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**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

16th August, 2017

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following item will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 am on Friday, 18th August, 2017.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

7. Operational Issues

- (f) Belfast Rapid Transit Vehicle launch (Pages 1 - 2)

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Subject:	Belfast Rapid Transit Vehicle launch
Date:	18 August 2017
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Anne Doherty, Planning & Transport Officer, ext 3477

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The Committee is advised that an invitation has been received from the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) reference group inviting the Lord Mayor to attend the unveiling of the new Belfast Rapid Transit vehicle at the 'Busworld Europe' conference in Kortrijk, Belgium on the 19 th October 2017.
1.2	The 'Busworld Europe' conference is the biggest bus and coach exhibition in Europe and is attended by around 35,000 visitors. The Belgian-based company Van Hool, who were awarded the BRT contract in November 2015, are using the conference to launch and showcase the new vehicle on a European platform.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	It is recommended that Committee approve attendance of the Lord Major and an officer at the unveiling of the new Belfast Rapid transit vehicle at the 'Busworld Europe' conference and authorise the payment of the appropriate travel and subsistence allowances associated with the trip.
3.0	Main report
3.1	The Council has supported the introduction of Belfast Rapid Transit which should greatly enhance the existing public transport network in Belfast. The pilot BRT network is currently being developed and will link East Belfast, West Belfast and Titanic Quarter via the city centre. Work is currently underway to facilitate future introduction of bus lanes in the east and west of the city. 'Belfast On the Move' provided the enabling measures for rapid transit in the city centre and a new Park & Ride facility at Dunlady Road, Dundonald came into operation in December 2014.
3.2	Van Hool won the contract to supply a fleet of 30 vehicles for the new Belfast system and will be supported locally by Road Trucks Limited of Larne. The new vehicles, known as Exqui.City are currently being built and are scheduled to come into service on the new BRT network in September 2018.
3.3	These high quality rapid transit vehicles should provide a modern, comfortable environment for passengers in terms of space, security and on-board information. The BRT system will also incorporate high quality halts with easy access to vehicles, real time information systems for easier journey planning and off-vehicle ticketing to speed up the boarding process. It is hoped the speed, reliability and comfort of the BRT services will provide an attractive public transport alternative for residents and visitors.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.4	The cost for travel and accommodation will be approximately £600 and is included within current budgets.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>
3.5	No specific equality or good relations implications.
4.0	Appendices
	None