability arising in the circumstances set out herein.*
3. *The indemnity does not extend to any action by, or failure to act by, any Member or officer, which -*
 - a) *constitutes a criminal offence, or*
 - b) *is the result of fraud, or other deliberate wrongdoing or recklessness on the part of that Member or officer.*
4. *The indemnity will extend, subject to the provisions of the Order, -*
 - a) *to the defence of any criminal proceedings brought against the Member or officer, and*

- b) *any civil liability arising as a consequence of any action or failure to act which also constitutes a criminal offence.*
5. *Notwithstanding any limitations on the powers of a council, the council may provide an indemnity to the extent that the Member or officer in question –*
- a) *believed that the action, or failure to act, in question was within the powers of the council;*
or
- b) *where that action or failure comprises the issuing or authorisation of any document containing any statement as to the powers of the council, or any statement that certain steps have been taken or requirements fulfilled, believed that the contents of that statement were true,*
- and it was reasonable for that Member or officer to hold that belief at the time when the Member or officer acted or failed to act.*
6. *An indemnity shall be provided in relation to an act or omission which is subsequently found to be beyond the powers of the Member or officer in question but only to the extent that the Member or officer reasonably believed that the act or omission in question was within the powers of the Member or officer at the time at which the Member or officer acted.*
7. *Only those Members or officers that are in post at the time the indemnities are granted shall be eligible, but the indemnity shall continue to cover them in respect of any actions taken while they were a Member or officer once they have ceased to be a Member or officer.*
8. *The indemnity shall be available to Members or officers against the costs of defending libel or slander actions that are taken against them and that relate to their Council functions, but shall not be available where a Member or officer wishes to pursue a claim for defamation against another person.*
9. *The indemnity may be withdrawn by the Council where the Member or officer engages in conduct that may weaken the legal position of the Council, such*

as admitting liability or attempting to negotiate any claim.

10. *The provision of the indemnity shall be without prejudice to any disciplinary action that the Council may take against the Member or officer.*
11. *Where the Council has made a financial contribution to a Member or an officer under an indemnity, and that Member or officer subsequently recovers some or all of the expenses that were met through the indemnity, either through legal proceedings or otherwise, the Member or officer shall be obliged to refund such monies to the Council.*
12. *The indemnity shall not apply in situations where the liabilities of the Member or officer are adequately covered by any insurance or indemnity provided by any other Organisation.*

2.6 The Department of the Environment has advised that councils should try to ensure that there is not duplication of cover where a Member or officer serves on an outside body and that the council indemnity should not extend where the outside body itself holds sufficient indemnity cover. In order to assess the level of cover held by outside bodies, it is intended that a questionnaire will be issued. This questionnaire will also seek information as to the aims and objectives of the outside organisation and the role which it considers that members or officers play on the body. This information will be useful in progressing part 2 of the Council's declarations of Interest Policy which will cover declarations arising out of membership of an outside body.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 The Council already has an Officers' Indemnity Policy that allows it to provide indemnities to Members and officers (subject to a £5,000 excess), so it is unlikely that there will be any resource implications, although this will have to be confirmed by the Council's Insurance Broker.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

4.1 None.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. request the Council to adopt the policy on the indemnity of Members and officers, as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report; and**
- 2. agree that a questionnaire is issued to all outside bodies upon which Members or officers sit seeking information on the indemnity cover which the organisation holds and also as to the aims and objectives of the organisation and the role which it considers that Members or officers play on the body.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland – Spring Seminar

The Committee was advised that the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland was holding its Spring Seminar in New Ross, County Wexford, on 15th and 16th February. The theme of the seminar was “Putting People First – Local Government Reform....Real or Imaginary?”. Keynote speakers would include the Assistant Secretary in the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the Public Affairs and Business Development Director at the American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland and Councillor Joe Anderson, O.B.E., the first Directly Elected Mayor of Liverpool. The approximate cost of attendance would be £765 per delegate. Accordingly, it was recommended, in accordance with the Council’s policy for events of this nature, that the Committee authorise the attendance at the seminar of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council’s representatives on the National Association of Councillors, Northern Ireland Region (or their nominees) and a representative of each of the Parties on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,
Seconded by Councillor Hussey,

That the Committee agrees that it not be represented at the above-mentioned seminar.

