

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 13th February, 2015

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Carson (Deputy Chairman) (in the Chair);  
Aldermen Browne, R. Patterson and Robinson;  
Councillors Attwood, M. E. Campbell, Clarke, Corr,  
Haire, Hargey, Hendron, Jones, Kennedy,  
McCarthy, Mac Giolla Mhín, McVeigh and Mullan

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;  
Mr. J. Walsh, Town Solicitor;  
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Chairman (Councillor Reynolds) and Alderman Campbell.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd February, subject to the amendment of the minute under the heading "Flood Alleviation in Belfast" to provide that the Ministers for Finance and Personnel, Agricultural and Rural Development, Social Development and, if considered necessary, the Ministers for the Environment and Regional Development, be invited to meet with an All-Party Delegation from the Council to discuss Members' concerns around flood alleviation, cuts in funding and individual households' protection scheme.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Corr declared an interest in respect of Item 2a – Belfast Investment Fund in so far as he was on the Board of the West Belfast Partnership.

### **Investment Programme**

#### **Belfast Investment Fund**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

##### **1.1 Current objectives and criteria**

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- BIF support was designed to support partnership projects across the city which will have a substantial regenerative impact and will bring major benefit to the city
- The objectives of the Belfast Investment Fund are to:
- create a focal point for the Council to play a leading role in the development of the city
- create a 'can do' attitude amongst its citizens and create a sense of place and pride in Belfast
- encourage investment from and engagement of public, private and voluntary sectors, in the achievement of that aim
- to contribute to the Council's priorities and vision for the city
- to be eligible to receive funding under the Belfast Investment Fund projects must -
- be a single project or a programme/cluster of capital investment
- demonstrate that they have a cumulative iconic or transformational impact
- have a partnership element and be receiving at least match 50% funding from another source/sources
- be seeking a Council investment of above £250,000

Designed as a rolling programme of investment and given the level of investment in projects was meant to be over 3 terms of the Council up to 2019/2020.

#### 1.2 Current status of fund

- As outlined in the table below current expectations are that there will be £34m in the BIF stream by 16/17

	14/15	15/16	16/17
BIF Opening Balance	19287638	26272138	30442138
Capital Receipts	4214500	1400000	800000
Rates	2770000	2770000	2770000
	26272138	30442138	34012138

#### 1.3 Current status of projects

- No funding for any BIF project has been agreed to date by Committee
- 20 emerging projects agreed in principle by Committee – (appendix 1)

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- 3 of these have been progressed to Stage 2 (i.e. development of an OBC) – Lagan Gateway at Stranmillis; redevelopment of St. Comgall's and new pitches at St. Mary's – these projects were prioritised due to their state of readiness and/or match funding sources in place

## **2.0 Issues**

- One of the key issues in relation to BIF projects has been the 50% match funding requirement – this has been difficult for projects to secure given the lack of other sources of funding – this will be further impacted by the loss of DSD funding under LGR. The South AWG formally requested in October 14 that the 'SP&R Committee review the match funding requirement for BIF projects which could allow projects that have a certain amount of match funding in place, but not the 50% requirement, to proceed'. This was considered but no recommendations were agreed at this stage.
- There are no proposed projects in the enhanced boundaries of the Council and no city centre proposals
- Many of the proposed projects are limited in scope and their potential outcomes for the city is accordingly reduced.

## **2.1 Options for Members to consider**

To actually begin to use BIF Members need to focus on three key issues:

- How can BIF be best linked to the emerging 'Belfast Agenda' and the outcomes and accountability frameworks?
- Given the changing roles and responsibilities of the Council and the enhanced boundaries should BIF be repackaged as a city regeneration fund?
- Should the match funding criteria be reduced to allow a number of projects to progress now? If so to what level?

