



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Consultation on Severance Arrangements for Councillors
<b>Date:</b>	19th June, 2009
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mr. S. McCrory, Principal Committee Administrator
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr. S. McCrory (extension 6314)

### Relevant Background Information

Members may recall that the Committee, at its meeting on 24th April, agreed to defer consideration of a report in relation to the Department of the Environment's Consultation Paper on Severance Arrangements for Councillors to enable the Party Groupings on the Council to consider the matter.

Following further consultation with Members, a revised report and response to the consultation document was submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 22nd May, at which the response was approved (a copy of the minute in this regard is appended).

At its meeting on 1st June, at the request of Councillor Humphrey, the Council agreed that the matter be taken back to the Committee to allow the Party Groupings to give further consideration to the proposals.

### Key Issues

As the closing date for responses to the consultation was 31st May, a copy of the Council's comments was forwarded to the Department of the Environment on 27th May, with the proviso that the decision was subject to ratification by the Council on 1st June.

Following the Council's decision, the Department of the Environment was contacted and advised that the Council's response had not yet been ratified.

The Department was advised also that the Council would not be in a position to resubmit a response until after the Council meeting on 1st July at the earliest and asked if the Council's response would still be taken into consideration if it was not approved until that time.

**Key issues (continued)**

A reply was received from the Department's Policy Division acknowledging the non-ratification of the Council's comments and stating that it would not be able to take the views of the Council into account since the Assembly's Environment Committee had requested a synopsis of responses to the consultation by 19th June in order to permit the Minister to introduce to the Assembly in late June the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, which will contain the enabling power for the Department to make a severance scheme.

However, the Department has indicated that the views of the Council may be taken into account when framing the subordinate legislation.

**Resource Implications**

There are no Human Resource or financial implications associated with this report.

**Recommendation**

To approve the response submitted.

**Decision Tracking**

Any decision of the Committee will be conveyed, if necessary, to the Department of the Environment following the meeting of the Council on 1st July.

Officer Responsible – Mr. Jim Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator

**Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Extract of minutes of meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May.