

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 3rd June, 2011

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman); and
Aldermen Browne, M. Campbell, Crozier and Newton;
Councillors Attwood, Convery, Garrett, Haire, Hanna,
Hendron, Jones, Lavery, Mallon, Maskey, McKee,
McVeigh, Ó Muilleoir and A. Newton.

Also attended: Councillor Keenan.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, 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.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the Members to the first meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee following the Local Government Elections held in May.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th 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 3rd May, subject to:

- (i) the omission of the minute under the heading "Recruitment of Head of Information Services Belfast" which, at the request of Alderman Browne, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- (ii) the omission of that portion of the minute under the heading "Recruitment of the Post of Director of Finance and Resources" in so far as it related to the appointment of the selection panel which the Council had agreed be deferred until after the Local Government Elections.

Corporate Plan and Performance Management

Corporate Plan 2011-12 and Future Development

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

"Background information

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Council and its corporate priorities through the development of the corporate plan. The Committee is also responsible for allocating resources to ensure that corporate priorities as agreed in the corporate plan are implemented.

At the meeting, Members will receive a presentation from officers which is intended to inform Members about work underway to support the Committee in fulfilling this role and to allow Members to begin to consider the ways in which they wish to shape the future direction of the Council and the city. This paper is intended to act as context to the presentation and to highlight some of the key processes which exist to help the Committee get things done.

The Corporate Plan

The Council is the largest local authority in Northern Ireland, employing over 2300 people with an annual expenditure of around £168 million. It has 6 operational departments delivering a wide range of services from street cleansing and refuse collection to running the city's parks and leisure facilities. It has a wide regulatory role, involving services such as environmental health and building control and works in partnership with other organisations to tackle issues such as community safety and health improvement. The Council plays an important role in supporting local economic growth, the arts and tourism and promoting the development and regeneration of the city. It is consulted on key issues impacting upon the city and its people and communities, including local area planning.

In short, the Council is a large and diverse organisation which plays an important role in shaping, developing and investing in the city and local areas. A key role of the SP&R Committee is to provide overall direction to this work, to make sure that the resources are available to deliver it and to hold officers to account for making it happen. The corporate plan and processes linked to it, including the setting of budgets and the development of the capital programme help the Committee to fulfil this role.

The Corporate Plan – current status

The corporate plan, helps Members get things done by setting out:

- The Council's vision for the city and its priorities – based upon engagement with local people and analysis of data about the city;
- The key actions that will be implemented in the year ahead;
- Performance indicators, allowing for regular review of progress;
- Financial information, setting out how resources have been allocated across the Council to ensure that things get done.

The Council's previous corporate plan covered the period 2008 – 2011. A key task for the coming year will be for officers to work with the Committee to agree the Council's priorities and plans and how resources will be allocated to these for the remainder of the Council term. A detailed project plan, outlining a timetable and process for developing the new plan will be brought to Committee for approval in August.

Over the past year, the SP&R Committee worked with all Members to prepare a draft update of the plan for 2011/12 so that there might be continuity in terms of the Council's over-all direction, whilst the new Committee considers future priorities. This update work was carried out in line with the development of the Council's budget for 2011/12, which was agreed by the SP&R Committee in February 2011.

In updating the corporate plan, the Committee was guided by analysis of information about the type of city that Belfast is, the issues that people across the city face and by feedback from local people about what they believe the Council's priorities should be. Feedback from residents in 2010, obtained through surveying over 1600 citizens in their own homes was that the Council's priorities should be:

- Creating a safer city
- Making the city cleaner and greener
- Supporting children and young people
- Investing in improving local areas
- Helping to support and improve the city's economy
- Providing value for money services

These priorities are reflected in the Council's draft vision and priorities for 2011/12 which are set out at Appendix 1.

Further information on the draft interim corporate plan for 2011/12 and on the actions that departments will undertake to achieve the Council's priorities will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

Related work – managing people, projects, money and assets

Whilst working with the Committee to develop the new corporate plan, officers will also be working with Members to develop key strands of work designed to ensure that resources are available to allow the Council to continue to invest in the city, make sound financial plans to safeguard vital service delivery, and ensure the Council is run efficiently and provides value for money. At the meeting, Chief Officers will set out the key pieces of work involved and how Members will lead the process of taking these forward.

Recommendations

Members are asked note the report by way of background to a presentation by Chief Officers at the meeting about development of the Committee's key strands of work for the year ahead.

