



**Belfast City Council**

**Report to** Town Planning Committee

**Subject:** **Frequency of Meetings**

**Date:** 18th June, 2014

**Reporting Officer:** Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)

Contact Officer: Barry Flynn, Democratic Services Officer (ext 6312)

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that the Term of Office of the current Town Planning Committee will end on 31st March, 2014. In preparation for the new Council, the first meeting of the Shadow Planning Committee is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 7th August.
1.2	Given that 36 Members of the current Council will serve also on the new Council, officers are in the process of creating a monthly meeting schedule which will incorporate the meetings of the Shadow Committees into an already busy schedule.
1.3	As such, it is perhaps appropriate for the current Committee to re-examine the frequency of its meetings and, given the future demands on Members' time, to consider moving to one meeting a month on a trial basis.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Whilst the Shadow Planning Committee will, in light of the new powers which the Council will assume, focus primarily on the future strategic direction of the City and emerging policy, the current Committee will continue to consider routine planning matters.
2.2	The Committee will be aware that since the adoption of the Streamlined Planning Process in 2010, the number of applications presented for consideration has reduced significantly. Coupled with the fact that issues relating to major future planning applications and policy will be considered by the Shadow Planning Committee, it is evident that the workload of the current Committee will decrease over the coming months.

2.3	Accordingly, as the remit of the Committee for its remaining Term of Office will primarily involve the consideration of planning applications, it would be considered fitting that the Committee consider holding a single meeting each month - initially for the months of August and September - with that situation being reviewed after that time.
2.4	Since the Committee has delegated powers, applications approved at a monthly meeting would not experience unnecessary delay. Any reconsidered items which had not received the unanimous support of the Committee, would be referred, as usual, to the Council for ratification.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	None.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
4.1	There are no equality or good relations considerations connected to this report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
5.1	The Committee is recommended to meet once a month in August and September with that situation being reviewed thereafter.