

# Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum

## Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024

### **Attendance**

Members:

Councillor Michael Long

Councillor Ryan Murphy

Councillor Áine Groogan

Councillor Sarah Bunting

Councillor Séamas de Faoite

**Apologies:** Alderman Sonia Copeland, Councillor Ciaran Beattie

### **Officers:**

John Walsh, Chief Executive

Sharon McNicholl Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services

Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance (for Item 1)

Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place & Economy (for Items 2 & 3)

Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development (for Item 2)

David Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services (for Item 5)

Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

### **1. Finance Update**

The Director of Finance & Resources presented the year end financial outturn for 2023/24 and outlined the implications for the general reserves. Members also discussed additional monies that had become available following the year end financial outturn in relation to a recent VAT claim. The Director proposed that the reallocation process for these additional monies be considered in line with the corporate planning, medium term financial plan and capital planning processes in order to ensure alignment with corporate priorities. The June SP&R finance report will include a recommendation for this approach along with a recommendation for a facilitated All Party workshop on finance to consider prioritisation for any reallocations.

### **2. City Centre Regeneration Framework**

The Strategic Director of Place & Economy provided an update in relation to the City Centre Regeneration programme of work including an update on the actions agreed by Members at the May SP&R Committee. The Strategic Director and the Director of City Regeneration & Development presented to Members the next steps in relation to the development of a Regeneration Framework, a decision making framework which will be designed to be used in

the prioritisation of place based regeneration initiatives across Belfast. It was noted the detail on this work will be considered by Members at a Special SP&R Committee on the 28<sup>th</sup> June. The Chief Executive provided guidance in relation to any Member engagement with parties who may be associated with active or anticipated planning applications.

### **3. MOBO Awards**

The Strategic Director of Place & Economy advised that correspondence had been received in relation to the MOBO Awards. The Director provided a briefing on the background to the request, potential financial implications involved and the process for submitting an expression of interest. It was noted that further due diligence and exploratory work is required should Members wish to consider further. A report will be brought to a future SP&R Committee outlining the request received and the key next steps.

### **4. Planning Update**

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in the coming months.

### **5. AOB**

#### **Annadale Embankment**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services outlined a request received from community representatives in the Annadale area for temporary fencing on Annadale embankment. In relation to a specific query raised by a Member both the Director and a Member provided clarity. It was noted the request would be agreed under the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services delegated authority.

#### **Consultation on Department for Communities Budget 2024-25 allocations**

The Chief Executive referred to the consultation issued by the Department for Communities which details the Minister for Communities' initial Budget 2024-25 decisions and how they will impact on the Department's ability to deliver public services. A copy of the consultation document will be circulated to Party Group Leaders and a corporate response will be submitted to a future SP&R Committee.

## **Issues Raised by Members**

**Environmental Health - Procedures for damp home** - The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to follow up and clarify the issue raised.

**Council Owned Park** - A member raised an issue in relation to funding support for an upcoming event in a Council owned park. A report will be brought to June SP&R Committee for Members consideration.

**Bonfire Issue** - The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to follow up an issue raised in relation to a specific query on a bonfire location and to provide an update for the Member.