

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 23rd March, 2012

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive; Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor; 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.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Alderman R. Newton.

The Committee agreed that a letter be forwarded to Alderman R. Newton expressing the Committee's best wishes for a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Modernisation and Improvement

Local Government Reform – Moving Forward

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that the NI Executive's draft Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, contains a clear commitment to proceed with local government reform and to transfer key functions (e.g. planning, regeneration and community planning) to councils as part of the reform process.

- 1.2 The Environment Minister has recently written to all councils requesting that they restore necessary implementation structures to support the operational delivery of local government reform at the local level.
- 1.3 At the SP&R Committee on the 2 March, there was an initial discussion with Members on local government reform; examining some of the key challenges in moving forward including the need to inform/shape emerging legislation, establish appropriate governance and implementation structures and effectively engage with Lisburn and Castlereagh. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the issue until its next meeting on 23 March to enable Members and Political Parties to give further consideration in advance of taking decisions.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 At the SP&R meeting on 23 March 2012, Members views will be sought on the following key issues:-

2.2 *(i) Belfast voluntary Transition Committee*

- 2.2.1 Members are asked to give consideration to the political composition of the Council's voluntary Transition Committee (vTC) which will provide political oversight and co-ordinate the Councils activities around local government reform. Potential options include:

Option 1: SP&R Committee designated as Belfast vTC with 1 monthly meeting dealing with reform related matters; (would ensure proportionality)

Option 2: SP&R Committee, with the addition of a PUP nomination to ensure cross party representation, designated as Belfast vTC with 1 monthly meeting dealing with reform related matters;

Option 3: Belfast vTC to consist of Party Group Leaders and Chairs and Deputy Chairs of all Standing Committees (would ensure proportionality)

Option 4: Any other political composition which SP&R and Council agree appropriate.

Depending on the option chosen, consideration would have to be given to whether there was any impact on the Councils proportionality arrangements and whether any change was required to Standing Orders. In any event it is recommended that the vTC meet once a month to discuss reform related issues.

2.2 (ii) Transfer of Functions

2.2.1 Members' authority is sought for the Council to intensify its discussions with DOE, DoE Planning Service and DSD regarding the potential initiation of a Belfast pilot which seeks to integrate planning and regeneration functions within the context, among other things, of the delivery of the Belfast Investment Programme. This has already been discussed when a BCC cross-party delegation recently meet with the Environment Minister and a meeting is now being sought with the DSD Minister

2.2.2 Authority is sought also to develop a joint training programme with the Planning Service to build the capacity of both Councillors and officers in relation to planning and their future statutory role.

2.3 (iii) Engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh

2.3.1 Members are asked to consider whether the Council should formally write to both Lisburn and Castlereagh councils seeking to meet with them to discuss matters of mutual interest and to start to plan for any proposed boundary changes and associated challenges (e.g. ensuring service harmonisation, transfer of assets and liabilities, mitigating potential financial risks, minimising the impact on rates etc). A piece of work has already been authorised by the Committee to look at service needs in relation to future leisure provision.

2.4 (iv) Funding Local Government Reform

2.4.1 There is growing opposition across local government to the NI Executive's decision not to fund local government reorganisation but rather seeking local government to fund reform. How such costs are identified, planned and budgeted for on a potential 'invest to save' basis will be crucial. It is understood that the DoE are considering what financial instruments could be put in place to give councils greater flexibility to fund specific one-off costs of reform.

2.4.2 The Council has received correspondence from the National Association of Councillors setting out the Association's concerns in regards to the absence of central government funding for key elements of the reform process including severance payments for members who may be displaced by the proposed reduction in the number of local councils in 2015. The Association has sought clarification from local government if they believe they can fund the reform programme or whether they expect central government to provide part funding.

2.4.3 The Council will need to consider whether it is willing to fund elements of the reform programme which offer the potential to secure future efficiency savings or service improvements for the Council.

2.4.4 It may be that Members would wish to support a lobby led by NILGA requesting the NI Executive to provide additional funding to enable Councils to deliver on the RPA. It is advised that the Council also seek authority for an increase in Special Responsibility Allowance from the DOE, to permit Belfast to fund the additional Member involvement which will be required by the RPA process if the NILGA lobby is unsuccessful.

2.5 *(v) Governance proposals and Council's decision-making processes*

2.5.1 The Council must ensure that it engages with DoE and informs the emerging legislative proposals relating to the future governance and decision-making processes of Councils. Such proposals are to be set out in the draft Local Government Reorganisation Bill which it is expected to be issued for consultation by December 2012. Detailed consideration needs to be given to the practical and operational implications of any proposals relating to, in particular:-

- 'Weighted Majority Voting' (e.g. 80% of Council members present and voting). Understanding that decisions relating to the statutory duties of the Council , e.g. striking the rate and those of a quasi judicial nature such as making bye-laws would be excluded from qualified majority voting.
- 'Decision call-in' procurements (e.g. a call-in trigger being 15% of total Council membership). We need to ensure that adequate consideration is given to the practical implications

2.5.2 Members will note that a separate report on this matter is on the Committee's agenda for discussion.

3.0 Proposed next steps

3.1 Following discussion among Members at the Committee meeting, a detailed project plan dealing with, among other things, the various issues outlined above will be developed and brought back to a subsequent meeting of the Committee for consideration and approval.

4.0 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.

If the Committee agree to seek authority from the Environment Minister to extend the limit of its Special Responsibilities Allowance, any additional funding allocated towards this will be secured through realignment of existing budgets.

5.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to consider and agree:

- i. the political composition of the Belfast voluntary Transition Committee (vTC);
- ii. that the nomination process to the Belfast vTC would sit outside the formal Committee appointment process as set out within the Council's Standing Orders;
- iii. that the Belfast vTC meets at least once a month;
- iv. that the Council now actively engages with DoE, Planning Service and DSD regarding a Belfast pilot;
- v. Council officials work with DoE Planning Service officials to develop proposals for a joint training and capacity building programme around planning;
- vi. to formally write to both Lisburn and Castlereagh councils seeking an initial meeting to identify and discuss matters of mutual interest resulting from any proposed changes to Belfast's boundary;
- vii. whether the Council would be willing to fund key elements of the local government reform programme on a potential 'invest to save' basis and to respond to the correspondence received from the National Association of Councillors accordingly; and
- viii. whether the Council should write to the Environment Minister seeking authority to extend the limit of its Special Responsibilities Allowance scheme."

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McVeigh,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be designated as Belfast's voluntary Transition Committee and that a Member of the Progressive Unionist Party be invited to attend the meetings in a non-voting capacity.

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

After further discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt recommendations (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii) as set out in the report. With regard to Option (viii), the Committee agreed not to write to the Environment Minister to seek authority to extend the limit of its Special Responsibilities Allowances scheme.

Governance Proposals in the Local Government Reorganisation Bill

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 2nd March, it had agreed that a report be prepared setting out the current position with regard to the latest thinking on governance arrangements in the new Councils following the Review of Public Administration. The Committee was reminded further that, at its meeting on 18th February, 2011, it had approved a response to a consultation document on Local Government Reform which had been issued by the Department of the Environment, a copy of which, together with the Council's response, had been circulated for information.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the main governance considerations which had been contained in the 2011 consultation paper covered the following areas:

- decision-making structures, including scrutiny arrangements;
- sharing power and responsibility (proportionality);
- checks and balances, including weighted majority voting and call-in;
and
- increased transparency, including the development of a Council constitution.

He explained that things had not moved on very far from the decision in February, 2011. No new proposals had been produced by the Department and officials had confirmed that the Minister was currently examining the responses to the 2011 consultation paper. It was expected that the Minister's position on Local Government Reform would be presented to the Environment Committee in April or early May. At that point, the Council might have an opportunity, if it so wished, to respond to the Environment Committee on the Minister's proposals.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Clerk to the Environment Committee indicating that the Council wished to be involved in any consultation at an early stage.

