

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 15th December, 2017

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairperson);
Aldermen Browne, Convery, Rodgers and Spence;
Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Campbell, Corr, Craig,
Graham, Hutchinson, Long, McCabe, McDonough-Brown,
McVeigh, O'Neill, Reynolds and Walsh.

Also attended: Councillor O'Hara.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
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 the High Sheriff (Alderman Haire).

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 24th 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 4th December.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Reynolds declared an interest in respect of item 6c Asset Management, insofar as it referred to the development of land opposite his house and he left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Request to present - Casement Park

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from representatives of the Ulster Council of the GAA in January, 2018 in relation to the Casement Park Development.

Restricted Items

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

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussions of these items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2018/19

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the development of the revenue estimates for 2018/19 and the key issues which Members needed to consider as part of the rates settlement process.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McVeigh,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Committee agrees that £200,000 be included with the revenue estimates to support the Boxing Strategy.

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

Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the amount to be included within the Capital Financing and whether or not to invest in the Boxing Strategy until its special meeting scheduled for 5th January.

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

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Agreed that the paper should not be subject to call-in because it would cause an unreasonable delay which would be prejudicial to the Council's and the public's interests in striking the district rate by the legislative deadline of 15th February 2018.
- Considered and agreed the following growth proposals should be included in the 2018/19 revenue estimates:
- Community Grants: £147,000 (People and Communities Committee) and £147,000 non-recurrent.
- Additional Twilight Markets: £70,000 (City Growth and Regeneration Committee) – non-recurrent.
- Robinson Centre Staff Deployment (2): £50,460 (Planning Committee)

- European Capital of Culture £373,799 (Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)
- Employability and Skills: £500,000 (City Growth and Regeneration Committee)
- City Centre Regeneration: £240,000 (Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)
- City Deal: £1,000,000 (Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)
- To agree in principle a £300K contingency for Peace IV capital projects

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the following until its special meeting on 5th January:

- Equality / Diversity Officer: £56,000 (Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)
- Regen Support Assts. (2): £68,986 (Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)
- Boxing Strategy: £200,000 (People and Communities Committee) and reduce the increase in the capital financing budget by £200,000 to keep any rate increase below 2%.
- Capital Financing: £1,200,000 (Strategic Policy and Resources Committee) (If Boxing Strategy is agreed to be funded then reduce to £1,000,000)

Capital of Culture - Update

The Committee noted an updated which had been provided by the Chief Executive on the Capital of Culture bid and agreed:

- to proceed with the deputation to Brussels;
- to undertake a political deputation to seek a meeting with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Arts (DCMS);
- to investigate whether a Belfast/Derry/Strabane bid could proceed alone through a different route; and
- to continue engagement with DCMS regarding proposals for funding for the five bid cities.

Update on Recruitment

The Committee noted the contents of a report which had been submitted by the Chief Executive which provided an update on the current position on the recruitment of the seven senior posts within the Council.

Matters Referred Back from Council/Notices of Motion

Notice of Motion - Education Support

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 4th December, the following notice of motion had been proposed by former Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor O'Hara:

"This Council notes the continued Tory led cuts to the Department of Education's budget and the resulting devastating impact on the Education Authorities, schools and youth providers. Schools, youth providers, children, parents and the wider community are now at breaking point with continuing threats to services. The Council strongly opposes these cuts.

The Council also notes the work being carried out by the various Partnership Boards and schools across Belfast to improve standards of literacy and numeracy amongst our young people, particularly those living in areas of high social deprivation. The Council commends the Partnership Boards and schools for their successes to date in improving standards of literacy and numeracy, especially at GCSE level, through their various Easter schools, mid-term schools, community based classes and efforts outside of the classroom. It should be noted that the Council itself also provides educational support through homework clubs (for 5-11 years old) and parent and toddler groups

For these reasons, this Council agrees to task Council officers to investigate ways in which it can contribute to the continued improvement and academic achievement in literacy and numeracy within local communities and will look at how it can help to overcome various barriers to learning at post primary level."

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the notice of motion had been referred to the Committee for consideration.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor O'Hara, who had seconded the motion, addressed the Committee.

The Committee agreed that a report on the matter be submitted to a future meeting.

Notice of Motion - Support for Positive Life HIV Charity

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the motion to allow Councillor Nicholl, who had proposed the motion, to be in attendance.

Notice of Motion - Cuts to Health Budgets - Responses

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 4th September, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor Attwood and seconded by Councillor Kyle and passed:

"This Council notes that Health and Social Care Trusts have been tasked by the Department of Health to find £70 million of savings in 2017/2018 financial year and that the Belfast Trust will have to impose cuts of £26.3 million.

The Council expresses its deep concern at the effect which these proposed cuts will have on domiciliary care, elective care services, nursing and residential homes, the deferral of drug treatments and cuts in agency staff. The Council believes that these cuts will have a devastating impact on the sick, elderly and most vulnerable sections of our community in Belfast.

The Council strenuously opposes these cuts and agrees to write to and seek urgent meetings with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Permanent Secretary in the Department of Health."

The Committee was advised that a response to the motion had been received on 5th October from the Permanent Secretary, Richard Pengelly, in which he had pointed out that, since the motion was concerned with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's savings plan, the Council should, in the first instance, seek a meeting with Martin Dillon, Chief Executive of the Trust.

Subsequently a letter had been forwarded to Mr Dillon seeking a meeting. Mr Dillon had responded and advised that all but one of the major savings plans and proposals were actually stood down at a meeting of the Trust Board on 13th October and, to that end, he indicated that he was unsure if a meeting with the Council was still required.

