

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 21st February, 2014

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Robinson (Chairman);  
Alderman Browne;  
Councillors Attwood, Carson, Clarke, Corr,  
Haire, Hargey, Hendron, Jones, Kennedy,  
Mac Giolla Mhín, 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;  
Mrs. J. Minne, Assistant Chief Executive/  
Head of Human Resources;  
Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental  
Services;  
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Campbell and Councillors McCabe and McCarthy.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillor McVeigh declared an interest in item 3(e) Leisure Transformation Programme, in that he was employed by SIPTU.

### Finance/Value-for-Money

#### Quarter 3 Financial Report

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

#### **"1.0 Relevant Background Information**

#### **1.1 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed on 18 June 2010 that:**

- **The Council would produce financial reporting packs for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and each Standing Committee on a quarterly basis**

- The Budget and Transformation Panel would also receive monthly financial updates if there were any significant issues to report.

1.2 The reporting pack contains a summary dashboard of the financial indicators and an executive summary explaining the financial performance. It also provides a more detailed explanation of each of the relevant indicators covering outturn for the quarter, payment of creditors, recovery of debt and procurement compliance.

## 2.0 Key Issues

### 2.1 Current and Forecast financial Position 2013/14

The financial position for Quarter 3 is a net departmental under-spend of £1.3m (1.5%). The forecast year end departmental position is an under-spend of £646k (0.5%) which after the reallocation of £275k to fund the 'Christmas in Belfast Campaign' agreed by the Committee on the 15 November 2013, provides a Committee level under spend of £371k (0.3%)

2.2 The main factors leading to the year-end under spend are the receipt of additional income in the Building Control Services arising from building notices, regularisation certificates, property certificates and LPS work together with in year employee cost savings arising from slippage in the recruitment for vacant posts.

### 2.3 Rate Income

The Land and Property Service (LPS) are forecasting a positive settlement of £416k for the Council which compares to the Quarter 1 forecast of £900k and the Quarter 2 forecast of £395k. This would result in an overall revenue surplus for the Council of £787k at the year-end.

### 2.4 Reserves

The general reserves balance at the start of the financial year was £13.3m. Based on the forecast movements, including the allocation of £1.15m to the Leisure Transformation Programme as agreed by Committee on the 23 August 2013, general reserves are expected to be £12.8m at the end of the financial year.

**Investment Programme**

- 2.5 Committed expenditure approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for the 3 year Capital Programme stands at £39.4m, leaving £35.6m of schemes within the 3 year programme at the uncommitted or emerging project stage.
- 2.6 Committed expenditure on LIF projects currently stands at £4.8m with actual expenditure of £571k incurred at the end of quarter 3.
- 2.7 The amount of levered external funding for the Investment Programme which has been agreed in principal is £69.9m, with £29.5m of these funds confirmed through letters of offer at the end of quarter 3. Members will be aware that the Council has recently received two further letters of offer relating to the Waterfront Hall Exhibition and Conference Centre and the Tropical Ravine which has increased the confirmed amount of levered external funding to £50.4m.
- 2.8 Actual capital expenditure for the period was £4.9m, while non-recurring expenditure was £669k.

**Other Financial Indicators**

- 2.9 The percentage of average for debt under 90 days old increased during the quarter to 71.9% which was above the target 65%.
- 2.10 The average number of creditors paid within 28 days for the year to date was 78.0% compared to a target of 80%

**3.0 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 The forecast year end revenue position is a surplus of £787k, arising from a forecast departmental under spend position of £371k and a forecast positive LPS settlement of £416k.

**4.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

There are no equality and good relations implications associated with the report.

**5.0 Recommendations**

Members are asked to consider setting aside an amount of £300k from the year end surplus to meet two specific areas of non recurring expenditure in 2014/15 as follows:-

- **£250k to fund the net expenditure of the Shadow Council during the period June 2014 to March 2015. A detailed budget for the Shadow Council will be presented to the Statutory Transition Committee in March 2014.**
- **£50k contribution to the Election Fund maintained by the Council. The additional contribution will offset the increased election costs in 2014 arising from the boundary changes.**

**5.2 Agree that no further reallocations of the forecast under spend be made at this stage given that the remaining forecast surplus for both the Council's budget and the rates position are close to break even."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy – Prudential Code and Treasury Management Indicators**

The Committee was advised that the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 required the Council to adopt the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Finance in Local Authorities. In so doing, the Council was required to agree a minimum revenue provision policy annually and set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objectives of which were to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 9th December, 2011, the Committee had approved the Council's Treasury Management Policy which was based on the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Treasury Management Policy required that a Treasury Management Strategy be presented to the Committee on an annual basis and that it was supported by a mid-year and year end treasury management reports.

The Director explained that the comparison of "Gross Borrowing" to "Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)" was the main indicator of prudence when considering the proposed capital investment plans of the Council. Estimated gross borrowing should not exceed the CFR for the current year plus two years. The Council's estimated gross borrowing position was comfortably within the CFR in the medium term. Therefore, the Director of Finance and Resources considered the estimated levels of gross borrowing as being prudent. The estimated financial costs for capital expenditure as a percentage of the estimated net revenue stream for the Council, based on the medium term financial plan, and the incremental impact on the rates of the Investment Programme, illustrated that, in the medium term, financing costs would represent 8.81% of the Council's net running costs. On that basis, the Director was satisfied also that the level of capital expenditure was affordable.

The Finance Act required the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, related to gross debt. The Prudential Code defined that affordable limit as the "Authorised Borrowing Limit" and gross borrowing must not exceed that limit. He recommended that the Committee approve an Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £119 million.

The Committee agreed that the Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council be £119 million, approved the Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/15 and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement.

### **Request for Funding - Harlandic Male Voice Choir**

The Committee was advised that a request for financial assistance had been received from the Harlandic Male Voice Choir towards the cost of representing Belfast and Northern Ireland at the "Voices of the Commonwealth" concert in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on 1st June to celebrate the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. As well as being part of the massed male voice choir consisting of choirs from Scotland and several Commonwealth countries, the Harlandic Male Voice Choir would also sing two pieces of their own at the concert.

The Director of Finance and Resources explained that, under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Council had a discretion to consider exceptional requests for financial assistance. A small, special expenditure budget (Grants and Subscriptions) within the Finance and Resources Department made provision for such requests providing:

- the Council had the statutory authority to make such payments; and
- assistance was not available from the remit of another Committee.

He pointed out that the request for funding met the criteria previously agreed by the Committee and it was recommended a contribution of £3,000 be made.

Accordingly, it was

Resolved – That expenditure of £3,000 in respect of the aforementioned event be approved under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to, the District and its inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefits so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made.

### **Residual Waste Treatment Contract**

The committee considered a report in relation to the procurement of Waste Treatment Facilities via arc21 which had been leading on the process to secure waste treatment infrastructure, including a modern mechanical biological treatment facility (MBT) and a modern energy-from-waste facility (EFW) on behalf of its 11 constituent councils. The report outlined the current position in relation to the preferred site and the Department of the Environment's responses to requests from the Committee and arc21

regarding its views on the project. It also outlined the Bidder's request to councils to demonstrate commitment to the continuation of the process by agreeing to a limited contingent liability.

arc21 was recommending that the Council make provision in its accounts for its share of the potential £1million contingent liability based on a pro rata of population amongst participating councils, in respect of a contribution towards the Bidder's vouched expenses to be incurred in the course of its ongoing participation in the competitive dialogue procedure in accordance with the principles of the counter proposal.

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendation which had been made by arc21.

### **Approval to Invite Tenders for Supplies and Services**

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:

<b>Contracts</b>	<b>Indicative Costs per Annum</b>	<b>Period of Contract</b>
Tender for security related services	£1.2 million	2 years, with 2 years optional renewal
Hydraulic hoses	£36,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal
Fire Extinguishers	£33,900	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal

The Committee granted authority also for the current contracts for the aforementioned items to be extended for an initial three month period, if required, and thereafter on a monthly basis until the new contracts had been awarded.

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

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 14th February.

### **Investment Programme**

#### **Capital Programme**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of report**

**1.1 The Council’s Capital Programme is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report provides –**

- **an update on the Capital Programme 13/14 which was presented to Committee on 24th March 2013**
- **proposed recommendations for movement between the Capital Programme stages**
- **specific project updates**
- **an update on the capital financing for 2014/2015**

**2.0 Relevant Background Information**

***Update on 2013/14 Capital Programme***

**2.1 Significant progress has been made in the delivery of the capital programme since it was agreed by SP&R Committee last March. Details of the current status and photographs of projects have been circulated. The Property & Projects department is happy to arrange site visits for Members/ Party Groups to Council funded capital project.**

**2.2 Key highlights since the last quarterly report in November include -**

- **the successful relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre to Donegal Square which opened in December 2013. This £1.8million project was part funded by the ERDF**
- **literally moving a river under Phase 1 of the £4m Connswater Community Greenway project with the realignment of Knock River in Orangefield Park at the end of January**
- **the roll-out of Phase 3 of the Alleygating Programme with the majority of the gates to be installed across the city by the end of March**
- **Super-Connected Belfast - the launch of the full voucher scheme on 14th Feb**

- MUGA programme - refurbishment work is well underway on a number of sites including Willowbank and New Lodge

*Capital Programme*

- 2.3 Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three Stage process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Importantly it will also enable Members to focus on delivering the projects which can have maximum benefits and investment return for the city and local areas.

**KEY ISSUES**

*Capital Programme – Proposed movements - Projects recommended to move up a Stage*

Proposed movements from ‘Stage 1 – Emerging’ to ‘Stage 2 – Uncommitted’

- 2.4 Members are asked to consider if they wish to progress the projects as outlined in Table 1 below from ‘Stage 1- Emerging project’ to ‘Stage 2- Uncommitted’ under the Capital Programme. A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) has been completed for each of these which has examined (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 high level and this is tested and challenged further during Stages 2 and 3.

Project	Project Review	Proposed Stage
City Hall Works	Members will be aware an EQIA on Memorabilia was carried out last year and the outcomes reported to Committee in Nov 12. Following this an independent consultant was commissioned to undertake work in relation to the next steps for displays, the findings of which were presented to the Joint Diversity group in March. Party Group briefings were subsequently held in April and May. At this stage the Joint Diversity Group requested that the displays & memorabilia element be referred to the SP&R Committee as an Emerging Project as part of the City Hall project and that a composite SOC for all elements of the City Hall works be developed. This was agreed by the SP&R Committee in September 2013.	Stage 2



	<p>As part of the development of the SOC, the Council commissioned independent consultants to conduct a feasibility study into the creation of a memorabilia led visitor exhibition within the East wing. This study, which helped inform the SOC, has demonstrated that the project is feasible and has produced plans and designs to show how the project could work within the proposed space.</p> <p>The SOC has also taken onto account at a very high level a number of other emerging issues including the Council's corporate accommodation strategy, the impact of local government reform and transfer of functions.</p> <p>The findings from the feasibility study and the SOC were presented to the Joint Diversity Group on 31st January and Party Group briefings on the City Hall works were subsequently held w/c 3rd February.</p> <p>Members are asked to consider if they wish to advance this to Stage 2 – Uncommitted and the development of an outline business case.</p>	
<p>Roselawn Extensions</p>	<p>Members will be aware that the Council has a statutory duty to provide grave space. Current provision has fallen below the minimum requirements of 4,500 new burial plots being available at all times. The development of further grave space at Roselawn was therefore and Emerging Project on the Council's Capital Programme.</p> <p>The SOC proposes to create 7,300 new grave plots as well as the associated infrastructure. <i>Three phases are proposed – Phase 1 – 3500 new graves; Phase 2 – 2300 new graves, Phase 3 – 1330 new graves</i></p> <p>Members are asked to note that this is a long term scheme and will provide provision up to 2025. Members are asked to consider if they wish to advance this to Stage 2 – Uncommitted and the development of an outline business case.</p>	<p>Stage 2</p>

<p><b>Tamar Street</b></p>	<p>Members will be aware that the Council owns land in Tamar Street off the Newtownards Rd. There is a modular building on part of the land which was previously leased by the Scout Association. The East AWG had been approached by the Group who were interested in using the building and asked that this project be added to the Emerging Projects list in June.</p> <p>Members are asked to note in relation to this project that the SOC has identified a number of emerging issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Goes against previous SP&amp;R Committee decision to demolish building due to its bad state of repair (April 2012)</li><li>• The group do not need to use the premises 24/7 and there are alternative facilities available in the neighbouring area – in addition to Connswater Community Centre there is also Walkway, Friendship Centre, Dee St Community Centre and Skainos</li><li>• Any letting out of the building would have to go through and Expression of Interest process (it cannot just be given to one group)</li><li>• The land is designated as ‘white-land’ and is therefore free from development constraints. The Council also owns the adjoining land and this may facilitate the wider development of the site.</li></ul> <p>Members are therefore asked to consider if they wish to advance this to Stage 2 – Uncommitted and the development of an outline business case or if they wish to hold this and look at a wider masterplan for the site.</p>	
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#### Updates on capital projects

##### *Belfast Waterfront Exhibition and Conference Facility*

- 2.6 Members will be aware that one of the major projects under the Investment Programme is a proposed extension to the Waterfront to provide dedicated exhibition and conference facilities. Funding for this project has now been secured with

a letter of offer for £14.5million from ERDF and £4m from NITB together with the Council's investment of £11m. This is a significant investment for the city and will significantly enhance the city's economic infrastructure. Preparatory work is continuing with the enabling works due to go on ground at the end of March with main work commencing in the late summer.

*Tropical Ravine*

- 2.7 Members are asked to note that funding for refurbishment of the historic Tropical Ravine has now been secured with a letter of offer for £2.32million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Preparatory work is continuing with the enabling works due to go on ground at the end of March with main work commencing in the autumn time.
- 2.8 Members are asked to note that the Council's Investment Programme set a target of levering in £50m over the course of the programme. As highlighted in the Quarter 3 Finance report which is also on Committee for discussion today at the end of December nearly £30m of external funding had already been levered in. With the addition of both the Waterfront and Tropical Ravine projects this brings the figure of levered in money to over £50million with additional monies still due to be levered in through a number of other projects including the Innovation Centre, the Creative Hub and the infrastructure at the North Foreshore.

*Public Bike Share Scheme*

- 2.9 Members will recall that they agreed in June 2013 to move the Public Bike Share Scheme from a 'Stage 2 – Uncommitted project' to a 'Stage 3 – Committed Project'. At this stage this was moved to 'Tier 0 – Schemes at risk' as it was highlighted to Committee that the ongoing revenue implications for this scheme had not yet been agreed. This meant that the scheme could be advanced to tender stage but that no construction contracts could be let until all outstanding issues were satisfactorily resolved.
- 2.10 The project aims to create a network of 30 docking stations supporting 300 bikes in the city centre. It is anticipated that it will facilitate cheap and accessible transport, as well as benefits such as increased tourism, improved health, and reduced congestion. Bike share schemes have proved very popular in cities across the world including London, Dublin and New York.
- 2.11 External funding of £698,700 was secured from DRD under the Active Travel Demonstration Projects for the project.

Members are asked to note that the Council's bid for this figure was based on OBC for a Public Bike Hire Scheme which was commissioned by SIB. At this time the OBC estimated that annual revenue costs for the operation/maintenance of such a scheme would be approx £370,000 per year. It should be noted that most public bike share systems do not meet their full operating cost through membership and user fees alone and, in addition to sponsorship/advertising revenue, some form of public sector subsidy is usually required.

- 2.12 Since June 2013 officers have worked hard on progressing this project. An Invitation to Tender was advertised on the 4th November 2013 with the procurement was divided into two lots: Lot 1 – Design, supply, maintain and operate and Lot 2 – sponsorship. Tenders are currently being evaluated and a detailed report will be brought back to Committee in March.

