

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 18th November, 2016

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hussey (Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Alderman Rodgers);  
Aldermen Browne and Convery;  
Councillors Attwood, Clarke, Corr, Craig,  
Graham, Haire, Hargey, Jones, Long, McAllister,  
McCabe, McVeigh, O'Donnell, Reynolds and  
Walsh

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr .G. Miller, Director of Property and Projects;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

An Apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Hutchinson.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st November.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jones declared an interest in respect of item 8e National Association of Councillors – Attendance at National Executive Meetings and left the meeting whilst the item was under discussion.

### Restricted Items

**The Information contained in the following six reports is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014**

#### **Local Development Plan Preferred Options**

The Committee considered a report in relation to the Local Development Plan Preferred Options. The Committee was advised that, with the publication of the Statement of Community Involvement and the publication of the Local Development Plan (LDP) timetable in June, 2016, the plan process had formally commenced. The draft Preferred Options Summary Paper (POP) set out four strategic aims for growth

and development in Belfast for the period up to 2035 which were linked to the aspirations within the Belfast Agenda. The strategic aims and objectives, as previously discussed, formed the basis of the POP which it was proposed be published in early 2017 for a 12 week consultation period. The preferred options paper was the first formal engagement document in the Local Development Plan and aimed to promote debate on strategic issues which would influence and shape the future development in Belfast.

The purpose of the report was to provide the Members with the final draft of the Preferred Options for consideration; advise of the additional technical documents that would accompany the LDP when it was formally published; and update the Members on the Proposed Preferred Options consultation.

After discussion the Committee:

- endorsed the preferred options, as set out in the Draft preferred options Summary Paper, as the basis for the formal consultation document;
- noted the additional technical documents that were required to accompany the Preferred Options when it was published for consultation; and
- noted the timescale/arrangements for the proposed consultation from early 2017.

### **Organisational Development Update**

(With the exception of the Chief Executive and the Senior Democratic Services Officer, all Council officers left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.)

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which outlined and sought the agreement of the Committee in principle, for the next phase of organisational change at the officer leadership level across the organisation, to ensure effective delivery of the priorities in the Belfast Agenda, continued investment across the city and excellent service delivery.

The Chief Executive explained that the Council, having been through local government reform, extended its boundaries and embedded delivery of the new powers, had set out an ambitious plan for the City under the Belfast Agenda. The Agenda committed the Council under the leadership of the Elected Representatives to delivering inclusive growth across the city, with a focus on integrated service and programme delivery, investment and diverse economic growth, regeneration of the city centre, investment in neighbourhoods, improved infrastructure and addressing health, income and skills inequalities. The Agenda set out ambitious targets to grow the population, create more jobs and reduce inequality gaps.

To deliver the Belfast Agenda, the Council needed to ensure it had the right skills, resources and leadership in the right places. Considerable work had been done to do this since local government reform (LGR), by continuing to build the Council's capacity to deliver major physical projects; the development of a City Centre Regeneration/Investment Plan and a City Centre Team; the development of the necessary planning teams; as well as work on employability; both investment and small business advisory services; smart city projects and a city deal proposal.

The Chief Executive indicated that, however, as the resourcing, leadership and skills requirements of those aspects of the Belfast Agenda had become clearer, the Council needed to move to the next phase of organisational development and design to support these major city projects.

She submitted a report which outlined the approach to a phased organisation redesign and development; the interim arrangements which had been put in place to embed new functions and review existing functions to maximise the new powers and deliver Members' ambitions; the future Council model; and proposals for agreement and the next steps.

The new model sets out the reconfiguration of Planning and Building Control; Development; City Centre Regeneration; and Property and Projects and the formation of a new City Growth and Regeneration Department, with one Director and three Assistant Directors and the creation of a stand-alone Major Project Service, reporting to the Chief Executive.

It also shows the internal departments and reporting lines to the Chief Executive (including Finance and Resources; People, Improvement and Inclusion; and City Solicitor)

After discussion, the Committee agreed in principle to:

- The reconfiguration of Planning and Building Control; Development; City Centre Regeneration; and Property and Projects and the formation of a new City Growth and Regeneration Department, with one Director and three Assistant Directors and the creation of a stand-alone Major Project Service, reporting to the Chief Executive; and
- The reporting lines set out in the new organisational model shown at paragraph 3.4 and the more detailed recommendations set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

### **Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2017/18**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the development of the revenue estimates for 2017/18 and the key issues which Members needed to consider as part of the rates settlement process.

After discussion, the Committee noted:

- (1) the update on the development of the revenue estimates and the setting of the district rate; and
- (2) that party group briefings had been arranged for the end of November, with a further report on the setting of the district rate being brought to the Committee at its meeting in December, 2016.

### **Leisure Update**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the development and implementation of the £105m leisure assets capital programme.

After discussion the Committee adopted the following recommendations as set out in the report:

#### **Programme level**

- i. Consultation Feedback – note the feedback from the consultation sessions that were held in relation to the concept designs for Brook, Robinson and Andersonstown. In summary the consultation feedback was very positive with 96% of those who responded welcoming the proposed redevelopments. The most common comment in relation to the three centres was around delivering as soon as possible. Following the outcome of the consultation, it was recommended that there are no changes to the concept design and facilities mixes for the Brook and Robinson Centres and that these are now progressed. It was recommended that changes be made to Andersonstown to reflect the feedback.
- ii. Implementation and sequencing plan – note the updated implementation and sequencing plan for the Leisure Programme
- iii. Procurement – note that the tender process closed on 11th November and that 4 responses were received. These were currently being assessed and Members would be kept up to date of the outcome.

#### **Specific projects**

- i. Andersonstown – Facilities mix - note that the key response received in relation to Andersonstown was to increase the size of the leisure water and over 600 written responses were received in relation to this. This feedback was presented to the West AWG at its meeting on 27th October and Committee was asked to agree the recommendation that the following elements are removed from the agreed facilities mix for Andersonstown (sports hall, geo-dome over one of the outdoor 5-side pitches and the BMX track) to allow for the leisure water to be increased to reflect the feedback from the consultation. These elements were required to be removed to ensure that the project remained within the capital budget (agreed by Committee in April 2015).

At a special meeting on 9th November the West AWG considered in greater detail the two options proposed in relation to the configuration of the leisure water (Option 4A and 4B). Both options were within the design cost limits and did not change the overall footprint of the building. A further West AWG was held on 15th November and, following additional detail being provided,

the Members agreed to recommend to the Committee to proceed with Option 4B.

