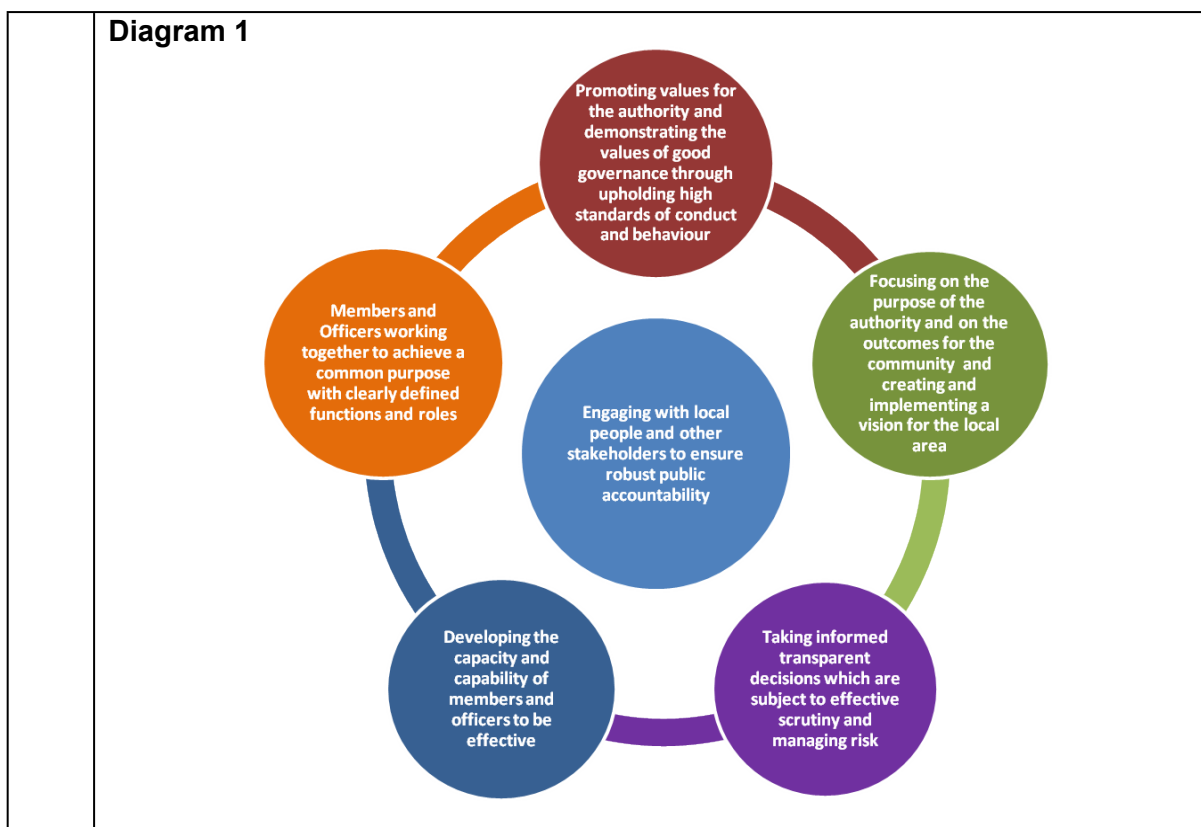




## Belfast City Council

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| <b>Report to</b>          | <b>Statutory Transition Committee</b>   |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Update on Future Governance Arrangements for the Council</b>                                 |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2014   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Peter McNaney, Chief Executive  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources<br>Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager |

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>  |
| 1.1      | <p>The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meetings on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2012, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013, and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013 considered reports on emerging options relating to new political management arrangements for the new Council.</p> <p>This included a high-level overview of the range of options which were likely to emerge as part of the local government reform legislative programme (i.e. Reorganisation Bill) regarding future governance and political management arrangements and also an overview of the three possible governance structures that were likely to be presented in the Bill (i) Traditional Committee System, (ii) Cabinet System, (iii) Streamlined Committee System.</p> |
| 1.2      | <p>Members then agreed that Party briefings would be held to enable Members to explore what options may exist regarding future governance and political management arrangements for the Council. At these briefings the parties agreed that they would prefer to await the release of the Reorganisation Bill before discussing possible models for the Council.</p>  |
| 1.3      | <p>The re-organisation Bill was laid before the Assembly in July 2013 and the purpose of the report is to provide to members a process of engagement which will allow recommendations to be made to the Shadow Council on new possible political management structures for the new Council.</p>   |
| 1.4      | <p>As agreed in previous reports discussions concerning any potential new political management arrangements will be considered in line with the good governance principles within which the Council currently operates – see diagram 1.</p>   |
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| 2                    | Key Issues   |           |  |          |  |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|-----------|--|----------|--|----------------------|--|
| 2.1                  | The three governance options laid out in the re-organisation Bill which Councils may choose from reflect those already outlined to members; the traditional committee system, a cabinet system or a streamlined committee system. While they operate in different ways every option will have to take account of the current and new functions and powers that the Council will be responsible for. This essentially means that any new arrangements will have to consider following elements;   |           |  |          |  |                      |  |
| 2.2                  | <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1294 619 1552">Strategic</td><td data-bbox="627 1294 1426 1552">At its highest level the Council will have to have in place structures which will set the overall policy and strategy of the organisation, allocate resources and manage performance. With the additional powers and transferring functions this will also include the development of a community plan and city outcomes, the local area plan and regeneration frameworks.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1563 619 1798">Thematic</td><td data-bbox="627 1563 1426 1798">Given the need to deliver against outcomes it is likely that specific structures will need to be put in place at a thematic level such as safety, health and well being etc. as set out in the Community Plan. Through these structures members would develop and oversee the organisations contribution to the delivery of city wide outcomes in a joined up way.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1809 619 2020">Operational Delivery</td><td data-bbox="627 1809 1426 2020">Members will continue to oversee the delivery of Council Services ensuring that they are focussed on the thematic outcomes and also value for money. Decisions will also have to be made on services which will be delivered at a city wide level and those which can be tailored to specific areas.</td></tr> </table> | Strategic | At its highest level the Council will have to have in place structures which will set the overall policy and strategy of the organisation, allocate resources and manage performance. With the additional powers and transferring functions this will also include the development of a community plan and city outcomes, the local area plan and regeneration frameworks. | Thematic | Given the need to deliver against outcomes it is likely that specific structures will need to be put in place at a thematic level such as safety, health and well being etc. as set out in the Community Plan. Through these structures members would develop and oversee the organisations contribution to the delivery of city wide outcomes in a joined up way. | Operational Delivery | Members will continue to oversee the delivery of Council Services ensuring that they are focussed on the thematic outcomes and also value for money. Decisions will also have to be made on services which will be delivered at a city wide level and those which can be tailored to specific areas. |
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| Regulatory Functions                | <p>Within the element Members will oversee the delivery of statutory responsibilities e.g. licensing, regulatory environmental health issues, waste, cleansing, building control, registration of births/deaths/marriages, burials etc.</p> <p>They will also be involved in establishing standards and undertaking audit and scrutiny roles.</p> <p>With the transfer of planning the Council will have to consider the future delivery of statutory planning functions including creation of development plans, adjudication of planning applications and enforcement against breaches to planning decisions.</p>   |
| Area Neighbourhood Working /        | Members are already involved in area working groups identifying local needs and priorities. In the new Council governance structures will have to support the development of local areas plans, work with the operational delivery strand to agree service that need to be specifically targeted in certain areas, and ensure that relevant thematic outcomes at city wide level are targeting local need.  |
| External Relations and Partnerships | Fundamental to the work of all elements of the new governance structures will be its connectivity to external partners at all levels, both in developing city and areas plans but also in their successful delivery. Members will have to consider how the internal governance structures will input and relate to city wide frameworks, regional structures and local area partnerships.   |
| 2.3                                 | <p>Regardless of the system of governance selected for the new Council in 2015, the Reorganisation Bill is proposing a series of new checks and balances including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Proportionality</i> – to be applied in the appointment of committees and key positions within council and to external bodies.</li> <li>• <i>Weighted Majority Voting</i> – 80% weighted majority voting will be introduced for decisions which are taken on a number of key areas including e.g. selection of governance structures and major capital projects.</li> <li>• <i>Call-in</i> - A system of call-in is being whereby a 15% of the total number of members (in the new council this would be 9 members) will be the trigger point to request a call-in.</li> </ul> |
| 2.4                                 | <p>In order to develop new arrangements members will have to understand in detail the possible roles of each of these elements outlined above and how they will operate in practice. They will also have to consider what implications of the proposed checks and balances will mean for any decision making process and how they would be applied.</p> <p>At its meeting in September 2013 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to join the Improvement and Efficiencies South East organisation (iESE), a social enterprise owned by local authorities in the South East of England which</p>  |

