

# Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 28th November, 2014

## MEETING OF SHADOW STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Stalford (Chairman);  
Councillors McAteer, Attwood, Beattie, Browne, boyle,  
GrovesB, Haire, Hargey, Hutchinson, Jones, Kingston,  
Long, McCabe, McNamee, McVeigh, Robinson and  
Rodgers.

In attendance:

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was received from Councillor Spence.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 24th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 4th November.

### **Declarations of Interest**

In respect of item 3(g), 'Request for Funding - City of Belfast Youth Orchestra', Councillor Rodgers declared an interest in that he was a member of the Belfast Education and Library Board, which was associated with the Youth Orchestra.

### **Councillor McAteer**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor McAteer to her first meeting of the Committee.

### **Request to Address the Committee**

The Committee agreed to receive, at its meeting in January, a deputation from representatives of the Forum for an Alternative Belfast (FAB) to discuss issues associated with the community planning process and the creation of a Local Development Plan.

### **Ulster Orchestra - Belfast Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall**

The Committee was reminded that Belfast City Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st November, in response to a request for financial assistance from the Ulster Orchestra, had agreed, in principle, to contribute a sum of £100,000, subject to that body securing additional funding to meet its operating deficit for 2014/2015. That decision had been subject also to the Council being satisfied with the longer-term financial viability of the Orchestra and to the receipt of assurances from its auditors that the Orchestra was considered a going concern.

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that there had been two elements to the Ulster Orchestra's request, the second being that the Council would consider providing the Orchestra with a rent-free period of five years for the use of the Belfast Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall. It was noted, particularly, that the potential loss of income to the Council, should it grant the free use of the Ulster Hall to the Orchestra, would be in the region of £170,000 per annum. Given that such a decision would affect the Council post-2015, it had been considered appropriate to invite representatives of the Orchestra to make a presentation to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Accordingly, the Chairman welcomed to the meeting Professor G. Bain, Executive Chairman of the Board of the Ulster Orchestra, together with Ms. A. Sands, Ms. B. McKinley and Mr. T. Green, representing the senior management team of the Orchestra.

Professor Bain outlined the extent of the Orchestra's operating deficit and the factors which had contributed to it. He requested that the Council consider providing, for a period of five years, that is, from 1st April, 2015 till 31st March, 2020 the free use of the Belfast Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall by the Orchestra. The savings which the Orchestra would make, should the Council accede to the request, would assist it to lever additional funding to offset its operating costs throughout that period. He concluded by stressing that the Orchestra had established a five-year plan to enhance its future viability and sustainability and appealed to the Committee to look favourably upon the request. The deputation then retired from the meeting.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the request for the free use of the Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall could only be considered within the context of the rate-setting process for the new Council in 2015/2016 and in future years. She reported that officers within the Finance and Resources Department were formulating the revenue estimates for 2015/2016 and that the request would be considered as part of that process. She referred also to the forthcoming capital scheme at the Waterfront Hall which would oversee the establishment of conference and exhibition facilities. Given that the business and operating model for the Waterfront Hall could change significantly, she suggested that the ability of the Council to meet the Orchestra's request, insofar as it related to the Waterfront Hall, would need to be considered further.

After discussion, during which the Committee expressed that view that it would wish to be supportive of the Ulster Orchestra in the future, the following was agreed:

- that the Ulster Orchestra's request for the free use of the Ulster Hall for a five-year period would be considered as part of Council's rate-setting process for 2015/2016 and in future years; and
- that details regarding the implications and possibility of the Council meeting the request for the free use of the Belfast Waterfront Hall would be submitted for the Committee's further consideration in due course.

### **Democratic Services and Governance**

#### **Council - Charters and Status**

The Committee considered the following report:

##### **"1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee upon a formal Council response to the DOE's Consultation on draft Regulations dealing with the Charters and Status of the new councils – the Local Government (Transitional, Incidental, Consequential and Supplemental Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

## 1.2 Background

The Department has issued a consultation document along with the proposed draft Regulations and have asked councils to respond by 12 December 2014. In summary, the proposed legislation will provide for the new Council to continue the County Borough and City status of the existing Council with effect from 1 April 2015 without the new council being required to take any action. By virtue of separate legislation (Local Government Act 2014 and Local Government Act 1972), the name of the new council will automatically revert back to 'Belfast City Council' on the 1 April 2015.

## **2.0 Key Issues**

### **2.1 Council Charter and City Status**

The 11 new councils have been established, by way of legislation, as district councils. The proposed Regulations offers the new councils the following options:

- (a) take no action and remain a district council;
- (b) petition the Secretary of State for the grant of a new charter; or
- (c) continue a charter which currently exists within its local government district.

Option (c) above is the only option which allows for the retention of Belfast's city status post-2015. As such, the Department have indicated that the Regulations have been drafted so as to continue the existing charter of Belfast (and other cities where city status is linked to a charter) without the new council being required to take any action.

This is similar to the approach taken during the last period of local government reform in the 1970s where the continuation of city status was automatically provided for in legislation (in relation to Northern Ireland's two cities at that time, Belfast and Derry/Londonderry). The Department have indicated that this course of action would maintain the current situation and avoid the potential loss of Belfast's city status (there has been an occurrence of this in England).

### **2.2 Honorary Freemen**

The roll of honorary freemen attached to the existing Belfast City Council Charter will be automatically continued into the new Belfast City Council – therefore all persons admitted to the freedom of the borough will remain on the roll post April 2015. Regulation 5 will provide for the admittance of persons to the freedom of the borough. This is a direct replacement of the provisions of the Local Government (Modification of Borough Charters) Order (NI) 1973 and there are no proposed changes to the current process.

### **2.3 Council Name**

The issue of council names is not dealt with in the proposed regulations as legislative provision to allow councils to make decisions on their names is already in place. Members are advised however that the continuation of the existing County Borough (and City) status as proposed in the Regulations would result in the name of the Council automatically reverting back to 'Belfast City Council' on the 1 April 2015.

Section 1 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 provides for the name of a new council to be the name of its district (as set out in the Local Government (Boundaries) Order (NI) 2012) – which in the Councils case is ‘Belfast’.

Section 2 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, provides that where a district has borough or city status, the name of the council will automatically change to the name of its district followed by the words ‘Borough Council’ or ‘City Council’. The official name of the new Council on 1 April 2015 will therefore automatically become ‘Belfast City Council’.

This approach is in agreement with the decision of Members at the Transition Committee on 18 August 2014, when Members agreed ‘to the proposed approach to retain the current corporate identity colours and logo and to seek to revert to the name of Belfast City Council’. This decision was ratified by the Full Council at its meeting in September.

### 3.0 Draft Council Response

3.1 The Consultation document seeks answers to six questions. Questions 1, 3 and 5 are not applicable to Belfast given the proposal to automatically continue the existing County Borough charter and city status. The proposed Council response to each of the remaining questions is outlined below for Committee approval.

- **QUESTION 1 - *Do you agree that new Councils should be able to choose to continue an existing borough charter in respect of the new local government district (N.B. section 2 of the 1972 Act, which is already in place and is not part of the Regulations, allows any new council to petition the Secretary of State for the grant of a new borough charter)?***  
N/A
- **QUESTION 2 - *Do you agree that the roll of honorary freemen attached to outgoing charters should be able to be preserved within a new or continuing charter?*** Yes
- **QUESTION 3 - *Do you agree that 1 April 2016 is an appropriate deadline by which a council should ensure that a new or existing charter is in place, if it wishes to preserve the roll of honorary freemen attached to outgoing charters? If not, what do you think would be an appropriate deadline?*** N/A
- **QUESTION 4 - *Do you agree that the Regulations should make provision for existing charters which are linked to city status to be continued without the new council having to take any action?*** Yes
- **QUESTION 5 - *Do you agree that all existing charters which are not subject to continuation under the provisions of the Regulations should be annulled on 1 April 2016? If not, what do you think would be an appropriate deadline?*** N/A
- **QUESTION 6 - *Do you have any comments in relation to the proposed replacement of provisions in relation to the***

*designation of aldermen and admittance to the freedom of the borough? No*

**4.0 Resource Implications**

4.1 None

**5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

5.1 None

**6.0 Call-in**

6.1 This decision is subject to call-in.

**6.0 Recommendations**

6.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Note the contents of the report including the draft consultation document as set out; and
- (ii) Consider and approve the attached Shadow Council consultation response at Paragraph 3.1 subject to any amendments proposed by the Committee and subsequently by Shadow Council on 8 December 2014.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and endorsed the associated consultation response, a copy of which was published on the Council’s website.

**Council Constitution**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Background Information**

1.1 Section 2(1) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 places a duty on Councils to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution. The Act places a statutory duty on councils to include within the constitution:

- a) a copy of the Council’s Standing Orders
- b) a copy of the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors
- c) such information as the Department may direct
- d) such other information (if any) as the Council considers appropriate

With regards to paragraph (c) above, the Department (DoE) is now consulting with councils on the specific information which the Department will by Direction require each council to include within their constitution. In addition, the Department has also provided a draft Constitution Framework which can

be used as a guide by councils when drafting their own bespoke constitution.

A final copy of the Constitution must be available on the Council's website by 30th April 2015. However to ensure that all the component parts are in place to support the development of new governance arrangements it is intended that the final Constitution for Belfast will be submitted to the Council AGM in March for approval.

## **2.0 Consultation on Direction and Draft Framework Constitution**

The DoE has now issued for consultation, a document containing:

- (i) A Draft 'Council Constitution Direction'
- (ii) A Draft Framework Constitution

Responses to the consultation are required by 19th December after which time a final Direction and Framework are likely to be issued. However given the tight timeframes involved, and the likelihood that the final versions of each document will not differ vastly from the draft versions, work to compile the Constitution is now beginning.

## **3.0 Draft Council Constitution Direction**

**3.1** Section 2(1)(c) of the Act requires Councils to incorporate into their Constitutions any information required by the Department in the form of a Direction. The draft Direction issued for consultation outlines requirements under six separate sections:

1) The Council – requirements under this section include an obligation to incorporate within the Constitution details of: the purpose of the document; the composition of the Council; a 'scheme of ordinary elections' for Members; residents' rights and responsibilities; roles and functions of the Lord Mayor; the Scheme of Allowances for Members; rules and procedures for the management of financial, contractual and legal affairs and; rules and procedures for review of the Constitution.

There does not appear to be anything controversial or unusual in this section. Details of arrangements for the ongoing review and revision of the Council's Constitution will be developed in order that we fulfil our requirement to include the information.

2) Functions – requirements under this section include: details of the roles, membership and function of Committees and rules governing the conduct and proceedings of Committee meetings; description of

functions discharged by identified officers and; descriptions of joint arrangements and their rules and terms.

A copy of the Council's Standing Orders together with a refreshed Scheme of Delegation will fulfil the requirement of this part of the Direction. It would appear that the description of Joint Arrangements made with other Councils should be included at the point at which such arrangements are made (such arrangements may include for example a joint committee in relation to Arc 21).

3) Officers – Roles of officers in supporting the Council; roles and functions of the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer; details of the management structure; rules on recruitment, appointment, dismissal and disciplinary action for officers and; the officer Code of Conduct and protocol for relationships with Members are all included here.

Requirements under this section will largely fall to HR with possible input from Democratic Services.

4) Meetings and Information – requirements under this section are for details on arrangements for access by Councillors, the public and Officers to meetings of the Council and its Committees and for access to information about the decisions of those Committees and Council.

A copy of the Council's Standing Orders will fulfil the requirements of this section in respect of Members and the public. Officer access to meetings may need to be articulated separately within Staff protocol procedures. Officer access to information about Committee and Council decisions is likely to be fulfilled by the provision of the Modern.gov system.

5) Executive – this section is relevant only to those Councils planning an executive form of governance and we therefore can exclude it from our Constitution.

3.2 It appears that the required information specified in the Departmental Direction will be readily available and officers have no concerns about the ability of the Council to comply with the Direction.