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

Accordingly, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

iPads for Members

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update in relation to the issue of iPads for Members and the development of the Modern.gov and My Belfast apps.

Minutes of Party Leaders' Forum

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting of the Party Leaders' Forum held on 9th January.

Human Resources

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

Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives

The Committee noted 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.

Pay Request from Belfast City Council Trade Union Group

The Committee considered a report which provided an update in relation to a request which had been made by the Council's Trade Union Group in relation to the payment of £250 to employees earning less than £21,000 per year. The Head of Human Resources outlined the discussions which had taken place and indicated that there were still differing views in relation to the issue.

Accordingly, it was recommended that the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor seek Senior Counsel advice on the matter and that the Head of Human Resources continue to engage with the Belfast City Council Trade Union Group in the interim, with the matter being reported back to the Committee in February.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Asset Management

Iceland Foods, Ballysillan Road

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Approximately 5.37 acres of land at Ballysillan Road, adjacent to the Ballysillan Leisure Centre and held by Parks & Leisure Committee is leased to Iceland Foods Plc. Iceland Foods Plc hold this site under a 125 year Lease dated 22nd May 2001 and**

they have constructed a foodstore of approximately 8,000 sq ft for their own occupation and three smaller speculative shop units for leasing. They also have an option to develop additional adjoining land of approximately 1.60 acres for further car parking associated with their development.

1.2 Council had initially entered into a Development Agreement with Stewarts Supermarkets Ltd in response to a DOE development brief for the construction of a neighbourhood shopping centre (circa 40-50,000 sq ft) However, this scheme never materialised and a revised proposal for the much smaller Iceland Foods scheme located on the same site area of 5.37 acres was later approved by the Client Services Committee at its meeting of 20th August 1996.

1.3 Under the terms of the Lease the ground rent for this site is to be reviewed every 5 years. Members may recall that at the first review (22nd May 2006) the initial rent of £10,000 per annum, set in May 2001, remained unchanged following referral to an independent expert to settle the matter as it was not possible to achieve a negotiated settlement.

2 Key Issues

(i) 2011 rent review

2.1 A further rent review fell due on 22 May 2011 and there have been subsequent negotiations to try and agree the revised rent. Despite numerous discussions the agents appointed by Iceland Foods have again resisted any increase in the ground rent review and made an application to the Lands Tribunal to settle the review at £10,001 per annum.

2.2 During the course of the rent review negotiations Iceland's agent made a submission to Council to surrender part of the land leased to Iceland back to the Council with the aim of fixing the annual ground rent, albeit for a reduced site area, at £10,000 for the residue of the 125 year term.

2.3 Whilst Iceland's proposed re-gearing of their lease forms the second part of this report, negotiations on the lease re-gearing have been progressed in tandem with the outstanding rent review, whereby agreement has now been reached, subject to Committee's approval, of a revised rent of £14,000 per annum for the 5 years effective from 22nd May 2011. This represents an increase of 40% on the 2006 rent assessment. Iceland has also agreed to postpone the Lands Tribunal proceedings whilst the detail of any lease re-gearing is finalised.

2.4 In respect of future rent reviews and in order to negate protracted and potentially costly negotiations, relative to value of the ground rent income, it has also been agreed (subject to Committee approval) to replace the existing open market rent reviews provisions in the Lease with future 5-year periodic reviews indexed linked that will guarantee increases at all future reviews.

2.5 *(ii) Lease re-gearing*

Given the reduced scale of development delivered on this 5.37 acre site, together with the lack of demand for the 3 additional shop units that have remained vacant since their construction, Iceland have proposed to re-gear their Lease to reflect more accurately their actual development which has rendered much of the site surplus to their requirements.

