

Document Pack

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

**TO: THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR
ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the City Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast on Monday, 4th November, 2013 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Reading of Scriptures
2. Chief executive to submit Summons convening the meeting
3. Apologies
4. To take as read and confirm the minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Council of 1st October (Pages 3 - 8)
5. To receive official announcements and memorials, if any.
6. Nominations to the Position of High Sheriff of Belfast for 2014
7. Change of Membership on Committees and Outside Bodies
8. To receive and adopt the minutes of the proceedings of the Committees as follows:
 - a) Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 11th October (Pages 9 - 46)
 - b) Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October (Pages 47 - 100)
 - c) Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee of 11th October (Pages 101 - 126)
 - d) Parks and Leisure Committee of 10th October (Pages 127 - 150)
 - e) Parks and Leisure Committee of 19th October (Pages 151 - 152)
 - f) Development Committee of 22nd October (Pages 153 - 184)
 - g) Health and Environmental Services Committee of 2nd October (Pages 185 - 204)
 - h) Licensing Committee of 16th October (Pages 205 - 214)
 - i) Town Planning Committee of 3rd October (Pages 215 - 220)

- j) Town Planning Committee of 17th October (Pages 221 - 232)
- k) Town Planning Committee of 28th October (Pages 233 - 236)

9. Notices of Motion

- a) Small Business Saturday (Pages 237 - 238)
- b) Belfast Healthy Cities (Pages 239 - 240)
- c) International Mental Health Centre for Northern Ireland (Pages 241 - 242)
- d) Belfast City Centre (Pages 243 - 244)
- e) Human Trafficking Bill (Pages 245 - 246)
- f) Blood Transfusion Service (Pages 247 - 248)
- g) Rejection of Terrorism (Pages 249 - 250)

The Members of Belfast City Council are hereby summoned to attend.

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

Council

MONTHLY MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall on Tuesday, 1st October, 2013
at the hour of 6.00 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
(Councillor Ó Muilleoir) (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford);
the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston);
Aldermen M. Campbell, Ekin, McCoubrey,
R. Newton, Robinson, Rodgers and Stoker;
Councillors Attwood, Austin, Beattie,
M. E. Campbell, Carson, Clarke, Convery,
Corr, Cunningham, Curran, Garrett, Groves,
Haire, Hanna, Hargey, Hussey, Jones, Keenan,
Kelly, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín, Magee, McCabe,
McCarthy, McKee, McVeigh, Mullan, A. Newton,
Ó Donnghaile, L. Patterson, Reynolds, Spence,
Thompson, Verner and Webb.

Reading of Scriptures

In accordance with Standing Order 9, the Lord Mayor read a passage from the Scriptures.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Aldermen Browne, R. Patterson and Smyth and Councillors Hendron and McNamee.

New Members

The Lord Mayor welcomed to their first meeting Councillors Beattie, Carson and Clarke, who had replaced the former Members Hartley, O'Neill and Lavery, respectively, on the Council.

He reported that Alderman Humphrey and Councillor Maskey had, since the last meeting, resigned also from the Council and he welcomed their replacements, namely, Councillors Magee and Verner.

Representatives of each of the Political Parties paid tribute to the former Alderman and Councillor and the contribution which they had, over the years, made to the Council and their constituents.

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Congratulations

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, extended congratulations to Alderman Robinson and his wife Lindsay on the birth of their son Reuben. He congratulated also the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford) and his wife Laura on the news that they were expecting their third child.

Retirement of Town Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive

The Lord Mayor reported that this would be the last meeting which would be attended by Mr. Ciaran Quigley, Town Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive, who would be retiring from the Council at the end of the month after thirty-five years of service.

On behalf of the Members, he thanked Mr. Quigley for the contribution which he had made to the work of the Council during that time and wished him well in his retirement.

Minutes

Moved by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor,
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of the Council of 2nd September and the Special Meeting of the Council of 16th September be taken as read and signed as correct.

Filming of Proceedings

The Chief Executive reported that a request had been received from An Phoblacht seeking permission to film the commencement of the meeting.

The Council acceded to the request.

Change of Membership on Committees

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from the Democratic Unionist Party indicating that it wished:

- Alderman McCoubrey to replace Alderman M. Campbell on the Health and Environmental Services Committee and
- Councillor Verner to replace Alderman McCoubrey on the Development Committee.

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He reported further that the Sinn Féin Party had indicated that it wished:

- Councillor Carson to replace Councillor Magee on the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
- Councillors Clarke and Magee to replace Councillors Beattie and Carson on the Health and Environmental Services Committee
- Councillor Magee to replace Councillor Carson on the Licensing Committee and
- Councillor Beattie to replace Councillor Clarke on the Town Planning Committee

The Council approved the aforementioned changes and noted that Councillors Carson, M. E. Campbell and Spence had been nominated by their Political Parties to serve as Deputy Chairmen of the Strategic Policy and Resources, Licensing and Development Committees respectively.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and
the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee**

Moved by Alderman Robinson,
Seconded by Councillor Reynolds and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 6th and 20th September and the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee of 6th September be approved and adopted.

Parks and Leisure Committee

Moved by Councillor McKee,
Seconded by Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Parks and Leisure Committee of 12th September be approved and adopted.

Development Committee

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor Keenan,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Development Committee of 17th and 23rd September be approved and adopted.

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Amendment

Moved by Councillor Keenan,
Seconded by Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín,

That the decision of the Development Committee of 17th September under the heading "First Steps Early Years Group – Request for Funding" be amended to provide that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to consider the funding of the group under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

On a vote by show of hands twenty-three Members voted for the amendment and twenty-one against and it was declared carried.

Subsequent to the foregoing decision, the Council agreed, at the request of Alderman Stoker, that the Director of Development undertake an urgent review of the Council's community centres to determine whether they complied with the current legislation governing the hosting of early years groups.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment and addition, the proceedings of the Development Committee of 17th and 23rd September were approved and adopted.

Health and Environmental Services Committee

Moved by Councillor Corr,
Seconded by Councillor McCarthy,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Health and Environmental Services Committee of 4th September be approved and adopted.

Update on Zero Waste Action Plan

At the request of Councillor Ó Donnghaile, the Council agreed that information sessions would, at the request of Members, be organised as the new inner city food waste and recycling service was being rolled out.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition, the proceedings of the Health and Environmental Services Committee of 4th September were approved and adopted.

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Licensing Committee

Moved by Alderman Ekin,
Seconded by Councillor Attwood and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 18th September be approved and adopted, subject to the omission of those matters which had been delegated to it by the Council.

Town Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Hanna,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Town Planning Committee of 5th and 19th September be approved and adopted, subject to the omission of those matters which had been delegated to it by the Council.

Notices of Motion

Homelessness in Belfast

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor A. Newton proposed:

"Homelessness is a problem that has a severe negative impact on the lives of many of our citizens. There are numerous reasons for homelessness; family dispute, breakdown in living arrangements, addiction, mental ill health, debt, tenancy breakdown and so on. Homelessness impacts on individual lives for many years and this goes beyond the immediate lack of accommodation. It impacts upon an individual's health, financial and social well being.

Homelessness has generally been increasing since the early nineties. Between 2005/2006 and 2009/2010 the numbers levelled off only to see a significant increase in 2010/2011 when 20,158 households across Northern Ireland presented as homeless. This increase, due in part to the current economic situation, will have an adverse effect in the years to come. In Belfast in the year to March 2012, 2,493 homeless applicants were assessed as Full Duty Applicants.

No one organisation or agency can address these issues acting in isolation. There is now a greater need than ever to respond to homelessness in a coordinated, multi agency way and for each partner to contribute their expertise and resources to promote social inclusion.

This Council wishes to fully acknowledge the importance of the issue of Homelessness and calls on all relevant agencies to engage effectively with the Department for Social Development to provide new and

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innovative approaches to deal effectively with the problem. For its part, the Council agrees to examine ways in which it can help with the provision of advice and guidance to those presenting as homeless, perhaps through including useful information on its website to advise those seeking advice of the various statutory and charitable bodies which can provide direct support.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Convery.

After discussion, the Motion was put to the meeting and passed unanimously.

Zero Hours Contracts

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Hanna proposed:

“This Council declares its opposition in principle to Zero Hours Contracts (ZHCs) being imposed on workers. Such contracts are inimical to workers’ rights, fought for and won over many years, and to income stability, disproportionately affecting women and young people. The Council requests the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider the introduction of a policy which would ensure that no ZHCs are ever imposed on Council employees or, within an agreed timescale, by any suppliers who provide agency or other staff services to the Council.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Attwood.

In accordance with Standing Order 11(e), the Lord Mayor confirmed that the matter would be referred without debate to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Lord Mayor
Chairman

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 11th October, 2013

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Robinson (Chairman), Alderman Browne, M Campbell and R. Newton;
Councillors Attwood, Carson, Clarke, Corr, Haire, Hargey, Hendron, McCabe, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mullan, A. Newton, Reynolds and Spence.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Jones, McCarthy and Mac Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings on 6th and 20th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Democratic Services and Governance

Wreath-Laying at the Cenotaph

The committee reminded that, at its meeting on 24th August, 2012, it had agreed a set of recommendations concerning the laying of wreaths at the Cenotaph at the City Hall during the Remembrance Day event.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the recommendations which had been agreed were to set in place a policy for dealing with additional requests from Honorary Consuls wishing to be included in a list of those entitled to lay a wreath during the Remembrance Day event. The Royal British Legion had, at that time, expressed concerns at the number of organisations included in the event, which resulted in a particularly long ceremony which some of the more elderly participants had found to be arduous. The Committee had agreed that, in order to accommodate new requests, a

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single additional invitation would be issued to the Honorary Consuls on a strictly rotational basis, ensuring all Consuls were fairly treated, and the attending Honorary Consul would be asked to lay a wreath on behalf of all the other Honorary Consuls in Northern Ireland.

The Democratic Services Manager advised that a request had been received from the Honorary Consul of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for the Committee to reconsider the policy and allow him, as a representative of a sovereign country which had participated in the Allied Forces during the War, to lay a wreath on behalf of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. A meeting had been held with the President of the Royal British Legion and the position of the Legion had changed from that in 2012 when the Committee has established the existing policy. The Legion would now request the Committee to consider permitting the Honorary Consuls of both Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and of Malta to participate in the Remembrance Day event in their own right and not to form part of a policy of rotating such privilege amongst a number of Honorary Consuls. The Legion was of the opinion that to accede to the request would only add a few minutes to the overall length of the service and that that was reasonable given the accredited service of people from those Countries during the War.

He pointed out that, should the Committee be minded to accede to the request, that could set a precedent should further requests be received from other Honorary Consuls, although the Royal British Legion had indicated that the view of the Northern Ireland Consular Association was that such requests were unlikely to be forthcoming.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request from the Honorary Consul of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which was supported by Royal British Legion, and to amend the existing policy to allow the Honorary Consuls from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and from Malta to be included in future Remembrance Day events.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Northern Ireland European Union Programmes: Draft Consultations Responses
(Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 In the course of the last two months, consultations have been issued on the draft EU structural funds programmes for the new programming period (2014-2020). These are the Investment Growth and Jobs Programme (European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF)); and the Rural Development Programme. The deadline for responses to these consultations is 21 October 2013.**

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- 1.2 The consultations for the Peace and Interreg programmes have not yet been issued. It is understood that these consultations are likely to be issued in the coming month.
- 1.3 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council, through the EU Unit, has been lobbying to maximise the drawdown of the future NI EU mainstream funds for the period 2014-2020. These programmes offer huge potential to the council as a means of resourcing corporate priorities identified in successive strategies and plans including the Investment Programme, the Masterplan and the forthcoming Integrated Economic Strategy and Skills and Employability plans.
- 1.4 Chief Officers have asked for work to be undertaken to identify a pipeline of projects to form a draft integrated plan for submission to government departments, in order to try and secure ring-fenced EU funds at the outset of the new programming round. A meeting took place with a range of partner organisations on 23 September 2013 to discuss draft project ideas and additional work is now being carried out to substantiate these proposals. Copies of the proposed activities will be presented to Members for endorsement before any formal submission to DFP and other departments.
- 1.5 Lessons learned from the current programme include the need to invest in management resources to develop and deliver successful projects as well as the need for early engagement with partner organisations in order to ensure that activities complement wider offer and do not duplicate existing provision. There is also significant focus on demonstrating the need and demand for proposed activities and on ensuring value for money.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Proposed responses to each of the following programmes are outlined in appendices I, II, III;
- 1) European Regional Development Programme (ERDF)
 - 2) European Social Fund (ESF)
 - 3) Rural Development Programme (RDP)
- 2.2 There are a number of common themes across all the responses. These include:
- Identifying the opportunity within the programmes for integrated, area-based activities aligned to EU, national, regional and local strategies to promote and support economic regeneration. The leadership role of councils in developing these plans is highlighted

- Support for integration across separate funding streams in recognition of the multi-faceted nature of the economic challenges in the region
- Support for greater simplification and alignment of administration systems across the programmes
- The need to put in place mechanisms to encourage and support access to the range of interventions by SMEs, given the complex and confusing range of provision that is potentially available
- A proposed “commissioning” approach for the European Social Fund which will address the issue of duplication and lack of targeting that has been identified within the existing programme
- A perceived gap in references to exporting and entrepreneurship in the European Regional Development Fund consultation – both of which the council will play a much greater role in as a result of the transfer of functions.

2.3 Members will be aware of the ongoing engagement with DFP and the other managing authorities for the programmes (DETI, DEL and – to a lesser extent – DARD) with regard to the proposed ring-fencing of support for integrated, area-based plans to be coordinated by local authorities, as part of this funding round. To this end, DFP have asked for details of these draft “pipeline” projects to be submitted to them for consideration in October 2013. It is expected that they will provide feedback on these and that this will form the basis of the scale and scope of any delegation of funding directly to councils for economic regeneration activity under the new programme.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 No specific staff resources at this time. It should be noted that, if projects are successful, staff costs can be built into the overall programme budgets.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no specific equality or good relations implications.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that Members consider and approve Belfast City Council draft responses on the ESF, ERDF and RDP programmes, for submission to the respective managing authorities for the programmes by 21 October 2013.

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Appendix I

**Consultation on the Northern Ireland 2014-2020 ERDF Investment
for Growth and Jobs Programme**

**Draft Belfast City Council response for consideration by CMT –
October 2013**

Introduction

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Northern Ireland 2014-2020 ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme. The council and its residents have benefitted significantly from previous ERDF programmes and we are keen to maximise the opportunities for investment that are presented in this programme.

We would urge the Department to move ahead with programme development and implementation as quickly as possible in order to ensure that there is a seamless transition between the current Sustainable Competitiveness Programme and the introduction of this new initiative.

We are currently working with our partners Invest NI in developing an integrated economic strategy (IES) for the city of Belfast. This work has created a strong baseline identifying the key strengths and areas of challenge for the city. It is also helping identify a number of interventions which are critical for the city's future economic growth. This work will inform our future corporate priorities and approach to economic regeneration in the city and will help us target our resources and identify opportunities for collaboration to maximise the return on investment. We would be keen to share the findings of this work with the department.

In responding to the current consultation, we identify the opportunities for greater collaboration across EU funds (particularly ESF and ERDF) in order to identify integrated support programmes that will stimulate competitiveness, growth, skills development and innovation in our key sectors. We would encourage the managing authorities to give careful consideration to how this might happen and we consider that this will be an important factor in determining the success of the respective interventions.

We are currently working closely with the government departments to explore opportunities for area-based,

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targeted interventions to support economic competitiveness through the various EU funding programmes. We consider that these will provide a mechanism for improving the effectiveness of local delivery and enhancing programme outcomes. We are hopeful that the managing authorities will give careful consideration to this proposed approach and consider that, aligned with the proposed transfer of functions as part of Local Government Reform, it presents a unique opportunity to create a cohesive, integrated approach to local economic development.

Finally, we support the proposal to concentrate spending on priority areas to maximise results, rather than spreading funding too thinly. We consider that we can work with the managing authority to identify those priorities and develop targeted interventions that can achieve measurable impacts, ensuring that our mutual objectives can be achieved.

Question 1: Do you agree that we should focus on the selected Priorities 1, 3, 4?

We agree with the three selected priorities. The themes align with the emerging Belfast Integrated Economic Strategy (IES) that Belfast City Council is producing in partnership with Invest NI and will naturally align with the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy.

We acknowledge that the majority of the investment will focus on priority 2/thematic objective 3 – enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs – and we agree with this approach. Our recently completed Belfast Business Survey indicates that 73% of businesses expected to stabilise or grow in the coming year, with 41% expecting an increase in turnover. However only 33% of businesses surveyed had exported their products or services in the last year – and 25% of those were to the Republic of Ireland[1]. This demonstrates the scale of the challenge for local small businesses and reinforces the need for targeted support to address this issue.

We also welcome the ongoing support for strengthening research, technological development and innovation (thematic objective 1). Recent research by Centre for Cities suggests that Belfast is 25th out of 64 cities in terms of patents per head of population. Given that the University of Ulster will locate to the city within the next programming period, we consider that there is significant potential to improve this performance by promoting greater access to further and higher education research and expertise.

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With regard to the thematic objective around “enhancing access to and use and quality of ICT” (thematic objective 2), Belfast City Council is currently working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to roll out superfast and ultrafast connectivity to businesses across the city through a range of interventions. This will complement the DETI-funded rural broadband scheme that has been available across Northern Ireland. We will support this roll-out by investing in demand stimulation support which will improve the take-up of services by small businesses and will help them transform their business by looking at new processes and considering ways of working that are achievable as a result of the investment in new technologies. This, in turn, will support the broad objectives of thematic objective 1 by encouraging SMEs to invest in product and service development activities and stimulating innovation.

Our work with partners across government and in the private sector suggests that there is much untapped potential in looking at ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion and e-health, as identified within this investment priority. We therefore consider that there is still much work to do to maximise the social and economic potential of investment in this field and, while this is not explicitly a focus within the draft programme, we would encourage ongoing investment by government to exploit the recent investments in telecoms infrastructure to maximise economic benefit and support social cohesion across Northern Ireland.

Question 2: Are the programme proposals sufficiently focused given the limited resources likely to be available for NI?

Belfast City Council believes the focus on Research & Development and Innovation, Business Growth and developing the Low Carbon Economy is right on the basis that it aligns to the existing policy and strategic framework, particularly through the NI Economic & Draft Innovation Strategy priorities and the emerging Belfast City Council Integrated Economic Strategy priorities. Whilst we understand and appreciate the need for prioritisation due to the limited nature of resources available, we feel the Programme proposals contain insufficient emphasis on two key issues for the redevelopment and growth of the economy:

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- Exporting and the important contribution exporting will make towards rebalancing and rebuilding efforts; and
- The identified need to encourage greater quantity and quality of new start businesses to improve on the relatively low baseline vis a vis other UK and European regions and to enhance the survival rates of start ups (Belfast is currently ranked 63 out of 64 cities in terms of business start-up rates according to recent Centre for Cities research.

We feel that these two issues are fundamental to the future sustainability of the regional economy and, with increased responsibility for enterprise and early stage business growth envisaged to transfer to Councils under Local Government Reform, we feel that an increased emphasis should be placed on these two issues within the Programme proposals.

The establishment of clear targets for each of the priority areas is a useful mechanism for focusing effort and we would suggest that these should be maintained across all service delivery associated with this programme.

Question 3: What are your views on the proposed interventions identified under each of the three priorities?

With regard to the specific themes, we would make the following comments:

Theme 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

In light of the recent announcement of the consultation on the Draft Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2013-2025, we feel that activity under this theme should align closely with the priorities in the emerging strategy. This document acknowledges that “a complete step change in its culture, priority and performance in respect of innovation” is required if the vision of the Economic Strategy is to be realised.

Historically, Innovation & R&D have been the preserve of larger firms with SMEs experiencing considerable and often insurmountable barriers to engaging in innovative related activity. This is more prevalent in the manufacturing sector with SMEs accounting for less than 20% of manufacturing R&D. In order to generate the “step change” identified previously, we feel that particular emphasis should be placed on enhancing SME capacity and capability in this regard and

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in seeking to simplify the processes by which SMEs can access this funding. With SMEs accounting for over 95% of the local business base, there is much potential to make a significant impact on the innovation related targets identified in the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy and the Draft Innovation Strategy. Key deterrents for SMEs in terms of their propensity for engaging in R&D include the financial risk (which can be mitigated through the provision of grant support) and the bureaucratic logistical processes involved in accessing the funding. In our experience, larger businesses find it easier to access bank financing than SMEs plus the larger businesses tend to have internal resources not available to SMEs to engage in R&D projects and innovation work.

We feel that there needs to clarity at the outset of the ERDF programme in relation to what will be funded for business under this theme, and how it differs or indeed complements what is available from the forthcoming Horizon 2020 research programme (SME element) and Interreg V Cross border programme which will also have the thematic objective 1 as a pillar. Our 2011 business survey suggests that 84% of businesses in the city had availed of no government support in the previous year, despite the range of services that are available from a number of agencies. Our experience of working with SMEs – and particularly micro businesses – suggests that they find it difficult to navigate the spectrum of agencies and programmes on offer and therefore tend to avoid getting involved in many support initiatives which are created for them. We welcome, therefore, the proposed single gateway covering the R&D continuum from industrial research through to experimental development.

Whilst a lack of large firms and an over-reliance on SMEs is cited as a constraint on regional R&D performance, we believe that the SME segment offers significant potential for enhancing the growth of R&D and Innovation locally if appropriate support is available. As noted previously, support for innovation and R&D has traditionally been geared towards larger businesses and the Universities with little attention paid to the specific needs of SMEs. In this regard we welcome the commitment to making the financing grant for SMEs available but we would reiterate the need to address the existing barriers in the roll-out of this initiative.

Given the transfer of functions that will take place under Local Government Reform (LGR), Belfast City Council would welcome the opportunity to work with government

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departments and agencies to look at how access to innovation and R&D for small businesses could be enhanced. Aligned to the other support services for which we will be responsible, we would be keen to look at how communications to small businesses can be improved, ensuring that they are aware of and able to avail of the range of support services that are being developed to help them grow their businesses, in line with the overall targets identified in this programme.

We strongly support the proposed investment in a Design Service for businesses due to the strong link between design, innovation, productivity and quality. Notwithstanding Invest NI's recent commitment to engaging across the business base, we believe that design support services, particularly the Design Advice and Design Development Programmes should be accessible by all businesses across the region. In the absence of universal accessibility to design support services, Local Authorities, through their respective local economic development plans, should be free to develop and deliver their own project offering in this field, complementary to what is proposed in the Programme proposals.

We also welcome the focus on sectoral specialisms and, in particular, the focus on sustainable energy. However, we would suggest that resource efficiency/waste technology sectors also offer significant opportunities, particularly given the focus on recycling and landfill diversion and the associated emerging EU targets. We identified this as a missed opportunity in the Northern Ireland economic strategy and would re-iterate this point in relation to the current consultation.

Theme 3 – Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs

Belfast City Council welcomes the introduction of EU-backed financial investments to maximise public and private sector leverage for SMEs. We see these as being critical in growing the core of export-focused businesses in the region, given the scale of the challenge alluded to previously.

Belfast City Council would welcome early discussions with DETI and Invest NI with respect to these and to look at lessons from the current programming period in relation to the use of Jessica (urban regeneration), Jeremie (small business intervention) and the Progress micro financing initiative, which have had varying degrees of success across other member states.

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Access to finance is constantly cited as one of the key obstacles faced by small businesses in trying to grow beyond their current structure. In our recent business survey, an average of one third of businesses was finding it difficult to access finance and to maintain cashflow. We believe therefore that, should the right funding mechanisms be made available, there would be significant take-up from small businesses. As suggested earlier, consideration needs to be given to how the message is communicated to small businesses so that they are aware that the funding is available and that they know how and where they can access it. We would be keen to work closely with the government departments in this activity, alongside our other business support initiatives, ensuring a seamless approach to meet business needs.

We welcome the continuum of funding outlined within the programme. However, we note the lack of any reference to funding of a value of less than £50,000 and consider that there is a need for intervention in this field. Many SMEs still face difficulty in accessing bank lending, despite a range of government initiatives to address this situation. Micro businesses, in particular, often need relatively small amounts of support which, coupled with their own investments, can lever jobs and growth. We would welcome some consideration of how access to lending for these companies can be enhanced: if this does not happen, we consider that the Access to Finance objectives around enabling SMEs to have easier access to finance, helping rebuild and rebalance the economy and driving private sector growth may not be fully achieved.

We fully support the proposal to specifically target support to the Creative Industries sector, and in particular the emphasis placed on TV & Film production and digital content. While we recognise the value of attracting additional productions to the region, we consider that there is also a need for targeted investment in the indigenous business base in order to maximise the opportunities that these additional investments may bring about. We consider that there are opportunities to develop innovative approaches to both skills development and business growth within the sector, which will require some consideration to be given to how ESF and ERDF funds can align better to make this happen in a more seamless manner than is currently the case.

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We also consider that there is significant potential to explore opportunities for targeted investment in other sectors, including renewable energies. We welcome the recent decision to establish a Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE) but recognise that there are substantial barriers to local SMEs taking advantage of the opportunities that larger scale developments in sustainable energy, particularly the DONG Energy project in Belfast Harbour, the recent announcement of the First Flight Consortium as the preferred developer for an offshore wind project off the South East coast of County Down and the establishment of a MoU between the Irish and UK Governments for the export of significant quantities of renewable energy from Ireland to the mainland UK. We believe that these developments offer significant opportunities for new, innovative start ups and spin outs, for growth within our existing SME base and for diversifying the manufacturing and service industries. It is also recognised that the demonstration of local capacity and capability in this sector can lead to longer term export opportunities and international development for our SME base. We feel that without the appropriate support mechanisms being put in place, these opportunities may not be realised.

Belfast City Council considers that there should be greater emphasis under this priority on exporting. Export-led growth is the key to economic recovery and efforts to rebalance the local economy in favour of the private sector. Whilst recent evidence (DETI's export survey 2012 indicating a 6.1% increase in manufacturing exports and a return to the peak levels experienced in 2009) suggests that this is gradually taking place, particularly in Belfast, there is scope for provision of an additional impetus in this field. In our recent Survey of Belfast Businesses, only one third of business respondents had experience of international trade with a quarter of these having only experienced trading with the Republic of Ireland.

We fully support the proposed investment in the tourism sector and the key delivery role that NITB will have in the delivery of this. We believe that the strong working relationships between NITB and local authorities, developed through previous funding programmes, offer a useful template for the roll-out of similar activity, with the aim of improving the quality of the product and building the capacity of the sector.

We are about to embark on the development of a new tourism strategy for the city and we expect that NITB and

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DETI will be key partners in the development and delivery of this. As one of the nine tourism destinations identified by DETI in the 2020 strategy for tourism, we welcome the potential that this provided for channelling funding towards priority interventions and we would hope that this policy can continue under the new programme.

The Council fully welcomes the proposed continuation of a local economic development dimension for Council delivery. We have been working closely with DETI and other government agencies for some time now to look at how the effectiveness of this approach can be enhanced, recognising the complementary roles of a number of agencies working in this field. We would urge that councils, as strategic partners, can also have access to funding under themes 1 and 4, particularly to support the ongoing lobby by Belfast City Council and the local government sector as a whole to be able to have EU funded, integrated economic development plans as the outset of the programming period. We note that there is still some intensive work ongoing with regard to the potential devolution to councils of funding for agreed programmes of economic activity within their areas and we trust that this engagement will lead to a productive outcome that will help meet the objectives of this programme.

Theme 4 – Supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy

Belfast City Council welcomes the focus here and feels that the council, in conjunction with key partner organisations, can play a significant role in progress towards the targets under this priority. We feel that there are particularly strong linkages between this theme and the other thematic priorities in that local SMEs can play an important part in the development of a viable and cost effective supply chain for emerging sustainable energy projects and recognise that investment in R&D, technology transfer and innovation will contribute to the development of new technologies in this field. Additionally, Belfast City Council has submitted an application to the current round of ERDF under the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for the development of the infrastructure necessary to develop a Cleantech business park on the North Foreshore site in North Belfast.

We also feel that there is significant merit in pursuing an integrated approach to the low carbon agenda, particularly across the ESF and ERDF programmes. The sector is poised to be the fastest growing sector of the economy over the

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coming decade according to BIS and the OECD. If growth estimates in this market are to be realised and an innovative, export-focused Northern Ireland cleantech sector is to be established, the availability of a range of professional and technical skills will be crucial to this success. Recent demand in terms of applications for courses in manufacturing engineering, a key discipline for the cleantech industry, has been falling despite the creation of more specialist courses. We feel that integrating the approach across ERDF and ESF, particularly under this theme could offer substantial opportunities locally, and could assist in the establishment of a significant number of new jobs across the spectrum.

We support here the reference to the growing potential of the maritime economy especially given the opportunities outlined in the recent Irish Sea plan and the emerging Atlantic Area Strategy.

Question 4: Are the proposed delivery mechanisms appropriate?

Belfast City Council welcomes the intention referenced in the programme proposals for an enhanced role for local councils through the delivery of plans, allowing for delegation of project selection using four of the five Northern Ireland EU funds. Local Government Reform and the proposed transfer of major functions back to Local Government in 2014/15 provides a real opportunity to rethink how Central and Local Government in Northern Ireland can work in a more integrated manner, aligning both policy and resources to address identified priorities and shape places for the future. There is potential for Local Government to integrate key functions such as planning, regeneration and economic development to address local priorities identified as part of the Community Planning process.

This new EU programming round provides a timely opportunity to adopt a more integrated approach to the delivery of EU funding, and we would directly support local government's place shaping role for their cities, towns and neighbourhoods. We are currently working with DFP to explore opportunities for the allocation of ring-fenced budgets for councils in two stages 2014 – 2017 and 2017 – 2020, to allow for the development and delivery of strategic, integrated plans using ERDF, other EU funds, council, and private sector investments. This approach would allow for a much greater impact locally and would support the delivery of concrete results tied to local and regional strategies.

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Question 5: How might the implementation of the programme be simplified and streamlined?

Belfast City Council believes that the approach of local delivery through strategic integrated council plans in 2 phases 2014-2017 and 2017-2020 would lead to simplified delivery and clear results-based outcomes. We are wholly supportive of the work underway within and between departments to try and create a simplified system with regards to programme administration and consider that this will provide a better opportunity to improve the quality of service delivery on the ground.

We would welcome a consistent monitoring system across all ERDF and ESF funded programmes to make implementation effective, simple and streamlined. While all programme interventions now have targets, these are often around programme participation (inputs/outputs) as opposed to outcomes and longer-term impact. Equally, the outcomes vary from initiative to initiative and it is therefore difficult to gain a cumulative perspective on the impact of interventions across a range of partners and programmes. We welcome the commitment to programme-level targets and would be keen to see that these are maintained throughout the programming period and across funding programmes.

Question 6: Related issues not specifically addressed in the consultation

Belfast City Council as the regional driver and urban centre welcomes the new focus on sustainable urban development and would urge NI Government to identify both Belfast and Derry-Londonderry as specified urban authorities within the NI Chapter of the UK Partnership Agreement. Both authorities have been part of a sustained lobby at the European level alongside the Eurocities network for the last two years, in support of Commissioner Hahn's "ambitious urban agenda". Belfast as the capital city and Belfast and Derry-Londonderry as both regional drivers, as referenced in the Programme for Government, should benefit from this new 5% initiative, over and above what they would normally have sourced from the NI ERDF programme, in recognition of the specific challenges and opportunities presented within the cities in terms of socio-economic issues.

Belfast City Council commends and agrees with the Executive's restated commitment to make the economy the

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top priority in the Programme for Government and believe that the programme proposals demonstrate a cohesive approach to addressing some of those economic priorities. We consider that some prioritisation and additional emphasis should be placed on issues such as exporting and increasing the volume of start ups, given their relative importance for the future development of the economy locally and for growth amongst the micro-business sector and considering the scale of the challenge associated with this issue – as referenced in this response.

Belfast City Council has extensive experience in the successful delivery of NI, Inter-regional and Transnational EU competitive programmes and has developed an evidence base and city- wide partnership of stakeholders to develop and deliver integrated plans using EU and non EU funds. We are currently developing an Integrated Economic Strategy for the City and there are very obvious parallels between the emerging findings from the Strategy and the programme proposals presented in the consultation document. In conjunction with our partner Invest NI, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss the emerging findings and to identify areas for collaboration to help achieve our mutual objectives.

We consider that the coalescing of Local Government Reform (and the accompanying Transfer of Functions and enhanced responsibility for Economic Development and Community Planning) and the 2014-2020 ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme presents an opportunity for the reformed Local Authorities to play a more significant role at a local level in developing the local economy. We feel that lessons can be learned from the proposed approach in England with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) who will have responsibility for designing and delivering strategies on how to use the new Structural Funds. The respective LEPs will receive a notional allocation from the funds and will have responsibility for:

- Coming up with an investment strategy for spending their allocation
- Finding projects to deliver that strategy, using a mixture of commissioning, bidding and co-financing as best meets local need
- Finding match funding for those projects
- Ensuring those projects deliver their targets
- Making sure their allocations are spent on time
- Monitoring how well they are delivering against their strategies and the programme priorities.

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Finally, we feel that Council has the capacity to deliver the resources to provide the match funding required to bring forward these initiatives. We have strong governance and project management arrangements in place and have a track record in drawing down funds for capital and revenue projects under previous programmes.

Appendix II

Department for Employment and Learning's (DEL) consultation on the Northern Ireland 2014-2020 European Social Fund (ESF) Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme

Draft Belfast City Council response for consideration by CMT – October 2013

- 1) Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. Through the Council's 2012-2015 Investment Programme, we are committed to a range of employability-related initiatives, both as an employer and as a funder of external projects to address key sectors including:
 - i. Working with local partners to deliver targeted employability initiatives across the city, providing pre-employment support for 1,200 people and helping around 400 into employment (through ESF projects);
 - ii. Committing over 400 work placement, internship and apprenticeship opportunities within the Council with a focus on graduates, young long-term unemployed and people with disabilities
 - iii. Creating 200 employment opportunities at no additional cost to the ratepayer;
 - iv. Providing a £300,000 bursary fund to help 16-24 year-olds move into further education, training and employment.

- 2) The implementation of Local Government Reform in 2015 provides an important context for the development of the 2014-2020 ESF Investment for Growth and Jobs programme. This will result in significant changes for local government in terms of the geographic boundaries and population as well as the transfer of functions such as planning and regeneration from central to local government. In addition, community planning will provide a framework for councils and other partners to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of their area. It will ensure effective and co-ordinated service delivery that meets community

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needs by engaging all key stakeholders, including the community.

- 3) As the overarching strategic framework for an area, the community plan and associated local area plans have the potential to connect central government and local government commitments ensuring greater alignment of the regional and local priorities and delivery. An effective, strong community plan has the potential to connect the region to the local therefore enhancing the effectiveness of decision-making and delivery by creating real alignment policy and resources to address identified priorities and shape areas for the future. In this context, it considered that there is significant potential to maximise the impact of ESF and other EU funded interventions by ensuring that they are aligned to wider, locally-agreed priorities.
- 4) Our responses and comments on the questions posed in the consultation document are included below:

Q1 Do the selected thematic objectives and investment priorities demonstrate best use of ESF funding?

Priority 1 - Thematic Objective 8 - Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility

Priority 2 - Thematic Objective 9 - Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty

Priority 3 - Thematic Objective 10 - Investing in education, skills and life-long learning

		✓		
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- A1** The Council understands and agrees in principle with the focus on economic inactivity among young people (Priority 1). However, we note that at present, this is to receive the smallest percentage of funding available (28.5% compared with 30% and 40% for Priorities 2 and 3 respectively). We consider that this figure should be revised upwards to take account of the ongoing employability and skills challenges. Despite the fact that the Government’s Economic Strategy identifies Belfast as the key driver for economic growth in the region and the NI Executive references the importance of Belfast to regional prosperity, the following challenges remain within the city:
- Inactivity in the labour market is currently the biggest drag on the Belfast’s competitiveness, according to

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recent research commissioned by the Council. Benchmarked against 10 other cities, Belfast had the lowest levels of economic activity (41.6%) and considerably below that of Dublin (22.9%). This research shows there are 16 wards in Belfast with less than 50% of residents in employment;

- Belfast has relatively highly skilled residents but also has a high proportion of people with no formal qualifications. The Centre for Cities comparative analysis of Belfast with 63 other UK cities placed the city at the bottom of the group;
- Obtaining a level two qualification is out of reach for many Belfast residents. The Integrated Economic Strategy for the city (currently at draft stage) recognises the progress made between 2001 and 2011 in skills attainment, where the proportion of Belfast's population with no qualifications decreased from 41% to 30.4%. In some parts of the city, the level increases to almost 90% of the working age population; and
- An additional 15,000 people with no formal qualifications will come under Belfast city's jurisdiction in 2015. Finding a solution to these issues is key to maximising economic prosperity and we call for fair balance in funding allocation among the three priority areas.

In relation to Thematic Objective 9 (Priority 2), Belfast City Council welcomes the fact that ESF will support actions to promote social inclusion and combat poverty and that the allocation to this priority goes beyond the draft legislation recommendation. The need to tackle poverty and exclusion is demonstrated by the fact that [http://poochie:9070/documents/s72447/Appendix_II.html?CT=2 - ftn3:](http://poochie:9070/documents/s72447/Appendix_II.html?CT=2-ftn3)

- Poverty and deprivation has been concentrated, historically, in certain parts of the city. Many of the deprived areas in Belfast in 2011 are the same areas that were the most deprived in the city in 1991 (Ardoyne, Shankill, New Lodge, Falls, Crumlin appear in successive studies of multiple deprivation). Most of these areas are those in and around interfaces.
- 46% of Belfast's population live in the most deprived Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland
- 35% of the population in Belfast are income deprived; compared to 25% in NI as a whole
- 16% are employment deprived in Belfast compared to 13% in NI as a whole.
- Whiterock is ranked as the most deprived ward in Northern Ireland

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- A recent report by the Child Poverty Action Group revealed that the cost of dealing with child poverty in Northern Ireland has reached £1bn. Estimates provided in the report revealed that there are around 97,979 children in Northern Ireland defined as living in poverty, with the cost estimated at 1,065bn. In Belfast around 21,186 children are considered to be living in poverty with an estimated annual cost of 230 million.

Belfast City Council's Framework for Tackling Poverty and Social Inequalities is currently being reviewed in light of the Delivering Social Change Framework and Belfast Strategic Partnership's Framework for Action to Address Life Inequalities (2011-15). These frameworks for Belfast recognise multi-faceted nature of poverty which impacts on life opportunities and social inclusion in terms of employability, education, health, housing, community relations etc. As is the case across the UK, there is also growing trend of in-work poverty in NI, therefore facilitating access to employment opportunities requires a more co-ordinated and holistic approach to tackling poverty, improving social inclusion and increasing aspirations. The most recent figures on workless households in the UK regions positions Northern Ireland in second place (22%), narrowly behind the North East (23%). Belfast City Council would therefore request that the forthcoming ESF Programme takes a holistic approach and does not restrict project activity to combating poverty through facilitating access to the labour market alone, but supporting individuals to overcome obstacles and cyclical patterns which prevent them from leading a satisfying and fulfilling life.

While recognising the scale of the economic inactivity challenge, the Council would also contend that the skills challenge is a significant one for Belfast and the wider region. We support a sustained focus on skills based on the following evidence:

- It is estimated that over 85% of jobs in Belfast in the next 10 years will require a degree qualification or equivalent. Currently, 26% of the resident population in the city has qualifications of level 4 and above; and
- A report commissioned by Belfast City Council in 2009 identified the scale of the skills challenge across the city and its potential to impact adversely on the city's economic growth due to issues of skills mismatch and also due to the geographical concentration of those with low skills levels, which risked widening the social divide in the city. It noted that, while some areas of the city had

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large volumes of residents with “low or no skills” levels and 6 out of 7 jobs in the future would require qualification levels in excess of this.

We welcome the fact that Priority 3 (investing in education, skills and life-long learning) is to receive the largest percentage of funding available but we would ask that consideration is given to making this funding additional to mainstream provision, as opposed to supporting existing mainstream activity.

Under the 2007-2013 ESF programme, there was an open call for applications under which in excess of 80 projects were supported and more than 50 were based in the Belfast City Council area. While many of these projects were doing invaluable work, it is difficult to measure their impact. We consider that a more focused approach detailing specific targets may have improved the overall programme’s effectiveness.

To make the best use of ESF funding under the thematic objectives, the Council believes that economic prosperity and growth can be achieved by developing a locally based employability and skills strategy to address long standing employability and skills issues within Belfast. This commitment is outlined in the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy. We would be keen to work with DEL on the development of a city-wide strategy which would promote greater coherence between supply and demand with the aim of improving city competitiveness and supporting access to employment.

The Council has already met with DEL and Belfast Metropolitan College to explore the potential for developing an Employability and Skills strategy for the city. We would welcome further engagement with these and other relevant partners with a view to establishing creative and collaborative solutions to addressing these challenges.

The Council acknowledges that ESF is a regional initiative but we believe that a local response to local issues is required and we recommend a city strategy partnership model which operates successfully in other parts of the UK. This partnership approach could also contribute to:

- Improvement in the quality of life, health and education for people in areas of greatest need;**
- More cohesion of services to boost and develop confidence within communities;**
- Improved life chances for children and young people.**

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Evaluation of the city strategies model identified a number of key lessons that may be relevant to any Belfast-specific approach. These include:

- The importance of giving initiatives time to make a difference, given the scale of the challenges to be addressed;
- The need for national policy to work in the same direction as local policy and vice versa – to reinforce each other’s aims;
- Recognition that different geographical scales are important for different types of interventions;
- Discretionary funding can play an important role in helping partnerships to provide services to address local needs; and
- The importance of looking at the role of demand as well as supply in tackling worklessness.

Q2 Is the proposed programme funding sufficiently focused, given the limited resources likely to be available for Northern Ireland?

Yes

No

A2 Broadly, the Council welcomes the new objectives proposed and notes the similarity between the proposed and former programmes.

We would not however be supportive of the current process of allocating funding by an open call, The Council believes there is a substantial risk of the activity not focusing on those groups and locations in most need of support. We would therefore recommend that the allocation model prioritises those population groupings and communities which are in greatest need of support. We would also advocate an area based “commissioning approach” based on measurable outcomes. This will encourage collaborative applications as opposed to a large number of stand-alone projects, where a disproportionate resource is used to cover administrative overheads and dissipates impact.

The Northern Ireland Economic Strategy commits government to employment and skills strategies for Belfast and Derry/Londonderry and the Council believes this approach would create a framework within which funds could be allocated more effectively.

