

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 21st August, 2009

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hartley (Chairman);  
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Lavery); and  
Councillors Adamson, M. Browne, Campbell, Convery,  
Hendron, N. Kelly, P. Maskey, McCann, Newton,  
Rodgers, Rodway and Stoker.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;  
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Improvement;  
Mr. T. Salmon, Director of Corporate Services;  
Mr. L. Steele, Head of Committee and Members'  
Services; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Attwood and D. Browne.

### Transition Committee Business

#### Feedback from Members' Workshop

The Chief Executive reminded the Members that a Review of Public Administration Workshop had been held for Members of the Transition Committee on Monday, 17th August. He pointed out that the Members who had been in attendance at the workshop had requested that a road map and timetable in relation to the Transition Programme be produced and accordingly this had been tabled for the information of the Members. He pointed out that regular decisions would now be required of the Committee in relation to matters such as the transfer of functions and the allocation of resources and that reports in this regard would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

He reminded the Committee also that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association had a major role to play in relation to the Review of Public Administration implementation process and he stressed the need for the Members of Belfast City Council to engage in decision-making in that regard. In order to provide clarification in terms of the precise role to be played by the Council, he sought authority for the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Party Group Leaders to meet with the Office Bearers of the Association.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

### **Democratic Services and Governance**

#### **Transfer of Members back to the City Hall**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details in relation to the timetable for the transfer of Elected Members back to the City Hall. The Committee noted also that it was aimed to have the political process fully operational within the building as and from Monday, 14th September. The Committee agreed that a Members' preview of the coffee shop/exhibition area be held following its completion.

#### **Lord Mayor's Personal Allowance**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th June, it had deferred consideration of a report which had indicated that the Lord Mayor did not wish to accept her personal allowance for 2009/2010 but had sought permission to reallocate an amount equivalent to the Lord Mayor's personal allowance to the Good Relations Small Grants Scheme.

The Head of Committee and Members' Services reported that the Lord Mayor had indicated that her view had not changed and that she did not wish to accept the personal allowance. She would still like the Committee to authorise an amount equivalent to the personal allowance - £33,800 – to be allocated to the aforementioned Grants Scheme, which supported the work of local communities throughout the City on a range of Good Relations issues.

Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee authorise the reallocation of the Lord Mayor's Personal Allowance for 2009/2010 to the Good Relations Small Grants Scheme, on the understanding that that would be a one-off measure and would not be taken to create a precedent.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Hendron,  
Seconded by Councillor P. Maskey,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendation.

On a vote by show of hands eight Members voted for the proposal and three against and it was accordingly declared carried.

### **Finance**

#### **Approval to Seek Tenders – Closed Circuit Television Maintenance**

The Committee granted authority for the commencement of a tendering exercise to invite applications for inclusion on a Select List from which tenders would be invited subsequently for the repair and maintenance of Closed Circuit Television, access control and traffic control systems at an approximate cost of £65,000 per annum for a one-year period, with the option to renew for a further two years.

The Committee noted that the tenders would be evaluated using pre-determined criteria.

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

The Committee approved the minutes of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 14th August and adopted the following recommendations contained therein:

**“Recommendations**

1. Start the Estimates 2010/11 now by carrying out a comprehensive mini budget review which will be completed by a Change Team led by the Advisor to the Budget Panel. The Team will report directly to the Budget Panel and will provide options on the following for Members to consider:
  - a. Discretionary spend which may be suspended or re-aligned.
  - b. Opportunities for efficiencies.
2. Immediate actions need to be taken to secure savings for this year’s budget and which will feed into the estimates for next year. As part of this work we recommend that we do a trawl for voluntary redundancies. Members have rightly insisted that this process of rightsizing is only carried out in full consultation with staff representatives and to high standards of Human Resources management.
3. We continue the work to put in place the infrastructure required to deliver the recommendations with the Review of the Centre report so that they can be implemented as soon as possible after they have been agreed by Members.
4. Develop a revised capital financing strategy so that key sources of external funding and the revenue implications of capital spend are identified.
5. Recognise the role of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in financial planning, the management of major projects and the capital programme. In particular Members will wish to prioritise the capital schemes emerging from the North, West, South and East conversations currently under way.

In agreeing with the conclusions and recommendations discussed, Members stressed the seriousness of the current situation and the importance of the processes now outlined and recommended for immediate action. There was unanimous agreement on the need to move this process forward as a matter of urgency.

The recommendations were approved and Members asked the Chief Executive to bring forward further reports on progress on a regular basis.”

### Human Resources

#### Operational Changes to the Security Unit

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to operational changes to the Security Unit:

##### “Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that, in October 2006, a special meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee considered a report setting out a number of potential options for the future size, role and cost of the in-house Security unit. After some debate, it was agreed that the unit should continue to provide services at the agreed locations on a 24/7 basis and that permanent staffing numbers should be enhanced, but that the cost of overtime must be reduced and that the necessary operational changes in order to achieve this must be identified and pursued.

However in early 2007 the closure of the City Hall for refurbishment was announced and so, following discussions with the various trades unions, it was agreed that the implementation of these operational changes be deferred until the City Hall was once again available for occupation. In the interim, the trades unions agreed to initiate a number of changes on an interim basis, including agreement to rotate around all of the various premises and the operation of a system of ‘pool’ cover (which ensures that the first 4 occurrences of leave or sickness absence on any given day are covered in normal time at no additional cost to the unit). In return for these changes, the management side agreed to postpone dealing with a number of related issues, most notably the categorization of the posts and the removal of contractual and ‘compulsory’ overtime.