## **2.2 Lagan Gateway**

While awaiting decision on the above there is increasing frustration with regard to the South AWG who have worked

**hard to develop the Lagan Gateway and an increasing risk matched funding may be lost due to BCC decision delay.**

**The South AWG strategic view to investment in their part of the city identified the Lagan corridor as providing serious potential to moving things forward and produced a Back to the River plan as a context for project spend. This approach has been further endorsed by the Berridge report which also identified the importance of the river and the fact that a number of organisations are developing river associated projects e.g. BHC is now seriously looking at the leisure potential for the river banks from the Harbour Office to the weir; DRD have an economic appraisal on a new footbridge from the Gasworks to Ormeau Park; the private sector with the Council are developing two sites at Maysfield; the council has already completed investments at Mary Peters track, the Mountain Bike trails and the John Luke bridge as well as providing land for the Kayak boathouse. Furthermore the council is about to inherit responsibilities from DSD in respect to river management and further development sites such as Queens Quay as well as sites from Castlereagh B.C such as the Lockkeepers cottage. The discussions around the River Corridor have also inspired local communities to take an interest in river activity and begin exploring ways as to how they might evolve and create facilities to take advantage of new opportunities which is of course in the spirit of BIF to create 'can do' citizens and lift aspirations.**

**The Lagan Gateway project involves reopening the lock at Stranmillis and replacing the weir thus making the river navigable upstream from the city. This approach ties in with the Lagan Trust proposals to open the Lagan all the way to Lough Neagh and is an important first step in this bigger tourism regeneration scheme. The Lagan towpath is one of the most visited attractions in the Province with over 1m visitors recorded in 2014 and the Gateway scheme provides the potential of further opening up the East Bank of the river from Belvoir Forest to Stranmillis.**

**Ulster Gardens Villages have pledged £1m to support the gateway scheme but are under pressure to reallocate the money should the council further delay decision making. Currently the scheme has a complete economic appraisal which sets out the benefits and the costs. The current estimate is £4.9m broken down into four phases i.e. the Lock & Bridge at £2.9m; the Footway link to Belvoir Forest via council property at Lagan Lands East at £250k; a visitor centre and car park at £800k and a new weir at £1m.**

**In October 2014 SP&R was asked to consider a change in the BIF rules regarding the 50% matched funding which was also imply a more robust prioritisation of projects than the current list. Members agreed to discuss this further.**

**Given the fact that the UGV £1m funding offer will not remain open indefinitely and that it represents approximately 20% of the cost of the scheme Members are asked to reconsider the BIF funding mechanism and to prioritise along a sliding scale of external commitment allowing the Gateway project to move ahead now while other schemes are reprioritised.**

### **2.3 Proposed acquisition of land at Blackmountain**

**The SP&R Committee at its meeting on 18th June 2014 authorised officers to enter into negotiations to acquire the land at the junction of the Upper Ballygomartin Road and Springmartin Road for the Black Mountain Shared Space Project (BMSS). The BMSS project is an inter community partnership that brings together groups representative of the communities across the Upper Springfield/Moyard/New Barnsley and Springmartin/Highfield. The BMSS project aims to develop a shared space and create a community asset by regenerating the vacant and derelict Black Mountain site which includes the 8.429 acre ex-Finlay factory site and unmanaged open areas which have become contested spaces and the focal point for anti-community behaviour.**

**A draft economic appraisal for a shared space at the ex-Finlay site was produced in Nov 2013 which recommended the option to create Belfast's first eco village. The master plan will house 40,000 sq ft of community enterprise space that will be used to stimulate employment. The site will be completely shared and that will be exemplified by creating a large shared space community building that will be run and managed by the BMSSP. There will be allotment schemes throughout the development to continue with the promotion of the sustainable facility development. There is a possibility of up to 18 new houses built (based on need) toward the rear of the site and to ensure that the entire space is used and doesn't present opportunities for anti-social behaviour. The scheme will be further embellished with a shared space day care facility and a shared space outdoor education and activity resource centre. The master plan will be developed further in consultation with the key government departments and the local community prior to the submission of any planning application.**

**The site needs to be purchased to allow the development of the initiatives proposed by BMSS. This has been proposed as**

a potential BIF project by the West AWG however this is subject to final agreement. Officers have negotiated with Colliers who act for the site owners, the First Trust Bank, and agreed subject to Council approval to acquire the freehold interest in the site for £250,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that funds are available for the acquisition of this site from the Belfast Investment Fund.