Democratic Services and Governance

Documentary on Lord Mayor – Request to Film Council Meetings

The Committee was reminded that, at its meetings on 18th November, 2011 and 20th January, it had granted authority for a film company, Waddell Media, to record the proceedings of the December, 2011 and March, 2012 Council meetings, respectively, as part of a documentary it was producing on behalf of the British Broadcasting Company on the Lord Mayor's year in office.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the company had, in order to show some of the day-to-day business of how the Council was run, now requested permission to film also the full proceedings of the following Council meetings:

- Monday, 2nd April, 2012
- Tuesday, 1st May, 2012
- Friday, 1st June, 2012

It was understood that the Company required two personnel to be in attendance to carry out the filming. One camera would be used, operating from both fixed and non-fixed positions.

He pointed out that, if the Committee was minded to accede to the request, it should be noted that the Company would be in attendance after the minutes of the meeting of the Council had been adopted at the April meeting and at the commencement of the May and June meetings. It should be noted also that the meeting on 1st June would be the Annual Meeting and requests were normally received from broadcasting companies to film the election of the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request for the filming of the Council meetings as outlined.

Invitation to Commemoration Ceremonies – Government of the Irish Republic

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 4th January, 2012, had passed the undernoted resolution:

“This Council, in consultation with the Royal British Legion, wishes to extend an invitation to the Government of the Republic of Ireland to participate, following normal protocols, from 2012 onwards in the Commemoration to mark the Battle of the Somme and the Remembrance Sunday Ceremony at the Cenotaph in Belfast.”

The Democratic Services Manager explained that a meeting had been held recently with the President of the Royal British Legion who had confirmed that, at its Northern Ireland Executive Committee meeting on 16th February, there had been unanimous support for the Council's resolution. The Royal British Legion also wished to convey its appreciation to the Council for the fact that it had sought its views on the matter before proceeding. Given that the Legion was in full support of the Council's resolution, a letter would now be sent to the Government of the Irish Republic inviting it to participate in both the Commemoration to mark the Battle of the Somme and the Remembrance Sunday Ceremony.

Noted.

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

The Committee was advised that the undernoted requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality had been received:

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Probation Board Northern Ireland	Conference Dinner 25th October, 2012 Approximately 160 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better Services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Queen's University Belfast	Euromicro International Conference Reception 27th February, 2013 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the City'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce	Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce Presidents' Banquet 28th November, 2012 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall only	This event aims to provide a networking opportunity in order to encourage investment and business development opportunities for Belfast and beyond. The event, which will include representatives from both Local and Central Government, also seeks to facilitate discussion on economic and social regeneration. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better Services – listening and delivering' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall
IN! Magazine	The IN! Awards 3rd November, 2012 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall	This event aims to promote and celebrate the positive achievements of Northern Ireland's leaders in the fields of sport, music, fashion and film & television. This event, which has previously had considerable media coverage, will recognise individuals from the aforementioned fields who have excelled and promoted Northern Ireland both nationally and internationally. This year's event will be hosted by Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langford and previous recipients of the awards include Darren Clarke, Nadine Coyle, Katie Larmour and Graeme McDowell. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Pubs of Ulster	Pub of the Year Awards 14th November, 2012 Approximately 380 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This Awards ceremony seeks to recognise the best licensed trade establishments across Northern Ireland. Categories include 'Best Neighbourhood Pub' and 'Best Tourism/Visitor Pub'. The event aims to improve the industry by recognising best practice through the development and introduction of a robust set of retailing standards. Furthermore the organisation has a close working relationship with Belfast City Council as was demonstrated by their involvement in both the 'Get Home Safe' campaign and 'Counter Measures' training programme over recent years. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better Services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
The Boy's Brigade (Northern Ireland)	Gala Dinner to Celebrate The Boys' Brigade (Northern Ireland)'s 125th Anniversary 6th September, 2012 Approximately 250 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event seeks to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of The Boys' Brigade (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', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
The Linenhall Library	Gala Dinner to Celebrate Linenhall Library's 225th Anniversary. 11th May, 2013 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event seeks to celebrate the 225th Anniversary of the Linenhall Library 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 wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Active Communities Network	UK Launch of Urban Stars Programme 15th May, 2012 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits	This event, which will launch the Urban Stars Programme, seeks to deliver grass roots sporting projects in areas affected by poverty and anti-social behaviour to reduce crime, promote citizenship and offer alternative pathways for participants. During this period of economic hardship this programme will aim to bring additional resources to what is classed as 'hard to reach areas' and it will seek to target the resources in a joined up and effective manner. The programme will draw together community partners, the private sector and individuals who want to make a difference on the ground. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form tea/coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £250

A Member pointed out that a number of prominent guests would be attending the Active Communities Network event and requested the Committee to consider providing a light finger buffet in place of the hospitality as outlined.

The Committee agreed to this course of action and adopted the remainder of the recommendations as set out.

Confucius Institute of Northern Ireland

The Chief Executive reported that a request had been received from the Confucius Institute of Northern Ireland at the University of Ulster for the Council to hold a joint business event at the City Hall on April 19th, the purpose of which was to exchange information on how to do business with China. He explained that the Confucius Institute operated across the world, with Chinese Universities teaming up with counterparts in other countries. They were not solely academic enterprises but were resources which the education, business, cultural and sporting communities could tap into to develop relationships with their counterparts in China. The University of Ulster's partner was Zhejaing University of Media and Communication and it had forged also a partnership with Hubei Normal University for the setting up of Confucius classrooms for the teaching of Mandarin Chinese in some Northern Ireland primary and secondary schools.

The Committee approved the use of the City Hall for the aforementioned event and the provision of appropriate hospitality.

Request to use the City Hall to Mark the Centenary of the Signing of the Solemn League and Covenant - Co-operation Ireland

The Committee was reminded that the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group, at its meeting on 13th January, had agreed that any applications for the use of the City Hall for events associated with the decade of centenaries should be dealt with in the normal way and be subject to the existing Council policy on the use of the building and also the principles already agreed by the Historic Centenaries Working Group.

The Democratic Services Manager advised the Members that a request to mark the Centenary of the Signing of the Solemn League and Covenant, with an event entitled "Entwined Histories – the Ulster Covenant Screening and Reception" on 27th September, 2012, had been received from Co-operation Ireland. The purpose of the event was to show six films which had been produced by six groups of young people on a particular aspect of the signing of the Ulster Covenant in 1912. The films, which had been produced collectively by Co-operation Ireland and Cinemagic, would seek to demonstrate shared histories and entwined lives. Furthermore, the young people had produced the films in such a way as to demonstrate the different opinions and perspectives which had existed then and now. The event aimed to provide opportunities to include a range of different perspectives and ideologies, rather than a single viewpoint, aiming to increase understanding and appreciation of other perspectives and identities. It would do this by including historical experts from Queen's University Belfast and perspectives from the

Orange Order. The young people would also have access to tours of the City Hall, Ulster Museum, Schomberg Museum and the resources available at the Ulster Hall and on the Public Records Office website.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that the young people, who would come from schools which reflected the full educational spectrum in Belfast, would represent different communities, would collaborate in exploring their own identity and understanding of events, now and in the past, through a managed contact process. The organisers were seeking to ensure that the event was non-exclusive and welcoming to all sections of the community in Belfast by inviting the young people, their parents, their school teachers and governors, the academic and historical experts, Members of the Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs (Republic of Ireland) and the representatives of Co-operation Ireland and Cinemagic. Based on the information which had been received, the application appeared to satisfy both the criteria on the use of the City Hall and the principles which had been agreed by the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group.

The Committee agreed to grant the use of the City Hall for the event.

