

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 22nd February, 2013

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);
Aldermen M. Campbell and R. Newton; and
Councillors Attwood, Convery, Corr, Haire,
Hanna, Hendron, Hussey, Jones, Lavery, Maskey,
McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín,
A. Newton and Reynolds.

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

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Ó Muilleoir.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Review of Public Administration

Local Government Reform – Statutory Transition Committees

The Committee was reminded that the Department of the Environment had issued recently for consultation the policy proposals which were to be contained within the Regulations which would bring into effect the Statutory Transition Committees. An initial draft Council response to the consultation document had been submitted to the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee on 8th February and had been deferred to allow Members the opportunity to further examine and discuss the proposals which had been put forward, with a final draft response to be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. Accordingly, the undernoted response in this regard was submitted for the Committee's consideration:

**“Annex 2: POLICY PROPOSALS FOR CREATION OF STATUTORY
TRANSITION COMMITTEES**

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the policy proposals for the establishment of Statutory Transition Committees issued by the Department. The Council believes that Statutory Transition Committees have an important role to play in taking forward necessary preparatory work around local government reform in advance of the Shadow Councils becoming operational in June 2014 and in strengthening the working relationships between merging councils.

It is important to recognise the specific circumstances of the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee and the fact that the Council is not fully merging with any other council(s) but rather assimilating parts of adjacent Lisburn, Castlereagh and a small portion of North Down areas. Notwithstanding, the Council is fully aware of the importance of representation from Lisburn and Castlereagh on the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee given its role in planning for the new larger geographical area.

The Council therefore welcomes the proposal set out within the paper that the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee would consist of 25 Members including representation from Castlereagh Borough and Lisburn City Councils. The Council further notes the recommendation set out within the paper stating that the “Department expects most STCs will retain the same members as the former VTCs”. As the current Belfast VTC comprises 21 members, it is understood that the other 4 members on the Belfast STC would come from Lisburn and Castlereagh. The Council has previously agreed that those Members must be representative of those areas coming into Belfast as the role of the STC will be to plan for the new geographical area.

The Council is aware that when the enabling primary legislation (i.e. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010) had been adopted; it was within the context of there being no Shadow Council period being put in place. With the introduction of Shadow Councils in June 2014, it will be important that there is clarity of role; with a core focus of Statutory Transition Committees being to take forward necessary preparatory work to enable the Shadow Councils to

take decisions and progress key strands of work to ensure the establishment and operation of the new councils in April 2015.

The Council would seek clarification on the anticipated timescale for bringing forward Statutory Transition Committees and the subsequent operational lead-in time to the Shadow Councils scheduled for June 2014.

The Council would highlight that the level of information and detail provided within the policy proposals paper issued is somewhat limited and would suggest that it would have been beneficial if further detail was made available on the draft regulations. This would have enabled councils to have a more informed consideration of the proposals being brought forward.

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Q1. Does any other task need to be specified in the regulations?

COMMENTS

- In terms of the specific tasks set out for Statutory Transition Committees (para 7 of policy proposals paper), the Council would seek further clarification and detail in relation to the role of the STC in preparing a budget for STC & Shadow Council within the context of its relationship with constituent councils and the rates setting processes.
- The Council would suggest that STCs could prepare a draft mission /vision/values statement as a prelude to work on Corporate and Business Planning to be taken forward by Shadow Councils. Indeed, the establishment of a vision is a necessary element of preparing for the introduction of Community Planning.
- STCs may also wish to progress preparatory work in regards to appropriate draft governance procedures, including Standing Orders, be available prior to the commencement of operation of Shadow Councils.

Q2. Should the Department require that existing Councils get the consent of STCs if intending to dispose of land or enter into new contracts

COMMENTS

- Given the specific circumstances of the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee as referred to above, the Council believe that there is no need for such provisions in relation to decisions taken by Belfast City Council and the Statutory Transition Committees.
- If such provisions are to be introduced they should apply to any activity which relate to those new areas from Lisburn, Castlereagh and North Down coming into Belfast and not to those parts of the city not impacted upon by the boundary changes.
- Consideration must be given to the interface/relationship between the Lisburn/Castlereagh Statutory Transition, and the constituent councils of Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough, with the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee regarding any such decisions which impact upon those transitional areas moving into Belfast.

Q3. Given that all clusters have now constituted VTCs, is it sensible to replicate the same membership arrangements or the statutory phase.

COMMENTS

- The Council welcomes the proposal set out within the paper that the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee would consist of 25 Members including representation from Castlereagh Borough and Lisburn City Councils. The Council further notes the recommendation set out within the paper stating that the "Department expects most STCs will retain the same members as the former VTCs".
- As the current Belfast VTC comprises 21 members, it is understood that the other 4 members on the Belfast STC would come from Lisburn and Castlereagh. The Council would commend that those Members must be representative of those areas coming into Belfast as the role of the STC will be to plan for the new geographical area.

Q4. It is proposed that a member of an STC would be removed if he/she did not attend for 3months. Should this period be shorter or longer?

COMMENTS

- The Council would highlight that Section 9 (vacation of office on account of non-attendance) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 refers to a period of 6 months consecutive and also includes a provision that enables an appropriate reason (e.g. sickness) for non-attendance to be approved in advance by a council and therefore vacation of office would not apply.
- The Council would commend that similar provisions be considered for inclusion in the STC Regulations.

Q5. Should there be a lump sum allowance, rather than an attendance allowance for each meeting? If a lump sum is paid, how much should it be?

COMMENTS

- The Council would highlight that in the previous period of reform and operation of Voluntary Transition Committees (VTC), each Member represented on the VTC had been given an allowance of £2,700 pro rata, funded by the Department. This allowance was to take account of the additional activities linked to reform programme and work of VTC.
- Within Belfast City Council, Members' remuneration is not based on attendance allowance for meetings but rather every Member receives a basic allowance. In addition to this a special responsibility allowance is given for specific key positions within the council e.g. Chairs and deputy Chairs of Committees, Party Leaders etc.
- The Council would seek early confirmation on how Members' remuneration, and other operational costs, which may be attached to STCs will be funded. Whilst recognising that the Environment Minister has included such costs in the funding bid submitted to the NI Executive, it is aware there has not yet been a final decision taken by the NI Executive on funding.

Q6. Do you agree that governance and procedures for STCs reflect those presently in place for VTCs

COMMENTS

- Whilst the Council believe that the current governance and procedures in place for the voluntary Transition Committees have been appropriate, if STCs are to be given decision making powers, due consideration must be given to the relationship and governance arrangements between STCs and constituent councils.
- For example, are constituent councils required to agree to delegate authority to STCs to undertake certain functions or take decisions on specified issues. Due consideration should be given to the information flow between the STCs and constituent councils.
- The Council is aware that the primary legislation underpinning the creation of STCs (i.e. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010; states that STCs are to be established as 'Bodies Corporate'
- Could the department confirm if this would still be the intention and what would be the key legislative and operational implications of this for STCs to be established e.g. would STCs require separate accounts etc..

Q7. Do you agree with the duty for sharing information? If so, should it be extended to any other bodies?

COMMENTS

- In pursuance of ensuring a transparent process, the Council believe that it is important that appropriate information is shared in an open manner. In addition to information flowing from constituent councils to STCs, the duty should be extended to require STCs to share relevant information with constituent councils during the transition period.

Q8. Do you agree that STCs should appoint Chief Executives and other senior staff?

COMMENTS

- The Council would note from the recent 'Reform Inform Bulletin' issued by the Department that there still remains a number of key decisions still to be taken regarding, for example, the method of appointment for Chief Executives and senior staff posts, the principles which will underpin any recruitment process. It is further understood that these matters are being taken forward through the local government reform implementation structures established by the Environment Minister and is subject to legal advice.

Once this advice is available to Council will consider its position.

Q9. Do you agree existing councils should apply administrative staff on a temporary basis, prior to STCs appointing own staff?

COMMENTS

- In principle yes, albeit consideration will need to be given to any financial and HR implications for the constituent councils in doing so. The Council believes that the extent of administrative (and financial) work which will be required needs to be quantified at an early state to enable councils to assess staffing requirements.

Q10. Do you agree constituent councils should provide accommodation?

COMMENTS

- In principle yes, albeit consideration will need to be given to any financial and/or operational implications.

Q11. Do you agree with the approach that STCs will be wound up 21 calendar days after the election of the new council, once they have arranged the first meeting of the new council in shadow mode?

COMMENTS

- The Council would support approach outlined of winding up STCs 21 calendar days after the election of the incoming new Council in Shadow form.”

After discussion, the Committee approved the draft response.

**Appointment of Members From Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils
to the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee (STC)**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Belfast Statutory Transition Committee (STC) will comprise 25 members, 21 from Belfast City Council (i.e. the Members of the current VTC) with the remaining 4 Members coming from the existing Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Councils.

1.2 The Policy Proposals paper released recently by the Department of the Environment does not specify how these additional 4 Members should be appointed. Belfast City Council has previously adopted a position that those 4 Members should represent the areas of the existing Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils which will transfer to the Belfast Council area in 2015. The STC will be considering a range of investment and operational issues in the lead up to the formation of the new Council and it is recommended that the Council should write formally to the Department expressing the view that it is essential that the Members from Lisburn and Castlereagh are representative of the areas which will transfer.

2 Key Issues

2.1 It would seem to be reasonable that in appointing the representatives from Lisburn and Castlereagh a system of proportionality is employed to ensure fairness in the appointment process.

2.2 The main problem in trying to establish which representatives should be appointed is that the areas to transfer are based upon the new Ward boundaries as established by the Boundaries Commissioner in June 2009 whereas any analysis of the Party strengths on the Councils can only be based upon the 2011 local election results which were held on the basis of the existing (or old) ward boundaries. We are therefore not comparing like with like and are only making the best fit that is available to us.

