

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 22nd September, 2017

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Alderman Haire);
Aldermen Convery and Rodgers;
Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Campbell, Corr, Craig,
Graham, Hutchinson, Long, McCabe, McDonough-Brown,
McVeigh, O'Neill, Reynolds and Walsh.

Also Attended: Alderman Kingston.

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. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Alderman Spence.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th September.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Change of Date of Meeting in November

The Committee agreed to change the date of its next scheduled meeting from 17th till 24th November in order to accommodate the rate setting process for 2018-19.

Briefing Session – Commission for Victims and Survivors

The Committee noted that, at the request of the organisation, this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

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Restricted Items

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of these items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Changes to Current Catering Arrangements

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this matter to enable further information to be provided.

City Centre Investment Fund

The Committee noted a report which provided an update on the City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF), including progress to date, applications received and the planned next steps.

Efficiency Programme 2018-19 – 2019-20

The Committee noted the update on the efficiency programme and that further updates on the work streams and progress towards the efficiency targets would be provided as part of the rate setting reporting timetable; and agreed to the establishment of a Commercial Manager post to support the commercialisation of Council services and increased income opportunities to be funding from the invest to save budget at no additional cost to the ratepayer.

The Mac (Metropolitan Arts Centre) Update

(Mr. Donal Durkan, Director of Development, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report in relation to a request for funding from The Metropolitan Arts Centre.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request from the Mac to provide funding of £40,000, to be funded initially through general reserves, on the basis that meetings would be set in place between Belfast City Council politicians and representatives from the Mac, as well as the Arts Council and the Department for Communities, to ensure sustainability and enhance cultural and arts offering to local and international audiences.

It was agreed also that any further consideration for funding requests would only be considered in the context of the business case which had been presented to the Arts Council NI and the Department for Communities.

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Matters Referred Back from Council/Notices of Motion

Party Leaders' Forum

The Committee deferred consideration of the matter to enable it to be considered at the Party Group briefings and subsequently the Party Leaders' Forum.

Notice of Motion – Donations to Political Parties

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd July, had passed the following motion on Donations to Political Parties, which had been proposed by Councillor Nichol and seconded by Councillor Milne:

“This Council notes the motions passed in March, 2016 and January, 2017, recognising the importance which the citizens of Belfast place on being able to trust their elected representatives to work for the common good; further recognises the corrupting influence which money can have on political decision-making; considers it unacceptable that donations to political parties continue to remain secret in Northern Ireland; reiterates its calls on the Secretary of State to immediately lift the exemption to reveal all declared donations from £500 upwards to political parties since January 2014; and calls on all political parties to voluntarily publish donations until this time.”

It was reported that a response had now been received, on behalf of the Secretary of State, from Minister Chloe Smith MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Minister Smith explained that the Secretary of State had, in January 2017, written to the leaders of the Political Parties in Northern Ireland to seek their views on whether to move to full transparency for political donations and loans and, if so, to suggest a date from which such transparency should take effect. All of those parties which had responded had expressed the view that full transparency should be introduced, only one of which had been proposed that it be implemented retrospectively.

She had pointed out that, in light of those responses and the widespread support amongst the people of Northern Ireland around the importance of transparency to the wider political process, the Secretary of State had, on 3rd July, stated his intention to bring secondary legislation before Parliament shortly, with a view to having it passed in the autumn. That would provide for the publication of all donations and loans received by Political Parties in Northern Ireland on or after 1st July, 2017. On the basis of the representations which he had received from the parties, the Secretary of State did not consider it appropriate to impose retrospective regulations on those who had donated in accordance with the rules set out at that time.

The Minister went on to point out that the threshold for reporting and publishing donations and loans would be the same as in the rest of the United Kingdom, that is, over

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£7,500 or £1,500 for local accounting units. She concluded by stating that, whilst there were no plans to change those thresholds, the Secretary of State was aware that Political Parties in Northern Ireland had been considering the possibility of reducing them and the Northern Ireland Office would be interested in obtaining their views in that regard.

Noted.

Notice of Motion – Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd July, had passed the following motion on the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, which had been proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor McReynolds:

“This Council notes that the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Child Abuse found that children’s homes run by some churches, charities and state institutions in Belfast and elsewhere in Northern Ireland were the scene of widespread abuse and mistreatment of young residents.

The Council notes that Sir Anthony Hart, Chair of the Inquiry, recommended compensation, a memorial and a public apology to abuse survivors.

The Council expresses deep concern that, due to the failure to form a power-sharing government, there has been no progress into implementing the Hart HIA Redress Findings.

The Council agrees to write to political party leaders in Northern Ireland to ensure that, if an Executive is formed, the Inquiry’s recommendations are implemented in full as a matter of urgency.”

It was reported that a response had now been received, on behalf of the Secretary of State, from Minister Chloe Smith MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Minister Smith pointed out that the Secretary of State had met recently with historical institutional child abuse victims from a number of organisations in Northern Ireland, during which he had reiterated the Government’s condemnation of any form of abuse of children and its abhorrence of any tolerance by people in positions of responsibility of such activity by others.

She stated that the Government had always believed that the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, which had been announced in 2012 by the then First Minister and Deputy First Minister, was the most effective way of establishing the truth and that both the Government and agencies had provided the fullest possible level of co-operation. She highlighted the fact that Sir Anthony Hart, who had led the Inquiry, stated clearly within his closing statement that the report, its findings and recommendations were now a matter for the new Assembly and Executive to consider and urged them to implement his recommendations as a matter of priority. Minister Smith concluded by recognising fully the frustration felt by victims and survivors at the current lack of progress due to the

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suspension of the devolved administration and added that the Secretary of State continued to urge the Political Parties to restore the Executive to allow a response to Sir Anthony Hart's report to be provided at the earliest opportunity, including on his recommendations for redress and support for victims and survivors of child abuse.

In addition to the response from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Council had, to date, received responses from two leaders of Political Parties, namely, Mr. Steven Agnew MLA and Mr. Robin Swann MLA of the Green Party and the Ulster Unionist Party respectively.

Mr Agnew, within his response, recognised the urgency of the issue and maintained that the implementation of the report arising from the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry should not be delayed as a result of a failure to form an Executive and Assembly. He added that he had written to the Secretary of State to urge him to implement the report immediately and requested those Political Parties on the Council to urge their leadership to do the same.

Mr. Swann confirmed that he had written also to the Secretary of State on this issue and that he was committed to maintaining his Party's longstanding position of supporting the victims of historical institutional abuse. He too regretted the fact that the absence of an Executive and Assembly had delayed the process and supported the Council's call for the Inquiry's recommendations to be implemented as soon as the political institutions were restored. However, he pointed out that the Panel of Experts on Redress believed that the recommendations relating to compensation fell short of survivors' needs and had identified flaws and had suggested improvements. Mr. Swann confirmed that, in the absence of the Executive and Assembly, he had called upon the Government to examine both the recommendations of Sir Anthony Hart and the Panel of Experts on Redress and options for bridging the gap between them. He concluded by stating that he was working currently with other Political Parties to identify common ground and help deliver justice for the victims Historical Institutional Abuse.

The Committee noted the responses which had been received.

Strategic Issues/Belfast Agenda

Belfast Agenda – Publication and Next Steps

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 This report provides Members with the proposed final draft of the Belfast Agenda and includes a summary of the changes made following the public consultation held earlier this year. This report also proposes a launch of the final Belfast Agenda and briefly updates Members on the next steps in the implementation the Belfast Agenda.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- approve the final Belfast Agenda document and note the summary of changes from the draft;
- agree a launch of the Belfast Agenda in October; and
- agree the next steps in taking forward the implementation of the Belfast Agenda including 4 workshops proposed for the late Autumn.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 As Members will be aware the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, Part 10, placed a statutory duty on councils in relation to community planning. The legislation states that as lead partner, the council (once consensus has been reached with community planning partners), must publish a community plan that sets out long term objectives for improving economic, social and environment wellbeing of its district, together with the actions and functions to be delivered to achieve these objectives.

3.2 Following significant engagement with Members, partners and the general public (through The Belfast Conversation) Members agreed in November 2016 to a draft Belfast Agenda to go to public consultation in December 2016.

3.3 The public consultation on the draft Belfast Agenda, Belfast's Community Plan, was undertaken over an 18 week period, from 15th December 2016 to 20th April 2017. During the consultation period, a range of engagement activities were undertaken including public briefings, stakeholder workshops and meetings, an online questionnaire and social media activity.

Consultation feedback

3.4 Nearly 300 responses from a broad range of individuals, organisations and stakeholders were received to the consultation. Some of these responses represented the findings of workshops that stakeholders had undertaken with their own groups.

3.5 Overall the response to the consultation indicated a significant endorsement for the Belfast Agenda – there was

general support (over 80% of respondents) for the long term vision, outcomes and ambitions, and for the 4 year (to 2021) priorities of Growing the Economy, Living Here, City Development and Working and Learning.

- 3.6** Analysis of the feedback has been ongoing over recent months and findings have been discussed with community planning partners (including Party Group Leaders).
- 3.7** Some respondents suggested improvements to the plan or highlighted concerns, identifying themes that could be strengthened (for example, culture and arts, housing, good relations, environment, health, lifelong learning, among others) and these have been considered in producing the final version. Additionally, since the draft plan was published, more recent data and evidence has become available and this has also been considered, particularly in relation to the 'Belfast Now' section, the population indicators and Stretch goals. Greater alignment to the Local Development Plan was raised and this has been strengthened within the Belfast Agenda to reflect the LDP's role as the spatial representation of the community plan. Key changes to the draft Belfast Agenda and the basis upon which these were made are outlined in Appendix 2 to the report.
- 3.8** Many organisations, groups and individuals, also provided feedback on how 'work streams', programmes or projects should be taken forward in the delivery of the Belfast Agenda. Some highlighted how certain groups or stakeholders might contribute to the implementation. Whilst this feedback did not specifically relate to the content of the document, it is being analysed further and collated to enable it to be considered and inform and shape the on-going development of work programmes and action plans within the Belfast Agenda priorities.
- 3.9** The Community Planning Partners Forum discussed a revised draft of the Belfast Agenda at their recent meeting on 11th August 2017. Partners were asked to agree the final draft and statutory Community Planning Partners were asked to provide written endorsement from their organisations. The main elements of the Belfast Agenda and structure of the document remain largely constant in the revision. The content of the document includes the following:
- Separate forewords from Party Group Leaders and Statutory Community Planning partners, demonstrating the partnership commitment to the city agenda.