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The case for developing a locally based strategy, with clearly defined targets and outcomes to address long standing employability and skills issues within Belfast have been documented in question one. There are substantial long-term gains to be made by setting targets to overcome the high number of people disengaged from the labour market or those with no formal qualifications. This strategy must include an examination of DEL's existing commitments and programme activities and re-focus resources to address the challenges identified below:

- While Belfast is the economic driver of the region, it is also the location of the 9 out of the 10 most deprived electoral wards (using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM));
- The current claimant count for the Belfast (July 2013) sits at 7.9%, joint second highest with Strabane among district council areas and but below Derry (8.5%). There are significant variations in claimant numbers within Belfast wards ranging from 17.2% of working age population in Waterworks to 2.1% in Stormont. 32.2% of those claiming benefits have been unemployed for more than a year compared to 29.6% in the region. The youth claimant count sits at 26.5% which is down 2.7% compared to the previous year, but still unacceptably high; and
- The welfare reform programme is likely to have a significant impact on the employability arena and the levels of poverty in society, with a focus on 'making work pay' as opposed to staying on benefits. Universal Credit – bringing together all income-related social security benefits (Jobseekers' Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support) as well as housing benefit and working and child tax credits will be introduced in April 2014. The low levels of skills and the concentration by population in certain areas of the city means that, unless specific and targeted interventions and support mechanisms are put in place, future employment opportunities will remain out of the reach of many Belfast residents. Macro level changes such as the welfare reform agenda are likely to lead to an increase in those with low or no skills levels seeking employment in a declining market. The timeframe for introduction of this programme means that the Welfare Reform changes will be starting to impact, particularly on certain groups and/or geographical areas.

Q3 Implementation arrangements

What are your views on the extent to which the proposed interventions identified under each of the three Priorities (see Chapter 6) will address those Priorities?

	✓	
Completely	To some extent	Not at all

A3 The Council welcomes proposed interventions outlined in paragraphs 6.1 to 6.4 and the socio-economic analysis provided in paragraph 6.2.

Belfast City Council's Investment Programme 2012-2015 supports the need for specific, targeted interventions to ensure that the city's residents have the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to apply for and secure jobs, with a particular emphasis on young people who have been badly impacted by the economic downturn. However, investment in skills and training will be minimised unless there are relevant employment opportunities.

We believe that the actions under Priority 2 do not adequately address the underlying issues within Northern Ireland that impact on poverty and social inclusion. We believe that greater emphasis should be placed on issues raised in "Together Building a United Community" and the need to ensure all our communities, especially those most affected by the legacy of 'the Troubles' are supported.

The extent to which the actions will actually address the priorities identified will be dependent on the quality of programme implementation, monitoring and review. We recognise that actions proposed in paragraph 6.28 will help to address this.

We welcome DEL's focus on the economic sectors relating employment and skills provision (paragraph 2.29). This correlates to joint research commissioned by Belfast City Council and Invest NI http://poochie:9070/documents/s72447/Appendix_II.html?CT=2_-ftn8 which shows:

- An increase in the proportion of employment taken up by sectors such as administration and support, professional, scientific and technical and information and communication;

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- An increase in the employment between 2002 and 2012 in the finance and insurance sector. Employment in the sector has remained relatively steady in Belfast, despite the expectation of contracting in the financial crisis;
- The average growth rate in the manufacturing sector from 2008 – 2012 was 3.1%. It reflects the national trend of moving towards high-value added manufacturing, as the Western World struggles to compete with emerging nations on a cost basis;
- The presence of arts facilities in conjunction with TV programming and broadcasting, suggests the emergence of the creative industries sector in Belfast. Computer programming, the creative industries and the wider renewables or green industries present significant clustering opportunities for Belfast in the future;
- Employment levels in the number of people employed in art, entertainment and recreation sector have increased. This trend is estimated to continue, with employment rising on average by 1.6% each year between 2012 and 2022, taking the number from 3,800 to 4,600 employees within the Art, Entertainment and Recreation sector; and
- The accommodation and food sector has a sizable opportunity to increase its productivity with an average growth of 2.0%. This sector has a vital role within the economy of Belfast, accounting for 5.8% of total employment with over 12,000 employees.

Across all the priority areas, we consider it critical that there should be a focus on ensuring that funded activities meet the needs of both employers and programme participants. While the focus of the programme is on supply-side measures to address the challenges of economic inactivity and low skills levels, we consider that there is a need to work closely with businesses – particularly SMEs – to understand their employability and skills requirements and to provide solutions that meet their needs in a way that helps them improve their business productivity.

In order to improve the effectiveness of the interventions, we would strongly advocate the establishment of a single area based fund, bringing together ESF and other employability-focused resources from central government departments including the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Office of the First and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM). This fund could be managed by a programme board to oversee the commissioning of programmes which would target support on those communities and locations in most need of employability and skills investment. This approach fits with the following initiatives:

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- DSD's Neighbourhood Renewal strategy which aims to tackle disadvantage in the areas of highest deprivation. A mid-term review ^[9] of this strategy recommends linking regeneration policies with wider policies, particularly economic development; and
- OFMdfM's Delivering Social Change framework which aims to co-ordinate key actions across Departments to take forward work on priority social policy areas.

The creation of a single fund would negate the need for delivery agents seeking to secure 35% of their funding from other sources, ensure that projects are fully funded from the outset, substantially ease the administration and reduce the time taken to get projects off the ground.

Q4 Do you think that a more strategic approach should be taken to the selection of projects - for example, commissioning by themes rather than open call?

✓		
Completely	To some extent	Not at all

A4 Belfast City Council believes that the city strategies model proposed in the answer to question one is a more strategic approach.

The Council acknowledges and commends the valuable role played by community-based projects in tackling employment and skills issues. However, a locally agreed framework would create priority areas of focus with associated targets in order to ensure that all activities are contributing towards agreed goals. One way to achieve this is to create a framework using the city strategy model where activity can be commissioned against agreed priorities and themes (see above).

The Council believes this strategy should focus on a longer-term approach. Training and employment projects cannot be delivered in isolation of each other and a framework is required to bring all training and employment providers, funding bodies and employers together to set targets and determine outcomes.

Currently there are over 50 ESF projects being delivered in Belfast. We believe that the overall effectiveness of the programme can be improved by commissioning projects to meet a common agreed strategy and outcome related targets.

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While we would encourage partners to explore opportunities for commissioning, we recognise that this change would require effective communication and capacity building to support access to funds and to ensure quality in the implementation of subsequent projects.

Q5 How might the implementation of the 2014-2020 programme be simplified and streamlined?

A5 The Council has called for a joined up city-wide strategy in the answer to question one, together with the need to reduce the proliferation of individual projects outlined in the answer to question four.

Post-2015, consideration should be given to the development of area based 'Single Outcome Agreements' in the new 11 Council areas linked to the Community Plan. It is recognised however that there will still be programmes which are best delivered at a regional level.

We believe that the 2014-2020 programme can be simplified and streamlined by ensuring consistency across all EU-funded programmes and determining how funds can complement each other (for example ERDF). DEL should use this opportunity to review administration and monitoring arrangements across all EU funded projects and with organisations that provide match funding.

The Council calls for a consistent monitoring system to be put in place across all ESF funded programmes to make implementation effective, simple and streamlined. While all programme interventions now have targets, these are often around programme participation (inputs/outputs) as opposed to outcomes and longer-term impact. Equally, the outcomes vary from initiative to initiative and it is therefore difficult to gain a cumulative perspective on the impact of employability initiatives across a range of partners and programmes.

To this end, it may be appropriate to consider establishing clear baseline information for any target intervention and to create appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), targets and outcomes measurements for all three priorities that can be reviewed on a regular basis to note the progress made. This would mean a move away from the programme-based approach towards a target for a specific group or location, with consideration of the wider impact on issues such as health and deprivation levels.

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Outputs should not only include the number of programme participants but also qualification attainment, whether or not the qualification was useful in the labour market and whether or not job starts have been sustained or led to job progression and should track pay rates and pay progression of participants.

The Council's experience of the flat rate approach for indirect costs and a simplified regime for procurement below the EU threshold values implemented over the course of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) PEACE III Programme has been positive. We welcome a continuation of this approach in all EU Structural Funds for the next programming period, with a continued focus on the costs directly related to project delivery, and limits on the levels that can be claimed as overheads.

Q6 We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to set them out:

A6 Belfast City Council is keen to be an active partner with DEL and other agencies in addressing the employability and skills challenges that impact on the economic and social wellbeing in our area. We do not necessarily see our role as a delivery agent for ESF projects; however, the Council is preparing for new powers of regeneration, place-shaping and wellbeing under the Reform of Local Government in 2015 and is seeking to agree initial priorities for Belfast's development. We will have community planning powers requiring us to work with partners to develop local services to meet the needs of the relevant localities. While the statutory responsibility for employment and training is outside our remit, we are keen to promote greater co-ordination of employment and training activities to maximise opportunities for economic growth and to promote social inclusion in the city.

We note that DEL is working closely with the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) to ensure the ESF programme and the proposed PEACE IV programme (paragraph 1.8) complements each other and we support DEL's cross-departmental engagement with local government on implementation arrangements (paragraph 7.10). We would encourage similar collaboration with OFMdfM and DSD to ensure that we maximise the use of all resources aimed at addressing employability and skills provision.

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At an operational level, we would welcome greater ongoing engagement to ensure mutual understanding of challenges facing the city in the area of employability and skills and to develop practical solutions to address these.

At present, Belfast City Council is match funding five projects – three of which have sought council funding as they have failed to secure match funding from other sources. Due to the nature of the application process we have not been able to plan for these resource requests and do not see this as a sustainable approach going forward.

The ongoing community tensions in Belfast and other areas across Northern Ireland highlight that social cohesion, and specifically addressing the legacy of conflict within Northern Ireland, remains a key challenge. Although it is recognised that other programmes and funding are specifically designed to address these issues, it is important that the ESF takes more account of this underlying issue. A strong, stable and cohesive society will be essential to attracting inward investment and building a strong economy – without this the investment in skills and employment opportunities could be seriously undermined.

The consultation document mentions some funding being held for a performance reserve which would be distributed at the mid-term point of the programme. Further clarification is required as to whether this is on a financial basis or not. Belfast City Council suggests that it would be more beneficial to focus on outcomes rather than compliance and administrative process. We believe this review and reserve funding should be held to support a more joined-up outcomes based approach using the new community planning process post 2015.

We understand from early engagement in the consultation process for this new programme that DEL is likely to require project partners to be accredited training organisations. Belfast City Council welcomes this proposal from the point of view of maintaining quality of provision. We would also support the creation of an MIS system for the overall programme to allow project promoters to share information in a controlled manner and in compliance with all relevant legislation. This would allow instances of repeat training episodes to be flagged at an early stage and would allow programme managers to focus on identifying the appropriate intervention from the outset, thereby improving the experience for both the project promoter and the participant.

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We note the equality impact assessment and the steps proposed to ensure compliance with Section 75, the commitment to mainstream equality considerations and the proposed evaluation framework and reporting arrangements. The shared future policy screening (paragraph 3.22) is also to be welcomed.

Having considered the mid-term evaluation of the ESF report <http://poochie:9070/documents/s72447/Appendix II.html?CT=2-ftn10>, the Council recommends that DEL improve the information provided to ESF programme participants (and where relevant their parents) in a range of accessible formats and in plain English. Given the number of training and employment initiatives on offer, it can be difficult and confusing for users to navigate and make informed decisions on their career paths. Success rates of obtaining employment or gaining a relevant qualification from a training or employment provider must be made publicly available. A lack of clear information can create unnecessary barriers for the hardest-to-reach particularly at transition points in their lives and increases the risk of dropout. This also is relevant to those statutory and community partners, who inform, advise and guide programme participants.

To ensure that programmes have a strong customer focus, the Council recommends that potential programme participants should be involved in the programme design, content and evaluation processes. This could be achieved via focus groups and would strengthen redress systems where programmes are failing to meet their expectations. Evaluation systems must not only capture successful outcomes but identify and track people at risk of early disengagement, and provide wrap-around support to help those at greatest risk to secure sustainable employment or gain meaningful qualifications.

Appendix III

Consultation on the Northern Ireland 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme

Draft Belfast City Council response for consideration by CMT – October 2013

Background

DARD is inviting written responses to the consultation paper on the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. Given that only certain elements of the programme are relevant to Belfast City Council, the appendix sets out the proposed answers to those specific questions.

The key targets for the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme includes measures to improve the competitiveness of our agri-food industry as well as the natural environment alongside measures to develop and improve rural areas. There are 6 priority measures: the one of most relevance to Belfast City Council is Priority 6: Rural Development.

The consultation document features a series of questions related to priority 6. Proposed answers to the key questions in this section of the consultation are detailed below.

The consultation document makes some reference to the potential for the “Leader” model of delivery which has happened under previous rounds of the programme. Leader is a bottom-up approach to rural development activity. It involves devolving funding to local level to allow the delivery of agreed programme of work against a set of objectives. At present, the EU requires at least 5% of the funding to be distributed in this way. Under the current programme, Belfast is part of a cluster with Lisburn and Castlereagh. There are seven of these clusters at present: they were established in 2006 in anticipation of aligning with the proposed 7 council area model that at that time. However the lack of progress in RPA meant that this did not happen.

While the current consultation does not define the geographies to be associated with the Leader approach, it suggests that there are a number of principles for service delivery that need to be considered, namely:

- Effectiveness
- Equality focused
- Capable

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- Accountable
- Local.

It is proposed that our response includes a request to ensure that the Leader model is based on the 11 council structures and that, therefore, the new Belfast City Council boundary is designated as a Leader area in its own right.

Proposed answers to questions asked in the consultation document:

Question 31 - How effective do you think the proposed priority 6 schemes (Rural Business Development, Rural Business Investment, Rural Tourism, and Combating Poverty and Social Isolation – Basic Services, Village Renewal) will be in meeting the needs of the sector? Please provide reasons / evidence to support your views.

The above-mentioned activities are aligned to the EU priorities for smart and inclusive growth. The document sets out well the rationale for measures envisaged within this priority: the need to support and maintain rural SMEs, dependence on rural tourism (both as a main and supplementary income), reducing isolation through the provision of adequate basic services and the renewal of villages as community hubs.

Whilst Belfast City Council agrees with the focus of the proposed schemes, the operational delivery of these initiatives should take into consideration the challenges experienced by project promoters in terms of accessing match funding finance, securing planning permission and the timescales of this activity.

The proposed Rural Business Development and Rural Business Investment Schemes are both welcome additions to support business start up and growth in eligible areas. However both schemes appear to have prerequisites which impact on a company's ability to access support under the scheme. We have some concerns about placing potential barriers such as this which may prevent access to vital support services for rural businesses and would recommend that this issue is looked at again. If this does not happen, we consider that it could impact negatively on the ability to realise grant spend targets under this measure.

Question 32 – How might these schemes (Rural Business Development, Rural Business Investment, Rural Tourism, and Combating Poverty Social Isolation – Basic Services,

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Village Renewal) be improved upon to meet the needs of your sector? Please provide reasons / evidence to support your views.

Belfast City Council's Integrated Tourism Development Framework, which was developed in partnership with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has identified 10 Tourism Destinations for the city – two of which are directly located in or link into rural areas. These are Belfast Hills and Lagan Canal.

Tourism in Belfast was worth £416million in 2012 in direct visitor spending, and the industry supports 10,000 FTE jobs in the city. Belfast City Council's tourism strategy is focussed on spreading this benefit across the city. However, with particular regard to Belfast Hills and the Lagan Canal, there are a number of factors which impact on their ability to gain proportionate access to the economic benefits generated.

With regard to the Belfast Hills, baseline research has been undertaken by various groups in the hills and at the fringes of the hills. Current efforts have allowed pockets of sustainable development to take place but wider development has been hampered by limited access into the hills and within the wider hills network. Belfast City Council, with partner organisations, will continue to consult with private landowners and the National Trust to enable the maximum potential of the hills to be achieved and facilitate enjoyment of the natural assets by the public. These actions will greatly increase the potential of the Belfast Hills to realise its share of the overall Belfast tourism dividend. We would therefore encourage the Department to delineate the eligible hills boundary and increase the funding threshold for tourism projects to enable strategic, sustainable and inclusive projects to be delivered.

With regard to the Lagan Canal, Belfast City Council is working with several partners including the Lagan Canal Trust and landowners. However progress has been limited due to the need for large-scale investment. The funding limits in place in the current programme have supported only piecemeal investment in the site. If any strategic tourism development schemes are to take place, we would recommend that the Department considers removing the current funding cap to allow a number of these "flagship" projects to progress.

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It is also important to consider the impact of Local Government Reform which will affect local government boundaries, bringing in and transferring areas across Council boundaries. How this transfer is managed without disruption to the scheme and any live projects needs to be taken into account.

A key element of the Local Government Reform Programme is the requirement for the new Councils, in partnership with other stakeholders, to develop Community Plans for their areas. The NIRDP has the potential of becoming a significant resource stream to support the delivery of social, economic and environmental development projects within those Community Plans.

Belfast City Council proposes that the Leader elements of the programme should therefore be managed on a council area basis and the new Belfast City Council boundary should be designated as a Leader area in its own right. We consider that this would have a number of benefits:

- Allow for the alignment of rural development projects with the Belfast City Council Community Plan**
- Support the development of the community led local development approach: we are currently working with DFP, DETI and DEL to look at opportunities for providing ring-fenced funding to address identified socio-economic challenges in the locality. Inclusion of Leader funding into this model would allow a holistic yet targeted approach to addressing these challenges and would reduce duplication of funding, allowing Belfast to maximise the impact of the EU resources**
- Belfast City Council has many years of experience in drawing down EU funding for use in social and economic regeneration projects, including some significant schemes under the current Rural Development Programme. We have a track record of delivering results and ensuring funding drawdown, in line with programme commitments**
- The council's governance processes ensure that there is compliance with all relevant equality legislation. This would provide appropriate assurances for the Department in this regard**
- The council has significant profile at a local level as a key delivery body. Through our elected members, we are able to reflect the issues addressing local communities and deliver tangible projects to make a difference at local level.**

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To support business growth, we would further suggest reconsidering the eligibility requirements for this programme to include small businesses with up to 20 employees. The majority of businesses in Northern Ireland are micro-businesses and will fall into this category. This would align with the requirements of other programmes being run by the council and would therefore make it easier for companies to understand the nature of the offer.

Question 33 – On which issues should the proposed All Island Cooperation scheme focus in order to address deprivation and disadvantage in rural areas most effectively? Please provide reasons to support your views.

We consider that this measure should focus on shared learning, networking and exchange of best practice. Given that the council boundary is at a distance from the border, there are challenges in developing collaborative activities. While the opportunity for collaboration exists within the current programme, this has been difficult to realise in practical terms.

Question 34 – Should a scheme to address deprivation and disadvantage through North/South Co-operation focus only on those regions in the north adjacent to the border, or should it cover all rural areas in the north? Please provide reasons to support your views.

We recommend that it could operate on the same principle as the INTERREG Programme; namely those areas not contiguous to the border are eligible for 20% of the total priority budget.

Question 35 – How much of the programme budget should be allocated to the Leader approach, and why?

The Lagan Rural Partnership has fully allocated its available budget through the current NIRD. This demonstrates the potential of the Leader approach to achieve spend targets. We would therefore suggest that the Department considers going beyond the minimum 5% allocation to Leader projects and allocates a budget that is closer to the current programme (19% of programme budget).

In addition, it should be noted that Councils were able to design and deliver strategic projects only at a very late stage in the current Programme's lifespan. This demonstrates councils' flexibility and ability to design projects which meet localised needs and which contribute to the overall

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programme aims and objectives. We would encourage the Department to maintain this element of the Programme as we consider that there is additional potential for significant projects of this nature which can make a positive impact on the rural economy. Any reduction in budget to this element of the programme would have a significant impact on the ability to deliver projects of strategic impact and scale.

Should this approach be adopted for the 2014 programme, we would recommend that strategic projects with a value in excess of £250,000 of grant funding should be eligible for funding earlier in the programme in order to allow for time to build the potential landmark projects and facilitate early acceleration of grant spend.

Given the change of boundary as a result of Local Government Reform, Belfast City Council will have a more significant footprint in the designated rural boundary. We have seen the benefits of engagement under the current programme, albeit that our rural population is limited in size. Under the future programme, we would be a willing partner in a Leader-type approach and would be keen to look at how we could work with the Department to develop rural regeneration schemes which will impact positively on the quality of life for rural residents within our boundary.

Question 36 - Which measures/schemes should be delivered through the Leader approach, and why?

We believe that the draft Operational Programme is accurate in terms of what is envisaged to be delivered through Leader. There is however potential for Local Action Groups to also deliver activity related to knowledge transfer and innovation (priority 1) and we would support a revision of the programme to take account of this. This is in line with our proposals under the ERDF consultation.

Question 37 – Which measures should be delivered by bodies (including Councils) other than Local Action Groups and why?

Belfast City Council believes that it has a key role to play in the delivery of the outlined measures in Priority 6. In particular, we consider that local authorities, in partnership with the Local Action Groups, have a key role in delivering:

- Village renewal activity: notably where the rural community lacks the community infrastructure to develop plans and then map out and develop the delivery of initiatives contained therein

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- Strategic flagship initiatives which deliver a lasting legacy and sustainable outputs for an area, including tourism infrastructure schemes.

As previously mentioned, cognisance should be given to the likely transfer of functions to Councils through the Reform of Local Government e.g. business development and enterprise support initiatives. Belfast City Council would encourage the Department to work closely with councils in the development and implementation of any related measures, in order to minimise any negative impact on the end user.

We consider that, while the focus of the programme is on development of the physical space and its communities, it is also important to consider linkages with the adjacent urban areas. Many of the communities who use and “own” rural parts come from outside the designated area.

Additional comments

Whilst Belfast is principally an urban area, we welcome the opportunity to engage in the NIRDP and provide support to its rural visitors and population. Cities across the EU are recognising the importance of linking urban-rural and actions to support this should be welcomed within the functions of the Programme.

From our experience in the current programme, we would also make the following comments:

- Village Renewal Scheme (p80): one of the key lessons from the current programme is that the success of this measure is dependent on the social fabric existing in the village. Where a community infrastructure does not exist the Programme should facilitate community development and accommodate the time needed for this work within the profile of the Programme’s lifespan.
- The Department should recognise that, if it is envisaged that communities themselves are responsible for the development of these plans, the communities may not be able to access match funding. In the current Programme, local authorities undertook this responsibility. However, in line with the principles of community regeneration and in order to ensure that the community has ownership of the Programme, we would encourage communities to take the lead in this process. This however raises a number of issues including availability of funding and variances in capacity levels across local communities. The programme should consider how these issues can be addressed.

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- **We consider that there is a significant opportunity in the new programme to focus on support for the social economy in rural areas – both in terms of raising the awareness of its potential amongst rural communities and in providing resources to develop the sector**
- **We would encourage the department to look at how the administration and bureaucracy associated with Programme delivery can be reduced. A possible consideration for this may be the creation of a one tier robust corporate body, rather than the two tier (Strategic Joint Committee/Local Action Group) management system in the current programme**
- **We consider that the Leader structures should be co-terminous with the new council boundaries. This will ensure alignment with both Community Plans and the proposed integrated programme approach that has been discussed with DFP as part of the new EU funding programming period 2014-2020.”**

The Committee approved the forgoing comments as the Council's responses to the consultation documents.

Chairman

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

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MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Robinson (Chairman);
Aldermen Browne, Campbell and Newton;
Councillors Attwood, Carson, Clarke, Corr,
Haire, Hargey, Hendron, Jones, McCarthy,
Mac Giolla Mhín, McVeigh, Mullan, Newton,
Reynolds and Spence.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager;
Mr. John Walsh, Legal Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor McCabe.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Spence declared an interest in Item 8a in so far as he was on the Board of the Ulster Orchestra.

Presentation

Queen's University – Development Plans

The Committee was advised that Professor Tony Gallagher, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Mr. Niall McShane, President of the Students' Union, Mr. Kevin Mulhern, Head of Communications and External Affairs and Ms. Jennifer Harbinson, Public Affairs Officer, Queen's University Belfast, were in attendance to provide a presentation in relation to the University's Development Plans.

With the assistance of visual aids, Professor Gallagher outlined the role of the Queen's University as an anchor institution in Belfast, its ability to make substantial economic impacts on employment and spending patterns and the provision of broader social and environmental benefits to local communities. He reviewed the results of a Northern Ireland Statistics and Research (NISRA) survey which had indicated that the 3,500 staff employed by the University contributed an annual spend of £24 million in

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Belfast, its students a £380 million annual spend, whilst its graduates contributed £4.7 billion to the economy of the city.

Professor Gallagher then outlined the University's Capital Development Plan 2002-2023, which had resulted in £350 million spend to date and had provided 7,000 jobs in the construction industry through developments such as the Institute of Electronics, Communication and Information Technology (ECIT) and Science Park and the Cancer Research and Cell Biology Centre. He highlighted the strategic investment priorities over the next 10 years, which would result in further expenditure of £340 million, and emphasised the need to invest in young people through employment opportunities and student experience. He stated that that could only be enhanced through partnership working with others such as the Council. He concluded by highlighting the University's and Council's shared ambitions in creating an accessible and connected, learning and sustainable city.

Professor Gallagher then answered a number of questions from the Members, following which the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the deputation for attending and they retired from the meeting.

The Chief Executive emphasised the importance of the Council enhancing its engagement with key stakeholders and anchor institutions, particularly in light of the commencement of the forthcoming community planning function.

Noted.

Reform of Local Government

Local Government Reform Bill

The Committee was advised that this item had been withdrawn from the Agenda and would be presented to the next meeting of the Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee.

Investment Programme

**Area Working, including Update
on Belfast Investment Fund**

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

"1.0 Relevant Background Information

Role of the Area Working Groups

- 1.1 Members are aware that the Area Working Groups (AWGs) were established last year as a means of connecting Members to local areas in preparation for their role in community planning under the Reform of Local Government. In**

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governance terms, the AWGs were established to have an advisory role, informing the implementation of the Investment Programme. It was agreed that the AWGs would have no delegated authority and no budget.

- 1.2 Since this time, the AWGs have played an integral role in recommending investment decisions for their areas in terms of the Local Investment Fund, the Feasibility Fund and Local Interventions Funds to the SP&R Committee. It was also previously agreed at SP&R last November that the AWGs would play a central part in the decisions related to the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) given their knowledge of local areas and projects.

2.0 Key issues

Belfast Investment Fund – Update

- 2.1 Members will be aware the Belfast Investment Fund (previously the City Investment Fund) was established to enable the Council to take a lead role and work in partnership to deliver key investment projects across the city. Whilst it is previously intended that Members final decisions on BIF priorities should be informed by factors such as SIF projects and city and area priorities, it was highlighted to Committee in August that some AWGs were keen to move certain BIF schemes to feasibility stage because of timescale constraints, the level of investment and the need to secure at least 50% funding from other sources.
- 2.2 Members will therefore recall that a detailed report on BIF was taken to Committee last month which reiterated the objectives of the BIF and its approval process. This approval process reflects the Stage Approval process that SP& R has previously agreed that all Council capital projects must go through whereby decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R Committee in its role as the Council's investment decision maker. The first stage of this process is the development of a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) which will test the four abilities of the projects – i.e. feasibility, deliverability, affordability, sustainability. Members also then agreed last month to move a number of projects as recommended by the South and Shankill Area Working Groups (*Lagan, Gilpins and Markets Tunnels – South and St. Andrews Church – Shankill*) to Stage 1 (i.e. the development of a Strategic Outline Case).
- 2.3 Since this meeting the West and East Area Working Groups have also shortlisted a number of emerging BIF proposals. These are outlined in the Table below for Members.

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2.4

AWG	Current status in relation
West	<p>Have recommended that 6 projects be referred to SP&R to move to Stage 1 to test their feasibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St. Comgall's - An Sportslann - Corpus Christi – sports pitches - St Mary's Christian Brothers – sports facilities - Conway Mill - Belfast Hills
East	<p>Have recommended that the Strand Cinema Community Arts project be referred to SP&R to move to Stage 1 to test its feasibility</p>
North	<p>Currently considering their emerging BIF projects.</p>

2.5 Members are therefore asked to asked to consider if they wish to progress the projects as recommended by the West and East Area Working Groups to be moved to Stage 1 (i.e. the development of a Strategic Outline Case) which will test their feasibility in the first instance. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any project.

3.0 *Scope of work at Stage 1 – Feasibility*

3.1 Members will acknowledge that there is increasing demand on the Council to deliver projects within increasingly scarce financial resources. There is a limited amount of money available under BIF and there will be opportunity costs of approving one BIF project over another BIF project. With the finite amount of resources available it will not be possible for all the proposed BIF projects to be delivered. BIF is a citywide fund and individual allocations of money are not being made against particular areas. The final decision on which BIF projects the Council will invest in will be determined by the SP&R Committee in its role as the Council's investment decision maker. SP&R Members will therefore be required to use their civic leadership role and focus on agreeing those projects which can have maximum benefits and investment return on both city-level and area level outcomes in line with the investment principles that were agreed by Members that underpin the Council's Investment Programme.

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- 3.2 It should be noted that the emerging proposals above, and those already agreed by Committee last month for South and Shankill, are all at different stages of concept, design, planning and readiness. Some of them already have feasibilities or economic appraisals which have been carried (albeit that some of these are older) whilst others are still at concept stage and will require more support.
- 3.3 Given the above, it is important that Members can take informed decisions about which projects to invest in. However in order to take an informed decision, it will be necessary for the SP&R Committee to have a city-wide context with the same level of information on each project. It is therefore proposed that consultants are appointed to look at developing the SOCs around the emerging BIF proposals to ensure that these are independent and robust and to ensure that the same level of information is produced. A high level overview of the information that will be assessed through the SOC is attached at Appendix 3. Members are also asked to note that even if a feasibility study and/or economic appraisal has been carried out on a project that this will be reassessed in order that the Council has comfort in the outcomes of the study. The costs associated with the development of SOCs will come from the Feasibility Fund.
- 3.4 As previously outlined to Members last month, the outcome of these SOCs will be reported back to the SP&R Committee which can then take a decision on whether projects are progressed to the next stage or are stopped. As highlighted the emerging proposals are all at different stages and this will have an impact on when these are brought back to Committee.
- 4.0 *Resourcing*
- 4.1 Members will be aware that there are associated resource implications with bringing forward Stage 1 – Feasibility studies on the emerging BIF proposals. If Members approve the proposals as recommended by AWGs today there will be 11 emerging proposals and Members are asked to note that the North AWG has not yet recommended any decisions.
- 4.2 Although the work will be in part carried out by independent consultants, this work will require substantial input and be co-ordinated through the Property & Projects Department through the team of project sponsors. Given the scale of the projects this may also involve input from the Council's Project Management Unit, Estates Team, Legal Services or other departments as necessary depending on the scope and scale of the proposed projects and its links with other Council

initiatives. This type of co-ordination work is resource intensive and is also in the context of other competing priorities including the ongoing implementation of projects under the Council's Capital Programme and the Local Investment Fund. Workload and resource allocations are currently being confirmed and a project sponsor (or two depending on the size of the emerging project) will be assigned to the shortlisted proposals in the coming weeks. Once these are assigned the project sponsors will be in contact with the proposing groups in order to take the projects forward and agree next steps.

- 4.3 Members are reminded with the Leisure Transformation budget added to the Investment Programme the Council is now leading on one of the largest programmes of work in the regions with a bewildering level of complexity given the range of a scale of projects, agencies and groups involved and resident affected. The scale of the workload needs to be considered in the light of managing community expectations in terms of delivery of projects.

5.0 Resource Implications

Financial: Any costs associated with the development of Strategic Outline Cases for emerging BIF proposals will be met from the Feasibility Fund.

Human: Officer time in working with groups on developing their project proposals

Assets: none at present

6.0 Equality Implications

As part of the Stage approval process, a screening will be carried out on each project to indicate potential equality and good relations impacts and any mitigating actions needed.

7.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and

- agree the request from the West and East AWGs that their shortlisted BIF projects (St. Comgall's, An Sportslann, Corpus Christi, St. Mary's Christian Brothers, Conway Mill and the Belfast Hills – West and Strand Cinema Community Arts project – East) are progressed to Stage 1 and the development of SOCs to test their feasibility, affordability, sustainability and deliverability. Members are asked to note

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that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any project.

- note the high level overview of what assessed as a part of the Stage 1 feasibility study.
- note the associated resourcing implications and that a project sponsor (or two depending on project scale) from the Property & Projects Department will be assigned to each emerging proposal in the coming weeks. Once these are assigned the project sponsor (s) will be in contact with groups to kick-off the SOC process and agree next steps.”

The Director reported that, subsequent to the report having been issued, two of the Area Working Groups, that is, West and East, had held meetings and the Members had agreed a number of recommendations and requested that he put the following proposals to the Committee for ratification:

East Area Working Group

Diamond Project – Charter NI

The Group had agreed to recommend to the Committee that initial investigation work be carried out with the Charter NI organisation to identify the outcomes of its Diamond Project and how the Council could assist with its delivery, with a view to providing support under the Intervention Fund.

Community/Youth/Leisure Provision – Short Strand Area

The Group had agreed that the Committee be recommended to approve the sum of £8,000 till £10,000 for feasibility support for the above-mentioned project.

West Area Working Group

Belfast Investment Fund

The Group had agreed to two additional projects being added to the list of projects to be considered under the Belfast Investment Fund, that is, Lionra Uladh (Radio Fáilte) and Suffolk Community Forum – Integrated Pre-School Development at Teeling’s Green.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations as set out in the report and approved the additional projects as outlined by the Director of Property and Projects.

Area Intervention

The Committee was reminded that, in August, 2012, it had agreed to support pilot area integration intervention to address particular problems or take advantage of opportunities which had been identified by the Area Working Groups. A fund of

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£100,000 per Area Working Group, with a pro rata amount for the Greater Shankill, had later been established.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, to date, there had been expenditure in two of the Groups in regard to integration intervention funding. The West Area Working Group had identified a need for a broader co-ordinated approach by various agencies in regard to crime and anti-social behaviour issues in the Divis area. A developed programme of work in that regard was being taken forward by the Director of Health and Environmental Services given her current responsibilities within the Council.

The South Area Working Group had expended some of its intervention funds in support for retail across four areas of South Belfast and was considering further intervention to support tourism and the economy. The Director of Development was the lead officer on that given his economic development remit.

The Director reported that the North Area Working Group had held a special meeting on 17th October to discuss its approach. The Councillors had viewed anti-social behaviour as one of the biggest issues in North Belfast. While the Group recognised the nature of the integrationist approach which was being undertaken in the Divis area, the problem was considered to be more widespread in North Belfast with various areas being identified as at risk by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and other agencies due to the crime and anti-social behaviour activity. Furthermore, the Group was of the opinion that current intervention across the public sector was limited in that regard and believed that practical application of the intervention money on projects such as additional alleygates would be more beneficial. There was also a view that by undertaking a practical intervention such as that, the Council had a stronger argument to make with other agencies in terms of doing better.

The Director explained that the Group did not want to use its money as a substitute for the capital programme projects Alleygating Scheme Phase 3 and 4 and had, in some areas such as Glenard, Shore Road and Whitehall, identified streets that would not be included in those Phases. A number of other streets in other areas such as Ardoyne had also been identified, although the address details had not yet been confirmed. In addition, the Group wanted to undertake a feasibility study with some of the intervention money to assist the Cavehill Antrim Road Regeneration Group, which currently undertook youth diversionary activity in an area that was not totally suitable for alleygates.

The number of streets and consequent gates which had been identified by the Group was based on estimated costs which had been provided by staff of the Health and Environmental Services Department with an inbuilt contingency. Officers had pointed out that those were only estimates and did not include costs such as legal advice and advertisements and it would be approximately one year before gates were on the ground and, therefore, an allowance for inflation would be necessary. The Group had accepted that firmer costs would need to be provided and any impact on final decisions as to the number and location of gates would need to be agreed. Officers had also been tasked with undertaking further work with regard to gates specification and procurement and to report back to the Group on the outcome.

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Accordingly, the Committee was requested to endorse the aforementioned approach to intervention by the North Area Working Group, subject to:

- (i) further refinement of the cost and scope of the work within the £100,000 intervention limit;
- (ii) there being no substitution or duplication with Alleygates Phase 3 and 4; and
- (iii) the Area Working Group giving further consideration on how to use the community safety intervention as a lever to get better responses from other agencies in North Belfast.

The Committee agreed to endorse the approach as outlined.

Leisure Transformation Programme

(Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant background information

1.1 Under the Investment Programme Implementation Plan, agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2012, SP&R agreed the urgent need for fundamental change in its leisure services, with a focus on delivering better health outcomes and improved value for money. In January 2013, Committee agreed the indicative phasing of capital transformation:

- **Phase 1: Investment Programme (Windsor/Olympia; Andersonstown; Girdwood)**
- **Phase 2: Reform of Local Government (e.g. Avoniel; Castlereagh; Lagmore/Poleglass/Colin)**
- **Phase 3: One Public Estate(e.g. Ballysillan; Ozone; Shankill; Loughside; Whiterock).**

1.2 At its meeting in June, SP&R set a £105m capital expenditure affordability limit for the Leisure Transformation Programme. The Committee also agreed a capital financing strategy which includes allocating £3.23m of the £6m Belfast Investment Fund annual rates contribution to finance the £38m Olympia and Andersonstown schemes and £2m efficiency savings from the leisure service budgets, deliverable by 1 April 2016.

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At August committee, Members agreed the resourcing requirements of the Leisure Transformation Programme, to be funded as non-recurrent costs from reserves and an outline timeframe for decisions.

2. Key issues

2.1 Information gathering

Over recent months, Members and officers have undertaken a number of good practice visits to a range of leisure providers including Greenwich Leisure Limited (charitable social enterprise company); Glasgow Life (arms length company operated under charitable status); Greenvale Leisure, Magherafelt (private sector management company); and Northern Community Leisure Trust, North Down (leisure trust with private sector partner). Further visits and engagements are planned in order to understand the costs and benefits of the fullest range of business models. This information will be collated for Members' consideration at Committee in due course.

2.2 Timeline for business model decision

In August, Committee agreed to consider the business case for the business operating model by the end of 2013. This timeframe is determined by a number of key drivers:

- Part of the capital financing strategy is dependent upon £2m efficiency savings from leisure service budgets. In order to ensure that this is in place by 2016, these efficiencies must be derived at the latest in the financial year commencing April 2015 and therefore be included in the estimates planning cycle beginning in September 2014.
- Construction work will start to commence on three Phase 1 projects in 2014. Members have stressed the need for transformed services when the centres becoming operational in mid/late-2015. Human resources planning, including staff learning and development, will require a lead-in period of approximately 12 months.
- Critically, staff and trade unions understand the need for change in the service and have been briefed by the Chief Executive and Director on the emerging transformation programme. In order to give employees stability in a period of upheaval and change, it is most important that a timeline for decisions is set out.

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As per the resourcing plan agreed by Committee in August 2013, a number of pieces of work are being prepared to inform the decisions to be taken by Committee. This includes legal assurance on governance, financing models, detailed design work for Phase 1 of the capital programme and scoping work for Phase II.

2.3 Proposed decision schedule

Work is underway to develop business model options, with the proposed intention that this is brought to Committee in December 2013 in order that it can specify a preferred business operating model. The options report will detail the costs, benefits and sustainability in relation to the three delivery models as outlined in the Deloitte report presented to Committee in March 2013, that is:

- Transformed in-house direct service operator
- Non-profit distributing organisation (NPDO)
- Private sector partnership.

In relation to the NPDO model, an analysis of the spectrum of governance and legal frameworks will also be prepared.

Work will also be undertaken with Members to prepare evaluation criteria to appraise the strategic fit of the proposed business models (e.g. health/participation outcomes), as well as a framework to assess deliverability.

In December, it is proposed that Committee will be asked to consider each of the business cases and make an 'in principle' decision on the preferred business model. This will grant officers authority to develop a detailed business plan, drawing on expert advice, which will be subject to due diligence testing over the period March-May 2014. Depending upon the Council's decision, consideration will have to be given to the development of the potential vehicles to further develop the work such as the creation of a shell company established for charitable purposes.

It is proposed that the final decision to ratify the 'in principle' decision will be taken by the new Council at its SP&R Committee meeting in June 2014, on the basis of the due diligence reports and satisfactory fulfilment of the Council's strategic objectives for leisure transformation.

2.4 Trade union engagement

The Chief Executive met with representatives from all of the BCC trade unions in September. This was an open, transparent and two way engagement, in which both parties agreed the importance of sustaining the future of leisure services to deliver improved health outcomes and secure employment.

There was an acceptance that the status quo is unsustainable and significant change is required regardless of the final agreed service delivery model. The TUs asked therefore that consideration be given by management to a voluntary redundancy exercise to mitigate the potential for compulsory redundancies and/or a supernumerary situation.

It is proposed therefore to undertake an 'expression of interest' exercise for VR in Leisure Services – such an exercise would not commit the council or any employee to VR. Instead, this would give management a feel for those employees who may wish to be released on a voluntary basis (rather than be part of the significantly changed service delivery model) and which of these employees meet the criteria for VR, if this were to be progressed. Over the coming months, officers will scope the potential costs and organisational design implications of staffing changes for effective Leisure Transformation and present this to Committee for its consideration.

The trade unions also requested information on the running costs for leisure services as it is their intention to develop an alternative transformation plan, based on the in-house business operating model. This engagement is welcome and for the reasons outlined above, it is suggested that Committee requests that any alternative business plan is received from the trade unions by February 2014, in order that it can be subject to the appropriate due diligence testing and strategic appraisal in order for Committee to consider this alternative plan at its meeting in June 2014.

Regular engagement with both local and regional representatives is planned over the coming months. This includes a trade unions visit to Greenwich Leisure Limited in November 2013.

2.5 Communications and engagement

Members have emphasised the need for good communications throughout the Leisure Transformation Programme. Given the

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‘once-in-a-lifetime’ scale of capital investment and business transformation, it is proposed that as part of the Communications Strategy for the Investment Programme, a series of public announcements is planned for early 2014.

Internally, staff briefings have been completed in September and a regular newsletter is now being prepared for distribution to all staff. Staff engagement groups have also been established.

3.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Agree the proposed decision schedule as outlined above; and**
- **Authorise officers to initiate an ‘expression of interest’ exercise for a potential future voluntary redundancy scheme in Leisure Services.**

4.0 Resource Implications

This will be a major physical and service transformation process and the implications for resources (staff, assets and financial) will be fully scoped and assessed as part of the options appraisal and business planning processes, with continuous engagement with staff and trade union representatives as appropriate.

5.0 Equality Implications

Provision has been made within resources to screen the Leisure Transformation Programme at relevant intervals in line with the Council’s equality obligations.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Adjournment of Meeting

The Committee was advised that the Joint Group of the Party Leaders’ Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group, at its meeting on 18th October, had agreed to accede to a request from SIPTU in relation to laying a wreath at the Staff Memorial Fountain in the courtyard of the City Hall as part of a series of Commemorative events planned by Council workers on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the deaths of two Council employees at their place of work.

The Committee agreed to adjourn the meeting to afford Members the opportunity to partake in the ceremony.

