

Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



19th February, 2013

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room (Room G05), City Hall on Friday, 22nd February, 2013 at 10.00 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Routine Matters**
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Declarations of Interest
2. **Review of Public Administration**
 - (a) Local Government Reform – Statutory Transition Committees (Pages 1 - 18)
 - (b) Appointment of Members From Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils to the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee (STC) (Pages 19 - 24)
3. **Investment Programme**
 - (a) Local Investment Fund Update (Pages 25 - 34)

- (b) ICT Strategy (Pages 35 - 38)
- (c) Digital Hub Update (Pages 39 - 42)
- (d) Forthriver Innovation Centre – Update (Pages 43 - 46)

4. **Democratic Services and Governance**

- (a) Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality (Pages 47 - 52)
- (b) Request for the use of the Council Chamber (Pages 53 - 54)
- (c) Events to mark the Freedom of the City for Dame Mary Peters (Pages 55 - 58)
- (d) European Local Democracy Week 2013 (Pages 59 - 62)
- (e) Minutes of Meeting of Belfast Lord Mayor, Party Leaders and Committee Chairs (Pages 63 - 64)
- (f) Minutes of Meeting Belfast Party Leaders' Forum (Pages 65 - 66)

5. **Finance/Value-for-Money**

- (a) Financial Reporting – Quarter 3 2012-13 (Pages 67 - 88)
- (b) CIPFA Prudential Code and Treasury Management Indicators (Pages 89 - 104)
- (c) Belfast Tribunal Representation Service -Request for financial support from the Advice Consortia (Pages 105 - 114)
- (d) Request for Funding – NI Hospice (Pages 115 - 120)
- (e) Minutes of Meeting of Budget and Transformation Panel (Pages 121 - 122)
- (f) Property Maintenance Tender Approvals (Pages 123 - 126)
- (g) Tender for Site Investigations - Various Locations (Pages 127 - 130)

6. **Human Resources**

- (a) Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives (Pages 131 - 132)

7. **Asset Management**

- (a) Capital Programme – Suffolk Playing Fields (Pages 133 - 136)
- (b) 'ILLUMINATE' Project completion and governance arrangements (Pages 137 - 146)
- (c) Proposed disposal of Primrose Street Former Civic Amenity Site (Pages 147 - 152)

(d) Car Park at Clement Wilson Bridge (Pages 153 - 158)

8. **Good Relations and Equality**

(a) Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership (Pages 159 - 164)

9. **Cross-Cutting Issues**

(a) Notice of Motion re : Domestic Violence and Abuse- Response from the Minister (Pages 165 - 170)

To: The Chairman and Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

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Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Local Government Reform – Statutory Transition Committees
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney (Ext. 6202)

1.0 **Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that it is the intention that Voluntary Transition Committees are to be given a 'Statutory' footing to take forward delivery of the local government reform programme at the local level. The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 is the enabling legislation which enables the Environment Minister, by way of regulation, to create Statutory Transition Committees; defining their composition and functions.
- 1.2 The intention would be that Statutory Transition Committees (STCs) would be brought in as soon as possible, subject to regulations being cleared through the NI Assembly, and would operate up until the Shadow Councils are put in place in June 2014. Statutory Transition Committees will be the political forum representative of those councils merging together within clusters, and will be responsible for taking forward necessary preparatory work to enable the Shadow Councils to take decisions and progress key strands of work in to ensure the establishment and operation of the new councils in April 2015.
- 1.3 The Department for Environment recently issued for consultation the policy proposals (Annex 1 attached) which are to be contained within the Regulations which will bring affect to Statutory Transition Committees and held a series of Focus Group events, including an event in City Hall on 7 February 2013, to allow local government to discuss the emerging proposals. It is understood that the Environment Minister intends to introduce to the Assembly the necessary regulations to bring affect to Statutory Transition Committees in March 2013, and seeks that STCs are operational by early Autumn 2013 at the latest.

2.0 **KEY ISSUES**

- 2.1 Member will recall that initial draft Council response to the STC consultation document on had been submitted to the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee on 8 February and was deferred to allow Members the opportunity to further examine ad discuss the proposals put forward. A copy of the proposed Council response is attached at **Annex 2** for Members consideration and takes account of the views expressed by Belfast Members in attendance at the Focus Group event on the 7 February 2013.
- 2.2 The Councils response seeks to answer series of questions set out within the consultation document e.g.:
- Examining the core tasks to be undertaken by Statutory Transition Committees (e.g. preparing draft corporate and business plans for the STC and shadow council, preparing budget for Shadow Council)
 - Potential role of STCs and interface with councils in terms of disposal of land or entering into new contracts
 - Membership of STCs
 - Members' allowance for participation of STCs
 - Governance and procedures underpinning work of STCs
 - Role of STCs in the appointment process for senior staff of incoming shadow council

2.3	It is important to recognise the specific circumstances of the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee and the fact that the Council is not merging with any other council(s) but rather assimilating parts of adjacent Lisburn, Castlereagh and a small portion of North Down areas. 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.
2.4	Members will note that STC policy proposals consultation paper states that the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee will be permitted to have 25 members including representation from Lisburn and Castlereagh. It is further recommended that the STCs will retain the same membership as the VTCs which in terms of Belfast VTC is currently 21 members. This would mean that there would be 4 additional members coming onto the Belfast STC from Lisburn and Castlereagh. The Council has previously agreed the position that any such representation must reflect those areas coming into the city as the STC will be planning for this area.

3.0 Resource Implications

There will be financial and HR implications for the Council in terms of supporting the work of Statutory Transition Committees including payment of allowances for Members participation on STCs and providing officer support to the STCs.

Whilst the Environment Minister has submitted a funding bid to NI Executive seeking financial support for STCs, there has not yet been any decision in this regards. When a decision is taken by the NI Executive a further report will be submitted for the consideration of the Committee.

The working assumption in moving forward is that any financial and HR implications attached to supporting the work of the STC will be secured from within existing resources.

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree that the Council response to the DoE policy proposals for establishing Statutory Transition Committees, as set out at Annex 2, be submitted, subject to any amendments made by the Committee, to the Department.

5.0 Appended Documents

Annex 1 Policy proposals issued by DOE for Focus Group Events

Annex 2 Draft Council response to the DoE policy proposals



Linda MacHugh
Director
Local Government Policy Division

Council Mayors and Chairs
 Councillors
 Chairs of Voluntary Transition Committees
 Clerk and Chief Executive of each District
 Council
 Senior Council Officers
 National Association of Councillors
 NILGA Office Bearers and Chief Executive
 Chair of SOLACE
 Staff Side TUS Lead, Employer Side Lead
 LGRJF
 ALACE
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 Public Service Commission
 Local Government Auditor

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Date: 29 January 2013

Dear colleagues

STATUTORY TRANSITION COMMITTEES: FOCUS GROUP EVENTS – POLICY PROPOSALS SUMMARY PAPER

I refer to my letter of 15 January 2013 about the focus group events in early February for local government, the public sector and other stakeholders to discuss the policy proposals for Statutory Transition Committees.

The Department has received a number of nominations to attend the sessions on the following dates (please note the change of venue in Ballymena):

5 February – The Show Grounds, Ballymena (2:00pm)

7 February – City Hall, Belfast (10:00am)

7 February – Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Craigavon (2:00pm)

8 February – Strule Arts Centre, Omagh (2:00pm).

It would be appreciated if you could notify Ruth Northey (ruth.northey@doeni.gov.uk) and Mark Mulholland (mark.mulholland@doeni.gov.uk) of any further nominations by **Friday 1st February 2013** at the latest, in order that the Department can conclude on arrangements for the events.

In the meantime, please find enclosed for your consideration a brief summary paper of the policy proposals to be discussed at the focus group sessions.

If you need to contact Ruth or Mark please call 028 90416739.

I look forward to seeing you at one of the events.



LINDA MACHUGH

Local Government Reform
Establishing Statutory Transition
Committees
Policy Proposals

January 2013

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM
POLICY PROPOSALS FOR ESTABLISHING STATUTORY TRANSITION
COMMITTEES

Purpose

1. The Department of the Environment is seeking feedback at the forthcoming focus group sessions on its policy proposals for the establishment of Statutory Transition Committees (STCs). The Committees will be responsible for taking key decisions in the run up to the new councils being appointed in shadow form. A policy consultation on STCs was previously carried out in 2009 (closing on 31 May 2009); however, given that this was carried out in the context of STCs being established in place of a shadow period, the Department has decided to carry out targeted stakeholder engagement with local government in order to gather updated views. Councillors, council officers and representatives of other local government bodies have been invited to four events in early February. The outcome of these events will inform the drafting of the regulations.

Background

2. In order to drive the convergence of the programme for local government reform, the Minister has decided to place Voluntary Transition Committees (VTCs) on a statutory footing, as soon as possible. In early 2012, the Executive agreed to the provision of a shadow period following the next set of local government elections. The Secretary of State has agreed in principle to legislate for the next local government election to be held in June 2014. This timing allows for a shadow period for the new incoming council to run from the date of the elections until 1 April 2015, thereby allowing the new councils preparatory time to adopt their full range of functions and duties.

3. In broad terms, the incoming councils, during the shadow period, should be the decision making bodies in respect of key decisions necessary to ensure the establishment and effective operation of the new councils, whereas the role of the STC should be to undertake preparatory duties to inform the key decisions of the incoming council during the shadow period in respect of the new councils, when they assume full power.
4. However, given that there is a short time period to prepare for April 2015 and that there is a desire for certainty in some areas as soon as possible, the Department believes there are incidences where it may be appropriate for key decisions to be taken by the STCs.

Enabling Power

5. The Department proposes to make subordinate legislation for STCs using the enabling powers contained in sections 15 to 18 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 ("the 2010 Act") (attached at Annex 1).

Policy Issues

6. A number of policy details need to be settled now to take forward draft regulations for STCs. The Department's proposed approach is set out below and feedback will be welcome at the targeted stakeholder focus group events planned for February 2013.

Functions & Duties

7. It is intended that a Statutory Transition Committee will drive convergence between merging councils and begin the preparatory work for the new councils in advance of the shadow period. This is intended to ensure that the transition from 26 to 11 councils is as seamless as possible, that service delivery is maintained and that the

new councils are in a position to discharge their new functions and deliver on their vision for their district. The range of functions identified by the Department to be taken forward by STCs is set out in the Programme Implementation Plan (attached at Annex 2). However, certain tasks within the Plan are deemed to be particularly critical and it is proposed that they are set out now in regulations; namely to:

- a. Prepare a draft corporate and business plan for the new council.
- b. Prepare a budget for the STC and the new council (shadow period).
- c. Develop financial systems for the STC and the new council (shadow period).
- d. Arrange first meeting of the new council (post election).

Question:

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

Financial Controls

8. Under the 2010 Act, sections 10 to 14 make provision for placing controls on councils in regard to land disposals and entering into capital and non-capital contracts in the run up to reorganisation. The Act requires the existing council to obtain the written consent from the relevant STC. It is proposed that the STC regulations should give effect to these provisions¹.

Question:

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

¹ NB. The 2010 Act did not make provision for controlling local government borrowing or local government reserves. The Department therefore intends to introduce further controls via the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill.

Membership

9. The Department intends to provide that each STC will be permitted to have up to 16 members, with two exceptions. The Causeway Coast and Glens will be permitted to have 20 members since it is the only cluster with four constituent councils. Belfast will be permitted to have 25 members since the 2010 Act requires representation from Castlereagh Borough Council and Lisburn City Council.

10. It is proposed that, as with VTCs, membership of STCs will consist only of elected members from the existing councils and should proportionately reflect the political composition of those existing councils. The Department expects that most STCs will retain the same members as the former VTC. To mark the new phase members will be nominated anew by the merging councils, which will fill any vacancies arising as soon as possible. The regulations will require STCs to notify the Department of their membership and any subsequent changes. It is also proposed that if a member fails to attend meetings for a period of 3 months, without a satisfactory explanation, they will cease to be a member of the STC and will be replaced. In terms of an allowance for councillors sitting on an STC, the Finance Working Group has proposed £60 per meeting. However, a lump sum allowance (of an amount to be determined) has also been proposed rather than an attendance allowance for each meeting.