2.6 The proposal is that Iceland would surrender undeveloped land, the majority of existing car parking (shared with Ballysillan Leisure Centre) including an additional right in Iceland's lease to Option Land, comprising a further adjoining 1.6 acres at Ballysillan, together with the 3 vacant shop units. The extent of the land to be surrendered by Iceland is shown on the map, a copy of which has been circulated.

2.7 Initially Iceland indicated that in addition to freezing the ground rent for the residue of their Lease term they would also require payment of a capital premium to compensate them for surrender of land and option rights back to the Council. However, negotiations have been concluded (subject to Committee approval) on the basis of an improved ground rent, as above, coupled with simplified future periodic review provisions and with no capital premium payable.

2.8 However, the provision of clawback arrangements to share potential returns from any future development replaces Iceland's requirement for immediate payment of a capital premium. Iceland's agreement to the surrender back to the Council of this portion of their leased site is on the basis of a 40% clawback arrangement in the event that the surrendered land is subsequently developed for commercial purposes within 20 years. However, any future Council related proposals would not trigger clawback and the 3 shop units and the Option Site would also be excluded from the clawback arrangements.

- 2.9 Despite no particular Council requirement being identified at the current time for the surrendered lands, and even allowing for the clawback arrangement, there is nonetheless a benefit of resuming control of land that may provide greater flexibility for future Council uses or as a result of the outworkings of the Ballysillan Masterplan. Members may be aware that DSD, working with the North Belfast Partnership & Ballysillan /Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Partnership are commissioning consultants to prepare a Masterplan for the Greater Ballysillan area. The Council is represented on the Project Board overseeing the Masterplan.
- 2.10 No particular Council use has been identified for the three vacant shop units. However, these could either provide storage for a Council related use or the Council could advertise them to let on the open market. A report will however be brought back to Committee in due course in relation to the future use options for the shop units.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

(i) 2011 rent review

A 40% increase in the annual rental income to £14,000 p.a. backdated to May 2011, which would also provide more cost effective and timely implementation of future rent reviews through indexation.

(ii) Lease re-gearing

Whilst there will be normal occupational costs associated with taking back land (car parking, shop units etc) there would be no capital cost incurred in assuming full beneficial possession.

Clawback would only be triggered if the Council enter into a future commercial agreement for the development of lands surrendered back from Iceland, subject to the exemptions as referred to above.

3.2 Human Resources

Staff resource in Estates & Legal Services to implement and progress both the 2011 rent review and also the lease re-gearing.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

Re-gearing the original Lease with Iceland replaces an agreement that does not reflect the actual development undertaken and will provide greater flexibility for Council's adjoining assets of for future use proposals.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

4.1 There are no equality implications to this proposal.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves:

- (i) a revised rent of £14,000 per annum effective from 22 May 2011; and
- (ii) future rent reviews being agreed on the basis of indexation; and
- (iii) the re-gearing of the lease to reflect the surrender by Iceland Foods of a portion of their leased site, as outlined above, subject to detailed terms being agreed with the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Primrose Street - Disposal of Former Civic Amenity Site

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

Contractor's Compound - Area at Stewart Street Playground and John Hewitt Park

The Committee was advised that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 10th January, had considered reports on the proposed use/occupation by contractors of areas of Council-owned land at the Stewart Street Playground and the John Hewitt Park.

Stewart Street Playground

With regard to the works at the Stewart Street Playground, the compound area was required in connection with works being carried out on an adjoining site and a Licence Fee was to be charged. The fee partly reflected the financial benefit to the contractor of being allowed use of the Council's land and was partly to encourage the contractor to remain on the playground site no longer than was absolutely necessary. Accordingly, the Parks and Leisure Committee had agreed to approve the granting of a

Licence Agreement to Geda Construction Company Limited for a period of approximately twelve weeks to facilitate the construction of a boundary wall, subject to a Licence Fee of £75 per week and subject to detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager, incorporated in a suitable Licence Agreement which would be drawn up by the Town Solicitor and to approval by the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders.