2.3 Lisburn City Council

2.4 From the area of the existing Lisburn City district, the Commissioner recommended that the localities of Collin Glen, Poleglass, Lagmore, Twinbrook, Kilwee and Dunmurry should be incorporated in the Belfast district. The existing Dunmurry Cross District Electoral Area in Lisburn includes the wards: Collin Glen, Poleglass, Kilwee, Twinbrook, Dunmurry Seymour Hill and Derriaghy and therefore the existing Dunmurry Cross

DEA appears to fit quite well with the area to transfer and that DEA has been used for the proportionality calculations.

2.5 The 2011 election results of the Dunmurry Cross DEA gave the following results:

SF	5
SDLP	1
DUP	1
Total	7

2.6 In calculating which of the parties should be allocated the 2 seats on the Belfast STC we use the formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of members in the party elected in the DEA}}{\text{Total number of members elected in the DEA}} \times \text{number of seats on the STC}$$

Total number of members elected in the DEA

This gives the following result:

SF	$5/7 \times 2 = 1.43$	1 rounded up to 2
SDLP	$1/7 \times 2 = 0.29$	0
DUP	$1/7 \times 2 = 0.29$	0

Therefore, Sinn Fein would be allocated both seats on the Belfast STC.

2.7 It would also be perfectly reasonable to base the decision on the use of the d'Hondt table of choices. If we use the d'Hondt table based upon the Dunmurry Cross DEA alone then the following result is achieved:

Belfast STC - Seats from Lisburn using Dunmurry Cross DEA numbers

	SF		SDLP		DUP	
Divisor	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)
1	5	1	1		1	
2	2.500	2	0.500		0.500	
3	1.667	3	0.333		0.333	
4	1.250	4	0.250		0.250	
5	1.000		0.200		0.200	

2.8 Castlereagh Borough Council

2.9 From the area of the existing Castlereagh district, the Commissioner recommended that the localities of Tullycarnet, Gilnahirk, Braniel, Hillfoot, Merok, Cregagh, Wynchurch, Glencregagh, and Belvoir should be incorporated in the Belfast district

2.10 It is extremely difficult to identify an existing District Electoral Area in Castlereagh where these new localities are situated. The localities of Tullycarnet and Gilnahirk would seem to lie within the existing Castlereagh East DEA; the localities of Hillfoot, Glencregagh and Belvoir within the existing Castlereagh West DEA and the localities of Braniel, Merok, Cregagh and Wynchurch within the existing Castlereagh Central DEA. Therefore, the 2011 election results for the Castlereagh Central, East and West DEAs have been used to determine the party strengths in the area to transfer to Belfast in 2015. The results in those 3 DEAs were as follows:

DUP	9
ALL	5
UUP	2
SDLP	1
GREEN	1
Total	18

Again we use the formula:

Number of members in the party elected in the DEA

 x number of seats on the STC

Total number of members elected in the DEA

This gives the following result:

DUP	$9/18 \times 2 = 1.00$	1
ALL	$5/18 \times 2 = 0.56$	0 rounded up to 1
UUP	$2/18 \times 2 = 0.22$	0
SDLP	$1/18 \times 2 = 0.11$	0
GREEN	$1/18 \times 2 = 0.11$	0

2.11 Therefore both the DUP and Alliance parties would be allocated 1 seat each on the Belfast STC.

2.12 If we use the d'Hondt table of choices based upon the election results in 2011 for the Castlereagh Central, East and West DEAs then the following result is achieved:

Belfast STC - seats from Castlereagh using Castlereagh Central, East and West DEA numbers

	DUP	ALL	UUP	SDLP	GREEN
Divisor	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)
1	9	5	2	1	1
2	4.500	2.500	1.000	0.500	0.500
3	3.000	1.667	0.667	0.333	0.333

2.13 Therefore the DUP would have the first choice and the Alliance party the second choice. Again, each of the DUP and Alliance parties would be allocated 1 seat on the Belfast STC.

2.14 It is acknowledged that it could be argued that trying to fit the area to transfer from Castlereagh to Belfast is so imprecise that it would be better to base the decision on the overall political breakdown of the whole of the Castlereagh Council.

2.15 If we were to proceed on this basis then the political composition of Castlereagh Borough Council at the 2011 local elections was:

DUP	11
ALL	6
UUP	3
SDLP	2
GREEN	1
Total	23

If we base a decision on the overall political breakdown of the Council then we use the formula:

Number of members in the party x number of seats on the STC

Total number of members

This gives the following result:

DUP	$11/23 \times 2 = 0.96$	rounded up to 1
ALL	$6/23 \times 2 = 0.52$	rounded up to 1
UUP	$3/23 \times 2 = 0.26$	
SDLP	$2/23 \times 2 = 0.17$	
GREEN	$1/23 \times 2 = 0.09$	

2.16 Therefore, once again, both the DUP and Alliance parties would be allocated 1 seat each on the Belfast STC.

2.17 If we base the decision on the use of the d'Hondt table of choices for the Council as a whole the following result would be achieved:

Belfast STC - seats from Castlereagh using whole Council numbers

	DUP		ALL		UUP	SDLP	GREEN
Divisor	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)	(Choice)
1	11	1	6	2	3	2	1
2	5.500	3	3.000	4	1.500	1.000	0.500
3	3.667		2.000		1.000	0.667	0.333

2.18 Once again, the DUP would have the first choice and the Alliance party would have the second choice. Therefore, both the DUP and Alliance parties would be allocated a seat on the Belfast STC.

2.19 Summary

- Belfast City Council would submit that the representatives from Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils to sit on the Belfast STC should be selected, on a proportional basis, from the areas of those Councils which will transfer to Belfast in 2015.
- In Lisburn, it would appear to be reasonable to use the election results in 2011 for the Dunmurry Cross DEA as the basis of determining the political party strengths in the area of that Council which will transfer to Belfast. On that basis, the representation from Lisburn should be 2 Members of Sinn Fein.
- In Castlereagh, there is not any comfortable fit between the area to transfer and the District Electoral Areas upon which the 2011 local elections were based. The area to transfer appears to include parts of the existing Castlereagh East, West and Central DEAs and therefore the combined results of those 3 DEAs have been used to determine the political party strengths in the area of that Council which will transfer to Belfast. Alternatively, as the fit is not a comfortable one, the political party strengths on the overall Council have also been used to determine the representation. Whichever scenario is used the result is the same; that the representation from Castlereagh should be 1 Member of the DUP and 1 Member of the Alliance Party.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 None.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

4.1 None. The appointments to the Belfast STC would be based upon proportionality principles and would reflect the political representation from the areas of Lisburn and Castlereagh which will transfer to Belfast in 2015.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is recommended to adopt the position on the nomination of representatives from Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Councils to the Belfast STC as set out in the report i.e. that 2 Sinn Fein Members should be appointed from Lisburn and 1 DUP and 1 Alliance Member from Castlereagh.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed to write to the Environment Minister setting out the Council’s position.

Investment Programme

Local Investment Fund Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

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

1.2 The Local Investment Fund was established to support the delivery of key local regeneration projects in neighbourhoods and as a means for Members to connect with local communities in their area, in preparation for their formal role in community planning under the RPA. SP&R Committee agreed on 23 March 2012 that there was a minimum level of investment through LIF of no less than £15,000 and unlikely to exceed £250,000 to ensure focus on more local investments and the opportunity for a broad spread of investment across the city. North, South, East and West AWGs were allocated £1,127,500 each, with a proportionate amount of £490,000 for the Shankill area.

1.3 The Area Working Groups held their first meetings in June 2012 and each AWG has met on at least a monthly basis since this time. As part of this process, 58 Local Investment Fund project proposals have been recommended for funding by the AWGs and been approved in principle for funding by Strategic Policy & Resources.

2.0 Key Issues

LIF Processes and Governance

2.1 Members will recall that they approved in September 2012 the governance arrangements, including the financial governance, for LIF. Members are asked to note that detailed processes have been established for each stage of LIF. These include –

- Stage 1 – the project proposal stage – up until the project has been approved in principle for funding by SP&R or been rejected at this Stage by the AWG
- Stage 2 – the due-diligence process - an in-depth scrutiny of the project proposal forms which have been recommended for funding by SP&R
- Stage 3 – the delivery process – the project delivery method and who will undertake delivery
- Stage 4 – the payment process.

2.2 Members will be aware that the Council has a duty to ensure public money is spent wisely and the Council's investment is properly protected. In order to ensure this, a thorough due-diligence process has been established and each project proposal is subject to this process. The first step in the due-diligence process is that projects which have been approved in principle to receive funding are written out to and asked to provide written confirmation and clarification of issues identified or detailed information that remains outstanding. A due-diligence checklist has been developed in order to ensure that the Council captures all the information that it needs in order to properly and rigorously scrutinise proposals. Information that needs to be provided includes:

Legal provision to support the proposal – Vires

Capacity to deliver the proposed project and approach including timescales

Governance: constitution; appropriate policies; minutes of Board meeting to confirm grant application

Security of tenure: confirmation of ownership and/or permission to carry out the proposed works and occupy the land

Proposed approach to procurement

Financial: dedicated bank account; audited accounts; insurance cover; VAT eligibility; evidence of match funding offer(s); contract documentation and any conditions attached to partner funding; approach to payment and process identified

Statutory consents: site plan; details of site appraisal; confirmation of planning permission; building control approval; adherence to Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007

Sustainability: whole life costs; community use plan; maintenance plans; business plan/project management plan/marketing plan

Accessibility and secured community access

Equality/good relations screening

Any other supporting evidence e.g. topographical surveys, contaminated land surveys

The due-diligence process ensures that the support is eligible under the Local Government Finance Act 2011 and the Local Government Accounts and Audit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

- 2.3 At this stage 53 of the recommended project proposals have been written out to as part of the due-diligence process. The other letters are due to be sent out shortly. Members are asked to note that the Project Sponsor who worked with the Group from the proposal stage also works with the Group throughout the due-diligence stage. This provides continuity to the Groups and ensures that an iterative process of seeking information can be maintained.