(The Committee adjourned from 11.10 a.m. till 11.30 a.m.)

Girdwood Hub – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Girdwood Hub project. Members will be aware that they were informed last month that the Council had received notification from SEUPB that Peace III funding for the delivery of the Girdwood Hub has been approved and that a letter of offer would follow.
- 1.2 This Letter of Offer has now been received approving funding to the Girdwood Hub project to a total value of £9,597,249 under ‘*Priority 2 -Contributing to a Shared Society- Theme 1 Creating Public Shared Spaces*’ of the Peace III programme with Belfast City Council as the Lead Partner for the delivery of the project.

Key Issues

Current Status of Submission with SEUPB

- 2.1 The Director of Property and Projects, accompanied by a Senior Officer from Legal Services, met with representatives of SEUPB on Tuesday 15 October to have initial discussions on the terms and conditions contained within the Letter of Offer and the requirements placed upon Council for drawing down the funding.
- 2.2 There are a number of key conditions which have been attached to the Project, these include:
 - A review of the key areas of risk identified in the Economic Appraisal should be initiated within 6 months (this will be undertaken by SEUPB in the form of desk exercise)
 - It is desirable that the housing on the wider site is developed as integrated housing but caveated by the statement that this is a wider policy issue that is outside the control of the Council
 - The Council facilitating SEUPB in carrying out reviews at set intervals to ensure that key milestones have been achieved in relation to planning approval, DSD approval for the masterplan, land transfer, infrastructure and car parking and DEL approval for the BMC relationship

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- Monitoring of projects outputs, outcomes and impacts should continue for a period of at least three years from opening to inform any post project evaluation and understanding of how the shared the facility is in terms of user demographics
- That the project is commenced within 24 months of the date of the Letter of Offer
- That there are no substantial changes to the scope/scale of the project as described in the business case

None of the conditions attached to the Letter of Offer are believed to be 'show stoppers'. Work is ongoing with SEUPB in order to ensure that the Letter of Offer can be signed within the designated 6 week period.

- 2.3 The project lifetime has been defined as a period of 44 months commencing on 1 November, 2011 and completing on 30 June 2015. Final claim for expenditure must be submitted to SEUPB by 30 September 2015. It should be noted that given the tight timeline there is very little slack in the timescales for delivery or slippage etc. The construction element of the build will be closely managed by staff from the Project Management Unit.

Current Status of Design and Tender Documentation

- 2.4 Members will be aware that Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has previously agreed that Council work 'at risk' on the Hub project in order to ensure that the tight timescale would be met. To that end Capita Symonds has been appointed as design team and work is ongoing in partnership with the Hub Forum to progress the initial design and schedule of accommodation for the Hub.

Given the project lifeline runs from November 2011 Council can now claim back fees paid the Design Team.

- 2.5 Following robust community consultation a schedule of accommodation and design has now been agreed and includes:

- A multi-purpose hall
- Dedicated youth space
- Classroom space for Belfast Metropolitan College (it should be noted that BMC have specific minimum requirements/standards for classroom sizes etc to ensure they meet with Education Training Inspectorate Standards)
- A number of small flexible multi-purpose meeting rooms

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- Fitness suite and sauna/steam area with changing facilities
- A cafe

2.6 Following on from the issue of PQQ (Pre Qualification Questionnaire) documentation in October, 2103 Council are now working to issue ITT (Invitation to Tender) documentation to 6 selected contractors. It is envisaged that the successful contractor will be appointed by the end of December, 2013 with construction commencing on site by January, 2014. All of the above is dependent on confirmation of planning permission and discussions are continuing with the Planning Service regarding this.

2.7 Following a number of workshops with the Hub Forum and Council Officers a number of social clauses have been included in the construction contract. These include:-

- A requirement for the main contractor to appoint a nominated Community Liaison Officer who will work with the Project Sponsor and Hub Forum to deal with any community concerns issues
- A requirement for the main contractor to register on the Considerate Constructors Scheme
- A requirement to provide apprenticeships and employment opportunities in line with the labour value of the contract
- A requirement to liaise with Belfast City, DEL and/or any organisations identified by Council to agree an approach for the promotion of employment, student, placement and apprenticeship opportunities provided through the contract which will be advertised in local Job Centres
- A requirement to work with Belfast City Council's Economic Development Department to participate in two supplier information days. These events are likely to include a presentation on upcoming opportunities and one to one engagement with attendees and will be specifically targeted towards small businesses and social enterprises
- A requirement to meet the Fair Payments commitments set out in the 'Fair Payment' Charter

3.0 Current Status – Planning

3.1 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council lodged two planning applications in January for the development of the Hub. A full planning application Z/2013/0048/F was submitted with regard to the building itself, i.e. the designs for the

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building. An outline planning application Z/2013/0049/O was been submitted in respect of the infrastructure to be provided on site, i.e. road layout, and access proposals all of course dependent on the location of buildings on the wider Girdwood site hence the submission of an outline planning application. Approval has not as yet been given for either of these applications however Council are working closely with the Planning Service to ensure approval is given prior to appointment of a contractor.

- 3.2 A number of objections have been raised by residents living in the Brucevale area, and submitted to Planning Service, in relation to the proposed new entrance to the site from Duncairn Avenue. Following concerns raised through the Hub Forum the Director of Property and Projects facilitated a public meeting in City Hall on 19 September to afford residents the opportunity to discuss their concerns. An invitation was extended to Roads Service to attend that meeting however, they declined to send a representative. Representatives of Albert Fry Associates (Council's traffic consultant) provided an overview of the steps which have been taken to satisfy Roads Service in terms of the traffic impact of the Girdwood development for the next 15 years.
- 3.3 There will be four entrances to the Girdwood site – the Antrim Road entrance via Kinnard Street which will be extended into the Hub and Duncairn Avenue where a new entrance to the site will be created just before Brucevale Park. The other two entrances are at Clifton Park Avenue. Construction traffic will use the current site access from Cliftonpark Park Avenue which will be closed post completion.
- 3.4 It should be noted that these new roads are not through roads and will be controlled by bollards to allow emergency vehicles only through the site. The principle of four entrance and exit points is to dilute traffic impact on roads into the site and in the surrounding area.
- 4.0 Communications
- 4.1 Members are asked to note that a press release will be issued following the SP&R Committee meeting highlighting that the Council has received a formal letter of offer for the project from SEUPB. A wider launch event will be held once the letter of offer is signed off and planning permission is in place. Members will be kept up to date of the arrangements regarding this and the Council is working closely with the DSD and its other partners on progressing communication and engagement activity.

5.0 Girdwood Hub – Proposed Governance Structures

5.1 The Girdwood Hub is a key project under the Council's Investment Programme. An agreed governance structure is attached at Appendix 5.

5.2 Members will recall that it has been agreed that the decision making authority will follow the Council's Scheme of Delegation with strategic directions and decisions being made by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as the Council's Investment decision maker. Given the strategic importance of this project, it has been agreed that the Girdwood Project Board comprises Senior Officers from the Council, DSD, BMC as the strategic partner, two community representatives, SEUPB as the funding body, a representative from DSD European Division, and a representative from CPD (Central Procurement Directorate) as advisers to SEUPB.

5.3 Members will be aware that a Hub Forum, made up of community and statutory partners, was established in May 2011. This Forum has been the key mechanism for ensuring that stakeholders remain committed to the project and is the key discussion arena for all issues relating to the Hub project. This Forum, which is made up now of over 24 groups, meets on a monthly basis. The Hub Forum are responsible for overseeing the stakeholder engagement around the Hub and developing the Shared Space Action Plan which is the unique aspect of the Hub proposal and central to delivering the peace and reconciliation outcomes. A Community Engagement Sub-Group consisted of a number of Hub Forum members is currently reviewing and refreshing the community engagement strategy for the development of Girdwood Hub in order to maintain community support for the project.

5.4 At officer levels decisions will be made through the authority delegated to CMT and the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) the Director of Property and Projects. The Senior User for the project is currently the Director of Parks and Leisure. A Project Delivery Team has also been established with a number of workstreams under this include Capital Works/Design Team and a management and Maintenance Coordination Team to ensure the successful completion of the Hub Project.

6.0 Resource Implications

Human

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Officers from Property and Projects will work closely with SEUPB, DSD and the Hub Forum to ensure successful delivery of the Girdwood Hub.

Finance

All expenses for construction of the Hub as detailed in the Letter of Offer are eligible for recoupment from SEUPB in line with the terms set out.

Assets

Property and Projects Department, in liaison with other departments, will oversee the land acquisition issues and construction programme and seek the appropriate approvals from Committee in due course.

7.0 Equality Implications

The Committee previously approved the Equality Strategy for the Girdwood Hub which outlines how the Council will fulfil its equality obligations during the development of the Hub and the Hub's likely impact and outcomes in terms of equality and good relations.

8.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and –

- agree that Council Officers work with SEUPB in order to progress acceptance of the Letter of Offer to approving the Girdwood Hub project to a total value of £9,597,249 under Priority 2 Contributing to a Shared Society, Theme 1 Creating Public Shared Space to Belfast City Council as Lead Partner**
- note the current status of the design and tender documentation**
- note the current status of planning**
- note that a press release will be issued conforming the funding of the project and that arrangements are underway for a formal launch once the letter of offer is signed off and planning permission is in place**
- agree the proposed Governance Structure for the Girdwood Hub Project”**

The Director of property and Projects also noted the changing circumstances in that the Girdwood application had been made well ahead of the current Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Government Reform meant the Council was now more likely to take the whole Girdwood site from the Department for Social Development and the Committee had also agreed to make a Peace IV application when

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opened for the North Belfast Gateway. Taking those issues into account, with the ongoing work on the University of Ulster, Crumlin Road Gaol and the courthouse study, further reflection might be needed on the broader regeneration approach in this key part of the city. The Director undertook to raise this in the first instance with the North Area Working Group.

After discussion, the Committee noted the comments of the Director and adopted the recommendations.

Super Connected Belfast Update

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

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.0 This report provides an update on the Super-connected Belfast project following the completion of the Market Test phase of the Belfast Voucher scheme.

1.2 Members will recall the voucher scheme provides up to £3,000 to a business to enable them to access ultrafast broadband. The market testing phase ran from 1 August 2013 to 30 September 2013 and the target locations for the Market Testing phase included:

- Cathedral Quarter
- City East / East Belfast Enterprise
- Ormeau Business Park
- Ortus
- Argyle Business Park
- North City Business Centre
- Harbour Estate.

1.3 This report will update members on this and other aspects of the work being carried out by the Super-Connected Belfast project team.

2 Key Issues

**2.1 Belfast Voucher Scheme – Market Test Phase Summary
Note: All applications received by the 30 September deadline will continue to be processed right through to the issuing of**

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a voucher and subsequent broadband installations by telecoms suppliers.

2.2 Voucher Scheme Figures – (10 October 2013)

Applications: 228
 Approvals: 114 (4 rejections)
 Applications outstanding: 110
 Vouchers: 11

2.3 Distribution of Applications

Area	Applications	% of total
Argyle	38	16.7
Cathedral Quarter	43	18.9
City East	10	4.4
Harbour Estate	55	24.1
North City	27	11.8
Ormeau	27	11.8
Ortus	28	12.3
TOTAL	228	100.0

2.4 Outcomes and Benefits (so far!)

- The Belfast Voucher scheme received more applications than any other city and puts us on course to be the most successful of all the cities.
- The success of the Belfast Voucher scheme has led to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) using our scheme design and administration processes as the template for all other cities.
- The Super-connected Belfast team has developed online and back office applications that can be used as the foundation for administration of a citywide scheme.
- We have received positive feedback from both applicants and telecoms suppliers.
- Through the market test there is a commitment of up to £400k to provide local businesses with improved high speed broadband connections.
- Businesses have indicated through their applications that:
 - there will be a growth of up to £20m in the local economy,

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- and improving broadband connectivity will be responsible for the creation of at least 300 jobs in the next 3 years.
 - Local telecoms suppliers were chosen to deliver the majority of broadband connections.
- 2.5 Completing the Market Test Phase**
The Super-connected team will:
- Conduct a lessons learned/review of phase 1 (at a city and national level)
 - Process all applications through to completion
 - Conduct a survey of applicants
 - Invite case studies from successful applicants
 - Engage suppliers for feedback (local and national level)
- 2.6 Preparations for City Wide rollout**
It is anticipated that the Secretary of State for DCMS will announce the decision on the full rollout of the voucher scheme early in November. If the scheme is approved it will see us opening up the full scheme across the whole of Belfast.
- DCMS have agreed that the vouchers can be applied to businesses in the areas transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh.
- 2.7 Effective citywide roll out of the voucher scheme will be dependent on having the right amount of skilled resources to successfully deliver the scheme. One of the key lessons learned from the market test was that most businesses required significant support from Council officers to progress an application to approval.**
- 2.8 Based on findings from the market test the Belfast Voucher team it is recommended that additional resources are needed for effective citywide rollout. It is recommended these resources are and are recruited as Fixed-Term posts. It is estimated that there is potential for up to an additional 5 full-time employees to meet the contact centre and administrative requirements of the full scheme.**
- 2.9 Specialist commercial marketing expertise will be required to create the necessary branding and marketing strategy to support the full rollout of the Belfast Voucher scheme. All of the above resources will be financed from the £3M that the**

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Council has already committed to the Super-connected project.

2.10 Metro Wireless

Work is progressing well on the scheme to award an exclusive concession contract for the provision of a public city centre wireless zone.

2.11 A Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) is almost ready to release which will begin the procurement of the wireless concession contract. The key task that must be completed before this can happen is to get sign-off from NIE and DRD Roads Service on the technical design that has already been agreed by wireless suppliers.

2.12 It is anticipated that the PQQ will be ready to be released by the end of November.

2.13 Public Building Wi-Fi

Discussions will be held with key contacts responsible for managing public buildings that may be suitable for public Wi-Fi. These will shape the specification of requirements for a contract for Public Building Wi-Fi.

3 Resource Implications

HR

The following resources are required to enhance the existing Super-connected Belfast project team, to oversee citywide rollout of the Voucher scheme and the delivery of the Metro wireless and Public Building Wi-Fi strands.

**Voucher Scheme administration – up to 5 Fixed-Term posts
(indicative Scale 6) £112,215**

(The voucher team will be scaled up as the take-up of the scheme increases)

Branding & Marketing (Planning phase) – £6,000

(This planning phase will see the creation of a branding and marketing strategy for the Super-connected Belfast project. Following creation of the strategy we will have to determine the resources required to implement the strategy)

All resources will be financed from the BCC £3M contribution already committed to the Super-connected Belfast project.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no specific Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

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5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked note the contents of the report and agree to :

- The recruitment of up to five fixed term posts to meet the contact centre and administrative requirements of the full scheme.
- Specialist commercial marketing expertise to create the necessary branding and marketing strategy to support the full rollout of the Belfast Voucher scheme.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Social Clauses and Local Spend Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose

- The purpose of this report is to:
- Update Members on the progress to date on the incorporation of social clauses into Council procurement contracts
- Identify potential ways forward for the management, monitoring and delivery of social clauses across city wide contracts
- Update Members on activities underway to promote access to procurement opportunities for small businesses
- Update Members on a series of initiatives around the Procurement Improvement Programme which focus on local spend and efficiency.

2.0 Background

2.1 Investment Programme

As part of the £150 million capital investment within the Investment Programme (IP), Members have asked for consideration to be given to introducing, where appropriate, social clauses into council tenders. In addition the IP aims to increase Local Spend by 10% to 60% through by 2015 using a range of initiatives.

2.2 Social Clauses

On 4 July 2012, the Northern Ireland Assembly passed legislation that enables Councils to take account of certain

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non-commercial matters in the award of public works contracts that were previously considered as ineligible.

- 2.3 This change now enables Councils to consider the use of social clauses as contractual conditions, for instance, requiring contractors to provide employment opportunities for the unemployed. These conditions must be incorporated in such a way that they do not infringe the general principles of EU procurement law and must also ensure that they remain compliant with all equality obligations.
- 2.4 Government departments have been working for some time to incorporate social clauses into works and service contracts and some agreement has now been reached on a series of thresholds for the employment of apprentices, work placements and long-term unemployed. However the Northern Ireland Executive has yet to sign off an agreed approach. For that reason, practice is still ad-hoc and disjointed across the agencies and departments.
- 2.5 The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has an Employer Engagement Team which assists public sector organisations to implement some employability- related social clause requirements in contracts. Through this team, contractors are put in contact with DEL appointed training providers to help them source individuals to meet their contractual obligations. Upon contract completion, DEL can also provide a percentage based verification on individuals placed, to confirm compliance with the contract conditions on social clauses. The DEL support relates only to work placement opportunities provided through the Steps to Work programme and apprenticeship opportunities provided through the DEL Apprenticeship framework.
- 2.6 Procurement Improvement Programme Including Local Spend Improvement
A key strand of the Council's Efficiency and Investment Programme is the effective procurement of Supplies, Works and Services. Procurement is a key efficiency driver which can deliver significant cash savings as well as improved value for money. It also has the opportunity to act as an economic stimulus for the local economy.
- 2.7 The Procurement Improvement Programme is currently on target with a number of key recommendations either in progress or already having been carried out. See Appendix A for a progress report along with a description of the key highlights. Members may wish to also note that through Procurement Efficiency process up to and including 2012/13

over £400k of procurement related cash savings had already been realised. A further £408k of cash savings has now also been identified for 2014/15 resulting in a total of £808k of procurement related savings being achieved via the procurement improvement programme.

3.0 Key Issues

3.1 Social Clauses

The adoption of social clauses within the Northern Ireland public sector has mainly been focused upon delivering employability-related benefits through the provision of apprenticeships and employment/work placements for students and the unemployed. Whilst social clauses with an employability focus have been most high profile to date, a wider range of commercial, environmental and community-focused clauses exist and can be considered under the banner of “social clauses”, where appropriate. In the development of such clauses, consultation with Legal Services will be essential to ensure the clauses to be adopted are within the legal powers of council.

3.2 Council officers continue to work with Government Departments and our own Legal Services in reviewing social clauses being used in central government contracts, with a view to determining how these might be used or adapted for council contracts. The initial scoping work suggests:

- A lack of consistency across all contracts – with differing thresholds from contract to contract (for LTU/apprentices/work placements)
- A lack of coherent guidance – Strategic Investment Board (SIB) produced a toolkit a number of years ago and CPD are planning to issue guidance at some time in the future but there is no deadline for this
- Potential lack of ambition in development of clauses – our research suggests that there is some caution from departments as to the reach of the clauses and that, as such, they are being cautious in their requirements. This potentially reduces the economic impact and added value of the clause.

3.3 Minimum standards for social clauses have been agreed by CIFNI and CPD for construction works contracts and it is understood that similar standards are being developed for construction services as well as for goods and services contracts. Whilst these standards are a useful benchmark, they don't necessarily maximise the economic return, nor do

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they allow for local economic conditions to be taken into account.

- 3.4** Members should be assured that council officers have been screening all tender opportunities for the inclusion of the social clauses. See Appendix B for the list of tenders identified for the inclusion of social clauses and those screened for their inclusion. Members should be aware in the absence of a Social Clause Policy for council, contracts with a minimum labour value of £250,000 and contract duration of at least 6 months are being screened for the inclusion of social clauses, in line with CIFNI standards. Appendix C sets out a sample set of clauses included in the Girdwood Community Hub Tender Documents and supplies and services contracts.
- 3.5** In recognition of the need for coherence and clarity, and taking account of the lack of appropriate guidance from other sources, a social clause policy framework and guidance notes for the council have recently been commissioned.
- 3.6** Officers are currently investigating the implications of all options in terms of the potential to generate social return, resource implications for management and monitoring purposes and legal considerations. Once complete the findings will be presented to Members to agree the preferred option. Members should be aware that, in the absence of a Social Clause Policy, the council's default position will be to adopt the approach of integrating social clauses as a contract condition, in line with CIFNI standards.
- 3.7** Members should be aware that, ambitious as the Investment Programme is, the scale of council contracts in terms of value and duration may make it impractical for contractors to deliver longer-term employability benefits such as apprenticeships, the duration of which is expected to be longer than the timescale of the council's contract.
- 3.8** In order to address these challenges and to achieve sustainable construction related apprentices it will require collaboration and coordination between a number of partner organisations with capital programmes. There are examples of where this has worked in the UK especially in the Manchester and Liverpool areas. They achieve a successful apprenticeship programme by having a social enterprise act as the employer agent who co-ordinates the recruitment and placement of apprentices.

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- 3.9 Working in partnership with other public sector organisations, Council could adopt a similar approach to provide continuity of employment for apprentices to complete their qualification in full. Additionally whilst advice from legal services has confirmed our contracts can have employment clauses such as those for apprentices, the Council cannot insist on Belfast residents being the beneficiaries of these clauses. The Councils vires only allows it to work within its own geographical boundaries. However employment through a third party provider will provide Council with a mechanism of targeting opportunities to local communities without explicitly limiting these to Belfast residents.**
- 3.10 In order to maximise the impact of this approach, consideration needs to be given to working in partnership with OFMDFM and DEL to consider how this could be delivered and resourced.**
- 3.11 In addition to the employability-related clauses referred to above, there are opportunities to include additional clauses into upcoming contracts which will help maximise the local impact of the activity. These might include the promotion of supply chain opportunities, environmental benefits and/or project specific community benefits.**
- 3.12 Given the complexity of this area of work, careful consideration should be given to the availability of resources for the monitoring and management of all social clauses in order to achieve contractor compliance and to derive maximum benefit for the local economy.**
- 3.13 In summary, the next steps for council in the adoption and implementation of social clauses are:**
- Further development of the social clause policy options and associated guidance, with sign-off by January 2014**
 - Consultation with OFMDFM, DEL and partner organisations to consider how a collaborative approach to apprenticeship opportunities and other employability-related benefits can be developed – initial meeting in November 2013**
 - Review options available for the management and monitoring of social clauses in council contracts – December 2013.**

3.14 Increasing Local Spend

In order to measure and further enhance local expenditure, Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), was commissioned following a competitive procurement process to undertake a study on the economic impact of the Council's expenditure. Findings from this study have concluded that every £1 of Council expenditure generates;

- 76 pence is spent or re-spent in the Belfast economy
- 80 pence is spent or re-spent in the post LGR boundary
- £1.02 is spent or re-spent in the Greater Belfast Area
- £1.35 is spent or re-spent in the regional economy.

These figures compare favourably with other UK local authority areas which typically have in the region of 50-60 pence within the local economy. Appendix D contains a summary of the CLES findings.

Following this study a series of recommendations is being developed to identify approaches that the Council could adopt to further increase and sustain the impact of its expenditure within the local economy. These will be reported through the Development Committee once completed.

3.16 Members should also aware of the ongoing work to up skill and engage local businesses in the council and wider public sector supply chain. A series of procurement workshops is currently being delivered across the city, to educate and inform local businesses on the council's procurement processes and on consortia building, facilitating them to compete for public sector contracts. A schedule of upcoming workshops is contained in Appendix E.

3.17 To increase local spend, a commitment to 'buy local' in areas where we can influence spend has been endorsed by the Corporate Management Team. In addition it has been recommended to staff that, where appropriate, quotations are issued to Belfast based SMEs.

3.18 To support this approach it has also been agreed that a 'buy local first' communications initiative be devised with Corporate Communications and a corporate quotation protocol drafted and mandated. Corporate Procurement Services has been given the authority to challenge Services where local suppliers are not being selected.

4 Resource Implications

No specific additional resource implications are required at this time.

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5 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

5.1 Any emergent Social Clause Policy will required to be equality screened.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to:

- 1. Note the work ongoing regarding the social clause policy and maximising local expenditure.**
- 2. Approve the interim position of using the CIFNI social clause standards and screening council contracts for inclusion of social clauses with a labour value of £250,000 and 6 month contract duration.**
- 3. Endorse the proposal to engaged with DEL and OFMDFM to explore the potential for an employer agent model as a means of sourcing apprenticeships across, government contracts, and to explore funding opportunities for this approach**
- 4. Note the financial spend and re-spend impact of council expenditure in both the local and regional economy.”**

The Committee adopted the Recommendations.

Democratic Services and Governance

Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality

The Committee was advised that the undernoted requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality had been received:

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Public Achievement	Let's Talk About Europe Conference Reception 30th November, 2013 Approximately 120 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Queen's University Belfast	Improving Children's Lives Conference	The use of the City Hall and the provision	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the

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	Reception 20th February, 2014 Approximately 300 attending	of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists	Irish Professional Development in Obstetrics and Gynaecology Conference Reception 26th February, 2014 Approximately 60 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £300
Women in Business Northern Ireland Limited	International Business Women's Conference 2014, Conference Reception 13th May, 2014 Approximately 500 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Queen's University Belfast	Campbell Collaboration Colloquium Conference Reception 17th June, 2014 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
European Sociological Association	European Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Research Network 3rd September, 2014 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
British Association of Removers	British Association of Removers Conference	The use of the City Hall and the provision of	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the

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	Reception 22nd May, 2015 Approximately 200 attending	hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Queen's University Belfast	Science Shop 25th Anniversary Awards 23rd January, 2014 Approximately 50 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event will highlight the exemplary work carried out between the two Universities to create the Northern Ireland Science Shop. The event will award students for their work with community and voluntary organisations. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £250
Centre for Competitiveness	Ireland Excellence Awards 30th January, 2014 Approximately 250 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event will seek to recognise organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors that have achieved success in the global market. These organisations not only provide employment but also have an impact on the well being of the community. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Abbey Gymnastics CIC (Community Interest Company)	Awards Presentation and Recognition of Volunteers Dinner 22nd February, 2014 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event will aim to recognise the contribution of volunteers within Abbey Gymnastics who give of their time freely. Abbey Gymnastics is a truly cross-community group who bring together nationalities, ethnic groups and cultures from across the City. This event would contribute to the Council's	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

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			Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	
National Deaf Children's Society	Young Authors and Artists Prize Day 6th May, 2014 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.	This event seeks to celebrate and recognise the artistic achievements of deaf children and young people in the areas of creative writing and visual art. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits. Approximate cost £325
Young Enterprise Northern Ireland	Young Enterprise Northern Ireland Innovation Awards 14th May, 2014 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	This event will celebrate the achievements of a cross-section of young people from the community, many of whom have learning and physical disabilities. The programme provides the opportunity to showcase the unique talents of the participants while clearly communicating that a lack of academic success does not equate to failure. This event would contribute to the Council's key themes 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and of 'Better support for people and communities' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits Approximate cost of £1,000
Railway Preservation Society of Ireland	50th Anniversary Dinner 13th September, 2014 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event will highlight the work carried out by the Railway Preservation Society in bringing people together. It will highlight the activities, such as the trips on the special steam trains, which work create a bond across all sectors of the community. This event would	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

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			contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better support for people and communities'	
Polish Educational and Cultural Association	Polish Independence Day 17th November, 2013 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	This event will aim to highlight the positive contribution that the Polish community, the largest ethnic minority in Belfast, has made to the shared future of the city. The event seeks to showcase the Polish culture to representatives from different communities and the province and will provide an opportunity for meaningful dialogue between members of the different communities. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits Approximate cost of £250
Action on Hearing Loss	Signs and Songs Christmas Carol Service 9th December, 2013 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits	This event seeks to celebrate the contribution of Action on Hearing Loss to the general life and well-being of the city. This annual event, led by children from Jordanstown School for the deaf and visually impaired, will provide an opportunity to bring together people with a range of disabilities to celebrate Christmas. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'Better opportunities for success across the city', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £500
Belfast Healthy Cities	Roundtable Discussion on Achieving Healthy	The use of the City Hall and the provision of	This event will provide the opportunity for significant joint leadership for	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the

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	<p>City Status for Belfast</p> <p>10th January, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 50 attending</p>	<p>hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>working towards achieving World Health Organisation European Healthy Status for the City of Belfast</p> <p>Belfast City Council has been a partner of Belfast Healthy Cities since its inception in 1988 and holds the WHO Secretariat position.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better opportunities for success across the City', 'Better care for Belfast's environment' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>form of tea, coffee and biscuits.</p> <p>Approximate cost £125</p>
<p>North Belfast Area Learning Community</p>	<p>Cross-community STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and CEIAG (Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Education) Event</p> <p>22nd January, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 600+ attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>This event will provide an opportunity for schools in the North of the City to come together and to witness first hand the opportunities which exist in the City for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>
<p>Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister</p> <p>Equality and Human Rights Unit</p>	<p>2014 Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration</p> <p>27th January, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 400 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event seeks to provide an opportunity to remember the victims of the Holocaust and of genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur and to reflect on the horrors of the past and the lessons to be learned.</p> <p>In addition, the event aims to emphasise the importance of remembering those who have died and the sufferings of survivors with a view to learning from their experiences</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits.</p> <p>Approximate cost £1,000</p>

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			<p>and seeking to improve the future for our young people.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.</p>	
Extended Special Schools Cluster	<p>Extended Special Schools Cluster</p> <p>20th March, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 500 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	<p>This fashion show aims to showcase the talents of the children and young people from across the seven special schools in the Belfast area and to present awards in recognition of their hard work and achievements.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Belfast City Council, Parks and Leisure Department	<p>City of Belfast International Rose Trials – Judges Reception and Dinner</p> <p>26th July, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 150 attending</p>	The use of City Hall and the provision of Hospitality in the form of a Civic Dinner	<p>The annual City of Belfast International Rose Trials will be held during Rose Week. The Trials are renowned worldwide for attracting international rose growers in addition to a significant number of visitors.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together'.</p>	<p>The use of City Hall and the provision of Hospitality in the form of a Civic Dinner.</p> <p>Approximate Cost £4,500</p>
Law Society of Northern Ireland	<p>The Law Society of Northern Ireland Council Dinner</p> <p>19th September, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 300</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	<p>This event seeks to provide an opportunity for representatives from the judiciary, business, voluntary and community sectors to come together to acknowledge the achievements of the Society. The event aims</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>

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	attending		to highlight best practice and to develop relations with key stakeholders. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	
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The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that a report on the criteria for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

**Provision of Civic Hospitality –
National Association of Councillors’
Annual General Meeting**

The Committee was advised that the Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Councillors would be held this year in Belfast from 22nd till 24th November. The Democratic Services Manager reported that it was normal for the hosting Councils for the aforementioned Annual General Meeting to provide civic hospitality for a reception for delegates, all of whom were from the Local Government sector. He reported that a request had been received for the Council to host a drinks reception on 22nd November for approximately 40 delegates. The Lord Mayor had agreed to the use of the Lord Mayor's Parlour for the reception but that the costs of the provision of the hospitality would need to be met from the Civic Hospitality budget. It was estimated that the cost of the reception would not exceed £500 and that could be met from within existing revenue budgets.

The Committee approved the provision of Civic Hospitality for the Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Councillors by way of a drinks reception on 22nd November, 2013.

**National Association of Councillors –
Annual General Meeting**

The Democratic Services Manager reported further that the aforementioned Annual General Meeting and Conference was designed to be of great value to Councillors at all tiers of Local Government. The keynote Speaker at the Conference would be Dr. Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council, who had led Durham Council through the recent reorganisation of the District and County Councils to form a Unitarian County Council. The cost per delegate of attending the Conference would be £60 and it was recommended that the Committee authorise the attendance at the Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region), and a representative from each of the Parties on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

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Lord Mayor's Photography Project

The Democratic Services Manager advised the Committee that the Lord Mayor had agreed, on a personal basis, to be the focus of a photographic project featuring his year in office both from a public and private point of view. The photographer was Donal McCann, who was a former United Kingdom Young Photographer of the Year and had been awarded a Fellowship with the Royal Photographic Society in 2012, the highest recognition in the profession. He had previously completed a fourteen month essay featuring the construction of Titanic Belfast. It was proposed that he would shadow the Lord Mayor throughout his year in office and aimed to include the publishing of images on line and to mounting an exhibition during the Belfast Festival in October, 2014. In addition to shadowing the Lord Mayor at various public functions and events at which he could freely take photographs on the same basis as any other photographer, he would also attend some private meetings and engagements and the Lord Mayor had given assurance that anyone involved, including staff members and Elected Representatives, would be advised in advance of the purpose of the photographer. Permission of those being photographed inside the City Hall would be requested prior to any photographs being taken and they would be free to withdraw from any photograph if they so wished.

He reported further that the Lord Mayor had requested also that Mr. McCann be granted access to one or more full Council meetings for the duration of his tenure in the post rather than having to request permission separately at a future time. He would not be permitted to move freely around the Chamber during the meetings but would be limited to similar areas which were used by the media when they were given permission to photograph the proceedings and that would be managed by Corporate Communications in the usual way.

Accordingly, the Committee was requested to:

- (i) note the contents of the report and the commitment to seek permission from participants, including staff, in advance of the photographs being taken or used from private meetings/events; and
- (ii) consider the request from the Lord Mayor to approve the attendance of Mr. Donal McCann at monthly Council meetings for the duration of the current Lord Mayor's tenure to take photographs, subject to the usual movement restrictions and to take such action as may be determined.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and acceded to the request from the Lord Mayor in respect of the photographer's attendance at Council meetings.

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Finance/Value-for-Money

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

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 18th October.

Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel of 22nd October.

**Request for Funding –
First Steps Early Years Group**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report regarding a request for funding from the First Steps Early Years Group to enable further information to be obtained.

**Occupational Health and
Employee Counselling Contracts**

The Committee noted that this item had been withdrawn from the Agenda and would be considered by the Committee at a later date.

**Appointment of Contractor to Undertake
City Hall Memorabilia Scoping**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to request permission to deviate from Standing Orders and to accede to Standing Order 62a exceptions in relation to contracts by direction of the Council acting on a recommendation of a Chief Officer that the exception is justified in special circumstances.

2.0 Background

2.1 Members will be aware that Joint Diversity Group at its meeting on 6 September, 2013 considered a report on City Hall Memorabilia which had emerged out of the recommendations of the Equality Impact Assessment on Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment and it was agreed that the displays and memorabilia element be added to

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the Emerging Project list as part of overall City Hall works project.

- 2.2 It was further agreed that a detailed report be presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January, 2014 and that a consultant be engaged to develop the narrative and conceptualise the recommendations contained within the Interpretative Design Advice paper (by Victoria Kingston, Independent Advisor).

This report will develop the Interpretative Design Advice recommendations into a more focused and detailed plan which would feed into an overarching Strategic Outline Case for City Hall to include the further development of the project and the East Wing as a dedicated visitor space, taking into consideration a number of other key issues such as staff accommodation, impact of local government reform, conflicting priorities for use of space already in East Entrance.

- 2.3 Members are reminded that Joint Diversity Group at its meeting on 6 September, 2013 agreed that the set of principles which had been used for undertaking any Decade of Centenaries work also be adopted when undertaking any work in relation to City Hall memorabilia.

3.0 Key Issues

- 3.1 Given the tight timescale involved it is essential that whoever is appointed is in a position to expedite the work in order that a comprehensive report can be brought to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January, 2014.

- 3.2 The City Hall Memorabilia project requires the successful consultant to be sympathetic to and very aware of the political sensitivities around memorabilia issues in City Hall.

- 3.3 The successful contractor must demonstrate political sensitivity and a sound understanding of the impact of any changes to City Hall memorabilia will not only in City Hall but also in a wider political context.

- 3.4 The successful contractor must also demonstrate that they have a proven track record of working with Belfast City Council in the past on similar types of projects.

- 3.5 This approach has been taken on the advice from the Head of Contracts in conjunction with Legal Services.

4.0 Resource Implications

Human

Officers from Property and Projects will work closely with the appointed Contractor in order to ensure that the work is undertaken expeditiously.

Finance

The expected costs associated with undertaking this type of project are in the region of £20,000 (NB budget estimate figures) and will be met from the Feasibility Budget.

Assets

Property and Projects Department are currently undertaking a review of staff accommodation and the conceptualisation of the City Hall memorabilia proposals will have an impact.

5.0 Equality Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment in relation to City Hall Memorabilia (recommendations by John Kremer) was approved by Council on 3 December, 2012,.

6.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and –

- agree to accede to Standing Order 62, (a) exceptions in relation to contracts by direction of the Council acting on a recommendation of a Chief Officer that the exception is justified in special circumstances “

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Human Resources

(Mrs. J. Minne, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with these items.)

Recruitment and Selection of Clerk and Chief Executive in Belfast City Council

(With the exception of the Head of Human Resources and the Senior Democratic Services Officer, all members of staff left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.)

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The Head of Human Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) recently issued a Consultation Document on the Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of Chief Executives in the 11 New Councils. Belfast City Council's response on this was agreed by SP&R on 20 September 2013 and sent to the LGSC on 23 September 2013.**
- 1.2 The LGSC is still considering the consultation responses and formal guidance on the Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of Chief Executives in the 11 New Councils will be issued at the end of October 2013. The LGSC, however, has indicated that the likely timeline for the recruitment and selection of Clerk and Chief Executive in the 11 new councils is as follows:**

Activity	Date
One public advertisement placed by DOE	15 November 2013
Closing date	TBC
Short-listing and interviewing panel nominated and agreed	ASAP
Panel training	ASAP
First short-listing	Prior to Christmas
Assessment centre	Early January 2014
Second short-listing	Early January 2014
Interviews	February / March 2013

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Given the potential timeframe for this process, and some of the issues raised in the consultation process about the format of the selection process, it is proposed that representatives from the VTC meet with the Minister to clarify/discuss options for Belfast City Council.**

It is proposed that such a conversation should focus on the following key issues:

- 2.2 Belfast City Council believes it will be necessary to have 11 short listing panels comprising, as set out in the Consultation Document, the Chair of the STC; not less than two and not more than four members of the STC, as appointed by the STC; the Chairperson of the LGSC; and the Chief Executive of the**

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LGSC. Belfast City Council also recognises that these panel members must be fully trained; however, in the absence of a STC, we need to discuss what the alternative options might be for Belfast.

- 2.3 The council is keen to ensure that the impact of the public advertisement for its 'top' job accurately reflects the nature, scope and scale of the Belfast challenge and would have concerns about how this could be communicated effectively in a single advertisement for all 11 jobs. Also, further discussion would be welcomed around how Members' views can be incorporated into the process in terms of issues such as where the advert should be placed; its style and content; whether executive search should be used, and what format the job micro-site should take, if there is to be one at all etc?
- 2.4 The council believes that an assessment centre in accordance with LGSC guidance must be undertaken and it is keen to ensure that the individual priorities, challenges, corporate objectives and ambitions for Belfast are accurately reflected in this assessment process. In particular, it is keen to ensure that quality is not compromised by either a 'one size fits all' approach or by an imposed timeframe. A key issue for discussion with the Minister is the possibility of a Belfast-specific assessment centre, in liaison with the LGSC.
- 2.5 It is of paramount importance that Belfast's elected members 'own' this recruitment and selection process. While complying fully with the LGSC Code of Procedures; it is essential that the LGSC work closely and specifically with our Members to ensure that the recruitment and selection methods accurately reflect Belfast's needs – e.g. that the message is targeted; that Members can input appropriately into the competency areas, including the weighting and significance of each area; that the exercises are tailored and specific to the particular job role; that consideration is given to whether or not the assessment centre scores are carried forward to interview; that the presentation topic to be delivered at interview is relevant; that the interview questions are targeted and weighted appropriately; and that the most technically proficient Professional Assessor for Belfast is assigned to Belfast to assist and support the panel.

3 Action Required / Proposals

- 3.1 As Belfast City Council does not yet have an STC in place, it has not yet established a short-listing and interviewing panel for this process.

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- 3.2 Given the issues, it is recommended that representatives of Belfast City Council's VTC meet with the Minister to discuss and clarify these matters prior to constituting a panel**

4 Resource Implications

Human Resources

- 4.1 None.**

Financial

- 4.2 None.**

5 Equality Implications

- 5.1 None. All selection panel members will receive appropriate training in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques, including awareness of the Equality Commission's statutory Codes of Practice and Guidance documents, as and when required."**

The Head of Human Resources outlined the main aspects of the report and the steps which the Council would be required to take to appoint a new Chief Executive for the new Belfast District Area.

She reported that consultation regarding the recommended salaries for the eleven new Chief Executives was ongoing currently. A meeting for the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Statutory Transition Committees (STCs), with the independent expert procured to undertake that piece of work on behalf of the Joint National Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives (JNC), was scheduled for later that afternoon at the Northern Ireland Local Government Association offices, but that, in the absence of the Council having appointed a Statutory Transition Committee, the JNC would seek to accommodate the Council's input on another date. In addition, the Minister had written to the Chairs of the Statutory Transition Committees confirming that the STCs must appoint a Chief Executive through open competition and that those Chief Executives who did not wish to apply might stay in post until the end of March, 2015. The Council's Chief Executive had written to the Head of Human Resources formally advising her that he would not be applying for the new Chief Executive role and she would submit a report to the Voluntary Transition Committee on that matter. Finally, the Minister had announced that, following a full consultation exercise, he intended to have the Local Government Staff Commission wound up by 2017.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed to seek an all-party deputation meeting with the Minister for the Environment to discuss the issues as set out in the report.

Zero Hours Contracts

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

- "1. Relevant Background Information**

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- 1.1 At Council on 1 October 2013, a Notice of Motion was referred under Standing Order 11e to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee *'to consider the introduction of a policy which would ensure that no Zero Hours' Contracts (ZHCs) are ever imposed on Council employees or, within an agreed timescale, by any suppliers who provide agency or other staff services to the Council.'*
- 1.2 This report defines the use of Zero Hours' Contracts, explains how 'casual' workers currently engaged in the Council are managed; and proposes a policy framework to be developed and considered at a future meeting.
2. **Key Issues**
 - 2.1 By definition, workers on ZHCs only work as and when they are needed by employers and are only paid for the hours they work. There is no guarantee of work, so no particular number of hours or times of work are specified; instead, workers operate on an 'on-call' basis.
 - 2.2 Workers on ZHCs are entitled to accrue annual leave and to payment when they work. However, they do not have all the same rights as those on traditional employment contracts and they are not entitled to sick pay. As there is no guaranteed work, and consequently no guaranteed income, mortgages and credit cards can be more difficult obtain if an individual is on a ZHC. Some ZHCs oblige workers to take the shifts they are offered, others do not.
 - 2.3 Belfast City Council recognises that the use of ZHCs may be open to abuse, i.e. where individuals are to all intents and purposes employees working an identifiable routine, but engaged under a ZHC and therefore not afforded employment protection. This is an employment practice that Belfast City Council, as a best practice employer, would not wish to follow.
 - 2.4 Belfast City Council does not engage anyone on ZHC; we have a small number of casual workers to cover short-term, ad-hoc or unplanned work; during busy times; or to cover short-term sickness, leave or specialist assignments in its front-line, customer-serving facilities, for example, casual coaches, leisure attendants, receptionists, stage technicians, front of house jobs.
 - 2.5 Belfast City Council's 'casual' workers are recruited in line with the LGSC's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection Procedures on the basis of merit and paid the same

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hourly rate of pay in line with that determined by the NJC for Local Government Services plus an additional percentage rate to compensate for untaken annual leave entitlement. In addition, there is no obligation either on the Council to offer work or on the 'casual' worker to accept such work. The 'casual' worker is not subject to any detriment if s/he is unable to accept the work and s/he may also indicate the days and times when s/he will be available for work.