*Council Accommodation*

- 2.13 Members will be aware that they agreed to move Council Accommodation from a 'Stage 1 – Emerging project' to 'Stage 2- Uncommitted project' on the capital programme in September last year. An economic appraisal was commissioned on the back of this to help inform the development of a longer term strategy for the Council's accommodation needs. Members are asked to note that a separate report on Accommodation is on the agenda for discussion at today's Committee.

*Innovation Centre and Creative Hub*

- 2.14 Members will be aware that the Investment Programme included a range of projects designed to enhance the city's economic infrastructure. These included the development of a Creative Hub and an Innovation Centre. These projects are both seeking funding under ERDF and it is anticipated that the outcome of these applications will be known shortly. In the meantime given the tight timescales for the delivery of EU projects the Committee agreed that these projects could be worked at at risk. Separate reports in relation to acquisitions to facilitate these projects are on the agenda at today's Committee

3.0 Capital Financing –Capital Programme 2014/15

- 3.1 The Council incurs capital expenditure and capital financing costs in the delivery of its capital programme.

- **Capital Expenditure** is the expenditure incurred in the actual delivery of contracts e.g. the actual payments to the contractor for a construction contract.
- **Capital Financing** is the method the council uses to fund the capital expenditure. The capital financing costs include loan repayments (principle and interest) and revenue contributions (cash payments to repay or avoid taking out loans).

**3.2** At its meeting on 21 June 2013 the SP&R Committee considered a report on the affordability of the leisure transformation programme and agreed an overall capital expenditure affordability limit of £105m for this. To support the capital financing of this capital investment the Committee agreed the following recommendations:-

- To allocate, from the 1 April 2015, £3.23m of the £6m Belfast Investment Fund annual rates contribution to finance the £38m Olympia /Andersonstown schemes. (£2m: 14/15)
- To set a target of £2m of additional rates income emanating from local government boundary changes being available to support the capital financing of the LTP. (£2m: 15/16)
- To set a £2m efficiency savings target for leisure services as part of the LTP deliverable on the 1 April 2016 and that these savings are used for the purpose of leisure capital financing. (£2m: 16/17)
- To include the £1.7m outstanding financing requirement in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan

The incremental additional capital financing highlighted above has been included in the capital financing projections for 2014/15-2016/17 within this report.

**3.3** The delivery of the Capital Programme element of the Investment Programme will be matched by a phased increase in capital financing charges up to the capital financing limit over the life of the programme as all schemes within the programme are financed. The phased impact of the capital programme on the capital financing budget provides the

opportunity for the council to allocate an element of the 2014/15 capital financing budget to finance feasibility works and non recurring schemes.

**Feasibility Fund 2014/2015**

- 3.4 The incremental nature of the Investment Programme means that there is the opportunity for the Council to ring fence part of the capital financing budget to provide a Feasibility Fund. The Feasibility Fund enables initial feasibility work to be undertaken on proposed projects to bring them to a point where Members can decide if they should be progressed as Capital Schemes, or Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) schemes. It is recommended that the contribution to the Feasibility Fund for 2014/15 be capped at £250k.

**Non-recurrent projects**

- 3.5 Members are asked to agree an allocation of £1million towards non recurring maintenance projects to be funded from the capital financing budget.
- 3.6 Table 2 below summarises the outstanding loans and planned capital expenditure which will require financing up to 16/17. This covers all schemes detailed in Appendices B and C.
- 3.7 Table 2 - Capital Expenditure to 2016/17 – Current Programme

Outstanding Loans @ 31.03.13	£20,167,038
Capital Expenditure 2013/14	£8,444,905
Capital Expenditure 2014/15	£31,802,710
Capital Expenditure 2015/16	£52,839,139
Capital Expenditure 2016/17	£30,464,563
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>£143,718,355</b>

- 3.8 Table 3 below provides a summary of the allocation of the capital financing budget for the above expenditure based on the capital financing proposals in Appendices E and F together with other non recurring schemes.

- 3.9 Table 3 - Capital Financing to 2016/17 – Current Programme

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
<b><u>Loan Repayments</u></b>			
Existing Loan Repayments	£1,957,127	£4,503,049	£8,375,252
<b>New Loans: Committed Schemes</b>	<b>£2,258,306</b>	<b>£3,009,101</b>	<b>£2,356,758</b>
<b>New Loans: Uncommitted</b>	<b>£287,616</b>	<b>£863,102</b>	<b>£1,044,947</b>

Schemes			
Total Loan Repayments	£4,503,049	£8,375,252	£11,776,957
<b>Revenue Funding</b>			
Committed Schemes	£4,731,925	£4,210,625	£2,511,300
Uncommitted Schemes	£0	£0	£0
Non Recurring Maintenance	£1,000,000	£0	£0
Feasibility	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Total Revenue Funding	£5,981,925	£4,460,625	£2,761,300
<i>Less Capital Financing Budget</i>	<i>£13,370,000</i>	<i>£15,370,000</i>	<i>£17,370,000</i>
Available Financing Budget	£2,885,026	£2,534,123	£2,831,743

3.10 As part of the proposed movements in the Capital Programme, the Committee is being asked to consider if they wish to move the three projects outlined below to Stage 2 – Uncommitted Projects. Table 4 below illustrates the impact of these movement with the following capital financing assumptions for the schemes:-

- *Tamar Street* - £50k capital expenditure to be financed through a revenue contribution in 2014/15.
- *City Hall Works* - £2m to be financed through loans over a four year repayment period.
- *Roselawn Extensions* - £2.2m financed through loans of over a 25 year repayment period.

3.11 Table 4 – Capital Financing Impact to 2016/17 of Proposed Stage 1 Movements

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Available Financing Budget (From Table 2)	£2,885,026	£2,534,123	£2,831,743
<u>Less</u> Additional Financing Requirement			
Tamar Street	£50,000	£0	£0
City Hall Works	£306,250	£578,750	£556,250
Roselawn Extensions	£0	£48,125	£84,000
Revised Available Financing Budget	£2,528,776	£1,907,248	£2,191,493

3.12 Table 4 above illustrates that the total of the capital financing budget available reduced to only £2.1m in 2016/17. This position is based on the financing of the committed and uncommitted projects included in Appendices B and C, together with the proposed Stage 1 movements referred to above. It should be noted that this does not include financing for the following potential future costs:-

- The Emerging List projects included in Appendix D
- The final phase of the LTP for which a financing source has to be identified
- Any new capital schemes or non recurring maintenance or other re-instatement costs arising from the condition surveys on assets transferring from Lisburn/Castlereagh areas
- The impact of the transfer of regeneration powers and its impact on capital expenditure by the Council
- The Council's Accommodation strategy

#### 4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and  
Movements

- agree if the proposed projects as outlined in Table 1 – *City Hall Works, Roselawn Extensions and Tamar Street* are progressed from 'Stage 1 – Emerging' to 'Stage 2 – Uncommitted' on the Capital Programme



### Project Updates

- ***Belfast Waterfront Exhibition and Conference Facility*** – note that funding of £18.5m has been secured for this project (£14.5m from ERDF and £4m from NITB)
- ***Tropical Ravine*** - note that funding of £2.32m has been secured for this project from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)
- ***Public Bike Share Scheme*** – agree to consider a detailed report on this at Committee next month
- ***Council Accommodation*** – note that a separate report in relation to Council Accommodation is on the agenda for discussion at today's Committee
- ***Innovation Centre and Creative Hub*** – note that separate reports in relation to acquisitions to facilitate these projects are on the agenda at today's Committee

### Levered in monies

- note that with the external funding that has been secured for both the Waterfront and the Tropical Ravine that the Council has now levered in over £50million in external funding towards capital projects under its investment programme – this has exceeded the target outlined in the Programme with additional monies still due to be levered in through a number of other projects including the Innovation Centre and the Creative Hub.

### Capital Financing

- agree that £250,000 from the capital financing budget be ringfenced for Feasibility Fund
- agree an allocation of £1million towards non recurring maintenance projects to be funded from the capital financing budget.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Carson,  
Seconded by Councillor Hargey,

That the City Hall Works – Memorabilia Project be advanced to Stage 2 of the Capital Programme and that a report providing a broad outline of the costs and the indicative budget for Stage 2 be submitted to the Committee for consideration at its meeting on 21st March.

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

The Committee agreed to adopt the remaining recommendations as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

### **Community Planning**

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

#### **“1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To update Members on the preparations for community planning presented to the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee on 15th January 2014.**
- 1.2 To outline the role of elected Members in leading this process, including the potential role of the Area Working Groups during 2014.**

#### **2.0 Background**

**2.1 On 15th January 2014, the Statutory Transition Committee agreed a one-year work programme to help ensure the council is prepared for the Duty of community planning (a copy of the STC report has been circulated). The action plan reflects non statutory guidance which has been issued by the DoE in the ‘Community Planning Foundation Programme’ and has four key strands:**

- i. Start to develop the city vision and long-term objectives**
- ii. Develop an approach to community planning at the local level**

iii. Develop the right governance, structures and accountability frameworks

iv. Ensure effective communications and build capacity to support community planning

2.2 Further information about each of these strands is set out in the remainder of this report.

### **3.0 Role of Elected Members**

3.1 Members are the democratically elected leadership at the heart of the community planning process. They will lead the development of a long-term vision and priorities for Belfast and its neighbourhoods. They will drive engagement and partnership-working to ensure that change is substantive; that decisions by council and its partners are informed by the broad range of views of local people; and need is balance against realistic resourcing and deliverability.

3.3 Members will also need to have an oversight role to ensure that progress is monitored and that agreed actions are delivered, even by other agencies.

3.4 Because of the central role of Members, the STC has agreed to hold a Community Planning workshop, to which other Members of Council will be invited, to create a shared understanding of the community planning process and to co-design a process that fits the Belfast context. The focus of the workshop will be to examine the practicalities associated with Members' new leadership role in the process. The workshop will be held on 4th March at 5.00pm and will be facilitated by Neil McInroy from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies.

3.5 The current cross-party working group on community planning (with two Members from each party) has been leading the Council's emerging approach to date. As the process of developing the community plan continues, this group will meet stakeholders and experts to help develop recommendations for the STC and SP&R. Some of the recommendations emerging from the group are contained in this report.

### **4.0 Community Planning and Belfast – city vision and outcomes**

4.1 The new functions and powers being transferred to councils in 2015 will enable BCC to take a lead role in shaping the future of the City, through growing the economy, spatial planning and

addressing social problems. The community planning framework for Belfast will need to provide a joined up approach to delivering on priorities both at a city and a neighbourhood level.

- 4.2 One of the functions of the community plan is to set out the shared vision and long-term social, economic and environmental objectives for Belfast. Determining the vision and its objectives will be the responsibility of the new council. This is an important opportunity in Belfast to bring better integration and alignment of the many plans, activities and partnerships in the city (including those in the new areas).**
- 4.2 The process of developing the city vision must be underpinned by a strong evidence base and a programme of consultation and engagement with stakeholders.**
- 4.3 At previous workshops, Members have said they want to take an engaged but pragmatic approach that reflects the real-life demands, opportunities and characteristics of the city and which is supported by clear evidence and ability to deliver and to measure success.**
- 4.4 The Council's Cross Party Reference Group on Community Planning has discussed a high level approach to designing the visioning process in Belfast. The working group has suggested that it will be important to build on existing work and research, where possible, and that effective engagement mechanisms should be developed to test emerging themes and priorities.**
- 4.5 Given the critical nature of this element it is proposed that expert assistance is commissioned to support the development of a shared vision for Belfast. It is also proposed that a cross-sector 'reference panel' is created as a touch-stone for the design of the visioning process. Key principles of the process will be that it should support the civic leadership role of our Members and ensure the maximum appropriate level of participation from across public, private, community and voluntary sectors.**
- 4.6 It is also proposed that this development process is supported, along with other engagement methods, by a large-scale public survey in order that the views of residents from across the city are represented. A specialist market research company will be retained to carry out this work. This understanding of the views of local people will help the new council plan its services and priorities for the newly enlarged city and the longer term future.**

**5.0 Developing an approach to community planning and regeneration at a local level**

**5.1 The STC agreed that Area Working Groups should play a key role in exploring and shaping the local dimension of community planning.**

**5.2 As Members are aware, at the local level there is often a strong relationship between community planning and neighbourhood regeneration (physical, social and economic). Regeneration powers are passing to the council from DSD and it will be important for us to link these closely to our approach to community planning. In other strategic plans, including the Investment Programme, Members have emphasised the importance of connecting neighbourhood development to city development and of ensuring that local people have the greatest possible access to the advantages that flow from a growing and competitive city. For this reason, Members have stressed the need for any local plans and priorities to be connected to the city-wide plan and therefore to the overall ambition that leaders have for the city, whether that be in terms of employment, skills, health or any other aspect of quality of life.**

**Therefore Members and partners will need to consider how to:**

- develop and implement local plans and priorities within a city-wide framework;**
- Develop a governance framework which clarifies the decision making and resource allocation processes at city and neighbourhood level;**
- better integrate and improve service delivery at a local level;**
- maximise the impact and integration of funding streams to support local communities;**
- ensure effective engagement and participation by local communities in influencing priorities and improving local areas and opportunities for local people;**
- consider local governance and networking structures for the future, given that responsibilities for the Area Partnership Boards and neighbourhood renewal powers will be transferred to the Council in 2015.**

5.3 In light of this, proposed key tasks for the AWGs in supporting the development of community planning over the next year are:

- ***Practical Work to test area planning approaches:*** A separate paper on the Committee's agenda sets out the current status of a number of physical projects being advanced through various funding mechanisms including BIF, LIF, SIF and the capital programme. When Members have considered these projects within their area working groups they have commented on the potential to create synergies between a cluster of projects and to inter-weave this with programming activity at a local level. Essentially this type of 'place-shaping' work, strongly linked to shared local outcomes, is likely to become the business as usual model when implementing the Council's new powers of regeneration and planning. It is therefore proposed that a key role for the AWGs in the months ahead will be to identify opportunities for 'learning by doing' using existing and emerging projects, programmes and to test how different integrated planning approaches might work. This will inform the on-going development of policy, governance and delivery structures for regeneration and community planning from 2015 onwards. The on-going implementation of LIF and the area interventions both underway and planned also provide practical opportunities for learning.
- ***Thinking about potential area-based governance issues, including geographies*** A key aspect in moving forward with the local element of community planning will be to establish sound governance arrangements linked to the new council and community planning structures. At a local level, governance for community planning will need to factor in existing partnerships and groups with local plans and strategies. This piece of work is intrinsically linked to issues emerging from the overall governance discussion and the way decisions in the new Council will be made. A decision will also need to be made as to how to involve the new areas in the area working planning phase over the next 12 months and during the

Shadow Council, new AWG boundaries for the new Council will need to be designed.

- *Understanding current stakeholders, plans and strategies:* Stakeholder engagement is a key aspect of community planning and mapping key stakeholders, and existing plans and strategies is a key task within the DoE's Foundation Programme. Area Working Groups will support the development of stakeholder maps and engagement strategies to underpin the development of community planning. Based on an assessment of issues and outcomes for local areas, AWG's will oversee the on-going development of effective local intelligence for the new geographies. It will also be important to test the local element of emerging strategies such as the Integrated Economic Strategy, Interfaces Strategy etc. The Area Working Groups will therefore test and refine these emerging strategies.

#### 6.0 Communications, capacity building and engagement

- 6.1 It is essential that our key stakeholders are fully aware of and understand community planning and a programme of awareness and capacity building is therefore being developed and will be delivered in tandem with the other strands of work.
- 6.2 Capacity building requirements or other learning issues may become clearer as we get on with the practice of community planning. A learning and review element has therefore been factored into the draft programme – this will enable us to take into account any emerging statutory guidance from the DoE, such as on performance management, and allow council and its community planning partners to continually improve our approach to community planning so that it delivers the necessary results for local people.