National Association of Councillors – Community Sport and Leisure Conference

The Committee was advised that the National Association of Councillors was holding a weekend Training Conference in Scarborough from Friday, 13th until Sunday, 15th April. The theme of the conference was Community Sport and Leisure. The Democratic Services Manager explained that as we approached the 2012 Olympic Games there was an increased focus on the importance of sport and leisure to local communities. The conference would present an opportunity for Members to discuss innovative ways to refurbish and improve sports facilities to ensure that they were fit for purpose and had the potential to make a real difference to the lives of citizens. The cost of attendance per delegate would be approximately £682.

The Committee authorised the attendance at the Training Conference 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 from each of the Parties on the Council not represented by the aforementioned Members.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Leaders' Forum

The minutes of the meeting of the Party Leaders' Forum of 16th February were approved and adopted.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Members' Development Steering Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Members' Development Steering Group of 29th February.

Finance/Value-for-Money

Delivering the Belfast Investment Package

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At its meeting (03 February 12), the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee received a presentation on the delivery of the Investment Programme. They were asked to consider a number of questions in relation to the delivery of the Investment Programme, under the following headings:

Overarching policy framework
City Investment Fund
Local Investment Fund
Non recurrent capital spend
Governance
Capacity to deliver
Monitoring and review

Following initial comments, the Committee agreed that further discussion was needed in party group briefings.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 In the briefings, all Members have emphasised the need to move swiftly to implementation of the Investment Programme, delivering quick wins across the city as well as laying the groundwork for the larger investments. All parties have stressed the need to test robustly the future sustainability of investments and any future revenue implications, as well as their capacity to deliver ‘quality of life’ outcomes as described in the Council’s corporate objectives.
- 2.2 Over the next 3 months, the key milestones for the Investment Programme are:

<p>2 April</p>	<p>Council authority for: Policy framework for use of non-recurrent capital programme projects Policy framework for City Investment Fund Policy framework for Local Investment Fund Strategic governance framework</p>
	<p>Presentation to SP&R: Design of political governance framework inc. Area Working Groups; Party Group Leaders' Forum; and Standing Committees Prioritisation matrices Non recurrent capital spend</p>
<p>May</p>	<p>Establishment of Area Working Groups</p>
<p>22 June</p>	<p>Presentation to SP&R: First prioritisation of projects from Area Working Groups Final Investment Programme (inc. consultation responses) Partnership principles for supported projects (inc. claw-back clauses; social return on investment; secured community access; revenue implications)</p>

2.3 Overarching policy framework – principles

All party groups support an over-arching framework which guides all the Council's investment decisions. It is recommended that the four principles are used as the basis of any capital investment prioritisation matrix:

- **affordability inc. consideration of available match funding;**
- **deliverability;**
- **feasibility; and**
- **sustainability inc. consideration of complementarity, deprivation and need.**

Further work will be undertaken on this basis, if agreed, to develop detailed prioritisation matrices, and brought back to Committee for approval in April.

2.4 City Investment Fund

The existing objectives for the City Investment Fund (CIF), agreed in December 2007, are:

- To create a focal point for the Council to play a leading role in the development of the city; create a 'can do' attitude amongst its citizens and create a sense of place and pride in Belfast;
- To encourage investment from and engagement of public, private and voluntary sectors, in the achievement of that aim;
- To contribute to the Council's priorities and vision for the city.

CIF enables us to take a lead role and work in partnership to deliver key investment projects which:

- Promote the image of Belfast as a place to visit
- Enable and/or promote the city as a place in which to do business
- Bring financial or other economic returns to the city which help to build the city's rate base.
- Promote Belfast as a city in which its citizens have pride and belief in a brighter future.
- Enhance the city's strategic, social, cultural and environmental infrastructure.
- Provide a lasting legacy for future generations.

Having reviewed this with all party groups, it is recommended that these objectives remain in place for the next phase of CIF. However, given both the changed needs of the city as well as the broader economic context, it is recommended that CIF support is extended to include programmes of capital investment (or clusters) as well as individual projects, which can demonstrate a cumulative iconic or transformational impact.

In order to ensure a balanced investment across the city, given the scale of investments, it is suggested that the time horizon for CIF is over three terms of Council, from 2007 when CIF was initiated through to 2019/20.

2.5 Local Investment Fund

In discussion with party groups, there appears to be an emerging consensus on the following issues, in relation to the implementation of the Local Investment Fund (LIF):

- This is a one-off fund and there should be an even split of investment across the city within this Council term;
- It is a pot for smaller-scale projects not owned by the Council. There will not be an open call for projects; projects will be identified by the proposed Area Working Groups;
- The overarching principles – outlined above at 2.1 – will be used by the proposed Member Area Working Groups to determine priorities within their local area;
- There should be a minimum level of investment – projects should be no less than £15,000;
- There should be a maximum level of investment – support for one project is unlikely to exceed £250,000, to ensure a spread of investment across the city.

In terms of allocating the £5 million across the proposed Member Area Working Groups, there are a number of options for Members' consideration:

Option	Area	% split	Fund Allocation (£)	Comment
1.	4 areas – North, South, East and West – based on Westminster constituency boundaries	25% of total LIF allocated to each area	North - 1,250,000 South - 1,250,000 East - 1,250,000 West - 1,250,000	Even distribution across the city, which is a core principle for the Investment Programme.

Option	Area	% split	Fund Allocation (£)	Comment
2.	5 areas – North, South, East, West and Central. (Recently agreed at the Development Committee in its review of the allocation of funding for advice services.)	It uses the latest deprivation data (MDM 2010) and the most recent population estimates to determine proportional allocation. It is weighted towards those SOAs that are in the 10% to 30% most deprived in the city. The 10% 'Central' allocation has been proportionally reallocated to NSEW.	North – 32.07% South – 18.14% East – 14.89% West – 34.90%	Does not distribute evenly across the city, which is a core principle for the Investment Programme. Also, need measured and weighted at SOA level rather than at NSEW area level.
3.	4 areas + Shankill based on Parliamentary electoral boundaries and Shankill area defined as Court District Electoral Area	A proportionate allocation based on number of elected Members in Court DEA to Shankill top-sliced from total LIF. Remainder allocated as 25% to each area.	North – 1,127,500 South - 1,127,500 East - 1,127,500 West - 1,127,500 Shankill – 490,000	Participation of Councillors for Court in North and West area working groups would need to be determined.

Option	Area	% split	Fund Allocation (£)	Comment
4.	4 areas + Shankill based on Parliamentary electoral boundaries and Shankill area defined as Court District Electoral Area	25% of total LIF allocated to each area and a proportionate allocation to Shankill top-sliced from West and North allocations.	North – 1,054,000 South - 1,250,000 East - 1,250,000 West - 956,000 Shankill – 490,000	As above. Proportion deducted from North and West based on Crumlin and Woodvale in the North and Glencairn, Highfield and Shankill in the West.

2.5 Non recurrent capital spend

Members support the need for a neighbourhood improvement scheme as part of the Investment programme, to improve attractiveness in local areas. They also agreed on the need to support planned maintenance and IT investment. The neighbourhood improvement package is likely to include:

- Cleansing initiatives such as graffiti removal, land clearance, community clean-ups, etc.
- Renewing the Routes
- Community safety programmes such as alleygating, anti-dog fouling projects, etc.
- Environmental improvement budgets including Belfast in Bloom, Neighbourhood Renewal, etc.
- Parks outreach programmes such as community gardens, multi-use games areas, meanwhile projects, etc.

Further work is needed on this and a developed proposal will be brought to Committee for consideration in April.

