

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 23rd September, 2011

## MEETING OF Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Members present: Councillor McKee (Deputy Chairman) (in the Chair);  
Aldermen Browne, Campbell and R. Newton;  
Councillors Attwood, Convery, Garrett, Haire,  
Hanna, Hendron, Lavery, Mallon, Maskey, McVeigh,  
Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Muilleoir and A. Newton.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;  
Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;  
Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;  
Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and  
Environmental Services'  
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Chairman (Councillor Hargey) and Councillors Jones and Reynolds.

### Corporate Plan and Performance Management

#### Members' Workshop of 17th August – Feedback and Next Steps

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

#### **"1.0 Relevant Background Information**

**The first in this year's series of corporate planning workshops was held on the 17th August in the Group Space (Ulster Hall) and attended by 30 Councillors plus Chief Officers.**

**The workshop was facilitated by Councillor Jon Huish.**

There were two sessions:

- one about ‘place-shaping’ and potentially ‘game-changing’ projects that Members wanted to see delivered in Belfast on a NSEW and CityCentre basis.
- one about the corporate themes – leadership, economy, environment, people and communities and improving services.

This report sets out the direction given by Members at the workshop to guide further development of the corporate plan 2012-15 together with progress in developing the ‘investment package’ which members wish to use to communicate the Council’s commitment to tackling the effect of the economic downturn in the city.

A summary of the feedback provided by Members at the session on 17th August has been circulated for the Committee’s information, together with a initial draft outline of how an investment or stimulus package might be developed and presented. It is very much a first draft for Members consideration and direction, with additional work to refine its messages ongoing.

## 2.0 Place-shaping

### 2.1 *Identification of projects*

The projects selected by Members for further focus fall into two categories – green, which are underway and amber/red which are at various stages of readiness from being ‘ideas’ to having fairly well established concepts.

Members asked that a process should be delivered to take these projects forward. Members wanted to progress those projects which were ready to move forward but also to get other projects to a state of readiness where they might avail of potential funding opportunities or be the subject of advocacy by Members for funding. In order to do this Members are asked to consider two steps – agreeing principles for taking projects forward and agreeing the process of engagement with Members around this.

#### *Process in taking decisions about project investment forward*

At the workshop Members considered the steps that necessary to take a project from concept through to delivery, including concept design and agreement, potential funding arrangements; detailed design and costings; political approval, planning permissions; project planning, procurement, contract management and delivery.

The next stage is therefore for Members to further consider the projects listed, testing them against the various stages of project delivery and providing further direction for officers. In order to guide this process it is suggested that a set of principles be established so that scarce resources can be effectively targeted at realisable projects.

These principles will need to consider a number of issues such as:

- concept plan
- feasibility
- design
- funding
- need for balance of funding across city
- need to deliver against Council objectives

In order to take forward further consideration of both the projects and the principles it is recommended that a set of the City Centre, North, South, East, West joint officer/Member working groups is established, these working groups will report back to a meeting of Party Group Leaders and Committee in November with an agreed set of principles and updates on all the projects considered.

## **2.2 *A place-shaping opportunity for Belfast - ERDF***

Linked to the place-shaping work is an opportunity for Belfast to benefit from funding from the ERDF with the potential to draw down up to 75% of the cost of specific types of capital projects aligned to supporting local economic development and the objectives of Invest NI. To avail of the first tranche of funding, applications must be made by 30th October 2011 for expenditure up to December 2013. Three of the projects focused on by Members at the place-shaping workshop, are in a position at the current time to be submitted by the deadline, these being:

- Green economy business park, Northforeshore;
- Innovation Centre at Forth River Business Park on Springfield Road;
- Digital Hub.

A separate report on the ERDF proposals will also be considered at this Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, seeking approval to make these applications and which also outlines the potential to attract significant tourism development funding for an extension to the Waterfront Hall to provide additional conference and exhibition facilities.

### **2.3 Leadership and governance**

Members stressed the need to create a long-term vision for Belfast, using mechanisms such as the masterplan process which will help guide future city development, identify opportunities and advocate for key city infrastructure and projects.

- An opportunity now exists to take forward the review of the masterplan connected to the further development of the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks with the Department of Social Development and other partners. This would greatly help the creation of the more coherent and unified city framework that Members want to see in place. Members are asked to approve further work on this issue with a report being brought back before Christmas.

### **2.4 Members also recommended the following:**

- (i) A review of council governance and decision making structures to ensure that these are fit for purpose– Members asked that officers look at best practice elsewhere and come up with a series of options for consideration;

The Council should actively advocate and build appropriate relationships with government and external organisations in order to ensure that the Council has the powers to determine 'place' and to increase the rate base. Officers will continue to work with DoE and DSD in relation to planning and regeneration pilots and bring forward options for consideration by Members.

- (ii) A positive, coherent relationship with the Executive should be developed around key advocacy issues and the position of the Lord Mayor should be used to maximise the impact of advocacy. Clear positions on city developments with significant potential to benefit the city and local communities should be brought to Committee, these should include – the move of the University of Ulster campus into Belfast; the rapid transit project; the creation of a digital hub, the development of Royal Exchange in the City Centre, the development of stadia at Windsor and Casement Parks.

- (iii) Party Leaders should be supported to work across parties to ensure that all strategic issues are taken forward effectively and to create positive and beneficial change. Members felt that the contribution made by Jon Huish had facilitated discussions on strategic issues had introduced a needed element of challenge, it was proposed that such support should be continued throughout the remaining corporate planning process to enable effective dialogue at party leader and party group level.

**2.5 *Economy (discussion also drew upon the Development Committee workshop of 12 August)***

Members recommended that:

- (i) The new plan must have a strong focus on the local economy, including effective investment in key projects, support for job creation, support for small businesses, building the skills base and the most impactful use of the Council's own procurement and employment practices to provide job and training opportunities for local people.
- (ii) Given the imperative created by the impact of the recession on Belfast, Members were keen that an investment or stimulus package should be drawn together as quickly as possible to demonstrate the Council's leadership on tackling the effects of the downturn.
- (iii) Officers have been working to develop a set of key messages around the types of intervention that members have requested and to quantify this investment in monetary terms an initial draft indicative outline of how an investment or stimulus package might be presented is attached at Appendix 3. This is very much a first draft for comment/direction and further work is ongoing.
- (iv) In order to build on the momentum created on both the 12th and 17th August sessions, Members asked that the next workshop session should focus on the economy. The date for this session has now been set as 28th September, commencing at 9.30am and concluding with lunch at 1.00pm, the venue is once again the Group Space in the Ulster Hall. The session will be facilitated by Neil Gibson of Economic Forecasts, author of the Council's city competitiveness research report. The draft stimulus package will be discussed in greater detail and will be further developed with Members at this workshop.

- (v) **Members have also indicated that a consensus building city workshop or conference on the economy in the Autumn would allow the Council to share its ideas with partners and other stake-holders and communicate its commitment to investing in and supporting the local economy. A proposal on the format and approach to this conference will be discussed further with Members at the economy workshop.**

## **2.6 *People and Communities***

- (i) **Key issues for Members in supporting local people and communities were:**

- **Identifying measures whereby the Council can support local people to cope with the recession such as the support for debt advice and the measures described in the Council's Anti-Poverty Framework.**
- **The integration of services locally and maximising the usefulness of local community assets and social enterprises;**
- **Good relations – needs to be more 'upfront' throughout the corporate plan and in particular a Council should commit to a strategy which enhances accessibility to all parts of the City, tackles interfaces and build confidence, trust and relationships.**
- **Building on and replicating the best features of successful local interventions such as measures to address anti-social behaviour and the installation of alley-gates.**

- (ii) **The third workshop session, scheduled to be held on 12 October will be devoted to the issue of people, communities and neighbourhoods. It is intended that at this workshop Members can explore further the development of a better Council approach to working in and intervening in neighbourhoods and ways in which the good relations agenda, including work at interfaces can be better reflected in the corporate plan. At this session members will also consider the policy framework which will underpin the implementation of the Local Investment Fund, previously agreed by the Committee; this will include the process and criteria for implementing the fund. Finally the Anti-Poverty Framework which was the subject of recent consultation with Parties will be presented in its final draft form.**

## **2.7 *Environment***

Members want a continued focus on creating a cleaner, greener, city. Key points included:

- The need for a clear focus on the importance of green space in the city as a way of improving quality of life in all ways including health, supporting the local economy through events and improving the city's offer to visitors, workers, students and investors;
- The impact of all natural city assets should be maximised – greenways, parks, rivers and mountains;
- The Council's environmental commitments should not be passive but should be framed and delivered in such a way that they enlist the public and partners;
- Transport is a key issue, including the need for constantly improving public transport and ultimately rapid transit infrastructure;
- Ensuring that the city meets its waste management targets, reducing the amount of waste produced and improving recycling rates remains a priority.

Proposals on actions and targets around the environment theme will be brought to SP&R, Parks and Leisure and Health & Environmental Services Committees in October and November.

## **2.8 *Timeline for delivery of the corporate plan and future Member engagement***

The timeline for the remaining production of the corporate plan has been circulated for Members' information.

## **3.0 Resource Implications**

The resource implications of taking forward the Council's commitments as set out in the 'investment package' will be discussed further in line with the budget setting process for 2012-15.

## **4.0 Equality Implications**

Equality screening of all elements of the corporate plan will be taken forward throughout the process of its development

## 5.0 Recommendations

### Summary of recommended actions:

Members are asked to agree the principles and process for taking forward the projects identified at the place-shaping workshop;

Members are asked to agree the actions outlined for taking forward further work on the corporate plan themes including:

- **Creating a stimulus package for Belfast and organise a consensus building city workshop or conference on the economy in late Autumn, detail to be discussed further at the economy workshop on 28th September. An initial draft indicative outline of how an investment or stimulus package might be developed and presented is attached at Appendix 3, which had been circulated for the Members' information;**
- **Take forward the review of the masterplan connected to the further development of the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks with the Department of Social Development and other partners;**
- **Review council governance and decision making structures to ensure that these are fit for purpose;**
- **Support Party Leaders to work across parties to ensure that all strategic issues are taken forward effectively and to create positive and beneficial change, this should include an external support and challenge role;**
- **Advocacy - clear positions on city developments with significant potential to benefit the city and local communities, these should including the move of the University of Ulster campus into Belfast; the rapid transit project; the creation of a digital hub and the development of Royal Exchange should be brought to Committee;**
- **Commit to a strategy for interfaces which builds confidence and relationships."**

During discussion, the Members commended the report and made the following points:

- the package needed to strike a balance between investment in the city through financial support for big construction projects and support for individuals struggling to cope with the recession;



- the reduction in the levels of poverty and inequality needed to be more central in the document;
- the Council should explore how it provides more focused advice, support and signposting services to those in debt and examine how it can through its own activities offer opportunities for internships, mentoring schemes and apprenticeships;
- the Council needed to investigate how it could do more to address the issue of employability by working with relevant government bodies such as the Department for Employment and Learning and by introducing a city-wide bursary scheme;
- more work was required on the contribution procurement and social clauses might make to providing opportunities to local firms and those not in employment;
- the Council needed to drive the agenda for reducing health inequalities;
- it was essential to explore the social economy and the potential to work with other bodies in that area;
- rather than committing to a strategy for interfaces only, there should be a commitment to ensure that the good relations and equality strategy was considered in relation to all the projects across the City in which the Council was involved;
- the Council needed to take on a greater civic leadership role and become the voice of the city in relation to advocating for the needs of its citizens and marketing the city for investment and tourism;
- the Council should develop an international and external relations strategy, and form key relationships with bodies such as Invest NI and government departments to ensure that investment efforts were aligned and focused; and
- there was a need to ensure that the identification of place shaping projects was spread fairly across the city and that key projects in the city centre, such as a civic square around the City Hall and the development of St George's Market, were considered.

In response the Chief Executive stated that in order to effectively deliver on the package the Council would need to agree a balanced programme of investment across the city which would gain political support; need to consider affordability in the context of agreement on the level of the rate and efficiency measures; and deliverability in terms of the detail of projects and programmes being sufficiently designed and specified to establish their financial consequences and delivery timetable. He indicated that work was ongoing in terms of identifying funding streams to support the programme and that an effective engagement strategy with government departments and the private sector would have to be developed to optimise investment in the city. He highlighted that work was also ongoing in relation to social clauses, procurement and marketing in the city and that further reports would be brought to the Committee.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Democratic Services and Governance**

**Review of Parliamentary Constituencies**

The Committee was advised that the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland had published its Provisional Proposals Report for the 6th Review of Parliamentary Constituencies on 13th September. The report set out for public consultation the boundaries and names of the proposed new constituencies. The Democratic Services Manager reported that the Council had, in the past, when previous reviews were being conducted, agreed to display the report and constituency maps in the Reception area of the City Hall in order to inform the public and to assist those interested to submit responses to the consultation. Accordingly, the map and report had once again been displayed in that area on 13th September. He explained that the Council's accepted practice when considering consultations on proposed changes to electoral boundaries was not to make a corporate response but rather to leave it to each of the Political Parties to respond. That was due to an acceptance that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to reach a consensus on a matter where there was likely to be different or opposing views taken by the various Parties.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee:

- grant retrospective authority for the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland's Provisional Proposals Report for the 6th Review of Parliamentary Constituencies to be displayed in the Reception area of the City Hall with effect from 13th September; and
- refer consideration of responses to the consultation to each of the Political Parties on the Council.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Minutes of the Member Development Steering Group**

The Committee adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Member Development Steering Group held on 30th August.

**Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality**

The Committee was advised 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
British Mensa Ltd	British Mensa Annual Conference Dinner  22nd September, 2012  Approximately 120 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair, together' and Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks.  Approximate cost £500

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/ Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Silver Award Presentation for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award  28th November, 2011  Approximately 500 attending	The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits	These awards aim to recognise the development of citizenship amongst young people and to acknowledge the newly found skills and talents which will enable them to develop and mature as individuals. The event meets the Council's Key Themes of 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.	The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits  Approximate cost £1250
Health and Social Care Board	Regional Social Work Awards Ceremony  8th June, 2012  Approximately attending	The use of the City Hall	This event will seek to recognise those Social Workers who operate across a range of specialities and who have demonstrated outstanding service to the people of Belfast.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall
Social Security Agency	Launch of the Social Security Agency 'Innovation Fund for Benefit Uptake'  1st November, 2011  Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall	This event will launch an initiative which seeks to increase benefit uptake through an Innovation Fund. It will also seek to strengthen partnership working with the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'Better support for people and communities'; 'City leadership, strong, fair, together' and 'Better services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/ Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Corrymeela Community	Inclusive Neighbourhood Project - 'Sharing the Learning'  29th November, 2011  Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.	This event, which concludes the Peace III funded 'Inclusive Neighbourhood Project' seeks to support integration between the refugee and host community in Northern Ireland. The event aims to do this by sharing and disseminating the learning, launching the final evaluation report and community training resources and celebrating individual achievement with a certificate presentation.  This event, which would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together', 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.  Approximate cost £500
Andersonstown Traditional & Contemporary Music School	Showcase Concert  14th November, 2011  Approximately 600 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits.	This free to attend event will aim to showcase the talent of the children and young people to many different communities from across the city of Belfast by actively inviting such groups to attend.  This event seeks to recognise the achievements of the Music School and to pay tribute to past and present pupils.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme 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 tea/coffee and biscuits  Approximate cost £1500

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

## **2012 Olympic and Paralympic Activity**

(Mr. G. Copeland, City Events Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

### **“1.0 Purpose**

**1.1 This purpose of this report is to update Strategic, Policy & Resources on the current status of BCC related London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic activity. The report is also seeking approval from Members for: the installation of the Olympic and Paralympic emblems on the City Hall; for the hosting of the Paralympic Flame Festival at City Hall and for the selection of two Olympic Torch bearers which the Council has been offered by London 2012.**

**1.2 A number of reports have been taken to Council over the last number of years in regard to plans for the 2012 year. Therefore, the planning process has started on the events programme for the year.**

### **2.0 Background**

#### **2.1 London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games**

**There are a number of strands relating to the London 2012 Games connected to Belfast. These are highlighted below.**

**2.2 Pre-Games Acclimatization and Competitions – There will be details confirmed on these issues in the near future as the information is currently embargoed. It should be noted that this process has been facilitated by the work of the Council’s Sports Development Unit, alongside DCAL, Sport NI and a variety of regional sports bodies. The output of this process would see significant numbers of international athletes either using Belfast for pre-Games competitive events and or making the city their home for pre-Games acclimatization. However, at the current time, Australia has issued a letter of intent and Hungary & Canada are considered potentials.**

**2.3 Olympic Torch Relay – In May 2011 it was announced that Belfast will be part of the UK Olympic Torch Relay. The Northern Ireland Olympic Torch Relay will culminate in Belfast on the 6 June after a three day tour across the region. The route for the Belfast leg has been selected by LOCOG 2012 with no input from BCC Officers and is not open for change as the final selection of both the route and torch bearers rests with the London 2012 Olympic Games**

organisers. The plan is to welcome the arrival of the Olympic Flame to City Hall, on the evening of the 6 June. The cortege would be met by a range of performers, some of which will be supplied by LOCOG. However, there will be a cost to Council, which is currently estimated at circa £50,000. This money would be found within the agreed finances for the City's overall 2012 activity and have matched funding from other bodies such as NITB; DSD and Sport NI.

- 2.3 Olympic Torch Bearer Nominations – Along with the Relay there was also an opportunity for the general public and a range of sporting and non-sporting individuals to be nominated to carry the Olympic flame through Belfast. The public selection of these individuals closed at the end of June 2011. However, the Council now has the opportunity to nominate two individuals to carry the Olympic flame. These nominations must be completed by the 31 October 2011. It should be noted that due to LOCOG 2012 guidelines the Council is not permitted to make a public call or campaign for nominations. Therefore, it is being recommended that the Chair and Deputy, along with Officers from the Council's Sport Development Unit look at winners from the Belfast Sports Awards which have been staged over the last number of years.
- 2.4 2012 Paralympic Games Flame Festivals (24 to 29 August) – Council Officers have just received details in regard to this element of the 2012 year. The proposed event, which the Council has yet to agree to, would be proposed to be staged on Saturday 25 August and be focused in and around Belfast. There is no nation wide torch relay, like the Olympic Games, and the event would involve the Paralympic Flame being transported to Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff and London between the above dates. The proposed Belfast 'Flame Festival', if agreed by Council, would open with lighting of a Paralympic light at sunrise in Belfast (probably Stormont), followed by a series of community visits culminating in an evening celebration at the Belfast Live Site location at City Hall. This latter element will involve Council financial resources which are estimated around circa £35,000. This money would be found within the agreed finances for the City's overall 2012 activity and have matched funding from other bodies such as NITB; DSD and Sport NI.

- 2.5 Inspire Mark – The 2012 ‘Inspire Mark’ is the official London Games brand endorsement for community, civic and cultural activities. To date the Council has only made limited use of the endorsement London 2012 Games ‘Inspire Mark’. However the series of Inspire Marked ‘Try-it’ events hosted in Leisure Centres have made use of the brand to attract funding from DCAL and BT. To date over one thousand local primary school and summer scheme children have taken part in a range of Olympic sports, as well as Gaelic and Asian sports activities.**
- 2.6 Olympic & Paralympic Spectaculars – A proposal, from the Government Olympic Executive and DCAL, has been received to install both the Olympic Rings and the Paralympic Agitos on Belfast City Hall. At this stage the Government Olympic Executive are seeking Council approval to install the symbols. If approved by Council the Rings and Agitos would require approval from NI Planning Service & NIEA. It would be anticipated that installation period would be from the 31 December 2011 to the 10 September 2012 (the day after the closing ceremony of the Paralympic Games). The cost of the production, installation and removal would be met by the Government Olympic Executive. The Council would be required to look at a launch event for the ‘Spectaculars’. The proposed launch would be date would be mid-night on the 31 December 2011. The cost for this event would be met by the Government Olympic Executive as part of their Olympic ‘Look’ campaign.**
- 2.7 Live Site Screen - Belfast City Council now has one of LOCOG/BBC funded Big Screens (all so known as Live Sites). In total there are twenty-one of these large LED screens around the UK, with a possible twenty-second planned for Derry~Londonderry as part of its preparations for the City of Culture in 2013. The Belfast screen is based in the grounds of City Hall. To date the screen has relayed promotional campaigns for the Council and facilitated musical, operatic and sports events. The Live Site is also available for the use of community, cultural, sports and arts organisations. This could simply be the promotion of a certain initiative or the staging of an event in front of the Big Screen. The screen costs the Council a maximum of £20,000 per year, which covers maintenance, insurance and security expenditure. The screen has temporary planning consent for three year period after which, according NI Planning Service, it should be moved out of the grounds of City Hall, unless the Council decides otherwise and objects.**

### **3.0 Key Issues**

- 3.1** The following section indicates the key matters required to be addressed by Council.
- 3.2** Olympic Torch Bearer Nominations – Agreement from Members that the Parks & Leisure Committee Chair and Deputy, along with Officers from the Council’s Sport Development Unit, assess two nominations from previous award winners of the Belfast Sports Awards as the Council’s two Torch Bearer nominees. It should be noted that those selected by BCC are not guaranteed to be part of the 2012 Torch Relay until LOCOG 2012 run their own checks and scrutiny process.
- 3.3** 2012 Paralympic Games Flame Festival (24 to 29 August) – The Council will need to commit at least £35,000 of its planned 2012 budget to this project. If agreed, the Council will work closely with LOCOG 2012 and a number of local partners to deliver this significant ceremonial event for the city. Members will also need to agree to the usage of the City Hall grounds in order to stage this event.
- 3.4** Olympic & Paralympic Spectaculars – There are a number of key issues here. Firstly, Members will need to agree to the erection of these items on City Hall. It will also require input from planning professionals within the Council re the installation of the symbols and applying for temporary planning consent. The unveiling of the symbols would be financed by the Government Olympic Executive through its Olympic ‘Look’ campaign. The planned unveiling of the Olympic Rings for Belfast would be coordinated with events in Edinburgh, Cardiff and London and would take place on the 31 December 2011, with the Belfast event taking place at City Hall.

### **4.0 Resource Implications**

#### **4.1 Finance**

- 4.2** Pre-Games Acclimatization and Competitions – Costs have yet to be established.
- 4.3** Olympic Torch Relay – It is likely that this event would cost the Council £50,000. It is anticipated that part of this money would be found within the agreed finances for the City’s overall 2012 activity and have matched funding from other bodies such as NITB; DSD and Sport NI.



- 4.4 Olympic Torch Bearer Nominations – No cost
- 4.5 2012 Paralympic Games Flame Festival (24 to 29 August) – This element will involve Council financial resources which are estimated around circa £35,000. It is anticipated that part of this money would be found within the agreed finances for the City's overall 2012 activity and with matched funding sought from other bodies such as NITB; DSD and Sport NI.
- 4.6 Inspire Mark – No cost to the usage of the LOCOG 2012 brand.
- 4.7 Olympic & Paralympic Spectaculars – There would be costs attached to any agreed planning application with the largest finance attached to the proposed launch date at mid-night on the 31 December 2011. The unveiling of the symbols would be financed by the Government Olympic Executive through its Olympic 'Look' campaign to the sum of £30,000.
- 4.8 Live Site Screen - The agreed screen costs for Council is a maximum of £20,000 per year, for three years from 2011 to 2013. This covers maintenance, insurance and security expenditure.
- 4.9 Staffing – It would be envisaged that at least two additional staff would be required to deliver the sited events. This is based on the experience of previous events such as the World Cross Country; World Boxing and the 2009 Tall Ships events. This issue will be addressed in broader paper on overall 2012 and 2013 event activity.
- 5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications
- 5.1 As with all major civic events, public events like this have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.
- 6.0 Recommendations
- 6.1 SP&R are being asked to recommend:
- Agree that a report goes to the Parks and Leisure Committee in order that an internal nomination, for the Council's two Olympic Torch Bearers, is achieved by the 31 October 2011. This would involve the Chair and Deputy Chair of Parks and Leisure with input of Officers in the Sports Development Unit.

- **Staging of the Paralympic Flame Festival at a costs of circa £35,000 plus match funding from external partners. Finance for this event would be as part of the Council agreed 2012 budgets from the Development Department.**
- **Olympic & Paralympic Spectaculars – That Members agree to the 2012 ‘Spectaculars’ being installed on City Hall by the 31 December. In addition to the staging of an event on the New Year’s Eve to mark the unveiling of the Olympic Rings, with the cost of this event being met by London 2012.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Board of the Ulster Orchestra Society Limited**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th August, it had considered correspondence which had been received from the Ulster Orchestra Society Limited which had indicated that the status of the Council representation on the Board had been changed from that of a “representative” to that of an “observer”. The Committee had agreed that, in the first instance, the Chairman and the Council’s current representative on the Board meet with representatives of the Ulster Orchestra Board to discuss that change of status.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the Council’s representative on the Board (Councillor Maskey) had since had a discussion with Mr. Declan McGovern, the Chief Executive of the Ulster Orchestra, and had raised with him the concerns which had been expressed by the Members at the meeting of the Committee. The Town Solicitor/Assistant Chief Executive had also had a subsequent discussion with Mr. McGovern for the purpose of clarifying some of the background issues.

Mr. McGovern had explained that, following the appointment of a new Chairman to the Ulster Orchestra, a major review had been carried out in relation to its governance. That included the appointment of a consultant to carry out a good governance review. Out of that review, a number of recommendations had been made, one of which was that there were too many directors and that the Board should be reduced from fourteen to seven members. The review had concluded also that there needed to be a reduction in the number of Board meetings and that there was a need for the members of the Board to receive full training.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that a key recommendation arising out of the review was that any member of the Board who represented a funding organisation should not be a formal director, but rather should have status as an “observer”. However, as an observer, that individual would still receive all Board papers and have the right to participate in discussions at the Board meetings, but would not have any formal right of voting. Mr. McGovern had explained that that recommendation had been made in order that there could be a Board of Directors which was deemed to be completely independent in terms of its formal decision making. The Chief Executive of the Ulster Orchestra had been keen to reiterate that those individuals with observer

status would have access to the same information as other Board members. He had also pointed out that the governance proposals had been fully supported by the Arts Council, which was a primary stakeholder, and that the reality was that almost all decisions of the Board were taken by consensus and it was rare that a vote was required.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that the Council itself would be looking at its own governance issues over the next few months and that the Town Solicitor/Assistant Chief Executive would be leading on the matter with a report being submitted to the Committee in relation to the creation of a constitution for the Council, which would include a review of issues such as relationships with Outside Bodies and the role of Members who were appointed or nominated to those Bodies.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Best Practice Visits - Irish Medium Initiatives**

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín raised the issue of Best Practice Visits to Irish Medium Initiatives. He outlined the background to the Irish language community, the numbers enrolled in the Irish Medium education establishments, the investment in economic development in the Gaeltacht Quarter and other initiatives and suggested that a number of Best Practice site visits be arranged for the month of October to the following locations:

- Colaiste Feirste Secondary School, 59 Beechview Park;
- Cultúrlann Building, 216 Falls Road;
- An Droichead, 20 Cooke Street; and
- 174 Trust, 174 Antrim Road.

The Committee agreed to undertake the Best Practice site visits as outlined and that these be arranged over lunchtime periods, that the High Sheriff, Mr. Ian Adamson, be invited to attend and that a further report exploring Best Practice visits in general be submitted to the Committee in due course.

### **National Association of Councillors – Annual General Meeting and Conference**

The Committee was advised that the National Association of Councillors was holding a weekend Conference and Annual General Meeting from 14th till 16th October in the Hallmark Hotel, Carlisle. The conference aimed to tackle public disorder and discuss delivering community safety by considering the importance of community policing and the benefits of a stronger more visible police presence in communities. The matter of alcohol-related problems and the issues of crime disorder which could arise out of that would also be examined. The approximate cost of attending would be £654 per delegate.

The Committee authorised the attendance at the National Association of Councillors Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) and a representative of each of the Parties on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members.

## **Finance**

### **Finance Update Report**

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

#### **"Relevant Background Information**

**At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 August, the potential for unutilised funds becoming available for re-allocation was highlighted. A review of the forecast year end position has confirmed that up to £2m, in the context of the overall financial position of the organisation, is available for re-allocation. The reason for funds becoming available is due to slippage in a number of capital projects and a reduced vehicle replacement requirement.**

**The purpose of this report is to agree the principles to be used to determine the re-allocation of the funds and to present options for utilisation.**

#### **Key Findings / Issues**

##### **Principles**

**It is recommended that the following principles are adopted by Members to allocate the unutilised funds:**

- 1. They are used to support one-off initiatives rather than on-going expenditure. This means there will be no negative impact on the rate setting for 2012/13 and beyond.**
- 2. For any agreed revenue projects, the money must be spent by 31 March 2012.**
- 3. There are a number of initiatives which the council is committed to delivering but are currently unfunded. These initiatives should have first call on the available finances.**
- 4. Money may be allocated to reserves for specific future use.**
- 5. Priority should be given to initiatives which have a direct benefit to the city and its ratepayers.**

## Options

### *Commitments requiring funds*

1. £54,000 to finance the winter gritting materials and equipment required by the Parks Service as agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 August 2011.
2. £160,000 to finance the potential purchase of property adjacent to the Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park as agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 August 2011.
3. Members are aware that the council has agreed to extend the opening hours of Roselawn Crematorium. This means that the service will be in operation during hours of darkness. At present suitable lighting is not available along the entrance avenue. It is recommended that £60,000 is set aside to finance the installation of suitable lamp standards and luminaries.

