

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 15th April, 2011

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Crozier (Chairman);
the High Sheriff (Councillor Adamson); and
Councillors D. Browne, W. Browne, M. Campbell, Garrett,
Hargey, Hartley, Hendron, N. Kelly, Lavery, McCarthy,
McVeigh, Newton, G. Robinson, Rodway, J. Rodgers
and Stoker.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mrs. J. Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apology

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

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 4th and 18th March 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 April, subject to:

- (i) the omission of that portion of the minute of 18th March under the heading "Recruitment for the post of Director of Finance and Resources" in so far as it related to the transfer of the Human Resources and Organisational Development Section to the Chief Executive's Department which, at the request of Councillor J. Rodgers, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- (ii) the variation of the minute of the meeting of 18th March under the heading "Request for the Use of the City Hall Grounds" to provide that the words "indicated that it was minded to refuse the requests for the use of the City Hall grounds for the purpose outlined, but" being removed.

**Recruitment for the Post of
Director of Finance and Resources**

The Committee considered further the undernoted minute in so far as it related to the transfer of the Human Resources and Organisational Development Section to the Chief Executive's Department:

**"Recruitment for the Post of Director
of Finance and Resources**

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

'Relevant Background Information

The Director of Finance and Resources has advised that she plans to leave the council at the end of June 2011, subject to the completion of formalities for her new post in the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety. Arrangements therefore need to be put in place now to ensure the effective recruitment of a suitable candidate for this vital post.

Key Issues

1. Background to Job Role

Members will be aware that the post of Director of Finance and Resources currently has responsibility for Finance; Efficiency; Performance Management; Audit, Governance and Risk (including Health and Safety); ICT and Human Resources.

There are considerable agendas associated with the council's two most important assets – money and people. Each requires effective, efficient management and scrutiny while supporting the organisation to make significant improvements.

(a) Financial Challenges

Clearly the effective management of our money is vital. The council must ensure it has sound financial governance and fit for purpose strategic financial planning and management, particularly in these financially challenging times. At its meeting on 4 March, the Committee discussed the need to not only manage our own finances as effectively as possible and to continue to find efficiencies but to

explore new and innovative ways of financing investment in the city. Members stressed the need for key strategic relationships to be developed with the aim of advocating for and proactively leveraging resources into key projects. This would come together through the development and implementation of a resourcing strategy for the city.

In short, therefore, moving forward the role of Director of Finance and Resources, in terms of finance, has three key elements:

- (i) tight organisational management, linked to efficiency, performance management and continuous improvements across all departments,*
 - (ii) addressing rating setting issues and related management of budgets; and*
 - (iii) an enhanced externally focused role to secure financing/income - building key relationships, identifying new and innovative funding streams and creating a long-term, collaborative approach to growing the rates-base, the Council's key source of income.*
- (b) Human Resources/Organisational Development (OD) Challenges**

The effective management of our workforce is equally important and the nature of HR as a function has also changed. While there is still clearly a need to ensure compliance with relevant employment legislation and best practise, we have been moving to a more strategic approach to managing our people in order to build the capacity of the organisation to improve, deliver value for money services and achieve efficiencies. There is also a significant industrial relations agenda which needs to be managed in a time when we must do more with less.

To support this agenda, the council's former Business Improvement section has largely merged with HR, with some staff moving to the Efficiency Unit. In addition arrangements are being implemented to ensure that HR Officers across the council link to the Head of HR (Finance Officers across the council already link into the Director of Finance and Resources on an informal basis).

2. Proposed revision to Job Role

In summary, following discussion with the existing Director of Finance and Resources, the current economic climate and the significant challenges expected over the next few years in finance and HR/OD mean that the role of Director of Finance and Resources has changed considerably, both in scope and significance.

Consequently, it is felt that a role that is responsible for Finance; Efficiency; Performance Management; Audit Governance and Risk (including Health and Safety) ICT, HR and a new externally focussed City Resourcing Strategy; is too extensive given the significant external pressures and the efficiency, organisational development and improvement agenda ahead.

High performing councils in England, Scotland and Wales (and private sector organisations) have Finance and HR / Organisational Development (OD) within the same tier in the organisation, with each of the lead officers for these functions reporting directly to the Chief Executive. This recognises the significance of and difference in each of these functions.

It is proposed therefore to keep Finance (including a new externally focussed City Resourcing Strategy) Efficiency, Performance Management, Audit, Governance and Risk (including Health and Safety), and ICT under the Director of Finance and Resources and place HR and OD with the Chief Executive alongside Legal, Policy and Planning and Communications.

Members will be aware that each director within BCC has a "flexibility" clause within their job description allowing for functions to be changed as required. There would be no change to the salary scales of either the Director of Finance and Resources or the Head of HR, nor would there be any change to the current governance arrangements in that the Director of Finance and Resources and the Head of HR would continue to report to the Audit Panel, Budget and Transformation Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in each of their specific areas.

3. Filling the post

The appointment for the Director of Finance and Resources will be made in accordance with the council's normal recruitment and selection procedure.

Given the significance of the post, it is proposed that we follow the arrangements used the last time the post was filled and to perform an executive search in order to obtain the best possible pool of capable candidates for consideration by the council.

Council policy, in accordance with guidance given by the statutory Code of Employment Practice issued by the Local Government Staff Commission provides that the selection panel for such posts should comprise the Chair, Deputy Chair, two Members and the Chief Executive. (Community balance is to be provided across the Members and gender balance is to be provided across the panel.) A non-voting Local Government Staff Commission professional assessor/observer should also be in attendance.

Recommendations

Subject to the recruitment formalities being completed for the present Director's new post, it is recommended that:

- 1. the Director of Finance and Resources should be responsible for Finance; Efficiency; Performance Management; Audit, Governance and Risk (including Health and Safety); ICT; and city resourcing strategy with the functional responsibility of HR and OD moving to the Chief Executive.***
- 2. the Committee agree elected members' nominees to comprise the selection panel.***
- 3. The Chair and Deputy Chair agree the recruitment plan and documentation with the Chief Executive; and***
- 4. the selection panel will have delegated authority to make the appointment with the outcome being reported to June's Council meeting for members' notification.***

Resource Implications

The cost of executive search will be subject to a four quote specification process based on quality and price and will be within the limit set for delegated authority.'

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that, in addition to the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, that Councillors Hargey and McCarthy be appointed to the selection panel."

During discussion, the Chief Executive explained the rationale for transferring the Human Resource and Organisational Development functions under his control and indicated that the proposed recruitment exercise for the new Director of Finance and Resources provided the opportune time to implement the transfer. He assured the Members that the transfer of the functions would not have any resource implications.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 18th March and that the Director of Finance and Resources should be responsible for Finance, Efficiency, Performance Management, Audit, Governance and Risk (including Health and Safety), ICT and the City Resourcing Strategy, with the functional responsibility of Human Resources and Organisational Development transferring to the Chief Executive.

**Performance Management
and Corporate Plan**

Departmental Plans

The Committee agreed to defer until June consideration of the Departmental Plans for the Chief Executive's, Finance and Resources and Property and Projects Departments.