John Hewitt Park

The works at the John Hewitt Park had been carried out by the Department for Social Development's contractor and involved the installation of approved environmental improvements on the Council's site in the form of a themed garden. As those works were designed to improve the Council's asset, no Licence Fee was associated with the grant of the Licence. In this regard, the Parks and Leisure Committee had agreed to:

- (i) approve the carrying out of the work on Council-owned land;
- (ii) enter into a Licence Agreement to permit those works to be carried out, subject to approval by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders; and
- (iii) absorb the maintenance cost and include the themed garden within the Council's public liability schedule.

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee authorised the grant of the proposed Licence Agreements at Stewart Street Playground and the John Hewitt Park on the terms as outlined.

Proposed Lease to the North Belfast Play Forum

The Committee was informed that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 9th August, 2012, had approved the grant of a lease to North Belfast Play Forum Limited in respect of the multi-use pitch situated on the edge of the Waterworks site near the junction of the Antrim Road and the Cavehill Road. The purpose of the lease was to allow the Forum to draw down funding of £50,000 from Biffa Award to install a 3G surface over the existing polymeric surfaced games area. The lease was to be for a period of up to fifteen years to satisfy the needs of the funding organisation. A contribution of £5,102.04 had also been authorised by the Parks and Leisure Committee towards the proposed re-surfacing.

The Estates Manager reported that, subsequently, at its meeting on 15th November, the Parks and Leisure Committee had approved also a variation of the existing Facilities Management Agreement on that site so as to ensure no overlap between the Agreement and the proposed lease. The proposed lease would reduce the Council's maintenance responsibilities and Facilities Management Agreement costs and would provide the Forum with an opportunity to generate income from public use of the facility, which it had anticipated would offset its additional responsibilities and the reduction in income from the Council. The Forum relied on public use to generate income and operated to promote the use of the facility and was not in itself engaged in team sports.

Following further discussions with the Biffa Board and the Forum, it had been agreed that the duration of the proposed lease be fixed at ten years. That represented the maximum expected life of the proposed new 3G surface. It was also agreed that the Forum would pay a rent to the Council of £2,500 per annum for the facility. That rent took account of the existing income generating capacity of the site. Under the terms of the proposed lease, the Forum would be responsible for maintenance and insurance of the playing surface and for electricity costs associated with flood lighting. The Council would remain responsible for maintenance of the fencing which surrounded the pitch. The adjoining pavilion building would also remain under Council ownership as part of the revised Facilities Management Agreement.

The Committee authorised the grant of a ten year lease to the North Belfast Play Forum Limited at a rent of £2,500 per annum, subject to detailed terms to be incorporated in a legal agreement to be drawn up by the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor.

Duncrue Fuel Storage Facilities and Associated Infrastructure Works

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th April, 2009, it had approved the invitation of tenders and the awarding of contracts for the replacement of the fuel storage facilities and associated infrastructure works at the Duncrue Complex. There had been complications with the initial procurement process for the fuel management system element of the project in so far as the successful tenderer had been bought over and could no longer meet the specification requirements. The procurement strategy had been revisited and the works element was subsequently combined with the fuel management element and a contract had been eventually awarded in October, 2012. The works were currently ahead of programme and it was anticipated that the new facility would be operational by March, 2013.

The Committee was informed that, additionally, in June, 2012, as part of the Council's efficiency agenda, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had approved a high level corporate wide Fleet Improvement Programme. That had been based on recommendations from the review of the Council's fleet provision undertaken by consultants in Autumn, 2011. One of the key recommendations from that report was that the Council's fuel management system should be addressed as a corporate issue.