#### 4.0 Draft Constitution Framework

4.1 The Draft Framework, on which the DoE is also consulting, proposes an outline format which each Council is invited to follow when drafting their own bespoke Constitution. It contains all of the requirements of both the 2014 Act and the Departmental Direction, together with suggested additional content.



4.2 There is therefore discretion for each council to amend the draft Framework provided their Constitutions contain, as a minimum, all of the elements listed in the 2014 Act and the Departmental Direction.

5.0 Next Steps

5.1 Given the need to produce a Constitution for the Council in a timely way it is suggested that we develop a Constitution in line with the Draft Constitution Direction with an understanding that it may require some amendment should the final Departmental Direction differ from the draft.

5.2 The development of the Constitution involves a number of individual components which will each be brought for Committee approval over the next few months during which time officers will continue to engage with Members.

6.0 Response to the Consultation

6.1 It is recommended that the Council submit a letter of response indicating general satisfaction with both the Direction and the Framework issued by the Department.

7.0 Resource Implications

7.1 None

8.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

8.1 None

9.0 Call in

9.1 This report is subject to call in.

10.0 Recommendations

10.1 It is recommended that Members:

- Note the Council's obligations to develop a Constitution
- Agree steps outlined as summarise in paragraph 5
- Agree the response to the DoE as set out hereunder."

Council Response

*"The Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Consultation on Executive Arrangements and the draft Council Constitution Framework.*

*The Council has reviewed the various documents provided in the consultation paper and are content with the draft guidance on the operation of Executive Arrangements; and, with both the proposed Departmental Direction on the Council Constitution and the draft Constitution Framework.*

*The Council welcomes the provision of the draft Constitution Framework but would also note that each council will be free to develop its bespoke constitution as it sees fit, provided that the final document is in compliance with both the requirements of the 2014 Act and the final Departmental Direction.*

*This response is subject to approval by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 8 December 2014.”*

The Committee adopted the recommendations and endorsed the associated response.

### **Overview of the Governance Process**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Background**

**1.1 As Members will be aware, the initial one year ‘shadow period’ of the new Council will come to an end on 31 March 2015 with the new Council assuming full powers and responsibilities from 1 April 2015 onwards.**

**1.2 It will therefore be necessary for the new Council to agree upon a preferred set of governance arrangements (including a suitable form of governance and a new committee structure) for the four year term beginning in April 2015 and ending with the local government elections in May 2019. In order for this to be operational by 1 April Members will need to decide on the following:**

- the committee structure (including the number, size and role of committees);
- the method for filling positions of responsibility;
- the method for appointing Councillors to committees;
- the remuneration of Councillors (including the allocation of Special Responsibility Allowances);
- the Council’s Standing Orders and;
- A Council Constitution.

**1.3 At its meeting on 26th September the Committee agreed that officers should begin, as a first step, to develop options on new political management arrangements based on a traditional committee system, for discussions with party groups.**

**1.4 This report sets out initial recommendations relating to new committee structures taking account of the feedback from**

the party group briefings held in November and the work which has commenced with Members to develop the future strategic direction of the organisation and its organisational design

**2.0 Context**

**2.1 Belfast's Strategic Direction**

**2.2 We have begun Member, Chief Officer and other stakeholder engagement to help establish a strategic direction for the Council, and already a number of general recommendations on the way forward have emerged.**

**2.3 Much of the work carried out to date has revealed that the organisation of the future will need to be more outward facing. Members are keen for the Council to operate at a city-wide and neighbourhood level with opportunities to deliver services appropriately within neighbourhoods while working in a coherent way with other agencies in the city. Ultimately this would involve more efficient use of both resources and ratepayers' money.**

**2.4 In addition, as the planning and future regeneration authority for the city, and with the new convening power of Community Planning, the Council and elected Members will play a more strategic leadership role within the city within a more outward facing organisation, working in partnership to deliver against identified city outcomes.**

**2.5 Developing strategic relationships with key stakeholders at a city, thematic and area-level will be the cornerstone of the Council's approach to community and strategic planning and will be a key lever to stimulating continued investment and supporting the social, economic, environmental and physical renewal of the city and its neighbourhoods.**

**2.6 Agreed governance arrangements for 2015 forward will therefore need to reflect the new organisation that Belfast City Council will become. Any model must be considered in the context of the extended city boundary and reflect the additional responsibilities that the Council will acquire.**

**3.0 Committee Structure**

**3.1 Given the Council's ambitions emerging as part of the Belfast Agenda, and the current and new functions and powers that the Council will be responsible for, Members have agreed that any new arrangements will have to include the following decision making tiers;**

- Strategic;
- City wide / thematic;

- Operational;
- Regulatory;
- Area / Neighbourhood and;
- External / Partnerships.

Taking this into account a traditional committee system with the following five standing committees were presented at the party group briefings.

- Strategic Policy and Resources
- Place and Growth
- People and Communities
- Planning Committee
- Licensing Committee

#### **4.0 Role of the new Committees**

##### **4.1 Strategic Policy and Resources**

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would be responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Council through the development of its corporate plan and other key corporate strategies and policies. It would also ensure effective use of resources and value for money for ratepayers, and oversee the Council's relationship with a number of key agencies and partners.

##### **4.2 Place and Growth Committee**

The Place and Growth Committee would be responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects directed to the regeneration and growth of the city in the context of the outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategies.

##### **4.3 People and Communities Committee**

The People and Communities Committee would be responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects aimed at improving life at a local level in the context of the outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategies.

##### **4.4 Planning Committee**

The Planning Committee shall be responsible for the formulation of the local development plan creating a clear vision of how the council area should look in the future by establishing what type and scale of development should be encouraged and where it should be located within the council area. The Planning Committee shall be responsible for all the Council's planning functions, excepting those

matters which are expressly delegated to officers or reserved to full Council.

**4.5 Licensing Committee**

The Licensing Committee shall be responsible for the consideration of all matters pertaining to policy and legislation in relation to licensing issues.

**5.0 Overview, Scrutiny and Performance Management**

**5.1** As part of the party group briefings some Members raised the need for scrutiny in the new committee structures. Under the Local Government Act Councils opting for Executive/Cabinet arrangements as their permitted form of governance (Part 6, 27(1)), are required to establish one or more overview and scrutiny committees with power to review or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken under executive arrangements. They, therefore, provide part of the system of checks and balances given that not all decisions will be referred to full council. Although this arrangement will not apply in the traditional committee model that Belfast is proposing all decisions made by the Council will be subject to ratification by full Council.

**5.2** Members will be aware that, also under the Act, Councils will, from 2015, have a general duty of performance improvement imposed upon them (Part 12). This will require putting in place arrangements for delivering improvement objectives that are relevant to the Council and to local communities while making best use of resources and evaluating the impact of our actions on a continuous basis.

**5.3** The proposed Committee structure set out above incorporates an 'outcomes and performance' function for each of the Standing Committees to ensure that this statutory obligation is met. The Committees will do this by monitoring and overseeing the various plans that they are responsible for delivering. At the strategic level this will include monitoring of the implementation of both the Community and Corporate Plans, in terms of the progress of activities and performance indicators, as well as overseeing the work of the new Leisure Trust, for example. At the operational level the Committees will monitor service delivery in the context of thematic outcomes and how well, and how efficiently, the organisation's objectives are being supported by our services. The operational committees will also have a role in overseeing how the needs of individual areas are being met as we begin to adapt and tailor services to address need. Further details on the performance role of the committees will be developed in line with the terms of reference for each committee.

5.4 In addition, in undertaking the community planning function, a mechanism will be put in place for agreeing the joint city priorities across agencies enabling elected representatives to both support agencies in meeting these agreements, but also challenge them when agreed actions are not implemented.

#### 6.0 Audit Panel

6.1 Within our overall consultation process on governance, a Member workshop was held to review the possible role of an Audit Panel in the new Council. At the workshop, Members identified a continuing need for the Panel and made the following recommendations:

- That it be known as the Audit and Risk Panel;
- That it should meet at least four times per year;
- That it should remain a Panel, rather than a Committee;
- That the Panel should consist of one Member from each of the Political Party Groupings on the Council (up to six Members);
- To continue with at least one independent Member on the panel;
- That, to raise the profile of the Panel, it will report quarterly to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with a specific report on the key issues arising at the Panel's last meeting and;
- That audit issues requiring the attention of one of the new committees should be reported initially to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with a recommendation that they also be referred to the relevant Committee

#### 7.0 Area decision making

7.1 Members are already involved in area working groups identifying local needs and priorities. In the new Council, governance structures will have to support the development of local areas plans, work with the operational delivery strand to agree services that might be specifically targeted in certain areas, and ensure that relevant thematic outcomes at city wide level are targeting local need.

7.2 As the lead body for community planning we want to encourage our partners to consider community planning as a way to articulate outcomes and priorities at the city level but also as a process that can inform, in an integrated way, decision-making, priority-setting and planning at the neighbourhood level.

7.3 To do this effectively over the coming months officers will assist Members in their area working groups to review the future role, function and structure of area working groups.

Specifically, it is proposed that the following items are discussed:

- Consideration of future geographic models of Council governance and what Council could fruitfully plan for on an area, as opposed to a city-wide basis;
- And linked to this, local approach to community planning and regeneration, including engagement at a local level;
- On-going work with LIF;
- Development of the Council's physical programme at a local level;
- Leisure Transformation Programme at a local level and;
- Development of new terms of reference for the area working groups, effective from April 2015.

#### **8.0 Proposed Governance Structure**

8.1 Taking into account the levels of decision making and proposals set out above it is recommended that Belfast City Council adopts a traditional committee system and agrees in principle with five main standing committees, supported by area working groups. The two regulatory Committees; Planning and Licensing, will have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council. The three remaining committees, SP&R, Place and Growth, People and Communities will have both internal and external roles and the recommendations from these committees will be referred to full Council for ratification. More detailed proposals on the role and remit of each committee including the review of the names of the Committees will be worked up for further consideration.

#### **9.0 Size of Committees**

9.1 There is no limit to the size of committees in a traditional committee model, and it is therefore up to individual Councils to determine this. In order to ensure inclusivity, across the Council and within parties, while remaining mindful of Members' time commitments, the optimum committee size to date has been 20 Members. This option allows all Members of the Council to sit on at least one committee.

9.2 Through the party group briefings there was general consensus that Council should retain 20 Members on each committee with the exception of the Planning Committee, where it was recognised that, given the quasi-judicial nature of planning, and the associated statutory requirements placed upon the Council, that this committee will require specific governance arrangements to be put in place in relation to, for example, the optimum size of a planning

committee, code of conduct around planning, scheme of delegation etc. It was therefore agreed that the Planning Committee should be smaller and made up of 10 or 14 members.

**10.0 Appointment of Councillors to Committees**

**10.1** The appointment of Councillors to committees must be undertaken at the AGM of the Council in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act. Standing committees may be supported by working groups as required. Members will be aware that, for the operation of committees during the Shadow Period, the new Council selected the default 'Quota Greatest Remainder' method of appointing councillors to committees.

**10.2** Consultation with the party groups during November indicated that this will continue to be the case for the new council.

**11.0 Positions of Responsibility**

**11.1** The new Council will be required to decide upon a method for filling positions of responsibility and must then proceed to allocate each position over the full four year term (April 2015 to May 2019) at the AGM in March 2015 in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Local Government Act. The number of positions of responsibility will be dependent on the number of committees and also the number of Council representatives on external bodies.

**11.2** The Act provides three possible methods for filling positions of responsibility - d'Hondt, Sainte Lague, and the Single Transferable Vote. The Council currently uses the d'Hondt method however a notice of motion was referred to the committee to *give due consideration to adopting the Sainte Laguë method*. This was discussed at party groups with the majority of parties still recommending d'Hondt. The d'Hondt method is the default method unless a qualified majority of Members decide to select one of the other options.

**11.3** For the forthcoming four year term, the positions of responsibility will be extended to include external representatives of the Council. It is not possible to calculate the total number of external positions of responsibility until the DOE have completed an exercise to identify those outside bodies which will require councillor representation.

