

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 13th December, 2013

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Robinson (Chairman);
Aldermen Campbell and Newton;
Councillors Attwood, Carson, Clarke, Corr,
Hargey, Hendron, Jones, McCabe, McCarthy,
McVeigh, Mullan, Newton, Reynolds and Spence.

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

Apologies

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

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 8th, 15th and 22nd November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd December.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Investment Programme

Leisure Transformation Programme

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

The Director of Parks and Leisure submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided a detailed analysis of the three business model options for the future delivery of leisure services in the City.

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Trades Unions to address the Committee in relation to the proposals. The Committee agreed to receive two deputations, namely, a joint presentation from Unite, GMB and SIPTU; and a second presentation from a representative of NIPSA.

Prior to the deputations being admitted, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the report until its second meeting in January, 2014 to allow the

Members to consider any comments which the representatives of the Trades Unions might make.

NIPSA

Ms. A. McMillan, NIPSA, was admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Ms. McMillan welcomed the Committee's decision to defer until January consideration of the leisure transformation report. She outlined the concerns of the members of the Union regarding two of the options in the report and indicated that the best option was to retain the provision through an in-house transformed model. She requested that an opportunity be given to Union representatives to access the Deloitte report and any associated documentation so that staff could prepare a report and/or presentation, detailing a number of alternative model options, prior to the Committee considering the matter in January.

Ms. McMillan thanked the Committee for receiving her and she retired from the meeting.

UNITE, GMB and SIPTU

Representatives of the above-mentioned Trades Unions, together with Messrs. G. O' Fachtna and J. Dawson, Trade Union Co-ordinators, were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. O'Fachtna read out, on behalf of the three Unions, a joint statement, copies of which were tabled for the information of the Members, which set out the position of the Unions in relation to the proposals. The statement outlined the concerns of the Unions in relation to both the privatisation and the non-profit distributing organisation (NPDO) models and gave its unequivocal support for an in-house model for the operation of leisure services in the City.

The deputation thanked the Committee for receiving them and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Deloitte report and any associated documentation be made available to the representatives of the Trades Unions.

Democratic Services and Governance

Schedule of Meetings 2014

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details of the dates and times of the meetings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for the period from January till May, 2014.

**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:

Appendix 1

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date Number Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Queen's University Belfast	'Seamus Heaney': A Conference and Commemoration" Conference Dinner 11th April, 2014 Approximately 250 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates at this celebration of the life and work of Seamus Heaney will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the Conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Belfast Community Sports Development Network	Sheer SKILL (Sporting Knowledge Igniting Lifelong Learning) Celebration 8th April, 2014 Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	This event will aim to recognise the opportunity for greater learning through the value of sport and community engagement. Since its inception many of the young people who have graduated have gained full and part-time employment within the sports and youth work sector across the City. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better support for people and communities' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £250
Loyal Orange Lodge 513	150th Anniversary of Loyal Orange Lodge 513 16th May, 2014 Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event will celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the Loyal Orange Lodge 513 and acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

<p>Chinese Welfare Association Northern Ireland</p>	<p>Chinese New Year 2014 2nd February, 2014 Approximately 400 people per show (2 shows)</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>This event will provide the opportunity for all communities to come together and celebrate and experience, with one of the oldest communities in Belfast t, Chinese culture in the Year of the Horse. It is hoped that the event will promote diversity and successful relationships with other communities.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>
<p>Belfast Men's Health Group</p>	<p>Men's Health Week Event 2013 11th June, 2014 Approximately 300 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will build on the success of the 2011, 2012 and 2013 events and will focus on the theme of Men's Health Week which is Opportunities and Challenges.</p> <p>This event aims to promote the importance of men taking part in physical activity while highlighting the range of activities they can participate in to enhance their health.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £750</p>
<p>Ulster Youth Choir</p>	<p>Summer Concert 2014 – 'A Commemoration of the Centenary of World War 1' 8th August, 2014 Approximately 400 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will showcase the work of the Ulster Youth Choir. The concert will be the culmination of a residential which provides the opportunity for young people from all backgrounds to come together to study music and receive vocal training. The theme of the event will be a commemoration of the Centenary of World War 1.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better opportunities for success' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost of £1,000</p>

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 meetings on 14th December, 2012, and 19th April 2013 considered reports on emerging options relating to new political management arrangements for the new Council.

This included a high-level overview of the range of options which were likely to emerge as part of the local government reform legislative programme (i.e. Reorganisation Bill) regarding future governance and political management arrangements and also an overview of the three possible governance structures that were likely to be presented in the Bill (i) Traditional Committee System, (ii) Cabinet System, (iii) Streamlined Committee System.

1.2 Members then 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. At these briefings the parties agreed that they would prefer to await the release of the Reorganisation Bill before discussing possible models for the Council.

1.3 The re-organisation Bill was laid before the Assembly in July 2013 and the purpose of the report is to provide to members a process of engagement which will allow recommendations to be made to the Shadow Council on new possible political management structures for the new Council.

1.4 As agreed in previous reports discussions concerning any potential new political management arrangements will be considered in line with the good governance principles within which the Council currently operates.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The three governance options laid out in the re-organisation Bill which Councils may choose from reflect those already outlined to members; the traditional committee system, a cabinet system or a streamlined committee system. While they operate in different ways every option will have to take account of the current and new functions and powers that the Council will be responsible for. This essentially means that any new arrangements will have to consider following elements;

2.2

Strategic	At its highest level the Council will have to have in place structures which will set the overall policy and strategy of the organisation, allocate resources and manage performance. With the additional powers and transferring functions this will also include the development of a community plan and city outcomes, the local area plan and regeneration frameworks.
Thematic	Given the need to deliver against outcomes it is likely that specific structures will need to be put in place at a thematic level such as safety, health and well being etc. as set out in the Community Plan. Through these structures members would develop and oversee the organisations contribution to the delivery of city wide outcomes in a joined up way.