### *Future Commitments requiring funds*

1. The council has agreed to host or compete for a number of events over the period 2012/13 - 2015/16. In 2012/13 the Titanic Centenary celebrations and the World Irish Dancing Championships will require funding of £400k and £200k, respectively. In addition, in 2013/14 the World Police and Fire Games and the All-Ireland Irish Dancing Championships will require a total of £600k. As these events are non-recurrent in nature it is recommended that a specified reserve is created in order to build up a pot of money which will cover the additional finance required. This means that the events can be funded without having to increase the district rate. In the first instance it is recommended that £600,000 is placed in a specified reserve to cover the 2012/13 expenditure.

## Additional Initiatives

1. The underspend provides an opportunity to support elements of the Parks and Leisure programmes of work which are currently not supported by the department's budget. By allocating finance to non-recurrent items of expenditure, it means that major areas of improvement to services provided to the public can be delivered without impacting on the ratepayer in terms of increased rates bills. The following areas have been identified as being suitable for non-recurrent financing:

- a. A programme of 3G and grass resurfacing which has been identified as being required through the Pitches Strategy.
- b. The resurfacing of the cycling track at Orangefield Park which is used as a training facility for national cyclists who compete in the Commonwealth and Olympic Games.
- c. A programme of improvements and renewals in parks and leisure facilities, including lighting and equipment.
- d. A programme of community initiatives including playgrounds, community gardens and local community events.

It is recommended that £800,000 is allocated to the overall programme of work and that the Parks and Leisure Committee agree the allocation of money to specific initiatives.

2. Members are aware that the council is currently in the process of developing a portfolio of city projects in partnership with the public, business and community sectors. In order for Members to prioritise these projects and to support external funding applications, a reasonable level of detail is required in terms of costs, benefits, delivery implications, and so on. A feasibility study is the approach used to gather this information. It is recommended that £125,000 is set aside to develop feasibility studies where these are required.
3. A recent study by the Office for National Statistics showed that 4.9 million people connected through wi-fi hotspots over the last year in the UK, up from 0.7 million in 2007. At the last of meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the issue of wi-fi access in the City Hall was raised. Permission is sought from the Committee to carry out a feasibility study on providing wi-fi access in the City Hall and the Waterfront Hall to enhance the offer of these buildings to the public, tourists and business users. On completion of the feasibility study a report will be provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
4. There are a number of planned maintenance projects which can be brought forward from 2012/13 and completed by 31 March 2012. It is recommended that £260,000 is allocated to this area.

### Implementation Issues

Members should note that progress in delivering the agreed initiatives will be closely monitored and will be reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of the quarterly finance reports. The half year finance position will be brought to the Committee in November. At this point the Committee will also be in a position to review the future potential financial requirements of the city investment strategy and the forecast year end rates position.

### Decision Required

#### Recommendations / Decisions Required

It is recommended that Members note the report and agree to the following:

- (a) the principles to be applied to the allocation of funds;
- (b) £54,000 is allocated to finance the winter gritting materials and equipment required by the Parks Service as agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 August 2011;
- (c) £160,000 is allocated to finance the potential purchase of property adjacent to the Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park as agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 August 2011;
- (d) £60,000 is set aside to finance the installation of suitable lamp standards and luminaries in Roselawn Crematorium;
- (e) A specified reserve is established with the purpose of building up funds for major city events and that £600,000 is allocated to this reserve in the first instance;
- (f) £800,000 is allocated to support a programme of work in Parks and Leisure and that the Parks and Leisure Committee agree the allocation of money to specific initiatives;
- (g) £125,000 is set aside to develop feasibility studies for city projects where these are required;
- (h) A feasibility study on providing wi-fi access in the City Hall and the Waterfront Hall to enhance the offer of these buildings to the public, tourists and business users is carried out;
- (i) £200,000 is allocated to support planned maintenance projects which can be brought forward from 2012/13 and completed by 31 March 2012.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that a recommendation be made to the Parks and Leisure Committee that, when considering the programme of improvements and renewals in Parks and Leisure facilities, priority be given to those venues which have friends groups or other similar organisations affiliated. It was agreed also that a report on the future of the former Grove Swimming Pool be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

### **Report on the Review of Procurement**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided a summary of the key findings of the review of procurement in Belfast City Council.

### **Land and Property Services/Belfast City Council Memorandum of Understanding - Quarter 1 Performance Report**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 Land & Property Services (LPS) is an executive agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel. It is responsible for maintaining the valuation list of all properties in NI and the billing and collection of rate bills.**
- 1.2 The Council receives 74% of its income from the rate. The performance of the rating system is therefore critical to the financial performance of the Council. For this reason at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 18th March 2011, Members agreed a suite of progress indicators which would be used to monitor the performance of both the council and LPS in various areas of rating activity. These indicators relate directly to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between LPS and Belfast City Council and the Committee also agreed that quarterly performance reports on the progress of the indicators should be presented to the Committee.**
- 1.3 At their meeting the Committee were also advised that in order to make the performance information more useful and help identify areas for improvement that the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) would provide benchmark information from GB authorities to use for comparison purposes. Paragraph 2.3 (below) provides information on progress to date on benchmarking activity.**



- 1.4 The information from quarter 1 of this year has now been collated from data supplied both by LPS and the Council's Building Control Service. In addition the IRRV produced benchmark data based on a selection of GB Local Authorities that have similar population and property counts to Belfast. These Councils are then analysed against the Nobel indicators and the GB Deprivation Analysis to make sure they are as close a match as possible.

## **2 Summary of Performance**

- 2.1 The quarter 1 performance report is attached at Appendix II and provides full details of each indicator including definition, data, benchmark information, analysis and actions for improvement. A summary of the key issues is outlined below.
- 2.2 A number of the indicators are reported on annually and are therefore not included in this quarter's report. In addition, a number of the indicators continue to be refined to ensure that they are defined and reported on in a manner that supports analysis and improvement.
- 2.3 In the coming months, BCC and LPS officials will meet with IRRV to ensure that the benchmark information is as close as like-to-like as the different situations in Northern Ireland and Great Britain allow. The discussions will allow us to ensure that the benchmarking process is robust and transparent.
- 2.4 The time taken to process the information required to issue a rates bill

LPS has written to council officials (Appendix III) to highlight issues with the original data they had provided for the two indicators relating to this area. They have now requested that this data is withdrawn from the quarter 1 report.

### **2.5 The collection of rates**

In quarter 1 the LPS collected 31% of the rate compared to a target of 36%. This is a lower than the same period last year, principally due to the payment of rates by a number of Belfast based public bodies in early July 2011, rather than late June, for example assessments of £5.8 million was received from an education public body in early July 2011, compared with late June last year. Taking these timing differences into account, year on year performance is broadly comparable.

## **2.6 The loss on vacant properties**

6.6% or £21.2 million of potential rate for Belfast is lost due to the amount of vacant properties which are entitled to a reduction (up to 100%) on their rate bill. The measure reports a higher percentage shortfall than that recorded in Q1 2010/11. The key reason for this is the economic downturn which has increased levels of vacancies across the city.

## **2.7 The Cost of Collecting the Rates**

Average cost of collection rose from £27.74 in 2009 /10 to £28.20 in 2010/11 which is a rise of 1.66%. The GB benchmark shows a reduction in cost over the same period from £29.56 to £27.46. Because of the particular difficulties in comparing GB and Northern Ireland figures on this indicator, this will be a particular focus of discussions with IRRV.

## **2.8 Debt Collection**

The level of rating debt for the BCC area at 31 March 2011 was £52.5m which shows a reduction of 6.1% during 2010-11. This is despite a continuing downturn in the economic climate and was achieved by the following :

- The implementation of an LPS Debt Action Plan;
- The promotion of rating support benefits.
- An increased level of court processes
- The agreement of payment arrangements with ratepayers experiencing payment difficulties

The Committee should note that the rating debt impacts on the Council when LPS decide to write off debt. This is still an area of concern to the Council and Members may wish to gain assurances from LPS on the recovery of the outstanding £52.5m.

## **2.9 Adherence to agreed timetables for sharing information**

The Council and LPS continue to have a pro active working relationship and information relating to the EPP is consistently provided to the agreed timetable

## 2.10 LPS Forecast Information

At the end of Q1 LPS advised that they now anticipate that there will be a shortfall of £161,000 in the final Actual Penny Product. Committee will be aware how important the accuracy of this figure is in the rate setting process and the issues that arose last year due to the late notification of a significant change to this figure. BCC and LPS will continue to review this projection as per the agreed timetable and officers will continue to update Members on any variations.

## 3 Summary of Improvement Actions and Next Steps

3.1 Officers from the Council and LPS met to discuss the first quarter report and have summarised a number of improvement actions which are included in the report. In particular the following areas have been agreed as priorities.

- Reducing the loss on vacant properties
  - The Council has commissioned a piece of work to help identify ways, in partnership with others, that it can help enhance the rate base. This scope of this work will cover
    - Changes to rating policy
    - The management of vacant properties and
    - The introduction of business incentives
  - Once the Rating of Empty Homes is implemented, LPS will be turning its attention to ensuring that records of non-domestic vacant properties and exclusions from Non-Domestic Vacant Rating are fully up to date, and all appropriate assessments raised.
  - The Council's Building Control Service intend to continue to inspect vacant properties to see if they are in fact occupied and should be paying the full rate.

- Cost of collection

LPS will continue with work to clear backlogs and implement a revised service delivery model which encompasses the end to end rating process, and drives improvements to all

- Debt Management

LPS will build on the work of the 2110-11 Debt Action Plan; reviewing and revising procedures and systems and revising the LPS Collection and Recovery Strategy.

3.2 Members should note that the Budget and Transformation Panel have requested that officers from the LPS attend its meeting in October. The outcome of this meeting will be reported to this Committee.

#### 4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report including the quarter 1 data and the actions for improvement”

Noted.

### Capital Funding - European Regional Development Funds and Tourism Development Scheme Funds

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the report is to inform Members;

- of the potential to secure funding for capital projects from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Tourism Development Scheme (TDS)
- of the deadlines which are associated with applications to the fund;
- and to seek agreement on applications for projects within the deadlines set by DETI and NITB

#### 2.0 Background

##### ERDF

2.1 The European Regional Development Fund aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. In short, the ERDF finances:

- Direct aid to investments in companies (in particular SMEs) to create sustainable jobs;
- Infrastructure linked notably to research and innovation, telecommunications, environment, energy and transport;
- Financial instruments (capital risk funds, local development funds, etc.) to support regional and local development and to foster cooperation between towns and regions;

- 2.2 The current ERDF Programme runs until 31 December 2013. This in effect means that for a project to be eligible for funding, all approvals must be obtained and match funding committed by 31 December 2013, however actual spend on the project can be incurred beyond this date so long as all expenditure is completed by 31 December 2015.
- 2.3 The Programme in Northern Ireland is administered by the SEUPB, however DETI acts as the Managing Agent for a major element of the programme, the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme which is designed to support the creation of sustainable employment particularly in the SME Sector.
- 2.4 When the BSP was originally devised a 'Local Economic Development (LED)' Measure was included within the programme. This equated to a sum of £22m which was ring-fenced for applications from local Councils. In order to access this funding projects had to be led by a local authority and match funding of 50% made available from other public sources. At the outset it was envisaged that this match funding would come from the local authority. Since the commencement of the programme in 2007 there has been a limited drawdown from the fund, mainly due to the fact that Councils have not been in a position to make match funding available. Belfast City Council has been the exception and has drawn down an average of £600k per annum over the period to match fund its economic development programmes.
- 2.5 In order to maximise the drawdown from the BSP Invest NI agreed last year to match fund any application from councils which aligned with its corporate objectives. In effect this means that Councils can obtain 75% external funding for any project which meets the criteria for the fund and is aligned with Invest NI objectives. Despite this incentive the financial pressure being experienced by councils has meant that the BSP fund is still substantially under-committed.

#### TDS

- 2.6 The Tourism Development Scheme is essentially the programme devised by NITB to allocate capital funds made available from the Executive Budget to tourism related capital projects. The TDS is a competitive process and requires applicants to make bids for funding from the scheme. It is anticipated the scheme will open for a period of six weeks for applications in late September and will seek applications for funding between now and December 2015. It is expected that any application for funding for projects which the council might wish to deliver during this period will have to be

submitted during this funding round. It is unlikely that successful applications will receive more than a 50% contribution from the TDS towards the capital cost of the project concerned.

### **3.0 Key Issues**

#### **LED Measure**

- 3.1** There is a substantial risk that a large proportional of the £22m under the BSP may go unspent and as a result lost to Northern Ireland. As a result the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment has written to Councils setting a deadline of 30 October 2011 for applications to the LED programme which would require programme spend before December 2013. The letter requires proposals to be 'clearly defined, robust and fully costed'. The letter also makes it clear that any deficit on the £11m profiled for expenditure in that period will be reallocated to other economic development activity. A similar deadline of 30 September 2012 been set for expenditure of £10m profiled for 2014 and 2015.
- 3.2** The letter referred to above also informs councils that Invest NI will take on the role of Managing Agent for the LED Measure for the remainder of the Programme.
- 3.3** An opportunity clearly exists to draw down substantial funding towards programmes which meet with the economic development priorities identified by elected members and are aligned to Invest NI corporate objectives. In addition to this there is the potential to obtain match funding of up to 75% for economic development related capital projects which the Council might wish to invest in, either through its Capital Programme, City Investment Fund or Local Investment Fund.
- 3.4** At the Place Shaping Workshop on 17 August 2011 members prioritised a number of capital projects, two of which have been the subject of discussion with senior officials in Invest NI, namely the development of a Green Economy Business Park at the North Foreshore and an Innovation Centre at Springvale/Forth River. Invest NI have expressed a willingness to financially support both of these projects subject to the Council submitting viable proposals for their development and their being no displacement issues for existing premises and businesses.