#### Consultation and Engagement

- 6.3 Under the draft Local Government Bill, council will be required to consult with a wide range of people and organisations who live in the council area or who work, do business or have an interest in the future of the area. This consultation will extend to the development of the corporate plan, community plan and improvement duties of council. In addition, as required by the Planning Act, council will need to prepare, publish and implement a Statement of Community Involvement which sets

out how council will consult and engage in relation to the development and discharge of the Local Development Plan.

- 6.4 It is also recognised locally and nationally, that community planning and local area improvement can only really be achieved where local communities and partners are involved and participate. Securing the best involvement in a cost effective manner requires proper planning. The Council has therefore been reviewing its approach to consultation and engagement and will be developing a corporate consultation and engagement framework to guide its future approach.

#### **7.0 Resource Implications**

- 7.1 Putting effective foundations in place to supporting community planning will require additional funding in the first instance. These 'start-up' costs have been factored into the budget estimates for 2014/15 and a budget has been set aside to fund the engagement exercises and to meet the cost of additional expertise as outlined above.

- 7.2 As we move forward with community planning post 2015, there will be ongoing costs associated with the support, implementation and monitoring of community planning. Going forward there will also be resource implications related to ongoing delivery.

- 7.3 In addition to the publication costs, council will need to support partnership working and engagement, local area planning etc which will require officer time and other resources. As the agreed approach to community planning emerges, further reports will be brought to the STC and SP&R to explore the organisational and resource implications of supporting community planning longer term.

#### **8.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 8.1 Equality and good relations will be considered in all aspects of the on-going development of community planning.

#### **9.0 Recommendations**

- 9.1 Members are asked to note and agree the Community Planning Work Programme 2014 -2015, and specifically:



- i. The proposed four phased approach over the next twelve months to:
  - Start to develop the city vision and long-term objectives
  - Develop an approach to community planning at the local level
  - Develop the right governance, structures and accountability frameworks
  - Ensure effective communications and build capacity to support community planning
  - The commencement of research and survey work to support these workstreams.
- ii. The workshop be held 4th March for the STC (to which other Members will be invited) to create a shared understanding of the community planning process and to co-design a process that fits the Belfast context.
- iii. The role of the AWGs over the coming year to take forward consideration of local community planning and regeneration issues.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Area Working Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 Members are aware that are a number of major changes facing both the Council and the wider local government sector currently including –**

- the reform of local government and the enhanced roles and responsibilities in addition to the extended boundaries including the
  - transfer of regeneration powers and associated assets and projects from DSD
  - transfer of statutory planning powers from DoE
  - emerging statutory community planning duty which will be at a city, thematic and area level

- the emerging Social Investment Fund (SIF) projects
- the emerging Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP)

Together with the continued implementation of the Council's Investment Programme, all of the above provide a great opportunity for Members to make a real difference to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Belfast, particularly in terms of physical investment decisions. However Members are aware that there are limited financial resources and Members need to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one project over another project. Members also agreed last month to a continued zero rates increase which will increase pressure on the Council to deliver more with less. The SP&R Committee, as the Council's investment decision maker, has a responsibility to focus on delivering the projects which can have maximum benefits and investment return for the city and local areas. This raises a number of key issues and hard decisions for Members in terms project prioritisation.

- 1.2 Members are aware that since their inception the AWGs have played an integral role in recommending investment decisions for their areas in terms of LIF and Local Interventions to the SP&R Committee. It was also previously agreed at SP&R in November 2012 that the AWGs would play a central part in recommending decisions related to the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) given their knowledge of local areas and to date 19 of these have been recommended to progress to Stage 1 - Feasibility. However the final decisions on what projects to invest in under BIF lies with the SP&R Committee.
  - 1.3 However given the challenges and opportunities outlined above Members agreed last month that a detailed report on the current status of BIF projects particularly in regard to match funding be brought back to the February Committee. In order to develop an overall investment picture and to help Members with the emerging community planning process this paper also gives Members an update on the Council's other funding streams including the Capital Programme and the Local Investment Fund together with the emerging Social Investment Fund (SIF) proposals and the assets and projects which are transferring in from DSD/DRD and other areas under the LGR.
- 2.0 Current status – physical projects
  - 2.2 Members are aware that in addition to BIF there are also a number of other funding streams in terms of physical

investment projects within the Council. However due to the LGR the Council can no longer plan in the context of its current funding streams but needs to take into consideration the impact of the transferring DSD projects and the enhanced boundaries of the new Council post 2015. Indeed there is growing political pressure for commitment now to some DSD schemes so that DFP approval for funding is secured. The £37m that is being invested in Belfast under SIF also needs to be considered. It is therefore key that investment decisions are not taken in isolation and it is important the links and inter-dependencies between projects are taken into consideration. An overview of these funding streams/projects is contained in Appendix A

### 3.0 Emerging issues for Members to note

3.1 In the context of the above and the information in Appendix A there are a number of emerging key issues which Members are asked to note and consider

#### General

- the information presented above and in the appendices primarily relates to physical investment decisions – as Members are aware there are a vast range of revenue programmes taking place across the city which also need to be taken into consideration so that emerging plans deliver the optimum benefits and outcomes for both local areas and at a city level
- from 2015 the Council will become the regeneration authority for the city with a transferring regeneration budget as outlined to Committee last month. This presents an opportunity for the Council to look at reconstituting existing funding streams, including BIF, as wider regeneration funds. Members are asked to note however that this budget allocation has not yet been agreed and this is subject to further due-diligence work
- The Council will become the planning authority from 2015 and will be required to produce a Local Development Plan providing an additional lever in relation to city development
- the Council is already working closely with strategic partners including OFMDFM, DSD, DRD to ensure that there is continuity in terms of projects and projects delivery e.g. on the Rapid Transit

- city investment has been primarily funding project and delivery driven which is unsurprising given the numbers of players involved i.e. Council, DSD, DRD, OFMDFM, SIB and the fact that there are no overall coherent plans with identified resources and accountable delivery mechanisms. However there is now an opportunity to pull some of this together

#### **BIF projects**

- under the current criteria BIF projects must secure at least 50% match funding from other sources – the key sources for this for most of the projects are either through DSD funding or SIF. Members are asked also to note that none of the projects currently have full guaranteed match funding in place. Members will be aware that DSD funding will cease to exist in just over a year's time and this will have an impact on the potential match funding requirement. There are a number of projects where DSD/BRO are identified as a potential funder and where funding has in principle been profiled however there are no commitments to these projects yet. Only 2 of the emerging proposals may potentially receive SIF funding (St. Comgall's and the Lanyon Tunnels) although this has still to be confirmed by OFMDFM and there are a number of projects where SIF funding will now not now be forthcoming.

#### **Transferring DSD projects**

- Information is still being gathered on the transferring DSD projects and this will have to be analysed in more detail for their implications to the Council
- The STC have agreed a set of guiding principles to support collaborative working between both parties
- There are potentially over 250 projects/assets/initiatives transferring to the Council from DSD. Under each of the categories above there are essentially 4 stages of projects (similar to the Council's stage approval process)
  1. Projects currently underway which will be complete by 31 March 15 (*Committed*)
  2. Projects currently underway which *may* extend beyond 31 March 15 (*Committed*)

3. Projects which *may* commence before 31 March 15 and will extend beyond transfer (*Uncommitted*)
  4. Preparation for projects which will commence after 31 March 2015 (*Emerging*)
- Projects which fall into the third and fourth categories above will require the agreement of the STC or Shadow Council before preparatory and/or contractual work can proceed prior to 1 April 2015. It is unlikely that DFP will allow DSD to commence preparatory or construction works on these projects without a clear commitment from the STC/Shadow Council to deliver the projects post the transfer of the regeneration functions
  - Projects which are already underway (category 2) will need to be considered in the context of the rates setting process for the new Council. It is also recommended that these are considered at a programme level rather than an on individual basis. The Council already has as agreed policy on progression and delivery of capital projects and the STC/Shadow Council will need to integrate DSD's current and proposed work programme into the Council's Capital Programme Framework.
  - DSD funding has implications across the Council's physical funding streams including the capital programme, emerging BIF and LIF. However as Members are aware it also has implications in terms of revenue funding for community groups across the city through Neighbourhood Renewal etc – this will need to be taken into consideration in considering projects/groups which receive future funding etc. Members are asked to note that DSD

#### SIF projects

- it is likely that the Council will become the delivery agent for a number of the SIF capital projects in the Belfast area – the resource implications for this have still to be quantified. There are also still a number of unknowns in relation to these projects in terms of the ongoing sustainability of both projects and groups. Again many of the groups that are receiving funding are dependent on DSD funding and this will have implications for the Council post 2015.

- **SIF is funding projects at both a capital and revenue level which could allow Members the opportunity to cluster investment decisions which will have a greater strategic impact in local areas by looking at both revenue and assets together. The Council has previously highlighted that there is still no overall co-ordination of SIF projects across the city and has highlighted a potential a future role for the Council in developing synergies and connectivity between the plans, as per our original consultation response. It is therefore recommended that discussions regarding this co-ordination role are progressed with OFMDFM.**

**4.0 Area planning and project prioritisation – links to community planning and regeneration**

**4.1 Members will be aware that they have previously agreed to look at the development of area plans within the context of the emerging community planning framework. A report on the next steps in relation to community planning is also on the agenda for discussion by Committee today. Members have also previously agreed to commission a detailed piece of work in relation to regeneration focusing on the city centre. All these pieces of work are inter-linked**

**4.2 As can be seen from the information in Appendix A there is a lot of work taking place across the city in terms of physical development. As highlighted the focus of this report has been in relation to physical projects however the impact of ongoing revenue programmes also needs to be taken into consideration as a physical project can be a catalyst for an area but it needs associated programming to make it work.**

**5.0 Next steps – BIF**

**5.1 Officers are aware that this is a lot of information for Members to absorb at this stage. Members are also asked to note that further detail is still to be confirmed in relation to the emerging DSD projects. Further due-diligence is being carried out on the transferring Lisburn/Castlereagh assets and final confirmation is awaited regarding the projects receiving SIF funding and so this information will continue to evolve over the coming months.**

**5.2 It is recognised that there is pressure to progress some BIF projects. After an initial analysis of the emerging projects there are a number of projects which officers would suggest Members could prioritise in the short-term due to their state of**

readiness, potential funding being available etc. These are outlined below for Members consideration. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any BIF project and that officers will continue to work with groups to progress the development of the remaining BIF projects to help bring these up to a state of readiness where Members can take informed investment decisions to a later stage

Project	Rationale for progressing now
Stranmillis Gateway (Part of the Lagan Corridor)	Part of the wider Lagan Corridor Part funding secured from Ulster Garden Village Opportunity to work with DRD to capitalise on the proposed plans for the Gasworks Bridge
Lanyon Tunnels	Part of the wider Lagan Corridor Project fully worked up Match funding potentially available via SIF
Lionra Uladh (Raidio Failte)	DCAL/Ciste/DSD match funding potentially available
St. Comgall's	Match funding potentially available via SIF
St. Mary's pitches	Match funding potentially available via DSD and own funds available
Corpus Chrisiti (Davitts)	Match funding potentially available via DSD and own funds available
St. Andrew's	Match funding potentially available via DSD Economic appraisal underway

- 5.3 As outlined above DSD funding will cease to exist in just over a year's time and this will have an impact on the potential match funding requirement. There are a number of projects where DSD/BRO is identified as a potential funder and where funding has in principle been profiled however there are no commitments to these projects yet.

#### Next steps – Area planning

- 5.4 In advance of the community planning workshop, Members are asked to note that there are a number of significant strategic projects (both planned and underway) across the city which provide a timely opportunity for Members to consider the development of local regeneration frameworks around these. These include – *Lower Falls; Andersonstown/Casement; Lagan Corridor; Olympia/ Windsor; Inner East and Inner North*. Further details of these are contained in Appendix B.

- 5.5 Members are asked to consider if these areas should be progressed as pilot local regeneration frameworks. These are only examples of potential pilots and can be considered further as part of the emerging community planning process and can be discussed in greater detail in the Area Working Groups in the months ahead.
- 5.6 Members should also note that DSD are also progressing a number of Masterplans across the city (Ballysillan; Glen Road; Crumlin Road Courthouse; Shaftesbury Square etc). Together with the emerging plans above these masterplans could form the nucleus of wider area plans. A number of other groups are also looking at area based issues across the city e.g. Members may be aware that a new Group– FIN – the Forum for Inner-city Neighbourhoods who are being facilitated by Forum for an Alternative Belfast (FAB) has been established. This Forum is also considering a range of issues relating to inner-city areas. It is important however that all of these, including any pilot local regeneration frameworks, which are developed are placed in the context of an overall city plan.
- 5.7 Members are asked to note that if they wish to progress with the development of strategic regeneration plans in local areas that there will be associated resource implications and officers will have to be refocused from other work to help deliver these.

#### 6.0 Equality Implications

Emerging equality implications to be considered as further details emerge of projects

#### 7.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and -

##### Area planning

- consider the suggested BIF project as outlined in 5.2 above which could be progressed in the short term due to their state of readiness, potential of match funding etc. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any BIF project and that officers will continue to work with groups to progress the development of the remaining BIF projects to help bring these up to a state of readiness where Members can take informed investment decisions



- **consider the creation of a number of local regeneration frameworks (as outlined in 5.3 above) – the resource implications of this will need to be considered.”**

After discussion, the Committee agreed to progress the Belfast Investment Projects as outlined in paragraph 5.2 and to the creation of a number of local regeneration frameworks as outlined in paragraph 5.3.

### **Senior Officer Nominations to Social Investment Fund Area Steering Groups**

The Committee was reminded that, in March, 2011, the Social Investment Fund had been announced by the Northern Ireland Executive as a means to tackle poverty, unemployment and dereliction through community-led interventions of a significant scale. The programme, led by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, was delivered through strategic areas plans. In September, 2012, initial steering groups were established comprising four voluntary/community and four political representatives to co-ordinate the development of the Area Plan. A Council officer representative attended also with observer status. Area plans had since been developed with the ten priority areas identified. Now that the priorities were known, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister wished to finalise full membership of the area steering groups by appointing four statutory and two business representatives, prior to moving into project delivery later in 2014.

In January, 2014, the Council had received correspondence from the First Minister and Deputy First Minister asking for senior members of the organisation to be nominated to one of the each of the four area steering groups. It was required that those names be forwarded to the Department by the end of January.

The Chief Executive reported that the officers nominated to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister were those who had previously sat on the steering groups in an observer capacity and were as follows:

Gerry Millar – Belfast North  
Andrew Hassard – Belfast South  
John McGrillen – Belfast East  
Suzanne Wylie – Belfast West

The role of the steering groups would be to oversee progress in the delivery of the area plan and review needs and issues during the first phase of the Social Investment Fund, which would run until March, 2016.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Leisure Transformation Programme**

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Relevant background information**

- 1.1 At its meeting in January, the Committee agreed to reconsider the preferred business model at its next meeting, to allow the Trade Union Group additional time to prepare its proposals for a transformed in house option.

In order to leave all options on the table, the Committee further agreed at risk to grant authority to officers to take the necessary steps for the creation of a non-profit distributing organisation and to facilitate formal consultation with staff and trade unions to include the development of a series of protections for transferring staff.

**2.0 Key issues**

- 2.1 An ‘in principle’ decision

The professional analysis and advice is that the only model that will deliver the required £2m savings by 2016 is the non-profit distributing organisation. Previous Committee reports have been appended to this short update report, setting out the options and analysis.

Members are now being asked to consider the information contained in the report and appendices, and to indicate the Committee’s preferred ‘in principle’ business model option for the delivery of leisure services in Belfast, as the non-profit distributing organisation, which of course will be subject to consideration under Best Value and Equality legislation.