The Duncrue fuel facility was operated by Cleansing Services but a number of non-Cleansing Services vehicles also used the facility for refuelling. Refuelling facilities were available at eleven other Council locations, ten operated by the Parks and Leisure Department and two by the Health and Environmental Services Department, including Duncrue. The contract for the new fuel storage facility had been tendered before the Audit, Governance and Risk Services investigation had been instigated and included on-board devices for all of the cleansing vehicles (180). Those devices enabled automated data collection without manual intervention and the vehicle specific data was collated by the new Jigsaw fuel management system. In October, 2012, following an investigation by the Audit, Governance and Risk Services, it had issued key control guidance on the fuel storage and dispensing of fuel. That guidance included a specific key control

measure, that is, "Management should undertake periodic reviews of fuel usage per machine in order to determine whether or not the usage was commensurate with the work the machinery was carrying out. High or irregular usage levels should be investigated and reported upon".

The existing contract related solely to the 180 vehicles that made up the waste collection and street cleansing part of the Council's fleet. However, although it was not impossible, it would be difficult for any non on-board devices to be refuelled at the facility. Were those types of vehicles to refuel elsewhere, that would raise major concerns both because of potential delays and impact on operations and also because such refuelling would not be recorded against the vehicle. Cleansing Services had therefore made a request to expand the contract to include on-board devices for 167 other Council fleet vehicles, which would leave just 29 vehicles, the majority of which were mowers and could not accommodate an on-board device. Of the 167 additional vehicles, 90 had been identified as having refuelled at the Duncrue facility in the period from April till November, 2012.

There were no available funds within the existing capital budget for the project, as the anticipated final account was expected to be close to the approved project budget of £630,000. The estimated cost of fitting all 167 additional requested on-board devices was £52,000 and it was proposed that the capital budget for the project should be increased by that amount, with the expenditure financed from the capital financing budget for 2013/14. As part of the new fuel facility project, the contractor was providing training on the fitting of on-board devices and thus providing a potential future saving.

The Committee agreed that the current contract for the fuel storage facility should be expanded to include an additional 167 on-board devices as outlined.

Urgent Works at Avoniel Leisure Centre

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members may already be aware that the swimming pool at Avoniel Leisure Centre has been closed since 20th August 2012. This is because, in the course of routine inspections by the Property Maintenance unit under the planned maintenance programme, a very significant water leak has been detected.**
- 1.2 A number of initial investigations and excavations were carried out in terms of the tanks, pipe-work and pool fabric etc in order to locate the leak and carry out the necessary repairs. However, in the course of these investigations, asbestos testing was also routinely carried out by the unit and this subsequently resulted in a number of positive readings for the presence of asbestos in parts of the pool infrastructure.**

- 1.3 This required formal reporting to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), followed by a stand-still period to allow the HSE to inspect the site and, once all investigations were complete, the removal and/or encapsulation of the asbestos by professional, licensed contractors.
- 1.4 Only then was it possible to resume the search for the source(s) of the major leak. After a further period of detailed excavation and research in relation to the main poolside deck, the Property Maintenance unit has uncovered wet rock and concrete in areas that should be completely dry. There is also extensive, widespread evidence of chlorine compounds from the pool that have leached into and calcified on the rock and concrete.
- 1.5 The only conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the entire pool basin (in addition to the problems with the tanks, pipes, etc already identified) is leaking pool water into the surrounding sub-strata; it is effectively a catastrophic failure of the waterproof pool membrane.
- 1.6 The only solution to this problem is therefore to re-line the entire pool basin, overflow channels, and balance tank, as well as replace virtually all associated pipes leading to and from the pool, and then reinstate the poolside deck tiling.
- 1.7 The total cost of the reinstatement work is estimated to be in the order of £250,000, and specifically the approximate costs of the specialist services required in relining the pool, overflow channels, and balance tank etc and which are the subject of this report are estimated at £77,000.
- 1.8 This scale and scope of work-package would normally be procured via tender and a contract under seal, however the lead times for the tender process could add at least 4 months to the overall time-scales. This would cause obvious operational difficulties for the Centre, and would also mean an ongoing loss of income of approx. £12,000-£15,000 per month during the extended closure.
- 1.9 We have developed an alternative outline programme for this work based on a quotation exercise as opposed to a tender exercise, which we believe would enable completion of the entire project work and have the pool operational by mid-June 2013.
- 1.10 This would require the Committee to approve the quotation action under Standing Order 62(a), which provides that in special circumstances the relevant Chief Officer may seek

authorization to amend the normal procurement processes. This report therefore seeks authorization to utilise a competitive quotation process instead of the full tender process to procure the necessary services, in order to expedite the necessary and urgent work identified herein.

