

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 25th April, 2012

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);
the High Sheriff (Alderman M. Campbell);
and Councillors Attwood, Convery, Hanna,
Hendron, Jones, Maskey, McKee, McCarthy,
McVeigh, 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

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman R. Newton and Councillors Garrett, Haire, Lavery and Mac Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 2nd and 23rd March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd April, subject to:

- (i) the decision of the Committee of 23rd March under the heading “Local Government Reform – Moving Forward” being amended to provide that the Member of the Progressive Unionist Party who would sit on the Voluntary Transition Committee having full voting rights; and
- (ii) the decision of the Committee of 23rd March under the heading “Delivering the Belfast Investment Package”, in so far as it related to the model to be adopted for the allocation of the Local Investment Fund across the City, being amended to provide that, in line with the recommendations of the Party Leaders, Option 3 as set out in the report to the Committee being adopted. That meant that there would be five area-based working groups consisting of:
 - North Belfast comprising the Castle and Oldpark District Electoral Areas;
 - South Belfast comprising the Balmoral and Laganbank District Electoral Areas;

- East Belfast comprising the Pottinger and Victoria District Electoral Areas;
- West Belfast comprising the Lower Falls and Upper Falls District Electoral Areas; and
- Shankill comprising the Court District Electoral Area.

The East Belfast, North Belfast, South Belfast and West Belfast Area-based Working Groups would each receive an allocation of £1,127,500 and the Shankill Area-based Working Group an allocation of £490,000.

The composition of the Area-based Working Groups would be kept under review in line with any changes to the Governance Arrangements in the City.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Submission of Minutes

Resolved – In accordance with Standing Order 12, the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 1st May.

Next Meeting of the Committee

The committee was advised that its next meeting was scheduled to be held on Friday, 4th May. However, given that the business to be considered at that meeting had been included on the agenda for today's meeting, it would not now be necessary to hold that meeting.

The Committee agreed that the meeting scheduled for 4th May be cancelled.

Investment Programme

Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 In order to ensure the delivery of the Investment Programme the following key deliverables will be required to be agreed by the end of June:

- 1. Governance arrangements to support the delivery of the Investment Programme.**
- 2. Prioritisation frameworks for physical projects.**
- 3. First cut Capital Programme, LIF and CIF proposals.**
- 4. Investment Programme Communications Plan.**
- 5. Delivery Plan for:-**
 - **Procurement**
 - **Jobs and Placements**
 - **Bursary Scheme**
 - **Social Clauses**
 - **Marketing the city**
- 6. Completed Urban Broadband Fund submission.**

1.2 The table below outlines the timetable and key milestones for these deliverables.

25 April	<p>Presentation to Strategic Policy & Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference for Area Working Groups • Local Investment Fund (LIF) guidance, proposal form and prioritisation matrix
30 April – 9 May	<p>First Area Working Groups meetings</p>
18 May	<p>Presentation to Strategic Policy & Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Investment Programme (inc. consultation responses) • LIF prioritisation matrix • Capital Programme 2012/13 • Capital Programme non-recurrent 2012/13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feasibility Fund ○ Brighter Belfast Overview ○ Planned Maintenance ○ ICT • Communication Plan
28 May – 13 June	<p>Second Area Working Groups meetings</p>
22 June	<p>Presentation to Strategic Policy & Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIF Proposals • City Investment Fund priorities • Delivery Plan for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Procurement ○ Jobs and Placements ○ Bursary Scheme ○ Social Clauses ○ Marketing the city • Urban Broadband Fund submission

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Urban Broadband Fund - the Council has now received detailed guidance from the Department for Culture, Olympics, Media & Sport on the final submission requirements for the Urban Broadband Fund application. By 2 July 2012 the Council must:

- **Agree a programme management and governance structure**
- **Set out detailed plans for education, profile-raising and demand stimulation**
- **Agree a procurement strategy and timetable**
- **Agree a strategy for achieving compliance with State Aid rules**
- **Provide a complete resources package**
- **Provide detailed programme delivery plans.**

This is a major undertaking in a short timeframe with significant technical elements. In order to maximise the potential of the UBF for the city it is recommended that £150k is allocated to preparing the final submission and that the Council appoint Analysys Mason to assist council officers to prepare the detailed delivery plan for submission to DCMS on 2 July 2012. The Company has expertise in State Aid negotiations with the European Commission and has secured State Aid approvals for broadband projects in the UK. They have worked on assignments with DETI and DFPNI and have a good understanding of the telecoms markets in Belfast. This recommendation is made on the basis that there is insufficient time to tender for this work and it is of a very specialist nature. The value of the work is below EU thresholds and the recommendation is in line with the Council's Standing Orders.

3.0 Recommendations

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is asked to agree:

- 1. The key Investment Programme deliverables April-June as outlined in para 1.1.**
- 2. The key milestones April – June 2012 for the delivery of the Investment Programme**
- 3. The allocation of £150k to support the preparation of the Urban Broadband Fund submission**
- 4. The appointment of Analysys Mason to support the Council to prepare the Urban Broadband Fund submission.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Member Area Working Groups - Terms of Reference

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

"1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Council at its meeting on 2 April 12 adopted five area working groups consisting of:

- North Belfast comprising the Castle and Oldpark District Electoral Areas (DEAs);
- South Belfast comprising the Balmoral and Laganbank DEAs;
- East Belfast comprising the Pottinger and Victoria DEAs;
- West Belfast comprising the Lower Falls and Upper Falls DEAs; and
- Shankill comprising the Court DEA.

The party representation in each, is as follows:

Party	North	South	East	West	Shankill
SF	5	2	1	8	0
DUP	4	2	6	0	3
SDLP	2	4	0	2	0
ALL	0	2	4	0	0
UUP	1	1	1	0	0
PUP	0	0	1	0	1
IND	0	0	0	0	1
Total	12	11	13	10	5

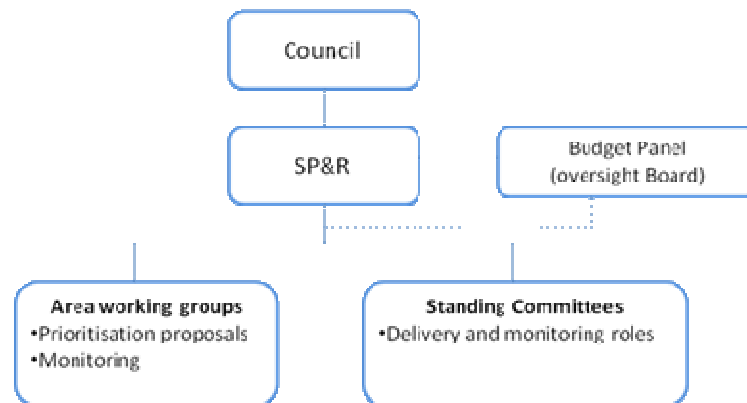
1.2 Members are keen to play an active role in the project management cycle. It was agreed the key points of involvement for the Member Area Working Groups (AWG) would be:

- Project identification;
- 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.

These stages have been reflected in the draft terms of reference outlined below.

- 1.3 At its meeting on 23 March the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee agreed the following governance arrangements:

Investment Programme Governance



2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 In discussions with party groups, Members have indicated that the Area Working Groups (AWG) should be convened on an advisory basis to inform the implementation of Belfast Investment Programme. The expressed preference is for 'light-touch' governance arrangements for the AWGs, in the first instance. The AWGs will have no delegated authority and no budget.

- 2.2 The interim terms of reference for the AWGs are:

"In the context of the Belfast Investment Programme, the SP&R Committee has convened the Area Working Groups to:

- (i) Act as community advocates to identify local priorities and support effective 'place-shaping';
- (ii) Make recommendations to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on investment decisions for the local area;
- (iii) To offer advice and guidance to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and officers in the development and implementation of local projects;
- (iv) Participate in and facilitate community engagement and communications activities with a wide range of groups on investment in local areas;
- (v) Consider other area-based issues as referred by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee;
- (vi) To monitor progress and produce an annual report on performance."

2.3 Timing of meetings

It is suggested that meetings are held on a monthly basis. In order to ensure that recommendations are made on a timely basis to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, the timeline will be:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Purpose of meeting</u>
30 Apr–3 May	AWG meetings x 5	Preliminary meeting
10 May	Budget and Transformation Panel	Further consideration prioritisation matrix
18 May	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee	
28 May – 8 June	AWG meetings x 5	First short-list of priorities for investment and further concept development
14 June	Budget and Transformation Panel	Review of AWG recommendations
22 June	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee	Consideration and ratification of AWG recommendations
2 July	Council meeting	Ratification of AWG recommendations

These meetings are scheduled around the existing schedule for Standing Committees and party briefings.

2.4 Following consultation with Group Leaders the dates of the first meetings of each Area Working Group are outlined below:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
West	30th April	12.00 noon – 2.00pm
East	1st May	10.00am – 12.00 noon
North	2nd May	12.00 noon – 2.00pm
Shankill	2nd May	6.00pm – 8.00pm
South	3rd May	12.00 noon – 2.00pm

Democratic Services will issue summons for these meetings.

2.5 It is suggested that on a rolling basis, the AWG meetings should be scheduled over a 2-week period at the 'turn' of each month (i.e. Week 4 and Week 1) and that all decisions will be presented to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in Week 3.

Members will note that the tight timetable for decisions and there is very limited flexibility for additional party group briefings or meetings.

2.6 Process for decision-making

Over the next 2 months, the AWGs will be asked to consider the following issues:

May	Establishment of AWGs First consideration of long-list of projects
June	First short-list of priorities for investment (Phase 1) from the Local Investment Fund Initial consideration of project feasibility Identify priorities and consideration of feasibility of City Investment Fund projects
August – December	Consideration of feasibility and sustainability reports on Phase 1 projects Brighter Belfast-type projects Outcomes framework Community engagement – with local area public meetings

In order to ensure that decisions are ratified in advance of the summer recess, it is critical that the AWGs focus on early prioritisation of projects, for presentation to the July Council meeting.