The Committee noted receipt of the responses and agreed that representatives of the Belfast Health Trust be invited to a special meeting of the Committee.

Notice of Motion - Amendment to Standing Order 30

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 4th December, the following notice of motion had been proposed by Councillor O'Hara and seconded by Councillor O'Neill.

"This Council agrees that 'Standing order 30: "A Member shall not impute motives or use offensive expression in reference to any Member of the Council" be amended to read: "A Member shall not impute motives or use offensive expression in reference to any persons or sections of society, that shows contempt on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious belief, age or disability".

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred to the Committee for consideration.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that, if the Committee were minded to agree to the amendment, it was suggested that the text of Standing Order 30 should read as follows:

"A Member shall not impute motives or use offensive expression in reference to any person or section of society, including any such expression that shows contempt in relation to their race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious belief, age or disability."

He pointed out that Standing Order 64 – Amendments to Standing Orders and repeals required an alteration to Standing Orders to be agreed by resolution of the Council passed at one meeting and confirmed at another. Therefore, the resolution would need to be passed at the January meeting and confirmed at the following meeting in February.

With permission of the Chairperson Councillor O'Hara, who had proposed the motion, addressed the Committee and confirmed that she was content with the suggested wording.

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,
Seconded by Alderman Spence,

That the proposed wording be amended by the insertion of the word 'grossly' after the word use and before the word offensive.

On a vote by show of hands seven members voted for the amendment and eleven against and it was declared lost.

The Committee accordingly agreed to the amendment of Standing Order 30 as set out.

Notice of Motion: Primary Schools Curriculum Sports Programme - Response from the Permanent Secretary

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th November, it had considered a response from the Permanent Secretary, Department of Education, regarding the motion which had been adopted by the Council in relation to the Primary Schools Curriculum Sports Programme.

At that meeting, the Committee had agreed that, as the response did not address the second part of the motion in relation to concern about the cut being made to the extended schools budget of 14% and a further cut of £56 for each child attending primary or nursery school, it had requested that the Committee proceed with seeking a meeting with the Permanent Secretary.

The Committee was advised that a further response had now been received from the Permanent Secretary in which he had indicated that he would be willing to meet with a deputation from the Council in January to discuss the Curriculum Sports Programme.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that, as Members would be aware, deputations from the Council normally consisted of one representative from each of the main six Political Parties on the Council. However, given that the motion stood in the name of Councillor Mullan it would be appropriate if she were to be included in that deputation and he recommended accordingly.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Governance

Nomination of a Person for Consideration
for Appointment as High Sheriff of Belfast for 2018

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd September, 2017, it had agreed to apply the D'hondt method of proportionality to identify which Parties would be entitled to nominate persons for consideration for appointment to the office of High Sheriff over a Council Term.

The Committee decided also, as it was halfway through a Council Term, to take account of the Parties that had already held the position in 2016 (UUP) and 2017 (DUP). Therefore, the D'hondt order of Parties for the next 2 years was as follows:

1. Sinn Féin
2. Sinn Féin
3. Alliance
4. SDLP
5. DUP

The Committee was reminded also that, at its meeting on 24th November, it had established deadlines by which Parties entitled to nominate must do so or the choice would pass to the next Party on the D'hondt table.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that Sinn Fein had indicated that they did not wish to nominate a person for consideration for appointment as High Sheriff, therefore the next choice fell to the Alliance Party and it had decided to nominate Councillor Carole Howard for consideration for appointment as High Sheriff for 2018.

Noted.

Belfast Agenda

ICT Strategy

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 For the Council to excel in today's digital society we must ensure information and technology are properly positioned to enable the delivery of the Council's key priorities. The Council's ICT Strategy is becoming more important as we face increasing digital opportunities and growing security threats. Our ICT strategy also has the potential to optimise, transform and improve the public services we deliver and maximise the value of our information assets.**
- 1.2 This paper requests approval for Digital Services to procure external assistance to deliver a new ICT Strategy for the**

Council, which will provide a framework for members under the remit of the Strategic Policy and Resources committee to oversee the development of the Council's ICT platforms and systems – over a period of 3 years – in alignment with the Council's key business priorities.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee approves that:

- Digital Services procure external assistance to facilitate the delivery a new ICT Strategy for the Council.
- The recent Customer Focus Outline Business Case should form a key input to the new ICT Strategy.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 In the digital age, it is vital that information and technology are positioned at the heart of business strategy, rather than as afterthoughts. Information and technology are fundamental as they underpin new business approaches and how services can be delivered and improved.
- 3.2 Technology is changing customer behaviour and expectations, so to meet the needs of our citizens we need to be able to respond quickly to opportunities and threats, by changing direction, reprioritising, and creating new capabilities more quickly and more often than we have in the past.
- 3.3 We are seeking external assistance to put in place a strategic planning process to provide clear direction for how information and technology can be used to deliver the Council's key priorities. We will be looking to engage all relevant stakeholders to help develop understanding and buy-in for the resulting strategy and to ensure its successful execution.
- 3.4 It is likely that delivering a new strategy will involve making changes to operational plans and priorities and may require the acquisition or development of new capabilities and systems.
- 3.5 It is also important to note that creating and delivering improved digital processes and services will not stop at our organisational boundary. They will require integration with other organisations to provide a seamless customer experience.