- 2.2 Work to date

Since January, preliminary work has been undertaken at risk to establish the non-profit distributing organisation (NPDO) structures with legal advisors. Work is also underway to develop the contract specification and business plan. This will include drafting health and well-being outcomes, asset management arrangements and customer service standards for discussion with Members.

As part of this, specialist legal advice has been taken which sets out a pragmatic procurement route. The Council also needs to be fully cognisant of its responsibilities under the Local Government (Best Value) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002, and ensure that it fulfils its obligations under the Act. A more

detailed report setting out these issues and consultation process will be brought to Committee, consequent to its 'in principle' decision, to be integrated with the EQIA consultation.

The current timeline is to bring a final decision to Committee in June 2014, including a proposed contractual agreement with the new trust, outline business plan and draft financial agreement. This will also include the necessary due diligence reports to give Members the appropriate assurances in relation to legal, financial and equality issues.

### **2.3 Consultation and engagement with staff and trade unions**

Committee and management have consistently, from the start of consultations in September 2013, committed to working with the trade unions to examine the options for leisure, including an in-house model. The TUs have been provided with information to support the development of their proposals; the key issue being the deliverability of the required savings by April 2016.

Correspondence with the trade unions, which sets out the engagement with them since September, has been circulated.

Also circulated for Members' information is the Director's response to the Trade Unions' report prepared by APSE.

One key area of concern for the TUs is in relation to TUPE and seeking to ensure existing staff terms and conditions will be protected. The Director has told the TUs that the Council will obviously work within its statutory requirements where TUPE applies and assured them that Committee wants to ensure that staff interests are protected.

To inform this, the Director has asked that the Trade Unions set out their views on those areas that are of significant importance, (e.g. protection of existing staff's terms and conditions of employment, pensions, career progression, job security) in order that these can be given full consideration.

Subsequently, the Trade Unions have written to the Chief Executive on 17 February 2014, requesting the opportunity to present to the Committee at its meeting on 21 February. The Chief Executive has advised the Chair of the Committee who has determined that it will be a matter for Committee to decide to receive the delegation.

## **2.4 Next steps**

**Committee is now asked to make an ‘in principle’ decision to support the non-profit distributing organisation as its preferred business model, in order that a business plan and financial agreement can be presented to Committee in June 2014. It will also allow management to formally consult with the trade unions and staff as part of this process.**

**Members will also engage in a series of discussions on the next phases of the capital programme as well as the overarching ambitions for the new trust.**

**Over the next period, the following papers will be presented to Committee for its consideration:**

- LTP Phase II capital programme – affordability limits for next priorities (*March 14*)**
- Health and well-being outcomes, facilities management arrangements, customer service standards and staff protections (*April 14*)**
- Governance arrangements for the new NPDO (*April 14*)**
- Proposed contractual agreement with the new trust, outline business plan and draft financial agreement (*June 14*).**
- Results of Best Value and Equality consultation processes.**

## **2.5 Conclusion**

**It is recognised that this is an ambitious timeframe. However, Members are reminded that by making this decision they will:**

- Position the Council’s leisure and well-being provision to be a ‘best-in-class’ service;**
- Maximise the benefits of an unprecedented £105m capital investment in the city;**
- Significantly improve the value for money of the service, in order to safeguard its longer term sustainability;**
- Retain the Council as ‘democratic guardians’ to oversee the delivery of a wide range of social outcomes not limited to health and participation; and**

- Most importantly, enable and attract more people to be more active, more often.

### **3.0 Decisions required**

Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the information contained in the report and appendices, and to indicate its preferred 'in principle' business model option as the non-profit distributing organisation.
2. Grant authority for formal consultation with staff and the trade unions on the preferred business model and in particular the staffing, financial and human resource implications of this (TUPE (protection of existing staff's terms and conditions of employment), voluntary redundancy, mitigation against compulsory redundancy, pensions, etc.) and the affordability of these options.
3. Grant authority for Best Value and Equality consultations to be undertaken to inform the final decision of the Committee.

### **4.0 Resource Implications**

This is a major physical and service transformation process and the implications for resources (staff, assets and financial) will be fully scoped and assessed as part of the business planning process, with continuous engagement with staff and trade union reps.

### **5.0 Equality Implications**

In line with the Council's equality obligations, specialist equality advice has been prepared and recommends the following approach to prepare a high level EQIA:

- Develop Leisure Transformation Programme's formal vision on the promotion of equality and good relations (including tackling health inequalities);
- Undertake preliminary consultation on the equality issues with selected consultees over the period April-May; to include elected Members, staff and TUs, the Equality Consultative Forum and the Youth Forum;

- **Issue an EQIA report for formal consultation for 12 weeks mid-2014;**
- **Advise the Equality Commission on approach.”**

It was reported that Messrs. B. Campfield, NIPSA, D. Edmond, UNITE, M. O'Rourke, SIPTU and K. Clayton and G. O'Fachtna, Trade Union Co-ordinators, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman. Mr. Campfield indicated that the Trade Unions were in favour of an in-house model and were concerned that that option had been sidelined by the Council. He expressed the view that the Council should allocate resources to the Council's Trade Unions and staff to help develop an in-house bid which could be tested against the Council's social health and financial objectives. He pointed out that the due diligence had still to be undertaken against the non-profit distributing organisation (NPDO) model and questioned what would happen if that indicated that it was not achievable. He reiterated the point that the staff and Trade Unions wanted an equal chance to develop an in-house bid and were committed to making it work.

The deputation then answered a number of questions from the Members, during which the Director of Parks and Leisure also clarified a number of issues.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Trade Union delegation for attending and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McVeigh,  
Seconded by Councillor Hargey,

That the Council agrees to set aside resources to assist the Trade Unions to explore and work up an in-house model alongside the Council exploring the NPDO.

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

Moved by Councillor Attwood,  
Seconded by Councillor Reynolds,

That the Committee agrees to indicate its preferred "in principle" business model option as the non-profit distributing organisation.

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

The Committee agreed also to adopt recommendations 2 and 3 as set out in the report.

**Democratic Services and Governance**

**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>
International Forum for Drug and Alcohol Testing	International Forum for Drug and Alcohol Testing Annual Conference Dinner 2014 11th September, 2014 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	Delegates at this Conference will be arriving from around the world and 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
Rotary Ireland	Rotary Conference Reception 26th September, 2014 Approximately 500 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates at this Conference 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' 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
Public Health Agency	Cancer Consortium Conference Welcome Reception	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a	Delegates at this Conference will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the Conference will	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £500

	<p>10th November, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 250 attending</p>	<p>drinks reception</p>	<p>take place within the city.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Support for people and communities.</p>	
<p>Radiology International</p>	<p>Radiology in the Emerald Isle Farewell Gala Dinner</p> <p>5th June, 2015</p> <p>Approximately 250 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>Delegates at this Conference will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the Conference will take place within the city.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Support for people and communities.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
<p>Guide Dogs for the Blind</p>	<p>Volunteer Recognition Awards</p> <p>4th June, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 120 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 celebrate the work of volunteers. It will aim to highlight the importance of volunteering to the work of Guide Dogs Northern Ireland, which has no Government funding and relies totally on the contribution made by its many volunteers.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of Tea, Coffee and Biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £300</p>



<p>Upper Springfield Development Trust</p>	<p>Success of the West Awards 18th June, 2014 Approximately 360 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 seeks to recognise the achievements of local people from vocational training programmes across West Belfast.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks  Approximate cost £900</p>
<p>Polish Abroad</p>	<p>Launch of Poetry Project 4th April, 2014 Approximately 30 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will seek to highlight the project which hopes to bring together both the local and polish communities through workshops with local poets. The project will encourage the local polish community to write, through verse, about their experience of living in Belfast. This project will culminate in a printed book of verse in both polish and english.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits  Approximate cost £75</p>
<p>Belfast Pride</p>	<p>Launch of Pride 2014 and Awards Presentation</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of</p>	<p>This event will be the first official event of 2014 Belfast Pride</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of</p>

	<p>25th July, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 300 attending</p>	<p>hospitality in the form of a drinks reception</p>	<p>Festival. The Festival will promote awareness of the arts, cultural heritage, history and experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered communities in Belfast and advance equality by offering a diverse and inclusive Festival open to all citizens of Belfast.</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>a drinks reception</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
<p>African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland</p>	<p>Launch of Caribbean Culture Week and One Love Festival</p> <p>9th August, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 350 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception</p>	<p>This event will launch a week of celebration of the Caribbean culture and performance arts which involve cross-community interactions. The aim of the One Love Festival is to tackle hate in all areas and will hope to engage participants of all race, religion, age, sexuality, etc.</p> <p>This event will provide the opportunity for all communities to participate and will enhance mutual understanding while sharing this vibrant culture in our city.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>

			Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	
Cinemagic Limited	Question and Answer with Lord Julian Fellowes 21st March, 2014 Approximately 150 attending	The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits	This event will provide the opportunity for young people to engage with the renowned actor and screenwriter Lord Julian Fellowes. Belfast has become one of the leading cities for filming and developing the film and television industry and Cinemagic believe that by encouraging young people at an early age to become involved will lead to a stronger understanding.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City leadership, strong, fair and 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 provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits  Approximate cost £375
Federation of Small Businesses	Networking Event 10th April, 2014 Approximately 50 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event will provide the opportunity to meet, interact and develop contacts for possible future business. It will aim to assist businesses in finding locally based suppliers	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception  Approximate cost £250

			<p>and/or potential new customers.</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>MBA Association</p>	<p>Digital DNA – Schools Digital Media Challenge</p> <p>5th November, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 250 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will provide the opportunity to inspire young people to have a stronger understanding of consumer and business need before applying technology to provide a delivery solution.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together', 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better support for people and communities' 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 provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cost £625</p>

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Use of the Council Chamber**

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 24th January, it had agreed to provide support for International Women's Day. As part of the events on 8th March, the live screen in the grounds of the City Hall would be used to broadcast a DVD of interviews with various famous female personalities. Women'stec, which was involved in the organisation of the event, had requested the use

of the Council Chamber later in the day to record introductions to each of the speakers on the DVD.

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Members that the use of the Council Chamber for events other than the monthly Council meetings required the approval of the Committee. He recommended, given the Council's ongoing support and involvement in International Women's Day, that the request be granted.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Meetings of Committees, Working Groups etc During May, 2014**

The Committee was reminded that, at a recent meeting, the Chairman had suggested that it might be appreciated by the Political Parties on the Council if the meetings of Committees and Working Groups, including the meetings of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the several Party Briefings, were to be cancelled during the month of May to allow the politicians to concentrate on the forthcoming European Parliament and Local Council elections.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the Party Leaders had been spoken to on their views over the past few weeks and the general view was that it would be helpful and that they would support the idea. He circulated for the information of the Members the scheduled meetings which were due to take place during May and which would be affected if the Committee supported a proposal to cancel them. Essentially, the last meeting to take place before the elections would be the full Council meeting of 1st May.

He pointed out that, if the Committee agreed to the suggestion, then for the month of May the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Party Leaders, the Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and appropriate Committee Chairmen, would exercise a general delegated authority to take any urgent decisions which were routinely set in place during the recess month of July each year. In addition, if the proposal was supported by the Committee, a report would be presented to each of the other Standing Committees requesting that they agree to cancel their meetings and any meetings of Working Groups established by those Committees during the month of May. It would be necessary also for a similar report to be considered by the Policing and Community Safety Partnership and by the Belfast Statutory Transition Committee which was scheduled to meet on 14th May.

The Committee agreed to the cancellation of its meetings in May, together with any Working Groups and Area Working Groups which had been established by it, and for delegated authority to be extended to the Chief Executive for that month in consultation with Party Leaders, the Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the appropriate Committee Chairman.

### **Attendances at Conferences**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th January, it had agreed that a report on the policy of attendance of Members at 'Members Association' events, such as the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland and the National Association of Councillors be submitted for consideration.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that consideration of attendance at those types of events previously fell under the remit of the former Members' Sub-Committee. That Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 15th October, 2001, had agreed a policy that all reports submitted to it on conferences and seminars should specify that at least one representative from each of the Party Groups on the Council be authorised to attend.

Following the abolition of the Members Sub-Committee in 2007, all reports relating to Members' Association events had been submitted directly to the Strategic Policy Resources Committee and, in accordance with Council Policy, the recommendation of one member from each party or, in some instances, such as the National Association of Councillors events, the Members who represented the Council on the association, continued to be applied.

The Committee agreed that an options paper in relation to the attendance of Members at all conferences and seminars be submitted for its consideration in due course.

### **Human Resources**

#### **Review of Lord Mayor's Unit**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **"1.0 Purpose**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out for Members the proposed interim staffing arrangements following a review of the Lord Mayor's Unit.**

##### **2.0 Background**

**2.1 A comprehensive review of the Lord Mayor's Unit, was conducted primarily because of the changing nature of the Lord Mayor's role and it's office and the significant number of additional hours being worked by staff in the unit over a long period.**

**The objectives of the review were :**

- to create a 'fit for purpose' service and staffing structure to ensure delivery of future needs in the changing civic and corporate environment;**
- to enhance and maintain the high quality service to the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff and to mitigate against risk within the environment;**

- to address long standing excessive working hours issues within the unit.

2.2 Two previous Lord Mayors and the current Lord Mayor of Belfast and all members of staff in the unit were consulted as part of the review.

2.3 The current organisation structure consists of an establishment of seven full time permanent staff and one temporary member of staff.

### 3.0 Key Issues

#### 3.1 Civic Leadership

Belfast is changing as a city with increasing recognition being given to the council as a civic leader, this combined with local government reform, the delivery of the Investment Programme and an increase in public expectations has had a significant impact on the Lord Mayor's role and that of the unit.

A change in focus over the years has resulted in the Lord Mayor's unit taking a wider approach with its staff building closer working relationships with departments across the council, in particular the Chief Executive's support unit, the City Events and the Economic Development teams.

#### 3.2 Working hours

For the past few years staff have been working a significant number of additional hours and have been carrying-over an increased amount of annual leave; there are long standing high levels of flexi leave, overtime and time off in lieu leave and members of staff regularly take work home.

#### 3.3 Staffing/Roles & Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities within the unit have become somewhat blurred and this is primarily due to the dynamic and demanding environment together with a significant increase in workload. This increased work and tight deadlines means the work on projects and events has become more re-active rather than pro-active and planned.