2.7 Format of meetings

In party group briefings, the suggestion was the format for AWG meetings should be a workshop format. For the first 2 meetings, in order that all Members can fully participate, it is suggested that the workshop will be facilitated jointly by the Director of Property and Projects and Director of Finance and Resources.

As the work of the AWGs evolves, further discussion will be needed on chairing the meetings and setting their agenda.

2.8 It is suggested that the agenda for the first meeting of the Member Area Working Groups is:

- (i) Overview of Local Investment Fund
- (ii) Overview of governance arrangements
- (iii) Prioritisation framework
- (iv) Overview of identified projects and initial 'sift'
- (v) Next steps

It is suggested that the agenda for the second meeting of the Member Area Working Groups is:

- (i) Area profile – mapping existing physical assets in area
- (ii) Discussion on first short-list of prioritised projects for feasibility
- (iii) Views on City Investment Fund priorities and feasibility studies
- (iv) Recommendations to SP&R on:
 - Investment decisions
 - Feasibility/concept development support

2.9 Communications plan

A Communications plan is being prepared for the Investment Programme. This plan will also need to address the need for sustained community engagement by the Area Working Groups.

2.10 Review of AWGs

The composition of the area working groups will be kept under review in line with any changes to the governance arrangements in the City. It is suggested that a 6-month review happens in December, to allow for discussion on the role of political leads, the relationship with standing Committees and the capacity to oversee delivery.

3.0 Resource Implications

Human – none
Financial – none
Assets – none at present

4.0 Equality Implications

Not applicable at this stage – all decisions of the AWGs would be subject to equality screening.

5.0 Recommendations

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is asked to agree:

- **Terms of reference for the AWG (2.2)**
- **Preliminary schedule of meetings for AWG (2.3)**
- **First meeting agenda for AWG (2.6)."**

During discussion, several Members indicated that the times and dates for both the meetings of the North and East Area Working Groups might not be appropriate for a number of Members and requested that consideration be given as to whether a more suitable date could be agreed.

In response, the Chairman explained that it had been accepted that the dates and times of the first meetings might not be suitable for a number of Members, but there had been a need to schedule all of the meetings before 9th May and the next meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel. She indicated that hereafter it would be a matter for the Groups to establish appropriate times and dates for their meetings but if the Committee was minded to agree then officers could contact the relevant Members to make alternative arrangements for the meetings.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations, subject to officers contacting the Members of the North and East Groups to see if a more suitable date could be agreed.

Investment Programme - Local Investment Fund

The Members were reminded that the newly established Local Investment Fund had been designed to support the delivery of key regeneration projects and neighbourhoods and also as a way for Elected Members to connect with local communities. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that one of the key roles of the newly formed Member Area Working Groups would be to prioritise and monitor Capital Projects on a local basis and to make recommendations thereon to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. As had been agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 23rd March, there would be a minimum level of investment through the Local Investment Fund of no less than £15,000 and that support of any one project was unlikely to exceed £250,000 in order to ensure a spread of investment across the City. At present the North, South, East and West Groups had been allocated £1,127,500 each with £490,000 being earmarked for the Shankill Area.

He stated that the first meetings of the Area Working Groups in May would focus on the following:

- (i) overview of Local Investment Fund;
- (ii) overview of Governance Arrangements;
- (iii) Prioritisation Framework;
- (iv) overview of indentifying projects and initial "sift"; and
- (v) next steps.

He indicated that Members had stressed the need to test robustly the future sustainability of any investments made under the City and Local Investment Funds and any future revenue implications, as well as a capacity to deliver “quality of life” outcomes as described in the Council’s Corporate Objectives. To ensure that occurred and to help inform and support the first meetings of the Area Working Groups, officers had drafted a number of supporting documents in relation to the Local Investment Fund. Those would aid Members in their decision-making in relation to local projects and would ensure that there was a consistency of approach and transparency in the decision-making process. The documents had been circulated for the information of the Members and included:

- Local Investment Fund guidance note for Members and officers – this provided a high level overview of the purpose of the fund, the types of organisations that could receive funding and what types of project could and could not be funded;
- Project Proposal Form – Each project would be required to complete a Project Proposal Form so that there was a consistent level of information upon which Members could make informed decisions. Officers from the Council would work closely with local groups to complete those forms;
- Prioritisation Matrix – once Project Proposal Forms had been completed and been deemed eligible and prioritised by Area Working Groups, they would be assessed, via a Prioritisation Matrix, against the key criteria which had been agreed by the Committee the previous month, which included:
 - affordability, including consideration of available match funding;
 - deliverability;
 - feasibility; and
 - sustainability, including consideration of complementarity, deprivation and need.

The Director pointed out that the supporting documents were currently in draft form and would need further refinement and testing. However, Members had previously emphasised the need to move swiftly to implementation of the Investment Programme and delivering quick wins across the City. Therefore, they would be discussed in greater detail at the first meetings of the Area Working Groups and would be brought back to the Committee in June to be agreed formally.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the details in the draft supporting documents for the Local Investment Fund and that these would be resubmitted to the Committee in June to be formally agreed following further discussion at the first meetings of the Area Working Groups.

Forthriver - Proposed Innovation Centre

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“2.0 Relevant Background Information

- 2.1** The Development Committee at their meeting of 27th September 2011 agreed to support an application for ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) funding in respect of a proposed Innovation Centre project at Springvale / Forthriver. The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee at their meeting on 23rd September 2011 also agreed to support the application for this project and agreed in principle to meeting the Council contribution from either the Council's City Investment Fund and/or capital programme subject to attaining an economic appraisal demonstrating a positive economic benefit to the city and being awarded projected grant funding. These approvals were subsequently ratified by Council on 3rd October 2011.
- 2.2** The Forthriver Innovation Centre project is included as an emerging Council-led Investment project in the Council's draft Investment Programme 2012 – 2015. Further reports are to be brought to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in relation to the proposed governance arrangements and prioritisation of the Investment Programme. However, due to the timing issues around the ERDF grant funding application, Members are being asked in advance of this to note the INI procedural stepped process which now involves a requirement to submit a Scoping Document to Invest NI as part of the funding application and to seek their approval on the proposed Development Brief process as outlined below.
- 2.3** It is intended that the Innovation Centre will complement the recent investment by Belfast Metropolitan College in their E3 campus at Springvale. This campus – which was just handed over to Belfast Met at the beginning of April – is to be the base for the college's project-based learning activity, involving students working with local businesses on company-based projects. In tandem, the students will be provided with entrepreneurship training and there will be facilities for students to work on their own business ideas. It is intended that, should the students require additional space and facilities, they may then consider locating in the new Innovation Centre. This will help build a critical mass of new growth businesses in this location and will create a positive regeneration project at this site, which currently attracts significant levels of anti-social behaviour.

2.4 The Forthriver site is owned by INI and is a serviced site which has been set aside for use by INI eligible businesses. INI, whilst supportive of the application, have reiterated the following points which are relevant in terms of taking forward this funding application:

- **This is a Council/EU scheme. Belfast City Council are the applicant for the purposes of this funding, which is a Local Economic Development (LED) project, and LED funding constraints will steer the type of development and conditions attached to the funding. The development will have to fit within the scheme rules and equally must align with the Council's objectives.**
- **Procurement is a Council issue and INI will expect Council to be complete and compliant in terms of procurement including the procurement of an operator to deliver and manage the scheme, and in terms of any subsequent land or property disposal.**
- **The funding is viewed by INI as being 50% EU funding, 25% Council funding and up to 25% 3rd party which could be INI if the project aligns with INI objectives. In this instance INI are willing to consider grant aiding up to the 25% subject to a successful funding application and approval process. INI would require the Council to purchase the land (by way of a 999 year lease) and have indicated a value of circa £130,000 per acre and are prepared to make 2 acres available, therefore total cost £260,000. The lease and the grant would have conditions in terms of user clawback etc. One of the conditions is that the completed development cannot be occupied by a public sector body. INI cannot sub-vent the land element, i.e. they cannot make this part of their (up to) 25% contribution, although the land value can form part of the Council's 25% contribution.**

2.5 If the funding application is successful and the Council draws down the 75% funding and commits a further 25% of its own funding there needs to be clarity as to how the Council wishes to utilise the funding, develop the project and who the potential owner/operator of the completed scheme will be and whether an operator will lease or have to financially contribute to the project. The Council will own the land upon which the proposed project is to be developed. In order to provide transparency and for legal and audit compliance, any such decisions will need to be in line with procurement, legal and land disposal regulations.