Operational Delivery	Members will continue to oversee the delivery of Council Services ensuring that they are focussed on the thematic outcomes and also value for money. Decisions will also have to be made on services which will be delivered at a city wide level and those which can be tailored to specific areas.
Regulatory Functions	Within the element Members will oversee the delivery of statutory responsibilities e.g. licensing, regulatory environmental health issues, waste, cleansing, building control, registration of births/deaths/marriages, burials etc. They will also be involved in establishing standards and undertaking audit and scrutiny roles. With the transfer of planning the Council will have to consider the future delivery of statutory planning functions including creation of development plans, adjudication of planning applications and enforcement against breaches to planning decisions.
Area / Neighbourhood Working	Members are already involved in area working groups identifying local needs and priorities. In the new Council governance structures will have to support the development of local areas plans, work with the operational delivery strand to agree service that need to be specifically targeted in certain areas, and ensure that relevant thematic outcomes at city wide level are targeting local need.

External Relations and Partnerships	Fundamental to the work of all elements of the new governance structures will be its connectivity to external partners at all levels, both in developing city and areas plans but also in their successful delivery. Members will have to consider how the internal governance structures will input and relate to city wide frameworks, regional structures and local area partnerships.
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2.3 Regardless of the system of governance selected for the new Council in 2015, the Reorganisation Bill is proposing 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* – 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* - A system of call-in is being 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.

2.4 In order to develop new arrangements members will have to understand in detail the possible roles of each of these elements outlined above and how they will operate in practice. They will also have to consider what implications of the proposed checks and balances will mean for any decision making process and how they would be applied.

At its meeting in September 2013 Committee agreed to join the Improvement and Efficiencies South East organisation (iESE), a social enterprise owned by local authorities in the South East of England which provides services and support to public sector bodies across the United Kingdom. They have worked with a number of organisations on the development and implementation of new structures, drawing on best practice and working with member piers across local government. It is therefore recommended that a number of briefing sessions and workshops are held in the first few months of 2014 and that iESE supported by member piers facilitate these discussions as set out below.

2.5 Proposals for Engagement

Committee agreed at its meeting on 22nd November to re constitute the members Governance Steering Group to allow detailed discussion on some of the complex issues before bringing these to committee for decisions. In addition to this it will be necessary to engage with the Committee, the STC and individual Party Groups.

January and February 2013

A workshop with the Governance Steering Panel looking in more detail at the key issues, how they apply to the various models outlined in the Re-organisation Bill and how they would operate in practice.

Briefings with Party Groups on the various elements of any new governance structure including the outworkings of the Governance Steering Panel.

Report to Committee on the feedback from the various sessions including draft governance proposals for the new organisation.

All sessions will be facilitated by iESE with input from Jonathan Huish and other member peers and will draw on examples from other areas. In addition party groups will be able to draw on advice from the Member peers over and above the process outlined above.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 All costs associated with this have been included in the previously agreed budget for Local Government Reform.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications None.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and
1) To agree the proposals for engagement set out at 2.5 above.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance/Value-for-Money

Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 6th December.

Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel of 10th December.

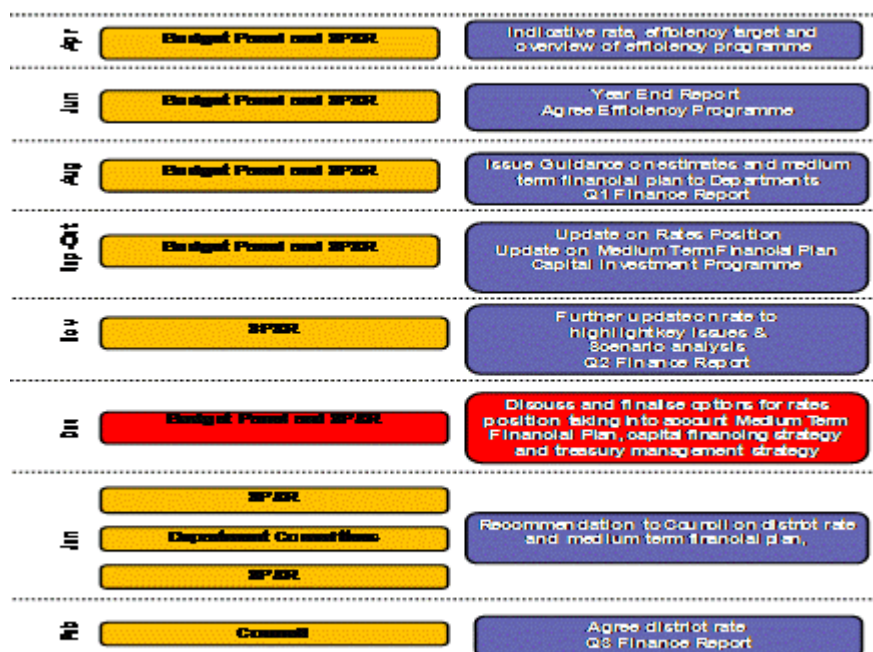
Rate Setting 2014/15

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 This report provides an update for Members and considers final options for the 2014/15 revenue estimates, in line with the summary of the rate setting process for 2014/15 outlined in figure 1 below.

