



Belfast City Council (Shadow)

Report to	Transition Committee
Subject:	Delivery of Front-Line Services from April 2015
Date:	29 January 2015
Reporting Officers:	Chris McCarthy, Interim Strategic Director of Health and Environmental Services (Ext 3260)

1	Background
1.1	In December, the Committee received detailed presentations from senior officers from across the Council with responsibility for the delivery of core frontline services. The purpose was to provide Members with assurance on the state of readiness for ensuring service continuity and investment in those areas transferring into the city from Lisburn, Castlereagh and North Down.
1.2	With only 61 days remaining until the 1 April, the level and pace of work underway across the organisation is gaining greater momentum. This report sets out a high-level overview of some of the preparations being undertaken by the core frontline services as well as some of the investment plans for the transferring areas in terms of assets and facilities.
2	Key Issues
	Asset transfer preparations
2.1	As a result of Local Government Reform (LGR), there are a number of land and property assets due to transfer to the Council on 1 April 2015. These include 55 assets due to transfer from Lisburn City Council, Castlereagh Borough and North Down and 30 no of off street car parks due to transfer from DRD.
2.2	A detailed due diligence exercise has been ongoing over recent months and detailed asset Packs have been prepared in respect of the transferring assets containing with summary details on title; lease /3rd party agreements; financial information; contracts; condition and compliance surveys; maps and photographs. These Asset Packs continue to be updated as additional information is obtained as part of the ongoing process of engagement.
2.3	There are a number of specific asset related issues currently being worked through with LCC and CBC relating to queries around potential liabilities, title, lease agreements, condition and/or compliance matters. Officers are seeking to bring a resolution to these outstanding issues to enable a detailed report to be brought to Committee in February for Members consideration and direction. Again, this will be submitted to future meeting of Committee for consideration.
2.4	The actual transfer of assets and liabilities require a legal Transfer Scheme which will be made by a Government Department. The transfer schemes will be developed by the transferring body (i.e. CBC/LCC/NDBC and DRD) and must be agreed by BCC as the transferee. The Department of the Environment have indicated that they will act in an adjudication role in the event that there are any issues which remain unresolved in relation to council to council transfer schemes.

