



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
<b>Subject:</b>	Investment Programme – communications update
<b>Date:</b>	23 November, 2012
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Eamon Deeny (ext 6285)

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	<p>The investment programme was launched in February 2012 in Belfast Waterfront and also at a number of smaller events throughout the community. It was warmly received by most of the media and also by the Northern Ireland Executive, business leader, trade unions and local communities.</p> <p>A communications plan was approved by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18 May, 2012 and at the council's June monthly meeting.</p> <p>In the intervening period a short term communications plan was drawn up and implemented and to date there has been media, City Matters and website coverage for a number of initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Super Connected Cities;</li><li>• Mary Peters Track;</li><li>• Dunville and Woodvale Parks;</li><li>• The local investment fund;</li><li>• The jobs target (110 jobs and 170 placements this year</li><li>• Plans for the Waterfront Hall.</li></ul> <p>Internally, there have also been regular updates to staff through Intercom magazine, Interlink (intranet) and team briefings and signage has been erected at Mary Peters Track, Dunville and Woodvale.</p> <p>With the first anniversary of the launch of the Investment Programme approaching in February, it is vital that communications is stepped up and that the contents of the original document are revisited and updates on progress are pulled together.</p> <p>We need to highlight projects on the ground that are being delivered and highlight progress on the headline developments, such as the Waterfront Hall,</p>

	Mary Peters Track etc. It is vital that we demonstrate we are achieving our aims.
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<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to inform members of plans to build on the original communications strategic approach paper and produce a fully developed action plan.</p> <p>One of the issues to date has been gathering updated information on progress from the various strands but the appointment this month of the Investment Programme Communications Officer and the recent appointments of the Programme Managers will resolve that ongoing difficulty.</p> <p>A communications group of officers involved in delivering the projects, led by the Director of Finance and the Head of Corporate Communications, has been set up and will develop the action plan and bring it to the January meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval. A quarterly report on communications issues will subsequently be brought to committee. .</p> <p>It is important that communications are politically led. The Communications Group will therefore report firstly direct to the Budget Panel, made up of the Party Group Leaders and the Chair of SP&amp;R Committee, and through the Budget Panel to Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee.</p> <p>In addition, individual parties have asked for access to the council's photographic images to allow them to include publicity about the council's investment programme in their own publications.</p> <p>It is possible for this to be provided and the committee is asked to consider if this should be made available on request, through Corporate Communications, to political parties with the proviso that the Investment Programme is always referred to as a cross party council initiative.</p> <p>This would be in keeping with the stated council's position that the Investment Programme is politically led.</p> <p>The committee is also asked to reaffirm the protocols around lead representatives in photocalls and press releases in relation to the Investment Programme. The following was suggested in the original communications strategic document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Party leaders on the big projects delivered by the council – such as Waterfront, Mary Peters Track at the announcement and completion stages. If for logistical reasons only one person can be used in a press release or a photocall the chair of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would represent the party leaders as a whole.</li> <li>• Chairman of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee or Lord Mayor, on agreement with party leaders, on partnership/Citywide projects which are not owned by the council or only partly involve the council and on events that require civic presence and other events where OFMDFM or other Ministers attend and official openings..</li> <li>• Committee chairs at departmental projects and also at key milestones (other than announcement and completion) of major projects</li> <li>• Other councillors – local projects, where possible make it cross party and all local reps where possible.</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<u>Financial</u> N/A
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> N/A
3.3	<u>Asset and Other Implications</u> N/A

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	N/A

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	<p>The committee is asked to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The setting up of the communications group</li> <li>• A fully developed communications action plan will be brought to committee in January for approval followed by quarterly update reports for discussion.</li> </ul> <p>The committee is asked to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making council owned photographic imaged available through Corporate Communications to political parties for use in their own publications;</li> <li>• The protocols in relation to council representatives in Investment Programme press releases and photographs</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Officer responsible – Eamon Deeny	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
N/A	