

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 9th December, 2011

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

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

Apology

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

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 4th and 18th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December.

Titanic Signature Project

The Chief Executive referred to a media report by the BBC News indicating that the Titanic Signature Project could be facing a funding shortfall. He explained that the report referred to an application by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for a grant of £20 million from the European Union towards the cost of the building which was being queried by the European Commission. He pointed out that, in response to the media report, the Department had indicated that the project was on course to be opened as planned on 31st March, 2012 in time for the 100 year anniversary of the Titanic's Maiden Voyage. The European Union Funding was irrelevant to the successful completion of the project. If funding was not drawn down against Titanic Belfast, it would be drawn down against other projects. The Chief Executive stated that the funding application was now being examined by legal advisors on both sides and he would update the Committee in due course in relation to any outcome.

Noted.

Review of Public Administration - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that the NI Executive agreed a draft Programme for Government on 16 November 2011. Contained within this agreement was a firm commitment to proceed with local government reform based on the 11 council model, with elections to shadow councils in 2014, and the establishment of the new 11 councils in 2015. There is a commitment also to transfer key functions (e.g. planning and regeneration) to councils as part of the reform process. The Minister for the Environment has expressed a preference for a 15 council model and wishes the decision to proceed with 11 councils to be informed by the consultation process on the programme for government.

1.2 In terms of the 11 council model, the Local Government Boundaries Commissioners' final recommendations report published in June 2009 proposed that the new Belfast City Council would increase its population base from 277,000 to 320,000 (approximately). The new Belfast boundary would incorporate parts of the adjoining Castlereagh Borough, Lisburn City and a small part of North Down District Council area. The number of electoral wards, and therefore councillors, would increase from 51 to 60, with an average of 40 electoral wards for the other 10 new council areas.

1.3 It is understood that the proposed changes to the Belfast City Council boundary had been one of the previous areas of disagreement within the NI Executive and had impacted upon the postponement of the RPA being implemented by 2011.

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Key milestones

2.1.1 Whilst further detail is still to emerge on the implementation of the local government reform (Review of Public Administration as it's known), it is understood that the key high-level milestones include:-

- (i) By 2012/13 – put in place the necessary enabling legislation (e.g. Local Government Reorganisation Act and the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act) to enable the reform programme to happen;

- (ii) By 2012/13 – establish the necessary programme structure to manage the change
- (iii) By 2013/14 – establishment of suitable arrangements for the election of Shadow Councils in 2014 and the delivery of the implementation programme; and
- (iv) By 2014/2015 – establishment of the 11 new councils, and suitable arrangements for the transfer of powers from central government to local government.

2.1.2 Members will appreciate both the scale of the challenge of preparing for the Review of Public Administration (RPA), and the opportunity which this presents in terms of the planned transfer of key place-shaping functions such as planning and regeneration back to the Council which will further enhance our ability to make a real and lasting difference in stimulating the local economy and improving the quality of people's lives across the city.

2.1.3 Whilst the Council will be less effected by the convergence issues which will be experienced by the other merging councils, we now need to restore our focus on planning for reform and, in particular, the transfer and integration of new functions. The Council has well developed systems already in place (e.g. effective planning, financial and HR management frameworks) which will assist in this planning process.

2.1.4 Work is underway to scope the key strands of work linked to the RPA to inform the preparation of the draft implementation (transition) and resource plan for moving forward. Members input into this process will be crucial and it is suggested that any emerging plans will be an integral part of the Committees' future work programme.

2.2 Governance

2.2.1 It is understood from discussions with senior officials within the DoE that it would be the intention of the NI Executive to bring forward 'Statutory Transition Committees', representing those clusters of councils which are to merge together. The Statutory Transition Committees will oversee the reform programme at the local level and make the necessary preparations for the establishment of Shadow Councils in 2014 and Councils in 2015.

2.2.2 Members will note that in establishing the previous RPA governance and delivery structures, the Environment Minister at the time, Minister Sammy Wilson, agreed that the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be designated as the 'Belfast voluntary Transition Committee' and that this committee would schedule an additional meeting a month to deal with RPA and transformation related matters. In addition, the Council had established a voluntary political forum with Lisburn/Castlereagh to identify and examine important transition related issues. Given the postponement of the RPA this forum had been suspended.

2.2.3 As the DoE will circulate, in due course, detailed guidance in respect of the role, remit and composition of any Statutory transition Committee, including the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee, it will be important that the Council engages and discusses this with the DoE in advance.

2.3 *Boundary Changes – Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh*

2.3.1 The Council will need to give consideration to how it would wish to engage with Lisburn and Castlereagh in preparing for any proposed boundary changes and planning/managing any associated transition matters (e.g. ensuring service harmonisation, transfer of assets and liabilities, mitigating potential financial risks, minimising the impact on rates etc).

2.4 *Transfer of Functions*

2.4.1 As previously agreed by the Committee, discussions are ongoing with the DSD, DoE and DoE Planning Service regarding the potential for the Council to support the delivery and integration of key functions such as planning and regeneration at a local level in advance of any formal transfer to councils in 2015. This will put place the necessary foundations, relationships and capacity to underpin the future transfer of functions. Through this process the Council can better plan for and help minimise the potential impact on the rate. A further report will be submitted for the future consideration of the Committee.

2.5 *Community Planning*

- 2.5.1** Members are aware, a key aspect of local government reform will be the introduction of community planning powers for Councils together with a “power of well-being”. At the Committee’s last meeting it received an update on the progress of the community planning pilot in Belfast, currently funded by the BIG Lottery until end of February 2012 and the work of the Council’s cross party working group on community planning to develop a “Belfast model” of community planning in preparation for the new duty.
- 2.5.2** The cross party working group on community planning have noted the importance of continuing this work given the intention set out in the programme for government and the economic strategy which states that *“councils will lead a community planning process and will work with a range of agencies and interests to develop a shared vision for promoting the well-being of their area”*.
- 2.5.3** The working group are considering ways to ensure that the learning and momentum generated by the pilot, particularly in the areas of community engagement and cross-sectoral working can be maintained and built upon, in order that Belfast’s emerging approach can inform future guidance and that the Council can move quickly to take full advantage of this opportunity to improve service delivery and outcomes for local people.
- 2.5.4** Officers will explore realigning resources within estimated budgets to determine whether the level of support to this project can be maintained into 2012/13 and work through ways to ensure sustainability of the Big Lottery pilot with the cross party working group.

2.6 Funding the Reform Programme

- 2.6.1** Whilst the funding for local government reform remains a key issue which needs clarification, there is no doubt that there will be growing pressure from the NI Executive and DoE for local government to contribute towards funding those elements of the reform programme which will directly result in potential efficiency savings for councils. How such costs are identified, planned and budgeted for on a potential ‘invest to save’ basis will be crucial. A report on the potential resource implications for the Council attached to any reform and transformation programme will be submitted for the future consideration of the Committee. This will be set within the context of the Council’s medium-term financial plan and efficiency programme.

3.0 Resource Implications

There will clearly be financial and Human Resources implications for the Council in preparing for RPA, however, the scope and scale of these remain somewhat uncertain in the absence of further detail from the NI Executive and clarification on potential funding options.

Council officers are currently looking at the key strands of work which may be required and any associated resource implications.

4.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) note the indicative milestones for local government reform as set out within the report;
- (ii) note that work is underway to scope out the key strands of work required around RPA and any associated resource implications;
- (iii) agree that the Council engage with the DoE in regards to the establishment of Statutory Transition Committees and any associated guidance; and
- (iv) note the ongoing work of the cross-party community planning working group to ensure the sustainability of the BIG Lottery Community Planning pilot and to develop a 'Belfast Community Planning model.'

The Chief Executive outlined the main aspects of the report and indicated that one of the main issues was the proposed boundary changes which he understood would see the Dundonald Ice Bowl and Forestside shopping complex remain with the new Castlereagh/Lisburn Council area and Dunmurry being incorporated within the Belfast Boundary. He stated that, in order to prepare for the Review of Public Administration he was seeking the Committee's authority to commission work on the implications of the Review on the current and future provision of Council services and authority to jointly commission work with Lisburn / Castlereagh where necessary.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and granted the authority sought.

Improvement Collaboration and Efficiency Programme – Regional Governance Group Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update regarding the work of the Regional Governance Group in relation to the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Programme, which sought to identify and explore potential opportunities for greater collaboration and joint working across the local government sector in order to secure potential efficiencies and improve service delivery.

Draft Programme for Government

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a summary of the key issues for local government which are contained within the draft Programme for Government, the draft Economic Strategy and the draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Detailed formal responses to the consultation documents will be provided for Members consideration in the New Year.

Background

On 17 November 2011, the First Minister and deputy First Minister published the draft Programme for Government 2011-2015 for consultation. The document focuses on two main priorities - supporting economic recovery and tackling disadvantage.

The draft PfG is supplemented by the NI Economic Strategy, which aims to improve the economic competitiveness of the economy by increasing employment and wealth opportunities for all, and the draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

The Investment Strategy document updates the 2008 Investment Strategy as the Assembly moves into a new budget period, highlighting the progress made to date and setting out the next phase of investment in key projects and programmes. The three documents are part of an overall programme and are not meant to be read in isolation. As such, all three documents share a common consultation deadline of the 22nd February 2012.

A summary of the overall aims and objectives within the Programme for Government and the draft Economic Strategy is attached at Appendix A.

