

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 21st May, 2010

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mrs. J. Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. L. Steele, Head of Committee and
Members' Services; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator.

Apology

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

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 15th and 23rd April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th May, subject to the omission of the minute of the meeting of 15th April under the heading "Local Government (Disqualifications) (Amendment) Bill" which, at the request of Councillor Robinson, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Local Government (Disqualifications) (Amendment) Bill

The Committee considered further the undernoted minute of the meeting of 15th April:

"Local Government (Disqualifications) (Amendment) Bill

The Director of Legal Services advised the Committee that correspondence had been received from the Committee for the Environment seeking the Council's views on the draft Local Government (Disqualifications) (Amendment) Bill. He explained that the sole purpose of the Bill was to amend the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to make provision to disqualify Elected Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly from holding office as Councillors.

The Director pointed out that Section 4(1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 currently prescribed a range of circumstances which would disqualify a person from holding office as a Councillor. The Bill would extend the 1972 Act to preclude MLAs from being, or being elected, as a Councillor. Following Royal Assent, it would be the intention that the Bill would be operative on the day of the next District Council Elections, which were expected to take place in May, 2011.

The Director of Legal Services stated that the Bill addressed a political issue and an excess of 140 individuals and organisations, including political Parties, had been consulted. The comments received were strongly in favour of the proposal. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree not to offer any objection to the introduction of the Bill.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.”

Councillor Robinson, at whose request the matter had been taken back to the Committee, indicated that if the legislation were to be passed in its current form there could be technical difficulties if the Local Government and Assembly Elections were held on the same date and Parties nominated the same candidate for both elections.

The Head of Committee and Members' Services explained that if the legislation did not take effect until the date of the next Local Government Elections, there would be nothing to prevent existing Members of the Assembly from submitting nomination papers for election to Local Councils nor existing Members of Local Councils from submitting nomination papers for election to the Assembly. One way to avoid that would be to introduce legislation with effect from 1st April, 2011, that is, prior to the submission of nominations.

However, that would not prevent a person who was a not a Member of either the Council or the Assembly submitting nomination papers for election to both. While the main political Parties were unlikely to approve candidates submitting papers in respect of both Councils and the Assembly, it was possible that independent persons could do so. If such a person were to be elected to the Assembly before the Council votes were counted, he or she would then be ineligible for election to the Council despite appearing on the ballot paper and receiving votes from the electorate. If he or she were to receive sufficient votes to be "elected", the question was what status he or she would have and how would the matter be dealt with?

The Head of Committee and Members' Services pointed out that these points had been raised by members of the Assembly's Committee for the Environment with Dawn Purvis, MLA, who had had the Private Members' Bill approved, and she was currently taking legal advice on the matter. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve the submission of the foregoing points as the Council's response to the consultation on the Bill.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Transition Committee Business

Review of Public Administration – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the ongoing discussions within the NI Executive in regards to the Review of Public Administration and how the reform of local government within Northern Ireland will be progressed. It is understood that there remains an absence of decision on important implementation issues including, for example, the new local government boundaries and how the reform programme will be funded.**

Key Issues

- 1.2 The Environment Minister intended to submit a report to the Executive, at its meeting on 13th May 2010, setting out options on a proposed way forward for the RPA. As it happens, the report did not actually appear on the agenda.**
- 1.3 It is understood that the report indicated that the reform of local government as currently proposed (particularly the reorganisation of councils from 26 to 11) is no longer deliverable by May 2011 and should be postponed until 2015. Two options had been outlined for Ministerial consideration:-**
- *Option 1:* reorganisation of councils postponed until 2015 with shadow councils being put in place from 2014. Consideration to be given to the interim transfer of some functions (e.g. Planning, DSD functions and the duty off Community Planning) to councils from 2011 onwards.**
 - *Option 2:* reorganisation of councils and transfer of functions deferred until 2015 with consideration given to potential shadow period being introduced from 2014.**
- 1.4 Any postponement or reconfiguration made to the RPA programme requires Executive approval.**
- 1.5 There has been considerable media speculation and discussion within the Executive over recent months in regards to the RPA. An extract from Hansard outlining the Environment Minister’s responses to RPA related questions raised within the Assembly on 11th May 2010 has been circulated.**

- 1.6 As previously agreed by the Committee, a letter has been sent to the Environment Minister outlining the Council's concerns regarding the continued delay and absence of decisions around the RPA and seeking an urgent announcement on the way forward.
- 1.7 A verbal update will be provided at the SP&R Committee meeting on 21st May, on any further RPA developments since the report was drafted.

Collaboration and Efficiency

- 2.8 Members will be aware of the recent discussions in regards to how local government would intend to take forward the creation of a service-delivery model that would provide efficiencies through collaboration. This work was initiated in response to the sector's strong opposition to the proposed establishment of a centralised Business Services Organisation.
- 2.9 The local government proposed approach outlined in the paper 'A Practical Approach to Securing Local Government Efficiencies and Improvements through Collaboration' was accepted in principle by the Environment Minister at the Strategic Leadership Board meeting of 14 April 2010. The Minister indicated, however, that further work was now required on the detail of the proposals put forward in regards to delivering efficiencies through voluntary collaboration.
- 2.10 It is understood that the Environment Minister is minded, in moving forward with a reconfigured RPA programme, to place a greater focus on securing efficiencies within local government. A detailed business case and work programme needs to be developed which clearly sets out how a local government efficiency agenda may be taken forward.
- 2.11 As previously agreed by the Committee, Council officials are engaged in the ongoing discussions on this issue and will ensure that Members are kept fully updated as it moves forward. Members will note that work is underway to identify and explore the potential collaborative opportunities which may exist to the Council as part of its wider efficiency programme which has already recognised collaboration as one approach. Within this context, it would be the intention to also explore the potential opportunities with other statutory service providers within the city as part of a total place approach.

2.12 The current financial pressures facing the local government and wider public sector will undoubtedly act as a compelling driver for encouraging greater collaboration where real benefits, greater value for money and efficiencies can be demonstrated at no detriment to councils.

2.13 Any collaborative approach or models put in place should be subject to a robust value for money test for participant councils and, therefore, the Council will reserve the right to be autonomous in moving forward.

3.0 Resource Implications

There will clearly be resource implications (in terms of officer time) attached to the Council's continued engagement and work on the key issues outlined within this report.

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report."

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that, in light of the above information, he would undertake the preparation of an options paper in relation to the piloting of Community Planning for inclusion in the Corporate Plan. In response to a question, the Chief Executive assured the Members that the Council would only use resources to explore potential collaborative opportunities if there were a cost benefit to the Council.

Noted.

**Urban Regeneration and Community Development
Policy Framework Seminar**

The Committee was advised that the Department for Social Development had commissioned recently a consortium of consultants to assist the Department in preparing a strategy and policy framework for Urban Regeneration and Community Development in Northern Ireland. In order to enable key stakeholders to provide an input into the process, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association had arranged a seminar in the Strule Arts Centre, Omagh on Friday, 28th May.

The Committee approved the attendance of one Member from each of the Party Groupings on the Council, together with appropriate officers, at the seminar.

Democratic Services and Governance

Member Development Framework Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the implementation of the Member Development Framework, the proposed content of future Member development activities and a proposed induction training plan for new Members following the Local Government Elections in May, 2011.

**Transitional Governance Arrangements
for the Education Sector**

The Committee was reminded that it was intended that the five Education and Library Boards would be replaced with an Education and Skills Authority. However, that required legislative agreement between the Parties and in the period prior to the establishment of the new Body streamlined Education and Library Boards were being put in place. The Head of Committee and Members' Services reminded the Committee further that, at its meeting on 11th December, 2009, it had considered a request from the Minister for Education to put forward, in line with the guidelines published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, at least eight Councillors who would be willing to sit on the transitional Board. The Committee had agreed to nominate only four Members with representatives being selected using a one-off d'Hondt process. That had resulted in the nominations falling to the Sinn Féin, Democratic Unionist, Ulster Unionist and Social Democratic and Labour Party Groupings, with Councillors Convery, Hartley, Rodgers and Rodway having been put forward for selection.

He reported that further correspondence had been received from the Minister on 17th February reiterating the need for the Council to nominate at least two persons for each vacancy and requesting that an additional four names be forwarded to her. That had been drawn to the Committee's attention at its meeting on 19th February, when it had been decided to affirm the decision of 11th December to nominate only four Members to the four places to which the Council was entitled under the legislation.

The Minister for Education had now written again asking the Council to review its position with a view to providing a total of eight nominees in order to comply with the guidelines of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. In her letter, the Minister explained that she was required to follow the procedures laid down by the Commissioner and that twenty-four out of the twenty-six Councils in Northern Ireland had complied with the request to provide multiple nominees.

The Head of Committee and Members' Services pointed out that, while that request was essentially no different from that which the Minister had made in February, there was little doubt that the impasse which had arisen was doing nothing to progress and enhance the administration, oversight and management of education in Belfast. He felt that the Committee might take the view that, in the interests of ensuring that the Council had the opportunity to play a positive and constructive role in overseeing and contributing to educational decisions and policy in the City, it would be better to find a way to accommodate the Minister's wishes while at the same time preserving and protecting the basis on which the Committee made appointments to Outside Bodies, that is, through the use of the d'Hondt process.

He indicated that the Committee could do so by simply giving each of the Party Groupings two nominees under each choice rather than the normal one. That would preserve the principle of proportionality yet satisfy the Minister's wish to be able to make choices from a pool of eight nominees. The one rider which would have to be added would be that, in the interests of fairness, equality and justice, the final selections made by the Minister would have to entail one appointment from each of the four largest Party Groupings on the Council, that is, the Sinn Féin, the Democratic Unionist, the Ulster Unionist and the Social Democratic and Labour Party Groupings.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McCann,
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Lavery),

That the Committee agrees to an additional four nominees, to be provided by the Sinn Féin, Democratic Unionist, Ulster Unionist and Social Democratic and Labour Party Groupings, being forwarded to the Minister for Education for consideration for appointment to the interim Belfast Education and Library Board on the basis that the four persons appointed will be representatives of the four largest Party Groupings on the Council but that the Committee express its disappointment that the Minister had not accepted the four names submitted under the Council's d'Hondt system.

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

The Provision of Hospitality to External Organisations using the City Hall

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

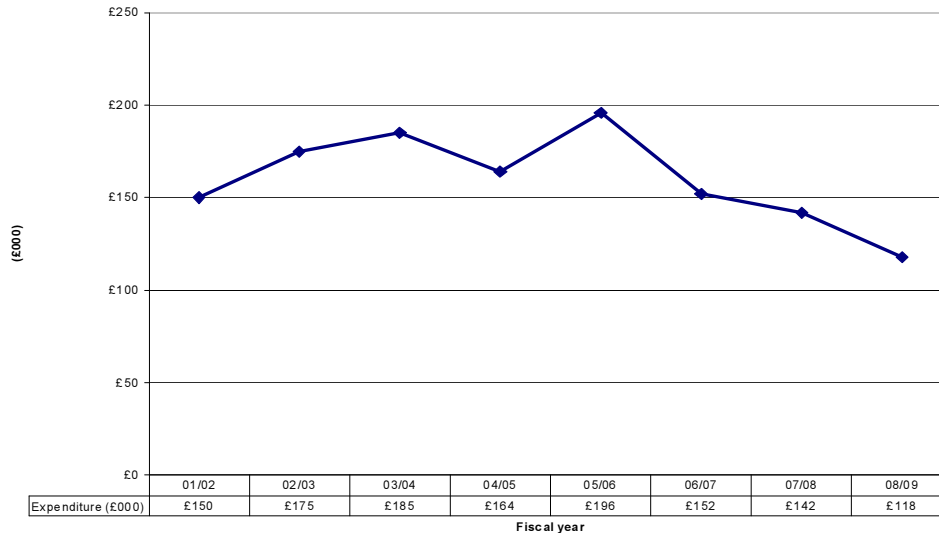
As part of the rate setting process for 2010/2011 the Committee has stressed the need for all Departments to consider potential efficiency savings. The drive to effect efficiencies and to reduce costs across the organisation is ongoing and reports will be submitted periodically. One area where costs could be reduced is in the provision of hospitality to external organisations using the City Hall.