Members will be aware that overtime is woven into the fabric of the rosters and working practices of the Security unit for a number of increasingly irrelevant historical reasons. Currently the cost of overtime annually for the unit is approaching £300,000, and 51% of this is due solely to the existence of 3 hours contractual overtime per week and the existence within the rotas of between 8 and 12 days per employee of what is referred to as ‘compulsory’ overtime on Saturdays and Sundays. All of this is in place because the unit apparently chose - for whatever reasons – not to move staff from a 40-hour working week to a standard 37-hour week in 2001,

when this was introduced for the rest of the organization on foot of the national Single Status agreement. More recently, of course, the Single Status agreement negotiated by the council with the trades unions in 2007 identifies 37 hours as the agreed standard working week, and it is perfectly possible to cover the various premises on the basis of standard 37-hour shifts without the need for built-in overtime.

Now that the re-opening of the City Hall is imminent it is necessary, in line with the agreement made with the trades unions in 2007, to finalise a package of operational and financial changes in order to regularise the position within the Security unit and bring its costs and operations – most notably in respect of overtime – under closer control.

A package of measures has therefore been developed and tabled with the trades unions in order to deal with the situation. In essence this package involves:

- the development of standard 37-hour per week shifts which contain no element of contractual or compulsory overtime (these shifts to be based on the principle of rotation around all premises and on the operation of a system of ‘pool’ cover for sickness and leave);
- the buyout of the contractual overtime element at the level agreed by the Committee as part of the Single Status agreement concluded with the trades unions corporately in 2007, i.e. three times the annual loss (approx. £6,000 per person);
- the abolition of ‘compulsory’ overtime on Saturdays/Sundays;
- the development of modern, forward-looking job descriptions for Security Officers and Control Room Operatives, and the re-grading of these staff on the basis of the new job descriptions, which will also help to recompense them for the loss of regular ‘compulsory’ overtime (desk-top evaluations by BIS have already confirmed that the new job descriptions would support the necessary re-grading);
- the enhancement of the work/life balance of staff through the shortened working week and the removal of the ‘compulsory’ overtime requirement to work between 8 - 12 weekends per year;
- the payment of a one-off ‘transition payment’ of £500 per person in recognition of the personal disruption and need for flexibility that will inevitably be required from staff during the period of transition (complicated still further by the re-opening of the City Hall) ; *and*
- an agreed permanent establishment of 30 Security Officers and 8 Control Room Operatives.

These proposed changes have been discussed with the full-time officials and local shop stewards involved. In addition, the shop stewards have been facilitated to meet with their members to explain the proposals, and a series of 5 briefing sessions were conducted by the Head of Facilities Management at which individual members of staff were invited to attend to hear the proposals first-hand and to ask questions, and over 70% of available staff attended. In addition, a dedicated edition of the 'Security Bulletin' was produced setting out the proposals and copies were distributed to all staff, including those on leave or sickness absence.

The total one-off cost of the 'buyout' of contractual overtime would be £229,686, and provision for such a buyout has been made in the unit's revenue estimates for the current year. The year-on-year savings which would result from the implementation of the proposed changes during 2009 would be in the order of £89,755 and the 'pay-back' period would therefore be just over 2½ years.

The proposed 'transition' payment of £500 per person would cost approx. £19,000 in total and no revenue provision was made for this, however the post of Security Manager is currently vacant and will in all probability remain so until at least January 2010, and this releases approx. £30K of savings in the staffing budget from which this payment could be funded in the current year.

This payment reflects the operational difficulties involved in transferring staff from existing roster arrangements to the new arrangements, where it will be inevitable that some individuals will have to work back-to-back night shifts and/or weekends, will be working in new teams and will be required to be flexible at short notice during the decant and re-opening phase of the City Hall. It is anticipated that this settling-down period will be around 6 weeks, which means that the proposed payment would be worth around £85 per week for each individual.

It should be noted that the costs of doing nothing (i.e. simply allowing the continuation of un-necessary 40-hour working weeks based on paid breaks and the associated built-in contractual and 'compulsory' overtime etc.) would be approx. £428,500 over the next 3 years.

The proposed changes have been discussed with the various trades unions on a number of occasions, and are now accepted by them as the best that can be achieved by negotiation in the circumstances.

It has been emphasized to the trades unions and staff that the proposals are only available as a package; we will not permit the 'cherry-picking' of the various provisions and it has been made clear that, if a package cannot be agreed, we will proceed to deal with each of the individual issues using the existing policies and mechanisms.

The trades unions therefore wish to conduct a secret ballot of the Security work-force on the proposals, but before this can occur the Committee must be willing to authorise the offer to be made by the council.

### **Key Issues**

In October 2006 this Committee decided that it wished to retain manned security cover at the existing range of premises and to do so on the basis of 24/7 cover where appropriate. It is therefore necessary to regularise the duties, rostering and pay of the staff concerned in order to provide a modern, flexible and well-regarded in-house security and CCTV monitoring service, and the proposals set out above are central to that effort.