- **The Belfast opportunity – a brief overview of Belfast now and the opportunity afforded by the Belfast Agenda.**
- **Impact summary – this new section provides a Belfast Agenda ‘plan on a page’ highlighting the key features and ambitions of the Belfast Agenda.**
- **A vision for 2035 – An aspirational description of what we want Belfast to be in 2035.**
- **A set of outcomes for 2035 – these five statements describe the detail of the vision - specifically what we want for the people who live and work in Belfast.**
- **Population indicators - measures that will give a strong sense of the city’s ‘wellbeing’ over the coming years and provide Members and partners with a powerful tool to measure the positive impact of the Belfast Agenda.**
- **Our ambitions – four goals to be the focus to drive growth and reduce inequalities over the long term in Belfast.**
- **Belfast Now – key statistics giving a current view of the city**
- **Inclusive growth and medium term priorities (2017-21) – outlining the overarching aspiration of inclusive growth and the four priority areas being taken forward immediately: Growing the economy; Living here; City Development; and Working and Learning. Each of these priority areas includes:**
 - **Stretch goals: challenging targets to help quantify what the city needs to achieve for each priority over the next four years.**
 - **Work-streams: These are the ‘game-changing’ programmes of work to be delivered by city partners over the next four years.**

3.10 Members are asked to consider and approve the revised Belfast Agenda.

Belfast Agenda Launch

3.11 The legislation requires the council to formally publish the community plan once consensus has been reached with partners. It is proposed, therefore, that the formal launch of the Belfast Agenda takes place once the revised Belfast Agenda has been endorsed by all partners (statutory partners have been asked to endorse the Belfast agenda by mid-Sept and it is hoped the council will ratify in October).

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- 3.12** It is proposed that a press launch with Party Group Leaders, Chair of SP&R and key community planning partners be arranged in City Hall in October.
- 3.13** In addition to the revised Belfast Agenda the following supporting documents are also being produced and will be published at the same time:
- A technical document defining all the measures referred to in the Belfast Agenda
 - Equality Impact Assessment – revised following the consultation;
 - Strategic Environmental Assessment – revised following the consultation
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment
 - Rural Needs Assessment
 - Consultation feedback summary report
- 3.14** Members are asked to consider and agree a press launch of the final Belfast Agenda in October, involving the Party Group Leaders, Chair of SP&R Committee, the Chief Executive and other statutory partners.

Next Steps – Towards delivery

- 3.15** As a final Belfast Agenda document is agreed and published over the coming weeks, it is important that focus now turns to delivery. As Members recognise the Belfast Agenda is a strategic framework; its priorities contain a range of workstreams, programmes and projects, some of which are already underway or in planning phases, and others have yet to begin; some with existing partnership arrangements, others may require new arrangements. As a result arrangements for delivery, monitoring and oversight of each of the Belfast Agenda priorities will need to be tailored to be effective.
- 3.16** In moving forward, it is proposed that a series of workshops is planned for this autumn, convening initially around each of the 4 Belfast Agenda priorities, to consider how collaboration in action planning and delivery can best be taken forward across a range of city partners. These will provide opportunities for wider engagement as part of this process, including existing partnerships and the community and voluntary sector. It is also anticipated that this initial work will build foundations for further consideration of governance requirements for delivery and oversight of the Belfast Agenda.

3.17 Financial & Resource Implications

This next programme phase of the Belfast Agenda is included within current Council resources. Given the significant workload associated with supporting delivery of the Belfast Agenda consideration is being given, as part of the ongoing organisational development programme to the necessary alignment and organisation of staff to ensure effective delivery.

3.18 Equality or Good Relations Implications

Equality and good relations have been central to the development of the Belfast Agenda to date and equality and good relations implications will continue to be considered throughout the implementation process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

European Capital of Culture 2023

The Committee agreed to the hosting of a special meeting to consider reports on the 2023 bid.

City Region Growth Deal – Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update the Committee on progress on the development of a Belfast Region City Deal, including the proposed geographic area, overall objective and key themes.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve:

- the proposed geography for the Belfast City Region Deal as set out in the report;
- the overall objective of ‘more and better jobs; inclusive growth; improved skills and and growth of domestic business and FDI’;
- the key themes of Infrastructure, Innovation and Skills; and
- £15,000 to contribute to a joint, co-funded, pre-feasibility study with Louth and Newry and Mourne Councils and ARUP on a Belfast Dublin fast rail link.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 At its meeting in June, members were updated on the proposals to progress a Belfast Region City Deal which included the timeline for the delivery of a full feasibility study, including the development of a detailed evidence base setting out the rationale and benefits of a City Deal.

3.2 Progress on this was discussed with the Committee at its workshop on 6th September 2017 with specific detail provided on the proposed geographic area and the overall objective for the City Deal and its role in the achievement of the key commitments in the Belfast Agenda.

The Belfast Region Geography

3.3 A 'city deal' is not just for a city but is designed to drive investment and growth across a much wider region and ensure that as large a population as possible feels the benefits of increased investment and employment.

3.4 A principle of UK City Deals is that the proposed geography should be the 'largest geography consistent with economic geography and effective governance'. The proposed geography for the 'Belfast Region' takes in the Belfast Travel to Work Area, extended out to each of the local authority boundaries.

3.5 Based on this travel to work area the current proposed geography includes;

- Belfast City Council;
- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council;
- Ards & North Down Borough Council;
- Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council;
- Mid & East Antrim Borough Council; and
- Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.

3.6 A geographic spread of benefits will be core to the deal. As in other City Region Deals – all areas will see an uplift in increased access to jobs – and mechanisms will be used to ensure a spread across the Region.

Belfast Region City Deal Overall Objective

- 3.7 Inclusive Growth is at the heart of the Belfast Agenda and is about more and better jobs, improving living standards and earnings, offering in work progression and challenging barriers to employment such as child care, transport and training. Given that the City Deal is a key mechanism for delivering the ambitious agenda set out in the Belfast Agenda it is important that we develop a City Deal which puts 'Inclusive Growth' at its core, increasing prosperity for the city region, driving forward regional growth and providing wider social and environmental benefits.
- 3.8 The proposed overarching objective for the city deal is
'more and better jobs; inclusive growth; improved skills and and growth of domestic business and FDI'
- 3.9 This re-enforces and supports the Belfast Agenda and will help deliver against the key priorities agreed in the plan.

Belfast Region City Deal – Key themes

- 3.10 In order to deliver against our objective a 'Cohesive' Programme of investment being considered for a Belfast Region City Deal comprises three main themes:
- infrastructure, innovation and skills.
- 3.11 The infrastructure theme comprises 'economic infrastructure' which could include:
- Transport infrastructure; Regeneration; Tourism projects; and Digital infrastructure.
- 3.12 Innovation builds on our key sectoral growth areas and may include for example Centres of Excellence at FE/HE Colleges which allow local economies and industries to compete in a global market.
- 3.13 Skills - A central part of the Belfast Region City Deal will be to ensure that alongside the programme of capital investment, parallel action is taken on employability and skills programmes to ensure that people are ready to take up the specific additional jobs created. Collectively addressing skills deficits will deliver stronger, more inclusive and more resilient economic outcomes which

will provide sustainable solutions to the social challenges faced by the Belfast Region.

Next Steps

3.15 Work will continue on the detailed feasibility study including the identification of proposed projects, governance structures, performance metrics and financial modelling to further develop the Deal. This will include intensive engagement with:

- Belfast City-Region Councillors and officers
- DCLG
- NI Assembly representatives
- Northern Ireland Office
- Taoiseach's Office/Department for Foreign Affairs
- Business sector including large businesses and representative bodies
- Innovation sector including universities, further education and innovation hubs
- City stakeholders such as the Belfast Harbour Commission
- NI Civil Service departments notably Department for Infrastructure; Department for the Economy and Department for Finance

3.16 It is also proposed that Council contributes to a joint, co-funded, pre-feasibility study with Louth and Newry and Mourne Councils and ARUP on a Belfast Dublin fast rail link.

3.17 Committee should note that the first joint workshop for elected members from the Belfast City Region Deal Councils is scheduled for 28th September 2017. Party Group Briefings will also be held on the next steps including possible projects.

3.18 **Financial and Resource Implications**

£15,000 to contribute to a joint, co-funded, pre-feasibility study with Louth and Newry and Mourne Councils and ARUP on a Belfast Dublin fast rail link from within existing budgets.

Further financing may be required to progress the City Region Growth Deal in particular the development of business cases associated with specific projects. This will be considered as part of the half year finance report.

3.19 **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

To be considered in preparation of City Region Growth Deal.”

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The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Launch of the Smart Belfast Framework
and Innovation Programme**

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To provide further details about the launch of the Smart Belfast framework in the City Hall on Tuesday, 26 September 2017 to which all Members have been invited. This paper also provides details of the new Smart Belfast Collaborative Challenge Fund (with the potential value for local SMEs of over £860,000) which will be launched jointly with Invest NI at the same event.