Key Issues

The Council provides hospitality in relation to events organised by external organisations as well as several civic events, such as the Lord Mayor's installation dinner, the Somme Commemoration and the Rose Trials Dinner, which are organised directly by the Council.

Hospitality is provided to most external organisations which have been granted authority for their event to take place within the City Hall. However, it is apparent that the provision of hospitality is of secondary importance to organisations, with securing the use of the building for their event being their primary concern.

The total expenditure on hospitality for each of the past eight years is illustrated below.



Members will recall that when the City Hall was closed from September 2007 to October 2009, the Council continued to cover the cost of hospitality for events which were held in alternative venues so long as the request satisfied the criteria.

Members will observe from the data that, despite the cost of food and drink increasing over this period, hospitality expenditure has generally decreased. This is due largely to the decision taken when the policy for the use of the City Hall was reviewed in 2003 to move away from the provision of civic dinners to a 'use of the building only' concession. There was a recognition at that time that circumstances had changed to the extent that Belfast did not have to provide lavish dinners in order to attract conferences, and certainly this does appear to have been the case. This is illustrated by the fact that the number of business visitors coming to the City doubled from 329,000 in 2003 to 659,000 in 2008. While there are obviously a range of factors involved in contributing to this increase, it is certainly true that reducing the level of hospitality has not had a negative impact. The current economic circumstances facing the Council make it necessary to further review the existing policy and to consider whether effecting enhanced savings would be appropriate.

The following options have been identified as a means of achieving this:

1. cease to provide any hospitality whatsoever for events organised within the City Hall by external organisations, which would still be granted the use of the building. This option could save the Council approximately £105,000 per annum.

- 2. cap the amount to be spent on drinks receptions to £500 per event. This option could save the Council approximately £23,000 per annum.**

Although the options outline the financial benefits to the Council they do not take into account any detrimental effects associated with reducing the amount or level of hospitality provided to external organisations. The following points highlight some of the arguments for retaining the provision of hospitality:

- 1. It is accepted that there is an expectation amongst conference organisers and delegates that hospitality will be provided within the Civic Headquarters of the host city. This hospitality is normally expected to be in the form of a drinks reception and is the norm within other conference cities.**
- 2. Many organisations, especially community groups, avail of the free use of the building to organise a low budget yet still important event. Hospitality allows these organisations to add to the success of the event by providing refreshments, such as sandwiches or a finger buffet, for their guests and permits the Council to acknowledge the important contribution made by such organisations to the life and well-being of the city.**
- 3. Many events in the City Hall include high profile and influential guests who have the ability to encourage investment and development within the City. The level of hospitality provided may influence the perception which these guests have of the city.**
- 4. Although feedback suggests that the reduction in hospitality already implemented has not had a negative effect upon the numbers of visitors to the city, any further reduction could have a detrimental impact.**

In addition, the scale of charges applicable to organisations using the City Hall should be reviewed and introduced at an early date and criteria established in order to determine when such charges will apply.

Resource Implications

Savings of either approximately £105,000 or £23,000 per annum.

Recommendations

1. To agree to cap the contribution to hospitality in the form of drinks receptions to £500 per event. This will enable external organisations to secure the use of the City Hall whilst allowing the Council to welcome guests to the building by making a contribution towards the event.
2. To review the scale of charges for the use of the City Hall and to apply these on a consistent basis.

Decision Tracking

If the Committee adopts the recommendation, Gareth Quinn, Development Officer, will ensure that the relevant revisions are implemented and that the application form and accompanying guidance notes will be amended accordingly.

Furthermore, Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources, will arrange for a review of the scale of charges to be undertaken and will ensure that these are applied on a consistent basis.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations on the basis that there would be no contribution by the Council towards drinks receptions for statutory bodies, that community groups would not be adversely affected and that they would be exempt from charges for the use of the City Hall.

Requests for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality

The Committee was informed 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
Queens University Belfast	Astrophysics Science Consortium Conference 2010 30th August, 2010 Approximately 120 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner 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’ and ‘Better opportunities for success across the city’.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £480

Organisation/ Body	Event / Date – Number of Delegates / Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Chartered Institute for Securities and Investment	Chartered Institute for Securities and Investment Conference 2010 28th October, 2010 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner 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' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £400
Belfast Cathedral Past Choristers Association	Conference Dinner 8th June, 2013 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner 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' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £800
The Federation of Retail Licensed Trade	The Federation of Retail Licensed Trade - Pub of the Year Awards 2010 11th November, 2010 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall.	This Awards ceremony seeks to recognise the best licensed trade establishments across Northern Ireland. Categories include 'Best Neighbourhood Pub' and 'Best Tourism/Visitor Pub'. The events aims to improve the industry by recognising best practice through the development and introduction of a robust set of retailing standards. Furthermore the Federation of Retail Licensed Trade has a close working relationship with Belfast City Council as was demonstrated by their involvement in and support for both the 'Get Home Safe' campaign and 'Counter Measures' training programme. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of ' City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Submission of Late Reports

The Committee noted the information which had been provided in relation to the submission of late reports.

Notice of Motion re: St. Gall's Gaelic Athletic Club

The Committee was reminded that the undernoted Notice of Motion had been proposed by Councillor Brownlee and seconded by Councillor M. Browne at the Council meeting on 1st April:

“The Council commends the achievement of St. Gall's Gaelic Athletic Club, in this its centenary year, in becoming the first team from Belfast to win an All-Ireland Senior Gaelic Football Club Championship and requests that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee give consideration to the appropriate way in which this achievement might best be recognised.”

In accordance with Standing Order 11(e), the motion had stood referred without discussion to the Committee, but had subsequently been deferred at its meeting on 23rd April. The Committee was reminded also that the scale of the achievement of St. Gall's winning the All-Ireland Senior Club Football Championship had been recognised as soon as it had occurred. The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Lavery, had raised the matter and arrangements had been put in train to receive the club players and officials in order to pay tribute to their success. A Mayoral reception had been held on 15th April, the earliest suitable date, when the Deputy Lord Mayor had acknowledged the Club's success and had congratulated the players on their achievements.

A Member pointed out that the winning of the trophy had been a significant achievement and requested that the Committee give proper consideration to how it could best be recognised.

The Committee was advised that the Club was this year celebrating its 100th Anniversary and was seeking to use the City Hall for that event and if the Committee were minded then discussions could be undertaken with the Club to establish how its achievement could be recognised by the Council at that event.

The Committee agreed to this course of action.

Notice of Motion: Mr. Noel Bailie

The Committee was reminded that the Lord Mayor, at the meeting of the Council on 4th May, in accordance with Standing Order 11(e), had referred to the Committee the undernoted Notice of Motion which had been proposed by Councillor Stoker and seconded by Councillor Rodgers:

“This Council recognises the achievement of Noel Bailie in reaching the incredible milestone of having made 1,000 appearances for Linfield Football Club and calls upon the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to give consideration to the appropriate way in which this achievement might best be recognised.”

It was suggested that, as a means of recognising the feat, the incoming Lord Mayor be recommended to hold a reception for the Linfield Football Club and that a special presentation be made at that event to Mr. Noel Bailie in recognition of his having achieved 1,000 appearances for the Club.

The Committee agreed to this course of action.

**Allowances for the Lord Mayor,
the Deputy Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff**

The Committee was advised that it had been the practice for the Entertainment and Personal Allowances paid to the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff to be reviewed annually to take into account increases in the cost of living and other factors.

Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee approve the increasing of the Lord Mayor's Personal and Entertainments Allowances to £34,800 and £25,900 respectively and the Deputy Lord Mayor's and the High Sheriff's Personal and Entertainments Allowances to £5,250 and £735 respectively. All the recommended increases in the allowances represented an inflationary increase of 3% approximately.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 14th May:

“Relevant Background Information

These are the minutes of Meeting No.11 of the Budget and Transformation Panel, held on Friday 14 May 2010.

Present:

Cllr T Hartley	SF (Chair)
Cllr M Browne	SF
Cllr P Convery	SDLP
Cllr M Jones	ALL
Cllr R Newton	DUP

P McNaney	Chief Executive
J Thompson	Director of Finance and Resources
G Millar	Director of Property and Projects
R Cregan	Head of Finance and Performance

Key Issues

1. Indicative Rate Target for 2011/12

The Chief Executive discussed with Members the challenging financial environment anticipated for the public sector over the next few years, for both capital and revenue expenditure.

As agreed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 2010, work has been ongoing to develop an indicative rate target for 2011/12 and an efficiency target which would be discussed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in May 2010. This is an additional step put into the rates setting process which will give a context and framework for officers as they approach the more detailed rates setting work in the late summer/autumn.

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a paper to Members of the Budget and Transformation Panel on the indicative rates target for 2011/12. Having considered the financial implications for the Council at a very high level, it was recommended that an indicative rate target for 2011/12 be established at 2.5%.

Members recognised that this was an initial target that was subject to review as more detailed work progressed. Further choices and recommendations would be presented to Members but they advised that this should be viewed as an upper target at this stage and officers should seek to identify a lower rates uplift, if at all possible. The need for prudence was emphasised with control and challenge of costs, along with the identification of options for investment in the city. The role of Land and Property Services in maximising rates income was also discussed. It was agreed that the Budget and Transformation Panel would recommend an indicative rates target of 2.5% for 2011/12 to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

2. Use of VAT Reclaim Monies (2009/10)

On the back of a court case which challenged the VAT charged for sporting, leisure and cultural services, the council has been able to secure a VAT refund. Given the difficulties of predicting the success of our claim, we have recently received some £1.3m of extra income which has not yet been accounted for, on top of the £1.56m income already included in the Council's forecast projections for 2009/10. This £1.3m is one off income that needs to be accounted for in 2009/10, with the draft accounts planned to be presented to the Audit Panel on 7 June.

The reserves position is in line with the current reserves strategy and therefore it is proposed that the £1.3m is not put into reserves. The City Investment Strategy (CIS) is the other non-recurrent balance in the council's books. The Chief Local Government Auditor raised concerns in the 2008/09 Management Letter regarding the financing of this fund. There is sufficient financing to cover the current commitments in the CIS but it is likely that new schemes will be added and the current economic recession is also likely to impact on the planned disposal receipts of the Council which help to fund the CIS. It is therefore recommended that the additional £1.3m is used to bolster the City Investment Strategy and that further information on proposals for the use of the City Investment Strategy will be presented to Members in June (see 4 below).

3. Indicative Efficiency Target for 2011/12

As agreed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 2010, further details of the proposed council efficiency programme would be provided in May. The Director of Finance and Resources presented a paper to Members of the Budget and Transformation Panel on the indicative efficiency target for 2011/12.

This identified an indicative target of some £1.7m and some proposals as to how this target would be achieved within the already agreed efficiency workstreams. The report also discussed the development of a programme which will enable the delivery of further efficiencies post 2011/12.

Members discussed the report and recognised that this was an improved and earlier planning process compared to previous years. They agreed that more work needed to be carried out over the summer on the individual workstreams and that the final target and efficiency proposals would be agreed as part of the rates setting process in the autumn. It was agreed that the Budget and Transformation Panel would recommend an indicative efficiency target of £1.7m for 2011/12 to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and a range of other more detailed actions as set out in the recommendations below.

4. Capital Programme

The Director of Property and Projects discussed with Members the need to identify and agree a prioritised capital programme for 2010/11 – 2014/15. This programme would need to be aligned with future financing requirements, given that the majority of capital projects were now funded by loan. There was also a need to improve the management and maintenance of assets and ensure that resources were aligned to overall agreed council priorities.

It was agreed that, given the importance of this issue, that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee should be set aside on 4 June to discuss the asset management plan, the capital programme and the City Investment Strategy.

