

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 19th April, 2013

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);  
Aldermen Browne, M. Campbell and R. Newton;  
Councillors Attwood, Convery, Corr, Haire,  
Hanna, Hendron, Jones, Lavery, Maskey,  
McCarthy, McVeigh, Ó Muilleoir, A. Newton  
and Reynolds.

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

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Hussey and Mac Giolla Mhín.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 1st, 8th 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 3rd April, subject to the amendment of the minute of 8th March under the heading "Appointments to the Belfast Education and Library Board" to provide that the Minister for Education be requested to appoint the four current nominees from the Council who have successfully passed the eligibility sift.

### Investment Programme

#### Study Visit to Dublin

The Committee noted the contents of a report in relation to a Study Visit which had been undertaken to Dublin on 24th August. The report gave details of the visits to Waterways Ireland, the Convention Centre, the Digital Hub and a courtesy meeting with the Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to extend an invitation to representatives of Dublin City Council to undertake a Study Visit to Belfast.

### **Belfast Waterfront Conference and Exhibition Centre**

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

**"1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the capital costs associated with the proposed construction of a new Conference and Exhibition Centre which the Council is seeking to develop as an extension to the Waterfront Hall.**

**2 Background**

- 2.1 The Waterfront Hall since its opening has enjoyed considerable success as a conference destination but in recent years has been losing market share in the business tourism sector. In particular it has increasingly lost out on a significant number of events from within the key market segment – the UK Association Conference Market. A Feasibility Study commissioned by BCC in 2008 indicated that the decline in market share was primarily due to the limitations of the venue, including:**

- Lack of sufficient exhibition space;
- Inadequate breakout provision; and
- Lack of banqueting space

- 2.2 Market share will continue to fall in the face of competition from newly developed and extended facilities such as Liverpool, Dublin and Edinburgh unless positive action is taken to enable Belfast to compete effectively for business.**

- 2.3 The Feasibility Study identified the need for the following:**

- Exhibition space – meeting rooms (minimum 5) for up to 1000 people
- Banqueting space – for up to 750 covers
- Plenary – the existing auditorium to facilitate 2000+ people in conference mode
- Registration and circulation space – to allow for full and safe movement
- Ancillary spaces – kitchen services, storage, plant etc

- 2.4 In January 2011 the former Head of City Venues and Events was made aware of an opportunity to purchase part of the Lanyon Quay development which appeared to present an opportunity to meet the needs set out in paragraph 2.3 above.**

- 2.5** The Development Committee at its meeting on 5 February 2011 gave approval to commission an economic appraisal and to make an application for funding to NITB. The Director of Development also approached the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and NITB to establish if European Funding could be made available for the project.
- 2.6** DETI indicated that the Minister would be willing to allocate £10m of the Department's ERDF funds to the project if this were to be matched from other sources and NITB indicated a willingness to contribute £2m from its Tourism Development Scheme. In order to draw down the full ERDF allocation, a contribution of at least £8m was required from the Council. Consequently the Appraisal team were asked to develop a business case based on an affordability limit of £20m.
- 2.7** At the outset the Appraisal Team (RSM McClure Watters) sought technical advice from the operators of the Dublin Convention Centre to establish the operational viability of the Lanyon Quay building. It was concluded at an early stage that this option would not meet the requirements of conference operators and an alternative proposal to construct the Conference and Exhibition facility in the space between the Waterfront Hall and the Hilton Hotel, over the service yard was taken forward as the preferred option. Robinson McIlwaine, the original architects for the Waterfront Hall, were engaged to do the preparatory design work and VB Evans, the original quantity surveyors, provided the associated costs.
- 2.8** In order to deliver a project within the £20m capital expenditure affordability limit the business case was constructed on the basis that some capital items would be provided through leasing of equipment and others through the operator fit out (eg kitchen facilities). In addition to this a compromise had to be made on total floor space (9150sqm) and ceiling heights (5m). A draft economic appraisal was subsequently submitted to NITB for consideration based on the above model.
- 2.9** In June 2012 SIB were approached by the Council seeking their professional support in the delivery of the project. Dr Bryan Gregory, the SRO for Titanic Belfast was engaged to head the Project Delivery Team. An expert team was put together to finalise the business case, review design proposals and the associated capital costs. The expert team includes:
- TRS Consultants – International consultants on convention centre operational design
  - Kennedy Fitzgerald Associates – Architects

- VB Evans – Cost consultants
- Ekosgen Consulting – ERDF financing experts

### **3 Key Issues**

- 3.1 Any proposal to construct the new facilities over the service yard will require amendments to legal agreements which exist between the Council and the Hilton Hotel which govern the use of this space and any development in this area. The legal agreements include provisions which stipulate separation distances, access to light and visual requirements with respect to the location of the plant.**
- 3.2 To date the Hilton has been supportive of this option however should a new legal agreement not be negotiated this would leave the Council in a position of considerable risk and the potential that the project could not be delivered. In order to mitigate this risk the Project Team has now proposed an alternative 'independent' option should an agreement with the Hilton not be reached.**
- 3.3 The Team also revisited original design and costs associated with the 'Hilton linked' option, the purpose of which was to establish the costs of an upgraded facility as a basis for further negotiation with DETI and NITB who had indicated they might be prepared to make a greater contribution to the project if required.**
- 3.4 A detailed breakdown of the costs for the following had been circulated:**
- Original 'Hilton link' option
  - The revised 'Hilton link' option and;
  - 'Independent' option
- 3.5 In summary the key differences in the projected costs are due to the following factors:**
- Ceiling heights have increased from 5m to the industry standard of 7m
  - Total area has increased by 2100sqm to enhance circulation
  - Enhanced external finishes
  - Consequential improvements as a result of the introduction of new (Part E) Building Regulations in late 2012 equating to 10% of extension costs
  - Increased optimism bias (contingency sums)
  - Costs previously provided for in revenue projections have been fully capitalised (£2.45m)

**3.6 The total revised costs of the two options are as follows:**

- **Linked option - £28.6m**
- **Independent option - £29.5m**

**4 Resource Complications**

**4.1 Following discussions with both DETI and NITB officials a full business case was prepared based upon a maximum projected capital cost of £29.5m. Following the decision by the SP&R Committee on 22 March 2013 an application has now been submitted for an ERDF grant of £14.5m and a further £4m from NITB's Tourism Development Scheme. This leaves a Council contribution of £11m.**

**4.2 It should be noted these costs remain estimates and final costs will not be determined until completion of the full design and responses have been received to any construction tender.**

**4.3 The grant application is based on the maximum estimated cost in order to maximise the quantum and percentage of grant. Should the total costs reduce the contributions from the Council and funders will reduce proportionally.**

**4.4 The grant contributions are subject to approval of the business case by the NITB Board and the DETI and DFP Ministers.**

**5 Recommendations**

**5.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report."**

After discussion, during which the Director of Development answered a number of questions in relation to the current Conference Market and the future management of the Centre, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Creative Hub update**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, as part of its Investment Programme, had identified a number of key projects to support economic growth within the City. Included within those projects was a proposal to deliver a "Digital Hub" to support growth and generate employment within the digital industries sector. At its meeting on 26th June, 2012, the Development Committee had agreed to commission a feasibility study to scope out the need and demand for a digital hub in Belfast and to consider the type of development that would meet the requirements of the sector as well as the preferred location for such a development. Ekos Consulting had been appointed to carry out that work in September, 2012 and had completed their report in January, 2013. Ekos had engaged directly with relevant businesses, as well as a range of stakeholders, including Invest NI, the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Momentum (the trade body for the IT sector) and the universities and colleges. Having

established and confirmed the need and demand for a development of this nature, they had considered the relevant services and infrastructural requirements and also assessed the relative merits of a range of potential locations, including the Cathedral Quarter, Crumlin Road Gaol, the Northern Ireland Science Park, the Gasworks Business Park, Springvale and Weaver's Court.