1.2 This report also seeks Members' approval for the next major work strands which the Smart Belfast team are proposing to undertake over the coming months in support of the objectives of the Smart Belfast framework. A common theme across all these work strands is creating opportunities for greater collaborative innovation between the public and private sector in order to better address city challenges and to support the transformation of public services.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the agenda for the launch of the Smart Belfast framework and the invitation to all Members to attend.**
- note the launch of the Smart Belfast Collaborative Challenge fund and the five city challenges.**
- note Belfast's submission of an expression of interest in a £30 million bid to the national Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme.**
- agree that in the event of a successful agreed bid to Digital Catapult's LPWAN competition, the Council will commit £30,000 to support activities that exploit Internet of Things technology to address Belfast and regional challenges.**
- allocate £127,000 of non-recurring capital finance for the capital works required to support the establishment of the Immersive Technology hub, subject to agreement on the licensing terms between DfE and Bel Tel LLP.**

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- note that the process to recruit the Belfast Commissioner for Resilience will commence within the next month and
- agree to provide a letter of support to accompany 100 Resilient Cities' application to the 'International Urban Cooperation (IUC) city-to-city cooperation' programme in support of an exchange programme between Belfast and the Columbian Resilient Cities of Cali and Medellín.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 Smart Belfast framework

The Smart Belfast framework, previously agreed by Committee in May 2017, aims to marry the city's ambition to support its high-growth digital technology SME sector with a desire to bring the innovation of this sector to bear on urban challenges and public service transformation. The framework will be publicly launched in City Hall at 10am on Tuesday, 26 September to which all Members have been invited. (A printed copy of the framework document will be shared with Members at the meeting).

3.2 The agenda for the launch event includes:

- A breakfast briefing hosted by the Lord Mayor for representatives of large digital corporations. The briefing is an opportunity to share Belfast's smart city ambitions with those larger companies already investing in similar work across the world.
- The main launch event (10am to 12 noon in the Great Hall): Introduced by the Lord Mayor and attended by over 300 representatives from SMEs, public bodies and communities, the will set out the aims of a Smart Belfast, and the necessary foundations that are required for its success.
- Special guest Carl Piva, Vice-President of Global Strategic Programmes at TM Forum will then make the economic development case for smart cities – which create attractive propositions for FDI. Mr Piva works closely with cities across the world, including the US and China, on building successful smart city strategies. (Belfast recently become a member of TM Forum – a global non-profit association of over 850 digital partners set up to encourage collaborative problem-solving.)

Smart Belfast Collaborative Challenge Fund

3.3 Generously supported by Invest NI, this new fund will be launched at the same City Hall event. The fund is aimed at local digital SMEs working together to scope out innovative solutions to urban challenges. Over 300 individuals and companies have already registered their interest in the fund.

3.4 Five 'urban challenges', linked to the Belfast Agenda, have been identified that will provide real-life opportunities for local companies to engage with the public sector to develop innovative solutions. Initially, £25,000 will be available for up to eight SME-led networks seeking to explore innovation in:

- 1.** Encouraging greater numbers of commuter to adopt public transport and increasing active travel throughout the city centre.
- 2.** Finding better ways to understand and measure visitor activity in the city
- 3.** Getting deeper insights into the flow of 'waste' resources to enable their re-use in the city's economy.
- 4.** Understanding the impact of active living programmes on the city's population.
- 5.** Finding opportunities to make new or more efficient use of the Council's and partners buildings and infrastructure.

3.5 Following this seven-month scoping phase more substantial funding (up to £170,000 each) may then be available for particular proposals that can demonstrate business growth potential. Copies of the Challenge briefs and details of the Fund will be available on the Council website from 26 September.

3.6 **Expression of Interest in Full Fibre programme**

The recently launched Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme (part of the National Productivity Investment Fund), which currently has £200 million allocated to it, aims to accelerate the market delivery of new full fibre networks. Pilots have been announced aimed at testing four complimentary approaches:

- I.** Aggregating public sector demand
- II.** Incentivising new fibre with upgrades to public sector buildings
- III.** Reusing public sector assets such as ducts
- IV.** A new Gigabit voucher scheme which businesses can access

- 3.7 Belfast City Council has submitted an Expression of Interest to the programme seeking a £30 million full fibre investment for four potential project areas:
- Belfast City Council Anchor Tenancy procurement which would provide Dark Fibre Upgrades for all Belfast City Council's networked sites with the potential to future-proof and provide resilient connectivity to our key sites for the next 50 years. (£6 million)
 - Northern Ireland Regional Gigabit Voucher Scheme – A Gigabit Voucher Scheme could resolve those areas across Belfast which currently suffer from poor broadband connectivity (£20 million)
 - Reuse of 'Streets Ahead' Public Realm scheme ducting
 - Other – Belfast Independent Internet Exchange – A neutral place where network operators and digital providers can meet and exchange data traffic, to improve the customer internet experience cost effectively (£4 million)
- 3.8 The full application process will follow a number of workshops which are currently being organised by the Department of Culture Media and Sport. Representatives from Digital Services will attend these workshops to discuss the challenge fund and application process. Further updates will be provided for Members when the application process gets underway.

Regional 'Internet of Things' competition

- 3.9 Digital Catapult UK is running a £540,000 national competition to set up five regional free-to-use LPWAN networks. These are state-of-the-art radio networks that can be used to control a vast range of low-cost sensors and smart devices. Such networks are important building blocks for Internet of Things technologies (a recognised future growth area for the digital and manufacturing sector) and as such represent an important component of the Smart Belfast framework.
- 3.10 Invest NI and Ulster University are developing a Northern Ireland consortium bid and are seeking to agree a joint proposal with a range of partners prior the submission deadline of 29 September. Successful bids need to demonstrate three main things: how the network will be deployed; how the SME innovator community will be supported to utilise the network; and how the network will be used to address challenges in each area.

- 3.11 Partners, including all NI local councils and Tourism NI, are being asked to contribute, in principle, to a challenge programme which would provide funding to local SMEs to exploit this new technology to order to tackle local and regional challenges and to improve public sector services. It is proposed that, in the event of a successful bid, Belfast City Council would, in principle, commit £30,000 to the challenge programme to support activities that address Belfast and regional challenges.

Immersive Technology Hub

- 3.12 The UK Government's Digital Catapult (DCUK) was set up by UK Government to support the acceleration of digital innovations to make the UK economy stronger. The Catapult has identified 'immersive technology' as a significant growth area for the national economy and are providing a range of programmes and investments to support its development. ('Immersive technology' includes Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality technology – and is being developed not only for use in gaming but for exploitation in medicine, tourism, advanced manufacturing, urban planning, etc.)
- 3.13 DCUK wish to establish three regional immersive technology hubs (in Belfast, Gateshead and Brighton) which will both showcase the potential of the technology and foster opportunities for SMEs and others to collaborate and to grow their capabilities in this technology.
- 3.14 DCUK have offered £70,000 of Immersive Tech equipment to each hub and will support activities through a series of national competitions and other initiatives (including a major competition launch on 10 October 2017).
- 3.15 The NI Department for the Economy (DfE) and Digital Catapult NI have explored several options for a suitable city centre location and have identified space within the Bel Tel building as an ideal venue for the hub. Officials from DfE are now engaging with the Bel Tel LLP to agree licensing terms and fees for this space for an initial 18 month period.
- 3.16 DfE have indicated that they will further support the hub by providing up to five members of staff, including a Hub Manager who would co-ordinate programming from the venue. The Hub space would also be used as a venue for joint projects between Council, other public agencies and the digital SME sector.

- 3.17 Work is required to bring the identified space up to a suitable standard and Council are being asked to contribute to this capital cost. Subject to agreement on the licensing terms between DfE and Bel Tel LLP, Members are therefore asked to allocate £127,000 of non-recurring capital finance for the capital works required to support the establishment of the Immersive Technology hub.**

Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilience Cities programme

- 3.18 Members will be aware that, as part of the city's membership of the 100 Resilience Cities (100RC) network, the Foundation would provide grant funding to recruit a Belfast Commissioner for Resilience for two years. This person will also be able to access significant additional resources and international consultancy expertise on behalf of the city to develop a Belfast Resilience Strategy.**
- 3.19 100RC have now commissioned an executive search agency to work with Belfast City Council to recruit the Commissioner post. This process is due to commence within the next few weeks and will include national publicity about the vacancy.**
- 3.20 In addition, as part of their 100RC programme, Rockefeller Foundation have a substantial relationship with the Columbian cities of Cali and Medellin where they have been supporting urban and economic development work and post conflict resilience building. Working with the office of the President of Columbia, 100RC are proposing a learning exchange programme between Belfast and these two 100RC cities that would be supported by the Council's new Commissioner for Resilience, Invest NI, and other city partners.**
- 3.21 100RC have identified funding for the programme via the EU's 'International Urban Cooperation (IUC) city-to-city cooperation' programme. 100RC have offered to submit an application to the IUC on Belfast's behalf and have requested that both Invest NI and Belfast City Council provide a letter of support.**
- 3.22 Members are asked to agree to the Council providing a letter of support to accompany the 100RC application.**
- 3.23 Financial & Resource Implications**

The £127,000 of non-recurring capital spend for the necessary capital works required to support the establishment of the

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Immersive Technology hub in the Bel Tel building have been identified within the non-recurrent capital budget.

3.24 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.

Governance

Freedom of the City for Sir Kenneth Branagh

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in November 2015, it had adopted the following process for future proposals for the award of the Freedom of the City:

- When a request is received from a Member of Council or a member of the public for the Freedom of the City to be conferred, the Democratic Services Manager will liaise with the Party Leaders on the Council to ascertain the level of support which the proposal would have;
- Once the level of support is known, a report will be submitted in the first instance to the Budget and Transformation Panel so that an informal discussion of the proposal can take place and any minor issues resolved; and
- If there is at least 2/3 of the whole number of Members (40 Member) supportive of the proposal, then the Chief Executive will contact the proposed recipient to ask if they would be amenable to accepting the award should the Council offer it. If there is a positive response, a report will be submitted to the next available meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee recommending that the award be made and requesting it to set a date for a meeting of the Council to formally consider the proposal.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that a request had been received in April, 2017, from the then Lord Mayor, Alderman Brian Kingston, that the Council consider awarding the Freedom of the City to Sir Kenneth Branagh, given that he was born in this city and recognising his outstanding achievements and international status in drama and cinema, as actor, director, producer and screen writer.

