

# **New Regional Hospital for Women and Children Working Group**

Tuesday, 21st April, 2009

## **MEETING OF NEW REGIONAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN WORKING GROUP**

Members present: Councillor Attwood (Chairman); and  
Councillors Hendron, McKenzie and Rodgers.

In attendance: Mr. C. Quigley, Director of Legal Services;  
Mr. E. Deeny, Head of Corporate Communications;  
Mr. L. Steele, Head of Committee and  
Members' Services; and  
Miss L. Hillick, Committee Administrator.

### **Chairing of Meeting**

The Working Group agreed that Councillor Rodgers take the Chair for the purpose of the appointment of a Chairman.

(Councillor Rodgers in the Chair.)

### **Nomination of Chairman**

The Working Group agreed that Councillor Attwood be nominated as the Chairman of the Working Group.

(Councillor Attwood in the Chair.)

### **New Regional Hospital for Women and Children Working Group**

The Working Group considered the undernoted report in relation to the background to its establishment and next steps:

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

##### **Notice of Motion 1st July, 2008**

**Members will recall that the Council, at its meeting on 1st July, passed unanimously the following Notice of Motion:**

**‘Belfast City Council calls on the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Executive to make the completion of the new regional hospital for children and women, on the site of the Royal Group of Hospitals, a matter of top priority in the next comprehensive spending review.**

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The Council calls on the Minister of Health and the Executive to secure the resources now for clearing the site, which is an essential first step in progressing the new hospital for children and women.

The Council agrees to work in partnership with the Royal Maternity Hospital Liaison Group to lobby the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly to secure the capital funds necessary to build the new regional hospital for children and women.'

Copies of the Motion were forwarded to both the Assembly and the Minister for Health.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  
22nd August, 2008**

Responses to the Motion were received from the Minister and the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and these were reported to the above-mentioned Committee meeting.

In addition, at that meeting it had been reported that the Committee, at its meeting on 20th June, had agreed to hold an informal meeting or briefing session to enable the Royal Maternity Hospital Liaison Group to brief the Members on the situation regarding the new regional hospital.

The final part of the Motion committed the Council to work in partnership with the Group but, rather than hold a special meeting, the Chairman of the Committee felt that it was more appropriate for the Group to make a short presentation to the Committee at its meeting on 22nd August.

The Committee accordingly received a presentation from the group and agreed that the means by which the Council could support the campaign either financially or otherwise be investigated and that a report thereon be submitted for the Committee's consideration in due course.

**Strategic Policy and resources Committee  
23rd January, 2009**

A report was subsequently prepared by the Director of Legal Services and submitted to the Committee for consideration. However, the report was deferred to enable further information to be obtained.

A revised report was submitted to the committee on 12th December and the following was agreed:

- (a) *expenditure, up to a maximum of £20,000, in respect of the above-mentioned campaign to be approved under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to, the District and the inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefit so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made;*
- (b) *a fixed-term Working Group, comprising one Member from each of the Political Parties represented on the Council, be appointed to consider the most appropriate means of taking forward the campaign; and*
- (c) *a report on the recommendations of the Working Group in this regard be submitted in due course for the consideration of the Committee.*

Following a referral back by the Council on 5th January, this decision was affirmed by the Committee on 23rd January, subject to the following caveat:

*'that when the Working Group had been established the first item of business to be dealt with would be to seek a meeting with Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety'.*

#### Key Issues

The Nominations for the Working Group were sought and the following Members have been appointed:

Alliance Party	- Councillor Hendron
Democratic Unionist Party	- Councillor McKenzie
Progressive Unionist Party	- Councillor Kyle
Social Democratic and Labour Party	- Councillor Attwood
Sinn Fein Party	- Councillor M. Browne
Ulster Unionist Party	- Councillor Rodgers

In accordance with the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the first item of business to be dealt with by the Group is to seek a meeting with the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

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The Minister's current position in relation to the new hospital is set out in the attached press release and is as follows:

The site enabling works will begin in 2011, with construction of the Women's Hospital beginning in 2015/16 and completed during 2017/18.

Construction of the Children's Hospital is not due to start until 2017/18, with completion expected in 2021/22.

**Resource Implications**

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has approved expenditure, up to a maximum of £20,000, in respect of a campaign to support the provision of a new regional hospital for women and children on the site of the Royal Group of Hospitals.

**Recommendations**

The Working Group is asked to note the information provided and agree to seek a meeting with the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the provision of a new regional hospital for women and children."

The Head of Committee and Members' Services provided the Members with up-to-date information in relation to the matter.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to:

- (i) seek a meeting with the Minister with responsibility for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Mr. M. McGimpsey, M.L.A. in order to outline the Council's support for the provision of a new regional hospital;
- (ii) undertake a site visit to the Royal Maternity Hospital in order to review the facilities thereat; and
- (iii) write to the Chief Executive of Lisburn City Council requesting that representatives from that Council attend a future meeting of the Working Group in order to outline the steps which that Council had taken in relation to its campaign to support the Lagan Valley Hospital.

Chairman