The key issue is therefore whether or not the Committee is minded to act now to abolish the old inefficient and uneconomic working practices of the past, by making the one-off payments set out above. By so doing, the unit will be able to:-

1. buy out the old practices at no additional cost to the rate-payer (as these costs were foreseen and provided for in the current year's revenue estimates);
2. immediately begin to save in the order of £90K (more in the early years) per annum;
3. remove the reliance on costly but un-necessary built-in overtime;
4. provide an effective mechanism to manage the issue of cover for sickness and leave etc. though the implementation of 'pool' cover at normal time and with no additional costs; and
5. ensure that this last-remaining group of staff comply with the Single Status agreement as set out in the document of April 2007.

If the Committee is minded to endorse the proposed package of changes and to approve the making of a formal offer, a secret ballot will be conducted by each of the 3 trades unions involved as soon as possible thereafter. The results of these ballots will be reported back to the Committee for information.

## Resource Implications

### Financial

These proposals will involve an initial buyout totalling some £230K for which provision has been made in the current year, together with a further sum of £19K in respect of the 'transition' payment for which no provision has been made but which can be funded from other revenue savings. In the longer term this will mean savings of approx. £90K per year, with an initial pay-back period of just over 2½ years.

### Human Resources

There are no direct HR implications arising from this report, as the staffing levels proposed are the same as the current levels so there are no potential redundancy considerations.

### Assets

There are no direct asset implications arising from this report.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee endorses the package of proposals set out herein and authorises the Head of Facilities Management to make a formal offer to staff and trades unions on this basis.

It is also recommended that, if the outcome of the secret ballots is acceptance of the package, the Head of Facilities Management be authorised to proceed to implementation immediately.

## Decision Tracking

The trades unions have indicated that, if the proposals are put to the Committee and accepted, they will hold a secret ballot immediately after full Council ratification on 1st September 2009. The Head of Facilities Management will ensure that, in these circumstances, the new rates are paid in the first full fortnightly period thereafter and the buyout amounts paid in the next fortnightly period, and will report back the outcome of the ballots to the Committee for information in September 2009."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.



**Amalgamation of Staff Teams to Support  
the Community Safety Partnership and  
the District Policing Partnership**

(Ms. S. Wylie, Head of Environmental Health, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“Relevant Background Information**

Members will be aware that the Council’s contribution to a Safer City is achieved through its leadership role in both the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and District Policing Partnership (DPP) as well as through the delivery of services by a number of departments. Members have previously expressed concerns that there is considerable duplication between the work of both partnerships and consider that there should be a more integrated approach.

Earlier this year, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Minister, Paul Goggins, consulted key stakeholders requesting views on the future delivery of the functions of both partnerships.

The current roles of each partnership are described below:

- **The Belfast District Policing Partnership**

The District Policing Partnership (DPP) consists of a Principal DPP and four geographically based sub groups. The DPP, which is made up of both Elected and Independent Members, has statutory responsibility for community engagement on policing issues, gaining the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime and in monitoring the performance of the police against the targets included in the Annual and Local Policing Plans. The Northern Ireland Policing Board provides for 75% of approved expenditure incurred by the DPP which consists mostly of Members’ allowances and staff salaries. There is also provision for the advertising and holding of a significant number of public meetings to monitor police performance and a small amount to support local initiatives. In the 2008/09 financial year, the total contribution from the Policing Board was £383,000.

- **The Community Safety Partnership**

The Belfast Community Safety Partnership (CSP) brings together representatives from various agencies and sectors to work collectively on the delivery of programmes to help make communities safer. Each of the political parties is represented. The CSP is working to an agreed Safer Belfast Plan for 2009–2011, which prioritises four main themes: tackling anti-social behaviour; reducing alcohol fuelled violent crime; dealing with hate crime; and helping Belfast feel safer. The Council receives some funding from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) on behalf of the CSP which currently includes £380,000 for programme work and £123,000 for staff per year (secured until end of March 2011). Partner agencies also make some contributions to particular programmes.

At its meeting of 24th April 2009, the Committee agreed an interim response to the NIO consultation, which stated that it is in agreement with the principle of creating fully integrated partnerships post 2011 and on taking steps as soon as possible to more closely align the work and approaches of CSPs and DPPs. Subsequently, on 22nd May, it agreed its more detailed response.

In addition, a Safer City workshop was held for Members on 6th April 2009 at which a discussion took place on the steps which could be taken to more closely align the work of the two partnerships prior to 2011. There was general consensus around the following issues:

- The CSP/DPP staff should be brought together under one Service and management structure; and
- Further work should be carried out and agreed through the political system to better align the work and outcomes of both partnerships.

**Key Issues**

The Minister has now written to the Chief Executive and to the chairs of both the CSP and DPP, thanking them for their response and outlining the general nature of all of the responses received.