3.6 A new ICT Strategy must ensure that the right set of policies, working practices and supporting technology are put in place because information technology and the management of our information:

- is an essential element of good corporate governance,
- provides Members and Chief Officers with the right information to support
- effective decision making,
- challenges our thinking on how we deliver services and supports
- innovation in service design,
- sets direction in terms of investment in technology assuring alignment to
- corporate objectives,
- and provides the basis of accountability to Elected Members and the
- citizens of Belfast for the stewardship and use of IT resources.

Financial and Resource Implications

The cost of external assistance to develop a new ICT Strategy will be £25,000 - £30,000 and will be funded from Digital Services revenue budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

N/A.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Physical Programme Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The Council’s Physical Programme covers over 350 projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, LIF, BIF and the projects which the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This paper provides an update for Members on the Physical Programme

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to –

General

- note the updates in relation to the Physical Programme as outlined in 3.1 and that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange site visits for Members/ Party Groups to any physical project

Project Update

- note that works to improve accessibility to the West Wing outdoor space (including the upgrade works to the Cenotaph) which was previously agreed by Committee in August, are due to commence on 08 January 2018 and will continue until Spring 2018. In order to facilitate construction works it will be necessary to close the West Wing entrance gate and the Cenotaph area. During this time the City Hall grounds can be accessed through the gates at Donegall Square North and Donegall Square East and signage will be in place informing members of the public etc. of the alternative access points and to update them on the project

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial physical programme covering over 350 projects under a range of funding streams including the capital programme, BIF and LIF together with the projects that it is delivering on behalf of other agencies including the Executive Office and the Department for Communities.

Recent highlights under the physical programme are outlined below:

- LTP – Andersonstown - the installation of new hoardings at Andersonstown outlining the key features of the new facility. Members are asked to note that design work is currently underway for hoardings for Robinson and Olympia and that these are due to be in place by the New Year. It is intended that the hoardings will be kept up to date and replaced as the projects continue to develop
- LTP – Avoniel and Templemore – Stage 2 consultations currently underway at a range of venues across East Belfast

- **Capital Programme – New Pavilion Sally Gardens** – Development of a new changing pavilion to complement the pitch facility. This project received match funding from DfC
- **Capital Programme – Tropical Ravine** – works have been completed and the building has been handed over to City & Neighbourhood Services. Preparations are underway for the official opening in February and Members will be kept up to date with the proposals for the opening
- **BIF - Stranmillis Gateway** – a ‘*Cutting the sod*’ ceremony was held to mark works starting on the new £4m works at Stranmillis which will include the development of a navigation lock, an iconic foot and cycle bridge, the refurbishment of the existing weir and high quality landscaping with associated path connections
- **Urban Villages – Lagmore Community Forum** (Nov 16th) - Official opening of this new community facility – this new £370k facility was funded by Urban Initiatives and delivered by the Council
- **LIF** - the following LIF projects were completed/officially opened – Ballysillan Youth for Christ (NLIF072 - £27,000); Brantwood and Loughside FC (NLIF061- £100,000); Colin Valley FC (WLIF2-16 - £15,000); Greencastle Orange Hall (NLIF2-09 - £35,000); Garden of Reflection Shore Road (NLIF064 - £24,000) and Annadale/Haywood Residents Association (SLIF063 - £102,959)

3.2 In addition Members are asked to note that work is continuing on a range of projects including –

- New 3G pitches and pavilions at Falls Park and Cherryvale as part of the Pitches Strategy
- Works on the new leisure facilities at Andersonstown and Robinson and Phase 2 of works at Olympia
- Environmental upgrades at Falls Park and Skegoneil
- Phase 4 of the citywide alleygating programme
- BIF projects – works at Raidio Failte and Davitts

Project Updates

3.3 **Capital Programme - City Hall West Wing - Outdoor Space including the Cenotaph – Upgrade and Enhancements** – Members will recall that they agreed in August 2017 to move this project to Stage 3 – Committed on the Capital Programme. At this stage it was highlighted to Members that works were required to be completed in time for the Somme Commemoration in July 2018 and as a result this would

necessitate works starting early in the New Year. Members are advised that these works are on programme and works are due to commence on 8th January. However in order to facilitate the works it is necessary to restrict access to the West Wing space and the main entrance gate at the West Wing will be closed along with the space at the Cenotaph. During this time the City Hall grounds can be accessed through the gates at Donegall Square North and Donegall Square East. Members are asked to note that sign-posting etc. will be in place prior to work commencing to advise members of the public etc. of the alternative access points and to update them on the project. Members are also asked to note that arrangements will be kept under review as required for any large-scale planned public events – e.g. the Spring Market

3.4 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial – Costs for all projects have been agreed by Committee and through the three stage approval process which all physical projects are required to go through

Resources – Resources from Property & Projects and appropriate departments in working up proposals in conjunction with groups.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

No implications arising.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Area Working Update (AWG) Minutes

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meetings of the East Area Working Group of 22nd November and 7th December; the West Area Working Group of 23rd November; the South Area Working Group of 27th November and the North Area Working Group of 30th November.

Local Investment Fund

The Committee approved the recommendation of the South Area Working Group in respect of reallocating £40,000 which had been allocated to the Ormeau boxing Club back into the LIF2 fund.

The Committee agreed the recommendations from the North Area Working Group as set out below:

Project	LIF Allocation	Recommendations
NLIF073 - Jennymount Methodist Church	£64,000	That the funding be split in to 2 phases, (Phase 1 being the delivery of heating enhancements and phase 2 the community garden/ play area.)