- 3.5 The Director of Property and Projects has engaged BDO Stoy Hayward to complete an Economic Appraisal for the development of a Green Industry Park at the North Foreshore. This is due for completion in late September. At this point the cost of any potential project is not yet known however the Economic Appraisal could form the basis of a project proposal, with associated costs, for submission to Invest NI by the 30 October 2011 deadline.
- 3.6 Over the past 3 months the Director of Development has also been in discussion with Invest NI and the Falls Road based Local Enterprise Agency, Ortus Ltd with a view having Ortus develop a business case for the development of an Innovation Centre at the Forth River Business Park on the Springfield Road. Again it is anticipated that a submission could be made by the 30 October deadline.
- 3.7 In addition to the above Invest NI are keen to work in partnership with BCC to develop a Digital Hub in Belfast similar to facilities which have been developed in other cities such as the Digital Hub, Dublin, the Match Factory in Liverpool and the Custard Factory in Birmingham. Each of these facilities have been hugely successful in promoting digital technology based enterprises in their respective cities. The promotion of the creative industry sector has been identified as a priority by members of the Development Committee at their workshop on 12 August and an area of competitive weakness in Oxford Economics comparative analysis of Belfast with other cities.
- 3.8 At this point in time numerous organisations and locations have expressed an interest in housing this facility. Potential locations include Crumlin Road Gaol, Carlisle Memorial Church and Conway Mill amongst others. This is a project for which we would intend working up a proposal in partnership with Invest NI between now and the deadline of 30 October. Until such a proposal is fully developed it is not possible to establish the full costs of such a project however an indicative cost of £4m would not seem unreasonable. It is expected that the contribution required from the council would be around £1m.
- 3.9 In addition to the capital projects identified above Economic Development Officers are anticipating that the Council will receive requests for financial support for capital projects from other third parties in the near future. These include North City Business Park which is considering the development of an Enterprise Centre at the former Grove Baths Site and the Argyll Business Centre which is seeking to expand its

facilities on the Shankill Road. It is unlikely that these proposals will be fully developed in advance of the 30 October deadline but there will be a further opportunity to make bids in advance of the 30 September 2012 deadline.

#### Non LED Funding

- 3.10 In addition to the LED measure SEUPB can allocate funding to other economic development activity outside of the 'LED Measure' referred to above. One project which has been earmarked for ERDF funding by NITB is the proposal to extend the Waterfront Hall to incorporate conference and exhibition facilities. This project was also identified as a priority by the elected members at their Place Shaping workshop on 17 August 2011.
- 3.11 NITB has informed the Director of Development that £10m of ERDF funding has been provisionally set aside to part fund such a project. A further bid of £2m to NITB's Capital Budget is also likely to be successful. FGS Mc Clure Watters are currently completing the Business Case for this project and is due for completion in mid- September. The projected cost of the preferred option is estimated at around £16m, excluding fit out and professional fees. Project Management Staff in Projects and Properties estimate a total project cost of £19m-£20m.
- 3.12 During a recent meeting as part of the economic appraisal process, executives from the NEC suggested that if the Waterfront Hall was to re-focus its business on conferences as opposed to entertainment much of this investment could be self financing through reduced costs and increased revenue.
- 3.13 NITB in a recent meeting (30 August) informed the Director of Development that the Council will be required to submit a funding application for this project to the Tourism Development Scheme (TDS). It is anticipated that this will open for calls in late September 2011 and close in late October 2012.

#### TDS Funding

- 3.14 In addition to bidding to the NITB capital budget for the extension to the Waterfront Hall referred to above Officers have been in discussions with NITB about potential capital funding to support the relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre from its current offices to a more appropriate location elsewhere within the City centre.



3.15 NITB has indicated that subject to an acceptable business case being submitted the Council could expect a contribution of around £800k towards the cost of the project. A full business case is currently being finalised by ASM Horwath and should be complete by the end of September. The total cost of the project is not expected to exceed £1.6m.

#### 4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 Until the business cases in relation to each of the above projects are complete it is not possible to state with certainty the financial contribution required from the Council towards these projects however at this point it is estimated that the following funding could be required:-

Project	Total Cost	Funding Expected	Council Contribution
North Foreshore	£8m	£6m	£2m
Springvale/Forth River	£8m	£6m	£2m
Conference Facilities/ Waterfront Hall	£20m	£12m	£8m
Digital Hub	£4m	£3m	£1m
Belfast Welcome Centre	£1.6m	£800k	£800k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£41.6m</b>	<b>£27.8m</b>	<b>£13.8m</b>

#### 5. Equality and Good Relations Considerations

5.1 There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached with this report.

#### 6. Recommendation

6.1 Given the deadlines set out above it is clear that if the Council wishes to maximise the potential for external funding for the above projects it will require business cases to be completed and applications submitted to Invest NI and NITB by the end of October 2011. This is why the report is being submitted to SP&R and the Development Committees this month.

6.2 Members are asked to consider supporting applications for each of the projects outlined above and agreeing in principle to meeting the council contribution from the Council's City Investment Fund and/or Capital Programme for the purposes of the application.

- 6.3 Any commitment by the Council would be subject to each project obtaining a positive economic appraisal, demonstrating a positive economic benefit to the city and being awarded the projected grant funding.
- 6.4 It is recommended that the report should also be submitted to the Development Committee for its consideration at its meeting on 27 September, where an update will be given on SP&R's consideration of the funding implications. The views of both Committees will then be able to be considered at the Council meeting on 3 October.
5. Decision Tracking
- 5.1 The Directors of Development, Projects and Property and Finance and Resources will bring appropriate reports back to Committee on the full business case for each of the projects and associated detailed costings for further consideration by the Committee in due course."

During discussion, a Member pointed out that the proposed Green Industry Park at the North Foreshore needed to be discussed in detail by the North Foreshore Steering Group to allow detailed input from the local Elected Members. In addition, the Belfast Welcome Centre should be requested to provide evidence outlining its business plan for the years ahead and the potential for the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board working together on the same site, should be explored.

In response, the Director of Property and Projects undertook to expedite a meeting of the North Foreshore Steering Group to allow the Members the opportunity to discuss the project. The Director of Development pointed out that he would be submitting to the Development Committee a report in relation to collaboration between the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Tourism Ireland and the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, which would recommend that representatives from all three organisations be invited to meet with the Committee to discuss their future plans.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Property and Projects Management Arrangements

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### "Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to consider the appropriateness of the current management structure within the Property and Projects department in the context of the changing needs of the organisation.

The Property and Projects department was created by the council in September 2009 on the back of an independent report on the governance of major projects which highlighted the need to formalise the effective management of major project risks. Members agreed that a Director of Property and Projects post be created with responsibility for:

- Facilities Management (Facilities, Property Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance).
- Asset Management
- Estates Management
- Capital Programme
- City Investment Strategy
- Procurement

Currently, a Head of Facilities Management and principal officer grade in each of the functional areas support the director.

### Key Issues

Since the department was created in September 2009 the needs of the organisation have changed significantly in two key areas – the scale and complexity of physical projects which the council is becoming increasingly engaged with, and the role of procurement in delivering efficiency cash savings.

#### Scale and complexity of physical projects

In terms of the city investment strategy, members have expanded the role of the council to not just being a funder of projects but also to be the facilitator of project development with a range of partners across the public, business and community sectors. At present, the Property and Projects department is engaged in the development of over 30 potential partnership projects.

In addition, the council has taken on responsibility for the delivery of the Connswater Community Greenway. Members have indicated their desire for the council to use its project delivery experience to support the development of a number of agreed schemes across the city to enable them to bid for funding from council funding streams such as the city investment strategy, and local investment fund and external funding such as ERDF, Peace III and the social investment fund.

Consequently, the majority of the section's time is now being spent on the development of city investment projects and the delivery of Connswater Community Greenway.

### Role of Procurement

The council has agreed efficiency targets of £2m for each of the next two years. The efficiency programme is a key element of the financial strategy of the organisation and the savings it generates supports the additional investment in capital projects while at the same time keeping the district rate as low as possible. Procurement is a key strand of the efficiency programme and members have already considered today an independent report which recommends that a more strategic approach is required if further procurement savings are to be delivered. The report also recommends that a Head of Procurement post should be created.

### Key Recommendations

It is recommended that a new head of service post is created in the Property and Projects department. This post would be responsible to the director for the council's procurement function and the Project Management Unit. The post holder would be responsible for delivering the recommendations contained in the independent review of procurement and the operational elements of the capital programme and city investment strategy. The creation of the post would therefore serve to enhance the council's ability to assist schemes to be developed to a stage where they are capable of being delivered subject to funding.

It is also recommended that the post should be self-financing through the delivery of procurement savings which means that there would be no additional cost to the ratepayer. These savings would be delivered in the context of an overall procurement efficiency target which would be set by Members.

Members are requested to note that the Budget Panel, at its meeting on 13 September 2011, agreed with the creation of the proposed Head of Service post. The Panel, while recognising that the number of Heads of Service posts has been reduced from 26 to 15 over the past five years, also recommended that further review of senior management posts in the organisation should take place as part of the 'employee costs' strand of the council's efficiency programme.

### Implementation Issues

In accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection:

- the post would be publicly advertised and the selection panel would comprise the Chair of the Committee and two other elected members from political parties not already represented by the Chair, along with the Director of Property and Projects and another director/appropriate head of service;

- the entire selection panel would be representative of gender and community background with all panel members having attended recent training in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques; and
- an observer from the Local Government Staff Commission and a professional assessor could also be in attendance during the selection process but with no voting rights.

The proposed recruitment and selection is as follows:

- following council ratification, the vacancy to publicly advertised on 3 and 4 November 2011 with a closing date of 18 November 2011;
- the panel short-list to take place on 29 November 2011 from 1:30pm to 3:30pm;
- short-listed candidates invited to attend a full day assessment centre on 6 and 7 December 2011;
- Members' briefing and the selection panel meeting to approve the outcome of the assessment centre to be held on 8 December 2011 from 9:30am to 10.30am; and
- the selection panel interviews to be held on 15 December 2011 (all day to be kept free).

#### Financial Implications

A job description has been prepared for the proposed post of Head of Procurement and Projects with an evaluated indicative grade of SCP66 - £56,755 – SCP74 - £67,565.

#### Decision Required

Members are asked to agree the following:

- (a) The creation of a new Head of Procurement and Projects.
- (b) The new post holder will be responsible to the Director of Property and Projects for the Procurement Unit and the Project Management Unit.
- (c) The post will be financed through procurement efficiency savings.
- (d) Further review of senior management posts in the organisation to be included as part of the 'employee costs' strand of the council's efficiency programme.
- (e) The post will be recruited in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection

- (f) That in the interests of making an early appointment, the selection panel be given full delegated authority (through the Director of Property and Projects) to offer the post to the recommended candidate with the outcome of the appointment being reported back to committee for notation.
- (g) That a review of the number of senior management posts be undertaken as part of the employee costs

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel.

#### **Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel of 14th September.

#### **Section 115 - Continuation of the Fuel Stamps Scheme**

The Director of Health and Environmental Services reported that, following the successful pilot of the Fuel Stamps Scheme in early 2009, the Committee had agreed to roll out the Scheme across the Belfast City Council area. It was estimated that 38% of households in Belfast were currently in fuel poverty. To help people, particularly older people, budget for expensive Winter oil bills, the scheme enabled residents to purchase £5 savings stamps from local shops, garages, credit unions and some local Council facilities. To date, almost 69,000 stamps totalling over £334,000 had been sold to the public through the Scheme.

The Director pointed out that the annual operating cost of the Scheme was £45,000 which included administration, printing and promotion costs. The cost of the Scheme was funded through the Council's thematic budget allocation and, given the nature of the expenditure, it required the Committee to grant authority under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to incur the expenditure.

After discussion, it was

Resolved – That the Committee grants authority under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to incur expenditure of £45,000 during 2011/12 on the Fuel Stamps Scheme, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would be of direct benefit to, the District and the inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefits so accrued would be commensurate with the payment to be made.

## **Asset Management**

### **Approval to Seek Tenders – Mechanical Installations**

The Committee granted authority for the commencement of a tendering exercise and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to invite and approve the invitation of applications for inclusion on a Select List and the submission of tenders in respect of Mechanical Service Installations for a period of one year, with an option to extend for a further two years. The estimated annual value of the contract was £500,000.

### **M1 Vesting - Department of Regional Development**

The Committee was advised that when undertaking improvements to the M1 Motorway the Department of Regional Development had acquired lands from the Council by way of two Vesting Orders on 2nd August and 15th November, 2004, respectively. Whilst compensation had been paid to the Council in relation to one of the Vesting Orders, compensation for the other had been withheld pending the Council proving that it had held title to the land.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, following protracted negotiations, it had been agreed that a compensation sum of £143,000 plus statutory interest be offered for the Council's fee simple interest in the second area of land acquired by the Department of Regional Development by virtue of a Vesting Order dated 15th November, 2004, and he recommended that the Committee accept that offer.

The Committee agreed to accept the compensation as outlined.

### **Connswater Community Greenway**

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 an area of land at Linen Gardens had already been acquired by the Council, with a further area located adjacent to it having been agreed for sale to the Council. However, within those areas of land, Northern Ireland Water required an area consisting of 275 square metres to construct an underground mechanical screen as part of its existing combined sewer outfall at that location. Following discussions between Council officers and McAdam Design, the project managers for the Connswater Community Greenway, it had been established that the Northern Ireland Water proposals could be accommodated without conflict with the Greenway. As the structure was located underground and the area would not be fenced off, access would still be available to the general public. Council officers had agreed, subject to the Committee's approval, to sell that portion of land to Northern Ireland Water by way of a 99 year lease for a one-off premium of £3,000 plus payment by Northern Ireland Water of the Council's reasonable legal fees.

The Committee granted the approval sought, subject to detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager and a suitable legal agreement to be drawn up by the Legal Services Section.

**Ormeau Park - Ormeau Golf Club Rent Review**

The Committee was advised that the former Parks Committee, at its meeting on 11th January, 1990, had agreed to lease approximately 38 acres of golf course at the Ormeau Park to the Ormeau Golf Club for a term of 30 years. A lease to that effect between the Council and the Club had commenced on 1st July, 1990. In addition, the former Client Services (Parks and Amenities) Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 13th November, 2001, had agreed to lease an additional portion of public land extending to 0.56 acres by way of a Supplemental Lease dated 1st April, 2004. Under the terms of the lease the rent was subject to a review every seven years and was to be ascertained by the District Valuer (Land and Property Services).

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, following discussions between the Trustees of the Club and Land Property Services, agreement had been reached to revise the current rent of £12,500 per annum upward to £13,750 per annum, with effect from 1st July, 2011, payable for the seven year period of the lease.

The Committee approved the proposed revised rent of £13,750 per annum.

**Licensing Lease Renewal: Community Usage**

In accordance with Standing Order 46, the Committee was advised that the Development Committee had approved the extension of existing lease and licence arrangements for the premises listed hereunder:

**Benview/Ballysillan Play Centre**

The licence agreement with Benview/Ballysillan Tenants' Association to be renewed for a further 12 months with effect from 1st July, 2011, with the Council paying a rental amount to the Tenants' Association of £4,025.56 for the Council's partial use of its facility.

**Loop River Play Centre**

The licence agreement with the 26th Scout Group be renewed for a further 18 month period from 1st July, 2011 at a cost of £190 per week.