Information gathered as part of the review demonstrated that the service has delivered a significant number of events over the past number of years with the Lord Mayor's Principal

**Officer in particular spending an increasing amount of time working with civic dignitaries and providing advice on events such as the visit of President Obama and the hosting of the 'Freedom of the City' events dedicated to Dame Mary Peters and Van Morrison.**

**The review also highlighted that there was some duplication of work and that senior officers were becoming involved in day to day operational issues resulting in less time being dedicated to issues commensurate with their level.**

- 3.4 It is evident that additional support is required for the delivery of operational projects and it is therefore proposed that a new temporary post of Operations Manager (Lord Mayor's) notional salary scale PO5 is established to give additional support and to drive day to day operational work.**
  
- 3.5 The work within the unit can be divided into two main strands of diary management and events management. Some tasks however have become merged and at times it is difficult to pin point ownership and accountability. It is important to clearly allocate duties and projects with clear accountability. It is therefore proposed to create two distinct strands with the current post of Democratic Services Officer (Lord Mayor's) salary scale PO3 being realigned and retitled to better reflect the key duties and an additional temporary post created i.e. Democratic Services Officer (Diary Management and Events) to support this dual approach (aspects of this role are currently being covered by an existing generic corporate resource on an interim basis).**
  
- 3.6 During the review it was highlighted by each of the Lord Mayors that while the Lord Mayor's Principal Officer and other designated officers currently attend larger scale civic events to ensure proper protocol is in place it would be useful to have a member of staff to accompany the Lord Mayor at local community based engagements. They also suggested that it would be beneficial to have an officer undertaking more detailed research and providing relevant background information prior to engagements. Evidence presented also highlighted that there were tasks at an operational level that could be improved and developed. It is therefore proposed that a new temporary post of Support Assistant (Lord Mayor's) notional grade salary scale 5 be established. This post would attend engagements as assigned and also provide the wider support as necessary and will also have line management responsibility for the Chauffeur and Parlour staff and ensure co-ordination of their activities in line with the diary and engagement requirements. The non-driving duties carried out by the chauffeurs are a key element in the effective operation of the unit.**



- 3.7 Within the Lord Mayor's parlour service there is currently one member of staff i.e. the Civic Attendant, who due to the increased number of engagements, lunches and receptions has had to work a significant amount of additional hours. Agency staff are employed during periods of absence and this type of cover is not sustainable nor is it in line with council objectives relating to efficiency and the Investment Programme. Further, the use of agency staff is not appropriate in this particular work environment. To assist with the current workload and enable proper cover for the parlour a new post of Civic Attendant (salary scale 3) is proposed.
- 3.8 It is anticipated that a shift pattern will be developed to provide adequate cover for the role and to decrease the number of additional hours worked by staff.
- 3.9 In the context of LGR, potential new governance arrangements and organisational design it is proposed that the new posts are created on a temporary basis until April 2015 with these arrangements being reviewed in-line with corporate organisational redesign. The additional interim posts can be created under the Council's Scheme of Delegation but given the nature of this review it was considered appropriate to seek Members agreement.
- 3.10 There are currently three posts within the unit receiving an on-call payment and this will be reviewed once the recommendations of the review have been fully implemented and evaluated.
- 3.11 If the Lord Mayor's Unit is to meet future needs such as supporting civic dignitaries, delivering events both locally and on a global scale, it is vital that there are adequate and appropriate resources with clear lines of communication, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities but it should also be noted that additional resources alone will not ensure all needs are met. While the creation and the filling of the proposed new temporary posts will assist with the heavy burden of work in the Lord Mayor's Unit, this alone will not address the issues highlighted as a result of this review nor meet the objectives of it. It will therefore be necessary to adopt a far reaching planned approach to improvements that will not only ensure that the new human resources are recruited but that each of the issues identified through the review (such as the need for effective and updated IT systems

and processes; improved planning and communication; and establishing a new culture to create a better work/life balance for staff) are addressed. In addition to the proposed additional resources a planned approach to improvements will now be developed and implemented.

#### **4.0 Resource Implications**

##### **4.1 Staff Implications**

The Human Resource implications will be implemented in accordance with the council's normal policies and procedures. The additional temporary posts can be created under the Council's Scheme of Delegation but given the nature of this review it was considered appropriate to seek Members agreement.

##### **4.2 Financial Implications**

These posts will be financed up to April 2015 through the re-alignment of existing budgets and the reduction of overtime payments.

#### **5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None

#### **6.0 Recommendations**

##### **6.1 Members are asked to agree the following temporary arrangements:**

- Create one new temporary post of Operations Manager - notional salary scale PO5.
- Create one new temporary post of Democratic Services Officer (Diary Management & Civic Events) - notional salary scale PO3 (aspects of this role are currently being covered by an existing generic corporate resource on an interim basis).
- Create one new post of Support Assistant (Lord Mayors) - notional salary SC5.
- Create one new temporary post of Parlour/Civic Attendant - notional salary scale SC3.

- **HR to work with the Democratic Services Manager to develop an implementation plan to ensure all issues/improvements are addressed.**
- **Review on-call payments at an appropriate time.”**

After discussion, during which the Committee was advised that the proposals were an interim arrangement which would be kept under review and that the cost would be approximately £130,000 up until April, 2015, which would be met through the re-alignment of existing budgets and the reduction of overtime payments, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **The Effective Management of Agency Workers**

The Assistant Chief Executive/Head of Human Resources submitted for the Committee's the consideration the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise elected members of the arrangements to ensure the effective management of agency workers and to seek agreement to extend Standing Order 55 to agency workers.**

#### **2.0 Relevant Background Information**

- 2.1 An essential element of the Council's efficiency agenda is to reduce the long term use of and over dependency on agency workers. A framework for the effective management and use of employment agency services was therefore developed and communicated to all Council departments.**
- 2.2 Closely linked to this is the Council's commitment to deliver two hundred job opportunities as part of the Investment Programme. Work has been ongoing to reduce dependency on agency workers and where possible, realign resources to deliver direct employment opportunities. Thirty-five permanent Business Support Clerk (BSC) posts have been created with a comparable reduction in the use of agency BSCs. A new generic job of Mobile Facilities Attendant in Parks and Leisure has also been developed, creating up to twenty-six new posts and direct employment in these roles will bring about a considerable reduction in the use of agency workers. Work will continue to focus on the reduction in the use of agency workers as well as exploring how levels of overtime can be reduced to deliver even more direct employment opportunities.**

2.3 Recently, some concerns regarding the requisitioning of agency workers and the appropriate management of long term agency workers have been highlighted.

3.0 Key Issues

The following work has therefore been completed:

3.1 The framework for managing the use of employment agency services has been updated and communicated across departments. It is attached at Appendix One. The updated framework includes tighter controls around the requisitioning of agency workers and the appropriate management and support of long term agency workers when applying for council jobs.

3.2 To ensure a continued focus on efficiency through effective management of agency workers and to help bring about improvement, corporate Human Resources has set up regular compliance meetings with departments to ensure that the framework is being adhered to, i.e. that authorisation and requisitioning protocols are being followed. Analysis will also include the duration of assignments and departments will also be asked to justify long term use. The monitoring approach being implemented by corporate Human Resources will be similar to that implemented to reduce levels of sickness absence.

3.3 While efforts continue to reduce the number of agency workers in the council, there will always be a need, for operational reasons, to have these type of resources. Clear processes and procedures for fair, equitable and appropriate requisitioning of agency workers is essential. Such a process has therefore been made explicit in the updated framework for managing the use of agency services and each council department has been advised accordingly.

3.4 It is also proposed that the Council's Standing Order (SO) 55 be extended to include the engagement of agency resources. This protocol states that 'a relation of any officer or servant of the Council shall not be appointed or engaged or recommended for appointment or engagement in any Department except with the consent of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee - such consent to be recorded in the minutes of that Committee.' The Director of Finance and Resources has delegated authority to approve the appointment or engagement of such individuals and report for Committee notation.

3.8 The Assistant Chief Executive and Head of HR has met with Grafton Recruitment, (the current agency worker provider), to clarify the required protocol, specifically regarding council officers asking for named individuals and the need to report immediately to corporate Human Resources any instances of this happening.

4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 The effective and efficient management of agency workers is in line with the Council's efficiency agenda. There are no additional resource implications contained in this report.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

5.1 The proposals in this report and associated protocols have been developed to ensure equality of access to council job opportunities for agency workers.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Elected members are asked to:

- note the contents of this report and
- agree to extend the Council's Standing Order (SO) 55 reporting to include the engagement of agency resources.

7.0 Documents attached

Appendix One - Updated framework for managing the use of employment agency services

Appendix One

**Framework for managing the use of employment agency services**

Belfast City Council has a corporate framework for managing the use of employment agency services. This framework sets out corporate guidance on the principles and protocols for managing, monitoring and reporting upon the use of employment agency resources within the organisation.

The Human Resources (HR) Section will maintain and update the corporate framework; procure and manage the terms of the employment agency contract; monitor departmental compliance with the framework; and review management reports on a regular basis to ensure probity and value for money in the use of agency resources within the organisation.

Council departments will manage agency resource needs on a decentralised basis within the parameters of this framework; request and authorise the use of agency resources strictly in line with corporate protocols; work within the terms of the employment agency contract; attend management meetings with the contractor(s) and compliance meetings as required with the HR Section; and regularly monitor and report upon the use and spend of agency resources on a unit, section and departmental level.

**Corporate Principles:**

**1. Using agency resources**

The council recognises that there are certain situations where the use of agency cover is the most effective resourcing mechanism, for example:

- short-term cover at short notice without which front-line, customer-facing service delivery would be adversely affected on that particular day, for example, LGV/HGV driver, play-worker, cleansing operative, receptionist posts etc;
- short-term cover for an agreed, defined period of time, such as, summer scheme staff and other seasonal worker requirements;
- to cover established posts which are temporarily vacant or vacant pending permanent recruitment, where it has not been possible to cover the vacancy by normal recruitment mechanisms;

- to cover for post/duties which are over and above establishment figures but only where the additional workload is of an extremely temporary nature, for example, three days work to distribute council leaflets for a particular event or initiative; and
- to cover for unexpected events or unpredicted upsurges in workload where it is not practicable or possible, for whatever reason, to cover the vacancy by normal recruitment mechanisms.

It also recognises that there is an organisational responsibility to monitor and control the use of such agency cover to ensure, in all cases:

- that it is only sought at the lowest possible basic entry level, i.e. not at a supervisory, senior or principal officer level;
- that normal recruitment mechanisms, including internally-trawled job opportunities which offer developmental or financial advantage to council employees, have been given proper consideration prior to agency resources being requisitioned;
- that proper requisition and authorisation protocols are in place and adhered to;
- that the duration of the cover, in normal circumstances, lasts no longer than three months; and
- that the deployment of agency resources is managed in an equitable, consistent and cohesive manner across the organisation.

The main focus of the meetings to monitor departmental compliance with the framework will be the reason why agency resources have been requisitioned, the duration of these resources and to check departmental compliance with the corporate principles and protocols.

2. Agency Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011  
These regulations came into operation on 5 December 2011 and seek to ensure that agency workers are entitled to the same basic working and employment conditions as if they had been directly recruited by the council, mostly after they have completed 12 weeks' service in the same (or similar) job.

**Information relating to the regulations, specifically in terms of rights relating to access to vacancies, facilities, holidays, training etc was issued by the HR Section to departments on 7 December 2011. It should, however, be noted that Belfast City Council's principle of payment, as agreed by the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee on 19 August 2002, was always that agency resources would be paid the same rate of pay as council employees, including any applicable allowances.**

**From the first day of an assignment, agency workers are entitled to be made aware of and apply for job vacancies which are internally trawled within the council. For this reason, council departments need to ensure that specific consideration is given to communicating information on job vacancies to agency workers, as well as to comparable council employees. It is particularly important to communicate information on any upcoming job vacancies to agency workers, as well as comparable council employees, following the outcome of a structural review. Agency workers are eligible to apply for internally trawled job vacancies provided they are current agency workers with the council as at the closing date for receipt of the job applications and that they continually remain current agency workers with the council throughout the entire recruitment and selection process up to the time, following all pre-employment checks, when a formal offer of appointment is made.**

**Agency assignments must always be resourced on the basis of the job description and employee specification for the established post which requires cover, with no agency assignment having lesser qualifications or experience than that which would be required should the post be recruited via the council's normal recruitment and selection procedures. In the event of a need to resource duties where no job description currently exists or where some of the duties of a post need to be covered without the requirement for the assignee to work to the full job description, the duties of the post need to be set out clearly, evaluated and a formal rate of pay established. No agency assignment should be engaged before this exercise has been completed and signed-off by the HR Section.**

**The employment agency contractor is responsible for undertaking all relevant pre-employment checks such as references, qualifications, medical assessments, criminal conviction, asylum and immigration checks and conducting all relevant risk assessment exercises to ensure suitable agency**



assignees are allocated to suitable council jobs. The contractor is also responsible for covering any associated costs, for example, Access NI, Security Industry Authority licence costs etc. The council will only consider reimbursing these costs in exceptional circumstances.

The employment agency 'mark-up' for each salary scale is agreed as part of the current contract and this cost will remain fixed throughout the duration of the contract.

Should an agency resource apply for and be recommended for appointment to a post in the council via its normal recruitment and selection procedures, the council will not be liable for payment of an introductory fee to the contractor.

The contractor is responsible for all administration and payroll procedures, including National Insurance and Pay as You Earn and is required to submit all invoices directly to Central Transaction Unit (CTU) on a weekly basis.

Should an agency resource be terminated with 24 hours due to unsuitability, for any justifiable reason, the council will not be required to pay the contractor for the hours worked.

**3. Defining the employment status of agency resources**

The legal principle is that the relationship between the council and the agency assignee will not give rise to a contract of employment with the council. While the duration of such resources, in normal circumstances, should last no longer than 3 months, this principle will remain the case even if an agency assignee has been hired out to the council by the agency for a long period of time i.e. transmutation to a contract of employment will not come from long service.

**4. Training agency resources (including health and safety issues)**

The agency resource is not a council employee and, as such, does not require a personal development plan (PDP) or specific investment in development activities. However there is the need for basic job related training and an awareness of health and safety matters.

Whereas the contractor is responsible for fully briefing the agency resource on his his/her duties prior to commencement, the council is responsible for carrying out any job specific training required, for example, the use of specialist software packages, machinery or equipment etc to enable the assignee to undertake the role.

Also, whereas the contractor is responsible for advising the agency resource of his/her responsibilities in observing and adhering to all health and safety policies, the council is responsible for the delivery of any health and safety training required by the assignee in order to undertake the role.

The council is an equal opportunities employer and, as such, expects the same standards to be applied in the fair selection of agency resources to work in our organisation. The contractor is responsible for providing equality and diversity training to its agency assignees and for ensuring they are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity prior to commencement. The council is responsible for the delivery of any on-site mandatory training, for example, child protection training.

Whereas, the contractor is responsible for providing agency assignees with protective footwear, the council is responsible for providing appropriate protective clothing and/or uniforms where it is deemed necessary (with the contractor having responsibility for recovering such items of clothing on behalf of the council when the assignee leaves the post.) In the event that an agency resource reports for an assignment without the proper protective footwear, the council officer may refuse the assignee and will not be liable for any payment to the contractor.

The contractor is responsible for fully briefing the agency resource on the hours of work, location of assignment and methods of travel available prior to commencement.

The contractor is responsible for ensuring that all agency resources comply with all policies, legislation and prohibitions operated by the council.

#### Corporate Protocols:

1. Requesting agency resources

The HR Section is responsible for holding the organisational list of 'assigned officers' i.e. the names of departmental officers who are authorised to request or 'order' agency resources. It is the department's responsibility to notify the HR Section of any amendments to this list and the HR Section will notify the contractor accordingly.

Where a request is made from a departmental officer who is not an assigned officer, the contractor will notify the HR Section of

this non-compliance issue and the HR Section will liaise with the department concerned. In such cases, the contractor will not place an agency resource in that department until approval has been granted by another assigned officer from that department or the HR Section.

The requisition form and flowchart procedure for requesting agency resources are available via the Interlink Library>Forms>Human Resources link but, in summary, assigned officers should liaise directly with the relevant contractor and submit a properly authorised requisition form detailing the duties to be undertaken (job description), the reason why agency cover is required, whether the agency resource is required to cover an established council post within the council's structures, the location of work, hours of work including any shift working or unsocial hours, rate of pay including any allowances, duration of assignment and any specific qualifications, experience, skills or competencies required for the job.

If the contractor receives a request from an assigned officer without a properly authorized requisition form, with no job description and employee specification or with incomplete details in terms of the reason why the agency cover is required or whether or not the agency cover is to fill an established council post etc, the contractor will advise the council officer that s/he is unable to action the request and s/he will notify the departmental manager responsible for human resource matters or the Human Resources Section of the non-compliance issue. The contractor will also formally record and report details of such non-compliance departmental issues to the HR Section on a monthly basis.

When requesting agency resources, assigned officers should always be mindful of the corporate principle that no agency resource should be requested on the basis of lesser qualifications or experience than that which would be required should the post be recruited via the council's normal recruitment and selection procedures.