Wider area - note that there was planned investment of over £100m within the Andersonstown area with the proposed redevelopment of Casement Park and the new Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) system. Discussions were being taken forward with BRT and the Department for Communities and the Committee was asked to note that an inter-agency working group was being established to ensure alignment of the projects and to maximise the communications and engagement opportunities

- ii. Avoniel – In August 2015 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed to dispose of a parcel of land to the Education Authority (EA) to accommodate its development plans for the existing Avoniel Primary School site, subject to a number of caveats. The Committee was asked to note that agreement had now been reached with the EA in relation to the valuation of the land and agree that this disposal be now progressed; and agree also that the capital receipt is ring-fenced for the interim and permanent re-location of play services in the area.
- iii. Robinson – note that the demolition works on the existing centre were due to commence in December. Officers were currently looking at the communications requirements around this and would keep the Members updated.
- iv. Olympia – note that the new Olympia Leisure Centre was on track to open as planned in early January and preparations were currently underway for the opening. Further detail on this would be brought back to the Committee next month. The Committee was also asked to agree to the acquisition of a site at the rear of Olympia Drive to enhance the overall appearance of the area and to aid regeneration of the local area and note that this acquisition was being funded via capital receipts unapplied.

### **Member car-parking City Hall**

The Committee agreed to defer a report on Member car parking in the City Hall courtyard for a period of one month.

### **Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP - Update)**

The Chief Executive provided the Committee with an update in relation to the High Court hearing in relation to the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP).

The Committee noted the High Court had ruled, earlier in the day, that the bulky goods restriction in BMAP be lifted and agreed that the Council appeal the decision.

**Matters Referred Back from Council/Notices of Motion**

**Notice of Motion - Changes to State Pension**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd October, had passed the following motion on Changes to State Pension Provision, which had been proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor Copeland:

“This Council calls upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after 6th April 1951, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age with lack of appropriate notification.

Hundreds of thousands of women, including many of our own citizens, have had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2011 with little/no personal notification of the changes. Some women had only two years notice of a six-year increase to their state pension age.

Many women born in the 1950's are living in hardship. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. Many of these women are already out of the labour market, caring for elderly relatives, providing childcare for grandchildren, or suffer discrimination in the workplace so struggle to find employment. Women born in this decade are suffering financially. These women have worked hard, raised families and paid their tax and national insurance with the expectation that they would be financially secure when reaching 60. It is not the pension age itself that is in dispute - it is widely accepted that women and men should retire at the same time. The issue is that the rise in the women's state pension age has been too rapid and has happened without sufficient notice being given to the women affected, leaving women with no time to make alternative arrangements.

The Council calls upon the Government to reconsider transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6th April 1951, so that women do not live in hardship due to pension changes they were not told about until it was too late to make alternative arrangements.”

The committee was advised that a response had now been received from the Minister for Communities, which highlighted the work which had been undertaken since 1995 around the equalisation of the state pension age for men and women. The Minister had indicated that he was supportive of a motion which had been presented to the NI Assembly on 26th September, which called for Transitional State Pension arrangements for women born in the 1950s, and that he had written to Mr. Richard Harrington M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Pensions, advising him of the motion and urging the Government to give careful consideration to determine if any action could be taken to address the concerns of the women affected.

The Committee noted the response from the Minister for Communities.

## Belfast Agenda

### Public Consultation on the Revised Belfast Agenda

The Committee considered a revised draft of the city's first community plan – the 'Belfast Agenda' – as the basis for a twelve-week public consultation on the plan. The paper outlined the main structure of the document which had been amended following discussion by Members at the all-Member workshop held on 28th October and set out the main elements of the public consultation programme. Following consultation, it was expected that the draft Agenda would be agreed by the Council and the community planning partners in April 2017, with the first four year programme of work commencing in the spring.

The Committee:

- agreed the content of the revised Belfast Agenda as a basis for the public consultation and the production of further communication materials, including a summary version; and
- noted the proposed consultation process and timings.

### Mid-Year Performance Report 2016-17

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-17 had been agreed by the Council in May 2016. Contained within the Plan was the Council's commitment to securing continuous improvement through the delivery of 11 Improvement Objectives in line with Part 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act. The projects underpinning these improvement objectives were delivered through strategic programmes of work, which were reported to the appropriate Committee on an ongoing basis and managed through the Corporate and Departmental Management Teams. The Members would also be aware that additional delivery structures were also in place for large scale programmes of work, such as leisure, and those were also reported through Corporate Management Team and Committee.

She pointed out that, however, there was a need to provide a full performance update on the plan in line with the Improvement Duty. The initial overall update had been compiled from a range of sources to provide a detailed overview of progress to date on all programmes of work and Appendix 3 to the report provided a separate update on the Council's extensive capital programme and support for development across the city.

She tabled for the Members' consideration a progress summary that showed that there was already alignment with the priorities outlined in the Belfast Agenda. Work had begun on the Council's Corporate Plan 2017-20, with an initial workshop being held with the Committee in October. The new plan would build on the programmes and projects already underway and further align with the outcomes, priorities and actions within the Belfast Agenda.

The Committee noted the half year update on the Capital Improvement objectives as outlined in the Corporate Plan.

### Westminster Visit

The Committee noted an update which had been provided by the Chief Executive on the visit earlier in the month to Westminster which had been undertaken by a delegation from the Council.

### Physical Programme and Asset Management

#### Area Working Update

The Committee considered the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 To provide an update on a number of area related issues for Members’ consideration.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Members are asked to –**

##### **AWG minutes**

- **approve the most recent round AWG Minutes (*East – 3rd November; West – 27th October and South – 31st October*) as attached at Appendix 1. Members are asked to note that the North AWG held its meeting on Thursday 10th November – the minutes for this are not yet available however the relevant funding decisions from the meeting are included within this report.**

##### **Local Investment Fund**

- **agree the recommendations from the West and North AWGs in relation to LIF funding (sections 3.2 and 3.3).**

##### **Belfast Investment Fund**

- **agree the recommendations from the South in relation to their ringfenced BIF allocation of £500,000.**

PROJECT	CURRENT STAGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>SOUTH</b>		
Linfield FC, the Belfast Battalion of the Boys’ Brigade and Belvoir FC	n/a	Add as a Stage 1 – Emerging project with up to £250,000 to be ringfenced



**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 AREA WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

Members agreed in June that the Area Working Group minutes would be taken into the SP&R Committee for approval going forward in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistency in approach to the other Member-led Working Groups. Members are asked to approve the most recent round AWG Minutes (*West – 27th October; South – 31st October and East – 3rd November*) as attached at Appendix 1. Members are asked to note that the North AWG held its meeting on Thursday 10th November – the minutes for this are not yet available however the relevant funding decisions from the meeting are included within this report.