The Director of Development reported that the outcome of the feasibility study had been presented in a report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22nd February. The report had confirmed the viability of the proposed scheme and noted that the Cathedral Quarter was the preferred location, as referenced by the various stakeholders and businesses consulted. On the basis of the feasibility study, Members were asked to agree to the development of a business case and a funding application to Invest NI for the creation of a Digital Hub in the Cathedral Quarter. Following discussion on the report, the Committee had requested that additional information on the relative assessments of all the location options be presented through party briefings and those had taken place during March and early April.

In the interim, officers had been in contact with Invest NI to clarify the implications for the potential funding availability for the scheme, given that the original submission deadline had been 28th February, 2013. Invest NI staff had confirmed that they would be willing to consider an application if it was submitted by the end of April, 2013. However, they felt that an application submitted after that point was unlikely to be considered, given the time required to progress and process the application and the need to have a letter of offer in place by the end of 2013. Given also that 75% of the funding for the scheme would come from Invest NI, that decision was critical to the financial feasibility of the scheme. Accordingly, the Director submitted a report which recapped on some of the issues discussed at the party briefings and which sought a decision from the Committee as to how it wished to proceed with the project, given the urgency of the impending funding deadline. The report assessed the relevant merits of a range of locations, as previously outlined, and a brief summary of the assessment of each was provided for the information of the Members.

The Director reported further that, at this stage, an indicative financial commitment of £4 million had been set aside for the scheme. If the scheme met the funder requirements, funding of up to £3 million would be able to be drawn down from the European Regional Development Fund (£2 million) and Invest NI (£1 million). The Council would be expected to provide match funding of £1 million. That would cover both capital and revenue costs associated with the development up to December, 2015. Any funding requirements beyond that date would have to be subject to additional funding applications.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and approved the submission of a funding application to Invest NI to draw down support for a creative hub, to be located in the vicinity of the Cathedral Quarter/Inner North (the precise location to be determined).

### Efficiency Programme 2014/15 - 2015/16

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview for Members of the proposed approach to the development and delivery of the 2014/15 - 2015/16 Efficiency Programme to meet the target of £20m by 2015/16.

#### Background

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R) on 15 April 2011 agreed an indicative efficiency target of £2m per year for the 3 years up to 2015/16 to ensure that a total of £20m of efficiencies are realised by that date. The efficiency target was a key element of the Investment Programme commitment to maintain the increase in the district rate at or below the rate of inflation over the three year period to 2015/16.

The 2013/14 revenue estimates included £2.12m of efficiency savings arising from the efficiency programme, as against the target of £2m and this contributed to the council setting a zero district rate for 2013/14. The £2.12m of savings brought the total savings from the Efficiency Programme to £16m since 2006.

#### Key Issues

##### Financial Pressures

The following pressures all contribute to making the realisation of cash savings from the efficiency programme more difficult in 2014/15 and future years. These include:-

- The quick win efficiencies within the council have already been realised in previous years.
- The cash savings removed in previous years have significantly reduced the budgets for expenditure on external services meaning that the major element of a number of service budgets now relate to employee costs.
- While the implementation of improvement plans has generated cash savings, some of these savings have been redeployed to support other priority initiatives, such as improving job opportunities, and so are not available to offset against the district rate.

- The significant capital expenditure savings in vehicle procurement arising from the review of the council's fleet, has not resulted in a reduction in the annual capital financing budget as the savings are being used to finance the full capital expenditure commitments of the Investment Programme.
- Transformational savings within Leisure Services will be required to support additional capital investment in the Leisure Estate rather than to offset the district rate requirements.
- The need to consider ways to enhance income generation particularly through demand led services such as the Zoo and Belfast Castle.

The above pressures mean that the bulk of the efficiency savings will have to come from wider business transformation / value for money projects which are complex, may require collaboration with other local authorities and public bodies and have longer lead in times.

#### **Approach to Efficiency programme 2014/15 - 2015/16**

The key themes of the efficiency programme, and the associated projects, will continue to be based on the HM Treasury Guidance and these are:-

- Procurement
- Assets & Land
- Budgetary Challenge
- ICT
- Income Generation
- Service Reviews/Employee Costs

#### **Current Projects in Progress**

The Efficiency Unit is currently supporting the implementation of improvement programmes following the completion of the Value for Money (VFM) reviews in the thematic areas of Procurement & Fleet. Both of these projects have been agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and will generate significant cash savings over the next 2 years to contribute to the £20m efficiency target by 2015/16.

A VFM review of Security is also in progress and the final report expected by the end of April 2013 which should also identify further opportunities to realise cash savings for 2014/15. The outcome of the review and proposed efficiency savings will require Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approval.



The other main projects which are in progress are:-

- Fleet Utilisation and Route Optimisation in Cleansing Services - Terms of reference are being prepared with the department.
- Office Accommodation - Review in progress, supported by external consultant.
- Energy and Utilities - Review completed and implementation plan to be developed and agreed.
- Review of BCC Marketing - Terms of reference being developed.
- Overtime & Agency – Revised overtime policy being drafted and analysis of costs has been completed. Implementation plan to be developed which will include agreed balance between job creation and cash savings.
- ICT Strategy – Being commissioned and will include wider Local Government Reform opportunities and business case for future Microsoft licensing arrangements.
- Advertising on Assets and Income - Review completed and implementation plan to be agreed.
- Budgetary Challenge - Challenge will continue on current budgets.

#### Proposed New Projects

The proposed approach to further projects to be included in the Efficiency Programme will be based on the following actions:-

- Complete a high level strategic cost driver analysis review across BCC against the top expenditure areas and by Department / Service to identify the potential for realising cash savings or highlighting areas requiring a more detailed VFM review.
- Complete an analysis of potential service review areas based on the net cost of the service to the ratepayer.

A further report on the 2014/15 Efficiency Programme and a revised programme of service reviews arising from the above actions will be presented to SP&R in June 2013.

#### Trade Union Support

As we move into conducting more transformation thematic and prioritised VFM review type work there will be an increasing potential for there to be implications for staff. In order to ensure that we are in a position to effectively

manage any potential human resource and employee relations issues it will be essential that we work closely with the Trade Unions to ensure that effective communication channels remain open and to ensure that staff concerns and issues have a mechanism to be addressed. At present there is a specific Trade Union Efficiency Sub Group made up of representatives from Human Resources, Finance, Trade Union Coordinators and representatives from the Trade Unions and it will be important to work closely with this group to ensure that they are fully engaged.

### Conclusions

At present £2m will be required annually over the next 2 years to meet the £20m efficiency target by 2015/16 as agreed as part of our Investment Programme.

By June 2013 the council will have received the final Actual Penny Product from Land and Property Services, for 2012/13 and this will enable the efficiency target to be reviewed in the context of the district rate for 2014/15.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and agree the direction of travel for the Efficiency Programme
- Agree that a detailed report on the Efficiency Programme 2014/15-2015/16 be brought to SP&R in June 2013.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Local Investment Fund

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 In April 2012 the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee agreed to convene five Area Working Groups (AWGs) to support effective ‘place-shaping’ and make recommendations to SP&R Committee on capital investment decisions for the local area.
- 1.2 To support this work the Council established a £5 million Local Investment Fund (LIF) for investments of between £15,000 and £250,000 in the development or improvement of local assets. £100,000 was also made available to each AWG for local

interventions that would add value to the capital investments made through LIF.