In the event that the BMSS fails to go forward the council will retain control of a potentially valuable site with development potential into the future.

### **3.0 Resource Implications**

**Financial:** As outlined above.

**Human:** Officer time in working with groups on developing their project proposals

**Assets:** none at present

### **4.0 Equality Implications**

As part of the Stage approval process, a screening will be carried out on each project to indicate potential equality and good relations impacts and any mitigating actions needed.

### **5.0 Recommendations**

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and

- **Seek Shadow SP&R approval to advance the Lagan Gateway project at less than 50% match funding subject to new criteria being developed for BIF overall. Also to approve the acquisition of the Finlay Site.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and that the Lagan Gateway Project be advanced with phases 1 and 2 to include the lock, the bridge and the footway.

## **Democratic Services and Governance**

### **Requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality**

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

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<b>Organisation/ Body</b>	<b>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Queens University Belfast	Belfast Model United Nations Conference Reception  11th November, 2015  Approximately 250 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the meeting will take place within the city.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £500
Irish Football Association	Irish FA McDonald's Grassroots Football Awards 2015  19th November, 2015  Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event seeks to recognise and celebrate all those individuals who have significantly contributed to grassroots football in communities across Northern Ireland. The event will particularly recognise the important role that grassroots football plays in bringing people together to play the game irrespective of race, gender, religion and other barriers which exist within society.  The awards will be presented to volunteers, parents, coaches, clubs, caretakers etc who give their time to delivering grassroots football.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £500
The Scout Association	Queen's Scout Award and Chief Scout's Award Certificate Presentation  8th January, 2016  Approximately 450 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	This event aims to recognise the achievements of young people who have successfully demonstrated the determination and persistence required to achieve their personal best in terms of effort, commitment and self-	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.  Approximate cost £1,125

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			<p>reliance.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together', and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	
Belfast Central Mission	<p>125th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon</p> <p>24th September, 2015</p> <p>Approximately 100 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event seeks to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Belfast Central Mission and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £250</p>
Northern Ireland Private Greens Bowling League	<p>Centenary Dinner</p> <p>20th October, 2017</p> <p>Approximately 200 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event seeks to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Northern Ireland Private Greens Bowling League and to acknowledge the contribution of its member clubs, more than half of which are situated within the City boundary, to the general life and well-being of the city.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Potala Buddhist Centre	<p>Public Talk on Meditation and Mindfulness</p> <p>12th May, 2015</p> <p>Approximately 200 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of Tea, Coffee and Biscuits</p>	<p>This event will provide the opportunity to explain and promote the benefits gained through mindfulness meditation. The event will be open to all members of the public and it is hoped that both Members and Officials of Belfast City Council will attend.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of Tea, Coffee and Biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>



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			<p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	
<p>Organisation of Malayalis in Northern Ireland</p>	<p>'Ponnonam 2015' Celebration Event 23rd August, 2015 Approximately 500 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>Ponnonam 2015 is the celebration of the various cultures within the Indian community for people from the state of Kerala.</p> <p>This programme consists of a series of events which include children's entertainment activities, a special vegetarian lunch and a stage programme showing the talent of the community through song and dance.</p> <p>The aim of the event is to promote cultural diversity and also to forge closer relationships between the Indian community and the citizens of Belfast.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's key themes 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and of 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>
<p>MBA Association</p>	<p>Digital DNA – Schools Digital Media Challenge 14th October, 2015 Approximately 350 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will provide the opportunity to inspire young people to have a stronger understanding of consumer and business need before applying technology to provide a delivery solution.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together', 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better support for people and communities' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £875</p>

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			of Children and Young People.	
Halo Northern Ireland	Halo NI Presentation Evening 17th November, 2015 Approximately 80 attending	The use of the City Hall	This event will provide the opportunity to bring together companies that are looking for potential investment with investors who are looking for opportunities to provide not only monetary assistance but also provide business acumen and contacts.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Asset Management**

