

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 16th November, 2016

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Graham (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Haire, McGimpsey and Spence; and  
Councillors Boyle, Dudgeon, Hargey,  
Magee, O'Hara and Walsh.

Also attended: Councillors Copeland and Craig.

In attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;  
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the High Sheriff Alderman Rodgers, Alderman Patterson and Councillors Howard, Johnston and McDonough-Brown.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### Presentations

#### NI Water

The Committee was advised that Mr. Grahame Millar, Head of Wastewater Networks Capital Delivery, Mr. David McCullough, Wastewater Assets Senior Manager, and Dr. Steve Blockwell, Head of Strategic Investment Planning, from Northern Ireland Water (NI Water) were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Millar provided the Committee with NI Water's key promises to its customers, which included providing clean and safe drinking water, dealing with the effects of climate change, protecting and enhancing the natural environment and taking care of wastewater.

He outlined a number of top investments which NI Water was carrying out within Belfast, including refurbishment work at the Belfast Wastewater Treatment Works at Duncrue, a new Storm Drain at the site of the new Olympia Leisure Centre and Windsor Park Stadium and £4 million worth of work completed at the Sydenham Wastewater Pumping Station.

The Members were advised that, in the longer term, NI Water was looking at Belfast Treatment works for the future population under the programme 'Living with Water'. He advised the Committee that the Ormeau Avenue Sewage project, which

would go along Sandy Row to stop the pollution which was currently going into the Lagan, would hopefully be put out to tender in the New Year. It was pointed out to the Members that this project would likely cause traffic disruption in the city centre while works were ongoing but that it was a significant and worthwhile scheme.

The Committee was also provided with an update on the Glenmachan Strategic Project at Greystown Avenue and Upper Malone for Flood Alleviation, which was a joint project between NI Water and the Rivers Agency. He pointed out that this would also go out to tender in the New Year, with works likely to begin in Spring 2017, and expected to take 18 months to complete.

Mr. Millar provided the Members with an overview of a number of current public initiatives which NI Water had implemented, included a Smartphone app to report leaks and a number of awareness-raising campaigns. He advised the Members that NI Water worked well with the Council in relation to major incident planning and that the recent mock exercise which they had run together had been a success.

In relation to a Member's question regarding the awareness-raising campaigns, such as 'Fats, Oils and Grease' or 'Bag it and Bin it', Mr. McCullough confirmed that while mass leaflet drops were not included, they were happy to take direction from elected representatives on specific groups which they felt could benefit from educational material.

The Director of Property and Projects sought confirmation from the representatives that the 3G pitches and training facilities which the Council had planned for the King George V Playing Fields in the next year could work with the £25 million Living with Water works which were planned for the north east corner of the Playing Fields, to ensure that work on both projects could proceed without disrupting the other. The Head of Wastewater Networks Capital Delivery confirmed that they would be happy to liaise with the Council in this regard.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Living with Water scheme, the Director of Property and Projects advised that a report would be submitted to a future Committee meeting to provide the Members with an update.

The Head of Wastewater Networks Capital Delivery advised the Committee that a 'Blue Green Cities Infrastructure Conference' was being held in the City Hall on Thursday, 24th November, and that all interested Members were welcome to attend.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

Noted.

### **NIE Networks**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. Nicholas Tarrant, Managing Director, Mr. Peter Ewing, Deputy Managing Director, and Mr. Roger Henderson, Network Connections Director, from NIE Networks were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Tarrant provided the Members with an overview of the role of Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIE), and advised that they owned and managed the 49,200km of electricity cables and 300 substations, but did not generate electricity or issued bills to customers. He advised that, on a day to day basis, NIE maintained and developed the electricity network, carried out meter readings, dealt with power cuts and carried out new connections.

He advised the Committee that NIE invested approximately £100million into the electricity network each year, and highlighted that, over the past number of years, an investment of £25million was made in replacing old infrastructure in the Belfast area, including substations at Hannahstown, the Donegall Road, Balmoral, Falls and Knock. The Members were also advised that investment had been made to increase capacity in Belfast North, the Newtownbreda-Balmoral line and the Shore Road, which were load-related projects, to ensure that adequate infrastructure was in place for new customers connecting onto the network.

The Managing Director confirmed to the Committee that NIE had recently undertaken a successful mock exercise to ensure that it was ready if a major storm or event was to cause a major electricity power cut.

The Members were advised of the key points within the NIE Business Plan 2017 – 2024 which outlined its plans to invest over £500 million in the network. The Managing Director advised the Committee that the Plan included significant asset replacement, growth of the network and looking at ways to deal with climate change. During discussion, he highlighted that tree cutting was incredibly important in maintaining an effective electricity network across Northern Ireland.

In response to a Member's question regarding why only some overhead cables in the most built-up areas of the City were being replaced with underground cables, the Managing Director confirmed that this was dependant on their asset replacement programmes, which determined whether it was cost effective to replace overhead cables if they still had a significant life term remaining. He also confirmed that the typical lifespan of an overhead cable was approximately 40 years, while underground cables could last up to 100 years.

In response to a further Member's question regarding the North South Interconnector, Mr. Tarrant confirmed that while it would help to reduce electricity costs for customers eventually, that there would be the initial implementation costs to cover.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

Noted.

Chairman