- 1.3** While LIF is a Council-led, capital investment programme it was intended that projects would be developed, and potentially delivered, by or in conjunction with local groups and partner organisations. Members will be aware though that, as some organisations did not have the capacity to develop detailed proposals or experience of capital works, it was agreed by Council (3rd September 2012) that Council could undertake project delivery if required.
- 1.4** LIF proposals have now been developed by each AWG and currently 60 individual projects have been offered 'support in principle' from this Committee. Officers and Members are working closely with responsible groups/organisations to put in place formal agreements to allow works to commence and it is anticipated that by May 2013 one-third will have received formal funding agreements; representing a contribution of over £1 million.
- 1.5** The following report therefore contains:
- 1.** recommendations regarding the use of accompanying intervention funding
  - 2.** proposals to expedite the delivery of projects; and
  - 3.** a proposal to raise awareness of the Council's investment through LIF

## **2** **Key Issues**

### **Local Intervention funding**

- 2.1** South AWG - Since the last meeting of this Committee, the South AWG has met again and resolved that a proportion of its intervention monies be allocated to support retail initiatives in South Belfast and also agreed that the Lisburn Road Business Association should benefit through assistance from this specified resource.
- 2.2** The South AWG is therefore recommending that SP&R Committee:
- approve a sum of £50,000 out of the intervention monies for South to support a range of retail initiatives in South Belfast; and
  - that the Lisburn Road Business Association be allocated £15,000 from this retail initiative budget (on the basis that the Association provide match-funding) to enable it to employ a Development Officer

- 2.3 It is also suggested that the Director of Development takes this particular intervention forward given his economic development remit in the same way as the Director of Health and Environmental Services is supporting the community safety intervention in west Belfast.
- 2.4 East AWG - Members should also note that the East Belfast Area Working Group intend to meet just before the Strategic Policy and Resources committee. A verbal report of emerging recommendations will be made to the committee including recommendations regarding the allocation of their intervention monies.

#### Project delivery and procurement

- 2.5 As noted, due to limited organisational capacity, it has been agreed that the Council may undertake project delivery of LIF projects. Appendix A provides an indicative list of initiatives where Council has been identified as the delivery body. Others may though arise in the course of the development of project proposals and options.
- 2.6 The Council is now ready to enter into formal agreement in respect of a number of projects that have submitted the pre-requisite information and are going through the required due diligence checks and being screened for delivery options. The scheme of delegation currently requires Council approval for works contracts in excess of £30,000; though authority for this may be delegated to the appropriate Director.
- 2.7 As such it is proposed that delegated authority be given to the Director of Property and Projects for the invitation of tenders, award of contracts, extension of existing contracts and the use of appropriate procurement frameworks to support delivery of Council-led and delivered projects within LIF.
- 2.8 Members should be assured that the Council's governance and audit procedures will be applied throughout; including due diligence, equality screening and the application of contractual terms and conditions etc in order to ensure that there is proper financial control and value for money.

#### Local Investment Fund Event

- 2.9 Lastly, in recognition of the progress made by the Area Working Groups it is proposed that an event will be organised at City Hall with the involvement of the various groups from this first round of formal agreements. All Members of Council will be invited to attend this event. It is proposed that the event

takes place on the 16th May 2013 in City Hall; further details will be forwarded by the Communications team when arrangements are finalised.

**3 Resource Implications**

3.1 The above recommendations can be accommodated within the existing LIF and Intervention budgets. Indirect costs such as officer time will also be met by existing revenue estimates.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

4.1 None

**5 Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that Committee:

1. endorse the recommendations of the South Belfast Area Working Group, as set out at point 2.3 above; and
2. endorse the recommendations of the East Belfast Area Working Group as provided by verbal report
3. grant delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects for the invitation of tenders, award of contracts, extension of existing contracts and the use of appropriate procurement frameworks to support delivery of Council-led and delivered projects within LIF.
4. support the proposal for a Local Investment Fund event, on the 16th May 2013.”

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, subsequent to the report having been issued, the East Belfast Area Working Group had met on 17th April and had agreed the following:

ELIF025: Wandsworth Community Association - The Group had agreed to recommend to the Committee that funding of up to £25,000 be allocated.

ELIF027: Templemore Avenue School Trust - The Group had agreed also to recommend to the Committee that funding in the sum of £100,000 be allocated.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Belfast: A Future City – City Development Conference**

The Committee considered a report which provided details of the Council-organised City Development Conference to be held on Wednesday, 22nd May, 2013.

After a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed to the format of the proposed conference and to the holding of the conference in the MAC.

### **Special Meeting – Stadia Development Update**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 8th March, it had received a report on Maximising the Regeneration Impact of the Stadia Developments at Windsor Park and Casement Park. At that meeting, the Members had been apprised of the progress and the timetables in relation to the developments. In order to update the Members on the current progress, it was proposed to hold a special meeting on Friday, 26th April at 12.00 noon.

The Committee agreed to the holding of the special meeting as outlined.

### **Review of Public Administration**

#### **Severance Arrangements for Councillors**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 The Department of the Environment has issued a consultation document on severance arrangements for councillors (copy attached at Appendix 1). Responses to the consultation are to be with the Department no later than 31st May, 2013.**

#### **2 Key Issues**

**2.1 The consultation document asks a number of questions in relation to options as to how the scheme should be delivered. The main aspects of the scheme are summarised below.**

#### **2.2 Eligibility - The Prescribed Period**

**The prescribed period means that only those serving councillors who are in office on the date the Regulations come into force and who resign their seat before 31st March, 2015 will be eligible for severance under the scheme.**

#### **2.3 Application Periods**

**It is proposed that there will be two periods during which councillors can apply for severance. The first period would start from the date the Regulations come into operation and end on 31st December, 2013. Councillors who apply in the first period would resign their seats immediately and the vacant seat would be filled using the current co-option arrangements.**

The second period would commence on 1st January, 2014 and end on the closing date for nominations for the local government elections. Councillors who apply in this period would have to resign before 31st March, 2015.

The scheme is clear that it will not be possible for a councillor who stands for election in 2014 and fails to be elected to then apply for severance. The decision to apply under the scheme must be made in one of the two prescribed periods. In addition, applicants under the severance scheme will be required to sign a declaration that they will not seek re-election.

Severance payments would be made on or after the date of the councillor's resignation.

The first question in the consultation document asks if the Council agrees with this two stage application process and, if not, what alternative would it suggest? The second question asks if the Council would foresee any practical or administrative difficulties with the prescribed period ending on 31st March, 2015?

It is recommended that the Council should respond supporting the two stage process and that it does not foresee any difficulties with the prescribed period ending on 31st March, 2015.

The Minister is considering discussing with the Secretary of State the possibility of amending electoral legislation to allow a vacancy on an existing council to be filled by co-option after 1st January, 2014 and question three asks if the Council would be supportive of this proposal.

All political parties appear to be satisfied with the current co-option system for dealing with casual vacancies on a council. It is considered that the extension of these arrangements beyond 1st January in an election year would not disadvantage any particular party and would allow incoming co-opted councillors to gain valuable experience both in constituency work and in familiarising themselves with council procedures. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Council should support this proposal.

#### **2.4 Eligibility – The Qualifying Period**

The proposed scheme will take account of all periods of service of an elected member from the local government elections in 1973 to the date of the councillor's resignation. There is no requirement for these periods to be concurrent.

It is proposed that the length of service would be measured in years rather than council terms of office. This takes account of councillors elected at a by-election or co-opted during a council term.

The scheme will only be open to those councillors who have a minimum qualifying period of 12 years service. Periods when a councillor was also a Member of the Assembly, an MP or an MEP would not count towards the qualifying period.

Question four asks if the Council agrees that such periods should be excluded from the calculation when determining the eligibility of councillors and question five asks if the Council feels that the minimum qualifying period for severance should be longer than 12 years?

The Council had responded to a previous consultation document on a severance scheme for councillors in 2009 and had adopted the position that serving MLAs, MPs and MEPs should be included in the scheme but that their entitlement to an award should only be calculated on those years of local government service which they had acquired prior to their election to another tier of government. As such, the current proposals would be consistent with the Council's former position and it is recommended that the Council support the current proposal. It is also recommended that the Council support the proposal that the minimum qualifying period for severance should be 12 years.

#### **2.5 Reckonable Service Within the Qualifying Period**

A severance payment will be based on the cumulative total of all periods of reckonable service since 7th May, 1973 and excludes any periods when the councillor was also an MLA, an MP or an MEP. Part years of more than 6 months will be counted as a full year and part years of less than 6 months will be discounted when calculating reckonable service.

Question six asks if the Council agrees with this proposal and it is recommended that the Council support it.

#### **2.6 Calculation of Individual Severance payments**

The consultation document proposes a graduated scheme of payments where service in the earliest years of the current 26 councils would receive a higher annual rate than service in the later years. The reasons given for this approach is that civil unrest was at its height in the earlier years and the remuneration for councillors in those years was relatively low.