2.5	Individual services are currently putting in place detailed operational plans to ensure day-1 readiness and service continuity for those assets transferring.																				
	Investing in the new areas transferring																				
2.6	Members may be aware that a number of key reports had been submitted to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 16 January, setting out initial proposals in relation to the 2015/16 rates setting process. This included identified funding requirements for both non-recurrent and capital expenditure for those new areas and assets transferring into Belfast. These reports and recommendations are due to be considered again by the Shadow SP&R Committee on 20 January. A prioritisation <i>and</i> implementation plan will now be developed in order to progress these capital and non recurrent projects during the 2015/16 period.																				
	Maintenance/Upgrade investment																				
2.7	<p>£573K budget is currently included in the 15/16 budget estimates for one-off costs associated with the assets transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh. Table 1 below sets out the proposed one-off investments identified; with a summary of the proposed maintenance investments by asset transferring set out at Appendix 1.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1: One-Off Asset Costs 2015/16</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Property Maintenance - Assets transferring</td> <td style="text-align: right;">393,235</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parks & Open Spaces/Tree & Path Works</td> <td style="text-align: right;">127,307</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pitches Improvement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10,510</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Street Signs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Building Signage</td> <td style="text-align: right;">30,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Assets</td> <td style="text-align: right;">573,052</td> </tr> </table> <p>In addition to building signage, work is also underway, in liaison with LCC, CBC and ND to identify and plan for potential boundary related signage works which would be implemented during the 2015/16 period.</p>	Property Maintenance - Assets transferring	393,235	Parks & Open Spaces/Tree & Path Works	127,307	Pitches Improvement	10,510	Street Signs	12,000	Building Signage	30,000	Total Assets	573,052								
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	Capital investment in transferring areas																				
2.8	<p>Table 2 below sets out proposals for £2m investment in a number of capital projects in the new areas transferring as part of the Council's wider Capital Programme. It has been recommended to SSP&R that the financing of this would be from the new rate base and is included in the 2015/15 rates estimates. It is proposed that all these projects can be completed during 2015/16.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Table 2 - Allocation of £2m New Boundary Capital Financing</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Brooke Playground Replacement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£230,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mount Eagles Playground Replacement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£230,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Areema Drive Playground Replacement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£230,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New playground (Poleglass)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£230,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Twinbrook Wildlife Park</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£80,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roddens Crescent Playground Upgrade</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£70,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lisburn Bridges Repairs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£150,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prince Regent Road Depot</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£480,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sally Gardens</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£300,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Financing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£2,000,000</td> </tr> </table>	Brooke Playground Replacement	£230,000	Mount Eagles Playground Replacement	£230,000	Areema Drive Playground Replacement	£230,000	New playground (Poleglass)	£230,000	Twinbrook Wildlife Park	£80,000	Roddens Crescent Playground Upgrade	£70,000	Lisburn Bridges Repairs	£150,000	Prince Regent Road Depot	£480,000	Sally Gardens	£300,000	Total Financing	£2,000,000
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2.9	The intention now is to undertake detailed scoping, in liaison with elected Members, to examine the new areas transferring from a physical perspective and identify potential capital investment needs and/or opportunities. This work will input into the Council's future capital programme and financial planning processes.
	Grant Provision
2.10	As part of the 15/16 rates estimates there has also been £429k budget allocation proposed to support the alignment of the Council's grant aid programmes for those new areas transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh. To enhance the awareness of the council grant opportunities and the capacity of potential applications to draw down possible funding, the Council's Central Grants Unit has implemented a series of focused workshop and briefing sessions with key stakeholder groups from across the new larger city boundary.
3.0	Service Readiness Preparations
3.1	<p>Detailed service planning is ongoing across the organisation to ensure the effective delivery, within budget limitations, of core frontline services to the additional 21,000 households, 53,000 citizens residing in approximately 690 new streets transferring and the transfer of 800 businesses and 160 commercial waste customers. Some key highlights include:</p> <p>Communications and Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All services have mapped out their detailed customer profiles and needs linked to the areas transferring and this information has informed service and resource planning. - Officers throughout the organisation are working closely with communities' right across the city to raise awareness of the services and support provided by the Council - A community engagement working group has been established to coordinate a corporate approach to LGR service convergence engagement; to map all engagement activity taking place in the run up to April 15 and beyond, ensuring that all areas transferring to the city are covered and that all relevant and timely information relating to services is available to officers on the ground. - City Matters issued to transferring areas from w/c 19 Jan - Business e-shot to be issued in early February. Engagement event for businesses on the LPS rates revaluation and convergence scheme in early Feb <p>Environmental Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New operational geographies agreed and service plans in place to extend all core services (e.g. night-time noise, air quality, food safety) into new areas transferring - Emergency Planning – assessment undertaken to identify risks in the transferring areas (e.g. flooding, security alerts, high risk locations) and identification of available resources for emergency response (e.g. Emergency Support Centres). BCC Emergency Plan being revised and engagement underway with other key stakeholders to ensure that all multi-agency plans take account of new areas. <p>Cleansing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have mapped customer needs and preparations remain on track - Operational plans in place to extend existing services (e.g. commercial waste, bulky waste, street cleansing, dog control, pest control) to new areas. Estimated that there will be approximately 312 additional miles to be cleansed weekly. - Routes developed and staff resources allocated. - Roll-out of education and awareness activities with key stakeholder including schools, resident groups and local communities in the new areas. <p>Waste Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational plans in place to extend services (including e.g. refuse collection, recycling) into new areas transferring - Geographical areas identified and new collection bin routes planned. - Education & Promotions Team commencing door-to-door engagement in transferring areas in February 15.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial article on bin collections included in January 15 edition of City Matters which had been issued to all new households.
3.5	<p>Building Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational plans in place to extend services into new areas including e.g. building regulations, licensing and addressing dangerous or dilapidated buildings. - There have been 32 dangerous or dilapidated buildings identified. These will be triaged against the impact matrix and then built into future submissions for additional funding should it arise or, where the Council can take action.
3.6	<p>Parks & Leisure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area plans developed to include all new open spaces. Routes developed and staff resources allocated. - Belfast in Bloom to be extended to new area. - Plans underway to extend Green-flag in new areas - initial assessments undertaken of transferring assets and improvement plans currently being considered. - All clubs and community groups in transferring areas have been contacted to raise awareness of Support for Sport and Park Small Event grants availability. - Outreach Managers working with new communities to develop programmes for 2015/16 – initial emphasis on Easter week - Music in Parks event programme will extend to new areas - Warden service extending to new areas - Playground upgrades included in capital programme
3.7	<p>Community Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community/user groups mapping exercise complete and engagement underway - Service plans in place for the extension of community and area support services into the new areas. - Day-1 operational plans being prepared for transferring assets. - Grant funding - communications and awareness sessions with potential grant recipients completed.

4	Resource Implications
5.1	Resources have been included in the revenue estimates for 2015 /16.

6	Equality and Good Relations Implications
6.1	None

7	Recommendations
7.1	Members are asked to note the content of the report and that more detailed reports will be brought to Committee in February 2015.

8	Documents Attached
8.1	Maintenance Required for transferring assets 2015/16

Appendix One: Maintenance required for transferring assets 15/16

Asset	Cost
Braniel Community Centre	3,050
Clonduff Drive Community Centre	135,800
Cregagh Civic Amenity Facility	25,300
Cregagh Youth and Community Centre	755
Downshire Community Hall	84,250
Henry Jones Pavillion	116,100
Knockbreda Cemetery Store	5,350
Lock Keepers Cottage	1,000
Tullycarnet Community Centre	730
Tullycarnet Pavilion & Bowling Green	15,000
Fullerton Park Community Centre & Pavillion	2,450
Napier Park Changing Pavillion	3,450
	393,235