- 1.11 Finally, it is of course the case that many of the Leisure properties are of a similar age to the Avoniel site and it is therefore possible that similar failures may begin to occur at other locations. It is therefore the intention of the Property & Projects Dept to review and assess the relevant properties upon the conclusion of the leisure estate review.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The key issue is whether or not the Committee is content that the situation at Avoniel is sufficiently serious to justify the amendment of the standard procurement processes so as to permit the use of a competitive quotation process in place of the mandated tender process under the council's Standing Orders.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 The estimated costs of the specialist services required in re-lining the pool, overflow channels and balance tank etc is £77,000. The overall cost of the capital repairs and refurbishment project is £250,000, and will be financed from the capital financing budget for 2013/14.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 4.1 There are no equality and/or good relations implications in relation to this report.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that:-

- a) the Committee endorses the proposal to set aside the requirement to invite tenders for the necessary remedial works at Avoniel Leisure Centre under Standing Order 62(a); *and*
- b) the Committee approves the invitation of quotations for the relevant package(s) of work."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Good Relations and Equality

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

Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 14th January.

Minutes of Meeting of Joint Group of Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Group of Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group held on 18th January.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Belfast City Council and COMET Response to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association Consultation - NI EU Operational Programme 2014-20 Future Delivery Campaign for Local Authorities

The Committee considered the undernoted report and approved the comments attached at Appendix 1 as the Council's response to the consultation:

"1.0 Background

- 1.1 **Members will be aware that the current round of EU funding terminates in 2013. To this end, the consultation process regarding the next 7 year Programme Period (i.e. 2014-2020) is ongoing. This process centres on the draft legislation published in October 2012 and which outlines the aims, objectives and mechanisms for delivering the future Structural Funds Programmes.**
- 1.2 **Members will also be aware that the Councils of the Metropolitan Region (COMET) have developed an urban position regarding maximising the opportunities for local authorities within the metropolitan area. This focuses on the creation of an Integrated Territorial Investment which would allow Councils to develop an Integrated Urban Strategy to maximise the impact of EU investment whilst also reducing the bureaucracy associated with securing EU funds. This position paper was endorsed by SP&R Committee in December 2012.**

- 1.3 In parallel, NILGA have also sought the opinion of all 26 Local Authorities in relation to the draft EU legislation. A copy of the proposed NILGA model of Eu funding delivery is attached as appendix one of this report , along with a copy of the draft BCC response.
- 2.0 Key Issues
- 2.1 In order to maximise the opportunities for Councils in the next Programme Period, local authorities need to influence the decision making process to enable changes to the way EU monies will be delivered in 2014-2020. It is critical therefore that there is an agreed Local Government position on its role in the future delivery of EU funds. In an effort to achieve this objective the attached response has been agreed with SoLACE and Liam Hannaway has circulated a copy to the CEOs of all 26 Councils encouraging them to propose to their Councils that they make a similar response.
- 2.2 Members will note from the attached response that, in general, BCC welcomes the opportunity to work with NILGA and all the other Councils to obtain agreement from relevant Ministers for the devolution of a proportion of EU funding to a local government level in order to support the delivery of 'place based' development plans.
- 2.3 Whilst the response states that BCC is in favour of devolving the administration of EU funds to Local Government it does raise issues with respect to NILGA's proposal for a 'Local Government Regional Investment Group (LGRIG)'. The proposed function of this LGRIG is not clear from the Consultation Paper. SoLACE would agree that this is unnecessary and should have no administrative or decision-making role in the delivery of funds. If such a group should exist then its role should be limited to supporting collaboration and the exchange of best practice between the Councils/Council clusters involved in delivering EU funds.
- 2.4 Upon Committee approval, the attached response will be submitted immediately to meet NILGA's consultation deadline.
- 2.5 In addition, should all 6 COMET Councils endorse this paper, the Council's EU Unit will undertake to submit a collective COMET response to NILGA.