**12.0 Next Steps**

**12.1** Remuneration and Special Responsibility Allowances



12.1.1 The new Council will be required to agree upon the breakdown of the £108,000 Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) between Members of the Council during the first year (2015/2016). The Minister for the Environment has already agreed the scheme of allowances payable to Members of the new Councils in April 2015 (basic allowance, travel and subsistence, caring or dependent carer's allowance, etc) so no decision is required on that aspect of Member's remuneration.

12.1.2 The division of the Special Responsibility Allowance is based upon the positions held by individual Members either as Chair and Deputy Chair of Committees or as Officers within the Political Parties. The Shadow Council agreed upon a SRA allocation during the shadow period which was based on the same general principles that have been used to determine SRA allowance in the past.

12.1.3 These same principles were discussed with Members during party briefings in order to determine a suitable allocation of SRA during the first year of the new Council (2015/2016). Following feedback from the party groups the allocation model will be brought to committee for approval.

## 12.2 A New Council Constitution

12.2.1 The new Council will be required to publish a Council Constitution by the 30th April 2015. The key supporting governance related frameworks required by the date of the AGM will be (i) agreed Standing Orders which will set out how the new Council and associated Committees will operate; and (ii) a Scheme of Delegation outlining the delegated authority from Council to Committee and from Committee to Officers

12.2.2 Members shall note that the DoE has now issued a model constitution for consultation and a formal response is the subject to a separate report at this committee.

12.2.3 A draft standing orders document, based on both the regulations emerging from the DoE and the current Belfast City Council arrangements, will be issued to party groups for consultation in December with a view to bringing a revised set of standing orders for consideration by committee in January 2015.

12.2.4 Work to agree a new Scheme of Delegation to officers, as well as a Scheme of Delegation to the Planning Committee, is also ongoing and will be reported to Committee in due course.

## 12.3 External Relations – the Council's role

12.3.1 Fundamental to the work of all elements of the new governance structure will be the Council's connectivity to external partners at all levels in terms of developing and ensuring successful delivery of city and area plans. The internal governance structures will therefore need to input and relate to city wide frameworks, regional structures and local area partnerships.

12.3.2 As a result the standing committees (i.e. excluding the Regulatory Committees) will have a dual role relating to each of their areas of responsibility; the internal delivery of functions and services within each committees' remit and the external scrutiny of the relevant partnerships and outcomes agreed for the city and its neighbourhoods through the Belfast Plan and the contribution to key strategic documents including the Programme Government.

12.3.3 This role will evolve as priorities and outcomes are developed and as the new city wide governance structures are developed.

#### 12.4 Working Groups

12.4.1 In moving forward and, given both the expanded remit of Members and the associated capacity and resource pressures that this creates, Members will need to explore the future role and status of Member Working Groups.

12.4.2 At this time there is a recommendation to retain the Budget Panel, possibly comprising the Chairs of the three main committees. In addition some form of working group to oversee Good Relations, such as the Good Relations Partnership Panel, will be required. A review of working groups is underway and proposals shall be brought back to committee in the New Year.

#### 12.5 Support to Members and Party Groupings

12.5.1 The additional functions and responsibilities of the new Council will place a much greater demand on Members' time and will impact on their capacity to serve their constituents. Initial options for Members around the potential provision of additional political / policy assistance to Party Groups were discussed with the parties and, following feedback on these, further proposals will be developed.

#### 13.0 Resource Implications

13.1 None

#### 14.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

14.1 None

**15.0 Call in**

**15.1 This report is subject to call in.**

**16.0 Recommendations**

**16.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- **Agree, in principle, the adoption of five standing committees; Strategic Policy and Resources, Place and Growth, People and Communities, Planning and Licensing'**
- **Agree that four committees; Strategic Policy and Resources, Place and Growth, People and Communities and Licensing, shall each comprise 20 Members**
- **Decide if the Planning committee should have 10 or 14 members**
- **Agree the establishment of an Audit and Risk Panel**
- **Agree the Quota Greatest Remainder method of appointing councillors to committees**
- **Agree D'Hondt as the method for selecting positions of responsibility**
- **Note and agree next steps in respect of ongoing work on area decision making, working groups, the development of the Council's Constitution and support to party groups."**

After discussion, during which it was agreed that the Planning Committee would consist of 14 Members and it was noted that a report would be submitted for consideration in due course regarding the feasibility of those Members appointing substitutes to deputise in their absence, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Department of the Environment - Partnership Panel**

The Committee was advised that the Minister for the Environment, Mr. Mark H. Durkan, MLA, had written to the Council to confirm his intention to establish a Partnership Panel, which would act as a formal liaison body between the Northern Ireland Executive and Local Government.

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Panel would comprise of all of the Executive Ministers and that Local Government representation would include a nominated representative from each of the eleven councils, together with five additional Elected Members to be nominated, subject to approval, by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association. She reminded the Committee that the Shadow Council, at its meeting on 11th June, had agreed to nominate Councillor Paula Bradshaw as its representative on the Partnership Panel.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the Minister's letter and noted further that Councillor Bradshaw would be the Council's representative on the Partnership Panel. In addition, the Committee agreed that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) would nominate the additional five elected

representatives to the Partnership Panel, subject to a review being undertaken subsequent to the establishment of the new councils.

### **Recording of Committee Meetings**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1        Relevant Background Information**

**1.1        The Shadow Council, at its meeting in October, referred the undernoted Notice of Motion, proposed by Councillor Long, to the Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.**

**1.2        *‘In order to increase openness and transparency, so far as is reasonably practicable, this Council will make an audio and potentially video recording of so much of any Committee meeting of the Council as is open to the public and the recordings will be made available to the public at the City Hall and published on the Council’s website.’***

**2        Key Issues**

**2.1        Background**

**2.1.1      The existing Belfast City Council decided in 2011 to tender for the provision of a webcasting service to allow for the live webcasting of meetings of the full Council.**

**2.1.2      The Council received only one expression of interest, from Public-I, for the provision of the service. The contract was agreed for the provision of up to 60 hours of broadcasting per year at a monthly cost of £1,500.**

**2.1.3      The Committee meetings of the existing Council are not held in the Council Chamber but rather are held in private session in the Committee Room.**

**2.2        Venue for Committee Meetings from April 2015**

**2.2.1      The first decision that the Committee is required to take is regarding the venue in which Committee meetings should take place.**

**2.2.2      As all Committee meetings in the new Council will be required to be open to the public to attend, consideration as to the appropriateness of the meeting venue needs careful consideration. Essentially, the options are to continue to hold Committee meetings in the Committee Room and the full Council meeting in the Council Chamber or to hold all meetings in the Council Chamber.**

**2.2.3      There are advantages and disadvantages to both options. The advantages of holding all meetings in the Council**

Chamber are that the attendance of the public would be more easily managed with the public attending in the public gallery and more space would be available in that venue for public attendance. If the Committee decides that it wishes to provide for the webcasting of future Committee meetings then the equipment for that is already in place in the Council Chamber.

- 2.2.4 The disadvantages are that the Council Chamber is not set up to allow for the efficient transaction of business for a Committee. There is not any area in the Chamber which would allow for the necessary interaction between Members and Officers and the seating arrangements are such that parties are separated across the Chamber which could lead to a more difficult situation in which to come to agreement on the many issues discussed at Committee meetings.

2.3 Costs for Webcasting Committee meetings

- 2.3.1 If the existing contract with Public-I were to be extended on the same terms as the existing contract to cover 5 Committee meetings each month (with the exception of the recess month of July) then the number of total hours contracted for would need to be increased and the estimated additional monthly cost of doing so is estimated at £525 (£6,300 per annum). There would also be some additional staffing costs for a webcast operator and engineer to be present during such meetings, which are normally held in part outside normal contracted hours.

- 2.3.2 The cost of providing webcasting facilities in the Committee Room is estimated at an annual cost of £20,000 - £25,000 as this would require the installation of cameras and the computer equipment to allow for the webcasting to take place. It is unlikely that the Committee Room would be large enough to allow for the installation of a dedicated webcasting station whilst also setting aside an area for the members of the public to attend and for those reasons this option is not considered to be feasible.

2.4 Audio Recording in Committee Rooms

- 2.4.1 An estimate has been received for the provision of equipment in the Committee Rooms to allow for the audio recording of Committee meetings on media which would allow for the recordings to be made available after the meeting on the Council's website.

- 2.4.2 The estimated initial cost of the provision of this equipment is £500 per room (including set up costs). If we were to provide it in only the main Committee Room (Lavery Room) then the annual running costs would be £50. If we were to

extend the provision to the Conor Room also then this cost would double to £100.

- 2.4.3 The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires the Council to provide for the audio recording of full Council meetings and this requirement is met under our current policy of webcasting the Council meetings. This requirement is not extended to Committee meetings and the Council is under no obligation to record the proceedings of Committees in any way other than through the official minute record.

## 2.5 Venue for Planning Committee Meetings

- 2.5.1 Some additional consideration will require to be given as to the venue for meetings of the Planning Committee from April 2015 when the new Council assumes full planning powers. Concern has been expressed by the Senior Planning officials that neither the Committee Rooms nor the Council Chamber would be an ideal location for such meetings to be held, particularly when the Committee is considering applications for major planning applications where there would be detailed plans and architect's drawings to be displayed and where there might be significant public interest in attending. The LCD screens in the Committee Rooms are not of sufficient size to properly display detailed plans.

- 2.5.2 Officers are currently investigating this matter in detail and a separate report on options will be presented to the Shadow Planning Committee in due course.

## 3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 The cost of upgrading the webcasting service to allow for the broadcasting and archiving of the Committees' meetings is estimated at £6,300 per annum plus staff costs.

- 3.2 The estimated cost of providing audio recording equipment in the Committee Room(s) is £500 for purchase and set up plus £50 per room annually for running costs.

- 3.3 No specific budget has been set aside for these costs but, should the Committee decide to proceed with either option, the additional costs could be met from within Departmental budgets.

## 4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 4.1 None associated with this report.

## 5 Call In

- 5.1 This decision is subject to call-in.

## 6 Recommendations

**6.1 The Committee is asked:**

- 1. To decide upon the venue for meetings of the several Committees of the new Council from April, 2015 – either the Council Chamber or the Committee Room.**
- 2. If the decision is to move all the meetings to the Council Chamber, then the Committee is asked to decide if it wishes to webcast the proceedings of the Committee meetings.**
- 3. If the decision is to continue to hold meetings in the Committee Room, then the Committee is asked to decide if it wishes to provide for the audio recording of proceedings.”**

Councillor Long, who had proposed the original motion, welcomed the contents of the report. However, other Members indicated that the Council would need to explore further the full implications of recording meetings.

**Proposal**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Robinson,  
Seconded by Councillor Rodgers,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the report to enable further information to be obtained.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Long,  
Seconded by Councillor McNamee,

That the Committee agrees, in principle, to audio record and make available on the Council's website, recordings of those parts of Committee meetings which are open to the public and that such meetings would take place in either the Lavery Room or Conor Room, subject to a further report being submitted for consideration which would outline, in full, the cost implications to the new Council and which would clarify a range of other issues.

On a vote by show of hands three Members voted for the amendment and fourteen Members against and it was accordingly declared lost.

The Committee therefore adopted the proposal in the name of Councillor Robinson and seconded by Councillor Rodgers as set out. It was noted that the Town Solicitor would brief Members in this regard as part of the December party briefings.

**Motion - Gender Inequality**

(Councillor O' Hara attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that the Shadow Council, at its meeting on 4th November, had referred the following Motion, which had been proposed by Councillor O'Hara and seconded by Councillor J. A. Corr, to it for further consideration:

**“Belfast District Council recognises that gender inequality is not simply an issue for women, but equally an issue for men. In recognition of this, the Council agrees to endorse the United Nation’s Women’s solidarity campaign ‘He for She’ and to put this campaign into action in our policy- making.**

**The Council commends Belfast City Council for the great work that it has carried out to promote gender equality through the Women’s Steering Group and commits itself to pushing this agenda further by opening up membership of the Group to include senior male officers and Members of Council. The Council recognises the positive contribution they could make as advocates and stakeholders to fully achieve gender equality within our organisation.”**

Councillor O'Hara outlined the principal aspects of her motion and gave an overview of the “He for She” initiative.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and noted further that a report in the matter would be submitted in due course.