In accordance with existing Council policy on the award of the Freedom of the City, the views of the Party Groups on the Council had been sought as to whether or not they would be supportive of such a suggestion. Parties had responded and there was overwhelming support for the award to be made. Sir Kenneth had indicated that he would be honoured to accept the award.

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The Committee agreed to award the Freedom of the City to Sir Kenneth Branagh and that a Special Meeting of the Council be convened at 6.00pm on Monday, 2nd October, 2017, immediately prior to the monthly Council meeting, for that purpose.

Process for Considering Requests for the Freedom of the City

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To consider the process applied for requests for the conferment of the Freedom of the City.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Agree not to make any change to the established process for considering requests for the Freedom of the City but to agree that the award will not be granted more than once in any Council term except when there are exceptional circumstances; and**
- **Agree to receive a further report at October’s Strategic Policy and Resources Committee considering an approach to some form of recognition for individuals or organisations at a lower level than the award of the Freedom of the City.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

The former Council’s policy on consideration of requests for the award of the Freedom of the City was agreed in 1996.

In 2013, the Council agreed to bestow the honour of the Freedom of the City to two individuals – Van Morrison and Dame Mary Peters. Prior to this, there was a period of 11 years when no such awards were made. In 2015, the Freedom was awarded to Michael Longley and to the Nursing Service in Belfast. There are now a total of 81 Freemen of the City.

3.2 Legislation

The Local Government (Modification of Borough Charters) Order (Northern Ireland) 1973 has been revoked by the Local Government (Transitional, Incidental, Consequential and Supplemental Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland)

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2015. The rules are now much simpler. The award can be agreed by the Council by way of a special resolution by a simple majority vote and there is not any need for 10 days' notice of the special Council meeting to be given.

Although the new legislation does not require a 2/3 majority of the Council to support a proposal to award the Freedom of the City, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th November, 2015 agreed that the Council would continue with its previous policy as set out below:

- When a request is received from a Member of Council or a member of the public for the Freedom of the City to be conferred, the Democratic Services Manager will liaise with the Party Leaders on the Council to ascertain the level of support which the proposal would have.**
- Once the level of support is known, a report will be submitted in the first instance to the Budget and Transformation Panel so that an informal discussion of the proposal can take place and any minor issues resolved.**
- If there is at least 2/3 of the whole number of Members (40 Member) supportive of the proposal, then the Chief Executive will contact the proposed recipient to ask if they would be amenable to accepting the award should the Council offer it. If there is a positive response, a report will be submitted to the next available meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee recommending that the award be made and requesting it to set a date for a meeting of the Council to formally consider the proposal.**

3.3 Current policy

- Council can recognise individuals and organisations whom it considers have rendered eminent service to the city, those who have brought distinction to the city or Northern Ireland or those who have made an outstanding contribution to the wider national or international sphere.**
- Proposals are received by the Chief Executive who brings, outside the committee system, the proposal to the party group leaders to ascertain party support. If there is not enough support for the honour (in other words over two-thirds), the Chief Executive privately and discreetly informs the proposer; thus avoiding unnecessary embarrassment to the individual or group being proposed. If there is support, the Chief Executive then contacts the individual or group to ascertain if the**

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individual or group would be willing to accept the award if the Council were to offer it.

- If the Chief Executive is satisfied that there is likely to be enough support within the Council and the proposed recipient has agreed to accept the award, if offered, the Chief Executive shall submit the proposal to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee. If the Committee supports the proposal, a special meeting of the full council will be arranged.

There are currently no limits on the number of people who can receive the award.

3.4 Strengths of current policy

The current policy does not tie councillors down to a rigid framework or set criteria that could become inflexible – it leaves the decision to the discretion of the councillors.

3.5 Issues with current policy

There have been previous concerns raised that this honour could become over used, lessening the prestige of the award.

It is not suggested that there should be any major change to the policy for the award of the Freedom of the City but rather that there is a recognition that this award should only be used infrequently so as to maintain the prestige of the office of Freeman.

3.6 Possible addition to the current policy

Following discussions with the Party Leaders, at their meeting on 27th April and last month, it was agreed that the Council should consider adding to its current policy to provide for some form of recognition for individuals or organisations at a lower level than the award of the Freedom of the City. Subject to Committee agreement and consideration of the issues it is suggested that a further report is brought to Strategic Policy & Resources in October considering such an approach.

3.7 Financial and Resource Implications

None associated with this report.

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None associated with this report.”

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The Committee adopted the recommendations

**Amendment to the Scheme of Delegation –
Special Events on Roads**

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's consideration 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 an amendment to the Scheme of Delegation regarding road closures for special events.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- agree the proposed amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, as recommended by the Licensing Committee in June 2017.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

The Roads (Miscellaneous Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 was enacted on 13 August 2010. An Order, commencing the specific special events provisions, was made on 25 January 2017 with the provisions becoming operational on 4 September 2017.

3.2 Until now roads have been closed by police using general policing powers. This new legislation provides the Council the power to authorise and approve, by order, the holding of a special event such as a street party, sporting event or making of a film on a public road.

3.3 This legislation was due to be commenced in 2013 and at the time Members of the Licensing Committee agreed that the Council be recommended to delegate authority to the Licensing Committee to determine all applications under the Act. This decision was ratified by Council on 3rd April 2013. At that time, the Committee undertook to consider all applications whether or not any representations had been received by the Council.

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- 3.4** The Licensing Committee in June 2017 re-considered this issue based on feedback from Northern Ireland Screen who raised concerns that the estimated turnaround time of three months from application to determination could have an impact on the film industry in Northern Ireland, which operates on relatively short lead-in times prior to filming commencing.
- 3.5** It is estimated that if delegated authority was granted to issue Orders, *where no objection is received* (as is the case with other licensing applications), an application could be determined within approximately 35 days, taking account of a statutory 21 days within which representations may be made.
- 3.6** Therefore, it is recommended that the Scheme of Delegation is amended so that the exercise of the following functions, in line with relevant Council policies, is delegated to the Director of Planning and Place:
- ‘Exercising all powers in relation to the making of an Order restricting or prohibiting temporarily the use of a public road in connect with special events, excluding provisions relating to:
- applications for an order where adverse representations are made
 - the recovery of costs incurred by the Council as a consequence of making an Order and such other matters as the Director deems appropriate’
- 3.7** At the Licensing Committee it was also agreed that a notification procedure would be put in place to alert Members to all applications received by the Council to close roads. Thereby, even if representations were not made Members would be aware of all applications received and have an opportunity to comment on them if necessary. This will be managed by Building Control.
- 3.8** Members are advised that the ultimate responsibility for the administration of the making of an Order restricting or prohibiting temporarily the use of a public road in connection with special events will remain with the Licensing Committee. Any decision of the Licensing Committee in relation policy and legislation concerning licensing matters must be ratified by Council.
- 3.9** Financial & Resource Implications
- There will be direct financial costs attached to the administration of the new legislation and, whilst such costs

may be recovered from applications, decisions in relation to the extent of public notification required and the fee charging option chosen will determine the actual financial implication. This will be determined by the Licencing Committee in due course. Building Control has not had the opportunity to factor the role and costs of administrating this legislation into its budget for the financial year 2017-18.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications

Building Control had previously assessed the equality and good relations implications with the introduction of the legislation and liaised with the Equality & Diversity Officer to ensure all potential issues are appropriately addressed. Building Control will continue to do this.”

The Committee agreed to the proposed amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, as recommended by the Licensing Committee in June, 2017.

Introduction of a System of Proportionality for the Position of High Sheriff

The Committee considered a report in relation to the introduction of a system of proportionality for the identification of candidates for consideration for the appointment to the Office of High Sheriff. The Democratic Services Manager reported that a question had been raised as to whether the Council could and should introduce a system of proportionality to identify those Parties which would be entitled to nominate a person to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for consideration for appointment as High Sheriff.

In short, the Council could decide to do this if they so wished. However, in considering whether it should do so the Committee take into account the following points.

The position of High Sheriff is not one which is within the Council's gift. Rather, the appointment is made by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who, each year, requested the Council to provide him/her with the names of three persons suitable for appointment. For many years now, the process which the Council had used to do this was for one name only to be provided and the name of that person was decided by the Council at a full Council meeting. Where more than one candidate was nominated, the Council voted and the person who received the most votes was duly nominated.

The position of High sheriff was not a "Position of Responsibility" as defined in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and therefore the Council was not required to use a system of proportionality to make the nominations. However, the Council could decide to use the same system as proportionality as it did for those Positions of Responsibility when deciding on whom to nominate for High Sheriff.

The Positions of Responsibility were allocated at the first annual meeting of the Council following a Local Council election for each year of the 4-year Term. The Council

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could decide to apply the D'hondt system to the nomination of candidates for High Sheriff as a separate pool of 4 positions. If this had been applied at the start of the current Council Term then, given the strengths of the Political parties as at the elections in 2014, the 4 choices would have fallen to:

1. SF
2. DUP
3. SF
4. ALL
5. SDLP
6. UUP
7. DUP

In the past, both Sinn Fein and SDLP had not nominated anyone as a candidate for High Sheriff and, if that had continued, then the 4 Parties which would have been entitled to nominate a candidate and which would wish to avail of that choice would have been:

1. DUP
2. ALL
3. UUP
4. DUP

Of course, it would have been a matter for a political party to choose which of the 4 years it wished when it was their turn to choose.

Should the Council decide to introduce proportionality from the start of the next Council Term in 2019 then, of course, the Parties which would be eligible to nominate a candidate would be dependent upon the outcome of the Local Election.

The Council could decide to examine the Parties that have already nominated to the position so far in this Term (Alderman Rodgers – UUP in 2016 and Alderman Haire – DUP in 2017) and then to allocate the remaining two nominations in this Term to the Parties which had choices left under the D'hondt system, which would mean that the following two nominations would fall to Alliance and DUP.

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill,

That the Council is committed to equality and fairness and that Civic posts should be allocated according to electoral support and therefore the Council should use a system of proportionality. In terms of the decision of High Sheriff, the Council agrees to forward one nominee to the Secretary of State and nominations will be according to the D'hondt system, with the arrangement commencing for the remaining years of this Council Term.

