

**Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting
18 October 2013**

1. Attendance

Members:

Alderman Gavin Robinson (Chair)
Councillor Tim Attwood
Councillor Maire Hendron
Councillor Jim McVeigh

Apologies:

Councillor John Kyle
Councillor Lee Reynolds

Officers:

Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance
Caroline Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager (for item 4)

2. Rates Setting

The Director of Finance and Resources provided an update on the current rate setting process and advised that the departmental estimates had been submitted and that these were now being subject to challenge by Central Finance.

He also advised that work to secure the £2m of efficiency savings for 2014/15 was continuing, however he emphasised that the decision regarding the future options for Security, which would be considered at the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Meeting on the 22 November, would be key to achieving the overall £2m efficiency target.

A report outlining the summary impact of the estimates on the District Rate would be presented to the SP&R on the 22 November 2013 and would include options for 1%, 0% and 2% rate.

3. Local Government Reform

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Transfer of Functions and Service Convergence stands of Local Government Reform. He also highlighted that the guidance issued by the Department on expenditure contracts had the potential to delay council contracts. Council officers are currently developing a list of key contracts for discussion with the Department.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive should present a briefing paper to the VTC on 8 November 2013 which would propose the establishment of a Cross Party Working Group to consider of the governance options for the New Council. The report should also include a draft timetable which would enable any proposals/views of the Working Group to be considered by SP&R, before a final decision was made by the Shadow Council in June 2013.

4. Leisure Transformation Programme

The Neighbourhood and Development Manager summarised the issues arising from the Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) visit, including the workshop with Elected Members and the meeting with the Trade Unions.

Given the timescales for the development of the Olympia and Andersonstown facilities and the commitment to generate £2m of leisure transformation savings by 2016, it was agreed the options for future leisure operating models should be presented to SP&R in December 2013 in order for a full business plan to be prepared and tested in accordance with due diligence requirements.

It was also agreed that the Head of Corporate Communications should be asked to attend the next meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel to provide an update on the Communications Strategy for the Investment Programme and how, from a communications plan perspective, the new Leisure Capital Investment can form the basis of Phase 2 of the Investment programme

5. Social Clauses

It was noted that the Director of Property and Projects would be presenting a progress report on the inclusion of social clauses in Council contracts to SP&R on the 25 October 2013.

The report would also include the findings of the Council for Local Economic Studies (CLES) review of the impact of Council spend in the Belfast and wider Northern Ireland economy, together with the proposal to increase the level of Belfast appointees to apprenticeship opportunities generated through the social clauses.

6. Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

The Director of Property and Projects advised that a report would be presented to SP&R on the 25 October recommending that approximately 11 BIF proposals should be moved to Stage 1 (Emerging Projects).

It was noted that no BIF proposals could move beyond the feasibility stage until the overall funding framework for BIF had been agreed by SP&R.

7. Girdwood Consultation

The Director of Property and Projects advised that feedback from the consultation exercise had mainly been very positive. Some objections had been received on the basis of the impact on streets which would lead to the access points of the site. A full report on the consultation would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in the 25 October 2013.

7. Date of Next Meeting

10.00am, Friday 15 November 2013.