The letter outlines that there is clear support for bringing the current CSP and DPP functions together into a single partnership post RPA. Concerns expressed reflected the fact that:

- There should not be a dilution of the existing arrangements for ensuring that the police are accountable to their local communities; and

- **Proposals and future frameworks need to take account of the developing Community Planning frameworks.**

**A new working group has been set up to take the review forward into the next stage and to propose potential future models and working arrangements. However the documentation from the Minister also requires that by the Autumn, each Council should be working to achieve the following:**

- **Sharing of information between the partnerships;**
- **Reciprocal reporting arrangements (for each partnership to notify the other of its main activities and outcomes);**
- **Identification of joint projects for collaboration;**
- **Some members of CSP attending DPP meetings and vice-a-versa;**
- **Sharing processes for priority setting to assist the development of future local policing plans;**
- **Shared public engagement events;**

**Some of the above joint working arrangements have already been put in place in Belfast, but a small number will also require further discussions with the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Community Safety Unit at the NIO to ensure that these can be achieved whilst allowing both Partnerships to meet their agreed targets and timescales and that any necessary changes can be made to the Code of Practice with regard to this and to holding meetings in public. It is proposed that bringing the two staff teams supporting the CSP and DPP together would serve as an essential step in achieving this more joined up approach.**

**It is therefore proposed that the staff providing support to the DPP move to be co-located with the Community Safety Team and that both teams of staff are managed within the Environmental Health Service. The advantages of doing this would be that it could facilitate:**

- **Less duplication of work and roles;**
- **More sharing of resources;**
- **A single point of contact for all safer city issues;**
- **Sharing of information;**
- **More joint projects;**

- A joined up approach to planning and much more of a connection between the issues raised at DPP meetings and projects and services delivered via the community safety team and the NIO funding for CSP programmes;
- Fewer meetings;
- A more joined up approach to community engagement;
- A greater input by elected representatives into the work of the CSP; and
- Single consultation exercises.

### **Resource Implications**

#### **Finance**

There would be no staff costs associated with this move.

#### **Human Resources**

Discussions will now take place with the relevant stakeholders including the Trade Unions. However as changes to DPP staff duties are not required, it is envisaged that implementation of the changes would be achieved through 'badging' of the existing DPP unit and related posts to the Environmental Health Service structure. The job description of the new Safer City Manager Post can accommodate management of the DPP team.

#### **Assets**

In addition, the ongoing accommodation plans can ensure that space is provided for co-location of the teams in the Cecil Ward Building, once some decanting has occurred in the Autumn.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to agree that steps are taken to amalgamate the CSP and DPP teams, including:

- The re-badging of posts within the DPP Unit to the Environmental Health Service structure with the DPP manager reporting to the Safer City Manager post, as soon as agreement of the Council is reached;
- The staff team of the DPP moving to be co-located with the CSP team in the Cecil Ward Building as soon as the accommodation becomes available, following the move of some work units back to the City Hall; and

- **Authorising officers to enter into detailed discussions with the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Community Safety Unit at the NIO in respect of the impact on current expectations, targets and codes of practice. .**

**The Committee is also asked to agree the proposed management arrangements as the management side position and that if no written objections are received from the Unions, that we can proceed directly to implementation stage without further referral back to Committee.**

#### **Decision Tracking**

**Further update reports on progress towards better aligning the work of the DPPs and CSPs will be brought back to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee by the Head of Environmental Health and the Head of Committee and Members' Services, as appropriate."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### **Swine Flu Pandemic – Managing and Reporting of Absence**

(Ms. J. Minne, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was advised that the Council's Pandemic Plan Working Group had been working with Departments to ensure that essential Council services had robust plans in place to ensure business continuity in the event of a flu pandemic. Mechanisms had been put in place for ongoing consultation and communication with all relevant stakeholders, including staff and trade unions.

The main impact of the pandemic on the Council would be the absence of staff. It would therefore be vital to ensure that the absence was managed appropriately so that its impact on the provision of vital services could be minimised. Business continuity plans had been developed for essential services and the Council now needed to consider the way in which absence related to the Swine Flu Pandemic was managed and reported.

Following consultation with other local Councils through the Local Government Emergency Management Group and research with the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the following was proposed:

#### **Reporting of Absence**

Swine Flu absence would be reported and categorised separately to all other reasons for absence.

### **Management of Absence**

An absence period of up to seven calendar days due to Swine Flu or Swine Flu-like symptoms would not be taken into account for the issuing of warnings under the Council's Absence Policy.

It was likely also that there would be a demand for leave from staff to look after sick dependants and relatives. The Council had a policy which made provision for special unpaid leave to enable care and responsibilities to be discharged if employees were unable to meet those responsibilities using their annual and/or flexi time leave. It was proposed that that policy would be used in relation to staff who needed to look after dependants as a result of the pandemic. In addition, line managers, in conjunction with Human Resources staff, could give consideration to measures which might assist by, for example, allowing adjustments to flexi-time or to annual leave provision to enable staff to draw leave from another period and explore ways to mitigate the impact of financial loss.

The Committee approved the proposed arrangements for the reporting and management of absence related to pandemic flu and agreed that the Head of Human Resources could advise the Council's trade unions and issue guidelines to staff managers in that regard.