NLIF057 – Holy Cross Boxing Club	£66,000	Agree to the LIF funding moving from the previous premises of the boxing club on Flax Street to the new premises at the former St Gemma's school.
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Belfast Investment Fund

The Committee approved the recommendation of the South Area working Group in relation to adding the Belfast Islamic Centre project as a stage one emerging project.

Asset Management

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members to asset related disposal, acquisition and lease matters.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1

i) Renewal of licence agreement with GROW, Waterworks Park

The Committee is asked to:

- Approve the renewal of the Licence agreement with ‘GROW’ in relation to the provision of a community garden within Waterworks Park (shown outlined red on plan attached at Appendix 1) for a period of 2 years with an option to extend for a further three years subject to review and the Director of City & Neighbourhood Services being satisfied that the project remains sustainable**
- Approve the extension of the boundary as shown outlined red and shaded blue on the plan attached at Appendix ‘1’**

2.2

ii) Maysfield Water Inlet – Agreement with Allstate

Committee is recommended to approve entering into a Management Agreement with Allstate in respect of day-to-day maintenance of the water inlet at Maysfield, subject to terms being agreed with the Estates Manager and the City Solicitor and also to give approval for Allstate to provide

enabling infrastructure to accommodate a water aerator/feature within the water inlet at a future date.

2.3

iii) Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre: Proposed Possession

Following a decision of the People & Communities Committee of 10 October 2017, Committee is recommended to agree to terminate the Agreement for Lease in respect of Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre to take possession of the property (subject to the funder confirming that it does not wish to exercise step in rights).

2.4

iv) Land at Glenbryn - Playground and Open Space

Committee is asked to agree to the acquisition of 1.28 acres of land from DfC to transform an area of wasteland between Glenbryn Park and Alliance Road into a pocket park to include a playground, path network and an attractive green space for community use. Approval is also sought to BCC entering into a Licence Agreement with Groundwork NI for the continued use of part of the site as a community garden.

2.5

v) Land at Cregagh Park: Marketing update

Committee is asked to note that following a decision by the SP&R Committee in August 2017, land at Cregagh Park has subsequently been placed on the open market for sale. They are also asked to note that due to the open space and planning issues to be addressed, it is proposed to set a closing date for bids in early January to allow interested bidders time to undertake the necessary due diligence to ensure that offers are robust in planning and financial terms.

3.0 Main report

3.1

i) Renewal of licence agreement with GROW, Waterworks Park

3.2 Key Issues

At meetings on the 8th Nov 2016 and 7th Feb 2017 the People and Communities Committee approved the renewal of a licence agreement with 'GROW' for a period of two years; the extension of area licenced to GROW to include the area outlined red and shaded blue on the plan attached at Appendix '1' and to confer delegated authority to the Director

of City and Neighbourhood Services to extend the agreement for up to 3 years subject to the Director's satisfaction that the project remains sustainable.

- 3.3 The Council has permitted GROW to use land at Waterworks Park to provide a community garden; this arrangement has been in place since 2010 and the Group have been successful in attracting third party funding. The two year extension to the licence will secure current funding from the Rank Foundation.

3.4 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications at this time.

3.5 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None associated with this report.

3.6

ii) Maysfield Water Inlet – Agreement with Allstate

3.7 Key Issues

At its meeting on 12th December 2014 the Committee approved the award of preferred developer status, on foot of a Development Brief process, to Allstate for development of their new headquarters building at Maysfield; this development will provide an office building of approximately 165,000 sq ft providing accommodation for over 1,500 staff. Allstate also entered into a further agreement with Council in respect of additional social and economic benefits to be delivered in local area.

- 3.8 Allstate's development proposals required a new quay wall to be constructed to the Council's water inlet at the rear of the former leisure centre (Appendix 2 – location map). In the course of undertaking works to the inlet it became apparent that a large volume of contaminated silt would have to be removed off-site.

- 3.9 Following consideration at two further meetings (23rd September and 21st October 2016) Members decided not to accede to requests from Allstate to contribute towards the hitherto unseen cost of this remediation work.

- 3.10 Members were made aware at its meeting of 23rd September 2016 of the potential to seek future commitments from Allstate in relation to maintaining the water surface of the inlet to keep it free from accumulation of debris.

3.11 It is therefore now proposed to enter into a Management Agreement with Allstate, in respect of the water inlet that remains in Council ownership. This will document the extent of roles and responsibilities associated with an ongoing maintenance obligation following grant of the ground lease for their new office premises, primarily in respect of Allstate performing day-to-day maintenance duties to keep the water surface clear of accumulating debris.

3.12 Allstate anticipate completion of construction of the new office building in early part of 2018 when the water inlet will be refilled with water once again. Allstate have now sought permission, and in order to prevent the growth of algae in the water inlet, that as part of their current construction works that a power supply is provided to the water inlet that would facilitate future installation of a water aerator/feature. Such an installation would require a specific legal agreement and a further report would be brought back to this Committee in this regard.

3.13 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications to the Council in respect of this proposal.

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None

3.15

iii) Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre – Proposed Possession

3.16 Key Issues

Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre has become vacant and the former occupier Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre Limited (UAYC) has dissolved. The Council owns the land upon which this building is located and had previously entered into an Agreement for Lease with UAYC although the lease was never executed. At its meeting on 10 October 2017 the People and Communities Committee agreed to terminate the Agreement for Lease and take possession of the property, subject to approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. They also agreed to bring the property into operational use of the Council subject to an assessment of need and condition, with consideration of the purpose/use to be further considered by the North Area Working Group, in the context of wider area needs, taking into account other known facility needs such as Hillview Boxing Club. A further report is to be brought back to the People and Communities Committee in terms of future use proposals as well as an update on the condition of the building.

