

Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting 12 January 2017

Attendance

Members:

Alderman Pat Convery
Councillor Deirdre Hargey (for Cllr J. McVeigh)
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Lee Reynolds
Alderman David Browne

Apologies: Cllr Hussey, Cllr McVeigh

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
John Walsh, Town Solicitor
Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Mark McBride, Head of Finance & Performance
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

In attendance for Item 9

Councillor John Kyle
Councillor Tim Attwood
Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager
Margaret Higgins, Senior Good Relations Officer

1. Revenue Estimates 2017 /18

The Director of Finance and Resources provided an updated position on the revenue estimates and rate setting process for 2017 / 18. This included the updates from the individual party groups following the recent briefings. The members discussed the updated proposals and agreed that they would be presented to the SP&R Committee on 20th January for a decision. The standing committees would then meet to agree their cash limits on 24th January with a view to SP&R agreeing a rate at a special meeting on 26th January to be recommended to full Council on 1st February. The Director also agreed to obtain an update on the position with the regional rate and the possible impact of an election on the overall process.

2. Belfast Agenda – Area Events

The Chief Executive circulated dates and venues for the four area briefing events on the Belfast Agenda. She informed the panel that additional sessions could be held in other

venues to ensure that as many people as possible had the opportunity to be involved in the consultation process. Also officers were available to brief local groups or attend local engagement sessions. Members outlined the need to possibly extend the consultation if an election was called.

3. Rates Consultation

The Council's draft response to proposals on reforming the rating system together with a summary outlining the key issues in the consultation document was circulated. Members were asked to review the papers and if they had any specific questions or required further information to contact the Head of Finance and Performance. The members of the panel asked for information on the proposals relating to Halls of Residence and costs associated with this to be circulated to them.

4. Sunday Trading

The Town Solicitor circulated a paper outlining the proposed next steps in relation to a consultation process to designate Belfast as a 'holiday resort' to improve the tourism offer in the city. The panel agreed the approach and outlined the need to extend the consultation process given the possibility of an election.

5. Leisure Update

The Director of Property and Projects provided an update on the leisure programme and circulated a draft press release on the appointment of a contractor for the new facilities replacing Andersonstown Leisure Centre, the Robinson Centre and Brook Activity Centre.

The Town Solicitor provided an update on the recent decision in relation to the transfer of the Robinson Centre under Local Government Reform which saw the Council awarded £500,000 towards the cost of demolition of the centre and ensured that all liabilities relating to claims remain with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. Alderman Browne congratulated the Legal Services team on the work they had done in relation to achieving this outcome.

6. Planning Applications / Update

The Director of Planning and Place updated the Members of the engagement process for the LDP Preferred Options paper and circulated the draft document which would be launched on 26th of January for formal consultation.

He also informed the panel of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee this month. The Director also highlighted that the Planning Department had seen an increase of 36% in planning applications that it has processed compared with this period last year.

7. Memorandum of Understanding – Belfast Regeneration Directorate

The Chief Executive informed the panel that the Council was continuing to work with DfC on regeneration issues in line with the MOU. In particular officers are currently working up proposals around a joint programme of work (including how resources can be better aligned) with a focus on progressing priority regeneration/development schemes within the city.

8. AOB

(i) Party Group Leaders Meeting

Party Group Leaders agreed to meet on Friday 20th January after SP&R to discuss a number of outstanding issues.

(ii) Peace IV

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services updated the panel on the Peace IV Shared Space funding bid that had been submitted to SEUPB and in particular initial feedback that the council has received which requested additional information including specific site locations. The Director of Property and Projects circulated a map showing a number of current projects with a proposed location for the project which could enhance these current projects and help to join them up. Members were informed that a decision on the location was required by the end of January and it was agreed that officers should continue to work on the current proposal and the Party Group Leaders would consider this further at their meeting on 20th January

Councillors John Kyle and Tim Atwood joined the meeting to outline proposals in relation to the Good Relations approach to Bonfires.

(N Lane and M Higgins from the Good Relations Unit also attended in relation to this item)

9. Bonfire Management Programme

Councillors Kyle and Atwood reminded the panel of the background to the Bonfire Management Programme and then outlined proposed changes which had been circulated to members by way of a briefing paper. The members discussed the proposals including financial penalties, environmental issues and the broader programme of work. They agreed to add this to their agenda for further consideration on 20th January.