Democratic Services and Governance

**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
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	European Foundation Centre Annual Conference - 'Peacebuilding through Social Justice: A Role for Philanthropy?' 6th June, 2012 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-event drinks reception.	It is estimated that 650-750 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 Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better services - listening and delivering' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of a pre-event drinks reception in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £500

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/ Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Woodvale Cricket Club	125th Anniversary Dinner 23rd March, 2012 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event seeks to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Woodvale Cricket Club and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £500
Plumbing & Mechanical Services Training Ltd	Apprenticeship Achievers Award Ceremony 28th June, 2011 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event seeks to recognise the achievement of those individuals who have successfully completed an apprenticeship programme. This event provides and opportunity for the Council to show its support to an industry which is suffering due to the economic downturn whilst demonstrating support for the development of our city's young people. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks. Approximate cost £500
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce	Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce's President's Banquet and Awards 24th November, 2011 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This events aims to provide a networking opportunity in order to encourage investment and business development opportunities for Belfast and beyond. The event, which will include representatives from both Local and Central Government, also seeks to facilitate discussion on economic and social regeneration. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better Services - listening and delivering' 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 £500

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/ Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Institute of Directors	Institute of Directors Award of Excellence 9th February, 2012 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-event drinks reception	<p>This event will recognise the Director of the Year by presenting the wit the 'Award of Excellence' for their contribution, through effective leadership, to business, the community and the wider economy.</p> <p>The 'Award of Excellence' also seeks to recognise a Director whose organisation has demonstrated a clear commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility. Furthermore, this event will provide the Council with an opportunity to build and enhance relationships with many of the city's business leaders.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better Opportunities for Success' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks.</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Northern Ireland School Caterers Association	Northern Ireland School Caterers Association Awards Ceremony 20th October, 2012 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-event drinks reception.	<p>This awards ceremony aims to acknowledge school caterers at primary, post primary and management level who have clearly demonstrated their commitment to continuous service development within their particular school or area.</p> <p>The event seeks to recognise the strong leadership of the school caterers as they work in partnership with local schools, local communities, Local Government and health authorities in driving forward the relevant nutritional standards.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of a pre-event drinks reception in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks.</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/ Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	HIV Awareness Training Resource Launch 18th May, 2011 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall	This event, which will formally launch the training manual for HIV Awareness Trainers, seeks to increase the personal awareness of all staff about HIV and equip them with the skills necessary in addressing the stigma and discrimination which is often experienced by those who live with HIV. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Provision of IT Equipment to Elected Members

The Committee agreed to defer, until after the Local Government Elections, consideration of a report in relation to the provision of IT equipment to Members and agreed further that, following the Election, a representative from each of the Party Groupings on the Council meet with officers to discuss the proposals contained within the report.

Members Development Steering Group – Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update in relation to the work of the Member Development Steering Group, approved the implementation of an enhanced Members' Induction Programme and agreed that each Council Department should produce service information packs providing Members with information which would be useful to them when dealing with issues which might be raised by the Council's key stakeholders.

Updating the Council's Constitution

The Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

"1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 As Members are aware, over the last few years the Council has been putting in place the frameworks and structures needed to make it a 'fit for purpose' local authority which can deliver the effective, value for money services that our citizens deserve. These frameworks and processes will**

provide the strong foundations that the Council needs as it moves into a new term following the elections in May and as it prepares for the additional functions, including planning, it will assume under the RPA.

- 1.2 These frameworks and structures sit within the Council's overarching Constitution which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 As we are moving into a new Council term it will be important that all the necessary governance documents are in place to support Members in their civic role as Councillors. The concept of the Constitution was conceived to bring together into one document the guidelines and regulations which explain and govern how the Council operates; and to do so in a presentable and accessible way. It is considered that this will enable the Council to be more transparent and democratic, and will encourage and foster more efficient working practices.

Council Constitution

- 2.2 The Council's Constitution is a key governance document which covers the following –
- Who we are
 - What we do
 - How we do it
 - Our values
 - Supporting documents and policies
- 2.3 As Members are aware, there has been a number of agreed governance, structural and procedural changes that have taken place in the organisation over the past couple of years and as a result the Constitution requires updating to reflect these changes. It is proposed that this work is now progressed. Members are asked to note that there will be full political engagement on the updated Constitution and its component parts.
- 2.4 The '*Local Government Reform – Policy Proposals*' consultation document (Nov 2010) proposed that each council in Northern Ireland will be required to prepare and publish a Constitution. Local authorities in England and Wales are already statutorily obliged to have a Constitution.

Progressing this work now will enable the Council to take a policy lead ahead of other councils in Northern Ireland in adopting the concept and practice of using a Constitution.

Council Constitution – Supporting documents and policies

2.5 As highlighted the Constitution is underpinned by a suite of documents and policies including -

- Corporate Plan
- the Standing Orders
- the Scheme of Delegation
- the Financial Regulations
- the Equality Scheme
- Code of Governance
- Publications Scheme
- Conflict of Interest policies
- Codes of Conduct

2.6 Currently, a number of these are somewhat dated and will need to be revised so as to inform the content of the updated Constitution. Many of these documents and policies are also interlinked and changes to one document may necessarily require changes to another. The updated Constitution will also need to reflect other key pieces of work which are being carried out including the review of procurement. An update on the current status of some these policies is outlined below.

Current Status

2.7 *Corporate Plan* – The Corporate Plan is the Council’s key strategic planning document setting out the vision and strategic objectives of the Council. As Members are aware work is progressing on the development of the Council’s new Corporate Plan.

2.8 *Standing Orders* – The Standing Orders are the set of rules which regulate the transaction of the business of the Council and its Committees and should be read in conjunction with the Council’s Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation. The Standing Orders were last reviewed in 2008 to take account of the Committee changes at this time.

2.9 *Scheme of Delegation* – The Scheme of Delegation is aimed at improving the operation of the Council and ensuring that the responsibility and accountability for making and implementing various levels of decision is properly allocated

between Members and officers. Its central purpose is to aid decision making in the organisation, freeing up Committees and Members to concentrate on strategic issues rather than having to deal with day to day operational issues. Members will recall that the Scheme was last substantially reviewed in 2007 and work is progressing on reviewing and updating this.

- 2.10 *Financial Regulations* - The Financial Regulations need to be updated to take account of several changes including revised processes for quarterly financial reporting, a more formal approach to risk management and the expansion of e-business technology. They also need to take account of the requirements under the '*Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (NI) 2011*' including the need for capital financing and treasury management strategies and a medium term financial plan. It is envisaged that an updated set of financial regulations will be brought to the Audit Panel in September. Given the need to control and prioritise expenditure across the Council, policies on the use of consultancy services and revenue investments are being introduced to justify spending, similar to those already in place for capital spending. These will involve the preparation of a proportionate business case to support recommendations to spend significant Council funds on either new revenue investments or consultancy services.
- 2.11 *Conflicts of Interest policy* – Members will recall that a draft Conflict of Interest policy was presented to Committee in March 2011. It was agreed to defer consideration of this pending a further report which addressed some of the outstanding issues such as indemnity legislation and to provide clarification on the types of outside bodies to which Members were appointed and their role on these bodies. Work is progressing on this.
- 2.12 *Equality Scheme* – The Equality Commission's revised Guide for Public Authorities was published in April 2010 which emphasised the need for local authorities to mainstream equality considerations into policy making to ensure that S75 duties are effectively integrated into core business activities. As part of this revised Guide, the Council is required to submit a revised Equality Scheme in 2011. Work is progressing on the development of the new revised Equality Scheme.

2.13 **Code of Governance** – Under the ‘*Local Government (Accounts and Audit) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2006*’ the Council is required to conduct a review each year of the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement. The Council’s Code of Governance was signed off in 2008 and is reviewed on an annual basis.

3.0 **Next Steps**

3.1 It is envisaged that an updated Constitution will be taken to SP&R Committee in November 2011. Update reports on the supporting documents and policies will be brought to Committee as necessary before this.

4.0 **Going forwards**

4.1 It is intended that the Council’s Constitution will be a ‘living’ document and once updated, it is recommended that a review of it, and its supporting documents and policies, takes place on a regular basis to ensure they remain up to date. The Constitution will be available in a central location on the Council’s website – this will allow for easy access to the documents. Hard copies of the updated Constitution will also be made available to all Members.