2.6 Governance arrangements

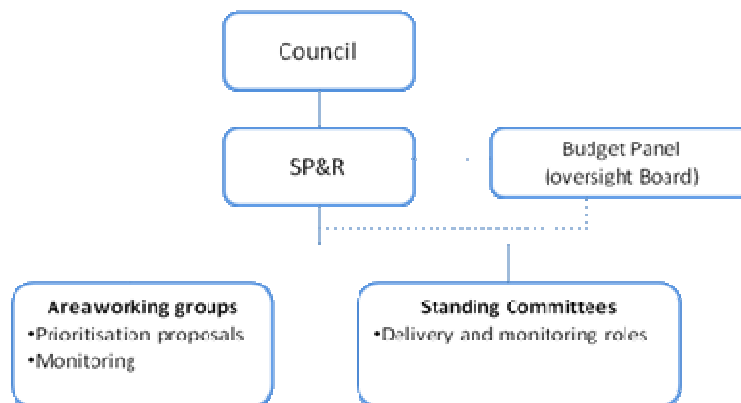
All party groups agreed that the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee retains full responsibility for the Investment Programme and has a key role to play in challenging, improving and prioritising capital projects.

In relation to the proposed Member Area Working groups, all parties have expressed support for a role in prioritising and monitoring capital projects on a local basis, and to enable wider Member participation in the Investment programme.

It is suggested that the governance framework is:

Investment Programme Governance

Investment Programme Governance



In the project management cycle, it is recommended the key points of involvement for the Member Area Working groups would be:

- Project identification (including consideration of those additional projects which have been identified as part of the public consultation and party group briefings)
- Prioritising short-list, on the basis of deliverability and affordability, for design and concept development
- Making recommendation on the investment decision to SP&R Committee, on the basis of feasibility and sustainability,
- Monitoring progress and supporting community engagement, where appropriate
- Official launch and communicating success.

This was broadly welcomed in the Member briefings. Further work will be undertaken on this basis to finalise the terms of reference and officer support required for these working groups. If agreed, it is anticipated these groups would convene in May.

2.7 Internal capacity to deliver

Members reinforced the need to ensure that the Council is 'fit for delivery'. Work is ongoing in relation to the internal capacity to deliver and officers are examining the potential for the re-allocation of human resource within the organisation to facilitate its delivery. It is therefore recommended that Committee delegates authority to the Chief Executive to ensure that the appropriate resources are aligned to meet the demands of the Investment Programme at no additional cost to the ratepayer.

Members have also expressed interest in receiving training in project management as well as awareness sessions on potential external funding and other topics relevant to the successful implementation of the Investment Programme.

2.8 Partners' capacity to deliver

As previously agreed by Members, work is underway to establish an inter-agency, politically-led Belfast Implementation Forum. It will oversee the development of a prioritised and resourced delivery plan for key investment projects within the city.

When the structure of the Belfast Implementation Forum becomes more developed, further information will be brought to Committee for consideration.

3.0 Resource Implications

Human – to be determined
Financial – to be determined
Asset – to be determined

4.0 Equality Implications

The overall Investment Programme will be equality screened.

5.0 Recommendations

Members are asked for their feedback on the issues raised above, in particular:

- Extension of City Investment Fund to support transformational/iconic programmes (or clusters) of capital investment as well as single iconic projects;
- the upper and lower thresholds for the Local Investment Fund;
- the preferred model for the allocation of the Local Investment Fund across the city;
- proposed role of proposed Area Working Groups; and
- delegated authority to the Chief Executive to ensure that the appropriate resources are in place to meet the demands of the Investment Programme at no additional cost to the ratepayer. Subject to regular reports being brought to Committee to update them on progress.”

During discussion, a Member suggested that a decision on the preferred model for the allocation of the Local Investment Fund across the City be deferred until the meeting of the Council on 2nd April to enable further discussions to be undertaken between the Political Parties to determine whether an agreed position could be achieved.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to the extension of the City Investment Fund to support transformational/iconic programmes (or clusters) of capital investment as well as single iconic projects;
- (ii) that the upper threshold be set at £250,000 and the lower threshold at £15,000 for the Local Investment Fund;
- (iii) the proposed role of the Area Working Groups;
- (iv) to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to ensure that the appropriate resources were in place to meet the demands of the Investment Programme at no additional cost to the ratepayer and subject to regular reports being submitted to the Committee to provide an update on the progress; and
- (v) to defer consideration, until the meeting of the Council on 2nd April, of the preferred model for the allocation of the Local Investment Fund across the City.

Super-connected Cities

The Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 20th January, it had agreed that the Council would lead on a bid to access money from the Government's Urban Broadband Fund and, given the tight timescale for submissions, had delegated authority to the Chief Executive to prepare the high level proposal.

The Director reported that the allocation of the Fund had been announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as part of the Budget and the Council had been informed that it would receive a minimum of £6 million and up to a maximum of £13.7 million in relation to its proposals.

He outlined the summary of the submission and the next steps which would require full details of the proposal to be submitted by 2nd July, 2012. The Committee noted the information which had been provided and that a further report on the details would be submitted in due course and congratulated the Director of Finance and Resources and the staff from across the Council involved in the submission of the bid.

Minutes of Meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meetings of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 9th February and 8th March.

Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel of 13th March were approved and adopted.

Human Resources

Employability Initiatives

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- **update members on progress with employability initiatives contained in the Investment Programme and**
- **seek agreement to remove existing limitations in relation to the facilitation of work experience placements in the Council.**

- 1.2 As part of the Investment Programme members have committed to 400 placement, apprenticeship and internship opportunities in the Council and to the creation of 200 job opportunities at no additional cost to the rate payer. Progress in taking these initiatives forward is outlined at paragraph 2.1.
- 1.3 Clearly, it is important to ensure that work placement opportunities with the Council are widely accessible to all. The Council's community outreach programme was launched in 1998 to promote Belfast City Council as an attractive, equal opportunities employer with wide and varied job opportunities. Initially activity focused on young people (mostly students and school children) and people with disabilities. Outreach activity however has been extended over the past few years to focus on the long term unemployed and ex-offenders and these initiatives have been particularly successful. Committee approval was sought to engage in these initiatives which did not meet existing work experience placement requirements. Members are asked to consider two issues which have in the past prevented some people from availing of work placement opportunities with the Council. These are:
- indemnity arrangements and
 - involvement in government led training programmes.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Progress to date

To build upon the council's existing work experience programme and to look to extend the remit of it, a number of meetings with potential partners are currently taking place. These partners include DEL and their lead contractors who deliver employability programmes and Local Employment Intermediary Services (LEMIS) across the city, the Employment Services Board as well as Belfast Metropolitan College. The purpose of these meetings is to:

- identify opportunities to provide more placements and internships
- explore how we can work with partner organisations to support young people needing work experience as part of existing apprenticeship programmes
- consider how a council specific apprenticeship scheme might be developed

- explore how we can best prepare the long term unemployed to compete for council positions as they become available and
- agree plans to provide this support.

2.2 A number of suitable immediate vacancies have already been identified and support is being targeted at the long term unemployed through the Job Assist Centres. Work has started to develop a recruitment plan and a programme of targeted timely support. This support will include work placements, site visits, motivational talks, information and training on the council's recruitment and selection procedures, mock interviews etc.

2.3 **Indemnity arrangements for work experience placements.**

The current indemnity arrangements for work experience placements were agreed by the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee at its meeting on 28 June 2004. At that time it was agreed that the Council accept work experience students from those educational establishments which either sign the council's form of indemnity or provide an alternative form of indemnity. In the past this has prevented certain people from taking up work experience placement opportunities in the Council; individuals without their own insurance provision and participants from small community or voluntary organisations with limited resources.

2.4 The Council has however, in the past agreed to self insure certain placements where individuals do not have their own indemnity or where organisations are not in a position to sign the Council's indemnity form, i.e., placements for people with disabilities, a community service pilot for ex offenders and for the long term unemployed. Requests for the Council to self insure individuals have been presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on a case by case basis for approval. Where organisations require the Council to sign their indemnity forms and associated insurance arrangements, advice is sought from Legal Services and Audit Governance and Risk Services regarding any implications for the Council.