- 2.6 The Council will also give as much notice as possible (at least two weeks), where practicable, to enable its 'casual' workers to accept the work and it has a system in place to refresh its 'casual' list of workers to ensure they are still available for work; wish to remain on the 'casual' list and still hold the relevant qualifications / certificates, if applicable
- 2.7 Given BCC's recognition that the use of ZHCs could be open to abuse it is proposed that a policy is developed in respect of 'casual' workers in Belfast City Council.
- 2.8 Such a policy would include:
- Policy statement / general principles on the use of 'casual' workers;
 - Procedure for use of 'casual' workers;
 - Recruitment of 'casual' workers;
 - Terms of engagement for 'casual' workers, including annual leave provision;
 - Allocation of hours to 'casual' workers;
 - Maintenance / refreshing of database for 'casual' workers etc.
- 2.9 It is also proposed, following consultation with the Council's Head of Contracts, that the policy includes reference to ensuring that suppliers who provide agency or other staff services to the Council are aware of fair employment and best practice guidance in respect of engaging any 'casual' or ZHC workers in their business with the Council.

3. **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Human Resources**

There are no human resource implications.

3.2 **Financial**

There are no financial implications. 'Casual' workers will continue to be paid the same hourly rate of pay in line with that determined by the NJC for Local Government Services plus an

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additional percentage rate to compensate for untaken annual leave entitlement.

4. Equality Implications

4.1 There are no equality implications.

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that:

5.2 Members note how 'casual' workers currently working in the Council are managed; and

5.3 Members agree the policy framework to be further developed and presented to Committee for approval at a future meeting."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives

The Committee was advised that the Director of Finance and Resources had, in accordance with the authority delegated to him, authorised the appointments of a number of individuals who were related to existing officers of the Council.

Noted.

Asset Management

Licence Agreement/Renewal

Ulster Hall – Ulster Orchestra Licence Agreement

The Committee was advised that the former Community and Recreation Committee, at its meeting on 25th October, 2006, had approved the terms and conditions of a Partnership Agreement with the Ulster Orchestra which provided it with a lease for accommodation within the refurbished Ulster Hall. The lease was for a term of 25 years from 29th May, 2009, at a rent of £36,500 per annum, with the option for the Ulster Orchestra to terminate the Agreement should its funding for operating the premises cease or be reduced. Subsequently, on 22nd March, 2013, the Ulster Orchestra had received a notification from the Arts Council Northern Ireland that its funding was to be significantly reduced. The Ulster Orchestra had then served notice on 25th June, 2013 to terminate its Lease and sought to reduce its area of occupation and therefore its accommodation costs.

A reduced area of occupation totalling approximately 1,468 square feet had now been agreed with the Ulster Orchestra, subject to a rent of £1,298 per month plus service charge. That was equivalent to the pro-rata rental rate payable under the terminated Lease. The Ulster Orchestra wished to hold that area under a Licence

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Agreement until it finalised a new business plan and partnership arrangement with the Council under which it might require a new Lease. It had indicated that that was due for completion within the near future. The proposed term of the new Licence Agreement was six months from 25th July, 2013 and month to month thereafter, solely at the discretion of the Council.

The Committee agreed to grant a temporary Licence Agreement with the Ulster Orchestra for six months and month to month thereafter at the Council's discretion, subject to a fee of £1,298 per month plus service charge.

Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal

The Committee was advised that the Development Committee, at its meeting on 17th September, 2013, had agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 46, to recommend to the Committee that it authorise the extension of an existing Lease and Licence Agreement with the Scout Association for the use of premises at Courtney Hall, situated on the Cregagh Road, as alternative accommodation for the Loop River Play Centre, for a further 24 month period from 1st November, 2013, at a cost of £190 per week.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Good Relations and Equality

Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 14th October.

**Minutes of Meeting of the of Party Leaders' Forum
and Historic Centenaries Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group of 18th October.

European Commission Award – Access City 2013

The Good Relations Manager advised the Committee that the European Commission encouraged all Member States to make their cities more accessible to people with disabilities and to older people. The Commission had an Award Scheme which was open to cities with over 50,000 people and provided an opportunity for EU cities to showcase and share their work and plans for accessibility. Cities were requested to demonstrate their activities and strategies designed to make cities barrier-free and better places to live for everyone. The Equality and Diversity Officer acted as a liaison officer for the Council's work on disability and had recently submitted an entry for the Access City Award.

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The Commission had now informed the Council that the European Jury had selected the City of Belfast as a prize winner, although whether the award was for a first, second or third place or simply for a special mention, would not be known until the publication of the official press release by the European Commission on 3rd December, 2013. Six other European Cities had also been selected.

The Good Relations Manager reported that an official Award Ceremony and a Conference on Accessibility would be held in Brussels on 3rd and 4th December and the European Commission would meet the costs of travel and accommodation for two representatives from Belfast at the event. The Commission had recommended that the City delegation be composed of the Lord Mayor of Belfast and the Accessibility Manager (or the person responsible for the disability/accessibility issues in the City administration). She pointed out that the Lord Mayor would not be available and that the officer with special responsibility for disability issues was the Equality and Diversity Officer who had submitted the entry.

The Committee congratulated the Good Relations Unit on its achievement and granted authority for two representatives from Belfast to attend the Awards Ceremony and Conference as outlined.

Belfast Statutory Transition Committee

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will recall the detailed paper in relation to the creation of the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee which was provided to the SP&R / VTC Committee on the 21 June 2013 and subsequently on 9 August 2013. At both meetings it was agreed that Belfast City Council should ‘defer consideration of a report in relation to the creation of the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee to enable the Minister for the Environment to consider the nominees to the Statutory Transition Committee by Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Council’**
- 1.2 Members will be aware that the Environment Minister had issued letters to Belfast City Council, Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council in relation to the failure to establish the Belfast Transition Committee in line with the requirement set out in Regulation 3 of the Local Government (Statutory Transition Committees) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2013.**
- 1.3 In the letter to Belfast City Council dated 28 August the Environment Minister acknowledged ‘the difficult position which Belfast City Council has been put in by virtue of the decisions of Castlereagh Borough Council and Lisburn City**

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Council in respect of their nominations to the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee’.

1.4 The Council’s response to the Minister’s letter has been circulated. The response seeks clarification on the departments’ intentions in regards to the nominations to the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Although a formal response has not been received from the Minister, indications are that he will issue a Departmental Direction to the Council in relation to the establishment of the Belfast STC.

2.2 Also the Department has also recently issued guidance in relation to the expenditure controls for Statutory Transition Committees. The Direction is made under the section 10 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010, and states that councils may not, without the written consent of the Statutory Transition Committee:

(a) make any disposal of land, if the consideration for the disposal exceeds £100,000

(b) enter into any capital contract

i. under which the consideration payable by the relevant council exceeds £250,000

ii. which includes a term allowing the consideration payable by the relevant council to be varied;

(c) enter into any non-capital contract under which the consideration payable by the relevant council exceeds £100,000.

2.3 These expenditure controls mean that the Council cannot enter into contracts which are required, for example, to deliver capital projects, without the consent of the STC. The table below provides examples of contracts which are directly affected by the expenditure control direction.

Capital Grant Funding from third parties

Project	External Funding
Marrowbone Pitch	£495,000
Waterfront Hall Exhibition and Conference Centre	£19,000,000

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Girdwood Hub	£9,597,249
North Foreshore Green	£6,000,000
Innovation Centre	£625,000
Creative Hub	£3,700,000
Tropical Ravine Refurbishment	£2,232,000

Capital Works Contracts

Project	Estimated Contract Value
Marrowbone Pitch	£765,000
Waterfront Hall Exhibition and Conference Centre, Enabling Works	£375,000
Girdwood Hub	£9,597,249
North Foreshore (appointment of design team)	£500,000

Sample of supplies and Services contracts

Project	Contract Value
Super-connected cities communications campaign	£500,000
Business support initiative	£681,500
Ancillary services for events	£345,500
Super-connected cities growth initiative	£600,000
Employee counselling services	£400,000

2.4 In addition to the expenditure controls the Statutory Transition Committee is required to:

- (i) Prepare a draft corporate and business plan for the new council**
- (ii) Prepare a draft budget for agreement by the new council – this will form part of the rate setting process for 2014/15**
- (iii) Arrange the first meeting of the new council**
- (iv) Appoint the Chief Executive for the new council – the process is due to start in November**
- (v) Appoint staff to the new council as it deems appropriate**

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- 2.5** Taking all of the issues above into account, Members will need to give consideration to the establishment and composition of the Belfast STC.

2.6 *Appointments to Belfast STC*

In considering the appointment of Members from Belfast City Council to the STC, the Committee is reminded that the Department has issued guidance which states that Belfast should appoint 21 Members to the STC using one of three methods – D’hondt, Sainte Lague or STV – based upon the strengths of the political parties immediately after the local elections in 2011. However, given that the guidance issued to councils in relation to the appointment of Members to STCs is advisory rather than statutory, the Council would be entitled to use a different method of appointment if it saw fit, for example by continuing to apply the Quota Greatest Remainder method which is used currently by the Council.. In considering this matter, the Committee is reminded that its position has been consistently that Castlereagh and Lisburn Councils should make their appointments to the STC based upon the Guidance issued by the Department and in order to be consistent with that position the Quota Greatest Remainder method would not be appropriate.

- 2.7** A summary of the results of the application of the Quota Greatest Remainder, D’hondt and Sainte Lague methods of proportionality when applied to the political party strengths immediately after the 2011 elections has been circulated. The outcomes of the 3 methods are:

	<u>Quota Greatest Remainder</u>	<u>D’hondt</u>	<u>Sainte Lague</u>
SF	7	7	7
DUP	6	7	6
SDLP	3	3	3
ALL	3	3	3
UUP	1	1	1
PUP	1	0	1

2.8 Castlereagh Borough Council

D. Vitty - DUP
C. McGimpsey – UUP

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Lisburn City Council

M.H. Tolerton – DUP

J. Drake – IND

- 2.9** The Committee is reminded that meetings of the STC are to be open to the public to attend, unless they are specifically excluded for certain types of decisions, and it is therefore suggested that the meetings should be held in the Council Chamber were the public gallery and Press facilities are already in place

3 **Resource Implications**

- 3.1** Once the Belfast STC is established, there will be a payment made to the Belfast City Council nominees of £2,700 per annum paid monthly in arrears. These payments can be accommodated through the budget established for transitional arrangements.

4 **Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 4.1** The establishment of the Belfast STC is provided for in legislation and the methodology for the appointment of Members to the Committee is established in Guidance issued by the Department of the Environment. Accordingly, there are not considered to be any relevant equality or good relations considerations associated with this report.

5 **Recommendations**

- 5.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1.** Note the contents of the report.
- 2.** Agree to consider the establishment of the Belfast STC at the VTC meeting on 8 November 2013.
- 3.** If recommendation 2 above is agreed; consider, at the VTC meeting on 8 November 2013, the proportionality method to be used to appoint Members from Belfast.”

The Chief Executive reported that, with regard to guidance on expenditure controls and the role of Statutory Transition Committee, the Department for the Environment, Local Government Policy Division, had issued earlier that day the following further guidance:

“3 Year Capital Plans and Revenue Forecasts

- 2.1 Councils must have regard to the CIPFA ‘Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities’ (the Prudential Code) when carrying out their duties in Northern Ireland under Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.**
- 2.2 The Prudential Code requires the development of three-year revenue expenditure forecasts as well as three-year capital plans.**
- 2.3 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010, taken together with the Departmental direction, provides that councils must seek the consent of STCs before making a disposal of land where consideration exceeds £100,000 or entering into a capital contract where consideration exceeds £250,000 or entering into a non capital contract where consideration exceeds £100,000.**
- 2.4 The simplest way of achieving this would be for councils to have their three year capital plans and revenue expenditure forecasts examined and approved by the STC at the beginning which would mean that only those transactions above and beyond what are in the three year capital plans and revenue expenditure forecasts would subsequently have to be referred to the STC.**
- 2.4 All other disposals, capital contracts and non-capital contracts outside of the three-year capital plans and revenue expenditure forecasts should comply with the direction issued by the Department and the guidance set out in paragraphs 3 – 6.....”**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman

Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee

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MEETING OF BELFAST VOLUNTARY TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Robinson (Chairman); Aldermen Browne, M Campbell and R. Newton;
Councillors Attwood, Carson, Clarke, Corr, Haire, Hargey, Hendron, McCabe, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mullan, A. Newton, Reynolds and Spence.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Jones, Kyle, McCarthy and Mac Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd September.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Reform of Local Government

Local Government Reform Bill

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 On Monday 23 September 2013, the Environment Minister, Mark Durkan MLA introduced the Local Government Bill into the NI Assembly. The Bill provides the legislative basis for the local government reform programme and will introduce a number of far-reaching reforms which will have a direct impact upon the future governance, operations and service delivery of the Council.**

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- 1.2 Members will appreciate that the Bill is a complex piece of legislation – 96 pages in length and containing 128 clauses, 16 Parts and 12 Schedules and dealing with a wide range of issues. To assist Members in their analysis of the Bill a copy of the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum has been circulated. A copy of the Bill is available on the NI Assembly Website (<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Legislation/Primary-Legislation-Current-Bills/>). Hard copies of the Bill can be made available to Members on request from Democratic Services.**
- 1.3 Some of the key reforms in the Bill are listed below:**
- new governance arrangements for councils – contains proposals in regards to the future decision making structures of councils; sharing power and responsibility; putting in place necessary checks and balances (including proposals to introduce qualified majority voting and a call-in procedure) and ensuring the openness and transparency in how councils conduct their business (including provision of public access to meetings and a requirement for councils to publish a constitution).
 - new ethical standards regime - there will be a mandatory code of conduct for councillors and others appointed to take part in council business. The code will be supported by mechanisms for the investigation and adjudication of alleged breaches of the code through the Office of the Commissioner of Complaints.
 - a bar on MLAs, MPs and MEPs from being elected or acting as councillors – in order to end the dual mandate
 - removal of bar on council employees being a councillor – removing the blanket bar on council employees being elected or being a councillor. The bar will continue to apply to council officers who work directly with and provide advice to a council or one of its committees. Similar provisions are already in place in England and Wales.
 - new council-led community planning process – will provide a statutory framework for councils to work in conjunction with other public service providers to deliver the objective of improving outcomes for everyone.
 - performance improvement – the introduction of an updated performance improvement framework that focuses on the delivery of continuous improvement in service delivery – this will include a requirement for councils to report annually on performance.

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- supervisory powers – linked to the transfer of functions, the Bill will extend to all Departments the supervision powers which are currently only available to the DOE.
- general power of competence – will give councils the power to do anything that individuals generally can do that is not prohibited by other laws. The aim is to give a council greater legislative freedom to act in its own interest and to develop innovative approaches to improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area.
- establishing a partnership panel – made up of Executive Ministers and elected representatives from the councils to discuss matters of mutual interest.
- transfer of staff, assets and liabilities – the Bill makes provision for the development of schemes to effect the transfer of staff, assets and liabilities to the new councils from existing councils, from other local government bodies and from central government departments.

1.4 It is important to note that the Bill does not provide for the operation and functions of the new councils during the shadow period. That will be provided by way of a programme of subordinate legislation using the enabling provisions of the Local Government (Boundaries) Act (NI) 2008 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (NI) 2010, and powers conferred under Clause 123 of the Bill. It is intended that all the necessary regulations will be made before the local government elections take place in May 2014.

2.0 KEY ISSUES

Process for Taking the Bill Forward

- 2.1 An indicative timetable for the Bill's passage through the NI Assembly has also been circulated. It should be noted, however, that the dates set out may change as they will be dependent upon the level of scrutiny given to the Bill during the 'Committee Stage' consideration and subsequent stages.
- 2.2 Members will note that the Second Stage debate in the Assembly on the Bill took place on Tuesday 2 October 2013. This was the first opportunity that MLAs had to discuss and debate the general principles of the Bill. A paraphrased summary of the Minister's introduction to the Bill has been provided for Members information. Following this stage, the Bill now moves onto Committee Stage for detailed scrutiny and the Environment Committee have indicated that they will seek evidence from interested bodies (including Belfast City Council) as part of this process.

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2.3 It will be important that focused consideration is given to reviewing the Bill in some detail and identifying those critical issues, concerns or points of clarification emerging from the Bill. Whilst the Council will seek to influence any critical issues identified, focus will also need to be given to:

- examining the organisational implications of the Bill;
- undertaking an assessment/benchmark of the impact of the Bill's proposals upon the current practices and processes of the Council; and,
- identifying the practical steps which now need to be undertaken to ensure the Council is ready

2.4 In parallel to taking forward its own detailed examination of and preparations for the Bill, the Council will also need to engage with, and input into, the wider discussions and debate across local and central government as the Bill passes through the various stages in the Assembly. A proposed timetable for taking forward detailed work and engagement in regards to the Bill is set out below.

2.5

Phase I: Internal Review and Response	TIMESCALES
1. Report on initial observations/issues & process submitted to Belfast VTC	11 Oct '13
2. Draft response submitted to CMT for consideration and comment	16 Oct '13
3. Discussion within Budget and Transformation Panel	18 Oct '13
4. Draft response submitted to VTC / SP&R for consideration and comment a. <i>to feed into the Committee Stage consideration</i>	25 Oct '13
5. BCC response submitted to Environment Committee and evidence given	Nov 13
Phase II: External Engagement and Influence	
6. SOLACE workshop facilitated by Belfast City Council officers	15 Oct '13
7. 7 NILGA facilitated workshops with Members – with officer input a. Cookstown (28 th October 2013) b. - Lisburn (29 October 2013)	28 and 29 Oct '13

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Phase II: Organisational Preparations	
8. Detailed analysis of organisational implications and necessary actions	Oct-Dec 13
9. Detailed implementation and resource plan developed	Dec 13/Jan 14

Initial observations on LG Bill

2.6 Set out below, for Members' consideration, are some initial high-level observations on the content of the Bill. Given the limited time available to assess the Bill in any detail at this stage, the points set out below are not intended to be comprehensive but rather to stimulate discussions amongst Members. A timetable for taking forward detailed work and engagement in regards to the Bill is set out below.

2.7

- a. **Names of Councils (Part 1) – under the legislation set out the name of the incoming new council for Belfast would be Belfast 'District Council'. Clarification is required on the process through which Belfast is given its 'City' status in its name and the detail of the supplementary Regulations which will cover this.**
- b. **Positions of Responsibility (Part 3) – Notably, positions on a Streamlined Committee Executive are not to be included in the list of positions of responsibility whereas positions on a Cabinet Executive are. The legislation enables councils to nominate a councillor to serve as a member of any 'prescribed' public body or other public association. Clarification will be required on what a "prescribed" public body is. How will the Council go about making appointments to outside bodies which are not on the prescribed list?**
- c. **Permitted forms of Governance (Part 5) – The legislation allows for executive arrangements or a traditional committee system, but it also provides for councils to propose their own system of governance which would require the Department's approval.**
- d. **Executive Arrangements (Part 6) – Executive arrangements can be either one committee of the council (cabinet executive) or more than one committee of the council (streamlined committee executive) each committee may only have between 4 and 10 members. The Executive would be responsible for all the functions of a Council except for certain functions which will be specified in Regulations. However, Clause 26 (3) (b) leaves the door open for Regulations to give some**

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discretion to a Council as to the extent of the powers which an Executive will have.

- e. **Executive Arrangements: - Overview and Scrutiny (Clauses 31-37) – Any Executive arrangements of a Council must include provision for the appointment by the council of one or more ‘overview and scrutiny committees’ which in turn may appoint sub-committees. Clarification is required in terms of composition and functions of this committee within the context of the operation of meetings of the full council.**
- f. **Meetings and proceedings (Part 7);**
- **Simple Majority (Clause 43) – stipulates that every decision (with the exception of those subject to qualified majority) of a council must be taken by simple majority.**
 - **Qualified Majority (Clause 44) – those decisions which will be subject to Qualified Majority Voting (80% present and voting) must be specified within a council's Standing Orders. The specified percentage (80%) for QMV may be amended through Regulations. Clarification is needed around the specific decisions to which QMV will automatically apply. These are to be specified by the DoE in Regulations, however the Minister in responding to a question in this regard, indicated that the following types of decisions would be included for QMV:**
 - **Choice of political governance arrangements;**
 - **Method for sharing positions of responsibility;**
 - **Method for appointing members to committees;**
 - **Major capital projects**
 - **Programmes that impact across a number of DEA's and**
 - **In response to a legitimate call-in on adverse uimpact grounds**
 - **The last 3 of these decision types would give particular pause for concern that a considerable number of council decisions might fall under one of those categories.**
 - **Consideration will also need to be given to the practical implications of implementing QMV in a council such as Belfast and whether it would be feasible to introduce tiered thresholds for key governance processes depending upon the political composition of a council.**
- g. **Power to require decisions to be reconsidered (call-in) (Part 7, Clause 45) – provisions are set out enabling decisions to be call-in if 15% of Members of council (which equates to 9 members in the new council) seek to**

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do so under either of the following grounds (i) that a decision was not arrived at after proper consideration of the relevant facts and issues; (ii) that the decision would disproportionately affect adversely any section of the inhabitants of the district. Standing Orders must require the clerk of the council to obtain an opinion from a practising barrister or solicitor before reconsideration of a decision on a requisition. There will clearly be procedural and financial implications for the council in administering this system. The specified percentage (15%) for call in may also be amended through Regulations. There would be concern that the reasons for triggering call-in are so broad and can be interpreted so widely that it could mean that a significant number of decisions may be subject to it and that this could have implications for efficient decision-making

- h. **Access to meetings and Documents (Part 8)** – a meeting of the Council must be open to the public, with 5 days notice given, rather than the current 3 days applied in BCC. There are provisions enabling the council to exclude the public in particular circumstances. The legislation specifies that meetings of committees and sub-committees must also be open to the public.
- i. **Conduct of Councillors (Part 9)** – Introduces new legislative provisions (including a code of conduct for councillors albeit the detail of the code will be set out in Regulations and Guidance).
- j. **Community Planning (Part 10)** – Sets out the process through which councils will take forward community planning within their districts. States that NI Departments will (insofar as reasonably practicable to do so) promote and encourage community planning and ‘have regard’ to any implications for the exercise of the departments’ functions. The legislation also introduces amendments to the Planning Act which will require that councils in preparing their local development plans, must take into account a councils community plan.
- k. **General Power of Councils (Part 11)** – introduces a new power of general competence which will give a council greater legislative freedom to act in its own interest and to develop innovative approaches to addressing issues in its area. This power should be welcome albeit recognising that any action undertaken will be subject to resource availability.

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- i. Performance Improvement (Part 12) – Councils must set itself improvement objectives to underpin the administration of its functions and must consult on any such objectives set. The legislation also enables the DoE and other Gov departments to specify performance indicators for councils which appears to overly bureaucratic and would question why the proposals are not set within the context of a community planning framework. Greater role and scrutiny by the Local Government Auditor is also introduced as part of the Bill and Councils will be required to report (no later than 31 October each year) on its assessment of performance during the financial year.**
- m. Partnership Panel (Part 13) – agreement in principle with the proposal to establish a Partnership Panel but would seek further clarification on the representation and process for selecting local representatives (i.e. councillors), operation and remit of the Panel**
- n. Control of Councils by Northern Ireland Departments (Part 14) – introduces a general power of direction to all central government departments to request reports and returns of information from councils. Any NI department may also cause local inquiries and investigations in connection with the administration of any statutory provision relating to the functions of any council. The power of intervention, previously provided to the DoE (but never used), is now extended to all NI departments. Whilst recognising that specific functions will transfer from central to local government as part of the LGR process it is unclear the specific rationale for such provisions.**
- o. The Local Government Auditor (Part 15) – this part amends the 2005 Order to include provisions for the DoE, with the consent of the Comptroller and Auditor General, to designate a member of staff of the NI Audit Office as the local government auditor. The local government auditor may make arrangements for staff of the NIAO to assist in the performance of the local government auditors functions. The local government auditor will prepare an annual report on the exercise of the local government auditors functions in that year, and send a copy of the report to each council and to the Department.**
- p. Miscellaneous (Part 16) – this Part deals with a range of issues (summarised below):**

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- **Guidance- Councils must have regard to any guidance issued by the Department for the purposes of this Act**
- **Control of disposal and contracts and council finances - The Department may direct that from a specified date, an existing council shall not, without the written consent of its successor council or a specified statutory transition committee**
 - (a) **dispose of any land....(exceeding a specified sum)**
 - (b) **enter into any capital contract....(exceeding a specified sum, etc)**
 - (c) **enter into any non-capital contract....(exceeding a specified sum, etc)**
 - (d) **borrow any sum exceeding a specified sum**
 - (e) **reduce any financial reserve or a specified description below a specified limit**
- **This is of particular importance given the potential implications of the councils procurement, capital programme and asset management in the lead up to 2015 and the operation of the new Council.**
- **Transfer schemes - The Department (and any NI department) may make one or more transfer schemes for the transfer of designated assets or liabilities of the department or a local government body to a local government body. The detail of any emerging transfer schemes needs to be examined in detail to ensure its fit-for-purpose as it related to Belfast.**
- **Supplementary and transitional provisions for the purposes of this Act – this is a catch all provision which allows the Department (or another NI department) to make such incidental, consequential, transitional or supplemental provision as appears to the Department to be necessary for the purposes of this Act; the Local Government (Boundaries) Act (NI) 2008; or the transfer of functions by any statutory provision which comes into operation on or before the relevant date (1st April 2015) to a local government body. The power to make transfer schemes is provided for by this general provision.**

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3.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree the proposed timetable (set out in para 2.5 above), for taking forward detailed work on the Bill”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation, agreed that regular updates on the issues which were being considered by the Regional Transition Committee be submitted to the Committee and that a report outlining key questions and answers for ratepayers who would be transferring to the new Belfast District in 2015 be presented to the Committee in due course.

Creation of Statutory Transition Committees

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 Members will recall the detailed paper in relation to the Creation of the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee which was provided to the SP&R / VTC Committee on the 21 June 2013 and subsequently on 9 August 2013. At both meetings it was agreed that Belfast City Council should “*defer consideration of a report in relation to the creation of the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee to enable the Minister for the Environment to consider the nominees to the Statutory Transition Committee by Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough Council*”**
- 1.2 Members will be aware that the Environment Minister had issued letters to Belfast City Council, Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council in relation to the failure to establish the Belfast Transition Committee in line with the requirement set out in Regulation 3 of the Local Government (Statutory Transition Committees) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2013.**
- 1.3 In the letter to Belfast City Council dated 28 August the Environment Minister acknowledged ‘the difficult position which Belfast City Council has been put in by virtue of the decisions of Castlereagh Borough Council and Lisburn City Council in respect of their nominations to the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee’. A draft Council response to the Minister’s letter has been circulated for Members consideration. The response seeks clarification on the departments’ intentions in regards to the nominations to the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee.**

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1.4 The Minister has advised that he had written to the both Castlereagh and Lisburn councils advising them that in his view they have acted contrary to the spirit in which the regulations were made and in which the associated guidance was issued.

2.0 **KEY ISSUES**

Update on nomination process

2.1 Since the last update provided to the Committee on 6 September 2013, further correspondence has been received from both Castlereagh Borough Council and Lisburn City Council regarding nominations to the Belfast STC.

(i) **Castlereagh Borough Council**

- Correspondence received (attached at Appendix 3) indicating that the Council, at its meeting on 26 September, considered the correspondence received from the Minister of the Environment and resolved not to change its previous nominations to the Belfast STC being Councillor Denny Vitty (DUP) and Cllr. Chris McGimpsey (UUP).

(ii) **Lisburn City Council**

- Correspondence received (attached at Appendix 4) indicating that the Council, at its meeting on 26 September, considered its nominations to the Belfast STC and reaffirmed the nomination of the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr. M.H Tolerton (DUP) and newly nominated Cllr John Drake (Independent)

2.2 It is understood that both Councils have now written to the Environment Minister regarding their nominations to the Belfast STC.

Guidance for STCs

2.3 The Department for the Environment has issued a series of circulars providing guidance to assist councils on the establishment and operation of the Statutory Transition Committees. Three pieces of guidance have been issued to date and are outlined below. Copies of the guidance documents are attached as Appendix 4 for Members information.

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Date of issue	Summary of guidance
July 2013	<p>Operation and Establishment of STCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Statutory Transition Committees • Establishment and Membership • Governance and Procedures • Functions • Premises and Facilities • Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons • Payment of Allowance
August 2013	<p>Financial and Staffing Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Finance • Financial Controls • Assets and Liabilities • Staffing of STCs • Corporate and Business Plan of STC • Duties of existing councils and STCs
September 2013	<p>Guidance on Expenditure Controls and role of STCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure controls • Direction from the Department to seek approval of STCs in respect of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - disposals - capital contracts - non-capital contracts • Consent refused or granted subject to conditions • Contravention of direction

Members will note that this guidance is under consideration by officers and further reports will be brought back to Committee as appropriate.

3.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- i. consider the contents of the report and the appendices attached;
- ii. consider and agree the submission of the draft response to the Environment Minister;
- iii. note that Hanwood Development will present to Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee meeting in November, 2013; and
- iv. note the DoE guidance documents issued

4.0 Resource Implications

There will be no resource implications attached to this report."

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The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted the recent guidance and associated direction, made under section 10 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010, which had been issued by the Department of the Environment in relation to the requirement of the Council to get the written consent of the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee (STC) for the disposal of land and to the entering into capital and non-capital contracts within certain limits. In this regard, the Committee agreed that contact be made with the Department of the Environment regarding the implications for the Council in the absence of an STC and that appropriate authority be sought from the Department for any urgent decisions.

Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh

The Committee was reminded that, as part of the local government reform programme, the new Belfast District Council boundary, scheduled to come into effect by 2015, would encompass parts of the adjacent Lisburn, Castlereagh and a small portion of the North Down council areas. That would include around 56,500 residents and 22,300 households coming into the new extended Belfast City Council.

The Chief Executive reported that, as had been agreed by the Committee, joint officer discussions were ongoing with Lisburn and Castlereagh to capture the necessary information to inform a due diligence assessment of potential assets and any associated liabilities and staff transferring to Belfast City Council. That work would ensure that appropriately informed options and recommendations could be put to the Members for consideration and direction. It would ensure also that any necessary transition related activities could be built into the Council's financial planning processes. In preparation for the transition to the larger Belfast City Council area, the work between the three councils was continuing and a joint programme of work was in place covering the following areas:

- (1) Assets and Liabilities – asset listing complete (approximately 50 assets ranging from actual facilities through to parcels of land and open space) and detailed due diligence work underway examining important considerations such as book value of the assets, loans attached to the assets, running costs, and maintenance requirements;
- (2) Staff Transfer – need to identify and plan for those staff who might transfer to Belfast across the following categories
 - a) staff directly employed and based in a facility to transfer;
 - b) staff who were not employed in a facility transferring, but who worked all, or the majority of their time, in the areas transferring;
 - c) staff who provided support to categories (a) and (b) (proportionate);
- (3) Service Convergence – scoping work was underway to identify and plan for the key service convergence issues which needed to be addressed in extending council services to those parts of Lisburn and Castlereagh coming into the new Belfast boundary;
- (4) Joint Communications Planning – joint action plan developed and communications activities identified; and

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- (5) Investment Plans for Transitional Areas – need to consider potential investment needs of those new areas coming into Belfast and start to build those into the Council’s planning processes.

The Committee was reminded further that representatives from the Colin Glen Town Centre Development, situated in the part of Lisburn transferring into Belfast, had made a presentation to the Voluntary Transition Committee in March, 2013, to provide an insight into the development proposals for that area. It had been agreed also that representatives from the Hanwood Centre, which was located in a part of Castlereagh coming into Belfast, be invited to a future meeting of the Voluntary Transition Committee and it was recommended that they be invited to attend the scheduled meeting to be held on 8th November, 2013.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the Voluntary Transition Committee for Lisburn and Castlereagh had agreed recently that they would seek a joint member “information event” with Belfast City Council in November, if possible. The purpose of the event would be to share information and explore the current and future programme of work to be taken forward in preparation for the extension of the Belfast City Council boundary and the associated convergence related matters and he suggested that an appropriate event be arranged. In addition, at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th September, the Members had highlighted the importance of continual engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils on the investment demands for those areas transferring into the City and that consideration should be given to what mechanisms could be put in place to facilitate engagement with those Members from Lisburn and Castlereagh who represented the areas which were transferring. It was proposed also that this be discussed at the joint “information session.”

Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee:

- (1) note that representatives of Hanwood Development would be making a presentation to the Voluntary Transition Committee in November;
- (2) note the joint transition work programme which was being undertaken with Lisburn and Castlereagh; and
- (3) agree that a joint political “information session” with the Lisburn/Castlereagh Statutory Transition Committee be arranged.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

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Agreeing the way forward for the Belfast Community Investment Programme

The Director of Development submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide a background to, and outline of, the work completed to date on the design of the new Belfast Community Investment Programme (BCIP) and to outline the emerging issues which support a request to further defer the planned timeline for the introduction of this community development grant funding programme.
- 1.2** Further detail and clarification is required on the level of the transferring budget for community development and this is unlikely to be confirmed until mid 2014. This, alongside the strategic alignment issue raised in our consultation and engagement to date, would suggest we delay the introduction of the new programme until 2017 to allow BCIP to be fully aligned with the broader transfer of functions work stream.
- 1.3** The '*Building Better Communities - Belfast Community Investment Programme*' (BCIP) began as a joint project between the council and DSD with the aim of developing a strategic community development fund for the city.
- 1.4** This joint commitment was made prior to the LGR process. However, there was early recognition that BCIP could provide valuable learning for later transfers (including those related to the Neighbourhood Renewal programme).
- 1.5** Under the original plan BCIP's estimated £5.4 million annual budget was to be drawn from both organisations' existing community development grant schemes that were due to close in March 2014. These included the council's Advice and Information Grant, Capacity Support Grant, Revenue and other small community grants; Belfast Regeneration Office's Neighbourhood Renewal funding for community development; and the Voluntary and Community Unit's Community Investment Fund in Belfast.
- 1.6** In January 2013 Development Committee (and DSD) adopted an 'outcomes framework' for the new programme that defined the impact it was expected to make in the city. With this framework in place four new grant streams were then designed to support these outcomes. These streams were approved in principle by Development Committee in April

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2013 along with proposals for both a public consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment to begin the following month.

- 1.7 However, this public consultation did not begin in May as planned. There were two main reasons for this. Pre-consultation feedback from the community and voluntary sector suggested that, while there was broad support for BCIP, the 2014 date was both too ambitious and misaligned with other LGR transfers that were likely to affect the sector. Members also wanted additional research on the likely equality impact of the proposals across the city.
- 1.8 Following this, DSD officials concluded that 2014 was too ambitious and proposed April 2015 as a more realistic timeframe. Given this move to 2015, they then withdrew from BCIP, arguing that it had become part of the wider LGR transfer and therefore it no longer held the status of a separate pilot project. This decision led to the withdrawal of their five staff members from the project team.
- 1.9 During the summer of 2013 a much reduced council project team have worked to make the necessary arrangements for a 2015 start date (while also working to ensure that there would be interim arrangements in place for existing grants during 2014/15). In August 2013 Development Committee agreed to the new timetable. Committee also agreed that, with BCIP moving to 2015, political approval on the project needed to pass to the Voluntary Transition Committee.

2 Key Issues

Issues for the public consultation

- 2.1 Under the new timeline BCIP planned to open for applications to its four new grant schemes in late spring 2014. This would give groups eight weeks to prepare their multi-annual applications; and three months for officers to carry out assessments and make recommendations to Members. This would then allow time to notify groups three months in advance of the end of their contracts in 2015. To meet these dates (and to avoid the council election purdah period) BCIP would need to go to public consultation no later than October 2013.
- 2.2 In order to prepare an equality impact assessment for the public consultation, we would need a number of immediate decisions about the programme. These include agreement on a grant aid budget and a method for allocating this across the city. However, it has become apparent that the

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council is not yet in a position to provide such an indicative budget.

- 2.3 The original £5.4 million BCIP budget was based on the grants that had been awarded across all of the legacy grant programmes in 2012/13. However, from 2015 this approach will no longer be adequate. Given that details of transferring budgets are unlikely to be confirmed until mid-2014, it will be necessary to identify indicative budgets upon which to plan for the continuity of existing services at point of transfer in 2015. This has proved a difficult task as part of the BCIP process given that indicative budgets will both raise expectations amongst external stakeholders and leave a legacy regarding resourcing for what will effectively be a new authority only to be established in May 2014.
- 2.4 Amongst the additional factors we would need to consider is the impact of the new areas coming into the city and the demands that this 20% increase in our population might make on the programme.
- 2.5 From 2015 the BCIP budget decision will lie solely with council. It will thus form part of the broader discussion around the total LGR budget transferring to council from central government. In effect it will be up to council to decide how much of the total regeneration and community development available budget it wants to assign to BCIP.
- 2.6 This leaves two scenarios regarding the BCIP public consultation: The council could consult on the new grant programme but not be in a position to indicate how much money the scheme will make available and therefore not be in a position to determine the equality impact of the proposal. Or we go to consultation with only an indicative commitment by council – one which may need to be change following the submission of financial information from DSD next year.
- 2.7 Both scenarios present obvious financial and reputation risks for the council and it is recommended that we don't proceed with the BCIP consultation at this time.
- 2.8 However, by not going to consultation in October, the programme will miss its timeline for an open call in late Spring 2014 and therefore not be in a position to offer contracts from 2015.

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Alternative proposal for community development funding

- 2.9 Given this, it is proposed that activity on BCIP should now be incorporated into the much wider programme of work that the council has begun as part of its preparation for the transfer of regeneration functions in 2015. This would allow the council to consider related issues in an integrated manner.
- 2.10 Given the scale of existing commitments and experience across the breadth of the urban regeneration function, and supported by the learning from BCIP, officers are considering two work streams are established to operate in parallel and to support transition:
- i. Transfer – to focus on the immediate practical arrangements/decisions necessary for Council to maintain and deliver agreed transferred services and resources on 1st April 2015. In essence this provides continuity of service and helps manage expectations/risks, allowing for a step-change in delivery during a transitional 2015-2017 period.
 - ii. Transform – to focus on developing the future vision/strategy and delivery model for the regeneration for the city. This is a longer term process but will operate in parallel to the Transfer strand of work and beyond (2013-2017) enabling Council to have a composite understanding of the scope/breadth of the regeneration functions to inform the decisions around delivery structures, alignment of resources etc and maximise the ability to implement the learning from elsewhere to deliver an effective integrated regeneration function for the future.
- 2.13 This approach would ensure that BCIP will become an integral element of our council's regeneration policy and would ensure that future investment in community development activity and infrastructure is aligned to and supports the agreed targeted outcomes of any urban regeneration strategy and align with any community planning approach.
- 2.14 Rather than focusing solely on BCIP, which in addition to our own grants, offered a mechanism to replace only the 'community development' strand of Neighbourhood Renewal (approximately 27% of the total budget), this more ambitious approach would develop proposals for a successor to the entire revenue strand of NR. Support for community

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development would thus represent only one strand of this successor (and would perhaps form phase one of a programme). The timescale for the implementation of this would have to be extended to 2017.

- 2.15 Under this proposal Community Services would work with the Central Grants Unit to ensure that its existing grant streams are ready for a full competitive open call across all of the new council area for the period 2015 to 2017.
- 2.16 The existing grants (for Revenue, Capacity Support and Advice and Information) would not be changed in any substantive way – thus reducing the need for an equality impact assessment or public consultation.
- 2.17 During the 2014/2015 period Community Services will extend its contracts to existing groups and an additional resource will be made available to new groups and groups with new facilities. Development support will also be offered to groups, which are not currently in receipt of Community Support Programme funds. The resources necessary will be allocated from the £2m allocated to address non-recurrent convergence issues agreed by the VTC on 7th June, 2013 and ratified by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21st June, 2013.
- 2.18 Early discussions will be required with DSD regarding their plans for the Neighbourhood Renewal programme post 2015 (and the Voluntary and Community Unit's small Community Investment Fund). Currently these are due to end in March 2015 and the council to date has received no detail on the arrangements for their transfer. It will be equally important to engage early with the community and voluntary sector following our decision on a way forward.

Governance

- 2.19 Under the existing 2015 timeline for BCIP a new council-only project governance structure had been adopted by Development Committee (with the director of Development as the single SRO). Agreeing to this proposal the Committee also requested the establishment of a new Members Reference Group as part of this structure. Nominations to this group are already being sought from the Parties by Democratic Services.
- 2.20 However, if the proposal to integrate BCIP into the wider LGR project for 2017 is adopted by Committee then it is unlikely that BCIP will require its own project governance

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structure. If this is the case then it is recommended that the Members Reference Group is not established.

- 2.21 The All Party Working Group on Community Planning currently receives regular updates on the BCIP project and it is suggested that, in the absence of separate BCIP governance arrangements, this continues.
- 2.22 The need and design of any elected member reference mechanisms for the broader discussion on post-Neighbourhood Renewal successors would therefore be considered and agreed as part of this ongoing planning.

Communications

- 2.23 Subsequent to committee consideration, officers propose to engage with key stakeholders to outline our proposed approach to future funding arrangements. It is critical that our communication and engagement with the sector and other key groups is co-ordinated with DSD in order to ensure a consistent message.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 Staff resources in Community Services will be realigned to support the preparation for an open call for its existing grant schemes.
- 3.2 Any resources required will be met from the £2m allocated towards the cost of non-recurrent convergence issues. There will, therefore, be no additional cost to the ratepayer.
- 3.3 Work will also begin on determining the post-2015 budget for Revenue, Capacity Support and Advice and Information grants.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 4.1 Equality and good relations implications, in relation to this policy, are still under consideration. Further updates will be sent to the Equality and Diversity Officer in due course.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Agree to suspend plans for the October public consultation on BCIP.
 - ii. Agree to integrate the existing work into the wider corporate activities on the transfer of functions against a 2017 timeline.

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- iii. Agree to begin preparations for an open call for Community Services grants (for the period 2015 to 2017).
- iv. Consider the recommendations regarding the BCIP Members Reference Group and agree to alternative arrangements via the existing All-Party Reference Group on Community Planning.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Councillors' Remuneration Panel

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 As part of the Local Government Reform Programme, the Councillors' Remuneration Panel for NI is conducting a review of councillors' remuneration and advising on the system and level of allowances appropriate for the 11 new councils.
- 1.2 The Panel has been asked to make recommendations that fairly reflect the roles and responsibilities that councillors will be taking on in the new councils, post reorganisation in April, 2015. It is also considering the allowances that should be paid during the shadow period following the local government elections in 2014 when the new councils will operate alongside the existing 26.