Key Issues

An initial review of the three documents presented to the NI Assembly reveals a number of key commitments which will be dependent upon local government for delivery.

It is important that the Council is aware of these commitments and that the priorities identified within the documents are reflected in our work programmes and any publications which we may produce over the coming months (i.e. the stimulus programme and the Corporate Plan).

The key commitments include:

- the reform of local government with enhanced powers delivered through a reduced number of councils
- a new framework for local government in which planning and other powers will be devolved to councils. It is envisaged that the Planning Act (NI) 2011 will introduce operational changes to streamline planning processes to allow for faster and more predictable decision making.
- working with councils on strategic employment strategies and encouraging business growth
- councils to lead a community planning process and work with a range of agencies and interests to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of their area
- councils to manage waste, by increasing recycling, diverting residual waste from landfill, and enabling more sustainable technologies to be introduced that recover energy from the waste treatment process
- overall contribution to the economic infrastructure – connectivity, tourism, waste management, urban regeneration

A more detailed summary of the key issues for local government is included in Appendix B.

The reform of local government was identified as one of the most important commitments within the Programme for Government by a panel of MLA's at a Chief Executive's Forum event to discuss the Programme for Government in Parliament Buildings on the 1st December. (Members will note that there is a separate report on the reform of local government on the Committees agenda).

The issue of Council borrowing power, which has been raised in recent Assembly questions, was repeated by the panel members who indicated that there may be potential for the new larger Councils to generate revenue to support some of the projects within the Programme for Government / Investment Strategy.

Equality implications

None.

Resource implications

None.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the attached report.

Decision tracking

Members will be provided with formal responses to each of the consultation documents for their consideration in the New Year.

Appendix A

Summary of key aims and objectives

Programme for Government

Five Key Priorities

- Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future
- Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Well-Being
- Protecting Our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities
- Building a Strong and Shared Community
- Delivering High Quality and Efficient Public Services

The Economy is the top priority

- Supporting economic recovery
- Tackling disadvantage
- Rebuilding the labour market
- Rebalancing the economy

Guided by the following principles:

Balanced sub-regional growth: we will ensure that all sub-regions are able to grow and prosper whilst recognising the importance of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry as key drivers of regional economic growth;

Equality: we will ensure that no section of the community is left behind; equality of opportunity, fairness, inclusion and the promotion of good relations will be watchwords for all our policies and programmes across Government and;

Sustainability: sustainability policy is driven by intergenerational equity – securing a positive quality of life for present and future generations. To realise this, and to make sustainable development a hallmark of 21st Century government here, we will work together, across and beyond organisational and social boundaries to promote and encourage its recognition and acceptance.

Draft Economic Strategy

Key Messages

- Working in partnership – to build a safe, peaceful, fair and prosperous society
- Building growth and prosperity requires co-ordinated action from all sectors –acknowledge the continued support of UK government to help rebalance the economy
- Recognise that companies and the workforce remain the key drivers of economic growth, particularly with the ongoing pressure on consumer and public expenditure
- Aim is to improve the economic competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy
- A sustainable and growing private sector – where a greater number of firms compete in global markets and there is growing employment and prosperity
- Significant new policy levers required to make this step change without key policy levers – powers to vary the rate on corporation tax & air passenger duty
- Growth will be based on increasing employment and wealth by building a larger and more export driven private sector
- This approach will tackle disadvantage and help address social deprivation and division

Key Economic Priorities

1. Rebalancing the Economy – to improve wealth, employment, and living standards of everyone in NI
2. Rebuilding the Economy – to address the impact of the global economic downturn, particularly on employment.

Appendix B

Summary of key issues for local government

Reform of Local Government

One of the key aims of the Programme for Government is the reform of local government with enhanced powers delivered through a reduced number of councils (PfG p.50). There is a commitment to establish the 11 council model for Local Government by 2015. The key milestones for 2012/13 will be to progress legislation (the Local Government Reorganisation Act) and a programme structure necessary to manage the change. The key milestones for 2013/14 will be to put arrangements in place for the shadow councils and in 2014/15 to have arrangements in place for the transfer of powers to councils.

Employment Strategies

The Economic Strategy document states that central government will work with Belfast and Derry City Councils and other stakeholders to develop strategic employment strategies for each city (Economic Strategy p.52)

Encouraging Business Growth

The Economic Strategy states that in order to secure our vision for the economy, it is vital that we grow the private sector and make it easier to do business in NI. This theme covers initiatives aimed at exploiting the market opportunities in emerging sectors, including the low carbon / green economy, in order to meet the key global challenges such as climate change and waste management.

Given the importance of this area to the overall strategy, the Executive, through DETI and Invest NI, is working to develop an accompanying action plan to encourage business growth. Work is already underway and discussions have commenced with local Councils and other stakeholders. The action plan will be launched later in 2011/12. (Economic Strategy p.55)

Economic Infrastructure

The NI Economic Strategy indicates that a modern and sustainable economic infrastructure is needed to support economic growth. The quality of the business environment, including transport infrastructure, has been identified as a significant factor alongside issues such as access to markets, labour supply and business accommodation, all of which impact on the ability of locations to attract, develop and retain competitive businesses. Local councils will be involved in developing this infrastructure via the following streams:

- **Connectivity** - the Economic Strategy recognises the importance of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry as important drivers of regional economic growth. This priority is also about ensuring improved linkages within NI, as well as improved connectivity, including on a North- South and East-West basis. (Economic Strategy p.62)
- **Dereliction** – government will continue to undertake Urban Regeneration Schemes in areas experiencing dereliction and neglect and redevelop underused sites (Economic Strategy p.68)

- **Waste Management** – government have invested £42m to help councils divert waste from landfill through reuse and recycling. NI is now recycling an extra 9,939 tonnes of household waste every year. Government will continue to provide project support to local authorities to change the way we manage waste, by increasing recycling, diverting residual waste from landfill, and enabling more sustainable technologies to be introduced that recover energy from the waste treatment process. (Economic Strategy p.63)
- **Air Quality** – the government has granted £1.7m to councils through the our Local Air Quality Grant Scheme (Economic Strategy p.63)
- **Tourism Infrastructure** – a total of £300m of infrastructure investment will come on stream, including the completion of key tourism attractions at Titanic Belfast and the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre. In 2013, the World Police and Fire Games will be held in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry will also be the UK City of Culture. (Economic Strategy p.26)

The document also states that the Government will continue to explore options for further investment in our tourist / cultural amenities, including a fully integrated conference & exhibition facility,

Community Planning and Regeneration

The Economic Strategy states that councils will lead a community planning process and will work with a range of agencies and interests to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of their area. Councils will create spatial Local Development Plans, providing a realistic vision of how their areas should change and what they should be like in the future. They will also manage most development in their areas and enforce planning decisions which will help place a sharper focus on local economic development. (Economic Strategy p.66)

Planning System

Government have legislated to reform the planning system and have consulted on a new framework for local government in which planning and other powers will be devolved to councils. It is envisaged that the Planning Act (NI) 2011 will introduce operational changes to streamline planning processes to allow for faster and more predictable decision making. (Economic Strategy p.63)

This new modernised the planning system should result in faster decisions on planning applications, faster and fairer appeals, stronger and simpler enforcement and a new duty to further sustainable development and well being. This will be one of the key roles for local government.

NI Investment Strategy

A number of Belfast related projects are referenced in the Investment Strategy.

These include:

- Belfast Metropolitan College campus at Springvale / E3
- Refurbishment at three Belfast libraries – Falls, Shankill and Whiterock
- Public realm schemes taken forward in five deprived areas of Belfast to stimulate investment and economic activity.
- Belfast's North East Quarter (Royal Exchange) retail led regeneration scheme has been submitted for planning approval by the preferred developer.
- The Connswater Community Greenway project will bring about the creation of a 9km linear park through East Belfast, reconnecting the communities of East Belfast and restoring the rivers as community assets. Work is ongoing to progress this project.
- The Metropolitan Arts Centre (MAC) in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter will be finished by January 2012. When completed this will enhance and complement arts infrastructure provision.
- A flood risk management plan for Belfast is being progressed.
- The Titanic Signature Project (Titanic Belfast).

Social Clauses (Investment Strategy p.7)

The Investment Strategy notes that the government have introduced 'social clauses' into contracts for major public works. These clauses require contractors to deliver employment and training opportunities for apprentices and the long-term unemployed.

Contractors are also encouraged to engage proactively with the local community to identify other social benefits such as the use of public buildings for community use.

These changes in how we procure major works are already helping young people, particularly in areas of high deprivation, to access valuable training opportunities at a time of particular difficulty in the training and jobs market. Going forward, we will develop these schemes further with a particular focus on introducing social clauses in supplies and services contracts to ensure that as many people as possible benefit across the region."

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

Performance Management and Corporate Plan

Draft Investment Programme 2012-15 Update

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

"1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 This report sets out the key issues relating to the revised 'DRAFT Belfast Investment Package 2012-15.

The information in the package is DRAFT at this point, with final content dependent on the affordability limits set by Members through agreement of the rate for 2012/13. This paper therefore needs to be read in conjunction with the rates report which sets out the implications of different levels of rate for deliverability, particularly of capital investment projects. Should Members be minded, a final draft of the package will be presented to Committee in January 2012, in the context of the decision about the rate, with a view to launching consultation on the document in February.

