

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 19th May, 2017

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hussey (Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Alderman Haire);  
Aldermen Browne and Convery;  
Councillors Attwood, Clarke, Corr, Craig,  
Hargey, Hutchinson, Jones, Long, McCabe,  
McVeigh, Reynolds and Walsh.

Also Attended: Councillor Collins.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;  
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;  
Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood  
Services;  
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development;  
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Graham, McAllister and O'Donnell

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 21st April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd May.

### **Declarations of Interest**

The High Sheriff (Councillor Haire) declared an interest in respect of item number 8(b) Allowances for Civic Dignitaries and left the meeting whilst that item was under discussion.

**Deputations**

**Designation of Belfast District (or the City Centre)  
as a Holiday Resort**

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- update the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the findings from the public consultation as to whether Belfast City Council should designate the Belfast district (or the city centre) as a 'holiday resort' under Article 6 of the Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- to seek a decision from Members on whether to proceed with a 'holiday resort' designation

The effect of such a designation would be to provide large shops with an option to extend their Sunday trading hours in the city centre on up to 18 Sundays (other than Easter Sunday) between 1 March and 30 September in any calendar year. Such a designation may not come into effect until at least one month after the resolution of the Council.

**Deputations**

Members will note that the SP&R Committee have agreed to receive deputations from Usdaw and Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce and both organisations have confirmed their attendance. Further requests have since been received from Retail NI and Visit Belfast to present at the meeting and it will be a matter for the Committee to decide whether or not it agrees to receive a presentation from representatives of both Retail NI and Visit Belfast along with the two previously agreed deputations from Usdaw and BCTC.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- (i) note the contents of the report including the findings from the public consultation which concluded on 5 May 2017.
- (ii) provide approval for the Council to make a 'holiday resort' designation under Article 6 of the Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- (iii) make a decision as to whether to apply the designation to either
  - a) the entire Belfast City Council district area, or
  - b) Belfast City Centre only (based on the BMAP definition of the city centre.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 The initial proposal was made in response to a strong lobby within the city to designate Belfast as a 'holiday resort' area in order to improve the tourism offering in Belfast (particularly on a Sunday morning), to boost the local economy and to support the overall regeneration of the city centre.**

The principle of additional Sunday opening hours for large shops in 'holiday resort' areas was established under Article 6 of the Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (copy attached at Appendix 1). Article 6 was included in the 1997 Order as an additional exemption to allow large shops in tourist areas to avail of the additional tourist trade over the summer months. A range of areas and towns in Northern Ireland have been designated and remain as "holiday resorts" for this purpose including Derry-Londonderry, Newry, Kilkeel, Portrush, Portstewart and Ballycastle.

Belfast, as a growing tourist destination in both Northern Ireland and wider afield may similarly wish to avail of this exemption. There is nothing in this proposal which will result in any change in existing legislation or further 'deregulation' of Sunday trading law.

**3.2 Requirement to consult**

Any designation as a 'holiday resort' must be done by resolution of the Council. The legislation states that before making a designation the Council must first consult persons likely to be affected by the proposed designation.

At the SP&R Meeting of 21 October 2016 Members agreed to undertake a public consultation seeking views on whether to designate the Belfast district (or part of the district such as the city centre) as a 'holiday resort'.

### **3.3 Consultation**

Following initial engagement with representatives from within the city's retail industry, council officers received feedback indicating that it would be prudent to carry out pre-consultation engagement with all interested parties for a period of 4 weeks prior to the issue of the formal consultation.

Council officers engaged with a range of organisations during the pre-consultation period including BCCM, Belfast One BID, USDAW, Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Translink, PSNI, Retail NI, Belfast City Council Equality Consultative Forum and the NI Retail Consortium to elicit their opinions and shape the consultation questions. The Council also contacted the NI Interfaith Forum to alert them of the forthcoming consultation and offered to meet with them.

A formal consultation was commenced on 10 March 2017 on Citizen Space, the Council's online consultation platform for a further 8-week period closing on 5 May 2017.

A list of consultees has been circulated for information. (The Council also consulted with all of those representatives on the Equality and Disability consultee list as part of the Screening Exercise).

### **Responses to The Consultation**

#### **3.4 In total, 2471 people and organisations responded to the consultation.**

Some 1858 responses were collected via Citizen Space (the council's online consultation tool), with the remaining 613 responses being comprised mainly of emails (434) and written correspondence (177). There was also one phone call and one petition received.

Whilst it is possible to undertake a detailed analysis of the responses received via the Citizen Space online tool, it is not

possible to undertake a comparative analysis on the email and written correspondence as they did not cover the question areas set out in the online questionnaire. However, all the responses received have been examined and can be attributed as being either in support or against the proposal according to their content.

#### Key Findings From The Consultation

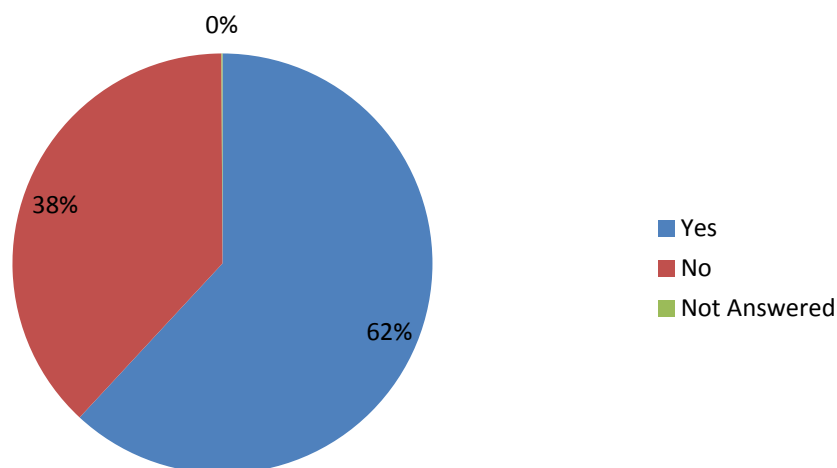
##### **3.5 With regards to the priority question in the consultation –**

**Should Belfast be designated as a holiday resort in order to provide large shops with the option to extend Sunday trading hours?**

**Of the total 2471 people and organisations who responded to the consultation:**

- 1531 answered yes (62%)
- 934 answered no (38%)
- 5 did not answer

**ALL RESPONSES - Should Belfast be designated as a holiday resort in order to provide large shops with the option to extend Sunday trading hours?**

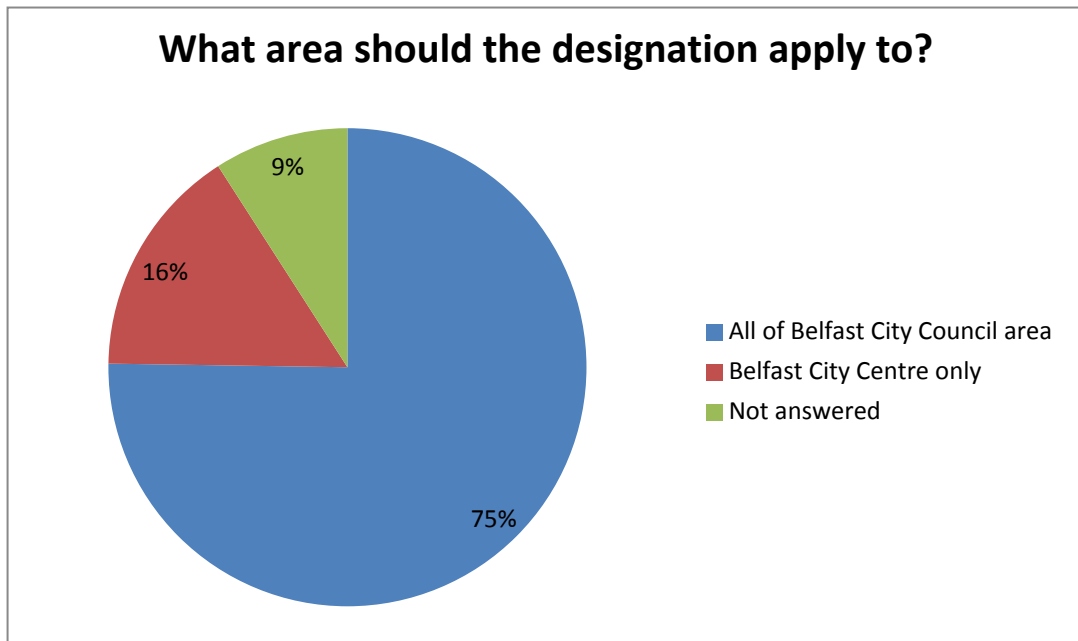


##### **3.6 With regards to the second question in the consultation –**

**What area should the designation apply to?**

Of the total 1858 people and organisations who responded via the Citizen Space online tool:

- 1398 indicated all of the Belfast City Council area (75.2%)
- 291 indicated Belfast City Centre only (15.7%)
- 169 did not answer (9.1%)



**3.7 The third question in the consultation asked –**

**Do you think Belfast would be more attractive as a tourist and/or shopping and leisure destination if the restrictions on Sunday opening times for larger shops were removed?**

Of the total 1858 people and organisations who responded via the Citizen Space online tool:

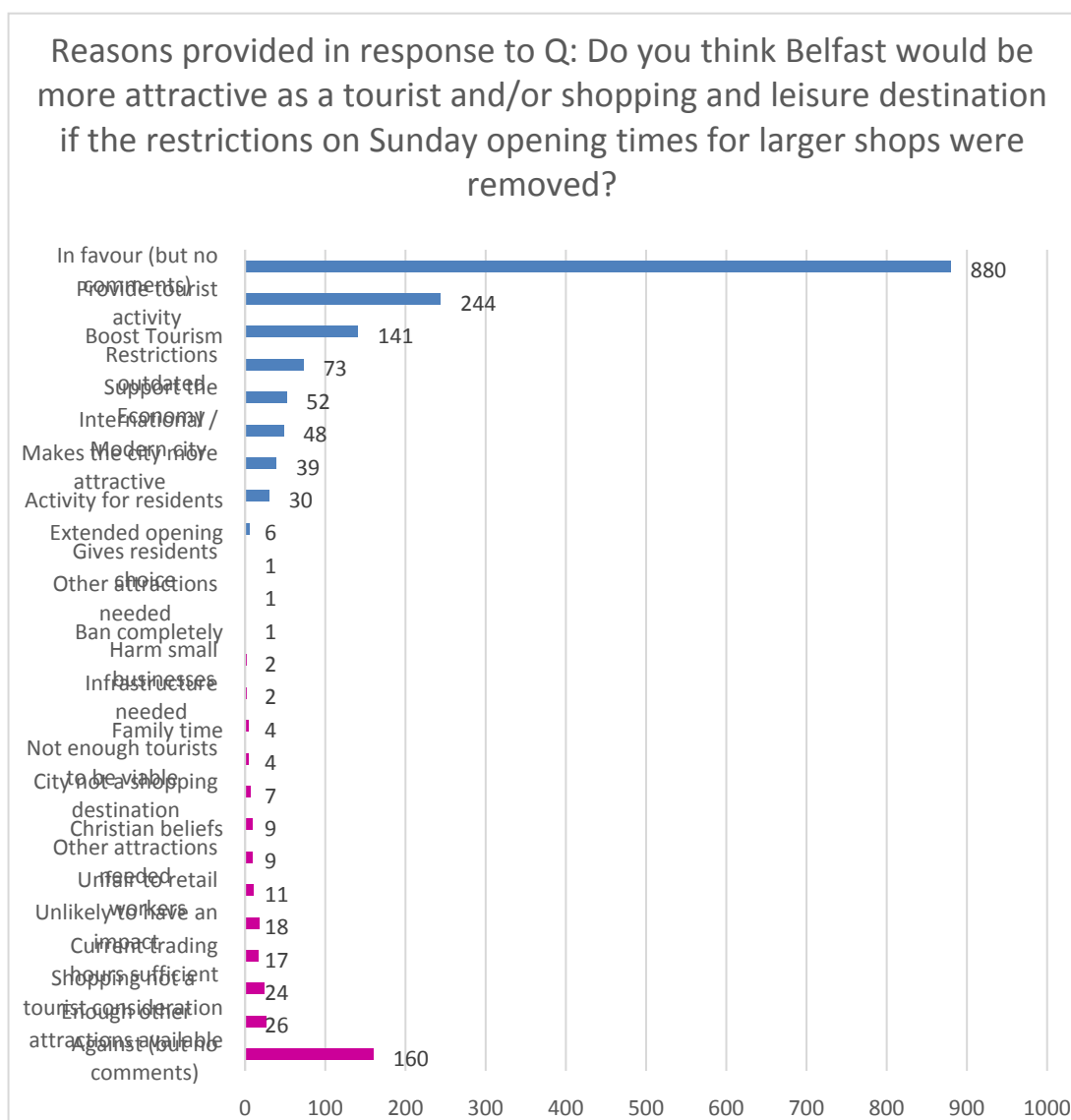
- 1515 agreed with this statement (81.4%)
- 294 disagreed with the statement (15.8%)
- 49 did not answer (2.6%)

Consultees were offered the opportunity to provide reasons for their answer.

Those agreeing with the statement cited reasons such as this would boost tourism, would provide tourists with an activity to do, the current restrictions are outdated and it would make Belfast feel like a modern international city.

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**The reasons given by respondents who disagreed with the statement included those who felt that there are enough other attractions available for tourists, shopping is not a tourist consideration and the current trading hours are sufficient or changes would be unlikely to have an impact.**



**Tourism NI have indicated that they would position Sunday trading within the context of meeting visitor expectations and providing a range of things to do and see. They acknowledge that flexibility around trading hours sits within a broader debate about what other initiatives are required to make our city centres more attractive and vibrant so that they both help position Northern Ireland competitively on the international stage and encourage local residents to come to them.**

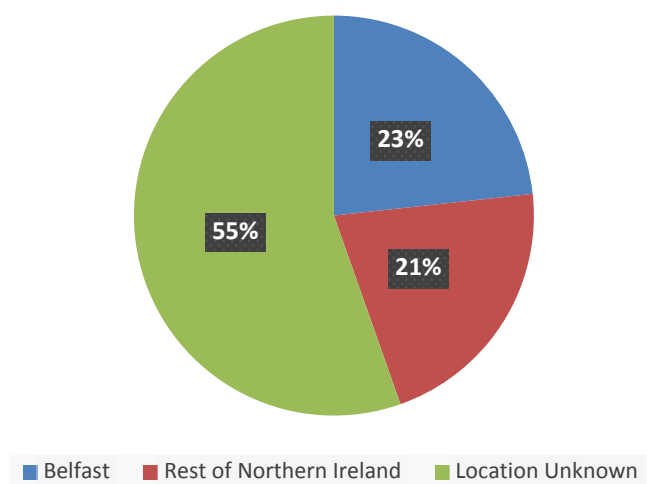
Visitor surveys regularly indicate that a lack of range of things to do in the evenings and on Sundays is a weakness with a negative impact on the overall visitor experience.

Keeping the issue of flexibility on trading hours to the forefront is important not least for any future major tourism events.

### 3.8 Location of respondents

With regards to the location of those respondents completing the survey, some 23% stated that they were from within Belfast, 21% stated that were from outside of Belfast and 56% did not provide information on their location.

#### Location of all respondents to holiday resort designation consultation



### Next Steps

### 3.9 Making the Designation

Should the Council decide to make the designation, they must do so by resolution of the Council and the designation cannot take effect until at least one month after the date on which the resolution is passed. Therefore, if the resolution was passed at the 1 June Council meeting then the designation could not take effect until 1 July 2017.



**3.10 How would the Exemption be Applied**

To make use of the exemption, the occupier or proposed occupier of a large shop must notify the local District Council of the dates of the Sundays involved. The notification does not take effect until 14 days from the date it is given, unless the Council agrees that it should come into effect earlier.

A Council must maintain a register of shops in its district making use of this exemption and make the register available to the public at all reasonable times.

The Council may not dictate which Sunday's the large shop may open on (within the designated dates) nor the opening or closing times. Having made the 'holiday resort' designation the council's role according to the legislation will be keep a register of the large shops making use of the exemption in addition to their existing enforcement role in respect of Sunday trading.

**3.11 A co-ordinated approach**

If the Council decides to proceed with the designation, the Council will wish to work with key partners including the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Belfast One and Visit Belfast to ensure the effective promotion of the additional hours and to consider the potential impact on city animation due to the additional visitors to the city on that day.

For example, if a major event is taking place in the city over a particular weekend during the summer months, then the Council would aim to ensure that the event would be promoted alongside a programme of supporting activities. The city would effectively be 'open for business' across entire weekend thereby maximising the tourism offering in the city and providing the option for both small and large retail stores to avail of the additional visitors into the city whilst the event is taking place.

Likewise, the retail and business partners have been working on the proposals for increased marketing and promotion in order to raise awareness of the change in opening hours, if agreed. It is likely that the majority of retailers will want to open from 11am. The closing hours are likely to remain unchanged.

**3.12 Employment provisions**

Concerns about the impact of additional Sunday trading on the rights of shop workers was a major issue during the drafting of the original legislation in 1997. To counter these concerns Article 11 and Schedule 2 of the Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 was included to provide employment rights for shop workers, except those contracted to work only on Sundays. They aim to ensure that shop workers are not compelled to work on Sundays against their wishes. The rights apply irrespective of age, length of service or hours of work.

The Schedule provides that dismissal of a shop worker (including dismissal for reasons of redundancy) is unfair if the reason for it was the worker's refusal to work on Sundays. It also provides the right not to suffer any other detriment (such as denial of normal promotion or training opportunities, or refusal to pay seniority bonuses, etc.) for refusing to work on Sundays. All shop workers who enter into a contract of employment requiring Sunday working are able to 'opt out' of Sunday working subject to giving the employer three month's notice. Enforcement of the employment rights is by way of complaint to an industrial tribunal.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.13** There will be financial and resource implications for both the Development Department and the Planning and Place Department should the Council designate the council area as a holiday resort under Article 6 of the 1997 Order.

The Building Control Service currently perform the enforcement role in relation to Sunday trading under the 1997 Order and the designation of the Belfast district as a 'holiday resort' would require an additional level of resource to manage the registration of participating shops and enforcement of same.

The Development Department may need to consider how existing resources are re-focused to promote change in opening hours. This may include additional city animation or promotional activities. There may also be a request for additional financial support to supplement planned marketing activity. This will have to be found from existing resources.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 3.14 A draft Equality Screening exercise was undertaken during pre-consultation process. This document was shared on Citizens Space to help elicit views from respondents. The draft screening exercise highlighted minor impacts on the Religious Beliefs and Dependents categories. As part of the online consultation, respondents were asked if they were aware of any equality and / or good relations implications that should be considered around potentially extending Sunday trading.**

**There were 454 responses to this question via the online consultation. Some respondents made more than one point. The most frequently cited thematic areas are listed below:**

- Some people can't work on a Sunday due to religious commitments /going to church/family commitments but will feel obliged/pressured to do so if changes are implemented. 159**
- Extended Sunday opening during the summer will provide economic opportunities and conveys a positive cosmopolitan image to visitors/tourists. 97**
- If implemented, extending Sunday trading hours during summer months will provide additional choice for residents and tourists that want to shop on Sundays, for businesses that wish to open and people that want to work on Sundays. 70**
- Religious beliefs/current laws should not restrict those who wish to shop on a Sunday 51**
- Family life will be affected if Sunday trading is implemented. There will be a negative impact on retail workers who are carers/have children. 36**
- Extended Sunday trading conflicts with personal Christian religious views/faith beliefs 34**

**Information elicited from the consultation will be used to inform and update the Equality Screening document in line with members' decision."**

The Chief Executive outlined the main aspects of the report, including the proposed additional trading hours for a minimum of 18 Sundays per year; the prime focus of the proposals, which was tourism spend; the survey results (in which the majority of those surveyed supported the extended hours); details of other Northern Ireland based Local Authorities which had applied the 1997 Order; and the protection already built into the legislation for shop workers who do not wish to work on Sundays. She explained that there was also a requirement for the Council to consider, if it was minded to designate

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Belfast as a holiday resort, the area it wished to designate, that is, the whole Belfast area or the City centre as based on the BMAP definition.