The panel was appointed on 1st May 2013 and has six months (to 1st November) to submit its final recommendations

It is anticipated that the Council will be asked to submit a formal position to the Panel by the middle of October.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Principles

The Council, in its response to the last consultation on Councillors' Remuneration back in 2006, agreed on a number of broad principles which are still relevant today. The Council agreed that a revised remuneration scheme should:

- Compensate public representatives appropriately and uniformly for the contribution they make to public life
- Be consistent with the aims and objectives of government

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- Assist councils to put in place streamlined governance arrangements
- Recognise the uniqueness of councils through tiered Special Responsibility Allowances

2.2 Role of Councillor

Whilst the original Councillors' Remuneration Working Group (CRWG) report in 2006 referred to the additional responsibilities which Councillors will have following the implementation of local government reform, it did not refer to the unique situation within which Councillors in Northern Ireland have to work on a daily basis.

In 2006, the CRWG recommended that the role of a councillor should be considered to be on average equivalent to half (or 50%) of a full time job. This estimation does not appear to reflect the unique role of the councillor in Northern Ireland nor the new duties which will be expected of councillors following local government reform - when they will be expected to participate in area and thematic committees, to perform an oversight and scrutiny role, to deal with statutory town planning, community planning and regeneration.

Officers have studied the remuneration arrangements currently in place in the rest of the UK and Ireland. In Wales the Basic Allowance was calculated originally on the basis of a councillor role being equivalent to 60% of a full time job and in Scotland the same calculation is based on 75% of a full time job.

It is therefore recommended that the Council submit to the Panel that the role of a Councillor should not be considered to be equivalent to half of a full time job but should more closely reflect the arrangements in Scotland and Wales.

2.3 Basic Allowance

At present, all Councillors in Belfast receive a Basic Allowance of £9,835, the maximum level of allowance which is determined by the Department of the Environment.

In England, local independent remuneration panels have the freedom to use any salary rate they feel is appropriate. It is also the overwhelming practice to apply a public service discount (33% being the norm) to the hours required to fulfil a backbench councillor role when determining the level of basic allowance.

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In The republic of Ireland the maximum basic allowance is €16,724 – equivalent to £14,021, in Scotland, the maximum is £18,916 (based on 75% of the median gross annual salary) with no public service discount built in, and in Wales it is £13,175 (based on an earlier calculation of 3/5ths of the median gross annual salary) also with no public service discount built in.

It is recommended that the Committee submit to the Panel that the level of basic allowance should be established to fairly and adequately recompense councillors for the responsible position which they are expected to fulfil. The level of allowance should be such as to attract a wide range of new talent to Councils, particularly from the business sector which has been under-represented in Belfast for a number of years.

It is recommended that the Council submit to the Panel that a formula be devised to determine the Basic Allowance which reflects the approaches used in Wales and Scotland with Scotland, as the most recent review completed, being the preferred model.

It is further recommended that the Council should oppose any proposal to impose any level of public service discount when considering a formula for remuneration of councillors in Northern Ireland.

2.4 Special Responsibility Allowance

The Council currently pays Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors it considers to have significant, additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor. The maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance is determined by the Department of the Environment (based upon population bands).

The division of the Special Responsibility Allowance is based upon the positions held by individual Members either as Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees or as Officers within the Political Parties. The allocations are consistent with the Council's system of proportionality which seeks to allocate positions in accordance with the relative strength of the Parties within the Council.

In 2006, the CRWG found that the payment of SRAs varied amongst councils in Northern Ireland but that the total sums paid out in SRAs were very small in comparison to the rest of the UK. The CRWG concluded that it would be

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appropriate to have flexibility within a framework and that the amount a council can spend on SRA should be banded by council population size and subject to a maximum.

The release of the Local Government Bill recently has highlighted that there will be options as to the form of governance that a Council may choose to operate under in 2015 onwards. Councils may choose to operate a system of executive or cabinet governance with robust overview and scrutiny arrangements. This would create a core of councillors (executive members) who would have to operate on a full-time basis. The level of Special Responsibility Allowance which a Council should be able to pay to such councillors needs to reflect this full-time equivalence.

It is recommended that the Council submit to the Panel:

- that a framework should be established for determining Special Responsibility Allowance.
- that the Civic Allowances and Civic Expenses of the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Lord Mayor and, in some cases, the High Sheriff should continue to be paid as they are currently and as legislated for under Sections 12 and 13 (2a) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- that the SRA should continue to be banded according to size of population and/or annual budget
- that the amount of SRA, both pre 2015 and following the creation of the 11 new councils, must be established at a level which reflects adequately the roles and responsibilities undertaken by key players in the Council.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 It is not possible to calculate the resource implications of any revised remuneration arrangements until detailed proposals are provided on the way forward.

It is anticipated that the amount of money currently provided by DOE for Special Responsibility Allowances would need to be increased substantially. However, it is difficult to provide any indicative figures around the amounts attached to SRAs until the maximum amount is known and the governance structure of the new council has been determined.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 4.1 There are no equality and good relations implications contained within this report.

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5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to agree to the submission of a detailed paper to the Councillors' Remuneration Panel setting out the following basic principles:

- that in calculating the basic allowance the role of a Councillor should be considered to be equivalent to 75% of a full-time job which would closely reflect the arrangements in Scotland.
- That the Council is opposed any proposal to impose any level of public service discount when considering a formula for remuneration of councillors in Northern Ireland.
- that a framework be established for determining Special Responsibility Allowance and that the SRA should continue to be banded according to size of population and/or annual Council budget.
- that the amount of SRA, both pre 2015 and following the creation of the 11 new councils, must be established at a level which reflects adequately the roles and responsibilities undertaken by key players in the Council."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman

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Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 10th October, 2013

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McKee (Chairman);
Aldermen Robinson and Rodgers;
Councillors Beattie, Convery, Corr,
Cunningham, Haire, Hendron, Hanna,
Hussey, Kyle, McCabe, McNamee,
Mallon, Mullan, Ó Donnghaile,
Thompson and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks
and Leisure;
Mrs. P. Scarborough, Democratic Services Section; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

New Members

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Beattie and Verner to their first meeting of the Committee.

Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th September were taken and read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Incident at the Alexandra Park

The Director provided the Committee with an overview of the circumstances surrounding the discovery of a body within the Alexandra Park that morning.

After discussion, during which the Director undertook to review the manner in which Members were advised of serious incidents within the Department's properties, the Committee noted the comments of the Director.

Support for Sport

Small Development Grants and 'Clubmark' Awards

The Committee noted a schedule of Support for Sport applications which related to development and hospitality grants, together with a schedule of 'Clubmark' awards,

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which had been approved by the Director in accordance with the authority delegated to him, information on which was available on the Council's Mod.gov website.

Individual Development Grants

The Committee noted a schedule of Individual Development Grants, a copy of which is set out hereunder, which had been approved by the Director in accordance with the authority delegated to him by the Committee at its meeting on 11th October, 2012.

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Sports Club</u>	<u>Forename</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Recommend</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Archery	City of Belfast Archery Club	Mel	Lawther	Recommend	£1,000
Canoeing	Canoe Slalom Northern Ireland	Matthew	McKnight	Recommend	£1,000
Athletics	Unattached	Stephen	Scullion	Recommend	£1,000
Cycling	Baku Cycling Project	David	McCann	Recommend	£1,000
Athletics	North Belfast Harriers	Breege	Connolly	Recommend	£1,000
Archery	City of Belfast Archery Club	Stuart	Wilson	Recommend	£1,000
Cycling	Synergy Baku	Connor	McConvey	Recommend	£1,000
Tennis	Belfast Boat Club	Laura	Reid	Recommend	£500
Table tennis	Ormeau TTC Anneccy TTC	Keith	Knox	Recommend	£500
Golf	Shandon Park Golf Club	Chloe	Weir	Recommend	£500
Tennis	Windsor Tennis Club	Karola	Bejenaru	Recommend	£500

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<u>Sport</u>	<u>Sports Club</u>	<u>Forename</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Recommend</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Cycling	Team IG - Sigma Sport	Peter	Hawkins	Recommend	£500
Cycling	East Antrim Cycling Club	Daniel	Stewart	Recommend	£500
Climbing	Northern Ireland Youth Climbing Team	Eoin	Action	Recommend	£500
Trampolining	Andersonstown Trampoline Club	Ryan	Devine	Recommend	£250
Judo	Murakwai Judo	Daniel	Mayhew	Recommend	£250
Judo	Murakwai Judo	James	Reid	Recommend	£250
Judo	Murakwai Judo	Skye	Sands	Recommend	£250
Boxing	St George's A.B.C	James	McGivern	Recommend	£250
Boxing	Holy Family GG	Michaela	Walsh	Recommend	£250
Boxing	Holy Family GG	Aidan	Walsh	Recommend	£250
Climbing	NI and All Ireland Climbing Team	Jamie	Rankin	Recommend	£250
Climbing	NIYCT also Irish Team Member	Carson	Carnduff	Recommend	£250
Climbing	Sticky Feet	Megan	Foreman	Recommend	£250
Table tennis	Glenburn Table Tennis Club	Owen	Cathcart	Recommend	£250

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<u>Sport</u>	<u>Sports Club</u>	<u>Forename</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Recommend</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Taekwondo	Cheol Taekwondo Academy	Damian	Duffy	Recommend	£250
Taekwondo	Cheol Taekwondo Academy	Emma	McCartney	Recommend	£250
Hockey	Lisnagarvey HC	Gavin	Adams	Recommend	£250
Athletics	City of Lisburn	Megan	Marrs	Recommend	£250
Athletics	City of Lisburn	Ronan	Jenkins	Recommend	£250
Squash	Ballynafeigh	Emma	McGugan	Recommend	£250
Squash	Ballynafeigh	Hannah	McGugan	Recommend	£250
Boxing	St. Paul's ABC	Brendan	Irvine	Recommend	£250
Boxing	Clonard ABC	Conor	Quinn	Recommend	£250
				<u>Total</u>	<u>£15,500</u>

In response to a Member's query regarding the awarding of grants to applicants residing outside the City boundary, the Director agreed to review the eligibility criteria and to submit a report in this regard to a future meeting of the Committee. In addition, it was agreed that a report outlining the benefits which had been achieved through the Scheme would be submitted to a future meeting.

Parks Events – Small Grants Scheme

The Director reminded the Committee that the Parks Events Small Grants Scheme, which had been established in 2006, had sought to encourage community-based groups to host a range of events in local parks. He explained that the initiative had proved to be a success and indicated that funding of £100,000 had been allocated for groups in 2013/2014, with a maximum grant of £3,000 available to successful applicants. He indicated that a total of 44 applications for assistance had been received

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in the current year, of which 36 had been deemed eligible for funding. He added that a total of 50 events would be held in 26 separate locations across Belfast.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed:

- that the Department would continue the Scheme in 2014/2015;
- that the funding would be maintained at £100,000; and
- to delegate authority to the Director to make future awards.

Future Management of Parks

Arising from discussion on the foregoing report, the Director agreed to submit a report to a future meeting which would outline the feasibility of the area management of parks being undertaken on a north, south, east and west basis, as opposed to the current arrangements which separated the areas on a north, east and south/west basis.

Fees and Charges

The Committee agreed to defer, until its meeting on 14th November, consideration of a report in respect of departmental fees and charges for the financial year 2014/2015. It was noted that, during the interim period, briefings on the proposed fees and charges would be provided to those parties who wished to receive them.

Study Visit to Crematoria

Arising from discussion on the proposed fees and charges, insofar as they related to the City of Belfast Crematorium, a Member referred to a proposed study visit to view crematoria in England, which had been organised by Cogent Consulting, and which would take place on Thursday and Friday 16th and 17th October. He reminded the Committee that it had been anticipated that the visit would involve Elected Members from both Belfast City Council and Newtownabbey Borough Council. However, he expressed concern that the date which had been chosen by the consultants for the visit had not proved to be suitable for the Members of Belfast City Council and, given that the purpose of visit was to examine models which might be utilised in the joint management of a new crematorium in the Newtownabbey area, he emphasised that it was important that the Council was represented at a political level.

In response, the Director reminded the Members that the Department had written to each of the Party Leaders in July seeking nominations for the study visit and, in addition, the Committee had considered a report in this regard at its meeting on 8th August. He pointed out that the dates for the visit had been determined not by the consultants, but by the host crematoria in England. He indicated that any Member of the Committee who so wished to attend would be accommodated should they contact the Department at the earliest opportunity.

Noted.

Belfast Zoo – Adoption Package Review

The Committee considered the undernoted report and noted that the schedule of charges in respect of the above-mentioned matter had been published on the Council's Mod.gov website:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Committee will recall the report presented at the September 2013 meeting regarding the review of the Zoo's animal adoption package. Following the Committee's consideration in September, a further review has taken place and officers have made further enhancements to the various adoption packages, taking into account Members comments.

2. Key Issues

The adoption package costs remain unchanged from the original proposal in September and include a new package for our younger visitors. This includes a gift bag, a free child entrance ticket, a fact sheet and certificate. This is priced at £25.00 and is aimed at the gift market.

The bronze package has been enhanced, and now includes one free entrance ticket, and the chance for the adopter and one guest to attend an exclusive behind the scenes evening tour of the Zoo, as well as a number of features that were previously outlined.

The silver package now includes four free entrance tickets to the Zoo, a personalised guided tour of the zoo during the summer for the adopter and one friend, and the chance for the adopter and three guests to attend an exclusive behind the scenes evening tour of the Zoo, as well as a number of features that were previously outlined;

The gold package now includes eight free entrance tickets to the zoo, a personalised guided tour of the Zoo during the summer for the adopter and up to ten guests, the opportunity to meet the zookeeper who manages the adopter's chosen animal and learn more about how it is looked after (including the chance to access areas normally restricted to visitors), and the chance for the adopter and three guests to attend an exclusive behind the scenes evening tour of the Zoo, as well as a number of features that were previously outlined.

- 2.2 Further work is ongoing to consider enhancements to the adoption packages through offers at the Zoo's gift shop and catering outlets and proposals will be brought forward in due course.

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- 2.3 Work is also in progress to review the current names of the four packages with a view to considering options regarding their branding.

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial

The Zoo's income has been under pressure for the last few years and it is hoped that the review of the adoption packages and the promotion around these can help to stimulate their use. A new package aimed at children has been recommended and the price of the Bronze package has been reduced to reflect the benchmarking information.

All these changes will be reflected in the fees and charges for the Zoo which will be brought to committee in the autumn. The new prices will be effective from April 2014 however the use of previously agreed delegated authority from the Director may be required for any special promotions and in particular to launch the new basic package in time for the Christmas period. A review of membership packages is also underway and will be included in the fees and charges report.

Human Resources

The adoption scheme is overseen by the Zoo's commercial and marketing team and there are no additional human resource needs following the review.

4. **Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to approve the new adoption packages"

The Committee adopted the recommendation and endorsed the associated schedule of charges.

Review of Crèche Provision

The Committee agreed to defer, until its meeting on 14th November, consideration of a report on the Department's Review of Crèche Provision to enable further information to be provided.

Belfast Community Sports Development Network

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 **Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 12 February 2009 the Committee supported an application for funding to Sport NI to participate in the

Active Communities Programme. This was successful and the programme has been running since 2011.

- 1.2 Active Communities is an investment programme delivered by Sport NI that seeks to employ, deploy and train a network of full time and part time sports coaches and leaders to deliver activities in community and club settings across Northern Ireland, with a view to increasing participation in sport and physical recreation, especially among underrepresented groups.**
- 1.3 A package of funding and business a plan was put together to support BCSDN (Belfast Community Sports Development Network) as the lead delivery partner for Sport NI's Active Communities programme under the auspices of the Active Belfast Consortium (ABC).**
- 1.4 The Committee gave approval for the Director of Parks and Leisure, in consultation with the Chair of Parks and Leisure, to agree the Council's contribution to the overall package of funding up to a maximum of £50,000 per annum.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 As lead partner Belfast City Council is responsible for the management of the project including monitoring and evaluation and managing the overall investment in the project by all consortium members.**

In keeping with this effective governance of the project a Value for Money Audit was commissioned in May 2013 to:

- review the extent to which BCSDN is complying with the terms of the contract; and to review the value for money provided by the contracted service.**
- 2.2 Significant levels of inconsistencies and areas of non-compliance, which could lead to the potential for irregularities, were identified through the review. In particular there were issues with:**
 - 35% of targets per the ABC Action Plan Report 2012/13 were not achieved**
 - Delivery of the programme has become less cost effective in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12 as the cost per new participant has increased from £20 to £22**
 - BCSDN is not compliant with BCC requirements to deliver the Active Communities Programme consistently across Belfast**
 - Active Communities Programme does not appear to be contributing more than the minimum requirements**

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of the school curriculum. This is not compliant with the strategic aims of the Active Communities programme to contribute added value to schools.

- Only 52% of coaches achieved the target of 14.5 coaching hours per week. In our opinion this is an unsatisfactory level of performance
- 54% of the data contained errors; this is an unsatisfactory level of compliance and calls into question the reliability of the AC Database for performance monitoring.
- When the cost per participant is adjusted for the 54% error rate, cost per new participant increases to £47, which is above the benchmark figure of £30, thereby indicating that BCSDN does not provide value for money.

- 2.3 The report has been shared with the Board of BCSDN and officers will engage with BCSDN on the findings of the VFM Audit recommendations and to consider any proposals that they have regarding the issues raised. BCSDN have now provided an initial view of the findings of the audit.

In addition the audit indicates that this is an appropriate time to review the options for future delivery and have recommended that an options report be prepared, considering the cost, benefits and risks associated with the options currently available to the Council. They suggest that this should include consideration of:

- The status quo
- Bring in-house maintaining the delivery partner structure
- Bring in-house
- Alternative provider

3 Resource Implications

An annual contribution of £50k has been provided for in 2013/14 and a decision will be required on the commitment to the project going forward.

Currently the Director chairs the consortium and the Leisure Development Manager and his team manage the contract with BCSDN.

4 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to agree that officers engage with BCSDN on the development of an improvement plan and that a review of the options for the future delivery be undertaken with

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a report being prepared for a future meeting of the Committee.”

After discussion, during which a number of Members stressed that the Department should seek to monitor closely the performance and compliance figures reported in respect of the Programme, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Tendering Exercises

The Director sought, and was granted approval to, undertake tendering exercises and to award, under the Scheme of Delegation, contracts to the most economically advantageous tenders submitted for the undernoted services:

<u>Tender</u>	<u>Cost</u>
• Supply and Delivery of Lucerne Hay to the Zoo	- £16,000
• Supply and Delivery of Confectionery to the Zoo (income)	- £30,000
• Provision of Gritting Service	- £20,000

The Committee noted that the duration of each of the contracts would be for a three-year period, subject to satisfactory performance and annual review.

Cherryvale Playing Fields – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The Committee will recall that the Pitches strategy was formally agreed at Council in March 2012. Members are reminded that a central strand of the strategy was the need to intensify use owing to the shortfall in the number of pitches across the city. Given the lack of open space in the city and the desire to avoid using further open space for pitches, it was agreed that the construction of artificial turf pitches was the preferred method of increasing use. Members will be aware that these are suitable for greater use as opposed to the limited use of natural turf which requires recovery time between games and at the end of each playing season.

Members are reminded that Cherryvale Playing Fields were prioritised as part of the evaluation process based on an assessment matrix agreed by Committee. This process took into account several factors one of which was partnership funding. In this case there had been an offer of funding from GAA to help improve provision for GAA on a number of sites across the city, one of which was Cherryvale Playing Fields. The Committee will recall that at its meeting in April 2013 it noted the approach with GAA and agreed that Officers continue to meet with the GAA in order to reach agreement.

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In essence, Officers were tasked to deliver a 3rd generation artificial turf pitch in Cherryvale Playing fields.

During the past year there has been a series of meetings between Council Officers and representatives from GAA with the aim of agreeing a scheme layout. This was proved to be challenging owing to the constraints of Cherryvale itself and the use of the facility by other sporting codes, including rugby and association football. Whilst Cherryvale is designated as Playing Fields, the facility also contains a children's playground and is regularly used by dog walkers, joggers etc.

A number of options have been examined with a view to minimising the impact on the playing fields and the detriment to each of the sporting codes and other users. The main options are set out below. Members will note that all of the options contain an artificial turf pitch which was the agreed position approved by Committee.

Option 1 – Replace existing GAA natural turf to 3G

Disadvantages

1. GAA will lose an existing grass pitch
2. Some residents have voiced concerns re: additional use, lighting and noise
3. Some non-sports affiliated users have expressed concern that use of the playing fields will be restricted owing to the inclusion of fencing; and
4. Funding from GAA may be at risk.

Advantages

1. This would intensify use;
2. There would be no detriment to rugby or soccer;
3. Lighting and noise would be further removed from the immediate vicinity of the residents.

Option 2 – Proposed Agreed Option from Sporting Codes

Disadvantages

1. There is detriment to rugby, soccer and GAA;
2. Some residents have voiced concerns against additional use, lighting and noise;
3. Some non sports affiliated users have expressed concern that use of the playing fields will be restricted owing to the inclusion of fencing.

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Advantages

1. GAA will retain the existing grass pitch;
2. All sporting codes will gain use of the artificial turf pitch through a pre-agreed management plan; and
3. Artificial turf pitch will permit intensification of use.

Option 3 – Reduced Scale Artificial Turf Pitch

Disadvantages

1. A more limited artificial turf pitch will not meet the needs of GAA;
2. Some residents have voiced concerns against additional use, lighting and noise; and
3. Some non sports affiliated users have expressed concern that use of the playing fields will be restricted owing to the inclusion of fencing

Advantages

1. There will be intensification of use; and
2. There is no detriment to rugby or soccer.

Discussions have been widened out and there have been several meetings with residents who live immediately adjacent to the park as well as users from the wider community which would include dog walkers. A group of residents and other non sports affiliated users of the playing fields have expressed concern about a number of issues:

1. The lack of consultation with the residents;
2. The proposal to install a floodlit artificial pitch in the playing fields adjacent to residents accommodation with the associated increase in noise and light levels and increased use of the facility;
3. The inclusion of fencing will restrict use of the playing fields by non sports affiliated users.

The strong view from those objecting is that they do not want any form of 3rd generation artificial turf pitch located in Cherryvale.

For this reason a 4th option is presented to Committee, this option excludes the artificial pitch.

Option 4 – Do nothing and leave site as is

Disadvantages

1. There will be no intensification of use;

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2. Funding from GAA will be at risk; and
3. Sporting groups at Cherryvale are likely to object.

Advantages

1. The concerns of those residents and non sports affiliated users will have been removed.

2 Key Issues

The Committee is asked to consider the following:

1. Cherryvale is essentially playing fields;
2. Council has through the Pitches Strategy taken a decision to support local sports through increasing the capacity for use of its facility by installing artificial turf pitches, floodlighting and fencing;
3. Cherryvale, owing in part to the partnership funding, has been identified as a site;
4. Following significant discussions with sporting codes Option 2 is presented as a proposed way forward to deliver this project within the Pitches Strategy;
5. A group of residents and other non sports affiliated users have stated their opposition to the proposal owing to concerns around opening times; lighting, noise and increased use;
6. Consideration has been given to the needs of other users and a trim trail around the perimeter of the site has been added to the proposals;
7. Representatives from the residents and non sports affiliated users read out a prepared statement and asked if it could be presented to the Committee;
8. It is likely that should the members agree to the proposed option 2, there will be opposition to this in the planning process;
9. The Committee is asked to note that whilst there is opposition to the proposal not all residents are of this view and a number spoke out at the recent public meeting in support of the proposals. In addition, one of the local schools located immediately adjacent to the pitches openly supported the proposals on the basis that it provided an opportunity for the school to gain access to improved facilities in the area. The school currently has no playing field provision of its own.
10. The importance of the views of those who live immediately adjacent to our facilities and those who use them cannot be understated and it is important to address these concerns through locality sensitive management of the facility;

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11. It is equally important that the development and improvement of our facilities to meet the needs of other users be progressed;
12. Officers are confident that through sensitive management of the facility the impact of the concerns can be minimised;
13. Members are asked to note that as part of the planning process Council will be required to submit ecological survey; Lux (lighting) surveys and noise surveys to satisfy planning requirements on these matters;
14. If Committee decides not to support the proposals for investment in Cherryvale and to support Option 4, consideration would be given to investing in the next sites identified through the Pitches Strategy which were Northlink Playing Fields and Boucher Road Playing Fields.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

There are no additional costs at this time.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 4.1 There are no equality implications

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 **The Committee is asked to consider the report and its contents; to consider in particular the concerns highlighted in the report and to direct officers to the preferred approach."**

The Assistant Director outlined the principal aspects of the report and provided an overview of the consultation exercises which had been undertaken by the Department in respect of the proposals. A number of Members indicated that they had been contacted by residents living with the vicinity of the Playing Fields, particularly from Knock Eden Park, who had requested that further consultations be undertaken. A further Member suggested that, prior to any decision being taken by the Committee, it would be prudent to undertake a site visit to the Playing Fields and, given the localised nature of the objections, to extend an invitation to Members representing the Laganbank District Electoral Area to attend that visit also.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to defer, until its meeting on 14th November, consideration of the matter to enable a site visit, to which Members

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representing the Laganbank District Electoral Area would be invited to attend, to be held on Saturday, 19th October at 10.00 a.m.

It was agreed further that deputations, primarily from residents from Knock Eden Park, would be received by the Committee at a special meeting to be held in the Lavery Room on Tuesday, 5th November at 4.30 p.m., prior to any decision being taken in respect of the proposals.

Environmental Improvement Scheme – Lower Shankill

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Committee is asked to note that Officials from the Department for Social Development have met with Council Officers to update them on proposals to undertake a significant environmental improvement scheme in the Lower Shankill. The indicative cost of the scheme at this time is in the region of £1.8m which will be met by the Department.

Discussions are ongoing between the Housing Executive and the Roads Service, each organisation owns part of the land, although the Housing Executive is the main landowner in this instance.

Members are asked to note that no capital money has been committed to this project by the Department. However, it is the Department’s intention to seek the necessary allocation. Preliminary discussions with Officials from the Department have intimated the cost of maintenance for 12 months, post completion, will be included.

Whilst the Housing Executive is the main land owner Officials have indicated that the Executive is not in a position to undertake the operational maintenance post completion. The Council has been asked to consider whether it is prepared to accept the transfer of land and the associated maintenance and public liability associated with the project. The Executive has indicated that low level maintenance will underpin the design.

Members will note from the attached drawing that the proposal includes a multi user games area and a playground. The remainder of the area will incorporate grassed areas, paths and some hedging. It is not intended that bedding will be included.

2. **Key Issues**

The key issue that the committee is being asked to consider at this stage is whether the Council is willing to accept the land transfer from the Housing Executive and to undertake the maintenance and public liability associated with the scheme post completion and after the first year. In considering its position the Members may wish to consider the following points:

1. The project is at its early stages in development;
2. There has been limited consultation with the community;
3. The funding from DSD has not yet been committed;
4. It is likely that it will be a further 2-3 years before the project is completed;
5. Council Officers have not yet commented on the proposals;
6. There are a number of management issues which have not been worked through such as the management of the MUGA or the need for an additional playground in area which already has three such facilities in close proximity at the Hammer, at Dover Street and at Brown Square;
7. The revenue costs are not available at present, however, a preliminary estimate based on the playground and the MUGA might be in the region of £30,000 per annum;
8. It is unlikely that this work could be absorbed within the existing budget and staffing structure;

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial Implications

Whilst there are no capital expenditure requirements the initial estimated revenue cost may be the region of £30,000 per annum, subject to further review.

Human Resource Implications

Consideration will be required to be given to the impact of this on overall workload of the current establishment.

Asset and Other implications

This will increase the Council's asset holding and will also increase the council's liability.

From a community perspective this project will improve the aesthetic appearance of the area and minimise the potential for

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anti social behaviour through incorporating secure by design principles.

4. Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations implications.

5. Recommendations

Committee is asked to support the proposed in principle at this stage subject to:

- **capital funding being secured by the Department;**
- **the land is transferred at nil cost to the Council and the Department meeting the cost of maintenance in the first year; and**
- **the details of the scheme being agreed by the Council.**

The Committee adopted the recommendations, subject to the endorsement by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of the proposal to acquire the land in accordance with Standing Order 60.

Connswater Community Greenway – Bridge Naming

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th June, it had approved the process by which a name would be chosen for a new bridge which would link the Airport Road with the Victoria Park as part of the Connswater Community Greenway. The Assistant Director reported that the panel appointed for this purpose had shortlisted five names for consideration by means of a public vote, viz., The Island Bridge, The Victoria 'Vicky' Bridge, The Avalon Bridge, The Cranes Bridge and The Sam Thompson Bridge.

She tabled for the Committee's information the result of the vote, which had closed the previously day, and pointed out that the name The Sam Thompson Bridge had been the winner by securing 44% of the 1,441 votes cast. She added that the name The Avalon Bridge, which was in recognition of Van Morrison's 1989 album 'Avalon Sunset', had finished in second place with 29%, or 408 of the votes. The name The Victoria Bridge had received 189 votes, while The Island Bridge had finished in fourth place with 107 votes and The Cranes Bridge had received 79 of the votes cast.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the bridge be named in honour of the local playwright Sam Thompson, subject to the endorsement by the Council at its meeting on 4th November.

Business in the Community (BITC) – Community Garden

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Council received a request in July 2013 from Business in the Community (BITC) for support with the development of a**

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new community garden on the Albertbridge Road, as part of a cross-community growing project adjacent to a key interface area.

- 1.2 BITC is a not for profit membership body working with private and public sector organisations to address local community and wider sustainability issues in Northern Ireland. Belfast City Council has engaged in a range of activities with BITC over several years and is currently a BITC member organisation.
- 1.3 In 2012, BITC applied to Biffa Award, the Landfill Communities Fund distributor, for funding to support a new community garden project. BITC has been offered a £44,000 grant, (to which BITC has already made a 10% match funding contribution) by Biffa Award, subject to securing full planning permission by 30 September 2013. To date, a landscape architect has been engaged, outline design proposals for a garden with costings have been prepared and a Phase 1 Contaminated Land Survey completed. The proposals have now received full planning permission.
- 1.4 In summary, the project will do the following:
 - Convert part of a car park adjacent to BITC's offices, located on Albertbridge Road between Cluan Place and Paulett Avenue, to a community garden. The site is owned by BT (BITC's landlords) who have already formally given permission for the project. The community garden will exist on approximately half of the 800m² site, whilst the remainder of the site will retain a number of parking spaces.
 - The plan retains nine BT parking spaces which is in agreement with their requirements (all of the current spaces are for BT's use rather than public parking).
 - Engage the local community in planning, development, maintenance and ongoing use of the garden – as a resource for programmed cross-community horticultural activities, as a means of improving local health and well-being, and as a shared space for relaxation and play, and interaction between local residents;
 - Provide an opportunity to enhance biodiversity in the area, integrating native species of trees, grass and shrubs, and using bird and bat boxes to encourage wildlife to the garden; and
 - Contribute to regeneration efforts in an area of low social and economic wealth, acting as a regeneration catalyst for the Albertbridge Road in

line with current work on the Newtownards Road and the Connswater Community Greenway.

2. Key Issues

2.1 The aims of the project are in line with Growing Communities Strategy 2012 - 2022. In particular the project closely aligns with the following strategic objectives:

- To support healthier lifestyles by providing growing opportunities to people of all ages;
- To support and develop communities by building and encouraging ownership of and pride in the city's growing spaces;
- To work to support environmental sustainability by ensuring that growing spaces and activities contribute positively to the local environment and support the attainment of sustainable development targets set for local government; and
- To engage the wider community through inclusiveness in the development of shared growing spaces.

2.2 Throughout the process so far, BITC has engaged with, and secured the support of, the local community and stakeholders, including the following processes:

- Face to face consultation - with a range of stakeholders including representatives from the following: Belfast City Council Parks and Leisure Department, Department for Social Development, Connswater Community Greenway, East Belfast Partnership, East Belfast Community Development Agency, East Belfast Mission; Community Change, East Belfast Sure Start Centre, PSNI and local political representatives.
- A questionnaire survey - of local businesses, organisations and community groups (20 out of 30 questionnaires issued were completed) with the following results:
 - 100% of the organisations and individuals said that they would support the project;
 - No one indicated that they would not be interested in using the park;
 - 40% said they would use it monthly;
 - 40% said they would use it weekly;
 - 20% said they would use it daily; and
 - 95% said they would like to be updated on the project.

- 2.4 It is recognised that taking on responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of a new asset by the Council is likely to be unsustainable. Based on the outline design discussed with BITC, it is suggested that a sustainable option would be for the Council to assist for an initial period by developing the necessary local knowledge and skills to allow ongoing maintenance of the garden by its users. It is proposed that, through the Council's current contract with The Conservation Volunteers for community growing facilitation, in kind support is provided for a period of one year, to a maximum value of £3000, working alongside BITC and one or more nominated garden users through a programme of facilitated horticultural and community engagement activities.
- 2.5 It is proposed that the development of the garden will be led initially by a BITC project team working in conjunction with a Community Garden Action Group (CGAG) who will move forward with the garden's maintenance and ongoing management. It is proposed that the CGAG will comprise representatives from the local community stakeholder groups as well as individual residents of Cluan Place and the local environs.
- 2.6 BITC will conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project in order to ensure that any support provided contributes to the aims of the Growing Communities Strategy, appropriate evaluation measures will be agreed with BITC.
- 2.7 It is expected that the project will begin garden construction on October of this year aiming to be completed by March 2014, during which time a programme of community engagement and activity planning will be undertaken.

3. Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

In-kind support would be provided to the value of £3000 maximum. This is in keeping with the level of support which may be allocated by officers to individual groups through the Growing Communities Strategy.

It is expected that financial support to the value of £3600 would be allocated from an allowance made in existing revenue budgets. This is to meet the additional unforeseen cost for planning fees, professional design fees and survey fees.

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3.2 Human Resources

No requirement for officer time additional to that already allocated to managing the contract with The Conservation Volunteers is expected. BITC project team working in partnership with a CGAG will manage the community engagement and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

The Council's involvement with the community garden would be for a limited period in a facilitation role, in line with the aims of the Growing Communities Strategy; the physical asset would remain under external ownership, management and public liability insurance; however it would contribute to the resources available to the residents of Belfast in line with the Council's wider aims and objectives.

4. Equality and good relations implications

4.1 There are no implications at this stage. However, equality and good relations factors will be taken into account in any activities delivered at the community garden or through the project.

4.2 The proposed project has been planned with cross community consultation and involvement and will meet the relevant requirements placed upon it by the Government's Landfill Community Fund scheme.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to –

1. approve BITC's request for Council support for the community garden project, and
2. approve that officers provide BITC with in kind support to a maximum value of £3,000 and financial support to a maximum value £3,600, subject to BITC through monitoring and evaluation satisfying criteria to adhere to the Council's Growing Communities Strategy,
3. A legal agreement is drawn up to support the arrangements."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Active Belfast – Update

The Director submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

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“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Council is currently leading on the development of the Active Belfast approach, as part the Belfast Strategic Partnerships work to address inequalities within the city.**

The Active Belfast approach is also a key strand of the Council’s Leisure Transformation Programme, providing significant opportunities to work collaboratively with a range of partners, with the outcome of improving the health and wellbeing of people in Belfast.

At the meeting of the Parks and Leisure Committee on Thursday 12 April 2012, the Committee agreed to allocate match funding of £90,000, (£70,000 from Council’s thematic budget and £20,000 from the Parks and Leisure revenue budget) towards the Active Belfast Investment Fund. Similar allowance was made in the 2013/14 revenue estimates.

This report summarises the work completed between April 2012 and March 2013, including outputs of the Active Belfast Investment Fund and identifies for Members several priority areas for the development of Active Belfast over the next period.

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Active Belfast Investment Fund

A total of 33 projects received support from the Active Belfast Investment Fund in the financial year 2012/2013. The projects ranged across the priority areas of play, travel, schools and workplaces.

More than 9,600 people directly benefited from activities delivered through the Active Belfast Investment Fund with many others indirectly benefiting as a result of increasing community capacity through the development of 255 people as physical activity leaders and champions across the city and through the investment in new equipment for community based facilities.

2.2 Active Outdoors

Supported by the Public Health Agency (PHA) through Active Belfast, council have installed outdoor fitness equipment in 8 parks across the city. This equipment has increased the opportunities to be active which are available to park users.

Work is currently underway to develop coach-led programmes to promote the all year round use of the equipment.

2.3 Physical Activity Referral Programmes

Physical Activity Referral Programmes (PAR) are a key area of regional work for our partners in the PHA. Through the Active Belfast approach additional support for this work has been secured through both Sport NI (£132,000) and the Local Commissioning Group (£45,000).

This additional support has allowed for the creation of 7 full time equivalent posted dedicated to the improvement of PAR Programmes across the city. This has allowed for work to be undertaken in supporting people recovering from, and living with a range of conditions including coronary heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes and cancer.

2.4 Community awareness programmes

A range of community awareness programmes have been delivered to increase the understanding of what being active means and to raise the profile of the Active Belfast approach. These have included programmes targeting sedentary women, young children and their parents and people experiencing low levels of mental health. In total more than 500 people have take part in these programmes.

2.5 Priorities for developing the Active Belfast approach

The Active Belfast Partners have identified the following key actions for the development of the Active Belfast approach:

- the development of an Active Travel action plan for the city, which will be one of the BSP's key demonstration projects in 2014;
- the continued support for programmes targeted at under-represented groups, including the Active Belfast Investment Fund;
- the development of communication channels for the Active Belfast message, brand and programmes including a dedicated website;
- to undertake an ongoing process of mapping and scoping all physical activity opportunities available in the city;
- to develop appropriate engagement and representation with local communities.

3.0 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

The provision of match funding to the Active Belfast Investment Fund includes provision of £90k from the Parks and Leisure revenue budget with a further £7k required for the development of an Active Travel Action Plan for Belfast. Provision has been made in revenue budgets for these programmes of work.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that Committee note the current position regarding Active Belfast and notes the provision of funding to the work of the Active Belfast Partnership as outlined in the report.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Chairman

Parks and Leisure Committee

Saturday, 19th October, 2013

SPECIAL MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Aldermen Robinson and Rodgers;
Councillors Haire, Hendron, Mullan and Verner.

Also attended: The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford) and Hargey.

In attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mr. S. Walker, Department Portfolio Manager;
Mr. B. Beggs, Project Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Chairman (Councillor McKee) and Councillors Curran, Hussey, Ó Donnghaile and McNamee.

Cherryvale Playing Fields

Pursuant to its decision of 10th October, the Committee undertook a study visit to the Cherryvale Playing Fields in order to assess at first hand the proposals which had been formulated for the establishment of a 3G pitch at the site. An invitation to attend the visit had been extended also to those Elected Members who represented the Laganbank District Electoral Area who were not members of the Parks and Leisure Committee.

The Members were conducted on a tour of the facility and apprised of each of the proposals. The officers provided an overview of the issues which had arisen in relation to each site and outlined the concerns which had been raised by local residents.

The Members noted the information which had been provided and noted further that a special meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday, 5th November at 4.30 p.m., to consider the Council's options in this regard.

Chairman

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Development Committee

Tuesday, 22nd October, 2013

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford);
the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston);
Alderman Ekin; Councillors Austin,
Beattie, Convery, Garrett, Hussey, Keenan,
Kelly, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhóin, Ó Donnghaile,
Reynolds, Spence and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives
and International Development;
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 17th and 23rd September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

Apologies

Apologies were reported from Alderman Stoker and Councillor Webb.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

New Members

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Beattie and Verner to their first meeting of the Committee and congratulated Councillor Spence on his appointment as Deputy Chairman.

Woodvale Community Centre

The Committee agreed that Councillor Verner be appointed to the Committee of the Woodvale Community Centre.

Destination Belfast - Project Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Background Information

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Members will be aware that the Destination Belfast project is an EU funded initiative to improve the quantity and quality of the local tourism offer across the city. The project has three elements, viz., Tourism Development Programme; Tourism Champions and WorldHost.

- 1.2 The first element of Destination Belfast is the Tourism Development Programme designed to increase sales, growth and innovation of established tourism businesses across the city. 14 businesses have completed the first wave of the programme; a further 15 businesses have been recruited and will commence the programme in October 2013 and applications for participation in wave 3 will open in December 2013. By the end of March 2014, 44 tourism businesses will have been provided with assistance through this element of the programme.
- 1.3 The Tourism Champion element of Destination Belfast was designed to create local tourism ambassadors to enhance and promote the tourism offer in their locality. 20 Champions were engaged on the programme through an open application process. The programme content included industry workshops, product development mentoring, an ILM level 5 accreditation and a bursary of up to £1000 for product development. 16 champions have completed the workshops and mentoring, five have completed ILM Level accreditation and three have drawn down the product development bursary.
- 1.4 The final element of Destination Belfast is the rollout of WorldHost. This is an internationally recognised customer service standard. Through this element of the programme, we are encouraging businesses to become 'WorldHost Recognised Businesses'. We also want the ten tourism destinations to become WorldHost Recognised and we want Belfast as a city to become the first WorldHost Destination in Northern Ireland.

2 Key Issues

2.1 WorldHost

We have recently completed an audit to identify the level of uptake by local businesses and to subsequently point to the scale of the challenge if we are to achieve WorldHost destination status for the city.

2.2 Progress to date includes:

- 2989 individuals trained
- 112 businesses trained or in training

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- 29 companies have gained recognition as WorldHost businesses (i.e. 50% of their frontline staff have been trained).
- 2.3 If Belfast is to achieve WorldHost Destination Status, 450 businesses from the sectors of Tourism, Hospitality, Leisure, Passenger Transport & Travel, Support Services and retail must have achieved “Recognised Business” status. We have set a target of achieving that figure by April 2014.
- 2.4 It is our intention that we will take a targeted approach to achieving this 450 figure. This will mean ensuring that all ten tourism destinations (namely City Centre, North Belfast Cultural Corridor, Cathedral Quarter, Gaeltacht Quarter, Shankill Quarter, Lisburn Road, Queen’s Quarter, Belfast Hills, Connswater – East Belfast, Titanic Quarter) are actively engaged. In practical terms, it means that 25% of businesses in the relevant sectors in these locations must undertake the training and that the 25% target must be achieved across each of the sectors (i.e. all recognised businesses cannot be in one or two specific sectors).
- 2.5 The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) is currently subsidising the cost of the training to the business. The cost to the businesses with subsidy is £20 per employee; without the subsidy, the cost is £190. DEL funding for WorldHost is to end in March 2014 and to date there is no confirmation of an extension. Therefore recruitment and training needs to be maximised by the end of March 2014 in order to avail of the significant opportunity. This is in line with our timeline for the city status designation.
- 2.6 In order to build momentum among the sector and to generate support for the rollout of World Host and the other programme elements, it is planned that an event will take place in the City Hall in the coming months. Members of the Development Committee will be invited to attend.
- 2.7 *Champions’ Programme*
- The aim of this strand of the programme is to ensure that the Champions are ambassadors for our tourism development activities and that they act as conduits for improving the tourism offering in their area.
- 2.8 In order to improve their knowledge of tourism issues and of our wider policy in this field, we developed a bespoke training programme that has been accredited to ILM level 4 (through Belfast Metropolitan College). While the training programme has now finished, there are a number of champions who have

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yet to submit their written assignments. Unless this happens, they cannot achieve the accreditation.

