

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 5th October, 2018

SPECIAL MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor McDonough-Brown;
Aldermen Browne, Convery, Haire and Spence; and
Councillors Beattie, Carson, Craig, Garrett, Graham,
Hutchinson, Long, Reynolds and Walsh.
- Also attended: Councillor Lyons.
- In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development
Ms. G. Long, Commissioner for Resilience;
Mr. A. Thatcher, Director Planning and Building Control; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Councillors Campbell, McAteer and O'Donnell.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Spence declared an interest in that he was member of the Ulster Reform club.

Restricted Item

Prior to the report on the proposal for the use of the Primark Fund for businesses being tabled, the Chief Executive advised the Members that there would be some confidential information which would be supplied to the Committee regarding the building and that require would the discussion around the report to be restricted. However, following the Committee's decision and the subsequent release of a press statement, the restriction would be lifted and the report made available to anyone who requested it.

The information contained in the report relating to the following item 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 discussion of this item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

**Bank Buildings: Proposal for the use of the
Primark Fund for Businesses**

The Committee was reminded that, following the fire at the Bank Buildings, Primark had announced on 18th September that it would be *“donating £500,000 to the Council’s recovery programme as a gesture of goodwill. The Council will manage the distribution of the recovery fund to those local businesses impacted by the fire”*.

The Chief Executive then tabled a report for the Committee’s consideration and informed the Members that there were three key assumptions set out in the paper:

- That the priority investment for the £500,000 fund was to be focused on activities to provided direct support to affected businesses, in line with the Primark statement. If the funding was not all allocated to the businesses within the proposed six-week period, the balance may be re-deployed to the wider city centre recovery fund. The decision-making process relating to that balance and the level of consultation related to that decision would be commensurate with the balance available;
- That the resources are to be focused on “local” businesses, in keeping with the Primark statement. In consultation with traders and business representative groups. The following criteria are recommended to define ‘local businesses impacted by the fire’
 - Independent retailers with less than fifty employees
 - Charities
 - Offices which were displaced by the fire
 - Single local franchises with less than fifty employees; and
- That there is a differentiated level of funding for businesses within the cordon compared with those outside the cordon. In these proposals, businesses within the cordon have been allocated a more substantial level of support than those outside the cordon, given the increased level of impact on their business.

The Director of Economic Development then reviewed the proposed boundary for the funds, the eligible businesses, a breakdown of properties, the impact of insurance claims and the process for allocating funding.

That the Committee agreed:

- i. The proposal for the Primark £500,000 towards business recovery; and
- ii. The proposed process for dispersing the money designed and agreed in conjunction with PWC.

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Building Status – Update

The Committee noted an update, which had been provided by the Director Planning and Building Control, on the status of the building and information on the first listed building consent application from Primark.

Chairperson