- 2.4** The information that is provided by Groups is then scrutinised by a Due-Diligence working group, which meets on a weekly basis, which has been set up to oversee this process. This Group, which is chaired by the Head of Contracts, is comprised of officers from across the Council with relevant disciplines (legal, financial, estates, project management). Members are asked to note that NO project proposal will receive a Letter of Offer or Funding Agreement before all due-diligence information is received and has been signed off by each individual section (Property & Projects, Legal Services, Estates, Urban development Unit and Financial Services) as being satisfactory and meeting all requirements.
- 2.5** Members will be aware that some of the projects which were proposed for funding under LIF were at a more advanced state of readiness than others. At this stage in-depth information has been received in relation to 8 project proposals. It is anticipated that a number of these will be signed off in the coming weeks by the Due-Diligence Group. These will then be passed to Legal Services to draft the Letters of Offer and the individual Funding Agreements. Each project proposal will have standard Terms and Conditions which will be outlined in their funding agreement as well as specific conditions relating to their own unique project. The remaining 48 projects are being work through systematically with the projects officers and updates will be given as required at the respective Area Working Groups.
- 2.6** A detailed payment process, similar to those which have been established for other Council funding streams, has been established by Financial Services and Property and Projects. The final letters of offer will issued by the Director of Finance. Members are asked to note that no payments will be made to project promoters until the Letter of Offer and Funding Agreements are signed by both parties. As part of this process the Council has put in place a series of checks and balances to ensure that the money which has been issued by the Council has been used for the purpose for which it was approved. Clawback procedures proportionate to the funding offer will be put in place.
- 2.7** Members are asked to note that in the case of projects which have been approved for funding in principle, subject to match funding being found (either within 12months or 18 months), the period of time for match funding being secured will commence from when the Letter of Offer is sent out by the Council.

- 2.8 Members will be kept up to date on the progress of the due diligence process in respect of project proposals through the Area Working Groups on a regular basis going forward

Delivery Mechanism

- 2.9 At the due-diligence stage confirmation is also sought in relation to the anticipated project delivery method and who will be appointed to undertake delivery, including whether there is any anticipated support needed from the Council. At this stage of the due-diligence process 8 projects have been identified that will potentially be delivered by the Council.

February AWG Recommendations on LIF proposals

- 2.10 At the most recent round of AWG meetings, officers updated Members on the external meetings they have facilitated on the LIF proposals. In accordance with Council procedures, individual Members declared any conflicts of interest and this was noted in the minutes of the AWG. Members are asked to note that only the South and East AWGs have met in time for the preparation of this report and put forward project recommendations. On the basis of the information presented, the South and East AWGs have made the following recommendations for the consideration of the Committee:

East AWG

- 2.11 The East AWG considered the potential for feasibility support and recommends to the SP&R the following as a feasibility project:

Project	Ref No.	Comments
Constance Street Community House	ELIF021	Feasibility study

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

Proposal	Ref No.	Up to £	AWG Comments
Community Garden Tildarg Street	ELIF022	£15,000	

South AWG

2.12 The South AWG confirmed support and recommend to the SP&R the following as a feasibility project:

Project	Ref No.	Comments
Tonnta / SOLAS	SLIF053	Feasibility study
South Belfast Sure Start (Markets)	SLIF056	Feasibility study

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

Proposal	Ref No.	Up to £	AWG Comments
South Belfast Sure Start (Markets)	SLIF056	£150,000	Subject to match funding being obtained

Review of the role of Area Working Groups

2.13 Members have enthusiastically embraced the potential presented by local area working. This is an evolving process and when the Area Working Groups were first established it was agreed that their role and remit should be kept under regular review. Given that the AWGs are now well established and that most of the AWGs have committed their full allocation of Local Investment Funding at this stage, it is recommended that the terms of reference for the AWGs are reviewed to ensure that they can continue to best facilitate the shared political ambition to deliver change at a local level. This will be undertaken in parallel with, and link to, the ongoing work which is being taken forward by Jon Huish on Member development and review of the Council's governance.

2.14 With the first draft of SIF Area Plans now published it is important that Area Working Groups begin to address overall plans for their area.

To this end further work is intended with Jon Huish to agree comprehensive area plans that link to an overall community plan and includes high level outcomes together with practical on the ground projects.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Human – Resources are currently allocated to individual projects

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

AWG	(A) LIF Allocation	Amount allocated June 12- Jan 13 (B)	Proposals in this report (C)	(D) Projected Allocation (b) + (c)	Remaining amount (A) – (D)
East	£1,127,500	£860,852	£15,000	£875,852	£251,648
South	£1,127,500	£874,541.40	£150,000	£1,024,541.40	£102,958.60
West	£1,127,500	£1,127,500	-	£1,127,500	£0
North	£1,127,500	£1,127,500	-	£1,127,500	£0
Shankill	£490,000	£438,000	-	£438,000	£52,000
TOTAL	£5,000,000	£4,428,393.40	£300,000	£4,728,393.40	£271,606.60

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 The overall LIF programme 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.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and

- Note the thorough due diligence process which is being carried out on each LIF project proposal
- Approve in principle the allocation of Local Investment Funding as proposed by the South and East Area Working Groups
- Approve that a review of the Terms of Reference for the AWGs is undertaken in order to continue to ensure that the AWGs can best facilitate the shared political ambition to deliver change at a local level and begin to finalise area plans.”

The Director of Property and Projects advised that the West Area Working Group had previously agreed to support the Rossa Park Project in full. However, at its last meeting it had considered a revised scheme at Phase 1, including the modernisation and refurbishment of the existing structure and had agreed to support the revised scheme in the sum of £80,000 and be recommended accordingly.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

ICT Strategy

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are central to the delivery of the Council’s corporate plans. How we use technology to manage our information has a critical and expanding role in improving access to our services and provides new ways of working which can improve both service quality and staff productivity.

1.2 We all now expect ICT to enable:

- increasing mobility,**
- access to information wherever we are,**
- location-based information which can shape how we make our decisions,**
- access to social networks to deliver a personally relevant experience that is integrated into, and initiated from, various social platforms.**

1.3 This means that the Council requires an ICT Strategy which ensures that the right set of policies, working practices and supporting technology are put in place because information technology and the management of our information:

- is an essential element of good corporate governance,**
- provides Members and Chief Officers with the right information to support effective decision making,**
- challenges our thinking on how we deliver services and supports innovation in service design,**
- sets direction in terms of investment in technology assuring alignment to corporate objectives,**
- and provides the basis of accountability to Elected Members and the citizens of Belfast for the stewardship and use of IT resources.**

2 Key Issues

Key elements of the Council's ICT strategy should include:

2.1 Strategy and Business Alignment

It is important that the Council invests in the right technology to meet the business objectives of the Council both corporately and at service level. This becomes more important in the context of modernising public services and the drive to deliver efficiency and value for money. It is essential that planning for the use of IT is fully integrated with the financial, capital, human resources and business planning processes of the Council.

2.2 Management and Governance

The Council needs to direct and control IT resources to achieve the objectives of the Corporate Plan as well as employing good practices for managing the business operation of IT.

2.3 Business Applications

Critical to the delivery of the council's goals will be the plan to evolve our business applications to support our business strategy and underlying processes.

2.4 Technology and Architecture

A critical element of the framework is the underlying technology infrastructure and the processes for developing, deploying, enhancing and supporting the business capabilities using technology solutions. It is equally critical that these solutions are measured in terms of their fitness for purpose and return on investment. Reporting on performance of KPIs against targets will form part of the routine measurement of the performance of our ICT services.

2.5 Organisation and skills

An essential element is the capacity of the Council in terms of its IT skills as well as management ability to deliver change effectively and create and promote an environment of productivity, learning and employee satisfaction.

3 Resource Implications

**3.1 Cost of external assistance to develop an ICT Strategy
£25,000 - £30,000**

3.2 The ICT Strategy will result in the development of a number of capital projects for which business cases will be developed. These projects will be taken through agreed project approval processes to ensure strategic fit and affordability.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

N/A

5 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- 1. Note the contents of the report.**
- 2. Agree to the commissioning of external assistance to facilitate the development of an ICT Strategy”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Digital Hub Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that the Belfast City Council Investment Programme 2012-15 sets out a package of measures to help address the impact of the economic downturn across Belfast and to capitalise on the city’s growing reputation as a choice for foreign direct investment and a top tourism and cultural destination. One of the major capital schemes to promote economic growth in key sectors is the proposed Digital Hub.

1.2 The development of a digital hub has a close strategic alignment with the Super Connected Belfast Project which will see a £13.7million investment in the city’s digital infrastructure. A key element of the Super Connected Belfast programme is the creation and growth of businesses in the Digital content sector and it is envisaged that a Digital Hub would play a key role in delivering on the objectives set out in the business case submitted to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in support of Council’s submission.

1.3 In order to further develop and refine the concept, and to test its viability, the Development Committee agreed in June 2012 to support a feasibility study into the development of a hub in Belfast. The Committee agreed that the feasibility study should look at not just the digital content sector but consider the broader creative industry sector which includes music, film, tv, digital media and design. The feasibility study was commissioned in September 2012 and Ekos were appointed to carry out this work. The company has extensive experience in this area and have carried out similar studies for the creative media centre in Stornoway, Media Enterprise Centres in Manchester as well as creative industries strategies for Creative Scotland and the London Development Agency.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The feasibility study required the company to consider a range of issues including:

- Assessment of how the concept would sit within the strategic context of wider support for sectoral growth from other national and regional government departments, including engagement with relevant stakeholder bodies to consider their support for such a scheme
- Quantification of demand for the development, to be assessed through engagement with potential end-users and stakeholders such as Invest NI
- Consideration of the infrastructure requirements of such a facility, to encourage optimal use
- Consideration of locational requirements of a development of this nature
- Identification of the type of support services that could “wrap around” the physical space to support business growth and collaboration between resident businesses and other companies
- Consideration of the most suitable options for management for the facilities including cost projections.

2.2 Consultation with both the private and public sector was also a key element of the feasibility study. 25 Belfast-based companies spanning the key sectors of film, TV, music, digital media and design were consulted along with key public sector stakeholders including Invest NI, Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Digital Circle (the trade body for the digital media

sector), University of Ulster, Belfast Metropolitan College and the Northern Ireland Science Park.

2.3 The collective agreement from both the private and public sector stakeholders was that the hub should focus on “key areas of potential growth in the creative industries, with room for close links to technology”. In summary, this might include digital media, film and television, design and some digital content businesses e.g. app development.