The champions can avail of a product development bursary of a value of up to £1,000 and this allows them to test a new product idea. While not all champions have yet availed of this support, new products currently being developed include:

- CQ Card (Cathedral Quarter Loyalty Card)
- CS Lewis presentation and new content for tours.

2.9 Tourism Development Programme

In August 2013, an evaluation of the first wave of the programme was undertaken. It reported on a programme wide basis (14 participants) an estimated increase in sales of 22%, 64 full time jobs and 3 part time jobs were retained, 1 full time job had been created while 6 full time jobs, 2 part time jobs and 10 to 12 temporary posts (for events) were in planning.

The businesses which participated in the programme were:

- Aunt Sandra's Candy Factory,
- Belfast Bus Company
- Belfast Compass Tours
- Castle Catering
- Clifton House
- Crumlin Road Gaol
- Greenmount B&B
- Knock Travel
- Lagan Boat Company
- McComb's Executive Travel & Tours
- NI Taxi Tours
- Ravenhill Guest House
- SS Nomadic
- Tara Lodge.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

There are no resource implications at this stage. Destination Belfast is 50% match funded by ERDF.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the work undertaken to date on the programme
- Note the ambitious targets – particularly around World Host – and the associated plans to meet these targets.

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- **Note the plan to hold an event in the City Hall to build support for the three elements of the programme.”**

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Best Practice Visits - Gilpin's and Market Tunnels

The Committee agreed that a report in respect of a number of proposed best practice visits be referred for consideration to the South Belfast Area Based Working Group.

Response to Draft Living Places

The Committee considered the undernoted report and endorsed the associated response to the Department of the Environment's 'Draft Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland', a copy of the report and the response are set out hereunder:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Department of the Environment (DOE) published Draft Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland in August 2013 for public consultation. The Department has requested comments on the guide before the closing date on the 31st October.

1.2 The Urban Stewardship and Design Guide identifies ten key principles behind good place making:

- **Visionary**
- **Collaborative**
- **Contextual**
- **Responsible**
- **Accessible**
- **Hospitable**
- **Vibrant & Diverse**
- **Crafted**
- **Viable**
- **Enduring**

1.3 The document seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (design) urban places, with a view to raising standards across Northern Ireland. The focus of the guide is urban areas, including cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods.

1.4 The document will be a Material Consideration in the determination of planning applications and planning appeals for development affecting all urban places.

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2 Key Issues

- 2.1** A proposed draft response is attached for consideration by committee as a suggested submission to the Department and a summary of the issues is outlined below:
- 2.2** While the Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland is welcomed, the Council would argue that there is limited guidance within the document. The concepts generally seem sound and are a good starting point however, the key issue is how the guide will be implemented as the purpose and standing of the document is unclear.
- 2.3** The DOE is currently preparing a single Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) in order to consolidate the existing suite of Planning Policy Statements. Clarification is required in terms of the relationship between the Living Places Guide and the proposed SPPS.
- 2.4** The document appears to overlook a number of the key issues which contribute to good urban spaces in many cities including parks (such as Botanic Gardens) and the availability of green urban space, sustainable transport (e.g. cycle lanes), climate change adaptation in buildings (green roofs/walls etc) and adaptation to flooding, and food markets or allotments/urban space used for growing food. It also fails to identify what makes people want to go to meet up in these spaces.
- 2.5** If the guide is being promoted for use by “everyone”, it may be helpful to provide a little more context about what the document may mean in practice, clarify roles and responsibilities in terms of who will be responsible for applying the principles and who will ‘enforce’ them. From a Council perspective, it is unclear what the document will mean for the Council in practice.
- 2.6** It is difficult to ascertain what this will mean in practice and how the qualities will be assessed and weighted.
- 2.7** There appears to be a greater emphasis on planning and design principles in the guidance with little mention of the stewardship, maintenance, management, or consideration of lifecycle costs to maintain the quality of the public realm after the works have been completed. The stewardship of public spaces is always the most difficult component to deliver, to ensure continuity in the management and maintenance of the quality of the public realm, and there is little in the way of guidance on how this can be achieved. In particular, the burden for stewardship has tended to fall on Council’s, and post Review of Public Administration (RPA), with the transfer

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of assets and maintenance liabilities from the Department for Social Development (DSD), this burden is likely to increase.

- 2.8 It is suggested the Council request clarification on how the document relates to the Local Area Development Plans that Councils will be required to prepare following the RPA.

3 **Resource Implications**

- 3.1 No revenue cost associated with the request

4 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

- 4.1 There are no specific Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

5 **Recommendations**

- 5.1 Members are requested to consider the content of the proposed draft response to the Urban Stewardship and Design Guide and if appropriate endorse this as the formal response to the Department of the Environment.

Appendix 1: Belfast City Council response to Draft Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland

1. **Overview**

- 1.1 Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Living Places – An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland. The Council is fully supportive of the need for an Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland given the impact place plays on our lives. The Guide aims to establish the key principles behind good place making. A key priority for Belfast City Council outlined in our Corporate Plan under City Leadership is to ‘Invest in our city and maximise our place shaping role.
- 1.2 The Draft Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland, published by the Department for the Environment (DOE), seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (design) urban places, with a view to raising standards across Northern Ireland.
- 1.3 The document uses case studies of urban areas throughout Northern Ireland to exemplify 10 qualities which contribute to successful cities, towns and villages. These qualities are considered critical ingredients to successful places and include:

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- Visionary;
- Collaborative;
- Contextual;
- Responsible;
- Accessible;
- Hospitable;
- Vibrant and diverse;
- Crafted;
- Viable; and
- Enduring.

1.4 Planning applications that include masterplans in urban areas will be required to demonstrate how the qualities above have informed the development proposals. The document also suggests that the document will be a material consideration for development affecting all urban places.

2. Background

2.1 Belfast City Council first published its city wide Masterplan in 2004 and recently published a review of the Masterplan for public consultation. The Masterplan Review identifies a revised set of spatial and strategic objectives:

- *The Learning City* - Harnessing the economic power of the City's Higher and Further Education Institutions. Addressing low levels of educational attainment within deprived communities.
- *The Accessible and Connected City* - Enhancing accessibility and connectivity internationally, regionally and locally.
- *The Low Carbon City* - Clean technology, renewable energy and efficiency will drive further growth in the economy and reduce costs for businesses and households.
- *The Digital City* - City wide ultrafast broadband and integrated smart city infrastructure driving innovation and supporting growth and efficient delivery of public services.
- *The Belfast City Region* - Working together across administrative and geographical boundaries to deliver the city's growth potential.
- *The Centre City* - An accessible vibrant and dynamic centre city driving the regional economy.
- *The Neighbourhood City* - Neighbourhoods which engender confident, caring, cohesive and resilient communities.

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3. General Comments

- 3.1** While the Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland is welcomed, the Council would argue that there is limited guidance within the document. The document appears to focus on presenting and getting buy-in of the qualities. While the concepts generally seem sound and are a good starting point, the key issue is how the Guide will be implemented as the purpose and standing of the document is unclear. The Council would also request clarification if Living Places will become statutory guidance.
- 3.2** The Council is aware of the ongoing preparation of a single Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) in order to consolidate the existing suite of Planning Policy Statements. Clarification is required in terms of the relationship between the Living Places Guide and the proposed SPPS.
- 3.3** The document appears to overlook a number of the key issues which contribute to good urban spaces in many cities including parks (such as Botanic Gardens) and the availability of green urban space, sustainable transport (e.g. cycle lanes), climate change adaptation in buildings (green roofs/walls etc) and adaptation to flooding, and food markets or allotments/urban space used for growing food. It also fails to identify what makes people want to go to meet up in these spaces.
- 3.4** If the guide is being promoted for use by “everyone”, it may be helpful to provide a little more context about what the document may mean in practice as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities in terms of who will be responsible for applying the principles and who will ‘enforce’ them. From a Council perspective, it is unclear what the document will mean for the Council in practice. The Council would also question how the document will be implemented in practice in the absence of appropriate policy/legislation.
- 3.5** The document states that it will be a material consideration in assessing planning applications and planning appeals for developments affecting urban places. And when submitting masterplans in an urban area, applicants will be required to demonstrate how the ten qualities outlined out in the document have shaped and informed their proposals. It is difficult to ascertain what this will mean in practice and how the qualities will be assessed and weighted. It is also unclear if the document will apply only to strategic masterplans or if it will also apply to other smaller scale developments that may impact on urban spaces such as the University of Ulster redevelopment. Greater clarity needs to be provided as potential applicants or their representatives, particularly in a

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planning appeals situation, may be tempted to argue over the definition of an “urban area”, particularly in a rural settlement context.

- 3.6 It should be noted that urban and rural settlements are very different in their scale, character and function. They will have their unique challenges which will shape the public realm. While the ten guiding principles can be broadly applied to different settlement types, the document appears to be primarily concerned with shaping the “public realm and public spaces within urban areas”. It is noted that most of the case studies are about successful public realm and public space shaping in both urban and rural settlements. It is suggested that the guidance may be more appropriately renamed to “Living Places – Public Realm Stewardship and Design Guidelines for Northern Ireland” which would be inclusive of both urban and rural settlements.
- 3.7 The guidance is trying to combine urban planning / design and urban stewardship to promote good quality sustainable urban environments in order to create a legacy for future generations. Within the document there appears to be an assumed reliance on design rather than planning to create quality urban spaces. The Council would argue that there needs to be a sequential application of both planning and design.
- 3.8 That said, there appears to be a greater emphasis on planning and design principles in the guidance with little mention of stewardship, maintenance, management, or consideration of lifecycle costs to maintain the quality of the public realm after the works have been completed. The stewardship of public spaces is always the most difficult component to deliver, to ensure continuity in the management and maintenance of the quality of the public realm, and there is little in terms of guidance on how this can be achieved. In particular, the burden for stewardship has tended to fall on Councils, and post Review of Public Administration (RPA), with the transfer of assets and maintenance liabilities from the Department for Social Development (DSD), this burden is likely to increase. It will be important to ensure that life cycle cost and ease of maintenance are an important consideration during the design phase, as well as ensuring sufficient funding is available to ensure that quality can be maintained.
- 3.9 The document recognises that planning and regeneration functions are to be transferred to Local Councils, and the guidance which establishes broad principles will still be relevant in a period of transition. The Council would request clarification on how the document relates to the Local Area Development Plans that Councils will be required to prepare

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following the RPA. The Development Plan and any physical and urban design work should complement and have regard for the Community Plan. The Community Plan will help provide leadership, active participation and collaboration and also the 'understanding of place' cited in the guide. The two processes should be seen as mutually reinforcing and mutually beneficial.

- 3.10 The document recognises that the reorganisation of government structures provides the opportunity to break down the administrative barriers that currently exist to collaborative working in the built environment. Civic leadership by Councils could provide greater commitment to collaboration and participation that would secure robust planning and place shaping of the public realm. The changes in planning policy will move towards a spatially oriented planning approach with Community Planning and area based regeneration initiatives. After RPA Councils will have responsibility for planning and cleansing functions, enabling them to be best placed to take a holistic approach to manage the design process and stewardship of public realm to ensure quality can be maintained.

4.0 Specific Comments

4.1 The Urban North

The Council considers a key element of the historical analysis ought to be recognition that Northern Ireland has been a place of non-nucleated settlement, and there continues to be a cultural preference for this model, which means that urban settlements function rather differently than in most of the rest of Europe. The balance between urban function in terms of residence and service provision is different, and this is particularly the case in Belfast where the population size in no way reflects its cultural and economic dominance.

4.2 Challenges

The draft document identifies a number of challenges that have hindered successful place making. The Council would broadly agree that the challenges identified have impinged on the ability to create high quality urban places. The Council considers that the implementation of the ten qualities could contribute to addressing these challenges.

- 4.3 The document acknowledges the impact of the Troubles and ongoing segregation on our society. The Council would argue that the divided nature of Northern Ireland is not adequately followed through into the other qualities. Shared space is mentioned under the "responsible" quality in terms of car use,

however in Good Relations terminology it has a completely different meaning. Furthermore, given the impact of division on Northern Ireland, perhaps shared space, particularly along interfaces, should be mentioned under “Visionary” and as a consideration under “understanding place”.

4.4 Good Places

Many of the examples throughout the document relate to public funded and driven development. It is recommended that the guide should illustrate more private sector examples. In addition, the Council considers that Belfast is heavily under-represented in the case studies, many of which are minor schemes. The Streets Ahead scheme (design-led) has been selected but the benefits realisation methodology is by no means clear and there is no visible cost-benefit analysis.

4.5 The Council has been involved in the development of quality places, both within the city and across the province which demonstrate a range of the qualities, for example, Grove Wellbeing Centre, Falls Park Masterplan, development of a “Walkability” Index, development of public spaces at Woodvale and Dunville parks, and the Renewing the Routes programme.

4.6 Since 1983 the Council in partnership with Roads Service and DSD have been responsible for planting 11,500 street trees which have made a significant impact on our city and within the provincial towns. The Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of all the street trees in Greater Belfast, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownards, Bangor, Ballymena/Larne, and Newtownabbey/Carrickfergus.

4.7 In addition, the Council is also involved in developing environmental improvement schemes throughout the city on behalf of DSD, in partnership with the Department for Regional Development (DRD) Roads Service, such as Ballymacarrett Walkway, Falls Road/Glen Road open site, and Bridge End. Furthermore, the Council also undertake annual playground refurbishments throughout the city which has involved installing ‘inclusive’ playground equipment.

4.8 Bad Places

The Council considers that “bad places” are largely a result of planning for a specific outcome which fail to consider all other factors, for example, road junctions designed to improve the flow of traffic to support economy which result in the segregation of communities from many local amenities (for example Cromac Street, Ormeau Avenue, Westlink). Good

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planning will require a considered and balanced approach reflecting all potential impacts.

- 4.9 It is noted that the area around Dunbar Link is used to illustrate bad places. The Council would agree that this area is not a particularly attractive urban environment due to the wide road network, large expanses of surface level car-parking and the presence of numerous dilapidated and vacant properties in the surrounding area. The Council would suggest that an alternative photograph is used which depicts these negative aspects of the Dunbar Link as the image used appears to focus on to the Council's operational Cleansing Depot.

4.10 Qualities

A number of the qualities identified within the draft Living Places document reflect the Strategic and Spatial objectives identified in the Belfast City Masterplan Review, particularly the Council's priorities in terms of:

- An accessible and connected city;
- The low carbon city; and
- The neighbourhood city.

- 4.11 The ten guiding principles provide a useful checklist to help designers, and developers in the preparation of their planning proposals. While it is difficult to argue or disagree with the ten qualities there are a number of points to note.

- 4.12 The Council would request greater clarification on how the ten qualities were developed and selected. Are they based on good practice and research from other cities or countries? The document mentions a collaborative process and the appendices reference other material and policy documents. The Council would suggest that the document requires a better explanation of where the qualities came from and how much weight is attached to them in other areas or jurisdictions.

4.13 Visionary

The Council considers that Local Authorities would be best placed to provide the civic leadership to develop strategic masterplans. Post RPA the Council will have responsibility for Community Planning which will enable community involvement in the preparation of plans for their neighbourhoods. A key priority for the Council outlined in the Corporate Plan as part of City Leadership is to 'maximise the place shaping role. The consultation document refers to the need for skills but does not elaborate on how such skills and

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capacity will be developed and supported. The Council would suggest that the document provides further guidance on the type of support provided and the source envisaged. Within the Belfast City Masterplan Review it is suggested that a Framework for the city centre should be prepared by the Department of Social Development and the council to cohesively address the potential for continued regeneration. The Review notes that an essential element of the framework would be to harness the opportunity to enhance the environment through quality design and proposes a newly created senior position within the Council, with proven skills in urban design and placemaking would help drive this agenda.

4.14 The lack of “City Architects” or similar champions reflects the multi-disciplinary, multi-organisation, multi-funding nature of development in our cities and urban areas. City Architects are still evident in European Cities and their effectiveness is linked to their cities’ functions / control over land ownership, the ability to incentivise development and the amount of risk and cost in development that the Local and Municipal authorities will bear.

4.15 There is an argument for a “champion” around specific developments and it is notable that there is no mention of Titanic Quarter within this document under any category despite the significant lobbying and collaboration from both public and private sector in the initial phases of this ongoing development in the city.

4.16 Collaborative

Councils are well placed to provide the civic leadership to promote active participation, and encourage collaborative working with stakeholders. This is evidenced in the current development work being undertaken by the Council to deliver the City Investment Programme.

4.17 It could be considered that there is support in the guide for increased use of Vesting Powers to achieve delivery of developments to meet the guidelines without recognition of the time it can take to achieve the site assembly required and the necessary support from the DOE. Some assurance is needed for developers around recognition from planners that schemes put forward may be less than perfect but the benefits far outweigh the defects.

4.18 There is a significant overlap with the collaborative approach and community planning, although community planning is not specifically mentioned within the document. The importance of place and the links to community planning should be better articulated. Perhaps under the “Visionary”, “Collaborative”

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and “Contextual” qualities there should be reference to the Community Plan.

4.19 Contextual

This provides the usual contextual design principles that should be adopted by designers preparing plans and designs for public spaces. These could be incorporated into Design Briefs and Development Briefs to ensure that Project Teams and Developers have a good understanding of the context which has to be considered as part of the design process.

4.20 Responsible

The Council is supportive of the inclusion of this quality. A low carbon city is a strategic objective within the Belfast City Masterplan Review. The Council considers that clean technology, renewable energy and efficiency will drive further growth in the economy and reduce future costs for businesses and households.

4.21 The Masterplan Review highlights the need for the city centre to develop sequentially from the inside out. Encouraging the re-use of brownfield land in city centre locations for a variety of uses will be integral to reviving urban areas and achieving more sustainable patterns of development. It is suggested that the document should mention the reuse of vacant sites within existing settlements as a counter to the pressures for less sustainable development or sprawl into surrounding rural areas.

4.22 It is noted that environmental considerations are referenced in certain parts of the document (for example car ownership and pollution); the Council is disappointed that there is no specific section on the environment within the document, for example, under the “Sustainable” quality. The Council suggests that reference could be made to aspects such as environmental quality, sustainable building materials, environmental/heritage protection, stewardship and local quality of life within such a section.

4.23 Within the document, it is mentioned that climate change is a major challenge and this is reflected in this section by encouraging sustainable urban drainage and conservation of resources. However, there is a lack of awareness of the European Union drive to shift Europe toward a “Low Carbon Future” (Europe 2020 Strategy), and this is a priority funding theme post 2014. This will have a key influence on the future shape of our public realm, with a greater emphasis on “Green Infrastructure Plans” to reduce our dependence on cars and promote public transport, walking and cycling. This would also

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include enhancing biodiversity within cities and increasing tree planting to mitigate the impact of climate change. This section should also include the issue of choice of materials and life cycle cost to ensure resource efficiency, to minimise waste, and to promote sustainable reuse of materials.

- 4.24 The document should also include planning and design for the management of waste. The Council would refer to the “Local Government Waste Storage Guide for Northern Ireland” and request that it is taken into account within Living Places. The guide can be downloaded from:

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/buildingcontrolenvironment/buildingcontrol/wasteguidelines.aspx>

- 4.25 The Waste Storage Guide was developed by local government, with close consultation and collaboration with central government. It seeks to provide practical advice and guidance to architects, developers and building contractors, to ensure that waste is properly planned for at the earliest stage of the design and build process of development and that the arrangements for storing and accessing waste are properly considered when designing buildings and building developments. It is suggested that a link to the Waste Storage Guide could be provided within the Living Places Guide or could be added to this list of references.

4.26 Accessible

The Living Places document states that accessibility is critical in developing successful public spaces. In particular, connectivity is essential to ensure the integration of new public realm spaces into the urban fabric. The Council also recognises the importance of accessibility as it has been identified as a strategic objective in the Belfast City Masterplan Review. Within the Masterplan Review, accessibility is considered critical to the economic competitiveness of the city.

4.27 Hospitable

It is noted that “healthy” and “safety” have been identified as sub sections under the heading “hospitable”. Providing a healthy living environment for the city’s residents in order to deliver thriving neighbourhoods is a priority within the Belfast City Masterplan Review therefore the Council would argue that both principles should be qualities in their own right. The Council is also represented on the Belfast Strategic Partnership for Health and Wellbeing and endorses the Framework for Action to address life inequalities 2011 – 2015. Regenerating living places and healthy spaces is identified as a priority with the Framework for Action and the Council has

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incorporated positive health outcomes into a number of initiatives such as Active Travel and Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme.

4.28 Vibrant and Diverse

This is critical to ensure that our public realm areas are attractive. This will be challenging in the current economic climate where there suppressed demand for commercial development, constraints on private investment and public funding. The consequence is that the amount of vacant spaces is likely to increase. In particular, the changes in the retail sector are having a profound impact on cities and town centres, with predictions of further contractions in retail space due to the growth in online shopping. There is a need for innovative ideas to encourage diversity in land uses that will maintain the vibrancies of public spaces.

4.29 Crafted

This provides useful principles that should be adopted by designers preparing plans and designs for attractive public spaces. It may be useful to suggest maintenance specifications to ensure quality stewardship of the public spaces.

4.30 Viable

In the current economic climate this will be challenging with the lack of available investment funding particularly from private sector developers. The guidance proposes “testing of new uses” by trial periods for new activities however the Council would require clarification as to whether this is to be delivered in the context of a relaxation on the need for planning permission for a certain period and the mechanisms for longer term management / control. The assessment of economic viability and sustainability of a scheme is entering a realm which is not in the usual planning remit and is very subjective given that each applicant will be different in the resources that they can bring to secure satisfactory completion of a development and arrangements around future management. The applicant may not even be the actual developer of the project.

4.31 Enduring

This provides the useful principles that should be adopted for the creation of attractive public spaces.

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4.32 Bringing it all together

While the document provides some useful guidance for the planning and development of the public realms in our cities, towns and villages, it will be important to be pragmatic and realistic in the implementation of the guidance, particularly in this challenging economic climate where there limited investment, and a greater need to prioritise the use of financial and organisational resources.

4.33 Appendices

It is noted that PPS 5 has not been included within the relevant policy documents identified in section B 2). It is considered that PPS 5 should be included.”

Belfast City Access Strategy

The Committee agreed to receive, at its meeting on 19th November, a presentation from Atkins' Consultants in respect of the development of the second stage of the Belfast City Access Strategy.

City Dressing Campaign

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th April, it had approved the 'Patterns of the City Belfast City Dressing Plan'. The Director reminded the Committee that that Plan was a cross-community tourism initiative which sought to enhance the City's appearance through the dressing of lampposts in the city centre and on main access routes. The Committee was advised that it was anticipated that any further development of the Plan would address City branding and development and would be in line with the implementation of a new tourism strategy. A review of City dressing would be integral to any new strategic direction and he reported that an adapted City dressing policy would be submitted for the Committee's approval.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and endorsed the contents of the updated City Dressing Policy as set out hereunder:

“City Dressing Policy

Objectives of the City Dressing Steering Group

The role of the Belfast City Dressing Steering Group is to oversee the implementation of City Dressing across Belfast and ensure that it creates a sense of welcome and builds the Belfast Brand. The Group will also monitor city dressing usage and needs across the city. The City Dressing plan includes generic patterns of the city that communicate a sense of energy, innovation and vibrancy. In addition the city dressing plan includes supporting the promotion of key international events and giving events and festivals access to agreed hire sites for promotions and marketing purposes.

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City Dressing Steering Group Members

- Belfast City Centre Management
- Belfast City Council: Building Control, Tourism, Culture and Arts, Events, Corporate Communications
- Department for Regional Development
- Department for Social Development
- Visit Belfast

Remit of City Dressing

- ensure that city dressing provides sense of welcome;
- ensure that city dressing provides information in a stimulating way;
- ensure that city dressing creates a feel of a special occasion across the city or one of the destinations;
- ensure that city dressing arouses curiosity in an appealing way;

Organisation Roles

Belfast City Council

Belfast City Council (BCC) will manage and implement the generic city patterns and winter pattern campaign across the existing locations and tourism place destinations.

Belfast City Centre Management

Belfast City Centre Management will manage commercial campaigns and these will only be permitted in the areas managed by Belfast City Centre Management. Commercial campaigns must follow template/ design guidelines agreed by BCC and the City Dressing Steering Group.

BCCM will manage city wide event campaigns under a legal contract and SLA with BCC which ensure:

- Campaigns must be formally shared with the City Dressing Steering Group in advance of the campaign start date.
- BCCM must ensure that all proposed commercial dressing artwork has been equality checked, shared and approved by the Department of Regional Development and approved by the City Dressing steering Group.

This city dressing policy acknowledges and includes the BCCM Banner Policy agreed with DRD.

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Department for Social Development

The department owns a number of sites within the city centre and permission will be sought to use these sites and co-ordinate activity with the general city dressing plans.

Belfast City Dressing locations:

Prioritisation of City Dressing is given to:

- Main Visitor Access Roads – already established and in operation
- Quarters/Tourism Place Destination – main visitor routes (detailed below)
- City Centre

Tourism place destinations were identified in the Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework. These place destinations will be priority locations and restricted to 15 lamp post sites in high profile locations in each area. The implementation of city dressing will be dependent on the development of the tourism place destination plans. Progress is dependent on a tourism development team taking on responsibility of liaising with BCC to implement city dressing.

- Cathedral Quarter
- City Centre
- East Belfast
- Gaeltacht Quarter
- Queen's Quarter
- Shankill
- Titanic Quarter

Permitted Campaigns for City Dressing

Within the city centre there are sites available for hire by the commercial sector. Only campaigns that enhance the image and brand of the city will be permitted. These include city events, city campaigns and festivals.

Campaigns that are inappropriate or are linked to inappropriate brands via sponsorship will not be permitted. Promotions (e.g. two for one offers, advertising promotions) will not be permitted for city dressing.

Major events that can clearly demonstrate the ability to attract international media coverage (MTV EMAs, Olympics, World Police and Fire Games, Giro Italia, Tall Ships 2015) and can secure international footfall in the city will have access to agreed city dressing sites beyond the commercial sites in the

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city centre. Proposals will be reviewed by the City Dressing Steering Group and a collective decision reached. City wide branding will also require political approval and at least a 6 month notice in advance of campaign start date.”

Heifei City Government - Visit to Belfast

The Director reported that a delegation from Heifei would visit the City in January to prepare for a collaborative art exhibition entitled ‘Crossroads’, which would be taking place in Heifei, Belfast, Cork and Dublin in June, 2014. He reminded the Committee of the long-standing Sister City association with Heifei and indicated that the visit would provide an opportunity for the Council to explore areas of mutual benefit in both economic and cultural terms.

The Committee agreed that a sum of £500 be allocated towards the provision of hospitality at a reception to mark the visit of the deputation from Heifei.

International Curators - Visit to Belfast

The Director reported that, as part of the series of events which would coincide with the hosting by Londonderry of the 2013 Turner Prize, a group of 18 international curators would be visiting Belfast in December. A detailed itinerary had been formulated to coincide with that visit and he indicated that a reception had been arranged to take place at the City Hall. The Director outlined the networking opportunities which would be afforded to promote the visual arts in Belfast at the reception and, in particular, the Council’s role in this regard.

The Committee agreed that a sum of £1,000 be allocated towards the provision of hospitality to mark the visit to the City Hall of the international curators.

Business Development in North America

The Committee was advised that the Lord Mayor would be undertaking a visit to Washington on 6th and 7th November in support of a sales mission which would be led by Visit Belfast and the Waterfront Hall. The Director indicated that the visit would present an opportunity to highlight the plans to establish new convention facilities at the Waterfront Hall and he outlined the extensive range of meetings which the Lord Mayor had arranged to promote the City’s business potential. He reported also that the Lord Mayor would be attending a meeting in Toronto with representatives of the American Ireland Fund in respect of an inward investment mission to Belfast which would take place in February, 2014.

The Committee agreed that the Director (or his nominee) be authorised to accompany the Lord Mayor on the North American visit at a cost not to exceed £2,500. It was noted that the Lord Mayor would undertake the visit at no cost to the Council.

Clarawood Development

The Committee considered the undernoted report

“1 **Relevant Background Information**

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- 1.1 There are 3 Revenue funded community groups in the Clarawood estate:
Clarawood Community Association - £9,440.97
Clara Park Tenants and Residents - £7,579.02
Oak Partnership - £1,917.89
- 1.2 The Clarawood Community Association operated out of the BELB Anne Napier Centre with a licence agreement in place between BELB and BCC and a sub licence agreement in place between BCC and Clarawood Community Association. As of the 1st July 2013 this arrangement ended with the BELB taking a more direct involvement in the provision of youth work in the Anne Napier centre.
- 1.3 The Clara Park Tenants and Residents operate out of their own hall in Clarawood Park. They have a small and ageing membership.
- 1.4 The Oak Partnership is the smallest of the estate's 3 groups but it has increasingly taken on a co-ordination and leadership role in regards to the community work within the Clarawood estate, working with BELB on its youth work programme and giving guidance and worker and programme support to the Tenants Association.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Community Development Revenue Grant (£9,440.97) for the Clarawood Community Association will not be released in 2013/14 as the BELB are directly organizing Youth Work out of the Anne Napier Centre.
- 2.2 The Clara Park Tenants and Residents group and the Oak Partnership are working together to ensure that the services previously available at the Anne Napier Centre are available within their own centres.
- 2.3 To help support and facilitate a partnership and integrated approach to programme development, volunteer training and community consultation between the Oak Partnership and Clara Park Tenants and Residents, it is proposed that the Clarawood Community Association 2013/14 Revenue Grant be re allocated between the two remaining groups on the estate.

Officers will work with the groups to assess and support their programme plans. Any reallocated grant will be support to the same compliance and monitoring requirements.

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3 Resource Implications

3.1 Available within existing budget

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no specific equality and good relations considerations attached to this report.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Clarawood Community Association Revenue grant allocation for 2013/14 be reallocated equally between the Oak Partnership and Clara Park Tenants & Residents in order to secure the continuation and future expansion of services to residents of the Clarawood Estate.”

After discussion, during which the Community Services Manager clarified a number of issues, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Olympia Community Centre - Options Appraisal

The Committee agreed to defer, until its meeting on 19th November, consideration of a report on the Council's options regarding the future provision of community services in the Village area to enable briefings to be provided to those parties who so wished to receive them. In addition, it was agreed that the Committee would, at the meeting on 19th November, receive a deputation from the Olympia Community Centre Support Group in respect of its concerns regarding the future provision of community services in that area.

Community Support Plan – In-Year Additional Allocation

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 BCC have an annual grant contract with DSD for £1.57m under their regional Community Support Programme. The contract is conditional on our making contribution to the CSP overall aim defined as:

‘To strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups, community activity and local advice services’.

1.2 A series of four outcomes, or impacts have been set for the CSP

- i. an active and organised community,**
- ii. an influential community,**

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- iii. an informed community,
- iv. a sustainable community,

- 1.3 The Voluntary and Community Unit (DSD) has offered Belfast City Council an additional in-year allocation of approximately £467,000 towards general revenue expenditure and subject to the same conditions of grant offer.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the additional allocation is conditional on the utilisation of the full fund by 31 March 2014. There is no requirement on BCC to provide match funding. All of the additional grant allocation will be subject to the normal DSD monitoring and compliance requirements.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to seek committee approval to accept the offer of additional in year CSP grant and to agree expenditure options.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The limited timeframe attached to the additional funding will not allow for monies to be administered competitively so it is crucial to find a prompt but robust way in which to allocate the funds in support of projects and service providers for community benefit.
- 2.2 Given this requirement (to allocate and fully expend the additional monies within the current financial year), officers have identified a number of potential in-year funding opportunities. In doing so, we have also considered the following;
- DSD Community Support Programme funding criteria and target Outcomes
 - The objectives, supporting actions and logic model presented in the DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework (July 2013)
 - The opportunity presented to significantly contribute to the council's Service Convergence and Assets & Liabilities work streams in relation to Urban Regeneration and Community Development.
 - The opportunity presented to enhance the community impact of corporate initiatives, for example, Super Connected City and Advice Tribunal Service
 - Priority needs related to current financial climate
 - Feasibility of proposal to support compliant assessment, committal and expenditure of funds by 31st March 2014
 - Efficiency considerations to ensure related officer resources

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- 2.3 The DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework (July 2013) sets out the proposed strategic direction for the delivery of urban regeneration and community development policies and programmes in Northern Ireland both before and after the Reform of Local Government. It also contains a set of four supporting actions which will help develop a more conducive policy and financial environment in which the Policy Framework will operate. In addition the Framework contains DSD's commitment to adopt an outcomes-focused approach (*'the Logic Model'*) to operational activity on urban regeneration and community development. This approach will focus on results ahead of process, using evidence to support action and working in ways that are more responsive to community needs and more collaborative across and within sectors.
- 2.4 There are significant inter-dependencies between the various elements of regeneration (economic, social, physical, community) that need to be clearly understood and analysed at a practical level to ensure a viable transition, maintaining service continuity in the short-term, but also setting a firm foundation for the implementation of a transformed service over the longer-term. Given the scale of existing commitments and Council's officers experience to date, particularly the learning from the *'Building Better Communities-Belfast Community Investment Programme'* (BCIP), a two strand approach has been proposed:
- 2.5 *Transition* – to focus on the practical arrangements/decisions necessary for Council to maintain and deliver agreed transferred services and resources on 1st April 2015. This provides service continuity and helps manage expectations/risks, allowing for a transitional 2015-2017 period.
- 2.6 *Transformation* – to focus on developing the future vision and model for delivery of the transformed regeneration function for the city. This is a longer term process but will operate in parallel to the Transfer strand of work and beyond (2013-2017). This will provide for a composite understanding of the scope of regeneration functions to inform decisions around delivery structures, alignment of resources, etc. and maximise the ability to implement the learning from elsewhere to deliver an effective integrated regeneration function for the future
- 2.7 To support the priorities outlined above and help align services to meet the proposed urban regeneration and community development objectives post LGR a number of initiatives have been identified for the in-year allocation: Community Sector Support, Large Grant Up-Lift, Corporate Initiatives, Service Convergence to support transferring Assets and Liabilities, and associated officer support.

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2.8 i. Community Sector Support

With less than 18 months to the transfer of functions and associated support programmes for URCD there is an opportunity for Council to inform, support and engage the community sector in preparation for this change process.

- 2.9 Given details of transferring budgets are unlikely to be confirmed until mid 2014, it has been proposed that BCIP should be delayed until 2017 to allow for alignment with the broader regeneration programme and transfer of functions work stream. Without BCIP in place, an interim measure will have to be established to bridge funding for the sector for 2014/15 and beyond. Committee have already agreed in principle to extend our current grant aid programme for this further year. Officers are working to ensure that the Service Grant Programme is subsequently ready for a full competitive open call against current funding streams in 2015. This will involve a limited redesign of the application, assessment and monitoring processes. In addition we must consider applications from groups within the new council boundary. In order to meet the 2015/16 funding cycle, the grant programme must be open in May 2014.
- 2.10 To prepare the community sector for the change process, and to assist Council in managing the change, it is proposed that we develop and deliver a capacity building programme which will incorporate elements of best practice and training delivery from the sector. This will have the dual role of skilling the community sector and building stronger relationships between council and our community partners.
- 2.11 This programme will be aligned to our current capacity building training support which includes: Community Development Toolkit, Volunteer Development and Child Protection Training.
- 2.12 At the end of the programme the council will have a comprehensive set of toolkits and training materials which can be made available for future support activities. This stage of delivery of the capacity building support programme will be time bound to March 2014
- 2.13 It is envisaged that this branded capacity building support programme will consist of workshops, toolkits, and facilitated sessions covering a range of generic skills including:
- Supporting Collaborative working and Service Planning
 - Financial Management
 - Area/Neighbourhood Planning

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- Strategic and Business Planning
- Investment Readiness (Contracts and Asset Management)
- Developing Outcomes Frameworks and Measuring the Impact of Service Delivery
- Governance

2.14 The programme will be rolled out across the city, delivered locally in our community centres and in a central location. It is envisaged that suitable venues will also be arranged in Castlereagh, North Down and Lisburn to facilitate those groups falling within the extended city boundaries in 2015. The programme will be proactively advertised to maximise awareness and registration.

2.15 Committee are asked to consider the use of the in-year allocation to design and deliver the capacity building support programme and production of toolkits. If members agree to the above proposal an estimated budget of £65,000 is requested.

2.16 ii Large Grant Up Lift

Under the Community Support Plan, BCC currently provides revenue grant aid to 80 community organisations across the city and capacity grant to 19 support organisations. The revenue funding is used towards the running costs associated with operating a community building and the capacity grant contributes to the core costs of larger, area based community development support agencies. Officers are aware, via the monitoring process, that funding awards do not currently meet full costs. There is also evidence that, within the current funding environment, a significant number of community organisations are struggling to meet these costs.

2.17 Committee are asked to consider an in-year limited offer of additional funds to support programmes in community buildings or those of community development support organisations. The fund could be used to support any verified increase in core costs, for small scale building repairs and maintenance or for programme equipment. If we are to meet the requirement to allocate and fully expend the additional monies within the current financial year, it is suggested that any agreed uptake of these funds be administered to those organisations currently in receipt of a revenue or capacity grant from BCC in 2013/14.

2.18 A small number of organisations have not yet completed the monitoring requirements in regard to this grant. Eligibility for an uplift award would be dependent upon compliant submission.

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2.19 If agreeable, officers will invite organisations to submit proposals on how they propose to utilise the potential funding and to indicate a budget: bands of £1000, £1500 and £2000. After assessment and confirmation of available budget, recommendations for grant uplift would be presented for the Director's approval via delegated authority. Subject to approval, a letter of variation on existing contracts will be issued and, as per current arrangements, all successful groups will submit monitoring returns to report progress against targets.

2.20 If members agree to the proposal as outlined above, the allocation would be approximately £160,000

2.21 iii. Corporate Initiatives

2.22 *Super Connected Belfast: Community Centre Public Access*

Members will be aware that Belfast City Council, with the support of a number of organisations, has successfully bid for funding to become a Super-connected City by March 2015. £13.7 million will come from the Urban Broadband Fund to provide a major boost to the city's infrastructure. In addition to this, the Council also intends to contribute an additional £3 million, as part of its Investment Programme, and the private sector will contribute £8 million towards the project.

2.23 To increase levels of community engagement, access and knowledge, Development Committee agreed in February 2013 to invest in a network of public access computer suites in 8 BCC community centres, 2 Council owned/ community managed centres and 2 independent centres.

2.24 These quality ICT suites will facilitate a community focused capacity programme, designed to promote and enable social inclusion amongst our citizens by enhancing access to broadband services and providing training for individuals who lack digital literacy. Working with the community sector and other training providers, these suites could facilitate the development and delivery of knowledge-based skills to help people get online; carry out more transactions online; use the internet to find employment and develop the basic skills required for the current market place. Because not all community centres could facilitate the IT suites, it was suggested that laptops could be used to provide services on an outreach basis and therefore extend the reach of any associated digital community programme.

2.25 The hardware and associated software has been purchased to fit-out the 12 suites. Working with colleagues from ISB and Legal Services, staff have been progressing the project

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however, as each centre was being assessed for networking, it became apparent that where dedicated furniture existed, it was of a low quality and did not match the Council's guidelines.

2.26 Members are asked to consider a further £20,000 in-year allocation to provide chairs and desks as required to support set-up costs at each site. (Approximately £1,660 per site)

2.27 As noted, this network of community based IT suites are designed to support a community facing demand stimulation programme however we have not yet identified additional resources in order to deliver and sustain a proactive community education programme to animate the suites and to work collaboratively with other community based provision.

2.28 Officers therefore propose that we utilise £80,000 of the in-year CSP income to support a pilot programme which would:

- Launch this BCC investment
- Raise awareness of the programme in local neighbourhoods and key target audiences (eg children, young people, older people, LTE, etc)
- Offer animation programmes to support use of these community IT hubs and stimulate interest and digital confidence
- Deliver a series of Taster training programmes which would engage threshold interest and act as a pathway to the established Essential Skills Programmes.

2.29 This investment would include identification and purchase of any supporting software and materials, the design and delivery of the community animation and education pilot programme and an evaluation report to inform and support any resource application for future programme delivery.

2.30 If members are supportive of this pilot proposal, officers will work with ISB and current delivery partners to further develop and cost the programme.

2.31 *City Wide Advice Tribunal Service*

In August 2013, Council announced two-year funding totalling £430,000 for a Citywide Tribunal Representation Service to help claimants who wish to appeal SSA decisions on benefits including Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independent Payment, Universal Credit and any other SSA benefit. This service enables clients to challenge decisions, assisting them through the process and representing them at hearings.

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- 2.32 The opportunity exists via the in-year allocation to provide up to 3 months additional funding for the service, which could be spent by March 2014.

Members are asked to consider a budget allocation of £54,000 to support this project and result in an extended time-line for the service.

2.33 iv Service Convergence and Service Planning

With the transfer of functions for urban regeneration and community development to the Council and the change in the city boundary to take in substantial areas of Lisburn, Castlereagh and North Down, there is a need to assess the likely impact on our services and to plan for effective service delivery.

- 2.34 Our Community Services grants programme will be expanded to include new areas in 2015 with a proposed open call in May 2014. As already outlined, community organisations will require support to prepare for this open call particularly those which have not applied for Council funding in the past or are currently outside the city boundary. This will be supported via the proposed sector support programme outlined above.

- 2.35 The service will also acquire responsibility for a number of community centre assets and will need to design and deliver our community area support programme, play development and youth engagement support activities for the new areas which will include a significantly increased Traveller population.

- 2.36 To deliver our new service business plans we will need to understand the neighbourhoods, the community infrastructure and the level of support required by organisations. Officers suggest a project which will help to underpin service convergence and service planning in relation to the transfer of Assets & Liabilities associated with the new council boundary and linked to the current council work streams relating to LGR. This project will support the service to consider and quantify service implications associated with those transferring Assets. These include eight community centre assets transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh council areas. In order to support service business plans (drafts by June 2014) we need to scope the condition and current service delivery model for each of the transferring assets.

- 2.37 Through the CSP, we also provide revenue funding to support the cost of community sector facilities. This is allocated to support groups and organisations which provide community space and a varied programme of activities/services. It is vital

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for us to have an understanding of the physical infrastructure used to support community development and services in the new boundary areas before we go to open grant call (estimated May 2014).