**Belfast Education and Library Board/Clarawood  
Community Association – Anne Napier Centre**

The lease for the Anne Napier Centre between the Belfast Education and Library Board and the Council and the sub-lease between the Council and Clarawood Community Association be renewed for a further two years with effect from 1st July, 2011, subject to the revenue grant allocation to the Association being sufficient to meet all related costs.



### **Walkway Community Association**

The lease for the site at 1-9 Finvoy Street with Walkway Community Association be renewed for a further five years with effect from 5th November, 2010 at a revised rent of £475 per annum. In addition, the Council was to renew its lease with the Department of Regional Development, Roads Service for the site at 1 Finvoy Street for a further five years, subject to a rent of £1, if demanded.

### **Percy Street Lease**

The licence agreement with the Lower Shankill Group Welfare Committee in respect of the Percy Street Community Centre be changed to a lease agreement similar to other independently managed centres, such as the Grosvenor and Shaftesbury Recreation Centres, at a rent of £1,550 per annum with effect from 1st April, 2011.

The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Development Committee.

### **Smithfield Market Unit Lettings**

In accordance with the authority delegated to him, it was reported that the Director of Property and Projects had let the following units at Smithfield Market:

- Unit 2 – Desmond McKenna, 2 Mulroy Park and Ibrahim Salami, 54 Stranmillis Wharf, Belfast at a cost of £208 per month for the purpose of retailing watch and jewellery repairs and sales
- Units 9/10 – Gary McCann, 11 Knock Eden Park, Belfast, at a cost of £910 per month for the purpose of retailing camping and outdoor equipment;
- Unit 34 – Gary McCann, 11 Knockeden Park, Belfast, at a cost of £395 per month for the purpose of retailing camping and outdoor equipment;
- Unit 38 – Brenda Herald, 72 Duneden Park, Belfast, at a cost of £395 per month for retail of dressmaking, stitching and garment repairs.

Noted.

### **Place Shaping Conference**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1. Relevant background information**

**1.1 In 2010 the Committee agreed to participation in a conference ‘Urban Promo’ in Venice, Italy as part of promoting Belfast in Europe. The conference and associated seminars aims to promote innovation in public, private partnership and to boost investment in cities by exchanging knowledge experience.**

- 1.2 An exhibition consisting of 30 large panels highlighting the story of physical development in Belfast since the early 1990s was produced for the event with some of the images since being used at Member workshops.
  - 1.3 Besides the exhibition a number of presentations were made by Belfast City Council; Titanic Quarter; PLACE, University of Ulster, FAB and Ard Architects who had largely been responsible for pulling the exhibition together. The event was also supported by the British Council as an additional event linked to the Venice Biennale, a major art and architecture event held on a regular basis.
  - 1.4 The Mayor of Venice hosted an evening for the board of event and the Italian press showcased the conference in several different articles.
2. Key Issues
- 2.1 The largely Italian audience was quite impressed at the amount of physical development that had taken place in Belfast in a 15 year period. The Neapolitan Campania region undertook a low key visit to Belfast earlier this year and paid for a number of the Belfast participants to speak in Naples in May 2011 particularly in regard to private sector engagement and alternative funding mechanisms.
  - 2.2 The organisers of the Venice event have since awarded Belfast a prestigious Urbanistica International prize 2011 for 'Best Balance of Interests' ie private, public and community in regeneration. The award is to be presented on 9 November 2011 in Bologna during Urban Promo 2011, Belfast representatives are invited to attend.
  - 2.3 A special issue of the journal Urbanistica published by the Italian Urban Institute dedicated solely to Belfast will be published in December and circulated across Italy and further afield.
  - 2.4 In addition SOLACE (Society for Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) would like to make a short film in relation to this work for their annual conference in Edinburgh in October as part of their 'thought leadership' features. These features are used to demonstrate areas of excellence in local government by those seeking to improve social and economic regeneration.
  - 2.5 A lot has been made of this exhibition and regeneration story outside of Belfast but nothing in the City itself.

- 2.6 With the development of the proposed investment package before Christmas and the publication in Italy in December it is proposed to host the exhibition in City Hall in January.
- 2.7 There would also be an opportunity to host a conference on the place shaping agenda now being formulated by Council to engage the wider development and regeneration sector and to present the Council's ideas. It may also be useful to invite the Italian experts to give an independent view of how Belfast has and is developing.

### Resources Implications

#### Financial:

The exhibition is already paid for there will only be a cost for small scale catering.

Should a decision be taken to attend the award ceremony there would be flight and accommodation costs.

#### Human Resources:

There are no additional HR implications in respect of this report.

#### Asset Implications:

There are no additional asset or other implications.

### Equality & Good Relations Implications

None at this time.

### Recommendations & Decisions

Members are requested to agree to host the exhibition as part of a conference on the broader place shaping agenda.

Members are asked if the Committee wishes to be represented at the prize award ceremony.

### Decision Tracking

If agreed a date in January will be set subject to City Hall availability.

**Key to Abbreviations**

PLACE – Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Community,  
Environment  
FAB – Forum for Alternative Belfast”

The Committee agreed to host the aforementioned exhibition and agreed also that it be represented at the prize award ceremony by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman and the Director of Property and Projects (or their nominees).

**Offer to Donate an Historic Clock to the Council**

The Committee was advised that an offer had been made to donate to the Council an historic clock which had first been used to regulate the Albert Clock and then placed in the City Hall to set the timepieces which were located in the building. In the early 1970's the clock had been considered redundant and had been sold by the Council to the person who had been contracted to look after its clocks. His family was now offering to donate the piece to be returned to the City Hall.

The Chief Executive explained that regulators were precision timepieces often used to time astronomical observations or adjust more workaday clocks to keep the best possible time. The regulator dated back to the 1860's and had been signed by F. Moore, who had premises located at the bottom of High Street, including his own observatory, and whose business included the supply of navigational chronometers to ships, as well as looking after the Albert Clock. The clock had a significant historical connection to the City and a very close association with the Council from the construction of the Albert Memorial 1865-69 until the 1970's. It was in excellent condition having recently undergone professional conservation.

The Committee agreed to accept the donation by means of a formal transfer of title process, that a small ceremony hosted by the Lord Mayor be held to acknowledge the generosity of the family and the sum of £300 be provided to cover the associated costs.

**Good Relations and Equality**

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

**Minutes of Historic Centenaries Working Group**

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the minutes of the Historic Centenaries Working Group of 6th September be referred back to the Group for further consideration.

**Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 12th September and adopted the recommendations in respect of the Bonfire Management Programme in relation to the delivery mechanism and level of annual funding in the sum of £50,000 for 2012.

**Notice of Motion re: Removal of Peace Walls**

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

**1.0 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 At the Council meeting on 1 September 11, Alderman Ekin proposed:**

**'This Council can demonstrate true civic leadership by agreeing to tackle one of the biggest problems which affects all of the citizens of the City, that is, the continued existence of the so called "Peace Walls".**

**These walls performed a necessary security purpose in the past in the several interface areas of the City but now serve to increase alienation and to inhibit regeneration and development of those very same areas and the time has now come to seek to move towards their removal.**

**The Council agrees to take the lead in devising a strategy which seeks to move towards the removal of a number of these walls within the current Council term. This strategy should be inclusive and include the direct involvement of all appropriate organisations from the business, public and voluntary and community sectors, with the wishes and needs of those people who live in the interface areas being paramount.'**

**The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kyle.**

**In accordance with Standing Order 11(e), the Lord Mayor indicated that the matter would be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee without debate.**

**1.2 Previously, at the monthly meeting of the Council 3 March 2008, Councillor Maginness had proposed:**

**'Belfast City Council resolves that it is now time to begin to work towards the reduction and the ultimate removal of the so called 'peace walls' and barriers that presently divide our City.**

**To this end, the Council therefore agrees to establish a working group to explore ways and means to initiate such a process and to report back with proposals by September, 2008.'**

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Long and the matter was referred to the Good Relations Steering Panel without debate.

At that time, the Good Relations Steering Panel integrated a series of actions related to working in interface areas into its Peace and Reconciliation Plan 2009-2011 as well as the Good Relations Plan. Over £1.5m was spent on initiatives focussed on work at the interface during the first phase of the Council's Peace III Programme.

## **2.0 Key Issues**

2.1 Drawing from a series of research reports, it is clear segregation has significant costs in the city. This includes the distortion of labour markets, the inefficient use of services and facilities, significant urban blight and poverty. The 'diseconomies of segregation' are borne disproportionately by the most disadvantaged communities. All of this projects a negative backdrop as Belfast presents itself as an outward looking and modern location for living, investment and tourism.

Health and well-being are inextricably linked to community cohesion. Health tends to decline (with premature mortality and increased morbidity, particularly in stress related conditions) in communities where levels of interaction are low and where people feel insecure.

2.2 From the outset of the Council's good relations work, it was acknowledged that social divisions in Belfast were deep-rooted and that it would require a joint approach from a number of agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to effect change in our city and address issues such as sectarianism and racism. Since 2002, the Council has co-operated and partnered with a range of other agencies in the city in examining and tackling the issues that cause division.

2.3 While the removal of interface barriers is critical to the success of Belfast, it also presents an enormous threat to those who feel most protected by their existence. It is more likely that by promoting connections and access to safe and affordable shared spaces and high-quality services, community interaction will increase and suspicion and mistrust will diminish. Ultimately, it is hoped that safety and security in Belfast will only truly be guaranteed through interaction rather than hard physical measures such as barriers.

- 2.4 Equally, we must proactively work with, and expedite bureaucratic processes for, those communities who through community consultation, are seeking to remove or reduce the interface barriers in the city.
- 2.5 Since the publication of the Good Relations Strategy in 2003, we have always advocated a 'commitment rather than minimal compliance' approach. As the public sector is increasingly challenged to meet the needs of our society within a reducing public purse, it is critical that good relations work continues to be seen as a central part of the city agenda rather than additional burden or an optional extra.
- 2.5 As part of the Council's Safer City Strategic Group business plan for 2010/11, an internal officers' group was established to develop a co-ordinated Council-wide approach to interventions at interfaces in Belfast. The Safer City group has identified three potential roles for Council in its approach to interfaces:
1. A civic leadership role – setting the vision that ultimately we should be seeking to develop a City without physical barriers
  2. An influencing role – seeking to use the influence of the Council to ensure that all master plans, developments, regeneration projects seek to contribute to a City without physical barriers
  3. A practical role – using the resources of the Council (assets, facilities, funding) to complement and support wider initiatives aimed at promoting and ultimately achieving a City without physical barriers.
- 2.6 This Council group is currently considering ways in which a one Council approach can link with the work of the inter-agency Interface Working Group (IWG), convened by the Community Relations Council.

The Interface Working Group has developed a number of initiatives, particularly around barrier removal. While the Council has no direct involvement in the erection or removal of interface barriers, a template has been devised through the IWG to assist communities seeking barrier removal and there is a defined role for Council's in this process. The principles involved in this are that in all responses to the legacy of physical segregation, the safety and security of the people living near to interfaces and interface barriers will be the priority. At the same time it is the responsibility of government to develop responses to the real challenges of fear and threat which do not rely on permanent barriers or patterns of exclusion and violence.

The Council has a key role within this process and this role will be reflected in any strategy and action plan emerging from this report, in line with the principles contained within the IWG.

**2.7** It is therefore proposed that a detailed framework for action, in relation to the interface barriers in the city, is developed under the 5 strategic themes of the Council. Across all of these areas of city development, there are multiple opportunities to promote good relations and community cohesion outcomes, with a focus on neighbourhoods located at the interface.

**2.8** Some indicative actions may be:

- **Better leadership**
  - The place-shaping agenda in Belfast can proactively transform contested space in the city. City centre must be secured and promoted as a shared space alongside other iconic projects, such as University of Ulster, Girdwood, Springvale and Connswater Greenway. In addition, the Council can set an overall vision of a city without physical barriers and use its influence to permeate that vision within the wider regeneration agenda.
- **Better opportunities for success across the city**
  - Labour mobility in the city is dependent on ease of access and reduction in the perception of risk to personal safety. There is potential for orbital and cross-city routes, building public transport demand.
  - There is opportunity in Belfast to work with local areas on a series of linked cultural tourism and night-time economy projects which promote a unique 'City of Neighbourhoods' and ensures that the social and economic value of the multiple cultural identities of the city is maximised.
- **Better care for Belfast's environment**
  - Segregation has a carbon cost too, with distances travelled to access services in the city, such as schools, greater as a result of the distorted travel horizons we have in the city. Safe and shared connections for walking and cycling will impact upon the environment of the city as well as promote accessibility and connectivity.



- **Better support for people and communities**
  - It is critical that we work with local neighbourhoods who are seeking to reduce and remove barriers, in the context of local area working. There are already a number of communities who are looking for leadership and support in their desire to transform and remove barriers. We could seek to support and advocate for a number of pilot areas in Belfast, located at the interface, to regenerate the neighbourhood while safely and sensitively removing/reducing barriers.
- **Better services**
  - Duplication and restricted access are key efficiency and value for money questions for asset management and service delivery in Belfast. We must develop a neighbourhood asset management model which will maximise social outcomes while at the same time reduce segregation.

2.9 It is recommended that a cross-cutting interfaces strategy be developed identifying resources, necessary partnerships and a monitoring framework for presentation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

### 3.0 Resource implications

3.1 **Financial: To be determined**

**Assets: To be determined**

**Human: Officer time to draft an interfaces strategy and associated action plan.**

### 4.0 Equality considerations

4.1 A screening exercise will be undertaken as part of the development of the strategy and action plan.

### 5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee recommends the Good Relations Partnership works with the Safer City Group to develop a strategy and action plan focussed on neighbourhoods located near/at the interface. This will be presented to the SP&R Committee for discussion at a meeting in November 2011, for integration into the forthcoming corporate plan and subsequent business plans in 2012/13.

**6.0 Officers to contact for further information**

**6.1 Peter McNaney, Chief Executive (Ext. 6001)”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Notice of Motion re: 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, agreed that the undernoted Notice of Motion which had been proposed by Councillor Kingston be referred to the Committee for consideration and report:

“The Council notes that this year marks the 400th anniversary of one of the English language’s most pre-eminent books – the King James Version of the Bible.

The Council recognises that this publication combined an accuracy of translation with an authoritative and poetic use of language which has made it the most widely used version of the Bible, with over one billion sales. The Council recognises also the significance of the role which the King James Bible played in the development and the global spread of the English language, with a richness of expression which has enhanced our language and continues to do so to this day.

The Council commends those churches and groups in Belfast and elsewhere which have organised events and activities in recognition of the 400th anniversary of this treasure in the Christian heritage of our country and requests the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to give consideration as to how the Council might also recognise this important and historic anniversary.”