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Amendment

Moved by Councillor Reynold,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the matter for one month to enable discussions to take place on the appointment of the High Sheriff for the remainder of the Council Term and to consider a proportionality system in the next Council Term.

On a vote by show of hands six Members for the amendment and eleven against and it was declared lost.

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Long and seconded by Councillor O'Neil was put to the meeting when eleven Members voted for and six against and it was declared carried.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

**Physical Programme Update –
Capital Programme and LIF**

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that it had agreed that all capital projects much go through a 3 stage process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. Accordingly, he requested the Committee to agree the following movements as summarised below:

Project	Overview	Stage
Palm House, Botanic Gardens	To examine the options in relation to the refurbishment and upgrade of the Palm House in Botanic Gardens	Add as an Emerging Project

He reported that the Palm House in the Botanic Gardens was one of the earliest examples of a glasshouse made from curved iron glass in the United Kingdom. The building was designed by Sir Charles Lanyon and dated back to the 1840s. The building was of significant heritage and cultural importance, however, over the years the condition of the building had gradually declined. The Members would be aware that the adjoining Tropical Ravine in Botanic Gardens had been undergoing a £4.1m restoration over the past few years of which £2.4m was secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Works on the building are almost complete and it was envisaged that it would be reopened to the public early next year. The redevelopment of the Palm House, in tandem with the newly refurbished Tropical Ravine, together with the Ulster Museum which recently underwent a substantial renovation programme, could potentially provide a key cultural, heritage and tourism destination helping to restore Botanic Gardens to its former glory as one of the leading Victorian parks within the United Kingdom.

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Accordingly, it was recommended that the proposed upgrade of the Palm House at Botanic Gardens be added to the Capital Programme which would allow the options in relations to the site to be worked up and for the funding strategy to be developed, including the initiation of discussions with the HLF about potential funding for the project.

In addition, the Committee was requested to note that one LIF project which had previously been agreed for in principle funding (NLIF066 – Wishing Well) had now been scored by officers, had met the minimum threshold and it was recommended that it be now progressed to the Due Diligence stage of the LIF process.

The Committee agreed that the Palm House, Botanic Gardens be added as a stage 1 – Emerging Project and that the Wishing Well projects be progressed to the Due Diligence stage of the LIF process.

Disability – Accessible WC and Creation of a New Family Room Facility in City Hall

The Director of Property and Projects 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 Members on proposals to re-locate the existing disability-accessible WC and to create of a new Family Room in the East Wing of the City Hall, and also to reverse the positioning of the existing toilet facilities in the East area to facilitate these changes.

2.0 Decision(s) required and recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- **approve the proposal to re-locate the existing disability-accessible WC; create a new family room to enable breast-feeding/feeding and changing facilities for young children and reverse the current positioning of the ladies and gents’ toilet locations in the East entrance area in order to enhance compliance with statutory duties and best practice; and**
- **note the update in respect of the proposed provision of a Changing Places Facility in the City Hall and that a further update will be brought back in due course on this.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members will be aware that the new Exhibition area in the City Hall opened to the public on 16th May 2017. As part of this

overall facility, and in line with the requirements of the Building Control service in terms of compliance with the relevant building regulations and disability access legislation, a disability-accessible WC facility was built adjacent to the existing male toilets in the East entrance area. Under the regulations this must be located within 30m of the main Exhibition facility.

- 3.2** The available space to construct this facility was quite limited due to the construction of the walls and the existing layout of the area, and consequently a modest relaxation of the strict application of the building regulations was allowed by Building Control. Although this is a perfectly legitimate application of the professional discretion allowed to Building Control it is recognised that, although the facility is now operational and useable, it would be better if it could be enhanced in terms of its size and fit-out and be made fully compliant with the regulations in all respects.
- 3.3** At the same time, the Committee will also be aware that the issue of the lack of a dedicated and private family room for people with small children and breast-feeding mothers has been a concern for some time. Committee will be aware that this is currently on the council's Capital Programme as a Stage 2 projects as part of the wider scheme involving – City Hall – Family Room and the Additional Toilet Provision (including a Changing Places facility). An update in respect of the proposed Changing Places facility is given at 3.7 below.
- 3.4** An opportunity now exists however to deal with both matters in the course of a single project, which could be undertaken relatively quickly and would offer a number of benefits. This would involve moving the existing disability-accessible WC facility across to a new location adjacent to the current ladies' toilets in the East entrance area where more space is available to provide a larger overall facility, and then to refurbish the existing disabled toilet and create a new, dedicated Family Room at that location.
- 3.5** In order to further enhance this provision it would also be the intention to 'swap' the ladies and gents' toilet positions on the East entrance area at the same time, and to re-fit each. This would produce a more intuitive overall result in which the Family facility would be adjacent to the female toilets on the south side and the disability-accessible facility adjacent to the gents toilet area on the north side, and this does have significant benefits for the organization, most notably in terms of regularising the disability-accessible WC provision and at

the same time dealing with a long-standing omission in terms of a dedicated family facility. Both facilities would of course have separate entrance areas and be clearly sign-posted. The proposed layout is illustrated in Appendix 1 (attached).

- 3.6 If approved, the project would be delivered by the in-house Property Maintenance unit, and is planned to be complete by mid-December however this is dependent on the outcome of a number of competitive procurement exercises and this date may therefore change. Any significant changes to timescales will be brought to the Committee's attention. Detailed plans setting out the layout and dimensions of both facilities have been lodged with the Building Control service, and the intended scheme has also been submitted to the Heritage Service for approval as required in light of the fact that the City Hall is a Grade B listed building. Both of these statutory approvals will of course be necessary before the project can physically commence, however the Committee's approval in principle is now sought in order to facilitate design and planning activity.

3.7 Update on Changing Places facility

As outlined above Members will be aware that there has been demand for some time for the provision of a Changing Places facility within the City Hall. This is part of the wider Stage 2 – Uncommitted scheme. Work is currently underway in respect of the options available for a Changing Place facility on the ground floor within the City Hall and a further update will be brought back to Committee in due course.

3.8 Financial and Resource Implications

The overall project costs are estimated to be £30,000. If approved, the project is to be funded as a non-recurring scheme. The Director of Finance & Resources has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications

The work comprised in this proposal will enhance the council's offer to people with disabilities and also to people with young children and improve statutory compliance, and is therefore a benefit in terms of equality. Equality staff have been consulted in relation to these proposals and are content to recommend them to the Committee."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

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Assets Management

Suffolk FC – Licence for 100 Seater Spectator Stand

The Committee approved the grant of a licence to Suffolk FC to allow the Club to install a proposed stand, subject to the club securing the necessary funding, statutory approvals, including planning permission, and providing adequate insurance cover.

The Committee noted that the Licence would run alongside the existing Facilities Management Agreement.

Deed of Dedication - Cregagh Green

The Committee approved the recommendation of the People and Communities Committee of 7th March, 2017, and agreed to proceed with the completion of a Deed of Dedication with Fields in Trust in respect of the identified land at Cregagh Green, subject to the approval of the Department of Communities (Local Government Policy Division).

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2016 – 2017

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 present to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Statement of Accounts of the Council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the period ending 31 March 2017.**
- 1.2 The Statement of Accounts are an important element of the council’s overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council’s finances and its financial position.**
- 1.3 The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017, as attached, have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17 based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department for the Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 10/17 dated 13 March 2017.**
- 1.4 I can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for the Communities and in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income**

and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2017.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 Audit Opinion

It is the Local government Auditors' opinion that:

the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016-17, of the financial position of Belfast City Council as at 31 March 2017 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and

the statement of accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities directions issued thereunder; and

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and
- the information given in the Narrative Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2017 is consistent with the financial statements.

3.2 Reserves

General Fund

The credit balance on the General Fund has increased to £20,989,452 (of which £7,634,933 relates to specified reserves). The movement on the reserves balance is summarised in Table 1 below:

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Table 1: Summary of Reserves Position

Opening Balance	£19.2m
In year movement in reserves	£ 1.8m
Closing Balance	£21.0m
Specified Reserves at year end	£ 7.6m
Balance Available	<u>£13.4m</u>

3.3 Capital Fund £24,850,616

The Capital Fund is made up of the Belfast Investment Fund (£3,810,715). The fund has been created to support key partnership projects to regenerate Belfast and help lever substantial funds from other sources, the Local Investment Fund (£4,056,629) to fund smaller local regeneration projects, the City Centre Investment Fund (£15,699,861) to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans, the Social Outcomes Fund (£1,000,000) to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support attraction of investment and the BWUH Subvention Fund (£283,411) to support planned maintenance and future capital works at the new exhibition centre.

3.4 Leisure Mobilisation Fund £1,945,000

This fund is to support the Leisure Transformation Programme and will cover programme level costs including communications, engagement and procurement costs.

3.5 Capital Receipts Reserve £1,632,457

These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets and which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure. This amount relates mainly to the sale of land & buildings at Loop River (£860,000).

3.6 Other Fund Balances and Reserves £357,818

This relates to the Election Reserve which has been set up to smooth the cost of running council elections.

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3.7 Debt

The overall level of trade debtors had decreased over the previous 9 years, reducing from £10m at 31 March 2008 to £4.2m at 31 March 2017. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below:

	31 March 2017	31 March 2016
Less than three months	£3,305,930	£2,434,909
Three to one year	£111,596	£166,672
More than one year	£789,382	£1,021,813
Total	£4,206,908	£3,623,394

3.8 Creditors

The Department for Communities has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year the council paid 61,092 invoices totalling £185,282,726.

3.9 The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 23 days for the year ended 31 March 2017. The Council paid 43,898 invoices within 10 days, 53,600 invoices within 30 days, and 7,492 invoices outside of 30 days. The council endeavours to process invoices as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process.

3.10 Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

The Statement of Accounts include Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2016/17, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by the Department for Communities, NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. Specifically the AGS sets out:

- scope of responsibility of the Council in relation to governance
- the purpose of the governance framework
- the governance framework in place
- review of effectiveness of the governance framework
- significant governance issues to be disclosed.