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

#### **Rates Convergence**

The Committee considered the following report:

##### **“1.0 Background Information**

**1.1 This report provides summary of the District Rates Convergence Scheme announced by the Finance Minister, Simon Hamilton MLA on the 20 November 2014. Rates Convergence Impact on the New Boundary Area**

**1.2 Domestic and non-domestic rate bills are made up of two parts.**

- The District Rate, which is set by the Council and represents 44% of the rates bill.**
- The Regional Rate, which is set by the Executive and represents 56% of the rates bill.**

**1.3 Table 1 below illustrates the effect of rates convergence on a domestic rate payer with a property capital value of £150,000 transferring into the new Belfast area from Castlereagh and Lisburn, based on 2014/15 district and regional rates and prior to the application of any rates convergence relief.**

**Domestic Property: Capital value £150,000**

	<b>Pre Convergence</b>	<b>Post Convergence</b>
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	Regional Rate	District Rate	Total	Regional Rate	District Rate	Total
Belfast	£597.90	£464.10	<b>£1,062.00</b>	£597.90	£464.10	<b>£1,062.00</b>
Castlereagh	£597.90	£326.40	<b>£924.30</b>	£597.90	£464.10	<b>£1,062.00</b>
Lisburn	£597.90	£400.35	<b>£998.25</b>	£597.90	£464.10	<b>£1,062.00</b>

**Castlereagh Increase: £137.70 (14.90%)**

**Lisburn Increase: £63.75 (6.39%)**

- 1.3 Table 2 below illustrates the effect of rates convergence on a non domestic rate payer with an NAV of £15,000 transferring into the new Belfast area from Castlereagh and Lisburn, based on 2014/15 district and regional rates and prior to the application of rates convergence relief or any other applicable relief.

**Non-Domestic Property: NAV £15,000**

	Pre Convergence			Post Convergence		
	Regional Rate	District Rate	Total	Regional Rate	District Rate	Total
Belfast	£5,086.50	£4,053.54	<b>£9,140.04</b>	£5,086.50	£4,053.54	<b>£9,140.04</b>
Castlereagh	£5,086.50	£2,714.09	<b>£7,800.59</b>	£5,086.50	£4,053.54	<b>£9,140.04</b>
Lisburn	£5,086.50	£3,055.50	<b>£8,142.00</b>	£5,086.50	£4,053.54	<b>£9,140.04</b>

**Castlereagh Increase: £1,339.45 (17.17%)**

**Lisburn Increase: £998.04 (12.26%)**

- 1.4 The Executive has set aside £30m to fund a transitional relief scheme for those ratepayers who incur an increase in the district rate element of their rate bill as a result of local government reform. The transitional relief will be applied directly to the rates bill before any other existing reliefs are applied.
- 1.5 In August 2014, the Committee considered a consultation document issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel outlining potential options for a transitional relief scheme and the Council submitted its views a preferred option for the scheme.
- 1.6 The scheme announced by the Finance Minister on the 20 November 2014 matches the preferred option of the council and the detail of this is outlined below.

**2.0 Key Issues**

- 2.1 The scheme will come into effect on 1 April 2015 to coincide with the creation of the new larger councils. The scheme is an outworking of the Executive's decision to provide up to £30 million of support for the effects of District Rate Convergence on ratepayers (i.e. the result of district councils coming together or boundary changes). The subsidy will be applied

automatically by the Land and property Service (LPS) and therefore ratepayers do not need to claim this support.

2.3 The scheme consists of phased relief on the increase over a four year period as follows:

- Year 1: 80% Relief
- Year 2: 60% Relief
- Year 3: 40% Relief
- Year 4: 20% Relief

2.4 The Department of the Finance and Personnel have advised that the next stage is the calculation of the various District Rate Discounts that will be applied to rate bills in each of the affected areas over the life of the scheme, to implement the policy. These will be published by DFP in the coming weeks.

### 3.0 Resource Implications

3.1 The Department of Finance and Personnel estimate that the cost of the scheme comes very close to the maximum funding of £30m made available by the Executive.

3.2 As a result the Department will be monitoring actual spend carefully for the mid-term review which is planned in advance of the 2017/18 rating year, to establish if any adjustment to the scheme will be required in the latter years. The Department is already required to do this under statute in line with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

### 4.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality and good relations implications associated with the report.

### 5.0 Recommendation

**Members are asked to note the report.”**

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that further information would be required for those ratepayers who would be transferring from the Lisburn and Castlereagh councils to the Belfast District Council as soon as all of the relevant financial information had become available.

## Non Domestic Rates - Revaluation

The Committee considered the following report:

### “1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 This report provides an update for the Committee on the Non Domestic Property Revaluation referred to as ‘Reval 2015 NI’.

Reval 2015 NI is the process by which Land & Property Services (LPS) re-valued all non-domestic properties in Northern Ireland for rating purposes. Currently business rates are based on 2001 values, however following the revaluation, the rateable value of all non-domestic properties will be in line with property values as at 1 April 2013.

Belfast City Council currently receives 66% of its rates income from non domestic properties. The rateable values of non domestic properties in the City are used to calculate the share of the rates burden which each non domestic property is liable for, although this will also be affected by the level of rates exemption and any rates relief allowance.

The total amount of money to be raised through the rates will not change as a result of revaluation; however individual ratepayers may see an increase or decrease in their rates bills as a result of the revaluation.

## 2.0 Key Issues

### Draft Schedule of New Values

- 2.1 The draft schedule of new values was published by LPS on the 17 November 2014.
- 2.2 Rate bills based on the published Valuation List will be issued in April 2015. However ratepayers will be able to calculate their new rates bill in February 2015, when the District rate is struck by the Council and the Regional rate is struck by the Executive.

### Preliminary Outcomes of the Draft Schedule

- 2.3 Some of the overall preliminary outcomes of the revaluation by type of are highlighted below.
  - The total of Belfast NAV's increased by 4.6% as a result of the revaluation.
  - The total NAVs for Belfast Offices have reduced by 4%.
  - The total NAVs of Belfast Retail have reduced by 13%.
  - The total NAVs of Belfast Warehouses and Stores have reduced by 5%.
  - The total NAVs of Belfast Industrials have reduced by 10%.
  - The total NAVs for Supermarkets has increased by 24%.
  - The Power transmission and distribution NAV (which is calculated at NI level) has increased by 40%.
  - The Gas NAV (which is calculated at NI level) has increased by 40%.
- 2.4 It should be noted that the above changes show the net position of properties within the property category. Within each

type there can be major decreases and increases, especially depending on location of the property, which make up the overall percentage movement. For example the revaluation of Pubs in Belfast has resulted in a range of changes from a reduction of 40% to an increase of over 500%.

2.5 Some of the overall preliminary outcomes of the revaluation by location are highlighted below.

- Excluding large shops and department stores, the total NAVs for Victoria Square have reduced by 17%.
- Excluding large shops and department stores, the total NAVs for Castle Court have reduced by 45%.
- Excluding large shops department stores, the total NAVs for Donegall Place have reduced by 48%.
- The total NAVs for the Kennedy Centre have increased by 22%.
- The total NAVs for Boucher Crescent have increased 66%.

2.6 Actual rate bills for 2015/16 cannot be calculated until February 2015, when the district and regional rates are struck. However Land and Property Services have estimated that in terms of the revaluation itself, 60% of non domestic ratepayers would be better off and 70% of shops would be the same or better off. It is also clear that some non domestic ratepayers will see a significant increase in their rates bill as result of the revaluation exercise. Some of these ratepayers are based in locations transferring into the new Belfast area and they will face an increase as the result of the boundary change and a further increase arising from the revaluation.

2.7 Members will be aware that the Finance Minister has set aside £30m to fund a rates convergence scheme which will provide phased relief to those whose rate bills will be increased as a result of local government reform boundary changes.

2.8 Given the significant increase which some businesses will face as a result of the non domestic revaluation, Members may wish to write to the Finance Minister asking him to consider providing a separate relief scheme for those businesses whose face significant increases in their rate bills as a result of the non domestic revaluation.

2.9 The purpose of the publication of the draft valuation list by the Land and Property Service in November is to allow time for any major errors in the list to be addressed and to give ratepayers the opportunity to contact LPS for explanation of the revaluation and draft values prior to the final list being published in April 2015.

2.10 From the 1 April 2015, ratepayers who are not satisfied with the revaluation of their non-domestic property can take the following escalating action.

- Make an application to the District Valuer to have their NAV reviewed.
- If not resolved, then submit a subsequent appeal to the Commissioner of valuation.
- Finally if still not satisfied, then submit a subsequent appeal to the Lands Tribunal for Northern Ireland.

2.11 It should be noted that the above review and appeals process is not available until 1 April 2015.

2.12 Members are also asked to note that officers are currently analysing the new valuation list in order to identify individual businesses which will face significant increases in their rates bills. This information will be made available to Members as soon as it is ready.

### 3.0 Resource Implications

3.1 The Council received approximately 66% of its rate income from non domestic properties. The total amount of money to be raised through the rates will not change as a result of revaluation; however individual ratepayers may see an increase or decrease in their rates bills as a result of the revaluation.

### 4.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality and good relations implications associated with the report.

### 5.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:-

- Note the report on the non domestic revaluation.
- Consider whether a request should be made to the Finance Minister to ask him to consider providing a non-domestic revaluation relief scheme for those non domestic ratepayers who face significant increases arising from the non domestic revaluation.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Finance Minister requesting that he consider establishing a non-domestic revaluation rate relief scheme.

### Rates Setting - 2015/2016

The Committee considered the following report:

#### “1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the progress being made to develop the revenue estimates and to set a district rate for 2015/16.

2 **Key Issues**

- 2.1 The following paragraphs outline the key issues for each of the factors which Members are required to consider as part of the rate setting process.

**Department Estimates**

- 2.2 The key driver of growth in the revenue estimates is the impact of the boundary changes. All departments have completed first draft budgets based on service delivery plans incorporating the new areas. After a detailed challenge process approximately £9.3m of uncontrollable costs have been identified. These mainly relate to staff costs, waste management and Members' Allowances.

- 2.3 Further work is now being carried out to test the remainder of the departments' funding requests. The details of each department's estimates will be reported to the Committee in December 2014.

- 2.4 The estimates do not include the financial impact of any organisational restructuring arising from the organisational design of the new Council as these are unknown at this stage. At a later stage in the process the estimates will be realigned to reflect the new governance and organisational structure.

**Capital Programme**

- 2.5 The capital programme is used to pay for enhancements to existing Council assets or for the provision of new assets owned by the Council. The capital programme is financed through a core annual capital financing budget which is currently £10.14m.

- 2.6 A separate half year capital programme report will be presented to both Strategic Policy and Resources Committees in December 2014. This will provide an update on the capital programme, Belfast Investment Fund and Local Investment Fund together with the capital financing position associated with these streams and the impact on the 2015/16 rate setting process, including the level of non recurrent financing available and the transfer of outstanding loans from Lisburn and Castlereagh.

- 2.7 Members should note that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed in June 2013 that £2.0m from the transferring rate base should be allocated as part of the capital financing of the leisure transformation programme.

**Transferring Functions**

- 2.8 A separate report on the due diligence work being carried out at a regional level to assess the level of funding being proposed by central government to support the delivery of transferring functions is included on the Committee's agenda.
- 2.9 Officers are currently drafting a first cut of the revenue estimates for the Planning and Car Parking Functions and they are also assessing the impact of the transfer of community planning powers. This will enable any funding gaps to be identified.
- 2.10 Members are asked to note that there are a number of key issues with the financing of the transferring functions. These include:
1. It is likely that the final financial settlement with central government including the potential impact of government cut backs will not be known until the middle of January 2015. This gives very little time for officers and Members to address any funding gaps.
  2. There is uncertainty about the nature of the financial settlement with central government. It was originally agreed that level of funding at the point of transfer would be guaranteed for future years and aligned to the level of district rate set. There is now a risk that the level of funding will be agreed on an annual basis which means that funding levels will not be guaranteed.