Agreed rate setting process for 2014/15



2.0 Key Issues

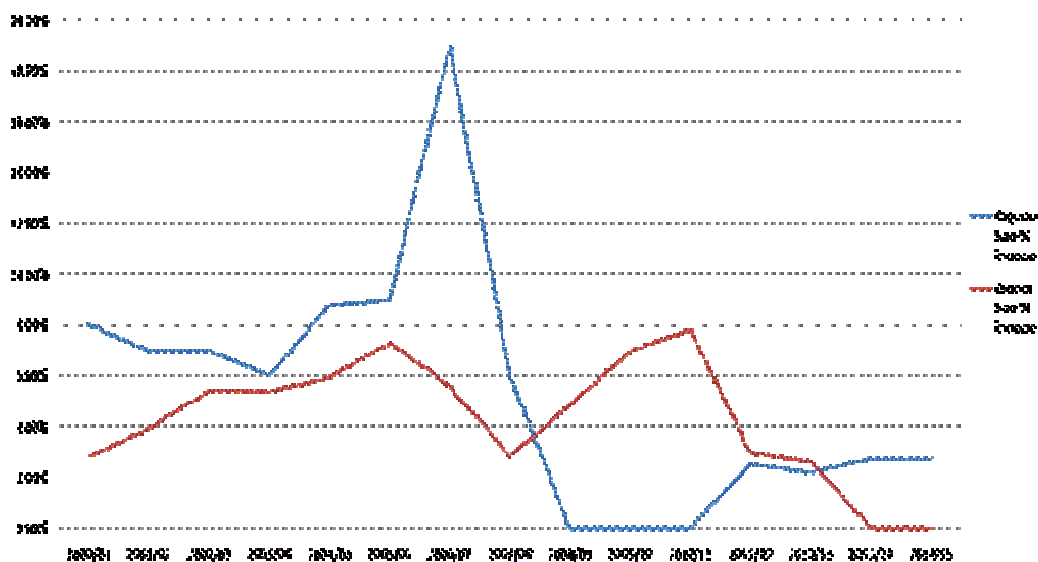
- 2.1 At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 22 November 2013, Members were advised that departments had completed their estimates for 2014/15 and that the outcome was that an increase of £1,295,800 (1%) would be required for 2014/15.

At the Committee it was agreed that officers should present a report to the Committee in December 2013 based on the delivery of a 0% rate. The setting of a zero rate would represent a reduction of 2.2% in real terms based on the current CPI rate. This would mean that for the first time the Council would have set a 0% district rate in two consecutive years.

- 2.2 Since the report to Committee in November 2013, the Financial Services Section has worked with departments to review the draft revenue estimates and growth proposals. This review took into account the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in November 2013 in relation to the review of security and the previous decisions of the Committee to establish specified reserves and funds for local government reform and non recurring capital expenditure.
- 2.3 As a result of this work the following adjustments to the revenue estimates have been made which will enable a zero district rate to be set by the Council for 2014/15.
1. Estimated savings arising from the implementation of the review of security have been removed totalling £300k. The actual level of savings will depend on the preferred option agreed by Committee in early 2014. A verbal update will be provided to the Committee on 13 December on the outcome of the voluntary redundancy exercise.
 2. The Council has been advised by the Department of Finance and Personnel on the 2 December 2013 of an increase in the de-rating grant for Belfast amounting to £159k.
 3. The detailed work on the revenue estimates has been completed which has enabled a reduction of the estimates by £836k through the inclusion of additional income (£211k), removal of non-recurring expenditure requests (£88k), budgetary challenge (£255k) and realignment of planned maintenance budgets (£282k).
- 2.4 Taking account the above actions it would be possible for the Council to deliver a zero increase on the District Rate in 2014/15. The graph below shows the regional and district rates set over the past 15 years. For the period of 2011/12 – 2014/15

the council will have a record of district rates set below the level of inflation – 2.95%, 2.6%, 0% and 0%.

District & Regional Rate Increases



- 2.5 **Capital Programme:** This is used to pay for enhancements to existing council assets or for the provision of new assets owned by the council. The capital programme is financed through an annual budget of £10.14m and this budget is sufficient to meet the spending plans included in the council's investment programme and therefore no increase to the capital financing budget is required for 2014/15.
- 2.6 **Leisure Capital Transformation Financing:** This will be used to pay the £38m for the first phase of Leisure capital investment in Olympia and Andersonstown. The annual financing budget of £3.23m has been provided through the agreed transfer from the annual Belfast Investment Fund contribution meaning that no increase is required for 2014/15.
- 2.7 **Belfast Investment Fund:** This is used to finance investment package schemes for non-council assets. The current annual contribution to the fund of £2.77m will ensure that £20m of Belfast Investment Funding is available by 2014/15. There is therefore no requirement to increase the current level of contribution to the Belfast Investment Fund during 2014/15.

- 2.8 Local Investment Fund – This is used to fund non-council neighbourhood capital projects for non-council assets. The £5m fund has been fully financed and there is therefore no requirement to make additional contributions through the district rate during 2014/15.
- 2.9 Reserves – The council's general reserves position is forecast to be at least £13m by the end of 2013/14. Given the uncertainty surrounding the financial implications of local government reform and the new rate base it is believed that this level of reserves is appropriate.
- 2.10 Rate Base – The LPS have advised that there is likely to be marginal growth in Estimated Penny Product (EPP) for 2014/15.
- 2.11 Members will be aware that for the purposes of setting the District rate in 2012/13 and 2013/14, the Committee agreed that the EPP for both years should be kept at the 2011/12 level, given the difficult economic environment and the risk of decline in the rate base.
- 2.12 Officers have worked closely with the LPS to determine the risks associated with accepting a marginal growth forecast in the rate base in 2014/15. Given the current economic environment, ongoing rates appeals and the level of outstanding debt and write offs, the uncertainty around the new rate base and the impact of the non-domestic revaluation exercise in 2015 and the fluctuations in yearend rate settlements it is the view of the Director of Finance and Resources that it would be prudent to maintain the EPP at the 2013/14 level. This approach and recommendation has been validated by the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV).
- 2.13 Members will be aware that the collection performance of LPS has been a matter of concern for the Council and for members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for a number of years, especially when benchmarked against the performance of local authorities in England and Wales.
- 2.14 On the 1 December 2013, the Finance Minister, Simon Hamilton, announced that he has commissioned a review of the rate collection and the recovery processes. As part of the Minister's reform agenda, the Department of Finance and Personnel will be carrying out a strategic assessment of rate collection and recovery with the assistance of external advice and expertise from Ernst & Young, who have experience in engaging with leading collection agencies in the public and private sector. This will be a short, focussed review which will be completed by the end of the year.