Questions:

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

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

- 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?**

Governance & Procedures

11. The Department will provide model standing orders to guide councils on how STCs should structure, manage and execute their business in regard to governance and procedural issues. It will be important that the work of convergence and transition is carried out in an organised way with decisions being taken in an open and accountable manner. The arrangement for STCs will generally mirror those currently in operation for the VTCs.

Question:

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

Co-operation

12. It is proposed that there should be a duty on:

- a. existing councils to provide information to STCs;
- b. STCs to pass information to the incoming councils;
- c. STCs to share information with other STCs.

Question:

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

Staffing

13. From a leadership and management perspective, it is important that a senior officer (i.e. a Chief Executive) is appointed to lead the change management process as soon as possible. This could be an interim, fixed term or permanent appointment. It is also expected that STCs will wish to appoint finance and human resources staff at an early stage.

14. STCs will also require administrative teams from the outset. Initially, these should be provided on a temporary basis by existing councils. However, it is proposed that STCs should appoint their own administrative teams, as soon as is practicable.

Question:

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

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

Premises and Facilities

15. The Department proposes that STCs should use the premises and facilities of existing councils. Consequently, it is proposed that constituent councils should agree and make available suitable accommodation.

Question:

Q10. Do you agree constituent councils should provide accommodation?

Winding Up

16. It is intended to provide for the winding up of STCs 21 calendar days after the election of the new council, once they have arranged the first meeting of the new council in shadow mode. Any assets and liabilities will pass to the newly elected councils.

Question:

Q11. Do you agree with this approach?

Contact

17. If you have any queries in relation to the proposals, you should contact:

Mark Mulholland

DOE - Local Government Policy Division
Reform Implementation Team
Millennium House
17-25 Great Victoria Street
Malone Lower
BELFAST
BT2 7BN

Telephone 028 90416739 (internal 85739)

Email mark.mulholland@doeni.gov.uk

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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.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Appointment of Members From Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils to the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee (STC)
Date:	22nd February, 2013
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (Ext 6314)

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	<p>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.</p>									
2.3	<p><u>Lisburn City Council</u></p>									
2.4	<p>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.</p>									
2.5	<p>The 2011 election results of the Dunmurry Cross DEA gave the following results:</p> <table data-bbox="319 918 558 1075"> <tr> <td>SF</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SDLP</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DUP</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </table>	SF	5	SDLP	1	DUP	1	Total	7	
SF	5									
SDLP	1									
DUP	1									
Total	7									
2.6	<p>In calculating which of the parties should be allocated the 2 seats on the Belfast STC we use the formula:</p> $\frac{\text{Number of members in the party elected in the DEA}}{\text{Total number of members elected in the DEA}} \times \text{number of seats on the STC}$ <p>This gives the following result:</p> <table data-bbox="319 1467 957 1590"> <tr> <td>SF</td> <td>$5/7 \times 2 = 1.43$</td> <td>1 rounded up to 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SDLP</td> <td>$1/7 \times 2 = 0.29$</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DUP</td> <td>$1/7 \times 2 = 0.29$</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table> <p>Therefore, Sinn Fein would be allocated both seats on the Belfast STC.</p>	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
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								
2.7	<p>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:</p>									

Belfast STC - Seats from Lisburn using Dunmurry Cross DEA numbers

	SF		SDLP		DUP
Divisor	(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 in the DEAs

x number of seats on the
STC

Total number of members elected in the DEAs

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	1	5	2	2	1	1
2	4.500	3	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:

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

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)
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.

6	Decision Tracking
Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager March, 2013	

7	Key to Abbreviations
STC – Statutory Transition Committee VTC – Voluntary Transition Committee DEA – District Electoral Area	

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Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	ICT Strategy
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance & Resources
Contact Officer:	Paul Gribben, Head of ISB

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Strategy and Business Alignment</p> <p>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.</p>
2.2	<p>Management and Governance</p> <p>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.</p>
2.3	<p>Business Applications</p> <p>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.</p>
2.4	<p>Technology and Architecture</p> <p>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.</p>
2.5	<p>Organisation and skills</p> <p>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.</p>

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:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the contents of the report.2. Agree to the commissioning of external assistance to facilitate the development of an ICT Strategy
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6	Decision Tracking

7	Key to Abbreviations

8	Documents Attached

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Digital Hub Update
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives ext 3463

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assessment of how the concept would sit within the strategic context of

	<p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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. <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2.4 The feasibility study has drawn a number of key conclusions:</p> <p>2.5 <u>Need and Rationale for a Creative Hub</u> 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.</p> <p>2.6 <u>Services and Activities</u> 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.</p> <p>2.7 <u>Management</u> 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</p>
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	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	<p><u>Infrastructural requirements</u></p> <p>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).</p>
2.9	<p><u>Location Requirements</u></p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>The costs for progressing this to Economic Appraisal will be met out of the Feasibility Fund and will not exceed £60,000.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No specific equality and good relations implications.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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.

6	Key to Abbreviations
DCAL	– Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DSD	– Department for Social Development
OFMDFM	– Office of the First and Deputy First Minister



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Forthriver Innovation Centre – update
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

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.

6	Key to Abbreviations
DCAL	– Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure
DETI	– Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
NISP	– Northern Ireland Science Park

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
Date:	Friday, 22nd February, 2013
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (Ext. 6314)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ext. 6316)

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will recall that the Committee, at its meeting on 26th September, 2003, agreed to the criteria which would be used to assess requests from external organisations for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality. Subsequently the Committee at its meeting on 7th August, 2009, further amended the criteria so as to incorporate the new Key Themes as identified in the Council's Corporate Plan.
2.	Key Issues
2.1	The revised criteria have been applied to each of the requests contained within the appendix and recommendations have been made to the Committee on this basis.
3.	Resource Implications
3.1	Provision has been made in the revenue estimates for hospitality.
4.	Equality Implications
4.1	N/A
5.	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations as set out in the Appendix.

6.	Decision Tracking
Officer responsible – Gareth Quinn	
7.	Key to Abbreviations
Not applicable.	
8.	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Schedule of Applications	

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
Common Purpose	Meridian Course Final Day and Award Ceremony 1st August, 2013 Approximately 50 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.	'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	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits. Approximate Cost £125

			<p>successfully completed the Meridian Programme.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	
British Institute of Cleaning Science	<p>Northern Ireland Cleaner of the Year 2013</p> <p>20th September, 2013</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £125</p>
Volunteer Now	<p>Volunteer Awards</p> <p>5th December, 2013</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The event also seeks to 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>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £600</p>
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</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>

			<p>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>	
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 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>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>
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce	<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>

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Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for the use of the Council Chamber
Date:	22nd February, 2013
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Officer (Ext 6314)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Council has received a request from a group representing the young people affiliated to each of the five main political parties (SF, SDLP, DUP, UUP & ALL) in Northern Ireland for the use of the Council Chamber for a political debate.
1.2	The Group wishes to hold the debate in March and would invite eight representatives from each of the five main parties, together with eight representatives from the PUP, to take part. That would mean 48 participants with other affiliated members of the parties being present in the public gallery.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The use of the Council Chamber for events other than the monthly Council meeting requires the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
2.2	The proposed event has the support of the youth wings of the five main parties. As such it is considered that the request should be supported.

3	Resource Implications
	Small cost for appropriate hospitality for the event which can be met from within existing budgets.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is recommended to approve the use of the Council Chamber for the political debating event in March, together with the provision of appropriate hospitality.

6	Decision Tracking
Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager March, 2013.	

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	European Local Democracy Week 2013
Date:	Friday, 22nd February, 2013
Reporting Officer:	Mr. John McGrillen, Director of Development, (extension 3470) Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6314)
Contact Officer:	Ms. Laura Leonard, European Manager, (extension 3577) Ms. Kate McCafferty, Democratic Services Assistant (extension 6308) Mrs. Lorraine Wallace, Children and Young People Coordinator (extension 3595)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) is an annual event held each October. The overarching purpose of ELDW is 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.
1.2	ELDW builds on Local Democracy Week in which the Council has been involved in previous years by organising and hosting events involving young people from across the city.
1.3	In 2012 the Council 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 undertake the role of Youth Champion within their Party.
1.4	The event 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.

2	Key Issues
2.1	EurVoice is a unique community outreach programme designed to engage and empower young people, including those from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds. The purpose of EurVoice is to provide a platform and framework for young people to take ownership of their own opinions and place in society, to express their views to people in authority, and to discover their own importance in shaping the future. The nature of the event serves to influence the role young people could potentially have in local democracy decision-making. EurVoice is a sister programme to the European Youth Parliament debating event which brings young people together on a national and international level.
2.2	A project steering group has been set up to organise the event comprising officers from Community Services, Democratic Services, Corporate Communications and the European Unit as well as external organisations which include the European Commission Office of Northern Ireland and the European Youth Parliament.
2.3	Following the success of EurVoice 2012, it is felt that 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 face the young citizens of our City and to build on the themes discussed at the previous event. In addition to the participants who attended in 2012, invitations will also be extended to young people in the wider community.
2.4	The EurVoice event will take place in the Great Hall on Tuesday, 8th October, 2013 from 12.00 noon to 4.00 p.m. and will target Belfast schools and youth organisations. A series of activities are planned including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Q&A session • Closing mini-interviews to establish the impact of the event on participants' viewpoints
2.5	The participation of elected Members is crucial to the success of the event. Along with the Lord Mayor, the involvement of the Party nominated Youth Champions will assist in achieving the outlined aims as well as breaking down barriers between young citizens, the Council and its Members.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	It is expected that the event will cost approximately £3,600 which will include hospitality, IT provision and MC costs.
3.2	Provision for the cost of the event has been made within the Chief Executive's Departmental revenue estimates.

4	Equality Implications
	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to agree to the hosting of the EurVoice event as outlined

6	Decision Tracking
Officers responsible: Mr. John McGrillen, Director of Development Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager October, 2013	

7	Key to Abbreviations
ELDW- European Local Democracy Week	

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Belfast Lord Mayor, Party Leaders & Committee Chairs
13th February 2013, Malone House

Present

Councillors G Robinson, T Attwood, J Rodgers, W Humphrey, J McVeigh, M Hendron, D Hargey, C Stalford, J Hussey, G McCabe, L Patterson
Facilitator - J Huish

1. Planning - Presentation by N Dunlop

- Neil provided an update on the current position of the transfer of the Planning Function to Local Authorities
- Further, he gave a broad outline of the nature of what those powers might look like, both in terms of strategic planning for the City and the development control function, and its links to Community Planning and delivery of Council Programmes.
- Neil also noted the need for a wide range of member development activities linked to the new powers and a new style planning committee
- Members welcomed the presentation, noting the significant impact such measures will have, and echoing the need for extensive training in this area

2. Community Planning - Presentation by S Wylie

- Suzanne provided an update on the current position of the transfer of Community Planning Functions to Local Authorities, linked to the complementary power of well being also being introduced
- Further, she gave a broad outline of the current regional approach, including the role of the pilot proposals and Community Planning Workgroup
- The Foundation Programme is to look at understanding Community Planning, and explore governance structures and partnership working linked to engagement, performance, accountability and the creation of a Community Plan.
- It is anticipated that the draft legislation will be put before the DOE in March 2013.
- Belfast City Council is already preparing for the introduction of Community Planning - developing an outcome focus, area working, a community development strategy, a solid evidence base, partnership working etc.
- Clear within the proposals are the need for new partnership relationships, structures and activity - leading to the development of a shared Belfast Community Plan and outcome and delivery agreements.
- A wide range of member development activity, including workshops, study trips and seminars are already being planned and undertaken
- Members welcomed the presentation, and noted that the role for members was changing - especially when linked to the new Planning powers also discussed earlier.

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Belfast Party Leaders
13th February 2013, Malone House

Present

Councillors T Attwood, J Rodgers, W Humphrey initially,
J McVeigh & M Hendron joined the discussion later
Facilitator - J Huish

1. Governance - initial group feedback

- All groups were still considering the information presented to them at the special party briefings and agreed that follow up one-to-ones with Jonathan Huish would be useful in helping to inform discussion at the next Party Leaders Forum meeting in March.