She reminded the Committee that it had already acceded to requests for deputations from Usdaw and the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce. However, there were two additional requests from Retail NI and Visit Belfast and the Committee would need to decide on whether or not to receive them.

The Committee agreed to receive the two additional deputations.

**Udaw**

The Committee was advised that Mr. Paddy Lillis, Ms. Michala Lafferty and Ms. Lauren Elliott were in attendance and they were invited to address the Committee.

Mr. Lillis thanked the Committee for receiving them and for the opportunity to verbally supplement Usdaw's detailed written response. He made the point that the deregulation of trading on Sundays was not a new issue and had been ongoing for some thirty years and that Usdaw had, together with support groups, been at the forefront to keep Sundays special. He outlined the background to the legislation to Sunday trading and how the current position was arrived at, with compromises between employers and employees, which also worked for the consumers. He stated that all the evidence to date and all the surveys which Usdaw, the British Retail Consortium and the British Government had carried out had showed that there was no clamour to change the current legislation which had worked well.

He made the point that Usdaw had two main concerns if the hours were to be extended. Firstly, the effect on small businesses which could trade without the restriction of the 5 hours on Sundays. If the bigger stores were allowed to open for additional hours that would take away the competitive edge from small convenience stores which required and wanted to trade on Sunday to boost their own ability to survive.

Mr Lillis stated that, from a Trade Union point of view, its members were telling them over and over that they did not wish to have any further deregularisation. More importantly, was the detrimental effect, as most of the retail employees were female, and the impact on family life. He urged the Council to think carefully about extending Sunday opening, not only for Usdaw's 18,000 members, but for the 120,000 retail workers in Northern Ireland, because any decision which Belfast made would have a domino effect across the country.

Ms Lafferty advised the Committee that Usdaw wished to put on record that it had a petition with 2458 signatures opposed to the extension of Sunday trading hours.

**Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce**

Mr. Gordon McElroy, Ms. Michelle Greeves and Mr. Michael Stewart, representing the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, were invited to address the Committee.

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Mr. McElroy thanked the Chairperson for opportunity to address the Committee. He made the point that the Council was being asked to exercise its power and not to change the legislation or deregulate in order to recognise the Belfast City centre area only as a tourist destination and as a holiday resort. He stated that most of the hotels in Belfast were situated in the city centre and most of the tourists who came to Northern Ireland came to Belfast City centre and that is what the Chamber would like to see recognised.

He accepted that a number of objections had been raised, such as unfair competition and employees rights, and he addressed each of these objections in turn. He stated that the extension to Sunday trading hours would have the opportunity of recognising the great work which Visit Belfast had done to attract more tourists and the investment which stores had put in to bring the best brands to Belfast. He indicated that these were the brands which tourists wanted to come to shop for and that we are not maximising tourism spend.

He outlined how each of the services and retail industries should benefit on a Sunday and that no one would suffer any detriment as a result.

**Retail NI**

Mr. Glynn Roberts, who focused on the designation of the entire Belfast City Council area, and advised that Retail NI represented over 1600 members in Northern Ireland, a significant number of which were located in Belfast. He stated that his organisation was opposed to this type of extension and that the existing laws were a hard fought compromise which had in many respects been positive for the retail sector.

He made the point that many of their members' premises were below the 3000sq feet size and that those few additional hours which they opened on a Sunday morning were vital to the survival of their business and any change would lead to an increase in the unfair competitive advantage large supermarkets already had. He referred to the other Local Authorities which had applied 'holiday resort' status and the businesses which had availed of the additional hours and stated that these were mostly the large supermarkets. He urged the Committee to reject the proposals and suggested that a different strategy, with all the appropriate players involved in discussions, was required to ensure that Sunday in every part of Belfast was attractive to shoppers and tourists.

**Visit Belfast**

Mr. Gerry Lennon stated that Visit Belfast saw this primarily as opportunity to grow the economy, to grasp an economic opportunity which was already there and growing. To put it in context, he stated Tourism was now worth half a billion pounds to the city, it employed between 17,000 and 18,000 people in the Greater Belfast area and somewhere between 17% and 20% of every tourism pound was spent on retail. So the more that the tourism sector could be grown, the more retail would benefit.

In terms of Sunday opening and weekends, the growth in tourism in the last five years (55%) had largely been driven by the leisure market. Occupancy rates in the city centre for the last two years had been averaging 90%. Clearly those people were still in Belfast on a Sunday and that was an opportunity which the City was not capitalising on.

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He explained that the spend per head of visitors to Northern Ireland was significantly lower than those to the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and England, therefore, visitors had to be given more opportunity to engage in what the city had to offer and spend money and Visit Belfast saw this as such an opportunity.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Long,  
Seconded by Councillor Jones,

That the Committee agrees that the Council passes a resolution to designate Belfast City centre as a 'holiday resort' under Article 6 of the shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

On a vote by show of hands, three Members voted for the proposal and twelve against and it was declared lost.

**Restricted Items**

**The Information contained in the following six reports is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014**

**Leisure Transformation Programme - Assets Update**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the development and implementation of the £105m leisure assets capital programme. The report provided details in relation to the planned closure of Andersonstown Leisure Centre, the impact on staffing and users and alternate provision. The report also updated the members in relation to the Brooke Centre, the Avoniel Leisure Centre, Templemore, the Robinson Centre, Olympia and Girdwood.

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st April, it had agreed to receive presentations from representatives of the NIPSA and Unite Trade Unions in respect of the mobilisation plan for Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

**NIPSA**

The Committee was advised that Ms. Naomi Connor, representing NIPSA, was in attendance and she was admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairperson.

Ms. Connor reminded the Committee that NIPSA had been opposed to GLL taking over Belfast Leisure and still had significant concerns. She welcomed the fact that all staff from Andersonstown Leisure Centre had been relocated to other centres or had taken voluntary redundancy and that there had not been any compulsory redundancies. However, she expressed concerns in the manner in which staff had transferred in respect of centre of choice. In addition, she stated that, following the completion of the new leisure centre, staff had been advised that they would not automatically be redeployed to Andersonstown but would have to apply for the new posts. She expressed concern that

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these posts would be under GLL terms and conditions but that the Union position was that staff should retain TUPE rights and be allowed to transfer back to the centre when it was completed.

Ms. Connor then answered a number of questions from the Members, thanked the Committee for receiving her and retired from the meeting.

**Unite**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. Michael Keenan and Mr. Harry Magill, representing Unite, were in attendance and they were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Keenan expressed concern at the way the staff at Andersonstown Leisure had been treated as part of the transfer to other centres. He stated that, whilst the Union welcomed the new facilities which the Council was investing in, it was of the view that morale had been adversely impacted. He also referred to the transfer of staff to other centres and the need to apply to return to Andersonstown and the Union position was that staff should not be employed under new contracts but should be transferred under TUPE conditions.

The deputation then answered a number of question from the Members, thanked the Committee for receiving them and retired from the meeting.

After discussion, during which the Chief Executive and Director of City and Neighbourhood Services answered a number of questions and the Director undertook to investigate some of the issues which had been raised, the Committee:

- noted the contents of the report and agreed to keep the car parking at Andersonstown opened until August and to move the exterior panels to the Whiterock Community corridor: and
- agreed that a report, which provided options on how an independent review of the new operating model could be undertaken, taking into account the contractual position between BCC and GLL, be submitted to a future meeting. The Active Belfast Board would sign off on the review scope

**Special Arrangements in Respect of Awarding Contracts  
for Bonfire Retrieval, 2017-2020**

The Committee considered a report in relation to the proposed procurement approach for 2017 – 2020 to negotiate the appointments of contractors on a site by site basis to work with the Council and its partners to remove bonfires and related materials that had been identified as being gathered at or for bonfire sites associated with contentious July/August bonfires and bonfire clear ups.

The Committee was advised that the Council had, for a number of years, utilised the services of an independent cleansing contract for contentious bonfire sites. However, the procurement exercises had proven difficult and the Council had faced market failure

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on a number of occasions. Accordingly, officers were seeking approval to deviate from Standing Order 55 in awarding contracts above £30,000 in relation to the management of bonfire material across the city for the duration of 2017 - 2020.

The Committee agreed to deviate from Standing Order 55 regarding the award of contracts and:

- agreed that contracts relating to the management of bonfire material above £30,000 and up to the value of the European annual tender threshold (currently £164,176) be awarded via direct appointment through a process of negotiation to ensure value for money; and
- that, for all contracts relating to bonfire material retrieval within the stated limits, authority would be delegated to the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services who, in consultation with the City Solicitor would issue a contract award.

**City Centre Investment Fund Update**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF), including progress made to date, a summary of advice received from CBRE (in particular intervention options and high level investment parameters) and the planned next steps

After discussion, the Committee:

- agreed high level parameters for scheme identification;
- agreed the project prioritisation matrix as detailed in the report;
- agreed to go to the market to call for expressions of interest;
- agreed to support an independent organisation to assist in the valuation process; and
- granted approval to progress to a more detailed due diligence of the Aurora Fund request and that the Aurora Fund could mention in its ongoing funding discussions/material that it had a proposal with the Council which was currently undergoing due diligence assessment.

**Active Belfast Business Plan**

The Committee approved the Active Belfast Limited Business Plan for 2017 – 2020.