**LOCAL INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE**

**3.2 WEST AWG - The West AWG at its meeting on 27TH October, made the following recommendations for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to their LIF.**

Ref No	Project	£ Amount
WLIF2-17	North Belfast Working Men's Club	£4,000 - Additional allocation of £ 4k bringing total allocation to £24,000
WLIF2-08	Berlin Swifts Football Club	To be allocated the underspend amount from the Welcome Church project (Approx. £5k-9K) – this will be an additional allocation to the £30k already agreed

**3.3 NORTH AWG - The West AWG at its meeting on 10th November, made the following recommendations for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to their LIF.**

Ref No	Project	£ Amount
NLIF017	Basement Youth Club	£24,000 – that the £24,000 previously allocated to Basement Youth Club be removed.
TBD	Jennymount Church	£24,000 – to be allocated to Jennymount Church for the supply and installation of soft play equipment and

		refurbishment of hall.
TBD	STAR Neighbourhood Centre	£58,467 – to be allocated for the refurbishment of STAR Neighbourhood Centre and outdoor improvements.

#### **BELFAST INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE**

- 3.4** In January 2016, as part of the rates setting process, it was agreed that £5m would be ringfenced to support BIF projects in the areas of Lisburn and Castlereagh which transferred across under LGR with the monies to be shared equally as these areas had not had an opportunity to have any BIF projects considered and that in keeping with other BIF projects that it would be the role of the AWGs to consider emerging BIF proposals in these areas and recommend projects to the SP&R Committee in its role as the investment decision maker.
- 3.5** Members noted in March 2016 that the allocation for Outer East fell across two AWGs (South and East as residents transferred into the Balmoral (South), Lisnasharragh (East) and Orminston (East) DEAs). The total that transferred into these areas was just over 25,000 with approx 1/5 of these transferring into Balmoral (South) and the remainder transferring into the East DEAs. In terms of the £2.5million available for Outer East this equated to £500,000 for South and £2million for East and this allocation was agreed by Members.
- 3.6** SOUTH AWG – The South AWG at its meeting on 31st October, made the following recommendations for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to this ringfenced BIF allocation.
- 3.7** EAST AWG – The East AWG, at its meeting on 3rd October, agreed that officers continue to engage with the three Stage 1 – Emerging projects (the Hanwood Centre, Tullycarnet Action Group Initiative Trust (TAGIT) and Braniel Church) to obtain further information on each proposal and report back to a future AWG meeting.

Project	£ Amount	Comments
Linfield FC, the Belfast Battalion of the Boys' Brigade and Belvoir FC	Up to £250,000	Add as a Stage 1 – Emerging Project with up to £250,000 to be ringfenced Further detail to be brought back

### **3.8 Financial and Resource Implications**

- **Financial – £5m has been allocated to LIF 1 and £4m has been allocated to LIF2.**
- **Resource - Officers time to deliver projects.**

### **3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**LIF has been equality screened.”**

Moved by Councillor Long,  
Seconded by Councillor Jones,

That the additional £2m of BIF which had been ring-fenced for projects in the newly transferred areas of outer east should be advertised.

On a vote by show of hands five members voted for the proposal and fourteen against and it was declared lost.

The Committee accordingly adopted the recommendations set out in the report.

## **Asset Management**

### **Proposed Licences at Sally Gardens**

The Committee granted approval for the Council to enter into licences with the Poleglass Community Association @ Sally Gardens Ltd. (PCA) and the Department of Communities to allow the Council's contractors to take access across and occupy land to facilitate the construction of a new pavilion to serve the recently completed 3G pitch at Sally Gardens. The licences would be subject to agreement of terms by the Estates Manager and the drawing up of suitable agreements by the Legal Services Section.

### **Acquisition of Lands at Connswater Street/Severn Street from Transport NI**

The Committee approved the acquisition of three areas of land at Connswater Street/Severn Street, which was required to facilitate the regeneration of the area, from Transport NI for a nominal consideration.

**Shaftesbury Recreation Centre:  
Proposed Energy Project**

The Committee noted that the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group's (LORAG) request to install solar panels on the Shaftesbury Sports and Recreation Centre had been withdrawn.

**City Hall Update - Exhibition Area**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report on the operation of the new Exhibition Area in the City Hall.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Quarter 2 Finance Report**

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

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 This report presents the Quarter 2 financial position for the Council including a forecast of the year end outturn. It includes a reporting pack which contains a summary of the financial indicators and an executive summary. It also provides a more detailed explanation of each of the relevant indicators and the forecast outturn for the year.
- 1.2 The Departmental year end forecast is a net year end positive balance of £1,496k which represents a variance of 1.1% of the annual net expenditure budget which is well with the acceptable target limits.
- 1.3 However Land and Property Services are forecasting a district rate claw back position of £2,154k which means that the Council has to find an additional £658k, above the forecast departmental positive balance to fully finance the rates claw back.
- 1.4 Officers are reviewing the planned capital programme and non-recurrent programmes to identify potential capital financing which could meet the £658k balance of the rates claw back so as not to impact on the Council's reserves position.
- 1.5 In order to secure the current forecast departmental positive balance, Directors have been advised that a recommendation will be made to Members that departmental cash limits should be capped at the forecast level with no in year

reallocation of funds being allowed by departments unless they are built into the forecasts.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the forecast departmental position and rates claw back position at Quarter 2.
- agree, that in order to limit the impact on the Council's reserves position, departmental cash limits are capped at their forecast position and that officers will review the planned capital programme and non-recurrent work programmes to secure the £658k balance of the rates claw back from the capital financing budget.

**3.0 Main report**

**Current and Forecast Financial Position 2016/17**

**3.1 The financial position for Quarter 2 is a net departmental positive balance of £2,267k (3.4%). The forecast year-end departmental position is a positive balance of £1.496k (1.1%), which is well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.**

**3.2 The departmental balance arises mainly from the receipt of additional planning and building control fee income as well as additional grant income and below budget employee and supplies expenditure due to staff vacancies, staff turnover and reduced fuel costs. This has been partly offset by uncontrollable increases in waste management contracts.**

**Rates Finalisation**

**3.3 The Quarter 2 forecast by Land and Property Services is an adverse outturn of £2,154k. This is mainly due to non-domestic revaluation appeals and city development removals from the valuation list and the loss of industrial de-rating grant. In summary,**

- £8.2m has been removed from the valuation list due to demolitions / refurbishments.
- £9.1m has been added to the list due to new builds.
- £7.3m has been removed from the list following completion of valuation appeals.

**Capital Projects**

**3.4 Planned capital expenditure for 2016/17 approved as part of the capital programme is £55.04m, with forecast expenditure for the year being £45.1m.**

3.5 The Summary Dashboard, on page 2 of the attached performance report, summarises forecast expenditure on other capital programme including Non-Recurring Projects (£1,840k), Feasibility Fund (£129k) and projects in the new boundary areas (£900k).

3.6 Committed expenditure approved by the Committee on Belfast Investment Fund projects is £15.2m, with a further £4.9m committed on LIF 1 projects and £3.7m on LIF 2 projects.