#### Rates Income

- 2.11 The first cut Estimated Penny Product (EPP) provided by Land and Property Services for the new rate base together with supporting schedules of estimated income and losses have been reviewed by Finance Officers with the support of the Institute of Revenues Rating and valuation (IRRV).
- 2.12 The first cut EPP indicates that the new rate base will deliver increase rates income of approximately rate £12.4m. It should be noted that Land and Property Services have advised that their recent work on the EPP indicates that the second draft of the EPP which is due in mid December 2014 will show a reduction in the projected rates income. The details of the revised EPP will be reported to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its December meeting.
- 2.13 Members should note that the Finance Minister has announced the details of the Rates Convergence Scheme and this is subject to a separate report. There will also be a report on the outcome of the non-domestic revaluation exercise.

#### Inflation

- 2.14 As part of the Investment Programme Members gave a commitment to keep any district rate increase at or below inflation for three years. CPI inflation currently stands at 1.2% with the latest forecast from the Bank of England indicating that this is likely to remain close to 1% over the next 12 months.

**Regional Rate**

- 2.15 The Finance Minister has advised that the regional rate will be set at the level of inflation. In 2013/14 and 2014/15 the regional rate was set at 2.7%.

**Non Recurring Costs**

- 2.16 As part of the revenue estimates process departments also submitted proposals for non recurring expenditure arising from the boundary change aspects of local government reform and other corporate priorities. These proposals excluded non-recurring costs associated with the transferring functions, as these will be subject to a separate phase of the estimates process. Table 1 below summarises these costs.

**Table 1**  
**Departmental Non Recurrent Revenue Expenditure Proposals**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Asset Related</b>	<b>£2,896,585</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>	<b>£1,000,206</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,896,791</b>

- 2.17 These comprise of costs associated with transferring assets from Castlereagh and Lisburn, leisure transformation mobilisation costs and one off repairs to existing leisure centres. This category also includes £140,000 of non recurring costs for Girdwood Creative Hub and £12,000 for new street signs.
- 2.18 Other Costs: The £1,000,206 of costs in the “Other” category includes non asset related LGR costs such as ICT licences, branding and grant support.
- 2.19 In addition to the above, there may also be the need to provide one-off funding for expenditure relating to:
- the transfer of functions from central government
  - accommodation and City Hall accommodation works
  - temporary staffing arrangements.
- 2.20 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on the 21 November 2014, agreed that approximately £3.3m of in year under spends arising from departments and the in year rates settlement, be ring fenced to fund part of the above non-recurring costs.



- 2.21 A detailed report on the proposed allocation of non-recurrent funding and expenditure will be presented to the Committee in January.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **Transfer of Functions Budgets - Due Diligence and Reconciliation**

The Committee considered the following report:

- “1 **Relevant Background Information**
- 1.1 Members will be aware that over recent months there have been ongoing discussions within the NI Executive and transferring function departments to identify and quantify the proposed resources (budgets, staff, assets and liabilities) which would be attached to the functions transferring to local government as a result of the local government reform programme.
- 1.2 It had been initially anticipated that on 1 April 2015, local government would be given operational responsibility for spatial planning, regeneration and community development, off-street car parks, additional regulatory housing functions including Houses of Multiple Occupations (HMOs) and housing unfitness, as well as an enhanced role in supporting local economic development and tourism.
- 1.3 The Minister for Social Development, Mervyn Storey MLA, recently submitted a Written Ministerial Statement to the NI Assembly confirming the deferral of the transfer of DSD’s regeneration and community development responsibilities to councils to 1 April 2016. The Statement also confirms that the regulatory housing related functions (i.e. registration of housing of multiple occupancy and the ability to issue repair and demolition notices) will remain the responsibility of the NIHE until a new transfer date is agreed. N.B - a separate report is on the Committee’s agenda.
- 1.4 The transfer of such functions, coupled with new statutory community planning powers, will further enhance the ability of councils and local elected members to respond to the needs of local communities and shape, in partnership with others, the future development of their city.
- 2 **Key Issues**
- 2.1 Members will be aware that Deloitte had previously been commissioned by the Regional Transfer of Functions Working Group to undertake a detailed due diligence review of the resources to accompany the transfer of functions from Central to Local Government as part of LGR. A Due Diligence Findings Report (May 2014) had been submitted to the Council’s Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2014.
- 2.2 Subsequently, in August 2014, the DOE submitted a further report to the Regional Transitional Operational Board (RTOB) outlining revised budget allocations for transferring functions. The report also included proposals in relation to notional cost budgets (e.g. accommodation, ICT, HR support costs) attached to the transferring functions. In some

areas, the revised budget proposals differed from the May 2014 Due Diligence Report.

- 2.3** In order to ensure that proper assurances could be provided to elected Members of the Shadow Councils on the robustness and adequacy of the proposed revised budgets, the Local Government Chief Executive's Group (comprising of the Chief Executives of the 11 new Councils) commissioned Deloitte to undertake further due diligence on the revised budget allocations proposals. The objective of the due diligence work was to critically examine the budget proposals, reconcile with previous figures presented and importantly identify any specific issues and/or areas of concern.
- 2.4** Deloitte Reconciliation Report Attached at Appendix 1 is a copy of the Deloitte Reconciliation report recently received. It should be noted that this report provides a regional overview of the resources to transfer and does not set out the proposed resource (budget, staff, asset) allocations for the 11 new councils (including Belfast). The allocation of resources to the 11 Councils will be a decision to be taken by the Minister with responsibility for each transferring functional area.
- 2.5** In reviewing the Deloitte report, there remain a number of key issues which require further engagement and negotiation with the specific transferring function departments and DFP. These include:
- **Planning Portal** - There is currently no budget identified to transfer for the operation and maintenance of the Planning Portal, as well as for any future capital replacement costs for the Portal (subject to renewal in 2019).
  - **Local Development Plans** - concerns regarding the limited budget currently proposed to transfer to each Council for the preparation of Local Development Plans (e.g. £26k per council per annum proposed to cover required technical assessments/advice including retail and sustainability assessments).
  - **Planning Legal Costs** – no budget currently proposed to transfer for potential legal costs attached to the planning process and which could be substantive (e.g. Judicial Reviews).
- 2.6** At a regional level, a letter has been issued to the DOE Minister on behalf of the Local Government Chief Executive's Group (attached at Appendix 2) picking up on a number of the key issues highlighted in the Deloitte Reconciliation Report and seeking urgent engagement with DOE, DFP and relevant transferring function departments to bottom out the concerns of local government.
- 2.7** Members should note that it is unlikely that there will be final agreement by the NI Executive on the actual overall transfer of functions budget (and subsequently the individual 11 council budget allocations) reached until early 2015. Clearly this will impact upon the Council's own budget setting processes.
- 2.8** Notwithstanding, Council officers are in intensive engagement with respective transferring function departments (including, DOE Planning, DRD, DETI and DSD) to carry out its own due diligence around the potential resources to transfer to the council. Detailed work is also underway to start to build the budget estimates for the

transferring functions which will be brought forward for Members consideration as part of the estimates process in January 2015.

**3 Resources**

- 3.1 There will clearly be both financial and HR implications emerging from the transfer of functions to the Council. Detailed due diligence work is underway in liaison with the respective transferring function departments to inform the development of the budget estimates. A detailed report will be submitted to Committee in January 2015.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 4.1 There are no equality implications contained within this report. The deferral of the transfer of regeneration and community development powers to the Council means that DSD will continue to have responsibility for the delivery of the powers up until 1 April 2016.

**5 Call-in**

- 5.1 This decision is subject to call-in

**6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the appendices attached.”

**ICT Infrastructure**

The Director of Finance and Resources was granted authority to undertake tendering exercises for the following Information and Computer Technology contracts which would assist the Council to meet its service convergence requirements as part of the implementation of Local Government Reform. The Committee agreed also to delegate authority to the Director to award the contacts at the conclusion of the tendering process.

<b>Contract Description</b>	<b>Contract Value</b>
Core and Edge network switches	£90,000
Network Cabling	£90,000
VoIP support and maintenance	£90,000
Security support & advisory services	£40,000
Internet service provision	£60,000
Two-factor authentication	£30,000

**City of Belfast Youth Orchestra**

The Committee endorsed a recommendation of Belfast City Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and agreed to make a contribution of £5,000 to the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra to enable it to undertake a tour of the United States in 2015/2016. It was noted that that expenditure would be authorised under the specialised expenditure powers which the Council possessed under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

**Human Resources**

## Organisational Development and Design

The Committee considered the following report:

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

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Update Members on work to ensure the organisation is fit for purpose for its new roles and responsibilities, in particular, the processes and timeframes for the previously agreed Peer Review and Decision Making and Accountability processes.
2. Agree to delete the Director of Parks and Leisure post from the organisation structure and release the postholder by reason of redundancy.
3. Seek Members' permission to instigate an expression of interest in VR exercise across the council with the exception of front line staff.

### **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Approach to organisation development and design  
Members previously agreed that the Local Government Association (LGA) would help with two key strands of our work to redesign the organisation (the corporate peer challenge process and an analysis of decision making and accountability (DMA)).

An update on each of these processes is set out below.

- 2.2 Corporate Peer Challenge  
The LGA corporate peer challenge involves a team of external peers who will draw on their experience of local government to provide observations and feedback on our plans and proposals for the future. The review will consider core components and areas that are fundamental to councils' future performance and improvement; exploring them will give an indication of the organisation's ability and capacity to deliver on our plans, proposals and ambitions.

- 2.3 Peer team make-up and roles  
The peer team will comprise two elected members, (still to be confirmed) and the following senior local government officers:

Nicola Yates OBE – City Director, Bristol City Council:  
Ms Yates was appointed City Director in May 2013 and was previously Chief Executive at Hull City Council between 2009-2012. Prior to that, she held the roles of Deputy Chief Executive (2008-09) at Hull and Chief Executive of North Shropshire Council (2005-08). Ms Yates' professional background is within the housing sector and she has

contributed both operationally and academically to the landscape of social housing today.

**Sarah Reed – Assistant Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council:** Ms Reed's background is in organisation development and management services. She has been Assistant Chief Executive since 2010, and prior to that she was Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance Improvement. In these roles Ms Reed has led on developing the new operating model for the council and helped to make this happen by re-designing the focus of the council as a community leadership council.

**2.4 Neil Hanratty - Director for Economic Development, City of Cardiff Council:**

Mr Hanratty has worked in the regeneration and inward investment fields for over 20 years, mainly in local government and with public private partnerships throughout the UK. He is currently responsible for Economic Development, Regeneration, Major Projects and Property at City of Cardiff. He has a strong interest in sustainable urban development and economic growth, particularly the opportunities to develop smart cities to attract sustainable inward investment.

**2.5 Dates of the peer challenge**

The peer challenge team will be onsite at Belfast City Council on 27,28,29,30 January 2015.

**Members' briefing**

Political and stakeholder buy-in is crucial to a successful peer challenge and appropriate communications with the relevant internal and external stakeholders will take place over the next couple of months.

**2.6 As the starting point for this process the LGA will brief elected members at the strategic planning workshop on 26th November 2014.**

**DMA (Decision Making Accountability)**

The DMA process will help to:

- establish the number of layers of management the organisation needs to achieve its purpose effectively
- identify decision rights that managers at different levels require to be empowered
- create an effective organisation and efficient management structure.

**2.7 The LGA will review the Chief Executive's Department and the Finance and Resources Department first and it is hoped to**

have this completed by the end of December 2014 and the whole organisation completed by April 2015 (with a view to having best practice, evidence-based options for a new structure at the time).

**2.8 Other issues/immediate actions relating to organisation development and design**

While the organisation wide restructuring programme is progressing, work is continuing on previously agreed organisation development and design priorities including:

**2.9 Planning**

The executive search exercise for Director of Planning and Place has started and the recruitment advertisement was placed in the Guardian, the Municipal Journal, the Planning Magazine with premium online listings and the local papers on 20 November 2014. Following preliminary interviews and a full-day assessment centre, the final interviews are scheduled for Thursday 19 February 2015.