5. Financial Performance Reporting

It was agreed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in April that work would be ongoing with Members on the development of new financial performance reports, in order to propose recommendations for the way ahead to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June. The Budget and Transformation Panel discussed some initial proposals for financial performance reports and agreed that Party Group briefings should be arranged for late May/early June to discuss the proposed reports and their content and frequency.

6. Timetable for developing the new Corporate Plan

Members discussed an outline timetable for the development of the new Corporate Plan which would involve a range of engagements with party groups, the SP&R committee and Members workshops. This process needs to be substantively concluded by late summer so that the financial and business planning cycles can be aligned for the rates setting process during the autumn.

Resource Implications

Indicative rate target of 2.5% and indicative efficiency target of £1.7m for 2011/12.

Recommendations

The Budget and Transformation Panel recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that:

- a) an indicative rates target of 2.5% be set for 2011/12 with officers to complete more detailed work and come back to Members with further choices and recommendations;
- b) £1.3m of additional funding from a VAT refund to be put into the City Investment Strategy for 2009/10;
- c) an indicative efficiency target of £1.7m be set for 2011/12 with more detailed work completed over the summer and the final target agreed in the autumn;
- d) the Director of Property and Projects brings back a report on a review of the Facilities Management Service and the Procurement Unit and that the current system of internal charges for support services for facilities management and ISB be removed so that improved standards and better VFM can be attained;

- e) a suite of VFM indicators are developed for all services to help benchmarking of costs;
- f) the Head of Human Resources/Head of Finance and Performance bring back a report on the people aspects of the efficiency programme;
- g) the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 4 June is set aside to discuss various aspects of the capital programme; and
- h) that Party Group briefings will be arranged for late May/early June on a proposed set of financial reports for the Council to be used from 2010/11

Key to Abbreviations

CIS – City Investment Strategy”

After discussion, during which it was noted that a report on Council accommodation would be progressed through the Audit Panel, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Big Lottery – Outcome of Application for Funding to Deliver Community Planning Projects in Northern Ireland

(Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

On 22nd January, the Committee was advised that the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) had begun a tendering process for the delivery of three pilot projects on community planning in Northern Ireland, commencing with a pre-qualification stage to determine who should be invited to tender for the contract. The Committee agreed that the Council should submit an expression of interest and complete the pre-qualification application. As BIG’s preferred method of delivery appeared to be a partnership approach with the voluntary and community sector (VCS), the Committee also agreed that this should be done in collaboration with the five Area Partnership Boards (APBs) and the not for profit organisation, Community Places. For the purposes of the funding application, this partnership was named the ‘Belfast Community Planning Consortium’ with Belfast City Council assigned as the lead partner.

On 19th March the Committee was informed that the Council's consortium application had been short-listed and that we had been invited to submit a tender for the pilot community planning project. At that meeting, an outline project proposal that would form the basis of the submission was approved by the Committee. Officers from the Council, in collaboration with our consortium partners, subsequently developed the funding application and also attended an interview with BIG as part of the evaluation process.

We have now received notification from BIG that the bid has been successful and that they intend to award one of the three pilots to Belfast.

Key Issues

The Pilot Project

As agreed by Committee on 19th March, the pilot project will focus on the single theme of 'health' as this provides a manageable way to test processes and relationships whilst also securing deliverables for partners and ultimately the local community. The pilot project will build upon the Council's commitment to creating a healthier Belfast and will augment the work done to date within Council and with our partners to improve health and wellbeing. It will work closely with the new Belfast Health Development Unit (set up jointly between the Council, the Public Health Agency and the Health Trust) and comes at an opportune time to influence the further development of the new Unit's business plan and the development of a health and wellbeing plan for the City. At the same time it provides an opportunity to test in practical ways the capacity and ability of the VCS to participate most effectively in community planning.

Key elements of the project plan include:

- An engagement programme
- A capacity building programme
- A planning integration exercise (and in collaboration with our health partners lead to the creation of a health and wellbeing plan for the city)
- Development of a model of community planning for replication.

The intended outcomes of the pilot are to:

- Develop a shared understanding of community planning, through testing and modelling community planning processes around the theme of health;

- Build capacity in local communities and among citizens to influence decision-making on service provision in the Council and other statutory agencies;
- Build upon and improve networks and strategic alliances;
- Deliver tangible results in the form of a plan to address health inequalities and specific changes to the service plans of key statutory agencies to improve delivery of services on the ground;
- Ensure learning is transferred to the wider development of a community planning framework for the city and regionally.

The pilot therefore offers an opportunity to test our emerging community planning processes. Building on existing and planned work in terms of community engagement and integrated planning, the pilot will provide a specific focus at a time of uncertainty regarding the future statutory model for community planning. The emphasis on the VCS will provide a valuable learning tool in terms of how we engage, support and involve these important sectors. Whilst the pilot will be working in collaboration with the Belfast Area Partnerships, the Council is mindful of the need to engage fully with the VCS and communities themselves. It is therefore intended that the pilot or other linked Council processes will provide opportunities for the VCS to be fully engaged. As mentioned above, ongoing evaluation and learning forms an integral element of the project with BIG also providing a separate support contract to capture learning and good practice.

Contract

BIG had indicated that the total contract value for all three community planning projects was £380,000 to £420,000. This equates to approximately £127,000 - £140,000 per area, with the final breakdown open to negotiation. At the time of writing, BIG has not yet confirmed the final contract value awarded to Belfast. However, the schedule of costs as outlined in our application was to the value of £139,000 plus VAT.

The contract will be for a maximum of 18 months, commencing ideally in May 2010 and ending in November 2011. A high level project plan has been circulated to the Members for information. Work has commenced in collaboration with our consortium partners to develop a detailed action plan to ensure delivery against the project.

Additional BIG contract information

The lead partners and council areas which were awarded the contracts for the two other community planning pilots are as follows:

- Derry City Council – Derry and Strabane District
- Rural Development Council – Fermanagh and Omagh District

At its meeting on 22nd January, the Committee was also informed that a separate but linked support contract to capture the learning and good practice from the pilots was also being commissioned by BIG. Through these linked contracts, BIG aim to provide a model and a toolkit of good practice in community planning that will help ensure the genuine engagement of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the new / emerging formal processes.

Central role of Elected Members

Members will play a central role in the success of any community planning pilot, with the SP&R Committee in particular having a pivotal role to play in the development of the community planning process. It is intended that engagement with Members will be a key part of the community planning pilot and the wider development of a community planning framework for the city. Key ways that this will be taken forward include:

Cross-Party Community Planning Reference Group

At its meeting on the 19th March, the SP&R Committee agreed to establish a cross-party 'Community Planning Reference Group' comprising of up to two elected Members from each Party. Whilst Committee agreed that the group should be established for the purposes of taking forward the pilot project, it also agreed that this group should act as a reference panel in the wider development of the Council's community planning framework and the associated work streams which need to be undertaken. At the first meeting of the group, an outline programme of work and terms of reference will be presented for consideration.

Transition Committee (Strategic Policy and Resources)

The BIG Lottery was keen for the pilot projects to enable meaningful collaboration between the proposed Statutory Transition Committees and various partners in the community, particularly the VCS. Our project proposal therefore included specific engagement with the Council's Transition Committee (i.e. Strategic Policy and Resources) in the form of at least two seminars over the period of the contract. The exact outworkings of

these seminars will be developed over the course of the project and in addition, regular update reports on the BIG community planning pilot will also be brought to the Committee for information. At this stage the Committee is asked to agree to its involvement in a minimum of two seminars.

Elected Members and Party Briefings

Recognising the leading role of Elected Members, both as civic leaders and as local advocates, in our submission to BIG we recommended that Party briefings be organised to support the engagement, capacity building and collaborative working objectives of the pilot project. This builds on previous recommendations to Committee where it was agreed that Member workshops and /or party briefings be developed to support Members and the development of the community planning process. Within the pilot project it is proposed that the Party Briefings be held early in the project timetable, with perhaps review briefings held at appropriate intervals.

Regional Developments

The legislation which will underpin community planning is the Local Government Reorganisation Bill, which has yet to be released for consultation and no further official guidance has been received from the DoE since November on the issue of community planning. Nevertheless, the Council has made a commitment through the corporate plan to the creation of an effective community planning framework for Belfast in light of the benefits this is likely to bring in terms of more effective community engagement, more integrated planning and service delivery and improved collaboration between agencies to find the most effective and efficient solutions to issues across the city.

Resource Implications

Financial

None at present. The Council has already committed resources to the development of the Joint Belfast Health Development Unit. This Unit, together with other existing officers responsible for supporting community planning within Council, and a cross-departmental officer working group which was already established to support the development of community planning, will contribute to the pilot project.. Given the uncertainties surrounding RPA and community planning, the BIG pilot will provide a fresh impetus and focus for community planning activity. Additional support costs for managing and coordinating the project will be met from within the BIG funding.

Human Resources

As previously agreed with Committee, the bid included the salary cost for a project co-ordinator. This fully funded post with no additional cost to the Council will be recruited on a fixed-term basis for the duration of the contract only.

Decisions required

The Committee is asked to:

- i. Note the above report and the project plan and proposal summary, a copy which has been circulated for the information of the Members;
- ii. Agree to the Council entering into a contract with the BIG Lottery to deliver this pilot in conjunction with the consortium partners;
- iii. Approve the proposed Committee and Elected Member involvement as set out above and in particular to agree to engagement with the Committee and Party Groups as part of the pilot and development of the wider community planning framework;
- iv. Endorse the Council's continued commitment to the development of a community planning framework for the city.

Decision Tracking

The Director of Health and Environmental Services will bring progress reports back to the Committee as the project progresses.

Key to Abbreviations

- APBs – Area Partnership Boards
BIG – Big Lottery Fund
VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and granted the approval sought.

Asset Management

Land Contamination, Gasworks Site

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to land contamination at the Gasworks Estate:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that following closure of gas production in the City a major land remediation project of the Gasworks site was undertaken by Council in mid-1990's following initial decommissioning and removal of the gas production infrastructure by Department of Economic Development. Council's remediation involved the removal of a surface layer of contaminated material to be replaced with 'clean' material. Council appointed Parkman as consultants to oversee this land remediation project to meet the required standard prescribed by Department of Environment (Guidance on the Assessment and Redevelopment of Contaminated Land) that would permit future commercial development on the former Gasworks site.

Following remediation and provision of road and service infrastructure by Council various plots were leased to the private sector for development. Appropriate development was subsequently undertaken in accordance with legal agreements which required the developer to secure appropriate planning and all other relevant statutory consents and approvals.

To date in excess of £150 million of private sector investment has been secured in development of the former Gasworks site. The last development to be completed (Ormeau Gasworks Ltd – Plot 6) received its planning consent in April 2006.

A number of subsequent planning applications in respect of the former Gasworks site made by Helm Housing (formerly BIH Housing Association Ltd) in September 2007 to extend an existing social housing scheme and Cusp Ltd for a new 169-bed hotel made in March 2008 have been severely delayed in the planning system as a result of intervention by Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) who are seeking clarification and assurances on environmental issues.

In particular NIEA are concerned with potential negative environmental effects of development upon a naturally occurring aquifer in bedrock located beneath the Gasworks site. It is understood that NIEA require detailed reports on identification, monitoring and management of potential pollution risks to this aquifer associated with construction/use of the respective developments.

The backdrop to NIEA's particular concerns are rooted in a recent European Directive on Environmental Liability and impending implementation of Part III of the Waste & Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 which focus on prevention and remediation of environmental damage arising from the development of brownfield sites.

Members are reminded of the ongoing work to bring forward development of the Gasworks Northern Fringe and in this regard are presently seeking to secure outline planning permission. Planning Service require a detailed report on land contamination to be submitted as part of this outline application which has been undertaken.

Given the historical use of the Gasworks site the Council agreed to renewal of the environmental insurance policy (including the majority of the Northern Fringe lands) at its meeting of 17th January 2007 which is aimed at protecting Council should any subsequent claims arise from the previous contaminated condition of the remediated land.