3.11 The AGS is approved by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.

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3.12 Financial and Resource Implications

None

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None.”

The Committee approved the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March, 2017.

Contracts for Award

The Committee:

- (1) Approved the public advertisement and acceptance of tenders as listed in Appendix 1 Table 1, and Table 2, through the Council's electronic procurement system
- (2) Granted delegated authority to the appropriate Director using pre-agreed criteria, to accept the most economically advantageous tender and allow month by month extensions where contracts were under review.
- (3) Approved the award of contracts outlined in Appendix 1, Table 3 that had been carried out by Arc21 on behalf of the Council:

Appendix 1 - Schedule of tenders for consideration

Table 1 - New tenders

Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
Development Consultant	Nuala Gallagher	2-3 years

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Table 2 - New tenders – Peace IV

Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
<i>Tech for Good</i> - Development and delivery of a peace building digital cross-community programme	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Tech for Good (Children & Young People 1)</i> - Development and delivery of a Diversity Awareness / Good Relations training programme.	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Tech for Good</i> - Supply of IT Equipment to support training programme	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Playing our Part</i> - Development and delivery of a cross-community Play Programme for young people	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Playing our Part (Children & Young People 2)</i> - Development and delivery of Diversity Awareness/Good Relations training programme	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Young Advocates</i> - Development and delivery of training programme for young people in youth advocacy and campaigning for equality, human rights and social change	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Young Advocates (Children & Young People 4)</i> - Development and Delivery of Diversity Awareness/Good Relations programme.	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Creative Legacies</i> - Appointment of Artists to engage local communities in creative arts	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Creative Legacies</i> - Development and delivery of programme of creative events and publications.	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years

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Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
<i>Commemorating Centenaries -</i> Development and delivery of programme of significant anniversaries over the period 2017-2021	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Supporting Communities -</i> Development and delivery of intervention programmes supporting new communities	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years
<i>Supporting Communities -</i> Development and delivery of intervention programmes aimed at Traveller and Roma communities	Nigel Grimshaw	4 years

Table 3 – Tenders awarded by Arc21 on behalf of the Council

Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
Provision of Receipt, Processing, Treatment Recycling and Disposal of Street Sweepings Waste	Nigel Grimshaw	2 years with the option to renew up to a further 12 months

Request for Events and Festivals Funding 2018 – 2019

(Mr. Donal Durkan, Director of Development, attended in connection with this item.)

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 request approval from Members to financially support a range of music events and festivals during the financial year 2018/19, pending the outcome of the current strategic review of Events and Festivals. The events are as follows:

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- Féile an Phobail
- Other Voices
- Gradam Ceoil.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:-

- give priority to the named events and festivals when it is considering in-year allocations at the half or year-end periods.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 As Members will be aware, Festivals and Events International (FEI) Consultants have been appointed to develop an Events and Festival Strategy. This will be completed by December 2017. The Strategy will set the direction of travel in relation to the future decisions on Council financial support for events and festivals from 2019/20 onwards. The draft strategy will be presented to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for endorsement later in this calendar year. Given that any decisions made will take a while before they can be implemented, 2018/19 will effectively be a transition year for events and festivals support within the Council.

3.2 Investment in events and festivals can help strengthen the profile of the City as a culturally vibrant destination, thus supporting the Belfast Agenda and also aligning well with the current bid for European Capital of Culture in 2023. They also reinforce the commitment to build the City's cultural profile and showcase its creative talent. It is considered that support for the events and festivals noted in this report will make an overwhelmingly positive contribution towards the promotion of Belfast and its cultural offer and will generate significant economic return by virtue of additional visitor spend. It will also help to create a positive profile of the City as a culturally vibrant location with a rich musical heritage in line with the new city narrative.

3.3 At the August 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, Members agreed to approve an allocation of £200,000 towards a programme of BBC-led music events including the Folk Awards and a Big Music Weekend. Officers advised of a number of additional culture and music-focused events which were in the pipeline for 2018/19 and which would require Council support to proceed. These are:-

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- Féile an Phobail – financial request of £150,000 towards the August 2018 event
- Oher Voices – financial request of £40,000 towards the October 2018 event
- Gradam Ceoil – financial request of £50,000 towards the February 2019 event.

3.4 The Committee agreed to refer the funding requirement for these three events to the September meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with a request to give priority to these events and festivals when it is considering in-year allocations at the half or year-end periods.

3.5 Members are reminded that, in addition to the City Events Programme and events supported through its various funding streams, the Council has also committed £180,000 of support towards the UK Pipe Band Championships in Summer 2018.

Overview of Events Seeking Council Support

3.6 **Féile an Phobail**

2018 marks the 30th Anniversary of Féile An Phobail. It is marketed as Ireland's biggest community arts festival and summer school. The purpose of the festival has always been to celebrate the positive side of the community – its creativity, energy, passion for arts, culture and sport.

3.7 Féile is recognised for its collaborative community approach and it is intended that its 30th anniversary year festival will bring an inclusive programme of events which will demonstrate good relations in action, attracting more tourism and visitor spend and building increased social and cultural capital.

3.8 The organisers are presently undertaking a stakeholder engagement strategy and have commenced consultation and planning for 2018 events. Since July 2017, workshops have been held with over 30 arts, cultural and tourism organisations from across the City. One of the key themes that has emerged from these workshops is 'ambition'. Taking this theme and the new event space at the Falls Park, they are aiming to attract some of the biggest artists from across the globe in 2018.

3.9 For 2018/19, Féile aims to create a year-round programme of inclusive and accessible arts and cultural events, delivered across the City with four specific festivals during the year. This will include 400+ events with an audience reach of up to 100,000 people. The financial request from the Council is for a

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contribution of £180,000 towards the cost of hosting the 2018 Féile celebration programme.

3.10 Other Voices

At the June 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, Members approved financial support of £40,000 towards the 'Other Voices' event in Belfast in October 2017. Since this, the organisers have established the Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts as the hub for the October 2017 event. It is intended that the 2017 event will be a precursor to a larger Belfast event in 2018 and beyond.

3.11 Other Voices has attracted a range of well-known acts since its inception in 2002. These have included Willie Nelson, Ellie Goulding, Gregory Porter, Amy Winehouse and Mumford and Sons. In addition, it has attracted many indigenous acts and has provided a platform to highlight up-and-coming talent. The event is currently broadcast on RTE's television and digital platforms with more than 16 million views and more than 7,000 followers on YouTube. It also involves a wide range of outreach and engagement activity with local residents and those involved in the culture and arts sector.

3.12 The Other Voices team is currently exploring potential funding partners as well as building the local networks at community level to create a solid foundation for future activities. Experience from previous events suggests that it can have a significant economic, social and cultural impact on the local area.

3.13 The 2017 Other Voices event will attract a number of high profile and local musicians. It will be broadcast extensively on television and on social media platforms and this will present an opportunity to showcase not only the event but also the city of Belfast. Organisers have identified the potential to tap into the huge creative talent in the city. Plans for the 2018 programme are advanced and it is proposed that it will link with one of the city's premier digital events. It will include an extensive outreach and engagement programme, particularly with young people. Organisers will target young people from disadvantaged areas and schools that do not have experience of getting involved in these events. The financial request from the Council is for a contribution of £40,000 towards a total programme cost in excess of £200,000.

3.14 Gradam Ceoil

Gradam Ceoil is an annual awards ceremony which celebrates the best of traditional Irish music and song. It comprises a

gala event as well as an extensive outreach and engagement programme before the event to maximise impact and economic benefit.

- 3.15** The City Growth and Regeneration Committee has already agree to support the Gradam Ceoil event in Belfast in February 2018. Organisers generally work with host cities on a multi-annual basis in order to build momentum in the event and develop deep cultural and visitor engagement opportunities.
- 3.16** Based on the experience of the city of Cork, it is estimated that Gradam Ceoil will have a direct economic impact in the region of £350,000 over the weekend, in terms of visitor spend. Furthermore, the live coverage on TG4 and the potential engagement of BBC (particularly BBC radio and online) and BBC Alba (Scottish channel), as well as PBS in USA (broadcast as recorded coverage), will all provide meaningful opportunities to showcase Belfast as a city of music, arts and culture.
- 3.17** There will be excellent opportunities to advertise and promote the city over the weekend. Gradam Ceoil will help attract new visitors to Belfast and make more people aware of the city's cultural offer. The fact that it takes place at a traditionally quiet time in the cultural and visitor calendar offers an opportunity to extend the tourism realm and support the local industry at this time.
- 3.18** Following the Committee agreement to support the 2018 event, planning is underway to programme a series of unique musical pieces and presentations, to reflect the cultural heritage and traditions in the City. This work will provide a foundation for the 2019 event subject to funding availability. In keeping with the other commitments under the 'Year of Music' banner, the 2019 Gradam Ceoil event will present an opportunity to showcase the breadth of unique musical talent in the city. The event will require a match-funding commitment of £50,000 from the Council towards an overall budget of around £230,000.
- 3.19** Equality and Good Relations Implications

These events and festivals will all be equality proofed and there will be a significant complementary suite of outreach and engagement programmes open to all communities.

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3.20 Financial and Resource Implications

The financial support required from Belfast City Council for each initiative is as follows:

- Féile an Phobail 2018/19: £180,000
- Other Voices 2018/19: £40,000
- Gradam Ceoil 2018/19: £50,000

3.21 In total £270,000 additional funding is required to support these events. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to give priority to the funding of these events and festivals when it is considering in-year allocations at the half year or year-end.”

The Committee agreed to give priority to the following named events and festivals when it was considering in-year allocations at the half year or year-end periods:

- Féile an Phobail
- Other Voices
- Gradam Ceoil.

It was agreed also that other organisations, such as Eastside Arts, holding special events, would be added to the list if a request for funding were submitted.

The Committee noted that these requests for funding would have to be considered in the context of other competing priorities such as City Deal and the European Capital of Culture 2023.

