



Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Working Groups
Date:	22 nd August, 2014
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Stephen McCrory

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 4 th April, it had considered a report on the future governance arrangements for the Council.
1.2	The Committee had agreed to continue with the existing committee structures for the current Council until March, 2015 and to a traditional Committee system, with four Standing Committees, as the governance structure for the Shadow Council from June, 2014 – March, 2015.
1.3	It was agreed also to review the number and role of the existing working groups to take account of the dual governance systems which will operate during the shadow period and particularly to prioritise the time commitment required of those Members holding office on both Councils.
1.4	At its meeting on 25 th April, the Committee had agreed to reappoint the membership of the Audit Panel and the Good Relations Partnership in order that they might hold essential meetings in June, with the reappointment of all other working groups to be considered as part of an overall report to the Committee in August.
1.5	In approving the new Governance Arrangements in 2007, the Council agreed it would be likely that the Standing Committees would wish to appoint short-term Working Groups to focus on issues of particular concern. In addition, the Council had agreed previously the following principles associated with appointment of Working Groups:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Groups should be established only if they are considered to be essential for the achievement of effective and efficient decision-making; • such Working Groups should be appointed for a fixed-term and for a specific purpose; • the Groups would not have decision-making powers but rather would produce a report with recommendations for consideration by the appointing Committee; • after the Working Group has concluded the business for which it was established, it would cease to exist; and • Working Groups should be formed on the basis of All-Party representation with nominees sought from the Party Group Leaders.
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2	Key Issues																					
2.1	<p>The Council currently has the following 15 Working/Steering Groups/Panels together with five Area Based Working Groups:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Accommodation Steering Group</td> <td>Members' Development Steering Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Audit Panel</td> <td>North Foreshore Steering Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Budget and Transformation Panel</td> <td>Party Leaders' Forum</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cross-Party Reference Group on Community Planning</td> <td>Reference Group on Older People</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emergency and Severe Weather Working Group</td> <td>Waste Plan Implementation Working Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good Relations Partnership</td> <td>East Belfast Area Based Working Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Governance Working Group</td> <td>Greater Shankill Area Based Working Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Historic Centenaries Working Group</td> <td>North Belfast Area Based Working Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing Forum</td> <td>South Belfast Area Based Working Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joint Group of Party Group Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group</td> <td>West Belfast Area Based Working Group</td> </tr> </table>		Accommodation Steering Group	Members' Development Steering Group	Audit Panel	North Foreshore Steering Group	Budget and Transformation Panel	Party Leaders' Forum	Cross-Party Reference Group on Community Planning	Reference Group on Older People	Emergency and Severe Weather Working Group	Waste Plan Implementation Working Group	Good Relations Partnership	East Belfast Area Based Working Group	Governance Working Group	Greater Shankill Area Based Working Group	Historic Centenaries Working Group	North Belfast Area Based Working Group	Housing Forum	South Belfast Area Based Working Group	Joint Group of Party Group Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group	West Belfast Area Based Working Group
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2.2	<p>The Committee will now need to consider which of the above-mentioned Working Group it wishes to reconstitute. Details of the Terms of Reference, the current membership and the number of meetings held from June, 2013 until June, 2014, together with a recommendation on the future of the Group, are provided for Members' information at Appendix 1. A summary is outlined below.</p>																					

<p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p>	<p>The following working groups have already been reappointed to ensure continuity of business and it is recommended that they continue until 31st March 2015;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Audit panel • The Good Relations Partnership • The Budget and Transformation Panel • Party Leaders Forum (to meet immediately prior to the Diversity Working Group) <p>In addition, it is recommended that the following groups may need to meet over the coming year and are therefore reconstituted until 31st March 2015;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Foreshore Steering Group • Joint Group of Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group (renamed Diversity Working Group) (to meet immediately before the Party Leaders' Forum) • Reference Group on Older People • Accommodation Working Group • Emergency and Severe Weather Working Group (ad-hoc to meet as and when required) <p>The Housing Forum should be reviewed to take account of transferring functions.</p> <p>The following working groups should not be reconstituted as their work has either been completed or is now under the remit of the new Shadow Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-Party reference Group on Community Planning • Governance Working Group • Historic Centenaries working group (now incorporated into the Diversity Working Group) • Members' Development Steering Group (with capacity building issues being dealt with through the Budget and Transformation Panel) • Waste Plan Implementation Group <p>Area Working Groups</p> <p>The Shadow Council is now embarking on a community planning process which will include a review of the Council's approach to area working. Over the coming year it is proposed that the area working groups are retained in their current format and that the new members are invited to the appropriate group.</p>
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<p>3</p>	<p>Resource Implications</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>The number and frequency of working group meetings will have an impact on Member and officer time.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are not any equality or good relations considerations in relation to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is asked to consider each of the recommendations in relation to the Working Groups, as set out in Appendix 1, and decide which, if any, it wishes to reconstitute until 31 st March, 2015;

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Details of the Terms of Reference, Membership etc of each Working Group.	