- 2.6 Rather than the Council constructing the proposed Innovation Centre itself and risk building something speculatively which the market doesn't want or which is not compatible with the end users requirements, it is proposed that the Council alternatively consider progressing down the route of a Development Brief process. This process would entail the Council offering the site on the market for disposal (usually by way of long lease) and subsequent development. 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.
- 2.7 The Development Brief would contain criteria in terms of both the economic objectives and anticipated outcomes (aligned to the Council's economic objectives and LED funding constraints) as well as the usual financial and property related criteria. It would be open to potential end users/operators to respond to the brief accordingly; subject to any funding conditions in terms of the end user. Clarification is currently being sought from both INI and DETI (as the managing agent for the EU funding) to confirm specific conditions around end users, namely whether this project is only accessible to voluntary and social enterprise businesses.
- 2.8 If Members are agreeable to progressing via this route, it is proposed that a Steering Group with Member representation could be involved in the Development Brief process in terms of drawing up criteria and the subsequent evaluation of bids. Land disposal, procurement and legal advice will also be required. Reports would however still be brought to Committee for approval to all stages of the process.
- 2.9 INI have provided a stepped process in terms of taking this project forward. One of the initial stages is that a 'Scoping Document' is to be submitted to INI outlining the proposed terms of the project and the potential outcomes and economic considerations. INI would then provide initial feedback on the potential viability and suitability for funding under the LED measure. This would then allow the Council to instigate the Development Brief process, if Members agree that this is the most appropriate route
- 2.10 The Development Brief would make the scheme conditional on the Council being successful on drawing down the ERDF funding and on the proposed scheme receiving a positive economic appraisal. It could require the operator to provide a financial contribution to the scheme although this is subject to clarification from INI as to how this financial contribution would be treated in terms of the grant application. Upon completion of the completed development the Council could

potentially then lease the site either on the basis of a capital premium or alternatively a ground rent (as with Balmoral & Duncrue Industrial Estates) or equity rent (as with the Gasworks Business Park). INI are to also advise further as to whether this would impact on the amount of grant

- 2.11** If the Council do not propose to seek any financial return they will need to make sure that it complies with their legal obligation in terms of land disposals and in particular the requirements of the Local Government Act 1976 (Section 96) which requires all disposals to be at best price or on best terms, otherwise DOE approval is required.
- 2.12** On receipt of the completed responses to the Development Brief, the Council would make an assessment of the relative merits of all submissions. The preferred submission could then be approved in principle, and a full application for support made to Invest NI based on this submission. This application would then undergo economic appraisal and subject to a positive outcome of this, Invest NI would approve the requisite budget for the development. Following a letter of offer from INI, the Council in turn, would enter into a simultaneous development agreement and agreement for lease with the end operator.
- 2.13** INI can only formally allocate the site at Forthriver to the Council following the LED letter of offer. Up until this point INI are officially holding this site as being available for other interests. Once INI allocate the site for this project, the Council would be required to enter into an agreement to lease (i.e. agree to purchase the site) with INI and pay a 10% non refundable deposit to INI.
- 2.14** Invest NI have advised that the LED letter of offer may be forthcoming towards the end of this year if the Scoping Document and other decisions on the part of the Council are initiated now. In any case, all letters of offer for projects under the LED budget must be in place by the end of 2013 at the latest and all spend must be incurred and accounted for by the end of 2015.
- 2.15** Central Procurement Department (CPD) is used by INI to verify construction costs and the procurement process on the part of INI. Based on CPD approval to INI the LED funds would be released to the Council, either at the end of the completed project or on a staged basis. The Council would be the recipient of the funding and an agreed governance and audit arrangement would require to be put in place in terms of utilising these monies for the construction of the proposed development.

3 **Key Issues**

- 3.1** The Forthriver Innovation Centre project is included as an emerging Council-led investment project in the Council's draft Investment Programme 2012 – 2015. The Development Committee & the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in September 2011 granted approval to proceed with a grant application for ERDF funding.
- 3.2** Due to the timing issues around the ERDF Grant Funding application, Members are being asked to note the INI stepped process, which now involves a Scoping Document having to be submitted to INI. Members are also being asked to give their approval on the proposed Development Brief process as outlined above.
- 3.3** Subject to Members agreeing to the proposed Development Brief route the Scoping Document can be submitted to INI for consideration. It will set out the proposed terms of the project and the potential outcomes and economic considerations, in order to get initial feedback from Invest NI on potential viability and suitability for funding under the LED measure.
- 3.4** The subsequent Development Brief would contain criteria in terms of both the economic objectives and anticipated outcomes (aligned to the Council's economic objectives and LED funding constraints) as well as the usual financial and property related criteria. The Development Brief would be offered on the market and it would be open to end users to respond to the brief accordingly, subject to any funding conditions as to the end user.
- 3.5** It is proposed that a Steering group with Member representation could be involved in the Development Brief process and the evaluation of bids etc but with reports to be brought back to Committee at each stage of the process.
- 3.6** The preferred submission under the Development Brief would be subject to the successful outcome of a funding application to DETI/Invest NI for the EU and possible Invest NI match funding. This application would be made by Belfast City Council. One key element of the application process is an economic appraisal which will be carried out by an externally-appointed organisation.
- 3.7** The Council would only enter into an agreement with the bidder for the site once all of these processes had been completed and on transfer of the land from Invest NI.

- 3.8 Members should note that there is likely to be significant demand on the EU funds and therefore any significant delays in the application process could jeopardise the availability of this funding source.

4 **Resource Implications**

Finance

Until a fully worked out business case is completed and detailed costings are obtained it is not possible to state with certainty the financial contribution required from the Council towards this project; however it had been previously estimated that the total cost of the project was circa £8m with potential funding of £6m and a Council contribution of £2m. The Council's contribution could include the land acquisition or land value and other eligible costs. The Council will however be required to purchase the land from INI at an estimated site valuation of £260,000.

Depending on how the Council propose to eventually dispose or sublease the land to the end operator, and subject to INI advice on how this would be treated in terms of the grant application, a rental income and or capital premium may be payable by the developer/end operator. A further report will be brought back to Committee on this and the overall financial details in due course.

Human Resources

There will be a significant staff resource (primarily from Property & Projects; Economic Development Unit and Legal Services) in taking forward this project.

Asset & Other Implications

The development of this site should lead to improved social economic and regenerative benefits.

5 **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the update as provided above and the proposed next steps in the grant funding application, which now requires the submission of a scoping Document to INI for consideration.
- (ii) Approve this project being progressed on the basis of the Development Brief process as outlined (subject to a successful ERDF grant application outcome).

- (iii) Note that a further report will be brought back to Committee in due course, following consideration by INI of the Scoping Document, and to advise on financial requirements; and to seek further approvals in relation to the detail of the proposed Development Brief criteria and process.

6 Key to Abbreviations

INI – Invest Northern Ireland
ERDF – European Regional Development Fund
DETI – Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
LED – Local Economic Development.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Review of Public Administration

Local Government Reform Update

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committee’s consideration, the following report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the NI Executive has given a clear commitment within the Programme for Government and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, 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 On 15 February 2012, the Environment Minister wrote to all councils requesting that they restore necessary implementation structures to support the operational delivery of local government reform at the local level including Voluntary Transition Committees.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 23 March 2012, the Committee agreed to reinstate the Council’s Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as the Belfast voluntary Transition Committee (vTC) with the addition of a member of the Progressive Unionist Party being nominated onto the vTC to provide cross-party representation. The Council agreed, at its meeting on 1 April 2012 that the PUP member on the Belfast vTC would have voting rights.

2.0 **Key Issues**

2.1 The reform process is now entering a critical stage of implementation whereby primary legislation is being drafted, governance and implementation structures being re-established and active consideration being given to the transitional arrangements to be put in place to support local government reform within Northern Ireland together with ongoing transfer of functions issues.

2.2 The potential transfer of key functions such as planning and regeneration present a real opportunity for the Council to make a real and lasting difference in stimulating the local economy and improving the quality of people's lives across the city.

2.3 Whilst the Council will be less affected by the convergence issues which will be experienced by the other merging councils, the Council now need to restore its focus on planning for reform and shaping the approach taken by the wider local government sector.

2.4 **Belfast voluntary Transition Committee**

2.4.1 The primary role of the Transition Committee will be to provide overall political direction and to take the necessary decisions to ensure a coherent and co-ordinated approach is taken to implementing the reform programme.

2.4.2 The Council has recently received further correspondence from Linda MacHugh, Director of Local Government Policy Division, DoE setting out initial Guidance on the operation and reporting arrangements for the Voluntary Transition Committees (vTCs). Members will note that the general principles set out within the Guidance documents regarding the proposed governance; decision making and reporting mechanisms for vTCs align with current Council practice.

Governance of Belfast Voluntary Transition Committee

2.4.3 In order to ensure there is a clear distinction between the business of the vTC and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, members are asked to consider the following proposed governance arrangements for the Belfast vTC:

- (i) With effect from May 2012, the first Strategic Policy & Resources meeting of the month will be designated, as appropriate, to deal with local government reform related business and recorded in minutes as VTC business;

- (ii) depending upon the amount of business to be dealt with by the VTC, there may be potential scope to revert back to Strategic Policy & Resources related business immediately following VTC meeting;
- (iii) the nominated PUP member to the Belfast VTC will be invited to attend this meeting and will receive papers accordingly;

Programme of Work

- 2.4.4 A DoE paper setting out an initial high-level timetable for the local government reform programme, together with an initial 1st cut assessment of the potential high-level programme of work to be taken forward by Belfast City Council to deliver the reform programme.
- 2.4.5 It is intended that this will be further developed and a more detailed draft implementation plan will be submitted for the consideration of the Committee in June 2012.

2.5 Establishment of regional implementation structures

- 2.5.1 The Environment Minister and DoE has recently put in place the new regional implementation and governance arrangements for taking forward local government reform.
- 2.5.2 A graph showing the governance and relationship between these structures, the Council and the wider local government sector has been circulated.

Engagement with NI Executive and Government Departments

- 2.5.3 As previously stated by Members there is a need for the Council to initiate a focused and co-ordinated engagement programme with the NI Executive and relevant government Ministers on key issues impacting upon the city including local government reform.
- 2.5.4 Such engagement needs to be considered within the context of the delivery of the Investment Programme and the potential to initiate integrated pilots around planning, regeneration and local economic development activities.
- 2.5.5 As previously agreed by the Committee, meeting requests have been issued to all relevant Ministers (e.g. DSD, DETI, DEL, DCAL, DRD, DFP etc). Members will be aware that a cross-party delegation met recently with the Environment Minister.