#### Capital Financing

3.7 The summary dashboard has also been updated to provide analysis of the annual capital financing budget. A target of £658k which represents the further in-year savings which have to be found to finance the balance of the rates claw back, has been set for capital financing expenditure.

#### Forecast Reserves Position

3.8 As the district rates claw back is forecast to be financed from 2016/17 budgets, general reserves are forecast to remain at £12.8m.

3.9 The planned expenditure from specified reserves is forecast to reduce the specified reserve balances to £2.1m at the year end.

#### 3.10 Finance and Resource Implications

The Departmental position at Quarter 2 together with the forecast year end Council position is detailed within the report.

#### 3.11 Equality Implications

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### Contracts for Award

The Committee:

- (1) approved the public advertisement acceptance of tenders as listed in Appendix 1, table 1, through the Council's electronic procurement system;
- (2) approved extensions where contracts were under review as per table 2; and

(3) agreed to apply Standing Order 55(a) - exceptions in relation to contracts by direction of the Council acting on recommendations of a Chief Officer in - that the exception was justified in special circumstances for the purchase of leased assets as per table 3:

**Appendix 1 - Schedule of tenders for consideration**

**Table 1 - New tenders**

Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
Consultancy service for transport planning	Nuala Gallagher	6 months

**Table 2 - Contracts for extension of contract period**

Title of tender	Director Responsible	Proposed extension
Digitisation and microfilming of Building Control records	Nigel Grimshaw	1 year
Supply and delivery of playground equipment	Nigel Grimshaw	Month by month until new contract is in place
Supply, fitting and maintenance of wireless bin monitoring system	Nigel Grimshaw	Month by month until new contract is in place

**Table3 – Tenders justified by special circumstances**

Title of tender	Director Responsible	Proposed extension
Purchase of leased assets	Gerry Millar	Outright purchase

**Social Clauses - Update**

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current work programme around maximising the impact of procurement spend by taking a ‘social value’ approach to our procurement spend where appropriate.**

**1.2 The report also sets out the future work programme in this area and identifies how this work aligns to the broader work programmes around the ‘Growing the Economy’ and ‘Working and Learning’ strands of the Belfast Agenda.**

## 2.0 Recommendations

### 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Endorse the use of the social value/regeneration as evaluation criteria, where appropriate, as a stepped improvement of the Social Clause Policy;
- The Committee is asked to also note:
  - ongoing work to integrating social clauses, where appropriate, within capital and revenue contracts;
  - limitations of the current social clause approach and the timescales for moving towards the Buy Social approach by June 2017;
  - inclusion of social clause requirements into funding agreements such as Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), where appropriate;
  - findings from the local spend analysis (LM3) for the 15/16 financial year and the activities outlined to increase the impact of local spend.

## 3.0 Main report

3.1 At the 22 January 2016 meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, Members adopted the Council's social clause policy. This committed the Council to scope out all upcoming tender opportunities (focusing on those with a value of at least £250,000) to explore opportunities for securing social value returns by introducing social clauses.

3.2 These social clauses were focused primarily on employability related issues (e.g. apprenticeships, ring-fenced employment opportunities, work placements for long-term unemployed) but also included clauses relating to environmental sustainability.

3.3 Members will be aware that social clauses, as currently applied, are a relatively 'blunt' instrument in supporting employability and engagement by those furthest from the labour market. To date, social clauses have been largely focused on construction contracts. This means that the social clause obligations can only apply for the construction period of the project. As a result, the employability opportunities on these contracts tend to be limited in both duration and scope.

3.4 Recognising the limitations of the current arrangements, Members agreed that it would be prudent to review the Council's Social Policy to consider moving towards greater



alignment with the 'Buy Social' approach recently adopted by central government departments by June 2017.

- 3.5 'Buy Social' takes a broader approach to government purchasing, with a commitment to maximising the social and economic benefits from public procurement. This approach is now being rolled out across all government contracts and there is interest from the Finance Minister to extend this as far as is possible within the legislation.**
- 3.6 Following the commitment to working toward the Buy Social model, Officers introduced a number of developments in the Council's approach to social clauses. This included:**
- Collaboration with training providers already in receipt of financial support from the Council to act as a point of contact/ 'broker' for the contractor in providing training and work placement opportunities. This has improved the opportunities for coordination and has improved working relationships between key training organisations and the contractors**
  - Consideration of opportunities for social clauses within service contracts as well as construction contracts. One recent example of this has been the operator contract for the Innovation Factory.**
  - In addition to new developments, the Council has continued to monitoring social clauses: this was identified by central government as one of the areas in need of most development. The Council has always gathered data on social clauses performance against target, as part of our wider Project Management approach.**

**Social clauses outputs in all council contracts are monitored through the Council's contract management regime. Table 1 below details the position at the end of October 2015.**

3.7 Table 1

	Actual number of people employed	Actual number of apprentices	Actual number of Students	Actual number of Trainees	
<b>Live Projects</b>					
Connswater Community Greenway (1555)	5	8	12	2	
1563 Olympia regeneration Phase 1 (Shell) & Olympia Regeneration Phase 2 (Fit out)	5	2	2		
Cliftonville Pitch - Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain (1530)	3	2	0	1	
Roselawn Extension section Z2 - Z4 (1739)	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Council Accommodation (1606)	4	TBC	1	4	
North Foreshore infrastructure (1601)	2	28	5	1	
Tropical Ravine (1549)	0	0	0	0	
Kerbside Collection	3	N/A	1	N/A	
WFH Cleaning Contract	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Manned Guarding Security Services	2	N/A	N/A	3	Total number of opportunities created as a result of social clauses in contracts
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Closed Projects</b>					
Connswater Greenway / East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme – Phase 1 (1555)	4	5	7		Contract complete.
Dunville Park Regeneration (1485)	1	0	0	0	
Woodvale Park regeneration (1486)	6	0	0	0	
Belfast Waterfront Conference and Exhibition Centre (1478)	1	1	4	11	
Forthriver Innovation Centre (1566) - Heron Bros	4	16	11	0	
Girdwood Community Hub (1507)	5	43	4	4	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>TOTAL (Live and Closed)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>225</b>

Further information on performance to date is included as Appendix 1.

