

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 7th September, 2012

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. G. Milar, 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 Councillors Attwood, Haire and Hendron.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 27th June and 10th and 24th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd September, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Update on Operation Banner" which, at the request of Councillor Reynolds, had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration and to allow for consultations with the relevant welfare groups.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Update on Operation Banner

Councillor Reynolds advised the Committee that there would not have been an opportunity for the relevant welfare groups to have been consulted between the time of the Council meeting and the date of the Committee meeting and he therefore requested that the Committee consider deferring the matter until its next meeting on 21st September to enable that process to be undertaken.

**Strategic Policy and Resources and Committee,
Friday, 7th September, 2012**

A Member suggested that any consultation should include victims' groups and should be as inclusive and as broad as possible and his Party would be content to defer the matter on that basis.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed to defer the update on Operation Banner until its next meeting on 21st September and that the consultation should include victims' groups. It agreed further that the Party Leaders would be provided with a list of the groups included within that category prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

Investment Programme

**Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Social Investment Fund Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 At its meeting on 9 December 2011, Committee considered the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) consultation paper on the proposed Social Investment Fund and submitted its response subsequently.

1.2 The Executive considered all the consultation responses and published revised guidance on the implementation of the programme in June 2012. It outlines that:

‘The aim of the programme is to reduce poverty, unemployment and physical deterioration through strategic areas based interventions of significant scale. The fund will encourage communities, statutory agencies, business and local political representatives to work together in a co-ordinated way, reducing duplication, sharing best practice and enhancing existing provision for the benefits of those communities most in need.’

The 4 strategic objectives of the Fund are:

- Build Pathways to Employment by tackling educational under achievement and barriers to employment; tackling skills deficits and promoting jobs brokerage, widening access to the labour market, promoting business start up and increasing sustainability through social enterprise;**

- Tackling the systemic issues linked to deprivation including poor mental and physical health, young unsupported parents, substance abuse, children and young people at risk, and enhancing community capacity, confidence and partnership working to help reduce deprivation;
- Increase community physical resources – by regenerating and refurbishing existing facilities and providing play facilities and environmental improvements.
- Address dereliction – and promoting investment in the physical regeneration of deprived areas.

A total funding of £80m; £40m for programmes and £40m in respect of capital programmes will be provided during the life cycle of the programme which will end in March 2015.

- 1.3 The Social Investment Fund is being delivered in partnership with communities across nine social investment zones: the 4 in the Greater Belfast area are based on Northern Ireland Assembly constituencies.

It has now been agreed by OFMDFM that each investment zone will have a Steering Group with a maximum of 14 members representing the business, political, statutory and voluntary and community sectors. Their role will be to develop and manage area-based plans for each of the nine social investment zones. The membership will be:

- Political x 4 representatives (Political parties, in proportion determined by the D'Hondt method, have been invited to nominate MLAs or councillors to the steering groups.);
- Statutory x 4 representatives (senior level and have the authority to make decisions. The Council has agreed to nominate a Director for each group.);
- Voluntary and Community x 4 representatives (Applications were sought from the voluntary and community sector.);
- Business x 2 representatives (Key business organisations have been invited to nominate representatives.);

OFMDFM is in the process of finalising the membership of the Steering Groups, including the political nominees and selecting representatives from the voluntary and community sector applications.

1.4 The Steering Group within each zone will be tasked with managing the design, delivery and development of an Area Plan. OFMDFM has defined the criteria for allocating resources as:

- Areas within the top 10% most deprived super output areas on the Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010;
- Areas within the top 20% most deprived Super Output Areas on the key domains of income, employment, education and health;
- Areas with independently verified and robust evidence of objective need which can include data at Census Output Area level.