### **Absence Management - First Quarter 2009/10**

(Ms. J. Minne, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was advised that absenteeism for the period from April till June, 2009 was showing an average of 2.72 days lost per employee, which represented a decrease of 0.07 days per employee when compared to the same period in the previous year, when the figure had been 2.79 days. This represented a reduction also of 0.30 days over quarter four in the previous year, which meant that the Council was on target to reduce overall sickness absence to 10.50 days by 2010/11. It was pointed out that 75.35% of staff had had no absence during quarter one, with the number of staff with long-term sickness absence having reduced from 5.29% at the same time last year to 5.19% this year.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Asset Management**

#### **Disposal of Land at 702 Antrim Road**

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee was advised that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 12th February, had agreed to the disposal to members of the public of three portions of land at different locations across the City. The Committee was advised that officers had been in contact with all three prospective purchasers and in respect of the land adjoining 702 Antrim Road, agreement had been reached on the terms of disposal which were as follows:

- (i) the area for disposal comprised of approximately 131 square metres;

- (ii) use of the land would be restricted to open space and to garden use in particular;
- (iii) the disposal price had been agreed at £11,250; and
- (iv) the purchasers would relocate the boundary fence at their own expense.

The Committee approved the terms outlined.

### **Connswater Community Greenway Update**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, as part of the City Investment Strategy, had agreed to coordinate the acquisition of lands to enable the Connswater Community Greenway Programme to proceed. The Council would secure rights over the land needed for the Greenway and would be responsible for the management and maintenance of that land and any assets on it. The Greenway would have to be accessible for 40 years to comply with the Big Lottery Fund letter of offer, although the intention was to secure rights for longer if possible. It was reported that land owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive located at Clarawood, Bloomfield Parade and Ladas Walk had been identified as being required to complete the Greenway route and associated landscaping. Council officers had agreed, subject to Committee approval, to purchase a 10,000 year lease from the Executive for each of the three areas of land for the sum of £5 each.

The Committee granted approval for the purchase of the lands.

### **Dargan Road Landfill Closure Plan – Future Works**

The Committee was reminded that the North Foreshore Closure Plan discharged the Council's statutory responsibilities in respect of the former landfill site at Dargan Road and included:

- the execution of capping works to contain landfill gas discharge;
- the installation of landfill gas extraction and collection wells and pipework (from which the gas was delivered as fuel for the Council's electricity generation facility now on the site); and
- associated civil engineering works.

Those works were being carried out in various sections of the site under a planned, rolling programme of separate contracts with Phase 1 of the capping works and Phase 6 of the gas extraction and collection installations underway currently. The Members were advised that for previous phases numerous reports had been submitted to the Committee for approval on an individual contract by contract basis. However, since the content of each contract was decided on civil engineering technical assessments in the overall programmed area, it was considered that it would be more appropriate for a report to be submitted on an annual basis seeking broad approval to proceed to tender for the planned programme of works for the coming year.

Further phases of work were planned for progression following completion of the current phases, commencing in the Autumn with Phase J Capping and Phase 7 Gas Extraction and Collection, which were required to proceed to tender immediately. Some drainage and gas migration prevention works, which were needed to maintain the integrity of the capping, would also be required. Contracts for each tender would be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous offer received in terms of cost and quality and in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures.

The Capital Programme included the North Foreshore Closure Plan as a "Committed Project" and allowances of £5,550,000 and £6,000,000 had been made for planned capital expenditure during the 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years.

Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee approve the invitation of tenders for:

- (i) the execution of capping works to contain landfill gas discharge;
- (ii) the installation of landfill gas extraction and collection wells and pipework; and
- (iii) associated civil engineering works.

Those tenders would be required over the ensuing year as necessitated by statutory and civil engineering requirements in order to discharge the Council's obligations.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### **Capital Programme: Replacement of Sports Hall Floor at the Shankill Leisure Centre**

The Committee was advised that the Sport Northern Ireland Places for Sport programme provided funding for local projects which either built new or upgraded playing surfaces. In the first year of the funding package, proposed projects had to be in a high "state of readiness" with all relevant approvals in place in order to complete project spend by 31st March, 2010. The programme provided up to £245,000 for capital works, to which Local Authorities had to make a contribution of approximately 25% towards the costs of the work, as well as all the design costs.

The Park and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 11th June, had approved the submission of an application under the fund for the upgrade of the sports hall floor at the Shankill Leisure Centre. The Council's application had been successful at Stage 1 of the assessment process and, accordingly, the Council had been invited to submit pre-tender information to be assessed at Stage 2.

At its meeting on 13th August, the Parks and Leisure Committee had approved the preparation and management of a tender for the refurbishment of the sports hall and had authorised the Director of Parks and Leisure to invite applications for inclusion on a select list and appoint a contractor therefrom to undertake the project.



A proposal for the replacement of the sports hall at the Shankill Leisure Centre had previously been submitted to the Capital Programme but had remained “uncommitted” due to the continuing uncertainty as to the affordability of capital funding. The floor was in a poor condition and if it were not replaced in the near future it would become unusable and the main hall would have to be closed. The timescale which had been set by Sport Northern Ireland meant that the proposal had not been through any prioritisation mechanism. However, the later stages of the Council’s Gateway process would be applied throughout the development and delivery of the project.

Whilst approval by the Committee would be setting aside the agreed process for the approval of capital projects, the potential grant aid presented an opportunity to proceed with the proposal at a significantly reduced cost to the Council of approximately £50,000 against the overall anticipated cost of £163,000. The Parks and Leisure Department had confirmed that the expenditure would be met from reallocations within the existing revenue budget and consequently no capital expenditure would be required. However, a requirement of the grant was that the expenditure was required to be authorised by the Council’s Transition Committee, since expenditure would occur in 2010/11.