3.0 Resource Implications

No fiscal or human resource implications are associated with this issue.

4.0 Equality and Good Relations

None at present

5.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to agree the Council's consultation response, contained in Appendix 1.

Council's Response to the NI Local Government Association (NILGA) Consultation regarding the NI EU Operational Programme 2014-2020 Future Delivery Campaign for Local Authorities

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the NILGA consultation exercise with respect to the delivery of EU Structural Funds 2014-2020.

1.2 Through various mechanisms, local authorities continue to lobby for the inclusion of new proposed delivery structures in the EU legislation that will underpin the funds.

1.3 Councils support the greater emphasis within the draft legislation on the role of local authorities as essential partners in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the new EU programmes 2014-2020.

1.4 Councils have specifically asked National and Regional Government to make use of the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and Community Led Local Development tools of delivery for delegation of combined allocations of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) for the period 2014-2020.

2.0 Council's consideration of the NILGA campaign

2.1 Delegated Funding

Belfast City Council is supportive in principle of the NILGA proposal to maximise the role of local authorities in the delivery of Eu funds between 2014-2020. The Council is also supportive of the idea that there should be a single, unified local government position on this issue.

We agree with NILGA's statement that 'there is a compelling need to fully consider a new model to deliver local government elements of the next round of EU investment'. However, we would go further to say that councils also should have an even greater influencing role on the NI Consultative partnership, to shape all EU programming detail within the new EU/UK Partnership Agreement as recommended in EU legislation.

We fully recognise the need for a regional approach to delegated EU funding, which, in the context of RPA, will allow all local authorities to become involved in the delivery of EU funds. We recognise that under the Reform of Local Government, Councils will in effect become the vehicle for Economic Development and Regeneration for their areas as we will be responsible for Community Planning. An integrated funding approach will therefore be essential for the effective delivery of the Community Plans from 2015 onwards. In that regard, we believe that an Integrated Territorial Investment would be the appropriate model for large urban centres whilst the Community Led Local Development model would be appropriate for rural areas. We believe that a proportion of future EU Structural Funds should be delegated to the new Councils, or clusters of Councils if appropriate, aligned to the new models of delivery set out above.

Collaboration by Local Councils in the delivery of EU funding has already proved to be successful on previous programmes through Cross -Border INTERREG, Peace III and Rural Development partnerships.

With regard to governance and accountability arrangements it would be advantageous to have one Government department assigned as the accountable department for local government delivery to reduce the bureaucracy and administrative burden of EU programmes as experienced to date.