- 3.8** The table above does not include the social benefits emerging from the following contracts: the GLL leisure contract; the Waterfront Hall operator contract; the Innovation Factory operation contract; or the public bike hire contract all of which are monitored and managed outside of this process.
- 3.9** To identify opportunities for the integration of social clauses, a cross departmental team of officers, including representatives from Contracts and Economic Development, meet on a monthly basis to identify opportunities for social clauses inclusion. This includes screening opportunities through capital and revenue contracts as well as through funding agreements such as BIF. Funding agreements are screened in the context of the Council's existing clause policy which sets a threshold of a minimum labour contract value of £250k and a contract duration of at least 6 months. Examples where the need for social benefits have been included in the draft funding agreement for the Belfast Investment Fund include: Davitts GAC and Radio Fáilte. Through the Due Diligence process the inclusion of the relevant social benefits are given consideration.
- 3.10** In addition to employability benefits as social clauses, Officers have also taken a wider approach to maximising social and economic return on Council procurement spend. Some key examples of this include:
- **Organising Meet the Buyer events:** Contractor securing business with the Council are required to participate in at least one supplier information day, facilitated by Belfast City Council. Events provide an opportunity for local businesses to get direct engagement with the contractor. Events are specifically targeted towards small businesses and social enterprises and can also focus primarily (although not exclusively) on businesses located in the area adjacent to where the investment is taking place.
  - **Delivering programmes to help local businesses access public procurement opportunities:** although not exclusively focused on Council contracts, these programmes support up to 30 micro businesses and social enterprises each year to build their skills base on public sector procurement processes. They also receive support from mentors to advise them on how to take a targeted approach to opportunities from the public sector and to give them support on compiling

bids, including looking at opportunities for building consortia to access larger contract opportunities

- Incorporating social regeneration as an element of the evaluation criteria in relevant contracts: The first example of this has been the operator contract on the Innovation Factory. Bidders were asked about how they would support investment in social regeneration alongside the work that they would undertake to operate the centre efficiently and ensure occupancy levels in line with business plan projections. The contractor on this project has now developed a social integration and community engagement plan and has put in place an extensive programme of outreach, engagement and skills development, focusing on the adjacent community. Lessons learned from this approach are currently used in the ongoing procurement for the next phase of the Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP). This tender has included social value considerations within the evaluation criteria for the main works element of the proposed three new leisure centres.

- 3.11 In order to measure the impact of the Council spend on the local economy, the Council has been working with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) over the last three years to baseline the economic impact of the Council's investment and to identify ways to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefit derived from the spending. This includes spend through procurement as well as staff costs and grant funding. The model is referred to as LM3 (Local Multiplier 3), i.e. broad Council spend, re-spend of contractors (e.g. salaries and wages) and any spend by sub-contractors.
- 3.12 The analysis work involves analysing employee, supplier and grant expenditure and also incorporated a survey amongst each of these groups to understand how they further impacted the local economy through their own spending decisions.
- 3.13 The 2015 baseline using 14/15 financial data, identified that for every £1 of council expenditure:
- 70 pence is spent or re-spent in the Belfast economy
  - 96 pence is spent or re-spent in the Greater Belfast economy
  - £1.34 is spent or re-spent in the regional economy.

- 3.14 The 2016 update has just been completed. The figures are:**
- For every £1 spent by Belfast City Council, 64 pence is spent or re-spent in the Belfast economy**
  - For every £1 spent by Belfast City Council, 101 pence is spent or re-spent in the Greater Belfast economy**
  - For every £1 spent by Belfast City Council, 155 pence is spent or re-spent in the Northern Ireland economy.**
- 3.15 Although the spend in the immediate Council area has fallen back, the spend or re-spend in the wider area went up significantly. It is important to note that, in 2015/16, the capital expenditure increased from £21.9m in the previous year to £77.5million. This was largely due to the additional capital investments by the Council over that period, including Belfast Waterfront, Innovation Factory and North Foreshore infrastructure investment. It is also important to note that the majority of contractors in the construction industry are based outside of the Belfast City Council boundary and this would account for a significant proportion of the reduction of spend and re-spend within the city – as well as the increase outside of the city.**
- 3.16 In order to improve the baseline in the coming year, a number of activities are planned:**
- Strengthening engagement with Belfast based organisations and market testing: particularly in areas where there is significant expenditure leaking outside of the Belfast and regional economy.**
  - Influencing existing suppliers: this could be achieved on two levels, the first through the development of a Social Value Procurement Framework which will embed city priorities into the council’s procurement decisions. Secondly it is recognised there are a number of key suppliers currently in contract with Council, where the potential exists to engage with these suppliers to look at how they can contribute towards the city’s priorities**
  - Influencing anchor institutions: The Council is engaged with a range of anchor institutions on the Belfast Agenda and in other areas. There are opportunities to work with them to encourage them to understand the existing impact of spend, look at how it could be enhanced and contribute towards the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda.**
- 3.17 To support this activity Belfast has recently been confirmed as one of only 5 cities to participate in a UK project to look at**

ways in which cities can become more resilient. Led by Development Trust NI, this project will involve working with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and New Economic Foundation (NEF) as well as a range of local partners from private and third sectors. The purpose of this project will be to consider how procurement practices can be utilised to achieve greater levels of social value for the city.

**3.18 Resource implications**

Social clause monitoring is currently undertaken through Project Management Unit and has been delivered within the current resources to date. However limitations of the current approach have identified that the resource for monitoring and managing the outcomes requires to be reviewed.

**3.19 Equality and good relations implications**

**The Social Clause Policy has undergone equality screening.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Approved Duties for Committee Chairpersons  
and Deputy Chairpersons**

The Committee was advised that the Local Government (Payment to Councillors) Regulations was the proper authority from which the Council derived the ability to reimburse Councillors for motor mileage properly incurred for “approved duties”.

In the Regulations, approved duties were described as “attendance at a meeting of a council, or any of its committees or sub-committees or the doing of anything approved by the council for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of functions of the council or any committees or sub-committees”.

The Committee was advised that the Standing Committee Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons were, from time to time, required to attend meetings or events that other Members of the Committee would not be required to attend, such as Chairpersons briefings or speaking at an event or an official launch. However, as those duties fell outside the current description of a “meeting” and as there was usually not any specific Committee authority for them to attend and receive motor mileage for such events, it had not been possible to pay a claim for reimbursement of mileage claims.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that that seemed somewhat unfair as the attendance at such meetings and events was a consequence of the holding of the office of Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson and were at the request of Council officers. Therefore, It would seem to be appropriate that the mileage incurred was an expense which ought to be able to be reimbursed.

The Committee agreed to authorise the payment of the mileage claims for Committee Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons when undertaking duties required of them in that role.

**Local Government Staff Commission Dissolution**  
**Funding 31st March 2017**

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that a letter had been received from the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission in relation to the funding for 31st March 2017. The letter indicated that the Commission, which was to be dissolved on 31st March, 2017, had now agreed its revised financial scheme for the remainder of the year and estimated that the dissolution costs to be £1,996,101, of which Belfast City Council was required to pay 20.3034%.

The Committee agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Minister for Communities stating that the Council was not liable for the cost associated with dissolving the Local Government Staff Commission.

**Equality and Good Relations**

**Shared City Partnership - Minutes**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership held on 7th November, 2016; and approved the following:

**Future Approach to Bonfire Related Issues**

The adoption of the principles as outlined in relation to the 2017 Good Relations approach to bonfires and its continuing development over the next three to five year.

