

Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting 11 January 2012

1. Attendance

Members:

Cllr Tim Attwood
Alderman David Browne
Cllr Deirdre Hargey (Chair)
Cllr Maire Hendron
Cllr Jim McVeigh
Alderman Robin Newton
Alderman Hugh Smith

Officers:

Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
John McGrillen, Director of Development
Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance
Sharon McNicholl, Strategic Policy Manager

Mr Paul McTernan, SLR Consulting (for item 2 only)
Jonathan Huish, Peer Member

2. Belfast Masterplan

The Chair welcomed Mr Paul McTernan to the meeting.
Mr McTernan delivered a presentation to the panel which provided a summary of the draft Belfast Masterplan after which Mr McTernan answered questions from Elected Members.

The following points were made in relation to the draft Masterplan and the presentation:-

- Members welcomed the presentation and the opportunity to have an external view of the Masterplan proposals.
- It was noted that the Masterplan highlighted that the areas of deprivation in the City referred to in the 2003 Masterplan, still remained in deprivation. It was therefore important that investment in the “Learning City” theme of the Masterplan should assist in tackling long term unemployment in these areas.
- The importance of the links to Investment Package needed to be made in both the communication and delivery of the Masterplan.
- The ability of the Masterplan to impact on Good Relations in the City should be a key consideration of investment and design plans.

Following the presentation J McGrillen advised the Panel that the Masterplan would be presented to a special meeting of the Development Committee on the 26 January 2012, to which all members of council will be invited. It was also noted that the University of Ulster will be invited to attend the 6 February meeting of the Development Committee to talk about the proposals of the University to relocate to the York Street site.

3. Investment Programme

The Chief Executive referred to the latest draft of the Investment Programme which had been provided to the Members of the Panel and which had been updated taking on board

the comments of the party groups. The Investment Programme would be considered at the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on the 20 January 2012, with the District Rate report.

The Chief Executive stated that when the final document is published and promoted, it would send out a powerful joint political message, that Belfast is serious about investing in the City through committing to the delivery of £150m of capital investment, investing in tourism and neighbourhoods and creating employment and that this would be achieved through a below inflation rate increase.

All Party Group Leaders congratulated the officers on **their work on the** investment programme.

Mr McGillen outlined the proposed arrangements for the launch of the Investment Programme, with the main launch venue being the Gallery at the Waterfront Hall on the 2 February 2012, following the Council meeting on the 1 February 2012. This would be followed by neighbourhood launches at local venues during the week commencing the 6 February 2012. The launches would set the programme in the context of the rates and signpost the Masterplan for the City.

A full briefing for the Chair of SP&R and the Party Group Leaders would be provided in advance of the launch date in preparation for press interviews following the launch.

4. Capital Investment Element of the 2012/13 Rate Increase

R Cregan reported that the revenue estimates had been agreed by each of the departmental committees and that the remaining decision required by members was the level of capital investment to be included in the District Rate increase. It was noted that this would be considered at the Strategic Policy Resources Committee on the 20 January 2012, along with the Investment Package.

Members agreed that the issue regarding the level of capital investment would be discussed at the Party Group Leaders meeting which would follow this Budget and Transformation meeting.