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 At its meeting on 22 June 2012, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that the Chief Executive should nominate a Director to each of 4 Steering Groups in Belfast. In correspondence received from OFMDFM, they requested that the Council nominate representatives to the South and West Zones. The Chief Executive made the following nominations:

- Belfast West Zone : Ms Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services
- Belfast South Zone: Mr Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure

In respect of the East and North Zones, they asked that we work with Castlereagh and Newtownabbey Borough Councils respectively, to agree a nominated representative to sit on the Steering Group.

Newtownabbey Borough Council has agreed that their Director of Development will work through the Belfast City Council nominee to ensure that its interests are represented at the Steering Group. The Chief Executive nominated:

- Belfast North Zone: Mr Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects

**Strategic Policy and Resources and Committee,
Friday, 7th September, 2012**

- 2.2** Discussions are ongoing with Castlereagh Borough Council on appropriate representation, initially in relation to the East Zone. OFMDFM has now asked that we also work together on representation for the South Zone, where there is also some overlap with Castlereagh, as below:

| <u>Zones – based on NI Assembly boundaries</u> | <u>Belfast Local Government District</u> | <u>Castlereagh Local Government District</u> |
|---|---|---|
| East Social Investment Fund Zone | 58,079 (64.2%) | 32,323 (35.8%) |
| South Social Investment Fund Zone | 72,729 (70.1%) | 30,965 (29.9%) |

- 2.3** In relation to the criteria outlined by OFMDFM, the likely eligible areas for funding are:

| | <u>Top 10% most deprived on the Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010</u> | <u>Areas in the top 20% most deprived on key domains of income, employment, education and health</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| East SIF Zone | | |
| Belfast Super Output Areas (SOAs) | 5 | 10 |
| SIF Zone – Castlereagh SOAs | 0 | 3 |
| South SIF Zone | | |
| Belfast SOAs | 6 | 15 |
| Castlereagh SOAs | 0 | 1 |

The third criterion will be applied where robust evidence is available to determine objective need at a smaller output level.

- 2.4** There is an opportunity to align this work to discussions related to the Review of Public Administration, as well as ensuring that the 4 Zone area plans in Belfast are complementary to and aligned with the Council's Investment Programme and forthcoming Masterplan. It is suggested that it may be useful therefore to establish a sub-group of officers between Councils to enable this co-ordination, reporting to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in its role as

the voluntary Transition Committee (VTC) noting that representatives of the VTC will shortly have to commence an engagement with their political colleagues in Lisburn and Castlereagh.

The Chief Executive will keep Committee informed on the final nominations for the East and South Zones, and request any political direction needed.

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial: none at present

Human: staff time to participate in Steering Groups and prepare data for consideration

Assets: none at present

4.0 Equality Implications

OFMDFM is responsible for the equality screening and impact assessment to be undertaken. There is a commitment to subject individual programmes as they emerge to equality screening.

5.0 Recommendations

Members' direction is sought on membership of the South and East groupings set up for the Social Investment Fund."

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that officers should work with their counterparts in Castlereagh and Newtownabbey to develop proposals to feed into the plans for the four zones and that the Chief Executive should agree arrangements to rotate officer representation between Councils on the South and East Zones.

Girdwood Hub Matters

The Committee was reminded that the Community Hub at Girdwood Peace III application for funding was currently under consideration by the Special European Union Programmes Body following the submission of all necessary documentation in late Spring. In addition, the Programmes Body had indicated that the application had to address also a number of pre-conditions, including issues such as political and community buy-in, a realistic delivery programme within the Programme Body's timelines and an agreed overall masterplan for the Girdwood site.

**Strategic Policy and Resources and Committee,
Friday, 7th September, 2012**

The Director of Property and Projects reported that the issue of political and community buy-in had been addressed via the support of the Committee and the Council for the Hub Project, through an all-Party Group of the North Belfast MLAs and MP meeting with the Programmes Body and the ongoing involvement of the Girdwood Community Forum in the project. He explained that the Forum had undertaken a visit to a similar Hub building in Brownlow, Craigavon and was now engaged in an intensive six week consultation on the design process to ensure that the building addressed as many community issues as possible. The delivery programme was being addressed through the Council having appointed a design team, Capita Symonds, at risk, which was leading on the community engagement exercise.