However, given the NIEA recent interventions and the possibility they could include the Gasworks as a special site over which they take control if legislation is in place the Council's Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) have recommended that professional environmental advice is sought by Council in respect of ownership of the Gasworks as a brownfield development site. This work will identify a strategy for Council's current environmental management and future development of the site.

Key Issues

- Part III of the Waste & Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 has yet to come into force in the Province but will be retrospective in its application. This is already impacting on current planning applications awaiting a decision and could have consequences for development already completed in the Gasworks Estate.
- The European Directive on Environmental Liability came into force in Northern Ireland in July 2009 which basically implements the 'polluter pays principle' Subsequent legal case law in England tends to support this assertion which could leave the Council liable to legal challenge in relation to statutory obligations arising from ownership and development of the Gasworks site.

- **An underground body of water (aquifer) is contained in the Sherwood sandstone beneath the Gasworks site. This forms part of a much larger aquifer known as the Lagan Valley aquifer stretching from Lisburn to Belfast Lough. This aquifer is utilised as a naturally occurring sustainable supply of drinking water in, for example, Clare House. Potential contamination of this aquifer from the Gasworks site is of primary concern to NIEA when considering the current planning applications from Helm Housing and Cusp Ltd.**
- **The Council in 2006 endorsed Cusp's proposal to develop a second hotel within the Gasworks Estate. Council officers have met with NIEA, on behalf of Cusp Ltd, on a number of occasions in an attempt to progress this planning application towards a successful outcome.**
- **Helm's predicament of having already proceeded to construct a second phase of public sector sheltered dwelling scheme consisting of 14 new apartments have failed to secure the necessary planning permission which has resulted in this completed development remaining unoccupied. Part of the development is constructed on the former Gasworks land and acquired from Council in 2002.**
- **NIEA advise the Planning Service in relation to environmental issues arising from proposed development and whilst they have not yet made formal recommendations on the Cusp and Helm Housing applications they have indicated that based on information, or perceived lack of information, provided thus far that they would recommend refusal of both schemes.**
- **Council's EPU have responsibility for human health issues and are statutory consultees in the planning process. In this regard EPU would recommend approval of both the Cusp Ltd and Helm Housing applications.**
- **RPA Consultants have undertaken a recent borehole survey on the Gasworks Northern Fringe and have provided Council with a land contamination report to be submitted as part of Council's outline planning application.**
- **In order that Council continue to manage and secure appropriate development of the Gasworks site a three stage approach is initially proposed by EPU as follows:**
 1. **To produce a Preliminary Risk Assessment inline with UK policy for the management of brownfield sites.**

2. To produce a legal review and opinion on the liabilities associated with the Gasworks site.
 3. To produce a strategy for the management and future development of the Gasworks site.
- In line with Council's Procurement Policy, tenders will be invited from suitably qualified professional consultants with relative experience in the management and development of brownfield sites.

Resource Implications

Financial

It is estimated that the cost for the initial three phases of the work identified by EPU will be between £20-£30k and provision will be made from the Capital Programme approval for the Northern Fringe.

Council needs to be aware of liabilities in addressing obligations arising under the legislation governing ownership and development of brownfield sites, such as the Gasworks site.

Securing the financial potential of the Gasworks Northern Fringe is dependant on Planning Service granting the necessary planning permissions.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications for Council over those already committed to working on this issue.

Asset and Other Implications

Correct identification and management of the risks associated with the statutory requirements arising from brownfield ownership and development is essential to maintain the development potential of the Gasworks Estate.

Realisation of the latent development potential of the Gasworks Northern Fringe will depend upon securing appropriate planning permissions.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agree to approve the commencement of a procurement exercise and that delegated authority is given to the Director of Property and Projects to award the contract in line with the evaluation criteria.

Decision Tracking

N/A

Key to Abbreviations

NIEA – Northern Ireland Environment Agency
EPU – Environmental Protection Unit”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Asset Realisation Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Asset realisation is a key plank of both the City Leadership Place Shaping agenda and also the Council’s Efficiency Agenda.

Members will recall that a paper was taken to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 20 November 2009 on the City Investment Framework which incorporated asset disposals.

At that meeting it was highlighted that the current economic climate is not favourable to asset disposals given the lack of market demand, availability of finance & the resultant marked decline in market values. However, it was agreed that a cross departmental Assets Realisation Project Group be established to undertake appraisal and assessment of certain land and property assets, with a view to having them ‘market ready’ and to bring forward for disposal and/or development when the market improves or if any advantageous proposals are presented to the Council in the interim.

It was recognised that there are a number of issues that slow down any disposal or development options including planning, legal & title restrictions, environmental and contamination issues, and co dependencies with other agencies and external stakeholders. By way of examples, obtaining planning approval is the major hurdle in completing the Loughside disposal; it was also the major issue in the previously proposed redevelopment and disposal of the former Ravenhill Road PC’s and rest garden site; and planning approval was required for both the demolition and redevelopment of the former Templemore Avenue PC’s (located in an Area of Townscape Character) which delayed the site coming to the market. Resolving title issues (albeit in relation to the adjoining land primarily) at Primrose Street former civic amenity site has also delayed completion, whilst overcoming contamination & environmental constraints is a major issue of many sites, including the Gasworks Northern Fringe.

The above are only some examples but every site has its own particular issues and problems.

Key Issues

- A cross departmental Asset Realisation Project Group has been established comprising officers from Property & Projects, Legal Services, Health & Environmental Services, Development & the Parks & Leisure departments.
- The group are of the view that in terms of moving forward & progressing planning, legal, environmental and other issues, or progressing with disposal, that prioritisation should be given to those assets that are already currently surplus to Council requirements or, in certain instances, where interest has been expressed by third parties in acquiring or developing. These are listed in Table 1 below. In the case of the other assets previously identified (listed in Table 2 below), these are still being progressed but as there are various operational & other issues to be addressed in the first instance, it is considered prudent to take a phased approach. Thirdly, Table 3 provides a short list of under-utilised assets which could potentially be developed to the benefit of the wider community and the city.
- Planning assessments are to be undertaken in respect of many of these sites to ascertain future use options, optimal development & likelihood of obtaining approval in the context of planning policy, highway & other constraints. A procurement process has commenced to obtain planning consultants to advise on this. Planning advice has already been obtained in respect of certain assets.
- A process has been put in place to check & resolve as far as possible, title issues, restrictions, grant aid clawback etc.
- A process has also been put in place to ascertain contamination & environmental issues associated with each of these sites. Current environmental legislation could be a very significant constraint in future development/disposal options. A separate report is being brought to this Committee in relation to the Gasworks site and seeking approval to a tendering exercise for professional environmental advice in terms of a risk assessment, legal review and opinion on liabilities and a strategy for the management and future development of this site.
- A longer term accommodation strategy is being considered simultaneously and this may influence future development options in respect of certain assets. A separate report will be brought back to Committee on this.

- Whilst capital receipts through asset disposals has been identified as a key source of funding for the capital programme, city investment framework and other Council priorities, it must be highlighted that in the current economic climate caution should be taken in deciding to dispose of the Council's assets, and the timing of any such disposals. In terms of borrowing, there is limited finance available for purchasers which is reflected in the low levels of demand and significantly reduced open market values. The capital return from any disposal is obviously a key consideration although associated running costs and any contribution to wider corporate and service objectives also needs to be considered.

TABLE 1: Phase 1 Assets for Realisation

<u>Asset</u>	<u>Current Position</u>
Beechmount	Price agreed with Department of Education, final negotiations taking place as part of conveyancing process in relation to the issue of continued public access to facilities on the site.
Loughside	Disposal subject to planning approval; planning application submitted. Consultations ongoing.
Glen Road (Adj St Teresa's GAC)	Disposal completed. Capital receipt of £750,000 received.
Glen Road (Large site)	Forms part of a larger site (in 3 separate ownerships inc BCC land) designated in dBMAP as requiring a Concept Statement to facilitate the comprehensive development of total combined lands with a minimum of 240 social housings units and transport assessment to be agreed with Roads Service. Fold & Oaklee Housing Associations were nominated by NIHE as social housing providers. However, the disposal of this site was delayed primarily to issues surrounding proposed delivery vehicle and DSD guidance on EU Procurement Regulations which precluded the Design & Build route that NIHE and the Housing Associations had proposed.

Asset	Current Position
Colin Glen	<p>There were also issues with access and roads infrastructure. LPS had previously valued the Council's land but have to re-value following details of the revised scheme which is currently being progressed by architects on behalf of the Housing Associations/NIHE. A further report will be taken back to Committee in the near future with detailed terms of disposal.</p> <p>Previous Committee approval in principle to dispose to Clanmil Housing Association (nominated by NIHE to develop for social housing purposes) but progress by Clanmil has been very slow to date, which was, in part, due to changes in EU procurement process. Clanmil have however indicated that they are to submit a planning application in July, which should enable valuation to be agreed upon. Discussions remain ongoing with Clanmil with a view to progressing this sale.</p>
Primrose Street former Civic Amenity Site	<p>Following extensive marketing this property was agreed for sale on basis of Council's site and the adjoining area of land, owned by the Pigeon Club, being disposed of simultaneously. However, there were legal issues (including restrictions on title) with the Pigeon Club land which are being resolved by the Pigeon Club solicitors but this has delayed completion.</p>
Seapark former Civic Amenity Site	<p>Following extensive marketing this site was agreed for sale in June 2009. However, the purchaser has now made the completion of the sale conditional upon the sale of another property and progress has therefore been slow. Every effort is being made to complete the sale and it remains on the market. In addition mapping and title issues have had to be resolved.</p>

Asset	Current Position
Templemore Avenue former PC's site	Planning approval was obtained for 6 no houses at this site and it is currently on the open market for sale. However, any interest in this site has, to date, been at significantly less than the asking price. Habitat for Humanity has expressed an interest in the site and are to make a formal offer which will be reported to Committee in due course.
Land at North Foreshore	Potential disposal of land to Arc 21 for an MBT facility is dependent upon outcome of Arc 21 procurement process and site selection by the preferred bidder.
Gasworks Northern Fringe	Masterplanning process underway with a view to submitting an outline planning application. However land contamination issues and clarification on liabilities have to be resolved in the first instance; and there is a separate paper being presented to this Committee on this matter.
Maysfield	Planned demolition of this building was put on hold due to planning advice which highlighted that retention of the existing structure may protect future development potential, as existing use and vehicular access are factors that Planning Service <i>may</i> consider. Further engagement with Planning Service and Roads Service is however to be undertaken to secure their support in principle for redevelopment that would permit demolition but not impact on development potential. A planning assessment is being obtained to assess the optimal development potential; and roads/infrastructure, title & health & environmental issues (including impact of the COMAH regulations) are currently being considered. A more comprehensive report will be brought back to Committee in the near future with detail on these issues and options for disposal /redevelopment of this site, either on its own or in conjunction with adjoining landowners.

