Belfast District Council

Report to	**Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**
Subject:	**Appointment of Working Groups**
Date:	13th February, 2015
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (Ext 6314)
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ext 6313)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Committee will be aware that the current Council agreed to continue with the existing committee structures for the shadow period until March, 2015. In addition, the Shadow Council had opted for a traditional Committee system, with five Standing Committees, as the governance structure for the new Council from April, 2015.
1.2	The Council had agreed also to review the number and role of the existing working groups to take account of the dual governance systems which have been operating during the shadow period and particularly to prioritise the time commitment required of those Members holding office on both Councils.
1.3	The current policy for establishing working groups is that they should be appointed for a short-term to focus on issues of particular concern. In addition, the following principles also apply to the appointment of Working Groups: • Working Groups should be established only if they are considered to be essential for the achievement of effective and efficient decision-making; • such Working Groups should be appointed for a fixed-term and for a specific purpose; • the Groups would not have decision-making powers but rather would produce a report with recommendations for consideration by the appointing Committee; • after the Working Group has concluded the business for which it was established, it would cease to exist; and

	• Working Groups should be formed on the basis of All-Party representation with nominees sought from the Party Group Leaders.

2	**Key Issues**
2.1	At its meeting on 22ⁿᵈ August, 2014 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee considered a report on Working Groups and agreed to reconstitute the following until March, 2015:

Accommodation Steering Group	Good Relations Partnership
Audit Panel	North Foreshore Steering Group
Budget and Transformation Panel	Party Leaders' Forum
Diversity Working Group	Reference Group on Older People
Emergency and Severe Weather Working Group	

2.2 In addition the Committee agreed the following:

- To reconstitute the 5 area Based Working Groups.

- The Housing Forum should be reviewed to take account of transferring functions.

- That the following working groups should not be reconstituted as their work has either been completed or is now under the remit of the new Shadow Council:

  Cross-Party reference Group on Community Planning
  Governance Working Group
  Historic Centenaries working group (now incorporated into the Diversity Working Group)
  Members' Development Steering Group (with capacity building issues being dealt with through the Budget and Transformation Panel)
  Waste Plan Implementation Group

2.3 It should be pointed out that the work of some of the working groups which the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to reconstitute will be part of the remit of the new Standing Committees which will come in to operation from April, 2015

2.4 It is suggested that the Committee consider reconstituting only 5 of the Working Groups, namely, the Audit and Risk Panel, the Budget and Transformation Panel, the Diversity Working Group, the Good Relations Partnership and the Party Leaders Forum, on the same terms of reference and membership as previously agreed (copy of terms of reference and Membership attached at Appendix 1).

2.5 It will be a matter for the other new Committees to decide which Working Groups, if any, they wish to establish.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The number and frequency of working group meetings will have an impact on Member and officer time.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are not any equality or good relations considerations in relation to this report.

5	Call-In
5.1	This decision is subject to call-in.

6	Recommendations
6.1	The Committee is recommended reconstitute the 5 Working Groups as outline in paragraph 2.4.

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Details of the Terms of Reference and Membership of each Working Group.	