Equality and Good Relations

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shared City Partnership**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 11th September.

Equality Action Plan and Annual Report

The Committee was reminded that the Council was required by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to develop an Equality Action Plan. The Council was also required to report annually to the Equality Commission for NI on the progress of its implementation of its Equality Scheme.

It was reported that a draft Equality Action Plan had been issued for public consultation from 13th December, 2016 till 7th March, 2017 and had been updated based on feedback. The consultation had been aligned with the Belfast Agenda initial consultation period and considered in line with the agreed priorities from the Belfast

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Agenda. Following feedback during the public consultation, the main updates to the Action Plan included:

- Renaming the Equality Action Plan 'Equality and Diversity Framework' to reflect the broader actions across the organisation which were in addition to the equality compliance actions;
- The Community Safety Plan was now included as one of our key actions under 'Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment'; and
- A review of the Equality Consultative Forum and engagement mechanisms across all Section 75 groups will be addressed in 2017/18.

The Council was also required to report annually to the Equality commission on the implementation of the Council's Equality Scheme, including progress on delivery of actions identified to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

The Committee approved:

- The updates Draft Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-21; and
- The Council's Annual Report to the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland (ECNI) for 2016-17.

Belfast City Council Decade of Centenaries Programme 2017 – 2022

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To update Members on the proposed governance and delivery approaches for the Decade of Centenaries area of work and the proposed programme for the final phase of the Decade of Centenaries. This next phase will cover Decade of Centenaries Commemorations from 2017 up until 2022.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- **Agree the proposed governance and delivery approaches for the Decade of Centenaries area of work and approve the proposed programme outline for delivery over the coming 6 years. The programme includes activity within the current Council term, with agreement in principle on activity to be delivered following Council elections in 2019. Any activity agreed now, for beyond 2019, would be reviewed at that stage.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

Members will be aware of the programme of work in relation to the Decade of Centenaries, which has been ongoing since 2011. The Decade of Centenaries has been considered by the Diversity Working Group until March of this year, when that group ceased. Council decided at its April meeting that Decade of Centenaries issues would be discussed at the Shared City Partnership from then on.

3.2 In 2011, Members of the then Historic Centenaries Working Group had agreed a three phased approach to the Decade of Centenaries, divided into 3 phases.

3.3 The first period, 1912-1914, was entitled 'Shared History, Differing Allegiances'. The second period, 1914-1918, would cover the period of World War I, including the Somme and the Easter Rising. This activity, under the banner of 'Belfast; Reflections on 1916' was hugely successful. The third period, 1918-1922, would cover the end of WWI, the 1918 elections and the establishment of parliaments in Belfast and Dublin.

3.4 Major exhibitions were commissioned for the Covenant, the Somme and the Easter Rising and there was a Civic Dinner to mark each of these three major historical events. All of this activity, and more, has been delivered thus far.

3.5 In 2016, at the August meeting of the Diversity Working Group, Members requested that officers develop a programme for the remainder of the Decade, to run until 2022.

3.6 Central to the programme, Members requested that:

- Activity being planned would continue with the objective of having a strong Belfast focus, exploring the human stories of lost lives and be respectful.
- The current Principles, agreed in 2011, will inform all activity within the final phase of the Decade of Centenaries

3.7 This programme that has been developed contains a number of themes and a series of events to be delivered within each theme (see appendices 1 and 2)

3.8 At their August meeting, Party Group Leaders agreed to the themes and programme within appendix 1 and 2 to be

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delivered from 2018 – 2022. The programme for this financial year (appendix 3) was agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March of this year.

- 3.9** Members also confirmed that the Shared City Partnership and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would form the governance for the programme, with Party Group Leaders also having a regular input into programme development.
- 3.10** Party Group Leaders also requested that officers explore the possibility of delivering a large exhibition covering the themes within appendix 1 during this final phase of the Decade of Centenaries.
- 3.11** Members will also be aware of the wider Centenaries programme contained within the draft PEACE IV Plan. This programme will be an engagement programme within communities, whereas the Council's programme will be more of a Civic Programme of events as has been the case thus far.
- 3.12** Officers are engaging with the NIO and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to ascertain if they have substantial plans to mark the end of World War 1. Further updates will be provided in due course.
- 3.13** **Financial and Resource Implications**

All programme activity for the 2017/2018 financial year will be delivered from existing budgets. There is no resource to support delivery beyond March 2018. If members were content, a proposal to provide a portion of costs, up to £20,000 per annum, could be brought to the Shared City Partnership to approve as part of the annual District Council Good Relations Programme. Note, this funding could not be used to cover the costs associated with civic events.

- 3.14** **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

The Decade of Centenaries commemorations are part of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan, which was screened out following a screening exercise."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Exhibition Memorabilia Policy Refresh

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the report on the above mentioned matter for a period of one month.

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**Peace and Beyond Conference – Request
for Authority to Invite Former President Clinton**

The Committee was reminded that 10th April, 2018 would mark 20 years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA). The British Council, working with both universities as well as the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building, was proposing to host a major conference in Belfast to mark the event. The conference would take place in a number of venues across the City from 10th – 12th April 2018.

The objective of the conference was to bring together policy makers and peace practitioners from around the world to share reflections and case studies on building effective, inclusive and sustainable peace. The series of plenary sessions, workshops, site visits and cultural events would create an open, inclusive and shared space for international dialogue to reflect upon the experience of peace processes across the world. The events would build on the Northern Ireland experience of and expertise in conflict resolution and peace building. By marking the achievement of the multi-track work that led to the signing of the Agreement, the conference would provide opportunities for international dialogue to reflect on the experience of everyday peace building. The conference would also reflect on the contribution of partners such as the EU and the USA in the achievement and continuation of peace.

The British Council and its partners hoped to attract a number of individuals who played a key role in the negotiations at attend the event. They hoped, in particular, to invite former US President Bill Clinton to the event. In order to provide civic endorsement to the invitation, the British Council had asked whether the Lord Mayor of Belfast could issue this invitation on behalf of the City.

The Conference programme is currently being drafted. It will involve a series of tours, discussion and panel sessions, cultural showcases and visits to relevant projects and sites across the City. These were likely to involve Girdwood and the Innovation Factory. Attendees at the event would come from Northern Ireland but there would also be representation from international cities that were dealing with issues of conflict resolution.

The involvement of former President Clinton was seen as highly symbolic, given his close involvement in local politics at the time of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. His visit to the City Hall and the former Mackie's site in 1995 were also undertaken at a critical time in the process. A return visit to both locations offered a significant opportunity to explore how the City had developed since that time and to showcase how local partners were working collectively to improve lives within our communities.

This Conference presented a significant opportunity for the City to tell its story twenty years on from the Good Friday Agreement. It also offered an opportunity to reflect on developments since that time and to engage in discussion with other cities and locations that had undergone similar experiences.

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The Committee authorised the Lord Mayor to issue an invitation on behalf of the City to former President Bill Clinton to address this major conference in Belfast to mark the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in April 2018.

**Consultation Report on Draft Linguistic Diversity Policy
and Language Strategy Action Plan**

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

1.0 Purpose of report or summary of Main Issues

1.2 Members will be aware that at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21 April 2017 approval was given to consult on the draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity. A report on the findings from the consultation, which ran from 23 May 2017 to 18 July 2017 is presented for discussion. One of the key recommendations is to further develop the draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity as a Language Strategy, and the related action plan, to run from October 2017 until March 2018, which has been developed from the consultation findings, is also presented for approval.

1.2 The Committee should note that this report was brought to Party Group Leaders and they requested briefings for clarity but Sinn Fein have asked that it is considered at the September Committee meeting.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the findings of the consultation on the draft Linguistic Diversity Policy and approve the recommendations;**
- Approve the Language Strategy Action Plan Oct 2017 – March 2018.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

Belfast aims to be a welcoming and inclusive city for all. To help achieve this aim and to meet other best practice guidance and legal requirements, we developed a draft Linguistic Diversity Policy, approved for consultation at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21 April 2017. The draft Linguistic Diversity Policy outlined our approach to promoting different languages in the Belfast City Council area. It builds on our 2006 Language Policy which needed to

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be revised to take account of the changing population and other developments.

- 3.2** The draft policy provided background on the changing dynamics of the population of Belfast and also explained the legal framework, current central government strategies and details of previous engagement with stakeholders.

Based on this information, the draft policy recommended an approach which included:

- The development of an over-arching Language Framework, which articulated our commitment to supporting minority languages whilst allowing the different needs of speakers of Irish, Ulster-Scots and other minority languages to be addressed effectively.
- Development of an Irish Language Policy which focused primarily on the enhancement and protection of the language;
- Development of an Ulster-Scots Language policy which looked more to the promotion of the language and the cultural and heritage aspects of the language rather than the need for translation of documents and interpretation services.
- Development of a policy on other minority languages (including sign languages) which focused on ensuring good communication and increasing awareness and understanding of minority cultures.

- 3.3** The draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity was subject to a formal consultation period which ran from 23 May 2017 to 18 July 2017. Prior to this period, there had already been informal engagement / pre-consultation meetings with relevant sectors to ensure that the draft policy reflected on priorities and issues for each stakeholder group, these had taken place over the period from 2013-17. The Policy was then considered in draft form by the various Party political groups represented within the Council before the formal consultation period began.

The consultation was launched on with a press statement, article on staff intranet and an invitation on the Council's website to respond to the consultation.

- 3.4** For the general public different ways to respond were:

- An online questionnaire of public opinion on the Council's Consultation Hub, including information (hard copies were also available)

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- Attendance at one of two engagement events, designed to gather the same information as the online questionnaire.
- Attending any of four themed focus groups: Irish Language, Ulster-Scots Language, New Communities and Deaf or Partial Hearing, and / or Disabled people.
- Consultation comments could also be received by email and letter

3.5 For staff different ways to respond were:

- An online survey available (internally only) on the online Consultation Hub, including information and completion of an online questionnaire, available from 26 June until 18 July 2017 (hard copies were also available);
- One to one meetings with Dr John Kremer, independent equality and diversity consultant who co-facilitated the consultation activities

Meetings with Trade Union representatives were also planned as part of the consultation.