2.5 The Council's insurance brokers are of the view that the risk to the Council of claims arising from injuries sustained by students during work experience placement is relatively low and could be minimised through good risk management practice. Processes have already been put in place to help manage and minimise risk.

2.6 In order to increase the number of placements that the council can facilitate while endeavouring to mitigate against the risk, Legal Services has recommended that the Council's default position should be to self insure, unless the Council is aware that the sponsoring organisation is in a position to provide its own indemnity arrangements.

2.7 New Deal and Job Skills initiatives

At Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee on 22 September 2003 it was agreed that all requests for work experience placements linked to the government's New Deal or Job Skills initiative would be referred to the sub-committee for consideration.

2.8 Involvement in government led training programmes will be an essential element of our employability activities, not only to deliver on our commitments but to reach those who most need assistance. Programmes like Steps to Work and Training for Success (which have replaced New Deal and Job Skills) can provide the council with a platform to reach those furthest removed from the labour market and provide placement opportunities for the long term unemployed and apprentices. (The Department of the Environment has already committed to providing a large number of placement opportunities through the Steps to Work programme). It is proposed therefore that the commitment to employability initiatives outlined in the Investment Programme will remove the requirement for Committee to consider case by case requests for government programme work placements.

2.9 Members will of course receive regular reports on progress with the delivery of all our employability initiatives. Specific proposals will be presented to Committee in May.

3.0 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

When placements are unpaid or externally funded there is no direct financial implication although the self- insurance aspect is a financial risk. Due to the stringent risk assessment approach being carried out, this risk will be managed. Any additional resources identified will be agreed as part of the Investment Programme.

3.2 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications as all work experience placements within the Council are dependent on the relevant department having the capacity to accommodate such a request and all the placements are offered and accepted on the basis that no permanent offer of employment will follow, without adherence to the council's recruitment and selection processes.

4.0 Equality Implications

4.1 Consultation on the Investment Programme is ongoing. An EQIA report, together with a full report on the consultation process will be submitted to assist final decision making in the Investment Programme. Any employability initiatives delivered as part of the Investment Programme will be on a city wide basis and all opportunities will be widely promoted across all Section 75 groups.

5.0 Recommendations

The committee is asked to agree that:

- the council's default position should be to self insure work experience placements, unless the Council is aware that the sponsoring organisation is in a position to provide its own indemnity arrangements (see paragraphs 2.3 to 2.6) and that
- the requirement to refer decisions to Committee regarding participation in government led training programmes is removed (see paragraphs 2.7 & 2.8)"

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Unauthorised Disclosure of Personal Information relating to Members

The Town Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided an update in relation to the unauthorised disclosure of personal information relating to Members.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report, the action which had been taken by the Council on becoming aware of the unauthorised disclosure and the steps which would be taken and the data protection measures which the Council had in place.

Asset Management

Welcome Centre Relocation

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th March, 2011, it had approved the development of a full business case for the relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre/Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau for a generic City centre location, with the outcome of the full business case to be presented to the Council when available.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that the Development Committee, at its meeting on 20th March, had considered the business plan and had agreed the following:

- (i) to approve the business plan which had been prepared by ASM Howarth and commend it to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- (ii) to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that officers complete the lease negotiations on 8-10 Donegall Square North, Belfast for the provision of ground floor accommodation; and
- (ii) to recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the relocation of the Welcome Centre as a Capital Project in the Investment Programme 2012-2015 and that 50% of the £1.62 million be allocated accordingly.

The Director of Property and Projects pointed out that an application for 50% of the funding of the Capital works had been submitted to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board Tourist Development Scheme and, dependent on the outcome of that application, a further report would be submitted to the Committee indicating whether or not the Capital funding had been awarded.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Hendron,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations of the Development Committee in relation to the relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre.

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

**Disposal of Former Civic Amenity Site,
Boucher Road**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The former Civic Amenity site at Boucher Road, Balmoral Industrial Estate is a 0.588 acre site with frontage on to the Boucher Road close to its junction with Stockmans Lane, as shown outlined red on the plan attached at Appendix ‘1’. On the 18th March 2011 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee granted approval to placing the subject land on the open market to let by way of long lease (subject to 5 yearly rent reviews).

1.2 Balmoral Industrial Estate contains a large number of sites which are leased from the Council by way of long leases, usually 125 years, subject to the payment of reviewable ground rents. The rents receivable from this estate represent a valuable income stream for the Council with a rental income in 2011/12 of approximately £3,142,000, which is an increase from £1,390,000 in 2001/02. This represents a c.126% increase over the 10 year period. The leases within the estate are proactively managed by the Estates Management Unit to ensure rent reviews and lease terms are adhered to and optimised for the benefit of the Council.

1.3 It is worth noting that an Economic Impact Study undertaken by IPSOS MORI in 2007 highlighted the important role that both Balmoral and Duncrue Industrial Estates played in supporting the continued urban and social regeneration of Belfast, as well as contributing significantly to employment in the wholesale and retail sectors within Belfast. In 2007 the total turnover in the two estates was estimated at approximately £680m per annum, employing 6495 people with over 2.2m customers visiting the estates per annum.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Following the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee approval the site has been extensively marketed by Ardmore Commercial Property Agents on behalf of the Council. Following an open market bidding process during which bids were received from a number of different parties two bids as outlined below emerged significantly above the others.

- 2.2 Potential tenant: McKinney Land Ltd
Use: Drive Thru Restaurant with McDonalds as the occupier
Rent: £46,000 per annum exclusive. Conditional on planning.
Rent free: The tenant will require 6 months rent free from the lease commencement date
Rent review: 5 yearly with a minimum uplift of 10% at the first review
Conditions: Conditional upon planning which could potentially take up to 2 years to include an option to appeal. Conditional upon Council accepting full responsibility for any pre-existing environmental/contamination issues and all remedial costs associated with same.

Potential tenant: Boucher Enterprises (Mr Harry Diamond)
Use: Potential mixed use retail/restaurant development or solely for the use as a restaurant.
Rent: £45,000 per annum exclusive. Unconditional on planning.
Rent free: No rent free period required.
Rent review: 5 year review in line with market conditions.
Conditions: None

- 2.4 The Boucher Enterprises bid is not conditional on planning and nor is there a rent free period proposed. Therefore, over the 5 year period to next review the total income to the Council will be £225,000. The total rental income to the Council over the same period for the McKinney Land bid is £138,000 on the basis of the 6 month rent free period and assuming 18 months to obtain planning. The offer from Boucher Enterprises therefore represents best price in accordance with the requirements of Section 96(5) of the Local Government (NI) 1972 in that no conditions are attached and the rent will be payable immediately on completion of the lease. The marketing agents, Ardmore Commercial have also advised that, in their opinion, the offer received from Boucher Enterprises should be accepted.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

The £45,000 per annum rental will supplement the rent roll for Balmoral Industrial Estate and will assist in benchmarking for future rent reviews of other sites within this estate. This open market rental represents an excellent return to the Council even in this period of economic downturn. The rent will be subject to review in accordance with the terms of the lease every five years.

3.2 Human Resources

Staff resource from the Estates Unit & Legal Services will be required to complete the lease. Staff resource within Estates Unit to thereafter manage this leased site as part of the wider asset management of Balmoral Industrial Estate.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

The leasing and future redevelopment of this site accords with effective asset management and further contributes to the important economic role this estate plays within Belfast in terms of services and employment.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

4.1 There are no equality implications to this proposal.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is requested to approve the letting of this site at Boucher Road at £45,000 per annum, as outlined above, on the basis of a 125 year lease with 5 yearly rent reviews and with terms to be incorporated in an appropriate lease agreement.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Former Grove Primary School Site
and Old Grove Leisure Centre**

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

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The former Grove Primary & Nursery School site at North Queen Street was recently declared surplus to the requirements of BELB. The buildings on site have been demolished and the site is currently fenced. The site which extends to approx 2.5 acres directly adjoins the Council owned Grove Playing Fields & is opposite the Old Grove Leisure Centre.