A far reaching capacity building programme is in place for shadow planning committee members and a programme for non shadow planning committee Members will be delivered from January 2015. Study trips to Bristol and Cardiff are also being planned for Shadow Planning Committee members to take place by February 2015.

**Parks and Leisure**

**2.10 Given the transfer of the Leisure function in January 2015 Members agreed in principle to the deletion of the Director of Parks and Leisure post from the organisation structure.**

Should members agree to the deletion of the post of Director of Parks and Leisure and the release of the director by reason of redundancy by 31 March proposals will be brought in relation to the interim management of the remaining Parks function, pending on a more permanent structural solution.

**Voluntary Redundancy**

Members will be aware that voluntary redundancy exercises have been used in the past to achieve efficiencies and aid organisational restructuring, most recently within Leisure Services to assist with the Leisure transformation programme.

Given the ongoing work over the next few months to develop options for a new organisation model and the longer and more difficult piece of work to agree, plan and implement the new structure, elected members are asked to agree that an ongoing expression of interest (in voluntary redundancy) exercise is now instigated across the organisation, with the exception of front-line staff at this stage. While there is currently no indication whether or not there is a need to

reduce or substantially alter posts such an exercise may assist with this should it be necessary.

**3 Resource Implications**

**3.1 Costs for the work outlined are included as part of the funding allocation for capacity building.**

The release of the Director of Parks and Leisure will incur one costs of £138,181. This includes the voluntary redundancy statutory and compensation payment to the Director of Parks and Leisure and the actuarial payment to be made to NILGOSC. At this stage, there are no resource requirements for the voluntary redundancy exercise across the Council as this is an expressions of interest exercise.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Screening**

**4.1 All processes outlined will be taken forward within the context of the Council's equality and good relations frameworks.**

**5 Recommendations**

1. Note the on-going work and in particular the dates for the LGA briefing – 26th November 2014 and the Peer Review Process – 27,28,29,30 January 2015.
2. Agree to delete the Director of Parks and Leisure post from the organisation structure and release the postholder by reason of redundancy by 31 March 2014.
3. Agree to instigate an ongoing expression of interest in VR exercise across the council with the exception of front line staff at this stage.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Good Relations and Equality**

**Draft Equality Scheme**

The Committee agreed to defer, until its meeting in December, consideration of the Council's Draft Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.

**Labour Relations Agency**

The Committee was advised that Mrs. J. Minne, Director of Organisational Development, had been appointed to the Board of the Labour Relations Agency.

The Committee endorsed Mrs. Minne's appointment.

**Cross Cutting Issues**

## Tourism Strategy

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 In September 2013, the Development Committee gave approval for the development of a new tourism strategy for Belfast. The strategy was commissioned by the Council in partnership with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and has been developed through extensive consultation with partners and stakeholders.**
- 1.2 Tourism is the largest and fastest growing industry in the world today accounting for 9% of global GDP and employing 8% of the working population. In 2013 the visitor economy of Belfast was valued at £438.4m generated by approximately 9.4m visitors. On some nights during peak tourism periods there can be in excess of 4,000 temporary overnight residents in the city centre. This expenditure supports over 9,300 jobs across the city.**
- 1.3 Tourism can also help to promote a positive image of the city, support local businesses, stimulate civic pride and help to sustain services, events and facilities that are highly valued by the local community.**
- 1.4 The Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy sets out the main priorities and major activities for the city to improve tourism over the next five years. The aim of the strategy is to double tourism numbers, spend and jobs by the year 2020.**
- 1.5 The vision of the strategy is to ‘Build prosperity for our community by becoming a world leader in innovative, dynamic tourism development and marketing supported by an unrivalled desire to give all our guests unique Belfast experiences.’**
- 1.6 It is very much a strategy for the city and will help focus everyone’s efforts around the priority issues. The improvements that it suggests will be delivered in partnership with all those organisations that have an interest in increasing tourism into the city.**
- 1.7 The main improvement areas in the strategy are:**
  - Enhancing the city’s reputation by better marketing, increasing access to the city, improving the services for visitors, and improving our events and festivals offer.**
  - Strengthening the sector through quality assurance, training and developing new products and experiences for tourists.**



## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1** The international consultancy firm (Stevens and Associates) commissioned to develop the strategy has undertaken extensive consultation with approximately 120 tourism sector stakeholders as well as 70 people through workshop discussions. This was in addition to thorough desk based research, business surveys and a benchmarking exercise against other European destinations. Initial ideas were discussed with city stakeholders at the Future City Conference in June 2014.
- 2.2** The strategy contains one overarching strategic goal, namely to double the value of tourism by 2020. This will result in tourism being worth £870m per annum in five years, based upon current metrics. The strategy has taken into consideration the wider context, including alignment with the city centre regeneration strategy and investment plan. This identified the need to grow the tourism industry in the city and to invest in additional infrastructure to attract visitors to the city and to ensure that they could increase their levels of spend on facilities and activities through new product development and infrastructure investment.
- 2.3** The strategy contains a number of innovations and strategic priorities for action. These include:
- Development of an ‘Ideas Factory’ and innovative solutions: this initiative will empower the innovators in the private sector, delivering upon the ‘experiential tourism’ agenda. This is a fundamental part of the tourism strategy, as Belfast has a young and innovative creative sector who, if enabled, can develop solutions providing international standout
  - Supporting ‘a city of urban adventure’: there are clearly opportunities to develop innovative solutions to deliver the urban experiences desired by the younger markets
  - Exploring the “Beyond Peace’ agenda: Belfast is recognised worldwide as a city region that has emerged from conflict. The world wants to learn from these experiences and this can be a fundamental part of the business tourism strategy and a significant income generator
  - Developing a focused approach to business tourism: the investment in the new Waterfront development has the potential to significantly increase the volume of business tourism. This will have a positive impact on the wider sector in the city and will grow the number of bed nights, particularly mid-week

- Potential to explore the 'giving city' concept: Belfast could become the first city in the world whose tourism industry (businesses and visitors) collaborate in a unique, collective social responsibility initiative to raise money to invest in community peace-related projects at home and around the world – using tourism to position Belfast as 'the giving city'. This concept will require further development but may offer a unique selling point, in a time when there is a growing interest in ethical tourism
  - Focus on youth and younger markets: research demonstrates the importance of this market for Belfast. There is a need to build on this and to marketing and product development initiatives should prioritise these segments reflecting the overall city narrative.
- 2.4 These priority actions will be delivered through a number of actions plans involving partners from the public and private sectors. The strategy recognises that the current delivery structures within the city are fragmented and won't deliver optimal returns as currently aligned. It suggests very clear roles and responsibilities for the various agencies and identifies the need for the council to be the key partner in bringing together the input from the public sector. At the same time, it points to the need for the council to lead by example – ensuring that its policies and strategies fully support the development of tourism in the city.
- 2.5 The strategy identifies the need to look at how public funding is channelled into Visit Belfast (VB) and recommends that this is done through a multi-annual MoU in which broad areas of activity are agreed and VB is then allowed to go ahead with the operational delivery of agreed activities, within agreed parameters. This will require further engagement between NITB, Belfast City Council and Visit Belfast.
- 2.6 Subject to council approval the strategy will be issued for consultation for a period of 12 weeks from January 2015. The consultation will run in parallel with the consultation exercise on the City Centre Regeneration Strategy. A narrative is being prepared to inform interested parties how both documents link together and to ensure synergies between both. Following the consultation exercise, the strategy will be brought back to council for final agreement.
- 3 Resource Implications
- 3.1 No specific resource allocations are set out within the strategy. Work will now be undertaken to look at the financial implications of the proposed activities, taking account of potential public and private funding for this work.

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

**4.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out in parallel with the consultation exercise.**

#### **5 Recommendations**

**Members are asked to:**

- Note and agree the content of the draft Tourism Strategy as a basis for public consultation;**
- Agree to consider the revised version of the strategy after the conclusion of the consultation exercise.”**

The Director of Development outlined the principal aspects of the Tourism Strategy.

During discussion, Members made the following points and requested that they be incorporated within the document and addressed as part of the public consultation:

- the feasibility of promoting the Belfast Zoo as a visitor attraction for the whole of Northern Ireland;
- that the Game of Thrones is only one of a number of film productions set in Belfast which could be promoted by the City;
- the feasibility of promoting further community-based tourism initiatives and cultural events, such as the East Belfast Arts Festival and ‘Orangefest’; and
- recognise and promote the City’s built heritage as part of Belfast’s visitor attraction.

The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted the Members’ suggestions in relation thereto.

#### **Communications Update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an overview of the steps which had been taken to manage, from a Council perspective, the implementation of the Reform of Local Government and the transfer of rate-payers from those areas of the former Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council into the new Council boundary on 1st April, 2015.

#### **DoE Consultation on Draft Local Government (Community Planning Matters) Order**

The Committee considered the following report, together with the associated response:

##### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To present for approval a draft response to the draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 issued for consultation by the Department of the Environment (DoE).**

## **2.0 Relevant Background Information**

**2.1** The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires councils to make arrangements for community planning in their areas with effect from 1st April 2015. The Act introduces the new duty of community planning and sets out the high level framework for its operation within Northern Ireland. It defines community planning as “a process by which the council and its community planning partners identify long-term objectives [and agreed actions] for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the district”.

**2.2** The Act does not specify who the community planning partners must or should be but instead enables the DoE, following a formal consultation process, to specify by Order in the Assembly, the bodies or persons which are to be community planning partners. Similar to the approaches in Scotland and Wales, the DoE has decided to specify the community planning partners, and as required, is now seeking views on its proposals. The closing date for responses is 4.00pm on 12th December 2014.

## **3.0 Summary of the Consultation**

**3.1** The DoE has now issued for consultation a list of organisations that it proposes to name by Order as statutory community planning partners. Specifically, the DoE is asking:

- 1.** Do you agree with the list of bodies to be named as community planning partners?
- 2.** Do you think that other organisations should be named as community planning partners, and if so, why?

**3.2** The organisations that are proposed as statutory partners are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Education and Library Boards*</li><li>• The Health and Social Care Trusts</li><li>• Public Health Agency</li><li>• Health and Social Care Board</li><li>• Police Service of Northern Ireland</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Northern Ireland Housing Executive</li><li>• Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service</li><li>• Invest Northern Ireland</li><li>• Northern Ireland Tourist Board</li></ul>
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**\*Note:** The Department of Education has recently introduced legislation to establish a new education authority; should this obtain Royal Assent by January 2015 the Order will be amended to reflect any change that may occur.

3.1 This list was developed following preliminary engagement with the councils, via NILGA, discussions with other central government departments and agencies and research into community planning systems operating in the rest of the UK. The DoE's rationale for selecting statutory partners was to name those organisations that:

- a) Deliver significant services that promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of a district; and
- b) Provide services across the whole region which are likely to be of equal importance across all 11 new council areas.

3.4 To add or remove a body to the statutory partners list (other than as a result of a name change or because it no longer exists), the DoE must firstly consult and then amend by Order through the Assembly. The DoE will keep the list of statutory partners under annual review and will make changes as it is felt necessary to do so.

3.5 The consultation recognises that there are a wide range of businesses, voluntary organisations, community and other groups which make vital contributions to community planning. Therefore, in addition to named statutory partners, the DoE suggests that individual councils can invite other support partners to join their community planning process according to the priorities and needs of their particular area. The DoE is also preparing guidance on the operation of community planning that it will issue for public consultation later in the year. It is assumed that this will include guidance on the role of non-statutory partners.

#### 4.0 Key Issues

##### *Importance of Community Planning Partners*

4.1 Organisations that are specified as community planning partners "must participate in community planning for the district...and must assist the council in the discharge of its [community planning] duties" – Local Govt Act (NI) 2014. Commonly referred to as a statutory community planning partner, this means they will have a legal duty to participate which brings with it greater accountability. It is hoped that over time community planning will demonstrate that collaboration and joined-up working is the best way to make a positive difference to the lives of local people; however, in the first instance it will also require legislative support to help establish the conditions for effective community planning and partnership working. Specifying partners at this early stage sends out a message about the requirement for full and active involvement.