Asset	Current Position
<p>Grove Former Leisure Centre</p>	<p>Demolition and associated costs are being assessed. A planning assessment is being obtained to assess development potential; and roads/infrastructure, title & health & environmental issues are currently being considered. A more comprehensive report will be brought back to Committee in the near future with detail on these issues and options.</p>
<p>Ravenhill Road (former PC's & rest garden)</p>	<p>This site was previously marketed by way of a Development Brief and a developer appointed. However due to difficulties in obtaining planning and problems with obtaining funding this did not proceed. Discussions are currently underway with Planning Service in terms of these planning issues; and a planning assessment is being obtained to assess development potential; and roads/infrastructure, title & health & environmental issues are also currently being considered.</p>
<p>Duncrue former car compound site & adj. option site.</p>	<p>Planning issues, legal, title and health & environmental issues are all currently being considered, as well as an assessment of means of disposal (capital premium v rental income as per remainder of Duncrue Industrial Estate).</p>
<p>Shore Road (adj Whitewell Tabernacle Church)</p>	<p>A planning assessment is being obtained to assess development potential; and roads/infrastructure, title & environmental issues are also currently being considered.</p>
<p>Clara Street former Civic Amenity Site</p>	<p>Recently vacated by Health & Environmental Services department. Planning issues, legal, title and health & environmental issues are all currently being considered.</p>

Asset	Current Position
Boucher Road former Civic Amenity Site	Planning application previously submitted with a view to marketing by way of a long lease with reviewable ground rent (in line with the remainder of Balmoral Industrial Estate). Difficulties however with planning still to be resolved as well as legal, title and health & environmental issues all currently being considered.
Cathedral Gardens	Operational asset held by Parks & Leisure department as a city centre park area. Previously unable to agree terms with UUJ re appropriate redevelopment of this site. Parks & Leisure and the Property & Projects departments are undertaking an assessment of options regarding the future use and/or redevelopment of this site taking into account its current use. A report will be taken to the Parks & Leisure Committee in the first instance with options as to future use/retention or redevelopment.
Old Zoo Antrim Road	Parks & Leisure and the Property & Projects departments have commenced an assessment of options regarding the future use and/or redevelopment of this site, also taking into account the ongoing feasibility study of Floral Hall. Planning issues, legal, title, roads and health & environmental issues are all being considered.
Upper Whiterock Road/Ballygomartin Road	Issues regarding title and grant aid clawback have delayed the planning assessment which had been commissioned for this site. It is hoped that these legal issues will be resolved in the near future to allow the planning assessment to proceed.

TABLE 2: Phase 2 Assets for Realisation

<u>Asset</u>	<u>Current Position</u>
Stranmillis Car Park	The outcome of the dBMAP enquiry is awaited (the Council objected to its designation as public open space as part of the Lagan Valley Regional Park). Pending this, investigations are underway to ascertain use as a short stay car park with limited waiting time, for e.g. as a pay and display operated by a commercial car park operator or with limited waiting. This will be reported to Parks & Leisure Committee in first instance. Longer term options will be assessed in light of the outcome of the dBMAP enquiry.
Ormeau Avenue Car Park	Impact of proposed road scheme awaited. Legal, title and health & environmental issues will be ascertained in interim.
Dunbar Link Depot	Operational asset. Alternative reprovision to be considered, but also awaiting outcome of negotiations between potential developer and NIE (adjoining landowner) to ascertain if NIE proposing to relocate; and further awaiting details of transfer of functions from Roads Service in terms of the car park located to front of the site.
Seymour House & ISB building Gloucester Street	Staff in Seymour House have largely been relocated, and both buildings are being considered as part of a longer term accommodation strategy which is underway. A report will be brought back to Committee in due course.
McClure Street Open Space	Longer term options will be assessed in light of the outcome of the dBMAP enquiry. Legal, title and health & environmental issues will be ascertained in interim.

TABLE 3: Underutilised Assets with potential for wider benefits:

<u>Asset</u>	<u>Current Position</u>
Land at Whiterock Leisure Centre	This has been identified as having potential for a range of Parks and Leisure uses as well as potentially some commercial development. A range of issues are being addressed including the existing lease arrangements on part of the site and the extent of land contamination. A planning assessment will be required following resolution of these potentially limiting factors.
Wilmont House	A 'Listed Building' for which a draft Development Brief has been prepared and investigations are underway regarding relaxation of title constraints. The existing title limits use of the building to uses which bring benefit to the citizens of Belfast. Title also places a bar on the sale of alcohol.
Floral Hall	Feasibility Study underway to ascertain physical potential of the building and consider appropriate and sustainable end use.

Resource Implications

Financial: Capital receipts through asset disposals has been identified as a key source of funding for the capital programme, city investment framework and other Council priorities. However, in the current economic climate caution must be taken in deciding to dispose of the Council's assets, and the timing of any such disposals. In terms of borrowing, there is limited finance available for purchasers which is reflected in the low levels of demand and significantly reduced open market values. The capital return from any disposal is obviously a key consideration although associated running costs and any contribution to wider corporate and service objectives also need to be considered.

Human Resources: Cross departmental staff resource, primarily from Property & Projects department to progress the disposal or redevelopment options.

Asset & Other Implications: Consideration of the most appropriate disposal and/or redevelopment options for surplus Council assets accords with effective asset management.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and further note that more detailed reports will be brought back on an individual basis following the completion of the various planning and options appraisals in respect of the assets as listed.

Decision Tracking

Director of Property & Resources to ensure that the issues highlighted above are progressed in a timely manner with regular updates reported to Committee.”

The Head of Property and Projects indicated that certain of the schemes outlined had been held up as a result of the Department for Social Development insisting that the Council use the Government's Central Procurement Unit to undertake some of those projects, which was not necessary since the Council had its own expertise in this regard.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that it would not be necessary for the Council to use the Government's Central Procurement Unit when undertaking schemes involving Council assets since it was clear that the Council already had access to a high level of expertise in that regard.

City Hall – Major Works Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Major Works in City Hall commenced on the 19th November 2007 after a full decant of personnel to Adelaide Exchange and Clarendon Dock. The work was divided into two phases with the Council stipulating that Phase 1, which included the main Civic Rooms, was to be completed within a twelve month period. Phase 2, which included all the remaining areas, was to be completed by the 10th August 2009. These dates were successfully achieved.

In addition a major re-opening programme ‘City Hall for All’ was held during October.

Scope of Work

In order to obtain the best possible deal for Council, the Project Management Unit tendered the work in two packages. The object was to ensure all the important items were covered in Tender A with those items forming a ‘desirable list’ included in such a manner in Tender B as to allow Council to add items if funding was available. When tenders were returned it proved possible for all items listed in Tender B to be included in the Scope of Work which included:

Tender A

- **Re-roofing the slated areas of the North and East roofs**
- **Rewire of the building (excluding recently rewired areas such as the Control Room, Births Deaths and Marriages area, Lord Mayors Parlour and what is now the café area)**
- **New gas fired boilers with a new Low Temperature Hot Water Heating System**
- **Air Conditioning to all Party Rooms**
- **Re-decoration of general areas**
- **Asbestos removal**
- **Provision of air conditioned archive storage in four basement rooms**
- **Fire compartmentation in the roof void**
- **General repairs to marble and mosaic flooring**
- **Digging up the courtyard and provision of new drainage system, paved area and fountain feature.**

Tender B

- **Re-roofing the slated areas of the South and West roofs**
- **Decoration extended to include all internal areas**
- **Rewiring of the main kitchen**
- **Provision of a new chandelier in the Rotunda**
- **Ornate 3 lamp lighting fittings in Civic Corridors**
- **Courtyard lighting**

The following additional items were added and paid for out of the project contingencies:

- **Re-leathering the seats in the Council Chamber**
- **Renewal of the bird netting on the turrets**
- **Upgrading of the lightning protection**

- Conversion of part of the East wing to a new café/exhibition area
- Replacement marble flooring in reception area and ground floor corridors
- Upgrading Members Common room

Additional funding was also secured for the following:

- A new Emergency Control Room

Building Contract

A contract was let to John Graham (Dromore) Ltd following a competitive procurement exercise.

The work was completed on time, even with all the extras, and the cost will be under the Capital Programme allocation for the project ie within budget.

A Gate 4 review has been undertaken for the project and a green rating was achieved – indicating successful delivery of the project to time, cost and quality. However, there were a number of things which could have been done better and a ‘lesson learned’ post project review report will be produced with Members for future reference.

Key Issues

Emergency Room

Sometime into the building programme it was decided to move the existing emergency room from the basement to the second floor. This involved the provision of air conditioning, relocation of data supplies and the fitting out of the area to modern emergency room standards. A grant of £100,000 was received from the PSNI, with Health and Environmental Services Department providing the balance of the funding. While the work was ordered late in the contract, contract conditions allowed us to request that it be completed at the same time as the original contract completion date.

CCTV Provisions

The main contract only allowed for the provision of Cat6 cabling to new camera positions identified by a consultant appointed by Facilities Management. However, when old power cables were removed it was discovered that cameras were also deactivated.

In order to rectify the situation it has been necessary to reorganize the position of cameras and ensure they are connected to recording and monitoring equipment. When the refurbishment work in the Control Room is complete we will have approximately 60 functioning cameras in City Hall.

Scope of Work

Scope of work was limited by budget constraints. As already mentioned the package was tendered in such a way as to permit items to be added and because of favourable tendering conditions we were able to include all desirable items. It was however necessary to limit desirables to retain financial control and a number of items were, of necessity, omitted. Such items included overhaul of all doors and windows, secondary double glazing, cleaning of all stonework and external decoration.

Additional Work

Some members have voiced concern as to why certain elements of work have not been done. These include the following:

- Additional repairs to stonework
- Repairs to steps
- Additional repairs to marble flooring
- Additional CCTV coverage

When the final account has been settled it will be possible to ascertain if any funds remain in the current Capital Programme for the Major Repair work. If funds are available it may be possible to undertake some of the additional work listed above or indeed any other work members deem appropriate. To this end if a list of priorities could be provided then the Project Management Unit can progress the work.

Resource Implications

Funding

The project is currently within the amount approved in the Capital Programme and to date we have received grant aid as follows:

FUNDER	AMOUNT RECEIVED TO DATE	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING	TOTAL EXPECTED
NIEA	£484,000	£85,285	£569,285

In effect with the settlement of the final account there will be some monies available for additional work if approved.

Awards

To date the building project has been nominated for the following awards:

1. RSUA – Conservation Award for 2010
2. RICS – Building Conservation award for 2010

Environmental Implications

None.

Recommendations

That Members note the report and consider what if any additional work is recommended.

Key to Abbreviations

NIEA – Northern Ireland Environmental Agency”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that any remaining funds be used to undertake the additional repairs as outlined.

Connswater Community Greenway Update

The Committee was reminded that the Council, as part of the City Investment Strategy, had agreed to co-ordinate the acquisition of land 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 must be accessible for forty years to comply with the Big Lottery Funding letter of offer, although the intention was to secure rights for longer if possible.

It was reported that an area of 0.02 acres of land at Park Avenue had been identified as being required to help complete the Greenway route and associated landscaping. Subject to Committee approval, Council officers had agreed to purchase from the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company the area of land at a cost of £400 plus legal fees.

The Committee granted approval for the purchase of the area of land on the terms outlined.

Good Relations and Equality

(Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer, attended in connection with these items.)

Memorabilia Working Group

Minutes of Meeting of 10th May

The minutes of the meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group of 10th May were approved and adopted, subject to the minute in relation to the Somme Resolution being referred back to the Group for further consideration, with a view to a report being submitted to the Committee in August to enable a final decision on a revised resolution to be taken at the meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on 1st September.

Minutes of Meeting of 14th May

The minutes of the meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group of 14th May were approved and adopted.

Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 14th May and adopted the recommendation in respect of the following:

Peace III – Funding for Shared Cultural Space

The approval of the issue of letters of offer for funding up to a maximum of £25,000 to those groups which had achieved the necessary minimum score, subject to the undertaking of site visits and further checks by the Peace III Programme Officers.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Committee, at its meeting on 23rd April, agreed to receive a report detailing the actions which the various Council Departments were undertaking in relation to suicide awareness and prevention.

The prevention of suicide has been a major issue for some time with the numbers of such deaths in Northern Ireland running at extremely high levels, as illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: Deaths from suicide across Northern Ireland by age and gender 2005 – 2008

Year	Age (years)								Gender	
	1-14	15-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+	Male	Female
2005	3	77	45	40	31	11	6	0	167	46
2006	3	112	69	61	32	9	4	1	227	64
2007	4	80	52	51	30	15	9	1	175	67
2008	3	105	75	50	27	14	8	0	218	64

Source: DHSSPSNI, NISRA statistics, Registrar General Quarterly reports

Suicide is a recognised problem within Belfast as illustrated in Figure 2, with the north and west of the city recording the highest numbers of deaths.