The paper offers two options for a graduated scheme. The first divides service into two bands. Band 1 for service from May 1973 till May 1998 and band 2 for service from May 1998 till the date of a councillor's resignation. The yearly payment for service in band 1 would be £1,000 and for band 2 £600.

The consultation document explains that the use of 1998 as a break point is in recognition of the major changes to the security and political situation initiated by the Belfast Agreement and also that there was a change to the system of remuneration to councillors with the introduction of the basic allowance.

The second option divides the service into three bands. Band 1 for service from May 1973 till May 1987, band 2 for service from May 1987 till May 2001 and band 3 for service from May 2001 till the date of a councillor's resignation. The yearly payment for service in band 1 would be £1,000, for band 2 £750 and for band 3 £550.

The consultation document does not give any rationale to support the 3 band approach.

Question 7 asks if the Council agrees with the proposal to consider two options for calibrating individual severance payments and question 8 asks which option the Council would find most suitable.

As a reasonable rationale has been provided in the consultation document for option 1 it is recommended that the Council support this option.

The scheme proposes that the maximum severance which can be paid to any individual should be capped at £36,000. It is pointed out that the first £30,000 of any severance payment would be tax free with the rate of tax payable on any amount over £30,000 being dependent upon individual circumstances.

Question nine asks if the Council agrees with this maximum limit.

Under the two options for considering the payment of severance to an individual councillor, there is not any circumstance where an individual would be liable for a payment exceeding £36,000 and therefore it is recommended that the Council support the proposal.

## **2.7 Death of an Applicant for a Severance Payment**

When applying for severance, a councillor will be able to nominate a beneficiary or beneficiaries to receive the payment in the event of the councillor's death. The severance will be paid only to the beneficiary or beneficiaries nominated by the councillor.

## **2.8 Meeting the Cost of the Severance Scheme**

Councils will be responsible for making the severance payments but the cost will be reimbursed by the Department.

## **3 Resource Implications**

### **3.1 As the cost of the scheme will be reimbursed to the Council by the Department of the Environment, the net cost to the Council will be nil.**

## **4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None.

## **5 Recommendations**

### **5.1 It is recommended that the Council reply to the consultation document in the terms set out in the report."**

During discussion in the matter, a Member pointed out that during the previous consultation on proposed severance arrangements for Councillors, the Council had taken the view that there should be no banding in respect of the amount to be paid and that a flat rate be paid for the maximum qualifying period and, in addition, the minimum term to be served by a Member before he/she would become eligible for severance was at least two Council terms and he requested that the Committee should affirm that previous decision.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Browne,  
Seconded by Alderman M. Campbell,

That the Committee agrees to adhere to its decision of 19th June, 2009 in relation to Severance Arrangements for Councillors and that the response to the consultation document indicate that a set amount of £1,000 per year should be payable up to a maximum of 38 years, with eligibility for severance being restricted to Members who have served a minimum of two Council terms.

On a vote by show of hands two Members voted for the proposal and fifteen against and it was declared lost.

The Committee accordingly agreed that the Council reply to the Consultation Document be in the terms as set out in the report.

**Democratic Services and Governance**

**Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality**

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

<b>Organisation/ Body</b>	<b>Event/Date Number of Delegates/Guests</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Lighthouse Ireland	Mental Health: Talk About It – Harlem Shake Event  24th May, 2013  Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee, soft drinks and biscuits	This event aims to raise awareness and break down barriers around suicide and mental health. Northern Ireland has the 3rd highest level of youth suicide in Europe and the organisers will use this opportunity to emphasize the need for people to talk about all aspects of mental health. It is hoped that by using the global phenomenon of the Harlem Shake this event will bring people together help to dispel the stigma attached to mental health.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee, soft drinks and biscuits  Approximate cost £1,000
Pobal	Seoladh Chearta agus Ceilúradh 2013 / Launch of Rights and Revelry 2013  19th June, 2013  Approximately 40 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	This event will be a community and media launch of the 'Rights and Revelry' Irish language Festival which was previously supported by the Council's Community Festivals Fund. This launch will give a preview of what the Festival will offer and will showcase some of the music and arts which will be available during the Festival. The Festival will provide an	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits  Approximate cost £100

			<p>opportunity for the community to celebrate its successes and show its support for the Irish Language Act.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better care for Belfast's environment' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	
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The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Area Working Groups – Review and Future Work**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

##### **1.1 The Council at its meeting on 2 April 2012 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.**

##### **1.2 The interim terms of reference for the AWGs were agreed as to:**

- **act as community advocates to identify local priorities and support effective 'place-shaping';**
- **make recommendations to SP&R Committee on investment decisions for the local area;**

- offer advice and guidance to SP&R Committee and officers in the development and implementation of local projects;
- participate in and facilitate community engagement and communications activities with a wide range of groups on investment in local areas;
- consider other area-based issues as referred by SP&R Committee;
- monitor progress and produce an annual report on performance.

In governance terms, the Groups were established to have an advisory role, informing the implementation of the Belfast Investment Programme. It was agreed that the AWGs would have no delegated authority and no budget.

## **2.0 Review of first year**

**2.1 The Area Working Groups have met consistently since their establishment, largely on a monthly basis. Work to date of the AWGs has included:**

- Considering and making recommendations to the SP&R Committee of project proposals under the Local Investment Fund. To date approx 60 projects have been agreed in principle for funding;
- Using local intelligence to explore key issues at a local level;
- Holding a series of workshops looking at examining the role of Members in place-shaping and community engagement, in the context of the LIF, as well as the wider context of community planning.
- Receiving a range of presentations from a variety of stakeholders presenting issues/projects of specific interest to each AWGs
- Considering integrated multi-organisational interventions at a local level.

Since their establishment, the Area Working Groups have had a positive impact in the development of area based interventions and Members have begun to explore the potential presented by local area working.

2.2 In discussions at the Area Working Groups, members have highlighted a number of positive aspects of the approach to date including that the process has:

- helped move forward a significant stream of funding to local areas through LIF which has developed Members and officers shared understanding of project implementation;
- through LIF, Feasibility Fund and recently BIF , helped focus purpose around delivery and city and local issues;
- provided useful sharing of emerging thinking/priorities in SIF area plans;
- acted as a channel for the emergence of local ideas and issues;
- provided a more informal and creative environment for the generation of ideas about improving local areas;
- acted as a forum within which local area issues and initiatives can be presented without the need for formal committee deputations;
- provided Members and officers with practical learning opportunities in relation to resolving “live” community issues;
- External workshops with community planning experts were well-received and generated new ideas
- Helped understanding of the value of data and evidence e.g. citystats information as evidence for interventions
- Begun to shape shared ambition re: local outcomes

**On the whole, the AWGs have worked productively within their interim terms of reference as agreed by SP&R and have stimulated discussion on wider governance issues.**

**Moving forward, it is important to build on the groundwork of the Area Working Groups to date and to take forward their future development in the context of local government reform and the overall review of governance underway within the Council.**

Members have highlighted a number of areas that require consideration, including:

- Governance of the Area Working Groups;
- Chairmanship of the Groups;
- Agreed agendas and forward workplans;
- Preparing for community planning.

These issues are explored further in the remainder of the report.

### **3.0 Issues and proposed way forward**

#### **3.1 Governance**

As outlined previously, to date the AWGs have had no decision making powers, with recommendations going to the SP&R Committee for decision. In progressing the work and role of the Area Working Groups, it is now necessary to consider their governance in the context of the overall review of governance currently underway.

Key issues will include:

- Confirming the role of Area Working Groups in terms of their relationship to other committees/decision making structures;
- The optimum number of area working groups to ensure good governance and delivery;
- The degree of delegation, if any, to Area Working groups;
- The role of Area Working Groups and of other committees/decision making structures in taking forward community planning.

A separate report on the Committee's agenda provides further information on the timescales and approach to the review of governance.

