

Terms of Reference - Working Groups

Reference Group on Older people

- To provide political direction and input to the development of the city planning process for improving the health, wellbeing and independence of older people within Belfast
- Maximise the impact the Council can have in working with key stakeholders through the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership to meet the needs of older people in Belfast
- Provide political legitimacy to advocate, lobby and challenge on policy issues which directly impact on older people's quality of life.
- Direct the work of the officer group in improving and joining up council services for older people.

Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group

To support cemetery and crematorium development and improvement of bereavement services for Belfast through:

- consideration of evidence/reports in order to advise on issues and inform options around future provision;
- providing strategic direction and input into the city's framework for cemetery and crematorium development;
- making recommendations to the relevant Committee regarding cemetery and crematorium development; and
- acting as a communication channel to Party Groups and to other Councillors in general and ensure that the facts of issues around cemetery and crematorium development are fully understood.

North Foreshore Member' Steering Group

The remit of the Group is to oversee the management of the North Foreshore, especially in regard to policy, resource allocation and financial risk of future development at the site.

Shared city Partnership

The role of the SCP is:

- To assist the elected political leadership of the Council, staff, diverse civil society interests and partnering agencies to engage pro-actively on all Good Relations issues on behalf of citizens and be a collective voice, promoting a common vision for Good Relations in the City.

The purpose of the SCP is:

- To oversee the delivery of the Belfast PEACE IV Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan while also continuing with the core Good Relations agenda for the City including the good relations outcomes linked to the Belfast Agenda and the new Local Development Plan.
- To oversee the delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan and associated District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP).

- To provide a challenge function to the council and other represented
- organisations to ensure good relations is at the forefront of policy and programming development which impacts on the City.
- To promote good relations between people of different religious and political beliefs and different racial groups in every aspect of Council activities.
- To use the Council's influence as a democratically elected body, providing civic leadership to the City, to promote good relations throughout society.
- To promote equality of opportunity in the discharge of the Council's responsibilities, taking into account the needs of persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, of men and women generally, of persons with a disability and persons without and of persons with dependants and persons without;
- To promote respect and understanding throughout the City by providing support, including the equitable use of available budgets, for appropriate initiatives which celebrate the cultural diversity of Belfast.
- To act as an mechanism to ensure that major Belfast City Council initiatives both revenue and capital are cognisant of their duty in relation to Section 75, Part B

Audit and Risk Panel

Statement of purpose

1 The Audit and Risk Panel is a key component of Belfast City Council's corporate governance arrangements. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.

2 The purpose of the Audit and Risk Panel is to provide independent assurance to those charged with governance (Members and senior management) on the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of the council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It will provide an independent scrutiny of the council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it exposes the council to risk and weakens the control environment. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

Governance, risk and control

3 To review the council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework and consider annual governance reports and assurances.

4 To review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control.

5 To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.

6 To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.

7 To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the council, to include overseeing the council's risk, control and governance arrangements for health and safety.

8 To approve the council's risk management strategy and monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the Panel, including the corporate risk register and information on the management of key corporate risks.

9 To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.

10 To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.

11 To approve the council's fraud and whistleblowing policies and monitor the implementation of these policies, including the counter-fraud strategy, actions and resources.

12. To review and oversee the Council's framework and related arrangements for performance management.

Internal audit

13 To approve the internal audit charter.

14 To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.

15 To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.

16 To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.

17 To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.

18 To consider reports from the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:

a) Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.

b) Regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.

c) Reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the Annual Governance Statement.

19 To consider the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services' annual report:

a) The statement of the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement – these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit.

b) The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion – these will assist the committee in reviewing the Annual Governance Statement.

20 To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.

21 To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.

22 To contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.

23 To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

24 To support the development of effective communication with the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services.

External audit

25 To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.

26 To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.

27 To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.

28 To commission work from internal and external audit.

29 To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.

30 To consider the external auditor's report on performance management, specifically the annual improvement assessment and to consider the adequacy of management responses / action taken to address issues arising from these reports.

Financial reporting

31 To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.

32 To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Accountability arrangements, referral and reporting

33 To report to those charged with governance (Members and senior management) on the Panel's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions. The Panel will do this by reporting to the council's Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on a regular basis through reports and minutes of meetings. It may also report, with the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to other standing committees on matters that are of direct relevance to the responsibilities of these committees.

34 To report to full council (through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee) on a regular basis on the Panel's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Panel in meeting its purpose.

35. The Audit and Risk Panel shall consider any issue referred to it in relation to these terms of reference by the council or any Standing Committee. Furthermore, the Audit and Risk Panel shall also consider any matter brought to its attention by the Chief Executive. Where

any individual Member wishes to raise an issue under these terms of reference, the Member shall accordingly either raise the matter through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee or in the case of urgency with the Chief Executive.