2.6 Legislative Programme

2.6.1 There is a substantial programme of reform related legislation to be brought through the NI Executive over the coming months including the draft Local Government Reorganisation Bill.

2.6.2 The DoE are currently preparing the draft Local Government Reorganisation Bill and intend to present to the NI Assembly for consideration in Autumn of this year. DoE officials have indicated that they would anticipate that the Bill would be passed within a 6 – 8 month period and that the NI Executive and Environment Committee will consult as part of this process.

2.6.3 In response to Members stated desire to engage with and inform the development of this legislation, Council officers liaised with both DoE and the NI Executive's Committee for the Environment to register the Council's intent. Correspondence has been received on behalf of the Committee for the Environment stating that the Committee agreed, at its meeting on 17 April 2012, that they would contact the Council, in advance of any DoE departmental briefing on local government reform, inviting a written submission on any areas of concern for the Council. It also stated that the Committee is due to receive in the next few weeks the Department's Primary Legislation programme.

2.7 Funding Local Government Reform

2.7.1 Members will be aware that there is a growing lobby across local government advocating that central government should contribute a proportion of funding towards enabling reform to happen and to meet key up-front costs required. NILGA has written to all Councils including the Lord Mayor and Chief Executive, requesting the council to give its support to a campaign calling for (i) central government to make resources available to invest in and enable local government reform to happen; (ii) greater involvement of local government in supporting the delivery of reform. Members are asked to consider giving support to the NILGA campaign.

2.8 Internal capacity to deliver

2.8.1 Members will appreciate both the significance and scale of the reform programme and the need for the Council to ensure that it has the capacity in place to ensure effective delivery in addition to other substantial work programmes such as the Investment Programme, efficiency programme etc. Work is ongoing to establish the level of capacity required to deliver and the potential to realign resources to facilitate delivery. It is recommended that the Committee delegates authority to the

Chief Executive to ensure that appropriate resources are available to support delivery of the local government reform at no additional cost to the ratepayer.

4.0 Resource Implications

- **Human Resources** – In terms of supporting delivery, it is proposed that this will be through realignment of resources with no additional costs to the ratepayer.
- **Financial** - Whilst there are likely to be resource implications for the Council emerging from the local government reform programme, the scope and scale of these are still to be determined. A business case on any financial implications will be developed and presented to the Committee for consideration.

5.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) note the correspondence received by the Environment Minister regarding Guidance for the Voluntary Transition Committee;
- (ii) agree the proposed governance arrangements for the Belfast voluntary Transition Committee as set out at para. 2.4.3 above;
- (iii) consider the initial high-level draft programme of work for the Council linked to the reform programme;
- (iv) note that correspondence has been issued seeking Ministerial meetings to discuss key issues impacting upon the city;
- (v) note the intention of the NI Executive's Committee for the Environment to engage with the Council in taking forward its considerations around local government reform; and
- (vi) consider that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive to ensure that appropriate resources are in place to ensure the effective delivery of the reform programme at no additional cost to the ratepayer;
- (vii) consider supporting the NILGA campaign advocating that central government contribute a proportion of funding towards enabling reform to happen and to meet the up-front costs required."

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that he, together with the Chairman, had earlier that day attended a meeting of the Regional Transition Committee and he provided the Members with an update in that regard. He explained that, whilst Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils did not have representation on the Council's recently established voluntary Transition Committee, they would be allocated seats on the Statutory Transition Committee when it was set up in 2013. However, he suggested that, in the meantime, in order to establish a means of engagement, the Committee should write to both Councils with a view to arranging joint meetings between representatives of all three Councils, with the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman and the Party Group Leaders (or their nominees), together with appropriate officers being authorised to participate in any such meetings.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed to the process as outlined as a means of engagement with Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils prior to the establishment of the Statutory Transition Committee.

Democratic Services and Governance

Requests to Use the City Hall

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 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. In this regard, the Democratic Services Manager reported that the following applications had been received:

36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association – Formation of the Young Citizen Volunteers of Ireland

The 36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association had submitted an application form requesting the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality, in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits, to hold an event entitled "Celebrating the Formation of the Young Citizen Volunteers of Ireland (YCV) on 10th September, 2012. The purpose of the event was to increase the understanding of the formation of the YCV in its role up to and including the end of the Great War. The organisers wished for the event to take place in the City Hall, which was where the YCV had been formed by the then Lord Mayor. It was proposed that the event would take the following format:

- 7.00 p.m. - Lecture by Dr. Gordon Lucy
- 7.45 p.m. - Launch of a booklet which would chart the formation of the organisation and its role in the Great War of 1914-1918
- 8.15 p.m. - Refreshments, musical entertainment and opportunity for guests to view exhibition of YCV artefacts
- 10.00 p.m. - Event concludes.

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. The main event of the evening would be a lecture by Dr. Gordon Lucy which would set the scene as to why the Young Citizen Volunteers of Ireland had been formed and the role it played in Ireland at that time. The lecture would seek to provide an appreciation of the breadth and significance of the Division's formation and the event would be contextualised further through an exhibition of memorabilia which had belonged to the YCV.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the organisers had confirmed that the event would be based on historic accuracy, robust academic expertise and critical analysis. It would do that by gaining input from Historians and Academics such as Gordon Lucy, the author and compiler of the book entitled "The Ulster Covenant: A Pictorial History". His advice was deemed critical in ensuring the event was accurately portrayed and that the historical context was captured.

The organiser was seeking to ensure that the event was non-exclusive and welcomed to all sections of the community in Belfast by inviting the Lord Mayor, all Members of the Council's Good Relations Partnership, together with representatives of external organisations. Based on the information received, the application satisfied 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' and Historic Centenaries Working Group on 13th January.

**Ulster Centenary Committee –
To Mark the Centenary of the
Signing of the Ulster Covenant**

The Unionist Centenary Committee had submitted an application form requesting use of the City Hall to hold an event entitled "A Historical Re-enactment of the Centenary of the Signing of the Ulster Covenant" to be held on 29th September, 2012. The purpose of the re-enactment was to re-create the events of the day on which the Signing of the Ulster Covenant had taken place. It was proposed that the event would take the following format:

- 9.00 a.m. - 250 people in period costume to parade with a band from the Ulster Hall to the City Hall
- 9.30 a.m. - Arrival at the City Hall where 30 people would enter the building to re-enact the Signing of the Ulster Covenant, while a further 100 would be invited to enter the building to view the re-enactment
- 10.30 a.m. - Event concludes.

The organisers had requested also the use of the Covenant Table for the re-enactment.

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. The re-enactment would be preceded by an introductory talk which would aim to outline the events which had taken place in the City Hall, elsewhere in Ulster, the United Kingdom and across the rest of the world. The event would seek to draw on the reaction to those events from the different perspectives which existed at that time, both for and against. This would include editorial and political comment from that time. The re-enactment also aimed to be an educated event and would include brief pen histories of some of the signatories which would seek to increase the understanding of the breadth and range of support for the Ulster Covenant.

The Democratic Services Manager indicated that the organisers had confirmed that the event would be based on historic accuracy, robust academic expertise and critical analysis. It would so that by gaining input from the Historians and Academics, such as Dr. Gordon Lucy, whose advice was deemed critical in ensuring the event was accurately portrayed and that historical context was captured.

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 Lord Mayor, all Members of the Council's Good Relations Partnership and the Leaders of the Unionist Political Parties, the Churches, the Loyal Orders, representatives of the Government and the Irish Government, representatives of a cross-section of Churches and minority ethnic communities. The organisers also planned to produce a visual record of the event, as well as liaising with the BBC in respect of being able to broadcast a live event from within the City Hall to the Big City Screen in the grounds of the City Hall.

The Democratic Services Manager indicated that, based on the information which had been received, the application satisfied both the criteria on use of the City Hall and the principles agreed by the Joint Group for such events. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant the use of the City Hall for the event as outlined and approve the use of the Covenant Table.

A Member suggested that both the requests for the use of the City Hall should be referred to the Joint Group of Party Group Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group, which he felt was the best vehicle to consider such applications, before being resubmitted to the Committee.

It was pointed out that both applications had been submitted in line with the policy for the use of the City Hall and in accordance with the principles established by the Historic Centenaries Working Group which had subsequently been ratified by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. In addition, the Committee had, the previous month, approved two similar applications.

A Member indicated that further discussion was required with one of the Groups, with a view to including a range of different perspectives and ideologies, rather than a single viewpoint, which in his opinion had not been addressed and therefore did not meet the principles established by the Working Group.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Attwood,
Seconded by Councillor McVeigh,

That the applications for the Use of the City Hall which had been submitted by the 36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association and the Unionist Centenary Committee be referred to the Joint Group of Party Group Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group in order to assess if the applications were entirely consistent with the principles established by the Historic Centenaries Working Group.

