

Shadow Planning Committee

Thursday, 22nd January, 2015

MEETING OF SHADOW PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Mullan (Chair);
Councillors Armitage, Bunting, Campbell,
Haire, Heading, Hutchinson, Johnston,
McGimpsey, Ó Donnghaile, L. Patterson
and Sandford.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development
Ms. N. Largey, Council Solicitor;
Mr. K. Sutherland, Urban Development Manager;
Ms. K. Mills, Divisional Planning Office;
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer; and
Miss. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Bradshaw, Carson, Corr, Garrett, Hargey, McCoubrey and McDonough-Brown.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 8th December.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Planning Capacity Building Programme - Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“Key Issues

- 2.1 The remaining activities of the programme for Shadow Planning Committee will increasingly focus on practical sessions to provide members with the opportunity to consider the key issues, policy implications and outcomes of planning applications based in Northern Ireland.
- 2.2 The first practical session, held on 7 January 2015, was well received by members who indicated that it would be beneficial, given the usefulness of the session in considering planning

applications, to have as many of these type sessions as possible prior to April. In light of this feedback from members additional practical sessions will be scheduled over the next three months.

- 2.3 Members should note that they can attend sessions of the parallel programme as a refresher session or if they were unable to attend a similar session of the committee's bespoke programme.
- 2.4 Fraud awareness sessions have been included in the capacity building programmes. The sessions will be delivered by officers from the Audit, Governance and Risk Service and will focus on the risks to the Council, including those arising from the new powers, and the roles and responsibilities of members.
- 2.5 Members are asked to identify any other areas or issues which they would think it would be helpful to include in the planned programme of activities.

2.6 **Best Practice Study Visits**

The visit to Cardiff City Council will take place on 10-12 February with the visit to Bristol City Council being re-scheduled to take place on 18- 19 March 2015.

- 2.7 Twelve elected members are scheduled to attend the study visit to Cardiff and at this stage three elected members have expressed an interested in undertaking the visit to Bristol. The detailed itineraries for the visits are currently being developed in conjunction with planning colleagues in Cardiff City Council and Bristol City Council.

2.8 **Regional Training Events**

Members will be aware of the DoE's regional capacity building programme which ended in December 2014. The programme sessions were attended by a number of Shadow Planning Committee members and feedback, in the main, was positive. Members will continue to be kept informed of other scheduled regional Planning events including conferences and seminars.

3 **Resource Implications**

- 3.1 Members are aware the capacity building modules, delivered by external facilitators, will be financed from the 2014-2015 £200,000 DOE funding allocation as will the costs of member and officer attendance on the study visit to Cardiff and Bristol. Attendance at regional events will be financed from the member development budget.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no equality or good relations implications.

5 Call In

5.1 This decision is subject to Call In.”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and the Director undertook to investigate the feasibility of compiling a Members’ planning handbook which would provide a synopsis of the significant planning policies which would be relevant in the Council’s future decision-making function.

Programme of Work - Transfer of Powers

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that an internal officer team has been established to support the transfer of planning by 1st April 2015. The local DOE Planning Office has also now committed staffing resource to assist this work and staff will be co-located from mid-January onwards. An MOU has been agreed between Belfast City Council and the DOE as to how the transfer will progress.

1.2 A detailed project plan has been developed to support the delivery of the transition and an officer Steering Panel reports on progress regularly to the Director of Development and TMT.

2.0 Key issues

2.1 Key activities undertaken in December and January include:

1. Governance - consultation with party groups took place in December and subsequently governance proposals, including the scheme of delegation and committee protocol, are being brought to Shadow SP&R on 30th January.

2. Planning portal - a connection to the regional Planning Portal has been established on the Council’s network.

3. **Resources - revenue budgets** have been developed and will be brought through the political process in January and February.
4. **Staff transfer - names of transferring staff** have been confirmed. A total of 43 individuals will join the Council; equivalent to 40.5 Full time equivalent posts.
5. **Accommodation - office accommodation** has been confirmed in the Cecil Ward building. Decant and works are due to take place from late January onwards to facilitate planning staff moving to their new offices by April.
6. **Capacity Building - a range of 'mock' committee sessions** have been scheduled from January onwards to give members an opportunity to experience the decision making process in a test environment.