In all circumstances, it is the sole role of the contractor to select and supply the agency assignee to the council. Any council officer taking part in any form of selection process by holding informal discussions or by formally interviewing a number of potential agency assignees to select the successful agency assignee will render the council liable to legal challenge and claims of unlawful discrimination. In exceptional circumstances, and only if the post is a specialist, technical post e.g. Mechanical / Electrical Engineer, the contractor may

**forward CVs of its most suitably qualified and experienced agency resources for the assigned council officer to review. This review must be conducted in conjunction with the contractor and the ultimate decision in respect of which agency resource is assigned to the council will rest solely with the contractor.**

**Canvassing in any form, oral or written, direct or indirect, in terms of requesting agency resources is prohibited and any breach of this term will result in the termination of any agency resource that has been assigned. Under no circumstances, should an assigned council officer ask the contractor to supply him/her with a named individual to undertake an agency assignment. If an assigned council officer asks the contractor to supply him/her with a named individual, the contractor will advise the council officer that s/he is unable to action the request and will then notify the Human Resources Section. The Human Resources Section will then investigate the matter with the relevant department. In all circumstances, it is the sole responsibility of the contractor to select, supply and assign the most appropriate agency assignee to the council based on the qualifications and/or experience required for the assignment.**

**The council's standing order 55 (Employment of Relatives) states that a relation of any officer or servant (elected member) of the council shall not be appointed or engaged in any department except with the consent of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with such consent recorded in the minutes of that committee. (Delegated authority was subsequently granted by committee to the Director of Finance and Resource on 27 June 2005 for him/her to authorise the appointment or engagement of such individuals and report then for committee notation.) As agreed by the council's Corporate Management Team in February 2014, the names of all agency workers who are assigned to work in the council, who are related to existing council officers or elected members, will be subject to authorisation by the Director of Finance and Resources and the details reported accordingly to committee.**

**The supply of employment agency resources to the council will be provided by the contractor on a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, 365 day a year basis. There may exceptional occasions where a booking is made 'out of hours' and it is not possible for the appropriate level of authorisation to be obtained or the documentation completed prior to a request being made to the contractor. In such cases the contractor should continue to**

source the placement and the assigned officer should complete the requisition form as soon as it is practically possible.

2. **Authorising agency resources**

In all cases, assigned officers must adhere to the following authorisation protocol:

Type of Cover	Authorisation
Short term agency resource to cover an established post which is anticipated to be for less than 1 week	Manager with responsibility for the service
Agency resource to cover an established post which extends or is likely to extend for a period beyond 1 week up to 3 months.	Head of Service
Agency resource to cover an established post which extends or is likely to extend beyond 3 months OR where the cover is in addition to the approved establishment.	Director of Department

Any request to extend an agency assignment must be authorised by the Head of Service regardless of the period of extension.

NB: As agreed by CMT on 8 August 2012, departments can no longer contact the employment agency directly to request the use of Business Support Clerk agency assignees, or any other similar related administrative post. All such requests must be channelled through the Employee Resourcing unit of the HR Section.

3. **Adhering to turnaround times / using alternative suppliers**

On a contractual basis, the preferred supplier must be given the opportunity to fulfil the agency requirement. If it cannot do this within the agreed time-frames (see below), then the assigned officer must contact the appropriate back-up supplier and afford it the same time-frames (see below).

The contractor should acknowledge receipt of all requests for agency resources within a 30 minute timeframe and work within the following timeframe:

Notice period given by assigned officer	Contractor's response time
< 1 working day	1 hour
1 working day	2 hours
2 to 5 working days	4 hours
5 to 10 working days	1 working day
10+ working days	2 working days

If the preferred and back-up suppliers are unable to fulfil the agency resource within the timeframe, an alternative employment agency may be used.

If a request is made for an agency resource which is specialist in nature, and if the assigned officer is in agreement, the contractor may deviate from these response times and agree a more realistic time-frame. If this timeframe is not met, an alternative employment agency may be used.

Likewise, if a request has previously been made to fill an assignment and the contractor (either the preferred or back-up supplier) has been unable to meet the request by non-fulfilment, volume or calibre of agency resource, and if a similar placement becomes available within two months of the initial request, an alternative employment agency may be used. It is the responsibility of the assigned officer to record and monitor the use of any other employment agency and provide this information to the HR Section as and when required.

**4. Dealing with complaints / disciplinary and grievance issues**

In the event of a complaint from an agency resource or a complaint from a council employee against an agency resource, including claims of unfair treatment, the departmental officer with responsibility for HR should liaise with the contractor to discuss and agree the management of such cases in line with both the council's and the contractor's procedures for dealing with such matters. Corporate advice on such issues must be sought from the HR Employee Relations unit. In all cases and in the interests of fairness and consistency of approach when dealing with a complaint, the principle of natural justice will apply in that the relevant parties will be afforded an opportunity to respond to the issues raised.

**5 Unsatisfactory performance / notice**

If an agency resource is found to be incapable of carrying out the duties to the required standard, the department should

notify the contractor of the relevant details and request it to terminate the assignment with immediate effect and to supply a suitable replacement within 24 hours (or by the time agreed by the assigned officer). It is the responsibility of the contractor to notify the agency resource that his/her performance is unsatisfactory and the council is not required to issue a written instruction to the contractor in respect of this.

In normal circumstances, it is usual to give agency resources at least one week's verbal notice of termination.

### Corporate Monitoring and Reporting:

#### 1. Monitoring the use of agency resources

There is a need for the council to monitor the use of agency resources to ensure the proper management and control of staff numbers and financial probity. In order to do this, it must measure the use of agency resources at a corporate, departmental, section and unit level.

Each department must have the appropriate mechanisms in place for monitoring and measuring agency usage, reason, duration and spend at unit, section and departmental level. The use of agency resources and associated statistics and costs must be a standing agenda item on departmental management teams and examined at each meeting. At this meeting, departments should examine the reasons why agency resources are being used, the duration of such resources, the associated costs, whether value for money is being achieved and why the post, vacancy or duties could not have been covered by other suitable means.

The contractor is required to meet with departmental officers and members of the Human Resources Section on a quarterly basis to assist in the effective monitoring and management of agency resources within the council. The frequency of these management meetings will be subject to change depending on council requirements or circumstances. These management meetings will provide a formal mechanism for communication but the contractor should ensure that regular communication is maintained with departmental officers throughout the duration of every assignment.

#### 2. Reporting on the use of agency resources

The HR Section will report agency figures at a departmental level to the Council's Audit Panel on a quarterly basis. These

**figures will be compiled on the basis of the contractor's reports, which are, submitted on a monthly basis.**

**On a contractual basis the contractor is required to produce a suite of reports in electronic format to enable the council to analyse information on an organisational, departmental, section, unit, location and designation basis.**

**The contractor is also required to be flexible in the production of bespoke reports, as and when required.**

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**This framework will remain under review and be updated as required. It will also be available on the council's Interlink Library.**

**(Updated in February 2014)"**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Notice of Motion re: - Living Wage**

The Committee was reminded that at the Council meeting on 3rd February, the undernoted Notice of Motion had been proposed by Councillor Hanna and seconded by Councillor Mullan:

"This Council:

- Notes that many households in Belfast, including a high portion of those in work, are currently experiencing poverty;
- Contends that people working full-time should be able to afford housing costs, essential utilities and food bills;
- Agrees that the introduction of the minimum wage has been a step forward but that at its current level it is inadequate for many with financial responsibilities;
- Acknowledges that it is our responsibility as a major employer as well as to our ratepayers to seek to reduce poverty and inequality; and
- Notes that approximately 1% of council employees are paid below a 'Living Wage', currently set at £7.65 per hour, a sum independently set as the level above



which an earner can live adequately and with dignity in today's society.

The Council therefore agrees:

1. To become a Living Wage employer, in consultation with staff and their representatives, and to revise upwards payment to those employees currently receiving below the living wage level;
2. To include a commitment to include the living wage in all new employment contracts;
3. To review the extent to which the Council's Living Wage policy might be able to be applied to currently contracted-out services or as each contract comes up for renewal;
4. To encourage other employers in Belfast to adopt a similar anti low-pay policy for their staff;
5. To review the ratio between the lowest and the higher paid council officers; and
6. To ensure that the appropriate Council Committee receives reports on progress towards the above at least annually, and initially by April 2014."

In accordance with Standing Order 11(e), the motion had stood referred without discussion to the Committee.

The Committee agreed that a report on the matter be submitted for its consideration in due course.

### **Asset Management**

#### **Corporate Accommodation Strategy**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 **One of the key projects in the Council's Efficiency is the development and implementation of an accommodation strategy which rationalises the City Centre office accommodation for the Council freeing up leased accommodation for use by the private sector in support of the Council's City Financing Strategy and realising potential capital**

receipts on surplus BCC buildings. The strategy will also aim to establish accommodation facilitates modern ways of working in to office environment.

- 1.2 The majority of the Council's city centre staff (1,142 staff) are currently accommodated in four locations - City Hall, Cecil Ward Building, Adelaide Exchange and Lanyon Place, with the latter two buildings leased from private landlords. This accommodation is augmented by the ISB Building, Wellington Place (CAC), Dunbar Link and Maysfield LDC. The accommodation at Duncrue Complex is currently excluded from the accommodation strategy given its ongoing operational requirement. The associated annual rent and rates accommodation costs for currently leased city centre premises is £1,034,950.**
- 1.3 There is an opportunity for the Council to exercise lease break options in both Adelaide Exchange (September 2017) and Lanyon Place (January 2017) at no financial penalty to exercise the options. Should these break options not be utilised Council's tenure will automatically extend to the end of the Lease terms; August 2022 and November 2020 respectively.**
- 1.4 The Accommodation Group was re-established by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, on the 24 September 2010 to review existing accommodation commitments and consider the future accommodation needs of the Council.**
- 1.5 The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee of 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012 agreed that an Economic Appraisal and Options Report should be undertaken in respect of the Council's office accommodation in order to recommend a way forward for development of a Corporate Accommodation Strategy for the Council. CIPFA Property was appointed to provide an initial analysis of the Council's existing office accommodation and provide high level recommendations.**
- 1.6 The high level CIPFA Property evaluation identified a 'workstyle solution' based on modern ways of working that could potentially provide the optimal outcome for the Council. However, it was not considered that such a solution could universally be implemented with any degree of success given the existing nature, range and provision of services across the Council. It was recognised that this solution may not fit services and Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 21 June 2013 agreed to pursue an 'estates solution' that embodies the principles of best practice of workspace provision and where suitable to develop and employ more modern ways of working tailored to suit service delivery.**

- 1.7 A market site search of currently available property was concluded on behalf of the Council in October 2013 by CBRE estate agents who identified a list of 14 potential locations. This site search concluded there were no options available of sufficient size in suburban locations to facilitate a totally decentralised approach to the Council's eventual accommodation solution.
- 1.8 Deloitte were appointed to undertake the Economic Appraisal and Options Report based on a shortlist of locations identified in the CBRE site search and also to include 4 Council owned sites (ISB Building, Maysfield, Gasworks Northern Fringe, Ormeau Avenue).

## 2 Key Issues

### 2.1 Economic Appraisal

Building on the high level CIPFA Property analysis of the Council's existing office estate that identified the potential for revenue savings Deloitte have undertaken a detailed economic appraisal that assessed the various options available to Council in developing a Corporate Accommodation Strategy on the identified site location options, to include.

- Ownership v Leasing
- Purchase of existing building v new purpose built
- BCC owned site v 3rd party site
- Locational & regeneration Issues
- Centralised (city centre) v de-centralised (neighbourhood working model)
- Collaboration with other public sector bodies
- Potential for provision of additional accommodation for 3rd party letting
- LGR & reform of local government /future proofing
- Opportunities for flexible working; touch-down desks, home working etc where there is also scope within the Leisure Transformation Strategy to accommodate outreach office space in the community
- Opportunities arising from the Council's Investment Programme
- Financial Implications & potential for efficiencies
- Potential for alternative sources of funding for either capital or enhanced revenue expenditure (e.g income) depending on the option(s) adopted

- 2.2 Deloitte were provided with information in respect of the Council's current office estate (size, running costs etc) together

with current staff numbers/locations and future staff projections resulting from both LGR and natural growth on which to assess need and office space requirement.

2.3 The Economic Appraisal and Options Report undertakes a detailed assessment of need, identified options for full appraisal, highlight the benefits and opportunities and sets overall objectives for the Strategy and is summarised in Appendix 2

2.3 Monetary/Non-Monetary Assessment:

The economic appraisal has concluded:

- ownership is preferable to leasing options
- building new premises is preferable to refurbishment options
- confirms development of a 'campus style' approach for the Council's office estate (proximity to City Hall) as opposed to decentralisation and area based working – duplication of costs, services etc
- Estimates of savings on annual running costs has been identified at £1.2M annually from building and owning a new single building in the city centre over current running costs of the Council's existing office estate. Besides the savings on leased property this also includes savings associated with the ISB building and the Learning & Development Centre.
- Council requirement is for 100,000 sq ft in addition to City Hall & CWB
- Accommodation needs to accommodate additional circa 270 staff from LGR staff transferring and natural growth in service provision requirements

2.4 Recommendation:

The preferred option recommended in the Deloitte economic appraisal is to acquire a site and build new premises.

The preferred site for the new premises is Clarendon House site (adjacent to CWB) being the optimal location of the available opportunities.

The capital cost associated with acquisition, demolition, build, decant, fees etc for Clarendon House is estimated £21M.

2.5 Optimal Timing: Given the respective break options in the Council's leased accommodation (Adelaide Exchange, Lanyon

Place) in 2017 any alternative premises need to be available for occupation by end of December 2016 which leaves approximately just under 3 years to complete the project.

The Council has the opportunity to progress the purchase of Clarendon House, presently on the market, for which Committee had sanctioned conditional bidding. Valuation advice has been obtained from Land & Property Services to inform the bidding process. Such opportunity to acquire a development, that meets the Council's identified drivers for the Accommodation Strategy, may not be available in the future.

The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that if the Committee agreed that the Council should seek to purchase the site, within the value for money limit, the purchase of the Clarendon House site could be funded by a cash payment from the 2013/14 Capital Financing Budget, thus avoiding a future loan liability for this phase of the project.

If the purchase was successful, the Director of Finance and Resources would work with the Director of Property and Projects to develop a financing model for the new build, fit out and decant phase of the project, including the impact of transferring staff and resources from central government as part of Local Government Reform.

## **2.6 Risk**

Deloitte have examined 10 associated risks identified with delivery of the Council's Accommodation Strategy ranking the provision of a new building as relatively low risk with only a negative public perception (medium/low) and lack of support/buy-in to the recommended option (high) potentially impacting.

## **2.7 Accommodation Steering Group**

The Members Accommodation Steering Group considered the broad findings of the Economic Appraisal at its meeting on 4th February 2014 and agreed that a report should be taken to the next Strategic Policy & Resources Committee based on the Economic Appraisal findings to progress the Accommodation Strategy.

The Accommodation Steering Group also endorsed 5 key design principles for the Council's Corporate Accommodation Strategy identified in the Economic Appraisal

1. The City Hall and Cecil Ward Building will both be retained
2. The Council's office accommodation should be flexible and adaptable
3. The standard of accommodation does not need to be Grade A, good Grade B is an acceptable standard
4. The building should be designed to BREEAM standard of 'excellent' or above
5. The city centre office estate should follow a 'campus style' model

The Accommodation Steering Group has also highlighted:

- The potential for leasing out any surplus office space in a new City centre office development and utilising the ground floor as retail potential that would bring active street frontage.
- Potential within the Leisure review to explore incorporation of city centre leisure facilities in the provision of new accommodation.
- Branding of any new Council office block utilising the World Trade Centre licence currently held by the Council.
- Requirement or otherwise to include staff car parking with new accommodation.
- The need for full consideration of Green issues and energy efficiency in the delivery of any accommodation solution.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **3.1 Finance**

The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that if the Committee agreed that the Council should seek to purchase the site, within the value for money limit, the purchase of the Clarendon House site could be funded by a cash payment from the 2013/14 Capital Financing Budget, thus avoiding a future loan liability for this phase of the project.