#### **3.2 Nomination of chairs for the Area Working Groups**

Two AWGs (South and North) have appointed political representatives to chair meetings in recent months but this has not been replicated across all AWGs. It is recommended that a Member is nominated to chair each of the remaining

working groups within the May cycle of meetings to facilitate the effective planning and management of meetings.

### **3.3 Agreed agendas and forward work plans**

The terms of reference for the Area Working Groups remain relevant. Based on discussion at the Area Working Groups and at Committee about future agendas, it is recommended that the following issues provide a focus for the work of the AWGs in the year ahead:

- a continued role in implementing LIF and working through BIF projects and other related capital projects including those emerging under the Social Investment Fund (SIF);
- development of integrated, area-based interventions;
- consideration of the local dimension of key strategic Council projects such as leisure transformation; renewing the routes; tourism etc.;
- using set-piece workshop sessions as ‘creative spaces’ and opportunities for capacity building, designing interventions and problem solving;
- Member and Officer Development and
- Exploring the organisational consequences of area working and building capacity.

### **3.4 Community Planning**

In addition to the above, at the Voluntary Transition Committee meeting on 5 April, Members considered the potential role of the Area Working Groups in helping to develop our approach to community planning at a local level.

Members agreed that the Area Working Groups could help the Council prepare by:

- Developing an effective, inclusive, approach to area-based planning, connected to emerging approaches to local regeneration;
- Exploring issues of engagement and partnership and delivery at a local level;
- Using local intelligence and information to build a stronger understanding of local needs, priorities and



outcomes, connected to the development of a city outcomes framework.

3.5 It is recommended that preparation for community planning forms a central focus for the working groups in the months ahead and that their next task should be to begin the creation of local area plans, involving partners and engaging local communities as part of this process. A further report to set the context for this work will be brought to Committee shortly.

3.6 Schedule of meetings

Consideration needs also now to be given as to how to best integrate the meetings of working group into the overall meeting schedule in order to better align the decision making process. In scheduling meetings it is also important to be cognisant of the number of meetings which Members are now attending both within and external to Council.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to agree the proposals set out at paragraphs 3.2-3.6 in relation to:

- The nomination of political chairs for all the Area Working Groups;
- The proposed future focus of future working groups agendas;
- The role of the groups in community planning;
- Review of the scheduling of Area Working Group meetings to create better alignment with decision making cycles.”

After discussion, during which the Director of Property and Projects clarified that the Social Investment Fund projects would be reported to each of the Area Working Groups, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Update on Future Governance Arrangements for the Council

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Committee, at its meeting on 14th December, 2012, considered a report on the ongoing review of governance and political management arrangements for the Council. At this meeting Members had been provided with a high-level

overview of the range of options which are likely to emerge as part of the local government reform legislative programme (i.e. Reorganisation Bill) regarding future governance and political management arrangements. It was highlighted that the Reorganisation Bill is expected to present three options for the consideration of councils including (i) Traditional Committee System, (ii) Cabinet System, (iii) Streamlined Committee System. A copy of the relevant report is attached as Appendix 1 for Members information.

- 1.2 In considering the potential future political management arrangements, it is important to restate the good governance principles within which the Council currently operates.
- 1.3 At the meeting on 14 December 2012, it was agreed that Party briefings would be held, facilitated by Jonathan Huish, to enable Members to explore what options may exist regarding future governance and political management arrangements for the Council.
- 1.4 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on Members' discussions to date and the key issues emerging; set out the current legislative timetable linked to local government reform; and to outline the proposed next steps.

## 2 Key Issues

### 2.1 Legislative Timetable

The Environment Minister confirmed at a recent Regional Transition Committee meeting that he intended to introduce the Local Government Reorganisation Bill to the Assembly in April. Members should note that the Bill is expected to include high level enabling legislation on future governance options but that a significant amount of the detail which will be required for the Council to take informed decisions will be issued thereafter as part of a detailed programme of subordinate legislation.

- 2.2 Regardless of the system of governance selected for the new Council in 2015, the Reorganisation Bill is likely to introduce a series of new checks and balances including:

- Proportionality – to be applied in the appointment of committees and key positions within council and to external bodies.
- Weighted Majority Voting – It is expected that an 80% weighted majority voting will be introduced for decisions which are taken on a number of key

areas including e.g. selection of governance structures and major capital projects.

- Call-in - it is likely that a system of call-in will be introduced whereby a 15% of the total number of members (in the new council this would be 9 members) will be the trigger point to request a call-in.

2.3 It will be necessary to await the publication of the Reorganisation Bill and subordinate legislation before we can be certain as to how the checks and balances might impact upon effective decision-making but it would be prudent for the Committee to bear in mind that the system will certainly impact upon how we operate in the future.

#### 2.4 Establishment of Statutory Transition Committees

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 includes enabling powers for the Statutory Transition Committee regulations to be made. It is now expected that draft regulations will be laid in the Assembly in April. The Department has pointed out that, subject to the passage of these draft regulations through the Assembly process, this would allow for the Transition Committees to be placed on a statutory footing in June.

#### 2.5 Members' Severance

A consultation document on the Severance Arrangements for Councillors has been released by the Department and a separate report is on the Committee's agenda to consider a Council response.

#### 2.6 Members' Remuneration

The Department has held interviews for the appointment of members to the Remuneration Panel. It is expected that the Panel, which will advise the Minister on the system and level of allowances appropriate for the new councils in 2015 and, potentially the Shadow Councils in 2014, will report by November, 2013. No information is available at this stage as to the identity of the Panel members.

#### 2.7 Party Briefings on Future Governance Structures

As agreed by Committee, Jonathan Huish has completed a series of Party briefings to explore with Members their early views on potential future governance and political management arrangements within the Council. During

discussions, Members raised a number of issues for further consideration:

- Need to evolve structures so they are fit for future purpose
- Need for an inclusive process – ensuring all members are clearly involved
- Recognise the criticality of getting the degree of delegation right.
- Governance needs to be more joined up across structures
- Need to develop scrutiny function – internal and external
- Need to further develop approach to area working
- Need to have a more strategic city leadership role – engagement with external bodies and partnership working
- Recognise the potential benefits of moving towards a more themed approach and greater integration of service delivery
- Recognition of potential need for a strategic committee role to co-ordinate
- Need to consider impact of local government reform and transfer of new functions including community planning, planning, regeneration etc
- Need to streamline structures and reduce meetings so as to free up Members time and capacity to engage in strategic leadership issues
- Need to review future member roles and responsibilities (and review allowances accordingly)
- Need to build development activities into Belfast Members Academy to ensure members have capacity and knowledge to meet new challenges

2.8 It was clear from the briefings that the Parties would prefer to await the release of the Reorganisation Bill before committing the Council to a particular governance system. Members had requested that on release of the Reorganisation Bill, they would seek further engagement and discussions on the emerging operational models and the potential implications for the Council.

## 2.9 Next Steps

In moving forward it is suggested that the following practical steps be taken to prepare for and to maximise the benefits from the significant change programme that the Council faces over the next couple of years linked to the local government reform process.

(i) **Members' Capacity and Time Commitments**

One of the most important resources which will be required in addressing the programme of change which the reorganisation of Council governance will present is that of Members time. Members are central to the process of agreeing and embedding change at an organisational level and it will be vital to ensure that there is sufficient time created to allow Members to prioritise this work.

With the introduction of regular monthly Party Briefings and the development of the Area Working groups over the last year there has been a marked increase in the number of meetings which Members are being required to attend. Attached at Appendix 2 is an analysis of the number of meetings which have been held for the last three financial years. Members might be surprised to learn that there has been a 50% increase in the number of meetings in the 2012/13 year when compared to the 2011/12 year (258 in 2011/12 and 387 in 2012/13).

The Committee may wish to consider that a report be prepared on how Members time can be freed up within the monthly schedule to allow for the programme of work involved in the preparation for the new Council in 2015 and the potential Shadow Council in 2014 to be accommodated.

(ii) **Drawing upon Good Practice**

Members have already highlighted the importance of drawing upon good practice and experiences from elsewhere to inform the approach to local government reform, the transfer and integration of new place-shaping functions and any governance or political management changes introduced.