3.17 Finance and Resource Implications

As advised to the People & Communities Committee, revenue and resource costs in terms of staff resource and ongoing property costs will need to be reviewed in the context of future use proposals and condition of the building.

3.18 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None associated with this report

3.19

iv) Land at Glenbryn-Playground and Open Space

Land at Glenbryn Park (as shown in the plan attached at Appendix 4) is presently held for development by the Department for Communities, although it had been due to transfer to the Council along with the Jolly Rodger Centre on 1st April 2016 as part of the proposed transfer of regeneration powers. Discussions have continued with DfC and agreement has now been reached to transfer the land for the development of a pocket park to include a playground, path network and an attractive green space for community space. This agreement for transfer to the Council is on the basis of nil consideration.

The site also includes a small community garden currently held by way of a Licence between DfC and Groundwork NI. In advance of transfer of the site DfC would terminate their Licence with Groundwork NI and BCC would enter into a new Licence with Groundwork NI should Members agree. DfC have confirmed that they would have no objections to allowing access to the community garden through the Jolly Rodger Complex which would keep it separate from the pocket park facility.

3.20 This is an emerging project on the council's Capital Programme at Stage 1, as approved by the SP&R Committee in October 2015. Urban Villages are also considering the project for funding and are preparing a business case and programme.

3.21 Planning approval was granted for the pocket park at the Planning Committee on 16th May 2017. Subject to funding, the capital build for the project would take place in the 2018/19 financial year. Belfast City Council would act as the delivery agent for the project as per other Urban Villages projects.

3.22 Financial and Resource Implications

The land is to transfer from DfC to BCC at nil consideration in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 (5) (ii) of the Stormont Regulations and Government Property Act (Northern Ireland) 1933.

3.23 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no direct equality implications from the land transfer. Statutory consultation was undertaken as part of the planning process. Further community engagement is likely to be undertaken by Urban Villages.

3.24

v) Land at Cregagh Park: Marketing update

3.25 Key Issues

At its meeting in August 2017 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to declare land at Cregagh Park surplus to requirements and to place it on the open market for sale, with any such sale being subject to obtaining planning permission.

3.26 Marketing agents were subsequently appointed and planning advice sought. The site has been marketed over the past number of weeks with a good level of market interest although the issue of development potential in the context of planning policy remains the key issue to be addressed.

3.27 Members will recall from the August Committee report that the site is currently open space and as such is subject to open space policy OS1 in Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS8) to safeguard its protection. Planning advice indicates that exceptions to this can be made if it is clearly shown that redevelopment will bring substantial community benefits which outweigh the loss or where an alternative suitable provision is made. This advice also indicates that a case may be made for the improvement of an existing local open space, if it satisfactorily replaces the open space lost and has community support. An independent planning report notes that there may be potential for four to six dwellings to be developed subject to addressing open space issues.

3.28 Given the recent buoyancy in the housing market most interest in the site is coming from private residential developers. Unlike uses which can be considered to be community benefit, private residential developers would be required to look at offsetting the open space loss elsewhere.

This offset provision would increase their overall development costs. These costs have to be taken into account by the developer in their development appraisal to determine how much they could pay for the subject site to ensure that their overall proposal is financially viable. They therefore require sufficient time to work up proposals to address the planning issues and calculate costs so that offers made for the sale site are as robust as possible to reduce the risk of an offer being withdrawn at a later stage either through an unsuccessful planning application or by becoming financially unviable if the purchaser had underestimated the cost of offset works.

3.29 The onus would be on the developer to address the open space issue. Given the challenges of a developer finding an alternative site in close proximity for bringing into open space use, the Council as a local landowner of other open space in the local area could potentially benefit as there may be opportunities for the developer to seek to improve an alternative Council owned site, if demonstrated that it would satisfactorily replace the open space loss at Cregagh Park. However, it will be up to bidders to bring forward their proposals in relation to this.

3.30 Given the planning issues and the need for bidders, as part of their bid submission, to address the open space issue, on the advice of the marketing agent it is proposed to set a closing date for bids in early January. This should allow interested bidders time to undertake due diligence given the complexities regarding the open space issues.

3.31 Financial and Resource Implications

The Council would receive a capital receipt if planning is obtained and the land is sold.

3.32 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Contracts for Award

The Committee:

- (1) Approved the public advertisement and acceptance of tenders as listed in Appendix 1, Table 1 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 month by month extensions where contracts were under review as outlined in Appendix 1, Table 2.

Appendix 1 - Schedule of tenders for consideration

Table 1 – New tenders

Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
Expert technical advice to support the execution of the ICT Programme of work	Ronan Cregan	1 year

Table 2 – Contracts for extension of contract period

Title of tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
Supply and Erection of Street Nameplates	Keith Sutherland	Extend to 31 March 2018 and monthly thereafter, to allow for a new tender exercise.
Maintenance and Repair of Grounds Maintenance Equipment	Nigel Grimshaw	Extend to 31 March 2018 and monthly thereafter, to allow for a new tender exercise.
Digitisation and micro-filming of historical records	Keith Sutherland	Extend to 31 March 2018 and monthly thereafter, to allow for a new tender exercise.
Removal, storage and retrieval of office records	John Walsh	Extend to 31 March 2018 and monthly thereafter, to allow for a new tender exercise.