Members should note that the 'people, communities and neighbourhoods' aspect of the package requires further development in the light of the outcome of the Members' workshop on this theme, held on 29th November.

The draft document has been moved forward since it was discussed by Members on 20th September and 21st October; amendments have been made in respect of the issues raised by Members at these meetings, including the sections on:

- Physical investment;
- Employability and skills;
- Procurement and
- International relations and marketing.

2.0 Key issues

2.1 Content of the Draft Investment Programme

The content of the Draft Investment Package has moved on from previous iterations in line with the comments made by Members; however, it remains a draft for discussion. A mock up document of the draft programme is attached and a number of areas and figures are still to be finalised for example;

Available resource – finalisation of this information is dependent on Members consideration of affordability limits in the context of setting the rate;

Target setting – for example, in terms of potential job creation, where analysis is still being finalised to quantify all the potential employment created through the capital projects proposed in the package, the outreach work, internships and apprenticeships. In terms of the Council's own commitments, some of this will be dependent on the review of agency and overtime which work is ongoing.

Microfinance – a full paper will be taken to Committee in January, outlining the potential options and implications for the Council;

Outcome of the people and communities workshop – the content of this section need to be further updated in the context of the Members' workshop on 29th November.

The draft investment programme contains the following elements:

- **Introduction from the Chair of SP&R;**
- **Context information about the city;**
- **Principles which underpin the investment programme;**
- **Physical Investment Projects**
 - **Council led, partnership and advocacy projects;**

Economy

- **Support for Businesses and Growth (tourism, events, international marketing, supporting, businesses, procurement);**
- **Support for employability and skills development (internships and placements, skills development, bursary scheme, social clauses)**

People, Communities and Neighbourhoods

- **including local investment fund, good relations, interfaces work, community support, community safety, health inequalities, renewing the routes; poverty and inequalities strategy, advice provision and local parks and leisure developments.**

It is likely that any final iteration of the document will need to contain more summarised text; however, at this stage, Members are asked for their views on whether:

- the content reflects the range of interventions Members want to see pursued;
- the tone of the document and its messages are appropriate;
- the right level of information is provided.

The document will be redrafted in line with Members views and presented again to Committee in January.

3.0 Linked issues

3.1 Draft Masterplan

As Members are aware work has been ongoing to refresh the Belfast Masterplan which will give a wider physical development context to the investment/stimulus programme. Revision of the masterplan has been led by the Development Committee which considered the Masterplan review in the context of the Regional Development and Transportation strategies earlier this year. The revised Masterplan will set out what the Council needs to focus on in terms of city infrastructure and relationships in order to create a competitive, connected, inclusive Belfast. The key development platforms emerging from the Masterplan review include:

- The centre city – a vibrant and dynamic centre city and regional economy.
- The neighbourhood city – neighbourhoods which provide the focus for community, social and environmental sustainability.
- The accessible and connected city – enhancing the accessibility and connectivity internationally, regionally and locally.
- The learning city – harnessing the power of cutting edge research and development and third level educations.
- The eco city – clean technology, renewable energy and efficiency will drive growth in the economy and reduce costs for businesses and households.

Emerging thinking from this work is referenced within the draft investment package in the context of those projects which Members have prioritised for advocacy, including the new UU campus, stadia proposals, rapid transit and Royal Exchange.

In order that Members can discuss emerging thinking on the revised Masterplan, it is proposed that a joint meeting of the Development and SP&R Committees is held in early January 2012, to which all other Members will be invited. This will allow Members to shape and inform the recommendations from the masterplan and will also provide an opportunity to consider the elements of the investment programme in this context. The intention is that the draft masterplan would be launched for consultation together with the investment package so that they are mutually reinforcing documents, both aimed at creating a successful and competitive city. Obviously the creditability of the investment package will depend upon agreement being reached on the rate at the end of January.

3.2 Launch

Members have asked that the investment programme is launched for consultation in February, in the context of the Masterplan document, as outlined above. It is proposed that this happens on 2 February 2012 and that two sessions are held with different audiences in mind:

A media briefing focusing on business and economic correspondents from the local media and

A morning 'conference' to which Ministers, Belfast-based MLAs, Belfast City Councillors and senior decision makers from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors will be invited.

It is proposed that the detail and approach to this and other potentially related events and communication activity should be worked up together with the Party Leaders Forum with a view to updating the Committee of progress when the final draft of the programme is submitted in January.

Taking forward work with Members on further prioritisation of capital projects within the draft programme

The capital projects listed within the draft investment programme are those contained within the report by the Director of Property and Projects to the meeting on 18 November which contained information on all current and proposed capital projects. Members noted the need for officers and Members to work together to establish the feasibility and deliverability of projects. This work will commence in the new year when there is clarity about the resources available to deliver this stream of work in the context of the agreed rate.

4 Resource Implications

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

There will be costs associated with the launch of the document and its production but these can be covered from within existing budgets.

5 Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 5.1 Equality screening of all elements of the investment programme will be under taken in line with Council policy.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked:

- for feedback on the draft programme with a view to a further document being submitted to Committee in January;
- to agree that a special meeting of the SP&R and Development Committees is held in early January 2012 to consider the revised draft masterplan and its relationship with the investment programme;
- to agreed to 2 February as the target date for launching the programme and that details of the launch and related communication activities are worked out in further detail with the Party Leaders Forum."

The Members generally welcomed the work and complimented officers for their efforts to respond to Members' direction in this area. During discussion, a number of points were made in relation to the following:

- the style and the content of the document needed to connect to local communities and outline any benefits which would be achieved;
- the package needed to tackle any inequalities and should consider concessionary charges for use of the Council's leisure centres;
- there needed to more emphasis on procurement and supporting the local economy, with a major procurement fair being held which could focus on small to medium sized enterprises;

- consideration should be given to the launch of the document coinciding with any announcement of the business case for the extension of the Waterfront Hall;
- consideration should be given to holding two major investment conferences outside Northern Ireland;
- there was a need to recognise that the Investment Programme was inextricably linked to the rate setting process;
- the package needed to highlight the additionality the Council was trying to achieve, beyond the normal day to day operational work;
- the programme needed to balance ambition with what could be delivered;
- the programme should set out the longer-term ambitions for the City - over a fifteen to twenty year period; and
- there needed to be a process of proactive engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive in order to maximise the potential investment in the City.

After further discussion the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed also that:

- further refinement of the Investment Programme be undertaken before January, 2012;
- that a report on a communications strategy attached to the Investment Programme be submitted to the Committee in January, 2012;
- that no further detailed work would be undertaken on specific projects until the rate and affordability thresholds have been agreed in January; and
- a summary "Investment" pull-out be prepared for inclusion in City Matters.

The Committee noted also that reports on procurement and micro-financing would be submitted to the Committee for consideration in January.

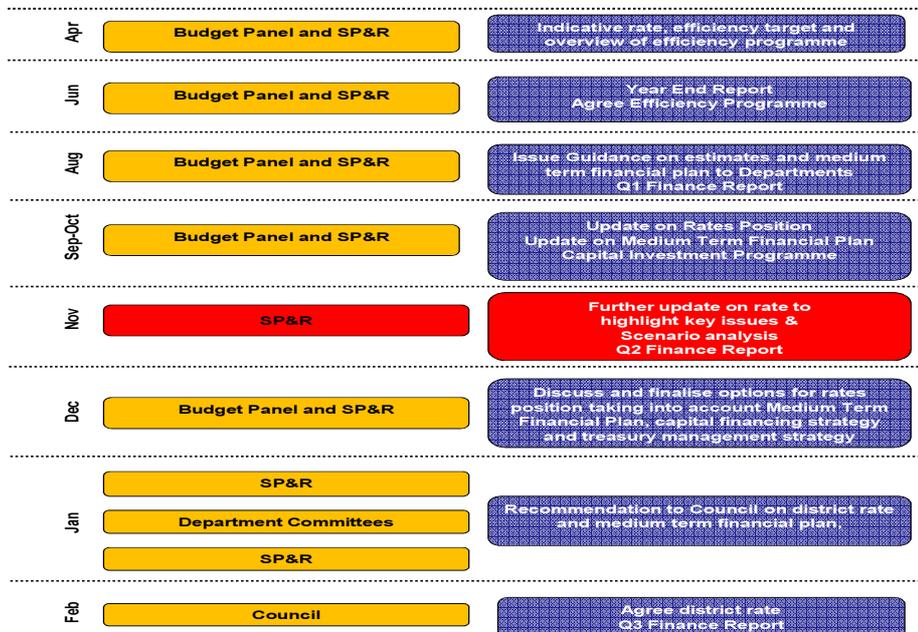
Rate Setting 2012/13

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will recall that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in April agreed the process for setting the rate as outlined in the chart below. The purpose of this report is to outline progress made against the agreed timetable and to discuss the key issues which will need to be considered as of the rate setting process.

Agreed rate setting process for 2012/13



2 Key Issues

2.1 Departmental Estimates –This is the money required by departments to deliver services and typically covers expenditure on headings such as salaries, supplies and services. The departments have all completed their estimates for 2012/13 and the final outcome is that £713,000 less will be required than for 2011/12.