At its meeting on 5th April, the Council's Voluntary Transition Committee considered detailed reports on the return of Planning & Regeneration powers to the Council as well as the introduction of the Community Planning model. It was acknowledged at that meeting that it would be essential to seek to learn from high performing authorities and it was suggested that it would be beneficial for learning opportunities with Councils from Scotland and the Republic of Ireland to be sought. If the Committee is in agreement, a report

will be brought back to Committee in May 2013 setting out detailed proposals regarding a series of good practice visits either to or from such Councils over the next number of months.

(iii) **Reorganisation Bill**

On release of the Reorganisation Bill in April/May 2013, officers will undertake a detailed analysis of what is being proposed; examine the implications for the Council and to identify key issues requiring political consideration. It would be the intention that further Committee and Party briefing sessions would be scheduled in May/June 2013 to explore the detail with Members.

(iv) **Area Working Groups**

Members have requested that a review be undertaken of the Area Working Groups and the effectiveness of approach to local area working. A separate report on this is included on the Committees agenda.

**3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 There will be cost implications arising from either visits to or from other Local Authorities but any such costs can be met from within existing revenue budgets.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None.

**5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and to:
- (i) consider and agree that a further report be brought back setting out options as to how member time could be freed up to allow for the additional commitments required to implement local government reform; and
  - (ii) consider and agree that a report be submitted in May 2013 regarding a series of of visits to or from other high performing local authorities who would have experience of undergoing significant governance reform and who deliver Community Planning and planning & regeneration functions.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Finance/Value-for-Money**

**Notice of Motion re: Northern Ireland Hospice**

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

**“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The Committee will recall that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd April considered the undernoted Notice of Motion which had been proposed by Councillor Convery and Seconded by Alderman Humphrey:**

**Northern Ireland Hospice**

**‘This Council recognises the significance of the work of the Northern Ireland Hospice and its contribution to healthcare in our City and beyond.**

**The Northern Ireland Hospice has contributed significantly to the welfare of the seriously ill by providing palliative care within the Hospice and by providing a service in the community throughout Northern Ireland. It also helps and assist families who at these times are under extreme emotional pressure.**

**Accordingly, the Council agrees to allocate payments of £250,000 in each of the next two financial years to the Northern Ireland Hospice Redevelopment Fund using its special expenditure powers under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.’**

- 1.2 In accordance with Standing Order 11(e), the Motion stood referred to the Committee.**

**2.0 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Members will recall that the Committee on 22nd February considered a report regarding a request for funding from the Northern Ireland Hospice (copy attached).**

- 2.2 The Committee agreed to contribute, from the under spend for 2012/13 in accordance with Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, £200,000 towards the redevelopment of the Northern Ireland Hospice. The expenditure was financed from the in year under spend as the Council does not have a separate budget for Section 37 expenditure.**

2.3 In considering the Notice of Motion Members must consider the following:

- Question 1: Does the payment fall within the agreed criteria approved by the Council?
- Question 2: If the payment was made, would the Council's total payments be within the limit allowable for the Council under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act 2011?
- Question 3: Is there available finance within the Council's budgets to cover the expenditure?

2.4 Question 1: The Legal Services Section has confirmed that the payment to the NI Hospice for the purposes of the redevelopment of the Hospice would meet the criteria agreed by the Council.

2.5 Question 2: The total payments that can be made under Section 37 in 2013/14 and 2014/15 are approximately £305,000 each year. The only other Section 37 payments currently committed for 2013/14 and 2014/15 are £7,600 per annum for the Oil Stamps Scheme. This means that should it be agreed to make the £250,000 payments to the NI Hospice in the next two years the Council would still be within the allowable limit.

2.6 Members should note, however, that the maximum value of additional requests that could be considered in 2013/14 and 2014/15 within the Finance Act limit would be £47,400. Based on previous years, this amount would be adequate to meet expected demand.

2.7 Question 3: Before a payment can be made to the NI Hospice, Members must be satisfied that sufficient resources are available to finance the payments. In-year re-allocations (the method used to finance this type of payment) are considered by the Committee in November each year as part of the half year finance review. It is therefore recommended that if the Committee is minded to approve the payments to the Hospice consideration is given to the affordability as part of the half year finance report in November 2013.

2.8 In summary, the Notice of Motion meets the legal requirements and the payments would be within the financial limits set out in the Local Government Finance Act 2011.

### 3.0 Equality Implications

3.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.



#### **4.0 Recommendations**

**4.1 Should Members wish to commit to payments of £250,000 for the next two financial years, to the NI Hospice then the following recommendation should be approved:-**

- That Committee approve in principle a payment of £250,000 in 2013/14 and 2014/15, subject to the Director of Finance and Resources confirming that there are resources available to meet these payments within each of the financial years.
- The financing of the £250,000 payment is considered as part of the half year finance report which will be brought to the Committee in November 2013.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

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

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 11th April.

#### **Capital Programme – Approval request to Move Projects from Stage 1- Emerging Projects to Stage 2**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **“1.0 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 The SP&R Committee is the Council’s investment decision maker. In order for the Council to ensure that it is able to monitor all capital spend, all capital related decisions must be taken to SP&R Committee. Members will recall that they approved the Council’s Capital Programme at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 22 March.**

**1.2 As part of this, Members were reminded that all capital projects must go through a Stage Process where the decision on which projects progress are taken by SP&R Committee as outlined below:**

- **Stage 1 - Emerging proposals: proposals which require completion of a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) before they could be considered further by SP&R Committee.**
- **Stage 2 - Uncommitted projects: projects where an SOC has been agreed by Committee and work on the project is being progressed through the**

development of an Outline Business Case (OBC), but they have not yet been developed to a stage where permission could be sought from SP&R to proceed to tender.

- **Stage 3 - Committed projects:** projects which have completed a Full Business Case (FBC) and where approval has already been obtained by SP&R to proceed to tender. These projects will be at the tender award, contract or construction stage.

1.3 SP&R Committee approval at each of these Stages will ensure that projects are robustly managed, that assurance on successful delivery is provided and that any issues are identified and communicated at an early stage. This process will also afford Members an opportunity to stop/defer projects which are not feasible/viable and enable them to refocus funding on those projects which Members consider priority. Member are asked to note that officers have developed supporting documents around each of the Stages to ensure that projects are all completing the same information so that Members can take informed decisions. Detailed processes are also being developed around each of these Stages.

## 2.0 Key Issues suspend

2.1 Members have approved the list of Stage 1 Emerging Projects, a copy of which has been circulated. SOC's have now been completed for three of the projects on this list and approval is sought to advance these to 'Stage 2 – Uncommitted'.

2.2 An SOC examines the following issues in relation to a proposed project (i) Background to the project; (2) Feasibility; (3) Affordability; (4) Deliverability and Sustainability. Members are asked to note that at SOC level the affordability of a project is only examined at a very high level and this is tested and challenged further during Stage 2 and Stage 3.

2.3 Members are asked to note that as part of the Stage 1 process, an internal Gate review is conducted to confirm the need and requirement of a project. This Gate Review identifies key areas of work that needs further examination, particularly around demonstrating affordability, achievability, deliverability and sustainability.