2. Anti-Poverty Task Force

- Noted that the council carries out a range of functions that contribute to tackling issues of poverty and deprivation already - request for this activity to be mapped
- Noted that the council works with a range of partner organisations already to tackle anti-poverty - request for these relationships to be mapped and reviewed, with further consideration given to structures required in the emerging public landscape, such as an overarching strategic partnership and thematic partnerships.
- Noted that the issue was soon to be raised at development committee, and there is a need to link the work at PLF & development
- Concerns were raised about the narrow remit under current council powers to directly tackle poverty, together with possible need for extra capacity to deal with such issues, though also noted that these powers will grow under RPA with the onset of Community Planning and Planning Functions.
- Also noted that the Council could have greater influence over such matters through partnership and lobbying.
- An ability to look at what other organisations are delivering in relation to anti-poverty and related matters would be welcomed - possibly some form of scrutiny
- The establishment of a body to look at, lead and tackle such issues was raised, though further information and discussion is needed to define and get agreement over the structure and remit of any such group, linked to further discussion at Development Committee.

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Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	CIPFA Prudential Code and Treasury Management Indicators
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and the supporting Prudential Code produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), require the council to consider the affordability and sustainability of capital expenditure decisions through the reporting of prudential and treasury management indicators.
1.2	This report provides information for Members on the prudential indicators for Belfast City Council for the period 2013/14 to 2015/16 and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14.
2	Key Issues
2.1	The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. In doing so, the Council is required to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objectives of which are to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the council are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
2.2	At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 9 December 2011, Members approved the Council's Treasury Management Policy which is based on the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Treasury Management Policy requires that a Treasury Management Strategy be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis and that it is supported by a mid-year and year end treasury management reports.
2.3	The prudential indicators are included as Appendix A, while the treasury management strategy and treasury management indicators have been included as Appendix B.

2.4	The comparison of “Net Borrowing” to “Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)” is 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, illustrated in Table 3, Appendix A, is comfortably within the CFR in the medium term. The Director of Finance and Resources therefore considers the estimated levels of net borrowing as being prudent.
2.5	Table 4 and 5 (Appendix A) shows the estimated financing 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. These illustrate that in the medium term, capital financing costs will represent 6.94% of the Council’s net running costs. On this basis the Director of Finance and Resources is satisfied that the level of capital expenditure is affordable.
2.6	The Finance Act requires the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, relating to gross debt. The Prudential Code defines this affordable limit as the “Authorised Borrowing Limit” and gross borrowing must not exceed this limit. Table 6 (Appendix A) sets out the recommended “Authorised Borrowing Limit” for the Council as being £109m.
3	Recommendations
3.1	<p>Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the prudential and treasury management indicators included within the appendices to the report.</p> <p>Members are also asked to agree:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £109m • The Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14, which has been included as Appendix B to this report.
4	<p>Decision Tracker</p> <p>Responsible Officers: Director of Finance & Resources</p>

Prudential Indicators for 2013/14 to 2015/16

1. Background

The Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Council to adopt the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. In doing so, the Council is required to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objective of which is to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

2. Capital Expenditure Indicators

2.1 Capital Expenditure

t

This indicator outlines estimated annual Capital Expenditure which will be incurred by the Council, to ensure that capital investment plans are sustainable. The Council's estimated additional annual capital expenditure is included in table 1 below.

Table 1
Estimated Annual Capital Expenditure

	Actual 2011/12 £'000	Estimate 2012/13 £'000	Estimate 2013/14 £'000	Estimate 2014/15 £'000	Estimate 2015/16 £'000
Capital Expenditure	3,478	10,596	20,576	50,021	16,900

2.2 Capital Financing Requirement

The Capital Financing Requirement reflects the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. It shows the total estimated capital expenditure that has not been resourced from capital or revenue sources. This requirement will eventually be met by revenue resources through the Minimum Revenue Provision mechanism. The actual Capital Financing Requirement for the Council is shown in table 2 below.

Table 2
Capital Financing Requirement

	Actual 2011/12 £'000	Estimate 2012/13 £'000	Estimate 2013/14 £'000	Estimate 2014/15 £'000	Estimate 2015/16 £'000
Capital Financing Requirement	43,153	48,388	56,927	81,958	94,095

3. Prudence Indicator

3.1 Net Borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

This is a key indicator of prudence which ensures that over the medium term, net borrowing will only be for a capital purpose. Under the prudential code, it is permitted for net borrowing to exceed the Capital Financing Requirement in the short term, provided that it does not exceed the estimate for the current year plus the next two financial years. The following table demonstrates that the estimated net debt position is comfortably within the estimated Capital Financing Requirement over the medium term.

Table 3
Net Borrowing and Capital Financing Requirement

	Actual 2011/12 £'000	Estimate 2012/13 £'000	Estimate 2013/14 £'000	Estimate 2014/15 £'000	Estimate 2015/16 £'000
Capital Financing Requirement	43,153	48,388	56,927	81,958	94,095
Net Borrowing	(4,602)	(5,417)	2,672	41,204	47,340
Is Net Borrowing within CFR?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

4. Affordability Indicators

4.1 Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

An important aspect of the Prudential Code is the assessment of affordability of the capital investment plans. One mechanism for doing this is by ascertaining the proportion of the revenue budget which is spent on capital financing, net of receipts from investment income. This does not include direct revenue financing amounts for capital schemes. Table 4 below summarises the ratio of financing costs to the estimated net revenue stream for the Council.

Table 4
Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

	Actual 2011/12 £'000	Estimate 2012/13 £'000	Estimate 2013/14 £'000	Estimate 2014/15 £'000	Estimate 2015/16 £'000
Financing Costs	2,987	2,924	3,882	6,379	9,314
Net Revenue Stream	130,183	133,870	134,188	134,188	134,188
Percentage	2.29%	2.18%	2.89%	4.75%	6.94%

The financing cost estimates are based on the capital financing budget in the budget report for 2012/13 and future years. The net revenue stream is calculated as the amounts met by government grants and the Rates.

4.2 Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions on the Rates

A key measure of the affordability of capital decisions is the ultimate impact on the Rates. This indicator identifies the increase in the proposed Rates which is attributable to the proposed changes in the Capital Programme being approved at this meeting. There has been no requirement to increase the current capital financing element of the Rate to finance the Council's Capital Programme and therefore there is no incremental. The impact of this increase is illustrated in table 5 below.

Table 5
Incremental Impact on Rates

	Estimate 2013/14	Estimate 2014/15	Estimate 2015/16
Incremental impact on Rates	0%	0%	0%

5. External Debt Indicators

5.1 Authorised Borrowing Limit

The Act requires the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, which relates to gross debt. This limit is referred to within the Prudential Code as the Authorised limit and must not be breached. It is therefore set at a level which includes sufficient headroom for the operational management of the treasury function. It is important to note that a key feature of the Prudential Code is that borrowing ahead of immediate need is permitted to the extent by which net borrowing cannot exceed the Capital Financing Requirement. Going forward, it is essential that the limits allow sufficient flexibility to allow further borrowing in advance of immediate need provided that all the implications and risks have been adequately considered.

The Director of Finance and Resources has delegated authority to effect movement between borrowing and other long term liabilities. The authorised borrowing limit, or estimated debt to 2014/15 is shown in table 6 below.

Table 6
Authorised Borrowing Limit

Authorised limit	Actual 2011/12 £'000	Estimate 2012/13 £'000	Estimate 2013/14 £'000	Estimate 2014/15 £'000	Estimate 2015/16 £'000
Borrowing	28,466	65,958	78,095	93,022	109,021
Other Long Term Liabilities					
Total	28,466	65,958	78,095	93,022	109,021

5.2 Operational Boundary

Unlike the Authorised Borrowing Limit, the Operational Boundary is not a limit and instead provides an indication of the most likely, but not worst case scenario of the estimates of gross external debt.

Table 7
Operational Borrowing Limit

Operational Boundary	Actual 2011/12 £'000	Estimate 2012/13 £'000	Estimate 2013/14 £'000	Estimate 2014/15 £'000	Estimate 2015/16 £'000
Borrowing	28,466	32,338	40,927	65,958	78,095
Other Long Term Liabilities					
Total	28,466	32,338	40,927	65,958	78,095

6. Treasury Management Indicators

The Prudential Code also requires the production of key treasury management indicators. These are included within section 9 of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

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Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14

1. Introduction

Belfast City Council's Treasury Management Policy is based on the Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice. The policy requires the Director of Finance and Resources to submit an annual Treasury management Strategy to the Council.

This strategy covers the following issues in respect of 2013/14:

- Current treasury position
- Outlook for interest rates
- Capital Financing Plans
- Establishing the Borrowing Requirement
- Borrowing strategy
- Debt rescheduling
- Investments
- Treasury Management Indicators

2. Current Treasury Position

Figure 1 below shows Belfast City Council's treasury position as at 31st March 2012 and 30th September 2012, as well as the projected position at 31st March 2013.

Figure 1
Current and Projected Treasury Position

	31st March 2012 £'000	Average rate	30th Sept 2012 £'000	Average rate	31st March 2013 forecast £'000	Average rate
Borrowing	28,466	6.23%	28,072	6.59%	32,338	5.79%
Investments	33,068	0.5%	26,900	0.6%	37,755	0.5%
Net Borrowing	(4,602)		1,172		(5,417)	

This shows that at the 30th September 2012, the net borrowing of the Council has increased by approximately £6m from the 31 March 2012 position. This increase is due to the negative cash flow in the year to date. However, the net debt position is forecast to become a net cash position of £5m before 31st March 2013 due to slippages in capital expenditure and increases in investment balances.

3. Outlook for Interest Rates

Market expectations are that interest rates will remain unchanged until late 2013 and then only a half point increase to 1% by mid-2014.

4. Capital Financing Plans

It is essential that the level of borrowing is considered within the context of the Council's capital expenditure and plans, as is required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance.

Figure 2 below shows how the reduced capital expenditure and financing plans will impact on the net cash requirement of the Council. It should also be noted that

movement to and from reserves will impact on the cash requirement (i.e. if there are net transfers from reserves, this will create an additional need for cash).

Figure 2
Net Cash Requirement

	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000
Capital Expenditure	10,596	20,576	50,021	16,900
Financed from "other" sources (e.g. grants, contributions, revenue, capital receipts etc)	4,259	10,219	22,000	502
Remainder to be "borrowed"	6,337	10,357	28,021	16,398
Notional Repayment of Principal (MRP)	1,152	1,768	2,989	4,261
Increase / (decrease) in CFR	5,185	8,589	25,032	12,137
Transfers (to) / from reserves	(6,000)	(500)	13,500	(6,000)
Net Cash Requirement	(815)	8,089	38,532	6,137

The way in which this total funding requirement of £87m for 2013/14-2015/16 is met, is a key consideration of the treasury management strategy. This requirement will increase the net borrowing position of the Council and consideration needs to be given to whether this is met by increasing borrowing, or reducing investment balances.

5 Establishing the Borrowing Requirement

The starting point for ascertain the appropriate level of borrowing is the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is derived from the Balance Sheet and represents the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose, as it takes account of all capital expenditure incurred which is resourced from borrowing.

However, in addition to the debt position created by historic capital expenditure met from borrowing, the Council also has significant values of reserves, provisions and balances supported by cash, which reduce the net indebtedness of the Council. These positive cash flows allow the Council to consider utilising this cash to support capital expenditure in lieu of external borrowing.

If external borrowing is higher than the CFR, this indicates borrowing in advance of immediate need (permitted within the Prudential Code) and borrowing below CFR would indicate internal borrowing (i.e. the level of cash used in lieu of external borrowing)

At 31st March 2012, the external borrowing of the Council was £14.7m below the total CFR, reflecting the fact that there is a significant level of internal borrowing.

The relatively high levels of reserves and balances on the Council's balance sheet have therefore enabled the Council to benefit from not having to borrow externally to the full extent of the underlying need. However, it cannot be assumed that this position can continue into perpetuity and needs to be given active consideration.

In order to create a framework around the extent to which the council's reserves and balances can continue to be used, the Director of Finance and Resources is recommending an internal limit to be placed on the level of internal borrowing, based

on CIPFA Treasury management Code of Practice that can be used before having to borrow externally. This is known as the Allowable Internal Borrowing limit. This limit has regard to the components of reserves and balances and the estimated longevity of these balances. The Director of Finance and Resources has assessed that of the £48m that existed on the balance sheet at 31st March 2012, approximately £16m will remain for the foreseeable future and that this the amount that may therefore be used in lieu of external borrowing. From the allowable internal borrowing limit, the proposed amount of external borrowing to be held, known as the Liability Benchmark can be determined.