2.2 This reduction is mainly due to two factors:

- £2.3m efficiencies have been taken out of the budgets as agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 4 November 2011.
 - A pay rise has not been factored into the budgets for the third year running.
- 2.3 The reduction in departmental estimates has been achieved despite significant financial pressures on departmental running costs including increased employers superannuation contributions, the impact of inflation (currently 5%) and the loss of external income in areas such as electricity generation at North Foreshore.
- 2.4 Waste Plan – waste management costs are due to increase by some £3.7m in 2014/15 when the arc21 Residual Waste Contract commences. The council has been planning for this increase in cost through a gradual increase in the rate so to avoid a spike in the rate in 2014/15. For 2012/13, a stepped increase of £1m will be required.
- 2.5 The net impact of the department estimates and the waste plan is that an additional £284,000 is required to cover revenue costs in 2012/13. This is the equivalent of a 0.22% increase in the rate.
- 2.6 This provides Members with a one-off opportunity to dedicate any rate increase over and above 0.22% to capital investment and the delivery of the stimulus programme, if they so choose.
- 2.7 **Capital Investment**
- Capital Programme – used to pay for enhancements or new assets owned by the council and paid for through a mixture of loans, grants, capital receipts and one-off payments. The current capital programme is financed through an annual budget of £10m .This budget is sufficient to meet the current capital spending plans of the council which will peak in 2015/16.
 - City Investment Fund – used to finance investment package schemes for non-council assets and paid for through cash generated from the rates or capital receipts. Currently, £3m from rates go into the fund every year. By 2014/15 there will be £11m in the fund net of current commitments. The number of schemes which can be delivered as part of the stimulus package will be limited by the amount of cash in this fund.

- Local Investment Fund – used to fund neighbourhood capital projects for non-council assets. There is £2.5m in the fund. There is an opportunity to add £2.5m to the fund over the next two years without increasing the rate.
- 2.8 Reserves – are forecast to be at least £10.3m by the end of 2011/12. This is line with the council’s reserve strategy which requires general reserves to be at a minimum of £10m.
- 2.9 Rate Base – Land and Property Services (LPS) have provided the council with their final forecast of what the rates will yield for next year. The advice is that there will be zero growth. Council officers have challenged the figures provided by LPS as far as is reasonably possible given the limited access we have to LPS data.
- 2.10 Members should note that the forecast for the total rates collected in 2011/12 is a claw back of £1.54m. It has already been agreed that this will be paid using the in-year underspend. A further update on the 2011/12 position will be provided to the council on 19 December 2011.

Summary

The table summarises the rates position taking into account all the key factors already discussed. The 0.22% scenario shows the base line position without additional capital investment. The further three scenarios show the impact of a 1%, 2%, and 3% rate increase on additional capital investment.

<u>Scenarios</u>	<u>Average Annual Increase in Rates Bill</u>	<u>Average Weekly Increase in Rates Bill</u>	<u>Additional Revenue</u>	<u>Additional City Investment per annum</u>	<u>City Investment by 2014/15</u>
0.22%	£10.21	19p	£284k	£0	£11.00m
1%	£12.85	24p	£284k	£1.00m	£14.00m
2%	£16.30	31p	£284k	£2.25m	£17.75m
3%	£19.75	38p	£284k	£3.50m	£21.50m

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 In order to prepare the rates report for the 6th January 2012 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, Members are requested to agree the following:

1. Officers prepare the department cash limits report based on a reduction of £713,000 as discussed in paragraph 2.1 above;
2. A stepped increase of £1m for the waste plan as discussed in paragraph 2.4 above;
3. Base rate calculations on zero growth in the Estimated Penny Product as discussed in paragraph 2.9 above; and
4. Agree the capital investment element of the rate at the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on 6 January 2012.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Local Government Finance Act
(Northern Ireland) 2011 Update**

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

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 **Members will recall that at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 4 November 2011, a report was presented which provided an overview of the implications of the new local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011.**
- 1.2 **The Act introduces a new capital financing system and sets out the legislative framework within which the council may manage its finances. This report provides an update on the programme for the development of council policies and prudential and treasury management indicators which will support the rate setting process for 2012/13 and in future years.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 **The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and the supporting Prudential and Treasury Codes produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), require the council to adopt certain financial policies which support of the rate setting process and the management of the council's financial affairs.**
- 2.2 **The Director of Finance and Resources is also required to report to Members on the robustness of the annual estimates and provide key financial information in the form of prudential and treasury management indicators as part of the rate setting process.**

- 2.3 The following table provides the timetable for the presentation of reports to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the Act. The reporting schedule has been structured to provide the proposed policy documents to the December 2011 committee (and these have been included as an appendices to this report), with reports providing specific financial information being presented at the January 2012 meeting in order that they can be considered alongside the 2012/13 rate increase. Finally, the financial regulations will be updated and presented to the March 2012 committee meeting.

Table 1
Finance Act Reporting Timetable

Report	SP&R Meeting Date
Treasury Management Policy Statement	9 Dec 2011
Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement	6 Jan 2012
Report on 2012/13 Estimates	3 Feb 2012
Prudential Indicators	6 Jan 2012
Annual Treasury Management Strategy	6 Jan 2012
Revised Financial Regulations	3 Feb 2012

3 Recommendations

3.1 Members are requested to:

- Agree the timetable for the presentation of new policy documents and financial information to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
- Approve the draft Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix A)
- Approve the draft Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement (Appendix B).

Appendix A

Belfast City Council
Treasury Management Policy Statement
December 2011

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy statement is based on the Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and outlines the arrangements within Belfast City Council for ensuring the proper management of the Council's investments and cash flows, its banking and money market capital transactions; the effective control of risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

2. Scope of Treasury Management Activities

- 2.1 Belfast City Council defines its treasury management activities as:-

- the management of the organisation's investments and cash flows
- its banking, money market and capital market transactions and
- the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

- 2.2 The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation.

- 2.3 The Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

3. Treasury Management Practices

3.1 The Director of Finance and Resources will develop and maintain suitable Treasury Management Practices (TMP's) and accompanying schedules as part of the Councils operational procedures. These procedures will set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve its treasury management policies and objectives, prescribe how it will manage and control those activities and address each of the of the following twelve TMP's which are specified in the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice:-

- **TMP1:-Risk Management**
- **TMP2:-Performance Measurement**
- **TMP3:-Decision-Making and Analysis**
- **TMP4:-Approved Instruments, Methods and Techniques**
- **TMP5:-Organisation, Clarity, and Segregation of Responsibilities and Dealing Arrangements**
- **TMP6:-Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements**
- **TMP7:-Budgeting, Accounting and Audit Arrangements**
- **TMP8:-Cash and Cash Flow Management**
- **TMP9:-Money Laundering**
- **TMP10:-Training and Qualifications**
- **TMP 11:-Use of External Service Providers**
- **TMP 12:-Corporate Governance**

4. Annual Treasury Management

4.1 The Director of Finance and Resources will report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the council's treasury management policies, practices and activities, including an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close, in the form described in the TMP's.

Appendix B

1. Introduction

1.1 The Local Government (Capital Financing and Accounting) Regulations (NI) 2011 require Councils to determine an amount of minimum revenue provision (MRP) which it considers to be prudent. This provision will be charged to the general fund each year and will be in respect of the financing of capital expenditure incurred in current or prior years.

2. **Commencement of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)**
- 2.1 The general MRP provision for capital expenditure financed by sanctions issued by the Department of the Environment up to and including 2011/12 and for borrowing incurred in 2012/13 and later years, will be charged to the general fund on a straight line basis in-line with the asset life determined for depreciation purposes either:-
- In the financial year in which the expenditure was incurred, if the expenditure was incurred during the first six months of the financial year.

or

 - In the financial year following the one in which the expenditure was incurred, if the expenditure was incurred during the last six months of the financial year.
- 2.2 The MRP will not be made on the value of Long term Debtors outstanding, as these will be repaid by third parties and it is not therefore deemed necessary to make an additional revenue charge in relation to these amounts. However, if a third party is not making annual repayments of principal, the MRP payments will be made over the asset life.
- 2.3 If the Council enters into finance leases, the MRP will be calculated in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and be equal to the principal elements of the lease payments.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Social Investment Fund - Consultation Response

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 **Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The Executive agreed in March 2011 to the establishment of the Social Investment Fund. The 4 strategic objectives of the Fund are:
- Build Pathways to Employment by tackling educational under achievement and barriers to employment; tackling skills deficits and promoting jobs brokerage, widening access to the labour market, promoting business start up and increasing sustainability through social enterprise.

- Tackling the systemic issues linked to deprivation including poor mental and physical health (suicide and self harm), young mothers, substance abuse, community safety, children and young people at risk, physical health and enhancing community capacity, confidence and partnership working to end deprivation.
- Increase community services by regenerating and refurbishing existing facilities and providing play facilities and environmental improvements.
- End dereliction and promoting investment in the physical regeneration of deprived areas.

There is more detail on the anticipated provision included in the consultation document (available at: <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/social-investment-fund>).

The period for public consultation closes on Thursday 23 December.

- 1.2 There are 4 investment zones proposed in Belfast: Greater North (CEP areas); West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce area; Greater East (inc. North Down and Ards); and Greater South (inc. Lagan Valley). All areas within the zones will not automatically be included; it will be determined by previously identified areas of high deprivation.
- 1.3 Each Social Investment Zone will establish a steering group which will comprise community, political, statutory agency and business representatives. The Steering Group will identify and make recommendations on all the proposed areas to be included in the strategic plan. The document outlines 4 options for the establishment of the Steering Group.
- 1.4 Each area plan will comprise a range of themes and priority actions/projects, to be delivered over 3 years, and based on the 4 strategic objectives of the Fund. It is proposed that only one strategic area plan will be brought forward from each zone. Each Steering Group's strategic plan should reflect the needs across the entire zone, be able to demonstrate community support, is impact-focussed and should encourage a collaborative approach.