He pointed out that a number of key milestones needed to be achieved in order to meet major deadlines, such as having grant monies allocated by 2013 and spent by 2014/15. A major milestone was obtaining planning permission once the building design had progressed sufficiently. In order to obtain planning permission for the building, the Council would not only require the building design, but also the site context including access to and from Girdwood as set out in an overall masterplan. Also from a construction perspective, the Council required the relevant infrastructure in terms of roads, power and utilities to be planned for and developed simultaneously with the building.

The Department for Social Development had agreed with the Planning Service that an outline planning permission for a site masterplan was required and, while the Council's team would produce the plan, it would be the Department for Social Development's plan supported by their policy documents in relation to the updated Masterplan Conceptual Framework. In addition, the Council would be making an application to the Department for the funding in regard to the infrastructure works.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Council's design brief be extended as outlined.

Good Relations and Equality

Christmas Lighting and Signage

(Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager, and Mr. G. Copeland, City Events Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Development Committee (6 March 2012), the Members considered a report relating to Christmas lighting and signage.**

**Strategic Policy and Resources and Committee,
Friday, 7th September, 2012**

The Committee deferred consideration of a report in respect of the Council's Christmas Lights and Signage. However, it was agreed that the management and delivery of the Christmas Lights and Signage Programme would transfer from the Development Department to the Property and Projects Department in the financial year 2013/2014, and that Committee reporting lines would be transferred also to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

- 1.2 The Joint Group of the Party Group Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group considered the deferred report at its meeting on 15 June 2012, particularly in regard to the installation of a sign in Irish. They agreed the matter should be referred to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August, subsequent to further party group discussions.

2.0 **Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Council's City Events Unit is currently responsible for the festive lighting on City Hall, the installation and lighting on the main Christmas tree and for the pea-lighting on the trees within the grounds of the Hall. The Council does not manage the festive lighting in the city centre, which is overseen by Belfast City Centre Management and the Belfast Chamber of Trade.

- 2.2 The present Council position was agreed at its meeting on 1 December 2011. It agreed that a lighted sign with the wording "Merry Christmas" be erected in 2011 and every year thereafter at the front and East Entrance area of the City Hall.

A further amendment was carried to provide that the Council agreed to explore with An Cultúrlann the possibility of it donating, pro gratis, a "Nollaig Shona" sign to be erected in the City Hall grounds. Consequent to this decision, the Council now has in its possession an Irish language sign (Nollaig Shona Duit), supplied by An Cultúrlann at no cost. In 2011 this was positioned above the east entrance of City Hall.

2.3 **'B Festive' Signage**

Members are asked to note that Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce have written to express their concern at the removal of the 'B Festive' signage and have requested that Members reinstate this sign.

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial

Costs in the region of £15k for new sign subject to final specification. Revenue funds have been allocated for this through the City Events Unit.

4.0 Equality Implications

As with all major civic events, public events like the above have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

5.0 Discussion required

Members are asked to give guidance in regard to:

- **City Hall festive lighting for the Christmas period in 2012, including the request from Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce to reinstate the ‘B Festive’ sign on City Hall.**

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Happy Christmas Belfast sign be retained at the front of the City Hall and that a B Festive sign be located at the East entrance area.

Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor Ó Muilleoir,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Nollaig Shona sign be erected again at the East entrance to the City Hall.