1.2 LPS trawled availability of the site amongst public sector bodies (including the Council) and there was a tight timeframe for responding to LPS. The Council expressed an initial interest in the site given that it adjoins the playing fields and is directly opposite the former Grove Leisure Centre, which the Council were considering in terms of future development options.

- 1.3 LPS have now provided an indicative value for the site of £130,000. This is however very much an indicative value & will be subject to a further more detailed valuation to take account of any relevant planning, title and site survey issues, and it would also be subject to negotiation.
- 1.4 In terms of the Old Grove Leisure Centre site (which is located directly opposite the school site) a report was previously brought to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 21 October 2011 and approval was given to demolition of the building; to undertaking an updated needs analysis report for business accommodation & incubation space in Belfast focusing on this particular location; and approval for officers to take forward discussions with BELB regarding any scope for joint disposal/development options for both the old Grove Leisure Centre site and the school site. A copy of the minutes is enclosed at appendix 2.
- 1.5 However, at the request of Alderman Browne this decision was taken back for further consideration by the Council on 1 November 2011. The Director of Property & Projects subsequently met with various elected members from the area & the DSD Minister, Nelson McCausland. There were concerns that demolition of the building may lead to problems with anti social behaviour. It was proposed that a workshop be convened in the New Year to explore development opportunities at both this site & other sites in the area, with participants at the workshop to include BCC, DSD, BELB, DRD & NIHE. The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, on 9 December 2011, agreed to this approach and demolition of the former Grove Leisure Building was to be considered following the outcome of the workshop. The Director of Property & Projects has since met with DSD, who were to lead on the proposed workshop, but to date there had been no workshop.
- 1.6 There remain, however, two potential (unsolicited) interests in the former Grove Leisure Centre site, one from North City Business Centre and the other from the Ashton Centre. North City Business Centre are a local enterprise agency and are considering expansion of their current social economy business park located at Duncairn Gardens and potential redevelopment of a further site. They advise that their current business park is 99% let and has a wide range of businesses located there. They had also enquired about the possibility of the Grove School site being available. The Ashton Centre have also registered an interest in the former leisure centre site and are potentially interested in developing the site to include office, retail and workshop units and a childcare centre.

- 1.7** There are ongoing security & maintenance issues with the Old Grove Leisure Centre building with continual break ins and this has an associated staff and financial resource, as well as potential liability issues for the Council.
- 1.8** In the interim period BELB have progressed with declaring their school site surplus and if there is no public sector interest shown via the LPS trawl process the next stage will be to advertise it for sale on the open market.
- 1.9** If the Council were to now acquire the former Grove Primary School site, subject to further investigation as to the site's development potential and planning status it could potentially also be offered for disposal via a Development Brief process in tandem with the former Grove Leisure Centre site. Planning will however be key in determining future development potential and this will need to be investigated further. This Development Brief process would essentially offer the sites on the market for disposal/development (often by way of long lease) subject to certain criteria; a development agreement would be entered into with the successful applicant/developer requiring them to develop within a certain timeframe & subject to certain criteria, and on practical completion title would be granted, which could be on the basis of either a capital premium or alternatively a ground rent (as with Balmoral & Duncrue Industrial Estates) or an equity rent (as with the Gasworks Business Park).
- 1.10** The Development Department are currently undertaking an updated needs analysis report on business accommodation and incubation space in Belfast (to also focus on this particular area) and it would inform the Development Brief process.
- 1.11** Demolition & progressing of future use/redevelopment options for the old Grove Leisure Centre site is included within the Council's draft Investment Programme 2012 -2015. Given the delay in DSD taking forward the proposed workshop of the wider stakeholder group and the continued interest by potential parties in the redevelopment of the site it is now being recommended that members give approval to proceed with demolition of the Old Grove Leisure Centre building and thereafter take forward disposal via a Development Brief process.

- 1.12 In addition, it is also being recommended that members grant approval to progress with negotiations to purchase the BELB former Grove Primary School site. This will be subject to further investigations in relation to title; site surveys, planning etc as well as agreement on valuation and a report would be brought back to committee on this. If agreement is reached on the purchase of this land, then subject to further investigation as to development potential and its planning status, it could potentially also be offered for disposal via this Development Brief process.

2 Key Issues

- Proposed purchase by BCC of former Grove Primary School site. Approval is being sought from Members to progress negotiations.
- Demolition and future redevelopment /disposal of old Grove Leisure Centre site is in the Council's draft Investment Programme 2012-2015.
- Members are being asked for further approval to demolish the old Grove Leisure Centre site & progress thereafter with disposal of the site via a Development Brief process. This could potentially also include the former school site.
- Two parties have already expressed a potential interest in the Old Grove Leisure Centre site; North City Business Centre and the Ashton Centre. The recommendation is to openly market the site via a Development Brief process.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Finance

An indicative value of £130,000 has been provided by LPS for the BELB site, but this is very much indicative and is subject to further investigations & negotiations. The Director of Finance & Resources has advised that funding can be made available to purchase.

The Council's uncommitted Capital Programme shows a provisional estimate of £500,000 for demolition of the old Grove Leisure Centre & associated works, although this is subject to a detailed invasive survey of the building. The cost will be offset in part by the ongoing costs of insuring and maintaining the existing building. Any financial return on disposal of the site will reflect that the developer/ purchaser will not have to undertake demolition

3.2 Human Resources

Staff Resource, primarily from Property & Projects in progressing negotiations for purchase of the BELB site & in progressing demolition & future use/disposal options for the Old Grove Leisure Centre site.

3.3 Asset & Other Implications

Future redevelopment should have economic, regenerative & financial benefits.

4 Recommendations

Members are asked to approve that the Council:

- i) Progress with negotiations to purchase the BELB owned former Grove Primary School site, with a further report to be brought back to Committee on the proposed terms of acquisition and
- ii) Progress with the demolition of the Old Grove Leisure Centre building and proceed with the invitation of tenders for the demolition works and the award of contract to the most economically advantageous offer received and
- iii) Thereafter progress with disposal via a Development Brief process with a further report to be brought back to Committee with details of the Development Brief criteria and process”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Permission to Invite Tender –
Bobbin Coffee Shop**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Contractual issues

Members will be aware that the Bobbin coffee-shop facility in the City Hall was originally let to the current operator, Castle Catering Ltd, in 2009 on the basis of a one-year contract with an option to extend by a further one year. This option was exercised by the council and the contract was duly extended to 30th September 2011.

- 1.2 A report was brought to the Committee in June 2011 seeking permission to initiate a public tender process in relation to the franchise as the end of the contract was approaching, but the Committee instead decided to grant a further extension of up to 9 months. This was done primarily on the basis that the ongoing review of City Hall management might produce recommendations in relation to the Bobbin and indeed in respect of catering issues in general, and that these ought to be taken into account before committing the council to a new 2-year arrangement.
- 1.3 This final offer of extension was made to and accepted by the current operator, however this extension runs out on 30th June 2012. Consequently a decision needs to be made in relation to the operation of the Bobbin facility.
- 1.4 Members will recall that a report was submitted in November 2011 dealing with the management of City Hall and that, following some discussion, it was agreed that party briefings would be useful in relation to some of the issues raised, including the operation of the Bobbin facility. Unfortunately, and largely due to the many other pressing strategic and financial issues facing the Committee (notably the investment programme and rate-setting etc), it has not yet been possible to schedule these briefings, however the Bobbin issue must now be addressed in the light of the imminent end of the existing contract.
- 1.5 Internal v. external provision

During previous discussions on this matter some members raised the issue of whether or not externalisation of the Bobbin facility was desirable, and whether or not the facility could potentially be operated internally by the council's own catering staff.