2.4 SOC's have been prepared for the following three projects on the Stage 1 Emerging Projects list:

Emerging Project	Project Aim
<p>Whiterock Community Health and Well Being Hub <i>(note name change from Whiterock Community Corridor)</i> See Appendix B for Site map</p>	<p>To improve the environmental quality of Council's Whiterock site to encourage the use of the services in and around the site, attract community activity and participation that positively impacts on the health and well being of the community and visitors but also encourages collaboration between the services on site. Site proposals include community buildings; environmental improvement scheme/public realm; increased pedestrian access points.</p>
<p>Half Moon Lake – See Appendix C for Site map</p>	<p>To support the evolution of the Half Moon Lake through improved access and to provide for a safe learning environment for the many school, community and local interest groups who enjoy this unique environmental asset located within a dense urban environment. Part funding for this project may be available through DCAL.</p>
<p>Drumglass Park – See Appendix D for Site map</p>	<p>To explore the opportunity to develop the current Drumglass Park in order to exploit fully it's role and function in the economic and tourism fabric of the Lisburn Road. This is proposed through civic realm improvements and public art installation which will facilitate enhanced usage by local people and visitors. Part funding for this project may be available through the Arts Council for NI.</p>

- 2.5 As part of the development of these emerging projects, Members are asked to note the involvement and assistance of individual Members in the development of the SOC including the Councillor led steering group for the Whiterock Community Corridor proposal and Councillor meeting to develop Drumglass Park proposal. Members are asked to note that a cross-departmental approach has been taken in relation to the development of each SOC in order to ensure that the benefits of the projects are maximised.
- 2.6 Specific to the Whiterock Community Health and Well Being Hub an important factor in the development of this project will be the commitment of a number of stakeholders, such as the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and NI Libraries. Both organisations are property and land owners adjacent to this site and as part of the SOC process have been identified as integral in progressing with this proposal. In order to complete Stage 2 officers will seek to fully engage with key stakeholders.

### Next steps

- 2.7 If Committee approves the advancement of these projects to Stage 2, each project will be required to conduct a robust appraisal, proportionate to its scale, in order to assess its affordability, achievability, deliverability and sustainability requirements. This process will also more robustly test and challenge the costs associated with the project. This will enable a report back to Committee on the appraisal outcome and subsequent recommendation for a decision on whether to proceed to Stage 3.

### Stage Approval process

- 2.8 As outlined above the SP&R Committee is the Council's investment decision maker. There is increasing demand on the Council to deliver projects within increasingly scarce financial resources. As part of this the Council has a duty to ensure public money is spent wisely and the Council's investment is properly protected. Members are also aware there is an opportunity cost of approving spend on one project which means that something else will fall down the list and will not proceed.
- 2.9 Update reports on the Capital Programme will be brought to the Committee on a quarterly basis moving forwards. As part of this all capital projects requiring investment decisions will be presented to Members as part of this quarterly reporting cycle. This will enable Members to take investment decisions in the context of overall affordability limits and will help Members prioritise those projects which can have maximum benefits and investment return for the city and local areas.

### 3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 Completion of the Stage 2 OBC for the above projects will be resourced within current staff levels. Any external expertise that may be required, proportionate to the project, will be resourced from the Council's Feasibility Fund.

### 4 Equality Implications

- 4.1 Once approved to advance to Stage 2 on the Capital Programme, each project will be equality screened.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

**5.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of this report and agree the advancement of the following projects proposals to ‘Stage 2 – Uncommitted’ under the capital programme:**

- **Whiterock Community Health and Well Being Hub**
- **Half Moon Lake**
- **Drumglass Park”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Human Resources**

#### **Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives**

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Order 55 and the authority delegated to him, the Director of Finance and Resources had authorised the appointment of a member of staff who was related to an existing officer of the Council.

### **Asset Management**

#### **Attempted Break In – City Hall**

The Committee noted the contents of a report in relation to an unsuccessful attempt to break into the City Hall on 5th April, 2013, recognised the prompt response by the security team to the incident and endorsed the proposal to use the text notification system to apprise Members of any similar incidents in the future.

#### **Illuminate Project City Hall – Additional Days**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **“Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 Members are aware that the Illuminate project, which has been partly funded by the EU, has replaced the existing City Hall façade lighting on the front, east and west facades as well as the main dome and turrets with a new low-energy LED lighting infrastructure. The key aim of the project is to sustainably reduce energy consumption and significantly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.**
- 1.2 One of the other benefits of the project is that it will also enable the City Hall to be illuminated in a variety of colours and colour combinations which are not currently possible. The lights which have been installed are the same technology**

which is used on the Empire State Building and other iconic buildings around the globe and the system which has been installed on the City Hall is one of the most advanced in the world. All Members were invited to attend the formal switch on event of the Illuminate project on Thursday 11 April which was very positively received.

## 2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Members were updated on the progress and proposed governance arrangements of the Illuminate project at the SP&R Committee meeting on 21st February. As part of this it was highlighted to Members that the new lighting features could be used to promote inclusivity and cultural awareness by recognizing days of particular significance to groups within the wider community through the illumination of the City Hall in the relevant colour(s). It was proposed that 6 specific days of particular interest to local people and communities be included in the schedule namely:

St. Patrick's Day (Green) - Polish Independence Day (red and white)  
Orangefest (Orange) - Chinese New Year (red and yellow)  
St. Valentine's Day (Red) - Gay Pride (rainbow)

It was also proposed that 12 nominated charities selected by the Council's civic dignitaries (Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff) will be able to use the new lighting features for charity events etc. These days had been equality screened and there were no equality implication arising. Members were asked to note that further days of cultural/social significance could be added to the schedule if agreed by the SP&R Committee. Members were however asked to note that given the iconic status of the City Hall the over-use of the lighting facilities on too many days per year could adversely affect the image and reputation of the building.

2.2 During the discussion at SP&R on 21st February, the proposed days as outlined above were agreed. The Committee had further discussion about a number of other days which could be illuminated. As part of this, it was proposed that 2 additional days be added to this list, namely

- May Day (red) and
- International Women's Day (purple)

However after further discussion the Committee decided that, as these days had not formed part of the equality screening carried out on the proposal, they should not to be included at that time. There was, however, widespread acceptance by Members that these 2 days would be a useful addition to the Illuminate schedule.

**2.3** Members are asked to note that the additional days (May Day and International Women's Day) have now been equality screened and there are no equality implications arising from the inclusion of these two days. Members are therefore asked to decide if they now wish the two additional days of May Day and International Women's Day to be added to the schedule. Members are asked to note that May Day this year is on 6th May 2013 and will be the first day that the new lighting will be used. This will generate significant media and public interest.

**2.4** At the full Council meeting on 4th March, there was further discussion around a number of other potential days which could be added to the schedule however none of these were agreed. It was agreed that the City Hall should be illuminated in orange and purple at Orangefest.

### **3.0 Resource Implications**

**3.1** The Illuminate Project will generate significant savings for the Council in terms of costs, both because of the lower consumption of energy and also because of the significantly longer life span of the lighting units. The system also provides the opportunity for a significant reduction in CO2 emissions.

### **4.0 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

**4.1** The proposed additional days of May Day and International Women's Day have been equality screened in line with the Council's Equality Scheme and there are no implications arising. Members are asked to note that any further days which are proposed will be subject to equality screening.

### **5.0 Recommendations**

**5.1** Members are asked to note the contents of this report and

- agree if they wish to include the additional two days of May Day and International Women's Day on the Illuminate schedule. These days have been equality screened and there are no equality implications arising
- note that if this is agreed that May Day is on 6th May and will be the first day that the lighting features will be used as part of the Illuminate project. This is likely to generate significant media and public interest.

- **note that the City Hall will be illuminated in orange and purple at Orangefest as agreed by Council on 3rd March**
- **are reminded that other events/days may be considered by SP&R Committee as necessary if specific requests are made. As outlined in 5.1 above any further days will also be subject to equality screening.”**

The Director of Property and Projects reported that, in addition to those additional days set out in the report, there were a number of other days for which requests to use the Illuminate system had been received. He pointed out that on 27th April the Council would be celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the awarding to Belfast of its Town Charter and the establishment of its Corporation and it had been suggested that the City Hall be lit up in the Council colours on that date. In addition, a request had been received from Translink to light up the City Hall on a Saturday in May to highlight a fares promotion on the Metro bus system.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the World Police and Fire Games, the Director of Property and Projects stated that management arrangements for the use of the system which had been approved by the Committee enabled officers to approve those events organised in the City Hall and/or grounds by the Council itself, either directly or in partnership with others, and the aforementioned event fell into that category and therefore the building would be lit during the period it was being held.