The Good Relations Manager reported that, in order to provide the Committee with proper information, some initial consultations had been held with Councillor Kingston and Mr. John Doherty from the Bible Society Northern Ireland, with a view to looking at how best to mark that anniversary should the Committee decide to adopt the Motion. She explained that there were a number of events being planned by several churches and groups in Belfast to mark the anniversary. Therefore, to complement those events that were happening at a community level, the option of delivering a lunch-time event in the City Hall had emerged as a potentially appropriate way to mark that anniversary. In consultation with the Bible Society Northern Ireland, that event could take the form of a selection of the following activities:

- contributions of biblical phrases that still held good in the Belfast speech today;
- a shared reading of a passage of the Bible by senior church representatives in Belfast

- a display of items associated with the King James bible, such as different historical versions, ancient Greek and Hebrew texts, an audio display, along with other translations;
- locating the King James version of the Bible within the historical chronology of Bible translations.

The display could remain within the City Hall for a short time after the event.

The Good Relations Manager indicated that up to a maximum of £1,500 would be required to organise and run the lunch-time event to cover the cost of refreshments and the transport and positioning of artefacts. It might be possible to fund the event from the Good Relations budget, 75% of which could be recouped from the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister through the District Councils Good Relations Programme. If that were not possible, then the costs could be met from the Civic Hospitality budget.

The Committee agreed to:

- (i) hold a lunch-time event in November, along the lines of the above-mentioned content in partnership with the Bible Society Northern Ireland;
- (ii) facilitate an on-going display of items for a short period following the event in order to enable those who could not attend to view the artefacts.

### Cross-Cutting Issues

#### Response to the Department of Justice on the Consultation on Police and Community Safety Partnerships

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 As Members are aware, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) will be established as new statutory bodies under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and should be in place by April 2012.**

**1.2 To move this process forward the Department of Justice (DOJ) is consulting on the implementation of PCSPs and has asked for responses on 3 key areas in this consultation, namely:**

- 1. Details of what should be contained in the code of practice for the operation of PCSPs (and in the case of Belfast, District Police and Community Safety Partnerships);**

2. Processes for the designation of statutory bodies on the partnership;
  3. A Draft Code of Practice on the appointment of Independent Members
- 1.3 Party group briefings were held in August in order to formulate a response for approval at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September. The draft response to the consultation is attached as Appendix 1. It should be noted that DOJ has agreed to consider the Committee's response following this meeting, despite the fact that the original deadline was 13th September 2011. the full consultation can be found at [www.dojni.gov.uk/...consultations/...consultations/consultation\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_pcsp-2.pdf](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/...consultations/...consultations/consultation_on_the_implementation_of_pcsp-2.pdf)
- 1.4 The Committee should also note that a further report on the new PCSP structure will be brought to the October meeting of the Committee, asking for a decision on the number of members who should sit on the PCSP and also the process for making political nominations to be made to the partnerships.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 There is recognition by all parties that the existing processes surrounding the functions of the DPP are bureaucratic for both Members and officers. There was a general consensus that resources, both financial and human, should as far as possible be used for local service delivery to tackle community safety issues and effective engagement at community level.

### 2.2 Draft Response – Summary

A draft response is provided at Appendix A. the key issues highlighted include:

- 2.2.1 Belfast Code of Practice – We are proposing that, due to the unique make up of Belfast, there should be a separate code of practice and that the code should take the form of a flexible framework, with an outline only of roles and responsibilities, good practice guidelines and minimal reporting requirements. This would mean that the detailed procedures could be developed locally.

- 2.2.2 Administrative procedures - We strongly recommend a significant shift from the mandatory / formal requirements of the existing Code Of Practice (COP) to a more flexible and locally determined approach which will allow local partnerships to assign the bulk of their resources to tackling ASB, crime and community safety issues, rather than resources being over committed to administrative functions.**
- 2.2.3 Local communities – The response proposes that local communities are at the core of the new partnership arrangements. It is therefore essential that the Belfast Code of Practice facilitates a locally determined relationship with communities which is responsive and provides effective service delivery at a local level. We recommend that arrangements for local engagement, allocation of funds, monitoring of functions / plans and management of meetings etc is left to the discretion of councils and local partnerships.**
- 2.2.4 Allowances – The fact that the legislation does not include any reference to payment of allowances (just out of pocket expenses) has caused concern among some parties. A number of those points are highlighted below:**
- **The potential to reduce the number of people applying to become independent members is likely to lead to a reduction in the range and quality of the pool of candidates and could ultimately affect ongoing participation.**
  - **The principle that membership should be reflective of the community and representative of the local political parties could be undermined.**
  - **Money saved from not paying allowances should be passed back to the PCSP for investing in programmes.**
- 2.2.5 Role of Principal Policing Committee –Clarity is sought on the relationship between the Principal Policing Committee and local Policing Committees. This is something which caused a problem with the current arrangements and the opportunity should be taken to rectify this in the future. More detail is provided in the Appendix.**
- 2.2.6 Review of partnerships - In order to ensure there is effective local service delivery for communities we have asked that there is flexibility in relation to the operational and administration of partnerships and that there is scope for a review of regional and local codes of practice / frameworks to allow for improvements / changes to be made after the partnerships are in operation. Such a review should be carried out after 18 months;**

### 2.3 Potential to Pay Chairs Allowances

There may be a possibility of paying chairs of the partnerships a special responsibility allowance, but this would require sanction from the Department of the Environment to raise the current cap on these payments and would also have to come from Council funds. If the Council wished to pursue this approach the Committee would need to write to the DOE to request that this is done.

### 2.4 DOJ / NILGA Workshop

A workshop is being held in Craigavon Civic Centre on 28th September 2011 from 9.30am – 2.00 pm to discuss the implementation plans for the new partnership. Belfast City Council has been invited to send four Members and one officer.

## 3 Resource Implications

3.1 The future funding from the DOJ and the NIPB will need to be agreed via the Joint Committee. During this transitional year (2011/2012) both partners have agreed the same level of funding as last year. Future funding proposals have still to be agreed.

3.2 It should also be noted that there is no provision within the new Partnership arrangements to pay an allowance to Members, either elected or independent, for attendance at meetings of the partnerships. Out of pocket expenses will be paid.

## 4 Equality Implications

None

## 5 Recommendations

### 5.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Approve the draft response attached as Appendix 1;
- Agree that the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee, the Chair of the Principal DPP (or their nominees) and another Member from a different political party attend the DOJ / NILGA workshop on 28th September.
- Consider whether it wishes a letter to be sent to the DOE asking for the Special Responsibility Allowance threshold to be increased to enable chairpersons of the partnerships to be paid an allowance.

### Key to Abbreviations

District Policing Partnerships (DPPs)  
Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)  
Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (or PCSPs)  
District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships  
(or DPCSPs)  
Department of Justice (DoJ)  
Department of the Environment (DOE)

### Appendices

Draft response to consultation  
Updated Diagram of proposed Belfast structures

### Decision Tracking

The Director of Health and Environmental Services will bring a report back on the new PCSP structure will be brought to the October meeting of the Committee, asking for a decision on the number of members who should sit on the PCSP and also the process for making political nominations to be made to the partnerships.

### Appendix 1

### Draft BCC Response to Department Of Justice (DOJ) Consultation on the implementation of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)

### Background

The Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) are new statutory bodies established under the Justice Act (NI) 2011 (to be fully operational by April 2012) designed to combine the work of the current District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in a single unified partnership. The DOJ is consulting on how these new partnerships will operate and wish to examine critically what has gone previously and ensure the new partnerships are able to respond effectively.

There are three strands to the consultation:

1. The practical operation of PCSPs, including the Policing Committee;
2. The issue of designation (whereby bodies which have a contribution to the work of PCSPs are granted membership);
3. Draft code of practice for the appointment of independent members to PCSPs

Useful documents can be downloaded as follows

**Consultation Document**

<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/public-consultations/current-consultations.htm> (this includes draft code of practice for appointment of members)

**Justice Act (Northern Ireland 2011)**

[www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/24/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/24/contents)

Belfast City Council's response below takes the form of general comments, followed by answers to the list of questions posed by DOJ.

**Section One: Operation of PCSPs and DPCSPs**

General Comments on the practical operation of PCSPs (p 7-11 consultation document)

Belfast City Council (BCC) would firstly like to highlight a number of key comments, principles and themes running through our response to the consultations for the DOJ / PBNI to take into consideration regarding the practical operation of the Policing Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) and relevant code of practice as follows;

- I. **Administrative procedures** - BCC strongly recommend a significant shift from the mandatory / formal requirements of the existing Code Of Practice (COP) (currently applicable to the DPP) so that the new partnerships can operate with less of an administrative burden being placed on members and officers, thus enabling them to focus on tackling ASB and improving community safety at a regional and local level. The new code should, in the Council's view, be considered as a framework only, outlining the roles and responsibilities of the new partnerships, suggesting good practice and detailing only minimal requirements in respect of reporting, etc. The code or framework should allow as much operational flexibility as possible, with the specifics of how the partnerships should operate being largely determined locally.

It is important to note that in recommending this approach, the Council does not consider that the need to consult with the community at various levels would be reduced, but rather that this function should be strengthened by considering what works locally. Each DPCSP should be able to consult / engage, plan and monitor as they decide is best for local people as opposed to having to follow rigid requirements which are often not seen as relevant.



To reduce the burden on members in terms of formal meetings, there should be sufficient scope to ensure that the Policing Committees do not need to meet separately from the PCSP by for example creating a clear decision making protocol for restricted functions.

- II. **Belfast Code of Practice** - As Belfast will retain a unique but significantly changed structure with the formation of one PCSP and four District Policing Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs) we strongly recommend that Belfast will require its own separate code of practice / framework. BCC would be happy to work with the DoJ/NIPB to develop this;
- III. **Allowances** – It is clear that the change to the legislation to allow Members (both elected and Independent) to receive expenses only is a significant issue for a number of the political parties, although not all.

Concerns raised include:

- The potential to reduce the number of people applying to become independent members is likely to lead to a reduction in the range and quality of the pool of candidates and could ultimately affect ongoing participation. There will still be a significant burden on members in the new structures considering the time that required to make the new partnerships successful.
- The potential to reduce the level of participation in the new structures could possibly undermine the principle that membership should be reflective of the community and representative of the local political parties.
- The issue of security was highlighted by some as another reason why allowances should be paid as in the past threats were made to DPP members and in some instances attacks on property and vehicles were carried out as a result of their involvement.
- That the withdrawal of allowances is not equitable as members of the Policing Board will continue to receive allowances.
- That the Council should not have to meet the costs for Members using ratepayers' money.
- Money saved from not paying allowances would not be passed back to the PCSP for investing in programmes.

There was an opinion from some parties that the Chairs and possibly vice chairs of the partnerships should at least be paid as they may well take on a much more strategic role, attend more meetings and have more delegated powers which will require a considerable amount of time. However there was little support for this cost being met by the ratepayer.

Even though all parties in Belfast City Council were not in agreement on the allowances issue, the fact that it was raised by four out of six of the party groups means that it is an issue that the DOJ and NIPB will need to consider in moving forward.

In conclusion on this point, it is imperative that the DOJ and NIPB think through the implications of not paying allowances, clarify what will be paid under expenses and appropriately market the recruitment of independent members along with district councils.

- IV. Relationship with Local communities - BCC believes that it is imperative that the practical operation of PCSPs / DPCSPs should ultimately lead to improved community safety and policing across the city. It is therefore essential that the Belfast Model enables the establishment of structures that support responsive and effective service delivery at a local level. We recommend that arrangements for local engagement, allocation of funds, management of meetings etc is left to the discretion of councils and again flexibility is at the core of the new partnerships. It has also been recommended that there are structures already in place throughout Belfast which are tackling ASB and community safety issues and there should be more formalised links between local fora and the new DCSPs. There is no wish to create more community structures or duplicate those which already exist. There may also be some opportunity for rationalisation at a local level to reduce duplication of effort e.g. Police and other partners being called to numerous meetings in an area to discuss the same issues which can reduce the effectiveness of inputs.
- V. Financing & Resourcing – BCC would seek assurances that there is no real cut in financial and resourcing terms to the cost of administering and setting up of the new partnerships e.g. the recruitment of independent members. As previously pointed out, any savings from bringing the two partnerships together (including any savings from allowances) should be redirected towards service delivery;

- VI. **Staffing** – BCC will be carrying out a review of its staffing arrangements in light of the new partnerships and would wish to make DOJ and NIPB aware of this. Currently, the DPP and CSP staff are under significant pressure to carry out their core duties. An example of this is the increase in membership of DPP from 19 to 55 after the St Andrew's agreement. Despite this increase staffing levels supporting the DPP have remained the same which has caused an adverse impact on the level of service given to the running of the DPP. BCC is of the opinion that there is likely to be a need to increase staffing levels if required in the new structure and Council does not feel it should be responsible for bearing the cost of this.
- VII. **Governance** – BCC would like clarification on the governance arrangements of the new partnerships and in particular the relationship and accountability mechanisms between local Councils (taking into consideration that the Chief Executive is the accounting officer) and the Joint Committee (DOJ / PBNI)
- VIII. **Accountability** – BCC wishes to see the reporting lines for the new partnerships being streamlined. The draft new model suggests there are two lines of accountability, one from the Policing committees (five in Belfast) to Policing Board and another from the PCSPs to Joint Committee. BCC has concerns that the accountability to both the Joint Committee and Policing Board will result in an increase in bureaucracy and reduce the amount of resources, both financial and staffing, that can be used to deliver local solutions in local communities. It is fundamental to the success of the new partnerships that the new partnerships should either report directly to the Joint Committee or that reports expected are streamlined considerably so there is no duplication.
- IX. **Relationship between PCSP and DPCSP** – Further clarification is sought on this as members who currently sit on the Principal DPP have indicated that they are not clear about its current role and the relationship between the Principal DPP and four sub groups in Belfast. Further discussions need to take place regarding this (particularly the role of the citywide Policing Committee) and included in a Belfast Code of Practice. This is imperative for success and in obtaining nominations from members. There is a view that perhaps the citywide policing committee would not formally perform a role in practice but that the members would focus on the PSCP roles in terms of co-ordination, citywide planning and programmes etc.

There is a view that dual membership, as far as is practical, of both the PSCP and the DPCSPs would help with continuity and the functioning of the PCSP itself. However, there is also an understanding that this would represent a considerable time commitment from elected and independent members.

- X. Review of partnerships - In order to ensure there is effective local service delivery for communities we would ask that there is flexibility in relation to the operational and administration of partnerships and that there is scope for a review of regional and local codes of practice / frameworks to allow for improvements / changes to be made after the partnerships are in operation. Such a review should be carried out after 18 months;
- XI. User friendly – BCC would ask that any documentation regarding the new partnership arrangements e.g. code of practice/framework should be written from a user’s perspective using the principles of Plain English to ensure that there is a clear understanding by a wider audience of how the different functions build into a cohesive and comprehensive approach.
- XII. Monitoring of PSNI against Policing Plan / Meetings in Public

Whilst it is recognised that there needs to be a mechanism to enable the public to question the district commander and to be assured that the PSNI are being monitored against the targets in the Policing Plan, the Council is of the opinion that the current arrangements are not effective. Again we would call for a less prescriptive approach to how these functions are carried out at a local level.