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|           | provides services and support to public sector bodies across the United Kingdom. They have worked with a number of organisations on the development and implementation of new structures, drawing on best practice and working with member piers across local government. It is therefore recommended that a number of briefing sessions and workshops are held in the first few months of 2014 and that iESE supported by member piers facilitate these discussions as set out below.  |      |                   |     |                   |     |                   |     |                   |           |                    |          |                    |
| 2.5       | <p><u>Proposals for Engagement</u></p> <p>The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November to re constitute the members Governance Steering Group to allow detailed discussion on some of the complex issues before bringing these to committee for decisions. In addition to this it will be necessary to engage with the SP&amp;R Committee, the STC and individual Party Groups.</p> <p>January and February 2013</p> <p>A workshop with the Governance Steering Panel looking in more detail at the key issues, how they apply to the various models outlined in the Re-organisation Bill and how they would operate in practice.</p> <p>Briefings with Party Groups on the various elements of any new governance structure which all members of the STC are encouraged to attend. These briefings will be held in the party rooms, City Hall and have been scheduled as follows;</p> <table> <tr> <td>SDLP</td><td>20 January 4.30pm</td></tr> <tr> <td>UUP</td><td>21 January 3.30pm</td></tr> <tr> <td>DUP</td><td>21 January 5.00pm</td></tr> <tr> <td>PUP</td><td>22 January 2.30pm</td></tr> <tr> <td>Sinn Fein</td><td>23 January 2.30 pm</td></tr> <tr> <td>Alliance</td><td>24 January 1.00 pm</td></tr> </table> <p>A report to the SP&amp;R Committee and the STC on the feedback from the various sessions including draft governance proposals for the new organisation.</p> <p>All sessions will be facilitated by iESE with input from Jonathan Huish, a former local government councillor in Wales, who has previously supported Belfast City Council members in a number of areas including governance and capacity building. In addition party groups will be able to draw on advice from Jonathan Huish and other Member piers linked to iESE over and above the process outlined above.</p> | SDLP | 20 January 4.30pm | UUP | 21 January 3.30pm | DUP | 21 January 5.00pm | PUP | 22 January 2.30pm | Sinn Fein | 23 January 2.30 pm | Alliance | 24 January 1.00 pm |
| SDLP      | 20 January 4.30pm   |      |                   |     |                   |     |                   |     |                   |           |                    |          |                    |
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| Alliance  | 24 January 1.00 pm  |      |                   |     |                   |     |                   |     |                   |           |                    |          |                    |

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| <b>3</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b>   |
| 3.1      | All costs associated with this have been included in the previously agreed budget for Local Government Reform. |

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| <b>4</b> | <b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b> |
|          | None.   |

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| <b>5</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 5.1      | The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report. |

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| <b>6</b>  | <b>Key to Abbreviations</b> |
| <p>SP&amp;R – Strategic Policy and Resources Committee<br/> STC – Statutory Transition Committee<br/> iESE - Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise</p> |                             |

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| <b>7</b> | <b>Documents Attached</b> |
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