- 2.15 The following extract of the Minister's statement should be of particular interest to the Committee

'I want to benchmark what LPS does against the best in Britain because I want LPS to become the best. A reformed public sector providing its people with first rate public services needs a cutting edge rates collection agency. This review and its outcomes can assist us in achieving that aim of an innovative and reform orientated public sector as well as underpinning our efforts to deliver world class public services to the people of Northern Ireland.'

- 2.16 In summary, a zero rate for 2014/15 is deliverable in the context of:

1. Meeting the running costs of the organisation.
2. Delivering the financial commitments detailed in the investment programme.
3. The Estimated Penny Product (rate base) remaining at the 2013/14 level.

3.0 Impact on Ratepayer

- 3.1 A rates bill in Belfast is made up of 56% Regional Rate and 44% District Rate. The Regional Rate, subject to Executive approval, is due to increase by 2.7%. If the Council sets a zero rate, this means the ratepayers total bill will increase by 1.49%. The table in Appendix A shows the monetary impact on average property types.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 In order to prepare the rates report for the 10 January 2014 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, Members are requested to agree the following:
1. Officers prepare the departmental cash limits report based on a zero district rate as discussed in Section 2 above.
 2. Base rate calculations on zero growth in the Estimated Penny Product as discussed in paragraph 2.10 above.
 3. That the report to the Committee in January 2014 includes a 'Key Messages' briefing prepared by the Head of Corporate Communications "

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Review of Processes

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th November, it had agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting containing proposals for an independent review of the process which had led to the Belfast City Centre – Enhanced Christmas in Belfast Campaign proposals coming forward. The review would examine decision-making processes, Member/officer relationships, compliance with codes of conduct, governance and the introduction of future agreed protocols.

The Director of Finance and Resources reported that iESE, the mutual organisation which the Council had joined, was supporting the Council in the development of governance options as part of local government reform. It had agreed, if it was acceptable to the Committee, to carry out the review of the Christmas in Belfast decision-making as part of the governance work. It was proposed that the scope of the review would cover:

- how the overall process was managed in the context of the decision-making process currently in place in the Council;
- how engagement and briefings with Parties were managed in the lead up to the Council meeting;
- how the decision from Full Council was communicated to the Parties;
- what areas for improvements to the process of decision-making could be identified and implemented; and
- the appropriateness of the Member and officer behaviour during the process.

The Committee agreed to iESE carrying out the review and to the scope and approach as outlined.

Replacement of the Lord Mayor's Official Vehicle

The Committee approved the commencement of a tendering exercise, on both an outright purchase and on a lease basis, for the replacement of the official vehicle for the Lord Mayor and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to accept the most advantageous tender received.

Tenders for the Supply and Delivery of Annual Supplies

The Committee approved the commencement of tendering exercises and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to accept the most advantageous tenders received in respect of the following:

<u>Contract</u>	<u>Indicative Costs Per Annum</u>	<u>Period of Contract</u>
Supply of bottled water	£19,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Supply of Mains Fed Water	£13,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Provision of a Courier Service	£12,000	1 year, with 3 years optional renewal
Supply and Delivery of Promotional Items	£72,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Hire of Machinery	£300,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal

Approval to Seek Tenders – Bobbin Coffee Outlet

The Committee granted approval for the commencement of a tendering exercise for the Bobbin Coffee Shop catering franchise for an initial period of one year, with two further one-year extensions, exercisable solely at the Council's discretion, and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to award the contract on the basis of the most advantageous tender received.

Approval to Seek Tenders for the Provision of Office Furniture Porterage Services

The Committee granted approval for the commencement of a tendering exercise for the provision of office furniture porterage services for an initial period of one year, with two further one-year extensions, exercisable solely at the Council's discretion, and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to accept the most advantageous tender received.

Approval to Seek Maintenance Tenders for 2014

The Committee approved the commencement of tendering exercises and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to accept the most advantageous tenders received in respect of the following:

<u>Goods and Services</u>	<u>Estimated Value per Annum</u>	<u>Period of Contract</u>
Repair, maintenance and minor works for CCTV	£75,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Repair, maintenance and minor works for general metal works and small engineering	£125,000	1 year, with two years optional renewal
Drain clearance and camera surveys	£40,000	1 year, with two years optional renewal
Supply and delivery of ironmongery	£120,000	1 year, with two years optional renewal
Supply and delivery of litter pickers	£60,000	1 year, with two years optional renewal
Supply and delivery of paints and oils	£115,000	1 year, with two years optional renewal
Supply and delivery of timber products	£85,000	1 year, with two years optional renewal

Human Resources

(Mrs. J. Minne, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with these items.)

Retirement of Head of Audit, Governance and Risk

The Committee was advised that the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services had advised that he would retire from the Council later in the month. The Members were reminded that discussions were ongoing within Government on the transfer of the planning and regeneration functions to Councils as part of the Local Government Reform. Elections to the Shadow Council were scheduled for May, 2014, with the new Belfast City Council due to be established in May, 2015. As part of the change process required bringing the new Council into being, the Council would have to give consideration to a new organisational structure, both in terms of governance, that is, the process by which it politically makes decisions and the officer/departmental structures which would support that.

It was therefore recommended that interim arrangements were made to replace the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk post pending a more comprehensive review of organisational structures in the context of Local Government Reform. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the post of Audit, Governance and Risk Manager (PO10) reported directly to the Head of Service and it had a full deputising responsibility

in the absence of the post holder. Therefore, that post was eligible to act up to the higher graded post if required by a chief officer as per the National Joint Council scheme of conditions of service. That was applicable to two current post holders and it was therefore proposed to seek expressions of interest to “act-up” from both those officers. Should more than one officer express an interest in the role, a merit-based selection would take place in accordance with the organisation’s recruitment processes.