- 1.5 The funding available under SIF is both revenue and capital. The split is:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Resource	£8m	£10m	£11m	£11m
Capital	£0m	£10m	£15m	£15m

Any funding not spent in Year 1 will be re-profiled over years 2,3 and 4 of the project therefore ensuring the Fund remains at £80million overall.

It is anticipated that Year 1 will include a development phase to build capacity within communities, develop area plans and to establish the local arrangements for delivery.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 A response to the consultation has been prepared, following discussion with the elected Members. Further to this, a roundtable meeting with the Area Partnership Boards and the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships was convened to explore the strategic direction and implementation of the Fund in Belfast. Their comments have been reflected in this response.
- 2.2 Broadly speaking, the Council commends OFMDFM's commitment to securing a fund that aims to increase quality of life, reduce poverty, improve employment opportunities and address dereliction. There are strong synergies between the objectives of the Fund and the Council's current corporate objectives, services and programmes.
- 2.3 There are a number of issues related to the speedy and strategic implementation of the Fund which we would like to work closely with OFMDFM to address, and we highlight these below:
- a. The Fund should result in change that people can see, touch and feel at a local level rather than the establishment of structures and development of plans. There is an abundance of plans, concepts, strategies and priority lists and the focus needs to switch to prioritisation and delivery. Both the updated Neighbourhood Renewal plans and the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks are an articulation of local needs and issues that could be utilised to inform what projects and activities are prioritised under the Fund.

The Council, in close consultation with key partners, could play a leadership role in supporting the alignment of this multiplicity of plans, so that the city can maximise the potential of the Fund;

- b. There is a need to ensure that the plans from the 4 social investment zones within Belfast as a whole must be complementary to ensure that they are both physically and thematically connected, balanced, collaborative and promote mobility within and across the city;
- c. The geographies for delivery are fundamental and the document contains no clarity on the proposed boundaries for the areas or guidance on proportionality within or between districts – some of which cross council boundaries. There may be merit in OFMDFM considering the potential to align the social investment zones with the new council boundaries being considered under the reform of local government;
- d. We welcome the direct involvement of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Council is keen to support them in the achievements of the ambitious goals of the Fund. We believe therefore that since 50% of the focus of the programme is in the greater Belfast area, there is a special case for Belfast representation at the Ministerial Committee;
- e. As place-shaper for the city, we would strongly argue that local government must be represented on the steering groups, linking the steering groups to the democratic mandate of the city leadership. Given the emphasis on area-based community planning, it is critical that local government must be fully involved at all stages in the implementation and management of the Fund, including the development, assessment, implementation and co-ordination of the area plans;
- f. The Council is a significant funder in the city – across community services; arts organisations; physical regeneration programmes; good relations; community safety; etc – and seeks assurance that the proposed Funders' Forum includes local government and not just central government funders;

- g. It is important to note that the Council has a substantial track record in both delivery and advocacy for major regeneration programmes, services and activities. We have the skills and capability in terms of delivering local projects as well as the systems for accounting for public money. Our track record includes: Renewing the Routes; delivery of the Integrated Delivery Fund; employability projects; community safety; physical refurbishment; capital build programmes – all of which have close alignment to the programmes and activities that are highlighted as priorities within the Fund. We understand the invaluable role of sustained community engagement in informing each of these initiatives and would be able to bring that experience and those diverse networks to the implementation of the Fund in Belfast;**
- h. There are also practical considerations such as equality impact screening, acquisition/vesting of land, planning permissions, lengthy economic appraisal processes and procurement, all of which are necessary but will delay implementation. The Council would welcome further discussion on how OFMDFM could potentially accelerate these time-consuming processes, as well as ensuring appropriate accountability and building the appropriate capacity at a local level;**
- i. While there is an appreciation that that this can only be a four year programme, but it is critical to acknowledge that the deprivation and poverty issues that the programme seeks to address are deep-seated. There needs to be clear linkages between the social investment zone plans and the ongoing transfer of powers work with DSD particularly in terms of community development, neighbourhood renewal and urban regeneration powers. OFMDFM will need to link the management of this process into DSD grant-funding and investment schemes, so that the long term sustainability of programmes and initiatives can be considered. It is important that Council is not left with an unsustainable legacy from the Fund. It is therefore critical that OFMDFM outlines its exit strategy for the Fund and includes Council in its design, from the outset.**

2.4 Members will be aware that we are currently developing the detail of the Local Investment Fund. Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that £2.5m of the under-spend for the 2010/2011 financial year be realigned into the Local Capital Investment Fund as a rolling fund. The following objectives were agreed at the June 2011 meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:

- To provide the Council with the ability to invest in smaller scale local/neighbourhood capital schemes;
- To act as a catalyst for attracting or complementing resources from the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- To provide funding for initial development capital at the local level which enhances development economics, 'pump priming' development opportunities and acting as a demand stimulus;
- To enable the Council to have a more strategic conversation with key delivery bodies and communities about the investment priorities for the city.

Further to this, initial principles were agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23rd September 2011. As the implementation plan for the Social Investment Fund takes shape, officers will work to ensure that the delivery detail of the Local Investment Fund is closely aligned, allowing us all to maximise the impact of public funding and resources in the city.

2.5 Following discussion at Committee, the response will be submitted to OFMDFM in advance of their deadline on December 23, subject to ratification by the Council on 4th January 2012.

3.0 Resource Implications

To be determined following issue of finalised implementation plan from OFMDFM.

4.0 Equality Implications

OFMDFM is responsible for the equality screening and impact assessment to be undertaken. The document contains an initial equality screening and there is a commitment to subject individual programmes as they emerge in future to more detailed equality screening.

5.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked for comment on the consultation response and to agree a submission to OFMDFM.”

During discussion, several Members made the point that the response should request that more clarity should be provided in relation to the proposed boundaries of the investment zones, the need for an exit strategy and the need to target resources based on objective need and to ensure that pockets of deprivation were tackled.

After further discussion, the Committee approved the draft response, subject to the incorporation of the above-mentioned comments and noted that a full copy of the response was available on the Council’s website.

Democratic Services and Governance

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

The Committee considered the undernoted requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality:

<u>Organisation/ Body</u>	<u>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure	DCAL – Outline of priorities and opportunities 21st December, 2011 Approximately 200 attending	Use of the City Hall	This event aims to provide a platform for the Minister and staff of the Department to look ahead and plan for the Department’s priorities and opportunities over the next two years. Much of the event will showcase the vibrancy and ambition of Belfast, by specifically focusing on the recent refurbishment of the Lyric Theatre and Cultúrlann McAdam Ó’Fiaich Centre; the opening of the MAC in January, the Olympic and Para-Olympic torches coming to Belfast in 2012; the opening of the Titanic Signature project also in 2012; the World Police and Fire Games in 2013; and the major capital investment in three Belfast stadia - Casement Park, Ravenhill and Windsor Park.	Use of the City Hall

<u>Organisation/ Body</u>	<u>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
			<p>Due to the intrinsic relationship between these projects and the Council, the Department will be extending invitations to Members of Council and relevant Officers who would find attendance at the event useful.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better opportunities for success'</p>	
Irish Amateur Swimming Association (Swim Ireland)	Awards Evening and Dinner 14th April, 2012 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	<p>This event seeks to provide an opportunity for Swim Ireland to formally recognise the successes of groups and individuals within the swimming fraternity.</p> <p>The event also aims to bring together clubs and individuals from all sections of our community in recognising the achievements of the many people involved in swimming.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'Better opportunities for success across the city', 'Better support for people and communities'</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Girlguiding Belfast	County Awards Ceremony for young people and leaders 10th May, 2012 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits	<p>This event seeks to recognise the achievements of Guides and their Leaders. Awards being presented include Queen's Guide, Duke of Edinburgh, Baden Powell Award for Guides and Long Service Awards for Leaders.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better opportunities for success'.</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £375

<u>Organisation/ Body</u>	<u>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Belfast City Centre Management	'Liverpool One : A best practice event' 25th January, 2012 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks	This event seeks to provide information to the Belfast business community and stakeholders on the experiences learnt by the city of Liverpool. The event aims to provide better opportunities for success by helping to ensure that Belfast continues to learn from and benchmark against other regional cities which have demonstrated best practice. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Clonard Waterpolo Club	Centenary Dinner 28th January, 2012 Approximately 350 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to celebrate the 100 th Anniversary of Clonard Waterpolo Club and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

<u>Organisation/ Body</u>	<u>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
DanceSport Northern Ireland	75 th Anniversary Dinner 1st 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	This event seeks to celebrate the 75 th Anniversary of DanceSport Northern Ireland and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Policy for Members

The Committee was reminded that in March, 2011, the Audit Panel had recommended that the Committee approve the conflicts of interest policy for Councillors. Consideration of the policy was subsequently deferred by the Committee at its meeting on 18th March. The reason for the deferral was for further information to be provided on the role of Members on Outside Bodies, how that impacted upon their membership of Council Committees and the indemnity for Members serving on such Outside Bodies. Following the Local Government Elections in May and as part of the development of the Council's constitution, the time was now considered to be right to seek to introduce the conflicts of interest policy. A report, together with the draft policy, had accordingly been submitted to the Committee on 18th November. At that meeting, the Committee had agreed to defer until its meeting in December consideration of a policy to enable the Political Parties to give due consideration to the matter. Subsequent to the meeting, the draft policy was circulated to the Party Leaders. However, at the time of re-issuing the report no comment had been received. Therefore, in accordance with the Committee's decision the draft policy had been submitted to the Committee for consideration.