Figure 2: Deaths from suicide and undetermined intent

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Belfast East	2	4	9	9	14	38
Belfast North	14	16	16	24	20	90
Belfast South	9	9	15	16	13	62
Belfast West	11	9	11	22	22	75
Total	26	38	51	73	69	257

Source: DHSSPS, NINIS statistics

Furthermore, it is well documented that these areas suffer from extreme social and economic deprivation and that the aftermath of the 'Troubles' has left a legacy of poor mental and physical health and wellbeing.

The problem in Northern Ireland led to the government introducing a Suicide Prevention Strategy, 'Protect Life – a shared vision', in October 2006 which advocates innovative and comprehensive local multi-sectoral approaches to help reduce the problem.

Key Issues

The Council recognises the urgent and imperative need to address actively the issues of suicide awareness and prevention. Various initiatives and activities have been undertaken in an effort to help deal with this problem. A list of these is set out below:

- In response to concerns about suicide rates in North and West Belfast, a multi sectoral Implementation Group for the prevention of suicide and self harm was established in October 2006. The Council has representation at both Member and officer level.

- **The Council has taken a lead role in developing a community response plan which aims to provide a co-ordinated approach to enable early detection of possible suicide clusters in order to prevent further suicides by supporting those individuals at risk. The plan also aims to ensure that information is gathered effectively and that the success or otherwise of each case is reviewed so that improvements can be made where necessary.**
- **The Council has entered into a partnership with the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to form the Belfast Health Development Unit. This unit aims to produce an integrated city wide plan for tackling health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing, with mental health and wellbeing having been identified as an overarching theme for its work.**
- **Under Peace III, funding has been administered to groups who are undertaking work which will have a positive effect on the issue of suicide awareness and prevention.**
- **As a major employer the Council has a duty to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of its employees, which includes providing support for employees who are affected by suicide.**
- **The civic dignitaries, both current and past, have attended events organised by suicide awareness groups from across the city. Furthermore, the current Deputy Lord Mayor is hosting later this month a charitable event in the City Hall for the PIPS Project.**
- **A youth column was recently featured in City Matters about depression and included the suicide prevention helpline number among other details. The following pieces have also been published in the magazine:**
 - **Launch of Suicide prevention helpline number - Spring 08 issue**
 - **Suicide prevention article expressing support for the recent World Suicide Prevention Day on 10th September – November 09 issue**
 - **Christmas Blues article with helpline numbers for young people – written by Youth Forum columnist – November 09 issue**

- The Development Department is exploring currently bespoke training for play staff regarding suicide, particularly identification of early signs and support for children who have been affected by suicide.
- A sub-group of the Youth Forum examined in depth the issue of suicide, undertaking training and organising visits to external organisations dealing with suicide. An expert panel discussion, hosted in City Hall in April, engaged young people, policy makers and practitioners.
- Community Development staff have organised and participated in a range of suicide related training courses in conjunction with key community based organisations like FASA and the PIPS Project. In turn, awareness level and other relevant training sessions have been organised for volunteers. Several examples are cited below:
 - December 2008, Community Services organised a training session to raise awareness of Suicide in our society. The accredited training was delivered by the PIPS Project and was given to staff from Community Services as well as Youth Forum members.
 - Nineteen people in total took part in the 'Lifeguard Training', which sought to raise awareness amongst ordinary people and front line staff of the signs that might give an indication that someone might be at risk from self harm or suicide.
 - The Highfield area via Upper Springfield Healthy Living Project can now avail of services around Mental Health Alternative Therapies based in Highfield Community Centre. Personal Counselling in Forthspring is also being planned.
 - FASA's Suicide Awareness project has previously used the Hammer Area Pavilion to run playschemes at Easter and during the summer. These targeted children who had lost a family member as a result of suicide.
 - Both FASA and PIPS have had free use of Duncairn Community Centre for meetings and counselling and therapy sessions.

- Approximately 12 volunteers in Inverary Community Centre completed PIPS training in Suicide awareness. This training was also rolled out to 12 volunteers from other community groups in the Inner East of the City.
- In addition, grant aid is provided via revenue grant to support organisations like FASA.
- The West Belfast Sub-Group of the District Policing Partnership has funded the Suicide Awareness and Support Group in West Belfast to produce an information leaflet in relation to youth issues. Funding in the sum of £500 was provided in March, 2010.
- The West Group of the District Policing Partnership has supported the work of the Suicide Awareness and Support Group through inviting them to present to a group of visitors from Tallaght West on an exchange project between West Belfast and Tallaght West. This was supported financially by the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

On a number of occasions the Council has unanimously passed notices of motion requesting that this important issue receives the required attention, most notably on 1st April, 2004 and again on 12th November, 2007, when the relevant statutory authorities were called upon to set up a task force to address the growing problem.

Members will also be aware that the Review of Public Administration will give Councils a new power of wellbeing. The Council will be able to utilise this functionality to become much more involved in promoting health and wellbeing in partnership with other key stakeholders. Furthermore, through the new duties associated with Community Planning, the Council will be able to support greater co-ordination of services in these fields throughout the City.

It is apparent from the above information that the Council is undertaking a significant amount of work in relation to suicide awareness and prevention.

Resource Implications

N/A

Recommendation

To note the information provided and to agree that the problem of suicides in the city finds expression in the planning process for the new Corporate Plan and that detailed action lists on the actions the Council can usefully take in relation to the exercise of its functions are prepared as part of the planning process.”

After discussion, during which the Chief Executive undertook to circulate information in relation to implementation issues, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Response to "Local Partnership Working of Policing and Community Safety – A Consultation Paper"

(Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Department of Justice (formerly NIO) is currently undertaking a consultation on the future of Community Safety and District Policing Partnerships. The deadline for response is 3rd June 2010.

The Community Safety and DPP teams within the Health & Environmental Services Department have been coordinating consultation on the proposals on behalf of Belfast City Council and the attached report (Appendix 1) is now being brought before members of committee for their consideration.

In Belfast consultation has taken place with the following:

- Belfast District Policing Partnership – Principal Partnership, North, South, East & West Sub-groups
- Belfast Community Safety Partnership – Strategic & Operational Tiers
- Chairman of Belfast District Policing Partnership
- Chairman of Belfast Community Safety Partnership
- Sinn Fein Party Group, Belfast City Council
- DUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- UUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- SDLP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- Alliance Party Group, Belfast City Council
- PUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- Belfast City Council Inter-Departmental Policy Officers Group

Consultation took the form of:

- Party Group briefings
- Individual briefing sessions
- Partnership meetings
- A joint CSP and DPP consultation event
- Email circulation for comment to members of the CSP and Council departments.

Key Issues

Aim of the Consultation: To seek views on the best way to deliver the functions of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) in the future through a single partnership.

Rationale: CSPs and DPPs were set up as separate structures with specific, but complementary functions, in 2003 after a Criminal Justice Review. This was considered to be the best arrangement at the time, considering the political climate that existed.

CSPs are largely seen to deliver initiatives on the ground to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime, while the DPPs ensure local engagement and accountability for how policing is delivered. These partnerships have generally worked very well but there is an emerging consensus that the time is now right to bring the functions of CSPs and DPPs together and it is suggested that they should be delivered by a single partnership.

There are a number of reasons that the NIO (now DOJ) believe that a single partnership is the best way forward:

1. Taking a more joined-up approach will result in better local delivery , accountability and engagement
2. Single partnerships should also complement the introduction of community planning
3. By streamlining the administration and overheads involved, we should be able to make better use of the resources available for partnership working by directing more of the funding to initiatives on the ground.

While this review is not in itself a cost-cutting exercise, the NIO (now DOJ) believes that it is vital that the new arrangements provide good value for money. At present, CSPs administrative costs account for approximately £1.15m (35%) out of their total budget of £3.28m, and approximately £3.5m (85%) out of the total budget of £4.1m for DPPs. The proposed new arrangements should facilitate a reduction in these overhead costs and enable more resources to be targeted at front line delivery.

Role of the new Partnership: In preparation for this public consultation, the NIO (NOW DOJ) has undertaken substantial engagement with a range of key stakeholders to test the practicability of amalgamating local partnerships and to ensure that the right issues were identified. This included a consultation in 2009 to which this Council made a response supporting better working arrangements between both partnerships.

The consultation recommends that the new partnership should:

- Not lose any of the functionality of the existing partnerships
- Join-up policing and community safety activities and be capable of aligning with broader arrangements at council level for community planning
- Facilitate meaningful public engagement by enhancing the involvement of local communities and responding to their concern
- Deliver improved value for money and quality of service
- Positively promote equality of opportunity
- Give equal weight to the functions of accountability, delivery and engagement
- Ensure that the policing accountability function is not diluted
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice across Northern Ireland
- Focus on outcomes/solutions rather than activities/analysis of problems
- Be capable of being easily understood by the public

Recommended model: While 3 models were considered within the consultation document, the NIO (now DOJ) has proposed one model for primary consideration as they believe it offers the correct balance in terms of joining up the functions currently delivered by CSPs and DPPs while retaining a distinct local police monitoring role. Model 2 also offers a pragmatic approach that is likely to be acceptable to all parties. Lastly, it recognises that the accountability arrangements are likely to remain complex as accountability for policing issues and community safety issues respectively fall to the Policing Board and the new Department of Justice.

The suggested model proposes a single Crime Reduction Partnership (name to be confirmed) incorporating a separate monitoring group on policing. The DoJ and the Northern Ireland Policing Board would jointly set regional priorities which would then be communicated to local councils. Councils would identify the local issues of concern for the Crime Reduction Partnership, which would be responsible for the development of a Partnership Plan to address these issues and for informing the Local Policing Plan. The Delivery Group (or Groups) would be responsible for the outworkings of the Partnership Plans. The local issues group or groups would support wider stakeholder and community engagement.

Other recommendations include:

- ***Statutory Duties*** – the NIO (now DOJ) would place a statutory duty on local councils to establish Crime Reduction Partnerships. The legislation would also carry across to the Policing Monitoring Group legislative duties that currently apply to District Policing Partnerships.
- ***Membership*** – The membership of the CRP would be drawn from four main areas:
 1. ***Elected representatives*** – nominated by Council proportionate to their party representation (please note elected members would also be expected to sit on the Police Monitoring Group)
 2. ***Statutory organisations*** – on invitation from Council to organisational representatives of an appropriate seniority
 3. ***Community & voluntary sector*** – which could include the business community and/or faith based organisations
 4. ***Independent members*** – who would be appointed by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (please note independent members would also be expected to sit on the Police Monitoring Group)

All sectors would be represented (possibly up to eight from each sector, not including the Partnership Chair) with the overall chair of the partnership to be agreed locally.

- ***Accountability*** – The Crime Reduction Partnership would be collectively accountable to the local council for delivery against the local Partnership Plan, and the council would in turn account to the DoJ for the Partnership's performance and how the council is exercising its statutory duties. The independent members and elected representatives (including the chair of the Crime Reduction Partnership) would, in addition to their role on the full partnership, form the separate Policing Monitoring Group. The Policing Monitoring Group would be responsible for monitoring the local police against achievement of the local policing plan and would be accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, through the local council, for this specific area of work.
- ***Public Engagement*** – The local council would be required to set up a local forum, or fora (the 'Local Issues Fora' in the proposed model) which could subsume existing structures and engagement mechanisms - for the purposes of engaging with the public on the full range of issues to be addressed by the Crime Reduction Partnership, including policing matters. Depending on local circumstances, this could be on a thematic or geographic basis.
- ***Delivery*** – The Delivery Group(s) would be responsible for front-line delivery of the Partnership Plan objectives. The makeup and membership of this group would be left to the local Partnership to decide. The make-up of the Delivery Group could be based on a thematic or geographic basis and should, as far as possible, dovetail with, other local delivery mechanisms (for example, Neighbourhood Renewal). It should include members of the Crime Reduction Partnership with a specific knowledge or interest in the issue to be addressed and be led by a 'champion (s)' who would be responsible for reporting back to the main Partnership on progress and delivery. This advocate (s) would also lead the liaison between the Local Issues Forum (or fora) and the main Partnership for their respective theme.
- ***Funding*** – Funding would continue to be provided by both the DoJ and the Northern Ireland Policing Board, though both organisations will consider how to provide a more streamlined and consistent approach for accounting to each organisation for how this funding is used, with a greater focus on achieving positive social outcomes.