**Disposal of Land at McClure Street**

The Committee noted the update in respect of the proposed disposal of Council-owned land at McClure Street for the development of social housing; and granted approval to obtain an updated valuation from Land and Property Services and, in the event that Apex obtained the requisite planning approval in due course, granted approval also to the disposal of the land to Apex Housing Association thereafter on the basis of the valuation and terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager and the City Solicitor.



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**Update on Organisational Design**

(With the exception of the Chief Executive and the Senior Democratic Services Officer, all officers left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion)

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Council's Organisation Design Model.

The Committee agreed:

1. the organisational design function model, including the creation of a new Strategic Hub;
2. that a recruitment process could start for a Director of Strategic Development (working title only);
3. that the Chief Executive consult with the Executive Search Agency to determine the level at which the new post should be positioned and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to apply the appropriate tier.
4. that work could begin developing or consolidating the next tier throughout the organisation;
5. to take the opportunity to realign some functions into the new directorates to better reflect the new organisation design, following further consultation and exploration with senior management, staff and trade unions;
6. that the process could begin in moving agreed functions and badging staff to the newly created department(s), following the consultation;
7. that a proactive executive search approach to the recruitment and selection of the Strategic Director post was essential, therefore, the timely and targeted executive search would start to ensure a strong and competent applicant field for the post; and
8. that the selection panel for the recruitment of the permanent Director of Strategic Development reflect a fair balance in terms of community background and gender and be comprised of the Chairperson (or nominee), Deputy Chairperson (or nominee), one other elected Member from a political party not already represented by the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson (or nominees), the Chief Executive and a Council Director.

The Committee also approved the recommendation of the selection panel for the appointment of Mr. Paddy Murray as Head of Human Resources.

**BMAP – Bulky Goods Restriction**

The Committee noted the Court of Appeal decision given in the Council's favour in relation to the purported adoption of BMAP. The City Solicitor explained that this had the effect of returning BMAP to a draft but that this in real terms did not undermine its significance as a policy within which planning decisions would have to be made. It also had the effect of putting restrictions relating to Sprucefield back as material planning considerations in relation to any relevant planning applications relating to that site.

**Matters Referred Back from Council/Notices of Motion**

**Notice of Motion re Stained Glass Window –  
321 Explosives Ordnance Disposal Company**

The Committee were reminded that the Council on 2nd May had referred the following notice of motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Graham and seconded by Councillor Johnston, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), to the Committee for consideration:

**"This Council acknowledges the vital role which 321 Explosives Ordnance Disposal Company, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, has provided to our City and its citizens over a number of decades. Their sacrifice and dedication has saved many lives and helped preserve our city from those who would physically destroy it. The Council agrees to commission a stained glass window to acknowledge their dedication and service and install this in an appropriate location in the City Hall."**

The Committee agreed that the matter be referred, in the first instance, to the Party Leaders.

**Belfast Agenda**

**A Smart City Framework to Support the Innovative  
Delivery of the Belfast Agenda**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To present Members with a proposed 'Smart Belfast' framework that seeks to harness the talent of the city's digital SME sector, and our world-class university research, to support the Council, community planning partners and local communities to create more innovative solutions to complex public policy challenges as identified in the Belfast Agenda. This work is part of a wider ambition to foster innovative methodologies and complements the Council's parallel work on Social Innovation with local communities and our corporate commitment to service transformation.**
- 1.2 The Smart Belfast framework is the product of a twelve-month co-investment agreement between the Council and the UK Future Cities Catapult which also delivered a series of 'demonstrator' projects that utilised a mix of 'smart city' approaches to address current city issues. (One of these**

demonstrator projects has already identified more than £370,000 of additional annual Rates income for the region.)

- 1.3 This report provides an overview of the framework and the results of the demonstrator projects. It also sets out a proposed programme to deliver the Smart Belfast framework within a wider Council commitment to innovative service delivery. It also includes details of an offer from Invest NI to support a 'Smart Belfast' challenge programme which has the potential to provide over £860,000 funding support to local SMEs. And an offer from the Digital Catapult to provide £50,000 funding support to local SMEs for an innovation challenge around the city's visitor experience.

## 2.0 Recommendations

### 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Consider and adopt the Smart Belfast framework as a basis for driving collaborative innovation between city partners.
- Agree the proposed programme of work including the delivery of a Smart Belfast challenge programme with Invest NI and the delivery of the Digital Catapult's open challenge competition on the visitor experience.
- Agree to a September launch event for the framework and Challenge programme. (Details to be issued to Members later in the summer.)
- Agree that the Council develops an approach to innovation that integrates opportunities presented by the Smart Belfast work, the Social Innovation programme with communities, and the organisational development programme.

## 3.0 Main report

### 3.1 Key Issues

Many cities around the world have created 'smart city' frameworks that aim to foster the conditions in which city partners can better exploit leading-edge technologies, data science and industrial design practices to address urban challenges in more innovative ways (while at the same time providing a welcoming environment for start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop new products).

- 3.2 Places such as Glasgow, Dublin, Bristol, and Manchester are successfully using such frameworks to:

- leverage substantial private sector investment and grant funding (eg, Innovate UK and Horizon 2020 funding);
- provide a creative environment in which local digital SMEs and entrepreneurs can develop new products and services;
- deliver innovative joint projects that make substantial contributions to urban challenges such as waste, energy, traffic and water management; and
- Improve public services for citizens and communities.

3.3 At the January 2016 SPR Committee, Members agreed that the Council would co-invest with the Government's Future Cities Catapult in a twelve-month programme to design a bespoke Smart Belfast framework that would seek to tap into our city's own unique strengths (particularly our growing digital sector) to support the delivery of elements of the Belfast Agenda. The joint programme also included a commitment to deliver a series of 'demonstrator' projects which would be used to build the Council's capacity in this area whilst also delivering solutions to real-world problems.

3.4 The 'demonstrator' projects

The programme adopted a 'learning by doing' approach: delivering a number of substantial 'demonstrator' projects that provided practical learning and 'proofs of concept' as the framework was developed. These projects included:

1. Business Rates Identification: Historically it has proven difficult to maintain an up-to-date Rates Register of businesses. (This is mainly due to the dynamic nature of the city's economy with a large number of businesses opening, closing or moving in any given financial year). The existing approach to maintaining the list is expensive and time-consuming resulting in significant loss in potential Rates income for Council and the NI Government. To address the issue the Council, working with colleagues from Land and Property Services and the Dept. for the Economy, ran a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition which provided small pots of R&D money to six SMEs to develop innovative solutions to this problem. In a second phase of the competition two of the SMEs were provided

further support to develop machine-learning proto-types. In their first iterations these solutions identified nearly £370,000 of new recurring non-domestic Rates revenue for the region. Further iterations are expected to grow this figure. In addition, the project attracted £100,000 of funding from Department of Finance and has been featured nationally as a best practice example of SBRI. Both companies have also indicated that they intend to develop their proto-types into commercial products which they plan to sell to cities across the UK.

2. Belfast Growth-planner: Working with the Planning Department the Smart Cities team developed a software tool - the first of its kind in the UK – that supports urban planners in determining the capacity of different parts of the city for future physical development. It includes user-friendly analysis of utility provision, water, transport and housing growth capacity. Partners are keen to continue development of this product with the Council and use it to promote Belfast's reputation as a place to innovate and develop complex tech solutions.
3. A Rates forecasting model sought to build upon the Council's new planning authority role to support longer term financial forecasting. A design-led process has established the likely approach – with further work required to gather relevant data from public sector partners. The project will also inform the specification of the city's future planning system.
4. A specification was developed for a city indicator dashboard to support Members and Community Planning partners to track the impact of the Belfast Agenda over time.
5. Ipedal: This R&D collaboration between the Council, See.Sense (a local SME), BT, Next Bike and Queen's University seeks to deploy state-of-the-art motion sensors on a number of the city's bikes. The project seeks to understand cycling behaviour (including bike theft) and may inform future bike lane investment decisions. The project also has the potential to identify pot-holes and to measure local air quality. The

project attracted £5,000 of co-investment from the Department of Infrastructure and substantial in-kind investment from BT and See.Sense.

6. **Waste Management analytics**: The Council has been awarded 20 hours of world-class 'big data' analytics expertise to analyse household recycling behaviour with the aim of providing insights that can assist in driving up recycling levels.

### **3.5 The Smart Belfast framework**

The Smart Cities team drew practical learning from the delivery of these demonstrators to identify the key elements of the framework. The team also drew on the best practice of other cities and adopted many of the concepts in the BSI Standard for Smart Cities (PAS 181)<sup>1</sup>. They also engaged with a broad range of local stakeholders through a series of workshops, one-to-one interviews and an online co-design process.

- 3.6 In general there was strong support for the concept of a Smart framework, particularly from the local SME community which saw it as an opportunity to deploy proto-types and products in a real-world environment, and from public sector partners who recognised the potential to bring innovation to bear on existing challenges. There was also broad agreement that Belfast City Council has an important convening role to play in bringing a diverse range of partners together for a common social impact.
- 3.7 The resulting framework is attached as Appendix One and sets out the following:
  - The guiding principles for a Smart Belfast
  - The 'foundations' that the city needs to have in place to deliver innovative programmes
  - A pipeline of potential projects that can directly contribute to the Belfast Agenda whilst also strengthening the city's smart foundations; and
  - A roadmap that describes proposed workstreams and resources.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/smart-cities/Smart-Cities-Standards-and-Publication/>

**3.8 The foundations for a Smart Belfast:**

Belfast has a growing community of innovators, designers, researchers, data scientists, and technologists. The city also has a strong digital infrastructure (enhanced by our recent investment in Superconnected Broadband and City WiFi) that offers first class connectivity for organisations and individuals. However, in order to harness these resources to better address city challenges, the city needs to strengthen four ‘foundations’:

1. **Shared understanding of city challenges:** Partners need to find new ways to work together to understand and analyse shared problems. There is the opportunity to adopt innovative ‘design-led’ approaches from industry that allow public sector partners to think differently about challenges, and then to develop and test their ideas before applying them at scale.
2. **An engaged innovator community:** If we want to co-opt the local SME sector and our universities to tackle challenges together, we need to find new ways of doing this beyond traditional procurement channels. These might include establishing innovative city challenge programmes, Small Business Research Initiatives (SBRIs), R&D collaborative agreements, social innovation programmes, competitions, joint investment vehicles, etc.
3. **Building city data assets:** In a modern knowledge economy access to data is as important an economic resource as access to financing or a skilled workforce. There is a growing demand from digital SMEs for access to public data that will allow them to create new products and services. Partners in a smart city need to get much more sophisticated in how they generate, manage and share public data safely and securely.
4. **Robust delivery mechanisms:** City partners need to find better ways of attracting investment; co-opting the support of partners; and designing agile delivery mechanisms that can develop ideas, test them, and rapidly scale proven

successes in timescales that are measured in weeks rather than months.