5.0 **Resource Implications**

5.1 The updating of the relevant supporting governance documents will require resourcing from Departments. Lead officers from the relevant departments have been identified to update these. A central resource from the Chief Executive’s Department will co-ordinate this work and the overall collation and presentation of the Constitution

6.0 **Recommendations**

6.1 **Members are asked to note the content of this report and agree that the updating of the Constitution and its component parts be progressed for consideration of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee by November 2011.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendation and noted that extensive consultation would be undertaken with Elected Members prior to the report being submitted to the Committee.

Armed Forces Day

The Committee was reminded that in April, 2009 and in April, 2010 it had considered requests from the Ministry of Defence for the Council to fly the Armed Forces Day Flag for a week leading up to the Armed Forces Day itself. For the previous two years the Council had agreed, in accordance with the existing Council policy, that the request to fly the Armed Forces Flag at the City Hall be acceded to but that the approval be for one day only. The Democratic Services Manager pointed out, however, that there had not been a consensus on the matter between the Political Parties represented on the Council.

He reported that a letter had been received from the Chief of the Defence Staff making a similar request for the flying of the Armed Forces Day Flag at the City Hall from 20th till 25th June this year. As in previous years, the Ministry of Defence had offered to provide the Council with the flag. The existing Council policy on the flying of flags allowed for flags other than the Union Flag to be flown on specific occasions. For example, the Cross of St. Patrick was flown on 17th March, the European Union Flag was flown on Europe Day on 9th May and the Red Ensign was flown on National Merchant Navy Day on 3rd September each year.

There were a number of options open to the Committee which were:

- (i) to accede to the request from the Ministry of Defence for the Armed Forces Flag to be flown at the City Hall for the period from 20th till 25th June; or
- (ii) in line with the decision which had been taken in the previous two years, to accede to the request but to limit the period during which the flag would be flown to the Armed Forces Day itself, that is, 25th June; or
- (iii) to refuse the request.

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor Hartley,

That the Committee agrees to adopt Option (iii) and refuse the request.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Newton,
Seconded by Councillor D. Browne,

That the Committee agrees to adopt Option (i) and accede to the request from the Ministry of Defence for the Armed Forces Flag to be flown at the City Hall for the period from 20th till 25th June.

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

The amendment was thereupon put as the substantive motion, when nine Members voted for and seven against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Finance

Financial Planning Issues

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the following financial issues:

- Indicative Rates 2012/13 and 2013/14;
- Efficiency Programme and Target 2012/13 and 2013/14; and,
- Finance Bill Update.

These issues were discussed at the Budget and Transformation Panel on 7 April 2011.

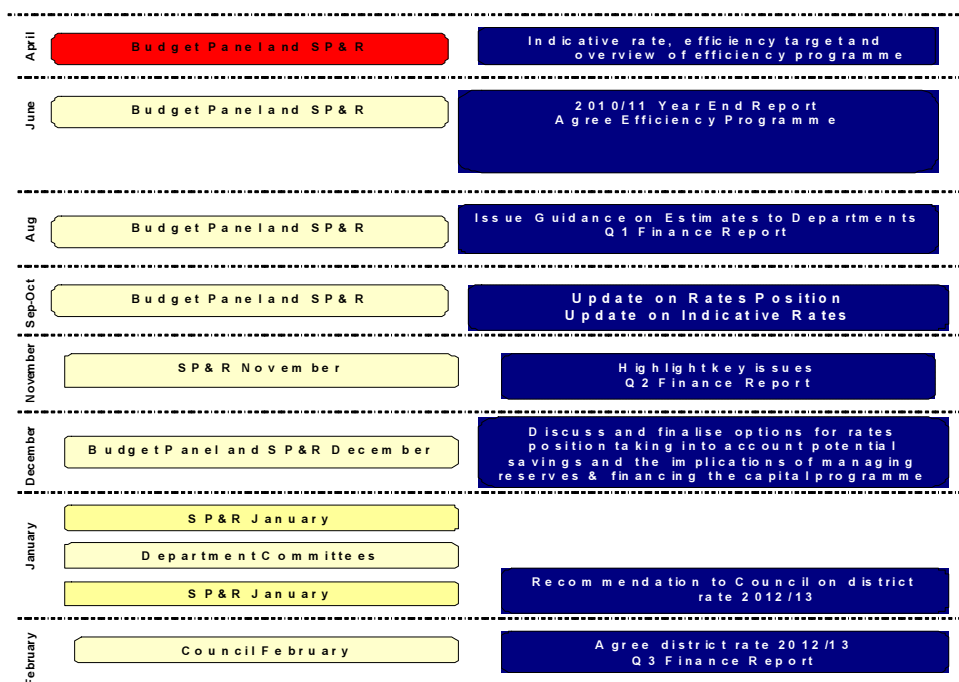
Key Issues

A. INDICATIVE RATE 2012/13 AND 2013/14

Members will recall that for 2011/12 the rate setting process started in Spring 2010 so that preparatory work could continue over the summer. A similar process has been followed this year on the rates for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

The diagram below shows where this step fits in with the overall process for setting the rate for 2012/13.

Agreed rate setting process for 2012/13



The purpose of setting an indicative rate target at this stage in the planning process is to provide a context within which officers can work up more detailed estimates which then allows them to identify in good time, for Members, the key issues which will need to be considered when setting the rate. This is *not a final decision* at this time and will be reviewed following the more detailed rates setting processes in the autumn.

At this stage officers have considered the financial implications for the Council in 2012/13 and 2013/14 at a very high level and it is *recommended, as a planning assumption, that an indicative rate target for both years is set at no more than the level of inflation (based on the Consumer Price Index)*. This is in line with the Executive's approach to setting the regional rate.

Members should note that this recommendation is made on the basis that the rate base will not decline further. *If there are significant changes to the rate base then the indicative rate recommendation will need to be revisited. Members should note that officers are working with LPS on a monthly basis to monitor the rate base.*

The next stage in the process is therefore that officers will continue to work over the summer on building the draft estimates within this indicative target with particular attention being paid to:

- *Department estimates* - the impact of pay awards and changes to superannuation.
- *Efficiency Savings* - delivery of an agreed efficiency programme for 2012/13 (see section B).
- *Capital Programme*- the development of the future capital programme and how it will be financed.
- *Corporate Plan* - to assess the financial implications of the emerging corporate plan for 2012/13.
- *Financial Performance* - to assess the potential impact of financial performance in 2010/11.
- *Rates Base* - to work with Land and Property Services on forecasting the impact of changes to the rate base.

An update on progress will be brought to the Budget and Transformation Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September on the indicative rate for 2012/13 and Members will have the opportunity to further refine the indicative rate target, if required. The indicative rate for 2013/14 will be further updated and discussed with Members in Spring 2012, in advance of the full rates setting process in Autumn 2012.

B. PROPOSED EFFICIENCY TARGET

In order to deliver the indicative rate target, the high level forecasting work carried out by officers would suggest that the organisation will need to set an efficiency target of £2m cash savings for both 2012/13 and 2013/14. In achieving this target, it will be a key priority to protect front line services.

In order to deliver further cash savings the following approach is proposed. A detailed report, based on the work streams, will be brought to the Budget and Transformation Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources committee in June.

(i) Department Savings

Department budgets will be challenged in the context of the 2010/11 financial outturn and its impact on the 2011/12 budgets.