### **4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

- 4.1 The longer term delivery of the Councils Corporate Accommodation Strategy will take account of equality issues.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members note the findings of the Economic Appraisal and work undertaken in respect of the Corporate Accommodation Strategy through the Accommodation Steering Group and agree to that the Council should seek to purchase the Clarendon House site for the future development of City Centre Office Accommodation for the Council .**
- 5.2 The Committee is asked to note that the If the purchase is successful, the Director of Finance and Resources would work with the Director of Property and Projects to develop a financing model for the new build, fit out and decant phase of the project, including the impact of transferring staff and resources from central government as part of Local Government Reform.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Innovation Centre**

The Committee was reminded that a European Regional Development Fund application had been submitted to develop an Innovation Centre at Springfield to act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the Forthriver Business Park. There were three main aspects to the project, that is, the build, community engagement and the operator model. There had been extensive community engagement and a wide range of different community groups had been consulted. The operator manual was currently being looked at and specialist skills had been contracted to help inform the specification. A design and build contract was being used for the build and a planning application was due to be submitted in May, 2014.

The Director of Property and Projects explained that the development would be located on part of the Forthriver Business Park. That site was owned by Invest NI and was an interface location in one of the most deprived areas of the City. The Innovation Centre would be situated on 2.1 acres of a 12 acres site and the anticipation was that that would act as a catalyst to help bring forward development of the wider site.

The estates management teams from both the Council and Invest NI, together with Legal Services and Invest NI's solicitors, had been in discussions to transfer the Invest NI land to the Council, subject to receipt of a letter of offer and the approval processes of each organisation. The Council's Estate Unit had been negotiating with Invest NI's agent and had agreed a consideration for the site, subject to the Committee's approval. In addition, Officers had been working with the respective solicitors to draft the terms of the Agreement for the Lease and the 999 year lease which would transfer the site to council ownership on completion of the development, subject to funding and approval.

The Director stated that the procedure for land transfer required the Council to pay Invest NI a 10% deposit for the site upon signing the Agreement for Lease and with an 18 month timeframe to build the Innovation Centre, in receipt of planning and approval of the plans as specifications by Invest NI. In order to meet the funding timescale for vouched expenditure on 31st December, 2015, the Centre build programme showed an anticipated completion of November, 2015. Once the building had been completed, in accordance with the plans and specifications, the Council will pay the remaining 90% of the consideration to Invest NI and the ownership of the land would be transferred to the Council by way of a 999 year lease. The consideration with Invest NI had been agreed at £150,000 for a total site area of 2.131 acres.

He pointed out that the business parks site had been subject to a Requisition Order from the Department of Justice to divert parades through the estate roads and paths. Whilst the site had been undeveloped, that had provided the Police Service of Northern Ireland with a public safety and public order solution. Discussion had taken place with the Police Service and the Department of Justice to limit the extent of time for any further Requisition Orders to the minimum time in order to limit any disruption for future occupiers of the Innovation Centre.

The Committee approved the acquisition of a 2.1 acre site on the Forthriver Park from Invest NI at a consideration of £150,000. The Committee noted that that acquisition would take place on completion of the construction of the Innovation Centre, in line with the receipt of a letter of offer for funding from Invest NI, planning approval and to agree plans and specifications.

### **Creative Hub**

(Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that under the Council’s Investment Programme a number of schemes designed to enhance the city’s economic infrastructure were proposed. One of these schemes is the creation of a Creative Hub. This scheme is subject to ERDF funding and is currently a ‘Stage 3 – Tier 0 Scheme’ (Schemes at Risk) on the Council’s Capital Programme. A letter of offer has not yet been received for the project however Committee agreed in June 2013 that this should be progressed to tender stage due to the tight funding timescales for EU projects.**
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to proceed now with the acquisition of a building at 19-21 Donegall Street in the Cathedral Quarter for the Council’s Creative Hub.**



Members are asked to note however that this is still subject to a LOO being received.

**2.0 Relevant Background Information**

- 2.1** On 22nd February 2013 following a feasibility study into the viability of a Creative Hub SP&R gave approval for the project to be explored in more detail work on the project and to make an application for funding from ERDF to cover some of the costs associated with the development.
- 2.2** On 19th April 2013, Committee approved a report outlining the preferred location for the development of a Creative Hub as Cathedral Quarter/Inner North Belfast and noted that further work would be undertaken to identify an appropriate site. Members of the SP&R and Development Committees were updated June 2013 that potential locations included options in Donegall Street and near Smithfield.
- 2.3** On 21st June 2013, as part of a wider update on capital schemes, approval was granted by the SP&R Committee to undertake preparatory work on the tendering for the Hub in order to meet the funding deadline of 31st Dec 2015. Committee further agreed on 19th Nov 2013 to incur expenditure up to £150K towards design/development activity, to ensure that funding deadlines could be met based on the potential acquisition of an existing building for refurbishment.
- 2.4** A comprehensive property search has been undertaken to identify available properties within the Cathedral Quarter/Inner North area meeting key criteria. Twenty commercial agents and landowners in the area were contacted and a long list of 25 properties in the area were considered. Key criteria were set to evaluate the long list including:
- Size
  - Location
  - Refurbishment potential within funding timescale and budget
  - Ability to purchase or for long lease
  - Proximity to new University development;
  - Proximity to DSD Managed Workspace Buildings and potential for further expansion. (The DSD Managed Workspace Buildings are to transfer to the Council in 2015 under LGR).
- 2.5** It is worth noting that whilst many properties were available on the basis of a short term lease they were not available for either purchase or by way of a longer term lease. In the current

downturn in the property market many property owners did not wish to sell, particularly given the pending regeneration of the area as a result of the development of the University of Ulster and the expectation that property values may rise in the future.

- 2.6 Using the evaluation criteria a short list of six properties was established from the long list and a scoring matrix used to identify potentially the most suitable building. Based on this the property solution location identified as potentially the best fit for the Creative Hub was 19/21 Donegall Street. This property is not on the open market but we were aware from negotiations with the agent that the owner may be open to a sale.
- 2.7 An independent Chartered Valuation Surveyor was appointed to progress negotiations on behalf of the Council. These have progressed to a point where Members approval is now being sought to agree the acquisition of 19/21 Donegall Street as the building for the Council's Creative Hub.

### 3.0 Key Issues

- 3.1 19/21 Donegall Street is located in the Inner North part of the city centre known as Cathedral Quarter / Conservation Area. It is a four storey mid- Victorian terrace building in a secondary commercial area. It is currently configured to provide circa 9100 sq ft of fitted out open plan offices with a separate area of circa 700 sq ft on the ground floor fronting the street. It has a frontage of 26 feet to Donegall Street and stretches back 123 feet to a rear alleyway. This property meets the size criteria from project benchmarks from elsewhere. The property also adjoins DSD'S Managed Workspace building, which is due to transfer to the Council under LGR and it therefore provides scope for potential expansion of the Creative Hub in the future.
- 3.2 The premises are held by the owner by way of a Fee Farm Grant. They are currently not occupied but demised on a 25 year lease until March 2016 with an ongoing rental stream to the owner of £87,000 per annum. Negotiations with the owner have reached the point where Members approval is now sought to acquire the property for the consideration of £900,000, subject to a successful funding application by BCC from ERDF and Invest NI. The owner will provide vacant possession of the premises on a proposed timescale of one month post completion of contracts.

3.3 Members are asked to note that the purchase of land and buildings is eligible expenditure under Article 7(1)(b) of ERDF Regulations. The eligible expenditure for land and buildings cannot however represent more than 10% of the overall total eligible expenditure of the project.

#### 4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 *Finance* - The cost of the property is £900,000. Members are asked to note that this acquisition is subject to the Council receiving a letter of offer for the project from InvestNI

*Assets* - Acquisition of this property will increase the Council's property portfolio.

*Human Resources* - Officers from Estates and Legal Services will complete the acquisition of the premises subject to Members approval.

#### 5 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

5.1 The development of the Creative Hub will be screened for equality impact.

#### 6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are recommended to approve the acquisition of 19-21 Donegall Street for the development of a Creative Hub in accordance with the ERDF application, on the terms outlined above and subject to receipt of a Letter of Offer for funding from Invest NI."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### Lands at Hannahstown Hill and Glen Road

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### "1 Relevant Background Information

##### (i) Request to acquire land at Hannahstown Hill

1.1 The Council owns circa 6 acres of land at Hannahstown Hill, as shown on the attached plan. Mr C Finnegan, the occupier of an adjoining property, has recently written to the Director of Property & Projects expressing an interest in acquiring either a portion or all of the Council's land holding at Hannahstown Hill. He has indicated that it would be his intention to cease his current use of his adjoining land

(sale of diesel and other household fuels) and to seek planning permission for land fronting Hannahstown Hill to be developed as retail units whilst the remainder of the land would provide grazing for horses he owns and trains.

- 1.2 In connection with his business of fuel sales Mr Finnegan had, until recently, taken illegal occupation of a Right of Way at this location which also involved a substantial encroachment onto other Council owned land. The matter was only recently resolved following lengthy contested legal proceedings between the Council and Mr Finnegan in the High Court to prevent Mr Finnegan's continued illegal occupation and ensure the Council's land was not misused. The current use undertaken by Mr Finnegan at his land has deemed planning permission by passage of time and is immune from enforcement action.
- 1.3 The background to the Council's acquisition of this land has also involved litigation actions between BCC, Mr Finnegan and the previous landowner. .

(ii) Glen Road Development Framework

- 1.4 Members will be aware that a Glen Road Development Framework (also known as Glen10), led by DSD with BCC representation, was launched last year by DSD following the culmination of almost two years of cross statutory engagement and public and private consultation. It is worth noting the Framework subject area includes the land at Hannahstown Hill also referenced in this Committee report.
- 1.5 The Framework included a proposed Action Plan and proposed that a 'Delivery Executive' would act as a forum for considering the actions within the Framework Action Plan and act as a mechanism for engagement between developers, landowners and statutory bodies in relation to the future development of the lands within the subject area.

2 Key Issues

(i) Hannahstown Hill

- 2.1 The Council recently had a planning assessment undertaken in respect of the Council's 6 acre land holding which concluded that whilst in the short-term there may be some limited development potential this will be restricted by the current planning policy (PPS 21) for the area which would constrain development to tourism (draft PPS 16), outdoor sport/recreation (PPS 8) and renewable energy projects (PPS 18). Development is further restricted by dBMAP which has

included the lands in a Rural Landscape Wedge and as such any development proposals may have to demonstrate a site-specific need. The planning assessment also confirmed the medium to longer term development potential being significantly enhanced if it were to be included within the Development Limit. Indeed this latent potential has already been recognised and supported previously by the identification of the site as part of a previous NIHE outline planning application made in 2004 for 700 social housing units – there remains an unmet requirement for social housing particularly in this part of west Belfast.

- 2.2 The planning assessment recommends that given the potential for development could be significantly enhanced over the next 5-15 years that the Council retains ownership of the land. Hannahstown is designated under dBMAP as a Small Settlement. The Council's planning assessment also confirmed that the Council's land would not be considered by DOE to relate to the Small Settlement of Hannahstown.
- 2.3 The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting of 23rd August 2013 endorsed the purchase of circa 30 acres of agricultural land immediately adjacent to the Council's existing landholding on the basis that the latent development potential for this land, together with the existing Council's 6 acre adjoining landholding on Hannahstown Hill, may be achievable in the future with an extension of the Development Limit through a review of dBMAP or the preparation of an Area Plan.
- 2.4 Both the Council's existing 6 acre site and the additional 30 acres site, currently being acquired by the Council, are included in the Glen Road Development Framework as forming part of a potential future residential development opportunity. It is also believed that these lands are contiguous with other land in the ownership of NIHE, also identified in the Glen Road Development Framework for potential future housing development. The Framework has highlighted creation of a new spine road required to service future development sites to enhance delivery of the Framework's proposals that will require adequate access/integration with existing road networks in the area. The Council's land at Hannahstown Hill has been identified in the Framework as not only facilitating this spine road but also providing a required access point. This consolidated 'public' ownership of a large wedge of land referenced in the Glen Road Framework document would ease deliverability within the Framework as opposed to dealing with fragmented private land owners with diverging agendas.

- 2.5 Under the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) a Village Plan for Hannahstown has identified a number of a priority projects which are eligible and could be resourced from NIRDP funding to include the creation of a distinct village identity through physical improvements. The Hannahstown Strategic Vision and Action Plan confirms support for the aims of the Glen Road Development Framework. However it also states that the local community strongly oppose any development which may encroach on the rural character of Hannahstown and would oppose any development on land which lies outside designated settlement limits as define by DOE. The Action Plan highlights a number of derelict and vacant sites within Hannahstown which could provide retail potential within the current village designation.
- 2.6 Whilst the land currently sits in the Corporate Landbank the Council formally would have to declare the land surplus in order to facilitate the request from Mr Finnegan. The Council are bound to achieve best value in any land disposals under the provision of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 – Section 96(5)(a)

(ii) Glen Road Development Framework

- 2.7 The Glen Road Development Framework included proposals for a Delivery Executive and DSD now propose that this is set up and jointly chaired by officers from DSD Belfast Regeneration Office and Belfast City Council.
- 2.8 The core membership of the group is to include DSD, BCC, NIHE, DOE Planning, DRD Roads, Department of Education, CCMS, DHSSPS, DETI, Invest NI, the West Belfast Partnership and local political representatives. Further representatives may include landowners. Members are now requested to indicate their preferences for local Member representation onto the Delivery Executive

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

(i) Hannahstown Hill

The sale of these lands or any part could result in a capital return to the Council. . However, the proposed value at the present time would not reflect the latent land value it has as potential housing land in the future which would significantly increase with a review of the current

Development Limit or reflect the potential to facilitate a spine road to open up other adjacent land, as envisaged in the Glen Road Development Framework.

(ii) Glen Road Development Framework

No Financial implications currently

3.2 Human Resources

(i) Hannahstown Hill

Should Members decide to sell all or some of this land to Mr Finnegan there would be a staff resource in Estates & Legal Services to progress. Otherwise the land will continue to be managed by Estates as part of the Corporate Landbank.

(ii) Glen Road Development Framework

Staff resource required to co-chair the Glen Road Development Framework Delivery Executive with DSD.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

(i) Hannahstown Hill

Whilst the Council's land currently lies outside the current Development Limit it is identified within the Glen Road Development Framework as a potential future housing development that could assist in addressing the unmet social housing requirement that exists in this area, together with the pivotal role of facilitating access to other sites within the Glen Road Development Framework subject area.

Given current planning policies for the area and based on the Council's own planning assessment of the land it is considered unlikely that permission would be granted for proposed retail use.

This land has not formally been declared surplus by Council and may have to be placed on the open market to effect any disposal.

(ii) Glen Road Development Framework

The objective of the Glen Road Development Framework and the work of the Delivery Executive is to consider the development of the lands within the subject area in a cohesive and integrated manner.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

**4.1 There are currently no equality implications to the proposals within this report.**

**5 Recommendations**

**5.1 (i) Land at Hannahstown Hill**

**It is recommended not to accede to the request from Mr C Finnegan given that the land has latent potential as future housing development land together with the pivotal role it may have in facilitating access to other sites within the Glen Road Development Framework subject area.**

**(ii) Glen Road Development Framework**

**The Glen Road Development Framework has progressed to the stage of setting up a Delivery Executive and Members are asked to indicate their preference for local Member representation onto the Delivery Executive.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Use of ILLUMINATE Facilities**

The Committee was reminded that the governance arrangements for the ILLUMINATE Project, which it had approved in February, 2013, had limited access to the new ILLUMINATE LED lighting facilities to:

- (a) charities nominated by our Civic Office Bearers;
- (b) events organised or supported by the Council;
- (c) an agreed schedule of additional days.