Figure 3
External Borrowing Requirement

	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000
Projected closing CFR	48,338	56,927	81,958	94,095
Allowable Internal Borrowing Limit	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
Liability Benchmark	32,338	40,927	65,958	78,095
Projected closing borrowing	27,689	28,578	40,148	64,202
Borrowing maturing in year	(777)	(3,751)	(779)	(1,756)
Additional Borrowing Required	4,650	12,340	25,811	13,893
(Increase) / Decrease in Investment Balances	(4,687)	(500)	13,500	(6,000)

It should be noted that, in the event of slippage within the capital programme, the CFR may not increase as much as has been forecast and therefore if the external borrowing had been undertaken as planned, internal borrowing would be lower than the limit specified.

6. Borrowing Strategy

In terms of meeting the external borrowing requirement identified above, one of the most important considerations is the timing, in terms of the potential to save significant interest costs and it is key that this position is proactively managed using all information available to inform decisions. It is essential therefore that the considerations of timing of borrowing form a key element of the borrowing strategy.

It is of course not possible for all borrowing to be undertaken at the lowest rates of interest available, as unforeseen events can significantly alter the path of rates. It is therefore essential that the risks to adverse movements are fully understood and actively managed.

One of the key borrowing objectives is to achieve certainty around interest costs, and there is therefore little appetite to undertake variable rate borrowing. It is unlikely that long term interest rates will fall over the medium term and therefore to reduce the risk of rising interest rates, officers will seek to carry out the external borrowing in the financial year to which the expenditure relates.

It is recognised that whilst the capital expenditure and financing plans will be a driver of borrowing costs, the management of risk is the prime objective of the

borrowing strategy and reduction of interest rate risk and refinancing risk within the portfolio is essential.

Therefore, the Council remains prepared to undertake the potential borrowing ahead of immediate need (up to three years in advance), if it results in a reduction of interest rate risk within the portfolio. The Council recognises that this may temporarily increase investment balances, and increase net interest costs in the short term, and that these factors will form part of the decision making process when the strategy is executed. It would be necessary to demonstrate value for money when making a decision in respect of borrowing in advance of need, therefore it will only be undertaken if there is a strong view that rates may rise.

It is expected that requirements for long term borrowing will be met from the Government Loans Fund as, although the costs of borrowing increased in the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, this remains the lowest cost fixed rate borrowing.

7. Debt Rescheduling

The prime objective of any restructuring is to reduce risk in the portfolio, whether that be interest rate or refinancing risk. Any savings that may be created as a result will be considered in the context of the overall risk profile.

Debt restructuring opportunities will be kept under constant review, however the penalties of premature redemption of loans at higher rates than prevailing interest rates mean that there may be significant costs associated with this, which will reduce the attractiveness of opportunities.

8. Investments

Annual Investment Strategy

The Council has regard to the Guidance for Local Government Investments for District Councils in Northern Ireland (the Guidance) as cited under Section 25(1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Act) when setting the Investment Strategy. The Department recommends that each local authority produce and publish an Annual Investment Strategy, approved by the Council and revised in year as required. This sets out the Council's policies for managing investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. This investment strategy states which instruments the Council may use for investment purposes, making a distinction between specified and non-specified investments. This strategy also determines limits in respect of their overall levels.

The prime objective of the Council's investment strategy is to ensure prudent investment of surplus funds. The Council's investment priorities are the security of capital, liquidity of investments and, within those objectives, to secure optimum performance.

All investments will be made in accordance with the Council's investment policies and prevailing legislation and regulations.

8.1 Specified Investments

An investment is a **specified investment** if:

- The investment is denominated in Sterling and all payments or repayments are payable only in Sterling,

- The investment is not a long term investment (i.e. due to be repaid within 12 months of the date in which it was made or one which the Council may require to be repaid within that period),
- The making of the investment is not defined as capital expenditure by virtue of regulation 12 of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2011; and
- The investment is made with a body which has been awarded a high credit rating, or is made with one of the following:
 - a) The United Kingdom Government;
 - b) A District Council; or
 - c) A Local Authority in England and Wales, or a similar body in Scotland;

The following categories of investments may be used under the definition of specified investments:

- Short term cash deposits
- Call accounts
- Certificates of Deposit (with maturity dates < 1 year)
- UK Government Gilts
- Treasury Bills
- Money Market Funds

The Council considers a high credit rating for money market funds to be those with a long term Fitch Rating of AAA (or the equivalent highest rating from Standard and Poors or Moodys).

The Council will have regard to all 3 rating agencies and considers a high credit rating for other investments to be as follows:

Fitch Credit Rating	Minimum level
Short Term Rating	F1
Long Term Rating	A

Fitch defines these ratings as follows:

A: High credit quality.

'A' ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

F1: Highest short-term credit quality.

Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments

8.2 Non-specified Investments

In respect of **non-specified investments**. The following instruments have been identified by the Council.

Category of Non-specified investment
Sterling denominated Foreign Government Securities
Sterling medium term Deposits or Certificates of Deposit
Floating rate Certificates of Deposit
Highly rated Corporate Bonds (including investments in a Corporate

Bond Fund)
Sterling Reserve Funds
Index-linked structured deposits
Collateralised deposits
Foreign Currency denominated investments
Deposits with non-rated Building Societies

The Council do not intend on making any investments in the 2013/14 year which meet the definition of non-specified investments and therefore there is no limit set on this within the Investment Strategy.

The CIPFA Code of Practice recommends that the Investment Strategy sets out the maximum period over which investments will be made.

The Director of Finance and Resources recommends that a maximum duration of 2 years should be set, although it is only expected that investments over 12 months will be made in exceptional circumstances.

Regulation 12(1) (d) of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that some categories of investment are defined as Capital Expenditure. This relates to the acquisition of share or loan capital in any body corporate. However, in the event that this expenditure is made as an investment for the prudent management of the Council's financial affairs, it shall not be treated as capital expenditure.

The impact of investing in instruments of this nature are such that, unlike other investment instruments, either capital or revenue resources would have to be applied to this expenditure, and once the investment was sold or matured, the income would be a capital receipt.

The Council do not intend on making any investments which meet the definition of capital expenditure and therefore there is no limit set on this within the Investment Strategy.

8.3 Investment Risk

The prime consideration of risk within investments is the loss of capital invested. Therefore investments will only be made with bodies with a high credit rating defined above. Credit ratings will form the primary driver for assessing credit quality, although it is recognised that this is not the only means of assessing credit quality.

Caution will be exercised in determining the creditworthiness of investment counterparties, even if they meet the minimum criteria above.

In the event that any institutions are at the minimum criteria and are on negative rating watch, monies will not be placed with that organisation until such time that the negative outlook is revised.

Geographical limits will be considered to ensure an appropriate spread of risk. Sovereign ratings will be taken account of when placing funds with institutions outside of the UK.

Credit ratings for existing investment counterparties will be monitored on a monthly basis, as well as immediately before new deposits are placed.

Market intelligence will also be considered before entering into any investments with proposed counterparties meeting the minimum criteria.

8.4 Treasury Management Advisers

The Council does not currently utilise the services of external advisers when determining the credit quality of its investment counterparties. However, the Director of Finance and Resources intends to review this during 2013/14 with the intention of making use of external advisers in future years. The Council recognise that responsibility for the decision to invest with a counterparty rests with the Council as the principle undertaking the transaction.

Credit ratings will be obtained directly from the rating agencies' websites, and officers will regularly read the financial press for information relevant to the credit-worthiness of counterparties.

8.5 Investment Training

The Council recognises that investments, as well as wider treasury management issues require a high level of specialist knowledge. Officers undertaking the decisions are all qualified accountants with many years of experience. However, the Council recognises the need for officers to be kept up to date with developments and through the annual appraisal system will identify any training needs to further enhance the current skills base.

In the event of new Officers joining the function, they will be provided with significant on the job training as well as being provided with the opportunity to attend relevant external training courses.

The Council recognises that although there may be costs involved with sending officers to training courses, when these costs are considered in the context of the size of the portfolios being managed, and the amount of the Council's money at risk, investment in training is a worthwhile area of expenditure.

In addition to the training of officers, in order for elected members to provide effective scrutiny of the strategy and to have the knowledge to make informed decisions regarding the strategy, it is also important that training is provided to Members of the Council.

8.6 Other Investment Considerations

The level of investment balances is not specifically targeted in the strategy; it will be a consequence of the net spending plans of the Council, and the level of external borrowing to be undertaken. To date, balances have remained relatively stable over recent years. However, the introduction of the Prudential Code, and the self regulation of borrowing limits and capital financing strategies, may result in higher or lower levels of balances going forwards as the level of external borrowing is given active consideration.

It should also be noted that the investments are largely as a result of the level of reserves and provisions that the Council has at any one point in time. In addition, there is an amount of working capital (excess of creditors over debtors) as well as being a factor of the extent to which investment balances have been used in lieu of external borrowing.

Section 5 of this report explained the concept of setting a limit on the level of balances and reserves that can be used to support capital expenditure, and as a result, investment balances are expected to decrease as further investment balances are used in lieu of external borrowing.

The remaining cash balances that will not be used in lieu of external borrowing will primarily exist to manage cash flow volatility within the Council. It is therefore not expected that investments of a long term strategic nature will be made. Instead the duration of new investments will remain relatively short in order to meet liquidity demands.

The Council recognises that a consequence of short dated investments is that it exposes the portfolio to interest rate risk, which would otherwise be reduced if investments were made of a long term nature. The current historical low short term rates will limit the risk of further falls in investment rates. The budget for investment income takes a prudent approach to expected returns from investments.

9. Treasury Management Indicators

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice requires various indicators to be set within the strategy. This section of the report sets these out in the format required by the Code. Whilst they are required to provide boundaries within which the treasury management operations will be managed, it is also important that there is sufficient flexibility to enable officers to react to unforeseen favourable movements in the financial markets which may present beneficial opportunities to the Council.

9.1 Adoption of the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management

The first Treasury Management Prudential Indicator is that the Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services. The aim of the Code is for authorities create sound objectives and procedures to ensure decisions are made within an appropriate framework, and to emphasise the overriding importance of effective risk management. In response to this, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed a Treasury Management Policy for the Council and the Director of Finance and Resources maintains Treasury Management Practices for the effective management and control of the treasury management activities in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice.

9.2 Interest Rate Exposures

The Council is required to set upper limits for both fixed and variable exposures for the forthcoming years. The purpose of this indicator is to contain the Council's exposure to unfavourable movements in interest rates. The indicators are expressed as Fixed Rate Borrowing less Fixed Rate Investments and Variable Rate Borrowing less Variable Rate Investments. The Council defines variable rate investments as including those instruments maturing within each year, as the replacement of those instruments will be subject to prevailing rates of interest. The following table shows the upper limit of fixed rate exposure and the upper limit of variable rate exposure for the forthcoming four years.

	Estimate 2012/13 £'000	Estimate 2013/14 £'000	Estimate 2014/15 £'000	Estimate 2015/16 £'000
Upper limit of fixed rate exposure	33,116	44,678	66,738	79,852
Upper limit of variable rate exposure	(36,825)	(34,857)	(16,195)	(19,416)

9.3 Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

The Council is required to set upper and lower limits of fixed rate borrowing maturing within certain periods, in order to contain the exposure to re-financing risk which

may arise if significant proportions of borrowing were maturing within a short period of time. The Council has set the following limits for the forthcoming financial year.

	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Under 12 months	0.00%	20.00%
12 months – 24 months	5.00%	25.00%
24 months – 5 years	10.00%	25.00%
5 years – 10 years	10.00%	50.00%
10 years and above	5.00%	60.00%

9.4 Total Principal Sums Invested for periods longer than 364 days

The purpose of this indicator is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of sums invested.

The Council would not, through its normal course of investment activities, expect to make investments beyond 12 months. However, there may be exceptional circumstances which may result in investments being made up to 2 years in duration, as is referred to within the Annual Investment Strategy.