Whilst the rationale used by the DoE for naming partners is helpful, it is important that the underlying principle for identifying and involving community planning partners should be their contribution to achieving the agreed community planning outcomes.

*The Northern Ireland context*

4.2 Partnership and participation within the current Northern Ireland context is not the same as other jurisdictions – the legislative framework therefore needs to reflect this. This is important given that even after local government reform, local councils in Northern Ireland will not have the same range of powers as their counterparts in other places. As a result, there are clear gaps between the range of functions covered by councils and the proposed statutory community planning partners outlined in the draft legislation; for example, roads and transport and skills and employment.

4.3 It is important that the statutory partner legislation and the statutory community planning guidance address this issue. This is particularly important in respect of accountability and performance management arrangements – in other areas a regional performance management framework which connects community planning outcomes across different tiers of government and which supports partners in working towards shared targets has been a cornerstone of progress. This will be particularly important in Northern Ireland where responsibility for key services is still relatively distributed and where accountability has the potential to be diffuse.

*Role of the Government Departments*

4.4 Under the Act, Government Departments are required to promote and encourage community planning, and have regard to the implications of community plans. The DoE suggests that this role is distinct but complementary to that of statutory partners, and therefore, as a reflection of these separate roles has not included departments in the draft statutory partners list.

4.5 The council's draft response, which is attached at appendix 1, uses the examples of employment and skills, and transport to demonstrate the importance of the involvement of government departments in any future community planning structures. These are two issues that are emerging as important to competitiveness and quality of life in Belfast. However, without the active participation of for example, the Dept for Employment and Learning (DEL) and Translink/Transport NI it is difficult to see how community planning will address those key issues of concern.

4.6 There is also a clear link and synergy between the outcomes-based approach of community planning and some of the key programmes being implemented by OFMDFM, including Delivering Social Change and Together Building United

Communities. There is also a clear opportunity to maximise the benefit of community planning by connecting it to the development of the next Programme for Government.

4.7 In the light of the delay in the transfer of regeneration functions and of the on-going need for a close relationship in terms of regeneration and community development policy and for the alignment of outcomes in these critical areas of work, it is also recommended that DSD is included as a partner.

As a result we are recommending that the following be included in the Order:

- Department for Employment and Learning
- Transport NI (formerly the Roads Service)
- NI Transport Holding Company (parent company which oversees the activities of Translink)
- OFMDFM
- Department of Social Development

#### *Other Sectors*

4.9 The draft Order can only specify statutory organisations as partners as it would not be feasible, legally or practically, for Government to direct the actions of non-public sector organisations. However, the recognition by the DoE that other sectors will have a role to play in community planning is welcomed. We await the issue of the draft guidance in due course, which we hope will provide further clarification on this and other issues.

#### 5.0 Decision Required

5.1 Members are asked to approve the release of the draft Council response (attached at appendix 1) to the DoE, subject to ratification by Shadow Council.

#### 6.0 Resource Implications

6.1 There are no anticipated additional resource implications for the Council.

#### 7.0 Equality Implications

7.1 There are no equality implications for the Council.

Under the terms of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the DoE carried out screening for equality impact and is satisfied that the proposed legislation will not lead to discriminatory or negative differential impact on any of the section 75 groups.

## **1.0 Summary of Key points**

- The Council recommends that the underlying principle for the identification of community planning partners be that they are selected based on their contribution to the achievement of community planning outcomes.
- The governance and delivery of public services in Northern Ireland is different to that in other places. Our local councils do not have the same range of functions and responsibilities as their counterparts in other regions. As a result there are clear gaps between the proposed list of statutory community planning partners listed in the draft regulations and the range of function / issues that will need to be included in a community plan. For example, there is no representation in respect of roads and transport or skills and employment.
- Government Departments have not been included in the statutory partners list; yet in Northern Ireland they are responsible for local service delivery in areas such as health, roads, education and employment and will therefore play a key role in supporting delivery at a local level and helping to align priorities and strategic policy setting at the regional level. Specific consideration should be given to naming key Government Departments and/or operating units to ensure community will work effectively given the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.
- Belfast City Council strongly recommends the inclusion of OFMDFM, the Department for Employment and Learning; Transport NI and the NI Transport Holding Company to ensure that these core functions will have a statutory requirement to participate in community planning. Also, given the delay in the transfer of regeneration functions, it is recommended that the Department for Social Development is also included as a partner.
- The Council emphasises the importance of ensuring effective dialogue and collaboration between central government and local government, through the Minister / Member led Partnership Panel and at officer level, and also in time, supported by a regional performance management framework.
- The Council recommends that it should be for each council area and partnership to agree how the partners should meet and convene, including the levels of involvement and partnership structures. This should be included in the draft guidance which is currently under development.

## **2.0 General Comments**



The consultation issued by the Department of the Environment (the Department) regarding the proposed specification of community planning partners is a welcome step in the ongoing development of community planning within Northern Ireland. Belfast City Council looks forward to working with the Department to help ensure the goals of community planning are met and that a fit for purpose and effective process is implemented.

*The Importance of Community Planning Partners*

Belfast City Council believes that over time community planning will demonstrate that collaboration and joined-up working is the best way to make a positive difference to the lives of local people. However, we also feel that in the first instance, community planning will require legislative support to help establish the conditions for effective community planning and partnership working. It is important that both the enabling legislation and statutory guidance provide a strong foundation upon which to build the relationships and practice of community planning. By specifying partners at this early stage it sends out a clear message and requirement for full and active involvement. It also helps establish the shared ownership and responsibility which will be necessary for effective community planning.

Whilst the rationale used by the Department for naming partners is helpful, we believe that the starting criteria and underlying principle for identifying and involving community planning partners should be based on their contribution to achieving the agreed community planning outcomes. This shifts the focus to desired end results (outcomes) and then on who needs to work together to achieve them.

*Belfast City Council therefore recommends that the underlying principle for identifying and involving community planning partners should be based on their contribution to achieving the agreed community planning outcomes.*

*The Northern Ireland context*

Partnership and participation within the current Northern Ireland context is not the same as other jurisdictions – the legislative framework therefore needs to reflect this. Any enabling legislation intended to drive and support community planning will need to address Northern Ireland's unique circumstances. This is extremely important given that even after local government reform, local councils in Northern Ireland will not have the same range of powers as their counterparts in other places. As a result, there are clear gaps between the range of functions covered by councils and the proposed statutory community planning partners outlined in the draft legislation; for example, roads and transport, skills and employment.

It is imperative that the statutory partner legislation and the statutory community planning guidance address this issue. Developing a fit for purpose legislative framework for Northern Ireland will require a more creative approach and a willingness to develop new solutions.

Already, based on our emerging approach to community planning to date, we have identified clear gaps between the functions and partners that would need to be actively involved and accountable under a community planning process for Belfast and the list of proposed statutory partners. This is due to the different governance and service delivery arrangements that exist here in Northern Ireland. This is explored in more detail below in response to the consultation questions (see response to Question 2.)

#### *Role of the Government Departments*

Government Departments are required to promote and encourage community planning, and have regard to the implications of community plans. The consultation states that the role of the Government Departments is distinct but complementary to that of statutory partners, and therefore, they have not been included in the draft statutory partners list. However, it is clear that they will need to play a key role in supporting delivery at local level and helping to align priorities and strategic policy setting at the regional level. This is particularly important for community planning in Northern Ireland where the government departments actually deliver a range of local services that in other jurisdictions would be delivered by local councils or other statutory partners. This therefore requires a different approach to be taken to the involvement of departments, or parts of departments; and must be focused and driven by the need to involve the services and functions required to achieve better outcomes.

Consequently, the Council believes that appropriate elements of Departments should be designated as community planning partners to ensure those departments participate and engage beyond mere consultation. We have therefore highlighted in our response to the posed consultation questions, those functions and Departments which we believe should be designated community planning partners. We therefore request that further consideration is given to how the role of departments can be reflected in both legislation and guidance and would welcome further engagement on this issue. The Council also recommends that Community Planning should be a key consideration in any future changes to departmental structures.

#### *Other Sectors*

In this consultation the Department acknowledges that other sectors will have a role to play in community planning. We appreciate that the statutory designation of community planning partners must be limited to public sector bodies but

welcome the Department's recognition of the important role that the business, voluntary and community sectors can play. We await the publication of the draft statutory community planning guidance, which we hope will provide further clarification on how wider partnership working will be supported at a policy level.

#### ***Statutory Guidance***

In considering the draft legislation it becomes apparent that the specification of statutory partners, whilst important, will not guarantee the successful delivery of community planning. Therefore, the statutory guidance will need to play a critical role in helping to clarify and strengthen partnership working and processes. It is important that both the enabling legislation and statutory guidance provide a strong foundation upon which to build the relationships and practice of community planning. The community planning partners together must be able to ensure that:

- a) each district community plan is accountable and influential and carries with it sufficient authority to enable successful implementation; and
- b) that decisions and actions are managed on an ongoing basis so that each district community plan can be effectively delivered and implemented.

However, there is a risk that naming a large number of statutory organisations in the Order will make community planning unwieldy and unproductive. Therefore, in keeping with our recommended principle of focusing on what is needed to make community planning work locally, we recommend that a clear rationale for designating statutory partners be agreed coupled with flexibility thereafter for each council area to identify optimum partnership structures and levels of involvement.

For community planning to be effective, partnerships will need to fulfil two distinct roles – setting the policy direction and managing local delivery. This may mean that different organisations will be involved at different stages or in different ways. However, it is essential that the right people who can make key decisions, in line with the local community planning priorities, are at the table. Ideally the guidance should help clarify what is expected from organisations and the level of seniority required, whilst also enabling partnerships the flexibility to establish partnership arrangements that are fit for purpose in each local area rather than a single partnership and one-size fits all approach.

#### **Consultation Questions**

1. *Do you agree with the list of bodies to be named as community planning partners?*

The organisations that are proposed as statutory partners are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Education and Library Boards*</li><li>• The Health and Social Care Trusts</li><li>• Public Health Agency</li><li>• Health and Social Care Board</li><li>• Police Service of Northern Ireland</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Northern Ireland Housing Executive</li><li>• Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service</li><li>• Invest Northern Ireland</li><li>• Northern Ireland Tourist Board</li></ul>
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\*Subject to amendment should the legislation to establish a new education authority obtain Royal Assent by January 2015

Belfast City Council agrees that those included in this list should be designated statutory partners. However, it should be for each council area and partnership to agree how the partners should meet and convene, including levels of involvement and partnership structures. The guidance which is currently being developed should provide clarification on this.

*2. Do you think that other organisations should be named as community planning partners, and if so, why?*

As mentioned above, we feel that the current list contains clear service and function gaps when assessed against the likely quality of life issues that community planning will need to address. Achieving the community planning goals of improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area will be challenging, particularly as environmental and economic issues are so underrepresented in terms of the current council functions and proposed list of statutory community planning partner organisations.

The ability to deliver meaningful outcomes will be predicated on the involvement of government departments. Whilst this is an issue that the Partnership Panel will undoubtedly seek to address in the coming months; Belfast requests that the Department secures a commitment from the Executive and the Departments to look at this in an inclusive, creative and pragmatic manner. The end focus should be on how governance and public services within Northern Ireland can be enabled to work in partnership, through the mechanism of community planning to deliver a real difference to local people.

As a minimum, council would expect this to be addressed through the statutory guidance – which must be extended to government departments.

We particularly wish to highlight the examples of employment / skills and transport to demonstrate why a more creative and fit

for purpose approach to the involvement of government departments in any future community planning structures is required within Northern Ireland. These are two issues that are important to competitiveness and quality of life in Belfast and have also emerged as important matters for local people following our recent Belfast resident survey. It is difficult to see how community planning will help address these key issues of concern without the active participation of the government departments who have the responsibility for those functions. Whilst we are confident of developing meaningful relationships and active partnership, there is a risk that without a mechanism to support their involvement progress may be hampered.