### 3.9 Roadmap

The framework identifies a series work strands that the Council and its partners need to deliver in order to strengthen the foundations described above:

1. Building governance structures A cross-sector group to guide the Smart Belfast work; build partner commitment; provide data assurance, and contribute to the delivery of the programme.
2. Building the Smart Belfast team The Council and other city partners to build a core team to champion the approach; to engage with challenge owners, and; to coordinate collaborative programme and projects.
3. Building engagement channels Utilise digital and more traditional engagement methods for coordination and to communicate the smart city work with stakeholders including local communities, while promoting Belfast as a place for innovators to invest.
4. Building the innovation network Provide mechanisms and opportunities for responsive, agile partnerships to deliver projects that address city challenges. These partnerships would draw upon Social Innovation or Living Labs<sup>2</sup> -style techniques to better understand challenges and work towards solutions.
5. Building IoT and data infrastructure Individual projects generate lots of data that can often be developed into a shared city platform that can be used by other innovators. Internet of Things (IoT) technology allows cities to deploy inexpensive sensors for a vast range of purposes from air quality monitoring to tracking tourist and retail behaviour in the city centre.
6. Building innovation experience Providing new procurement challenges through such

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/FAQ>



mechanisms as open calls and competitions supported by an Innovation Fund.

**3.10 Smart Belfast project pipeline**

The aim is to drive the framework through the delivery of challenge-focused projects. That is, the Council and its partners will identify a series of projects over the next period that build our capacity as a Smart City, but also, at the same time, practically address Belfast Agenda challenges.

**3.11** Over the past few months officers have engaged with partners (including Tourism NI, Department for Infrastructure, Queen's and Ulster University) to draw up a pipeline of likely projects for which there is a demand from 'challenge owners' and potential smart city solution-providers. Further work is required to identify collaborative investment opportunities but emerging proposals include:

- **A circular economy grand challenge:** A SME-led challenge in support of the Resourceful Belfast strategy to rethink the city's waste as an economic resource.
- **A Belfast Health and Leisure Passport:** Developing a detailed understanding of the physical activity citizens to improve programmes and interventions and enhancing the impact of the Council's £105m leisure transformation programme.
- **Public transport challenge:** Nearly half Belfast's workforce travel to work by car. Attitudes to travel by public transport or active travel remain a barrier. As major improvements to public transport are completed (Belfast Transport Hub, Rapid Transit System), this barrier will need to be lifted in order to maximise these opportunities.
- **City centre parking:** Adopting new technologies to understand driver behaviours and providing interactive solutions to address the parking challenge.
- **Building an integrated employment pathway:** Belfast has a complex, underperforming employability pathway with many providers offering a broad range of interventions for those working towards employment. A key step is understanding employability as a total system.
- **Understanding visitor trends:** Building a more sophisticated model of tourist and conference

delegate behaviours to enhance the city experience.

- Leveraging the public estate: Drawing on new technologies to provide innovative ways of managing the wider public estate including the planned leisure estate.
- Understanding the future labour market: The Northern Ireland Skills Barometer reveals areas of significant imbalance, such as an undersupply of STEM skills, and an over-supply of hospitality skills. More work is needed to create actionable insights at a local level.

### **3.12 Smart Belfast Challenge programme**

Invest NI has been particularly supportive of a Smart Belfast and have identified it as an opportunity to provide R&D support to the region's burgeoning digital SME sector. They also see it as a means by which city partners can develop ideas that may form the basis of future applications to the Government's Innovate UK<sup>3</sup> funding programme. As Members may be aware, over £2 billion of innovation funding is being provided to business growth sectors over the next few years – with urban infrastructure challenges being a particular focus for funding. Work on Smart Belfast challenges can provide important experience in the development of more complex future applications to Innovate UK.

- 3.13 Invest NI is therefore proposing to provide up to £25,000 each to eight SME-led networks addressing four or five Smart Belfast challenge areas over an eight month period. These networks would then be eligible to apply for a second phase of funding of up to £170,000 each to help them design proto-types and concepts that address a Belfast challenge. The potential maximum funding pot available is approximately £860,000.

- 3.14 To deliver the programme the Council would be expected to facilitate engagement between city partners and work with the network members on the challenge areas. Officers are recommending that the Council work with Invest NI to deliver this programme with an initial 'challenge' workshop with partners in June 2017 and a public launch in late September 2017 at City Hall. Further details of this launch event will be presented to Members in August 2017.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/innovate-uk>

**3.15 Digital Catapult Open Challenge competition**

The Council has also been approached by the Northern Ireland node of the Digital Catapult. This organisation also support the concepts behind the framework and are offering to provide £50,000 of funding to local SMEs in a two-stage design competition to unlock local expertise in immersive technology to develop proposals to support the visitor experience in the city. The Catapult is seeking £25,000 of match-funding from Council in support of the competition (which is scheduled to open on 26 May).

**3.16 Wider innovation ambition**

The Smart Belfast framework is part of a wider ambition by the Council to foster innovation in service delivery and it complements our parallel work on Social Innovation with local communities and the Outcomes-Based Accountability model adopted for community planning. Each of these strands adopts a number of core methodologies (such as design-led innovation, partnership working, agile and scalable deployment of projects, etc.) There is an opportunity to support a growing innovation culture within the Council by incorporating these Smart City and Social Innovation methodologies into aspects of the Organisational Development programme.

**3.17 Financial & Resource Implications**

During its first twelve months the Smart Belfast work has already attracted over £200,000 of co-investment (from Future Cities Catapult, Department of Finance and Department for Infrastructure). The Smart Cities team also led the successful application to the 100 Resilient Cities programme which will attract substantial funding from the Rockefeller Foundation over the next two years. This ability to attract co-investment is only likely to grow during the implementation phase – particularly if the framework is successful in creating the conditions for attracting Innovate UK funding.

**3.18 Invest NI has offered to support SME partners to a potential value of £860,000 while the Digital Catapult has offered an initial £50,000. There are also offers of in-kind support from other partners including data science, Queen's University and Ulster University (which include access to Phd researchers and UU's new Cognitive Analytics and Research Laboratory).**

**3.19 Delivery of the first year of the framework will require a budget of £378,000. This total includes the delivery of six main work-strands:**

- Smart Belfast framework implementation: £105,000
- Smart Belfast challenge programme with Invest NI and Open Challenge call with Digital Catapult: £55,000
- City data management and digital strategy: £70,000
- Further development of existing demonstrator projects: £123,000
- Develop new pipeline projects proposals £20,000
- Development support for a corporate Innovation programme £5,000

**3.20 If the Framework is agreed by Committee the financial implications outlined above will need to be considered as part of the year end finance report which will be presented to the Committee in June.**

**3.21 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

Equality and good relations implications will be taken into consideration and it is proposed that we will take this through equality screening; however it is anticipated that any collaborative efforts should have a positive effect on section 75 groups.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Belfast Residents’ Survey**

The Chief Executive submitted to for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To update Members on the key findings from the Belfast Resident Survey and to outline next steps in terms of how the data will be used and reported.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the key findings of the survey

- As in previous years, it is recommended that the results from the survey will be communicated through the council website, City Matters and via interlink and that a similar report to this to be brought to the next SP&R Committee. It is also recommended that more detailed reports be brought to each of the Area Working Groups so that Members can consider local implications if any arising from these results.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

The council undertakes a regular resident survey to help inform strategic planning, in particular the development of the council's corporate plan and now our emerging Belfast Agenda. Information from this research, together with other evidence and data, is used to help set the future strategic direction of the Council and to inform community planning priorities; it is also used to track progress on and inform improvement objectives for council and the city. The survey also helps council fulfil its statutory duty to consult under the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 as it provides reliable resident perception data to inform strategic planning and performance management. The survey, which is based on a representative and statistically valid sample, is normally carried out every two to three years, with the most recent survey carried at the beginning of 2017.

- 3.2** The survey was carried out by Social Market Research (SMR), to ensure independence and to provide expert assurance regarding the statistical validity and reliability of the data. As with previous exercises, the survey was based on a representative sample of residents and carried out via face-to-face interviews conducted in the home. Approximately 1500 people over the age of sixteen were interviewed across Belfast across all DEAs and electoral wards.

- 3.3** The fieldwork was carried out between 2nd February and 2nd March 2017 and sought feedback from residents on the following matters:

- Living in Belfast
- Improvement Priorities for Belfast
- Your Local Area
- Your Wellbeing
- Belfast City Council Performance

- 3.4 Key findings are set out below; where applicable comparison with the previous survey results from 2014 are provided for trend purposes.

3.5 **Improvement Priorities for Belfast**

Respondents were asked about to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 10, how important or unimportant a range of improvement priorities were for them. The list of improvement priorities were generated using previous research and feedback on what mattered most to local people or for making a successful city. The priorities that ranked highest overall were:

<b><i>Improvement Priority</i></b>
Attracting investment to Belfast
Improving people's health and wellbeing
Supporting our older people
Improving safety, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
Creating more jobs
Reducing poverty

- 3.6 Whilst it is possible to create a ranked order of importance based on average score, it should be noted that the improvement priorities all ranked highly demonstrating that the emerging council and city strategic plans resonate with people's concerns.

3.7 **Living in Belfast**

91% of those surveyed were satisfied with Belfast as a place to live. The level of satisfaction has remained fairly constant since 2007 and compares favourably to other cities.

- 3.8 Approximately 4 out 5 people surveyed, felt that in Belfast:

- People are friendly, caring and compassionate (86% - new indicator)
- All people can live life to full (84% - up from 79% in 2014)
- Children and young people can reach their full potential (81% - up from 74% in 2014)

**3.9 Whilst approximately 3 out of 4 people surveyed felt that in Belfast:**

- People share in the economic success of the city (76% - new indicator)
- People are treated with equality and respect (75% - new indicator)
- Older people are treated with respect and dignity (73% - down slightly from 76%)

**3.10 There were also high levels of agreement that Belfast:**

- Is a good place to visit (92%)
- The city centre is vibrant and attractive (87%)
- Is a well-connected city (85%)
- Is a welcoming and inclusive city (82%)
- Is an economically thriving and prosperous city (81%)
- Is an environmentally friendly city (80%)

**3.11 My Local Area**

91% of those surveyed were satisfied with their local area as a place to live – up from 86% in 2014. However, there are variations across DEAs, initial analysis would suggest those living in electoral areas with higher levels of deprivation recording lower levels of satisfaction. Further more detailed analysis is currently being undertaken.

**3.12 When asked more specific questions about their local area, respondents were also quite positive with improving perceptions across all questions. Over 4 out of 5 people surveyed agreeing that their local area:**

- had a strong sense of community (87% - up from 73% in 2014)
- people worked together to improve things (87% - up from 69% in 2014)
- was clean and attractive (82% - up from 68% in 2014)
- 85% agreed that they could access all the services they needed (up from 81%), whilst 76% agreed they could access job and training opportunities (up from 60%)
- 82% of respondents agreed that the local area had good parks and green space with 80% agreeing that the parks and green spaces were safe.

- 3.13 When asked about perceptions of safety in general, the 2017 results also showed slight improvement with 94% indicating that they felt fairly or very safe in their local area during the day (up from 91%) and 82% indicating that they felt fairly or very safe in their local area at night (up from 80%).
- 3.14 Perceptions of safety in the city centre also shows improvement with 91% feeling fairly or very safe in the city centre during the day (up from 78%) and 65% feeling safe at night (up from 58%)
- 3.15 Generally, the good relations questions have tended to score lower in comparison to other issues; however the results from 2017 have increased when compared to 2014. Those surveyed this time were more inclined to agree that their local area was a place where people from different:
- racial and ethnic backgrounds got on well together (79% - up from 52% in 2014)
  - religious and political backgrounds got on well (79% - up from 51% in 2014)
  - was seen as welcoming to others (84% - up from 69% in 2014)
- 3.16 The results also show improvement in the number of people who felt they were [always or mostly] able to have a say on things happening or how services are run in their area - up to 51% from 46%. In 2017, we asked a new question about partnership working – three quarters of respondents (76%) agreed that local agencies and service providers worked well together to support and improve your local area?
- 3.17 When asked unprompted what one thing do you think would most improve the quality of life in your local area, the issues most frequently mentioned were:
- Less dog fouling
  - Bins being emptied / more bins
  - More for children / young people
  - Improved parking
  - Jobs / employment opportunities

3.18 Wellbeing

This year's results also show marginal improvement across the wellbeing questions. Overall satisfaction with life, as scored on a scale of 0 to 10, was 8.2 which compares favourably to other cities.



**3.19 Belfast City Council Performance**

Generally resident opinion about Belfast City Council was positive:

- 81% agreed the council makes Belfast a better place to live (up from 69% in 2014)
- 74% agreed the council shows good leadership for the city (up from 65% in 2014)
- 78% of respondents were satisfied with how council runs things (up from 69% in 2014)
- 87% agreed the Council keeps residents either very or fairly well informed about the services it provides (up from 64% in 2014 and 54% in 2010)
- 68% agreed that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local residents (up from 60% in 2014 and 36% in 2010)

**3.20 In 2017 we asked new performance questions, which we hope to use as benchmarks against other councils and sectors moving forward:**

- 71% agreed that the council provides good customer service;
- 67% rated the council highly [excellent to good] in terms of reputation, 11% felt it was poor with the remainder answering 'don't know';
- 63% rated the council highly [excellent to good] in terms of trustworthiness, 10% felt it was poor with the remainder answering 'don't know';
- 76% agreed that Council should have more power and responsibility for delivering services and developing the city.

**3.21 The results from the resident survey will play a key part in helping to inform the development of the council's Corporate Plan and the development of the 'Belfast Agenda'. It will also help us to track progress against the key outcomes and objectives within these plans. Survey data relating to council performance and outcomes will be fed into the new performance management arrangements being developed as part of our new obligations under the Local Government Act. Members and partners will have an opportunity to consider these findings in more detail as part of the ongoing community planning development process and through the individual work streams and also through Area Working Group meetings linked to the development of local area planning.**

**3.22 Financial & Resource Implications**

There are no direct resource implications as a result of this report.

**3.23 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. However, the information obtained will help inform our good relations work and audit of inequalities.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Governance**

**Annual Updates to the Council Constitution Documents  
(including the Scheme of Delegation)**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of report or summary of main issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to submit for approval updates to the Council Constitution and it’s appendices, specifically:**

- Council Constitution
- Standing Orders
- Roles and Functions of Committees
- Scheme of Delegation

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Approve the proposed amendments

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

**3.1 As Members will be aware, the Council approved a Constitution in April 2015 comprising key governance documents including the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation. In order to reflect recent organisational changes in the Council, the NI Executive departments and new legislation, these documents have been updated. Tracked changes versions of all the updated documents are set out as appendices to this report.**

- 3.2 In addition, in order to improve the service delivery of the Planning function, the powers delegated to the Director of Planning and Place were discussed at a special meeting of the Planning Committee on 14th March 2017 where it was agreed to recommend the changes proposed.

3.3 **Key Issues**

**Constitution**

Some minor amendments have been made to the Constitution to reflect internal and external changes. This updated document is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

3.4 **Standing Orders**

Some minor amendments have been made to the Standing Orders to reflect organisational changes and new legislation. This updated document is set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

3.5 **Roles and Functions of Committees**

Some minor amendments have been made to this document to reflect internal changes. The updated document is set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

3.6 **Scheme of Delegation**

A summary of the amendments which have been made are set out below and an updated document is at Appendix 4 to this report.

**Recent organisation and legislative changes**

- New Director of City & Neighbourhoods
- New Director of City Centre Development
- Move of Parks & Leisure
- Move of Building Control
- Move of Community Services
- Establishment of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Limited
- Establishment of Innovation Factory
- Updated references to legislation, statutory guidance and bye-laws

Please note that the powers relating to newly-vacant post of Director of Organisational Development can be delegated by

Chief Executive. A report outlining the re-assignment of these powers will be brought to Members at a later date.

- 3.7 In addition, a clause has been added allowing the Town Solicitor to make minor amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to reflect organisational or legislative changes (see 3.3.12) without having to bring the full Scheme of Delegation to Committee for approval. Significant amendments to the Scheme of Delegation will continue to be brought to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for approval.

3.8 Planning-related changes in order to improve service delivery

These changes have been proposed to ensure that the Planning Committee can operate more efficiently. At present the Planning Committee considers on average 17 applications (12 local and five major) each month. The key changes proposed would reduce the average number of local applications considered at each meeting from 12 to four. This would mean the Committee would deal with an average of nine applications (five major and four local). The ability of Members to bring matters before the Planning Committee is unaffected.

	Current	Proposed
Local	12	4
Major	5	5
Total	17	9

- 3.9 The Planning Committee at their meeting on 14th March 2017 agreed to recommend the proposed changes. For clarity, the proposed changes have been set out in a table in Appendix 5 of this report.

3.10 Licensing-related changes to give effect to the Pavement Café Act 2014

A new provision for the granting, renewal and variation of pavement café licences has been added. The Licensing Committee at their meeting on 14th December 2016 agreed to recommend the proposed changes (see 3.8.8 I).

**3.11 Building control-related changes for dealing with dual-language street signs**

Following a judicial review of a Council decision not to erect a dual-language street sign, the Scheme of Delegation has been updated to provide the power for refusing an application where the required survey quota is not met and no exceptional circumstances have been submitted. Where the submitted exceptional circumstances relate to matters other than the carrying out and processing of the survey, the matter will be presented to Committee (see 3.8.8 m and n).

**3.12 Next steps**

If these changes are approved by Members, the changes would take effect after the next Council meeting except the Standing Orders which must be passed at one Council meeting and confirmed at the next.

**3.13 Financial & Resource Implications**

The key aim of the proposed changes to the powers delegated to the Director of Planning and Place is to improve the efficiency and service delivery of the Planning function.

**3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations contained in the report and noted that the City Solicitor had sought legal opinion regarding issues which had been raised about Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) as set out in Standing Orders and would report back to the Committee in due course.

**Non-Attendance at Meetings**

The Committee acceded to the request by Councillor Arder Carson for the Council to approve his continued absence on the basis of ill health under the provision of Section 9 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Capital Programme Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The Council’s Capital Programme is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report outlines**

- an update on projects under the Capital Programme
- proposed movements – Clarendon Playing Fields (Stage 3- Committed), Ulidia Playing Fields and King George IV Playing Fields (Stage 2- Uncommitted)
- proposed additions– Reservoir Safety Programme and Ventilation system at St. George’s Market (Stage 1 – Emerging)

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to –**

- note that updates on the Capital programme since the last update report

**Project Movements**

- agree that the following project is moved to Stage 3- Committed – Schemes at tender preparation stage on the Capital Programme –
  - Clarendon Playing Fields – New mini 3G pitch and floodlighting (see 3.4) – with a maximum budget of £452,000 to be allocated - the Director of Finance & Resources has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. Members are also asked to agree that the necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tender received and full commitment to deliver.
- Agree that the following projects are moved to Stage 2 - Uncommitted (see 3.5)

- Ulidia Playing Fields – New 3G pitch and floodlighting – OBC to be worked up with further detail to be brought back to Committee for consideration in due course
- King George V Playing Fields – New 3G pitch and floodlighting - OBC to be worked up with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course
- Agree that the following projects are added as Stage 1 – Emerging Projects
  - Ventilation system at St. George's Market - SOC to be worked up and brought back to Committee for further consideration (section 3.6)
  - Reservoir Safety – SOC to be worked up and brought back to Committee for further consideration (section 3.7)

**Other projects – Updates**

- Shore Road Changing Pavilion – note that a study is being commissioned to ascertain the best option for future changing provision at the Shore Road (see 3.8)
- Fleet Programme - note the Fleet Programme for 17/18 (Appendix 1) and agree that the necessary procurement processes are initiated with the delegation of subsequent evaluation and award processes to the Director of Property & Projects (see 3.9)

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1** The Council's rolling Capital Programme is a significant programme of investment in Council assets and Members are asked to note the update in respect of the delivery of projects as outlined below –

**Projects recently completed/in final stages of completion**

- *Connswater community Greenway* – at the end of April a major milestone was reached with the opening of the final section of the transformative Connswater Community Greenway project. In

total the CCG has involved the development of 16km of new foot and cycle paths, improved green spaces, 23 new or improved bridges, 5km of flood walls and embankments, 6 new tourism and heritage trails as well as the C.S. Lewis Square. This is the single biggest capital project that the Council has ever undertaken at approx. £40m which included funding of £25m from the Big Lottery Fund and

- *City Hall - New visitor exhibition – ‘A journey from the past to present’* – officially opened by the Lord Mayor on Monday 15th May
- *North Foreshore Infrastructure works* – the North Foreshore site was officially opened for business on Wednesday 3rd May. As Members are aware a development brief for leisure uses for the site is currently out to the market which submissions due to be returned by 19th May

**Projects currently on the ground**

- the £3.7million upgrade of the Tropical Ravine
- Phase 2 of the Olympia regeneration project which includes the creation of the new boulevard entrance, new play space and 3G pitch and Midgley Park replacement
- New pavilion at Sally Gardens

**Projects at tender preparation stage**

- Preparatory work is continuing on a wide range of projects including the new pitch at Cherryvale under the Pitches strategy which has recently received planning permission, the baby plot memorial at the City Cemetery for which an artist has recently been commissioned and open space upgrades at both the Falls Park and Skegoneil

- 3.2 Members are asked to note that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange site visits for Members/ Party Groups to any capital programme project.

**Proposed movements on/additions to the Capital Programme**

- 3.3 Members have previously agreed that all capital projects must go through a 3 Stage process where decisions on which



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**projects progress are taken by SP&R. Members are asked to agree to the following movements as summarised below**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Overview</b>	<b>Stage</b>
Clarendon Playing Fields	New mini 3G pitch and floodlighting Maximum of £452,000 to be allocated	Move to Stage 3- Committed
Ulidia Playing Fields	New 3G pitch and floodlighting	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
King George V Playing Fields	New 3G pitch and floodlighting	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
St. George's Market – Ventilation system	To examine the options in relation to the ventilation system at St. George's Market	Add as an Emerging Project
Reservoir Safety Programme	To examine the options to ensure the safety of Council owned reservoirs	Add as an Emerging Project

**Move to Stage 3 – Committed**

- 3.4 Clarendon Playing Fields – Development of a new mini 3G pitch and associated floodlighting. Members. Members may recall that the Clarendon project was initially added to the Capital Programme under the MUGA programme however in May 2015 Committee was updated that the scope of this project had changed from a MUGA to a mini 3G pitch and the Committee therefore agreed that this should be reconsidered as a stand-alone project and added as an emerging project in its own right. Since this time work has progressed on the project, an OBC has been completed and assessed and planning is now in place.**

**It is now recommended that this project is progressed to Stage 3- Committed on the Capital Programme and the Director of Finance & Resources has recommended that a maximum of £452,000 be allocated to this project and has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. Committee is also asked to agree that the necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver**

**Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted**

- 3.5 Ulidia Playing Fields and King George V Playing Fields – New 3G pitch and floodlighting - Members will recall that they agreed in June 2016 to add the redevelopments of both Ulidia Playing Fields and King George V Playing Fields to the capital programme as Emerging Projects with SOC's to be worked up. These have now been completed in respect of both projects and it is recommended that both projects are now progressed to Stage 2- Uncommitted which will allow the costs to be fully worked up.**

Members are asked to note that this does not constitute an investment decision in either project and that as part of the OBC process these projects will be looked at in the context of other strategic initiatives happening in the local areas including the leisure transformation programme, existing facilities, planned projects under external initiatives and/or additional funding opportunities (e.g. DfC investment, Living with Water Programme etc).

**Add as Stage 1 – Emerging Projects**

- 3.6 St. George's Market – Ventilation system – Members will be aware of the changing nature of the offering at St. George's Market over the last number of years which has seen it move from being a traditional type of market to much more emphasis on becoming a tourism attraction and a destination of choice within the city with for example the Saturday City Food and Craft Market and specialised markets for example the award-winning Twilight Market which has a particular emphasis on local food producers. As a result there are an increasing number of hot food vendors and stalls at the market.**

The current ventilation system was installed when the Market was redeveloped in the early 90s and is no longer fit for purpose in terms of the current market offering. It is therefore recommended that the ventilation system is added as an emerging project onto the Capital Programme in order to assess the best option available in terms of future provision. Members will however appreciate the limitations of the St. George's Market both as a listed building and as a major working building and the need to ensure that any new system/upgrades will be sympathetic to the buildings overall usage and design will be considered as part of the Stage Approval process.

- 3.7 Reservoir Safety Programme – The Council owns a number of reservoirs across the city including Half Moon Lake, Boodles Dam, Waterworks Upper and Lower and Alexandra Park and as a reservoir owner the Council has a number of obligations under the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 which has recently received Royal Assent and the Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973. This includes ensuring the safety of reservoirs. Committee have previously been advised that works are required at Boodles Dam in order to comply with the requirements under the Reservoirs Act which were identified through a Section 10 safety report. Section 10 reports have now been carried out on the Council's other reservoir sites and a number of issues have been identified at the Waterworks and Alexandra Park which the Council are required to take forward. The Council has also recently received notification from the Rivers Agency reminding us of our obligations in this regard.**

**It is therefore recommended that a Reservoirs Safety Programme is added to the Capital Programme and that as part of this consultants are engaged to look at the emerging priorities of work required with further detail to be brought back to Members in due course.**

**Other projects**

- 3.8 Shore Road Changing Pavilion – Members are asked to note that following a recent maintenance report on this facility highlighted a number of key issues and noted that the building was in a poor state of repair. In light of this a study has been commissioned to assess the best option for the future changing provision at the Shore Road as the current provision is no longer fit for purpose. An update on this study will be brought back to Members in due course for consideration in relation to the next steps**
- 3.9 Fleet Programme 2017/18 – Members will know that the Council needs to run and maintain a substantial fleet in order to deliver its services. In March 2013 SP&R agreed to allocate £2.1m towards the Fleet Programme for 2017-2018. Members are asked to note that the Fleet Programme has been developed in conjunction with Council departments and reflects the service needs of the organisation. Members are asked to note the agreed Fleet Programme for 2017/2018 (see Appendix 1) and agree that the necessary procurement processes are initiated with the delegation of subsequent evaluation and award processes to the Director of Property & Projects**

**Physical Programme 2017/2018 and beyond –  
implications for Members**

**3.10 Members are aware that the Council is currently delivering a major physical programme which includes**

- over 70 projects on the Capital Programme
- the £105m Leisure Transformation Programme which will see the redevelopment of 7 leisure centres across the city with works due to commence in the summer on Andersonstown, Brook and Robinson
- 35 BIF projects which includes 12 which are at Stage 3 –Committed with the 23 projects currently being worked up
- A £9m LIF programme – which has already seen over 50 projects completed across the city with a further 70 either underway or agreed in principle
- a £6m annual rolling programme of maintenance

In addition the Council is now becoming the delivery agent of choice for a number of central government departments and is currently either delivering or proposed to be the delivery agent for over 40 projects across the city under the Building Successful Communities initiative, Urban Villages or the Social Investment Fund.

**3.11 Members will recognise from the above that resources, particularly financial resources, are in increasingly short supply and there is ever increasing demand for the Council to do more with less and less and it is clear that this level of investment cannot be sustained at this rate in the future given the budgetary pressures facing the Council and the wider public sector.**

Members are asked to note that there are a number of major capital projects which need to be considered over the coming months including the new crematorium, the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens as well as a wide range of emerging projects. Members therefore need to be aware that each decision they take in relation to progressing a capital project or agreeing additional money towards any one project or agreeing any new projects has a consequential impact on the level of financing that is available for other capital projects and each individual decision therefore subsequently limits the capacity of the Council to progress

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**other capital projects thereby potentially necessitating some difficult decisions for Members in terms of prioritisation.**

- 3.12 It is appreciated that this is a complex area for Members and it is therefore proposed that a detailed report on the current status of the physical programme, including the capital programme, is brought to Committee next month for the consideration of Members to allow Members to start to consider the physical programme in the context of local area planning etc.**

**3.13 Financial & Resource Implications**

**The capital programme is a rolling programme of investment in council assets**

**3.14 Equality & Good Relations Implications**

**All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Area Working Update**

**Minutes**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meetings of the Area Working Groups as follows: South Area Working Group 24th April; North Area Working Group 26th April; West Area working Group 28th April; and East Area Working Group 4th May.

**West Area Working Group**

The Committee was advised that the West Area Working Group (AWG), at its meeting on 26th April, had noted that the Falls Community Council (FCC) had recently approached the Council seeking support for the St. James Forum and the development and implementation of its community forum project (WLIF2 -10). The AWG had been asked to consider if it wished to approve the project proceeding as a partnership project between the St. James Forum and the FCC which would require due diligence on both organisations and joint signatures on any future legal agreements. The Working Group had agreed to the projected proceeding as a joint initiative.

Noted.

**South Area Working Group**

The South Area Working Group (AWG) in November 2016 had previously agreed to ring-fence £250,000 of its outer south BIF allocation to BIF33 – Linfield FC/ Boys

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Brigade and Belvoir FC, with further detail on the scope of the project to be brought back. Following further work with the Group the South AWG, at its meeting on 24th April, had agreed that the scope of the BIF funding should focus on Phase 1A which included the replacement of Belvoir FC's grass pitch, resurfacing of the car park and the widening of the access lane.

Noted.

**Assets and Estates**

**Former Tudor Place Playground, Agnes Street**

The Committee approved a negotiated financial settlement of £250,000 from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in relation to an Agreement dated 7th August, 2000 for the replacement of Tudor Place Playground and approved proposals for this capital receipt to be ring-fenced for the provision of proposed play facilities in the Agnes Street area.

**Springfield Star – Lease Agreement**

The Committee agreed to extend the current lease agreement with the Trustees of Springfield Star for lands adjacent to Springmartin Playground for a period of 3 years, with an option to renew for a further 3 years from the end date of the previous agreement.

**Medway Street Depot**

The Committee agreed to appropriation of the Medway Street Depot to the Corporate Landbank, which was held by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and managed by the Estates Unit, with a further report to be submitted to the Committee in due course on future use/disposal options.

**Licence Renewals for Off Street Car parks Located  
at Bankmore Street and Cromac Street**

The Committee agreed to the renewal of the car park Licence Agreements at Bankmore Street for 12 months from 1st April, 2017 at an annual licence fee of £28,100 and at Cromac Street for 12 months from 1st April, 2017 at an annual licence fee of £49,000.

**Avoniel Play Centre – Proposed Temporary  
Relocation to Exchange Church**

The Committee agreed to a Licence Agreement for the provision of temporary accommodation at Exchange Church, Albertbridge Road for the displaced Avoniel Play Centre Summer Scheme and potentially the After Schools Club.

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**Requests for the Use of Giant's Park, North Foreshore  
for NI Children's Hospice Colour Dash**

The Committee approved the use of facilities at Giant's Park, North Foreshore on 6th August, 2017 for the NI Children's Hospice 5k Sparkle Dash run, subject to the satisfactory resolution of the key issues as set out in the report.

**Park Road – Substation and Cable Easement  
and Right of Way**

The Committee granted a 99 year lease, cable easement and right of way to Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Ltd (NIE) for land at Park Road, Belfast for the installation for an electricity sub-station which supplied the Council's Park Road Civic Amenity Site.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Setting of Regional Rate**

The Committee noted a report which provided an update on the setting of the regional rate and arrangements for issue of rate bills for 2017/18.

**Allowances for Civic Dignitaries**

The Committee considered a report in relation to the allowances payable to the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff and agreed not to increase the allowance for the 2017/18 year.

**Contracts for Award**

The Committee:

- (1) approved the public advertisement and acceptance of tenders as listed in Appendix 1, table 1, through the Council's electronic procurement system;
- (2) grant delegated authority to the appropriate Director, using pre-agreed criteria, to accept the most economic advantageous tender, and allow extensions where contracts were under review as per table 2; and
- (3) noted the contracts awarded between January and April, 2017 as per table 3.

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**Appendix 1 - Schedule of Tenders for consideration**

**Table 1 – New tenders**

Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
Supply and Delivery of Animal Feed to Belfast Zoo	Nigel Grimshaw	1 year with the option to renew annually for a further two years
Botanic Gardens Palm House Redecoration	Gerry Millar	6 months
City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF) – Application Evaluation Partner	Nuala Gallagher	Up to 18 months with option to extend on a yearly basis for a further 2 years.
European Capital of Culture Support Services Contract	Donal Durkan	Up to October 2017 with option to extend on a month to month basis
Belfast Story – Contract for Strategic Client and Financial Advice	Nuala Gallagher	Initially for up to 12 months with potential to extend throughout duration of the project in line with activity schedule and break clause options

**Table 2 – Contracts for Extension of contract period**

Title of tender	Director Responsible	Proposed extension
Provision of Footwear and Gloves	Gerry Millar	Month to month until a new tender is in place
Provision of Mobile Video Screens	Donal Durkin	Month to month until a new tender is in place



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**Table 3 Contracts Awarded January – April 2017**

Title of Contract	Director Responsible	Contract Duration	Successful Contractor
T1776 Supply and fitting of tyres and associated services	Gerry Millar	39 months	Michelin Tyres plc, Campbell Road, Stoke –on-Trent, ST4 4EY
T1757 Tender for creation of a Brand Identity for Belfast	Suzanne Wylie	6 months	McCadden, Roof Terrace, Bedford House, Bedford Street, Belfast , BT2 7FD
T1755 Supply of Gas	Gerry Millar	33 months	Lissan Coal Co Ltd t/a Go Power
T 1756 Supply of Electricity	Gerry Millar	33 months	Lissan Coal Co Ltd t/a Go Power & Airtricity Energy Supply
T1758 Supply and delivery of trees	Nigel Grimshaw	1 year (+2 years)	Hillier Nurseries Ltd, Ampfield House, Winchester Rd, Ampfield, Romsey SO51 9PA
T1759 Design, provision and management of fireworks/pyrotechnics	Donal Durkin	3 years (+2 years) or maximum value of £160,000	Pains Fireworks Ltd Whiteparish Salisbury SP5 2SD
T1786 Professional Services to develop a full feasibility study for the City Growth Deal	Suzanne Wylie	12 months	KPMG LLP, 15 Canada Square, Canary Wharf London
T1771 Collection and Recovery of Vehicles and Mobile Plant	Gerry Millar	2 years (+1 year)	CCRS, 51 Cotton Rd, Bangor BT19 7QG

**Requests for Funding**

The Committee considered a report in relation to a joint request for funding from Féile an Phobail and Belfast South Community Resources (BSCR) in relation to a pilot diversionary programme in the south and west of the city. The total request for funding was £100,000.

After discussion the Committee agreed:

- that Officers meet with representatives of Feile an Phobail and BSCR to further exploit a request for funding and the costings for a pilot diversionary programme in the south and west of the city, with the report to be submitted to the June meeting on further details of the proposal as part of the year end finance report;
- that authority be delegated to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June to make the decision on whether or not to fund the proposal; and
- that the aforementioned report be submitted in the first instance to the Shared City Partnership to ascertain its views.

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**Equality and Good Relations**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 8th May.

**Operational Issues**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Budget and Transformation Panel**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 11th May.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Active Belfast Board**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Ltd Board of 20th April.

**Requests for the Use of City Hall  
and the Provision of Hospitality**

The Committee adopted the recommendations in relation to the requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>MAY 2017 REQUESTS</b>						
Peace-players International Champions4Peace Celebration Event	16 August 2017	Reception to recognize the work and efforts of Champions4Peace – a programme for young people to identify, manage conflict and appreciate diversity.  Attending - 80	Yes – c & d	No charge (charity)	Yes TCB £2 per head as small reception and would assist in the delivery of this event and small numbers attending	Allow No charge Hospitality – TCB reception £2 per head max 80 people
Business in the Community	29 September 2017	Networking event to allow business people to meet with and learn of third sector organizations and their needs – encourage business to work with local communities. Attending – 60	Yes – a & d	No charge (charity)	No – business and trustees attending.	Allow No charge No Hospitality

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Fleming Fulton School	21 September 2017	To recognize a significant milestone in the school's history and celebrate the work of special schools within Belfast	Yes - c	No charge	Yes, wine reception up to £500 in value	Allow No charge Civic hospitality
<b>2018 EVENT REQUESTS</b>						
IAFP Forensic	17 May 2018	Welcome reception for international delegates attending the IAFP Conference  Attending - 80	Yes – a & b	No charge (charity)	Yes – TCB	Allow No charge Hospitality – TCB reception £2 per head max 80 people or wine reception
University of Ulster International Conference of Structure in Fire dinner	7 June 2018	Welcome reception and dinner for delegates attending this 3 day conference in Belfast  Attending – 260	Yes – a & b	£825.00 (university not a charity)	Yes Max £500.00 wine reception	Allow Charge £825 Hospitality – Wine reception
British Sociological Association	13 September 2018	Welcome reception and dinner for delegates attending this 4 day conference in Belfast Attending – 200	Yes – a & b	£825	Yes Max £500.00 wine reception	Allow Charge £825 Hospitality – Wine reception

**Invitation to Attend the Centenary Ceremony  
for the Battle of Messines Ridge**

The Committee was advised that the Council had received an invitation from the UK and Irish Governments for a number of Members to attend the centenary ceremony for the Battle of Messines Ridge in Belgium on 7th June. Following contact with the organisers, the Council had been able to secure invitations for one representative from each of the six main political parties represented on the Council, together with a Council officer.

It was reported that the Somme Association had, through a local travel agent, arranged a visit to Belgium which would include this ceremony. The group would leave on 6th June and return on 9th June. However, it was pointed out that anyone attending the visit would be absent for polling day for the General Election on 8th June. In addition,

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given the tight time scales associated with making the booking with the Somme Association trip, it would be necessary to confirm any booking with them no later than Monday, 22nd May.

The Committee agreed that one representative from each of the six main political parties on the Council, together with a Council officer, be authorised to attend the Centenary Ceremony for the Battle of Messines Ridge.

**ILLUMINATE – Use of Facilities**

The Committee agreed to accede to a request from Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) the use of the ILLUMINATE system to mark a local day of action on 26th May, subject to it meeting the criteria and on the basis that the system was not already in use on that day.

Chairperson