

# Development Committee

Thursday, 3rd February, 2011

## SPECIAL MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Maskey (Chairman);  
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey); and  
Councillors M. Campbell, Ekin, Hargey, Kyle, Lavery,  
McKee, Mullaghan, J. Rodgers, P. Robinson, Rodway  
and Stoker.
- In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;  
Ms. B. Cook, Policy and Business Development  
Manager; and  
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Draft Corporate Action Plan to Tackle Poverty and Inequalities**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th November, it had agreed to receive a presentation from Professor Mike Morrissey, who had been commissioned by the Council to prepare a Draft Corporate Action Plan to Tackle Poverty and Inequality. The Chairman (Councillor Maskey) welcomed Professor Morrissey to the meeting and he proceeded to provide an overview on his findings to date.

Professor Morrissey outlined the vital role which cities played as catalysts for economic growth within regions. He stated that people were considered to be the most important asset of any successful city and that social inclusion, citizen engagement and a sense of belonging were all factors in the making of a successful city. He then provided an overview of the demographic make-up of Belfast and reported that 18 of the 20 most deprived areas of the city, as identified in 1991, were still considered to be within that bracket. He explained that research had indicated that poverty in Belfast persisted in areas where there was little or no religious diversity. Professor Morrissey emphasised further the role which the City Council could play in leading the economic regeneration of the city. He concluded by stating that it was important for the Council to monitor the development of economic opportunity and address negative social impacts by means of the new Integrated Economic Strategy and the Framework to Tackle Poverty and Inequalities.

In response to various questions put to him by the Members, Professor Morrissey made the undernoted points:

- the re-balancing of the Northern Ireland Economy was essential for the future economic prosperity of the Region and, as such, the disproportionate influence of the public sector, as opposed to that of the private sector, would need to be addressed; and
- despite the targeted allocation of significant public funding towards housing and regeneration, the persistence of poverty within certain areas of the city needed to be examined.

The Chairman (Councillor Maskey) thanked Professor Morrissey for his presentation and, after discussion, the Committee agreed that Party Group briefings in relation to the Draft Framework to Tackle Poverty and Inequality be provided prior to the document being presented to the Committee at its meeting in March.

Chairman