This matter has been considered in some depth by the department and, while it is certainly feasible to do so, there are a number of financial and legal issues which must be recognized if this course were to be pursued, most notably:-

- it is likely that a public tender would produce a significant increase in the amount which any external franchisee would be willing to pay to the council, given that the facility is now well-established and popular with significant goodwill;
- it is clear from the analysis that up to 4 additional staff would be required by BCC to operate the facility (it could not be covered by existing catering staff);

- the cost of employing these staff would be considerably higher than the comparative private sector costs: our analysis shows that even assuming that any contractor complied with all statutory requirements in relation to minimum wage rates, holiday entitlement and SSP etc the cost of employing the staff would be in the order of £30K per annum greater for BCC;
- this is caused by the fact that national NJC rates for catering staff are 28% above the minimum wage level, employers' pension contributions are currently at 19% as opposed to zero in the private sector, BCC staff enjoy higher holiday and sick-pay entitlements and nationally-agreed terms (i.e. week-end enhancement and shift allowance) apply in relation to Saturday working etc
- providing in-house staff would therefore mean either trying to ensure a corresponding increase in existing turnover to cover the increased costs (which would be difficult) or potentially moving into a loss-making scenario overall; *and*
- the provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations (TUPE) may apply if the facility were to be brought in-house, meaning a potential forced transfer of some/all of the existing staff from Castle Catering to the council.

- 1.6 It is also worthy of note that no other catering outlets in buildings owned and operated by the council (notably Malone House, Belfast Castle, Waterfront Hall, Stables Restaurant, Leisure Centres etc) are operated with BCC staff; all are franchised to the private sector and the financial and other issues set out above no doubt help to explain this situation.

It is the view of the department that bringing the facility in-house would not only mean foregoing the potential additional income to be derived from a public tendering exercise but also that the most likely outcome would be to incur a loss in the operation of the facility which would have to be passed on to the rate-payer.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 The key issue is obviously whether the Committee wishes to proceed to invite tenders for the franchise of the Bobbin catering and giftware operation or wishes to provide this service internally.

2.2 The options available to the Committee at this time would appear to be:-

1. to approve the invitation of tenders for the franchise of the Bobbin facility;
2. to offer a further 3-6 month extension of the existing contract to Castle Catering Ltd and to expedite the 'Management of City Hall' report and recommendations; or
3. to allow the existing contract to expire on 30/6/2012 and to agree that the facility be operated as a council-run operation thereafter, staffed by additional BCC staff.

The direction of the Committee is therefore sought.

3.0 Resource Implications

3.1 If the facility is publicly tendered there is a likelihood that the annual fee payable to the council will increase, although it is impossible to forecast by how much. If the facility is brought in-house it will require additional staff (2 x full-time and 2 x part-time) costing an estimated £66,002 (incl. on-costs but excluding overtime) per annum and these additional costs – unless accompanied by a very significant increase in turnover – must be met from the existing operating profit and may therefore result in the council incurring a loss.

It should also be noted that no provision has been made in the 2012/13 revenue estimates for these staff, although this could of course be remedied in 2013/14 and beyond.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Committee is recommended to adopt option 1 as set out above on the basis of contractual and cost effectiveness.

5.0 Decision Tracking

If a decision is taken to publicly tender the franchise the relevant documentation is ready and the invitation to tender will appear within 4-6 weeks. Alternatively, if a decision is taken to internalise the facility the recruitment process must commence immediately and be given a high priority.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Connswater Community Greenway –
Governance Review**

(Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that the Connswater Community Greenway Scheme was a £32 million investment in East Belfast, which had been developed by the East Belfast Partnership and funded by the Big Lottery Fund, the Council, the Rivers Agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Department for Social Development.

The Director reminded the Members further that in 2007 the Council had agreed to manage and maintain the Greenway once it had been delivered for a period of forty years and, in 2010, had agreed also that, in order to reduce financial risk to the project, the Council would become the grant holder working in conjunction with the East Belfast Partnership to deliver the scheme.

The Director explained that the governance structure for the scheme had been adjusted in 2010 to reflect the Council becoming the grant holder supported by a Management Agreement by the East Belfast Partnership and the Council. In 2011 the key stakeholders had agreed to review the Greenway programme governance structure to better reflect accountability and risk, decision-making and controls and the partnership relationship between Council and the East Belfast Partnership. Accordingly, a draft governance structure, which would supersede the 2010 structure, had been circulated for the information of the Members. He pointed out that it would be supported by a revised management agreement between the East Belfast Partnership and the Council and would require approval from the Council, the East Belfast Partnership, the Big Lottery Fund, the Rivers Agency and the Department for Social Development.

The Committee approved the new governance arrangements for the delivery of the Connswater Community Greenway and Flood Alleviation Scheme.

**Dargan Crescent In-Ground
Gas Extraction System**

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that, in June, 2009, it had approved a budget of £513,000 for the installation of an in-ground gas extraction system on the Dargan Crescent area of the Duncrue Industrial Estate as a capital project.

The work had now been completed and the final account had recently been agreed, with the final outturn cost being £561,250, which exceeded the approved budget by £48,250 or 9.41%. The contract conditions required that the Council paid the outstanding amounts to the contractor. He outlined the reasons for the variation, which included the relocation of gas manifold units due to legislative requirements, upgrading inspection chamber covers due to Health and Safety requirements, additional gas sampling apparatus and design revisions due to unforeseen ground conditions.

The Director pointed out that Financial Regulation D9 permitted Chief Officers to approve variations in the approved sum of a capital scheme up to 5% or £15,000 (whichever was the lower) and individual spending Committees to approve additional sums up to 10% or £50,000 (whichever was the lower). Since the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee was the relevant Committee for capital projects he was seeking formal approval for the Committee to approve the additional cost incurred and he recommended accordingly.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Good Relations and Equality

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Good Relations Partnership, Monday, 5th March

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 5th March and adopted the recommendations in respect of the following:

Seminar – Awareness of Human Trafficking

The Good Relations Unit, in partnership with the organisation Migrant Help, to organise in June, 2011 a one day seminar to raise awareness of the issues surrounding human trafficking. The cost of the seminar would be approximately £3,000, 75% of which could be recouped through the Council's Good Relations Programme.

Broadway Murals and Artwork

The provision of financial assistance towards the cost associated with the removal and/or replacement of murals in the Broadway area at a cost of not more than £7,000, 75% of which could be recouped from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Request from POBAL to Address the Committee

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the organisation, POBAL, seeking permission to address the Committee in relation to the question of the use of Irish language in public life. The Committee was advised that POBAL had been established in 1998 and acted as the umbrella organisation for the Irish Language community and sought to raise the profile of Irish.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request.