2.4 The feasibility study has drawn a number of key conclusions:

2.5 Need and Rationale for a Creative Hub

The study suggests that there is a demand from the sector and support from stakeholders for a facility of this nature. The industry survey suggested that 87% of those surveyed would be supportive of a hub, with almost two thirds expressing a strong interest or full commitment.

2.6 Services and Activities

Those surveyed suggested that the hub should provide a range of services and activities including flexible workspaces for creative companies with demonstrable growth potential. These should be available on flexible lease terms and at affordable rents – cost will be a major factor in company decisions about whether or not to locate in a hub. Other facilities that would be supported include hot-desk/drop-in area available to visiting companies/professionals; regular business events, including clinics with professional services providers (lawyers, accountants and HR specialists); networking events run by the hub and other partners; and business development support for companies in the hub, making use of existing services but ensuring clear access for hub tenants.

2.7 Management

The report suggests that the hub requires dedicated management support. Those providing the support should have knowledge of the creative/digital industries sectors. It is recognised that the proposed funding arrangement for the capital investment (i.e. for Belfast City Council to invest in the infrastructure and lever funding from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)) will mean that the Council acquires the asset (on lease or buy terms). However it is proposed that the management is sub-contracted to a suitably qualified organisation, to be identified through a process of competitive tender. The contract can be based on delivery of clear targets relating to occupancy, income, activities and company growth.

2.8 Infrastructural requirements

Businesses questioned suggested that there were a number of infrastructural requirements that would attract them to a development of this nature. These include high-speed, uninterrupted broadband access (potentially provided through the Super Connected Belfast Project); mixture of flexible office space (with potential to expand) and open, communal areas as well as quality catering facilities (in the location or adjacent).

2.9 Location Requirements

A number of locations were considered as part of the feasibility study which were assessed on a range of criteria including, stakeholder support, potential cost, ease of access and availability of amenities.

2.10 The locations considered included Ormeau Business Park, Weavers Court, City Centre, Titanic Quarter, Cathedral Quarter, Crumlin Road Gaol and Springvale.

2.11 Specific consideration was given to Crumlin Road Gaol and Springvale given the potential regeneration impact of the project. Crumlin Road Gaol was deemed not ideal due to physical constraints presented by the structure of the building which limited the potential to provide suitable workspace, meeting rooms and networking space. The feasibility study for Springvale has pointed to the need to develop a facility which will maximise the potential for job creation in this area and thus will focus on a much broader industry base.

2.12 The analysis ultimately concluded that the preferred location for such a facility would be Cathedral Quarter.

2.13 The main reasons cited for the Cathedral Quarter location were the alignment with the UU campus development plans; accessibility and adjacency to other, similar developments (e.g. Blick Studios and DSD managed workspaces at Cotton Court) and the potential to further develop the area as a creative quarter in the city.

- 2.14** In summary, the feasibility study has confirmed that there would be a demand for a creative hub, targeting micro-businesses in the creative and digital sectors, offering flexible lease terms and providing support services to encourage collaboration and stimulate new product development and access to new markets.
- 2.15** However, if the project is to progress beyond this feasibility stage, the next steps will include identification of a number of relevant, potential sites with associated costs; assessment of management arrangements and costs and development of a business case to ensure that the scheme is economically viable. The scheme will also need to meet with the external funder requirements, if resources are to be sought from external partners.
- 2.16** Once this business case is completed and approved, a funding application can be made to lever match-funding support for the scheme from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Agreement has been reached with the funding management body (Invest NI) that they would be willing to accept a submission for support up until end March 2013, subject to ongoing engagement with them to advise on potential costs and timeframes.
- 2.17** If this approach is pursued, it is likely that the costs will be lower than originally anticipated in the Investment Programme. This is due to a number of factors, but primarily the fact that the buildings in Cathedral Quarter are generally of a smaller scale than a new-build development might be.
- 2.18** However, if the Cathedral Quarter proposal was to develop, there may be an opportunity for the Council to establish a series of “networked creative hubs” in that location, given that it is likely that we may acquire three managed workspaces as part of the Review of Public Administration which are currently owned by Department for Social Development (DSD). These facilities are all located around the Cathedral Quarter area. It will also allow for economies of scale around facilities management and programme support activities.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

An indicative financial commitment of £4million total cost had been identified for this scheme within the Investment Programme. At this stage, it is not possible to finalise the costs for the scheme, until the preferred site has been identified. However, the costs will not exceed the £4million and, depending on the site, are likely to be significantly lower than this level. Further reports identifying potential costs will be brought forward should Members endorse the approval to move towards the business case stage.

The costs for progressing this to Economic Appraisal will be met out of the Feasibility Fund and will not exceed £60,000.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 No specific equality and good relations implications.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the key findings of the feasibility study on the creative/digital hub project
- Approve the development of a business case, based on a number of potential options within the preferred location, i.e. Cathedral Quarter
- Progress the Creative Hub project to 'Stage 2' on the Capital Programme and permit the carrying out of an Economic Appraisal on two locations with the costs to be met from the Feasibility Fund
- Note the intention to lever EU match funding, including the application timeframes for these funds."

During discussion, several Members expressed the view that there was a need to investigate other possible locations, as part of the Economic Appraisal, as a site for the Digital Hub.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that an options appraisal of possible sites be undertaken and that Party Group Briefings be provided in an attempt to reach a consensus on a preferred location and that a report thereon be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in order to progress the Economic Appraisal.

Forthriver Innovation Centre – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that, at the 21 September 2012 meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, an update report on the Forthriver project was presented for information.**
- 1.2 Members were advised that, instead of progressing the project by means of a development brief (which had been the original intention), Invest NI had just provided confirmation that the only means by which the Council would be guaranteed the £4 million European Regional Development funding towards the project was for the Council to undertake the construction of the building itself. This would mean that the Council would undertake to build the premises and retain it in its ownership, however, a separate contract would be developed for another agency to operate the scheme.**
- 1.3 The Committee agreed this approach, namely that the Council undertake the construction of the Forthriver Innovation Centre, following which a separate contract would be drawn up to seek expressions of interest for a third party to operate the building.**
- 1.4 In order to ascertain the viability of the proposed scheme and to consider the cost implications, the Development Committee approved a budget for a feasibility study and business case at its meeting on 20 November 2012. Capaxo Ltd were appointed to carry out the work and the timeframe for completion was mid-February 2013. This was to allow the submission of a funding bid to Invest NI in advance of the 28 February 2013 deadline.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 As part of the feasibility study and business case process, meetings were held with a range of potential end-users (both through direct engagement with companies and through trade bodies such as Momentum) as well as key statutory partners (Invest NI, universities, Belfast Metropolitan College, DETI, DCAL), other enterprise partners (Argyle Business Centre, Ortus, Workwest, Northern Ireland Science Park) and other relevant parties such as MATRIX and the Strategic Investment Board.**

- 2.2 A workshop was also organised for elected Members in the areas immediately adjacent to the site and other political briefings were also held.
- 2.3 The feasibility study suggests that there is both demand and support for a development at this site and that it could have a significant regeneration impact for the area and act as a catalyst for the wider site development. However it acknowledges that there are challenges not only in relation to the physical site in terms of both contaminants that are likely to remain from the previous industrial use and perceptions about how accessible the site is and its distance from the city centre, but also given that this is an interface site. In this regard, it recognises the need for cross-community support to ensure that it is a neutral employment location.
- 2.4 The study suggests that there are significant opportunities for collaboration with e3 and other enterprise support partners (e.g. NISP, Argyle, Ortus) to ensure a steady flow of potential tenants and to support collaborative business support programmes and initiatives which can improve business productivity.
- 2.5 It is proposed that the target audience for the development is those businesses in growth-focused sectors that are innovative (i.e. using new processes and techniques or developing new products) and that are open to collaboration with other partners.
- 2.6 It is suggested that the building finish should be of a high quality – in line with the e3 development. There should be flexibility as to tenant terms and conditions as well as the internal fabric of the building (flexible space, informal meeting areas etc.). The building should have appropriate catering facilities (which could be open to the public).
- 2.7 The feasibility study suggests that the operating model should be that the building remains in Council ownership (this will also be a stipulation of the external funder) and that the management and business support services are outsourced (again, through public tender). It notes that consideration should be given to the governance structures, possibly involving an advisory committee that is not responsible for the delivery function but that guides the strategic development of the centre, to ensure maximum economic and social regeneration impact.

- 2.8 Finally, based on the available budget, the feasibility suggests that a development of 40,000-45,000 sq ft may be possible (including business space and open space) and that this scale of development could accommodate up to 200 jobs.
- 2.9 The feasibility study provides all supporting information required to make the funding application for the end February 2013 deadline.
- 3 **Resource Implications**
- 3.1 It is anticipated that the development can be completed within the £8million allocated budget (based on the current designs).
- 4 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**
- 4.1 No specific equality and good relations implications.
- 5 **Recommendations**
- 5.1 Members are asked to note the update on the key findings of the feasibility study and business case for the Forthriver project and to endorse the submission of a funding bid to Invest NI on the basis of the findings, based on a total maximum project costs of £8million.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Democratic Services and Governance

Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality

The Committee was advised that the undernoted requests for the use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality had been received:

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Unite	Unite – Irish Policy Conference 2013 Reception 24th June, 2013 Approximately 220 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
The United Kingdom Haemophilia Society	European Haemophilia Conference 2014 Dinner 3rd October, 2014 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Belfast Community Sports Development Network	Annual Sports Awards 6th March, 2013 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception.	This event will recognise those individuals who have contributed to the provision of sport in Belfast. The event will celebrate the local sporting heroes, coaches and volunteers that help make Belfast an active and sporting city. Furthermore, this event will contribute to the achievement of the Belfast Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