**Land at Slievegallion Drive**

(Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure, and Mrs R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The Council currently hold the land at Slievegallion Drive. The land is held on a 10,000 year lease, date 20th Feb 1984, from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The lease restricts the use of the site to informal open space and NIHE consent is required for any assignment or sub letting.**
- 1.2 De La Salle College is located adjacent to the Council's land at Slievegallion Drive. The school have approached the Council with a proposal for the redevelopment of that part of the Council's land at Slievegallion Drive, to provide a school/community facility comprising 3G sports pitch and associated changing pavilion.**
- 1.3 The College require a 99 year lease in order to secure funding from the Department of Education for their proposal.**

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- 1.4 The site does not form part of the Pitches Strategy and there is currently no identified funding in the Capital Programme for the development of this land by the Council.**
- 1.5 Parks and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 13th June 2013 agreed to officers progressing discussions with De La Salle College with a view to exploring the most appropriate arrangement for the redevelopment of the informal open space at Slievegallion Drive, with a further report to be brought to the Parks & Leisure Committee in due course.**
- 1.6 A further report was brought to the Parks & Leisure Committee on the 11th December 2014 recommending that:**
  - 1. Officers continue to meet with the College representatives to progress the matter;**
  - 2. Agree in principle to the leasing of the land subject to obtaining the necessary statutory approvals; securing funding and reaching agreement with Council officers re terms and conditions including a community use clause;**
  - 3. Agree to make recommendations to Strategic Policy & Resources that the Council fund the refurbishment of the land outside of the pitch proposal using the land fee; and that the Landscape Planning and Development Unit is tasked to undertake the design element of this work.**
- 1.7 The recommendation was not approved by the Parks & Leisure Committee but was subsequently overturned at the Council meeting on the 5th Jan 2015 to provide that the Council proceed with the recommendations as set out within the report and, in addition, that officers arrange a meeting with residents in order to discuss any concerns which they may have in respect of the development.**
- 1.8 A report was brought to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 23rd Jan 2015 seeking approval to the premium of £129,450 and approval to use part of the receipt to upgrade and landscape the retained land. The Committee deferred a decision and asked that the matter be taken back to Committee following BCC officers undertaking the proposed information session with local residents.**
- 1.9 A public information session has been arranged for 10th February 2015 at Andersonstown Leisure Centre and the**

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Director of Parks & Leisure will provide an update at Committee on the outcome of this.

**2 Key Issues**

**2.1 De La Salle College are seeking funding from the Department of Education's School Enhancement Programme (SEP). The Department of Education have confirmed that there is not enough funding in the SEP to cover all projects and therefore funding will be allocated as and when projects are ready to go forward for procurement. In the case of the pitch and pavilion proposed at Slievegallion Drive, the Department of Education will only confirm the allocation of funding when there is Council approval to the sale of the land and planning approval is in place. De La Salle has recently advised that the planning application process is well advanced. There is, therefore, a risk that DE funding may not be available if Council approval to the land disposal and planning approval is not in place**

**2.2 Council officers have negotiated with the Department of Education and De La Salle College and the following has been agreed in principle and subject to Committee approval:**

- 1. The land shown shaded green on the plan attached at Appendix'1' is to be leased to the Department of Education for 99 years for use as pitches and a pavilion.**
- 2. The premium is agreed at £129,450 in accordance with the Land & Property Services valuation of the land.**
- 3. The Department of Education will be responsible for the construction costs associated with the pitch, pavilion and associated perimeter fence.**
- 4. De La Salle College will be responsible for obtaining planning approval for the proposed development.**
- 5. De La Salle College will facilitate the use of the new facilities by the local community outside of school hours.**

**2.3 While the Department of Education will be responsible for reinstating the Council's retained open space, the Council will fund any additional landscaping to provide higher quality and upgraded open space using part of the premium received from the Department of Education. A preliminary scheme has been prepared as part of the College's proposal at an estimated cost of £110,000.**

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **3.1 Finance**

The Department of Education will pay a premium of £129,450 for the site: it is estimated that the upgrading and landscaping of the retained open space will cost £110,000.