2. Answers to question posed in the consultation document

- A1 *How prescriptive should the code of practice on the exercise of functions be?*

BCC strongly recommends that the code should not be prescriptive at all unless there are essential mandatory functions / responsibilities that need to be delivered in a certain way and these should only be included if absolutely necessary. BCC requests that the code should take the form of a framework only, with an outline of roles and responsibilities, suggest good practice and detail only minimal requirements in respect of reporting, etc. This would enable local partnerships to have the level of flexibility required to assign the majority resources towards tackling ASB, crime and local community safety issues.

We would stress the need to try and use the opportunity of the development of the new Partnership arrangements to reduce the bureaucratic burden on members and officers as much as possible and only to seek reports where they serve a useful purpose. A good example is the current attendance policy and performance appraisal of members which is a cumbersome process that requires a significant amount of work from both members and officers to implement. However, there is a strong opinion among current members that this information (and other information) gathered is not used nor is the process useful.

The Belfast PCSP code of practice needs to provide a framework on the distinct mandatory functions of the PCSP and the DPCSPs (and the respective Policing Committees), as well as giving guidance on the reporting structure / lines and relationship that will exist between the PCSP, DPCSPs, Policing Committees and Designated Organisations. This framework should be for guidance only and should allow local partnerships to have the flexibility to ensure that service delivery in local communities is the priority of the new partnerships. This code of practice /framework should make it clear what is required by the PCSP / DPCSP to meet legislative requirements and what is considered good practice. It must also allow flexibility and a pragmatic approach to ensure that bureaucracy and administrative burdens are kept to a minimum.

The member's handbook that was developed historically for DPP members was thought to be very helpful. We would recommend that a handbook is developed for the new Model and forms the basis for the induction and training of members of the PCSPs. Further, it is suggested that the handbook and the training which is developed is piloted with practitioners to ensure that it meets the needs of the end users and can be updated / reviewed as appropriate if required.

It is appreciated that there is a need to ensure some consistency of approach across NI, particularly to allow all partner organisations to plan their involvement to properly participate in the PCSP at an appropriately senior level, but this needs to be balanced in Belfast with the right level of flexibility to allow the PCSP and DCSPs to tailor delivery and develop local plans with (and for) local communities.

**The framework / code should include the following key themes but the details of how to deliver on them should left to the local partnerships to determine:**

- **Local delivery**

**The focus on delivering an improvement in policing and community safety to make the district one which is safe to live and work in must be central to the work of the whole PCSP.**

**For Belfast, the code / framework also needs to clarify the role of the PCSP in relation to that of DPCSPs. The processes to develop action plans should be determined locally.**

**There needs to be further clarity and direction about the governance arrangements and how the policing committee relates to the whole PCSP, and vice versa, to ensure that the arrangements achieve a joined up approach to policing and community safety within the district.**

**The code / framework should refer to the allocation of resources for delivery. However it is our view that the PCSP / DPCSP should decide on how the local process should work.**

- **Consult and Engage**

**We should ensure that the full PCSP undertakes consultation and engagement on a number of levels to allow the full Partnership to identify the policing and community safety needs of the area.**

**It is recommended that the Joint Committee supports regular consultation and analysis of data from residents; there needs to be a long term commitment to this process so that we are able to prove the effectiveness of the partnership in the delivery of the local policing and community safety plan. This means that the same core questions should be asked each time the residents' consultation is undertaken so that the results are directly comparable.**

**In Belfast, each PCSP / DPCSP should be allowed to determine its own process of local consultation with community structures, hard to reach groups and minority groups to gain the necessary degree of understanding of the local policing and community safety issues and to utilise all the possible mechanisms to do this via its consultation structures within BCC and those used by other partner organisations. This consultation and engagement process should be developed**

for the life of the PCSP / DPCSP and cover the Section 75 Equality requirements on the Partnership. The code of practice / framework should require that the consultation and engagement plan is developed and regularly reviewed by the PCSP.

The timing of the consultations undertaken by PCSPs to determine local policing and community safety needs should fit with the funding cycles from central government and the business planning processes that the Joint Committee and the other members of the PCSP are subject to. It is recommended timelines for the consultations and engagement plan should follow the lifecycle of local government elections, relate to the April to March business cycle that is utilised across government and allow the PCSP/DPCSP to inform the development of the annual plans of partners.

How each PCSP / DPCSP engages with the community should be an ongoing interactive process that includes all different types of public meetings, discussion forums, information sessions, work shops and focus groups, regular forum meetings. These should be determined as necessary at a local level to ensure that they are meaningful and bought into by the community. The primary function of such engagement should be to build community confidence that government has joined up how it makes the district one which is, and is perceived to be, safer to live and work in. BCC also recommends that there is flexibility in how we consult and engage and current administration burdens such as the notice for meetings, notice of receiving reports etc is not included in how we do this.

- **Identify (Prepare Policing and Community Safety Plans)**

The information from the consultation and engagement processes detailed above should allow each PCSP / DPCSP to identify the particular issues which are relevant to their district and to develop plans for how those issues can be tackled.

For Belfast it is anticipated that there will be four local plans and an overarching citywide plan, and that resources will be allocated for delivery in a way determined by the PCSP.

Local DPCSPs need to be given flexibility to ensure that there are local solutions for local problems as each area of the city will have differing priorities. Local community networks need to ensure that they reflect the views of the local community highlighting that they have robust community consultation in place as well as effective communication plans to ensure that communities are kept up to date with the work of the DPCSP.

- **Monitor (Delivery of the Partnership and Local Policing Plans)**

It is recommended that the various structures of the PCSP, the policing committees and DPCSPs have monitoring as an agenda item at regular meetings (to be determined locally) to ensure that they are responding to appropriate issues through the delivery of their work to stay relevant and responsive to the needs of the local communities.

It appears that there are two lines of accountability in the new structure. BCC has concerns that the accountability to both the Joint Committee and policing board will result in an increase in bureaucracy and reduce the amount of resources both financial and staffing that can be used to deliver local solutions in local communities. It is fundamental to the success of the new partnerships that the new partnerships should report directly to the one body only i.e. the joint committee or that reports expected are streamlined considerably so there is no duplication.

- **PCSPs and DPCSPs**

Statistics from all relevant partner agencies along with monitoring reports from projects/interventions and the information gleaned during the ongoing engagement process will allow PCSPs to monitor the delivery of plans. All partners should be required to show how their activity contributes to making safer areas so that the Partnerships are able to evidence change and improve / develop interventions to increase community safety and reduce ASB.

- **Policing Committees**

Policing Committees will monitor the performance of the Police in line with the district policing plan, it is recommended that routine aspects of this monitoring function are carried out in private meetings and not in public as currently happens. We agree that Police and other partners need to be held to account but we recommend that this can be done in a less prescriptive manner in public e.g. the local DPCSPs can give an update on their plans at a meeting in public (attended regularly by the district commander) but this should also serve the purpose of illustrating how the overall partnership is making a positive impact on reducing crime and ASB and allow for improvements to be made locally if necessary.

The code / framework should outline the role of the PCSP in preparing an annual report; and that each Council is responsible for publishing it in a way it feels is appropriate. In specifying how often monitoring returns are made to the Joint Committee, it is important that these monitoring requirements



are not bureaucratic but are focused on PCSPs delivering a good service for local people. Therefore, flexibility needs to be built into any monitoring framework to allow changes to be made to local plans. Reports should only be sought where they are useful to the receiver and have a purpose.

*A2 Which of the issues listed on pages 8-10 definitely needs to be included within the code?*

To provide clarity it is recommended that the code / framework should be written from a user's perspective using the principles of Plain English, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how the different functions build into a cohesive and comprehensive approach. Also taking the opportunity to make the code adaptive and flexible to local circumstances rather than being too prescriptive.

Therefore BCC recommends that the framework covers the following procedures in outline only giving sufficient discretion in respect of the detail to local PCSPs / DPCSPs especially in relation to the running of meetings.

- Arrangements for the submission by or to a PCSP or policing committee of reports and other documentation
- It is recommended that the code / framework provides guidance on arrangements for sending in reports, but reports should only be required for functions that are essential such as monitoring / financial returns. The exact timescales of reports or any other essential documentation should be agreed with the PSCSP to fit in with systems already in place e.g. deadlines for financial returns should be agreed by local Councils and fit in with their systems.
- Arrangements for the monitoring of the performance of the PCSP / DPCSP in carrying out appropriate plans
- Plans should reflect local policing and community safety priorities, and as such, the code / framework should recommend that local impact targets should be developed with the support of a crime analyst, which could then be reported quarterly on a City wide and local basis.
- The arrangements for dealings with the joint committee

- Specific arrangements around dealings will need further consideration. It is important to understand how this will best operate to ensure effective communications and the ability to have open, useful and ongoing dialogue as the process of the new PCSPs takes shape. BCC recommends that, as far as possible, the committee should be flexible and work with PCSPs / DPCSPS to agree the easiest and most effective way of doing this.

**A3 *Which elements of the code of practice previously available for DPPs could be omitted?***

It is recommended that the code of practice / framework omits as much of the previous prescriptive requirements as possible and makes a clear distinction between meeting the legislative requirements and good practice. BCC recommends that flexibility should be given in the code /framework on the following for both PCSP and local DPCSPs, who should be able to decide locally how they carry out the necessary functions required.

- Meetings in public (As a tool to monitor the performance of the police).

It is widely recognised that public attendance is low and there are often frustrations about the reporting format and responses to the supplementary questions which are posed.

A locally determined engagement process which would enable a more meaningful, flexible and targeted approach is recommended.

- Holding of public meetings

As public meetings will take many forms and be reactive to local concerns, it is recommended that how public meetings are held is determined locally, depending on the function of the meeting and that the code/framework provides guidance only. We recommend that arrangements for local engagement, allocation of funds, management of meetings etc is left to the discretion of councils and partnerships.

- Arrangements for giving notice of meetings

BCC recommends that, as far as reasonably possible, meeting dates are set at the beginning of the year on an annual basis in order to carry out mandatory requirements such as monitoring progress against objectives/developing local plans etc. Further discussion needs to take place around the notification to be given for these meetings but again flexibility should be considered to ensure the administration of meetings does not reduce service delivery at a local level. BCC recommends that the code / framework does not stipulate the minimum number of meetings as was previously the case.

- Procedures for meetings

It is recommended that the new code is much less prescriptive in this regard.

- Arrangements for enabling questions on the discharge of functions by PSNI to be put by members of the policing committee for answer by the relevant district commander or their nominee

It is recommended that the code allows for flexibility on the above and the current mechanism to enable questions is not always productive and meaningful. All partners on PCSPs / DPCSPs should be meeting with local communities on a regular basis and should be reacting to questions on an ongoing basis. Current arrangements are too inflexible and do not assist the community engaging with Police as they are too formal in their approach.

- Arrangements to be made in relation to obtaining the cooperation of the public with the police.

The code/framework should give guidance only. It is important that this role is seen, as widely as possible, as being about building direct relationships between residents / communities and the PCSPs / DPCSPs not just Police.

Whilst this function is restricted to the policing committee, the code should give guidance about how it connects to the whole engagement process that the PCSP / DPCSP undertakes. If local people are to effectively engage and co-operate on an ongoing basis, then this must be done in a meaningful way through processes that suit local people and networks.

**A4** *What could be adjusted or amended? For example, concerns had been raised about the number of DPP meetings being held – what are your views on this?*

The current Code of Practice for DPPs and the established practice of these partnerships in Belfast has resulted in too many meetings in public and private. For example, in 2010/2011 there were 118 meetings of the DPP / CSP with 108 of these meetings being held by DPP. The issue is not just about numbers of meetings but also purpose and outcomes. Members feel that the requirements of the Policing Board are too bureaucratic regarding administration functions and that Officers / members time could be served better engaging with the public through current structures and holding public meetings in local areas to deal with specific local issues.

Also the high level of formality applied to the minutes and papers of the current DPP should be greatly reduced. All papers, minutes and action plans of the new PCSP should be focused on action points and to the Plain English standard so they can be easily understood by all. The use of the current DPP models for the administration of meetings will result in a similar process being applied to the new Partnerships. There needs to be a balance struck between the more informal approaches for the arrangements around CSPs rather than shaping the new partnership to one side of the current arrangements.

BCC proposes that a minimum number of meetings needs to be decided locally to allow each PCSP to determine the best, most efficient and effective way to deliver a safer district. There should also be flexibility to allow PCSPs / DPCSPs to organise meetings in public as and when required in order to respond to local need but without having to carry out current formal procedures in order to do so – e.g. an issue may arise and the PCSP / DPCSP will need to organise an emergency meeting in a locality with those affected, they need to have the flexibility to be able to hold a meeting at short notice without being consigned to formal procedures around this.

**A5** *Which aspects should be left to the discretion of councils?*

BCC would again stress the need to try and use the opportunity of the development of the new Partnership arrangements to reduce the bureaucratic burden as much as possible allowing flexibility at a local level. The Council strongly advocates a less prescriptive approach to the administrative arrangements than previously experienced by DPPs. This is to allow focus on delivery and a pragmatic involvement of all the relevant stakeholders and members.

Therefore we recommend that arrangements for local engagement, allocation of funds, management of meetings etc is left to the discretion of councils/partnerships and the code only provides a general framework for delivery of functions.

***B. How can this code of practice help partnerships to focus on delivery of outcomes, whether in relation to the operation of the Policing Committee or the overall PCSP?***

The focus of the new partnership has to be on the delivery of outcomes: to achieve this, the code / framework should ensure it facilitates a process where each partner organisation presents the necessary data to allow the impact of the work on local communities to be measured.

BCC recommends that a framework is developed to assist with the monitoring and evaluating of PCSPs / DPCSPs. This would allow each PCSP to report in a way where change is clearly measured and regularly compared.

**PCSP Model**

In the PCSP model (Annex A) in the consultation document there is a foot note at the bottom which states:

It is anticipated that pre-existing relevant groups / for a working on a community level will have informal.....

BCC recommends that the words anticipated and informal are removed and make this a statement of intent to ensure that local fora / groups can have a formal link with PCSPs through engagement activity etc. This should allow the relationship of the partnerships and the community to be determined locally.

**Section 2. Designated Bodies (p 12-14 consultation document)**

***What bodies should be compulsorily designated to all PCSPs?***

In order to answer this question fully BCC recommends that guidance is given in relation to the difference between regional designation and local designation. For example the guidance would need to address:

- Will the requirements be different for organisations that are compulsorily designated?
- What if local PCSPs request an organisation to be designated and they refuse?
- How will local communities and the voluntary sector be designated on local PCSPs / DPCSPs?