(ii) Employee Costs

For many services the majority of their costs relate to employees. For these services to deliver further efficiency savings, employee costs will need to be considered. The following approach to employee costs is proposed as a joint project led by HR and Finance and Performance:

- Review employee budgets in the context of agreed establishments and existing headcount.
- Opportunities will be explored through service reviews for further cost savings. This may include the identification of further voluntary redundancies.
- The two key employee variable costs - overtime and agency - will be reviewed. The approach will be similar to that used to successfully tackle absence.

(iii) Procurement

The council spends approximately £80m annually on goods and services and a key element of the efficiency programme is to reduce the amount that is spent in this area. The Director of Property and Projects in conjunction with Finance and Performance has just completed a review of the procurement function. The review was carried out by a team of external experts. The report commends the council for introducing a number of procurement innovations such as Gateway Reviews. It concludes however that for the organisation to deliver a sustained programme of material procurement savings it will need to establish a strategic procurement function, supported by licensed non-procurement specialists in departments and enhanced category and contract management. It recommends that procurement is driven by a Head of Strategic Procurement.

It is intended that a more detailed report is brought back in June to the Budget and Transformation Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June including an improvement programme for Procurement and proposals around staffing implications and how they could be financed.

(iv) Asset Management

The Director of Property and Projects and Director of Finance and Resources are currently working on the development of an asset management efficiency strand which will be integrated with the asset management plan. A key part of the work will be the development of an accommodation strategy linked to the use of ICT to enable remote working opportunities. Members should note that work is already underway to generate income from the use of council assets for advertising purposes.

(v) ICT

The Director of Finance and Resources is currently developing an ICT programme in the context of the new ICT governance arrangements. Business cases are currently being worked on for a number of efficiency projects such as the further roll out of VOIP (the telephony system).

A major area of work will be the alignment of a programme of web based customer enhancements to the efficiency programme. This will provide enhanced customer access to services via the web and hence reduce/improve back office processes.

(vi) Income Generation

Priority areas will include consideration of cemetery and crematorium charges, Boost Leisure Scheme, Zoo, use of the City Hall and advertising hoardings. It is recommended that all future significant pricing reviews are brought through the Budget and Transformation Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources committee as part of the efficiency agenda, as well as to Standing Committees.

The council as part of its resources strategy will also examine ways to increase its grants funding, and in particular, we will work along with government departments to maximise the amount of funding received from Europe.

(vii) Service Reviews

The Director of Property and Projects is about to commence a review of Fleet Management and the review of Building Maintenance is on-going. A programme of further service reviews will be presented to the Budget and Transformation Panel for consideration in June.

C. UPDATE ON FINANCE BILL

Members will recall that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2011 discussed the introduction of the new Local Government Finance Bill. In broad terms, the Bill seeks to:-

- remove the requirement for district councils to gain DOE approval for borrowings and the application of their funds or any proceeds from the sale of capital assets;
- introduce a prudential regime for capital finance along similar lines to that which operates in England and Wales;
- introduce a code of practice on Treasury Management and introduce new financial powers including the power to invest.

The Bill was originally to be effective from 1 April 2011. Members should be aware that the DOE, following receipt of councils' consultation responses including that from BCC, has recently informed the council that the Bill will now apply from 1 April 2012. In order to comply with the Code the council need to have in place a medium-term financial plan, an agreed capital programme and financing strategy and a treasury management strategy. *The key elements are to be in place in time for the 2012/13 rate setting process* and therefore work will be progressed on these issues in the next few months for Members' consideration in the autumn.

***D. ESTABLISHMENT OF FUNDS IN BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
AND UPDATE ON SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND***

As part of good financial planning processes, councils can set up a Repairs and Renewals Fund and a Capital Fund.

The Repairs and Renewals Fund is used to set aside funds to pay for repairs and renewals of existing assets. The expenditure can be revenue or capital. For Belfast City Council, we have a significant asset base that needs to be maintained properly to avoid early replacement.

The Capital Fund is used by councils to set aside funds to be spent on capital projects in their locality. The fund can be financed through capital receipts, year end surpluses, or other sums from the district fund. For Belfast City Council, this could fund small scale capital projects which are not suitable for financing by loans or to

contribute to small scale partnership projects with other funders in local neighbourhoods such as the recently announced Social Investment Fund and also Neighbourhood renewal (to complement the City Investment Fund which funds iconic partnership projects)

The Executive announced on 22 March the establishment of an *£80m Social Investment Fund* (see Appendix 1). The elements are as follows:

- The Fund will form part of an overall approach to enhance economic growth, employability and the sustainability of communities.
- It provides for both capital and revenue investment.
- It will attempt to lever investment from other public bodies, such as the council, and the private sector similar to the way the council has used its City Investment Strategy.
- The consultation will include a recommendation on the creation 8 possible investment zones four of which will be in Belfast.
- The Fund is at a pre-consultation stage with the intention to commence full consultation in early May 2011.

In anticipation of the consultation request in May, permission is sought from the Committee for officers to start work on examining:

- how the council could potentially align its neighbourhood investment and renewal work to the Fund;
- how the council could best work with community organisations to identify potential schemes; and,
- how the Council could establish a Repairs and Renewals fund and Capital Fund, the latter of which could be aligned to other funding streams such as the Social Investment Fund and other partnership funding sources.

This preparatory work will enable the council to make an informed response to the Social Investment Fund consultation when it comes out in May. A detailed report will be brought back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June.

Resource Implications

As a planning assumption, the indicative rate for 2012/13 and 2013/14 is set at no more than the level of inflation (based on the Consumer Price Index), with an efficiency target of £2m in each year. This is subject to no significant changes in the rates base.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note the report and agree:

- (a) as a planning assumption, the indicative rate for 2012/13 and 2013/14 is set at no more than the level of inflation (based on the Consumer Price Index) subject to there being no significant changes in the rates base and to more detailed work being carried out and consideration by Members in the autumn;
- (b) an indicative efficiency target of £2m be set for 2012/13 and 2013/14 and that a further report on the efficiency programme is brought back for Members' consideration in June; and
- (c) that preparatory work is carried out by officers on the key elements of the Finance Bill, the potential for Belfast City Council arising from the Social Investment Fund and the potential for Belfast City Council to establish a Repairs and Renewals Fund and a Capital Fund. A detailed report on these issues will be brought back to the Committee in June for Members' further consideration.

Decision Tracking

Responsible Officer – Director of Finance & Resources”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that Elected Members would be involved in the formulation of a response to the consultation on the Social Investment Fund which would be undertaken by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Future City Investment

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Council at its meeting of 4 April 2011 unanimously passed the following motion proposed by Councillor Newton:

‘This Council recognises that it maximises the impact which its investment in the city will have in future years by aligning its corporate priorities with those identified by the Northern Ireland Executive at a regional level. Such alignment will present opportunities for collaborate working and will increase the potential amount of funding available for investment.

Accordingly it was agreed the SP&R should give detailed consideration to the development of a citywide investment plan involving key partners from government departments/agencies and the private sector and to work towards the hosting of a major city investment conference at the end of the year to launch the plan.'

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Previous analysis of the competitiveness of Belfast has regularly identified the lack of coherence in city governance as a major handicap given the number of agencies operating to single issue agendas together with the fact that government departments have a regional focus which at times does not fully recognise the role of Belfast as the regional economic driver. The current economic crisis is an opportunity to bring some coherence as there is a real incentive to make best use of limited resources for a shared city agenda. Furthermore the regional driver argument for Belfast has the opportunity to gain further traction via the new Regional Development Strategy. This will need strong leadership at Assembly level to argue the case for an urban development policy and ensure government department resources are targeted to where the greatest regional return will occur. The Council will also have to better articulate the arguments that show that investment in Belfast brings advantage to people living outside the city.