Proposed Time scales: The NIO (now DOJ) believes that there is a clear consensus to press ahead with planning for the introduction of single partnership arrangements, coterminous with the proposed new council boundaries in May 2011. However, the Department is aware of the uncertainty around RPA and they have indicated that they would still wish to see a single partnerships established by May 2011; even if RPA is not implemented at that time. This decision will be dependent on a number of factors including the approval by the new DOJ Minister.

Resource Implications

Financial

None at present.

The DoJ and NIPB currently provide financial assistance to Belfast City Council to support the work of the DPP and CSP and other associated costs are included in annual revenue estimates. The consultation recommends that this is not a cost cutting exercise though it is hoped that the emerging structure would bring efficiencies.

Human Resources

At present the human resource implications of emerging recommendations are not known. However, work has already been undertaken to support the long-term integration of the CSP and DPP by bringing the two staff teams under the management of the Environmental Health Service.

Asset and Other Implications

N/A

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee considers and agrees the attached draft response.

Decision Tracking

The Director of Health and Environmental Services will ensure that the agreed response is submitted to the DoJ by 3rd June. She will also report back to the Committee on the outcome of the consultation and proposals for implementation at the appropriate time

Key to Abbreviations

NIO – Northern Ireland
CSP – Community Safety Partnership
DPP – District Policing Partnership
NIPB – Northern Ireland Policing Board
DoJ – Department of Justice
RPA – Review of Public Administration

COUNCIL RESPONSE

Background

Title: *Local Partnership working on Police and Community Safety: A Consultation Document*

Aim of the Consultation: To seek views on the best way to deliver the functions of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) in the future through a single partnership.

Rationale: CSPs and DPPs were set up as separate structures with specific, but complementary functions, in 2003 after a Criminal Justice Review. This was considered to be the best arrangement at the time, considering the political climate that existed.

CSPs are largely seen to deliver initiatives on the ground to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime, while the DPPs ensure local engagement and accountability for how policing is delivered. These partnerships have generally worked very well but there is an emerging consensus that the time is now right to bring the functions of CSPs and DPPs together and for them to be delivered by a single partnership.

There are a number of reasons that the NIO (now DOJ) believe that a single partnership is the best way forward:

1. Taking a more joined-up approach will result in better local delivery , accountability and engagement
2. Single partnerships should also complement the introduction of community planning
3. By streamlining the administration and overheads involved, we should be able to make better use of the resources available for partnership working by directing more of the funding to initiatives on the ground.

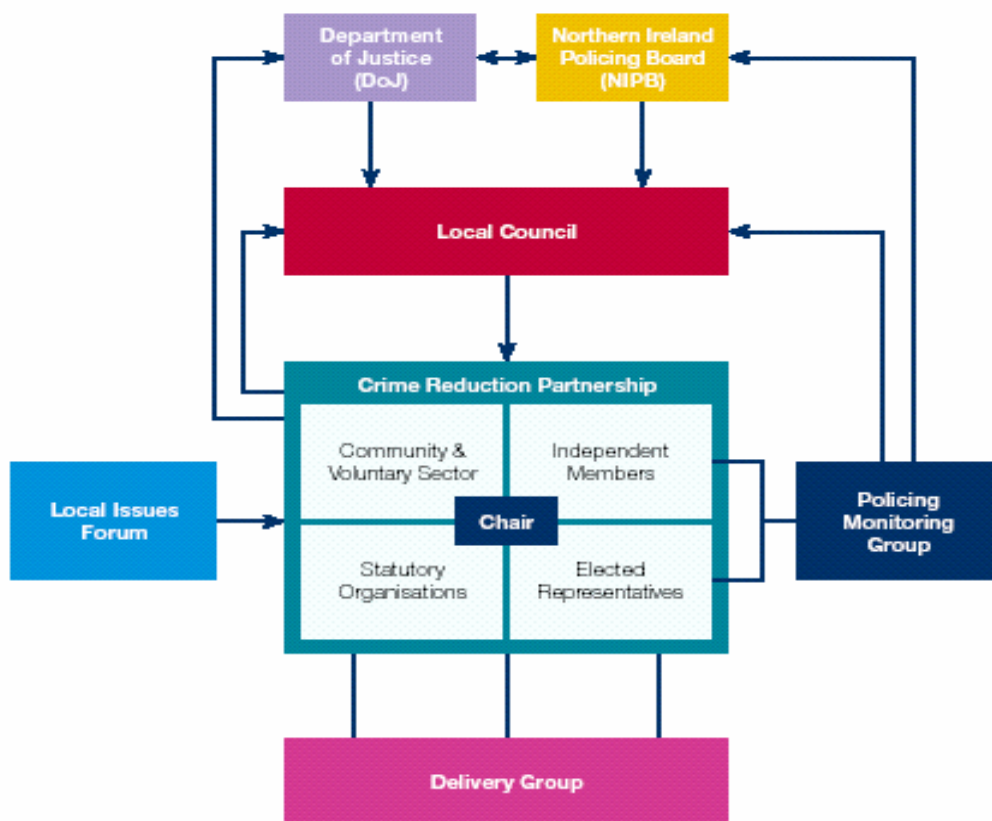
While this review is not in itself a cost-cutting exercise, the NIO (now DOJ) believes that it is vital that the new arrangements provide good value for money. At present, for CSPs administrative costs account for approximately £1.15m (35%) out of their total budget of £3.28m, and approximately £3.5m (85%) out of the total budget of £4.1m for DPPs. The proposed new arrangements should facilitate a reduction in these overhead costs and enable more resources to be targeted at front line delivery.

Role of the new Partnership: In preparation for this public consultation, the NIO (NOW DOJ) has undertaken substantial engagement with a range of key stakeholders to test the practicability of amalgamating local partnerships and to ensure that the right issues were identified.

The consultation recommends that the new partnership should:

- Not lose any of the functionality of the existing partnerships
- Join-up policing and community safety activities and be capable of aligning with broader arrangements at council level for community planning
- Facilitate meaningful public engagement by enhancing the involvement of local communities and responding to their concerns
- Deliver improved value for money and quality of service
- Positively promote equality of opportunity
- Give equal weight to the functions of accountability, delivery and engagement
- Ensure that the policing accountability function is not diluted
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice across Northern Ireland
- Focus on outcomes/solutions rather than activities/analysis of problems
- Be capable of being easily understood by the public

Recommended model: While 3 models were considered, the NIO (now DOJ) has proposed one model for primary consideration (Model 2 as below) as they believe it offers the correct balance in terms of joining up the functions currently delivered by CSPs and DPPs while retaining a distinct local police monitoring role. Model 2 also offers a pragmatic approach that is likely to be acceptable to all parties. Lastly, it recognises that the accountability arrangements are likely to remain complex as accountability for policing issues and community safety issues respectively fall to the Policing Board and the new Department of Justice.



Model Two –Crime Reduction Partnership Delivery

‘Belfast Crime Reduction Partnership (CRP)’

The suggested model proposes a single Crime Reduction Partnership incorporating a separate monitoring group on policing. The DoJ and the Northern Ireland Policing Board would jointly set regional priorities which would then be communicated to local councils. Councils would identify the local issues of concern for the Crime Reduction Partnership, which would be responsible for the development of a Partnership Plan to address these issues and for informing the Local Policing Plan. The Delivery Group (or Groups) would be responsible for the outworkings of the Partnership Plans. The local issues group or groups would support wider stakeholder and community engagement.

Other recommendations include:

- ***Statutory Duties*** – the NIO (now DOJ) would place a statutory duty on local councils to establish Crime Reduction Partnerships. The legislation would also carry across to the Policing Monitoring Group legislative duties that currently apply to District Policing Partnerships.
- ***Membership*** – The membership of the CRP would be drawn from four main areas:
 1. ***Elected representatives*** – nominated by Council proportionate to their party representation (please note elected members would also be expected to sit on the Police Monitoring Group)
 2. ***Statutory organisations*** – on invitation from Council to organisational representatives of an appropriate seniority
 3. ***Community & voluntary sector*** – which could include the business community and/or faith based organisations
 4. ***Independent members*** – who would be appointed by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (please note independent members would also be expected to sit on the Police Monitoring Group)

All sectors would be represented (possibly up to eight from each sector, not including the Partnership Chair) with the overall chair of the partnership to be agreed locally.

- ***Accountability*** – The Crime Reduction Partnership would be collectively accountable to the local council for delivery against the local Partnership Plan, and the council would in turn account to the DoJ for the Partnership's performance and how the council is exercising its statutory duties. The independent members and elected representatives (including the chair of the Crime Reduction Partnership) would, in addition to their role on the full partnership, form the separate Policing Monitoring Group. The Policing Monitoring Group would be responsible for monitoring the local police against achievement of the local policing plan and would be accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, through the local council, for this specific area of work.

- **Public Engagement** – The local council would be required to set up a local forum, or fora (the ‘Local Issues Fora’ in the proposed model) which could subsume existing structures and engagement mechanisms - for the purposes of engaging with the public on the full range of issues to be addressed by the Crime Reduction Partnership, including policing matters. Depending on local circumstances, this could be on a thematic or geographic basis.
- **Delivery** – The Delivery Group(s) would be responsible for front-line delivery of the Partnership Plan objectives. The makeup and membership of this group would be left to the local Partnership to decide. The make-up of the Delivery Group could be based on a thematic or geographic basis and should, as far as possible, dovetail with, other local delivery mechanisms (for example, Neighbourhood Renewal). It should include members of the Crime Reduction Partnership with a specific knowledge or interest in the issue to be addressed and be led by a ‘champion (s)’ who would be responsible for reporting back to the main Partnership on progress and delivery. This advocate (s) would also lead the liaison between the Local Issues Forum (or fora) and the main Partnership for their respective theme.
- **Funding** – Funding would continue to be provided by both the DoJ and the Northern Ireland Policing Board, though both organisations will consider how to provide a more streamlined and consistent approach for accounting to each organisation for how this funding is used, with a greater focus on achieving positive social outcomes.

Proposed Time scales: The NIO (now DOJ) believes that there is a clear consensus to press ahead with planning for the introduction of single partnership arrangements, co-terminous with the proposed new council boundaries in May 2011. However, the Department is aware of the uncertainty around RPA and would wish to see single partnerships established by May 2011; even if RPA is not implemented at that time.

Summary of consultation process in Belfast

Consultation was coordinated on behalf of Belfast City Council by the Community Safety and DPP teams within the Health & Environmental Services Department.

In Belfast consultation has taken place with the following:

- Belfast District Policing Partnership – Principal Partnership, North, South, East & West Sub-groups
- Belfast Community Safety Partnership – Strategic & Operational Tiers
- Chairman of Belfast District Policing Partnership
- Chairman of Belfast Community Safety Partnership
- Sinn Fein Party Group, Belfast City Council
- DUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- UUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- SDLP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- Alliance Party Group, Belfast City Council
- PUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- Belfast City Council Inter-Departmental Policy Officers Group.

Consultation took the form of:

- Party Group briefings
- Individual briefing sessions
- Partnership meetings
- A joint CSP and DPP consultation event
- Email circulation for comment to members of the CSP and Council departments.

Questions considered by Belfast

General issues

Q1. *Do you agree that the proposed model (Model 2) is the best option?*

While consultation focussed on the proposed model there was some concern voiced that the proposed structures would not 'simplify' the existing framework. It was noted that the dual lines of accountability and the proposal to establish Local Issues Fora and a Delivery Group might add to the existing myriad of structures in place throughout the city and it was suggested that this exercise should be used as an opportunity to either rationalise, or use existing, structures rather than create more and additional layers of partnership.

The view was also expressed that the proposed model was not radical enough and simply reframed what was already in place as opposed to trying to establish a single, genuinely integrated partnership and agenda. It is suggested that the model needs to be more visionary and that there may be merit in reconsidering the other models.