The Committee agreed that the role of Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services be covered through an interim “acting-up” basis and noted that the selected officer’s substantive post would be required to be backfilled on a temporary basis given the workload in that function.

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.

The Committee noted the appointment.

Interim Role of Assistant Chief Executive

(The Head of Human Resources left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.)

The Chief Executive reported that, following a selection process for an officer to undertake the duties associated with the role of interim Assistant Chief Executive, the Selection Panel had appointed Mrs. Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources, to undertake the additional duties.

Noted.

Asset Management

Greater Ballysillan Masterplan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Earlier this year, DSD, together with Ballysillan /Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Partnership and North Belfast Partnership appointed the Paul Hogarth Company to prepare a Masterplan for Greater Ballysillan. The intention for the Masterplan, which is currently out for public consultation, is that it will be used by central and local government, community organisations and the private sector to plan investment in the area over the next 10 – 20 years. The draft Masterplan recognises that many parts of Greater Ballysillan and North Belfast face significant challenges of a social, economic and political nature**

Draft Masterplan Summary:

- 1.2 The study area includes, but is not limited to, the Ballysillan /Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Area. This area covers a wide area of North Belfast and includes the communities of Glenbank, Benview, Sunningdale, Wheatfield and Glenbryn. Geographically, the study area extends along the Crumlin Road, Oldpark Road, Cavehill Road, Westland Road and the Ballysillan Road.
- 1.3 The proposed draft Vision Statement is: *‘As the source of the River Farset to which Belfast owes its name, Greater Ballysillan will rise to become a vibrant and connected part of a prosperous city. Our children will be afforded access to every opportunity as they along with all residents old and new, form a positive, healthy and welcoming community, proud to call Ballysillan home.*
- 1.4 Eight key aims and objectives are identified.
- A Connected Ballysillan – promote strong, connected and cohesive communities with improved access to Belfast City Centre and wider region.
 - A Sustainable Ballysillan – to secure stable levels of population while increasing opportunities for employment and access to decent and affordable homes.
 - A Healthy Ballysillan – to reduce health inequalities and promote the health and wellbeing of all residents.
 - A Diverse Ballysillan – to recognise, respect and celebrate North Belfast’s cultural heritage and diversity in a way that reflects its interests of people from all sections of society.
 - An Empowered Ballysillan – support existing and encouraging new local business ventures while raising levels of educational achievement and skills base across North Belfast.
 - A Vibrant Ballysillan – develop Ballysillan as a vibrant destination for social and economic activity.
 - A Natural Ballysillan – to make better use of Ballysillan’s natural resources while protecting and enhancing its bio diversity and unique landscape setting.
 - A Welcoming Ballysillan – forge an environment which is inviting and embraces new residents and visitors from all communities.

- 1.5 The draft Masterplan is set out in a number of themes and proposed immediate, short medium and long term projects, as follows:

A: Into Action: Laying the Groundwork for future regeneration. Proposed immediate projects include:

- (i) Capacity Building – working at local level to deliver community regeneration
- (ii) Targeting Dereliction – joined up approach; priority on quick wins
- (iii) Meanwhile Uses – identifying vacant buildings suitable for socially beneficial uses
- (iv) Communication Channels – improving communication between public and community

B: Sustainable Neighbourhoods: Supporting existing neighbourhood services. Proposed projects:

- (i) Neighbourhood Centre (short term) – environmental improvements and shop frontage upgrades
- (ii) Neighbourhood Parks (short term) – transforming existing green spaces into new neighbourhood parks with improved seating, lighting and play areas
- (iii) Collaborative Provision (immediate) – coordinating more effectively the efforts of public and community sector service providers

C: Housing: Increasing housing numbers and upgrading existing stock:

- (i) Upgrade of existing housing stock (short term) – improving social housing stock within existing communities including Silverstream and Glenbank.
- (ii) New Mixed Tenure Development (short term)

D: Greenway Network: Linking existing green spaces and river courses:

- (i) Rediscovered Rivers (short term) – uncovering where possible the rivers and streams that flow through Ballysillan.
- (ii) Continuous Footpaths/Cycle Paths (short term) – establishing a network of footpaths and cycle paths as part of citywide project to connect open spaces, neighbourhoods, schools and Belfast Hills.
- (iii) Orientation and Interpretation (short term) – Interpretation boards, public art and events.
- (iv) new outdoor activity and education centre

E: The Park: Creating a new park for active and passive pursuits and transforming Ballysillan Playing Fields into Ballysillan Park; a destination that will cater for both active and passive leisure activities within a high quality parkland setting, portions of which would include new built frontage.

- (i) Enhance sports provision (short term) – continued upgrading of sports provision in the Ballysillan Playing Fields,

including changing facilities, enhances pitch provision, lighting and mixed use games areas

(ii) High Quality Parkland (medium term) – introducing formalised and attractive parkland features including new planting, seating, lighting and public art within network of quality footpaths and trails.

(iii) New Park Frontage (medium term) – establishing built frontage directly onto the new park where possible so as to help keep it lively, animated and safer.

F: The Street: Formalising a new street along a stretch of the Ballysillan Road, alongside a programme of environmental improvements and introduction of quality mixed use development:

(i) Streetscape Improvements (medium term) – introducing a good quality street environment along a central stretch of Ballysillan Road. Improvement works to include new paving, street furniture, tree planting and lighting.

(ii) Mixed Used Frontage (medium term) – Provision of mixed use street frontage to include opportunities for community and commercial development. Opportunity for a range of residential accommodation as part of the new street frontage.

G: Leisure Plus: Complementing leisure and sports provision through establishment of a coordinates sports programme, upgrading of existing facilities and identification of additional compatible services.