<p>Common Purpose</p>	<p>Meridian Course Final Day and Award Ceremony 1st August, 2013 Approximately 50 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.</p>	<p>'Meridian' is a leadership programme that brings together a diverse group of leaders from the private, public, voluntary and community sectors. The participants learn how to improve their capacity to lead, effect change and expand their networks through the investigation of real-life challenges. This event will recognise the achievements of those individuals which have successfully completed the Meridian Programme. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits. Approximate Cost £125</p>
<p>British Institute of Cleaning Science</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Cleaner of the Year 2013 20th September, 2013 Approximately 50 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event seeks to acknowledge the vital role of cleaners across various industries in Northern Ireland. The event will also aim to recognise those individuals who have been nominated within their respective industries for undertaking their duties to a high standard. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £125</p>
<p>Volunteer Now</p>	<p>Volunteer Awards 5th December, 2013 Approximately 400 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event seeks to recognise those volunteers who have demonstrated a commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society, their community, the environment or individuals. The event also seeks to</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits Approximate cost</p>

			<p>promote the positive effect which volunteering has in combatting poverty, helping those who are disadvantaged and promoting social inclusion.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's key themes of 'Better opportunities for success across the City', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better Services – Listening and Delivering'.</p>	£600
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	<p>Peace Boat: International Peace and Reconciliation Visit Reception</p> <p>30th May, 2013</p> <p>Approximately 400 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception</p>	<p>This event will provide an opportunity to endorse the work of the 'Peace Boat' which aims to promote peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment. 'Peace Boat' seeks to create awareness and action based on effecting positive social and political change in the world.</p> <p>The 'Peace Boat' will dock in the city as part of its voyage and the 400 plus passengers will have the opportunity to visit and sample what Belfast has to offer.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.</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>
Belfast Men's Health Group	<p>Men's Health Week Event 2013</p> <p>13th June, 2013</p> <p>Approximately 300 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will build on the success of the 2011 and 2012 events and will focus on the theme of Men's Health Week which is Action.</p> <p>This event aims to promote the importance of men taking part in physical activity while highlighting the range of activities they can participate in to</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £750</p>

			<p>enhance their health.</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'.</p>	
<p>Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce Presidents' Banquet</p> <p>14th November, 2013</p> <p>Approximately 400 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>This event will provide a networking opportunity which will help to encourage investment and business development opportunities for Belfast and beyond.</p> <p>The event, which will include representatives from both Local and Central Government, also seeks to facilitate discussion on economic and social regeneration.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better Services – listening and delivering' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Request for the use of the Council Chamber

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from a group representing the young people affiliated to each of the five main Political Parties, that is, Sinn Fein, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, the Ulster Unionist Party and Alliance Party, in Northern Ireland for the use of the Council Chamber for a political debate. The Group wished to hold the debate in March and would invite eight representatives from each of the aforementioned Parties, together with eight representatives from the Progressive Unionist Party, to take part. That meant there would be 48 participants, with other affiliated members of the Parties being present in the public gallery.

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

The Committee granted the approval sought and approved also the provision of appropriate hospitality.

**Events to mark the Freedom of the City
for Dame Mary Peters**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at a special meeting on 1st November, 2012, had agreed to elect and admit Dame Mary Peters as a Freeman of the City of Belfast. Accordingly, the Democratic Services Manager submitted, for the information of the Members, a report which sought to update the Committee on the detailed discussions on the arrangements for the event to mark this occasion which had taken place involving the Lord Mayor, Dame Mary Peters and representatives of her sporting foundation and Council officers.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that previous ceremonies had included a Special Meeting of the Council which was held in the Council Chamber. Those ceremonies were very formal in nature and were followed by a dinner. However, since a Special Meeting had been held on 1st November, 2012, there was no (legal) requirement to hold another Special Meeting. In addition, Dame Mary had indicated that her preference would be for a modern and less formal approach to a ceremony which could be viewed and enjoyed by all guests together in one location and not be restricted by the capacity of the Council Chamber. Furthermore, Dame Mary had expressed a strong desire that any event should seek to:

- celebrate sport in the City;
- build on the enthusiasm of the Olympics and ParaOlympics in 2012;
- recognise the importance of sport for young people and help to encourage participation in schools sports;
- be cross-community based; and
- recognise those actively participating in sport in the City

It was proposed that the celebrations would take place on Wednesday, 8th May, 2013 and would include a sporting event in the morning, followed by a short ceremony and dinner that evening.

The Committee approved the proposals to celebrate the conferment of the Freedom of the City on Dame Mary Peters as outlined.

European Local Democracy Week 2013

The Committee was advised that the European Local Democracy Week was an annual event held each October, the overarching purpose of which was to promote a better involvement of citizens in public life, enhance transparency of local government mechanisms and improve social cohesion, in particular among young people and disadvantaged groups. It built on Local Democracy Week, in which the Council had been involved in previous years, by organising and hosting events involving young people from across the City.

In 2012 the Council had organised and delivered the EurVoice event which allowed pupils from secondary schools, members of the Council's Youth Forum, representatives of the European Youth Parliament and participants from community groups in the City to interact with their local Councillors who undertook the role of Youth Champion within their Party. That event had proved to be very successful and feedback from the schools and community groups and from the Councillors after the event was very positive. Participants felt that the event was a fun and convenient way for them all

to meet on a one-to-one basis and get a sense of and discuss through many mutually important and relevant issues.

A Project Steering Group had been set up to organise the 2013 event and was comprised of officers from several sections of the Council, together with external organisations. Following the success of the previous year's event, it was felt it would be worth organising an even more engaging and enjoyable event where both young people and Councillors could meet to discuss the relevant issues which faced the young citizens of our City and to build on the themes which had been discussed at the previous event. In addition to the participants who had attended in 2012, invitations would also be extended to young people in the wider community. The event would take place in the Great Hall on Tuesday, 8th October, 2013 from 12.00 noon till 4.00 p.m. and would target Belfast school and youth organisations. A series of activities was planned, which included:

- participating in a mock voting exercise;
- use of technology to conduct an opinion poll on a range of issues affecting young people, enabling instant feedback;
- workshops;
- panel question and answer session; and
- closing mini-interviews to establish the impact of the event on participants' viewpoints.

It was expected that the event would cost approximately £3,600 which would include hospitality, IT provision and Master of Ceremony costs, provision for which had been made within the Revenue Estimates.

The Committee agreed to the hosting of the EurVoice event as outlined.

Minutes of Meeting of Belfast Lord Mayor, Party Leaders and Committee Chairs

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Belfast Lord Mayor, Party Leaders and Committee Chairs which had been held on 13th February.

Minutes of Meeting Belfast Party Leaders' Forum

The minutes of the meeting of the Party Leaders' Forum which had been held on 13th February were approved and adopted.

Local Authority Members' Association – Spring Seminar

The Committee was advised that the Local Authority Members' Association was holding its Spring Seminar in Gorey, Co. Wexford on 5th and 6th April. The theme of the seminar was Local Authorities in Ireland – New Challenges, New Opportunities. Keynote speakers would include Fergus O'Dowd, T.D. and Damien Tiernan, RTE Regional Correspondent. Delegates at the seminar would have an opportunity to explore and debate subjects such as health and safety in the workplace, challenges facing local councils and the opportunities for change which the upcoming Reform of Local Government might present. The approximate cost per delegate would be £665 and it was recommended 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.

The Committee agreed, on a vote by show of hands, with nine Members voting for and five against, to adopt the recommendation.

Finance/Value-for-Money

Financial Reporting – Quarter 3 2012-13

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

“Relevant Background Information

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

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

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

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

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

Key Issues

Current and Forecast Revenue Position for 2012/13

The financial position for the Council at the end of Quarter 3 is a net departmental under-spend of £1.44m (1.6%). The forecast year end departmental position is an under-spend of £1.03m (0.9%), which is well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

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

- Expenditure on Invest to Save projects below quarter 3 budget position (£270k)
- In Health and Environmental Services (£426k) mainly due to the receipt of additional income in Building Control, reduced waste tonnages, staff vacancies and delays in the commencement of programmes of work largely due to the time taken for the Policing and Community Safety Partnership to be established.
- In Parks and Leisure (£496k) due to delays in planned works on playgrounds and work programmes mainly in leisure development activities, offset by the loss of external income.

There are four main components of the forecast year end position of a £1.034m under-spend. These are:

- A potential under-spend of £250k in the Invest to Save budget. Demand on this budget will increase over the next few years as the complexity of the Efficiency Programme increases.
- A £650k under-spend in the Health and Environmental Services budget due to the receipt of additional income, reduced waste tonnages and delays in establishing the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

- An under-spend in the Development Department budget of £175k mainly due to vacant posts arising during the structural reviews.
- An over-spend of £161k in Parks and Leisure Services for increased utility costs and reduced external income.

Capital Financing

The capital financing budget, of £10.14m, is forecast to be on budget at the year end and is made up of £2.05m to finance existing loans relating to the City Hall, Ulster Hall and Grove Wellbeing Centre projects with a further £6.97m used to finance other committed capital programme projects. The balance of the budget will be used to finance feasibility work to support the Investment Programme (£0.15m) and non-recurrent expenditure works (£0.92m).

Rate Income

The forecast LPS outturn for Quarter 3 has been maintained at the Quarter 2 position which was a favourable outturn of £138k. Officers will be meeting with LPS over the coming weeks to discuss the forecast particularly in relation to debt and outstanding appeals.

Reserve Movements

The movement in reserves, including the forecast departmental outturn of £1.03m and the allocation of £400k for the 'Backin Belfast' initiative mean that the general reserves position is forecast to be £13.03m at the year end.

Investment Programme

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

Committed expenditure approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for the 3 year Capital Programme stands at £29m, leaving £46m of schemes within the 3 year programme at the uncommitted or emerging project stage.

Committed expenditure on LIF projects at Quarter 3 totals £4.2m, leaving a balance of £0.8m in the Local Investment Fund.

The amount of levered external funding for the Investment Programme which has been agreed in principal increased to £17.4m at Quarter 3, with £16.6m of these funds confirmed through letters of offer.