2.2 Priorities for February include:

1. **Works to Cecil Ward to facilitate Planning staff moving in late-March**
2. **Confirmation of revenue budgets**
3. **Completion of process mapping to resolve interface with Council systems such as SAP**
4. **Recruitment of Director of Planning & Place**
5. **Putting in place an interim Business Support resource (following the transfer of the current DP Admin post within the local Planning Office) that can be embedded with the Planning Team to learn about their systems.**
6. **Confirmation of committee room arrangements**
7. **Providing training to transferring staff on Council systems.**
8. **Increased public communications e.g. correspondence with applicants with regard to transfer and new contact details**

2.3 Some key dates in February that members may wish to be aware of:

- **3rd February, 12.30-2pm - Meet & greet with local planning office staff (*Shadow Planning Committee members*)**
- **6th February, 12.30-2pm - Meet & greet with local planning office staff (*Open to all other members*)**
- **10th-12th February - Members study visit to Cardiff**

- 18th February, 5pm & 19th February, 12.30pm - Session on Local Development Planning (*Open to all members; NB this is a repeat of a session previously delivered to Shadow Planning Committee*)
- 19th February, 4.30pm - 'Mock' Committee session (*Shadow Planning Committee members prior to committee session*)
- 24th February, 12.30pm - Fraud awareness (*Open to all members*)

2.4 Further details of these sessions are available from Lisa Rogan, Human Resources (ext. 3251) or Barry Flynn, Democratic Services (ext. 6312).

3.0 Resource Implications

3.1 Costs have been included when the budget allocated for Local Government Reform.

4.0 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no equality or good relations implications identified at present.

5.0 Call In

5.1 Subject to call in.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to note the report.”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Planning Reform - The Planning Act (NI) 2011

The Committee noted the contents of a Council response to the above-mentioned consultation which had been endorsed by the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th December and adopted by the Shadow Council on 6th January, 2015.

A copy of that response was published on the Council's website.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations

(Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure, attended in connection with this matter.)

The Committee considered a report, together with a draft Council response, which related to the above-mentioned consultation exercise which had been issued by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.

The Assistant Director outlined the main elements of the response and referred to the range of issues which had been identified by officers for comment within the Council's submission. She indicated that the closing date for the exercise would be 30th January and requested that any additional comments by Members be submitted to the Parks and Leisure Department prior to that date.

The Committee endorsed, in principle, the consultation response as outlined, subject to the incorporation of any Members' comments by Members by 30th January, and to subsequent ratification by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 9th February.

Listing and De-listing of Buildings in Belfast

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) indicating that it would welcome the Council's views in relation to proposed listing and delisting of a number of buildings in Belfast. Copies of the correspondence was made available for the Members' information.

Advance Notice of Listing

- Former St Mary's Christian Brothers' School, Barrack Street;
- West Belfast Orange Hall, 342 to 344 Shankill Road;
- Caretaker's House, West Belfast Orange Hall;
- Albert Hall, 110 to 120 Shankill Road;
- Shankill Road Mission Hall;
- Malvern Primary School, Forster Street;
- North Belfast Working Men's Club, 32 Danube Street; and
- Psychiatric Building, Mater Hospital, 37 Crumlin Road.

Advance Notice of Delisting

- Nos. 276 to 294 Tennent Street, Edenderry Gardens (ten dwellings);
- Kelly's Cellars, 30 – 32 Bank Street;
- 11 and 13 College Place North;
- Arthur Chambers, 4-14 Arthur Street;
- 4 to 8 Church Lane (incorporating Miss Moran tobacconist);
- 10 Church Lane; and

- Former Methodist Church facade, Donegall Square East.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to support, in principle, the listing of the following buildings:

- Former St Mary's Christian Brothers' School, Barrack Street;
- West Belfast Orange Hall, 342 to 344 Shankill Road;

- Caretaker's House, West Belfast Orange Hall;
- Albert Hall, 110 to 120 Shankill Road;
- Shankill Road Mission Hall;
- Malvern Primary School, Forster Street;
- North Belfast Working Men's Club, 32 Danube Street; and
- Psychiatric Building, Mater Hospital, 37 Crumlin Road

The Committee agreed that it would be opposed, in principle, to the de-listing of the following buildings:

- Nos 276 to 294 Tennent Street, Edenderry Gardens;
- Kelly's Cellars, 30 to 32 Bank Street; and
- Nos. 11 and 13 College Place North.

In addition, the Committee agreed to defer, to enable further information to be provided, consideration of the proposals in respect of the following buildings:

- Arthur Chambers, 4 to 14 Arthur Street;
- 4 to 8 Church Lane (incorporating Miss Moran tobacconist) ;
- 10 Church Lane; and
- Former Methodist Church facade, Donegall Square East.

It was noted that the consultation exercise regarding the matter would close at the end of February and, accordingly, the Committee agreed that the issue be reconsidered at its meeting scheduled for 19th of that month, at which it would give its considered response to the proposals.

Chairman