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

**Request for the Use of the City Hall
and 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:

<u>Organisation/ Body</u>	<u>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
European Foundation Centre	European Foundation Centre Conference Reception 7th June, 2012 Approximately 550 attending	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. It is recommended that the Council grant the provision of a drinks reception in the Titanic Signature Building given that the purpose of this Conference is to explore 'Peacebuilding through Social Justice' and will look specifically at Community Arts and Culture; Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation; Children and Young People; Diversity and Inclusion; Community Engagement and Social Enterprise. The Community Federation for Northern Ireland will work closely with the Council in delivering the week-long Programme. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better Services – listening and delivering'.	The provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

<u>Organisation/ Body</u>	<u>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Institute of Roofing	Roofing Institute Annual Conference Reception 11th October, 2012 Approximately 150 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 Theme of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Union Masonic Lodge No. 106	200th Anniversary of the Union Masonic Lodge No. 106 8th March, 2013 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event will celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the formation of the Union Masonic Lodge No. 106 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
Belfast Trad (Traditional Music and Dance Society)	Belfast Trad Concert and Ceili 20th October, 2012 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event, which will also mark the rebranding of the organisation, will illustrate the Society's commitment to the promotion and preservation of traditional music. It aims to highlight the Society's outreach initiatives whilst demonstrating its success in attracting new members and celebrating its role in promoting and supporting Belfast as a tourist destination. 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

<u>Organisation/ Body</u>	<u>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
174 Trust	<p>Launch of 'Together Stronger' Programme</p> <p>21st May, 2012</p> <p>Approximately 200 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will launch the 'Together Stronger' Programme, a community relations initiative which seeks to bring together the communities living around a city interface. The initiative aims to build the capacity and commitment of community leaders to undertake community relations work in partnership across the community divide.</p> <p>Furthermore, through greater interaction and cooperation amongst communities it aims to bring communities together with other relevant agencies to discuss and promote the regeneration of Carlisle Circus as a shared space and diversity hub.</p> <p>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'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Carers Northern Ireland	<p>Launch of Carers' Week</p> <p>19th June, 2012</p> <p>Approximately 100 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event, which will launch Carers' Week, is an opportunity for the city to pay tribute to the vital role played by carers in contributing to those who require care throughout the city.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £250</p>

<u>Organisation/ Body</u>	<u>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Victim Support, Northern Ireland	Volunteer Recognition Event 26th November, 2012 Approximately 60 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event seeks to recognise the work of the volunteers who have played an important role in providing support to those who have been affected by crime. 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 £300
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	European Heritage Open Days 2012 Event 24th November, 2012 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits	This event seeks to acknowledge the role of European Heritage Open Days in providing an opportunity for local people and tourists to see inside and learn about Belfast's rich architectural heritage. The event will recognise those organisations who have opened their properties to the public as part of the Europe-wide event, European Heritage Open Days. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'Better care for Belfast's environment' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form tea/coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £375

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Invest NI

The Committee was advised that, subsequent to the report having issued, a further request for the use of the City Hall had been received from Invest NI for the holding of the Titanic Offshore Energy Supply Chain Event on 15th May, 2012. The event would be held in the Titanic Belfast but the organisers had requested the use of the Banqueting Hall for a pre-event reception. The conference was expected to attract up to 400 delegates, including international representatives. Accordingly, the Director of Property and Projects recommended that the Committee accede to the request.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Minutes of Meetings of the Governance Working Group

The Committee approved the minutes of the meetings of the Governance Working Group of 21st March and 18th April and adopted the recommendation of the Group in respect of the following:

Protocol on Issues Appearing On Committee Agendas

An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

“The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Group that a draft protocol on how issues appeared on Committee Agendas had been considered by the Working Group at its meeting on 30th January. At that meeting, it had been agreed that Members of the Group forward to the Democratic Services Manager any comments on the protocol and that a revised report be submitted to its next meeting.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that no comments had been received by any individual members of the Working Group. However, at the previous meeting the Members had felt that a Councillor should be able to request that an item be placed on a Committee agenda without the need to reduce that request to writing or an e-mail. Accordingly, the protocol had been revised to incorporate that change and a copy is set out hereunder:

‘Appendix 1

Protocol setting out the means by which items appear on Committee agendas

There has been some confusion recently concerning the means by which items appear on the agendas of the several Committees of the Council. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has agreed that a protocol on this matter should be developed so that Members and officers alike can understand the agreed rules.

Before setting out the protocol, it is worth restating one of the key principles of the operation of a public body. That is, it is for the elected Members, acting through the established decision-making structures of the Council, to decide on policy and to make the decisions which allocate resources. Officers will only act on these issues when there is a political decision to do so which is approved by the Council

There are a number of ways in which matters can appear on agendas and these are summarised below:

1. Corporate Plan/Departmental Plans

The Council invests a considerable amount of Member and officer time into the development of the Corporate Plan and the several departmental Plans. Officers will present reports to Committees making suggestions as to how the priorities in these plans can be given effect.

2. New Legislation or Guidelines

From time to time new legislation or guidelines are introduced which impact upon the delivery of Council services. Officers will prepare reports for consideration by the appropriate Committee on such matters.

3. Requests by Outside Organisations

The Council receives numerous requests from organisations and individuals for assistance or requests for the Council to take action on a certain matter. Where appropriate, officers deal with these requests where the Council has an established policy on the matter. However, on occasions it is considered to be necessary to bring such requests to the attention of the appropriate Committee for a decision.

4. Requests from the Committee

It is quite normal for a Committee to request officers to prepare a report on a certain matter and to bring it back to the Committee for consideration.

5. Suggestions from Professional Officers

The Council employs its professional Chief Officers not only to carry out the specific instructions of the Council but also to make suggestions which they consider would be of benefit to the city. Each Chief Officer has an established management team at which suggestions for new programmes or initiatives are discussed. The Chief Officer, if he/she considers the issue to be of benefit to the city might raise the matter at the appropriate Committee meeting for political direction.

6. **At the Request of an Individual Member**

It has been accepted practice for a number of years that an individual Member can ask for an issue to be raised at a Committee meeting and this has normally been highlighted on the agenda for the meeting against the Member's name for him or her to raise. Such requests are normally made to the appropriate Chief Officer and the appropriate Chairman is informed of the issue when being briefed on the agenda for the meeting.

It should be pointed out that, although the Chairman is responsible for the conduct of the Committee meeting, he or she does not have any authority acting outside the Committee and it is not appropriate for a Chairman to decide which items can or cannot be included on an agenda.

The following protocol is suggested for both Members and officers in dealing with requests from individual Members wishing to have an item placed on a Committee agenda:

- *Any Member is free to discuss matters with Chief or Senior officers of the Council and to seek their opinion on any suggestions which they might have for new policies or for a specific action to be taken.*
- *If, after these discussions, the Member wishes the issue to be raised on a Committee agenda then a specific request should be made to the appropriate Chief Officer.*
- *If the issue falls within the remit of the Committee and if it is considered that the action proposed to be taken is lawful, then the Chief Officer, after informing the appropriate Chairman, will arrange for the item to be included on the agenda for the next meeting indicating the name of the Member who will be speaking to the issue at the Committee.*
- *The issue will either simply appear on the agenda against the individual Member's name or, if the Chief Officer considers that it would be helpful to the Committee in considering the matter, a short covering report may be prepared which highlights that a named Member has asked that the issue is raised and give some important factual information. No significant resources, including officer time, will be committed to such preparatory work. Resources can only be committed once the Council has decided to take action.'*

The Working Group approved the revised Protocol on issues appearing on Committee Agendas and commended it to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval.”

Finance/Value-for-Money

**Approval to Seek Tender for the
Replacement of City Hall Facade Lighting**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant background information

Members will be aware that, under the revised Scheme of Delegation, approval must be sought from the relevant Committee prior to inviting tenders for the supply of goods or services.

Members will also be aware that, in the course of providing maintenance services at all Council properties, the Property Maintenance unit makes regular use of a number of external contractors, both in order to provide specialist services and also to supplement the existing in-house workforce during times of peak demand.

As part of the planned maintenance programme for 2012/13 it is proposed to replace the existing façade lighting to the North, East, and West elevations of Belfast City Hall with energy efficient solid state LED lighting. The proposed lighting is at least 60 percent more efficient than the existing lighting and has the potential to reduce electricity usage in the City Hall by approximately £13,000 per annum. The Property Maintenance unit therefore wishes to create a Select List for the supply and installation of the necessary LED lighting and associated infrastructure.

It should be noted that, within the current 2012/13 planned maintenance programme, provision of approx. £90,000 had been set aside to replace part of the existing façade floodlights around the City Hall main dome and turrets. Participation in the ILLUMINATE project would allow us to replace all the existing floodlighting on the main dome and turrets, and in addition to completely replace all of the external façade lighting around the building using the latest low-power LED lighting for a relatively small increase in project cost.

In addition to being cheaper to run, this lighting is much more flexible and programmable than the current system, and can allow the use of colour on specific parts of the building to complement events being staged in the grounds etc.

It is notable that this maintenance project has secured matched funding from an EU programme – Innovative Lighting Systems - and will be carried out in conjunction with a number of other European cities promoting energy efficiency using solid state technology.

The total projected cost of the project for the City Hall is £335,000 of which approximately £206,000 will be provided for from EU funds (this includes an allowance for project administration, design, internal staff costs, and travel). Belfast City Council would therefore contribute a net sum of approximately £129,000 to the project from the budget allocated from the 2012/13 planned maintenance (an increase of £39K over original budget).

The Corporate Management Team approved the initial attempt to secure match-funding, however now that this has been successfully secured the Committee's approval is necessary before any procurement can take place.

Detailed specifications are to be prepared in order to permit the contract to be let, and subject to Committee approval advertisements will be placed in the local press inviting applications for inclusion on a Select List.

It is intended that the installation of the upgraded lighting will be complete in all significant respects by December 2012.

Key Issues

The installation of solid state lighting to the City Hall will offer a number of efficiencies and added value to the building as follows:

- it has the potential to reduce electricity usage in the City Hall by approximately £13,000 per annum;
- the existing floodlights have a life expectancy of approximately 3 years. The proposed Solid State Lighting has a life expectancy of between 10-15 years resulting in longer term efficiency savings in respect of lamp replacement;
- over the lifetime of the new equipment there is therefore a potential saving of at least £90,000 meaning that the project is very largely self-financing, as well as offering a significant increase in functionality;
- the solid state lighting scheme will have the capacity to be both dimmable and have variable controlled colour. This has the potential to enhance a wide range of planned events within the City Hall grounds such as the Christmas Lights Switch-on, Christmas Market etc; and
- it will provide the opportunity for Belfast to participate with other major European cities in promoting energy efficiency using innovative technology.

