



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Lord Mayor's Personal Allowance
Date:	Friday, 19 th June, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Principal Committee Administrator (ext. 6314)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Gareth Quinn, Development Officer (ext. 6316)

Relevant Background Information

During their Term of Office each of the Civic Dignitaries receives a personal allowance which is agreed each year by Council. This allowance is intended to compensate the post-holder for the time involved and expenses incurred in carrying out the duties of Lord Mayor.

On 8th May, 2009 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to increase the Lord Mayor's Allowance of £33,200 in line with the Consumer Price Index as at 1st June, 2009.

Key Issues

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Naomi Long, has indicated that it is her intention not to accept her personal allowance. The Lord Mayor is keen to ensure that her decision not to accept her personal allowance is not seen as setting a precedent for future Lord Mayors. She is very conscious of the fact that other Members who may be elected in the future to the position of Lord Mayor may not be able to make the same gesture.

While the non-acceptance of the personal allowance will be of benefit to the Council and therefore the rate-payers, the Lord Mayor, who has an affinity with the promotion of Good Relations – she has been Chairman of the Council's Good Relations Partnership for the previous two years – would be anxious to see an amount equivalent to the Lord Mayor's personal allowance allocated to the Good Relations Small Grants Scheme, which supports the work of local communities throughout the city on a range of good relations issues. This would then be distributed along with current funding to applicants satisfying the existing criteria applied by the Committee.

The allocation of this money by the Council at source would enable the Good Relations Small Grants Scheme to benefit without Tax and National Insurance being deducted.

Resource Implications

None.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to authorise the reallocation of the Lord Mayor's Personal Allowance for 2009/10 to the Good Relations Small Grants Scheme, on the understanding that this is a one off measure and will not be taken to create a precedent.

Decision Tracking

If the Committee adopts the recommendation, the amount involved, after the increase in the Consumer Price Index as at 1st June has been added, will be confirmed and reallocated to the Good Relations Small Grants Scheme.

Officer responsible – Mr. Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services.
