

**Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting
12 June 2014**

1. Attendance

Members:

Councillor Lee Reynolds (Acting Chair)
Councillor Deidre Hargey (for Councillor Jim McVeigh)
Councillor Maire Hendron
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Kate Mullan (for Councillor Tim Attwood)

Apologies:

Alderman David Browne
Alderman Gavin Robinson
Councillor John Kyle

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive Designate
Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
John McGrillen, Director of Development
Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Jill Minne, Assistant Chief executive and Head of Human Resources
Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

2. Year End Finance

The Director of Finance and Resources provided an overview of the draft year end finance report which would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee on the 19 June 2014 and to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources (Shadow SP&R) Committee on the 23 June 2014. The Director highlighted that the departmental outturn was an under spend of £366k (0.3%) and that the year-end rates position would be a positive settlement of £1.67m.

The Panel agreed with the recommendation that the year-end outturn and the positive rates settlement should be earmarked to finance the voluntary redundancies and leisure pension costs arising from the leisure transformation programme.

3. Capital Programme

The Director of Property and Projects advised that a Capital Programme Update Report would be presented to June meetings of the SP&R and Shadow SP&R outlining the proposed movements in the capital programme, the current position Letters of Offer for EDRF funded projects and the procurement of vehicles required for the operation of cleansing and waste collection service to the new boundary areas. He also advised that a separate report on the Councils accommodation strategy would be presented to both committees, following the unsuccessful bid by the Council for the purchase of the Clarendon House site.

It was agreed that briefings were required for Elected Members on the current position and proposed design of the Innovation Centre at Springvale and that these briefings would need to be followed with meetings with local residents who had expressed concerns to their Elected Representatives. The Director of Development confirmed that he would take this forward.

4. Rates Process

The Director of Finance and Resources highlighted the complexity and issues associated with the development of the revenue estimates and district rate setting for 2015/16.

The Panel noted that the proposed process for setting the 2015/16 district rate, including the Budget Panel, Committee and Council reporting and decision timetable would be presented to the Shadow SP&R meeting on the 23 June 2014.

5. DSD Regeneration Funding

The Chief Executive Designate summarised the engagement which had been undertaken with DSD to challenge the allocation for Belfast proposed under the DSD Funding Model.

It was noted that the initial indications of a significant shortfall in the proposed funding available for Neighbourhood Renewal against historic trends and commitments has been confirmed in follow up engagement with DSD.

Given this shortfall and the funding required to maintain current levels of support for tackling disadvantage and community development for the next 2 years, together with the costs associated with the transfer of the Lagan Weir, there would be very little resources left to fund physical projects during the next two years unless transitional funding was available for this period.

The Panel noted that the Officers were making proposals to DSD / DFP for transition funding and also that given the significance of the City to the Northern Ireland economy that the Council should be able to bid for funding of regionally significant projects.

The Director of Property and Projects highlighted that the shortfall in funding proposed could affect existing LIF proposals which it was intended would be part funded through neighbourhood renewal funding. He added that consideration would need to be given to the alignment of the Belfast Investment Fund to the transferring regeneration function and funding.

6. Civic Initiatives Fund

The Panel discussed the potential establishment of a Civic Initiatives Fund from within existing resources which would target an initiative linked to the Council key priorities and which would be led by the Council's Civic Dignatories.

It was agreed that the Director of Finance and Resources should undertake research on similar City Initiatives and present an initial report on the potential policy framework, including mechanisms for ensuring measurable outcomes are delivered, for consideration by SP&R in August 2014.

7. Leisure Transformation Update

The Director of Parks and Leisure provided an update on the Leisure Transformation Programme. He reminded the Panel that £23.5m of capital investment as phase 2 of the Leisure Investment programme, was to be targeted at the local government transferring areas in the Outer West and East of the City. He referred to potential partnership arrangements in developing the phase 2 and that engagement with Elected Member on phase 2 would commence soon.

8. Real Jobs Policy Update

The Director of Property and Projects advised that further correspondence had been received from the "Right to Work: Right to Welfare" Group and that the group had requested that this correspondence be distributed to Elected Members. He advised that a briefing note

was being prepared for Members and that this would be circulated with the correspondence in the next few days.

9. IBM Smarter Cities Challenge Update

The Chief Executive Designate referred to the draft update report on the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge and the proposal to publish the IBM Executive Summary Report and the Council's proposed next steps.

It was agreed that the report should be presented to the SP&R meeting on the 19 June 2014.

10. Organisation Development Strategy

The Panel noted the update on the development of the Organisation Development (OD) Strategy and that a report on the strategic framework would be presented to the Shadow SP&R meeting on the 23 June 2014.

11. Date of Next Meeting

To be Advised