Draft Vision and Priorities 2011/12

Appendix 1

Our vision is to ensure that 'The Council, working with communities and stakeholders, takes a lead role in improving quality of life now and for future generations for the people of Belfast by making the city and its neighbourhoods better places to live in, work in, invest in, study in and visit'.

To deliver on this vision our Corporate Plan sets out 5 themes, these are:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>What they mean</u>
City leadership	Providing leadership and strategic direction for shaping, developing and managing the city
Environment	Caring for Belfast's environment and creating a sustainable, clean and healthy living space for all
Economy	Creating a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy
People and communities	Creating stronger neighbourhoods

<u>Theme</u>	<u>What they mean</u>
Improving our Services	Delivering value for money, customer focused services with the right level of resources to deliver Council and ratepayer priorities

More information about each of these themes is set out in the following pages.

City Leadership

Contributing to the leadership and strategic direction for shaping, developing and managing the city

Our priorities:

Place Shaping

- Using our capital programme and City Investment Fund to improve the city's economy and help regenerate local areas;
- Finding new ways of attracting funding to create sustainable investment across the city;
- Influencing the future development of the city and identifying the physical infrastructure needed to support the city's future economic competitiveness and growth;
- Preparing for the effective delivery of the new responsibilities that we will receive as a result of local government reform;
- Creating an effective Community Planning Framework.

Good Relations and Equality

- Creating better relationships with organisations locally, regionally and internationally to tackle poverty, address inequality and improve quality of life in the city
- Leading the development of good relations across the city, mainstreaming equality and respecting diversity
- Securing Peace III investment to create shared space and positive relations in the city.

What local people said about city leadership

- 96% of residents say they enjoy living in Belfast and more than four in five (84%) are satisfied with living in their local area
- In the last three years, more than half of residents think that the city has improved

- 80% of residents think that the council is important in their everyday lives
- 73% of residents think that the council makes Belfast a better place to live
- 66% of residents agree that the council is the organisation best placed to direct the future shape of the City
- one in three residents feel that 'investing in improving local areas' should be one of the Council's key priorities
- 75% of residents feel that the council is helping to promote good relations in the city

Environment

Caring for Belfast's environment and helping to create a sustainable, clean and healthy place to live for everyone.

Our priorities

Making the City Cleaner and Greener

- Keeping all parts of the city clean
- Improving the quality of parks and open spaces
- Promoting Belfast as a Sustainable City which looks after its environmental, social and economic future
- Improving the Council's energy efficiency and carry out services in a way which reduces our carbon footprint

Zero Waste Direct to Landfill

- Achieving our target of zero waste direct to landfill by 2015
- Increasing ways for households to recycle

High Quality Urban and Local Environment

- Improving the appearance of local areas across the city

What local people said about improving our environment

- 96% of residents say they enjoy living in Belfast and more than four in five (84%) are satisfied with living in their local area
- Residents have stated that making the City cleaner and greener should be one of council's top three priorities
- Almost nine in ten feel that the council is working to make the City cleaner and more attractive
- 28% of residents felt that cleaner streets would most help to improve their quality of life
- 31% of residents felt that the streets need to be better maintained

Economy

Creating a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy

Our priorities

Cultural and Tourism Experience

- Maximising tourism potential and making best use of the city's cultural products to promote Belfast
- Delivering a programme of events which will enhance the vibrancy of and attract tourism to the city

Contributing to regeneration and growing the rates base

- Developing relationships with those working to grow the local economy
- Supporting local regeneration activity
- Supporting growth of the city's rate base
- Developing the economic potential of the North Foreshore

Supporting Economic Growth

- Helping to maximise employability
- Supporting job creation
- Supporting business growth and competitiveness
- Working with our partners to improve the overall city centre experience and vitality
- Ensuring our markets continue to provide a unique shopping experience for residents and visitors alike.

What local people said about improving the local economy

- 55% of residents feel that the council is helping to improve the local economy
- 33% of residents feel that better employment opportunities would most help to improve their quality of life
- A quarter of residents questioned stated that 'helping to support and improve the city's economy' should be one of the council's key priorities

People and Communities

Improving quality of life across all neighbourhoods

Our priorities

People feel safer

- Helping to make people feel safer and addressing antisocial behaviour

People are Healthier

- Giving people opportunities to be more active
- Working with partners and communities to improve health and well-being in the city
- Provide high quality regulatory services to protect people's safety and health, such as building control and food safety

Engaged and Active Communities

- Making sure the Council is better engaged with local people and is involving them in improving the city and their local areas
- Helping local people get the best use out of the Council's assets
- Supporting local community development

Younger and Older People

- Creating and co-ordinating opportunities for children and young people
- Working with partners to improve services to older people and reducing isolation

Dealing with Emergencies

- Supporting local people affected in a crisis such as during flooding or severe weather

What local people said about improving life for people and communities

- More than half of residents feel that there is a strong sense of community in their local area
- Safety is the top key priority for residents, especially in the City centre after dark.
- Almost half of residents questioned feel that lower levels of anti-social behaviour and crime would be most likely to improve their quality of life.
- Residents feel that investing in improving local areas is also a key priority for the Council.