Some initial testing of the technology was recently carried out on part of the City Hall and this has confirmed our view that the system is capable of very nuanced effects which will allow specific parts of the building to be coloured, highlighted, darkened or emphasized as required, and will in effect allow us to 'paint' the building in whatever combinations of colours are required in the specific circumstances.

This will in turn allow us the flexibility to cater much more specifically for the requirements of events organisers within the grounds and also to mark special events and occasions of note within the council's own calendar.

Resource Implications

Financial

Regularly testing the market via competitive tendering ensures that we obtain the best possible value for money and standards of service from our external suppliers, which in turn assists us in driving down costs and minimising the rate burden. The majority of funding for the new system would come from EU sources, with an increase of only £39K in terms of the council's own planned expenditure being necessary to leverage the EU funding for an expended scheme. In addition, the system offers significantly lower operational and replacement costs which should result in the system being self-financing over the whole life of the project.

Human Resources

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

Asset and other implications

Having a range of experienced and efficient contractors available is an important factor in delivering effective property maintenance to the Council, and acquiring the necessary specialist skills will be essential in the successful delivery of this project.

Recommendations & Decisions

The Committee is recommended to approve the following:

- (a) to invite applications for inclusion on a Select List and the submission of Tenders in respect of the activities specified above."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 19th April.

**Connswater Community Greenway-
Land Assembly**

The Committee was reminded that, as part of the City Investment Strategy, it had agreed to co-ordinate the acquisition of lands to allow the Connswater Community Greenway to proceed. It was reported that the following area of land had been identified as being required to help complete the Greenway route and associated landscaping which officers had agreed to purchase, subject to the Committee's approval:

- An area of 0.622 acres of land at Connsbank Link and the Hollywood Arches by-pass which was owned by the Department for Regional Development as part of the road protection corridor for a licence fee of £60 per annum.

The Committee granted approval for the purchase of the land as outlined.

**Connswater Community Greenway/
Flood Alleviation Scheme Project Update**

The Committee considered a report which had been submitted by the Director of Property and Projects and the Assistant Chief Executive in relation to the current position regarding the contract for the Connswater Community Greenway/Flood Alleviation Scheme.

After discussion, the Committee authorised the Director of Property and Projects and the Town Solicitor to:

- (i) accept the Conciliator's Outcome;
- (ii) pursue mutual termination in the best interests of the Council in the event that the contractor, Connswater Joint Venture, rejected the Outcome;
- (iii) seek unilateral termination on the advice of the Council's Senior Counsel; and
- (iv) commence re-procurement of the scheme.

The Chief Executive placed on record his thanks for the hard work of the Council officers involved in the conciliation process and this was endorsed by the Committee.

**Proposed Lease of Site at
Cliftonville Playing Fields**

In accordance with Standing Order 60, the Committee was advised that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 12th April, had approved the grant of a five-year lease to Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain of an area of 0.29 acres of land at the Cliftonville Playing Fields at a rent of £1,780 per annum, subject to an appropriate legal agreement to be drawn up by Legal Services which would restrict the use of the site to educational purposes.

The Committee granted approval for the lease and noted that discussions were continuing with the Department of Education regarding the future overall site utilisation as well as procurement and delivery options.

Property at Tamar Street

The Committee was advised that approximately 0.125 acres of land at Tamar Street, Ballymacarrett, which was held by the Development Committee, was currently leased to the Scout Association. The Association held the site under a 25 year lease from the Council from 1st October, 1994. The lease had originally been granted to the Save the Children Fund which had erected a modular building on 1st August, 2000. The former Community and Recreation Sub-Committee had approved an assignment of the lease to the Scout Association on 16th May, 2001. Under the terms of the lease, the rent for the site was reviewable every five years. The rent of £900 per annum was currently payable by the Scout Association with effect from 1st October, 2009, with a review due 1st October, 2014.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that the Scout Association, which did not have groups meeting in the hall, had been trying for two years to assign its lease in the premises but to no avail. Accordingly, the Association had requested that the Council agree to accept a surrender of the remaining terms of the lease which was due to end on 30th September, 2019, although there was a break option in the lease in October, 2014. However, due to the financial burden of the rent to the Association and the upkeep of the premises, it currently considered that it was no longer able to continue with the lease. He indicated that the Council could require the Scout Association to remove the building and make good the site, however, the Group did not have the funds to undertake that work.

The Committee was therefore being requested to agree to lease surrender and accept the site back from the Association, with the building remaining on site to be demolished, removed and disposed of by the Council. Due to the poor condition of the modular building, it was not feasible to re-locate it elsewhere. The Council had had a planning assessment prepared on the site by a Planning Consultant in December, 2010. The site was designated a "white land" within the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and, as such, was free from constraint and might be suitable for development, subject to normal development control considerations. The return of the site to the Council might therefore facilitate future development along the adjoining land which was in the Council's ownership. Any future options for the use of the site would be presented to the Committee in due course.

Accordingly, the Director recommended that the Committee agree to accept a surrender of the current lease on the Tamar Street site from the Scout Association and approve the demolition and removal of the modular building located thereon.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Review of Rents on Parks Houses

The Committee was advised that the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 15th March, had approved the review of rents for houses located on land for which the Parks and Leisure Department had operational responsibility. However, in accordance with Standing Order 46, the rents remained subject to approval by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee approved the revised rents.

Good Relations and Equality

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

Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 3rd April and adopted the recommendations in respect of the following:

Tenders for the Delivery of Peace III Phase II Interfaces Programme

Approval to seek tenders for the delivery of the Interfaces Programme and the delegation of authority to the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor to award the tender to the most economically advantageous submission received which fulfilled the relevant criteria, including quality and cost.

International Day of Peace 2012

The holding of an appropriate event on 21st March to mark International Day of Peace 2012.

Community Relations Week 2012

The hosting of two events, the total cost of which would not exceed £700 and which would be recouped in full from the Peace III Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project, in May, as part of the Community Relations Week 2012.

**Update Report of Joint Group of Party Group
Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group**

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

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that Strategic Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2011 agreed:

‘that the Party Group leaders meet with the Centenaries Working Group over a defined period of time, as set out (in the report), to explore the possibility of developing a Council strategy on diversity and agree that the Chief Executive’s office liaise with Members to agree a timetable of meetings to be tabled at the first joint meeting of the Historic Centenaries Group.’

It also agreed the following items for discussion:

- memorabilia and displays in and around the City Hall
- Flying of the Union Flag Equality Impact Assessment
- the Decade of Centenaries programme, events, cultural displays in Council public facilities
- use of the Irish language
- use of the Ulster-Scots language
- use of minority ethnic languages
- how the Council deals with homecoming parades
- Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations
- expressions of distinctiveness within local areas and neighbourhoods (i.e. including public art, signage and symbolism).

1.2 The Joint Group has now met on 7 occasions and has agreed to bring a report to update Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on discussions within the Joint Group. The paper is to seek formal authority on recommendations and gain approval to continue discussions in relation to City Hall displays and other outstanding issues.

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Emerging themes

- 1. In preliminary discussion, a number of themes have been agreed:**

2. In the visible face of the City Council, there is a need to represent the total complexity of the city fairly, including in City Hall. The definition of fairness will necessarily change continuously with the city. At the present time, this requires attention to be paid to diversity in relation to British-ness and Irish-ness, as well as to other under-represented aspects of Belfast life including migration, poverty, labour, ethnic minorities and women;
3. Trust and robust working relationships are central to the ability of the Joint Group to reach agreement on issues. There is a need to go beyond the minimum 'live and let live' approach, towards respect for each other's identity and traditions. Progress will only be possible through open discussion, a willingness to meet the expressed needs of others and a commitment to 'reciprocal generosity';
4. Councillors recognised that the issues under discussion have consequences beyond City Hall, within the city as well as at a Northern Ireland Executive level, and there is a need to be mindful of these interests;
5. There is a commitment to engage in process and detailed discussions which exhaust all possible avenues for consensus;
6. Disagreement on specific issues should be done in a civil and balanced way, so as not to jeopardise broader goals;
7. For Unionists, the act of 'adding to' is less contentious and for Nationalists, there is a desire to increase a diversity of cultural expression in and around City Hall. Parties need to consider whether it is worthwhile having a discussion around re-location to take account of removal being portrayed as defeat, whereas adjustment can be seen as democratic accommodation;
8. Re-location of current displays requires sensitive and detailed discussion and agreement on restoration and future display;
9. There is particular sensitivity in the Unionist community over the armed forces and Remembrance Day.

10. There is no desire for commemorations or displays relating to recent paramilitary activities or organisations, cloaked in broader identity issues.
11. The City Hall should not be 'shared out' in different distinct zones of variable sectarian shades, but should be an open access building for all.
12. These are largely in line with and enhance those principles agreed by Centenaries Working Group 17 October 2011 and subsequently by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee 21 October 2011.

2.2 Actions underway

There were a number of 'time-critical' actions that the Joint Group agreed to forward to SP&R Committee, in advance of this update report. They include:

- The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations programme;
- A number of City Hall bookings to commemorate the Covenant including the Presbyterian Church and Co-operation Ireland; and
- Commissioning of an exhibition as part of the Decade of Centenaries covering the first period, 1912-1914, entitled 'Shared History, Differing Allegiances'.

The Joint Group is keen that these early agreements are seen within the context of the principles and themes outlined above, and supportive of the emerging diversity strategic framework.

2.3 Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) reports

The Joint Group has received presentations on the 2 EQIA reports in relation to the flying of the Union Flag; and Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment.