Q2. *Do you agree with the proposed functions of the partnership?*

It was largely agreed that there was a need to support community engagement, partnership working, service delivery and accountability. However, there were differing views on whether it was appropriate to hold the police accountable through a separate process and structure. The view, for example, was expressed that there should be accountability for the strategic work of the Partnership and any sub-structures and not merely the police alone. It was recognised however that there were communities who would feel strongly about retaining the opportunity to influence and monitor local policing and to ensure transparency.

Q3. *Do you agree with the name – Crime Reduction Partnership?*

Universally it was agreed that this name was unsuitable. It was agreed that the name presents a narrow view of the broad agenda that the Partnership would be addressing and that much of the work of the partnership would not only be about reducing crime but increasing reporting, tackling fear of crime, and dealing with antisocial behaviour. Views from other statutory services such as the Fire and Rescue Service or Ambulance Service expressed concern that this name would not reflect the extensive outreach programmes they deliver and the proactive approach to improving and encouraging safer environments.

Possible alternative suggestion: Safer [Belfast] Partnership

Rationale: In Belfast this would build upon the existing Safer Belfast Plan (2009-2011). It would also offer the Partnership flexibility to address a broad range of 'safety' issues and is easily marketable.

Q4. *Do you agree that the Council should oversee delivery of the partnership plan?*

There was broad support for this proposal as it was agreed that the emerging structure and process should be aligned with community planning in the future; in which Council will play a leading role. It was also agreed that this would strengthen governance and accountability arrangements and ensure elected members had appropriate oversight and input into the work of the Partnership.

Membership

Q5. *Do you agree with the proposed membership of the CRP?*

There was a variety of views expressed in relation to this:

- There was broad agreement for representation from the statutory sector, elected members and the community/voluntary sector. It was noted however that the private sector is not expressly articulated as a potential member and in Belfast the role of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce, among other organisations, would be seen to be beneficial. Moreover, the view was also expressed that there should be linkages with the wider Criminal Justice system, and in particular the PPS and Courts Service.
- Concern was raised on a number of occasions in relation to the appointment of independent members and the need to ensure that these representatives were truly 'independent' and reflective of society in general.
- It was acknowledged that appointment of the community/ voluntary sector presented challenges in ensuring true representation; and also there was the perception that those groups on the structure had a greater opportunity to access services and funding. It was suggested that this could be overcome by combining the community/voluntary and independent sectors and through the Local Issues Fora.
- There was also a strong suggestion that the role of faith groups play a vital role in delivering community safety and their membership should be considered in the definition of the voluntary sector.
- Some elected members were of the opinion that there should be a greater balance, or perhaps outright majority, of elected members on the CRP; however there was no consistent view on this matter either by party groups or the Community Safety Partnership.
- Some elected members also raised concern about capacity as they may be asked to sit on multiple structures.

- In general therefore it was agreed that there should be clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of member organisations and an agreed appointment system.
- It was noted that the current make up of the DPP and sub groups reflected a broad demographic range and this was of working benefit to them, consideration should therefore be given in selection to ensure diversity and including young people was key.

There was broad agreement that there should be as much flexibility for local determination as possible within the legislation; but that basic principles such as the categories of representatives, how they should be selected, and the proportion of seats that each should be allocated should be outlined in the legislation. It was suggested that the actual number of members could then be agreed locally to allow larger cities such as Belfast to accommodate the large number of potential members.

Lastly, it was noted that while the Council should play a leading role in supporting and driving the partnership that there should be commitment from other participating organisations – both to commit financial resources and support service delivery. It is hoped that putting the partnership and membership of certain organisations on a statutory footing would assist this.

Local accountability and engagement

Q6. *Does this model provide suitable opportunity to engage at a local level?*

It was largely agreed that a single Local Issues Fora would not allow for adequate community engagement within Belfast. Again it was suggested that there should be flexibility within the legislation to support local determination to establish structures as appropriate. The view was also strongly held that this consultation should support a rationalisation of structures and as such, where possible, existing structures (such as those supported by the Area Partnership Boards) should be built upon rather than establishing new ones.

Key to supporting this model is the need to put the local community at the heart of the model. It was suggested that to enable local communities to have a voice there was a need to support and resource community development to build local capacity. This was considered key to any successful model.

It was also noted that the Local Issues Fora for Belfast was likely to be needed at a geographical level possibly in a North South, East and West of the city however the groups would need to be structured to be inclusive of all the community and that local communities should be offered equal access to participate.

The meetings in public held by the DPP were largely felt to be an ineffective way of engaging with the community (in most but not all areas) and it was suggested that greater use could be made of PACT and CPLC structures already in place that appear to have been more successful in engaging with local residents.

Q7. *Who should sit on the Local Issues Fora?*

It was suggested that the Local Issues Fora could mirror the strategic partnership/CRP at a local level; thus potentially involving elected representatives as well as representatives from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. In order to support this considerable investment in community capacity and infrastructure would be required therefore it is important that the work of this structure is closely aligned with other agendas such as Neighbourhood Renewal and Shared Futures.

A number of elected members and organisations raised concern about their capacity to attend the litany of partnership structures (whether geographical or issue-based) and so expressed some concern about this proposal. Some elected members also felt it was essential that locally elected representatives should have the opportunity to represent their areas and it was suggested this could be achieved by building on the existing DPP sub-group structure and broadening membership and function to include other partners, development of local [community safety] plans (that would in turn align with local policing plans), and local delivery. However, this again raised the issue of capacity for members (statutory and elected alike) to sit on multiple structures.

Importantly, it was felt that were elected members to sit on the Local Issues Fora that the appointment system should ensure that it is representatives from that area that take up these seats. This is not currently the case in the Belfast DPP sub-groups due to the agreed appointment system (i.e. De Hondt).

Q8. *Do you agree with the proposed accountability lines?*

The dual accountability and reporting lines were largely seen to be confusing and perpetuating the current separation of roles and agendas. In general it was felt that a single line of accountability would be preferable though further discussion would be required at a local and regional level on this matter.

It was also felt that there should be greater linkages, perhaps through membership, between the Local Issues Fora and the CRP and Police Monitoring Group. Elected members were also keen to ensure the close working between Council and PSNI was not lost and the view was also expressed that policing should be held accountable in line with the current PSNI District structures.

The view was taken by many that the CRP should be held accountable for performance against agreed strategic and local priorities for the city and neighbourhoods. The CRP could therefore develop a strategic plan and priorities for the city from which Local Issues Fora would then develop local plans. These would inform and align with the local policing plans and would be reported on to the main CRP and the public [on a quarterly basis]. The CRP could then take responsibility for reporting on performance to the public on a city-wide basis. It is suggested this process would prevent duplication of effort, establish a clear link between community input and eventual service delivery, and ensure there is transparency and accountability at a local and strategic level.

It was articulated that accountability should be against shared, priorities that require the input of a range of organisations. Therefore it was questioned whether a separate Police Monitoring Group was either necessary or appropriate; as often outcomes measured at current DPP meetings are as a result of inter-agency working. Further consideration therefore of the other models may be warranted or alternatively there should a longer-term goal articulated with a staged approach.

Importantly, it was also noted that the Partnership should ultimately be accountable to the people it serves and that they should be able to feel the impact of the partnership's work on the ground. Therefore any model should be transparent, inclusive and accessible.

Remuneration

Q9. *Should members of the CRP (or its constituent parts) be remunerated and if so which ones?*

There was a wide range of views on this point; including that:

- No members of the partnership should be remunerated – this would ensure equality, ensure true commitment to the agenda and allow savings to be re-directed to front-line services.
- Elected and independent members should be paid - this is due to the time commitment asked of them by sitting on multiple structures, recognising loss of earnings and the time commitment required for work outside formal meetings and to ensure buy-in.
- Only independent members should be remunerated - this role is played on a voluntary capacity and you would be unlikely to get applicants without this incentive.
- If one sector is paid that all members (excluding the statutory sector) should be remunerated – but that this would lead to spiralling costs.

In general it was felt that if elected and independent members were to be remunerated in some way to at least cover expenses that it should be on the basis of attendance and not a fixed payment. It was also agreed that the aim should ultimately be to direct as much resource as possible into actual delivery.

Finance

Q10. *How can it provide best value?*

In general it was agreed that this exercise should bring efficiencies and allow potential administrative savings to be re-directed to front-line services. However, elected members were keen to ensure that the current funding commitment

offered by the Policing Board and Department of Justice (formerly NIO) to support the running of the DPP and CSP would not be diminished. Concern was also raised about the potential impact on staff that had supported the two partnerships' work over the last 7 years.

Conclusions

Broadly Agreed principles

While there were varied views on a range of the proposals, there was broad agreement on one central point – *that a single, integrated partnership should be created in the place of the existing CSP and DPP*. In addition, *there was universal rejection of the proposed name* and an acknowledgement that a single 'Local Issues Forum' structure would be insufficient to support community engagement in Belfast.

While there was not universal support for the proposed model it is recognised that Model 2 offers a pragmatic approach that may be acceptable to all parties. It is suggested, however, that this change process requires a staged approach and that a longer-term goal of full integration should be articulated; and that Model 2 might therefore be an initial step in this process.

While there are clear challenges in determining who and how members should be appointed it was agreed that the partnership should be inclusive and competent in their delivery. Importantly, the role of elected representatives on the partnership is crucial as they bring democratic legitimacy to the partnership and also act as representatives for their constituencies. It was suggested that being fully representative of all sectors would be more difficult but that perhaps modern technology, such as social network sites and the internet, might allow the partnership to establish a community of interest that would ensure accessibility in a more effective way than merely allocating seats on a formal structure.

There was also agreement that the new structure should continue to play a role in supporting the following key functions:

- establishing strategic priorities for the city and supporting associated strategic planning
- engaging with the public to support local planning and improve service delivery
- supporting service delivery to meet identified need

- providing transparency of decision making and resource accountability
- supporting performance management and accountability against agreed community safety targets

How this might be achieved is a different matter and further discussion will be required at both a regional and local level. In respect of Belfast it was agreed that the recommended model would not cater for the scale and complexity of engagement needs across the city. Therefore it is recommended that there should be *sufficient flexibility within the legislation* to allow the partnership to determine appropriate engagement and delivery structures. However it was acknowledged that it may need to specify basic 'guiding principles' governing these decisions. For example, while local areas may wish to agree the number of representatives on their CRP legislation should outline from what sectors they should be sought, how they should be appointed and the proportionate allocation of seats.

There was varied views consensus on the issue of remuneration - though there was consensus that as much resource as possible should support service delivery - and there were differing views on the potential benefits and drawbacks of offering remuneration. With regard to accountability it was largely felt that the current separation of accountability would be confusing and perpetuate the current separation of roles. It is suggested that there should be *shared accountability* for the broader role and work of the partnership and therefore there may be merit in exploring the other Models further. In order to support this we have undertaken to illustrate alternatives to the model presented in the consultation (See Appendix 1). Further consultation and political agreement would be required to take these forward but we would be keen to discuss this in conjunction with the Department of Justice and the Policing Board.

On a more practical note it was felt strongly that guidance should be given by the DoJ and NIPB as soon as possible on the role and operational priorities for the CSP and DPP in the interim period. It was also acknowledged that while the consultation document highlights a completion date of May 2011, this would not be feasible as local Council elections around that time would inevitably delay the ability to appoint elected members to the new partnership; likely *until Autumn 2011*.

In conclusion, within Belfast, the consultation was well received. Belfast City Council has previously indicated its commitment to moving towards a community planning approach and the basic objectives of this consultation would support this emerging agenda. While a great deal of further discussion is required on the Belfast Model and who would play a role on the new structure Belfast City Council, the CSP and DPP welcome the opportunity to shape this consultation and would look forward to making further comment on developing proposals.”

The Committee approved the foregoing comments as the Council’s response to the consultation document.

Last Meeting

The Chairman referred to the fact that this would be his last meeting prior to the new Chairman being appointed in June and he thanked the Members and officers for their support over the previous year.

Chairman