Actual capital expenditure at Quarter 3 was £5.4m with a year-end forecast spend of £9.9m against an annual budget of £19.4m, while non-recurring expenditure is forecast at £0.9m for the year end against a budget of £1.8m. A detail report on the capital programme will be presented at the 23 March Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

Better Services: Creditors and Debtors

The average number of creditors paid within 28 days was 75.5% at the end of Quarter 3, which was above the target of 70% for the period. As part of the Investment Programme a target of 75% has been set for 31st March 2013. To ensure that this target is achieved a project team has been set up to implement improvement actions during 2012/13. Progress in implementing these improvements will continue to be reported to Members as part of the quarterly financial reporting.

The Quarter 3 average for debt under 90 days old is 57.5% which is below the target of 65% and 52.4% of debt has been collected within 30 days, against the target of 60%. However the overall level of council debt has been reduced by £0.7m during the year to £3m at the end of Quarter 3. Staff in the Central Transaction Unit are monitoring those accounts where payment terms have been exceeded and legal action is being taken, where appropriate, to ensure debt is recovered.

Better Services: Procurement Compliance

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

Indicator 1 – compliant purchases. This indicator shows how often goods or services are ordered with a valid purchase order being created prior to the order being placed. A target of 85% was set for this indicator with the council achieving 83.5% compliance at the end of Quarter 3.

Indicator 2 – timeliness of goods on the system. This indicator shows when goods are received into the council whether they have been marked on the system as received (compliant) or whether the operator has waited for the invoice before marking the goods as received (non-compliant). A target of 65% was set for this indicator for Quarter 3, with the Council achieving 56.4% compliance at the end of the period.

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

Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

- a) **Note the financial report for Quarter 3 2012/13 and the year end forecast outturn of a departmental underspend of £1.03m (0.9%).**
- b) **Consider the year end outturn in the context of the funding proposals presented in separate reports at this meeting covering the following areas:-**
 - **Support for Advice Centres (£426k)**
 - **Northern Ireland Hospice Redevelopment (£200k)”**

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy – Prudential Code and Treasury Management Indicators

The Director of Finance and Resources reported that the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the supporting Prudential Code which had been produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) required the Council to consider the affordability and sustainability of capital expenditure decisions through the reporting of prudential and treasury management indicators. Accordingly, the Director submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided information on the prudential indicators for the Council for the period from 2013/14 till 2015/16 and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14.

He explained that the aforementioned Act required the Council to adopt the Prudential Code for Finance and Local Authorities. In doing so, the Council was required to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objectives of which were to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council were affordable, prudent and sustainable. He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 9th December, 2011, it had approved the Council's Treasury Management Policy which was based on the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Policy required that a Treasury Management Strategy be presented to the Committee on an annual basis and that it was supported by a mid-year and year-end Treasury Management report. Accordingly, he provided for the information of the Members reports in this regard.

The Director indicated that the comparison of "Net Borrowing" to "Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)" was the main indicator of prudence when considering the proposed capital investment plans of the Council. Estimated net borrowing should not exceed the CFR for the current year plus two years. The Council's estimated net borrowing position was comfortably within the Capital Financing Requirement in the medium term. He therefore considered the estimated levels of net borrowing as being prudent. The estimated financial costs for capital expenditure as a percentage of the estimated net revenue stream for the Council, based on the medium term financial plan, and the incremental impact on the rates of the Investment Programme, illustrated that, in the medium term, financing costs would represent 6.94% of the Council's net running cost. On that basis, the Director was satisfied also that the level of capital expenditure was affordable.

The Finance Act required the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, related to gross debt. The Prudential Code defined that affordable limit as the "Authorised Borrowing Limit" and gross borrowing must not exceed this limit. He recommended that the Committee approve an Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £109 million.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council be £109 million; and approved the Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14

**Belfast Tribunal Representation Service:
Request for financial support from the Advice Consortia**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Belfast City Council is a major funder of Advice & Information Services via a consortium model based on geographical providers. This approach to funding and advice delivery was established in 2005/06 and involves over 20 organisations which include both Citizens' Advice Bureau and Independent Advice providers. Essential criteria for receiving BCC Advice funding are that organisations need to give generalist advice and be associated to Citizens Advice or Advice N.I. Any requests for BCC funding from specialist advice providers are signposted to the relevant Government Department.

- 1.2 The current ongoing economic downturn and resultant uncertainty facing many households has resulted in an increase in the numbers of people accessing the services of advice agencies particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to debt and money advice services. The advice sector is experiencing difficulties in responding to this increased demand.
- 1.3 The BCC administered total financial support for Advice Services in Belfast last year was £825,619. This allowed the sector to process 191,085 enquiries of which over 26,569 were debt related. Monitoring returns demonstrate the funds levered an additional £41,947,284 in claimed benefits.
- 1.4 In line with the Welfare Reform – Notion of Motion passed by Council on 1st November 2012, officers have been working with the advice providers to identify potential funding sources to support a citywide Tribunal Service. The advice sector developed and submitted a 2 year programme which the Development Committee considered at their meeting on 20th November 2012. This meeting agreed in principle to seek to resource the programme from an in-year reallocation of funds as part of the Quarter 3 finance report.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 Representatives from the 5 Advice consortia are seeking BCC support to resource their proposal to deliver a Tribunal/Appeals Service across the city that clients can avail of at any BCC funded advice service.
- 2.2 This Belfast Tribunal Representation Service would represent clients who wish to appeal SSA decisions on benefits including Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independent Payment, Universal Credit and any other SSA benefit. This service would enable clients to challenge decisions, assisting them through the process and representing them at hearings.
- 2.3 Since the introduction of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) in 2011, the need for tribunal representation has steadily increased, as the number of claimants being disallowed benefit has grown, due to continuous changes to benefit criteria and constant periodic reviews of ESA claimants by ATOS, a commercial medical support service.

The advice consortia network indicates that this trend is likely to accelerate with the introduction of Welfare Reform, which represents the most significant change to the benefit system since the foundation of the Welfare State.

- 2.4** At present, advice services across the city are stretched, with advisors not only having to accommodate increasing numbers of clients, but also dealing with more complex cases, which are more time consuming because of the need to more actively monitor and progress claims on behalf of clients, and secure supporting evidence to submit with those claims.
- 2.5** The 5 consortia have therefore developed an outline programme for a citywide response which is attached at Appendix 1. While this proposal outlines a 2 year service plan with an anticipated start date of June 2013 and a total cost of £426,209.60, the consortia have also identified associated set up costs of £11,250.
- 2.6** The Development Committee agreed to resource the start up costs from additional in year grant received from DSD under the Community Support Plan. These costs include:
- Establishment of the Belfast Advice Group, lead partner identified, initial set up and recruitment, all taking place between January/March 2013, with staff recruited, agreement around referral processes, and familiarisation of staff with workload, protocols and generalist services.
 - Meet with the Appeal Service, SSA and other agencies that would positively contribute to delivering a citywide tribunal service.
 - Promotion and launch of service across Belfast.
- 2.7** The proposed programme to establish a city wide Tribunal Representative service will see the five area consortia come together to establish a Belfast Advice Group, comprising of a representative from each consortium. This group will be the mechanism to develop this service; it will nominate a lead partner as employer to oversee the administration of finances. Phase I would see the constitution of the group, establishing a terms of reference with clear objectives, decision making processes and roles/responsibilities. This work is underway.

2.8 Stage 2 of the proposal has an overall estimated cost of £426,210 and seeks to employ 5 Tribunal Representatives inclusive of 2 existing posts as both posts do not have funding beyond March 2013. One of the posts would be a Senior Tribunal Representative, overseeing the daily operational side of the service, providing a support and mentoring service to the tribunal representatives.

2.9 Officers have communicated the request for BCC financial support to DSD officials in the Voluntary & Community Unit. We are awaiting indication is there is any opportunity for DSD support.

3.0 Resource Implications

3.1 With the exception of the set up costs, no additional external funding has been identified to date. The proposal has therefore an overall estimated funding shortfall of £426,210 for a 2 year period.

3.2 Given the quarter 3 forecast revenue outturn position reported to this committee, the funding shortfall of £426,210 could be made available from in year revenue resources. However it must be noted that these resources are non-recurring and that there is no provision within the rate based budgets for additional expenditure after the 2 year period.

3.3 It is therefore extremely important that if the funding proposal is approved by the committee, that the basis of the funding is clearly communicated to the groups in the letter of offer i.e. that the funding is non recurrent and is only for a 2 year period

3.4 Given that the expenditure is for a 2 year period, any approved funding would be held in a specified reserve and released to the groups on an annual basis should it be established that alternative other funding streams have been unsuccessful.

3.5 There are no additional officer resources required as any related allocation of resources will be administered within our current service grant programme.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 That funding of £426,210 be approved to support the Belfast Tribunal Representation Service with the funds being retained in a specified reserve and released to the consortium on an as needs basis by the Director of Finance and Resources.

- 4.2 That it is clearly communicated to the consortium that the approved funds are being provided on a non recurring basis to cover the two year period and that there is no provision with the council finances for future funding of the initiative.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Request for Funding – NI Hospice

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 This report presents a request for financial assistance from the Northern Ireland Hospice towards the cost of the re-development of the hospice at Somerton House, Belfast.
- 1.2 The redevelopment will provide 18 beds in single en-suite rooms with supporting facilities for staff, families and volunteers. It will also create a dedicated Education and Resource Centre and a new Day Hospice facility capable sustaining the current level of support and clinical interventions in an enhanced environment.
- 1.3 The cost of the project is estimated at £11m with plans by the Hospice to raise approximately £3m from a public capital appeal over the next 3 years.
- 1.4 Under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the council has discretion to consider exceptional requests for financial assistance.
- The council has the statutory authority to make such payments
 - Assistance is not available from the remit of another Committee
- 1.5 The criteria for assessing requests for assistance which would fall within the council’s special expenditure budget were approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 June 2004.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 The people cared for at Somerton House include some of the most economically and socially deprived in Northern Ireland.