(i) Revitalised Leisure Centre (medium term) – Renewal of Leisure Centre

(ii) Compatible Service Provision (medium term) – Supporting compatible uses from the public, private and community sectors to complement those at the leisure centre. Uses could include pharmacy and healthy food outlets in addition to the emerging ‘health hub’ concept at the neighbouring Everton Complex.

(iii) Coordinated Sports Programme (medium term)

H: Linked Education: Strengthening the relationship between the communities of Greater Ballysillan and its schools through utilisation of facilities.

(i) Education Corridor (medium term) – Linking up existing and proposed schools

(ii) Potential Shared Facility (long term) – Exploring the potential and viability of a new community educational facility within centre of Greater Ballysillan.

I: Ways to Work: Generating new economic activities within Greater Ballysillan by enabling local companies and new businesses to set up own door offices and workshops, supported in times by hotel facilities.

- (i) Ballysillan Business Centre (long term) – Provision of affordable, short term office space
- (ii) Incubator Workshops (long term) – New workshops for small businesses
- (iii) Hotel and Conference Centre (medium term) – new small hotel as part of The Street

J: Creative Centre: Community arts programme for arts and cultural events with longer term aspiration to establish a creative centre, a destination landmark at entrance to Ballysillan Park.

- (i) Creative Centre (long term) – Landmark centre for creative arts and industries
- (ii) Major Community Arts Programme (short term)

K: Reconnection: Strengthen connections between The Street, The Park and neighbouring communities and facing challenges of existing peacelines.

- (i) Generational Projects (short term) – Cross community projects over a period of several years
- (ii) Forging Cohesive Communities (short term) – Initiate and sustain dialogue between adjoining communities.
- (iii) Connecting The Street (long term) – Linking communities of Upper Ardoyne and Wheatfield to the new street and park via a short spur off the upper end of the Ardoyne Road.
- (iv) Phased Peaceline Process (long term) – Shared road map leading to potential removal of all peacelines.

2 **Key Issues**

Proposed Council Response:

- 2.1 The Councils welcomes proposals that set out a vision for the Greater Ballysillan area over the next 10 -20 year period, which should assist in planning any future investment in the area as well as informing the community planning process. The Council would agree that the aims and objectives as set out in the draft Masterplan are a sound basis upon which to assess project proposals. However, in the context of LGR and the transfer of regeneration functions we would highlight the need for further refinement of the project proposals and the importance of having have a robust implementation and delivery plan aligned to funding, resources, governance, roles and responsibilities.

- 2.2 It would be useful if the aims and objectives as set out at the start of the draft Masterplan were aligned to the proposed projects which could assist in determining outcomes; for example the proposed projects around leisure would align with the stated objective of a Healthy Ballysillian and reducing health inequalities etc.
- 2.3 The plan at this stage does not identify the responsible partners or delivery mechanisms and this will be important going forward in terms of responsibility and delivery and in the context of managing expectations. The Council would endorse the principle of collaborative provision and the focus on capacity building and working at local level to ensure that the right skills, organisations and structures are in place to deliver effective community regeneration. It will be important that there is strong community involvement and responsibility and partnership working with statutory bodies.
- 2.4 The Council would fully support the objective of connectivity and improved accessibility to the city centre and wider region but would suggest that this objective could be more clearly articulated within the actual project proposals. Key strands within the Council's draft City Masterplan include both the 'Neighbourhood City' concept with strategic service gateways and regeneration hubs linked to the city centre, as well as an 'Accessible & Connected City' with connected movement throughout the city region.
- 2.5 The proposals in relation to leisure align with the Council's Leisure Transformation Programme and other strategies including playing pitches. Over the next 10 years the Council are investing £105million to transform our leisure centres. The Council has agreed a draft outline plan on how we aim to transform our services through a phased capital investment approach which is made up of 3 phases. Currently it is envisaged that within Phase 3 we will look at creating a 'one public estate' model at a number of centres including Ballysillian. The plan is still under political discussion and there is potential for some centres to be moved between phases. In terms of delivery, the Council's preferred approach is partnership working as demonstrated through our delivery in Phase 1 (Olympia and Andersonstown) and providing integrated services. The Guiding Principles underpinning the Leisure Transformation Programme include the following:

- **Quality:** Council leisure facilities should be fit for purpose, attractive and welcoming.
- **Focus on health and well-being outcomes:** Working with others to improve the health of the population, especially those most in need, and those with the most to gain, is an essential priority to improve individual and community quality of life and if we are to limit the cost to our society and our economy of avoidable ill-health.
- **Value for money:** Future Council investment in its leisure estate should focus on provision of a value for money leisure service demonstrated through user numbers, health and well-being outcomes and financial metrics. The physical asset base will need to maximise efficiency and income generation opportunities across Council assets and, ultimately, the wider public estate.
- **Balanced investment and accessibility:** There should be sufficient provision within each quarter of the city of wet, dry, health and fitness facilities that cater for a diversity of activity and meets the needs of different ages and abilities. The facilities should be well-connected, welcoming and safe, and promote connectivity, cohesion, 'shared-ness' and access for all.
- **Partnership:** Partnering opportunities (for example, with adjacent Councils, private sector, education estate and universities etc) and strategic opportunities should be actively explored, pursued and integrated into the transformation plan.
- **Affordability:** A capital financing strategy will be required to support the building of a new leisure estate. This strategy will need to be considered in the context of current capital financing requirements and the commitment, as part of the Investment Programme, to set the district rate at inflation or below for the next three years. Financing will need to include revenue savings generated from within the leisure budget. A key element of the transformation of leisure provision will be to ensure its sustainability, in terms of programming and ongoing running costs.