Ulster-Scots Agency

Arising out of discussion of the previous item, a Member requested that the Committee consider writing to the Ulster-Scots Agency inviting representatives to make a presentation to the Committee in due course.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to this course of action.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Age Friendly Approach and Declaration

(Mrs. A. Faulkner, Environmental Health Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Northern Ireland, like many other European Countries, has an increasing number of older people. The demographic structure has changed from a population largely under 50 to one where people over 50 account for around a third of the population and where people over 60 are estimated to outnumber people under 16 within the next few years.**
- 1.2 In Belfast 19.65% of the population is over 60. With life expectancy rising dramatically in the last 50 years, annual improvements in survival rates and falling levels of fertility it is estimated that by 2030 25% of people in Belfast will be over 65 years of age. As a City we must address this and be prepared for an increasingly ageing society and plan for how this will affect our City economically, socially and culturally e.g. the number of retired people will increase and therefore tax payers decrease; the costs of pensions, benefits and health care will also increase significantly.**
- 1.3 The World health Organisation (WHO) has a global Network of Age Friendly Cities. WHO regards active ageing as a life long process shaped by several factors that alone and acting together, favour health, participation and security in older adult life. The WHO has produced a guide and checklist to engage Cities to become more age friendly. If a City meets a list of criteria and makes an application to the WHO a City can be awarded ‘Age Friendly’ status.**

- 1.4 An age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs. In an age friendly city policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age actively. The outdoor environment have a major impact on the quality of life of older people and an age friendly city will have to consider; outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing , social participation, civic participations and employment, communication and information, community support and health services.
- 1.5 A discussion paper outlining the process for gaining Age Friendly status was taken to the All Party Reference Group on older people on 24th January 2011. The group were keen on starting this process by undertaking a baseline study of the City and investigating potential resources to lead the project. Since then officers have been progressing the Age Friendly process by developing networks and relationships with other Age Friendly Cities, undertaking a baseline study of Belfast's Age friendly status, investigating potential resources to lead the project and outlining the benefits to the City of becoming Age Friendly.
- 1.6 A further paper outlining the Age Friendly approach and signing of the declaration was taken to the Reference Group on Older people on Tuesday 21st February and a decision to seek committee approval for supporting the signing of the declaration for Belfast, was fully supported by the members in attendance.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Building the WHO Global Network 1st International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities was held in the Burlington Hotel in Dublin on 28-30th September 2011. Councillor Pat McCarthy and Adele Faulkner from Health and Environmental Services attended the conference. At the conference a number of Cities and regions signed an Age Friendly declaration including Dublin, New York, Edmonton, Mexico and Manchester.
- 2.2 Due to the late notice of the conference, Belfast was not in a position to sign the declaration at that time. Since then we have developed alliances with Co Louth, the first age friendly County in Ireland and Manchester the first UK Age Friendly City. Both have offered their support to Belfast in the process

of adoption of Age Friendly status. Conversations have also started with Newry and Mourne District Council who are exploring the development of an Age Strategy and becoming Age Friendly.

- 2.3 Supporting the adoption of Belfast as a city that supports and promotes the focus on its status as 'age-friendly' is linked into the supporting people and communities priority of the Investment programme. It is a work stream within the Belfast Strategic partnership and can be supported and delivered in conjunction with the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) which is part funded by Council. The signing of the declaration will be the first step in working towards improvements and access to services that benefit health. It is closely aligned to the work undertaken through our active Belfast programmes. The next step will be to lever European funding streams to support this work.
- 2.4 The first step in the process for Belfast becoming an Age Friendly City is to sign the Age Friendly declaration. The Age Friendly Declaration will formally commit Belfast's support to the principles of Age Friendly Cities. The Declaration contains a set of basic principles and commitments to make communities more age friendly. The commitments are summarised as follows:
- a) Promoting the Declaration in appropriate forums and adhering to the principles
 - b) Collaboration including participating in the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities (including a 5 year assessment and plan of improvement)
 - c) Development of communication channels and network with other cities and communities to promote equal rights and opportunities for older citizens

A full copy of the declaration is attached. The declaration would be signed by the Lord Mayor of Belfast. It is proposed that if this committee approves this approach the Declaration will be signed and publicised in conjunction with the 2012 Seniors Citizens Convention on 15th May 2012.

3 Resource Implications

Officers within the Environmental health Service will continue work with our European unit to seek EU funding to support developing and progressing with the approach once the age – friendly declaration is signed.

Funding from the current and future thematic budget will be used to host events, consultations and the Seniors Citizens Convention.

4 Recommendations

4.1 The Committee is asked to agree

- 1. To support progress with Belfast status as an Age Friendly Approach**
- 2. That the Lord Mayor will sign the Age Friendly Declaration which will commit Belfast to participating in the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly cities.**

Key to Abbreviations

WHO – World Health Organisation”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Co-operation Ireland Seminar

(Mrs. A. Faulkner, Environmental Health Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that 2012 was the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between the Generations. In this regard, Co-operation Ireland's Local Authority Forum, in association with the EY year of Active Ageing had organised a seminar entitled "The Role of Local Government in the Ageing Agenda" which was scheduled to be held in Armagh City Hotel on 3rd May.

The aim of the seminar was to explore the role of local government in the ageing well agenda and to examine the latest initiatives and best practice being taken by local government within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The seminar was open to Councillors, staff of Local Authorities and Agencies working with local government in the delivery of ageing well services and relevant organisations. Co-operation Ireland, which was an all island Local Authority Forum, through its social inclusion as a sub-group, had invited the Council to showcase its work at the seminar and, in particular, the work of the Council in working with partners across the City, including initiatives such as Seniors Information, Senior Citizens' Convention and Age Friendly consultations. In this regard the Chairman of the All-Party Reference Group on Older People, Councillor Kelly, had been invited to attend and speak at the seminar and the Committee's authority was sought in this regard.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

**Nominations to the Northern Ireland Policing Board
of Independent Members**

The Committee was reminded that the Council was required, under Part 3 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to establish the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the four District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. The legislation had required that a Public Appointments process was undertaken in order to appoint the independent members to the Partnerships and, in accordance with the Statutory Code of Practice on the appointment of independent members to the Partnerships, the Council had appointed a short-listing and interview panel for the purpose of determining which of the independent applicants were deemed to be suitable for appointment.

The Committee was advised that the interview panel had now completed its work and had drawn up a list of appointable candidates. The Statutory Code, at paragraph 6(4), required the Council to formally nominate to the Northern Ireland Policing Board those persons deemed to be suitable for appointment by the interview panel. Furthermore, paragraph 6(4) of the Statutory Code stated that in considering the names submitted by the interview panel, the Council should note that they were "applications in confidence" and should not seek to place the names in the public domain. To maintain that confidentiality an alphabetical list of applicants considered appropriate for nomination to the Belfast Partnerships was tabled for approval.

The Committee was reminded further that, due to the tight timescales that the Policing Board was working to in relation to the appointments process, the Policing Board's interim Chief Executive had written to all Council Chief Executives requesting that, providing that the appropriate Council agreement could be secured, Councils should try to expedite that element of the process as quickly as practicable. To ensure that the Policing Board's final appointment panels could proceed with the appointments stage without undue delay, the Committee had agreed, at its meeting on 17th February, to recommend the Council to delegate authority to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to approve, on behalf of the Council, a list of suitable candidates for consideration by the Northern Ireland Policing Board as independent members of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. That recommendation had subsequently been ratified by the Council at its meeting on 1st March.

The Committee agreed to formally nominate, on behalf of the Council, the list of those persons who had been deemed suitable by the interview panel for consideration by the Policing Board as independent members of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

**Right Service, Right Place –
A Consultation on Proposals to
Reshape Maternity Services in Belfast –
Request to Brief the Committee**

The Committee was reminded that in 2008 the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust had launched its New Directions consultation document, which was the commencement of a process to examine how the Belfast Trust would deliver health and social care services over the next decade. As part of that process, the Trust had issued previously a number of consultations, for example, Excellence and Choice: Adult Mental Health Services, to which the Council had submitted responses.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the next stage was to undertake a formal consultation on specific proposals for service change in the delivery of maternity services and to that end the Trust had issued the “Right Service, Right Place – A Consultation to Reshape Maternity Services in Belfast”. The consultation would take place from 1st March until 31st May, 2012 and, as part of the consultation process, Mr. Colm Donaghy, Chief Executive, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, had written to Council offering to brief the Committee on the proposals. A copy of the consultation document and the associated Equality Impact Assessment had already been circulated to all Members of Council.

The Committee agreed that a briefing session, to which all Members of the Council would be invited, be held for this purpose.

Chairman