- 2.38 We are therefore requesting a total of £25,000 to develop a Service Convergence Plan for community facilities in the new boundary areas. The plan will include a formal condition survey for each asset, a review of the current service delivery model, associated resourcing, systems, centre programme, user groups and local infrastructure. This will provide base-line information to allow us to plot a transition programme for the incoming assets while ensuring high quality, citizen centred and integrated community facilities. The surveys will be completed by February 2014

2.40 Staff Resources

In order to maximise the impact of the service in relation to the menu of proposed initiatives above while continuing to maintain the current service operational level, we are requesting a total of £63,000 from the in-year allocation for staff resources and development.

2.41 The allocation will be used to:

- Provide additional hours to key staff (currently part-time or time-bound agency) who will co-ordinate and administer the five initiatives (estimated budget £30,000).
- Train staff in Grant-Funding/Assessment, Facilitation, Action Planning and Building Collaborative Practice (estimated budget for 36 Staff £33,000). This will increase the capacity of staff to assess grant applications and support groups through the application process, and to help support community organisations to develop strategic and business plans and contribute to the formation of neighbourhood plans. As trained facilitators, officers will also be available to other services within council to help them develop effective collaboration with our sectoral partners.

Category	Allocation
Community Sector Support	£65,000
Large Grant Up-Lift	£160,000
Super Connected Belfast- Community Centre Public Access	£100,000
Extend the City Wide Advice Tribunal Service	£54,000
Assets Condition Surveys & Service Convergence Plan	£25,000
Staff allocation to programme co-ordination	£30,000
Staff development (36 staff)	£33,000
Total Allocation	£467,000

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3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 Pending confirmation of offer, the additional DSD allocation of £467,000 will cover all grant or associated project costs, and associated staff costs.**
- 3.2 Related assessment and administration resource requirements will be subsumed into current staff work programmes.**

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- i. Agree to accept the additional DSD offer of £467,000 as a variation to the Community Support Programme grant contract for 2013/14;**
- ii. Consider the proposals to utilise the potential additional allocation of CSP funds and prioritise these dependant on the total funds available;**
- iii. Agree that, where uptake within any of the proposed elements is under-utilised, officers can reallocate funding based on the committee agreed priorities in order to maximise the uptake of the additional CSP funding allocation.”**

After discussion, during which the Community Services Manager clarified a number of issues, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Ulster Hall - Catering Contract

The Director sought the Committee's permission to undertake a tendering exercise for the provision of café and bar services at the Ulster Hall for a two-year period, commencing in March, 2014, with a discretionary option to extend that contract for a further one-year period if deemed necessary.

The Committee granted the approval sought and delegated authority to the Director to appoint a suitably-qualified contractor at the conclusion of the tendering exercise.

Chairman

Health and Environmental Services Committee

Wednesday, 2nd October, 2013

MEETING OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Corr (Chairman);
the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Austin, M. E. Campbell, Curran,
Clarke, Garrett, Hussey, Jones, Keenan, Kelly,
Magee, McCarthy, McKee, McNamee, L. Patterson
and Thompson.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and
Environmental Services;
Mr. T. Martin, Head of Building Control;
Mr. S. Skimin, Head of Cleansing Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Head of Environmental Health;
Mr. T. Walker, Head of Waste Management; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

New Members

It was reported that Alderman McCoubrey had replaced Alderman M. Campbell on the Committee and that Councillors Clarke and Magee had replaced the former Members Hartley and O'Neill. The Chairman welcomed the Members to the meeting and paid tribute to Alderman Campbell and the two former Members for their contribution during their time on the Committee.

Environmental Health

Update on Tobacco Control Regulation

The Committee considered the following report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Smoking is the single greatest cause of preventable illness and premature death in Northern Ireland, killing around 2,300 people each year. In addition, a strong relationship exists between smoking and health inequalities. It has a greater impact on people living in areas of social or economic deprivation. Overall, almost one in four adults in Northern Ireland is a current smoker. In deprived areas this increases to one in three; and amongst the prison population, and for those with mental ill-health problems, smoking prevalence rates are considerably higher and one in two will die as a result of smoking.**
- 1.2 Since 2007, the NI Assembly has introduced a number of legislative controls to address this serious public health issue. On 30th April 2007 the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 came into effect to protect people from second hand smoke by preventing smoking in most workplaces and public places. On 1st September 2009 the minimum age to purchase tobacco products was increased from 16 to 18 years by the introduction of the Children and Young Persons (Sale of Tobacco etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008; and more recently controls were introduced relating to point of sale display of tobacco products and the use of vending machines. The Council has been funded by the Public Health Agency since 2006 to enforce the tobacco control legislation and the level of compliance relating to smoke free workplaces, point of sale display and the use of vending machines in Belfast and indeed, throughout Northern Ireland is high.**
- 1.3 The Public Health Agency also funds the Council to provide a smoking cessation service for its employees and this service has been extended over the past few years to include smoking cessation in other workplaces throughout the city.**
- 1.4 In February 2012, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety published a Ten Year Tobacco Control Strategy for NI with the overall aim to create a tobacco-free society. The Strategy identifies children and young people as one of the main priority groups and recognises that reducing the availability of tobacco to children and young people as key to being successful in reducing the uptake of smoking among this group.**
- 1.5 Recent research in NI indicates that 77% of adult smokers started to smoke in their teens and that almost 9% of children aged 11-16 are now regular smokers. It is agreed that more work needs to be done to prevent children and young people**

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from starting to smoke and that reducing the availability of tobacco products to under 18s is integral to this work. The Public Health Agency provides funding for district councils to enforce the underage sales legislation.

- 1.6 Studies carried out with children who smoke in England and Scotland show that their primary source for purchasing tobacco is shops, and although NI wasn't included in the study it is likely that a similar situation exists here. The Northern Ireland Assembly has issued a draft Tobacco Retailers Bill which will strengthen sanctions against retailers who sell tobacco products to children. The Bill, which is currently at Committee Stage, contains proposals that would allow for a restricted sales order to be applied to an individual, and/or a restricted premises order to be applied to a premises, prohibiting the sale of tobacco products for a period of time following the commission of a number of relevant offences.

Current Work

- 1.7 Since the minimum age to purchase tobacco products was raised from 16 to 18 in 2009 the Council has, in line with the Public Health Agency and other district councils, developed a programme of work to provide advice and guidance to retailers on how to comply with the legislation.
- 1.8 All tobacco retailers receive a visit at least once a year by an officer outlining the legal responsibilities associated with selling tobacco and advising of the controls that should be put in place to prevent sales being made to anyone under the age of 18. An advisory leaflet and letter confirming this is left at the time of the visit and an additional mail shot with the same information is sent out at least twice a year to all retailers. Retailers are clearly advised and reminded that a test purchase exercise may be carried out in their shop at any time.

Test Purchasing

- 1.9 All councils are required, within the service level agreements with the Public Health Agency, to carry out regulatory work to control sales. Belfast City Council carries out approximately 60 test purchases a year to monitor compliance with the above Regulations. This is where a 13 or 14 year old child volunteer visits a shop to attempt to buy cigarettes. The Council has a test purchasing procedure and all staff working in this area have undergone child protection training. The child volunteer is advised to tell the truth about their age if questioned by a retailer and they do not carry any identification. The Public

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Health Agency, as the funder of this work and to ensure consistency regionally, oversees the approach taken by councils, which is important given that a retailer may have a number of outlets in different council areas. The regional approach to prevent underage tobacco use is in line with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's 10 year tobacco control strategy.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1** The tobacco control work in Belfast, including that to prevent underage sales is undertaken in line with the Council's approach to better regulation. Education, information and advice, along with a well developed smoking cessation service are used to support businesses to achieve compliance. However, despite this, between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2013 out of 172 test purchase exercises carried out in Belfast 66 shops sold cigarettes to the 13 and 14 year old volunteers. Of these 43 have been progressed to formal prosecutions.
- 2.2** Business operators have the opportunity to demonstrate the controls and systems they have put in place to prevent sales and ensure compliance before a decision is taken with legal services to prosecute.
- 2.3** Due to the serious nature of this public health issue and the persistent high rate of sales of cigarettes to children in Belfast, the Council is currently considering other ways to support businesses to help them to meet their legal obligations. Work is underway updating the 'Do you sell age restricted products?' advisory leaflet and on the production of information packs for businesses, with template documents such as a refusal log, a generic age restricted policy, a record of training log, etc. We are seeking additional funding for this work and it is hoped that the posters and packs will be available before the end of the year. In addition regional seminars are being planned for businesses to provide advice on the new legislation. These are likely to take place in December or January.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 HR Implications

None

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3.2 Financial implications

There are no resource implications for the Council. The costs associated with this work are being met by the Public Health Agency as part of a regional grant.

3.3 Equipment Implications

None

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no equality issues associated with this work.

5 Recommendation

5.1 The Committee is requested to note the persistent high rate of sales of tobacco products to children in Belfast and the work being undertaken to better support businesses to prevent sales and achieve compliance.”

During discussion, several Members commended the work which was being undertaken by the Council and its partner organisations in relation to tobacco control. It was suggested that that work should be publicised more widely and that reference should be made to the important role to be played by parents in discouraging their children from smoking, the benefits of undertaking test purchases in shops and the mechanism for reporting to the Council those retailers who sold single cigarettes to young people who were under the minimum age. It was suggested also that an awareness campaign be organised for businesses in order to supplement the positive work being undertaken by that sector around the responsible sale of tobacco products. A Member stated that he had been made aware that some young people were using electronic cigarettes before moving on to smoke tobacco and sought clarification on any potential health implications and future control measures which could be implemented in relation to that type of device.

In response, the Head of Environmental Health undertook to examine, in consultation with the Corporate Communications Section, ways of publicising the work of the Council and partner agencies in terms of tobacco control. She undertook to raise with businesses regionally the need to raise awareness of their work and how it could be co-ordinated, once the new legislation had been passed and to obtain from the Regional Tobacco Control Group and the Public Health Agency clarification on the points which had been raised in relation to electronic cigarettes.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and that a report providing a further update on the control of tobacco would be submitted to a future meeting.

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**Consultation on the Food Law Code
of Practice (Northern Ireland) Review**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The statutory Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) (COP) sets out the instructions and criteria that local authorities need to follow when planning and carrying out their food law regulatory responsibilities. This Code requires periodic revision so that it reflects current enforcement practices and supports local authorities in ensuring that the delivery of their official control obligations is effective, consistent, risk based and proportionate.

1.2 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is currently seeking comments on its most recent proposals to amend the Code. The main changes proposed relate to the risk assessment tool used to determine the minimum frequency and type of intervention applied to verify compliance in food establishments. The proposals aim to:

- increase the consistency in risk scoring by updating and clarifying the risk descriptors used to assign risk scores and**
- improve the effectiveness of enforcement by redistributing the minimum inspection frequency of a number of businesses to allow enforcement to focus on businesses that are non-compliant with food law**

1.3 The current code sets out the scheme used to risk score premises and categorises them A (highest risk) – E (lowest). Part of the risk score reflects the level of compliance observed during inspection and is used to determine the Food Hygiene Rating which is published. The risk category determines the minimum intervention frequency, and also the type of intervention that must be applied. Higher risk premises are normally subject to more frequent, thorough inspections whereas lower risk premises may receive a range of light touch interventions at a reduced frequency.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The current risk assessment scheme fails to adequately differentiate between levels of compliance within all establishments and has resulted in large volumes of food establishments, ranging in compliance from good to poor,

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falling within risk category of 'C'. Establishments in category C, irrespective of levels of compliance, must receive an intervention at least once every 18 months and every other intervention must be a thorough inspection.

- 2.2 It is this Council's experience that for many food businesses the levels of compliance do not remain static over time and that external factors including staff turnover often result in falling standards between inspections. Periodic inspection is considered the most reliable way of detecting and assisting businesses to remedy non compliances.
- 2.3 A draft response to the consultation and associated covering letter are attached. The changes proposed are summarised below. The full consultation document can be accessed at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/consultations/consultations-northern-ireland/2013/foodlaw-ni>
- 2.4 The main impact of this proposal is to move the better compliant 'C' establishments to category 'D' where they may be removed from the inspection programme in favour of lighter touch interventions and at a reduced frequency.
- 2.5 The establishments moved by this proposal from category 'C' to category 'D' would result in almost 50% of businesses handling open high risk food falling into the latter category. As category 'D' such establishments would no longer require inspection, instead the minimum official control would equate to a light touch intervention at least once every 4 years.
- 2.6 Furthermore, removing up to 50% of establishments handling open high risk food from inspection requirements will compromise the integrity of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme as such premises may not be automatically re assessed over time.
- 2.7 Considering the proposals, the case studies provided estimate a modest 5.41% reduction in the minimum number of interventions required within Belfast. It would appear the case studies take an overly simplistic view as they fail to recognise the impact of the flexibilities within the existing code and the much greater reduction in the levels of intervention expected. This Council estimates that the proposal would equate to a 27% reduction in the number of inspections and an overall reduction of around 25% in the level of interventions.
- 2.8 It would appear that the proposals aim to help local authorities, particularly in England, that have faced severe financial hardship and have been forced to reduce resources. There is evidence that increasing numbers of these Authorities

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struggle to comply with the requirements of the current COP. It is not however clear if the proposals adequately consider the potential impact on consumer protection and in particular the effectiveness of light touch interventions alone to monitor compliance and evaluate food safety risk in such a large percentage of establishments handling open high risk food.

- 2.9** Should this proposal be adopted, it is likely that many councils will seek to maintain inspection levels for businesses handling high risk food, whereas others will not receive inspections in order to reduce expenditure to an absolute minimum. This is likely to increase inconsistency across the UK with different inspection regimes applied in different regions and LA areas.
- 2.10** It is possible that, rather than using any savings to better target non compliant businesses, authorities facing financial pressure may decide to divert resources away from food safety to other areas of work.
- 2.11** Members are asked to consider and agree the attached response at appendix 2, which includes the following:

Belfast City Council, through its investment programme and its Regulatory and Enforcement Policy, is committed to the principles of better regulation and to ensuring our regulatory activities not only protect the consumer, but also encourage economic growth. To that end the Council:

- strongly supports the overall aim of this proposal to 'improve the effectiveness of enforcement by redistributing the minimum inspection frequency of a number of businesses to allow enforcement to focus on businesses that are non-compliant with food law'
- supports a reduction in the frequency of intervention applied to the current more compliant 'C' establishments and agree that this would give the Council greater flexibility to decide and target local priorities;
- supports the recategorisation of establishments within the current category 'C' band which as it stands is too broad;
- suggests, however, that large numbers of premises handling open high risk food should not be removed completely from the inspection programme and the level of intervention applied must be sufficient to

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protect the consumer and maintain the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme; and

- suggests that should this proposal proceed then the level of minimum intervention required for category D premises handling open high risk food should be reviewed and increased accordingly.

Members are also asked to note the other proposed changes to the Code and agree the attached response (Appendix 2) including changes to descriptors, food standards qualifications, revisit requirements and registration of new premises.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications

Equality Implications

None

Recommendation

The Committee is requested to agree the following covering letter and consultation response.

Appendix 1

Belfast City Council is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Food Law Code of Practice (COP). Our Health and Environmental Services Committee at its meeting on the 2nd October considered your proposals and agree the attached response.

Through our investment programme and our Regulatory and Enforcement Policy we are committed to the principles of better regulation and to ensuring our regulatory activities not only protect the consumer, but also encourage economic growth. To that end the Council:

- strongly supports the overall aim of this proposal to 'improve the effectiveness of enforcement by redistributing the minimum inspection frequency of a number of businesses to allow enforcement to focus on businesses that are non-compliant with food law';

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- supports a reduction in the frequency of intervention applied to the current more compliant 'C' establishments and agree that this would give the Council greater flexibility to decide and target local priorities;
- supports the re categorisation of establishments within the current category 'C' band which as it stands is too broad;
- suggests, however, that large numbers of premises handling open high risk food should not be removed completely from the inspection programme and the level of intervention applied must be sufficient to protect the consumer and maintain the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme; and
- suggests that should this proposal proceed then the level of minimum intervention required for category D premises handling open high risk food should be reviewed and increased accordingly.

This response will be presented to the Council on 4th November for ratification and you will be advised subsequent to that meeting of any amendments made to the document.

Appendix 2

Council Response

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Food Law Code of Practice (COP). The Council through its investment programme and its Regulatory and Enforcement Policy is committed to the principles of better regulation and to ensuring our regulatory activities not only protect the consumer, but also, encourage economic growth. To that end the Council: strongly supports the overall aim of this proposal to improve consistency in risk scoring and to improve the effectiveness of enforcement by redistributing the minimum inspection frequency of a number of businesses to allow enforcement to focus on businesses that are non-compliant with food law. To that end the Council supports a reduction in the frequency of intervention applied to the current more compliant 'C' establishments and welcomes that this would give the Council greater flexibility to decide and target local priorities;

It is the Council's experience that, for many food businesses, the levels of compliance do not remain static over time and that external factors including staff turnover often result in falling

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standards between inspections. Periodic inspection is considered the most reliable way of detecting and assisting businesses to remedy non compliances. The premises moved by this proposal from category C to category D would result in almost 50% of businesses handling open high risk food falling into the latter category. As category 'D' such premises would no longer require inspection, instead the minimum intervention frequency would equate to a light touch official control once every 4 years. Belfast City Council considers such a low level of intervention is insufficient to ensure continued compliance with Food Hygiene requirements and would fail to adequately protect the consumer. Furthermore removing 50% of premises handling open high risk food from inspection requirements will compromise the integrity of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme as such premises may not be automatically re assessed over time.

Considering the proposals the case studies provided estimate a modest 5.41% reduction in the minimum number of interventions required within Belfast. It would appear the case studies take an overly simplistic view as they fail to recognise the impact of the flexibilities within the existing code and the much greater reduction in the levels of intervention expected. This Council estimates that the proposal would equate to a 27% reduction in the number of inspections and an overall reduction of around 25%.in the level of intervention.

It would appear that the proposals aim to help local authorities, particularly in England, that have faced severe financial hardship and have been forced to reduce resources including food safety. There is evidence that increasing numbers of these Authorities struggle to comply with the requirements of the current COP. It is not however clear if the proposals adequately consider the potential impact on consumer protection and in particular the effectiveness of light touch interventions alone to monitor compliance and evaluate food safety risk.

Should this proposal be adopted it is likely that many Councils will seek to maintain inspection levels for businesses handling high risk food, whereas others will avoid inspections in order to reduce expenditure to an absolute minimum. This is likely to increase inconsistency across the UK with different inspection regimes applied in different regions and LA areas.

It is also likely that rather than using any savings to better target non compliant businesses, many Authorities facing financial pressure will divert resources away from food safety to other areas of work.

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Furthermore the consultation paper refers only to annex five of the COP; however other parts of the code, not referred to, have been significantly changed.

Food Standards Qualifications

The requirements for qualifications for officers carrying out food standards inspections have been changed; the Food Inspector qualification with Food Standards Endorsement has been removed. This change would have significant negative implications for Belfast City Council. We currently employ 3 Technical Officers (Food Safety) who carry out Food Standards inspections. If the proposed changes in qualifications are adopted, these officers will no longer be authorized to carry out these inspections. We would therefore strongly oppose these changes.

Additional requirements for qualifications of officers to carry out food standards inspections of higher risk food premises are proposed. We feel that the requirement for lead assessor training is justified for inspection of complex premises; however 'high risk' within the COP needs to be clearly defined.

Revisits

We welcome the proposed changes to revisit requirements. This is consistent with the NI compliance strategy and with this Council's existing policies and procedures.

New premises

We support the proposal to require inspection of new premises within 28 days of registration or when known to be opened (with some flexibility allowed). However the COP should clarify the position in relation to, for example, childminders who are currently outside the inspection programme and not subject to an initial inspection.

Answers to the specific questions asked within the consultation document are given below.

Response

Q1: Do you think that the proposed amendments to the descriptors will affect the consistency of scoring of food businesses by LA officers?

Belfast City Council welcomes the updating and clarification of the text where issues have been identified.

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In particular with respect to the additional score for Method of Processing, the clarification should improve consistency. Whilst current advice from Food Safety Experts is that rare or undercooked burgers and similar products should not be consumed, the Council recognizes there is evidence that the availability of these products is increasing across the UK and that where strict precautions are taken to demonstrate the elimination of Ecoli contamination this may be accepted as compliant. Belfast City Council therefore welcomes the fact that these activities are now specifically highlighted within the COP as high risk and should automatically acquire an additional score. However, reference to such methods of processing within the code has the potential of main streaming such practices and may increase the risk to the consumer. The FSA needs to simultaneously provide clear guidance to industry and enforcement as to the specific controls necessary to ensure food safety.

With regards to Confidence in Management, the Council notes and supports the introduction of attitudes and culture into the scoring as this reflects recent research findings as to the reasons for non compliance. However it feels that this will remain a difficult area to score consistently and suspect some officers will struggle with the concept of not scoring practices and hygiene again to some extent.

Q2: Do you think additional clarification should be added to the descriptors in Annex 5, and if so which factor needs additional material and why?

The wording of the descriptors is open to a wide degree of interpretation and professional judgement and this has led to inconsistency and significant changes in scoring practices over the years. In recent years the risk scores have been used to generate and publish ratings as part of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and industry continue to raise concerns regarding consistency. Whilst much work has been done within Belfast and across Northern Ireland to ensure consistency of FH ratings it is clear the risk rating scheme was not specifically designed to ensure highly consistent Food Hygiene Ratings for publication. A more fundamental review of the rating scheme may be required to ensure highly consistent scores for Food Hygiene Ratings and risk assessment. At the very least additional detailed guidance should be produced to advise on the scoring of specific non compliances.

Confidence in Management – the inclusion of a score of 15 may help to avoid inconsistencies between officers where some officers may be unduly severe on some businesses opting for 20 rather than 10. Confidence in Management remains a challenging concept in terms of ensuring high levels of consistency in scoring. A more

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fundamental review of this aspect may be required to accommodate the FHRS.

Food Standards Risk to Consumers – this includes consideration of food with increased risk of chemical contamination; this aspect may need some clarification, perhaps a list of such foods.

Q3: Do you consider that the content and presentation are clear and easily understood, if not, how and where should this information be presented to improve this?

Yes

Q4: Do you agree with the proposal to redistribute the risk categories to focus on high risk establishments and will this help LAs identify those businesses that need more regulatory activity, please provide evidence to support your views?

Belfast City Council does not agree with the proposal as it is currently written and believes this is the most substantive part of the COP review and needs very careful consideration.

It very much supports a more targeted approach to food safety which focuses on the worst offenders and reduces the regulatory burden on compliant businesses.

It agrees that the current risk category C is much too broad and fails to adequately differentiate between premises with poor, acceptable and good levels of compliance.

The Council agrees that reducing the inspection frequency for the existing Category C premises with high levels of compliance could allow Councils to better target their resources without compromising food safety. However, the current level of intervention required for category D premises should the proposal be adopted, would remove large numbers of premises handling open high risk food completely from the inspection programme. They would instead be subjected to light touch official control visits once every four years. This is considered insufficient to ensure food safety requirements are being met and to ensure Food Hygiene Ratings are relevant.

Should the COP be amended to move significant numbers of premises handling open high risk food from category C into category D then the level of intervention required for Category D premises needs to be increased. This Council believes all premises handling open high risk foods should be periodically subject to inspection, albeit at a reduced frequency and alternated with light touch interventions.

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Q5: Do you foresee any positive or negative effects arising from this change?

It is possible that this proposal will result in a further depletion of the resources allocated by LA's across the UK to Food Safety. Local Authorities facing severe financial hardship may seek to achieve the minimum required levels of official controls and may divert any savings generated to other services. Under such circumstances the proposals will fail to improve the targeting of non compliant premises and more likely significantly increase the risk to the consumer.

With 50% of premises handling open high risk food potentially no longer subject to planned inspection, large proportions of food hygiene ratings will become out of date and irrelevant so threatening the integrity of the FHRS.

There has been no evidence of the effectiveness of light touch interventions to assess risk and effectively monitor compliance, on the other hand there is evidence to suggest that conditions within food business can deteriorate and fluctuate over time with staff changes and other external factors coming into play. Removing a high percentage of businesses handling open high risk food from the inspection regime in favour of lighter unevaluated interventions may result in a significant reduction in the effectiveness of the regulatory regime and increase consumer risk.

The reduction in the level of intervention carried out is likely to become a matter of public interest, possibly in response to an outbreak or other food safety incident occurring. It is likely consumers expect the regular inspection of premises handling open high risk food and in the absence of such, public confidence in the regulatory regime could be adversely affected.

On a positive side, the Council agrees that the current category C is too diverse in terms of compliance and supports a reduction in the frequency of intervention applied to the better premises. However they should not be removed completely from the inspection programme and the level of intervention applied should be sufficient to protect the consumer and maintain the FHRS. Should this proposal be agreed the level of minimum intervention required for category D premises handling open high risk food should be increased.

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Q6: Would you support further revisions to the Code to increase the frequency of intervention at higher risk establishments and reduce the frequency at lower risk establishments and how would you like to see this achieved?

The Council is of the opinion that the small number of existing Category C premises with poor standards of compliance (rated 0,1 and 2) should be re categorised into category B thereby increasing the minimum inspection frequency from once every three years to once a year. It is anticipated this would significantly improve the targeting of individual non compliant businesses, however, due to the small number of premises affected it would not significantly increase the overall regulatory burden.

As discussed above if the proposed changes to the risk banding are agreed this council believes that the current minimum intervention required for category D premises handling open high risk food should be revised and increased to ensure periodic inspection alternated with light touch interventions.

Q7: At figure 8 within the impact assessment at Annex B we have estimated an average time to undertake an inspection at business type. Do you agree with the estimations given?

(Can any alternative estimations submitted please state whether they include time spent pre and post the inspection)

The Council feels that the estimate of 3 hours for restaurants and caterers is an underestimate and that 4.5 hours for this class of premises is more realistic. It should also be noted that Belfast City Council utilises the flexibilities within the existing COP and planned interventions often take the form of short verification visits of approximately 30 mins. The impact assessment fails to consider the potential impact of the flexibilities within the COP which could see inspections being reduced by as much as 27%.

Q8: We have estimated that each officer involved in implementing Annex 5 will now need to spend an additional hour familiarising themselves with the changes, do you agree with this estimation?

Council believes this is unrealistic and that officers will require at least 2 hours to become familiar with the proposed changes.”

The Committee agreed that the foregoing letter and accompanying comments be forwarded to the Food Standards Agency as the Council's response to the consultation document.

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Building Control

Naming of Streets

The Committee approved the undernoted applications for the naming of streets in the City which did not conflict with existing street names and to which the Royal Mail had offered no objection:

<u>Proposed Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
Goldstone Hall	Off Park Avenue, BT4	Dimensions Architects
Victoria Close	Off Victoria Road, BT4	Fairbuild Homes (NI) Limited

Applications for the Erection of Dual-Language Street Signs

The Head of Building Control reported that the following applications to erect additional street nameplates in a language other than English had been received by the Council:

<u>Street Name</u>	<u>Proposed Second Street Name</u>	<u>Language</u>
Waterford Gardens, BT13	Garraithe Phort Láirge	Irish
Waterford Street, BT13	Sráid Phort Láirge	Irish

He explained that, in accordance with Council policy, a survey had been undertaken which had determined that over two-thirds of the residents of the streets had been in favour of the erection of additional nameplates. Accordingly, he sought approval for their erection.

The Committee granted the approval sought.

Joint Working Arrangement between the Council and the Department of Finance and Personnel

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee and seek its consent to enter into a pilot project with the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) of the Department of Finance**

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and Personnel in the submission of their In-House Design Schemes for Building Regulation Approvals by the Council.

- 1.2 The power for the Council to carry its Building Regulation function is contained in the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended 1990 and 2000). This states that anyone carrying out works to which the regulations apply must make application to the district council in which the building is situated to ensure their works comply with those regulations.
- 1.3 Whilst that Order states that the substantive requirements of the Building Regulations apply to the Crown (central government departments), they are exempt from the procedural requirements and enforcement. In effect this means that whilst they must ensure their buildings meet the regulatory requirements they do not have to apply to the Council nor are they subject to enforcement by the Council in respect of those buildings for any failure to comply with the regulations. This is in line with the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 which establishes that the Crown is not bound by legal requirements unless other legislation states otherwise. This is often referred to as 'crown exemption or crown immunity'.
- 1.4 CPD carries out in house design work on many of the government buildings which fall under this exemption. They are however of the opinion that they would be keen to make application to the Council for this work as they see the additional checks carried out by the Council as beneficial to the process in ensuring compliance of their buildings. They have consulted with their government legal advisers who, on checking the legislation, advised that, whilst CPD are not bound to make application under the Order it equally does not prevent them from making any application to the Council if they so wish.
- 1.5 In light of this, CPD has now approached the Council to ascertain if we would engage in a pilot within the Belfast area where they would submit applications for their in-house designs, pay the requisite fees as defined in the regulations and have their plans and building works assessed and inspected by the Council's building control staff. If the plans and works are in compliance, the Council would issue to them the necessary plan approvals and completion certificates.
- 1.6 Where the plans or works are not in compliance, CPD would, on receipt of our report, require amendments to achieve compliance as they would make our certificates a pre-requisite

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for approvals under their procedures. This mechanism is an important part of the process to ensure compliance as the Council has no enforcement power in relation to the works.

- 1.7 Not only would this benefit CPD in that they have an additional layer of control on their projects, but the costs would be fully covered through fees.
- 1.8 We have been in consultation with the Council's Legal Services Section on this matter and they are content that there are no significant legal issues preventing this arrangement provided that a Service Level Agreement is put in place. CPD are fully aware of this issue and have confirmed the willingness to enter into any agreement the Council would propose.
- 1.9 It is hoped that the results from this pilot would inform other councils in Northern Ireland who may wish to partake of this offer in their respective areas.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Service is proposing a joint working arrangement with the Central Procurement Directorate of the Department of Finance and Personnel in the submission of their In-House Designs for Building Regulation Approvals by the Council.
- 2.2 It is envisaged that the pilot will run for an initial period of 6 months. If successful, the project may form the basis of a province-wide initiative to introduce similar schemes to District Council Building Control Services in the other twenty five council areas.
- 2.3 The Council has a policy to work in partnership with other statutory agencies, especially on projects of mutual benefit.
- 2.4 Before any applications for building works are submitted for approval to the Building Control Service a full Service Level Agreement will be drawn up in conjunction with Legal Services ensuring the Council is exempt from any liability associated with the operation of this function.
- 2.5 To ensure the effective operation of the pilot and review quality control regular meetings will take place between the Head of Building Control and Stanley Simpson, a Deputy Director in Construction Division in Central Procurement Directorate.

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2.6 At the end of the pilot, a full evaluation report will be submitted to Committee for approval to continue the project.

3 **Resource Implications**

3.1 The project will be self financed via the fees charged.

4 **Equality Implications**

4.1 There are no equality or good relations issues.

5 **Recommendation**

5.1 The Committee is requested to grant approval for the commencement of the pilot exercise, for a period of 6 months, with the commencement date to be agreed between the parties. Details of the project will be reported to the Committee after six months.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Chairman

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 16th October, 2013

MEETING OF LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Ekin (Chairman);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford);
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors M. E. Campbell, Clarke, Hussey,
Jones, Keenan, Magee, Mallon, Ó Donnghaile,
Reynolds and Spence.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and
Environmental Services;
Mr. T. Martin, Head of Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, Solicitor; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Aldermen McCoubrey and Smyth and Councillors Attwood, Cunningham and Groves.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

New Members

The Chairman welcomed to their first meeting Councillors Clarke and Magee who had replaced the former Councillors Lavery and O'Neill on the Committee.

Non-Delegated Matters

Update on 2013 Summer Entertainment Events

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing information on entertainment events which had been held across the City over the course of the summer. The report had provided details on the location of the venues, the numbers of patrons who had attended, complaints which had arisen, together with any resulting actions, and the extent of the Council's work with promoters and the various statutory agencies.

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Invitation from the Police Service of Northern Ireland

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th August, 2012, it had received from a representative of the Police Service of Northern Ireland a presentation on a 'traffic light' categorisation system which it had developed to record information on violent crimes emanating from licensed premises. The representative had suggested that the deployment by pubs and nightclubs of an identification scanning device could have the potential to reduce levels of underage drinking, violence and anti-social behaviour and had invited the Council to participate in a joint initiative to promote their use. However, the Committee had agreed that it would require further evidence on the effectiveness of the device before deciding if the Council should sign up to the initiative.

The Head of Building Control reported that the Police Service had advised that two premises had, since June, 2013, been using the scanning device. A third establishment had, subsequently, deployed the device at the request of the Police Service, following an unacceptable rise in incidences of violent crime. He explained that the Police Service had invited the Licensing Committee to undertake a visit to those establishments in order to view the scanning device in operation and to obtain the views of the relevant licensees. Invitations had been extended also to the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and to participants in the Safer Cities Programme.

The Committee agreed to visit the premises.

**Authorisation of Officers under the Fire and
Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 20th June, 2012, it had recommended that the Council sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. The Head of Building Control reported that the purpose of the document, which would be reviewed annually by both parties, was to clarify and co-ordinate the roles and responsibilities of that Service and council licensing officers on matters relating to fire safety in those premises which councils were responsible for licensing. The Memorandum would ensure also that no unnecessary burden was placed on businesses or organisations seeking to comply with both the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and the Council's licensing conditions. The Council would not, however, be assuming any additional responsibilities, since it would be enforcing only that legislation which was covered currently by district councils.

He explained that, in entering into the Memorandum of Understanding, the Board of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service had agreed, as provided under Article 13 (1) of the aforementioned Order, to devolve to the Council its function conferred on it by virtue of Article 33(1) of the Order. Such a move would permit officers to undertake fire safety duties in premises or parts thereof which required a licence under the legislation listed within the Memorandum. It was, therefore, a requirement that all officers undertaking enforcement work under the Order were authorised to do so and that they were suitably qualified and competent. He reminded the Members that the Council had, for a number of years, delegated to the Director of Health and Environmental Services the power to authorise officers to undertake certain functions in the course of their work. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee delegate to

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the Director authority to authorise officers to carry out those fire safety duties which had been conferred on the Council under the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF
THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING ON
1st MAY, 2007 IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 46**

Licences Issued under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of licensing applications which had been granted under the delegated authority of the Director of Health and Environmental Services.

**Applications for the Grant of Outdoor Entertainments
Licences for Council-Owned Properties**

The Committee was advised that applications had been received from the Council's Parks and Leisure Department for the grant of Seven-day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licences for the Cathedral Gardens and the Woodvale Park and of a Fourteen-day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence for the Belmont Park. The Head of Building Control reported that, whilst these were the first such applications for the Cathedral Gardens and the Belmont Park, the Woodvale Park had held a Licence since 2008. However, that had not been renewed for 2012/2013 due to works being undertaken to upgrade the Park, which had since been completed.

The Head of Building Control reminded the Members that Outdoor Entertainments Licences for which no objections had been lodged had, in the past, been issued under the Council's Scheme of Delegation. However, the Committee, at its meeting on 21st November, 2012, had agreed, amongst other things, that in future all new applications for the grant of Outdoor Entertainments Licences be placed before it for consideration.

He reported that no written representation had been received in relation to the grant of the Licences and that the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service had offered no objections. The Council's Environmental Protection Unit had been advised of the applications and had confirmed that it would comment on events on an individual basis, once all of the relevant documentation had been received. He confirmed that, should the Committee grant the Licences, the Building Control Service would, in advance of events taking place, consult with the organisers, the Parks and Leisure Department, the Environmental Protection Unit and relevant agencies, including the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, to ensure that all documentation was completed and that all safety and technical requirements were met.

Cathedral Gardens

The Committee agreed, in its capacity as Licensing Authority, to grant a Seven-day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence in respect of the Cathedral Gardens.

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Woodvale Park

The Committee agreed, in its capacity as Licensing Authority, to grant a Seven-day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence in respect of the Woodvale Park.

Belmont Park

The Committee agreed, in its capacity as Licensing Authority, to grant a Fourteen-day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence in respect of the Belmont Park.

**Competing Applications for a Stationary Street
Trading Licence – Site 2, Berry Street**

The Committee was advised that competing applications had been received from two persons wishing to trade from a vacant designated site in Berry Street, 46 feet from its junction with Royal Avenue. The Head of Building Control reviewed the applications, one of which had been submitted by Ms. Monika Szczesna, who had applied to sell, from a traditional market stall measuring 3 metres by 1.5 metres, hand crafts, e-cigarettes, e-cigarette accessories and refills, seasonal accessories, leather goods and jewellery from Monday to Saturday between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. and on a Sunday from 1.00 p.m. till 6.00 p.m. He explained that the applicant had, in September, 2013, been granted a Street Trading Licence to trade from a designated site in Lower Garfield Street. However, she had advised Council officers that her preferred site was that in Berry Street and that, should her application be successful, she would vacate her current site.

He reported that the second applicant, namely, Mr. Peter Robinson, was seeking to sell, from a traditional market stall measuring 3 metres by 1.5 metres, hand crafts, football souvenirs, vintage and collectable clothing, bags and fashionable accessories and seasonal flowers from Monday to Saturday between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. and on a Sunday from 12.00 noon till 6.00 p.m. The applicant had held a Licence in 2003 for a site in Fountain Lane, which he had operated in accordance with the Street Trading legislation.

The Head of Building Control informed the Members that written objections to both applications had been received from Mr. M. Gulusen, who had, in September 2011, been granted by the Committee a Street Trading Licence to sell a range of commodities from a designated site in Berry Street, 32 feet from its junction with Royal Avenue. The Committee had agreed that leather goods should comprise 50% of those commodities, in view of the fact that they were handmade and unique and would add value to tourism. Mr. Gulusen's objections had been based primarily on the fact that he provided currently many of the goods which the applicants were proposing to sell and that his trade could be affected, should the Committee approve either of the applications.

He confirmed that all three parties had been invited to attend the meeting and that it was normal practice for the objector to address the Committee in advance of the applicants. However, having been advised that Mr. Gulusen had not yet arrived, the Committee agreed to receive the applicants and Mr. P. Robinson was welcomed to the meeting.

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Mr. Robinson outlined the extent of his trading experience to date and confirmed that he was proposing to sell, from an attractive stall, well-presented original high quality goods of local significance which would add interest and vibrancy to the area. Those goods, which would include distinct handmade pendants and necklaces, would differ from those sold by Mr. Gulusen and would, therefore, be unlikely to impact upon his trade.

Mr. Robinson thanked the Committee for receiving him and he retired from the meeting.

Ms. M. Szczesna, together with Mr. B. Brzezinski, her advisor, were then admitted to the meeting.

Ms. Szczesna circulated for the Members' information photographs of the type of stall from which she wished to trade. She outlined the range of commodities which she was proposing to sell, which would include unique hand-crafted items made of ceramic, glass, metal or wood, and pointed out that they would add to the attractiveness of her stall and to the general area. In terms of Mr. Gulusen's objection, she pointed out that, since he was not selling items such as e-cigarettes or their accessories, which she would be offering, his business would not be affected.

In response to a question from a Member, Ms. Szczesna confirmed that she had applied to trade from the site in Lower Garfield Street until such times as her application for the one in Berry Street had been processed. She pointed out that, whilst she had held the Licence for Lower Garfield Street for a few weeks, she had yet to trade from there and that she was willing to vacate that site should the Committee grant her current application, as Berry Street was her preferred location.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Szczesna and Mr. Brzezinski for being in attendance and they left the meeting.

It was reported that Mr. M. Gulusen was now available to address the Committee and he was admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Gulusen informed the Members that he had built up his street trading business over a number of years. He explained that he was not objecting to the presence of another street trading stall in Berry Street but on the basis that he was providing already many of the commodities which the applicants were proposing to sell, which would have a detrimental effect upon his business. He added that e-cigarettes and their accessories were not in keeping with the type of commodities which the Committee had licensed him to sell and that the Council should not be seen to be promoting such products.

Mr. Gulusen was thanked by the Chairman and he left the meeting.

The Council's Solicitor informed the Committee that, under the provisions of the European Union legislation and the European Union Services Directive in particular, the Committee could not refuse an application solely on economic grounds. It could, however, as had been the case with previous applications, refuse an application on the grounds, as set out within Section 9(iv) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland)

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2001, that there were sufficient traders trading in the street in the commodities in which the applicant wished to trade.

After a lengthy discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by The Deputy Lord Mayor Alderman Stalford,

That the Committee, in its capacity as Licensing Authority, agrees, in view of the unique nature of the commodities which he is offering for sale, that it is minded to grant to Mr. P. Robinson a Stationary Street Trading Licence to sell hand crafts, football souvenirs, vintage and collectable clothing, bags and fashionable accessories and seasonal flowers from Monday to Saturday between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. and on a Sunday from 12.00 noon till 6.00 p.m. in Berry Street, 46 feet from its junction with Royal Avenue, at a site which has been designated previously for the sale of those commodities, subject to:

- (i) the applicant providing all necessary documentation; and
- (ii) the receipt of the appropriate licensing fees.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Keenan,
Seconded by Councillor Mallon,

That the Committee, in its capacity as Licensing Authority, agrees, in view of the fact that her application was the first to be submitted, that it is minded to grant to Ms. M. Szczesna a Stationary Street Trading Licence to sell hand crafts, e-cigarettes, e-cigarette accessories and refills, seasonal accessories, leather goods and jewellery from Monday to Saturday between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. and on a Sunday from 1.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. in Berry Street, 46 feet from its junction with Royal Avenue, at a site which has been designated previously for the sale of those commodities, subject to:

- (i) the applicant providing all necessary documentation; and
- (ii) the receipt of the appropriate licensing fees.

On a vote by show of hands eight Members voted for the amendment and five against and it was accordingly declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the meeting as the substantive motion when eight Members voted for and seven against and it was accordingly declared carried.

As a consequence of the decision to grant the Licence to Ms. Szczesna and the fact that there was only one designated site available, the Committee agreed that it was minded to refuse the application which had been submitted by Mr. P. Robinson, on the

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grounds set out in Sections 9(i) and 9(iv) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, namely, that the location at which he wished to trade was unsuitable and that there were sufficient traders trading at that location in the articles, things or services in which he wished to trade.

The Head of Building Control informed the Members that the unsuccessful applicant would be advised that, in accordance with Section 12 (2)(b) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, he would be permitted to make written representation to the Council within twenty-one days from the date of notice.