#### **3.2 Assets**

De La Salle College will be responsible for the management, maintenance and insurance of proposed development. The College will provide access to the new facilities for the local community outside of school hours. This integrated approach is in line with the 'One Public Estate' concept and the improved use of publicly owned assets across the wider public sector, voluntary and community sectors.

#### **3.3 Human Resources**

Staff resource to complete the sale of the land by way of long lease to the Department of Education (subject to Committee approval). Further staff resource required in developing the agreement for the community use of the new facility.

### **4 Recommendations**

#### **4.1 Members are asked to note that BCC officers are undertaking a public information session on 10th February 2015 in relation to the proposed development of the land and the Director of Parks & Leisure will provide an update on the outcome of this at Committee. Members are also asked to note the position outlined above in relation to the Department of Education funding.**

Subject to this update being provided at Committee, Members are asked to note that following the Council's decision of the 5th January 2015 to approve, in principle, to the leasing of the land (as outlined above) a premium of £129,450 has now been provisionally agreed with the Department of Education for the disposal (by way of 99 year lease) of the land, subject to:

- Committee approval.
- An appropriate legal agreement to be drawn up by Legal Services.

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- **Expenditure of part of the receipt from the land disposal on the refurbishment and upgrade of the retained open space at this location.”**

The Committee was advised that a request for a deputation of residents who had concerns in relation to the development had been received and the Committee agreed that they be admitted to the meeting.

Prior to the admission of the deputation, the Director of Parks and Leisure tabled, for the information of the Members, a briefing paper in relation to the consultation responses on the De La Salle proposal and outlined the main aspects contained therein.

It was reported that Mrs. A. Kerrigan, Mr. A. Marron and Mrs. M. Keenan, representing Friends of Glasmullan Open Green, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Deputy Chairman.

Mrs. Kerrigan proceeded to outline the concerns of a number of local residents in relation to the proposal by De La Salle school. She pointed out that the open space was a community amenity and offered free use for all residents in what was a densely populated area. She stated that the open space was tranquil and peaceful and suggested that the school should consider alternative options for the location of a pitch.

The deputation then answered a number of questions from the Members and retired from the meeting.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Hendron,

Seconded by Councillor McVeigh,

That the Committee agrees to the leasing of the land as outlined, subject to an appropriate legal agreement to be drawn up by the Legal Services Section and to part of the income received for the land disposal being used for the refurbishment and upgrade of the retained open space at the location.

On a vote by show of hands thirteen Members voted for the proposal and three against and it was declared carried.

**Good Relations and Equality**

**Support for Summer Madness Event**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from Summer Madness for financial support for two Good Relations related events scheduled to take place on 17th and 18th March.

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It was reported that the first event, which was being organised by Summer Madness, would take place in the Waterfront Hall on the evening of 17th March. The event would be attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Mayor and a Catholic Church leader. The event proposed to engage young people from interface areas in conversations around reconciliation and would build on previous engagement projects which had been organised by Summer Madness around issues related to the past, flags and parades. The event would culminate in a symbolic act of prayer outside the City Hall.

The second event would engage young leaders from the business, media, education, faith and political sectors in a breakfast meeting to discuss matters relating to peace and reconciliation. The proposals aimed to strengthen relationships across communities and inspire young people to become advocates for change.

The Committee was informed that the proposed budget for both of the events was £9,270. However, Members would be aware that the Good Relations budget had been fully committed in the current financial year. If the Committee was minded to support the events it might wish to divert an amount of up to £9,270 from the current revenue resources of the Health and Environmental Services budget to cover the cost of the hire of the Waterfront Studio, sound and production, catering and facilitation.

The Committee agreed to vire the amount as outlined to support the events on 17th and 18th March, 2015.

**Human Resources**

**Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives**

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

Noted.

Chairman