- 2.6 The Council would support the principle of delivering underutilised land but would also wish to highlight that any new development should make adequate provision for good quality accessible public open space.
- 2.7 The proposals for increasing housing numbers aligns with the Council's draft City Masterplan, which advocates for population increase and the potential contribution that housing led regeneration can make
- 2.8 The Council would support the concept of developing an integrated greenway network, but the detail of this would require further consideration, particularly in terms of the potential impact on Council owned assets. The proposed Greenway Network projects are noted as being short term but we would suggest that these are longer term actions and would require further consideration to examine feasibility and sustainability.
- 2.9 In terms of the proposals for enhanced sports provision and high quality parkland, it should be noted that under the Council's current Pitches Strategy new changing facilities are planned for Ballysillan Playing Fields. In addition, the Council is currently reviewing its Pitches Strategy and the outcome of this will determine the level of future pitch provision across the city including the Ballysillan area. The Council also endeavours to provide high quality parkland across all its parks and open space and to seek quality assurance initiatives such as Green Flag status. There is also a Playground Improvement Programme in place.
- 2.10 It is also worth highlighting that the development of community gardens can make a positive contribution to the proposals for enhanced neighbourhood parks and high quality parkland. There are currently several community gardens in the area, including Glenbank, Ballysillan Community Gardens and Ballysillan Leisure Centre Community Garden. The Council currently works with Conservation Volunteers to deliver these and they are open to the local community. There is also a community garden at the Waterworks which is operated by 'Grow'.
- 2.11 In terms of the proposals for 'The Street' & 'The Park', this concept of a new heart for the Greater Ballysillan plan area is encouraging. However the broad proposals contained within the plan raise various issues for which there is not enough detail to allow for an informed response. The proposals appear to impact upon existing land uses in the area and it is difficult to adequately determine the impact on Ballysillan Playing Fields, particularly around proposals for housing at the edge of these and the proposed new connection through the playing fields and leased site. The current Ballysillan

Playing Fields is an important leisure and recreational asset for this part of the city and the Council's general principle is to retain and enhance open space provision.

- 2.12 In relation to proposals for commercial development, hotel and business space there needs to be a clearer articulation of the underlying assessment of the viability of such proposals. These should be based on a robust assessment, demand analysis and market assessment. Proposals to develop a Creative Centre would also appear to impact upon Ballysillan Playing Fields and again there would need to be a robust case for the proposed investment. In addition the viability and sustainability will need to be considered in the context of existing facilities and the Cultural Strategy proposals.**
- 2.13 In terms of proposals around linked education and strengthening the relationship between communities and schools, the Council would support the concept of shared facilities particularly given the capital constraints across the public sector and the desire to maximise the use of assets**
- 2.14 The desire to generate new economic activities within Greater Ballysillan is positive. However, the emphasis appears to be on physical facilities which again raises the same issue around viability, demand and market assessment as highlighted above. There appears to be an absence of linked employability and skills development initiatives which could be established in parallel with proposed developments.**
- 2.15 The creation of local employment opportunities could however support the concept of The Street and the establishment of a focus for the plan area. This concept would need to be more refined to consider the implications for the existing centres and their future relationship to the 'Street'.**
- 2.16 It would also appear that the individual projects appear to be primarily focused on Ballysillan Playing Fields/ The Park and immediate environs. There is limited proposed provision for other areas within the plan area or consideration of how this scale of development would impact on the wider area. The reliance on the use of public open space for the development of new proposals also appears questionable given the recognition of significant levels of dereliction and underused land.**

- 2.17 There appears to be some overlap with the Council's current programmes and initiatives. Going forward it may be that we can seek to align, where possible, programmes to ensure targeted intervention and reduce duplication. However more detail will be required in order to ensure aligned coordination and optimal use of scarce resources. The Council's Dilapidated Buildings project for eg could align with the proposal for tackling dereliction.
- 2.18 Future refinement of the concept proposals should be a priority. In the absence of a robust implementation and delivery plan aligned to funding, resources, governance, roles and responsibilities there is a significant risk that the Masterplan will be aspirational in nature and could raise unrealistic expectations. It is noted that whilst the plan appears to be post 2015 a number of timeframes are immediate i.e. 0-1 year.
- 2.19 The focus of the draft Masterplan is heavily reliant on The Street commercial element, which is only an outline concept. However, if the commercial elements prove unviable following a detailed assessment or lack of market demand, then there may be a risk that the remaining components of the plan will become disjointed and unsustainable. The housing does however appear to be a major component and the phasing of this could be very important in order to support and sustain other elements of the plan and address the issue of under used land.
- 2.20 It is also noted that the plan at the end of the document contains a number of elements/projects which are not referenced within the body of the report document and it would be preferable that cross referencing of both the plan and the report were consistent.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 Resource implications are unknown at this stage.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 4.1 Equality implications will be assessed as appropriate by DSD.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to consider the above and advise if they wish to make any additional comments to the proposed Council response.”**

The Committee approved the foregoing comments as the Council’s response to the consultation on the Masterplan for Greater Ballysillan.

Update on ILLUMINATE Project

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will recall that the council secured over £200,000 of EU funding to install the new LED lighting features on the City Hall under the EU ILLUMINATE project. The system went live in March 2013.**
- 1.2 In making the case for approval of the project to the Committee the business case developed by the Facilities Management Section pointed to the potential for significant cost savings and associated CO₂ emissions reductions, and an assurance was given that once quantifiable data was available a report would be brought back to the Committee quantifying any savings made.**
- 1.3 The following figures are based on a direct comparison of actual usage for a six-month period as compared with the same period last year;**

System	Peak Load	Average Load	CO₂
Old system	19Kw	15Kw	37 tonnes
New LED system	10Kw	5Kw	4 tonnes

- 1.4 As can be seen from this, the new LED lighting system has reduced electricity usage by some 70%. Electricity costs to the council for the City Hall in 2012/13 were £16,720, however based on the usage reductions achieved thus far the annual cost in 2013/14 will be approx. £5,016, representing a saving of over £12,000 for the rate-payer.**
- 1.5 In addition, the new LED low-energy lighting creates significantly less CO₂ emissions and this single project has, in fact, contributed over 30% of the council’s corporate 1% reduction target for the year (approx. 48 tonnes).**