- 2.2 The facility provides regular employment for some 111 staff and is a focal point for around 321 local volunteers, who give regularly of their time and talents in the service of the hospice.
- 2.3 The local community has invested heavily in the facility over the years generating revenue of over £5m each year in voluntary funds.
- 2.4 The request submitted by the NI Hospice states that the project supports Belfast City Council's Corporate Strategic Objectives in the following ways:-
- 'The NI Hospice cares for people at a time of great need and engenders a sense of confidence that the City will look after its citizens – from cradle to grave.'
 - 'Hospice volunteers contribute to a strong sense of community in the local area.'
 - 'The Hospice is a rare shared place in North Belfast and promotes positive relations amongst the whole community both through care received there and in fundraising for the service.'
 - 'Investment in the hospice is an investment in North Belfast – an area of tremendous need.'
 - 'Internationally, the Hospice has a remit around education and research, with links in palliative care, education and training in the USA, India and Asia and aspires to be a world leader in palliative care developing models that can be replicated worldwide.'
 - 'The NI Hospice is founding member of the All-Ireland Institute of Palliative Care.'
 - 'The NI Hospice is the largest hospice (by income/expenditure) in the UK and trains all junior doctors in Northern Ireland in Palliative care as well as a range of healthcare professional from both private and public sector.'
- 2.5 Legal Services have reviewed the request for funding and have advised that the proposal would fall within the criteria agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 June 2004 and that the request may therefore be considered by the Committee for funding support.

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial

3.1 In additional to the specific circumstances under which the council may consider a request for an exceptional payment, Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 also limits the total amount of payments that can be made by the council in any year, to the aggregate of:-

- a) the product of a rate of 0.596p in the pound on the rateable value of all hereditaments in a NAV list in the district; and**
- b) the product of a rate of 0.00082p in the pound on the rateable capital value of all hereditaments in a capital value list in the district.**

3.2 On the basis of the above limit and the exceptional payments already approved by the council during 2012/13, the council could consider a payment of up to £200,000 to the NI Hospice Project without exceeding the current limit as defined by the Finance Act. Such a payment could be funded through the use the forecast departmental under spend being considered by the committee as part of the Quarter 3 financial report.

3.3 Officers are aware that the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff designate specific charities for support during their period of office; however the NI Hospice Capital Appeal would provide the opportunity for staff within the council to engage in fund raising activity which would add to the approved donation by the council itself. Staff fund raising activities could be supported in ways such as allowing the free use of the Great Hall on a number of occasions during the year for fund raising events.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers a contribution of £200,000 towards the redevelopment of the NI Hospice, Somerton Road, Belfast and, if agreed, passes the undernoted resolution:

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

- 4.2 It is also recommended that officers explore the potential for other fund raising activity by staff within the council and that a further report is presented to committee which outlines the way in which the council could support this fund raising process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Minutes of Meeting of Budget and Transformation Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 14th February.

Approval to Seek Tenders - Property Maintenance

The Committee approved the commencement of tendering exercises in respect of the following:

<u>Contract</u>	<u>Estimated Value per Year</u>	<u>Period of Contract</u>
Measured Term Contract for Repair, Maintenance and Minor Works to Electrical Services	£150,000	1 year, with the option to renew for a further 2 years
Measured Term Contract for Repair, Maintenance and Minor Works to Lifts	£75,000	1 year, with the option to renew for a further 4 years
Mechanical Services Installation	£500,000	1 year, with the option to renew for a further 2 years
Natural Gas Supply	£1,200,000	3 years

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

Site Investigations - Various Locations

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that the Project Management Unit was developing various proposals which had been approved by the Committee for inclusion in the Capital Programme and for progress to feasibility stage. At the feasibility stage there was commonly a need for a detailed consideration of site conditions as part of the appraisal of planning and development options and the evaluation of anticipated risks. Normally that work was obtained through a quotation which did not require Committee approval.

The Director explained that the extent of site investigations was becoming more rigorous as new guidelines were introduced by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, as part of the Planning process, and the Council's own statutory contaminated land obligations. Given the number of projects, it would be more practical to aggregate several site investigations into a single contract rather than address each investigation separately. Therefore, it was proposed that the procurement of site investigations would be by means of a tender, rather than by numerous quotations, and consequently that required the approval of the Committee for the invitation of tenders and the award of contracts.

He pointed out that, besides the Capital Schemes, there were also several projects going through the system in regard to the Local Investment Fund and the Social Investment Fund which would also require site investigations.

The Committee approved the invitation of tenders and the award of contracts for site investigation works in respect of physical schemes which had been approved to progress to feasibility stage and noted that the contracts would be awarded by the Director in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

Human Resources

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

Pay Request from Belfast City Council Trade Union Group

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report in relation to the pay request from the Belfast City Council Trade Union Group to enable the Head of Human Resources to undertake further discussions with the representatives of the Trade Unions and for a further report thereon to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives

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

Noted.

Asset Management

Capital Programme – Suffolk Playing Fields

The Committee was reminded that, following the decision of the Council on 4th December, 2012, the Committee, at its meeting on 14th December, had agreed to the advancement of a proposal for a two room changing pavilion and meeting room at the Suffolk Playing Fields through the Gates governance process as an uncommitted proposal for the Capital Programme, with further reports being presented at relevant stages for consideration for inclusion in the aforementioned Programme against financial resource availability and prioritisation against other emerging proposals.

The Director of Property and Projects explained that a Strategic Outline Case had since been prepared and approval was now sought for the advancement of the proposal to the “uncommitted” section, that is, stage 1 of the Capital Programme and for an economic appraisal to be undertaken and an Outline Business Case to be prepared. He pointed out that the project formed part of the wider Pitches Programme, which included the playing fields under the pitches strategy, together with the other grounds which the Council had committed resources to. High level costs had been estimated at £117,500 and those would be fully appraised in Stage 2. The outcome and recommendation of the economic appraisal and the Outline Business Case would be reported back to the Committee in due course. The likely cost of the economic appraisal would be in the region of between £5,000 and £10,000.

The Committee agreed, from a corporate capital finance perspective, to the advancement of the proposal to the “uncommitted” section of the Capital Programme and approved a full economic appraisal being undertaken.

‘ILLUMINATE’ Project completion and governance arrangements

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At its meeting of 25th April 2012 the Committee approved the invitation of tenders for the implementation of the ‘ILLUMINATE’ project. This project seeks to facilitate the introduction of low-energy LED lighting in order to sustainably reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions.**
- 1.2 The project, which is part-funded by EC grant in partnership with six other Cities and will replace the existing City Hall façade lighting on the front, east and west facades as well as the main dome and turrets-etc. The project is well-advanced, and it is anticipated that the installation will be complete, tested and ready for first use by April 2013.**

- 1.3 In terms of the overall estimated savings in energy and replacement lamp costs the situation is as follows:

Estimated annual reduction in electricity usage and costs:-

	Existing Floodlighting	New LED Lighting
Electricity Consumption (KwH)	139,339	63,044
Annual Cost of Electricity	£16,720	£7,565
Annual Electricity Saving		£9,155

- 1.4 In addition, the LED fittings provide a very significantly longer life-span than the standard floodlights, requiring replacement every 12-15 years as opposed to every 3 years on average. This produces a further estimated re-lamping saving of £4,500 per annum.
- 1.5 In terms of the potential for reductions in CO₂ emissions the new system will represent an estimated reduction of 41 tonnes per annum, or just under 25% of the council's total annual carbon-reduction target (and a further £500 per annum saving in related CRC payments).
- 1.6 Overall, the new system will therefore reduce total City Hall energy costs by approximately £14,000 per annum and also significantly reduce CO₂ emissions.
- 1.7 However, in addition to the financial and environmental benefits to be gained by the new LED technology, the system has a range of additional benefits. Specifically, it is possible to precisely control the brightness and colour of each of the 433 lamps independently, and consequently a wide variety of effects can be obtained ranging from very subtle light, shade and colour effects emphasizing the building's architectural features to a full colour 'wash' of the building for special events and charity functions etc. It should be noted that the same system of lighting has recently been installed on the Empire State building in New York city to considerable public acclaim, and has become a recognised tourist attraction.
- 1.8 These features, if properly and imaginatively used, clearly have the potential to enhance the appearance and public perception of the City Hall amongst tourists, visitors and residents, and may attract significant media interest. The suppliers are therefore providing specialist assistance in terms of lighting design, to ensure that the system complements the building appropriately. Some modest additional expenditure may be necessary to cover this.

- 1.9 It is important that the Committee sets clear parameters around the circumstances in which the enhanced lighting features will be used, and the extent to which charities, event organisers and other organizations will have access to them.
- 1.10 Members will be aware that, even at the present time when we still operate the traditional floodlighting system, a number of applications are received each year from organizations seeking to have the City Hall lit in their chosen colour(s). Once the new facilities are available this is likely to increase significantly, and there is an obvious concern that over-use could adversely affect the image and reputation of the building.
- 1.11 The City Hall has an iconic status both in terms of its architectural splendour and its civic importance. It has been the natural focal and rallying point for many of the historic and political events which have shaped Belfast and Northern Ireland, from the signing of the Ulster Covenant in 1912 to more recent rallies by peace and trade union movements and welcoming back our Olympian sports stars.
- 1.12 However, the City Hall is also the seat of local democracy and is both the council's civic and administrative headquarters and a historic, listed building. It is therefore essential that we create a lighting implementation which will utilise the full capabilities of the enhanced lighting infrastructure to best effect, but will do so in a way which is in keeping with the purpose, history and use of the City Hall building.
- 1.13 The following management mechanism is therefore proposed:-
- a) only the charities nominated by the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff may avail of the features provided by the new lighting system (these charities change as the incumbents change and so over time there should be an opportunity for all charities to benefit);
 - b) only events organised in the City Hall and/or grounds by the council itself (either directly or in partnership with others) will have access to the lighting system;
 - c) a schedule of additional days of more general public interest should also be agreed by the Committee and the building washed in the appropriate colour(s) – see 4.2 below;

- d) the Director of Property & Projects may, in exceptional circumstances, seek the approval of a specific request by the Committee even where the above criteria are not satisfied; *and***
- e) where time does not allow the prior permission of the Committee to be sought the Director of Property & Projects may approve access to the facilities in appropriate circumstances, and will subsequently report the matter to the Committee for note.**

1.14 Members should note that there will be periods of time during which some or all of the existing façade lighting will be turned off over the coming weeks, in order to facilitate the installation and connection of the new wiring and fittings etc. This will be kept to a minimum, but is to some extent inevitable and unavoidable. It is anticipated that the system will be installed and fully operational by 1st April 2013.