Supply and Delivery of Plastic Sacks	Gerry Millar	Extend to 31 March 2018 and monthly thereafter, to allow for a new tender exercise.
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Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of Meeting of Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 11th December and specifically the following:

- To authorise the continuation of the St Patrick's Day Small Grants Scheme in its current format, given that this had been the preferred option of those who had participated in the survey and consultation event; and
- To note that a contribution of up to £3,000 had been provided through the District Council Good Relations Programme to support up to six local interface groups to deliver the annual Christmas Events.

**Equality and Diversity: Screening
Outcome Report Jan-Sep 2017**

The Committee was reminded that one of the main requirements of the Council's equality scheme was to carry out the screening of new and revised policies. That allowed any impacts related to equality of opportunity and/or good relations to be identified and addressed.

The City Solicitor reported that guidance from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland defined a policy "as all the ways in which an authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland." As such policies were written, formal or informal.

He reported also that the Departmental Management Teams were responsible for identifying policies for screening. An equality screening template was then completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Officer. On a regular basis, the Equality and Diversity Officer collated all completed templates into a Screening Outcome report and published onto the Council's website along with the relevant completed screening templates.

The Committee noted the Screening Outcome Report for January – September 2017.

Operational Issues

Minutes of Meeting of Budget and Transformation Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 7th December.

Minutes of Meeting of Audit and Risk Panel

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The Audit and Risk Panel is constituted as a working group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The purpose of the Panel is to provide an independent assurance on the adequacy of the Council’s risk management framework and associated control environment. The Panel also oversees the Council’s financial reporting process.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary to Committee of the key issues that have been considered and discussed by the Panel at its December 2017 meeting and to present minutes of the last meeting of the Panel for approval.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

- notes the summary of the issues discussed / assurance received at the Panel meeting of 8 December 2017 as set out at Section 3 below and;
- approves the minutes of the Audit & Risk Panel meeting of 8 December 2017.

3.0 Main report

3.1 NIAO – Completion of audit of 2016/17 financial statements

3.1.1 At its meeting on 8 December 2017 the Panel considered received final copies of the NIAO’s reports to those Charged with Governance and Annual Audit Letter for 2016/17 audit. There were no priority 1 recommendations and the audit resulted in an unqualified (‘clean’) opinion on the Council’s financial statements and related arrangements. A recent NIAO ‘good practice’ report on Bribery and Corruption was also considered by the Panel.

3.2 Management reports – Procurement, Absence and Health and Safety

3.2.1 Regarding Procurement, the Panel was apprised of the risks relating to procurement, the action being taken to address backlogs in tender processing and, moreover, to review the Council’s procurement arrangements going forward.

3.2.2 Regarding absence, the HR Manager reported on performance at the end of quarter 2 and provided a detailed analysis of the figures, in particular in relation to personal and work related stress. The Audit and Risk Panel agreed that it would write to Directors to emphasise the importance they attach to absence management and also to stress the ongoing need to ensure compliance with the process.

3.2.3 Regarding health and safety the Corporate H&S Manager provided an update on activity in quarter 2. This showed a small number of high priority actions from the Corporate H&S team's reviews still open and the Manager explained these issues were being followed up.

3.3 External review of Audit, Governance and Risk Services

3.3.1 The Council's internal audit service, AGRS, had been externally audited against professional standards. This is a mandatory process. The review had a positive outcome with assurance provided on the Service's conformance with standards.

3.4 Risk Management

3.4.1 The Panel received an update on risk management, in particular the management of corporate risks. The report highlighted the risk profile of the Council (which was significant), the action being taken to review and manage the risks. It highlighted the 'three lines of defence' model that can be used to aid management and assurance on key risks, comprising management controls, oversight and audit, and the need to develop this model further to address key corporate risks successfully. An independent review of the Council's risk management process had also been completed and the results of this were reported to the Panel. Overall the report noted the progress made to improve the process in recent years, but did identify a number of actions for improvement.

3.5 AGRS Reports

3.5.1 The Head of AGRS reported on the completion of a number of audits including payroll, outdoor leisure, corporate complaints and treasury management. He also reported on consultancy work undertaken by AGRS on city centre investment (Grade 'A' offices) and the Belfast Investment Fund. He advised the Panel of ongoing and planned audit work for the next quarter, including reviews of corporate risk areas, including procurement.

3.5.2 AGRS also reported on the implementation of agreed audit recommendations, with the exercise showing a 25% reduction in open actions, albeit AGRS indicated that there are a number of actions still requiring implementation.

3.6 Audit and Risk Panel / Member Training

3.6.1 Finally, training for Panel members has been arranged had been delivered in October and the Panel agreed the actions arising from the training including an additional Panel meeting in 2018 to allow further time to discuss risk management and, related to this, plans to incorporate risk / governance training into the Member Development programme for 2018/19.

3.7 Financial and Resource Implications

None.

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Requests for use of the City Hall
and the provision of Hospitality

The Committee approved the recommendations in relation to the requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2018 EVENTS						
GEMS NI	19th January 2018	Employment East Celebration of Achievement – award ceremony with speeches and reception Numbers attending - 100	C & D	No (Charity)	Yes - Wine Reception	Approve No charge Wine Reception
Cara-Friend	16th February 2018	Outing the Past – Festival of LGBT History 2 day event with launch at City Hall officially opened by the Lord Mayor. Numbers attending - 120	C & D	No (Charity)	Yes - Wine Reception	Approve No charge Wine Reception

Volunteer Now	16th March 2018	Recognising 'Saintly' Volunteers – Awards ceremony to celebrate those who volunteer across Northern Ireland. Numbers attending - 400	C	No (Charity)	Yes – Tea and coffee reception	Approve No charge Tea and Coffee Reception
British Institute of Cleaning Science	7th September 2018	NI Cleaning Operative of the Year Awards – Awards Ceremony recognising excellence across the industry. Numbers attending - 100	C	Yes Charge £115	No - as commercial	Approve Charge £115 No Hospitality
European Group for Public Administration (EGPA)	11th September 2019	European Group for Public Administration Welcome Reception – Major European Conference being hosted by Queens University, Belfast. Numbers attending – 500.	A & B	Yes Charge £300	Yes - Wine Reception	Approve Charge £300 Wine Reception

Grenfell Tower Fire – Update on Actions of Belfast City Council

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 Arising from the Notice of Motion; ‘Cladding on flats and high rise buildings’ which was considered at the SP&R meeting of 18 August this report is to inform Members of the actions that have been undertaken in the wake of the tragedy.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 It has been nearly six months since the fire at Grenfell tower where many residents lost their lives. The inquiry into the fire has now opened, with its chairman promising it will provide answers to how the disaster could have happened in the 21st century.
- 3.2 [The fire started in a Hotpoint fridge freezer](#) on the fourth floor and spread to the external cladding system. The London fire brigade were faced with an unprecedented level of rapid fire spread through the tower with 40 fire engines and more than 200 firefighters tackling the blaze.
- 3.3 The fire affected most of the floors of the building and destroyed 151 homes, both in the tower and surrounding areas. It has recently been confirmed that 71 lives have been lost as a result of the fire.
- 3.4 The cladding system installed at Grenfell is the main focus in relation to the rapid fire spread over the envelope of the building. The external cladding panel was a polyethylene (PE) filled aluminum panel (ACM). The insulation installed on the tower as part of the cladding system was a polyisocyanurate (PIR) insulation material.
- 3.5 On 6 July an Independent Expert Advisory Panel [recommended a series](#) of large scale fire tests to establish the performance of a range of ACM panels in conjunction with a range of insulation materials in order to help building owners make decisions on any further measures that may need to be put in place.
- 3.6 The testing was carried out by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and involved large scale fire tests to [BS 8414](#) which is currently one of the methods of determining compliance with national Building Regulations across the UK.
- 3.7 The type of ACM and insulation material employed on Grenfell was tested and failed to meet the performance criteria contained in BRE135 - Fire Performance of External Thermal Insulation for Walls of Multi-Storey Buildings.
- 3.8 The Building Regulations guidance in England, which is similar to that in Northern Ireland, has been called into question and is certainly unclear with regard to ACM panels. Many industry experts hold the view that the guidance as it stands does not prevent the use of PE filled ACM's and that this must be reviewed.

- 3.9 On 28th July 2017 the Department for Communities and Local Government announced an independent review of building regulations and fire safety in England. This independent review will be led by Dame Judith Hackitt, Chair of EEF, the Manufacturers' Organisation, and will look at current Building Regulations and fire safety with a particular focus on high rise residential buildings.
- 3.10 The outcome, including any subsequent change to both regulations and guidance in England, will greatly influence any change to the Building Regulations in Northern Ireland which has closely followed the requirements in England since implementation.

Actions of Belfast City Council in relation to NIHE high rise residential blocks

- 3.11 Since the fire at Grenfell tower the Building Control Service have been providing advice to the NIHE in relation to the external cladding systems employed on 4 of their 32 high rise residential blocks in N. Ireland.
- 3.12 Specifically we have carried out site inspections of the 4 blocks, all of which are in Belfast. Two of these blocks, Eithne House and Cuchulain House in the New Lodge are in the North of the city and two are in the East, Carnet House, Upper Newtownards Road and Whincroft House in the Braniel estate.
- 3.13 These inspections involved removing cladding panels to check the materials and products used and also checking fire separation measures around windows and at compartment floors and walls.
- 3.14 We have also reviewed the suitability of the two different cladding systems used on these blocks, both of which have undergone large scale fire testing to BS8414, and both were found to be in compliance with Building Regulations.
- 3.15 It should be emphasised that none of the Housing Executive tower blocks have Aluminium Composite Material, rainscreen cladding similar to that used in Grenfell tower block.
- 3.16 The Service have also provided advice on other aspects of fire safety in the 4 high rise blocks including methods of staircase and landing lobby smoke ventilation.

- 3.17 One of our Assistant Building Control Managers, Alan Mayrs, has been nominated onto an independent review group set up by the NIHE and chaired by Professor Alastair Adair of Ulster University. The group will assess all aspects of fire safety in relation to NIHE properties but has a central focus on high rise properties. There have been 6 meetings of the group and its findings are contained in a report which was taken to the NIHE Board on 29th November 2017.
- 3.18 It is important to note that once a building has been completed for the purposes of Building Regulations the Council has no power of continuing control as to how that building is maintained or operated. Nor is it the case that we can retrospectively apply the Regulations to existing buildings although improvements to fire safety may be enforced by other legislation such as the Fire Services Order if appropriate.