	Estimate 2013/14	Estimate 2014/15	Estimate 2015/16
Total principal sums invested for longer than 364 days	£2m	£2m	£2m

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Belfast Tribunal Representation Service: Request for financial support from the Advice Consortia
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

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 1 st 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 20 th 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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

5.0	Decision Tracking
Should the funding be approved, the Director of Finance and Resources will advise the consortium of the decision and that the funding is non recurrent.	

6.0	Documents Attached
Appendix 1: Draft outline Belfast Tribunal Representation Service	

Appendix 1:

Belfast Tribunal Representation Service

Introduction

In the past few years, advice services across Belfast have experienced a significant rise in the number of people accessing our services.

Advisors are now dealing with clients who have never been on benefits before, clients who are worried and concern about their present entitlement, and clients who are being continually reviewed and assessed for benefits. At a time when unemployment has risen, and those on low or fixed incomes are experiencing financial pressures as a result of the rising cost of living, the last 18 months have also been significant changes to the existing benefit system, with some benefits being removed and others being frozen.

This trend is likely to continue – indeed, 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.

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.

Demand for Representation

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.

Over the past year, the Appeal service (TAS) in Belfast has had to make provision for an increased number of hearings, and is currently operating from three locations in the city. The operational team at TAS are currently reviewing the service, based on their expectation that the number of appeals will treble in 2013/2014 with the continuation of ESA, and the introduction of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in place of Disability Living Allowance.

The Social Security Agency staff have confirmed to us that the number of people currently appealing ESA decisions is approximately 9,000. We believe that the number of appeals will grow with the introduction of the so-called '365' rule, which will place a time limit on contribution based ESA for those in the Work Related Activity Group.

The introduction of PIP will see at least 10,000 people across Northern Ireland lose benefit at the time of its introduction: this will generate further demand for representation in Belfast, as the city encompasses some of the most deprived areas in NI. Universal Credit will also generate large numbers of appeals, as clients will be appealing benefit amounts, and sanctions of benefits. The new Discretionary Support Scheme, which will replace the Social Fund, will prompt further reviews and appeals where claimants believe a grant

instead of a loan should have been awarded, or when claimants challenge proposed repayment schedules.

From our perspective as advice providers, such representation is a natural extension of our work on behalf of clients, as appeals are an integral part of the process begun by generalist providers when they complete a form on behalf of clients.

In providing such representation, we are not only helping clients exercise their right to appeal, and ensuring that those who are entitled to benefit receive their entitlement; we are also helping to make the system work more effectively. Staff providing representation effectively operates a *triage* system – identifying cases where appeals are not appropriate and identifying other options for those clients, and seeking reviews from SSA decision makers rather than formal hearings, as well as taking cases forward to hearings. Representation therefore not only provides redress for cases in which there is clear system failure – where entitlement exists but was not correctly identified – but also reduces the burden on TAS by reducing the number of unnecessary hearings and the costs that result.

The importance of representation in the benefits process cannot be overstated: all available evidence indicates that clients who have such representation at hearings have a significantly improved chance of securing a positive outcome. One estimate is that clients have a 70% chance of securing such an outcome with representation, while overall success rates at hearings are around 50%. In North Belfast, where the consortium has employed a full time representative, success rates have been above 70% in recent years.

Existing Service Provision

Currently across Belfast the advice sector employs 2 full time Tribunal Representatives, one based in North Belfast and the other in East Belfast. The service in North Belfast has been in place since 2005. However in the past 2 years this service has seen the number of appeals increase dramatically and in the past year the service dealt with 961 appeal hearings as a direct result of introduction of Employment Support Allowance, with £1,162,208 of benefit being secured on behalf of clients. In terms of this additional benefit entitlement, the return on representation is the highest of the highest return ratios within the advice sector, in the North of the city the cost of the service in relation to the output is for every £1 of funding a return of £29 is achieved on behalf of clients.

The full time service in East Belfast was only set up in 2011, but in that short period has seen an increase in demand for representation from 143 for the whole of 2011/12 to 100 in the first 6 months of this year alone.

We know from the two existing services that representation is effective and clients stand more of a chance to win entitlement. Representation benefits clients as it prepares them for the appeal process and provides them with representation; it also helps the TAS to deliver a more timely cost effective service, as representatives can guide and direct panels on appeal matters. This allows panel members to focus on the relevant issues in each individual case, rather than a more time consuming generic service.

This service in North and East has proven invaluable to both clients and advisors, a dedicated tribunal representative frees up generalist advisors to continue to deliver

generalist daily advice at main centres, outreach clinics etc., allowing them to the time to deal with more clients and enquires.

In other areas of Belfast generalist advisors, either paid or voluntary, attend appeal hearing with clients. Given the time consuming nature of this work, this represents a significant diversion of resources from delivering front line advice services. One tribunal will displace at least two advice sessions requiring the advisor to reschedule these sessions and thus limiting the overall service available to clients.

Proposal Aim

The delivery of a Tribunal/Appeals Service across the city of Belfast that clients can avail of at any BCC funded advice service. Representing 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.

Service Delivery

All five consortia will 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. We would hope to constitute this group, establishing a terms of reference for the group with clear objectives, alongside decision making processes and roles/responsibilities.

We would aim to employ 5 Tribunal Representatives inclusive of the 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.

We would employ 70 hours of weekly administrative support for Tribunals representatives to meet the administration workload of representatives, which includes case recording, appeal correspondence etc.

We would obtain a common case recording system to assist representative's record client details, keep case notes and outcomes/outputs. This would show the value for money aspect of the service and the effectiveness of tribunal representation.

Management/Monitoring Arrangements

The Steering Group with a representative from each consortium, will monitor service delivery and set targets for staff. The Group will review and monitor the service on regular basis to ensure meeting the need and fit for purpose.

Lead Partner

The lead partner would be responsible for the recruitment and employment of staff, day-to-day financial administration and operational issues. The lead partner would provide regular reports on both financial and operational issues to the Belfast Advice Group.

The service would roll out in two stages;

Stage 1: Initial Set Up (By March 2013 – funding secured)

Key Actions

- 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.
- We would also seek to 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.

Costs:

			Total
Faciliation Costs	Formation of Belfast Advice Group	2,000.00	2,000.00
Equipment	Office Equipment	2,500.00	2,500.00
	Computer Equipment	3,250.00	3,250.00
Recruitment	Staff Recruitment	1,000.00	1,000.00
Induction	Staff Training & Induction	2,500.00	2,500.00
Total Set Up Costs		11,250.00	11,250.00

Stage 2: Annual Service Delivery Costs (24 months: 2013-2015)

		Year 1	Year 2	Total
Staff Costs	Tribunal Representatives			
	Salary Costs (See Note)	130,924.84	130,924.84	261,849.68
	NIC Er's Pension Contribution	13,015.20	13,015.20	26,030.40
		11,128.61	11,128.61	22,257.22
	Administrative Support			
	Salary Costs: 2 Full time Administrators	31,486.00	31,486.00	62,972.00
	NIC Er's Pension Contribution	2,623.84	2,623.84	5,247.68
		2,676.31	2,676.31	5,352.62
	Subtotal: Staff Costs	191,854.80	191,854.80	383,709.60
	Support Costs	Travel	4,000.00	4,000.00
Telephone Indemnity Insurance		2,500.00	2,500.00	5,000.00
Advertising & Publicity		500.00	500.00	1,000.00
Management Fee (Lead Partner)		3,000.00	3,000.00	6,000.00
		5,000.00	5,000.00	10,000.00
Hosting Costs		6,250.00	6,250.00	12,500.00
Subtotal: Support Costs		21,250.00	21,250.00	42,500.00
TOTAL COSTS				426,209.60

Note

These costs are based on:

1 Senior Tribunal Representative @ £ 28,636.00 gross salary per annum
 4 Tribunal Representatives @ £ 25,572.21 gross salary per annum

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Property Maintenance Tender Approvals
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management (Ext. 5206/6232)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that, under the revised Scheme of Delegation, approval must be sought from the relevant Committee prior to inviting tenders for the supply of goods or services.
1.2	Members will also be aware that, in the course of providing maintenance services at all Council properties, the Property Maintenance unit makes regular use of a number of external contractors, both in order to provide specialist services and also to supplement the existing in-house workforce during times of peak demand.
1.3	A number of contracts require renewal for a variety of reasons, as set out below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) MTC for repair, maintenance & Minor Works for Electrical Services Installations. The incumbent contractor has now confirmed that they do not wish to exercise the option for contract extension therefore it will end on the 30th April 2013; b) MTC for Repair, Maintenance & Minor works for all Lift Installations: the incumbent contractor's performance for the year has been unsatisfactory and an offer of contract extension will not be made, consequently the contract will end on the 31 March 2013; c) In addition, on the 23 September 2011 granted approval to proceed with the tender process for the repair and maintenance of mechanical services installations at various Council Properties.
1.4	Tender evaluation was completed and approved in July 2012. However during the standstill period prior to awarding the contract a legal challenge was received from an unsuccessful contractor.
1.5	Following discussions between the Council's Legal Services team and the contractor's legal counsel it was agreed that in order to avoid a protracted legal action and the significant costs associated with such, the contractor would withdraw their legal challenge in response to the Council re-tendering the work.
1.6	In order to ensure there is adequate cover for the maintenance of mechanical systems throughout Council properties during the re-tendering period, it is proposed

	to extend the existing mechanical services MTC contract by 6 months to allow procurement of the new contract.
1.7	d) Finally, Members will be aware that the council uses natural gas as a fuel in a number of its properties, and that this fuel is procured on foot of competitive procurement processes to ensure that the most economically advantageous supply arrangements are in place. Currently this energy source costs the council approx. £1.2m per annum.
1.8	The existing contract, with Firmus Gas Ltd, is due to expire on the 31st March 2013, and the Facilities Management Section would normally seek the Committee's approval to re-tender in the normal way. However, on this occasion, the Section is instead seeking the Committee's approval to extend the current contract with Firmus for a period not to exceed 9 months, on the best available terms.
1.9	This approach is being proposed for a number of reasons, but principally because of the opportunities which may arise for collaboration with other public bodies. Energy procurement is an area in which the opportunities to collaborate with other bodies to the mutual benefit of all participants is increasing, and indeed this collaborative approach is a central theme of the council's corporate procurement strategy.
1.10	Following discussions with the Head of Contracts and the Procurement Manager it is therefore proposed that the council seeks a fixed-term extension of the current contract for a period not to exceed 9 months and, during the period of extension, to rationalize the existing specification and to explore fully any opportunities for collaborative working which may exist.
1.11	Approval is therefore sought to proceed with the various procurement-related actions set out above.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The key issues are that the Committee is content to approve the following on the basis of the information set out herein:-
2.2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the determination of the electrical measured-term contract at the request of the contractor and the re-letting of the contract; 2) the decision not to offer a contractual extension in respect of the lift maintenance contract on the basis of poor performance and instead to invite tenders for this activity; 3) the extension of the mechanical services maintenance contract while a re-tendering is conducted following a legal challenge; and 4) the extension of the existing natural gas supply contract to permit a wider, collaborative approach to be properly assessed.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The estimated spend in respect of each of the contract areas in set out in Appendix A.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are no direct good relations implications in respect of this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee approve the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the determination of the electrical measured-term contract at the request of the contractor and the re-letting of the contract; b) the decision not to offer a contractual extension in respect of the lift maintenance contract on the basis of poor performance and instead to invite tenders for this activity; c) the extension of the mechanical services maintenance contract while a re-tendering is conducted following a legal challenge; and d) the extension of the existing natural gas supply contract to permit a wider, collaborative approach to be properly assessed.

6	Decision Tracking
The various tender exercises will proceed on the basis of the illustrative timescales set out in Appendix A overleaf.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
None.	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix A – estimated costs	

APPENDIX A

Contract	Estimated value per year	Period of Contract	Contract expiry date	Anticipated advert date
MTC for repair, maintenance & minor works to Electrical Services	£ 150,000	1 year + 2 optional	30 April 13	March 13
MTC for repair, maintenance & minor works to Lifts	£ 75,000	1 year + 4 optional	31 March 13	March 13

Contract	Estimated value per year	Period of Contract	Anticipated advert date
Mechanical Services Installation	£ 500,000	1 year + 2 optional	March 2013

Contract	Estimated value per year	Period of Contract	Anticipated advert date
Natural gas supply	£ 1,200,000	3 years	1 st December 2013



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Site Investigations - Various Locations
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Donal Rogan, Head of Contracts, Ext: 2460

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Project Management Unit (in the Property and Projects Department) is developing various proposals which have been approved, by the SP&R Committee, for inclusion in the Capital Programme and for progress to feasibility stage.