The Committee approved the decision of the Parks and Leisure Committee to proceed with the replacement of the sports hall floor at the Shankill Leisure Centre and approved also the invitation of tenders for the works, subject to the award of grant aid from the Sport Northern Ireland Places for Sport fund, and to any contract being awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous offer in terms of cost and quality in accordance with the Council’s procurement procedures.

### **Good Relations and Equality**

(Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager, attended in connection with these items.)

### **Minutes of Good Relations Partnership**

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 14th August and adopted the recommendations contained therein, including:

#### **Peace III Small Grants Second Call**

The approval of the reallocation of funding into the small grants fund and the issue of Letters of Offer of funding up to a maximum of £25,000 to those groups which had achieved the necessary minimum score, subject to the satisfactory completion of pre-contractual checks and a site visit and the agreement of the budget with the Peace III Programme staff.

#### **Peace III Procurement of a Mediation Capacity Building Programme**

The Committee approved the acceptance of a tender which had been received from Mediation Northern Ireland in the sum of £199,263 for the procurement of a mediation capacity building programme under the theme of Transforming Contested Spaces in the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Plan.

### **Use of Memorabilia in the City Hall**

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to the use of memorabilia in the City Hall:

#### **“Relevant Background Information**

At its meeting of June 2009, the Committee reviewed the minutes of the Commemorations and Memorabilia Working Group, and resolved that *‘the Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group of 20th May and agreed that the Working Group be advised that no recommendations would be adopted by the Council until such times as a report on all the actions which had been agreed in relation to the location of memorabilia in the City Hall had been submitted to the Committee for consideration, thereby providing the Members with an overall view of the proposals’*.

The purpose of this report is therefore to outline the decisions already taken with regard to this matter and to provide some additional detail as requested by the Committee.

Members will recall that, in October 2008, a report was tabled by the Head of Facilities Management in respect of the revised approach to tours and the associated impact on the proposed uses of art, artefacts and other memorabilia held by the Council. That report recommended the creation of seven principal themes, namely:-

1. the history of the City Hall (located in the marble area);
2. our ‘Freedom of the City’ recipients (located in the Rotunda area);
3. Belfast in the 2 World Wars (located in the Rotunda area);
4. notable Belfast citizens (located in the Reception Hall);
5. the Titanic & Belfast’s Lord Mayors (located in the Banqueting Hall);
6. the civic regalia (located in the Robing Room); *and*
7. a display of civic gifts received by the city (located in the East Entrance area).

On foot of these themes a number of items were to be used in different ways. The principal changes recommended in the report were as follows:-

- the Covenant table will remain in the Council Chamber but would be supplemented with archive photographs of the signing of the covenant in 1912, new signage and additional historical material while tours are in progress;

- the civic regalia including maces, chains of office and robes currently stored in the Lord Mayor's Parlour would be moved to public view in the Robing Room;
- the Seaman Maginess portrait would be moved from the Robing Room to the Rotunda;
- a number of items connected with the Freedom of the City including caskets and scrolls currently in the Reception Hall and crystal in the Lord Mayor's Parlour and silver keys currently in storage would be brought together in a display on the Rotunda;
- the 'No Mean City' display (suitably updated) which was previously located on the ground floor west corridor would be moved to the Reception Hall to form the central part of a Belfast Citizens exhibit (note: location now changed to be adjacent to the new exhibition area) ;
- a number of items connected with the history of the City Hall including the black and white photographs in the Robing Room and the charters, silver trowel and gavel in the Reception Hall would be brought together and put on permanent display in dedicated display cases in the marble area;
- the portraits of Sir Edward Harland and Viscount & Viscountess Pirrie currently in the Council Chamber & Reception Hall would be moved to the Banqueting Hall; and
- a number of crystal and silver items presented to the city and currently in storage or in the Lord Mayor's Parlour would be brought together in a new display in the East entrance area.

Considerably more detail in respect of each of the themed areas and the proposed uses of current memorabilia can be found in the appendix which was circulated to the Members.

The Committee endorsed these proposals on the grounds that (a) they were necessary in the context of enhancing the tour offering within the building and (b) that they provided an opportunity to comply with some outstanding recommendations contained in the of the Advisory Panel on City Hall Memorabilia submitted in February 2003.

While the relevant officers are, of course, prepared to review the current proposals, the Committee will also be aware that the scheduled re-opening date for the City Hall is 5th October 2009 and that the final tour offering must be in place for that date. Planning for this is at an advanced stage, so it is hoped that the information contained herein will be acceptable to the Committee and that the necessary work can proceed as originally planned.

However, should the Committee wish to see any significant changes or additions made to current proposals, these can be discussed with the Commemorations and Memorabilia Working Group and the Good Relations Manager over the coming weeks and – hopefully - incorporated into the final designs in ways which will not necessitate a postponement of the tours commencement date.

### Key Issues

The key issue is whether or not the Committee is content with current proposals in respect of memorabilia held by the council or would wish to re-consider this matter at this time.

### Resource Implications

There will clearly be some resource implications if a decision is taken to review the current approach in any significant way, but it is difficult to quantify this.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee re-affirm its decision of October 2008 in respect of the revised approach to tours and the associated use of items of art, artefacts and other memorabilia owned or held by the council.

### Decision Tracking

The target date for the delivery of the new, themed tour service remains 5th October 2009, however if significant changes are proposed this may alter.”

