

Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum

21st March 2022

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Billy Hutchinson

Councillor Emmet Mc Donough-Brown (*for Councillor Nuala McAlister*)

Alderman Brian Kingston

Councillor Ciaran Beattie

Alderman Sonia Copeland

Apologies: Councillor Fiona Ferguson, Councillor Áine Groogan, Councillor Mal O'Hara, Councillor Donal Lyons

Officers:

John Walsh, Chief Executive

Rose Crozier, Director of Neighbourhood Services (for Items 1, 3 & 4)

Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services (for Item 4)

Christine Sheridan, Head of Human Resources (for Item 4)

Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager (for Item 2)

Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services (for Item 4)

Michael Denny, Commercial Manager

Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

1. Review of Active Belfast Limited/Governance Arrangements

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update on the independent review of Active Belfast Limited and the leisure governance model previously agreed by SP and R Committee. She outlined the main elements of the review findings and Members discussed the proposals and recommendations included in the report and the preferred way forward based on the assessment outlined. A report will be considered at March SP and R Committee.

2. A Day of Reflection

Following the motion discussed at February SP and R Committee in relation to Bloody Friday, the Chief Executive provided an update in relation to the Council organising a day of reflection to allow citizens to reflect on the recent conflict and to remember all of the victims of the Troubles in Belfast. The Good Relations Manager referred to a previous report considered by Party Group Leaders on what that might entail, and the principles that would underpin any day of reflection. Following detailed discussion Members agreed that any event organised would be an event to enable people to reflect in a private capacity rather than have civic

participation. The Good Relations Manager to draft up a proposal for Members' consideration based on the issues discussed. It was also agreed that the date aligns with the wider Day of Private Reflection that is coordinated by Healing Through Remembering. A report outlining the proposals will be brought to March SP&R Committee for consideration.

3. PEACE PLUS

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update on the development of the PEACE PLUS programme and outlined for Members the emerging work being undertaken as part of the first investment area that will open. She also set out the recommendations for the proposed governance arrangements. Members discussed the proposed model to enable decisions to be made in a timely manner. Following discussion on the options for the decision making process, Members noted a report will be considered by Members at March SP and R Committee outlining the emerging work and the recommendations for the proposed governance arrangements.

4. AOB

Bonfire and Cultural Expression Approach 2022

The Director of Neighbourhood Services outlined for Members the proposed overall approach to Bonfires and Cultural Expression for 2022. Members discussed the programme of work and the options outlined that are in line with the approach agreed for 2021. A report will be brought to March SP&R committee for Members' consideration. Some Members raised queries in relation to timelines for the funding streams and the Good Relations Manager provided clarity on the deadlines for applications. A report will be presented to the SP and R Committee in March.

Social Value Procurement Policy

The Chief Executive outlined the significant amount of work that has been undertaken in developing a proposed Social Value Procurement Policy. The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services updated Members on the development of the policy to date and advised that a copy of the draft policy was considered recently by the Social Policy Working Group. Comments have now been considered and incorporated into the final policy. There was detailed discussion and some concerns highlighted by Members around some of the detail of the policy. It was agreed that Members further consider and feedback any comments they may have to the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services in advance of March SP and R Committee.

Industrial Action

The Head of Human Resources provided an update on the Industrial Action currently taking place. As discussed at the last meeting she reminded members that the pay award is agreed nationally and therefore the council has no direct control in pay negotiations. Members noted the subsequent disruption to some council services, and it was noted that the situation was being closely monitored in order to minimise any impact on residents. It was also noted that there may be further disruption to services as the action continues this week and Members will be kept informed as this progresses.

The Chief Executive advised that he had received correspondence from one of the Political Parties to ask that any Council meetings due to take place this week are rescheduled. He outlined those committee meetings due to take place this week and sought the views of Members. There was consensus that the Chief Executive seek clarity from ICTU and update Members following his correspondence with ICTU.

Port Health

Members discussed in detail the current issues and challenges faced by the Port of Belfast as a result of the recent situation with P&O Ferries. The Director of City Services advised that the situation will be kept under review and that engagement with the other Councils, FSA and DAERA is ongoing. Members will be updated accordingly as the situation evolves.

World Down Syndrome Day 2022

Members noted the City Hall would be illuminated tonight for World Down Syndrome Day.

Queens Platinum Jubilee Funding

Further to the update provided to Members at the Forum meeting on the 16th March, the Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update on the application process through the CFNI portal. She outlined some issues in relation to the payment process and support for umbrella groups that need to be confirmed with CFNI. Following confirmation with CFNI, the Director will provide an update to party group leaders with all the details of the fund.