2	Key Issues
2.1	At feasibility stage there is 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 this work is obtained via quotation which should not require Committee approval.
2.2	The extent of site investigations is becoming more rigorous as new guidelines are introduced by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, as part of the Planning process, and the Council's own statutory contaminated land obligations.
2.3	Given the number of projects it is more practical to aggregate several site investigations into a single contract rather than address each investigation separately.
2.4	It is therefore proposed that the procurement of site investigations will be by means of tender (rather than by numerous quotations) and consequently this requires the approval of the SP&R Committee to the invitation of tenders and the award of contracts.
2.5	Besides the Capital Schemes there are also several projects going through the system in regard to LIF/SIF etc which will also require site investigations.
2.6	A schedule of those projects for which site investigation work is currently likely to be required is included as Appendix A to this report; but others will arise in the

	course of the development of project proposals and options.
2.7	It is therefore proposed to aggregate site investigations into larger contracts requiring tenders.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The cost of any site investigation work is charged to the relevant project account and is included in the overall budget for each proposal. The expenditure is necessary to enable realistic options to be developed and evaluated and for risks to be adequately appraised.
3.2	The approximate cost of the advancing projects to feasibility stage is of the order of 2%-3% of the anticipated project cost, with the balance of the budget remaining uncommitted until further approval is granted by the SP&R Committee.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality Implications relating to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that the Committee approve the invitation of tenders and the award of contracts for site investigation works in respect of physical schemes which have been approved to progress to feasibility stage.

6	Decision Tracking
The Director of Property and Projects will be responsible for the development of these projects through the capital programme process.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
LIF – Local Investment Fund	
SIF – Social Investment Fund	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix A – Schedule of Projects	

APPENDIX A

Schedule of projects for which site investigation work is currently likely to be required

Dixon Park (Pitches Strategy)
Victoria Park (Pitches Strategy)
Ormeau Park (Pitches Strategy)
Musgrave Park (Pitches Strategy)
Springmartin (LIF Scheme)
Shore Road Playing Fields (LIF Scheme)
Falls Park (Pitches Strategy)
Waterworks (Pitches Strategy)
Ballysillan Playing Fields (Pitches Strategy)
Cherryvale Playing Fields (Pitches Strategy)
Woodlands Playing Fields (Pitches Strategy)
Innovation Centre - Springvale Forthriver Business Park
North Foreshore Green Economy Business Park Infrastructure
Girdwood Community Hub
Waterfront Conference Centre/Exhibition Centre
Roselawn Cemetery – Future Developments
Springvale Household Recycling Centre
Belfast Zoo – Replacement Playground

This schedule is not exhaustive and site investigation will be required for further schemes, including LIF and SIF schemes, as the proposals are advanced.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, (Director of Finance and Resources, ext 6083)
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources, ext 3220

Relevant Background Information

To inform the Committee of delegated authority exercised by the Director of Finance and Resources to the employment of individuals who are related to existing officers of the Council.

The Director of Finance and Resources has authorised the appointment of the following individuals who are related to existing officers of the Council in accordance with the authority delegated to him by the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee on 27 June 2005. The Committee is asked to note the appointments are authorised by the Director under Standing Order 55.

NAME OF NEW EMPLOYEE	POST APPOINTED TO	RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING OFFICER	NAME OF EXISTING OFFICER	DEPARTMENT
Thomas Brown	Driver/Labourer	Brother	Ryan Brown	H&E Services
James Largey	Cemetery Operative	Nephew	Michael Largey	Parks & Leisure

Resource Implications

Financial

Provision for this post exists within the revenue budgets of the relevant departments.

Human Resources

There are no Human Resource considerations. All appointments have been made on the basis of merit in accordance with the Council's Recruitment Policies.

Asset and Other Implications

There are no other implications.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the appointments authorised by the Director of Finance and Resources in accordance with Standing Order 55.

Key to Abbreviations

Documents Attached



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Capital Programme – Suffolk Playing Fields
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Donal Rogan, Head of Contracts, Ext: 2460

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Following on from a December 2012 Council decision, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed, at its meeting on 14 December 2012 (an extract from the minutes is attached as Appendix A for ease of reference), to the advancement of a proposal for a two room changing pavilion and meeting room at 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 further consideration for inclusion in the Capital Programme against financial resource availability and prioritisation against other emerging proposals.

2	Key Issues
2.1	A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) has since been prepared and approval is now sought for the advancement of the proposal to the 'committed' section (Stage 1) of the Capital Programme and for an economic appraisal to be undertaken and an Outline Business Case (OBC) prepared.
2.2	This project forms part of the wider Pitches Programme which includes the pitches under the pitches strategy together with the other pitches which the Council has committed resources to.
2.3	High level costs have been estimated at £117,500. These will be fully appraised in Stage 2.
2.4	The outcome and recommendation of the economic appraisal and OBC will be reported back to the Committee in due course for further approvals.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	Quotations will be sought for the economic appraisal, the cost of which is likely to be in the region of £5,000 to £10,000.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	Equality and good relations considerations will be taken into account in the economic appraisal and equality impact assessment.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that the Committee consider, from a corporate capital finance perspective, the advancement of the proposal to the 'committed' section of the Capital Programme and agree to approve a full economic appraisal being undertaken.

6	Decision Tracking
The Director of Property and Projects will be responsible for the development of this project through the capital programme delivery process.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
SOC – Strategic Outline Case OBC – Outline Business Case	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix A – Extract from minutes of SP&R Committee of 14 December 2012	

Appendix A – Extract from minutes of SP&R Committee of 14 December 2012

Item 4f: Suffolk Football Club – Proposed Changing Facilities

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

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

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

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	'ILLUMINATE' Project completion and governance arrangements
Date:	18 th February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management (Ext. 5206/6232)

1.	Relevant Background Information												
1.1	At its meeting of 25 th 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 CO ₂ 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 ¹ 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:-												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Existing Floodlighting</th> <th>New LED Lighting</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Electricity Consumption (KwH)</td> <td>139,339</td> <td>63,044</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Annual Cost of Electricity</td> <td>£16,720</td> <td>£7,565</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Annual Electricity Saving</td> <td></td> <td>£9,155</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		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
	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 CO ₂ 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 Main dome & turrets lit 360°

1.6	Overall, the new system will therefore reduce total City Hall energy costs by approximately £14,000 per annum and also significantly reduce CO ₂ 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 (see Appendix 1a) to a full colour ‘wash’ of the building for special events and charity functions etc (see Appendix 1b). 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	<p>The following management mechanism is therefore proposed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 washed² in the appropriate colour(s) – see 4.2 below;

² colour-wash requests will be allowed for a maximum of one day only for all organizations;

1.14	<p>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; <i>and</i></p> <p>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.</p>
1.15	<p>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.</p>
1.16	<p>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.</p>
1.17	<p>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.</p>
1.18	<p>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.</p>
1.19	<p>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.</p>
1.20	<p>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.</p>
1.21	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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 as detailed in Appendix 2.</p>

2.	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The key issues may be summarised as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<p>a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; <i>and</i> • 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.
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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 CO ₂ emissions.

4.	Equality & Good Relations implications						
4.1	<p>The recent EQIA agreed by Council on Belfast City Hall - “Promoting a good and harmonious environment” - summarises our aim as:</p> <p><i>‘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’.</i></p>						
4.2	<p>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:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">St. Patrick’s Day (green)</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Chinese New Year (red & yellow)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Orangefest (orange)</td> <td>Polish independence day (red & white)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St. Valentine’s Day (red)</td> <td>Gay Pride (rainbow)</td> </tr> </table>	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)
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	<p>It is recommended that the Committee:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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; <i>and</i> f) agrees to a demonstration for all members prior to the April 2013 council meeting.

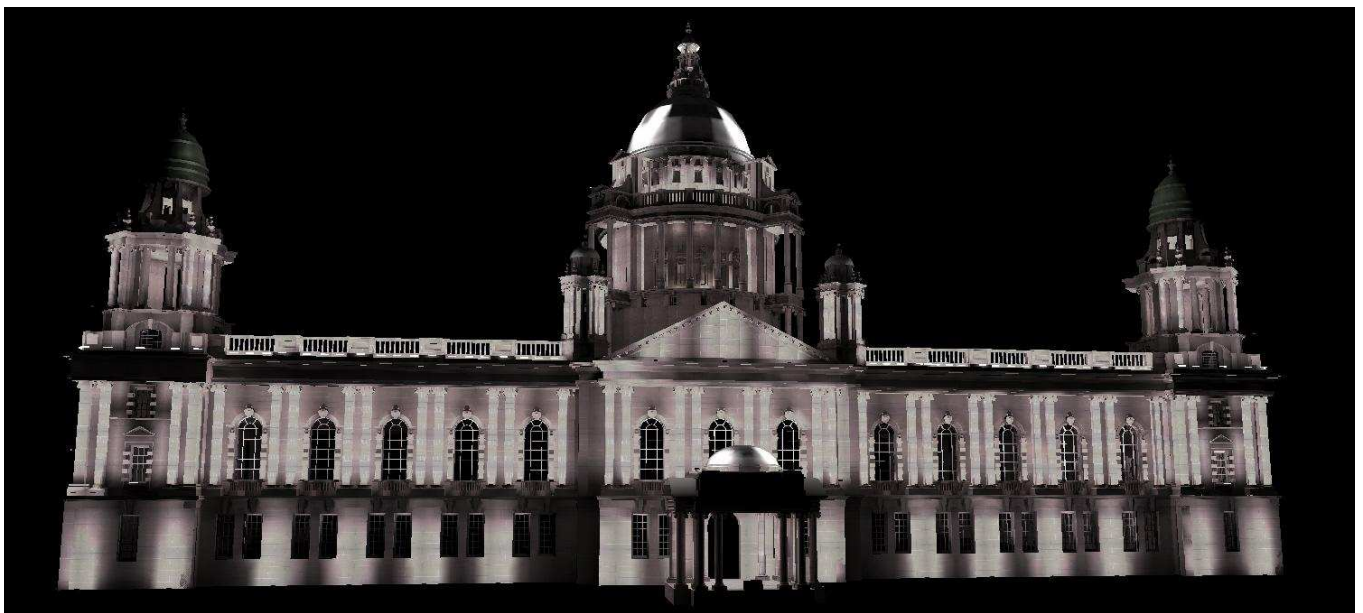
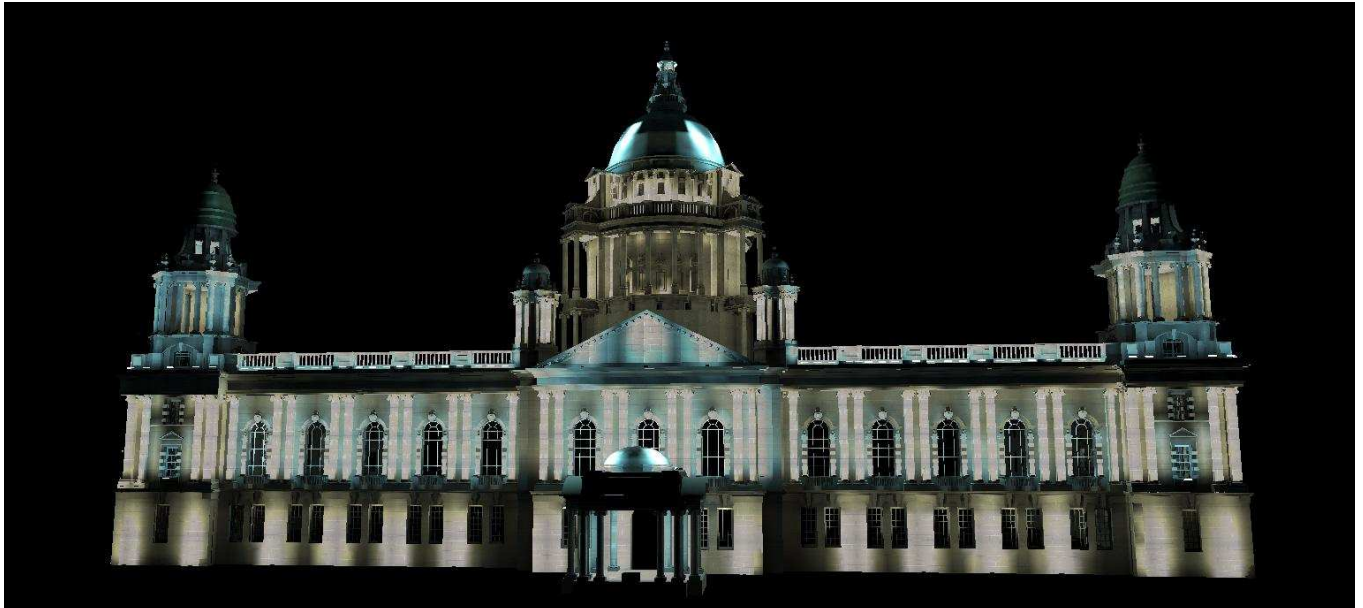
6.	Decision Tracking
6.1	<p>The City Hall ILLUMINATE project is scheduled to conclude during the first week of April 2013, and the facilities will be available from that time. There will inevitably be a short period during which expertise in the optimal use and deployment of the system must be developed by staff, but subject to this the facilities will be available as outlined above.</p>