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that, in order to clarify the issues for Members, it was suggested that the approach to be taken should have two distinct but complementary parts. The first report, which was included at Appendix 1, dealt with the establishment or register of Members' interests and gave advice on when and how a Member should declare a private pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest at a Council or Committee meeting. The report specifically excluded any advice on the matter of the declarations of interest which might arise due to the membership which a Councillor might hold on an Outside Body, to which they had been appointed by the Council. That matter, together with the broader issues of the roles of Councillors on Outside Bodies and the indemnity issues which might arise, would be dealt with in a subsequent report.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that the establishment of a Register of Members' Interest would take a little time to implement given that a pro-forma registration form would need to be signed, some initial training would need to be provided to Members and time would be required for Members to complete and return forms. Given the timescales involved it would be prudent to establish the Register with effect from 1st April, 2012. The policy, as it impacted upon the declaration of interests at Committee meetings, if approved by the Committee and endorsed by the full Council on 4th January, could be implemented with effect from 1st February, 2012.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to approve the Conflicts of Interest Policy for Councillors, a copy of which is set out below;
- (ii) to establish the Register of Members' Interests with effect from 1st April, 2012;
- (iii) that the policy, as it would affect the declarations of interests at Committee meetings, be applied from 1st February, 2012; and
- (iv) to note that a further report on the declarations of interests which might arise due to the membership which a Councillor might hold on an Outside Body to which they had been appointed by the Council, together with the broader issues of the roles of Councillors on Outside Bodies and the indemnity issues which might arise, would be dealt with in a subsequent report.

"1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

- 1.1 The public has high expectations of Councillors and officers and the way in which they should conduct themselves in undertaking their duties. Belfast City Council expects the conduct of its Councillors and officers to be above reproach.**
- 1.2 In the 1990s, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) set out seven principles of conduct which underpin public life. These seven principles (which are defined in the Annex to this Policy) are as follows:**

**Selflessness
Integrity
Objectivity
Accountability and stewardship
Openness
Honesty and
Leadership**

- 1.3 The handling of conflicts of interest is a particularly important and sensitive issue and is specifically referred to in the Nolan Principle on Honesty:

'You must act with honesty at all times. You must declare any private interests relating to your public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.'

- 1.4 Belfast City Council has adopted the Northern Ireland Code of Local Government Conduct which is a Code of Recommended Practice for the Guidance of Councillors. The Code contains various references to the duty of Councillors to handle conflicts of interest appropriately including:

'You should act in the public interest at all times. In particular, you should not, either officially or otherwise, use your position to gain advantage (financial or other) for yourself, a family member or a friend or business associate' (Section 17)

'If you have a pecuniary, or private or personal non-pecuniary, interest in a matter being considered by your council, you should exclude yourself from discussions and decisions on that matter' (Section 22)

'You should not speak or vote on a matter in which you have a pecuniary interest...you must withdraw from the meeting while that matter is being discussed' (Section 26)

'You should also declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter private or personal interest extends to your membership of, or association with, any business, club, society, voluntary body or other organisation' (Section 27)

Why do we need a Conflicts of Interest Policy?

- 1.5 While all Councillors have a personal responsibility to observe the Code of Conduct, it is also incumbent on Belfast City Council to provide advice and guidance to its Councillors to ensure that, in discharging their roles, they comply with the law and fulfil their obligations under the Code of Conduct. In addition, the Council has a duty to avoid placing Councillors in positions where they may face a serious conflict of interest.

1.6 As part of Belfast City Council's corporate governance arrangements, this document sets out the Council's Conflicts of Interest Policy and the procedures to be followed by Councillors when a conflict arises.

1.7 The key purposes of this Conflict of Interest Policy are as follows:

- To help Councillors comply with the Code of Conduct
- In particular, this Policy aims to avoid self-dealing and any perception of self-dealing which may adversely affect the Council and/or its Councillors
- To ensure effective governance and maintain the public's trust in the Council and its Councillors

Effective governance depends on decision making by Councillors that is unbiased and that appears to be unbiased. The perception of a conflict of interest could potentially damage Belfast City Council's credibility and reputation, and compromise its ability to fulfil its mission and goals

Who does the Policy cover?

1.8 This Policy applies to all Councillors in Belfast City Council and any member of a Council Committee or Working Group or Panel who is not a Councillor.

What does the Policy cover?

1.9 This Policy covers three main areas:

- The general principles for dealing with conflicts of interest within Belfast City Council
- Formal registration of interests by Councillors
- Procedures for declaring and managing conflicts of interest
 - Determining whether or not a conflict of interest exists and is material
 - Approving a 'transaction' where a conflict of interest is involved
 - Documentation of disclosures and decisions.

1.10 If you have any queries in respect of this policy or need advice in relation to a specific case, please contact the Assistant Chief Executive on 028 9027 0239.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Six Principles

2.1 Although this Policy provides advice and guidance to Councillors on how to handle conflicts of interest, it cannot cover every conceivable situation that may arise. Belfast City Council has identified six general principles which underlie and underpin its procedures to handle conflicts of interest appropriately.

2.2 In following these principles, Belfast City Council and its Councillors are demonstrating their commitment to openness, transparency and propriety in the conduct of Council business and adherence to the Nolan Principles as reflected in the Northern Ireland Code of Local Government Conduct.

2.3 The six principles are as follows:

1. It is the personal responsibility of each Councillor to ensure that he or she complies with this Conflicts of Interest Policy (Section 4.11)
2. Councillors should only play a role in the decision making process if they can demonstrate objectivity (Section 4.1)
3. In considering whether an interest is material, a Councillor must consider not only whether he or she will be influenced but also whether a member of the public, acting reasonably, might think that he or she might be influenced (the public perception test) (Section 4.2)
4. Where a material interest exists, either direct or indirect, objectivity will always be assumed to be impaired. This will be the case irrespective of the category of the organisation that the Councillor has the interest in^[1] (e.g. private sector, public sector, voluntary sector or community organisation) (Section 4.3)
5. Where a Councillor is deemed to have a material interest (direct or indirect) in any organisation dealing with the Council, he or she should declare this interest and take no part in the decision making process (Section 4.4)

^[1] This Policy does not apply where a Councillor has an interest in an outside organisation as a result of being nominated or appointed by the Council to the Board of that organisation. External appointments to outside bodies (including the handling of conflicts of interest arising therefrom) will be the subject of a separate report that will come to Council in due course

6. If in doubt, even after discussing the matter with colleagues or the Assistant Chief Executive, a Councillor should err on the side of caution. A Councillor cannot be accused of behaving improperly by declaring an interest which does not exist. However, Councillors do run the risk of serious criticism and possible sanction if they do not declare an interest and act appropriately in respect of an interest that does exist (Section 4.12)

3. REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

What is the difference between registration and declaration of interests?

- 3.1 Registration is the formal process of recording all the direct interests of Councillors on an annual basis whereas a declaration is made as and when interests arise during the day-to-day duties of Councillors.

Maintaining and updating the Register of Interests

- 3.2 All Councillors are required to formally register their own direct (personal) interests annually.
- 3.3 A Registers of Interests will be maintained for Councillors which should be formally updated at least annually and published on the Council's website. The Assistant Chief Executive will issue guidance annually on what is to be registered as part of the Council's Publication Scheme.
- 3.4 Councillors must inform the Council of any changes to their interests which occur during the year. Any new interests or changes to interests should normally be brought to the attention of the Assistant Chief Executive within one month of the new interest/change.
- 3.5 The Assistant Chief Executive will maintain (and update) the Register of Interests for Councillors and ensure that the website is regularly updated. The Assistant Chief Executive will be the key contact for Councillors for notification purposes.

What has to be registered?

3.6 The following six categories of interests should be registered.

- **Remuneration**

You have a registrable interest where you receive remuneration by virtue of being employed, self-employed, the holder of an office, a director of an undertaking, a partner in a firm, or undertaking a trade or profession

- **Related undertakings**

Any directorships of a parent or subsidiary undertaking which are unremunerated

- **Contracts**

Where an undertaking (i.e. you, a corporate body, partnership or unincorporated association), has a contract with Belfast City Council

- **Houses, Land and Buildings**

You have a registrable interest where you own or have any other right or interest in houses, land and buildings within the Council area which may be significant to the work and operation of the Council

- **Shares and Securities**

Shares or securities held in a company or organisation which may be significant to the work and operation of the Council

- **Non-financial interests**

Any non-financial interests that may be significant to the work and operation of the Council (see Sections 3.8 and 3.9 below).

3.7 Councillors do not have to register the value of any interest but rather the name and nature of the organisation in which the interest is held.

- 3.8 Councillors may have significant non-financial interests and it is equally important that relevant interests such as membership or holding office in public bodies, companies, clubs, societies and organisations such as trades unions and voluntary organisations, are registered and described.
- 3.9 In this context, non-financial interests are those which members of the public might reasonably think could influence your actions, speeches or votes in the Council.