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

Cross-Cutting Issues

**Community Planning Update and
Proposed Study Visit for Members**

(Mrs. S. McNicholl, Strategic Planning and Policy Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

**Strategic Policy and Resources and Committee,
Friday, 7th September, 2012**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant background information

1.1 On 25 April 2012 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approved a recommendation from the cross-party reference group on community planning to support an approach to the development of community planning within Council which included a number of proposals including:

- **That Council proactively responds to the Minister’s invitation to engage with the Department of the Environment;**
- **Develop a strategic, coherent approach to Community Planning internally within Council;**
- **Develop a learning programme for Members and officers including possible best practice study visit;**
- **Provide regular opportunities to communicate and engage with wider stakeholders in the ongoing development of Belfast Community Planning.**

1.2 This report provides an update on the Department of the Environment’s (DoE) emerging direction for Community Planning and also outlines the current work being carried out within Council. It outlines a proposed study trip for Members.

2.0 Key issues

Legislation & Guidance

2.1 In 2011 the DoE held a public consultation “Local Government Reform: Policy Proposals”; in July 2012 the DoE published its response to the consultation. Regarding community planning the Department’s response included the following points:

- **Council to lead and facilitate community planning;**
- **Council to determine the representation on any structures that they establish to support the operation of community planning across their district;**

**Strategic Policy and Resources and Committee,
Friday, 7th September, 2012**

- **Council required to publish a community plan for its district;**
- **There will be flexibility to identify and specifically address local issues;**
- **There is to be a statutory link between community plans and local government development plans will be provided in the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill.**

2.2 According to the DoE's response, guidance will be provided to support the proposed legislation and will include:

- **scope of community planning, its process and the format and content of community plans;**
- **engagement with Community and Voluntary sector;**
- **scope of duties of participants, including the Departments.**

2.3 The DoE have established a number of subgroups to progress streams of work around the Review of Public Administration (RPA). One of these, the Community Planning & Pilots subgroup, has been tasked with developing an action plan to support the introduction of community planning and assist Statutory Transition Committees in their preparation for the new duty. This group is also likely to shape the content of the statutory guidance supporting the community planning legislation. Belfast City Council is represented on this group at officer level by Suzanne Wylie (or Sharon McNicholl).

2.4 Previously a Foundation Programme was developed to support Statutory Transition Committees as they prepared for community planning. It is currently being proposed that the content of this original Foundation Programme be reviewed by the RPA subgroup. The Programme currently recommends the following actions:

- **Development of a 'new Council' shared understanding of purpose and potential achievement of community planning within the new Council;**

**Strategic Policy and Resources and Committee,
Friday, 7th September, 2012**

- **Audit of existing plans/strategies within new council area, to identify duplication, gaps and issues;**
- **Audit of existing information sources, gathering and sharing protocols especially between data sharing between sectors;**
- **Audit of existing partnership arrangements and identify models of best practice;**
- **Commence a programme of engagement – Members; public agencies; private sector; community and voluntary sector ;**
- **Explore governance structures to support community planning especially thematic and local area working;**
- **Audit performance measurement processes across partner organisations to identify issues to enable a coherent approach once community planning is introduced.**

2.5 The draft legislation is likely to be published in October and is expected to recommend the formation of an overarching council-led Community Planning partnership for new Council areas. Guidance is also likely to encourage the development of thematic partnerships and area based planning groups and will require engagement with local communities. A number of areas for consideration arise from this including:

- **Governance of existing and new structures (thematic and local) within a community planning model;**
- **Development of local area planning ;**
- **Relationship between regional and local priorities;**
- **Representation of the community and voluntary sector;**
- **Management of information and information sharing across partner agencies.**

2.6 There is no further consultation planned regarding the legislation but it is expected there will be an opportunity for Council to make a submission to the Assembly's Environment committee.

2.7 Preparing for Community Planning

Members agreed that the focus of current work within Council should support the development of a strategic, coherent

approach to Community Planning internally. Key streams of work include:

- **Outcomes** – Members are leading on the development of a Council wide outcomes framework to ensure that there is shared understanding of the impact that the Council wants to have in the city; this could form the basis of a city-wide outcomes framework for future community planning.
- **Inclusion** – ongoing development of the Council's consultation & engagement strategy; support of a community planning approach to the Investment Programme (especially within the Area Working Groups).
- **Planning** – the work of the Area Working Groups and consideration of emerging issues will feed into a review of the Council's approach to planning and service delivery at a local level; this is a fundamental aspect of community planning.
- **RPA** – ensuring a strong link between the emerging model of community planning and the transfer of functions such as regeneration and town planning, and the structures and processes that will underpin these.

2.8 Members best practice study trip and learning programme

Following approval from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in April 2012 the cross-party reference group explored the potential of a best practice study trip.

2.9 With support from Professor Deborah Peel from the University of Ulster cross-party Members have designed a proposed study trip to Scotland for October 2012 (with a suggested maximum 12 participants). This includes suggested visits to Edinburgh and Dundee Councils, and proposed meetings with representatives from Convention of Local Scottish Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish Government. It is proposed that Professor Peel will facilitate this study trip.

2.10 The Scottish Government introduced a formal duty of community planning in 2003 and since then there has been significant development of best practice and learning in both

policy and implementation. The proposed visit includes cities where there are similarities to Belfast to maximise the amount of relevant and transferable learning. Edinburgh affords the opportunity to examine a council whose boundaries host the seat of government and in which there is the prospect of exploring regional and local relationships. Dundee city has a number of similarities with Belfast in terms of geographic location, size, industrial history, economy etc and provides the chance to consider and observe the progress it has made addressing key issues and needs, as a result of community planning.

2.11 The objectives of the study trip are:

- To gain an understanding of how community planning is currently operating in Scotland
- To explore the implementation of community planning in Scotland at regional and local levels
- To experience community planning in a variety of local authorities and to hear from a range of stakeholders as to how implementation is being put into effect
- To identify examples of best practice and learning points that could:
 - Inform emerging organisational developments within the Council as it prepares for RPA and community planning
 - Assist the Council as new relationships and structures are developed with partners including the community and voluntary sectors
 - Influence the Council's response to the NI Assembly draft Local Government Reorganisation Bill (due in Nov 2012)

2.12 At the last cross-party Steering Group, Members asked that consideration be given to taking representatives of the voluntary and community sector on this trip. It was suggested that these representatives are invited from the membership of the previous BIG Lottery Funded Community Planning Pilot Steering Group.

2.13 Cross-party Members suggested that, following the study trip, feedback sessions be organised with all Members and the Voluntary Transition Committee, to allow attendees to share their learning to help equip all Members to input into the

design of the Council's developing Community Planning model.

- 2.14 Cross-party members previously identified the desire to provide regular opportunities to communicate and engage with wider stakeholders as community planning develops. Consequently a series of 3 seminars is proposed for the Autumn aimed at Members, staff and wider stakeholders to include sessions:

- Update on RPA and in particular the DoE's response to its Local Government Reform consultation;
- Overview of community planning developments in the UK including feedback on the proposed Member's Scottish study trip;
- Workshop to garner wider stakeholder feedback once the draft Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill is published.

3.0 Resource Implications

Peace III 'Growing a Shared City' funding is being explored to part-fund the study trip. Any remaining Member and staff costs will be met from the Chief Executive's Department revenue estimates. If Peace III support is unavailable, funding for representatives from the community and voluntary sector will need to be sought from an alternative source and it may be that this will not be possible within the timeframe of this study trip. It is anticipated that costs will not exceed £500 per person participating in the study trip.

4.0 Equality implications

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

5.0 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note the contents of this report
2. Authorise the attendance of the cross-party reference group Members to attend the proposed study trip to Scotland.
3. Authorise the attendance on the study trip of two community and voluntary sector representatives

**Strategic Policy and Resources and Committee,
Friday, 7th September, 2012**

- 4. Authorise the attendance at the study visits of the appropriate officers.**
- 5. Note the proposed wider stakeholder Autumn learning programme.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed, to ensure that there was an opportunity for all of the Partnership Boards to be represented at the event, the number of representatives from the community and volunteer sector authorised to attend be increased to five.

Chairman