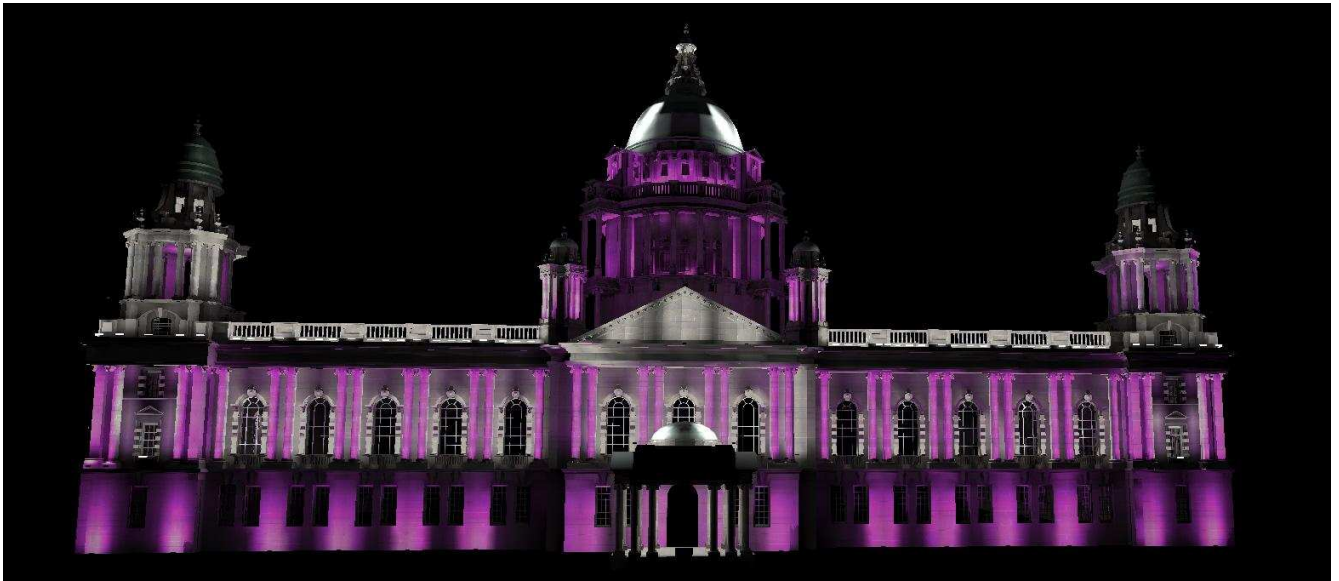
Key to Abbreviations
<p>LED – Light-emitting Diode UN – United Nations</p>

Documents Attached
<p>Appendix 1(a) – Illustrations of normal usage Appendix 1(b) – Illustrations of special events usage</p>

APPENDIX 1(a) – Routine uses of the ILLUMINATE facilities

APPENDIX 1(b) – illustration of capabilities of the ILLUMINATE system







Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Proposed disposal of Primrose Street Former Civic Amenity Site
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects Department, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Property and Projects Department, Ext: 3493

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. A location map showing the site outlined in red is attached at Appendix 1.
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	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Should the sale complete the Council will be liable to pay the Agent's sales fee.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Staff resource, primarily from Estates Unit and Legal Services required to progress any disposal.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>Disposal and redevelopment of this vacant property will bring this former Civic Amenity Site back into economic use.</p>

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.

6	Decision Tracking
	The Director of Property and Projects to ensure the disposal process is commenced within one month of Committee decision.

7	Key to Abbreviations
None	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Primrose Street Former Civic Amenity Site Location Map	

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Car Park at Clement Wilson Bridge
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext: 3493

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	At its meeting on 23 November 2012 Committee authorised advancement of a project to replace the bridge across the River Lagan at Clement Wilson Park. The project forms part of the Capital Programme and Committee also authorised proceeding to invitations to tender and award of contract to the most economically advantageous tender.
1.2	At its meeting on 6 December 2012 the Parks and Leisure Committee was updated on the Committee's authorisations of 23 November 2012 and further informed that to facilitate the desired construction method the proposed works would require use of an adjoining car park for short periods. The adjoining car park is not in Council ownership.
1.3	Contact was subsequently made with the owner of the adjoining car park and discussions undertaken to agree use of the land, over three or more weekends, to facilitate the removal of the existing bridge and installation of the new structure.
1.4	Agreement has now been reached with the car park owner for the periods of use sought.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The land owner has agreed to enter into a Licence Agreement with the Council to provide use of the car park adjoining Clement Wilson Park over three or more weekends, subject to a Licence Fee of £500 per weekend and the Council being responsible for all insurances etc. during the relevant periods and carrying out reinstatement of any damage caused to the car park as a result of the works.

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>3.1 The Council will incur expenditure of £500 per weekend over at least three weekends. This will form part of the project costs. It should be noted however it is likely an alternative bridge design and construction method would have to be adopted if the car park area was not available. This would likely result in project delays.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>3.2 Resources in Parks and Leisure, Property and Projects Department and Legal Services required in drafting and agreeing the relevant terms for the proposed Licence Agreement.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>3.3 Clement Wilson Park is bisected by the River Lagan and the bridge provides a vital link between the two parts for pedestrians, cyclists and the Council's service vehicles. As the bridge is currently closed for safety reasons, any delay in provision of a replacement structure is undesirable.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.

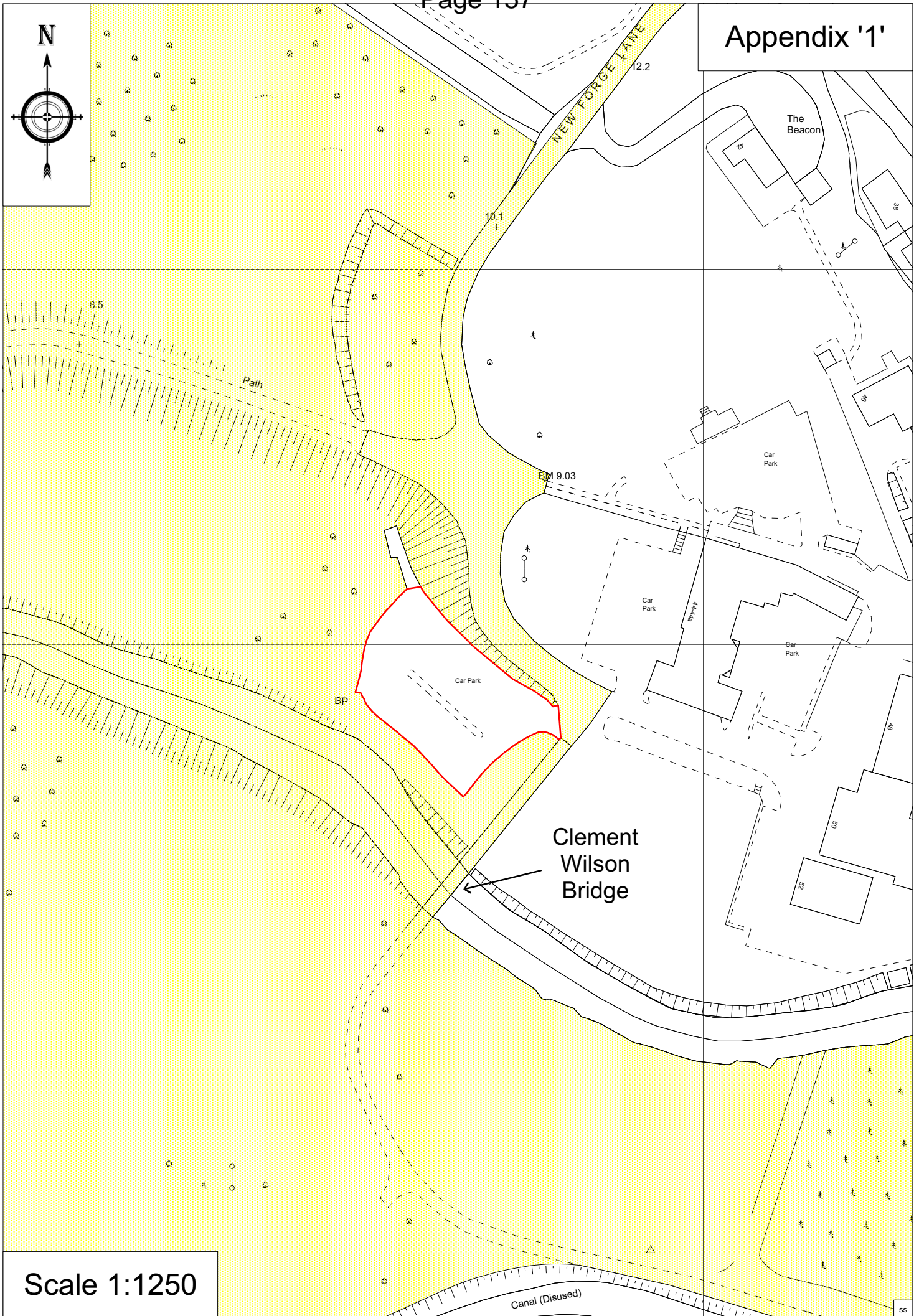
5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee is recommended to authorise the Council entering into a Licence Agreement with the land owner in respect of the land shown outlined red on the attached map (Appendix 1) subject to detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager and subject to the financial terms referred to in this report.

6	Decision Tracking
Director of Property and Projects to arrange for Licence Agreement to be in place prior to letting the contract for construction of the proposed replacement bridge.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
None.	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Map showing the area of the car park (outlined red) required in connection with the proposed Licence Agreement. The surrounding land in Council ownership is shaded yellow. Rights of way, to provide the owner of the car park with access to it, are included in the Council's legal title to the adjoining lands.	

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GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**MONDAY, 11th FEBRUARY, 2013****MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

Members present: Councillor Kyle (Deputy Chairman) (in the Chair);
Alderman Stoker and Councillors Attwood and Reynolds.

External Members: Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;
Archdeacon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Mrs. M. Marken, Catholic Church;
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Mr. R. Galway, Confederation of British
Industry/Shorts Bombardier;
Mr. B. McGivern, Belfast City Centre Management; and
Ms. M. De Silva, Voluntary/Community Sector.

Also attended: Ms. D. O'Loan, Community Relations Council/Pobal.

In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

(Councillor Attwood in the Chair.)

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Chairman (Councillor Hendron), Mrs. J. Hawthorne and Mr. P. Scott.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th January were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of item 3, viz., PEACE III Implementation Update, Mrs. Marken declared an interest in that she was a member of the Board of Public Achievement which was running the WIMPS Project (ref: 35709).

Growing Respect Programme

The Acting Chairman (Councillor Attwood) welcomed Ms. P. Irvine and Ms. M. McKnight to the meeting and they provided a presentation regarding the Growing Respect programme, which was overseen by the Council's Parks and Leisure Department.