What about the interests of family members?

- 3.10 Councillors are only required to register direct (personal) interests but may also voluntarily register indirect interests. The most common category of indirect interests is likely to be the financial interests of close family members.
- 3.11 Close family has been defined by the Accounting Standards Board in Financial Reporting Standard 8 as 'those family members, or members of the same household, who may be expected to influence, or be influenced by, that person in their dealings with the [Council].' It is intended to include at least those relatives identified as 'immediate family', i.e. spouse, live-in partner, parent, child, brother, sister and the spouses of any of these.
- 3.12 Even if indirect interests are not registered, they should be declared as and when they arise.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Declaring a conflict of interest

- 4.1 Public confidence in the Council depends on it being clearly understood that decisions are taken in the public interest and not for any other reason. Councillors should only play a role in any decision making process if they can demonstrate objectivity.
- 4.2 In considering whether an interest is material (significant), a Councillor must consider not only whether he or she will be influenced but also whether any reasonable person would think that he or she might be influenced. The test is whether a member of the public, acting reasonably, might think that a particular interest could influence the decision made (the public perception test).

- 4.3 Where a material interest exists, either direct or indirect, objectivity will always be assumed to be impaired. This will be the case irrespective of the category of the organisation that the Councillor has the interest in^{2[2]} (e.g. private sector, public sector, voluntary sector or community organisation).
- 4.4 Where a Councillor is deemed to have a material interest in an application or other matter, he or she should declare this interest and take no part in the decision making process. This includes not being present at the relevant part of a Committee or other meeting and not participating in discussions or having any kind of involvement or influence.
- 4.5 Where a Councillor has declared an interest at a Committee meeting and absented himself/herself in line with this Policy, the Councillor may be present at any full Council meeting where this decision is being ratified. However, the Councillor should not raise any point relating to the conflicted matter during the Council meeting and if the conflicted matter becomes the subject of a debate or discussion, the Councillor should again declare the interest and absent himself/herself from the meeting.
- 4.6 Interests may be financial or non-financial but there is a particular risk in respect of financial interests. In the case of a financial interest, there should be a presumption that the interest is material and that the conflicted Councillor should withdraw from playing any part in the process.
- 4.7 Councillors should also be aware of situations when it would be appropriate to declare significant interests of close family or friends (indirect interests). Some examples of indirect interests are:
- Your sister is a senior manager in a PR/Marketing company and the Council is entering into a procurement exercise for a major marketing contract
 - The Council is meeting to discuss the possible closure of a facility where a member of your family is employed
 - A close friend is a manager in a voluntary body that has submitted a grant application to the Council and it is due to be considered by a Council Committee that you are a member of.

^{2[2]} See footnote 1 on Page 5

- 4.8. Where a Councillor is unsure as to whether an interest should be declared, or what action to take in a given situation, he or she should seek the advice of the Assistant Chief Executive. However, ultimately, it is for each Councillor to make his or her own decision and to take personal responsibility for that decision.

When do you declare an interest?

- 4.9 Where a Councillor is attending a meeting and he or she has a material interest in one or more items on the agenda, declaration of the interest should be made as early as possible and certainly well before the particular item on the agenda is discussed. Ideally, the declaration should be made at the beginning of the meeting and provide enough information to allow those present to understand the nature of the interest. The person should then withdraw from the meeting for the relevant part of the meeting.
- 4.10 Declarations of interest and any action taken as a result (e.g. leaving the room) should be recorded in the minutes or other appropriate record of the meeting.
- 4.11 It is the personal responsibility of each Councillor to ensure that he or she complies with this Conflicts of Interest Policy. However, if the Chair of a Committee (or other) meeting is aware that a Councillor has not declared a material interest or has declared it but not acted in accordance with this Policy, the Chair should remind the Councillor of his/her responsibilities under this Policy.
- 4.12 If a Councillor is in doubt as to whether or not to declare a material interest, even after discussing the matter with colleagues or the Assistant Chief Executive, he or she should err on the side of caution. A Councillor cannot be accused of behaving improperly by declaring an interest which does not exist or by leaving the meeting upon declaring a material interest which a reasonable person would not have considered material. However, Councillors do run the risk of serious criticism and possible sanction if they do not declare an interest and act appropriately in respect of an interest that does exist.
- 4.13 A conflicted Councillor should not use his/her position to try and improperly influence a decision by, for example, asking or directing another person to represent his/her interests or views at the meeting. Likewise, the Councillor should not comment about the situation at any time, inside or outside meetings (including to the Press).

- 4.14 A Councillor should not seek or accept membership of any Committee (or Working Group, Panel etc.) if it would involve declaring a material interest so often that he or she would be of little value to that Committee or if it would damage public confidence in the Committee.
- 4.15 Councillors should also exercise extreme care when gifts, gratuities, entertainment, hospitality or honoraria are offered from current or potential suppliers or grantees or any individual or organisation which stands to gain or benefit from a decision of the Council. Such offers of gifts / hospitality should be recorded in the appropriate register maintained by the Democratic Services Section.

General exclusions

- 4.16 A Councillor does not have a material interest which has to be declared or acted upon:
- In respect of any issue relating to Council services which are offered to the public generally, as a recipient or non-recipient of those services or
 - In connection with the setting of the Council Rate (including the approval of the Annual Estimates) or
 - In matters relating to Councillors' remuneration, allowances, expenses or support services or in relation to Councillors' pension arrangements.

Breaching this Conflicts of Interest Policy

- 4.17 Where a Councillor has a direct or indirect pecuniary (financial) interest in a contract or other matter and takes any part in discussions or decisions on that matter, then under Section 28 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, the Councillor 'shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable:
- (a) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or to a fine or to both or
 - (b) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale [currently up to £1,000]'
- 4.18 Where Councillors otherwise commit a breach of any of the provisions of this Policy, they may be exposing themselves and/or their Political Party to criticism.

ANNEX: THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

The seven Nolan Principles are as follows:

Selflessness: Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.”

Election Accounts - May 2011

The Committee was advised that there was a requirement for the Election Accounts for the running of the Local Government Elections in May, 2011 to be notified to the Council. The total cost of the elections was £343,578 as compared with the cost of £274,975 for the Local Elections in 2005, an increase of £68,603. That increase was due principally to higher postage costs of £23,742 and an increase in staffing costs of £37,315. A full statement of expenditure in respect of the Elections is set out below:

Category	£
Postage to Candidates' Election addresses	£109,309
Postage to Council Counting staff	£268
EONI Postage cost	£10,408
Count Training	£596
Registers	£591
Advertising	£4,187
Stationery	£685
Use of Polling Premises	£5,470
Equipment	£3,070
Hire of Equipment	£3,011
Printing, Transport and Stationery	£11,518
Ballot Papers	£19,355
Transport (Translink)	£2,160
Security	£1,771
Count Staff	£73,171
Poll Staff	£98,008
TOTAL	£343,578

Noted.

Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland - Spring Seminar

The Committee was advised that the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland was holding its Spring Seminar in County Cavan on 10th and 11th February, 2012. The conference theme was "Local Government – Renewal and Development". The focus of discussion at the event would be how Local Government could be reformed in order to bring it closer to local communities. The keynote speaker at the conference would be Minister Phil Hogan TD, Minister of Environment, Community and Local Government. The approximate cost per delegate of attending was £501.

The Committee authorised the attendance at the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland Spring Seminar of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Council's representatives on the National Association of Councillors, Northern Ireland Region, the Democratic Services Manager (or their nominees) and a representative of each of the Parties on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members.

Member Development Charter

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the Council had been awarded the Member Development Charter, the first local authority in Northern Ireland to receive such an award. He expressed his gratitude to the Members and officers involved in helping the Council achieve the award.

The Committee noted the success and recorded its appreciation to those officers in Democratic Services, Gareth Quinn and Julie Lilley, and in Human Resources, Jill Minne and Lisa Rogan, for the work which they had undertaken.

Human Resources

Standing Order 55 - Employment of Relatives

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

The Committee noted the appointments.

Asset Management

North Foreshore Development Brief

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 19th August, it had granted approval to publicly advertise a Development Brief for a site of up to 39 acres at the North Foreshore site for Leisure/Cultural type uses. The exercise was the second step in regard to expressions of interest enquiries which the Council had received earlier in the year as it followed through on its waste, leisure and environmental industrial approach to the overall site.

He reported that expressions of interest had been received from two local developers and the Development Brief had been aimed to test the reality of those proposals and any new submissions by requesting of the developers full financial details, track records, legal standing and the benefits to the Council and the City of their proposals. The brief had been advertised both locally and in Europe with a closing date of 21st November, 2011.

The Director of Property and Projects advised the Members that at the closing date no positive responses had been received. He stated that the two original developers who had responded to the expression of interests call did respond as follows:

- ILS Limited, which had originally proposed a seven acre park of leisure attractions, had decided not to proceed; and
- Durnien Limited, which was acting for an overseas fund and consortium, had proposals for a major sports complex, including a stadium for Crusaders/Newington, together with a digital film post production facility, had also declined to submit a bid.

