

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 3rd February, 2012

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Investment Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“ **1.0 Relevant Background Information**

1.1 The capital investment detailed in the Investment Programme 2012-15 is as follows:

- **£75m in council facilities – delivered through the Council’s capital programme and financed through a combination of one-off revenue payments, loans, grants and capital receipts.**
- **£20m in partnership projects and £50m levered from sources outside of the council – delivered through the Council’s City Investment Fund and financed through an annual £6m rate contribution and capital receipts. Additional private investment will also be explored as more definition is put round the projects.**
- **£5m in smaller regeneration partnership projects – delivered through the Local Investment Fund and financed through re-allocation of existing resources.**

1.2 Now that the finances have been agreed Members and officers must turn their attention to delivery. It was agreed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th January that a workshop for Members would be held on 3rd February to discuss delivery issues followed by party group briefings and finally an implementation plan would be presented on 23rd March to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

1.3 The issues to be covered in the workshop are as follows:

- Governance arrangements to support moving projects from concept to construction;
- Policy frameworks for prioritisation of City Investment Fund and Local Investment Fund projects;
- Prioritisation of non-recurrent capital expenditure;
- Capacity to deliver – internal and external;
- Monitoring and review arrangements.

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Governance arrangements

A physical project, regardless of size, goes through four key stages. These are:

- Concept – initial appraisal including feasibility, financing and design option – should the project be considered to move forward to the next stage.
- Design – detailed design appraisal, quantifying social, economic and environmental impacts, community consultation and engagement and affordability and sustainability. Should the Council invest?
- Pre-Construction – specification, tender documents, evaluation of submissions and deliverability.
- Construction – deliver the project on time, to the appropriate quality and within budget.
- Hand-over – Management of facilities, assessment of outcomes and running costs.

The workshop will consider the role of Members and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at each of the five project stages in the context of the Capital Programme, City Investment Fund and Local Investment Fund.

2.2 Policy Framework

In order for Members to prioritise individual projects and to allocate resources within the Capital Programme, City Investment Fund and Local Investment Fund agreement will need to be reached on the criteria to be used. The workshop will include the assessment of social, environmental and economic impacts and how the investment principles which have already been agreed by Members will underpin investment decisions.

2.3 Prioritisation of non-recurrent capital expenditure

Members are aware that with the new Finance Act, if the full budget for the capital programme loan repayments is not needed in a particular year, that element of the budget which is not required may be reallocated in that year to pay for other capital schemes, on a one-off basis. The workshop will consider how Members may wish to allocate and prioritise any potential one-off capital expenditure.

2.4 Capacity to deliver – internal and external

The Investment Programme raises a number of capacity issues for the organisation. At the area briefings, Members have raised the issue of officer support for its implementation. There are a number of key functions related to this:

- Project development and appraisal
- Community engagement and stakeholder management
- Project management
- Financial management

There are also a number of key external dependencies which are central to the delivery of Investment Programme projects, including the Planning Service and speedy engagement with statutory consultees, such as DRD Roads Service and Heritage Service.

The organisational implications of the Investment Programme and the development of a Belfast Delivery Forum will be discussed at the workshop.

2.5 Monitoring and review

The workshop will consider the content and frequency of reporting to Members on the implementation of the Investment Programme.

3.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of the report.

4.0 Officers to contact

**Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects.”**

The Directors of Finance and Resources and Property and Projects tabled for the information of the Members a briefing paper in relation to the delivery of the Investment Programme which outlined the following key issues:

- policy frameworks for prioritisation of the City Investment Fund and the Local Investment Fund Projects;
- the governance arrangements to prioritise projects from concept to construction;
- the prioritisation of non-recurring capital expenditure in the following areas: alleygates, Brighter Belfast, provision of local facilities, maintenance/upgrade of local facilities and ICT;
- capacity to deliver – internally and externally; and
- the monitoring, review and public transparency arrangements.

Each section of the briefing paper outlined the current position, some options for implementation and key questions for Members to consider and provide advice to officers.

After consideration of the briefing paper, the Committee agreed that

- (1) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive (or his nominee) to establish and convene a Belfast Delivery Forum;
- (2) the Party Group Leaders Forum be empowered to look at and consider a means of engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive and Departmental Ministers and external parties;
- (3) the Budget and Transformation Panel consider the matter further at its next meeting;

- (4) the non-recurrent capital expenditure be allocated to:
- Alleygates
 - Brighter Belfast
 - Provision of local facilities
 - Maintenance/upgrade of local facilities
 - ICT
- (5) Political Party briefings be held to ensure that all Members were apprised and fully engaged in the process;
- (6) noted that, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, the Director of Property and Projects would be recruiting the necessary Project Managers and associated staff to resource the programme within the exiting Council establishments and at no additional costs; and
- (7) to enable the briefings to be held and a number of delivery-focused papers to be produced and presented, the meeting scheduled for 16th March be re-arranged and held at the later date of 23rd March.

Chairman