Ms. Irvine explained that the Growing Respect programme was funded as part of the Belfast PEACE III Plan. She outlined the work which had been undertaken with young people and local community groups to help them develop their awareness of cultural diversity, respect and understanding. She indicated that the programme aimed to address issues such as race, sectarianism and inequality through the medium of sports and outdoor gardening activities.

Such activities, she explained, highlighted the importance of teamwork as well as generating awareness and understanding of good relations within the City. The programme, which was delivered over a seventeen-week period, commenced in February each year and involved over twenty local community groups and more than 200 people of all ages from across Belfast.

Ms. McKnight then provided examples of the physical activities and cultural relations workshops which had been delivered. She outlined the successes of the initiative and the benefits which had been accrued through working with volunteers from within local communities. She detailed the future aims and objectives of the programme and answered a number of Members' questions on the success of the initiative.

(Councillor Kyle, the Deputy Chairman, in the Chair.)

The Deputy Chairman thanked the representatives of the Growing Together programme for their presentation and the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

PEACE III - Implementation Update

The Partnership considered a report which provided an overview of the current phase of the PEACE III Plan, together with an appendix which provided a summary of the current status of each of the approved Phase II projects, a copy of which was available on the Council's modern.gov system. The key points within the report are set hereunder:

Progress on Phase II projects

The total expenditure to 31st December 2012 is £995,981 or approximately 20% of the overall budget. A number of projects are flagged as red or amber given concerns around implementation within the timescale, as has been noted previously by the Partnership and relevant issues have been raised with individual project leads with close ongoing monitoring underway. A written request has been made to the Special EU Programmes Body for additional time for delivery of the Plan (beyond Dec 2013) to take account programme slippage but no formal response has been received to date. Aside from this issue a number of projects have raised the impact of increased community tensions on their planned activities and several projects have indicated that further revisions to their project plans will be required due to procurement/ recruitment delays.

Bringing Divided Communities Together Conference 31 January

Michelle Hand of the Good Relations Unit gave a presentation on the Interfaces Programme at the *Bringing Divided Communities Together* Conference in Brussels on 31st January. This major event was organized at the request of the European Commissioner for Regional Policy who attended the event along with the First and Deputy First Ministers and the Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. Other attendees included Northern Ireland's MEPS, Assembly Members from the OFMDFM Committee, country

Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 11th February, 2013

representatives from Belgium, Cyprus, Spain, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom, Croatia, Serbia and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Israel, Libya, Morocco, South Korea and Members of the European Parliament, European Commission, Economic & Social Committee, Committee of the Regions and the European

Running in parallel to the conference was an exhibition at the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels which showcased the work of the PEACE III Programme. A reception event held to mark the exhibition was addressed by the First and Deputy First Ministers. Also exhibiting were the following PEACE III projects: Donegal PEACE Partnership, Youth Education Social Inclusion Partnership, Rural Enabler Project, Maze Long Kesh Development, Skainos, Teaching Divided Communities, WAVE Trauma Centre and the Irish Football Association

Programme Review

As part of the ongoing review and evaluation of the Phase II Plan, Blueprint Development Consultancy will be commencing a key stakeholder consultation exercise in February/ March. This will include consulting with individual members of the Good Relations Partnership.”

Members expressed concern regarding the progress which had been achieved to date in the implementation of certain projects, particularly those which were Council-led initiatives. It was suggested that the Council could leave itself open to criticism given the number of initiatives which had as yet to be commenced or completed. The point was made that there existed a wide range of voluntary groups which possessed significant expertise in the management and delivery of community-based projects and the Council should assess whether it possessed sufficient resources to manage effectively the range of projects which it had placed within its remit. It was suggested that the concerns expressed should be drawn to the attention of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

A further Member stated that the figures presented within the report represented only a snapshot of the Programme at a particular point in time and did not provide the Partnership with sufficient information in respect of expenditure, up-to-date projections, outcomes and timescales for the delivery of projects. It was suggested that consideration be given to the manner in which the figures were presented in future.

The Good Relations Manager and the Peace III Programme Manager clarified a range of issues and provided assurances in respect of the procedures which had been put in place to monitor the delivery of the Programme from a Council perspective. The PEACE III Programme Manager undertook to review the format of the reports currently provided to address the concerns raised. The Good Relations Manager pointed out that the issue of the delivery of the Programme would be raised with the relevant Chief Officers with a view to a further report being submitted to the Partnership and, subsequently, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

After further discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Summer Intervention Fund – 2013

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

Background Information

Members will be aware that the Good Relations Unit has managed and administered the Summer Intervention Fund on behalf of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister since 2010. The Fund of approximately £100,000 is open to all areas of the city, but priority is given to groups/organisations working with young people who live at or near interface areas on programmes specifically being delivered during times of heightened tension over July and August.

Over the past few years, in delivering this programme on behalf of OFM/DFM, the Council has collaborated with a range of other agencies in Belfast in strengthening its criteria and developing a clearer focus on diversionary activities this year, in support of ongoing work led by the Department of Justice and PSNI. Partnership Members are requested to note that discussions are being held with other agencies, notably the DOJ, in efforts to develop a longer term strategy around youth intervention.

Key Issues

The application process opened on Monday 4 February and will close on Friday 1 March at 12.00 noon. This timetable is approximately two months earlier than previous years, in response to demand from the many voluntary and community groups that participate in the scheme.

Information about the Fund and application process will be distributed as widely as possible through the Good Relations Unit's mailing list, as well as publicly on the Council's website. Information will also be disseminated via other Council Departments, the BELB, CRC and OFM/DFM, who circulate the information through their mailing lists and websites. This process is being undertaken subject to the Council receiving a formal written letter of offer from OFM/DFM but indications are that the amount allocated in 2013 will be similar to previous years.

Resource Implications

All the funding under the Summer Intervention Fund will be recouped at 100% from OFM/DFM.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

The purpose of the Summer Intervention Fund is to support diversionary activity for young people within communities during times of heightened tension. This particular element of funding is part of a wider resource allocation that is also administered by the BELB, CRC and OFM/DFM. The Council's allocation seeks to prioritise those communities that have the potential for conflict and therefore this fund seeks to ensure that there is minimum negative impact on Community Relations throughout the City over the summer period.

The Partnership noted the information provided.

Decade of Centenaries – Spring Programme of Events

The Good Relations Manager tabled for the information of the Partnership the Council-sponsored spring programme of events for the Decade of Centenaries and highlighted a number of events therein.

Noted.

Community Relations in Belfast

A Member reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 14th January, it had discussed the issues which had arisen following the decision by the Council to fly the Union Flag on designated days only and it had been agreed that it would be an opportune time to highlight the valuable work which had been undertaken in conjunction with various agencies and groups to improve community relations between communities across the City.

The Partnership was updated in relation to the work which had been undertaken in this regard and the Elected Members provided an overview of the Council-sponsored initiative viz., the "BackIn' Belfast" campaign, which had been established to address the issues raised.

Chairman

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Notice of Motion re: Domestic Violence and Abuse- Response from the Minister
Date:	22nd February, 2013
Reporting Officer:	Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6314
Contact Officer:	Mr Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer (extension 6313)

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>Members will recall that the Council at its meeting on 7th January passed the following notice of motion:</p> <p>““This Council recognises that domestic violence and abuse is not a one gender issue – that it can affect anyone irrespective of age, gender, profession, race, religion, sexuality, disability or social background;</p> <p>This Council commends the work undertaken by Council officers in developing the Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse that was launched on 25th October, 2012 and encourages other employers to undertake similar initiatives;</p> <p>This Council applauds the work of the Women’s Aid Federation in its efforts to continually highlight the issue of domestic violence and abuse, regardless of gender, and commends the work carried out by that organisation’s Belfast and Lisburn offices and that of other agencies associated with domestic violence; and</p> <p>This Council calls upon the Minister for Justice to examine how the Public Prosecution Service handles cases involving domestic violence and abuse and the impact it has on the victims.”</p>

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The motion called upon the Minister for Justice to examine how the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) handles cases involving domestic violence and abuse and the impact it has on victims.
2.2	In his response, the Minister points out that the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 established the Public Prosecution Service a fully independent body and, therefore, it is not within his remit to accede to the content of the Motion.
2.3	He does suggest, however, that the Council should write directly to the Director of Public Prosecutions to raise its concerns about how it handles such cases.
2.4	The Minister also refers to the establishment in 2003 of the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland, which is an independent, statutory inspectorate which can inspect agencies such as the Public Prosecution Service.
2.5	That Inspectorate 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 has planned to conduct a follow up review of the recommendations during 2013.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	None associated with this report.

4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	None associated with this report.

5.0	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is asked to note the receipt of the correspondence and take such action thereon as may be determined.

6.0	Decision Tracking
	Jim Hanna

7.0	Documents Attached
	Copy of Correspondence from the Minister of Justice

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Department of

Justice

www.dojni.gov.uk

Minister's Office Block B,
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SG

Tel: 028 90528121

private.office@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

Our ref: COR/29/2013



Mr Barry Flynn
Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council
Belfast City Hall
BELFAST
BT1 5GS

) February 2013

Dear Mr Flynn

Thank you for your letter of 8 January advising me of the content of a Notice of Motion relating to domestic violence which was passed unanimously by Belfast City Council at its meeting of 7 January 2013.

I am pleased to note the launch of the Council Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse and I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Council for embracing this initiative. I believe that it is important for businesses and employers within our community to adopt such policies and to help raise awareness of the support services available to victims of domestic violence.

Such Services are provided by Women's Aid and other voluntary and statutory organisations. I fully endorse, therefore, the Council's appreciation of the work of Women's Aid; an organisation that works tirelessly to provide much needed support and services to victims living with or escaping from domestic violence.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



The Motion recognises that domestic violence and abuse is not a gender issue and can affect anyone. My Department, together with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, has joint policy lead for tackling domestic violence through the 'Tackling Violence at Home' Strategy and associated action plan which are gender neutral.

I note that the Motion calls upon me to examine how the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) handles cases involving domestic violence and abuse and the impact it has on victims. You will wish to note that the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 established the PPS as a fully independent body post devolution. Therefore it is not within my remit to accede to the content of the Motion. I would suggest that concerns about how the PPS handles cases relating to domestic violence and abuse, including their decision making process, should be raised directly with the Director of Public Prosecutions at the following address:

Mr Barra McGrory
Director of Public Prosecutions
Public Prosecution Service
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast
BT1 3JR

It may be helpful, however, to inform you of the role of Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI), which is an independent, statutory inspectorate established in 2003 under s.45 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. CJINI has the responsibility for inspecting all aspects of the criminal justice system apart from the judiciary. Agencies which CJINI can inspect include the Police Service, Prison Service, Public Prosecution Service, Youth Justice Agency and the Courts and Tribunal Services.

In December 2010, CJINI published a report on the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in responding to, and handling cases of, domestic violence and abuse

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



which resulted in a number of recommendations for improvement across the criminal justice system. I have been informed that CJINI plans to conduct a follow up review of the recommendations during 2013.

You may also wish to note the positive developments in terms of the range and quality of services provided to victims of crime more generally. This includes the publication of a Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and a guide to Northern Ireland's criminal justice system. A handbook for adult victims of sexual violence has been published as well as practitioner guidance on achieving best evidence, aimed at ensuring that victims and witnesses are prepared to give their best evidence in court.

There are also a range of special measures available for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. The upper age limit for being automatically eligible for special measures (support provisions at court) has been raised from 17 to 18 years, while young witnesses' views are now taken into account when a special measures application is being made. Adult complainants of sexual offences have an automatic entitlement to have a video recorded statement admitted as evidence in chief. In addition, restrictions have been relaxed on a witness giving additional evidence in chief after their video recorded statement has been admitted.

Currently a new five-year strategy for victims and witnesses of crime is being finalised and is due to be published at the end of March 2013. Included within this will be the progression of pilot Registered Intermediaries Schemes. These will provide assistance to those with communication difficulties, making the criminal justice process more accessible to some of the most vulnerable people. A Victims' Charter will also be introduced, setting out entitlements and the standard of service that can be expected. I also intend to give victims and communities a stronger voice in the criminal justice process, through the formalisation of victim personal statements and the introduction of community impact statements, allowing their views to be given on how the crime has impacted on them.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



I hope that this is helpful.

*Yours
David Ford*

DAVID FORD MLA
Minister of Justice