There is also a clear link and synergy between the outcomes-based approach of community planning and some of the key programmes being implemented by OFMDFM, including Delivering Social Change and Together Building United Communities. There is also a clear opportunity to maximise the benefit of community planning by connecting it to the development of the next Programme for Government.

In the light of the delay in the transfer of regeneration functions and of the on-going need for a close relationship in terms of regeneration and community development policy and for the alignment of outcomes in these critical areas of work, it is also recommended that DSD is included as a partner.

Belfast City Council therefore recommends that the following Government Departments be designated in the Order as statutory community planning partners:

- Department for Employment and Learning
- Transport NI
- NI Transport Holding Company
- OFMDFM
- DSD

The Council also recommends that consideration also be given as to how a mechanism to enable senior officer level dialogue and collaboration between central and local government officials in addition to the Minister / Member led Partnership Panel might work.

Additionally, the Council also recommends that consideration be given the development of a statutory-based regional performance management framework which connects community planning outcomes across different tiers of government and which supports partners in working towards shared targets. In other areas this has been a cornerstone of progress and would be particularly important in Northern Ireland where responsibility for key services is still relatively distributed and where accountability is potentially diffused.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report and endorsed the response.

### **Local Government Reform - Regeneration Bill**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 Members will be aware that over the past number of months the Department for Social Development has sought to introduce the draft Regeneration and Housing Bill into the NI Assembly. This legislation intended to bring affect the transfer of regeneration, community development (and associated assets including the Lagan Weir) and regulatory housing powers to the Council on the 1 April 2015.**

#### **2 Key Issues**

**2.1 On 11 November the Minister for Social Development, Mervyn Storey MLA submitted a Written Ministerial Statement to the NI Assembly confirming the following:**

- **Defer the transfer of regeneration and community development responsibilities (including the associated transfer of budgets and assets) to Councils for one year until 1 April 2016 and;**
- **Remove the specific provisions from the draft Bill relating to statutory housing functions to create a standalone ‘Regeneration Bill’. Whilst the Ministerial Statement refers to the Housing functions being considered separately from the Regeneration Bill, there is no timescales currently specified around this.**

**2.2 Whilst the transfer of regeneration and community development functions has now been delayed for a year, it still remains critical that the council continue to engage at both a political and senior officer level with DSD to implement the necessary programme of work to facilitate transfer. It will also be important that the Council seeks to maximise all opportunities for joint working with DSD in the lead up to 1 April 2016, particularly in relation to the development and implementation of community development programmes, the city centre regeneration and investment plan and physical capital schemes within the city.**

**2.3 Members have previously stated their strong concerns in relation to the significant shortfall in the proposed budget allocation to accompany the DSD powers transferring to the Council. Given the growing budgetary pressures on the NI Executive and central government Departments, it will be essential that the council continue to engage and negotiate with the DSD and NI Executive to ensure that an adequate budget transfers on 1 April 2016 and argue against any further significant reductions.**

**3 Resources**

- 3.1 There are no financial or human resource implications contained within this report.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 4.1 There are no equality implications from this report. The deferral of transferring powers to the council means that DSD will continue to have responsibility for the delivery of the powers up until 1 April 2016.

**5 Call-in**

- 5.1 This decision is subject to call-in

**6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Dry Recyclables Scheme and Food Waste Collection Service**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 Following securing £236,000 from the DOE’s Rethink Waste Capital Grant scheme, to seek approval from the Committee to introduce a food waste collection service for around 5,000 households in the west of the City and change the existing dry recyclables scheme in order to:

- capture additional recycling tonnage,
- deliver an improved environmental solution and
- afford residents in the proposed area the opportunity to recycle food waste and on the basis of no additional costs to the council going forward.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 The Council has successfully secured £236,000 from the DOE Rethink Waste Capital Grant scheme to fund the provision of new wheeled stacker collection units.
- 2.2 In Belfast, Waste Management has been actively seeking to simplify waste collection options for a number of years in order to reduce confusion and to make recycling as easy as possible for householders. With this aim, the City is now primarily on two schemes, a weekly recycling/food waste box service for the denser-housing stock in the inner city and an alternate weekly,

three-bin service (organic and residual wastes collected one week, recyclables the next) for the outer city.

- 2.3 There is however one small area of the city which almost a decade ago, due to the house size, was considered appropriate to be issued with a dry recyclable (blue) bin yet, as they did not have gardens, they did not receive an organic bin. This means that this area does not have a food waste collection service as these materials would be collected in an organics bin.
- 2.4 As stated above, these households were omitted from the original roll-out of organic (brown) bins as most did not have gardens. Recently, the Department of the Environment (DOE) published its '*Synopsis of Responses on the Restrictions on Landfilling Food Waste*' which will introduce the requirement for councils to provide a food waste service for all households within their jurisdiction.
- 2.5 With a renewed emphasis on diverting food waste from landfill, the Service has considered how to tailor a cost-effective solution for these households in order to provide a commensurate service to that received by the other 96% of households in the city, boosting recycling/composting tonnages and complying with impending legislation.
- 2.6 In advance of the DOE paper, the Service had been working for some time to consider how to introduce a food and glass waste service to these households – it looked like a weekly service using a kitchen caddy with a larger, external caddy was the most suitable option with a supplementary box for collecting glass. Last year, however, considerable effort went into providing tailored solutions for many of the inner-city apartment blocks and flats and during this programme a new waste receptacle was launched – a wheeled stacker collection unit (a stacker box). Where these units have been introduced, they have worked well.
- 2.7 Earlier this year, Waste Management submitted an application to the DOE's Rethink Waste Capital Grant scheme to fund the provision of new stacker boxes for this project and was successful in securing £236,000 for their purchase.
- 2.8 The households chosen will transfer onto a new, progressive stacker box collection system, with additional kitchen and external caddies for food waste being provided as well. The food waste and recyclables will be collected on a weekly basis on a single pass, dedicated vehicle using the Council's existing contractor for kerbside collection, Bryson Recycling. The residual waste collection will remain fortnightly.
- 2.9 The new stacker box service will mean that these householders will be able to recycle a wider range of materials than at present, most particularly through the inclusion of food waste



and glass. This is likely to increase the Council's recycling rate by almost 0.5%.

2.10 The stacker box service has already been introduced to a similar number of households in Newtownabbey Borough Council and has received a positive reception in terms of tonnage captured and resident feedback.

2.11 This service aims to assist in meeting the following specific waste objectives:

- To assist in delivering a recycling rate of 50% of household waste by 2020 (EU Waste Framework Directive)
- To contribute to a proposed Department of the Environment (DOE) target of 60% for NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste (LACMW) recycling rate by 2020.
- To contribute to the Council's on-going achievement of Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme Regulations 2004 (NILAS) – the progressive, annual reduction in biodegradable waste allowed to be disposed of to landfill.
- To contribute to the DOE's proposed Food Waste Regulations (2014) and the requirement for councils to introduce separate food waste collections for all households.
- To make better use of the Council's finances for waste collection, treatment and disposal.

2.12 It also meets the proposed DOE regulations as food waste will be collected separately in caddies. The proposed service will also permit the Council to demonstrate that it is keenly focused on providing all householders with the opportunity to recycle on their doorstep and, in so doing, that it is considering how best to deliver the Technically, Environmentally, Economically Practicable (TEEP) obligation as required under the EU Waste Framework Directive, by tailoring solutions to maximise recycling quality. In this case, the projected improved environmental performance is matched by reductions to the cost of providing this service.

This proposal could also inform strategic collection issues for the Council arising from TEEP longer-term, as well as improve the quality of materials for re-processing - an increasingly important issue in moving towards a circular economy.

### **3 Key Issues**

3.1 This report is seeking Member approval to introduce a food waste collection scheme for around 5,000 households in the west of the City and, in so doing, change the current kerbside

collection scheme for dry recyclables by introducing a progressive new, stacker box collection system.

- 3.2 The householders will receive a weekly collection of dry recyclables in the wheeled stacker box and food waste, along with a fortnightly collection of residual waste.
- 3.3 This scheme ties in with the objectives of the Council's '*Towards Zero Waste*' Action Plan and, more specifically, action point 1. '*To Improve Recycling Collection Services for Householders (More Materials, Better Services)*'. As outlined in the options appraisal which was provided to the DOE, the annual collection and treatment costs for the stacker box proposal are fully offset by (i) landfill gate fee savings, (ii) additional income from the kerbside box scheme, (iii) MRF gate fee savings, (iv) reduced resources being expended on the blue bin scheme which can be realised as part of the Route Optimisation exercise to be delivered in Cleansing Services around Q2, 2015/16 and (v) the non-requirement of a separate glass collection service for these households. This shows it to be a more advantageous economic and environmental solution than the alternative dedicated, food waste collection plus blue bin scheme.
- 3.4 There are a number of potential advantages associated with the proposal, both for the Council and residents:
  - Introduction of a weekly food waste collection to the targeted households would mean an equitable service of food waste collection now being provided citywide either in a dedicated caddy, or a brown bin, as well as improving capacity in the residual bin for those who use the scheme.
  - The wheeled stacker collection box provides an increased range of materials compared with the current blue bin scheme namely: glass, mixed plastics, batteries, hand tools and textiles
  - This should increase tonnage of recyclables captured, contributing directly to the recycling rate, projected at around 460 tonnes, or almost 0.5%.
  - Improved quality of recyclables with the materials being sorted at the kerbside rather than the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) which should reduce contamination within the recyclables, currently standing at around 10%.
  - This scheme could inform strategic direction of recyclables collections as the DOE intend to introduce legislation which will require the separate collection of food waste only.
  - One pass collection of recyclables and food waste in the same vehicle would be of benefit to the environment by reducing emissions
  - With the Council's existing kerbside-sort contractor being in a position to take on the collection of

recyclables and food waste from these households, the Council has the opportunity to deliver efficiency savings in this regard.

- This is also an optimum time to introduce such a change as Cleansing Services are preparing to review their waste and recyclables collection routes in response to Local Government Reform (LGR).

3.5 Subject to approval, the Service will develop a communications campaign to explain the changes to the waste collection arrangements and to engage directly with both Members and householders in the area before introducing the new stacker box collection scheme.

3.6 As stated above, this year the Council has secured a total of £970,000 from the DOE's Rethink Waste Capital Grant to support a range of recycling schemes, including £236,000 to provide the stacker boxes for this project. As a condition of this funding, it must be spent within the 2014/15 financial year. The Committee may care to note that the purchase of the stacker collection boxes will be made from a framework contract which is already in place.

#### 4 Resource Implications

##### 4.1 Financial Implications

The introduction of this proposal will be rates neutral.

As there is a matter of scheduling the introduction of this service with the Route Optimisation work being undertaken by Cleansing Services, there are costs of £16,000 to be borne in early 2015/16 by the existing arrangements prior to this service starting – this can be covered from within projected budgets. As the dry recyclable bins in this area are due to be uplifted during the introduction of the service, if these bins are in a satisfactory condition they may be reused and, given that they are currently in use, it is probable that these could offset the costs of the stacker box service through reducing the spend on replacement bins for 2015/16.

Once introduced, given that the capital costs for the purchase of the stacker boxes has been provided for by the DOE, it is projected that the service will be cost neutral.

The Committee may care to note that for 2014/15, the Council has been successful in being granted approval for projects from the DOE Rethink Waste funding of almost £1M, subject to the money being spent in this financial year.

##### 4.2 Human Resources

The proposal will involve the household recycling collections currently serviced by Cleansing Services switching to the Council's kerbside sort contractor, Bryson Recycling.

It is not proposed that the staff should transfer but that, as part of the Route Optimisation exercise to be delivered around Q2, they should be redeployed elsewhere in the city thereby contributing to the delivery of efficiency savings within Cleansing Services. These households are currently serviced by approximately a third of a crew.

**5 Call-In**

5.1 This report is subject to call-in

**6 Recommendation**

6.1 The Committee is requested to approve the proposed introduction of the stacker box and food waste collection service for around 5,000 households, as identified."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Minutes of the Budget and Transformation Panel**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 20th November.

Chairman