However, since Council officers had last met with them Durnien Limited representatives had firmed up their proposal and had indicated that the company required a larger site than that proposed in the development brief. To avoid the risk of a bid for a larger site being contested it did not wish to make a submission within the current process. Durnien Limited and its client remained committed to the scheme and would like to facilitate a meeting with the Council and relevant Ministers from the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Department for Social Development and the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to explore what options now existed and had requested such a meeting in writing.

The Director suggested that, since the development brief exercise had now been completed, the offer of a meeting should at least be taken up as there was substantial investment and job creation associated with the proposal in the range of £180 million investment and 2000 jobs if it proved viable.

After discussion, the Committee acceded to the request for a meeting and agreed that the Department of the Environment's Planning Service be included in such a meeting.

Former Grove Leisure Centre Site

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 A report was brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21 October 2011 regarding the demolition of the former Grove Leisure Centre.**
- 1.2 Members had agreed to progress with the demolition of the building; to undertake an updated report on a needs analysis for business accommodation and incubation space in Belfast in order to inform future use options for the site; to take forward discussions with BELB regarding any scope for joint consideration of disposal/development options for both the Council site and the adjacent former schools site and subsequently take a report back to Committee with proposals for future use options for the site.**
- 1.3 At the request of Alderman Browne the decision was, however, taken back for further consideration by the Council on 1st November.**
- 1.4 At the request of elected Members from the area the Director of Property and Projects has subsequently met with various elected Members from the area and the DSD Minister, Nelson McCausland. There were concerns that demolition of the building may lead to problems of anti social behaviour or illegal dumping at the site particularly if there was no agreed future use.**
- 1.5 It is now being proposed that a workshop be convened in the New Year to explore development opportunities at both this site and also at other sites in this area and to agree a way forward. The suggested participants at the workshop are to include BCC, BELB, DSD, NIHE, DRD, and other interested parties.**

2 **Key Issues**

- 2.1 It is proposed that a workshop is convened in the New Year to consider the potential for a joined up approach to development opportunities for both the BCC site at Old Grove as well as other potential development sites in close proximity. Suggested attendees of the workshop to include BCC, BELB, DSD, NIHE, DRD, PLACE and other interested parties as appropriate. The Director of Property & Projects has arranged a scoping meeting with BRO officials
- 2.2 The politicians only want the demolition option considered following the outcome of the workshop, which will be reported back to Committee for further instruction.
- 2.3 Officers would recommend that we continue to have the needs analysis for business accommodation & incubation space in Belfast updated, in order to inform future use options.

3 **Resource Implications**

As set out in the attached Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes of 21 October 2011.

4 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

None at this time.

5 **Recommendations**

Committee is asked to approve:

- (i) The holding of a workshop in early New Year to consider the future development opportunities and options for the former Grove Leisure Centre site as well as other potential development sites in this area. Proposed attendees at the workshop to include BCC, BELB, DSD, DRD, NIHE, PLACE and other interested parties.
- (ii) Demolition of the former Grove Leisure Centre building to be further considered following the outcome of the workshop.
- (iii) In order to inform future use options for the area an updated report to be undertaken on the needs analysis for business accommodation and incubation space in Belfast, with a focus on this particular area.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Glen Road Development Framework

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update in relation to the Glen Road Development Framework and indicated that a proposed pre-consultancy community event had been planned for early December and that Members of the Committee would be invited to attend the meeting of the Development Committee on 24th January, 2012 at which a presentation would be made by representatives from the Department of Social Development and its consultants.

Project Management – Construction-Related Consultancy Services

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that the Project Management Unit comprised staff from varying construction disciplines but required the engagement of consultants to provide construction-related consultancy services to supplement, and work under the direction of, the in-house resource in the delivery of projects. He explained that the framework agreements which had previously been set up for consultancy services had now expired and, consequently, consultants had recently been procured on a project by project basis. However, each of those procurement exercises was time-consuming which was wasteful of resources and did not bring any potential of economies of scale or benefits of earlier involvement and longer term collaborative working, which could be achieved through framework agreements.

He stated that the Capital Programme was dynamic and depended on the scale and nature of emerging projects and the availability of financial resources, with funding frequently becoming available at relatively short notice (in terms of overall construction and development programming). Projects were increasingly becoming subject to stringent funding conditions, time constraints and planning requirements and, to gain maximum benefit, construction consultants needed to be engaged in project development from early inception/feasibility stages. To facilitate that, the Project Management Unit proposed to set up a range of framework agreements for construction-related consultancy services, including, amongst other things, architectural, civil/structural engineering, building services engineering, cost management, Construction Design and Maintenance Co-ordinator and landscape architecture, to run for a period of three till four years.

The Director indicated that the frameworks would be neither guaranteed (no services might be required) nor exclusive but occasionally there would be a requirement for specialist construction-related consultancy services to be separately procured for particular projects where necessary, such as the proposed Girwood Community Hub or the Waterfront Hall Convention/Exhibition Centre. The potential for other local authorities to take advantage of those frameworks was also being explored and those flexibility options would be built into the tender/contract conditions.

The Committee approved the invitation of tenders and delegated authority to the Director, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to award contracts in respect of construction-related consultancy services for frameworks or specific projects, as detailed above, on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and evaluated on cost and quality criteria.

Capital Programme Scheme

The Committee was advised that the Parks and Leisure staff had been working for some time in progressing three schemes under the Sport NI Community Capital Programme:

- mountain Bike Trail at Barnett Demesne/Mary Peter's Track
- a 3G Pitch Soccer at Marylebone Millennium Pitch
- a 3G Pitch at Hammer Open Space

The Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 10th November, had agreed to enter into management and land agreements in respect of the bodies involved in each project and to the satisfaction of sports NI as a principal grants funder. The Committee had agreed also to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the minimum necessary financial capital contribution be made to each of the three projects, up to a maximum overall funding allowance of £375,000, and that the allocation of money to each particular project include a degree of flexibility as necessary to assist each club to achieve its project outputs.

The Director of Property and Projects explained that the Council's process would include a short 'gate' review of the business case for each project, which would assist in determining the final costs and assist also in the funding allocation. He stated that the Director of Financial Resources had indicated that there was sufficient finance available to allocate the required funding for those asset-enhancing schemes using revenue contributions.

The Committee approved the scheme for inclusion in the Capital Programme and agreed to make available the funding as outlined.

Acquisitions and Disposals

Re-purchase of Land at Loop River

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee was advised that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 6th December, had agreed to the re-acquisition of a small portion of land of approximately 0.106 acres from Trinity Housing Limited at Loop River Open Space. The acquisition, which was at nil cost to the Council, simplified the Roads/Footway adoption process and marginally enlarged the Council's land holding at the Loop River Open Space.

The Committee approved the acquisition.

Proposed Contractors' Compound at Andersonstown Leisure Centre

The Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 6th December, had also approved the grant of a Licence in respect of land to be used as a Contractors' Compound at the Andersonstown Leisure Centre in connection with improvement works being carried out as part of an Environmental Improvement Scheme along the Andersonstown Road. The Licence would be for a period of approximately ten months and command a fee of £100 per week.

The Committee approved the proposed Licence Agreement.

Licence Agreement at Musgrave Park

The Committee was advised that the car park at Musgrave Park had been developed by St. Brigid's Gaelic Athletic Club in order to facilitate club members and visitors using the adjoining pitches, which were covered by a Facilities Management Agreement with the Council. A Planning Assessment of the car park and adjoining lands had been undertaken, which had advised that the land might have commercial development potential and it had recommended that the Council keeps its options open and does not commit to any permanent development on that part of Musgrave Park pending the outwork of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Public Inquiry process.

At its meeting on 15th October, 2009, the Parks and Leisure Committee had agreed to grant a Licence Agreement to St. Brigid's Gaelic Athletic Club for temporary use of the aforementioned land for car parking and for the installation of temporary changing accommodation, subject to detailed terms being agreed and reported back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. It had only recently been possible to agree the overall terms of the proposed Licence Agreement which are set out hereunder:

- The terms of a proposed Licence Agreement with St Brigid's Gaelic Athletic Club have now been agreed for temporary use of an area of land for car parking and installation of temporary changing accommodation.
- The proposed duration is for 2 years and month to month thereafter. This will provide an opportunity to review the arrangements following the outcome of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan process.
- St Brigid's Gaelic Athletic Club will carry public liability insurance for Club Members and visitors over the area outlined red on the attached map and the right of way shown shaded yellow. The club will be responsible for all losses or claims associated with any temporary changing accommodation installed by the club on this area. The Council will carry its normal public liability insurance in respect of other users across the whole of Musgrave Park.
- A Licence fee of £60 per month has been agreed, subject to review after 3 years. If the Licence continues beyond this period it will become subject to annual review to take account of inflationary increases.
- St Brigid's Gaelic Athletic Club to be responsible for all repairs to the temporary changing accommodation and to keep the surface of the parking area in good order and repair. The Council is to be responsible for graffiti removal from the outside of the changing accommodation.

- The limited term licence agreement retains the relevant land within Council control and retains potential for asset realisation in the longer term.

The Committee approved the grant of the Licence Agreement on the terms outlined.

Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre

The Director of Property and Projects reported that the Development Committee, at its meeting on 14th September, had agreed to recommend entering into a new eighteen-month lease for the Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre with the Connswater Community and Leisure Services Limited, with an option on the part of the Council to extend for a further eighteen months, subject to approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee granted the approval sought.

Good Relations and Equality

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

Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 20th November.

Meeting of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group held on 2nd December.

Chairman