**International Women's Day**

The hosting of an event on 4th March, 2017 to mark International Women's Day 2017, at a cost of up to £6,500.

**Holocaust Memorial Day**

The hosting of an event to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day as part of the Good Relation Unit's Diverse city Programme Mural Transformation Programme Update, at a cost of up to £1,000.

**Mural Transformation Programme**

Funding of up to a maximum of £5,000 to be allocated for the Council to undertake work, in conjunction with the East Belfast Football Club, to transform a mural on the bowling green wall at Inverary Playing Fields.

### **Request for Support for Fusion+ Programme Event**

To support the use of the City Hall for the Fusion+ Programme to hold its finale event in March 2017 and noted the cost of the event was estimated to be in the region of £2,000, which would be met through the existing budgets.

### **Contribution towards Christmas Good Will Events**

A contribution of up to £500 for a maximum of 6 local interface groups to be awarded under the scheme of delegated authority.

### **Draft Equality Action Plan 2017-21**

The Committee was advised that, under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Council was required to develop an Equality Action Plan and report progress annually to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI). The Council had an interim plan at present and it had been agreed with ECNI that the new plan would be in place by 1st April, 2017.

As recommended by the ECNI, in order to develop the plan, the Council had carried out an Audit of Inequalities which had included: holding a staff workshop; carrying out one-to-one interviews; collecting information from departments; commissioning research; and carrying out pre-consultation engagement.

It was planned to issue the draft action plan for a 12-week consultation period in December. That would be at the same time as the Belfast Agenda and the Equality Action Plan made reference to the developing Community Plan for Belfast and its ambition to address inequalities in the city.

The Committee approved the draft Equality Action Plan 2017-21 for public consultation.

### **Quarterly Equality Screening Outcome Report**

The Committee was reminded that one of the main requirements of the Council's Equality Scheme was to carry out the screening of new and revised policies. That allowed any impact related to equality of opportunity and/or good relations to be identified and addressed. An equality screening template was completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality Diversity Officer. On a quarterly basis, the Equality and Diversity Officer collated all completed templates into a Screening Outcome Report and published it on the Council's website along with the relevant screening templates.

The Committee noted the Screening Outcome Report for quarters one and two of 2016.



**Disability Strategy - Proposals for the Adoption of Two Inclusive and Accessible Initiatives**

The Committee was advised that one of the key outcomes in the Belfast Agenda was to ensure that Belfast was a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all. One of the Strategic priorities in the Council's Disability Strategy was "to eliminate the barriers disabled people face in accessing the physical environment, goods and services so that disabled people could participate fully in all areas of life".

It was reported that the Council had recently received two requests to participate in initiatives aimed in improving the experience of disabled people when accessing services both from the Council and other city centre businesses as follows:

**Every Customer Counts (ECC) – Promoting Accessible Services**

The Every Customer Counts initiative was a corporate initiative launched recently by the Equality Commission. The aim of the initiative was to improve disabled people's access to services by encouraging organisations to demonstrate support for the initiative by making their services available to all of their customers on a fair and equitable basis. The ECNI would approve a sticker which could be displayed to inform the Council's customers that we:

- Review the accessibility of our service
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled customers

**The Now Group – JAM Card and App**

The Now Group, the operator of the Bobbin Café, was the social enterprise which supported people with learning difficulties and autism into jobs. The JAM Card and APP was an information card/App carried by people with hidden disabilities/learning disabilities to provide a discreet way to alert staff in a range of services including, retail, transport or other outlets that the card-holder needed "Just a Minute" of time and patience when interacting with them.

The Now Group had been awarded funding from the Big Lottery to roll out the JAM Card/App regionally over the next six months and was now seeking the assistance of key private and public sector stakeholders. In addition to the Council, the other key stakeholders would likely be Libraries NI, Translink, NIE and the Henderson Group.

It was proposed that free online "JAM Card Awareness" training would be provided to front line staff to help raise awareness of how to interact when presented with a JAM Card. In return it had requested the Council offer free publicity in its publications and promotion to key city centre partners through Belfast City Centre Management. The NOW Group hoped to use the Council's involvement as a model of good practice to use with other councils in Northern Ireland.

The Committee approved the Council's involvement in the Every Customer Counts Initiative and the JAM Card initiative.

## Operational Issues

### Planning Service Performance and Service Improvement Plan 2016 -18

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 This report provides an update on current performance in the planning service. Also attached at Appendix 1 is a copy of the 2016-18 Service Improvement Plan which identifies areas for further service improvement and indicates what actions are proposed to undertake these improvements.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note:

- the current processing performance; and
- Service improvement actions for 2016 - 18

#### **3.0 Main Report**

##### **3.1 Planning Performance**

Members will recall from previous reports that a number of changes were introduced by the service to respond to the requirements of the new planning legislation and to make our decision making processes more accessible. This includes the restructuring of the Development Management functions to provide greater flexibility to respond proportionately to the development pressures across the city and manage performance.

**3.2 Monitoring and regularly reporting on processing performance is essential for ensuring that the Council’s priorities are being achieved and that the information informs decision-making and business planning. Work continues in the planning service through the Improvement Plan on developing a proactive culture of monitoring business intelligence and customer insight information as well as completing policy reviews, business critical process audits, service reviews and self-assessments. This includes taking account of recommendations within the recent Internal Audit Report.**

**3.3 The Council inherited a substantial legacy of planning applications (780). It was recognised in 2015/16 that it would**

be difficult for the planning service to achieve the two statutory performance indicators in relation to the processing of Major and Local planning applications given the volume of 'legacy' applications. These statutory targets are to achieve an average processing time of 30 weeks on Major applications and 15 weeks on Local applications. It was therefore agreed that this year there would be a sustained approach towards eliminating this backlog. Agreement was secured from elected members that for those non-delegated legacy applications that were not required by law to be determined by the Planning Committee, the Director of Planning & Place in consultation with the Town Solicitor and chair and vice chair of the Planning Committee, was authorised to make the decision. As a result of these actions there are now less than 45 legacy applications remaining.