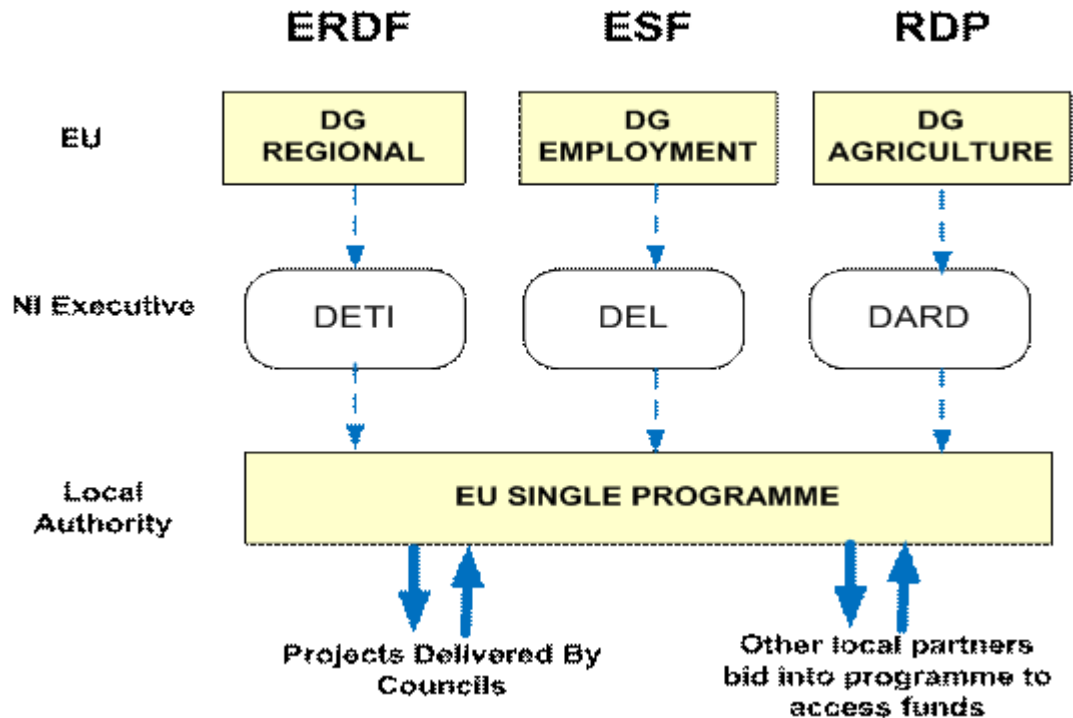
- 2.2 We fully agree that now is the opportune time to be proactive in making the case for more focussed delivery of EU funds, built on the principles of subsidiarity and a "place-based" approach to integrated development.
- 2.3 Belfast City Council agrees with NILGA's rationale for change in the next EU programming round and the guiding principles set out by NILGA in its "Campaign Consultation Document".

The proposed NILGA delivery model

- 2.4 Whilst we recognise and support the devolution of EU funds to a Local Government level, we would ask for clarity around the

role of the proposed 'Collective Council Local Government Regional Investment Group' (LGRIG) for EU Operational Programmes 2014-2020.

- 2.5 It is unclear in this section of the NILGA paper what role this LGRIG would have. Whilst we believe that there is a need for a structure for Councils to collaborate and share best practice in terms of European activity but it is unclear in the NILGA paper what value this group would add to that of other vehicles which already exist including:-
- i. The NI Local Economic Development Forum
 - ii. The NI EU Regional Forum
 - iii. The NILGA led EU Policy and Economic Development Working Group
 - iv. SoLACE
 - v. The 5 Cross Border INTERREG Partnerships
- 2.6 We believe that the NILGA EU officer resource should continue its work in supporting elected members on Steering and Monitoring Committees, but also build on the work it has commenced in relation to the creation of an EU knowledge bank as a resource for local Councils. Supporting Members on the Monitoring and Steering Committees will be critical going forward to ensure a unified local government voice at these meetings.
- 2.7 Belfast City Council would not be supportive of the proposed LGRIG playing any decision making or administrative role in the delivery of EU funds. It is our view that this would be best delivered through local area based structures using the ITI and CLLD models as set out in the diagram below.



The Council would ask NILGA to confirm that it is not envisaged that the LGRIG will play any role in determining the allocation or administration of any funds which may be delegated to local government.

3 Conclusion

- 3.5 Belfast City Council would like to emphasise its support in principle of the delegation of EU funding to local government 2014-2020.
- 3.6 It is the view of Belfast City Council that the proposed LGRIG's role should be limited to one of facilitating collaboration and sharing of best practice. The term '*Delivery Model*' used in the Consultation Document should be entitled '*Supporting Structure*' and presented within the paper in a way which clearly demonstrates that it is not an overarching body to which Councils would be accountable.
3. We would be keen to work with NILGA and Central Government to find a workable solution to the accountability issue with regards to devolving EU funds to Local Authorities.

3. **Belfast City Council is keen that a consensus local government position is agreed and presented to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and the NI Consultative Partnership overseeing the design of the new NI ERDF & ESF programmes. The Council would therefore stress the need for an agreed paper to be formulated for presentation by February 2013 at the latest.”**

Chairman