3.0 Actions so far

3.1 Belfast City Council has improved considerably as an effective organisation over the past number of years in terms of collectively managing its people and its money and in regard to planning and delivering services and projects. The biggest improvement gains have been realised where people work across Council, Committee and Departmental boundaries to exploit the full potential of the organisation's resources and expertise. The Council has extended this principle beyond the Council itself to deliver on a collaborative agenda and to benefit the citizen as initiatives such as the Grove Wellbeing Centre, Connswater Greenway, emergency planning and community safety demonstrate.

3.2 The Council has also sought to use its financial resources through the City Investment Fund to pump prime, enable and bring over the finish line a number of city wide infrastructure projects such as the Titanic Signature Project,

the Lyric and the MAC. Moving forward, the Council will need to consider how it might also contribute to capital projects occurring at a neighbourhood or local level to ensure that a balanced portfolio of investment is created at both a citywide and neighbourhood level.

- 3.3 Over the last number of months, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has also turned its mind to consider how the Council might contribute to a greater focus on *delivery* across the city and endorsed a *Shaping Belfast 2011-2015* paper which outlined a number of key actions the Council would develop to move forward.
- 3.4 The Committee has also recognised the need for strong political leadership for the city and commenced a series of cross party ministerial briefings to explore how government departments are moving forward with strategic investments such as Rapid Transit, Girdwood, Royal Exchange, stadia development, neighbourhood investment and waste disposal. These conversations also explored proposals for Local Government Reform and the potential for the return of 'Place Shaping' powers such as Planning and Comprehensive Development powers to Councils subject to the appropriate checks and balances. A planning pilot for Belfast is being considered and the DSD are also examining how future investment in the city centre might be financed, which the Council will need to consider in due course.
- 3.5 Following on from these bilateral meetings with Ministers, officers have been meeting with Departmental officials to establish what resources have been made available to Departments as a result of the recently announced budget agreed by the Assembly. This includes the £110million available for stadia development at Windsor, Ravenhill and Casement and consideration around the potential that the relocation of the University of Ulster campus from Jordanstown to York Street might have for city centre regeneration.
- 3.6 Finally the Council as part of its *Masterplan* process has facilitated a number of discussions with the private sector, community representations and government departments/agencies. The Masterplan itself will provide a valuable focus for discussion on city priorities and investment moving forward.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The motion passed by the Council calls for the development of a citywide Investment Plan and the hosting of a major city investment conference towards the end of next year. Given the developments outlined above, this would be a timely initiative and it is recommended that a report be brought to the June meeting of the Committee to outline various options on what this conference might look like.**

Members may like to discuss at Committee their expectations for such a conference and the outcomes they would like to see coming from it.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Human Resources

Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Order 55 and the authority delegated to her, the Director of Finance and Resources had authorised the appointment of individuals who were related to existing officers of the Council.

Noted.

Recruitment of Head of Information Services Belfast

The Committee was advised that the current Head of Information Services Belfast, Rose Crozier, had been successful in her application for the post of Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure and would take up post with effect from Monday, 18th April, 2011. It was pointed out that the post of Head of Information Services Belfast was currently being filled on a temporary basis by the two IS Portfolio Managers who were jointly acting up to the position. Consequently, arrangements now needed to be put in place to recruit a replacement post holder on a permanent basis.

The Committee was advised that the appointment for the Head of Information Services Belfast would be made in accordance with the Council's normal recruitment selection procedure. In accordance with Local Government Staff Commission Guidance, the selection panel should comprise the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) and another Member of the Committee from a Political Party not represented by the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman, together with the Director of Finance and Resources and another Chief Officer. The entire panel needed to be representative of gender and community background, with all panel members having attended recent training on the Council's recruitment and selection procedures. An observer from the Local Government Staff Commission and a professional assessor might also be in attendance but would have no voting rights.

The Committee agreed that:

- (i) the post of Head of Information Services Belfast be recruited on a permanent basis through external advertisement and public competition;
- (ii) the selection panel be comprised following the Annual Meeting of the Council, which was scheduled to be held on 26th May, 2011, with the recruitment and selection schedule developed as soon as possible; and
- (iii) the selection panel be given delegated authority to offer the post to the recommended candidate with the outcome being reported back to the Committee for noting only.

Asset Management

Capital Programme 1 – Development of the Mary Peters Track

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd October, 2010, it had agreed that officers undertake some preliminary works in relation to the development of the Mary Peters Track. Subsequently, at a special meeting of the Council held on 9th February, 2011 it was agreed, in principle, to undertake the development of the track and that it be included within the Capital Programme.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that earlier that week the Parks and Leisure Committee had considered a report on the proposal and had agreed, from a service perspective, to proceed with the development of the Mary Peters Track to provide a new 8 lane International Association of Athletics Federation specification track with a spectator stand and associated works, which had been the option recommended by an economic appraisal, and to commend its decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, with the development to be completed in time for the 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

The Committee adopted the recommendation of the Parks and Leisure Committee, approved the invitation of tenders and the award of contracts to the most economically advantageous tenders received and agreed also that application be made to the appropriate Government Department for sanction to the raising of a loan of £3 million to cover the Council's anticipated project expenditure.

Capital Programme 2 – Refurbishment of Dunville and Woodvale Parks

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th February, 2010, it had approved the proposals by the Parks and Leisure Committee to have the Woodvale and Dunville Parks schemes advanced to the 'committed' section of the Capital Programme, subject to a budget limit of £1 million per scheme, with the same amount in match-funding to be provided by the Belfast Regeneration Office.

It was reported that, at its meeting on 14th April, 2011, the Parks and Leisure Committee had recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the advancement of the refurbishment of the two Parks, with full commitment to invest, including the invitation of tenders, award of the contracts to the firms submitting the most economically advantageous tenders and to an application to the appropriate Government Department for sanction to the raising of a loan of £2 million to cover the Council's anticipated project expenditure, subject to formal written confirmation of match-funding from the Department of Social Development, Belfast Regeneration Office.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Capital Programme 3 –
Construction of the
Titanic Memorial Garden

The Director of Property and Projects advised the Committee that a proposal to construct a Titanic Memorial Garden, with some associated landscaping at the East Entrance of the City Hall, had been submitted in June, 2010 for inclusion in the Capital Programme. However, the proposal had not been prioritised for commitment by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee due to restricted financial resources.

He explained that the Titanic Memorial and the immediate surrounding area had been somewhat neglected for a number of years with only essential maintenance taking place. With the removal of the Belfast Big Wheel and the opening of the East Entrance, the Memorial area had taken on a much higher profile and the East access point was expected to attract even greater focus, given the significant level of interest in the Titanic which would increase as the centenary of its sailing and sinking drew closer.

The proposal was one of a number of emerging, uncommitted capital programme proposals and was being brought forward for consideration due to the time bound nature of any delivery programme. He pointed out that, should the Committee be minded to agree that the proposal should proceed, any award of contracts would be made to the firm submitting the most economically advantageous tender on the basis of a cost/quality evaluation in accordance with the Council's procurement guidelines. The estimated cost of the proposed works was between £120,000 and £150,000 for which no specific provision had been made in the capital programme.

The Committee agreed, from a corporate capital finance perspective, to the construction of a Titanic Memorial Garden, with a full commitment to invest, including the invitation of tenders, award of contracts to the firms submitting the most economically advantageous tenders and to an application to the appropriate Government Department for sanction to the raising of a loan of up to £150,000, if necessary, to cover the Council's anticipated project expenditure.