1.15 It is hoped to be able to provide a demonstration of the system's capabilities for members immediately prior to the full Council meeting scheduled for 3rd April 2013. This will be confirmed and invitations issued nearer to the time.

1.16 A further benefit of this project has been the exposure of the Property Maintenance Electrical Team to world class designers and manufacturers such as ARUP and Philips who act as advisers on the project for the EU.

1.17 It is also proposed that the ILLUMINATE project group meeting be hosted by Belfast on the 17th & 18th April 2013. This will be the 5th co-ordination meeting held since the commencement of the project in January 2012. The meeting will be attended by representatives from the 7 pilot projects which, in addition to the City Hall, include Genoa Porto Antico, Genoa Aquarium, Rotterdam Zoo, Lithuania Sea Museum, the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Crete and the Experimentarium Museum, Copenhagen.

1.18 The BCC project team would be keen to offer the City Hall as the venue for the meeting, particularly as it coincides with the go-live date of the City Hall project.

1.19 A total of approx. 20 people will be involved, and it is proposed that the Committee agree to provide small-scale hospitality for this group in the form of an evening meal, and also to permit the use of the Reception Room (and possibly a Committee Room) on the specified days for the group's meeting.

1.20 In addition it is proposed that a dissemination event takes place whereby the project will be presented to an audience of local councils, energy managers, architects, consulting engineers, etc to highlight the new technology and promote the general benefits and energy saving associated with LED lighting. This event will take place on the afternoon of the 17th April 2013, after the ILLUMINATE project meeting outlined above.

1.21 It should be noted that the Illuminate project has attracted considerable attention within the architectural world with the Belfast City Hall highlighted in the Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

2. Key Issues

2.1 The key issues may be summarised as follows:-

- on foot of the Committee's original decision of April 2012 the implementation of the new LED lighting system is now imminent;
- the system will generate annual energy cost savings of approx £14,000 and bring about a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions;
- the new system has almost unlimited potential in terms of the use of light, shade and colour being applied to the various parts of the City Hall building;
- continual use of the new facilities could potentially detract from the image of the building and the reputation of the council; *and*
- appropriate criteria governing the use of the new facilities are therefore required, including clarity around which charities, groups and events will be facilitated by the council.

3. Resource Implications

3.1 Overall, the ILLUMINATE scheme is projected to cost £335,000. Of this, £200,000 is being provided by the EC by way of grant, and of the remaining £135,000 a provision of £90,000 had already been made in the planned maintenance programme to replace the existing floodlighting.

3.2 Consequently, this very significant upgrade is being achieved at an additional cost to the council of just £45,000, and brings a range of benefits including an annual energy saving of approx. £14,000 and a tangible reduction in CO₂ emissions.

4. Equality & Good Relations implications

4.1 The recent EQIA agreed by Council on Belfast City Hall - *'Promoting a good and harmonious environment'* - summarises our aim as:

'to manage Belfast City Hall and its grounds in order to help promote a good and harmonious environment for those who visit and work in the building, while reflecting both the diverse identities of its users and the several functions served by the City Hall, and acknowledging its prominent role in the civic life and history of Belfast'.

4.2 The Good Relations Manager has been consulted on the proposals set out above, and as a result it is proposed that, in addition to the charity and other events covered above, the facilities could be used to mark a range of days of wider cultural or social significance to various groups within the city, most notably the following:

St. Patrick's Day (green)	Chinese New Year (red & yellow)
Orangefest (orange)	Polish independence day (red & white)
St. Valentine's Day (red)	Gay Pride (rainbow)

4.3 There are, of course, a considerable number of internationally-recognized days (such as the 115 specific days recognized by the UN, including Holocaust Day, Suicide Prevention Day, World Aids day, Autism and Diabetes etc) however in many cases these carry political connotations or are not associated with a specific colour etc., and it is therefore proposed that these days not be marked except where specifically approved by the Committee under 1.13(c) or (d) above.

4.4 NB: it should be noted that the new facilities cannot project images or logos etc onto the building; instead the building can be 'washed' in broad colour combinations using static LED fittings. It is therefore only appropriate for use in marking days or events which are associated with specific colour(s).

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- a) notes the imminent installation of the new LED infrastructure, hardware and software;
- b) approves the proposed management arrangements set out above in relation to charity and special event usage etc;
- c) agrees to create and keep under review an approved list of additional days which the council may wish to mark;
- d) approves the hosting of the ILLUMINATE meeting on 17th/18th April 2013 and the associated provision of small-scale hospitality;
- e) agrees to review the management and control arrangements after 12 months in order to permit any necessary changes to be made; *and*
- f) agrees to a demonstration for all members prior to the April 2013 council meeting.”

During discussion, the Director of Property and Projects advised the Committee that the proposed policy in this regard had undergone an Equality Screening exercise and that no issues had been raised through that process.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,
Seconded by Alderman Campbell,

That the Committee agrees that the ILLUMINATE Project be combined with the issue of 'other flags' which were displayed at the City Hall and be included in a City Hall dressing policy to be equality screened.

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

Accordingly, it was

Moved by Councillor McCarthy,
Seconded by Councillor McVeigh,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations as set out in the report.

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

**Proposed disposal of Primrose Street
Former Civic Amenity Site**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At its meeting of 24 January 2008 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee declared the former civic amenity site at Primrose Street as surplus to Council requirements and granted approval to placing the premises for sale on the open market. The property was placed on the open market with O’Connor Kennedy Turtle Estate Agents in June 2008.**
- 1.2 The premises were originally marketed at £225,000 for both the Council premises and the adjoining area of land owned by Ligoniel District & Homing Pigeon Society Social Club, with the value apportioned to the Council’s land approximately £165,000. The Pigeon Club subsequently withdrew their portion of land from the market in February 2011 and from this time the Agent has marketed the Council’s property independently. The property consists of old dilapidated buildings and a service yard, on a site area of 0.087 acres.**
- 1.3 The property has been continuously marketed from June 2008, however its value has fallen significantly due to the economic downturn and difficulties for potential buyers securing finance which has resulted in limited interest. Nevertheless several offers have been received, however all have been withdrawn or have been considerably less than the Agent’s recommendation of current market value. Due to the lack of interest and level of offers to purchase, the property was also being advertised to let through the same Agent, as approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting on 21 January 2011. This has also generated some interest, however interested parties were unable to provide the required references and business details.**

- 1.4 The Council have now received an unconditional cash offer of £30,000 to purchase the property from a private individual.

2 **Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Agent feels this offer represents the best value achievable in the current economic climate. The property has been on the market for over 4 years, during which time the premises have been extensively advertised in newspapers and on relevant websites. There have also been several mail shots to developers and housing associations and continuous presence of 'for sale/to let' signs on the property.

- 2.2 The bidder is proposing to refurbish the property to office use with some storage and on-site parking. In order to ensure the premises are brought back into economic use as soon as possible, as a result of this sale, the purchaser will be required to undertake the proposed refurbishment works and to take-up occupation as a condition of this disposal. In the event that the purchaser fails to comply with the sale conditions the purchase contract may be rescinded, subject to a further report being brought back to Committee, and the property returned to Council's ownership.

3 **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Financial**

The sale of this property will result in a total capital return to the Council of £30,000 which could be directed to the Council's Investment Programme or other priorities. However, if the purchase contract is rescinded and the property returned to council's ownership Council will be required to reimburse the purchaser.

Should the sale complete the Council will be liable to pay the Agent's sales fee.

3.2 **Human Resources**

Staff resource, primarily from Estates Unit and Legal Services required to progress any disposal.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

Disposal and redevelopment of this vacant property will bring this former Civic Amenity Site back into economic use.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

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

5 Recommendations

As the initial preference of Committee was to dispose of the property by way of an outright sale rather than letting, it is recommended that the Committee approves the disposal of this property for £30,000, subject to detail of the terms and conditions outlined above being agreed with the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the offer be rejected and that the Council does not dispose of the property at this time.

Car Park at Clement Wilson Bridge

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 23rd November, 2012, it had authorised the advancement of a project to replace the bridge across the River Lagan at the Clement Wilson Park. The project formed part of the Capital Programme and the Committee had authorised also the invitation of tenders and award of the contract to the most economically advantageous tender received.

The Director of Property and Projects advised that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 6th December, had been informed that in order to facilitate the desired construction method, the proposed works would require the use of an adjoining car park, which was not in the Council's ownership, over three or more weekends. A contract had subsequently been drawn up with the owner of the adjoining car park and discussions undertaken to agree the use of the land, to facilitate the removal of the existing bridge and the installation of the new structure and agreement had now been reached in this regard.

The landowner had agreed to enter into a Licence Agreement with the Council to provide the use of the car park at a cost of £500 per weekend, with the Council being responsible for all insurances during the relevant periods and the carrying out of the reinstatement of any damage caused to the car park as a result of the works.

Accordingly, the Committee authorised the entering into of a Licence Agreement with the landowner for the use of the car park as outlined and subject to detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager.

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 11th February.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Notice of Motion re : Domestic Violence and Abuse- Response from the Minister

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 7th January, passed a Notice of Motion in relation to domestic violence and abuse.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the motion had called upon the Minister for Justice to examine how the Public Prosecution Service handled cases involved in domestic violence and abuse and the impact it had on victims. A response had been received from the Minister, in which he had pointed out that the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 had established the Public Prosecution Service as a fully independent body and, therefore, it was not within his remit to accede to the content of the Motion. The Minister did suggest, however, that the Council should write directly to the Director of Public Prosecutions to raise its concerns about how it handled such cases.

In addition, the Minister had referred to the establishment in 2003 of the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland, which was an independent, statutory inspectorate which could inspect agencies such as the Public Prosecution Service. That inspectorate had published a report in December, 2010 on the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice system in responding to, and handling cases of, domestic violence and abuse which resulted in a number of recommendations for improvement across the Criminal Justice system. It had planned to conduct a follow-up review of the recommendations during 2013.

The Committee noted the receipt of the correspondence and the comments of the Minister.

Chairman