During discussion, a number of Members referred to their desire to see a set of recommendations to the Committee which reflected the need to balance the display of memorabilia in the City Hall to reflect all traditions and stated that in their view the Council should not accept any of the recommendations until the totality of displays in the City Hall was agreed. Other Members pointed out that it was important to proceed with the current recommendation in order to have displays available in time for the reopening of the City Hall and that further suggestions could be brought forward by the Memorabilia Working Group.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor P. Maskey,  
Seconded by Councillor M. Browne,

That the Committee agrees to reject the recommendation as set out in the report.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the proposal and seven against and it was accordingly declared lost.

The Committee accordingly agreed to adopt the recommendation as set out in the report.

### **Portraits of Former Lord Mayors**

Arising out of discussion in the previous item, the Committee agreed that a report in relation to the display of the portraits of the former Lord Mayors of Belfast be submitted in due course.

### **Memorabilia in the City Hall – Proposed Artwork for East Entrance**

The Committee was reminded that a number of years previously an Advisory Panel of external experts had been established to examine ways of achieving a more favourable balance of artworks and artefacts within the City Hall. The Panel had made a number of recommendations and some work had been undertaken and progress had been made, including the renaming of the Committee Rooms and the commissioning of the Mary Ann McCracken bust. More recently, the development of the coffee bar area and exhibition space had also been helpful in that respect since it focused on the contribution of the workers of Belfast and its industrial past. However, there still remained a need for some action to be taken to try to redress the overall balance.

The Memorabilia Working Group had discussed recently a number of possibilities and had agreed to recommend that the Committee commission two pieces of artwork, to be located in the newly refurbished East Entrance area, to improve the overall balance within the City Hall. These were to be on the themes of:

- boxing, which was always regarded as a cross-community sport; and
- young people and contemporary life in Belfast.

Discussions with groups from the Irish language community in Belfast and a possible artwork to represent the contribution of that community were continuing.

The Good Relations Manager reported that funding was available from the Peace III Budget towards the cost of the exhibition space within the City Hall as the Peace Plan included provision for such expenditure. This would enable the main City Hall budget to be used to commission appropriate artworks at a sum not exceeding £15,000.

The Committee approved the recommendation of the Memorabilia Working Group to commission two pieces of artwork representing boxing and young people in the City at a cost not to exceed £15,000.

The Committee agreed also that the Memorabilia Working Group give consideration to the means by which other sports could be represented in the City Hall.

### Cross-Cutting Issues

#### Options for Reducing Carbonaceous Emissions from the Council's Vehicle Fleet

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### “Relevant Background Information

At the Council meeting of 2nd March, 2009, Councillor Mullaghan proposed the following Notice of Motion relating to options for reducing carbonaceous emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet, 'As a contribution to its climate change agenda, Belfast city Council commits to a review of the options for reducing carbon emissions from its vehicle fleet, with a view to adopting a strategy with defined targets, the report on the review to be submitted to the Council within six months.'

The Committee, at its meeting on 20th March, adopted the Director of Health and Environmental Service's recommendation to authorise the preparation of a preliminary high-level review of options for reducing carbonaceous emissions from the vehicle fleet.

##### Vehicle Fleet background Information

During 2008, the Council's vehicle fleet consumed approximately 1,000,000 litres of diesel resulting in the generation of around 2,630 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Council has recently approved replacement of the fuel station at the main fuel storage facilities at Duncrue. It is anticipated that the new fuel management system will enable development of fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emission benchmarks

##### Manufacturer Reporting of Vehicle Carbon Dioxide Emissions

There is currently little European legislation requiring vehicle manufacturers to publish CO<sub>2</sub> emission factors for commercial vehicles. Preliminary communications suggest that the EU may adopt light commercial fleet average targets of 175g CO<sub>2</sub>/km by 2012 and 160g CO<sub>2</sub>/km by 2015. No comparable legislation is proposed however, for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) at this time. It should be noted however, that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are proportional to the amount of fuel consumed and are generally lower in modern vehicles and in those with smaller engine displacements. In comparison to petrol, diesel vehicles have significantly lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per kilometre travelled due to the higher engine efficiency.

### Governmental approach to reducing carbon dioxide emissions

With regard to minimising CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions, government has promoted a three step hierarchical approach of assessing emissions, reducing avoidable emissions and counter balancing non-avoidable emissions through offsetting.

### Council fleet vehicle emission characteristics

In the case of private and light goods vehicles, the Council operates a range of relatively low emitting diesel vehicles, generating around 140g CO<sub>2</sub>/km travelled. This emission rate is below the EU's proposed LCV targets and also compares favourably, for example, with the 'benchmark' Toyota Prius, which emits 104g CO<sub>2</sub>/km travelled.

In terms of larger box vans, the Council predominantly operates a range of vehicles with typical emissions of around 210g CO<sub>2</sub>/km travelled.

With regard to cleansing and refuse collection vehicles, some emit around 300g CO<sub>2</sub>/km travelled whereas fully laden refuse collection vehicles could emit in excess of 600g CO<sub>2</sub>/km travelled. The majority of Council fleet vehicles are less than 5 years old.