Connswater Community Greenway Update
(Part 1) – Land Assembly

The Committee was reminded that, as part of the City Investment Strategy, it had agreed to co-ordinate the acquisition of lands to allow the Connswater Community Greenway to proceed. It was reported that the following three areas of land had been identified as being required to help complete the Greenway route and associated landscaping which officers had agreed to purchase, subject to the Committee's approval:

- an area of 0.055 acres of land at Linen Gardens off Woodcot Avenue from Clanmil Housing for £1,650;
- an area of land off the Montgomery Road consisting of 0.062 acres from Ms. F. Thompson for £2,500; and
- an area of 0.149 acres of land at Alexander Road to be purchased from Crane Stockham and Valve for £14,000.

The Committee granted approval for the purchase of the three areas of land as outlined.

Connswater Community Greenway Update
(Part 2) Sustrans Access

The Committee was advised that the Strategic Investment Board had commissioned consultants to undertake a study into the potential for enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections to the Titanic Quarter as a contribution to a broader approach to activity under the Memorandum of Understanding for the Titanic Quarter. The consultants had identified a number of existing and potential routes which could be enhanced, including connections to the Connswater and Comber Community Greenways. The proposal was to bring forward project plans for each route to be considered by the different stakeholders as a basis for potential partnerships. The Strategic Investment Board had agreed that the prioritisation of the activity and potential routes be considered by the Titanic Quarter Access Group.

Sustrans had also approached the Council in relation to the potential for a Connect2 partnership project which would connect the Titanic Quarter with the Connswater and Comber Greenways via a new route through Bridge End Halt, Fraser Street and Sydenham Road. Under the Connect2 project, Sustrans would require a strategic partner to lead the project and had requested that the Council take on that role, with responsibility for the implementation and drawdown of potential funding.

The Director of Property and Projects explained that the proposed project, with the opening of Fraser Street, would complement proposed works to the Bridge End Halt and improve connections to the Titanic Quarter from both the Connswater and Comber Greenways by enhancing the link from the station to the Hollywood Arches area through a connection running along Island Street,

across Dee Street and onto the Ballymacarrett Walkway. The proposed connection would enhance the function of the Connswater Community Greenway proposals and it was recommended that the Council accept the Strategic Leadership role for the Connect2 partnership project with Sustrans, subject to details of the formal agreement and resource outline being reported to the Committee in due course.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Land at Lenadoon Millennium Park

The Members were advised that the Council held a portion of the Lenadoon Millennium Park by way of a 10,000-year lease from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The lease included a restriction on use of the land to 'informal open space'. At its meeting on 14th April, the Parks and Leisure Committee had agreed to seek a relaxation of the restrictive covenant to allow development of a community facility and changing accommodation on approximately 43.32 square metres of the site. The cost to the Council of achieving the aforementioned relaxation had been assessed by the District Valuer, Land and Property Services at £1,000. The proposed community facility and changing accommodation was to be developed by the Lenadoon Community Forum, with grant-aid from Sport Northern Ireland. The Forum was acquiring adjoining land from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and was seeking also to acquire the additional strip of 43.32 square metres at the Lenadoon Millennium Park from the Council.

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee approved the disposal of a portion of 43.32 square metres of land at the Lenadoon Millennium Park to the Lenadoon Community Forum on a 99-year lease at nil value, with the Council recouping the costs of the relaxation of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's restrictive covenant on the land from the Forum.

EU CIVITAS Forum Network

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

- “1 **Relevant Background Information**
- 1.1 **CIVITAS - cleaner and better transport in cities - stands for City-VITALity-Sustainability.**
- 1.2 **With the CIVITAS Initiative, the EC aims to generate a decisive breakthrough by supporting and evaluating the implementation of ambitious integrated sustainable urban transport strategies.**
- 1.3 **Within CIVITAS I (2002-2006) there are 19 cities clustered in 4 demonstration projects, within CIVITAS II (2005-2009) 17 cities in 4 demonstration projects, whilst within CIVITAS PLUS (2008-2012) 25 cities in 5 demonstration projects are taking part. These demonstration cities all over Europe will be funded by the European Commission.**

1.4 Objectives:

- i. to promote and implement sustainable, clean and (energy) efficient urban transport measures**
- ii. to implement integrated packages of technology and policy measures in the field of energy and transport in 8 categories of measures**
- iii. to build up critical mass and markets for innovation**

1.5 Key elements of CIVITAS

- i. CIVITAS is co-ordinated by cities: it is a programme 'of cities for cities'**
- ii. Cities are in the heart of local public private partnerships**
- iii. Political commitment is a basic requirement**
- iv. Cities are living 'Laboratories' for learning and evaluating**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement for Belfast to become a member of the European Civitas Forum Network.**

EU Civitas Forum Network

- 2.2 The CIVITAS Forum Network provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences between all the participating CIVITAS I, CIVITAS II and CIVITAS PLUS demonstration cities, and other cities that are committed to introducing ambitious, clean urban transport strategies.**
- 2.3 Cities participating in the CIVITAS Forum Network will benefit from the shared expertise of Europe's most advanced cities in the field of clean and sustainable urban transport.**
- 2.4 The CIVITAS Forum Network is an active community that currently incorporates over 180 cities. It is pioneering clean urban transport in Europe and is committed to the introduction of ambitious urban transport policies. Through workshops and training events, cities have the opportunity to inspire and aid active exchange of know-how, ideas and experience to facilitate change in the field of transport.**

2.5 Members of the CIVITAS Forum Network can participate in the annual CIVITAS Forum Conference. This conference enables similar-minded colleagues from Europe and beyond to engage in dialogue with other cities and European institutions. Political representatives of CIVITAS Forum cities may also participate in the CIVITAS Political Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC is a group of highly motivated politicians that represent (in a personal capacity) all cities within the CIVITAS Forum Network. It provides support to the CIVITAS Initiative in the identification of policy priorities and produces statements addressed to policy makers at the European, national and local level, as well as to the industry, transport operators and other stakeholders.

Requirements to join the Forum

2.6 The CIVITAS Forum is open to all cities that want to learn more about the usefulness of individual measures that support clean urban transport, and the best ways to combine and integrate them on a large scale. Participating cities have to prove their political and technical commitments to introduce ambitious, integrated urban transport strategies.

2.7 Specifically, this means that the city plans to

- i. Achieve a significant change in the modal split, in favour of sustainable transportation modes
- ii. Follow an integrated approach, by addressing as many of the categories of CIVITAS instruments and measures as possible in its policy.

2.8 Each city must commit itself to the introduction of an ambitious, sustainable urban transport policy. This commitment must be politically endorsed on the CIVITAS Forum Declaration by the signature of a local politician who has executive power.

2.9 Active participation in the CIVITAS Forum further requires that:

- i. A representative of your city attends CIVITAS Forum meetings
- ii. You have a constructive and proactive approach to the distribution of information about the CIVITAS Initiative, at local and national levels

- iii. You provide a paper that gives background information pertaining to your city and its transport policy. This paper should mention the categories of CIVITAS instruments and measures, and specify how they are being implemented and integrated in your city.