Evacuation procedures from high rise residential blocks

- 3.19 Queries have been raised about the concept of the Building Regulations design guidance which advocates a 'stay put' strategy in the event of fire in a high rise apartment block.
- 3.20 This is a concept that only the flat on fire needs to evacuate and that all residents in all the other flats will be safe to remain in their flat unless evacuation beyond the flat of origin becomes necessary due to a growing fire. Any such evacuation would be a controlled evacuation with the Fire Brigade removing those at greatest risk first.
- 3.21 The reason that this concept is considered safe is that each flat is designed and constructed as a self-contained fire compartment with each flat separated from the other flats adjacent, above and below by walls and floors which are of fire resisting construction. The amount of fire resistance required is specified in periods of time and can range from 30 minutes to 120 minutes depending on the size of the development.
- 3.22 The flats are also separated from the common corridor or lobby area by fire resisting walls and smoke ventilation may also be required to corridors or lobbies leading to the stairs depending on factors such as travel distance, number of stairs and height of the building.
- 3.23 The staircase enclosures will also be of fire resisting construction and will be required to have smoke ventilation installed.

- 3.24 Nationally the design of residential blocks of flats under Building Regulations and the associated British Standards are based on this 'stay put' concept. To move away from this would mean a complete shift by Government from established fire safety design principles.
- 3.25 However following a fire in Kensington and Chelsea and in Lakanal House in Southwark in 2009 it is clear this can sometimes go wrong. We won't have any recommendations from the investigation into Grenfell for some time but there seems a strong link to the work carried out to provide an external thermally insulated over cladding system to the building. We know from the investigations at Lakanal house that the serious fire spread that occurred was strongly influenced by building works carried out to the building over many years that compromised the original fire safety features of Lakanal House. While these works were not the sole reason the fire got so out of control they were a very relevant factor.

Local experience of fire in high rise accommodation

- 3.26 Members will be aware that a fire recently broke out in NIHE high rise accommodation at Coolmoyne House in Dunmurry. Thankfully, no-one was seriously injured and everyone was successfully evacuated from the building but there was some concern from residents that there had been no general fire alarm sounded.
- 3.27 However, the NIFRS confirmed that the fire alarm system had worked as intended in that the alarm in the flat where the fire occurred operated and automatic smoke vents linked to the detection system in the common areas also successfully operated in the communal hallway.
- 3.28 Each flat has self-contained smoke alarms, the flat in question had three smoke detectors and they worked, and other residents' alarms should not go off unless they detected smoke. It is not the case that there would be sounders in the common hallway as these are not necessary (nor advisable) for flats built in accordance with the codes.
- 3.29 In relation to evacuation procedures the NIFRS have issued fire safety advice for residents of high rise accommodation which can be accessed online at: -
<https://www.nifrs.org/fire-safety-advice-residents-high-rise-accommodation/>
- 3.30 In addition the NIHE have also issued advice for housing executive tenants which can be accessed online at:-
https://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/advice/advice_for_housing_executive_tenants/advicesafety/fire_safety/highrise_building_s.htm

Other actions of Belfast City Council

- 3.31 The Service have carried out a review of the building regulations requirements and guidance across the UK in relation to external fire spread over the surface of a building to inform the NIHE independent review group and to establish how our own legislation in NI compares with legislation in GB.
- 3.32 The Building Standards Branch (BSB) of the Department of Finance is responsible for the Building Regulations (NI) Order 1979 and for updating all fire safety requirements and guidance issued under the Regulations (Part E: Fire Safety). Since the fire we have, along with Building Control colleagues in the rest of N.Ireland, been working with BSB to review the methods of compliance and standards incorporated into fire safety guidance relevant to external fire spread and also on the issue of automatic fire suppression.
- 3.33 Based on these discussions an informative was issued by BSB in relation to the use of BRE 135 and large scale fire testing as a method of Building Regulations compliance in N. Ireland.
- 3.34 Within Building Control all our surveyors have been fully updated on the requirements and guidance in relation to external fire spread contained in Building Regulations and we have asked them all to review records over the last 2 years to ensure there are no issues in relation to external cladding assemblies in high rise buildings. To date we have not identified any buildings where the cladding has been cause for concern.
- 3.35 In response to a letter to the Chief Executive from the Head of the NI Civil Service requiring all public authorities to check for ACM type cladding systems (see table below for relevant premises) our colleagues in Property & Projects have reviewed all relevant Council buildings and found we have no buildings that fall within the parameters outlined.

Trigger heights for investigation of ACM Cladding Systems			
Building Use	Overnight accommodation	Trigger Height/storey*	Test?
Schools	Yes	Any height	Yes
	No	18 metres or more	Yes
Health care facilities (including Hospitals)	Yes	2 storeys or more	Yes
	No	18 metres or more	Yes
All other buildings	Yes	18 metres or more	Yes

** Height is measured from ground level at its lowest point to the upper surface of the top storey (excluding plant rooms)*

3.36 This letter was also sent to Departmental Permanent Secretaries and responses sought from them in relation health care and school buildings. Those buildings where any testing or follow up action is required will be the responsibility of the relevant government Department to address.”

The Committee noted the report and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Finance, Building Standards Branch, seeking an update on the process of recruitment of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee and the outcome of their review of Technical Booklet E (Fire Safety). The letter should also indicate that the Department should be more proactive in reviewing the Building Regulations rather than awaiting the outcome of the review in England. It was agreed also that officers should engage with the NI Fire and Rescue Service with a view to them appearing before Committee to discuss their capacity to enforce the Fire Services Order.

Chairperson