- 37% of residents felt that more activities for children and young people would most help to improve their quality of life
- 56% of residents feel that the council is helping to create a better city for older people
- 75% of residents believe the council is helping to promote healthier and more active lifestyles
- 86% of residents are generally satisfied with our Parks and Open Spaces

Improving our services

Delivering value for money, customer focused services

Our Priorities

- Enable value for money service delivery by ensuring efficient use of resources to achieve Council priorities
- Make best use of technology to deliver services when and where they are needed
- Providing adequate support to our services to ensure that resources are fully aligned to our corporate priorities
- Attracting and developing people who will work together to deliver our services and develop the organisation for the future
- Facilitating the effective planning, management and reporting of Council activities

What local people told us about improving services

- 78% of residents are satisfied with the services which the council provide
- 75% of residents thought that the council makes Belfast a better place to live
- 64% of residents thought the council was efficient in the delivery of its services
- 53% of residents felt our services had got better over the past three years whilst just 4% felt that they had got worse
- 23% of residents felt that 'providing value for money services' should be one of the council's key priorities"

With the assistance of visual aids, the Chief Executive reviewed the role of the Committee. He outlined how Members were able to get things done and their current ambitions for the City and the priorities of the citizens of Belfast as derived from the 2010 Public Survey. He also provided an overview of the Corporate Plan and how it was developed and the Council's vision and priorities.

The Director of Finance and Resources summarised the Council's budget for 2011/12, explained where the Council's income was derived from and how the budget was spent, the Council's resources strategy and other key strands of finance-related work which would be undertaken by the Committee.

The Director of Property and Projects reviewed the Capital Programme and the major schemes to which finances had been committed for the period 2011-15. He then provided an overview of the Capital City Investment Strategy to which the Council had contributed funding in the sum of £16 million for the Titanic Signature Project, the Connswater Community Greenway, the MAC Theatre and the Lyric Theatre and indicated that that contribution would leverage total expenditure of £160 million. He then outlined the role of Councillors in the development of the Capital Programme and how they could assist in the delivery of Projects.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive outlined the Council's leadership and governance structure, the next steps which Members would need to consider and the work which would be undertaken by the Committee during the period from August till November, 2011.

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

Modernisation and Improvement

Review of Public Administration Status Update

The Committee was reminded that, in 2002, the Northern Ireland Executive had initiated the Review of Public Administration, with the aim of modernising how Public Services were provided in Northern Ireland. As part of that Review, the Executive had, in 2008, taken a decision to reduce the number of Councils from twenty-six to eleven new larger Councils and to transfer a number of new functions from Central Government departments to Local Government. Under the Review of Public Administration proposals and, as a result of the recommendations which had been put forward by the Independent Local Government Boundary Commissioner, Mr. Dick McKenzie, it had been proposed that the new Belfast City Council boundary incorporate a small part of the adjacent Lisburn and Castlereagh areas, resulting in the City's population increasing from 268,000 to over 300,000.

The Chief Executive explained that, whilst the initial timetable for the Review had sought to have the new eleven Councils in place and operational as from the May, 2011 elections, discussions on how the Review of Public Administration Local Government Reform would be progressed had concluded on Monday, 14th June, 2010, with the Northern Ireland Executive not having reached agreement on the way forward. It was understood that there had been no agreement or decisions taken on important implementation issues such as:

- the new Local Government boundaries;
- how the Reform Programme would be funded; and
- the implementation timetable for reform.

He pointed out that, subsequently, the May, 2011 Local Government Elections had proceeded on the basis of the current twenty-six Councils and not the eleven Councils as recommended under the Review. In short, the Review of Public Administration had been placed in abeyance awaiting the formation of the new Northern Ireland Executive.

The Chief Executive explained that, despite the ongoing uncertainty and stop-start nature experienced with the Review of Public Administration, the Council had proactively engaged in the process at both Elected Member and senior officer level. The Council had been represented on the regionally established Review of Public Administration Policy Development and Implementation Structures and the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had been designated as the Belfast Review of Public Administration Voluntary Transition Committee and had been given the responsibility for overseeing, co-ordinating and managing the Council's own preparations for the Review of Public Administration.