- 3.4** The planning service also remains focused on achieving the performance target for those applications processed entirely by Council. In this financial year, up to 30 September 2016, 1,102 planning applications have been received, which is 25% more than the same period last year. Additional temporary agency staff were employed to assist with this increase and the number of decisions issued is up 53% on the same period last year. (603 up to 30 Sept 2015 to 1,127 up to Sept 2016).
- 3.5** Furthermore, in line with the recent Audit recommendations, new administrative processes are in place which means cases are prioritised to ensure, that where possible, target dates are achieved. Ongoing performance is monitored by the Senior Management Team and performance updates are also provided to the Planning Committee on a monthly basis.
- 3.6** Performance against statutory targets is continuing to improve for local applications, which form the majority of planning applications and we are currently exceeding the target set by the Department. (14.4 weeks against the target of 15 weeks)
- 3.7** Processing times for major applications is not within the statutory target of an average of 30 weeks but our ability to achieve this target has been impacted both by elimination of the legacy applications as typically these are the more complicated cases and with negotiation of the newly introduced Section 76 Agreements, which on average adds an extra 10 weeks processing time to those applications. (See paragraphs 3.11 for further information)

**Service Improvement Plan 2016 -18**

- 3.8** Belfast is facing an unprecedented level of growth where the development pipeline includes very significant commercial and employment generating developments. The City Council is committed to encouraging quality developments in the capital city of NI. To support applicants investing in such developments, the planning service needs to provide certainty and sufficient resources to ensure that planning applications for large scale or complex proposals are dealt with in a timely manner.
- 3.9** The attached Improvement Plan reflects the City Council's corporate priorities and objectives with a clear focus on an efficient and effective development management service. It is a continuation of previous improvements and covers both 'internal' and 'external' measures to bring about the necessary changes to the way business is conducted and how the public can enjoy an enhanced service. Some of the key aspects of the Improvement Plan are highlighted below.

**Processing of planning applications**

- 3.10** The planning service is currently undertaking a review of internal processes and systems in accordance with lean system thinking and best practice on performance management. The planning service has largely inherited processes and procedures from the Department of Environment and it is anticipated that marked efficiency gains can be achieved. The focus will be on front loading the process whereby the right information required to determine an application will be secured at an earlier stage; and a view can be formed earlier in the process as to whether an application is acceptable; and if is not, what needs to be done to make it acceptable.
- 3.11** In tandem with this work, a new performance management and monitoring framework will be established to better track the handling of applications through the system. This work will be informed by emerging guidance and support from DFI on how Councils in NI can best apply a performance management culture.

**Section 76 Planning Agreements (Developer Contributions)**

- 3.12** The Council's introduction of Section 76 planning agreements to secure developer contributions is unique in NI and is already playing a meaningful role in the development management process in the City by providing additional

funding sources beyond that of Council and ensuring that infrastructure constraints do not inhibit sustainable economic growth. To date approx. £2.5 million has been secured through Planning Agreements towards public infrastructure.

- 3.13** As a next step, the planning service is currently finalising a Developer Contributions Framework. The Council wants to ensure development and growth of the city is aligned to the social, economic and environmental well-being of its citizens. The Framework will provide clarity and transparency for developers by setting out the way in which Council will secure developer contributions through the planning system and to contribute to the Council's corporate objectives. It is expected that the Framework will be issued for public consultation by the end of 2016.

#### **Planning Performance Agreements**

- 3.14** The planning service has recently secured the agreement of the planning committee to enter into Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with applicants. PPAs are a project management tool and help to improve the quality of planning applications and the decision making process, through collaboration, for managing large scale or complex planning applications. PPAs will, inter alia, assist in delivering improved performance in determination timescales. For some applications, the Council may secure additional funding from applicants to help meet applicant's timescales for the handling and determination of those applications.

#### **Pre Application Discussions**

- 3.15** The planning service is investigating a scale of charges for pre-application advice to establish a formal charging framework, similar with other Core Cities in the UK, for significant development proposals and project work. The planning service welcomes and encourages discussions before a developer submits a planning application. These discussions can result in better quality applications which stand a better chance of a successful outcome and help speed up the decision making process after submission. As a consequence they can help to minimise subsequent costs and avoid abortive applications.
- 3.16** To enable the Council to provide this service to a consistent and high standard, the planning service needs to allocate significant resources to this service. It is considered that the cost of providing the service should be recovered directly from the applicant and not fall as a general cost to the council ratepayer. It should be noted that the current

Statutory planning fees do not cover the cost of any pre application advice given by the Council.

#### Enforcement

- 3.17 Work is continuing on embracing a proactive approach to enforcement. A key project currently underway is a proposal to remove deemed consent for the erection of estate agent signage in the university area of South Belfast. A public consultation exercise on the proposals has commenced and a stakeholder workshop is scheduled for later this month.

#### Member/Staff/Customer Engagement

- 3.18 A team has been set up to consider the current customer engagement within the planning service, focusing on member engagement. Key priorities over the next few months are to finalise an engagement protocol with members, reviewing the scheme of delegation, finalising guidance on levels of interaction and service standards with the public and industry, and to further improve linkages across the Council including key internal stakeholders.
- 3.19 For example, reception processes are currently being reviewed in anticipation of the establishment of a joint reception with Building Control next month. Additionally as part of our aim to improve accessibility/understanding of the planning process to all users of the planning system, we will be reviewing the NI Direct call handling system.

#### ICT Solutions

- 3.20 Work is also continuing on improving the short term operation of the Planning Portal and considering the longer term options for its planned replacement including the retrieval of reliable and relevant information to proactively contribute to effective rates forecasting for the Council.
- 3.21 The planning service is continuing to proactively look at a number of options open to the Council in terms of how it approaches the replacement of the Planning Portal. These include Belfast City Council procuring a replacement Planning system based on its own requirements and working with the Department for Infrastructure on the Discovery Phase of its project (subject to BCC not committing to accepting any recommendations arising out of this work).

**3.22 Financial and Resource Implications**

This work is included within existing budgets.

**3.23 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Review of Household Recycling Centres  
and Civic Amenity Sites**

(Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services Department, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to defer the public consultation process on the proposed future provision of Household Recycling Centres in Belfast to enable further discussion to take place regarding the content of the questionnaire.

**Members' Portal - Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of report or summary of main issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the development of the Members' Portal.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the contents of this report.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Background**

Following consultation with the Party Group Leaders and the Elected Member Development Working Group, a facilitated ‘discovery workshop’ was held in June to explore how technology could be best used to improve communication between Members and the wider council organisation.

**3.2 Key Issues**

During the workshop, Members highlighted key issues relating to how communication could be improved within the

council with specific suggestions. These have been analysed, grouped and prioritised by the Members' Portal project team in consultation with officers from relevant departments. The actions have been grouped under the following headings:

1. Making it easier to find out who is the best person to contact
2. Making it easier to find important information
3. Prioritising the information flow to Members
4. Making it easier to deal with and resolve issues raised by constituents
5. Other suggestions

3.3 The detailed action plan is due to be reviewed by Members at the next Elected Member Development Working Group on 21 November 2016.

3.4 Content

Based on these suggestions, the proposed content of the Members' Portal is therefore:

Immediate (aim for Jan 17)

- Directory of key internal and external contacts – internal contacts will have photos and any relevant description tags e.g. bonfires, dogs, derelict buildings
- Alert function for:
  - significant LIF project issues
  - briefings for Members on emerging situations
  - reminders of upcoming Member training sessions
  - recently approved council policies
  - recent awards won by council
- Existing 'Members' meeting calendar' e.g. training events, non-committee meetings
- New calendar showing the event and RSVP details for council-organised events to which all Members have been invited
- Open consultations: council's own; NI Executive; others which the council has been consulted
- Member training material
- A list of key council policies
- Area Working Group area profiles
- Frequent Member queries (if required for any remaining queries not addressed by portal)

These actions can be taken forward by the project team immediately.