When undertaking an EQIA, the Council closely follows the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) in 2004 which recommends that there should be seven steps in the EQIA process:

- Step 1: Definition of the aims of the policy – completed
- Step 2: Consideration of available data and research – completed
- Step 3: Assessment of potential and actual impacts – completed
- Step 4: Consideration of measures – completed
- Step 5: Formal consultation
- Step 6: Decision and publication of the results of the EQIA
- Step 7: Monitoring for adverse impact.

The 2 separate reports set out the findings of the first four steps of the process and were considered at early meetings of the Joint Group and subsequent party group briefings.

Following lengthy preliminary discussion, Members agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to proceed with the formal consultation process on the Equality Impact Assessment, based upon the best advice available from the Equality Commission and others as to the form which this should take.

The Joint Group sought clarification on a number of issues:

- Local agreements with trade unions regarding the flying of the Union flag at Duncrue Complex;
- An analysis of the trends regarding employment by community background in the Council; and
- The consultation requirements of the ECNI, in particular, the methodology for surveying employees in relation to the 2 EQIA reports and questions relating to chill factors.

An analysis on the trends regarding employment by community background in the Council has been included in the final EQIA report, including a breakdown of the senior levels of management.

The Head of Human Resources confirmed that after examination, there is no evidence of any local agreement with trade unions regarding the flying of the Union flag at Duncrue. In line with normal Council arrangements, the Council's trade unions would be consulted regarding any potential change of policy and fully involved in any communication exercise.

In relation to the consultation methodology, ECNI has confirmed the following:

- There is no definitive requirement re consultation - i.e. no fixed number of sessions or style etc. required – as long as the consultation is timely, open and inclusive;
- The 2 EQIAs should be consulted on concurrently, so as to avoid duplication and potential confusion for members of the public;
- Any public consultation process had to be proportionate (on grounds of economy) and realistic;

- **Separate public consultation sessions should be held for each EQIA as the likely attendees would represent different sectors of interest – e.g. the memorabilia session might likely attract local historians, art lovers etc**
- **In relation to the Flying of the Union Flag EQIA, they agreed that one public consultation event would be sufficient to gauge public views and that this could be held in a central Council venue, but not the City Hall;**
- **A press release should be issued to make the public aware of the EQIAs and information should be placed on the BCC website so members of the public can also submit their views individually, in addition to attending the formal public meeting;**
- **A staff on-line survey was a positive measure since questionnaire completion provided privacy and an opportunity to report individual views anonymously. The questions should be designed in accordance with recognised social survey methodology and signed off by the Equality Commission for NI. It should be available to all staff and not just those directly affected;**
- **A joint questionnaire for staff would be preferable as long as the sections were clearly identified and the questions were ‘plain English’ proofed with as much clarity as possible;**
- **ECNI queried the need to hold additional focus groups, questioning what benefit this would add to the process; they were of the opinion that these were unnecessary and that the questionnaire method alone should be used to ascertain staff views.**
- **In line with this advice, the following time-line is recommended by the Joint Group for the 2 EQIA consultations to run concurrently:**

4 May	Presentation of EQIA reports to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
18 May	Presentation of City Hall interpretative displays action plan to SP&R Committee (to be attached as draft action plan to EQIA report for consultation)
6 June	Ratification of documents for consultation by Council

7 June	Issue for 16 week consultation period (inc. extra 4 weeks over holiday period)
27 Sept	Close consultation
28 Sept – 12 Oct	Process and integrate consultation responses Draft implementation and resource plans
19 Oct	Presentation to Strategic Policy & Resources
	1 November Ratification by Council Policy implementation as politically directed

The workshops to develop the City Hall interpretative displays action plan are ongoing and, if possible, this plan will be attached to the EQIA report for public consultation. However, if this process is not completed, the EQIA report will be released without this appendix.

2.4 Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment

In addition, the Joint Group is holding two workshops, facilitated by Dr. D. Morrow, along with an expert advisor on interpretative design. The aim of the workshops is:

‘To develop a visitor/user experience that is more coherent in telling the stories of Belfast in City Hall, in-keeping with the recommendations emerging from the draft report entitled: ‘Equality Impact Assessment on Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment.’

The terms of reference for the advisor are:

- In a workshop format, to present innovative interpretative design solutions from elsewhere, particularly in relation to contested histories;
- To work with elected Members to generate ideas and identify an inclusive range of stories and key objects that they wish to present in the context of City Hall;
- To present ideas on ensuring a coherent, balanced narrative and identify any gaps;

- To engage in dialogue with Members on preliminary design options for the presentation of displays and narratives in City Hall;
- To outline potential resource implications (asset/human/financial) of an enhanced visitor/user experience in City Hall.
- The Joint Group are holding these workshops in April and early May, to develop a detailed action plan for the Committee to consider in the context of the EQIA report.

2.5 Languages

Members of the Joint Group have initiated discussion on the issues of:

- use of the Irish language
- use of the Ulster-Scots language
- use of minority ethnic languages

They are considering in detail the Council's current language policy and will report to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in due course. In early discussions, it was agreed that the Joint Group would recommend to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee the following:

- A formal Council calendar of cultural diversity events, incorporating events organised by the Council and funded by the Council;
- The promotion of the availability of Irish language tours in City Hall, by arrangement;
- The addition of Google's free website translator to the Council website, offering instant access to automatic translation of the pages.

The Joint Group has agreed that invitations will be extended to Foras na Gaeilge, Pobal and other relevant sectoral groups to meet with the Joint Group, to hear their views on what further actions and resources they would consider to be priority in promoting the Irish language. This meeting will be convened in May. In line with the decision of Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, it was also agreed that a similar meeting will be facilitated with the Ulster-Scots sector.

Following these meetings with the sectoral groups, it was agreed that the outstanding potential actions listed would be discussed at a future meeting of the Joint Group, when there was opportunity to consider the expressed opinions of the sectoral groups, as well as examine resource implications of additional actions.

2.6 Outstanding issues

At its meeting on the 27 January, the Joint Group agreed a work plan. The issues listed there which are under active discussion or remain outstanding are:

- a. City Hall interpretative displays action plan
- b. Language policy
- c. Operation Banner
- d. Homecoming parades
- e. Expressions of distinctiveness within local areas and neighbourhoods

It is recommended by the Joint Group that they continue to meet until the end of May in the present format to continue with their agenda. They will report to SP&R Committee again on 8 June 2012.

3.0 Resource Implications

Human: None at present.

Financial: Up to £3,000 + travel expenses for expert advice on interpretative design. This is available within revenue budgets and, to expedite delivery, has been commissioned under delegated authority.

Assets: None at present.

4.0 Equality Implications

All recommendations are in compliance with existing legal requirements and Equality Commission guidelines and aim to promote better relations within the Council and in the city.

5.0 Decisions required

Following consideration of the above issues, Committee is asked to:

- a. Agree the themes (outlined at 2.1);
- b. Authorise the timetable for the EQIA reports on the Flying of the Union Flag; and City Hall Displays to proceed to public consultation (as outlined at 2.3);
- c. Note the commissioning of expert advice on interpretative design for City Hall displays;

- d. Approve the continuation of the Joint Group discussions – forward agenda to include:
- City Hall interpretative displays action plan
 - Language policy
 - Operation Banner
 - Homecoming parades
 - Expressions of distinctiveness within local areas and neighbourhoods; and
- e. Receive a further update report on these matters in June 2012.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Community Planning Update

(Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Environmental Services submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant background information

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the BIG Lottery Fund Community Planning Pilot and proposals from the Community Planning cross-party reference group on the way forward for community planning within Council.
- 1.2 In June 2006 the ‘local government taskforce community planning sub-group’ produced a recommendation paper. The Director of Development was a leading Member of this group which made 21 key recommendations with regard to community planning. At that time it was envisaged RPA would be introduced in 2009. This slipped to 2011 and it is now anticipated to be introduced in 2015. As a consequence of the taskforce and the subsequent Foundation Programme a significant amount of work and policy developments were initiated in Council to prepare for community planning.
- 1.3 A key initiative was an application to the BIG Lottery Fund to tender for one of three contracts to deliver a community planning pilot project in Northern Ireland. In May 2010 Belfast City Council (as the lead partner in the Belfast Community Planning Consortium) was awarded one of the contracts (valued at £140k plus VAT). This was to be completed by January 2012.

- 1.4 The focus of the Pilots was the support of the VCS to participate in proposed community planning processes. The key achievements of the Belfast Pilot included:
- Raising the profile of community planning and contributing to a shared understanding of community planning
 - Developing and strengthening relationships and alliances between Council Members/Officers and cross-sector external agencies (statutory & VCS)
 - Assisting the Belfast Strategic Partnership to develop its Framework for Action by designing its initial planning process and first stage engagement.
 - Development of a community planning model/framework for Belfast
 - Delivering a replicable capacity building learning programme in partnership with University of Ulster
 - Summary of key lessons learned
- 1.5 The achievements and learning from the Pilot were shared at a summative conference held on 19 January 2012. The keynote speaker was the Minister of the Environment who reiterated the Programme for Government's commitment to Local Government Reform and in particular the introduction of the duty of Community Planning by 2015. He publically invited the Pilot Consortium to engage with his department in order to share the learning from this pilot.
- 1.6 The Belfast Pilot was extended by two months until the end of March 2012 and this additional period has focused on transitioning the Pilot's work from a time-bound project into a sustainable value-added process within BCC.
- 1.7 The cross-party Members working group on Community Planning has met monthly since September 2011 after its post-election re-establishment. It has met jointly with the Pilot Consortium twice and Cllr Attwood (Chairman) spoke at the Pilot's final conference outlining the Council's commitment to the continuing development of community planning.
- 1.8 The cross-party Members group recently met and agreed proposals for the next stage in developing Community Planning.