3.6 Key Issues

A Consultation Report on the Draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity (Appendix 2) has been prepared is structured under the following headings:

- A. Information on the policy consulted upon
- B. Our approach
- C. Consultees' comments
- D. Emerging issues and preliminary recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward for approval:

- The draft Linguistic Diversity Policy should be re-branded as a Language Strategy, outlining a strategic approach to the development of accessible and inclusive communications;
- The current Section 3 (Recent developments) should be amended to take on board consultees' comments and to ensure that the strategy is consistent with current legislation and guidance in Northern Ireland;
- The overarching principles should include further reference to the positive benefits attached to linguistic diversity and bilingualism;

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- Terminology used within the strategy should be consistent throughout, avoiding use of labels such as 'minority' wherever possible;
- Separate strands of work should be established under the strategy, for example –Irish Language, Ulster-Scots Language, Sign Language, New Communities' Communications and Language, and Communications and Language Strand for those with a Disability;
- Each strand should be assessed fully to inform appropriate resourcing, for example with dedicated human and material resources that are tailored to the particular needs and priorities of that language community;
- The job description for the post of language officers attached to one or more strands should be precise and reflect on the needs and priorities of the language communities in question. Recruitment of an Irish Language officer is recommended as an identified need for the Irish language community;
- Further engagement with each sector should be used to fine tune the aims and implementation sections of each strand of work to reflect the needs and priorities of the relevant community in any agreed policy;
- Pilots of work identified through the consultation will provide a useful insight in to wider implementation and how it impacts on operational delivery;
- The principles of shared space should be considered in the development of actions within the strategy and its related strands of work;
- Resource implications associated with the strategy should be clarified at an early stage, and action measures put in place that reflect on best value principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- Further analysis of staff training and capacity building needs should be undertaken;
- To take forward these recommendations, an action plan should be put in place with immediate effect, setting out a staged approach to full implementation, with resources made available for each strand in order to provide continued momentum to the emerging strategy.

3.7 Reflecting the recommendations a Language Strategy Action Plan to run from October 2017 to March 2018 (Appendix 3) has been prepared and Members are asked to approve the Action Plan for implementation commencing in October 2017.

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3.8 Next steps

The Language Strategy Action Plan will commence in October 2017 and run until March 2018. This will allow for alignment with the financial year, with a further one year action plan to run from April 2018 – March 2019 submitted for approval in early 2018.

3.9 Financial & Resource Implications

A budget of £25,000 was approved by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23 June 2017 to support the initial Language Strategy Action Plan, to run from October 2017 - March 2018.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications

A draft Equality Screening Report was presented as part of the consultation documentation. An updated screening will be undertaken at appropriate stages in the implementation of the Language Strategy.”

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor O’Neill,

That the Committee agrees to

- note the findings of the consultation on the Draft Linguistic Diversity Policy and approve the recommendations;
- approve the Language Strategy Action Plan October 2017 – March 2018; and
- approve the recruitment of an Irish Language Officer and the commencing of the drawing up of the job description and recruitment process for an additional Officer.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,
Seconded by Councillor Craig,

That the Committee agrees to adopt a linguistic diversity policy and approved the appointment of one Language Officer.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the amendment and eleven against and it was declared lost. The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Long and seconded by Councillor O’Neill was put to the meeting when eleven Members for and five against and it was declared carried.

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Operational Issues

Audit and Risk Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel of 11th September.

Budget and Transformation Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of the 14th September.

North Foreshore Steering Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the North Foreshore Steering Group of 21st August.

Area Working Update

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Area Working Group meetings as follows:

West Area Working Group 24th August;
North Area working Group 29th August; and
East Area Working Group 5th September.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board

The committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board of 18th September.

Requests for the use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality

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

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NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2017 EVENTS						
SEPHA	18 October 2017	Drinks Reception and Dinner for delegates attending the International Agent Conference for Pharmaceutical Industry. Attending 35	Yes A & B	Yes - £300	No – organized as a commercial company	Approve £300 charge No hospitality
Belfast Central Mission	24 October 2017	Event with lunch and play at conclusion of Prayer Walk. Attending 50	Yes D	No (Charity)	Yes – Tea and Coffee Reception	Approve No charge Tea and Coffee Reception
NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seeker	17 November 2017	Launch of Essential Guide for Refugees and Asylum Seekers including NI History, education, employment, support organizations. Attending 80	Yes D	No (Charity)	Yes – Tea and Coffee Reception	Approve No charge Tea and Coffee Reception
Community Foundation NI	11 December 2017	Christmas Grant Giving ceremony for ambassadors, donors and staff Attending 100	Yes C & D	No (Charity)	Yes - Wine Reception	Approve No charge Wine reception
2018 EVENTS						
SureStart Celebration	25 January 2018	An event to showcase Sure Start projects and celebrate past successes. Attending 200	Yes D	Yes - £300	No precluded as government body	Approve £300 charge No hospitality
National Deaf Children's Society	13 March 2018	Young Authors and Artists Prize day to celebrate the achievements	Yes C & D	No (Charity)	Yes – Tea and Coffee Reception	Approve No charge Tea and Coffee Reception

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NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		of local deaf children. Attending 160				
Belfast Hills Partnership	14 March 2018	Dinner, showcase and celebration of Belfast Hills venue and thank you for volunteers Attending 200	Yes C & D	No (Charity)	Yes – Wine Reception as volunteer dinner	Approve No charge Wine Reception
QUB ISPASS Conference Dinner	3 April 2018	Drinks reception and dinner for delegates attending 3 day Schools of Engineering ISPASS Conference in QUB. Attending 150	Yes A & B	Yes - £825	Yes – Wine Reception as Dinner event with international delegates	Approve £825 charge Wine reception
5 Nations Health Protection Conference	23 April 2018	Drinks reception and dinner for delegates attending a 2 day Health Protection Conference in Assembly Halls. Attending 120	Yes A & B	Yes - £300	No – organized as a commercial company	Approve £300 charge No hospitality
Young Enterprise Awards 2018	14 June 2018	Drinks reception, dinner and Awards Ceremony to celebrate the achievements of people across NI who completed YE programmes. showcase projects Attending 350	Yes A & B	No (Charity)	Yes - Wine Reception	Approve No charge Wine Reception
Host Global Forum	22 June 2018	Drinks Reception and dinner – part of a showcase for North American	Yes A & B	No (BCC endorsed showcase)	Yes - Wine Reception as Belfast Showcase event	Approve No charge Wine Reception

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NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		Visitors attracting future high spend incentive and business meetings to the City. Attending 240				
NIASW Launch / Exhibition	3 July 2018	Drinks reception and speeches with exhibition. Showcase event for NI social work with exhibitions targeted at international social workers attending a 3 day global conference in Dublin. Attending 150	Yes A & B	No (Charity)	Yes – Tea and Coffee Reception	Approve No charge Tea and Coffee Reception
QUB 9 th International Symposium on Testate Amoebae (ISTA 9) Conference	12 September 2018	Drinks Reception and Dinner as part of large conference hosted by QUB for climate change impacts to peatlands. Attending 120	Yes A & B	Yes - £300	Yes - Wine Reception as large dinner	Approve Charge £300 Wine Reception
2019 EVENTS						
Institute of Conservation Conference Dinner	13 June 2019	Formal Drinks Reception and Dinner as part of 4-day conference in Waterfront exploring Conservation. Attending 300	Yes A & B	No (Charity)	No – organized as a commercial company	Approve No charge Wine Reception
George Telford Memorial Loyal Orange Lodge Centenary Dinner	12 October 2019	Centenary Dinner to celebrate 100 years of the	Yes C & D	No (Community)	Yes - Wine Reception as Centenary Event	Approve No charge Wine Reception

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NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		Club based at Clifton Street Orange Hall. Attending 120				
2020 EVENTS						
British Transplantation Society (BTS) Gala Dinner	5 March 2020	Drinks Reception, Dinner, Awards and Entertainment – Part of 3 day Waterfront based congress of clinicians, surgeons, scientists, nurses and coordinators who work in the field of organ transplantation. Attending 250	Yes A & B	No (Charity)	Yes - Wine Reception, large dinner plus international delegates	Approve No charge Wine Reception

NILGA Annual Conference and Local Government Awards

The Committee was advised that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) annual conference would take place at La Mon House Hotel on 12th October. The Council was represented on NILGA by a number of Members across the political parties. The normal practice was to authorise those representatives to attend the Annual Conference if they so desired.

In addition, later that evening the Northern Ireland Local Government Awards dinner would be held. The Awards set out to showcase excellence in service delivery across the work of the Councils. This year the Council had been nominated in 5 categories. The Democratic Services Manager reported that it would be important for the Council to be represented at the Awards dinner so that, if successful, an elected Member could accept the award.

The Committee approved the attendance of the Council representatives on NILGA at the Annual conference on 12th October and authorised the attendance of the Chairpersons and the Deputy Chairpersons of the Strategic Policy and Resources, City Growth and Regeneration and People and Communities (or their nominees), together with the appropriate Officer at the Local Government Award dinner on 12th October.

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**National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region)
Annual General Meeting**

The Committee was advised that the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) AGM was being held on Friday, 6th October, at 11.00am in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown.

Following the meeting, there would be two guest speakers:

- Kevin Higgins, Head of Policy at Advice NI who would speak on the introduction of Universal Credit; and
- Maria Anderson, Local Government Commissioner for Standards, who would speak on the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that all Councillors were entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting and, accordingly, authority was being sought to authorise the attendance at the meeting of any Member of the Council who so wished and to consider it as an approved duty.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

Historic Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Historic Working Group of 7th September.

Issued Raised in Advance by Members

Council Photograph – Alderman Browne to Raise

The Committee agreed to defer again consideration of this item to allow Alderman Browne who had raised the matter to be in attendance.

Chairperson