He indicated that it was now understood that the new Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, was seeking to submit for the consideration of the Northern Ireland Executive in June, 2011, a paper which set out recommendations on the proposed way forward for the Review of Public Administration process. Based on discussions with officials from the Department of the Environment, it was understood also that the proposals would include a 2015 timeline for the formal establishment of the new eleven Councils and the transfer of functions from Central to Local Government, with a shadow Council period being introduced from 2014. A detailed report in this regard would be submitted for the consideration of the Committee when further clarity had been provided on the Executive's intentions.

The Chief Executive pointed out that, given the current economic climate and the growing pressures on the public sector to do more with less, there was a real opportunity to discuss with Central Government departments the need for and the benefits of service integration at the local level. As agreed by the Committee in December, 2010, Council officers had been in preliminary discussions with officials from the Department of the Environment, including the Planning Service and the Department for Social Development to explore the potential scope for Belfast to initiate an integrated area-based pilot. Such a pilot would seek to forge strengthened working relationships, build joint institutional delivery capacity and better integrate key place shaping functions, for example, planning, regeneration and enforcement powers at the local level. The Council had already a proven track record in successfully establishing integrated service delivery models in the areas of, for example, health and community safety. Work was underway to examine the potential business case for a Belfast pilot and the associated programme of work and a further report in this regard would be submitted to the Committee in August.

Accordingly, the Chief Executive recommended that, with the new Northern Ireland Executive now in place, Members should seek an early meeting with the Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, and the Social Development Minister, Nelson McCausland, to further explore the potential viability and scope of a Belfast-based pilot.

During discussion, a Member suggested that the Council needed to consider undertaking a more strategic engagement role at political level and meetings should be sought with more than just the two aforementioned Ministers.

In addition, a Member pointed out that the Committee held currently two meetings per month and he had suggested previously that one of the meetings should be allocated to deal with routine business, with the second meeting focusing on the major issues such as regeneration, funding development and securing financial investment in the City and its infrastructure.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and noted that further reports would be submitted to the Committee in due course in relation to the format of the twice-monthly meetings and strategic engagement at a political level.

Democratic Services and Governance

Fixed Term Working Groups

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members may recall that, in adopting the Council’s Governance Arrangements in 2007, it was acknowledged that the Standing Committees would wish to appoint short-term Working Groups to focus on issues of particular relevance. In addition, the Council had agreed previously to adopt the following principles in appointing Working Groups:

- **Working Groups should be established only if they are considered to be essential for the achievement of effective and efficient decision-making;**
- **such Working Groups should be appointed only for a fixed-term and for a specific purpose;**
- **the Groups would not have decision-making powers but rather would produce a report with recommendations for consideration by the appointing Committee;**
- **after the Working Group has fulfilled its remit it would cease to exist; and**
- **Working Groups should be formed on the basis of All-Party representation with nominees sought from the leaders of the Political Parties.**

Key Issues

The range of Working Groups, which had been in established during the previous Council term, ceased to exist on 5th May, coinciding with the Local Government Elections. Therefore, it is now a matter for the Committee to consider whether it wishes to reconstitute the following groups whose remit falls under the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:

1. Accommodation Steering Group

Established by Policy and Resources Committee on 19th January, 2007, this Group's original remit was to oversee the arrangements for the refurbishment of the City Hall. Since the completion of the work to the City Hall, meetings of this Group have been called periodically by the Director of Property and Projects to address staff and Political Party accommodation issues. In particular the Group's remit is as follows:

- to consider and advise upon future occupancy and accommodation requirements at the City Hall / Cecil Ward Building / Adelaide Exchange, together with outlying Council properties, and, in the case of the City Hall, in regard to public access and facilities; and
- to act as a communication channel to Political Parties and Members in general and ensure that issues regarding accommodation issues are fully understood.

Previous Membership

One representative from each Political Party.

Anticipated Life Span

Should this Group be reconstituted, it will meet on an ad hoc basis under the guidance of the Director of Property and Projects.

2. Audit Panel

The purpose of Audit Panel, which was established by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 20th April, 2007, is to provide impartial assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and associated control environment. It meets on a quarterly basis and provides independent scrutiny for the Council's financial and non-financial performance and highlights areas of concern which exposes the Council to risk and weakens the control environment. The Panel also oversees the Council's annual financial accounting process.

Previous Membership

One representative from each Political Party Grouping together with an external member appointed by the Council.