### Key Issues

In terms of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from its vehicles, there is a range of measures, direct and indirect, that the Council could take as summarised below:-

#### The potential to introduce biofuels

Biofuels deliver carbon savings as the CO<sub>2</sub> that is emitted into the atmosphere when they are burned is offset by the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that the crop absorbed as it grew. Unfortunately, first generation biofuels have come under scrutiny since their manufacture competes with food production and impacts detrimentally upon biodiversity. Second generation biofuels overcome these issues by being generated from the residual non-food parts of current crops however, the market is still very much in its infancy within the UK. In terms of vehicle maintenance, biodiesel acts as a detergent and consequently fuel filters typically have to be replaced more frequently to remove sludges. Moreover, biodiesel can attack fuel hoses and pump seals made from certain elastomers. Accordingly, the impact of biodiesel on vehicle warranties and maintenance programmes would have to be carefully considered prior to its introduction.

### The potential to introduce biogas

Council could theoretically also consider the introduction of bio-methane gas from the North Foreshore as a road fuel. As with biodiesel, bio-methane gas, derived from organic waste, generates no net CO<sub>2</sub>. Vehicles typically employ a dual fuel system, which enables the diesel engine to operate on bio-methane and diesel. Fuelling infrastructure would however, have to be installed to collect, clean, pressurise, store and distribute the gas. It should be noted that the Council has preferentially elected to generate electricity from the bio-methane at the North Foreshore, which is to be sold to the electricity grid thereby generating financial revenue whilst displacing fossil fuels in conventional power stations.

### Plug in refuse collection units

A 'plug in' refuse collection unit for waste vehicles driven by an electric motor and battery pack charged via off-peak environmentally friendly electricity has recently come on the market. The unit can also be charged from the chassis engine in order to ensure continuity of service. Electrical operation means that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are zero during loading and compacting as the RCV is at standstill. It has been estimated that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are reduced by 20% during a collection round.

### Hybrid refuse collection vehicles.

A hybrid solution for refuse collection vehicles that combines a normal diesel engine with an electric motor and lithium ion battery has also been developed recently. The refuse vehicle accelerates under electric power alone, promoting lower fuel consumption and lower emissions with the diesel engine cutting in once speed and power outtake have stabilised. Field trials are ongoing although it is estimated that the FE Hybrid can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 30%.

### Zero Emission Vehicles

Alternative engine technologies are also entering the panel and box van market in the form of zero emission electric vehicles (ZEV). Electric commercial vehicles now have an average range of 100 miles and a top speed of up to 70 mph. Vehicles are charged overnight and provided that a non-fossil electricity supply is used, then they can be regarded as zero emission. Electricity generated at the North Foreshore site would constitute a suitable charging source.



### Route Planning

Comprehensive route planning has the capacity to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by reducing distances travelled and by ensuring optimum utilisation of the vehicle fleet.

### Costs and service implications of introducing lower carbon technologies

Emerging vehicle technologies such as those highlighted within this report normally engender a significant price premium over established technologies. Moreover, some of the technologies are proprietary in nature and are subject to ongoing marketplace development by manufacturers. Accordingly, if the Council was to devise a fleet carbon abatement strategy, cost and maintenance, alongside a requirement for continuity of service delivery, would be significant considerations.

### Carbon offsetting

Once Council has eliminated its avoidable CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, it might choose to undertake carbon offsetting in order to achieve a 'carbon neutral' vehicle fleet. Presently, government assured carbon offsetting is available at around £16 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted. The overall cost of offsetting the Council's current vehicle fleet CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, without additional control measures, would be therefore around £42,000 per annum. In evaluating potential control measures, it will be important to balance the financial and environmental considerations of offsetting against the cost of operating new fleet technologies and to have due regard to the public perception and reputational issues involved in adopting offsetting as a strategy rather than employing direct carbon abatement measures.

### Resource Implications

#### Financial.

There will be sizeable additional costs associated with implementing many of the emerging vehicle technologies and significant lead times if wasteful expenditure is to be avoided. There will also be costs associated with offsetting residual fleet CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### Human Resources.

Emerging fleet technologies such as hybrid and zero emission vehicles typically have different operational and maintenance requirements to conventional fossil-fuelled vehicles. Consequently, the Fleet Management Unit may have to develop additional expertise to service and maintain such vehicles.

**Asset and other Implications.**

Such implications will become clearer through additional research of the various options.

**Recommendations**

This report presents a preliminary high-level review of options for reducing carbonaceous emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet. These options have not been costed and, consequently, further research would be required to allow informed decisions in adopting a vehicle carbon abatement strategy.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is invited therefore to note the high-level options for reducing carbonaceous emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet.

The Committee is also invited to recommend that further research be undertaken to enable the development of a detailed carbon abatement strategy for the Council's vehicle fleet. This research will be undertaken with due regard to emerging legislation and will also form a component of the implementation of the new Transportation Policy, as adopted by Council at its meeting on 1st June 2009.

It is further recommended that the research be undertaken principally 'in house' by Fleet Management staff and the Council's Sustainable Development Manager. Where consultancy support is required to appraise specific fleet technologies, a project proposal detailing financial, human resource and asset resource requirements, will be presented to Committee for approval prior to inception.

**Key to Abbreviations**

CO2	-	carbon dioxide.
EU	-	European Union
g/km	-	grammes per kilometre.
LCV	-	light commercial vehicles.
HGV	-	heavy goods vehicle.
RCV	-	refuse collection vehicle."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman