

Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum

15 August 2019

Attendance

Members:

Alderman Brian Kingston (Chair)
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Councillor George Dorrian
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Donal Lyons
Councillor Nuala McAllister (for Cllr Long)
Councillor Mal O'Hara
Alderman Jim Rodgers (for Cllr Copeland)

Apologies: Alderman Copeland, Councillor Long, Councillor Ferguson

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Christine Robinson, Head of Strategy, Policy and Partnerships
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

1. Inclusive Growth Framework

A draft summary document outlining the proposed Inclusive Growth Framework and overarching committee report were circulated. The Head of Strategy, Policy and Partnerships took the members through the priority areas and emerging actions. Members made a number of comments on the proposed actions and welcomed the opportunity to feed into the more comprehensive document and action plan via party group briefings in advance of the September Committee meeting where the Strategy would be brought to Committee for approval. The document would then go out to public consultation. The CX reminded members that this was an evolving document and would be added to as the council term progressed.

2. Finance

Quarter 1 Finance 2019 / 20

The Director of Finance and Resources outlined the 2019 / 20 quarter 1 financial position for the Council including a forecast of the year end outturn. He highlighted a number of factors which impacted on the forecast, in particular the LPS district rate forecast and recommended that this was discussed with their officials at a pre –arranged meeting on rating policy. He also outlined the recommendation to the August SP&R committee that no reallocations or cash flow payments are considered until the Quarter 2 position is presented to the Committee in November 2019.

Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiencies

The Director of Finance and Resources circulated a report on the council's medium term financial plan and efficiency programme which would be presented to the August SP&R committee . He outlined the key financial factors which influence the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 - 2022/23 and the rate setting process for 2020/21, together with an overview of the priorities and work in progress to establish the 2020/21 - 2022/23 Efficiency Programme. Party Group Briefings and further reports to committee will be held over the coming months to set the revenue estimates and to agree the efficiency programme.

3. Bonfire Framework

Following the decision of the SP&R committee in June 2019, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services outlined the proposed terms of reference for an All-Party Working Group which would be set up to put in place a framework to achieve more effective management of bonfires on Council-owned sites/facilities. The members agreed that this should be consider by the August SP&R Committee.

Members were then updated on ongoing issues in relation to Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre which are impacting on the overall development of the site. Further information will be brought to the next SP&R committee.

4. Update on Call - Ins

The City Solicitor provided a summary of counsel's advice on two call-ins relating to Statues and Flags and Banners. Both of these responses will be considered at the next council meeting. Members were asked to consider meeting informally to bring a resolution to the Statues issue.

5. Belfast Region City Growth Deal

An update paper on the city deal was circulated to members and the Chief Executive outlined recommendations for the establishment of a Joint Member Forum with the five other councils in the city region partnership. This will be presented to the August SP&R committee.

6. City Growth Commission

The Chief Executive informed the Forum that an update report on the establishment of a City Growth Commission will be presented to the SP&R committee at their meeting in August. The report provides details on the membership, resources and proposed programme of work, including the work on the Belfast/Dublin Economic Corridor.

7. Planning Update

The Chief Executive updated the panel on the live planning applications and informed the panel of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee this month.