Anticipated Life Span

It is anticipated that this Panel, if reconstituted, will meet on a quarterly basis throughout the Council term under the guidance of the Director of Finance and Resources.

The first meeting of this Working Group has been scheduled for 1.00 p.m. on 9th June as it will be required to review the Annual Accounts prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

3. Belfast Flooding Members' Group

This Working Group was established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd January, 2009, to oversee the implementation of the recommendations within the Belfast Flooding Report 2008. It seeks to work with other bodies and agencies to put in place prevention measures to address the risk of future flooding across the City. Its remit is at follows:

- to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the Council's 2008 Belfast Flooding Report;
- to provide political influence and leadership for stakeholders and partners involved in flood work in Belfast; and
- to support community engagement in flood work in Belfast

Previous Membership

One representative from each Political Party.

Anticipated Life Span

Should this Group be reconstituted it will meet on an ad hoc basis (normally monthly) under the guidance of the Director of Health and Environmental Services.

4. Budget and Transformation Panel

This Panel was established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 6th February, 2009. Its aims and objectives, as set out below, outline the objectives of the Panel, its deliverables, manner of working, governance arrangements and programme of work:

Overall Objective

The overall objective of the Budget and Transformation Panel is to provide political leadership and oversight of the Council's efficiency and transformation agenda and the Council's finances in general.

Detailed Objectives

- to provide political support in terms of Political Parties and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for the delivery of the Council's efficiency and transformation agenda;
- to scrutinise the alignment of the Council's efficiency and transformation agenda to corporate priorities;
- to support the development and implementation of the Council's efficiency and transformation programme;
- to hold officers to account for the delivery of an agreed efficiency and transformation programme;
- to track and monitor the achievement of agreed financial savings; and
- to provide an overview of the Council's finances.

Previous Membership

Leaders of each of the Political Parties and the Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Anticipated Life Span

Should this Group be reconstituted, it will meet on an ad hoc basis under the guidance of the Director of Finance and Resources.

5. City Investment Strategy Working Group

This Group, which was established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22nd October, 2010, seeks to address and manage the Council's budgetary constraints within the current challenging economic conditions. Accordingly, the Group works to ensure that the Council fulfils its obligation to retain its vision of strategic, equitable and sustainable development across the City. To this end, the Group seeks to engage with key stakeholders and to lobby Ministers at the Northern Ireland Assembly to focus and drive investment and resources to Belfast.

Previous Membership

Chairmen of Strategic Policy and Resources and Development Committees plus one representative from each of the other Political Parties.

Anticipated Life Span

Given the current economic climate, it is recommended that Group be reconstituted for the forthcoming Council term and meet on an ad hoc basis under the guidance of the Director of Property and Projects.

6. Cross-Party Reference Group on Community Planning

The Group reports on all issues affecting the future direction of Community Planning in Belfast which will be taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The purpose of the Reference Group is to support, influence, monitor and challenge the development of community planning in Belfast and related projects. Specifically, the Reference Group works:

- to provide strategic direction to the Belfast Community Planning Consortium (BCPC) - which is responsible for overseeing the BIG Lottery funded community planning pilot project;
- to ensure the BCPC and BIG Lottery Community Planning Project is connected to the political process;
- to monitor the progress of the BIG Lottery Community Planning Project and contribute to the evaluation of the project;
- to provide strategic / political direction and input to the development of the health planning process within Belfast.
- to assess the learning for Belfast City Council and its implications for the ongoing development of community planning within Belfast;
- to act as a reference panel in the wider development of the Council's community planning framework;

- to make recommendations to Strategic Policy and Resources regarding the developing community planning framework for Belfast. This may include recommendations on timelines, resources and structures;
- to champion a cohesive approach within the Council to Community Planning; and
- to develop and maintain expertise in the field of community planning.

Previous Membership

Two representatives from each of the Political Parties.

Anticipated Life Span

Should this Group be reconstituted, it will meet on a monthly basis under the guidance of the Director of Health and Environmental Services.

7. Good Relations Partnership

The Good Relations Partnership, which was established by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 17th August, 2001, has overseen the development of a Good Relations Strategy, the establishment of a Good Relations Unit and has made recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee on a range of issues, as well as the awarding of grant-aid, including substantial amounts of European funding via the Peace III Programme. The terms of reference for the Good Relations Partnership are set out below:

- to promote equality of opportunity in the discharge of the Council's responsibilities, taking into account the needs of persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, of men and women generally, of persons with a disability and persons without and of persons with dependants and persons without;
- to promote tolerance and understanding throughout the City by providing support, including the equitable use of available budgets, for appropriate initiatives which celebrate the cultural diversity of Belfast;

- to promote good relations between people of different religious and political beliefs and different racial groups in every aspect of Council activities; and
- to use the Council's influence as a democratically elected body, providing civic leadership to the City, to promote good relations throughout society.

Membership and Anticipated Life Span

The Good Relations Partnership, if reconstituted, will consist of one Member from each Political Party, together with 16 external Members and will meet on a monthly basis. In view of its current value to the Council and its potentially greater role in relation to the delivery of the Peace III funding within Belfast, it is recommended that the Good Relations Steering Panel be reconstituted and continue to meet on a monthly basis over the current Council term.

The first meeting of the Group is scheduled for 12.00 noon on Monday 6th June as it is required to consider the award of Summer Intervention Funding.

8. Memorabilia Working Group

The Council's representatives on the Good Relations Partnership serve also on the Memorabilia Working Group. This Group, which was established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 14th November, 2008, considers issues regarding memorabilia, language, civic ceremonies and events within the City Hall and the City Hall grounds.

Anticipated Life Span

Should this Group be reconstituted for the forthcoming Council term, it will meet on an ad hoc basis under the guidance of the Good Relations Manager.

9. Historic Centenaries Working Group

This Group was established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 10th December, 2010, to oversee the Council's approach to the forthcoming decade of centenaries. Its terms of reference are as follows:

- to consider historic centenaries and commemorations which the Council might wish to consider marking over the next decade

- to establish a core set of principles to be applied in considering those centenaries and in identifying appropriate events to be commemorated
- to consider what actions the Council might wish to take itself, carry out with others or support the celebrations of others in the marking of those centenaries
- to give consideration to how a budget might be developed to support any actions agreed
- to make recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee regarding the issues above.

Previous Membership

One representative from each of the Political Parties.

Anticipated Life Span

Should this Group be reconstituted, it will meet on an ad hoc basis under the guidance of the Good Relations Manager.

10. Housing Forum

This Forum, which was established by the Strategic Policy and Resources on 15th June, 2007, replaced the Council's former Housing Liaison. Given the significant amount of time which Members spend dealing with housing matters, it was felt appropriate that the Council would maintain formal links with the Housing Executive through a Housing Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity for Members to develop partnerships with officials from the Executive and also a platform to discuss and/or resolve many of the issues relating to housing problems faced by their constituents.

It is therefore proposed that the Housing Forum be re-established for the forthcoming Council term and that membership be extended to all Members. The Town Planning Committee would continue to receive the annual District Housing Plans for the Belfast Area. The terms of reference for the Forum are set out hereunder:

- to receive quarterly updates on the progress of the New Build Social Housing Programme;
- to receive reports on the Physical Programme, including annual cyclical maintenance; and
- to deal with any other Housing-related issues which the Members might wish to raise with Housing officials.

Previous Membership

All Members of the Council.

Anticipated Life Span

Should this Forum be reconstituted, invitations to attend quarterly meetings will be extended to all Members of the Council.

11. Member Development Steering Group

The Member Development Steering Group was first established by the former Members' Sub-Committee on 12th March, 2007, under the following terms of reference:

- to align the Member development strategy to the value creation map;
- to oversee the processes for the identification of development needs at individual, Party Group and Council-wide levels;
- to ensure the appropriate implementation of the Member Development Strategy and associated policies;
- to adopt a structured and timely approach to promoting Member development opportunities;
- to recommend best practice in other Local Authorities which Members can learn from and share with external partners;
- to facilitate Member development activity;
- to develop mechanisms for the evaluation of Member development activities; and
- to review, update and revise the Member development strategy at appropriate levels to ensure that it continues to address the development needs of Members.

Previous Membership

One representative from each of the Political Parties.

Anticipated Life Span

It is recommended that this Group be reconstituted. It will oversee the implementation of the Members' Development Strategy, including Personal Development Plans for Members, a revised and enhanced Induction Programme and core development activities.

12. New Regional Hospital for Women and Children Working Group

This Working Group was established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 12th December, 2009. Its remit is to oversee a campaign and to lobby for the establishment in Belfast of a new regional hospital for children and women. In addition, the following Notice of Motion was passed unanimously by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, 2009:

‘Belfast City Council calls on the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Executive to make the completion of the new regional hospital for children and women, on the site of the Royal Group of Hospitals, a matter of top priority in the next comprehensive spending review. The Council calls on the Minister of Health and the Executive to secure the resources now for clearing the site, which is an essential first step in progressing the new hospital for children and women. The Council agrees to work in partnership with the Royal Maternity Hospital Liaison Group to lobby the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly to secure the capital funds necessary to build the new regional hospital for children and women.’

Previous Membership

One representative from each of the Political Parties.

Anticipated Life Span

Given the previous Health Minister’s decision in relation to the hospital, this Group has not met since December, 2009. therefore, it is recommended that it does not be reconstituted.

13. North Foreshore Steering Group

This Group was established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 18th May, 2010. Its remit is to oversee the management of the North Foreshore, especially in regard to policy, resource allocation and financial risk of future development at the site

Previous Membership

The previous Steering Group held its first meeting on 16th December, 2010. This meeting was attended by the Chairmen of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Parks and Leisure Committee, the Health and Environmental Committee and

the Development Committee. At that meeting it was agreed that membership of the Steering Group would be extended to include Councillors from the Castle and Oldpark District Electoral Areas (14 Members in total).

Anticipated Life Span

Given the importance of political governance and direction in the development of major Council projects, such as the North Foreshore, it is recommended that Group be reconstituted for the forthcoming Council term and that it meet on an ad hoc basis under the guidance of the Director of Property and Projects.

14. Reference Group on Older People

The Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st April, 2006, established an All-Party Reference Group on Older People. The Group is supported by the Head of Environmental Health with policy input from the Corporate Policy Unit. The Group was set-up to engage directly with other agencies, including those in the voluntary sector and its role is to:

- to consider the potential future strategic direction of the Council's work on older people to inform the development of the Council's Corporate Strategy and Plan;
- to explore improve methods of maximising the impact which the Council could have in working with other partners to meet older people's needs;
- to work with Belfast Healthy Cities on developing the Council's input to the Intersectoral Plan;
- to have an overseeing role in respect of the Intersectoral Plan on Older People and an advocacy role; and
- to consider the services provided currently by the Council for older people.

Previous Membership

One representative from each of the Political Parties.

Anticipated Life Span

Should this Group be reconstituted, it will meet on an ad hoc basis under the guidance of the Head of Environmental Health.

Resource Implications

There are no financial or Human Resources implications associated with this report.

Recommendations

- The Committee is asked to consider which, if any, of the Working Groups it wishes to reconstitute and the membership of each of the Groups.
- The Committee may also wish to consider, given the number of Working Groups, whether or not to combine the work of some of the Groups.

Decision Tracking

Officer Responsible: Mr. Jim Hanna (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Timescale: A letter will be forwarded to each of the Party Leaders following the meeting to seek representation on each of the Groups which are reconstituted.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed the following:

1. Accommodation Steering Group

That this group be dissolved and any issues in relation to the Council's future accommodation be reported directly to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

2. Audit Panel

That the Audit Panel be constituted with one representative from each Political Party, together with an external Member to be appointed by the Council.

3. Belfast Flooding Members' Group

That this Group be reconstituted and its remit be extended to enable it to deal with all issues in relation to severe weather and that it be renamed accordingly as the Emergency and Severe Weather Working Group, the membership of which would be one representative from each Political Party.

4. Budget and Transformation Panel

The Panel to be reconstituted and its remit extended to incorporate the work of the former City Investment Strategy Working Group. The representation to be the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the leaders of the each of the Political Parties (or their nominees).

5. City Investment Strategy Working Group

This Group be dissolved and its work combined within the remit of the Budget and Transformation Panel.

6. Cross-Party Reference Group on Community Planning

The Cross-Party Reference Group on Community Planning be reconstituted and its representation be two Members from each of the Political Parties.

7. Good Relations Partnership

The Partnership be reconstituted with its membership consisting of a representative from each of the Political Parties, together with sixteen external Members.

8. Memorabilia Working Group

That a decision as to whether or not the Memorabilia Working Group should be reconstituted be deferred to enable a report on the work of the Group to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

9. Historic Centenaries Working Group

That this Group be re-established and the membership consist of one representative from each of the Political Parties.

10. Housing Forum

The Forum be reconstituted and invitations to attend the quarterly meetings be extended to all Members of the Council.

11. Members' Development Steering Group

That this Group be reconstituted and the membership consist of the leaders of the Political Parties (or their nominees).

12. New Regional Hospital for Women and Children Working Group

That this Group be dissolved.

13. North Foreshore Steering Group

The Group be re-established and that the membership consist of two representatives from each of the Political Parties and, as part of that representation, to include the Chairmen of the Strategic Policy and Resources, Parks and Leisure, Health and Environmental Services and Development Committees.