Currently, through the Belfast Community Safety Partnership (BCSP), the following organisations are members. These stakeholders have made a positive contribution to the development of the BCSP since its formation and provide much needed strategic direction and resources to develop our Safer Belfast plan which allows us to have local services to assist local communities reduce ASB and tackle community safety issues.

- Belfast City Council (elected members and officers)
- Belfast Area Partnership Boards
- Belfast City Centre Management
- Belfast District Policing Partnership
- Belfast Education and Library Board
- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
- Belfast Regeneration Office
- Engage with Age
- NIACRO (on behalf of NICVA)
- Northern Ireland Alternatives
- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
- Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue
- NI Housing Executive
- PSNI
- Probation Board NI
- Public Health Agency
- Translink
- Victim Support
- Women's Aid
- Youth Justice Agency

As mentioned, we recommend that the above organisations are represented on PCSPs / DPCSPs in Belfast and that consideration is given to including the community and voluntary sector, whilst at the same time trying to keep numbers manageable in terms of focus and decision making. Therefore flexibility needs to be built in to allow local Councils to choose who sits on the new structures and perhaps mechanisms be put in place to co-opt organisations onto structures as required.

As you will see from the above, we are not recommending that Council officers sit on PCSPs / DPCSPs as we are assuming that they will help to facilitate the delivery of PCSPs / DPCSPs (but have no voting rights). Elected members will represent the Council and have voting rights.

From a regional perspective BCC proposes the following organisations for compulsory designation

- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
- NI Housing Executive
- Probation Board NI
- PSNI
- Youth Justice Agency

*How can designated organisations be best represented on PCSPS?*

BCC recommends that organisations should appoint persons who are at an appropriate accountable level within their organisation to be able to commit resources under the auspices of reducing crime and enhancing community safety, be that in financial terms or in kind.

The PCSP will consult, engage and plan; therefore the person appointed should be of a position to influence planning on a short, medium and long term basis within their organisations and feed in the priorities of PCSPs and DPCSPs and ensure their plans, policies and activities work to reduce crime and enhance community safety.

BCC also recommends that attendance at relevant meetings should be consistent e.g. if senior staff officer in any of the organisations is designated to attend the PCSP meeting then he or she should make every reasonable effort to attend. If this is not possible an appropriate deputy should attend who can make decisions re resourcing or at least come back with a quick decision on urgent matters.

What guidance should be given on the appropriate level of representation or on the consistency of representation?

Good practice only. There also needs to be an acknowledgement that DPCSPs must be given local flexibility, linked to local knowledge, issues, concerns, ability to influence and persuade within local communities

Local DPCSPs need to be given flexibility to ensure that there are local solutions for local problems as each area of the city will have differing priorities, this will need to be reflected in the members of the group. Local community networks need to ensure that they reflect the views of the local community highlighting that they have robust community consultation (e.g. terms of reference and governance arrangements) in place as well as effective communication plans to ensure that communities are kept up to date with the work of the DPCSP. The Department may wish to consider developing some good practice guidelines about the constitutions of groups that are desirable. Councils could work with groups to build this level of capacity.

*How can we encourage and ensure all Section 75 groups are engaged?*

NIPB should use its existing network of contacts including its Reference Groups. NIPB should liaise with other statutory bodies such as Councils, PSNI and the NIHE to link into their networks and local structures. Furthermore, NIPB should engage with regional groups who represent various Section 75 groups throughout Northern Ireland.

*How can individuals be encouraged to apply for independent membership?*

NIPB should develop a recruitment process which uses multiple forms of media and social networking sites. All documentation should be in 'plain English' and available in various formats and languages. Clear descriptions of the roles and functions of the structures of the PCSP, DPCSP, and Policing Committees should be provided. Furthermore, the documentation should outline the role of Independent Members on both the Policing Committee and DPCSP/PCSP as well as an indication of the time commitment required and what expenses are recoverable.

Also organisations (e.g. community and voluntary sector) may wish to nominate representatives who act on behalf of the organisation rather than in an individual capacity so targeted recruitment utilising NICVA or other similar bodies may be appropriate.

*What should the 'default' mechanism be if not enough applications are received for a PCSP (paragraph 66 in the draft code)?*

Paragraph 66 states that if less than twice the number of candidates are put forward by the Council, the Policing Board, in partnership with the Council, may consider reviewing the local networks of community representatives and volunteers (such as Neighbourhood Watch Groups, CPLCs/PACTs) who may be interested in becoming involved in this area of work.

The Council feels that there is a need to maintain public confidence in the appointment process and seek assurances that this would not be considered as canvassing after the application process has been completed. To ensure the credibility of the process the Council believes that the local networks of community representatives and volunteers should be targeted during the publicity/awareness-raising stage of the process.



*How could the appointment process be improved further and made more cost effective?*

The Council recognises that the previous process and costs need to be rationalised. We appreciate that the NIPB is considering how this can be achieved and are identifying a number of steps in the recruitment process where savings can be made. BCC would however like to express our concern in relation to the additional burden on the Councils to administer and support the process of appointment of Independent Members - the impact on the resources needed to implement this could be significant for Councils. We would therefore seek assurances that appropriate expenses for panel members will be covered by NIPB.

We recognise this is a new process and places more onerous responsibility within the Councils remit. In order to ensure the additional processes are applied to the highest standard we are likely to require additional support from experienced Human Resources staff to support the process, possibly at worst case in the same way as the current 75:25 contribution split to ensure no detriment to Council.

The NIPB should also outline their proposals as soon as possible around the support and training that will be provided to members, and any Council staff taking part in the process and the timeframe for this.

To ensure that Independent Members have the necessary skills for full participation in PCSP/DPCSP/Policing Committees, the Board should consider whether a more competency based recruitment approach could be accommodated so that we appoint the right people with the right skills. This will help identify candidates with the necessary skills and attributes to be active participants in the Partnerships. This could include some form of measurement that will identify key competencies required by an Independent Member, for example report reading/writing, consultation/presentation skills, monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning and community engagement.

#### Disqualification

The Code indicates that the process of appointment has several stages. Firstly, (see Paragraph 53) the Policing Board will carry out an initial sift of applications and exclude those from candidates who clearly do not meet the published criteria.

The second stage will involve the Shortlisting/Interview Panel (the Council's nominees and an independent panel member) shortlisting the remaining candidates against predetermined essential and desirable criteria (Paragraph 57 refers). Following this the Panel will interview the shortlisted candidates and forward to the Policing Board an alphabetical list of candidates deemed to be suitable for appointment.

Only after this second stage has been completed will the Policing Board request the Chief Constable to undertake a check of persons on the list to ascertain if they have fully and accurately stated on their application form any prior criminal convictions. The legislation makes it clear that a person will not be appointable to a PCSP/DPCSP if they have a prison record and if 5 years has not elapsed since they were released either on remission or on license.

It would seem to make more common sense for this check to be undertaken between the first and second stages of the overall process, prior to the Panel undertaking the short-listing and interviews. Otherwise, the panel may waste time and public money in considering applicants who will eventually be disqualified from appointment.

The Council would recommend that a cost benefit analysis of both options is undertaken.

*Any other / general comments?*

#### Merit Principle in the Selection of Candidates

Paragraph 62 of the Code makes reference to the requirement for the panel to appoint candidates based upon the merit principle. However, the panel is permitted only to divide candidates into two pools; one for candidates suitable for appointment and the other for those unsuitable for appointment, based on a suitability pass mark which will be determined by the Policing Board in advance. The panel is permitted to grade the appointable candidates in order of merit, however, the Council is only able to submit, in alphabetical order, a list of those candidates considered suitable for nomination to the Policing Board, individual rankings should not be provided.

It is accepted that in appointing the Independent Members, the Policing Board must ensure, so far as is practicable, that the overall membership of the PCSP, both political and independent taken together, is representative of the Council area and that membership of each DPCSP is representative of that district. It is accepted also that the selection of Independent Members will be influenced by the political breakdown of the Council's nominations.

As a suggestion a better outcome may be achieved by the panel grading those persons deemed suitable for appointment in order of merit and the Policing Board then choosing the highest ranked candidates who meet the required profiles.

If legislative or other restrictions prevent the Policing Board from using the aforementioned method of selection then the Board should consider whether the requirement for the Council to nominate twice the number of appointments required could be reduced. This will result in only the candidates with the highest merit scores being put forward for consideration by the Policing Board's final appointment panels (Paragraph 65 refers).

### Conflicts of Interest

The Council welcomes the commitment, outlined in Paragraphs 37 and 38, for candidates to be required to state clearly on their application forms either direct or indirect conflicts of interest. The appointment process should ensure that the Policing Board recommend that no appointments are made of persons who hold other positions, either in their employment or in other public appointments, which the public might reasonably perceive to have connections to or with policing and which may give rise to a potential or perceived conflict or which may restrict the candidate from carrying out the full range of the duties of the post.

The need to maintain public confidence in the membership of appointees should not be underestimated and any conflict of interest must be avoided in order to strengthen the credibility of the process.

Whilst the Council recognises that the Policing Board cannot produce an exhaustive list of conflicts of interest it believes that the Policing Board should provide further guidance in the application pack in relation to this issue.

### Interview Panels for Sub-Groups

Paragraphs 57 to 63 outline the role of the Council's nominees to the Short-listing/Interview Panel. Paragraph 58 recommends that, to ensure consistency and because of the possibility of overlap in membership, the same panel should be involved in selecting Independent Members for the PCSP and all four DPCSPs. Furthermore, paragraph 61 states that the short-listing panel should aim to interview at least three times the number of candidates who will eventually be appointed. If this is applied to the forthcoming process, dependent on the Council determining the size of the PCSP, then a minimum of 81 candidates up to a maximum of 87 candidates would be required to be interviewed.

This will result in a considerable workload for those Members appointed to the panel. This time commitment will need to be borne in mind in making the Council nominations to the Panel. As stated earlier and at the beginning of BCC's response, the impact on the resources needed to implement could be significant for Councils and we would seek support that arrangements can be made to ensure claims for remuneration and expenses around the appointments process can be made from the NIPB budget for Belfast DPPs. We recognise this is a new process and places more onerous responsibility within the Councils' remit. In order to ensure the additional processes are applied to the highest standard we are likely to require additional support from experienced Human Resources staff to support the process.

BCC would argue that the burden on elected members to be involved in the appointment process without further clarity on remunerations is likely to be unsupported. However we recognise there is opportunity for the NIPB to consider this within the independent appointment process and we welcome your communication on this as urgently as possible. The Council therefore seeks urgent clarity on the new arrangements for financing this part of the process and more clarity on the expectations of the additional roles and responsibilities envisaged by the NIPB.

#### **Provision of Feedback to those Deemed Unsuitable for Appointment**

During previous appointment processes candidates who had been deemed unsuitable at the interview stage received feedback from the consultants. However, for this recruitment process Paragraph 61 states that the Policing Board/service provider will arrange the interviews for the panel but it will be the responsibility of the Council to appoint a secretary for each panel and to provide feedback to candidates if requested.

The Policing Board has obviously decided to reduce the costs of the recruitment process which are associated with the hire of consultants by transferring this element of the process to the Council. However, any human/financial resources in relation to this element of the process will now have to be absorbed 100% by the Council.

The Council will need to consider what financial/resources implications that this change in the process will have and whether it is willing to absorb these costs. Therefore, as stated above, clarity around the current DPP budget claims in the 2011/12 year for

the application of this process would be helpful. Councils are mindful that additional Human resources support is likely to be needed to support this process and therefore could form part of the claim. There is no budget provision within councils other than through DPP expenditure claims for the additional costs.

#### Remuneration of Panel Members

As with previous Codes, there is no indication given as to the mechanism to be used to reimburse the Members of Council appointed to the Short-listing/Interview Panel. In previous appointment processes undertaken in 2002/2003, 2005 and 2007 remuneration was provided, however, given that no provision has been made to pay allowances to PCSP/DPCSP Members, this issue would need to be clarified. It is our understanding that consideration is currently being given to this by the NIPB, therefore urgent clarity would be helpful.

#### Dual Membership

Paragraph 20 indicates that the Members of the DPCSPs need not be Members of the Principal Belfast PCSP, but it is felt that in principle it would be beneficial for both Political and Independent Members to sit on both to ensure continuity. Although it is beyond the scope of this Code to recommend this, careful consideration must be given to this dual membership given the time commitment that this would require. This level of commitment will not only be time consuming but may also be a financial burden given that no allowances will be payable. Therefore clarity will be needed on what 'out of pocket' expenses could be payable.

#### Information Packs

As previously mentioned, in the case of Belfast, it will be possible for candidates to be appointed to more than one DPCSP, or to a DPCSP and the main PCSP. Paragraph 49 of the Code makes reference to the requirement for the application form for Belfast applicants to provide an opportunity for candidates to indicate which of these they are interested in and may ask them to express a preference. If this is the case then it would be important for the information pack to clearly indicate the differing role and purpose of a PCSP Member and a DPCSP Member and also the time commitment involved."

After discussion, the Committee:

- approved the foregoing comments as the Council's response to the consultation document;
- agreed that a Council officer be authorised to attend the Department of Justice/Northern Ireland Local Government Association Workshop on 28th December, with a report on the proceedings being submitted to the Committee in due course; and
- authorised Council officers to work with the Department of the Environment to investigate the means by which Councils could pay an allowance to the Chairmen and, where possible, the Deputy Chairmen of the Partnerships.

### **Ageing Globally - Ageing Locally Conference**

The Committee was advised that a major International Conference entitled "Ageing Globally – Ageing Locally" was taking place in Dublin on 2nd and 3rd November and would be hosted by the Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland. The Conference would host international experts as well as leading researchers and professionals from the ageing sector in Ireland and would explore a number of issues, including how different countries addressed challenges and opportunities of population ageing, why global ageing mattered to Ireland and how policy makers, business and service providers could best plan for changing demographics.

The Director of Health and Environmental Services explained that the event would promote the value and role of ageing-related research specifically for policy and practice. Learning from the Conference would support the development of integrated approaches through the Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership and its links to the Belfast Strategic Partnership/Belfast Health Development Unit. One of the confirmed speakers was Sir Michael Marmot, Chair of the Commission on Social Determinants (World Health Organisation). The cost per delegate of attending would be approximately £450.

The Committee approved attendance at the conference of the Chairman of the All-Party Reference Group on Older People (or her nominee), together with an officer from the Health and Environmental Services Department.

### **Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Consultation on the Establishment of a Belfast City Centre Waiting List**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a response to the above-mentioned consultation document to enable Political Party briefings to be undertaken by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Chairman