A Member pointed out that, at the Council meeting on 4th March, he had raised the issue of including the Queen's Official Birthday and Remembrance Day as additional days for inclusion in the Illuminate project and, whilst the proposal to include those days had been lost, one of the Political Parties had indicated that they would wish those days to be equality screened before a decision could be made and therefore he requested that the Committee defer consideration of the additional days to enable that exercise to be undertaken.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to include the additional two days of May Day and International Women's Day on the Illuminate schedule;
- (ii) that the City Hall be lit up in the Council's corporate colours on 27th April to celebrate the 400th Anniversary of the Awarding of the Town Charter;
- (iii) to refuse the request from Translink, on the basis that it could be seen as a commercial venture; and
- (iv) that the two days which had been proposed at the Council meeting on 4th March, that is, the Queen's Official Birthday and Remembrance Day, be equality screened and a report thereon be submitted to the Committee in due course.



**Corporate Accommodation Strategy Update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update in relation to a Corporate Accommodation Strategy and agreed to the re-establishment of the Accommodation Working Group in order to progress the matter.

**Request for Use of City Hall Grounds During G8 Summit**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from Christian Aid and others to permit the staging of a "BIG IF BELFAST" concert in the grounds of the City Hall to coincide with the hosting of the G8 summit of world leaders in County Fermanagh in June. The event would take place on Saturday, 15th June, 2013 between 3.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. The stated purpose of the organisers was that the event would "provide an entertaining and informative mass-mobilisation event to mark the culmination of the Enough Food IF campaign work in Northern Ireland and provide a platform for articulating the need for change to the G8 Leaders".

The Director of Property and Projects reported that the draft programme for the event included a high-profile keynote speaker and a number of local celebrities plus a music contribution by the Ulster Orchestra and others. The event was scheduled to culminate in a finale piece involving "the coming together of signed banners with messages to the G8 Leaders that have travelled from each of the 26 council areas of Northern Ireland (and potentially London, Wales, Scotland and Dublin) which were combined together and fastened to a Giant 'IF' installation in the grounds of the City Hall". The event would be a free to access pre-ticketed concert and the organisers would expect 6,000 people to attend the afternoon of activities. It was envisaged that a range of Council departments would have input to ensure that the event was properly managed and delivered in a safe manner. The organisers would be expected to cover all costs connected to the staging of the event and there would be a need for a comprehensive legal contract with the organisers covering reinstatement arrangements, operational requirements and insurance issues. The Committee was requested to note that there were two other long-standing exhibition bookings which had already been approved for the City Hall grounds on the same date and time. The Committee also noted that a number of additional security measures would be introduced after advice from the Police Service of Northern Ireland over the period of the G8 event.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request.

**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 8th April.

### **Flying of the Union Flag at Half Mast from the City Hall**

The Members were reminded that, following the death on 8th April of Baroness Thatcher, the Chief Executive had received an enquiry as to whether the Union Flag would be flown at the City Hall on the day of the funeral. The Chief Executive had contacted the Party Leaders on the Council on 9th April to explain that that would fall within the existing Council policy. To ensure that there was no confusion on future occasions, the Chief Executive undertook to submit to the Committee a report outlining the policy.

The Members were informed that the Equality Impact Assessment, which had been produced in 2004, on the flying of the Union Flag had noted that, apart from the specified days listed, the Union Flag could be flown at half mast on occasions, including for funerals of members of the Royal Family and of office bearers such as former Prime Ministers, when special instructions were issued to that effect by the Lord Chamberlain's Department (a function which now lay with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport). That practice had previously been noted in a report to the former Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 18th April, 2003.

The issue of occasions when special instructions were issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to fly the Union Flag at half mast had not been specifically mentioned in the 2012 Flags Equality Impact Assessment, which focused more on the issue of the flying of the flag as a regular practice. The Council decision in December, 2012 in that regard was in the context of amending the then current policy and the amendment focused on the issue of the flying of the Union Flag on designated days rather than 365 days a year. Consequently, it followed that the previously existing protocol in relation to the flying of the Union Flag at half mast on specific occasions remained in force.

Furthermore, and in any event, the Council's decision at its meeting of 3rd December was to fly the Union Flag on "designated days", which was subsequently clarified through the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group to mean the days on the list issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in Westminster. That Department had issued on 8th April, 2013 an instruction to include the flying of the Union Flag on the day of the funeral and it was accordingly appropriate for the Council to apply that instruction.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and that the foregoing protocol in relation to the flying of the Union Flag on special occasions would continue to be applied when special notifications were issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

**Minutes of Meeting of Joint Group of Party Leaders' Forum  
and Historic Centenaries working Group**

**City Hall Cenotaph- Flying of the Union Flag:  
Results of Pre-Consultation Exercise**

In considering the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Group of Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group of 16th April, the Members' attention was drawn to the minute in relation to the flying of the Union Flag at the City Hall Cenotaph.

The Committee was advised that the Group had considered a report and the results of the pre-consultation exercise on the proposed policy of the flying of the Union Flat at the Cenotaph. In conclusion, that report had made the following recommendations:

- to determine whether the Group has sufficient information on the potential equality and good relations impacts of the proposed policy on which to base a rational decision
- to determine whether a full Equality Impact Assessment is required
- to proceed to make a decision on the proposed policy, taking into account the evidence presented in this screening report
- to determine the timescale for submitting the decision of the Joint Group to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Following discussion, the Joint Group had agreed the following:

- (i) that there was sufficient information on the potential equality and good relations impacts of the policy on which to make a rational decision;
- (ii) that the question of whether a full Equality Impact Assessment was required and whether to make a decision on the policy be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- (iii) the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration at its meeting scheduled for 19th April: and
- (iv) a report will be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th April in relation to the date of the monthly Council meeting in May.

With regard to point (iv) in relation to the date of the monthly Council meeting in May, the Democratic Services Manager tabled a report in that regard.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Council meeting in May should not be moved from its scheduled date of Wednesday, 1st May.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McCarthy,  
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Council's policy on the flying of the Union Flag in the Garden of Remembrance at the City Hall remain unchanged.

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

Subject, to the foregoing decision, the minutes of the meeting were approved and adopted.

### **Operation Banner – Dedication Ceremony**

The Committee considered a report in relation to the dedication ceremony to mark the installation of the revised UDR window in the City Hall and memorial bench to be located in the Garden of Remembrance at the City Hall and approved the arrangements as outlined.

### **Cross-Cutting Issues**

#### **EU Summit - Active and Healthy Ageing Dublin 13th- 14th June**

(Mrs. G. McEvoy, Senior Environmental Health Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was advised that an EU summit on Active and Healthy Ageing was being held in Dublin on 13th and 14th June, 2013 in association with the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The invitation event would be attended by the EU Commissionaire, Marie Geoghegan-Quinn, Senior EU and national policy makers, senior executives, mayors and leaders of existing and aspiring age-friendly cities and an invitation to attend had been issued to Belfast.

The summit aimed to provide a unique opportunity to set the agenda for an Age-Friendly Europe at a time when the ageing population was profoundly challenging fiscal sustainability. The event would provide an opportunity for the Council to help shape that agenda. It was hoped that the summit would help drive Europe's prosperity by charting a path for economic growth, improved health delivery, effective financial planning and intergenerational aspiration for life-long learning and activity. It was anticipated that attending the event would also provide an opportunity for the Council to learn from the experiences of other cities and ensure it was linked into emerging developments in the age-friendly agenda across Europe. The Health and Environmental Services Committee, at its meeting on 10th April, had considered a similar report and had authorised the Chairman of that Committee (or their nominee) to attend the summit.

The programme for the summit was developing and the organisers had indicated that they would also be extending an invitation to the Lord Mayor of Belfast, together with invited mayors from across Europe, to attend the event and to sign a declaration, which set out the vision, principles and commitments for municipal and national leaders for age-friendly cities in a European context.

The All-Party Reference Group on Older People, which was chaired by Councillor Kelly, oversaw the work of the Council in this area and accordingly it was recommended that she (or her nominee) be authorised to attend the summit. It was recommended also, that an appropriate Elected Member be granted authority to sign the declaration on behalf of the Council.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Traffic Congestion in the City**

A Member requested that a report in relation to the traffic congestion in the City be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee agreed that, in the first instance, and as he had done so previously the Lord Mayor be requested to host a meeting of the relevant stakeholders and key personnel to discuss the matter.

Chairman