**Medium-term (date to be agreed)**

**Up-to-date information about council grants ie grants currently open, remaining size of fund, how to apply, tracking progress of applications, total grants received by organisations, grants awarded by District Electoral Areas (DEA)**

**Some recommended actions to take this forward have been identified and will be fed into the planned corporate review of grants. However, in the interim, this information will be provided in liaison with Development Department Business Support, Central Grants Unit, Good Relations, and Corporate Finance.**

**3.5 Design**

**Following agreement on the content, Internal Communications will design the look-and-feel of the website.**

**3.6 Additional actions**

**Some additional actions to address issues raised by Members, which can also be taken forward by the project team immediately, are:**

**Development of a 'contacting Members protocol' (e.g. using preferred method of communication, more mobile-to-mobile calls to enable easier callback, email subject heading convention)**

**Ensuring new members of staff in key teams include their team in their email name so that Members don't miss important emails e.g. Sam Jones (CX Business Support)**

**3.7 Other issues**

**Other issues raised by Members outside the scope of the Members' Portal project which have been highlighted to the Corporate Management Team for further consideration:**

- **Enhance external website to be able to search for events/classes/programmes by location**
- **Ability to analyse council-related information by DEA e.g. participants on programmes**
- **Progress on outcomes from organisations receiving significant funding from the council**
- **Address issue of size of committee report packs e.g. by re-introducing two-page limit**
- **Consideration of role of central support team for Members**

- Consideration of how any new corporate approach to customer relationship management could be used to help Members manage constituents' queries e.g. tracking outcomes of queries, generating reply letters, use of 'live chat' chatbot on website

### 3.8 Next steps

- Provide a detailed update to the Elected Member Development Working Group on 21 November 2016
- Project Team to take forward immediate and medium-term actions to aim for a pilot for Members in January 2017

### 3.9 Financial & Resource Implications

**Maintenance:** Most information is currently being updated manually. Some development work by Digital Services and also agreed resources throughout the council will be required to update and maintain the content of the Members' Portal.

### 3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 10th November.

### National Association of Councillors – Attendance at National Executive Meetings

The Committee was reminded that it had eight members on the National Association of Councillors – Northern Ireland Region. Two Members, namely, Councillors Jones and Sandford, had been appointed to represent the Northern Ireland region on the National Association, which would require attendance at a number of National Executive meetings and the AGM in Carlisle, London and Glasgow during the year. The next four meetings were scheduled to be held in January, May, September and November.

The Committee:

- approved the attendance of Councillors Jones and Sandford at the meetings of the National Executive of the National Association of Councillors; and
- authorised the payment of the appropriate travel costs and subsistence associated therewith.

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations for the requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality as set out below:

Appendix

<b>Organisation/ Body</b>	<b>Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Queen's University Belfast	Annual Conference of the British Association for Lung Research Reception  30th August, 2017  Approximately 80 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the Congress will take place within the city.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception  Approximate cost £400
Conference Partners Limited	International Dairy Federation World Dairy Summit 2017 Farmers Dinner  30th October, 2017  Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the Congress will take place within the city.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception  Approximate cost £500
Ulster University	Association of Heads of University Administration Spring Conference 2017 Dinner  4th April, 2017  Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the Conference will take place within the city.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Opportunities for Success Across the City'	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception  Approximate cost £500
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	Aquinas 25th Anniversary Celebration  16th June, 2016  Approximately 400 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event will celebrate the success of the institution since 1993, and the positive contribution it has made to the many hundreds of past pupils.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Opportunities for Success Across the City'	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception  Approximate cost £500

Patient and Client Council	Contribution to Health and Social Care Event  29th March, 2017  Approximately 250 attending	The use of the City Hall	This event aims to recognise the contributions members have made in health and social care across Northern Ireland.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'Better Support for People and Communities' and 'Better Services – Listening and Delivering'	The use of the City Hall
British Heart Foundation Northern Ireland	British Heart Foundation NI Supporters Event  29th June, 2017  Approximately 250 attending	The use of the City Hall	This event will include the annual Heart Heroes Awards to mark the achievements and bravery of heart patients and their families.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better Opportunities for Success Across the City'	The use of the City Hall
Remembering Srebrenica	Northern Ireland National Srebrenica memorial 2017  10th July, 2017  Approximately 100 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	This event will provide delegates and members of the public with an understanding of the events and history of Srebrenica.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'Better Support for People and Communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits  Approximate cost £250
Belfast City Council – Parks and Cemeteries Service Section	City of Belfast International Rose Trials – Judges' Reception and Luncheon  21st July, 2017  Approximately 150 attending	The use of City Hall and the provision of Hospitality in the form of a Civic Lunch	The annual City of Belfast International Rose Trials will be held during Rose Week. The Trials are renowned worldwide for attracting international rose growers in addition to a significant number of visitors.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together'.	The use of City Hall and the provision of Hospitality in the form of a Civic Lunch.  Approximate cost £4,500
Law Society of Northern Ireland	Law Society of Northern Ireland Council Dinner 2017  8th September, 2017  Approximately 300	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks	This event seeks to provide an opportunity for representatives from the judiciary, business, voluntary and community sectors to come together to acknowledge the	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks

	attending	reception	achievements of the Society. The event aims to highlight best practice and to develop relations with key stakeholders.  This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	Approximate cost £500
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**2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies –  
Provisional Proposals**

The Committee was advised that the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies had commenced on 28th February, 2016. In accordance with schedule 2 of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, the number of Parliamentary constituencies across the United Kingdom would be reduced from 650 to 600. In Northern Ireland, the decrease would be from 18 seats to 17 at the next Westminster elections expected in 2020. That would mean redrawing the existing constituency boundaries. The Act required that Northern Ireland's electorate (1,243,369 people as at 1st December 2015) be divided into 17 constituencies utilising complete local government wards as building blocks. The electorate of each constituency must also be within a 5% variance of the UK electoral quota of 74,769 (that is, no less than 71,031 and no more than 78,507 people).

The Boundary Commissioner for Northern Ireland had published on 6th September, 2016 provisional recommendations for the new Parliamentary Constituencies within Northern Ireland. Responses to the consultation were being sought by 28th November 2016. The Commission was required to submit its report on final recommendations to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland no later than 1st October, 2018.

It was

Moved by Councillor McVeigh,  
Seconded by Councillor Long,

That the Committee agrees not to submit a Council response to the 2018 review of Parliamentary Constituencies – provisional proposals but rather that individual party responses should be made.

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

Chairperson