Any request which did not fall into those categories required the approval of the Committee.

**World Autism Awareness Day**

The Director of Property and Projects reported that a request had been received recently from the Parent’s Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT) to have the City Hall illuminated in a blue colour on 2nd April, 2014 to mark World Autism Awareness Day. He pointed out that World Autism Awareness Day not only raised awareness of that condition but also help to raise funds for research and to provide support for people living and caring for someone with that lifelong condition.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request.



### **Belfast Giants**

The Director report that, subsequent to the report having been issued, he had received a request from the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Ó Muilleoir) that the Committee consider lighting up the City Hall later in the evening in recognition of them winning the ice hockey Elite League the previous Sunday in the colours of the Belfast Giants and he recommended accordingly.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Good Relations and Equality**

#### **Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 10th February and approved the following:

#### **Review of Good Relations Partnership**

The decision of the Partnership to request that funding of £3,000 be made available for the hiring of the independent consultants to undertake the review of the Good Relations Partnership.

#### **Opening of the Sam Thompson Bridge**

Authority for expenditure of a sum of approximately £800 to enable the hosting of a small reception, together with the staging of a number of short scenes from Sam Thompson's plays, to mark the opening of the Sam Thompson Bridge which linked the Airport Road with the Victoria Park as part of the Connswater Community Greenway.

#### **The Great War Commemoration Concert**

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Soldiers Charity requesting that the Council consider reserving places at an event in the Waterfront Hall on 8th March entitled 'The Great War Commemoration Concert'. The charity provided lifetime support to serving and retired soldiers and their families.

The Director of Health and Environmental Services reported that the Great War Commemoration concert would be an event to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I. It would be hosted by UTV's Paul Clarke and would feature the band, bugle, pipes and drums of the Royal Irish Regiment, plus a number of other artists. The event would specifically commemorate the contribution of the whole of Ireland during World War I and as such there would be a wide representation from across the island at the event. Tickets for the event cost £29 each and the cost of attendance could be met from within an existing revenue budgets.

The Committee agreed to reserve eight places at the concert for the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee (or their nominees) and one member from each

of the Parties on the Council. The Committee agreed also that any commemoration of events in relation to the Great War be submitted (where time allowed) in the first instance to the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group.

### **PEACE III Interfaces Programme**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 25th April, 2012, it had approved and adopted the minutes of the Good Relations Partnership of 3rd April and adopted the recommendations in respect of the tenders for the delivery for the Peace III Phase II Interfaces Programme.

The Director of Health and Environmental Services explained that a key component of the aforementioned programme was to work closely with local communities to develop an inclusive community approach to the regeneration of the communities living at interfaces. Through that inclusive approach fourteen barriers, located at Duncairn Gardens, Flax Street, Torrens Crescent, Lower Falls/Shankill and Whitewell, had been identified as areas in which the programme could deliver small-scale environmental works decided upon by local communities following consultation. The Director pointed out that one of the proposals identified following consultation with the communities living in those interface areas included the introduction of art works which reflected the local history and heritage of the area. However, to deliver those art works the Council would be required to enter into a licence agreement with the owners of the properties to which the art works would be attached.

The Committee approved the entering into a licence agreement with the owners of the properties to which the art works, which were agreed through community consultation, were to be attached in order to allow this aspect of the PEACE III Phase II Interfaces Programme to proceed.

### **Cross-Cutting Issues**

#### **Age-friendly Belfast Consultation Response**

The Committee considered the undernoted report and approved the comments as set out in the draft response:

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

**1.1 In Belfast 19% of the population is over 60 and this is expected to rise to 36% by 2050. Whilst population aging is seen as major success of the 20th century it is also recognised as one of our greatest challenges. We must continue to improve our City's services and structures to ensure the City is accessible to all and to meet the needs of a growing population of older people with a wide range of abilities.**

**1.2 The Council has identified older people as a priority within its current corporate plan and in March 2012 the Lord Mayor**

signed a declaration formally committing Belfast to become a World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-friendly City. This effectively commits the City to a continuous improvement cycle, involving older people, of planning, implementation and evaluation to better meet the needs of an aging population. A three year action plan and progress report must be submitted to WHO for review at the start and end of the process respectively.

- 1.3 Since then the Council has been working collaboratively within the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) and specifically it's Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) to honour that commitment and has produced a draft 3 year plan
- 1.4 The Council's All Party Reference Group on Older People, currently chaired by Councillor Bernie Kelly, directs and oversees this work programme on behalf of the council.

## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Over the last 18 months, Council officers under the direction of the All Party Reference Group on Older People have worked collaboratively within BSP and HASP to:
  1. See Belfast become the first city in Northern Ireland to join into the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities.
  2. Establish mechanisms to involve older people throughout the Age-friendly process and carry out extensive consultations with a wide range of older people to establish how age friendly they perceive the city to be and what they would like to see improved under the eight Age Friendly domains;
  3. Compile key statistical data and create an Age-friendly Belfast profile which is easily available on the NINIS website <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx>.
  4. Hold a number of joint workshops with older people, service providers and key stakeholders, using the baseline assessment of older people's perceptions and the statistical data, to develop a vision for Age Friendly Belfast, key priorities for improvement and actions planned over the next three years.
- 2.2 The Draft 3 Year Age-friendly Belfast Plan (attached Appendix 1) was issued by BSP for consultation on 8th January 2014. The

proposed vision is that 'Belfast will be a city where older people live life to the full

- 2.3** The plans builds on the wide range of projects the Council already delivers targeted at older people to reduce isolation and encourage healthy, active ageing. Examples include, four Winter Warmth Clinics, Older Peoples Arts Festival in the Waterfront Hall, tea dances in the Ulster Hall, the Senior Citizens Convention in City Hall, a range of active aging events in leisure centres and parks across the City.
- 2.4** There were 3 Key themes that emerged during the process that shape the plan;
- **Age-friendly Image - creating a positive view of ageing**
  - **Age-friendly Lives – reducing life inequalities and isolation**
  - **Age-friendly Neighbourhoods - creating friendly places to live in**
- 2.5** For each theme commitment has been secured, from key stakeholders, to deliver specific projects to improve the age-friendliness of Belfast.
- 2.6** The draft Age-friendly Action plan includes the following commitments from the Council;
- **Belfast City Council, with the support of Belfast Strategic Partnership, will co-ordinate and lead on the development of a positive ageing campaign through the development of positive and diverse images, a community awareness campaign and a yearly calendar of events promoting positive ageing**
  - **Belfast City Council and Belfast Police and Community Safety Partnership will champion and deliver intergenerational relationships through a city wide project between Belfast City Council Youth Forum and Greater Belfast Seniors Forum;**
  - **To develop a toolkit to reduce the impact of poverty in Belfast (focusing on benefits, nutrition and fuel poverty) led by the Belfast Health Development Unit, Belfast City Council and the Public Health Agency, to be age-proofed and its use promoted with older people;.**

- The Belfast Strategic Partnership together with Belfast City Council will host an annual Age-friendly Convention and HASP will circulate a quarterly Age-friendly Belfast Update for older people and other stakeholders.
- Belfast City Council will develop an annual Older People's Art Festival connecting with the Public Health Agency's regional Arts and Older Peoples' Programme delivered through Arts Care and the Arts Council
- Belfast City Council, with the support of Volunteer Now, will deliver a comprehensive Age-friendly Older Volunteer Awards programme;
- Belfast City Council will work to increase older peoples usage of parks by improving the facilities, management and activities available in their parks;
- Belfast City Council will ensure that older people are involved in community planning in their local areas;
- The Policing and Community Safety Partnership will build on work taking place to improve perceptions of safety and intergenerational relationships in local neighbourhoods.

2.7 Appendix 1 contains a draft Council response to the proposed Age-friendly Plan. The draft response agrees with the proposed vision, aims and actions to make the City more Age-friendly and commits the Council to implementing key actions. The response also includes the following recommendations:

- The plan should reference the positive impact many of the initiatives shall have in promoting good relations in the city;
- The plan should reflect the roles of Belfast City Council and the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership in championing intergenerational work and delivering a coordinated city wide approach .

2.8 The following additions will also be included to highlight some key work already delivered by the Council:

1. Belfast City Council provides free home safety check scheme for older people.
2. Belfast City Council through its Investment Programme 2012-2015 is committed to providing placement

opportunities over the three year programme and the potential to work in partnership with older people's groups to assist with employability initiatives.

3. Belfast City Council, through its Investment Programme, has committed over £250 million during 2012 -2015 to help improve the city. This programme includes physical investments, health and well being programmes and the Active Belfast initiative which will improve quality of life for all citizens including older people.
4. Belfast City Council's 'Leisure Transformation' programme represents a significant investment in leisure provision and centres across the city and will help to improve health and well-being; including for older people
5. Investment in Belfast City Council Community Centre IT suites will support older people.

## 2.9 Next Steps

- It is expected that following the consultation HASP will produce the final 3 year Action Plan and submit to World Health Organisation in April for approval.
- Following approval the plan will be implemented by HASP reporting progress to BSP.
- Councillors will be kept updated on progress with the action plan.

## 3 Resource Implications

### 3.1 HR Implications None

### 3.2 Financial implications The Council's commitments under the Age-friendly Belfast Plan can be carried out within the Councils Revenue Estimates.

### 3.3 Equipment Implications None

## 4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

### 4.1 Equality screening has been carried out.

**5 Recommendation and decision**

- 5.1 Members are asked to consider the Age-friendly Belfast Plan and agree our response to the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership.”**

Appendix 2

**Age-friendly Belfast**

**BEFAST CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE**

*Belfast City Council has identified older people as a priority within its current corporate plan and has fully committed to Belfast becoming an Age-friendly City. The Council therefore welcomes the production of this 3 year plan to improve the Age-friendliness of this city and fully commits to working through the Healthy Aging Strategic Partnership to deliver the actions agreed. The Councils contribution shall be overseen and monitored by its All Party Reference group on Older People.*

*The Council considers that implementation of this plan will make a significant improvement to the lives of all of our citizens, irrespective of their age and fully supports its implementation.*

*The Council wish to make the following further response:*

**Question 1**

Do you agree with the vision of Age-friendly Belfast?

**Our vision is that Belfast will be a city where older people live life to the full**

Yes  No  If no, please give reasons

Belfast City Council agrees the overall vision proposed for Age-friendly Belfast.

**Question 2**

Do you agree with the 3 key themes and aims as set out below?

**Theme: Age-friendly Image**

**Aim:** Create and promote a positive view of ageing

**Theme: Age-friendly Lives**

**Aim:** Reduce life inequalities and isolation, and to encourage participation

**Theme: Age-friendly Neighbourhoods**

**Aim:** Create age-friendly neighbourhoods where older people participate, get active, feel safe, influence local decisions and where there are no barriers to active travel.

Yes  No  If no, please state which aim/s and give reasons

Belfast City Council supports the 3 themes and aims as set out in the Age-friendly Belfast Plan and believes working collaboratively towards these will help improve the city for all our citizens irrespective of their age. The Council recognises that the Age-friendly Plan supports and compliments many of the existing priorities for the city that the Council and partners are seeking to address. In particular encouraging respect, addressing poverty, reducing life inequalities, encouraging participation, giving communities more control of the decisions affecting them, improving neighbourhoods, activity and use of outdoor spaces.

**Question 3**

Do you support the Age-friendly actions we have secured commitment for under **Age-friendly Image?**

Yes  No  If no, please give reasoning

The Council recognises the importance of promoting respect across generations and in particular older people should be celebrated as a diverse and valuable resource to the city, economically, socially and culturally.

Following the pilot intergenerational project involving the Council's Youth forum it is recognised that the key to future success of intergenerational work is an age friendly city for all ages (as per WHO definition) which is a mutually beneficial approach to addressing a universal/ shared outcome, Council officers agreed they could develop an intergenerational protocol which will outline the terms for engagement across the age spectrum and in partnership in particular to safeguard both children and adults.

As part of the delivery of the Council's Children and Young People priority there is a focus on a key outcome for the council to deliver upon a city where CYP feel it is a place to be. Both the Youth Forum and Belfast Seniors shared and prioritised many universal issues therefore there is greater merit in the longer term ensuring an Age Friendly Belfast is both child friendly, older people friendly, in short friendly for all ages.

The Council is of the opinion that the commitment to intergenerational work is more than just delivery of a specific project. It is the role of the Council to champion and coordinate a range of intergenerational work. It is suggested that the action should be reworded as follows:



'Belfast City Council and the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership should champion intergenerational work and deliver a coordinated city wide approach building on the success of work between Belfast City Council Youth Forum and the Greater Belfast Seniors forum'

#### Question 4

Do you support the Age-friendly actions we have secured commitment for under **Age-friendly Lives**?

Yes  No  If no, please give reasoning

The actions planned to secure Age-friendly Lives are consistent and complementary to the existing priorities agreed within the Belfast Strategic Partnership's 'Framework for Action to reduce life inequalities.' The Council supports the proposed actions.

The following additions should be considered for inclusion under work already underway:

- Belfast City Councils free home safety check scheme for older people.
- Belfast City Council's Investment Programme 2012-2015, in particular the council's commitment to providing placement opportunities over the three year programme and the potential to work in partnership with older people's groups to assist with employability initiatives.

#### Question 5

Do you support the Age-friendly actions we have secured commitment for under **Age-friendly Neighbourhoods**?

Yes  No  If no, please give reasoning

The Council supports the actions proposed to develop Age- friendly neighbourhoods.

The Council suggests the following additions for inclusion under work already underway:

- Belfast City Council, through its Investment Programme, has committed over £250 million during 2012 -2015 to help improve the city. This programme includes physical investments, health and well being programmes and the Active Belfast initiative which will improve quality of life for all citizens including older people.
- Belfast City Council's 'Leisure Transformation' programme represents a significant investment in leisure provision and centres across the city and will help to improve health and well-being; including for older people.
- Investment in Belfast City Council Community Centre IT suites will improve access to the internet and social media in local areas.

#### **Question 6**

Are you aware of other work that is taking place that you feel will link to the Age-friendly Plan, please describe?

See comments in questions 4 and 5

#### **Question 7**

Do you agree with the areas of research that need to be taken forward within the Age-friendly Plan?

Yes  No  If no, please give reasoning

It was suggested to include LGBT groups on the area of research point below. Whilst a focus group session was carried out with LGBT groups more information is required.

- Identify and research the current and future needs of minority groups in the city, including black and minority ethnic and LGBT older people, in Belfast

**Question 8**

Do you feel the actions outlined in the Age-friendly Plan will achieve the vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full?

Yes it was agreed that the Age-friendly Plan will achieve the vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full.

**Question 9**

Do you think the themes and aims outlined in the Action Plan will help promote equality of opportunity and/or promote good relations?

Yes  No  If no, please give reasoning

Yes, equality screening in line with Belfast City Council policies has been carried out.

**Question 10**

Do have any further comments for this plan?

Belfast City Council would like the plan to highlight the positive impact many of the initiatives shall have in promoting good relations across the City. The following paragraph is suggested for inclusion in the context section of the plan.

*'The city of Belfast has undergone a process of transformation following years of conflict; the diversity of the city's population continues to increase, however, segregation remains high. Many of the initiatives within this action plan will make a positive contribution to how we tackle these challenges and address respect, social inclusion and civic participation to develop the opportunities which an Age-friendly city brings.'*

**Please send your completed response to:**

**B  
2254**

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 21st February, 2014**

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