**Competing Applications for a Stationary Street
Trading Licence - Shaw's Bridge Car Park**

The Head of Building Control informed the Committee that competing applications had been received from three persons wishing to trade from a designated site at the above-mentioned location. He provided an overview of the applications, the first of which had been submitted by Mr Kenneth Chivers, the current licensee of the site, who had, since July 2012, been selling ice cream, non-alcoholic beverages and confectionery from Monday to Sunday between the hours of 11.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. The second applicant, Mr. Paul Chivers, who was an uncle of Mr. Kenneth Chivers, had applied to sell ice cream, non-alcoholic beverages and confectionery from Monday to Sunday between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. Mr. P. Chivers held a Mobile Street Trading Licence for the Finaghy, Ladybrook, Suffolk and Taughmonagh areas and had operated in accordance with the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The final applicant, namely, Mr. Robert Adair, was seeking to sell ice cream, candy floss, non-alcoholic beverages and confectionery from Monday to Sunday between 12.00 noon and 8.00 p.m. Mr. Adair had, from 2008 till 2011, held a Street Trading Licence to sell ice cream from a site in Berry Street. However, he had traded there for only one month before vacating the site, once it had been established that his stall was substantially larger than that permitted.

He reported that Mr. K. Chivers, Mr. P. Chivers and Mr. W. Adair, the brother of Mr. R. Adair, were in attendance in order to brief the Committee on the applications and Mr. K. Chivers was admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Chivers reported that he had, since 2012, held a Stationary Street Trading Licence permitting him to sell ice cream, confectionery and non-alcoholic drinks from the car park at Shaw's Bridge. For four years prior to that, he had been employed there by his father, who had been the licensee at that time. He explained that he strove to provide a high quality service and he circulated for the Members' attention a list of customers, all of whom had affirmed that assertion. He pointed out that his business had attained consistently a 5-star rating from the Council in terms of its food hygiene and that his van had been specially adapted to reduce fuel emissions and was maintained regularly. In addition, he provided, during peak times, additional receptacles for waste and ensured that all litter generated by the operation of his business was removed from the site when he ceased trading.

Mr. Chivers thanked the Committee for receiving him and he left the meeting.

Mr. P. Chivers, together with Mr. O. Friel, his legal representative and Mr. B. Topping, his employee, were welcomed to the meeting.

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Mr. Friel informed the Committee that Mr. P. Chivers had, for the past two years, been licensed as a mobile street trader to sell ice cream and other products in Finaghy, Taughmonagh and the surrounding areas. In July of this year, he had secured a contract to trade within the Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, which had necessitated the purchase of a second van. He made the point that his client provided his customers with a high standard of service, which had been reinforced within a letter of support from a local community development association, and that his business had been awarded a 5-star rating by the Council in recognition of the strict hygiene standards which he maintained. He explained that his client was seeking to expand his business to sell ice cream, confectionery and hot beverages within the car park at Shaw's Bridge, which would require the acquisition of a third van and the recruitment of another employee. The fact that he retained an interest in the site, despite being unsuccessful with a previous application, demonstrated his continued desire to provide a service to customers at that location.

The Chairman thanked the delegation for being in attendance and they retired from the meeting.

Mr. W. Adair was then admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Adair reported that his brother, who had been unable to attend the meeting, had approximately thirty years' experience of trading and that he had operated previously for twelve years in the Botanic Gardens. In addition, he held mobile Street Trading Licences in two other council areas and had achieved accreditation in recognition of his high hygiene standards. He explained that the applicant was proposing to sell locally produced ice cream and other commodities such as fruit, juices, milk shakes and hot drinks and that no illegal products would be stocked. In addition, the site would be kept clean and any rubbish would be removed at the end of each day.

Mr. Adair was thanked for his contribution and he left the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee, agreed, in its capacity as Licensing Authority, that it was minded, in view of the fact that he was the current licensee and that he had operated the site in accordance with the Street Trading legislation, to grant to Mr. Kenneth Chivers a Stationary Street Trading Licence to sell, from a van measuring 4 metres by 2 metres, ice cream, non-alcoholic beverages and confectionery from Monday to Sunday between the hours of 11.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. in the car park at Shaw's Bridge, at a pitch which had been designated previously for the sale of those commodities, subject to:

- (iii) the applicant providing all necessary documentation; and
- (iv) the receipt of the appropriate licensing fees.

As a consequence of the decision to grant the Licence to Mr. Kenneth Chivers and the fact that there was only one designated site available, the Committee agreed that it was minded to refuse the applications which had been submitted by Mr. P. Chivers and Mr. R. Adair, on the grounds set out in Sections 9(i) and 9(iv) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, namely, that the location at which they wished to

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trade was unsuitable and that there were sufficient traders trading at that location in the articles, things or services in which they wished to trade.

The Head of Building Control informed the Members that the unsuccessful applicants would be advised that, as required under Section 12 (2)(b) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, they would be permitted to make written representation to the Council within twenty-one days from the date of notice.

**Competing Applications for a Stationary Street
Trading Licence – Apollo Road**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st August, it had considered separate applications from Mr. I. Emodi and Mr. R. Anderson for the grant of a Stationary Street Trading Licence to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a vacant designated site in Apollo Road.

The Head of Building Control reported that, whilst both applicants had been invited to brief the Committee at that meeting on their proposals, neither had been present. He explained that Mr. Emodi had been unable to attend due to ill health, however, his wife had been present in order to address the Members on his behalf, if required. Mr. Anderson, on the other hand, had not indicated that he would be unable to attend and had failed to respond to several telephone calls from officers advising him of the meeting. On that basis, the Committee had agreed that it was minded to grant a Stationary Street Trading Licence to Mr. Emodi to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from Monday till Friday between the hours of 6.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. in Apollo Road, at a pitch designated previously by the Council for the sale of those commodities, subject to:

- (v) the applicant providing all necessary documentation; and
- (vi) the receipt of the appropriate licensing fees.

As a consequence of that decision, the Committee had agreed also that it was minded to refuse the application which had been submitted by Mr. R. Anderson, on the grounds that, despite being aware that his application would be considered by the Committee on 21st August, he had failed to attend that meeting or to provide an explanation for his non-attendance and that Mr. Emodi had, in arranging for a representative to be in attendance, demonstrated more interest in acquiring the site.

The Head of Building Control reported further that Mr. Anderson had been advised that, as required under Section 12 (2)(b) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, he would be permitted to make written representation to the Council within twenty-one days of receiving notification of the Committee's decision. However, no written or verbal representation had been forthcoming during that time.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed, in its capacity as Licensing Authority, to affirm its decision of 21st August to grant to Mr. I. Emodi a Stationary Street Trading Licence for a designated site on Apollo Road. The Committee agreed also to refuse the application which had been submitted by Mr. R. Anderson on the basis of the aforementioned facts.

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As a consequence of the decision to grant the Licence to Mr. I. Emodi and the fact that there was only one designated site available, the Committee agreed to refuse the application which had been submitted by Mr. K. Anderson, on the grounds set out in Sections 9(i) and 9(iv) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, namely, that the location at which he wished to trade was unsuitable and that there were sufficient traders trading at that location in the articles, things or services in which he wished to trade.

Chairman

Town Planning Committee

Thursday, 3rd October, 2013

MEETING OF TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor C. Hanna (Chairman);
Alderman Rodgers; and Councillors Austin, M. E. Campbell,
Cunningham, Curran, Garrett, Haire, Hendron, McCarthy,
Mullan, A. Newton, L. Patterson and Webb.

In attendance: Mrs. P. Scarborough, Democratic Services Section; and
Ms. K. Mills) Divisional
Ms. U. McDonald) Planning Office.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Aldermen Campbell, McCoubrey and Smyth and Councillors Beattie and Carson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 5th and 19th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

Deputation from the Sans Souci Residents' Association in relation to the Lennoxvale application (Z/2012/1210/F)

The Committee was reminded that it had received previously a deputation from residents of the Lennoxvale/Sans Souci Park area of Lower Malone in relation to their concerns regarding proposals which had been submitted by The Queen's University of Belfast to demolish 2 detached properties and to replace them with 3 residential blocks for students, and that, at its meeting on 15th August, it had been informed that further contact had been received from the Sans Souci Residents' Association which had requested another opportunity to address the Members regarding revised plans which the University had submitted in relation to the proposal. Accordingly, the Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ms. A. Andress, Ms. R. Magee, Mr. M. Patton and Ms. E. Sung.

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Ms. Andress outlined the concerns, on behalf of the Sans Souci Residents, in that the application proposed the development of 7 bulky, 4.5 storey blocks of purpose built student accommodation which would be intended to house 172 students, the development of which would be intrusive and densely urban and would entail cumbersome roof installations and plant unit, car parking, infill and piling together with high level area lighting and Closed Circuit Television systems.

Ms. Magee provided an overview of the concerns of the Lennoxvale residents in relation to the potential environmental problems such as noise nuisance, litter and anti-social behaviour which would be detrimental to the suburban character of the area. Mr. Patton reminded the Committee that the Lennoxvale area had many unique and important features which made a significant contribution to the Malone Conservation Area and that the proposed development would not conform with guidance which had been laid down in the Department of the Environment's Planning Document entitled "A Design Guide for the Malone Conservation Area" in that the 2 buildings which made important material contributions to the character and appearance of Lennoxvale and the Malone Road would be demolished, together with several other features of such an area being affected.

Ms. Sung concluded by summarising the Residents' concerns in relation to the impact on the existing drainage systems and potential surface water flooding and associated risks.

The Residents' Association answered a number of questions put by the Members and they then left the meeting.

The Members noted the information which had been presented and noted also that the Planning Service was not in a position to indicate when the application would be brought back to Committee for consideration at this stage.

Routine Correspondence

It was reported that correspondence had been received from the Roads Service in respect of the notification of the proposed introduction of taxi ranks at Botanic Avenue and High Street.

A copy of the letter and maps relating to the aforementioned matter was made available at the meeting for the information of the Members.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Response from the Roads Service regarding
vehicles exiting the rear of the City Hall**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th August, it had agreed to write to the Roads Service to seek clarification on the right of way of vehicles exiting the rear of the City Hall. A letter, dated 23rd September, had been received from the Roads Service which informed the Committee that traffic exiting the City Hall onto

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Donegall Square South must enter the junction with due care and attention as traffic on the public highway had the right of way.

A number of Members expressed concern at the content of the letter and the ongoing difficulties which were experienced by drivers exiting the rear of the City Hall and the use by buses of the normal traffic lanes in the vicinity of the building which exacerbated the problem. Accordingly, it was agreed that the issues of concern would be raised with the Roads Service at its forthcoming meeting with the Committee.

Requests for Deputations

It was noted that no requests for deputations had been received.

New Planning Applications

A list of new planning applications, which had been received by the Planning Service from 10th September until 23rd September, was noted by the Committee.

**Streamlined Planning Applications –
Decisions Issued**

The Committee noted a list of decisions which had been issued by the Planning Service between 13th September and 25th September in respect of streamlined planning applications.

Deferred Items Still Under Consideration

A list of deferred items, which were still under consideration by the Planning Office, was noted by the Committee.

**Schedule of Applications –
Application Withdrawn**

At the request of the Planning Service, the undernoted item was withdrawn from the schedule:

<u>Site and Applicant</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Divisional Planning Manager's Opinion</u>
12, 14 and 16 Malone Ridge, Malone Ridge Limited	Amendments to house types in scheme which had been approved previously.	Refusal

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**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE
OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL**

Planning Management Board Referral
Z/2011/0486F and Z/2011/0547/DCA
21 to 23 Victoria Street and 45 to 51 Waring Street

Prior to the consideration of the above-mentioned applications, the Committee was reminded that the former Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th October, 2006, had agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 47, to delegate full Council powers to the Town Planning Committee to refer to the Planning Management Board for adjudication only those disputed applications which received the support of a minimum of 75% of the Members in attendance, and voting, at the meeting.

Accordingly, the Committee considered further the planning applications in relation to the demolition of an existing 4 storey commercial building and the erection of a new 7 storey building comprising of 56 small unit/studio apartments and 2 retail units at ground floor level, in respect of which the Divisional Planning Manager had offered opinions to approve and consent.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Webb,
Seconded by Councillor M. E. Campbell,

That the opinion of the Divisional Planning Manager, to approve the demolition of an existing 4 storey commercial building to enable the erection of a new 7 storey building comprising of 56 small unit/studio apartments and 2 retail units at ground floor level, be rejected on the grounds that the Committee was strongly of the opinion that a decision contrary to that proposed by the Divisional Planning Office should be made because of the nature of the large scale housing proposal in that:

- it was unacceptable due to its scale, mass and design and it was out of character with the amenity of the area in the context of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7;
- it could lead to an unacceptable precedent for further similar developments within the area when considered against PPS 7 and PPS 12; and
- the application had generated significant political objections.

Accordingly, the Committee agrees that the application be referred to the Planning Management Board for consideration.

On a vote by show of hands, nine Members voted for the proposal and two against and it was accordingly declared carried. It was noted that since the application had achieved the required support it would be forwarded to the Planning Management Board for adjudication.

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Reconsidered Items

The Committee considered further the undernoted planning applications and adopted the recommendations of the Divisional Planning Manager thereon:

<u>Site and Applicant</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Divisional Planning Manager's Opinion</u>
61 Circular Road, Mr. S. Mallon	Two storey extension to side of dwelling, new front porch and alterations to vehicle entrance.	Approval
48 to 54 Upper Charleville Street, Mr. S. Boyd	Change of use from public house to retail shop and off licence with off street parking.	Approval
14 Ballygomartin Road, Mr. J. Braniff	Change of use of ground floor from class D1: community and cultural uses to premises for the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises, with provision of new shop front.	Refusal

Schedule of Planning Applications

The Committee considered the schedule of planning applications which had been submitted by the Divisional Planning Manager in respect of the Council area and agreed to adopt the recommendations contained therein with the exception of those referred to below:

<u>Site and Applicant</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Divisional Planning Manager's Opinion</u>
16 College Gardens, Mr. L. J. Fon	Amendments to rear windows and replacement of all windows throughout the building. [Deferred at the request of Councillor Curran to enable an office meeting to be held to permit further discussions between the objectors and the Planning Service.]	Consent
16 College Gardens, Mr. L. J. Fon	Conversion to 6 apartments including alterations (upgrade of existing dormers, replacement windows and external rear staircase). [Deferred at the request of	Approval

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	<p>Councillor Curran to enable an office meeting to be held to permit further discussions between the objectors and the Planning Service.]</p>	
<p>Lands East of 60 Quarry Road, Mrs. M. Patterson</p>	<p>Proposed minor re-siting and change to house type design of existing approved dwelling on a farm which had been approved under current policy with new farm building and associated yard to accommodate and support the sustainable development of the existing farm business. [Deferred at the request of Alderman Rodgers to enable an office meeting to be held to permit further discussions between the applicant and the Planning Service.]</p>	<p>Refusal</p>
<p>16 Adelaide Park, Mr. C. Coburn</p>	<p>Alterations and extension of detached garage to form additional dwelling unit. [Deferred at the request of Alderman Rodgers to enable an office meeting to be held to permit further discussions between the applicant and the Planning Service.]</p>	<p>Refusal</p>
<p>322 Stranmillis Road, Mr. P. McIlvanna</p>	<p>New bay window and entrance door to front elevation and 2 storey rear extension. [Deferred at the request of Councillor McCarthy to enable an office meeting to be held to permit further discussions between the objectors and the Planning Service.]</p>	<p>Approval</p>

Chairman

Town Planning Committee

Thursday, 17th October, 2013

MEETING OF TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor C. Hanna (Chairman);
Aldermen M. Campbell, McCoubrey and Rodgers;
Councillors Austin, M. E. Campbell, Carson, Cunningham,
Curran, Garrett, Haire, Hendron, Mullan and L. Patterson.

In attendance: Mrs. P. Scarborough, Democratic Services Section; and
Mr. P. Fitzsimons) Divisional
Ms. C. Reville) Planning Office.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Smyth and Councillors Beattie, McCarthy and Webb.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

New Member

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed to the meeting Councillor Carson, who had replaced the former Member, Councillor O'Neill.

Routine Correspondence

It was reported that correspondence had been received from various statutory bodies, agencies and other organisations in respect of the undernoted:

Notification from the Roads Service of:

- the operative date for the Shore Road, Belfast (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013;
- the operative date for the Frederick Street, Belfast (Footpath) (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013;
- the proposed Abandonment at Casement Park to facilitate the redevelopment of the stadium;
- the removal of a disabled parking bay at 99 Joanmount Gardens; and

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- the removal of a disabled parking bay at 100 Dunluce Avenue.

Notification from the Belfast Area Planning Office that an appeal had been lodged under Article 33 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 in respect of the redevelopment of the site located at 48 to 50 Great Victoria Street and 12 to 18 Amelia Street.

Copies of the letters, maps and orders relating to the above-mentioned matters were made available at the meeting for the information of the Members.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Historic Buildings List Number 838
St. Aidan's Church of Ireland, Blythe Street

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency indicating that, having reconsidered the heritage value of the above-mentioned property, it had concluded that the St. Aidan's Church of Ireland remained of sufficient interest for protection as a listed building and, therefore, its statutory listing remained unchanged.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Request for Deputation

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Belfast Metropolitan College for a number of students studying for a Foundation Degree in Planning, Property and Housing, to attend a future meeting. The Committee agreed to the request.

Reports and Correspondence

Article 31 Planning Application:
Redevelopment of Casement Park

(Mr. K. Sutherland, Urban Development Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Urban Development Manager reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 15th August, it had received notification of a Major Planning Application, under Article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, in relation to the redevelopment of Casement Park on lands at 88 to 104 Andersonstown Road. The application was in connection with the provision of a 38,000 seated capacity GAA Stadium, which comprised of the demolition of the existing facilities and the construction of a new pitch and stands, which would incorporate a range of amenities. Subsequently, the Committee had received deputations from the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the Mooreland and Owenvarragh Residents' Association (MORA) in relation to the development proposals.

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The Urban Development Manager pointed out that the Casement Park upgrade had received funding as part of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's Regional Stadium Programme and that it had been considered an important element in the City's international profile and for the development of the sporting infrastructure for the whole community. In addition to the technical response, which had already been submitted to the Department of the Environment by the Health and Environmental Services Department, the Council would submit a corporate response to the planning application.

The Urban Development Manager advised the Committee that, if the Department of the Environment was minded to approve the application, it should make certain that the following issues were addressed to ensure that the proposed development maximised the social, leisure, economic and environmental benefits and effectively minimised adverse impacts, particularly in relation to those issues which had been identified by the residents:

- ensure the design and material finishes minimised the potential for adverse impacts on adjoining properties;
- that event management arrangements were robust and that formal processes were agreed to ensure participation and effective planning;
- the need for an agreed structure for event planning which ensured shared governance and access to Council or other required facilities;
- ensure an active frontage on the Andersonstown Road;
- general access to parking facilities outside of match days;
- the contribution to the broader regeneration and leisure plan for the wider area;
- the opportunity for local procurement for services and ongoing supply chain opportunities; and
- the establishment of a management structure to include local representation.

After discussion, the Committee endorsed the undernoted response to the Department of the Environment:

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Redevelopment of Casement Park– planning application Z/2013/0685/F

**Draft Consultation Response
STRATEGIC IMPACT NOTE**

1.	Introduction
	<p>Belfast City Council was officially consulted in July 2013 by the Department of Environment (DoE) Strategic Planning Division on an application for planning permission to redevelop Casement Park. The application submitted by Ulster GAA proposes to provide a 38,000 seated capacity GAA Stadium, comprising: demolition of the existing facilities; construction of new pitch and stands, incorporating bar/restaurant and ancillary kitchen areas, conference, training and community facilities, including handball courts, ancillary offices, player accommodation and welfare facilities, press/media and broadcast facilities; replacement floodlighting, stadium/event management suite, ground support facilities including electronic display installations, facilities associated with ground maintenance; enhanced access arrangements; coach parking; underground car parking; remediation/replacement of site boundaries; hard and soft landscaping.</p> <p>This document provides Belfast City Council's Corporate response to the planning application and should be considered alongside the Council's technical response which has been previously submitted to the DoE by our Health and Environmental Services Department.</p> <p>The Council has engaged with the applicant and with residents groups regarding this application. In early September 2013 the West Area Working Group (AWG) received a presentation from the GAA. In October 2013 the Town Planning Committee received deputations from the GAA, and from the local residents group – the Mooreland and Owenvarragh Residents Association (MORA).</p> <p>At these meetings a number of issues were raised with the Committee including the concerns of neighbouring residents in relation to the potential impacts: the steps which had been taken to alleviate those issues; wider engagement to include work with schools; inclusion of residents in the governance structure/ event management; the need to ensure community benefits and business opportunities.</p> <p>This response takes into account the comments from all parties as well as the local and City-wide context, including key Council documents, in relation to the proposed stadium redevelopment.</p>
2.	Value of Regional Sport and Cultural Assets
	<p>The Belfast Masterplan, which is currently under review and out for public consultation, outlines the Council's vision and development agenda for the city. The draft document identifies the Casement Stadium development (along with the Windsor Park stadium development) as one of six projects that will have a</p>

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	<p>citywide impact due to their capacity to have transformational and beneficial effects that extend beyond the local area to the city region.</p> <p>The stadium projects are considered important for the city's international profile and for the development of sporting infrastructure for the whole community. They also provide the opportunity, if properly planned, to have major positive regenerative impacts on their host neighbourhoods.</p> <p>These redeveloped sporting facilities will also form part of the wider tourism, leisure and event infrastructure and could support the development of a range of neighbourhood and business services through the procurement and operation of the facilities. The Council wants to ensure that the regeneration benefits of this public investment in sporting facilities are maximised for the city, however, the emphasis is on the developments being designed properly taking full account of the potential physical, social and economic impacts.</p> <p>The proposed development offers the prospect of being able to pilot innovative arrangements within Andersonstown and the wider area for the development of services, facilities, amenities, cultural and sporting infrastructure that will strengthen the appeal of this location. Central to this will be collaborative working to develop a shared vision for this area with cognisance of the other sport and leisure proposals in the greater Andersonstown area in order to deliver a greater local impact. As part of this the Council would emphasise the importance of sustained and meaningful engagement with local communities.</p>
3.	Wider Regeneration and Community Benefit
	<p>The Council recognises that the combined stadia programme offers huge opportunity for city development and regeneration. Shortly after the DCAL announcement of funding the Council commissioned Deloitte to look at the potential for wider regeneration impacts that could be achieved through the Stadia developments.</p> <p>This study identified direct opportunities from the Casement and Windsor developments, such as increased visitor numbers, employment in leisure/ construction and an improved experience for watching live sports. The report also identified the potential for much wider regeneration benefits achieved through off-site investments such as the provision of complementary facilities in the areas and enhanced connectivity for the stadia and their surrounding areas.</p> <p>Key points from the Deloitte report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the stadium developments could provide the stimulus for further developments with associated economic and social benefits • the development of Windsor Park and Casement Park have the potential to improve the economic and social conditions within the local areas and contribute to improving the quality of the lives for people within the local communities. • that wider regeneration could have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the surrounding communities as well as supporting economic regeneration through new employment, training and skills development opportunities.

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	<p>The redevelopment of Casement Park represents a major investment offering significant opportunities for this part of the city. The high levels of social and economic deprivation in the surrounding neighbourhoods highlights the need to ensure the capital investment is delivered alongside wider regeneration initiatives that increase opportunities for economic activity and address local opportunities.</p> <p><u>Leisure Transformation</u></p> <p>The Council has agreed a Leisure Transformation Programme that considers the redevelopment of the leisure estate including the Andersonstown Leisure Centre which lies in close proximity to Casement Park. As the Andersonstown Leisure Centre development progresses, complementarity with the proposed Casement redevelopment and planned leisure provision developments in the wider area is essential. The Council would request that clarity is provided in terms of the accessibility of the proposed community and leisure provision in the Stadium, particularly the leisure facilities (handball courts etc) and any other informal leisure uses. This is important in order to avoid duplication or unnecessary competition between community and leisure provision, existing and proposed, for the wider area.</p> <p>There is a need to consider the proposals for development in the vicinity of the stadium as well as the opportunities for local businesses through the procurement of contracts and supply chain possibilities. There are a number of sport and leisure related proposals in the local area that should be considered including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential improvements to Donegal Celtic Football Club; • Leisure provision related to De La Salle College • Improvements of Patrick Sarsfields GAC and Rossa GAC • The opportunity to enhance provision of North Link playing fields; and • The Andersonstown Leisure Centre redevelopment <p>It is considered that the stadium development alongside other sport, leisure and community projects in the wider area can have an impact on improving the health and wellbeing of this part of the City through the opportunity for coordinated activity and health awareness programming supported by the potential for enhanced participation in sport.</p> <p>The Council welcomes the planned investment into this part of the city, however, we acknowledge the ongoing issues raised and encourage further engagement to address the identified issues where possible.</p> <p>Belfast City Council is prepared to work with the GAA, communities, and statutory agencies to help ensure that this project, if it obtains planning approval, is delivered in a manner that maximises the benefit for the City but particularly the surrounding Andersonstown area.</p>
4.	Transport and Travel
	<p>The Masterplan and Council Transport Policy provides us with a coherent and aspirational vision for development of transport across Belfast. This seeks to support the sustainable economic development of Belfast City as a key</p>

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	<p>connected and regional asset. There is, in our view, a need to ensure that the redevelopment of Casement Park does not result in unacceptable impacts upon the local transport network. The Council supports the proposed use of sustainable modes of transport proposed in the Event Management Plan particularly where this will minimise the impact of the private car on surrounding business and residential areas when the stadium is in use.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges the potential congestion that will arise when the stadium is being accessed by larger audiences and we would support the use and promotion of sustainable modes of transport to facilitate access.</p> <p>The Council would welcome a clear process for event planning to ensure coordination and agreed access to Council or other facilities that are planned to be utilised to support parking provision as part of the event access planning.</p> <p>There should be clarity in relation to the general use or access to the proposed stadium parking provision during non-match days to support the existing provision or the surrounding commercial centre. The final event access planning should also address issues highlighted by DRD in their comments.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the Bus Rapid Transit scheme is proposed to travel along the Andersonstown Road and will be able to serve the stadium, however, we appreciate that the timing of Rapid Transit and the stadium redevelopment, if approved, do not currently align.</p> <p><u>Design Issues</u></p> <p>We welcome the proposed new active frontage and focus on main point of access from the Andersonstown Road. The proposed redevelopment of the Council's Andersonstown Leisure Centre site offers further opportunities to contribute towards the local commercial area.</p> <p>In the context of the deputations from the residents the Council would encourage that formal engagement between the applicant and MORA is resumed to ensure clarity in respect of the proposal and that the issues arising from the consultation and future operations are considered. The Council acknowledges the revised approach to the stadium design, however, there should be further consideration of design solutions and finishes to minimise the adverse impacts of the stadium for local communities. For the Andersonstown Road frontage the Council would support the introduction of an active frontage along the full length to encourage community access/use and contribute to the local commercial vitality on a year-round basis.</p>
5	Local Community benefit
	<p>The public sector financial support for the stadia programme is based on the delivery of a range of sustainable economic, social, equality and environmental returns. The Council is keen to explore the opportunities for community benefit arising both from the stadium itself and in relation to the potential for improvements in the wider area that could help secure the returns sought from the DCAL investment.</p>

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Community access should be addressed as a key consideration for the GAA proposal. This has been raised by elected Members and communities and is vital to the success of the stadium development, if approved.

The planning application outlines almost 2,000 sq metres of community space, including the proposed café. The detail of the access and use proposed for this space should be provided as part of the application and agreed before any permission is granted. The Council proposes to redevelop the Andersonstown Leisure Centre and we are aware of a number of developments potentially taking place in the wider area (see section 3) that, if considered in tandem with the stadium offering, could help provide a complementary community leisure provision in the area and an enhanced range of facilities.

It is anticipated that the stadium could create 1,500 jobs locally and could attract match audiences of up to 38,000, contributing almost £15 million to the Belfast economy annually and make a city wide impact.

Looking beyond the stadium site itself the Council is keen to see the potential for the community benefits of the stadium development to be invested in the wider area. Should the stadium obtain planning approval the Council would be willing to engage with DCAL, the GAA, and the surrounding communities with the aim of maximising the community benefit of the stadium in the context of a broader plan for the area.

Partnership and Resource Sharing

It is stressed that the Council is committed to working with the GAA and other government departments and statutory agencies to ensure that the development has a wide and positive regenerative impact on the city. We will support and participate in the development of any wider regeneration plans.

In developing the Masterplan, the Council has reflected the commitment to the strategic importance of the identified investments in the city. The Council are committed through a series of policies and programme vehicles to working in a collaborative partnership with the sports organisations and government agencies to ensure that the community, city, economic and environmental benefits are maximised.

The continued engagement is important through continued involvement of the Council, and local representatives, the community facilities workshops.

This should be linked to the formalisation of future governance arrangements including a range of stakeholders.

The wider regeneration potential of the stadium project, alongside other development opportunities, could impact positively on the health and wellbeing of surrounding communities and could support economic regeneration / employability opportunities through programmes targeting training, skills development and business opportunities. In this context year-round access to the community facilities is essential.

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6	Conclusions
	<p>In conclusion, the Council welcomes the ambitious proposal as identified in the Masterplan as part of the investment in the infrastructure of the City. Fundamental to the success of the development, the Council noted some concerns especially in terms of community engagement, links to the local infrastructure, transport, parking and access to services / amenities.</p> <p>To ensure the proposed development maximises the social, leisure, economic and environmental benefits and effectively minimises adverse impacts, particularly in relation to those issues identified by the residents, it is therefore suggested that, if the Department is minded to approve this application, it should address the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensuring design and material finishes minimise the potential for adverse impacts on adjoining properties · Event management arrangements are robust and formal processes agreed to ensure participation and effective planning · The need for an agreed structure for event planning ensuring shared governance and access to Council / other required facilities · Ensuring an active frontage on the Andersonstown Road · General access to parking facilities outside of match days · The contribution to broader regeneration and leisure plan for the wider area · The opportunity for local procurement for services and ongoing supply chain opportunities · The establishment of a management structure with local representation <p>This is in addition to the conditions and informatives recommended in the previously submitted technical response attached.”</p>

Deferrals Process

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report on the deferrals process to enable further information to be obtained on the authority permitting individual Members and the Committee as a whole to seek to defer applications for office meetings and the level of support by the Council which may be available to them in the event of any subsequent challenge. The Committee agreed also that clarification be sought on the use of the Committee’s delegated powers in relation to the deferrals process.

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**Royal Town Planning Institute
Event: 13th November, 2013**

The Committee was advised that notification had been received regarding a Royal Town Planning Institute Event which would be held in the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island, Craigavon on Wednesday, 13th November. It was pointed out that the aim of the event would be to provide an indication of what the roles and relationships of an elected representative and of officers dealing with a Planning Committee would entail. Attendance at the event would be £15 per person and it was recommended that any Member of the Committee who so wished be authorised to attend.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

New Planning Applications

The Committee noted a list of new planning applications which had been received by the Planning Service from 24th September until 7th October.

Appeal Dates Notified

The Committee noted the dates for planning appeals in respect of 3 applications: viz., a proposed billboard at the Lidl Store, 188 and 194 to 196 Shore Road; a proposed linear sign mounted to existing metal palisade fencing at the Lidl Store, 188 and 194 to 196 Shore Road; and the erection of a 2 storey, 2 bedroom mews house on land to the rear of 105 Malone Avenue.

Appeal Decisions Notified

The outcome of a planning appeal, in respect of the construction of a new-build house with 2 car parking spaces to the front, on lands to the rear of 107 Deramore Avenue, was noted by the Committee.

**Streamlined Planning Applications –
Decisions Issued**

The Committee noted a list of decisions which had been issued by the Planning Service between 25th September and 9th October in respect of streamlined planning applications.

Deferred Items Still Under Consideration

A list of deferred items, which were still under consideration by the Planning Office, was noted by the Committee.

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**Reconsidered Items - Application Rejected
Z/2013/0860/F – 322 Stranmillis Road**

The Committee considered further a planning application in relation to a new bay window and entrance door to the front elevation and a 2 storey extension to the rear at the above-mentioned location, in respect of which the Divisional Planning Manager had offered an opinion to approve.

After discussion, the Committee agreed, with one Member voting against, to adopt the opinion of the Divisional Planning Manager to approve the application.

(As the decision was not unanimous it was subject to ratification by the Council.)

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE
OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL**

Reconsidered Items

The Committee considered further the undernoted planning application and adopted the recommendation of the Divisional Planning Manager thereon:

<u>Site and Applicant</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Divisional Planning Manager's Opinion</u>
50 Ailesbury Road, Mr. C. O'Halloran	The erection of a single storey extension to side and rear of dwelling.	Approval

Schedule of Planning Applications

The Committee considered the schedule of planning applications which had been submitted by the Divisional Planning Manager in respect of the Council area and agreed to adopt the recommendations contained therein with the exception of that referred to below:

<u>Site and Applicant</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Divisional Planning Manager's Opinion</u>
80 Stranmillis Gardens, Mr. and Mrs. Hayward- Shaw	The erection of a 2 storey rear extension and attic conversion with dormer including balcony to rear of dwelling. [Deferred at the request of Councillor Mullan to enable an office meeting to be held.]	Refusal

Chairman

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Town Planning Committee

28th October, 2013

SPECIAL MEETING OF TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hanna (Chairman); Alderman Rodgers; and Councillors Austin, Beattie, Carson, Curran, Garrett, Haire, McCarthy and A. Newton.

Also attended: Councillors Convery, Hussey, Jones, Magee and Spence.

In attendance: Mrs. P. Scarborough, Democratic Services Section.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Campbell and Councillors Hendron, Mullan and Webb.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

Roads Service Programme of Works – Autumn 2013

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 7th February, it had agreed to hold a special meeting to receive a presentation from representatives of the Roads Service in respect of its Annual Autumn Progress Report. It was reported that Mr. R. Spiers, Deputy Divisional Roads Manager, Mr. B. O'Neill, Section Engineer, and Mr. C. Sykes, Network Maintenance Manager, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Sykes provided an update in relation to the Roads Service's plans and preparations for its winter service provision and gave an overview of the resources which would be available to ensure that the traffic on the road network continued to move safely and freely in conditions such as snow and ice. He outlined the communication channels which were available to the public and to Elected Members.

A Member pointed out the importance of ensuring that all road drains and gullies were inspected and cleared in order to ensure the free flow of heavy rainfall. A further Member requested that the Roads Service consider the introduction of a dedicated direct dial telephone number for use by Members of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly and Councillors.

Mr. Spiers outlined the principal aspects of the Roads Service's Programme of Works for the forthcoming year. He provided an overview on the works in relation to the York Street Interchange Scheme, the A2 Sydenham Bypass Improvement Scheme and the A55 Knock Road Widening Scheme, together with an update on collision remedial, traffic and pedestrian schemes, safer routes to school measures, carriageway and footpath resurfacing projects and adoptions. Mr. Spiers informed the Committee that

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the Belfast on the Move Scheme had been completed and that a survey thereon would commence shortly, the result of which would be available in due course. He explained that the provision of bus lanes was part of an effective bus-way system.

Mr. Spiers concluded by reminding the Committee that the Roads Service would commence, in April, 2014, discussions in relation to its plans to align itself to the future shape of the new council boundaries to facilitate joint working arrangements. In that regard, he informed the Committee that Mr. R. Ellison, the Divisional Roads Manager, would retire from the Roads Service at the end of the month. The post of Divisional Roads Manager would be filled by Mr. K. Monaghan.

A number of Members paid tribute to Mr. Ellison for the contribution which he had made to the work of the Committee and for the exemplary manner in which he had fulfilled his duties. After discussion, the Committee agreed that a letter be forwarded to Mr. Ellison conveying its best wishes on his retirement.

The Members drew the attention of the officers from the Roads Service to several matters, a number of which are set out hereunder:

- the parking issues and subsequent problems with bin collections in the Brenda Park/Finaghy Road North area, which had been raised at the previous meeting, and the possibility of the inclusion of this street in the forthcoming resurfacing and kerb-dropping programme in that vicinity;
- the process as a whole and the timescale for the adoption of roads and footpaths in the St. Mary's Gardens estate in the Beechmount area;
- the possibility of the replacement of those lights which had been removed from alleyways in the New Barnsley area during the recent street lighting upgrade;
- the improvement of the underpass at the entrance to Victoria Park to prevent flooding;
- to investigate the possibility of installing a yellow junction box at Cromac Street/Hamilton Street/East Bridge Street to prevent vehicles blocking the intersection;
- to consider the provision of double-yellow lines on the Crumlin Road adjacent to the entrance to the Mater Hospital to prevent vehicles parking in the area and thus allow for clearer sightlines;
- as previously advised in writing, to examine the collapsed and dangerous wall at the end of Bloomfield Drive which was permitting unauthorised access by pedestrians to the Connswater Shopping Centre complex;

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- to investigate the current maintenance arrangements at the Comber Greenway, with a view to organising a grass cutting and clean-up of the area;
- to inspect the condition of the footpath at the Stewartstown Road which ran parallel with Hillhead Crescent at St. Genevieve's School;
- to examine the drains at Balfour Avenue/Cooke Street to ensure any blockages were removed;
- to look at the resultant impact of the provision of the double-yellow lines on the Ormeau Road at the entrance to the Gasworks site, particularly in relation to the difficulties which were caused by those parked cars which had relocated to the Shaftesbury Avenue vicinity;
- to inspect the condition of the Lagan Walkway in relation to general maintenance issues;
- the current position with regard to the adoption of the Wellington Square development;
- the possibility of meeting with residents from the Fairhill area off the Donegall Park Avenue in relation to the provision of a one-way traffic system, which had been raised at the last meeting;
- to consider the provision of signage in connection with the White City Community Centre;
- the current position in relation to the abandoned site at the Shore Road adjacent to Northwood, opposite Seaview;
- the potential for the provision of free car parking in Roads Service car parks, particularly in the period preceding Christmas; and
- the operational hours of the City Centre traffic wardens.

The officials from the Roads Service answered the queries raised by the Members in respect of the above-mentioned issues and undertook to advise the Council of its response in relation to those matters which required further examination. Mr. Spiers agreed to provide the Committee with an explanation of the policy arrangements in relation to the adoption process.

The Committee was again reminded of the arrangements for exiting the City Hall and for the need to pay due care and attention when so doing. In relation to the use by buses of ordinary traffic lanes, the Committee agreed to write to Translink with respect to the actions of the bus drivers in this regard.

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The Chairman thanked the representatives of the Roads Service and the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairman

Small Business Saturday

Councillor Webb to move:

“This council recognises the difficulties faced by our business community, particularly, the small independent retailers who bring much vibrancy and character to our shopping districts. As a Council, we have supported the formation of local traders’ groups and initiatives such as Belfast Independent Retail Week. Building on this, the Council welcomes and pledges its support for the ‘Small Business Saturday’ initiative planned for December 7th, which aims to encourage people to shop in small, local shops. Belfast City Council also undertakes to use its marketing and communication channels to promote Small Business Saturday amongst residents and visitors.”

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Belfast Healthy Cities

Councillor Keenan to move:

“This Council congratulates Belfast Healthy Cities on its 25th anniversary and commends the significant work which it has done in tackling inequalities in health to date. The Council recognises the benefit of Belfast being a member of the World Health Organization European Healthy Cities Network, which through Belfast Healthy Cities, has placed Belfast on the international stage as a leading example of innovative practice in intersectoral working. The Council welcomes the forthcoming visit of Dr Agis Tsouros of WHO Europe to Belfast on 28th and 29th November, which is an endorsement of Belfast Healthy Cities’ achievements and contribution to health and wellbeing.”

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**International Mental Health Centre
For Northern Ireland**

Alderman Rodgers to move:

“This Council recognises that Northern Ireland has a high prevalence of poor mental health; notes that a previous World Mental Health survey stated that the Province has the world’s highest recorded rate of post-traumatic stress disorder and that violence had been a distinctive cause of mental health problems here. The Council acknowledges that trauma is one of the most hidden legacy issues of the Troubles; accepts the need to support and restore good mental health for those with difficulties at present across the Belfast City Council area and, therefore, calls for the creation of a new International Mental Health Centre for Northern Ireland which would be a world class facility for all.”

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Belfast City Centre

Councillor Hendron to move:

“This Council recognises that Members will always seek to represent the areas for which they were elected. However, the City Centre businesses contribute a very large portion of the rate base which, in turn, contributes to the cost of provision of services across the City. The views and plans of the business community for the future of the City are important.

The Council agrees that the Party Leaders of the Council should provide civic leadership in seeking to provide a united voice, along with City Centre businesses, and, to that end, requests the Party Leaders to meet regularly as a group with representatives of the business community to ensure the future development and prosperity of the entire City of Belfast.

Furthermore, recognising the importance of the Christmas period to those businesses, the Council agrees that it is vital to attempt to build upon the normal Christmas promotion campaign through helping to animate the city and to promote the many exciting and enjoyable events, activities and offers happening in Belfast in the lead up to Christmas. Accordingly, the Council requests the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to give urgent consideration as to the possibility of identifying additional resources which could be allocated to that promotion campaign and, due to the urgency of making quick decisions, agrees, if such resources can be identified, to delegate authority for a decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, so that the activities funded by the resources can be put in place before Christmas.”

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Human Trafficking Bill

Councillor Thompson to move:

“This Council:

- Recognises that human trafficking and exploitation is a growing problem in Northern Ireland;
- Believes that existing statistics regarding the number of people trafficked in to Northern Ireland do not reflect the scale of the problem and are only the "tip of the iceberg" in regard to the scale of the problem;
- Believes that no human being should be subjected to sexual exploitation, enforced labour or domestic servitude and condemns those who engage in human trafficking;
- Believes that more action should be undertaken to support those who have escaped from exploitation and to punish those who exploit them and, accordingly;
- Calls upon the Northern Ireland Assembly to endorse the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provision and Support for Victims) Bill.”

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Blood Transfusion Service

Councillor Cunningham to move:

“This Council recognises that, each year, 26,000 people require blood transfusions in the North. The Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service needs 8,000 new donors to come forward every year (due to people becoming ineligible) to maintain their service and each week the Service needs 1,500 donations. It is of great concern, therefore, that currently only 6% of the eligible population in Northern Ireland chooses to give blood.

A blood transfusion can be the difference between someone living or dying during emergency surgery, but it can also make the difference in helping treat long-term illnesses, like cancer or support maternity care. Approximately 40% of blood transfusions are to those suffering with various cancers. *Once a person becomes* a blood donor, if their platelet count is high enough, they can then become a platelet donor (you can't give both at the same time).

This Council agrees to make every effort to raise the profile of the Blood Transfusion Service and, to that end, encourages all Elected Members to sign up as blood donors and to use their public profile to raise awareness and encourage their constituents to consider giving blood.

With the decline in the number of people signing up, there is a real risk that hospitals could suffer significant shortfalls in blood stocks, so this is an absolutely vital campaign. Belfast City Council has been a supporter of this campaign in the past and commits itself to continued support by hosting a large-scale Blood Donation Event which will be open to Councillors, Staff and members of the public.”

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Rejection of Terrorism

The High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston) to move:

“This Council, mindful of a number of recent events which have caused hurt to victims, confirms its rejection of terrorism and reaffirms its opposition to the promotion of proscribed paramilitary organisations which have engaged in terrorism, both currently and in the past. The story we tell of the past is what we communicate to the future generations and a rejection of terrorism must be a central part of that.”

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