2.0 Key issues

Engagement with DoE & alignment with RPA

- 2.1 The Minister of the Environment's invitation to the Pilot Consortium indicated he would welcome engagement with his department as it seeks to develop the legislative framework and guidance for Community Planning. This has been reinforced at recent meetings between the Minister and Members. This invitation provides a real opportunity for Council (& its partners) to influence the legislation and guidance ahead of the proposed introduction of the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill (potentially November 2012). The cross-party reference group suggested Council officers made initial contact with DoE officials to explore development of further engagement.
- 2.2 The cross-party Members group identified the importance of linking internally with the new Voluntary Transition Committee and ensuring community planning developments were aligned to the emerging work on Local Government reform.

Preparing for the duty of community planning

- 2.3 In addition to the BIG Community Planning Pilot a number of significant initiatives have been progressing in Council that have synergies with the on-going development of Community Planning, including thematic and neighbourhood working and the development of Community Development and Consultation & Engagement strategies. The Council is also a key player on partnerships seeking to develop community planning approaches such as the Belfast Strategic Partnership, the Policing & Community Safety Partnership and the Good Relations Partnership. Cross-party Members noted that the stated commitment by the Assembly to progress Local Government Reform provides an impetus to draw these disparate strands together and develop a coherent strategic approach in preparing for the introduction of the formal Community Planning duty.
- 2.4 Cross-party Members identified that there is a need to build capacity of both Members and officers ahead of the formal introduction of Community Planning. It was suggested a programme of learning be developed and that this should potentially include finding out more about cities/areas where community planning is well established and has shown successes and briefings to share best practice in this area.

- 2.5 The group is keen to see the next stage of Community Planning continue to support current activities within Council. The BIG Community Planning Pilot produced a high-level model for community planning in Belfast. The cross-party reference group would encourage the model's continued development and have suggested a number of themes to explore its further application, including youth unemployment/NEETs; the Investment Programme; Older People; Community Safety. These areas are currently being refined so that the approach can best add value to what the Council sees as its priorities.
- 2.6 The development and high-profile commitment to the Investment Programme has raised expectations about the way the Council will deliver the Programme and in particular how it will work with its partners and local communities. The Investment Package includes commitments to partnership working, stakeholder engagement and local involvement in delivering key projects. The cross-party Members identified this as a real opportunity for continued work on community planning to support the development of these processes, whilst at the same time providing an additional resource for delivery.
- 2.7 Cross-party Members recognise that an important requisite in preparing for the proposed Community Planning duty will be the continued communication and engagement of Council with a wide range of stakeholders (including Members; other statutory agencies and departments; the private sector; voluntary and community sector, local communities and citizens). They acknowledged the role the Belfast Community Planning Consortium has played in enabling this as part of the successful delivery of the BIG Community Planning Pilot and asked them for feedback on how this may be continued. The Consortium suggested that Council provided regular opportunities (possibly 3 times a year) for wider stakeholders to meet and to engage with Council on the progress of Community Planning in Belfast. These events could be aligned with specific developments eg carrying out a joint consultation on the new draft Reform of Local Government Bill due in the Autumn.

Terms of Reference

- 2.8 As the BIG Community Planning Pilot project has now concluded, the terms of reference of the cross-party members group need to be updated to reflect this and the subsequent regional announcements surrounding RPA and community planning. Suggested amendments will be brought to a subsequent SP&R Committee for approval.

**Conference at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Craigavon,
27th April**

2.9 The Committee is also asked to note that at its meeting on 28th March, the working group agreed that SP&R Committee be asked to approve attendance by any member of the reference group at a community planning conference, “Ensuring the VOICES of Minorities in the Community Planning Process” in the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre in Craigavon on 27th April. So far the Chair of the working group has confirmed his intention to attend. The Committee is asked to approve attendance by Members of the cross party working group at this conference. There is no conference fee.

3.0 **Resource Implications**

All resource implications have been included within financial estimates for 2012/13.

4.0 **Equality implications**

The principles of equality and good relations will underpin the approach to community planning as it develops.

5.0 **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- Note the achievements of the BIG Lottery Fund’s Community Planning Pilot
- Consider the approach outlined in the report and support the identified actions:
 - That Council proactively responds to the Minister’s invitation to engage with the Department of the Environment
 - Identify clear linkages with the Review of Public Administration voluntary Transition Committee
 - Develop a strategic, coherent approach to Community Planning internally within Council; including a review of and recommendations relating to the Council’s approach to community engagement and external relations, building upon work carried out to date in this area
 - Develop a learning programme for Members and officers including possible best practice study visit.

- Continue development and testing of the emerging Belfast Community Planning model in identified areas of work
- Consider how a community planning approach can be used to aid the delivery of the Investment Programme
- Provide regular opportunities to communicate and engage with wider stakeholders in the ongoing development of Belfast Community Planning.
- Update the terms of reference of the cross-party reference group;
- Approve attendance by Members of the cross party reference group at the community planning conference in the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Craigavon on 27th April.

6.0 Decision Required

Members are asked to endorse the proposals of the cross-party reference group and the approach outlined in the report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Grundtvig Seniors Volunteer Programme - Final Conference

The Committee was advised that the Grundtvig Initiative on Volunteering in Europe for Seniors was a European initiative which had been introduced in 2009. It consisted of a scheme of grants to support senior volunteering projects between local organisations located in two countries participating in the European Lifelong Learning Programme. In August, 2009, the Council's European Unit had sent out a call to other European cities asking for a show of interest should they wish to partner Belfast in this exchange programme. Various cities had made contact, however, the most suitable in terms of volunteering opportunities and best practice had been Madrid.

The Director of Health and Environmental Services explained that Fundacion Voluntarios por Madrid (Madrid for Volunteers Foundation) was a non-profit entity for promotion, training and advice in the field of volunteerism. It had been set up in 2005 by Madrid City Council. The Foundation was chaired by the Mayor of Madrid and had Elected Members on the Board, with the overall responsibility resting with the Director for Volunteering. The joint application with Madrid to the programme had been successful and the Council had been awarded €24,282. To date six volunteers had travelled to Madrid to volunteer for six weeks and Belfast had hosted six volunteers.

The European funded volunteer exchange programme between Belfast and Madrid was due to close in July, 2012. The original funding application and budget included the organisation of a final conference which would bring together all of the volunteers to celebrate their learning and evaluate the programme. Madrid had offered to host that conference and to cover the costs of the accommodation. Belfast would be required to cover expenses relating to travel and subsistence for the local volunteers, an officer and a Member of Council, all of which could be claimed from the grant which had been awarded. Councillor Bernie Kelly, who had chaired the All-Party Reference Group

on Older People, had been involved in the project from the initial discussion stages and had attended the first meeting in Madrid in January, 2010. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee authorise the attendance of Councillor Kelly and the Council's lead officer on older people (or their nominees) to attend the final conference for the project in Madrid in June, 2012.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Response to Notice of Motion re: Welfare Reform

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st March, 2012, had agreed the following Notice of Motion:

“This Council believes that the Coalition Government's welfare cuts and major aspects of their Welfare Reform agenda are having and will continue to have a significant detrimental impact on the citizens of Belfast; recognises the impact will be more severe for Northern Ireland and our city's citizens given our historically high levels of disadvantage, higher proportion of families with children and of individuals in receipt of Disability Living Allowance; notes that the accumulated cost of welfare cuts to the local economy could reach £450m; calls on the Assembly to establish an ad-hoc committee to undertake detailed scrutiny of the upcoming universal credit bill and related issues; and further calls on the Northern Ireland Executive to make opposition to a wide range of the welfare reforms the highest Executive priority and to immediately pursue robust negotiations with the Coalition Government to pursue all possible legal and operational flexibilities and financial support to mitigate the impact of welfare cuts and changes imposed on Northern Ireland and Belfast in particular.”

The Democratic Services Manager reported that correspondence had been received from Mr. J. Reynolds, Head of Poverty, Social Inclusion, Disability Branch, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, advising that tackling disadvantage was a key priority for the Executive and an essential element in the draft Programme for Government. Ministers had therefore included in the Programme a commitment to establish an advisory group to assist in alleviating hardship, including any implications of the Coalition Government's Welfare Reform Programme.

The Committee noted receipt of the correspondence.

Response to Notice of Motion re: Joby Murphy

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Committee that the Council, at its meeting on 1st March, had agreed the following Notice of Motion:

“This Council expresses its support and solidarity with the family and friends of former Belfast City Council Youth Forum Member Joby Murphy following his sad loss at the footbridge over the River Lagan in January.

The Council recognises the increased role of the river front in the life of the City and the need to ensure that is a safe environment and that standards of provision are reviewed in light of this tragedy and the sad loss for the Murphy family.

The Council also expresses its opposition to the practice of inappropriate and dangerous drinks promotions in pubs and clubs and calls upon the Minister responsible to continue to engage with appropriate authorities, including representatives of local licensees, to develop an action plan to put an end to such practices.”

He reported that correspondence had been received from the Minister for Social Development, Mr. Nelson McCausland, MLA, indicating that the Department shared the Council’s support for the family and friends of the late Joby Murphy. In addition, with regard to the provision of safety alarms along the riverfront at the Laganside, the Department had commissioned an immediate health and safety review audit in order to reassure the public that the safety measures within the area fully comply with current bridge design and safety codes. The Audit, which had been completed, had identified a number of recommendations in relation to further preventative measures to reduce the risk of deliberate entry into the water.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that the Minister had welcomed the Council’s opposition to irresponsible drinks promotions and had indicated that the Department for Social Development was committed to banning such promotions and was working currently with representatives of the drinks trade to develop a code of practice on drinks promotions. The Department had launched a public consultation on the introduction of regulations to ban those promotions and look forward to receiving the Council’s response thereon. The Council’s response would be considered by the Health and Environmental Services Committee at its meeting on 2nd May.

Noted.

Chairman