Objective

- 2.10 The Civitas Forum Network will allow Belfast City Council a direct input into sustainable transport strategies as well as the funding mechanisms and partnerships that we would need to develop a successful Civitas bid.
- 2.11 In terms of the council subscribing to the forum, Belfast City Council are mindful of the governance arrangements relating to transport planning. However, the task is set to become easier with the impending transfer of development control functions.
- 2.12 Belfast City Council has recently published the updated Transport Policy which acknowledges the governance difficulties but still commits BCC to an inclusive and consistent approach to transport development which will allow us to develop the city in a sustainable manner.
- 2.13 We are starting to move towards more partner working with Department of Regional Development in terms of the rapid transit system, the public cycle hire scheme, the Active Travel forum and the 'Plugged in Places' initiative.
- 2.14 The Forum would provide Belfast a platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences between all the demonstration cities, and other cities that are committed to introducing ambitious, clean urban transport strategies. The Forum would assist with policy formation, learning and sharing of information, and funding information.
- 2.15 It would be useful for Belfast to join on a knowledge sharing basis to become better informed in order to more successfully lobby the Department for Regional Development regarding its future direction of travel.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

Joining the Civitas Forum Network is free of charge. It would require a member of staff and/ or a member from DRD to attend the meetings twice a year. The meetings are held in different locations across Europe, therefore estimation of cost will vary. An approximation would be:

- 3.2** Flight - £300
 Accommodation - £ 200
 Subsistence at £75 per day max - £150

 Approximate total: £650.00 x 2 per annum- £1300.00

This is on the assumption that a BCC member of staff attends. If it is DRD they will pay for themselves.

Human Resources

- 3.3** A European Officer will bring regular reports on the Network and policy and funding updates to Gerry Millar and other relevant BCC officers and COMT. When funding is identified to support BCC corporate plans other officers will be required to assist the development of a robust project.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 4.1** N/A

5 Recommendations

- 5.1** It is recommended that Members consider:
- i. Endorsing Belfast City Council joining the EU Civitas Forum Network**
 - ii. Endorse the financial and human resources implication of the Forum**

6 Decision Tracking

Action to be taken by Sarah Jayne Smith – 15 May 2011

7 Key to Abbreviations

CIVITAS - cleaner and better transport in cities - stands for City-VITALity-Sustainability.
DRD – Department of Regional Development”

The Committee agreed to the Council joining the EU CIVITAS Forum Network and noted the financial and human resource implications associated therewith.

**Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
and Belfast Welcome Centre**

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee was advised that the Development Committee, at its meeting on 13th April, had approved a new three-year lease from 1st August, 2010 on the existing Belfast Welcome Centre premises at a passing rent of £160,000 per annum, subject to agreement on detailed terms to be approved by the Council's Legal Services Section and the Estates Manager, Property and Projects.

The Committee approved the new three-year lease.

Laganside Licence Agreement

The Committee was advised that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 10th March, had agreed to a Licensing Agreement to facilitate the installation of a pole and life ring on the south bank of the River Lagan on Council-owned land close to the Stranmillis Weir.

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee approved the Licence Agreement for one year with effect from 5th November, 2010, with provision for its continuation on a month-to-month basis thereafter.

Announcement of Olympic Torch Run

The Committee was advised that a major announcement was set to take place on 18th May, 2011 with regard to the selected route for the torch relays in relation to the 2012 London Olympics. The event would involve high profile celebrities and would take place at locations throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It was expected that there would be live broadcast coverage of the announcement on national breakfast radio and television programmes.

It was reported that the location of the main Northern Ireland event was still under consideration and the grounds of the City Hall had been suggested as a possible venue. By the time the decision was taken it was likely that it would be too late to get Council approval in a timely way to enable it to be organised. The Committee was therefore requested to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in order to ensure the event could proceed if the City Hall was chosen.

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve the staging of an event to announce the route of the Olympic Torch Relay if the City Hall grounds was chosen as a possible location for the announcement.

Good Relations and Equality

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

EQIA Report – Memorabilia and Flag Flying

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Memorabilia Working Group was re-established around the time of the re-opening of the City Hall after refurbishment.

Since that time it has met on a number of occasions and has completed several actions but, given that a number of applications for external funding have been unsuccessful, the Council will now have to consider whether it wishes to establish its own internal budget to facilitate any major changes that might be agreed. It is also important to note the progress that has been made in terms of changes and adaptations to the City Hall over the past 5-6 years (bearing in mind that the building was closed for almost 2 years in that time).

2 Key Issues

Some time has now elapsed since the adoption of the consultant’s report ‘Reflecting the People – a City Hall for the 21st Century’ in February 2010, with considerable time and energy expended on unsuccessful attempts made to attract external funding. Members will recall that certain additional items – plaques, the Somme resolution etc – also involved lengthy discussions and debate.

An inter-Departmental Working Group of officers, chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive, has met recently and has been tasked with generating ideas and specific proposals to reflect a more contemporary and representative view of Belfast within the building, which would meet the Council’s stated aim of addressing the current imbalance in the City Hall memorabilia. These proposals will be used to develop a firm programme of work which will be submitted to the Memorabilia Working Group as soon as possible after the elections for consideration by the newly elected Councillors.

3 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

Memorabilia

This programme of work would assist in achieving the Council's stated aim of addressing the current imbalance within City Hall memorabilia.

In view of the fact that over a year has elapsed since consideration of the consultant's report noted above, and since a current review is being undertaken of the overall management of the City Hall, it is an opportune time to refresh our approach to memorabilia in general.

In addition, the Chief Executive has recently received correspondence from the Sinn Féin party group which requests that a formal EQIA of memorabilia displayed within the building be conducted.

It should be noted that although an EQIA on the Council's flag flying policy was conducted in 2004, a formal EQIA of memorabilia was not pursued at that time, following a Council decision that attempts should be made to change the current policy through discussions of the (then) Good Relations Steering Panel.

Accordingly the Council will now have to carry out a formal EQIA on memorabilia and we recommend that this be conducted by an independent consultant.

Flag Flying policy

The Sinn Féin correspondence also refers to the Council's current policy of flying the Union Flag and states their concerns in relation to this. Members will be aware that a very comprehensive EQIA on this was completed and reported to the (then) Policy & Resources Committee in March 2004, when the Committee determined not to make any change to the policy.

In this regard, the Town Solicitor/Assistant Chief Executive recommends that this EQIA be refreshed and up-dated, in order to ascertain whether the situation has changed and if any intervening adverse impact has been identified. This EQIA will also be carried out by an independent external consultant, which will include updating the advice from the Equality Commission. The Town Solicitor will also update the legal advice which accompanied the original report to Committee in 2004 and bring a composite report to a future meeting of the Working Group and the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.

4 Resource Implications

Memorabilia work programme

At present, no budget has been allocated for work relating to memorabilia. Following the development of a firm programme of work and the costing of this work, the Memorabilia Working Group will be requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that an appropriate budget stream be identified to support the programme of work agreed which will enable its effective implementation.

EQIAs – memorabilia and flag flying policy

It is anticipated that both could be completed for around £12,000; the costs of these can be accommodated within the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee's revenue budget.

5 Memorabilia Working Group approval

This report was considered by the Memorabilia Working Group at its meeting on 4 April. The Group agreed to note the information, approve the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that EQIAs be completed as outlined above and that updated legal advice and advice from the Equality Commission be obtained.

The Memorabilia Working Group also agreed that a separate report on this item be submitted to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.

6 Decision required

The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee is therefore requested to grant approval to:

- the carrying out of a formal Equality Impact Assessment on the City Hall memorabilia by an independent external consultant
- the refreshing/up-dating of the Equality Impact Assessment on the Council's policy of Flying the Union flag by an independent external consultant
- the up-dating of both legal advice and of advice from the Equality Commission on the matter by the Town Solicitor.

The Town Solicitor will bring a composite report to a future meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration in due course.

7 **Officers to contact for further information**

Ciaran Quigley, Town Solicitor and
Assistant Chief Executive, ext. 6038

Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext. 6020

8 **Abbreviations used**

EQIA = Equality Impact Assessment"

Moved by Councillor G. Robinson,
Seconded by Councillor M. Campbell,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the matter until after the Local Government Elections in May, 2011.

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

Minutes of Meeting of Memorabilia Working Group

In considering the minutes of the meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group the Committee's attention was drawn to the following:

**Public Art – to Celebrate the Contribution
and Achievements of Women in Belfast**

The decision of the Working Group was to request the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to provide a budget in the region of £20,000 for the provision of the above-mentioned artwork.

The Committee agreed that the Working Group give further consideration to the type of artwork and what it represented and that a further report in the matter be submitted to the Committee for consideration in due course.

Stained Glass Window – Irish Myths and Legends

The Committee was advised that the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister had agreed to contribute 75% of the cost, that is, £16,500 out of a total estimated cost of £22,000 for the Irish Myths and Legends stained glass window to be erected in the City Hall. Accordingly, the Memorabilia Working Group had agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to approve the outstanding balance of funding of £5,500.

The Committee acceded to the request.

**Request for Exhibition – International Brigade
Commemoration Committee**

The Working Group had considered a request from the Belfast Secretary of the International Brigade Commemoration Committee for permission to hold an exhibition in the East Entrance of the City Hall from 4th till 18th November, 2011. The exhibition entitled Antifascistas would tell the story of 2,500 volunteers from the British Isles who had joined the legendary International Brigades to defend democracy during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. The Working Group had commended the holding of the exhibition to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that, in future, any requests to hold exhibitions in the East Entrance be submitted in the first instance to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

The minutes of the meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group of 4th April were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 5th April were approved and adopted.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Notice of Motion – Recognition of Bus Drivers

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report on the Notice of Motion regarding the Recognition of Bus Drivers which had been referred to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 4th April and that, in the meantime, contact be made with the Bus Drivers Trade Union representatives to ascertain their views on what they felt would be an appropriate type of recognition.

Community Planning and BIG Lottery Project

(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 2010, the SP&R Committee was advised that the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) had begun a tendering process for the delivery of up to three community planning pilot projects in Northern Ireland. The primary purpose of the projects was to build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) so it could participate equally in the community planning process. The Committee subsequently agreed that the Council should submit a bid in collaboration with the five Area Partnership Boards and Community Places. For the purposes of the funding application, this partnership was named the ‘Belfast Community Planning Consortium’ (Belfast Consortium) with Belfast City Council assigned as the lead partner.

On the 19th March the Committee agreed the scope and outline project plan for the bid, agreeing to a community planning project that would focus on the single theme of health. On the 21st May, Committee was informed that the bid had been successful and agreed to enter into a contract with the BIG Lottery to deliver the pilot. The contract is to the value of £139,000 plus VAT and must be completed by February 2012. The remaining two contracts were awarded to partnerships from the Derry City and Strabane district council areas and the Fermanagh and Omagh district council areas.

The BIG Lottery pilot offers an opportunity to develop and test the Council's emerging community planning processes in advance of any future statutory model for community planning. However, the project represents just one aspect of our approach to community planning. Other thematic and citywide structures currently exist or will need to be developed outside of this project. For this reason, the Committee also agreed at its meeting on the 19th March to establish a Cross Party Reference Group on Community Planning to guide the project and to inform the development of the Council's wider community planning framework.

This report provides an update on progress to date and sets out the proposed next stages in the BIG Lottery project and community planning process in general.

Key Issues

The Pilot Project

As agreed by Committee on 19th March, the pilot project focuses 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 builds on the Council's commitment to creating a healthier Belfast and will augment ongoing work within Council and with our partners to improve health and wellbeing, including working closely with the new Belfast Health Development Unit (set up jointly between the Council, the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust) and the new Strategic Health Partnership for the city, which will be responsible for developing a health and wellbeing plan for the City. The pilot will inform the development of this plan, whilst at the same time provide an opportunity to test in practical ways how the VCS can participate most effectively in community planning.

The emphasis on the VCS will help inform how we engage, support and involve these important sectors in planning and delivery. Following the pilot, BIG aims to provide a model and a toolkit of good practice that will help ensure the genuine engagement of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the new/emerging community planning processes.

The pilot project is managed through a Project Steering Group, chaired by Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services, with membership from the following organisations:

Belfast City Council
Belfast Area Partnerships (one from each
of the five partnerships)
Community Places
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust:
Belfast Health Development Unit
Public Health Agency

The Belfast pilot is contracted to deliver the following key elements:

- Engagement and participation of Voluntary & Community Sector
- Capacity building programme
- Integrating emerging priorities into planning (and in collaboration with other partners informing the development of a health and wellbeing plan for the city)
- Creating realistic plans and ensuring they are resourced
- Informing the longer-term model of community planning
- Conference and Final Evaluation Report (Dec 2011 and Jan 2012)

Work to date has focused on understanding the health and voluntary and community sectors and making sense of the various health needs across the city. A review of expressed health needs and priorities has been completed and is being checked against people's understanding of the health issues in their local area. Feedback to date suggests that the range of existing priorities and issues do reflect local concerns and form an acceptable basis for developing a health & wellbeing plan for the city but we also want community and voluntary sector input to action planning and delivery.

In line with the approach agreed by the Committee previously, a number of engagement sessions are planned for the coming months including a 'mini conference' in June to which a wider range of participants from the community will be invited to hear about the project and give their views on how community planning should develop..

Work is also progressing on the development of the capacity building programme and a number of information sessions have been held with various stakeholders.. This includes plans to develop a formalised and ideally accredited short programme, with a specific Belfast focus, which will bring together participants from across all sectors to understand the potential benefits of community planning to Belfast and explore what has worked well both in other areas and in the city to date.

*Role of Elected Members, SP&R Committee
and Cross Party Reference Group*

Elected Members, as civic leaders and local advocates, will be pivotal to community planning at both local and strategic city-wide levels. Whilst the SP&R Committee has specific responsibility for the development and implementation of the community planning process; all Elected Members will have a role. Therefore the Committee was keen to ensure that this role was properly reflected within the pilot and any emerging model. As a result it established a cross Party Reference Group with the dual role of overseeing the BIG Lottery project but also leading the development of a community planning framework for the Council.

At the first meeting of the Reference Group on 12th October 2010, the Group agreed an outline programme of work and terms of reference (attached as appendix 1). The Reference Group has met four times to date, including a joint workshop with the BIG Project Steering Group. The Reference Group has received a number of briefings relating to community planning, the pilot project and related health theme. The primary focus to date has been on the BIG Lottery Project, but the Reference Group is keen to consider and align other relevant work, such as the development of the Council's Community Development Strategy, and to explore and develop models of good practice.

Through the BIG Lottery pilot and other good practice learning, the Reference Group aims to develop and test:

- A route map / model for community planning
- Structures and processes for engagement

In doing so, the Reference Group also hopes to learn and address the following key issues:

- Representation
- Resources
- Empowering the community and voluntary sector so it can influence and participate in how we plan and deliver services
- Joining up council responses /services
- Joint planning among agencies
- Working at both city level and local neighbourhood level

The Cross Party Reference Group will need to be re-constituted following the establishment of the new Council in June. It is also intended that Party Briefings and/or workshops with the new SP&R Committee be organised after June to update new and existing Members on community planning and to begin the process of Member engagement on community planning. This may be done as part of a wider induction programme.

Legislative Developments

The DoE recently issued the Local Government Reform / Policy Proposals for consultation, which included only high level references to community planning and the power of wellbeing. The Council will continue to seek to influence the development of formal community planning guidance. The pilot project will assist with this process.

Resource Implications

Financial

None at present. Support costs for managing and coordinating the project will be met from within the BIG funding. This includes the appointment of the Project Co-ordinator, Kim Walsh.

Human Resources

None at present.

Decisions required

The Committee is asked to note the above report and progress to date.

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”**

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairman