

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 16th December, 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, Hutchinson, Jones, Long,
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. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
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 McAllister.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 11th and 18th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Restricted Items

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

Revenue Estimates and District Rate

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 the update on the development of the revenue estimates and the setting of the district rate;
- Agreed to the next steps to setting the rate as outlined in paragraph 3.9 of the report; and
- Agreed that those areas for potential savings which had been identified by the Political Parties be considered in the first instance by the Budget and Transformation Panel.

City Centre Development

The Committee considered a report in relation to the potential acquisition of Commission House, Belfast as a Strategic Investment in line with the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategies.

The Committee agreed to the Council pursuing the potential acquisition of Commission House, on the basis of the Land and Property Services valuation, but subject to the Council obtaining its own independent valuation and undertaking other due diligence, with a further report to be submitted to the Committee prior to any final decisions.

IT Equipment

The Committee noted the contents of a report in relation to the Member's IT equipment package and agreed to hold party group briefings in January to consider its recommendations.

Revisions to Management of City Hall Function Booking Processes

The Committee deferred consideration of a report in relation to the revision to the management of the City Hall function booking processes to enable the recommendations contained therein to be considered as part of the rate setting process.

Matters referred back from Council/Notices of Motion

Metropolitan City Growth Deal

The Committee was reminded that, in accordance with standing orders, the following notice of motion in relation to the Metropolitan City Growth Deal, which had been proposed by Alderman Convery and seconded by Councillor Attwood, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council notes that the British Government has agreed major City Region Deals in England, Scotland and Wales, including:

- a £1.13 billion Glasgow and Clyde Valley Infrastructure Fund, in partnership with Scottish Government and local authorities;
- a £1.2 billion City Deal for the Cardiff Capital Region, in partnership with the Welsh Government and 10 local authorities; and

a £315m City Region Deal for Inverness and the wider Highlands area with Scottish and UK governments.

The Council notes that these deals are based on the ability to increase productivity and also in many cases to ensure that many communities are not left behind. The ability of councils to contribute finance alongside the Treasury and the Northern Ireland Executive to fund major infrastructure, regeneration and skills development projects, in Belfast, will be essential to realising the executive's emerging economic and a social strategies.

The Council recognises that City Region Deals can have far-reaching impacts, not just on the economy, but on regional competitiveness, connectivity, infrastructure, housing, employment and lifestyle.

The Council welcomes the dialogue with neighbouring local Councils about promoting city region devolution deals and calls upon the Minister of Finance and the Northern Ireland Executive to prioritise City Region Deals and to actively facilitate negotiations between the Department of Finance, local authorities and the UK Treasury.”

The Committee was advised that the City Growth and Regeneration Committee had considered a report on the steps which had been taken to date advocating for a city growth deal. That Committee had agreed to commission a feasibility study on the detail of the growth deal, alongside developing a programme of work with London and Dublin. The feasibility study and associated work would seek to:

- Engage with partners, establishing governance and setting the geography for the deals;
- Determine objectives, prioritisation criteria and identifying schemes;
- Prioritise projects and funding/financing routes for delivery; and
- Provide economic analysis, financial modelling and agreeing performance metrics, for example, additional in tax-take or increase in sustained employment opportunities.

The Committee noted the contents of the motion and the decision which had been taken by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee to progress the matter.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st December, had referred the following notice of motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Attwood and seconded by Councillor Heading, to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council notes with concern the decision of the High Court which decided that bulky goods only could be removed from the Belfast Metropolitan Area in relation to Sprucefield.

The Council notes that the Minister for Infrastructure, Mr. Chris Hazzard, agreed on a proposal to have BMAP adopted without the bulky goods restriction.

The Council notes that the Javelin report stated, in August 2016, that Belfast needs to improve the quality of its shops and that a John Lewis store would be seen as one of the major catalysts to rejuvenate Belfast City Centre.

Belfast needs to be a strong city in many ways to support the rest of Northern Ireland. This means that it has to have the right critical mass of offices, retail, residential, culture and arts to allow it to grow, not at the expense of other parts of Northern Ireland but in support of putting more money in everyone's pockets and creating more jobs both in the city and in the many businesses in the external supply chain. Belfast needs to compete with other cities if Northern Ireland is to be more financially successful. This means that it needs more people living, working and visiting here. It should be (according to its size) one of the top 10 cities in the UK but is currently only 16th in the retail rankings. This is not good enough for Northern Ireland.

The Council believes that the decision of the High Court will have an adverse impact on Belfast and other town centres and supports the decision to appeal the decision of the High Court and will work with retailers and others to challenge this decision."

The Committee was advised that the Council had become a notice party to the remedies hearing and had asked the court not to endorse the proposed removal of the bulky goods restriction as it believed it was inappropriate and unlawful for the court to do so.

Noted

Transfer of Regeneration Powers

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st December, Councillor McDonough-Brown had proposed the following:

"This Council expresses its profound disappointment in the decision of the Minister for Communities not to proceed with the Regeneration Bill and devolution of regeneration powers to local government.

The Council:

- (i) recognises that these powers would strengthen and enhance our ability to drive strategic regeneration activity, when used alongside community and land use planning;
- (ii) believes this decision to be in conflict with the entire direction and ethos of local government reform and to be a significant missed opportunity; and

- (iii) reiterates our support for the devolution of regeneration powers to local government; and calls for the Minister for Communities to meet with the Council with a view to reversing his decision and proceeding with the Bill.”

The motioned had been seconded by Councillor Howard.

The Committee was reminded further that, at the request of Councillor McDonough-Brown, the Council had agreed, with all forty-eight Members present and voting in support of the proposal, to suspend Standing Order 13(f) to enable the Council to debate point (iii) of the motion. Subsequently, the Council had agreed to adopt point (iii) and, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), had referred points (i) and (ii), without discussion, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee was advised that, in considering the notice of motion, Members should be aware that in responding to the draft Programme for Government (PfG), which would be considered later in the meeting, the Council had formerly requested that the NI Executive commit within the PfG that the regeneration powers in-fact transfer and complement existing planning and economic development functions of councils. The benefits of transferring important place-shaping regeneration functions, including comprehensive development schemes and compulsory purchase orders, was a key aspect of the recent Westminster and Stormont engagement and lobbying events.

In the interim, direct engagement was also ongoing with the Department of Communities and the NI Executive to explore how the Council might utilise specific regeneration powers on behalf of the Department through an agency-type arrangement. Such an approach would help unlock and progress prioritised regeneration and development schemes within the city and secure the necessary funding to deliver such schemes through innovative funding models, including potential public and private co-financing. The Members would also be aware that a Memorandum of Understanding had been established between the Council and the Department for Communities to enable a joined up approach to be taken to development.

The Committee noted parts (i) and (ii) of the motion and that part (iii) had already been agreed by the Council and noted the information which had been provided in relation to the Programme for Government response.

2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies – Provisional Proposals

The committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the consultation underway on the provisional proposals emerging from the ‘2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies’ and to outline for consideration a proposed response from Belfast City Council.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note

- the contents of the report and
- that November Committee agreed a Council response should not be submitted to the public consultation.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The 2018 Review of Parliamentary constituencies started on 24 February 2016. In accordance with schedule 2 of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, the number of Parliamentary constituencies across the UK will reduce from 650 to 600. In Northern Ireland, the decrease will be from 18 seats to 17 at the next Westminster elections, expected in 2020. This will mean redrawing the existing constituency boundaries. The Act requires that Northern Ireland's electorate (1,243,369 people at 1 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 per cent variance of the UK electoral quota of 74,769 (ie. no less than 71,031 and no more than 78,507 people).

3.2 A Boundary Commissioner for Northern Ireland published on 6 September 2016 provisional recommendations for the new Parliamentary Constituencies within NI. Responses are sought by 28 November 2016. The Commission is required to submit its report on final recommendations to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland no later than 1 October 2018.

3.3 Based on the proposals put forward, the current four Parliamentary Constituency covering Belfast will be reduced to three comprising of the following:

- East Belfast - the only Belfast constituency proposed to retain its name. Would cover those wards which lie between the River Lagan and the eastern boundary of the City. This would mean transferring out the wards of Dundonald, Carrowreagh, Grahamsbridge, Ballyanwood and Emler; and transferring in those wards from Belfast South which lie between the River and the City boundary (Hillfoot, Cregagh, Ravenhill, Woodstock, Ormeau, Rosetta and Belvoir). Would have an electorate of 72,001.
- Belfast North West - proposed new constituency which would retain Valley and Colinbridge from current Belfast North, transfer from Belfast West the

wards of Fourth River, Ballygomartin, Clonard, Beechmount, Falls and Shankill; and transfer out those wards lying outside the City boundary (Whitehouse, Rathcoole, O'Neill, Carmoney Hill, Glebe, Glengormley). Would have an electorate of 71,266.

- **Belfast South West – proposed new constituency which would extend from the Lagan to the western boundary encompassing the whole of Dunmurry ward, Colin Glen, Turf Lodge, Ballymurphy, Falls Park, Blackstaff and Central. Would have an electorate of 73,643.**

3.4 Elsewhere, eight constituencies would continue with minimal boundary changes; six new constituencies would be created, provisionally called Dalriada, Glenshane, North Tyrone, Upper Bann and Blackwater, West Antrim and West Down; and five names would disappear: Lagan Valley, East Londonderry, North Antrim, West Tyrone and Mid-Ulster.

3.5 Proposed Belfast City Council Response

Whilst recognising that individual Political Parties will clearly have their own views on the recommendations put forward not only for Belfast but for the wider region, Members may wish to consider submitting a short response from the Council outlining the following points:

- **Given the significance of Belfast as the economic driver and capital city for the region, and its desire to become more competitive on a national, European and International level, the Council would be concerned about any proposal to reduce the number of MPs for the City. This is particularly pertinent given the work underway by Council to develop a City Growth Deal for the city-region and the need to continue to lobby and influence regional and national government on city development related issues and seeking to ensure the continued social, economic and physical regeneration of the City and City-Region.**
- **As the proposed changes will not come into effect until 2020, the Council would highlight that they do not take account of the ambitious population growth targets set for the city over this period and the associated potential impact on the future electorate of the city. The Belfast Agenda (Community Plan for the City) includes a population growth target of an additional 70,000 new residents by 2035. Securing population growth will also be a key feature of the Council's emerging Local Development Plan for Belfast.**

3.6 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or Human Resource implications contained within this report.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None.”

After discussion it was

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,
Seconded by Councillor Craig

That the Committee approves the proposed Council response to the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies – Provisional Proposals as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

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

Belfast Agenda

**Programme for Government –
Consultation Response**

The Chief Executives submitted for the Committees consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 This report seeks to update Committee on the recent consultation on a further draft Programme for Government and a suite of associated draft delivery plans; and to enable Members to consider and agree a Council response to be submitted. The consultation ends on 23 December 2016.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **note the contents of this report; and**
- **consider and agree the proposed Council response to the draft PfG Framework**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1** The draft PfG is 170+ pages long and sets out 14 strategic outcomes, 48 indicators and is underpinned by 32 draft Delivery Plans, which the Executive states that when taken together, set a clear direction of travel and enable continuous improvement on the essential components of societal wellbeing and improve quality of life. They touch upon every aspect of government including, for example: securing economic success; supporting job creation and employability; attainment of good health and education; investment; and creating confident and peaceful communities.
- 3.2** Whilst welcomed, the new OBA format has introduced a new level of complexity into the PfG consultation process compared to previous years with the introduction of detailed delivery plans. For each of the PfG indicators, a named senior official has been identified who is responsible and accountable for leading the work to deliver the improvements identified and who will oversee the development of specific delivery plans. Each delivery plan sets out the key delivery partners involved, and their role.
- 3.3** The PfG will be supported by an updated Investment Strategy, an Economic Strategy and a new Social Strategy – these key strategies will also be subject to consultation and engagement which we understand will commence later in the month.
- 3.4** Council officers have reviewed both the draft PFG and associated Delivery Plans in the context of the previous response submitted to the first the PfG Framework (June 2016), and the ambitious set out for the city in the Belfast Agenda.
- 3.5** Attached at Appendix 2 for Members consideration is a proposed draft Council response to the PfG which is set out in two sections
- (i) The first relates to the overarching document and specifically the 14 listed outcomes and their associated issues, indicators and actions.
 - (ii) The second part sets out specific and detailed feedback on the emergent ‘Delivery Plans’ linked to the PFG outcomes and indicators. These comments will be submitted directly to the senior responsible officers for the relevant delivery plans.

3.6 (i) Overarching Document

The response to the overarching document includes the high level issues which the Council would like to see reflected in the PfG and naturally contains many of the 'key asks' which the Council has developed over recent months and opportunities to co-design and deliver in partnership with the Executive and other partners.

3.7 Where possible the response strives to reaffirm the importance of Belfast to the wider region and to demonstrate that a successful Belfast will result in a positive impact across many of the outcomes identified within the PfG and provide benefits to Northern Ireland as a whole. The response also outlines the complementarity between the ambitions set out within the PfG and the Belfast Agenda and emphasises the importance of working in partnership with the Executive to co-design placed-based programmes and initiatives which will deliver common outcomes. It also outlines the need to consider innovative and new forms of finance and delivery models to unlock development, regeneration and infrastructure priorities within the city and across the region.

3.8 Members will note that summary of the key issues outlined in the Council response is set out in Page 3-4 of Appendix 2.

3.9 (ii) Delivery Plans

In terms of responding to the delivery plans, the Executive have requested that comments are submitted in writing directly to the named senior owner for each plan. These delivery plans have been assigned in turn to senior officers throughout the Council whose views have been sought on the suitability and effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements.

3.10 There is an expectation that the delivery plans will be somewhat fluid and the senior officers within central government responsible for each plan will lead on engagement with delivery partners on an ongoing basis in order to review their effectiveness. Senior officers within the Council are engaging directly with the identified SROs for each plan in order to ensure that they can influence the respective delivery plans as they evolve over the lifetime of the Programme for Government.

3.11 Members will also be aware that there has been intensive political engagement by the Council seeking to inform and shape the emerging PFG and associated strategies including the recent series of Ministerial meetings, the representation at Westminster and Stormont and the briefings given to

specific Executive Committees including the Committee for Infrastructure on 7 November.

3.12 NILGA Response

A copy of NILGA's response to the PfG document is attached at Appendix 3 for information only.

3.13 Financial and Resource Implications

None.

3.14 Equality and Good Relations Implications

None.”

The Committee agreed the proposed Council response to the draft Programme for Government framework.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Capital Programme Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The Council's Capital Programme is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new Council facilities.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- note the contents of this report and the major achievements delivered under the Capital Programme over the past couple of months which has seen over £50million of projects completed across the city
- note the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange site visits for Members/ Party Groups to any capital programme project and in particular would advise Members to visit the new accommodation at 9 Adelaide, the new Olympia Leisure Centre and the Connswater Community Greenway

Project Updates

- note that the Council is progressing with Phase 4 of the Alleygating Programming and as part of this the supporting process of consultation is underway. The Council is aware that areas in the former Lisburn and Castlereagh areas were not part of the previous alleygating phases and is therefore looking at these areas to assess provision and it is recommended that consultation is undertaken in these areas as part of the process which will allow these gates to quickly progress if future funding is received (either Council or other funding). Members are asked to note at this stage there is no budget for a future alley gating programme
- Leisure Programme – agree to the demolition of the Clonduff Community Centre in line with the demolition works at Robinson given the reasons outlined in 3.2 below. Members are asked to note that officers will immediately progress discussions with the local community groups and Elected Members to ascertain the temporary provision that may be required to be put in place in the interim until the construction of the new centre.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council's rolling Capital Programme is a significant programme with over £185m of projects recently completed or currently underway. Members will be aware that when projects are completed they transfer from the Property & Projects Department to the relevant client Department (City & Neighbourhoods or Development) under the stewardship of the People and Communities and City & Growth Committees as appropriate. It is the role of the client department and the relevant standing Committee to manage the assets once completed.

Members are asked to note that over £50million of projects have either been completed in the past two months or are currently in the final stages of completion. This is a major achievement in terms of delivery and in terms of staff performance.

Projects recently completed/in final stages of completion

- *Council accommodation* – the new 9 Adelaide building, which will provide accommodation for over 800 officers, was officially handed over to the Council

(Property & Projects Department) on 28th November. This development is significant as it is the first purpose built Grade A accommodation in the city centre since the economic downturn and is a significant sign of the Council's confidence in and commitment to the city centre soon to be followed by the All State building at Maysfield which the Department also facilitated. The £20m plus new build was delivered ahead of programme and within budget and Members are asked to note that the project itself took just under two and a half years from start to finish which is an achievement in itself for a building of this scale. The first staff from Development moved into the building on the 9th December with Planning, Property & Projects, Reprographics, HR and Legal services to follow in the coming months. The decants will be completed by March. Further Public Realm works on the adjacent footpaths are planned for the new year.

- *Olympia Leisure Centre* – the new Olympia, which is the first of our new redeveloped facilities under the £105m leisure transformation programme, was handed over to GLL who will operate this under the Better brand on the 28th November. Testing of the building is currently underway with a soft opening at the start of January. The new building will be officially opened on the 24th January and further details on the opening will be provided to Members in due course. The new centre is the most modern and advanced leisure facility in Northern Ireland and has some new and innovative technologies. Facilities in the new centre, which adjoins the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park, include
 - a 25m pool and teaching pool
 - 120 station gym
 - 4 court sports hall
 - a luxurious day spa
 - state of the art exercise studios
 - multi purpose rooms
 - coffee corner

£2.75m was provided by the Department for Communities as part of the NI Executive's Stadium Redevelopment Programme. The new centre is only the first phase of the £21.75million Olympia Sports Village development and in the New Year we will be demolishing the old leisure centre, creating an exciting new boulevard entrance, a new playground and additional outdoor sports pitches

- **Connswater Community Greenway – on 22nd November the new CS Lewis Square, part of the £40m Connswater Community Greenway project, was opened. The Square, which has space for over 2000 people is the first dedicated outdoor space for activities and events. On the evening seven new sculptures were unveiled based on the characters from the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. The Square, which have been very popular with tourists and locals since its opening, will be open 24/7 and well-lit. The Connswater project is now in its final stages with seasonal planting to be finished off in the Spring.**
- **North Foreshore – Works on the ERDF funded project were completed at the end of October. Work on the Film Studio is nearing completion and is due to be opened in the New Year. Work is continuing on the infrastructure required for the development sites. A leisure development brief for the north end of the site being put out to the market.**
- **New pavilion at Musgrave and pitch upgrades – part of the £15m Pitches Programme, the new changing pavilion and upgrade to the pitch has recently been completed. With the handover of this to the City & Neighbourhoods Departments this means that 8 out of the 10 projects under the pitches strategy have been completed with new facilities open at**
- **Musgrave – new pavilion and pitch upgrades**
- **Cliftonville – New 3G pitch, pavilion, floodlights, new fencing**
- **Woodlands – New 3G pitch, pavilion, floodlights, new fencing and car park facilities**
- **Ormeau – New pitch, floodlights and new fencing**
- **Victoria – New pavilion**
- **Dixon – New pavilion**
- **Ballysillan – New pavilion**
- **Waterworks – New pavilion**

Works at Falls Park are due to commence in the New Year and a planning determination for the new pitch and pavilion at Cherryvale is expected next year. In addition works are due to commence in the New Year on the new pavilion at Sally Gardens to compliment the pitch which was completed earlier this year.

- **MUGA at Springfield Avenue - handed over to the City & Neighbourhoods Department w/c 17th October. This has transformed a previously derelict area of land and a former anti-social behavior hot-spot into a new community facility**

- **Phase 1 - Whiterock Community Corridor Phase 1 – handed over to the City & Neighbourhoods Department on the 16th November. Phase 1, which included the development of a new playground and MUGA, together with the LIF funded project at Glor NaMona on the other side has transformed what was derelict and underused land at the front entrance of the site. In total there has been a Council investment in the area of nearly £1m. Phase 2 of the Whiterock project – the completion of the road to serve the new Falls Park pitch will commence in January along with a piece of public art.**

Project Updates

- 3.2 Leisure Programme – Clonduff Community Centre – Members will be aware that the Council is proceeding with the demolition works at the Robinson Centre in anticipation of going on ground with the new centre next Summer (subject to the outcome of planning). The contractors are currently mobilising on the site with demolition works due to begin in January. There are a number of reasons why it proposed that the demolition works at Clonduff are progressed in line with this**

- 1. An overall cleared site will be better for the build programme of the new centre rather than trying to build around an existing facility – this will facilitate the quicker development of the new facility**
- 2. Members will be aware that asbestos has been discovered in the Robinson Centre and that a key part of the demolition contract is the removal of this. Members will be aware that issues may arise when asbestos is disturbed and therefore given the adjacencies and the arising health & safety implications it would be better to clear the overall site**
- 3. Invasive species have been discovered on areas of the site adjacent to the Clonduff Centre which will need to be cleared**
- 4. Demolishing the two centres under the one contract will also represent better value for the money for the Council**

Approval is therefore sought from the Committee to proceed with the demolition of the Clonduff Community Centre in line with the demolition of the existing Robinson Centre. Members will be aware that the current Clonduff Community Centre is still operational and that officers will work with the local Elected representative and community groups to ascertain the temporary provision that may be required to be put in place in the interim until the construction of the new centre.

3.3 **Alleygates** – Members will be aware that Phase 4 of the Alleygating programme is currently underway and as part of this the supporting process of consultation is underway. The Council is aware that areas in the former Lisburn and Castlereagh areas were not part of the previous alleygating phases and is therefore looking at these areas to ascertain if any alleygating provision is required. It is recommended that this is undertaken as part of this process which will allow these gates to progress if future funding is received. Members are asked to note at this stage there is no budget for a future alley gating programme

3.4 **Financial & Resource Implications**

Financial – The capital programme is a rolling programme of investment

Resources – Ongoing resources in terms of project operation

3.5 **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.”

During discussion, the Director of Property and Projects provided the Members with an update in relation to the purchase of the Ulster Bank at the Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report, noted the update in relation to the purchase of the Ulster Bank at the Andersonstown Leisure Centre and granted approval to the Director of Property and Projects to vest the property if necessary.

Area Working Update

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

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

1.1 To update Members on a number of area related issues for Members consideration.

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

AWG minutes

- approve the most recent round AWG Minutes (*South – 28th November and West – 24th November*) North and East AWG) Thursday 8th December

Local Investment Fund

- agree the recommendations from the West and East AWGs in relation to LIF funding (Section 3.2 – 3.3).
- note the additional projects which have been scored (Section 3.4) which have met the minimum threshold and agree that these are progressed to due-diligence

Belfast Investment Fund

- agree the recommendations from the East AWG in relation to BIF funding (Section 3.5)

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 (*South – 28th November and West – 24th November*) as attached at Appendix 1. Members are asked to note that the North and East AWGs held their meetings on Thursday 8th December – the minutes for this are not yet available however the relevant funding decisions from the meetings are included within this report.

LOCAL INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE

- 3.2 WEST AWG -** The West AWG at its meeting on 24th November, made the following recommendations for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to their LIF subject to the required criteria being met.

Ref No	Project	Recommendation
WLIF2-13	Sliabh Dubh Playground	To be withdrawn from the LIF programme (£70,000)
WLIF2-06	Lamh Dhearg GAC	Additional £15,000 (reallocation from WLIF2-13) – overall in principle allocation of £60,000
WLIF2-14	MMA Regional Centre of Excellence	Additional £30,000 (reallocation from WLIF2-13) – overall in principle allocation of £70,000
WLIF2-23	Blackie River Community Group	£25,000 (reallocation from WLIF2-13) – New LIF proposal

3.3 EAST AWG - The East AWG at its meeting on 8th December, made the following recommendations for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to their LIF

Ref No	Project	Recommendation
ELIF2-20	Tullycarnet Community Support Service	To be withdrawn from the LIF programme (£58,411)

The East AWG agreed that officers engage with a number of other projects which had been proposed in order to assess them for their feasibility with further details to be brought back to a future meeting.

Projects recommended to proceed to due-diligence

3.4 Members are asked to note that 4 LIF2 projects which had previously been agreed for in principle funding (*SLIF064 – Taughmonagh Community Forum; NLIF2-13 – Intercomm; NLIF2-14 – Star Neighbourhood Centre and WLIF2-22–Farset International*) have now been scored by officers (see Appendix 2) and have successfully met the minimum threshold. It is recommended that these projects now proceed to the Due Diligence stage of the LIF process

3.5 BELFAST INVESTMENT FUND

EAST AWG - The East AWG at its meeting on 8th December, made the following recommendations for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to their BIF

Ref No	Project	Recommendation
BIF28	Lagan Village Youth and Community Group	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted. Currently Stage 1

3.6 FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- **Financial – £5m has been allocated to LIF 1 and £4m has been allocated to LIF2. A summary of the current position across the LIF programme is attached below for Members**

Local Investment Fund 1

Area	Project Details	Status
North £1,127,500	25 projects approved in principle - £1,127,500 in total Remaining allocation - £0	15 completed - £611,128 1 project on the ground - £50,000 4 at tender preparation stage - £137,000 5 not yet through due-diligence - £329,372
South £1,127,500	13 projects approved in principle - £1,083,600 Remaining allocation - £43,900	7 completed - £639,641 2 projects on the ground - £190,000 2 at tender preparation stage - £153,959 2 not yet through due-diligence - £100,000
East £1,127,500	8 projects approved in principle - £1,127,500 Remaining allocation - £0	6 completed - £627,500 1 project on the ground - £250,000 1 not yet through due-diligence - £250,000
West £1,127,500	17 projects approved in principle - £1,127,500 Remaining allocation - £0	15 completed - £1,057,500 2 projects on the ground - £70,000
Shankill £490,000	8 projects approved in principle - £490,000 Remaining allocation - £0	7 completed - £382,680 1 project on the ground - £107,320

Local Investment Fund 2

Area	Project Details	Status
North £800,000	14 projects identified - £694,867 Remaining allocation - £105,133 3 projects under consideration	1 project on the ground - £100,000 4 at tender preparation stage - £118,200 9 not yet through due-diligence - £476,667
South £800,000	12 projects identified - £796,000 Remaining allocation - £4,000	1 completed - £75,000 1 project on the ground - £90,000 8 at tender preparation stage - £511,000 2 not yet through due-diligence - £120,000
East £1,200,000	13 projects identified - £1,200,000 Remaining allocation - £0	1 project on the ground - £208,300 5 at tender preparation stage - £679,069 7 not yet through due-diligence - £312,631
West £1,200,000	19 projects identified - £1,200,000 Remaining allocation - £0	2 completed - £325,000 1 project on the ground - £60,000 5 at tender preparation stage - £366,000 11 not yet through due-diligence - £449,000

- **Resource - Officers time to deliver projects.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications

LIF has been equality screened.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Asset Management

Percy Street Community Centre – Lease Renewal

The Committee approved the renewal of the Lease for Percy Street Community Centre for a further 5 years with the Trustees of Lower Shankill Groups Welfare Committee.

10-18 Cromac Street and 33-37 Market Street Belfast – Disposal of Ground Rent Interest

The Committee approved the disposal of the Council’s ground rent interest in land at 10-18 Cromac Street and 33-37 Market Street, Belfast.

**Stewart Street – Proposed Agreement for Easement
with Northern Ireland Electricity at Stewart Street**

The Committee granted approval to enter into an Agreement for Easement with NIE in respect of land at Stewart Street for the purposes of facilitating the development of a community garden and to provide potential pedestrian access to the Council's Gasworks Estate.

Acquisition of Springfield Dam

The Committee considered a report which sought approval to transfer to the Council land at Springfield Dam which was owned by the Department for Communities (DfC) following expenditure of c £0.5m by the DfC on capital work to upgrade the area.

The Committee was advised that the DfC owned land at Springfield Dam. It had commissioned AECOM to undertake a feasibility study in partnership with the Council to develop high level concept plans for the site. The Springfield Dam site shared a boundary with the Council's Springfield Park and there was an opportunity to create a larger enhanced and integrated open space at the location. The feasibility study produced two options; the estimated construction cost for Option 1 was £448,513.71 and for Option 2 was £1,215,511.01. The Department had advised that it had funding available in the current financial year for Option 1 and it was keen to start spending the estimated total construction costs for Option 1 before 31st March, 2017. If expenditure was committed and commenced prior to that date, it had advised that the full cost could be accrued by the Department for Communities in the financial year 2016/17. There was no funding currently available for option 2.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that Option 1 comprised the basic framework to improve access and provide for recreational use of the site. The proposed paths would provide for circulation between the Dam and Springfield Park and also link into proposed new entrances to the site. That would facilitate 'loop' walks in the locality. The proposed recreational facilities included a proposed building for classroom/training/recreational use, fishing stands and an activity trail.

He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting of 21st October, it had agreed in principle to the transfer of land and property assets from the Department of Communities, or other central government bodies as appropriate, upon completion of identified projects, subject to the conditions of transfer as set out in the report and specifically on agreement on revenue budgets at the time of transfer, with up to three years agreed maintenance costs being provided as a minimum, depending of the nature of the asset.

The following Heads of Terms had provisionally been agreed with DfC in respect to the transfer of Springfield Dam to the Council, subject to Committee and subsequently Council approval:

- DfC to provide BCC with copies of satisfactory title and confirmation that there are no restrictions, onerous conditions or charges in the title which would preclude the proposed works.
- BCC will appoint consultants to design Option 1 of the Springfield Dam project.
- BCC will secure planning approval and statutory approvals as required for the scheme.
- BCC will appoint the contractor to complete the works.
- DfC will fund all costs including design, statutory approvals and construction.
- BCC will agree to take ownership of the site at nil cost to the Council on completion of Option 1 of the works.
- BCC to be represented on the design group for the project to ensure that the future maintenance and management of the Springfield Dam is properly reflected in the designs.
- DfC will fund the Council's maintenance costs for a period of three years following handover of the site to the Council.

The Committee was advised also that the transfer would be at nil cost to the Council and would only take place following completion of capital expenditure of c.£0.5m. The maintenance cost for three years following completion of the capital works and hand over to the Council would be covered by DfC; and staff from Legal Services and the Estates Unit would complete the transfer of land and staff from the Project Management Unit would deliver the project on behalf of DfC, with design and maintenance advice from the City and Neighbourhoods Department.

The Committee granted approval to accept the transfer of land from the Department of Communities on the terms and conditions as outlined in the report.

Exhibition Area – Changes to Layout and Pricing

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of report or summary of main issues

1.1 To seek the Committee’s approval to implement the proposals set out below in relation to the operation of the new Exhibition Area in City Hall.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- **Adopt the proposals in respect of the operation of the new Exhibition Area as set out at below**
- **Agree to charge an entrance fee for commercial bookings broadly in the order of £2 per person, but with discounts available in respect of the provision of**

multi-lingual head-sets when booked as a group, in order to encourage use and enhance income.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that a paper was presented to the Committee in November 2016 seeking approval for a new Reception arrangement for the Exhibition. This proposal involved the removal of the former PUP room area as the main reception for the Exhibition, to be replaced by a bespoke new facility on the main floor inside the front entrance.

3.2 Following some discussion on the matter concerns were expressed by some members that the proposal may create un-necessary bottlenecks on the main marble area, and it was referred back for officers to re-consider the proposal to see what alternatives may exist. Officers had also noted that there would be noise impact on the Lavery Room.

3.3 Officers have reviewed the proposals as requested, but have concluded that in any event insufficient time now remains to prepare alternative proposals and get furniture etc ordered. Consequently the original proposal, which uses the former PUP party room as the main entrance and reception area, must be re-instated on the basis previously agreed.

3.4 The proposal to create a new reception area on the marble was developed primarily to enhance the potential income to be derived from the sale of merchandising.

By contrast, using the original reception area will mean that no merchandising can be sold at all on Saturdays or Sundays or on any evening (because any such sales will now have to be carried out by staff at the main Reception as opposed to the dedicated Exhibitions facility). Therefore it is likely that overall merchandising sales will be adversely affected.

3.5 There remains a concern that the original proposal will itself inevitably create bottlenecks, given that it is only 1.4m wide at its narrowest point and must provide for disabled access etc. while the proposal in relation to the marble would have allowed for more effective management of a build-up of visitors (including the use of the former PUP room and the room opposite for waiting areas), and the council's principal consultants Redhead Ltd had expressed their agreement with this approach.

3.6 However, as outlined above, the facility is due to be complete and to initiate a series of 'soft' opening events during April 2017, and consequently officers do not believe that it is

now feasible to develop alternative options, obtain Heritage Service approval and amend the overall project plan in order to deliver a new option in the time remaining.

The Committee is therefore requested to approve the reversion to the original reception location in the former PUP offices.

- 3.7** Members will also be aware that in the previous proposal entrance to the exhibition was free, although charges will be levied for head-set hire, souvenir booklet and app downloads etc. Officers considered recommending a general admission charge of £1, but concluded that the administration associated with this would outweigh the benefit. However there would be the opportunity to introduce a charge for Commercial Tour Groups and this is considered below and the potential for donations remains.
- 3.8** Commercial Tour Groups - It is also proposed that separate entrance charges be introduced for commercial tour groups (e.g. cruise-ship bookings etc), where each participant pays a significant premium to the relevant tour operators. This mirrors the approach recently adopted by the Committee in relation to the council's standard public tour offer and which has produced additional income of £12,067 in the 2016/17 financial year to date (1st 6 months).
- 3.9** It is proposed to adopt the same approach to charging for the new Exhibition Area, and would involve a charge broadly in the order of £2 per person, but with discounts available in respect of the provision of multi-lingual head-sets when booked as a group, in order to encourage use and enhance income. This would generate estimated additional income of £61,425.
- 3.10** Following a discussion at the party group leaders' forum the overall logo and strap-line to be used for the Exhibition Area is to be changed from the previous 'City Hall for All' approach simply to 'Belfast City Hall' and using the same graphic as previously agreed.
- 3.11** This new logo - which will be used on associated signage, promotional material and merchandising etc – is set out for note by the Committee in Appendix 1(a). Also included for note at Appendix 1(b) is the artwork to be used for the refurbished Bobbin coffee-shop area (which is intended to be operational by early March 2017).

3.12 Finance and Resource Implications

- Levying the recommended charge for commercial groups would generate additional estimated income of £61,425, based on anticipated visitor numbers

3.13 Equality & Good Relations Implications

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Mid Year Treasury Management Report 2016-17

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's information the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 This report presents the half year treasury management position for the Council as at the end of September, 2016/17.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Note the report.

3.0 Main report

Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011

3.1 The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011, and the supporting Prudential and Treasury Codes introduced a new capital financing system and legislative framework within which the Council manages its finances.

3.2 The Council's Treasury Management policy, developed in response to the new legislative framework, states that the Council will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities, including, as a minimum, an annual strategy, a mid-year review and an annual report after the close of the financial year.

3.3 This report represents the mid-year review as required by the policy and is structured to highlight key changes to the

Council's capital activity and the actual and proposed treasury management activity.

Prudential Indicators

The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and CIPFA's Prudential Code require the Council to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators (PIs). The key objective of which is to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

3.4 Capital Expenditure Prudential Indicator:

	Original	Revised
Indicator	£'000	£'000
Estimates of Capital Expenditure 2016/17	48,529	51,797

The original estimate reflects the capital budgets that were approved by the Council on 22 March 2016, whilst the revised estimate reflects the capital expenditure that is forecast to be spent by 31 March 2017. The increase in the forecast for this year is mainly due to the re-profiling of the capital programme. As the overall total has not changed this does not affect the financing of the capital programme.

3.5 Other Prudential Indicators

	Original Estimate	Current Estimate
Indicator	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	110,727	114,825
Borrowing Within CFR	yes	yes

As can be seen above the CFR estimate has increased. This is due to the increase in the revised estimate of capital expenditure in the current year's capital programme. The Council is forecast to remain within the Authorised Borrowing Limit, and the CFR indicates that over the medium term borrowings will only be for a capital purpose.

3.6 Treasury Management

The Council's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy adopt the key principles of CIPFA's Code of Practice and

have taken account of the guidance issued by the Department of The Environment on Local Government Investments.

- 3.7 **Debt Activity:** During the first half of 2016/17 the Council has taken advantage of internal borrowing, i.e. cash surpluses, to fund capital expenditure.
- 3.8 In addition, loan principal repayments of £1,573,854 have been made during the same period.
- 3.9 The level of external borrowings at 30 September 2016 is £33,188,655.
- 3.10 **Investment Strategy 2016-17:** The primary objective of the Council's investment strategy is to safeguard the repayment of the principal and interest of its investments on time. Investment return being a secondary objective.
- 3.11 The current investment climate is one of overriding risk consideration, particularly that of counterparty risk. As a result, officers continue to implement an operational investment strategy which maintains investments short term with high quality counterparties.
- 3.12 The Council has earned £66,486.63 in interest in the period from 1 April to 30 September 2016.
- 3.13 During this period the Council has placed deposits with Bank of Scotland, Santander UK, HSBC and Barclays. All four institutions meet the council's approval criteria.
- 3.14 The Council's limit for total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days is £2,000,000. As at 30 September 2016, the Council has not made any investments which are for periods longer than 364 days.
- 3.15 **Other Treasury Management Indicators:** Two other Treasury Management indicators were set at the start of the year as follows: -
- Upper Limits for Fixed and Variable Rate Borrowing
 - Limits on the Maturity of Fixed Rate Borrowing
- 3.16 Officers can confirm that the limits set have not been breached and no changes to the current limits are required.
- 3.17 **Bank Tender**

Approval was sought through SP&R Committee on 24th June 2016 to seek tenders for the provision of banking and

merchant services with a contract period of three years and the option to renew for two further periods of one year. Following a tender process the contract has been awarded under delegated authority to the Barclays, who are the Council's current bankers.

3.18 The contract shall be for a period of three years with the option to renew for two further periods of one year.

3.19 Financial & Resource Implications

All finance implications are dealt with in the report

3.20 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Contracts for Award

The Committee:

- (1) approved the public advertisement and acceptance of tenders as listed in appendix 1, table 1 below, through the Council's electronic procurement system; and
- (2) granted delegated authority to the appropriate Director, using pre-agreed criteria, to accept the most economically advantageous tender, and allow extensions where contracts were under review as per table 2:

Appendix 1 - Schedule of tenders for consideration

Table 1 - New tenders

Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
Tender for supply, fitting and maintenance of fire extinguishers	Gerry Millar	3 years
Tender for provision of minibus/coach service (with driver)	Gerry Millar	1 year plus option to renew for a further 3 years
Tender for provision of employment agency services	Jill Minne	1 year plus option to renew on an annual basis for a further 2 years
Tender for the supply, delivery and management of pyrotechnics	Donal Durkan	3 years with options to renew for a further 2 years

Tender for financial appraisals	Gerry Millar	3 years plus option to renew on an annual basis for a further 2 years
Professional services to develop a full feasibility study for the City Growth Deal	Suzanne Wylie	Up to 18 months

Table 2 - Contracts for extension of contract period

Title of tender	Director Responsible	Proposed extension
Tender for supply of general uniforms for stores	G Millar	Month by month until new contract is in place

Equality and Good Relations

Shared City Partnership Meeting

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership held on 5th December, 2016.

Request for the Use of the City Hall

The Committee was advised that an application had been received from the 36th (Ulster) Division Memorial Association Arts and Cultural Society for the use of the City Hall for a lecture and exhibition to mark the centenary of the role of the 36th (Ulster) Division and the 16th Irish Division in the Battle of Messines.

The Committee was reminded that, where a proposed event could be held to impact upon the Council's programme in relation to the Decade of Centenaries, then the opportunity was normally taken to seek the views of the Diversity Working Group before presenting the request to the Committee. However, the Working Group was currently not meeting whilst discussions took place on its future role and remit. Accordingly, the request was being presented to the Committee.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that the Council's policy on use of the City Hall, whilst not specifically ruling out exhibitions and lectures, did not encourage such use as the functions rooms were not seen as being ideal for that use. However, given that the request was to mark a significant centenary, the Committee might feel that the request should be acceded to. The cost of the provision of tea, coffee and biscuits for guests was estimated at £750 and that could be met within existing budgets.

The committee agreed to accede to the request and approved the provision of hospitality as outlined.

Operational Issues

Information Governance Training for Elected Members

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided information in relation to Information Governance training for Elected Members which would take place in February, 2017.

Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 8th December, 2016.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel of 6th December, 2016.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Active Belfast Board

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Board of 5th December, 2016.

Minutes of Meeting of Member Development Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Member Development Working Group of 21st November, 2016.

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

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
The Drascombe Association	Celebration of the Golden Anniversary of the Drascombe Lugger 25th March, 2017 Approximately 60 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	This event will celebrate the work of the Association while acknowledging the nautical heritage of the City. This is the first time the event has been held outside Great Britain and delegates will be shown the many sights and places of interest within the City. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception Approximate cost £300

			Opportunities for Success Across the City'	
Tennis Ulster Branch Ireland	Belfast City ITF Junior Tournament 2017 Celebratory Event 23rd July, 2017 Approximately 205 attending	The use of the City Hall	<p>The Ulster Branch of Tennis Ireland recently received a grant from the Council's Development Department to provide hospitality in the City Hall. This event will celebrate the achievements of their junior members throughout the past year and promote Belfast regionally and internationally in terms of sport and tourism.</p> <p>Approximately 130 athletes and their families will be travelling from across Europe and the USA and will be staying in accommodation within the city for up to 6 nights.</p> <p>This event will contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', Better Care for Belfast's Environment', Better Opportunities for Success Across the City' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.</p>	The use of the City Hall
Ulster Journals Limited	Ulster Tatler Dinner and Awards 2017 14th September, 2017 Approximately 360 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	<p>This event aims to highlight and recognise those individuals who have excelled in their chosen field.</p> <p>The awards ceremony will recognise and acknowledge those individuals who have demonstrated significant achievement in categories such as Business Man/ Woman of the Year, Arts Personality of the Year and Hotelier/Publican of the Year.</p> <p>The event will also pay tribute to an individual by way of the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' previous recipients have been Michael Longley, Barry McGuigan, Dame Mary Peters, Sir James Galway, Brian Friel, Phil Coulter, Gloria Hunniford and Terri</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>Hooley.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry	<p>The Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry Annual Lunch</p> <p>16th June, 2017</p> <p>Approximately 400 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall.	<p>The Annual Lunch aims to provide a networking opportunity in order to encourage investment and business development opportunities for Belfast and beyond. The event, which will include representatives from both Local and Central Government, also seeks to facilitate discussion on economic and social regeneration.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.</p>	The use of the City Hall.
Belfast Pride	<p>Launch of Pride 2017 and Awards Presentation</p> <p>28th July, 2017</p> <p>Approximately 350 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	<p>This event will be the first official event of 2017 Belfast Pride 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>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Northern Ireland Children's Enterprise	<p>Celebration of Volunteers</p> <p>13th April, 2017</p> <p>Approximately 70 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall	<p>This event will highlight and celebrate the work of the volunteers and the benefits gained over the years through the organisation's many community relations programmes.</p> <p>This event would contribute to</p>	The use of the City Hall

			the Council's Key Themes 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 and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.	
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The Committee approved, in principle, also a late application which had been submitted by An Droichead for use of the City Hall for a 25th Anniversary dinner on the basis that it meets criteria.

Proposals for the updated NI Multiple Deprivation Measure

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Update members on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) current consultation on proposals to update the Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM 2017).

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the details of the consultation, the deadline for responses and the event in Belfast on 19 December; and
- Consider the initial observations at paragraph 3.6 which will form the basis of the council's response to NISRA's consultation. A copy of the draft response will be brought to January's SP&R committee.

3.0 Key issues

Background

- ##### **3.1 The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has been commissioned by the Statistics Co-ordinating Group (SCG) of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, which comprises senior policy officials from Government**

Departments, to undertake an update of the current Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM 2010).

- 3.2 The updated measures will be hugely important to a wide variety of interested parties and users. They will continue to play a pivotal role in both informing the targeting of resources to the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland and the monitoring of the spatial impact of policy interventions. The current aim is to publish the updated measures in mid-2017, which will be referred to as NIMDM 2017 throughout this report.
- 3.3 In arriving at the proposals, consideration has been given to each of the 36 recommendations that arose following the last update in producing the NIMDM 2010. Positive action has been taken in respect of 17 recommendations, which it is considered will improve the updated measures. Six recommendations cannot be advanced at present due to data availability and/or quality issues and will be carried over. One recommendation was considered out of scope for this update, and a further 9 recommendations were rejected by the domain expert groups as not aligning with the agreed indicator principles. The remaining 3 recommendations will be addressed after the initial dissemination phase of the project.
- 3.4 In summary, the NIMDM 2010 consisted of 30 indicators, 20 of which are proposed to be retained in the updated measures. A further 7 are proposed to be modified in line with newly available data, while 3 are proposed to be omitted due to data quality and/or availability issues. A total of 12 new indicators are also proposed, as a result of addressing the 2010 NIMDM recommendations or as a result of new information having become available.
- 3.5 The consultation will run for 8 weeks and closes at midnight on 15 January 2017. Should members be interested they can [register](#) to attend a supporting Information Session that is being held in Belfast on Monday 19th December (venue to be confirmed).
- 3.6 **Council Observations**
- The consultation document states that this is an update to the 2010 measure of deprivation and any significant revisions to the methodology are outside of the scope of this work. The council would suggest that with 12 new indicators and 7 existing indicators being modified, there are significant revisions, particularly around the 'Income' and 'Access to Services' domains.
 - In order to be considered for inclusion, indicators have to be 'as up-to-date as possible'. The council would request clarification on this definition as the

use of 2011 Census data does not fit well with this. Furthermore, it would be helpful if all indicators could be updated on a frequent (over a reasonable short period of time) and regular basis.

- The council would suggest that the Income domain may also benefit from a housing-cost or affordability indicator.
- The council is concerned with the Access to Service domain in that there appears to be a misconception that 'distance' is equivalent to 'access'. Two of the three indicators include travel time analysis using private and public transport. The Council would contend that this method of measurement needs to take into consideration the congestion within Belfast and other urban areas, especially during peak travel times.
- The Council would again highlight comments made in previous responses to MDM consultations that a measure of distance to a service is not necessarily a measure of accessibility of that service given the community geography of Belfast. The segregated patterns of life in the city are marked at all levels and the perception of territory and safety have an impact on residents' access to services. The Council believes that this domain should therefore take peace lines and physical barriers into account when measuring these indicators.
- The Access to Services domain includes an indicator which measures the proportion of properties with a broadband speed below 10 Mbs. It should be noted that schemes such as the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project and the Superfast Extension Programme are rapidly expanding the availability of high speed broadband across the region, which may make this measure irrelevant in the short-term.

3.7 Geographies Consultation

In April, the council submitted a response to NISRA's consultation on the output geography upon which the updated NIMDM 2017 would be produced, recommending that the new measure should be based on geographies that nest within the new 462 Electoral Wards. While NISRA recommended Super Output Areas as the output geography for the updated NIMDM 2017, they did recognise the user need for deprivation statistics for the new Electoral Wards and will endeavour to create deprivation measures for this geography.

3.8 Financial Implications

There are no specific financial or resource implications.

3.8 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no specific equality or good relations implications.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report and that a draft response would be submitted to the Committee for consideration in January.

Apprenticeship Levy Consultation

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To seek Members’ approval of the council’s response to the Consultation on Northern Ireland response to the Apprenticeship Levy.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Approve the council’s consultation response for submission to the Department for the Economy in order to meet the response deadline of 23 December 2016.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

The Apprenticeship Levy will impact on private and public sector employers in Northern Ireland with a pay bill of over £3million. The levy, which is set at a rate of 0.5 per cent of an employer’s pay bill, will be payable along with income tax and National Insurance through a PAYE system on a monthly basis from May 2017. Large employers such as Belfast City Council will have a levy allowance of £15,000 per year to offset against the levy that they have paid

3.2 The consultation exercise seeks employers’ views on five questions:

Q1. What do you think are the main issues for Northern Ireland employers from the introduction of the Levy?

Q2. As a result of the Levy, what factors should the Department take into account to ensure appropriate training support is available in Northern Ireland?

Q3. Will the Levy have an impact on your recruitment of apprenticeships? In what way?

Q4. As a result of the Levy would you be more likely to use the programmes described in Annex B? In what way?

Q5. Do you have any further comments on the introduction of the UK wide Apprenticeship Levy?

3.3 The council's draft responses to these five questions are set out in Appendix 1, but the key overriding message set out in this proposed response is that since 2005, Belfast City Council has offered 37 full apprentice opportunities for electricians, fleet technicians, joiners, painters, gardeners and since the launch of our Investment Programme in 2012, the council has provided over 1000 work placements and delivered 6 pre- recruitment and training programmes for job opportunities ring fenced to the long term unemployed. We are working to build on this success by co-designing and working with community planning partners and central government through a 'local works' approach to remove the barriers of those furthest removed from the labour market into employment – a key strand of the Programme for Government.

3.4 and the Council's community plan around economic inactivity and inequalities will however require significant resources and this new, mandatory taxation could negatively impact on the ability of the council to do this work.

3.5 Funds should therefore be devolved locally in order to ensure that people get the right skills, experience and advice to move into and progress in work, helping to remove inequalities and deprivation where it is most needed, particularly important given the likely impact of welfare reform.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.6 Belfast City Council's levy is estimated at £455,000 per annum. In financial terms, however, its description as 'Apprentice Levy' is debateable, as the consultation document highlights that the levy will not result in any

noticeable additional funding being made to Northern Ireland Block. The levy is therefore essentially an additional employee overhead cost.

- 3.7 As the amount of the levy directly correlates to the organisation's pay bill (calculated as 0.5%) it could also potentially discourage the creation of new jobs, as that would increase the value of the levy paid.
- 3.8 The Levy will therefore mean an additional uncontrollable cost to Belfast City Council which will have to be passed to the ratepayer or be financed by diverting funds from front line services. The additional financial burden of the Apprentice Levy will also limit the ability of the council to fund investment in the key priorities for the city as set out in the 'Belfast Agenda', in particular that of improving employability and skills in the city.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

Given the indication that the levy will not result in any noticeable additional funding being made to Northern Ireland Block, and is essentially an additional employee overhead cost, the potential negative impact of the levy on Council's ambition for inclusive growth for the city must be highlighted."

The Committee approved the Council's consultation response on the Apprenticeship Levy for submission to the Department for the Economy in order to meet the response deadline of 23rd December, 2016.

Consultation Response on Future Delivery of Electoral Services Northern Ireland

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the Northern Ireland Office and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland were currently consulting on the options for the future delivery of Electoral Services in Northern Ireland. He reminded the Members that the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Graham Shields, had attended a special meeting of the Committee on 11th November to answer Members questions on the consultation exercise. The Committee had agreed at that meeting that a draft response be prepared and submitted for consideration.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that it was acknowledged that there might well be different views amongst the political parties as to whether or not the options for consideration in the review would be acceptable in a regional context and, therefore, the response dealt only with the practical issues which would arise for Belfast City Council should the proposals contained in the consultation paper proceed. A copy of the draft response is set out below:

Appendix 1

Belfast City Council Response to the Consultation on the Future Delivery of Electoral Services in Northern Ireland

Introduction

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the consultation on the future delivery of electoral services in Northern Ireland.

The Council recognises that there may well be different views on the regional impact of the proposals amongst the political parties in Northern Ireland. The Council notes that the Northern Ireland Assembly passed the following motion in June, 2016:

“This Assembly notes with concern the proposals from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland to close regional electoral offices in Ballymena, Banbridge, Londonderry, Newtownabbey, Newtownards and Omagh; believes that this will damage democracy in Northern Ireland, lead to fewer people on the electoral register and to a diminished role for the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland in local schools and communities; and calls on the Secretary of State, the Northern Ireland Office and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland to retain and fund all regional offices currently under threat of closure”.

Accordingly, this response is from Belfast City Council alone and should not be taken to represent the views of all or any of the political parties represented on it.

Digital Registration and Enhancing Local Services

The Council welcomes the proposals to move to digital registration in Northern Ireland as it considers that this has the potential, combined with the traditional methods of registration, to maximise the opportunities for citizens to participate in the future elections and referendums. This will be particularly attractive to younger people.

The Council would urge that all reasonable steps must be taken when designing the digital registration system to provide reassurance that electoral fraud will be eliminated.

The Council notes that the proposals do not envisage the provision of counter services in Belfast, unlike other parts of Northern Ireland where several District Councils may be required to undertake the provision of advice and support. Should this change and should the Council be requested to provide this service, then the Council would strongly be of the opinion that the necessary financial and human resources must be transferred or made available to it on an ongoing basis. The transfer of the proposed functions from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI) must not impose additional costs on the Council.

An Increased Role for the Council at all Elections and Referendums

The Council agrees with the assertion in the consultation document that it has the relevant expertise to assume greater responsibility for all elections and referendums in Northern Ireland, including Parliamentary and Northern Ireland Assembly elections.

Belfast City Council is well placed to manage the delivery of the nomination and local count functions outlined in paragraph 2.5.3.

The Council welcomes the guarantee that it will be fully funded for taking on these additional responsibilities through the UK and NI Consolidated Funds and that there will not be any additional costs to local ratepayers. The Council would request that this guarantee is enshrined in any new legislation required for the transfer of functions so as to provide assurance for it and for local ratepayers that there will not be any additional financial burden to be borne at a local level.

The Council does not have any concerns that its Chief Executive or other senior officers involved in the delivery of elections will be subject to any political interference in undertaking these roles. This has not been the case during many local elections where the Chief Executive has acted as the Deputy Retuning Officer under the direction of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Conclusion

The Council believes that the reform proposals have the potential to normalise local democratic processes and bring Northern Ireland more in line with neighbouring jurisdictions. The Council will stand ready to work closely with the Northern Ireland Office and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland to ensure the future delivery of efficient, effective and accessible electoral services.

The Committee approved the consultation response on the Future Delivery of Electoral Services in Northern Ireland.

Consultation Response to the Education Authority's Providing Pathways Draft Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017/20

The Chief Executive had submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Update members on the Education Authority's (EA) current consultation on their draft strategic area plan for school provision.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the details of the consultation and approve a high level response as detailed in paragraph 3.10.**

3.0 Key issues

3.1 The Education Authority (EA) has launched a consultation on Northern Ireland's first regional area plan for education, 'Providing Pathways 2017-2020'. The plan aims to ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their needs in sustainable schools that are of the right type, of the right size, located in the right place. It sets out the key priorities and objectives for the EA, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and other sectoral bodies, in light of the Department of Education's goals to create sustainable schools throughout Northern Ireland.

3.2 The Area Plan for 2017-2020 establishes Local Planning Districts which align with the 11 Local Government Districts, allowing education to make a contribution to the 11 LGD Community Plans.

3.3 For each Local Government District the plan sets out:

- Population projections;
- Summary data for Primary Schools;
- Summary Data for Post-primary schools;
- Key issues emerging from analysis of current local provision;
- What will we do?

3.4 The Belfast LG district data is set out below:

- The population in the age range 0-15 years is projected to increase by 7.6% by 2024.
- The population in the age range 16-19 years is projected to decrease by 1.4% by 2024.

3.5 Summary Data for Primary Schools

Management type	Number of schools	Total approved enrolments	Total actual enrolments	Super-numerary admissions	Number of available places	Number of schools with > 5% surplus or > £75,000	Number of schools with > 5% deficit or >£75,000
Controlled	44	16,031	11,884	506	4,642	22	4
Catholic Maintained	36	18,050	14,618	530	3,963	19	1
Irish Medium	9	1,617	1,204	32	445	2	3
Controlled Integrated	2	678	619	17	76	-	-
Grant Maintained Integrated	3	1,015	1,044	46	17	-	-
Totals	94	37,373	29,369	1,131	9,143	43	8

3.6 Summary Data for Post-Primary Schools

Management type	Number of schools	Total approved enrolments	Total actual enrolments	Super-numerary admissions	Number of available places	Number of schools with >5% Surplus or >£75,000	Number of schools with >5% Deficit or >£75,000	Entitlement Framework - Number of schools compliant KS4	Entitlement Framework Number of schools compliant Post-16
Controlled	7	5,670	5,894	233	124	3	1	5	4
Voluntary	14	15,106	15,113	306	351	n/a		12	8
Catholic Maintained	11	9,654	7,575	465	2,571	6	2	5	3
Irish Medium	1	600	605	24	19	1	-	-	-
Grant Maintained Integrated	2	1,650	1,491	98	257	n/a		1	1
Totals	35	32,680	30,678	1,126	3,322	10	3	23	16

3.7 The Plan identifies the following key issues emerging from their analysis of current provision across Belfast:

- Number of available places
- Location of available places
- Schools facing sustainability challenges
- Equitable access to Entitlement Framework pathways
- Potential for Irish Medium and Integrated school development
- Potential opportunities for shared education
- Need to establish learning support provision in mainstream schools

3.8 In order to address the issues, the EA says that it will develop proposals to:

- ensure that school places are located as required;
- address school provision where sustainability is an issue (primary and post-primary) - (reviews will take account of six Sustainable Schools criteria – see below);
- establish additional learning support and autism specific provision within primary and post-primary schools;
- ensure equitable access to the Entitlement Framework pathways at Key Stage 4;
- reconfigure primary school provision to reduce the number of available places in schools;
- reconfigure post-16 provision to give pupils equitable access to the Entitlement Framework pathways in collaboration with the Further Education sector;
- encourage and facilitate sustainable Irish Medium and Integrated schools; and
- promote shared education solutions which provide sustainable schools.

3.9 Sustainability criteria

The six criteria of the Sustainable Schools policy are:

1. Quality educational experience
2. Stable enrolment trends
3. Sound financial position
4. Strong leadership and management by Board of Governors and principals
5. Accessibility
6. Strong links with the community

The documents also provides a profile of current special school provision across the EA and proposals.

3.10 Proposed feedback

It is proposed that the Council makes the following comments in relation to the Draft Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020.

3.11 Belfast's community plan – the Belfast Agenda

Education is at the heart of Belfast's new community plan – the Belfast Agenda. It is seen as fundamental to removing barriers to opportunity for people across the city, reducing

life inequalities and ensuring our young people fulfil their potential.

- 3.12** The Council notes the Area Plan's alignment with the Programme for Government and in particular – its contribution to improving educational outcomes; addressing educational inequalities; improving the quality of education and improving child development.
- 3.13** The Council, with its partners, which include the Education Authority, CCMS and the Department for Education has just begun public consultation on the Belfast Agenda. The Agenda also prioritises addressing educational inequalities and improving educational attainment within Belfast. Some of the starkest figures with respect to educational inequality are within Belfast, with figures for achievement of at least 5 GCSE Grades A*-C (including English and Maths) ranging between 19 per cent and 100 per cent between wards (2014/15). There is a significant gap in attainment between those children entitled to free school meals and those who are not.
- 3.14** The Council therefore welcomes the intention to align the area planning process with the community planning process from 2017 onwards and would like more detail and discussion as to how it is intended this will be progressed; in particular whether it is intended that local government districts will be represented in area planning structures going forward or whether community planning structures will play a specific role. A partnership approach will be important so that we maximise the benefit of the school estate and other complementary local investment at a local level. The council notes that at present there is no local government district representation within the support structures for area planning.
- 3.15** Evidence and information emerging from the Local Development Planning process should also inform the development of local area plans.
- 3.16** Population Projections

As noted in paragraph 3.4 above, the official 2014-based population projections identify a 7.6% increase in the Belfast population in the age range 0-15 years and a 1.4% decrease in the age range 16-19 years by 2024. However, the Council's own research found that the continuation of existing demographic trends would serve to restrain economic and employment growth.

3.17 The council has undertaken its own population modelling work to inform the preparation for the new Local Development Plan for the City. This is reflected in the Belfast Agenda's aspiration to grow the population of the city so that by 2035 Belfast will be home to 70,000 more people. This would represent a total increase in the Belfast population of more than 47,000 above the official 2014-based projections produced by NISRA, which if achieved would have significant implications for population profile and consequently the education provision required.

3.18 Details of the projected population change as a result of these policy aspirations, including the growth within the 0-15 and 16-19 age groups, should therefore be taken into consideration when finalising the area plan.

3.19 Proposal to reconfigure primary school places

The council is unclear about the impact of the proposal to 'reconfigure primary school provision to reduce the number of available places in schools' in Belfast which is included within section 4.9 'Emerging Issues and Proposed Actions for each Local Government District'. The council would like clarification of this statement given the Education Authority's own projection of population growth of 7.6% within the age-range 0-15 to 2024 and given community planning partners' ambition to grow the population of the city by 70,000 by 2035.

3.20 Special Education Needs Categories

The Council notes in section 5.3 of the document with respect to special schools which support pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD). The draft plan states that with respect to SLD schools, '...work will be required to bring enhanced consistency across the Belfast City Council area in particular'. The council would welcome further information about this and about the development of any regional model with respect to special schools, particularly where this impacts on Belfast.

3.21 Financial Implications

There are no specific financial or resource implications.

3.22 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no specific equality or good relations implications."

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Friday, 16th December, 2016

The Committee approved the consultation response to the Education Authority's Providing Pathways Draft Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020.

Chairperson