14. Reference Group on Older People

That this Group be reconstituted, with the membership being one representative from each of the Political Parties. It was agreed also that a report be submitted to the Committee in due course on any revised terms of reference for the Group.

Arising out of discussion, a Member pointed out that, following the review of the governance arrangements and the abolishment of the Sub-Committees in 2007, that the Council needed to consider how each of the Committees undertook their business and how the new Councillors could be brought up to speed on specific issues.

It was suggested that the reconstituted Members' Development Steering Group could consider this in due course and that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee. The Committee agreed to this course of action.

Special Responsibility Allowance

The Committee considered a report in relation to the distribution of the Special Responsibility Allowance and it was

Moved by Alderman Browne,
Seconded by Alderman Crozier,

That consideration of the matter be deferred to enable a further report on revised figures to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 17th June.

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

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

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report in relation to the allowances for the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff to enable the matter to be considered in the first instance by the Budget and Transformation Panel, with a further report thereon being submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 17th June.

A Sustainable Transport Future – Local Government Consultation Event

The Committee was advised that the Department for Regional Development had published a revised Regional Transportation Strategy which set out a range of high level aims and strategic objectives mapping out the future direction for transportation in Northern Ireland beyond 2015, when the current transport plans would expire.

The Committee was advised that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, in conjunction with the Department for Regional Development, was holding a consultation event specifically for Councillors and officers on Wednesday, 15th June, 2011, in order to examine the proposals included in the revised Strategy. The event, which was at no cost to the Council, would be held in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown, commencing at 9.30 a.m. and finishing at 1.00 p.m.

The Committee authorised the attendance at the consultation event of any Member who so wished.

Human Resources

Recruitment of Post of Director of Finance and Resources

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of report

To constitute the selection panel for the recruitment of the Director of Finance and Resources.

Relevant Background Information

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee gave approval to recruit the post of Director of Finance and Resources on 18th March, 2011. At that meeting, the selection panel was given delegated authority to offer the post to the recommended candidate, with the outcome being reported back to Council on 4th July, 2011. Given that elections have taken place since then, there is a need to agree the elected members from Strategic Policy and Resources Committee who will constitute the selection panel for this recruitment exercise.

Key Issues

All recruitment in local government is regulated by the Local Government Staff Commission’s (LGSC) Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection. As agreed with the LGSC, the constitution of selection panels for director level posts in Belfast City Council should comprise the Chair and Deputy Chair of the controlling committee (or their nominees), another elected member from a political party not represented by the chair or deputy chair,

the Chief Executive and a chief officer. Given the nature and significance of this post the LGSC has agreed that up to two elected members in addition to the chair and deputy chair may sit on this selection panel. Committee are asked to decide whether they wish to nominate one or two additional Members for the Panel. An observer from the LGSC and a professional assessor may also be in attendance but with no voting rights. All panel members need to be trained in ensuring equality of opportunity with the recruitment and selection process and the entire panel should be balanced in terms of gender and community background.

The post of Director of Finance and Resources was advertised on 5th and 6th May, 2011 with twenty-three applications received by the closing date of 25th May, 2011.

The advertised schedule of dates for this recruitment campaign are as follows:

- (i) Selection panel short-list meeting on Monday, 6th June, 2011 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. (to determine which candidates to attend preliminary interviews);
- (ii) Preliminary interviews held by Executive Search Consultants on Wednesday, 8th, Thursday 9th and Friday, 10th June, 2011;
- (iii) Selection panel meet to review the outcome of the preliminary interviews on Tuesday, 14th June, 2011 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. (to determine which candidates should be invited to assessment centre);
- (iv) Short-listed candidates attend an assessment centre on Tuesday, 21st June, 2011;
- (v) Members' briefing meeting on Wednesday, 22nd June, 2011 from 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. (to agree outcome of assessment centre and agree which candidates are invited to interview); and
- (vi) Selection panel interviews to be held on Thursday, 30th June, 2011 from 9 a.m. (times to be confirmed).

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- 1. agree the elected members' nominees to comprise the selection panel; and**
- 2. confirm availability for the schedule of dates at which the selection panel's attendance is required i.e. Monday, 6th June, 2011; Tuesday, 14th June, 2011, Wednesday 22nd June, 2011 and Thursday, 30th June, 2011"**

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, Councillor Attwood and Councillor Hendron be appointed to the Selection Panel for the recruitment of the post of Director of Finance and Resources.

Chairman