- 1.6 The new LED lighting has also attracted a great deal of positive media and public interest. Corporate Communications confirm that the video of the ILLUMINATE launch is one of the most popular videos on the council's YouTube channel with 4,532 views and has received the 3rd-highest number of 'likes' on the channel despite only being uploaded in April 2013. It is also well followed on social media postings.
- 1.7 In addition to the stated aims of reducing energy consumption, costs and CO₂ emissions, the system was implemented on the basis that it also has the potential to enhance good relations by allowing us to mark days of particular significance to local people and communities.
- 1.8 Members will be aware that, in addition to the agreed schedule, the system has already been used to mark a number of additional* days, most notably:-
- India Night
 - World Police & Fire Games
 - Child Cancer (Light it up Gold)
 - Belfast Book Festival Launch
 - Launch of Restaurant Week
 - Poppy Appeal launch
 - World Diabetes Day
 - Christmas Switch On
 - Philippine Flood Disaster
 - Holocaust Day (Jan 2014)
- * It should be noted that all of the above were approved on a 'one-off' basis and will not necessarily be repeated in 2014 or beyond.*
- 1.9 All of the above were either approved by committee; were part of council organised events or related to charities nominated by civic officer holders. The one exception was the Philippines Flood Disaster where a request from the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor was received to close to the chosen date to obtain approval. Delegated authority was used in this instance.
- 1.10 The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor have also requested that the building is lit up in South African colours to mark the funeral of Nelson Mandela and committee is asked for its view on this.
- 1.11 Since the main system went live additional works have commenced in terms of the installation of low-energy LED lighting in the interior of the City Hall, Malone House and Belfast Castle, all of which will produce associated energy and cost reductions. Most recently, additional EU funding has been secured in order to extend the LED lighting to the statues in the grounds of the City Hall, and this work will be complete by the end of March 2014.

1.12 There has in the past been some discussion around the desirability of extending the system to the Donegall Square South façade and there is currently the potential to perhaps attract additional EU funding to do so. It would therefore be useful to have the Committee's views on the desirability of pursuing this option.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Members are asked to note the positive energy consumption, financial savings and CO2 reductions outcomes and the very positive media and public interest in the ILLUMINATE system.

2.2 The Committee is also asked to give a view on the desirability of extending the system to the Donegall Square South façade. If this is something which the Committee is minded to explore a further report will be brought in due course.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

4.1 There are no direct equality or good relations implications arising from this report.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to note the above report and to give its views on the desirability of extending the system to the south façade.

5.2 The Committee is also asked for its position in terms of marking the occasion of Nelson Mandela's funeral by lighting the building appropriately."

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to the lighting up of the building to mark the occasion of Nelson Mandela's funeral as outlined.

Good Relations and Equality

(Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group of 29th November and approved the following:

Fields of Battle – Lands of Peace: Outdoor Exhibition

The decision of the Group to grant approval in principle to the Fields of Battle – Lands of Peace: Outdoor Exhibition being displayed in Belfast during 2016, subject to the cost being reasonable and appropriate funding being made available.

**Decade of Centenaries Exhibition –
Request from Cork City Council**

The decision of the Group to commend to the Committee that it grants authority for the loan of the Decade of Centenaries exhibition to Cork City Council, subject to the satisfactory completion of an appropriate loan agreement.

Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth

The decision of the Group to commend to the Committee that it agrees:

- (i) to fly the Commonwealth Flag on 10th March, 2014; and
- (ii) to establish a policy decision to fly the Commonwealth Flag each year on Commonwealth Day.

Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 9th December and approved the following:

Information Guide for Refugees and Advice Providers

The decision of the Partnership to request that funding of £5,000 be made available towards the production of an information guide for refugees and advice providers.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Notice of Motion – Human Trafficking and Exploitation

The Committee was reminded that the Assembly was in the process of considering Lord Morrow's Private Members' Bill entitled: "The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill". Lord Morrow's proposed legislation contained nineteen clauses which would seek to update Northern Ireland's laws on trafficking and prostitution.

The Committee was reminded further that the Council, at its meeting on 4th November, had passed the undernoted Notice of Motion in support of Lord Morrow's Bill:

"This Council recognises that human trafficking and exploitation is a growing problem in Northern Ireland.

It believes that existing statistics regarding the number of people trafficked in to Northern Ireland do not reflect the scale of the problem and are only the 'tip of the iceberg' in regard to the scale of the problem; it believes that no human being should be subjected to sexual exploitation, enforced labour or domestic servitude and condemns those who engage in human trafficking.

It believes that more action should be undertaken to support those who have escaped from exploitation and to punish those who exploit them; and accordingly it calls upon the Northern Ireland Assembly to endorse the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provision and Support for Victims) Bill."

The Democratic Services Manager advised that a detailed response had been received from the Justice Minister. In his response the Minister had welcomed in broad terms the steps which the Council had taken to highlight the issue of Human Trafficking and Exploitation. He had pointed out also that, whilst he might have significant concerns with certain aspects of the proposed legislation and had alluded to those within his correspondence, he stated that it was his intention to work constructively with Lord Morrow to address any concerns whilst the Bill was under consideration by the Justice Committee.

Noted.

Alderman Hugh Smyth

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that he had received, earlier in the week, a letter of resignation from Alderman Hugh Smyth, with effect from 31st December, 2013. He advised the Members that he would be discussing the matter with the Lord Mayor in order to mark the occasion appropriately.

Mrs. H. Francey

The Committee was advised also that Mrs. H. Francey had indicated her intention to retire from the Council in February, 2014. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mrs. Francey for the work she had undertaken to further good relations issues within the City during her time in the post of Good Relations Manager.

Chairman