

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Thursday, 19th June, 2014

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Reynolds (Chairman);
Aldermen Robinson, Brown and Campbell;
Councillors Attwood, Campbell, Carson, Clarke, Corr,
Haire, Hargey, Hendron, Jones, McCarthy,
McVeigh, Mullan and Newton.

In attendance: Mrs S. Wylie, Chief Executive (Designate);
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mrs. J. Minne, Assistant Chief Executive/
Head of Human Resources;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman R. Patterson and Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 4th and 25th April 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 May.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jones declared interest in Item 4a Request for the Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality in so far as he was treasurer of the Glentoran Community Trust.

Investment Programme

Leisure Transformation Programme – Capital Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant background information

1.1 In January 2013 to inform future decisions SP&R adopted the following principles regarding leisure provision in the city: Quality;

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Focus on health and well-being outcomes; Value for money; Balanced investment and accessibility; Partnership; and Affordability.

- 1.2** Subsequently, at its meeting in June 2013, SP&R set a £105m capital expenditure affordability limit for the Leisure Transformation Programme. Committee agreed to the indicative phasing of capital transformation:
- **Phase 1: Investment Programme (Windsor/Olympia; Andersonstown; Girdwood)**
 - **Phase 2: Reform of Local Government (e.g. Avoniel; Castlereagh; Lagmore/Poleglass/Colin)**
 - **Phase 3: One Public Estate (e.g. Ballysillan; Ozone; Shankill; Loughside; Whiterock)**
- 1.3** At its meeting in April 2014 SP&R agreed the affordability limit for Phase II projects at £23.5m. Members will recall in March 2013 that SP&R granted authority for officers to facilitate in depth engagement with strategic stakeholders to explore co-investment opportunities under the leisure transformation programme.

2 **Key issues**

- 2.1** Following Committee's recommendation to engage with strategic partners, a number of pieces of work are being prepared to inform decisions to be taken by Committee over the coming months. Detailed design work is underway for phase 1 of the capital programme and engagement and scoping for phase 2, to identify strategic opportunities in east and outer west Belfast. The following sections outline an update on discussions and actions to date in relation to Phase 2.

2.2 **Outer West**

Some initial high level discussions have taken place around the future of leisure provision in the Twinbrook and Colin areas, specifically around the potential redevelopment of Brook Activity Centre, transferring under Local Government Reform and the opportunities presented in the Colin Town Centre Masterplan. A survey is being completed on the Brook Activity Centre to determine its physical condition.

Next steps

A feasibility study has been commissioned to identify a range of options for future leisure provision in Outer West Belfast. The study will include: an analysis of current leisure provision (both local authority and private); redevelopment/refurbishment options; exploration of potential sites for redevelopment; and provide a critical path including a comprehensive funding strategy. The study should

also make reference to the Colin Town Centre Masterplan, produced by the Department for Social Development.

It is planned that Area Working Group representatives will be fully involved in this process, including the appraisal of options, prior to presentation to Committee for investment decisions. Following this, there will then be a period of consultation and proposal development.

2.3 Inner East Belfast

Belfast Education & Library Board (BELB) has facilitated engagement with elected members, community representatives and potential strategic partners. This is due to an imminent strategic opportunity in relation to the potential rationalisation and re-development of two primary schools in the inner East area.

BELB are currently finalising an economic appraisal for the rationalisation of Avoniel and Elmgrove primary schools and one preparing a development proposal for the minister's consideration. Council officers have been working with BELB to identify potential linkages, community benefits and co-investment opportunities from any proposed development at the Avoniel Primary School site. BELB's economic appraisal is currently looking at a number of options including:

1. Do nothing
2. Do minimum (essential maintenance at both existing schools)
3. Extend and refurbish Elmgrove PS
4. Extend and refurbish Avoniel PS either by:
 - (a) using existing site; or
 - (b) by partial use of the existing Avoniel Leisure Centre site
5. New build on Avoniel Leisure Centre site

BELB have recently advised that the Economic Appraisal is indicating that the preferred option is development of a new school on the Avoniel School site to facilitate pupils from the current Avoniel and Elmgrove schools. This preferred option is likely to include an area of Council owned land where the Council's Play Centre and playground are currently located. BELB's initial overall site layout proposals, which are very indicative at this stage, provide for relocation of these facilities. It should be emphasised however that these are schematic layouts only as prepared by BELB and if the current proposals do progress then this will need to be considered in much more detail.

It is suggested that BELB's proposals offer a potential strategic opportunity for the Council to maximise its investment in the future provision of a fit-for purpose leisure estate for Inner East Belfast, and

the wider benefits it could have in terms of improved health, education and social inclusion outcomes.

Next steps

The Council is currently undertaking a feasibility study for future leisure provision for Inner East Belfast. Should the current proposals be the preferred option for both BELB and the Council, detailed design and development work to maximise synergies and co-location opportunities would be undertaken.

In order for BELB to complete their EA and secure money from the Department of Education for their proposed development, they have asked the Council to consider the disposal to them of the area of land as shown edged red on the attached plan at Appendix 1.

Officers have advised BELB that a recommendation cannot be made to Members at this stage for disposal of the land in the absence of more detail on the Council's own proposals for future leisure provision in Inner East Belfast. The feasibility study that is currently underway will consider the options available to the Council but until these have been considered the Council would not wish to place itself in a position whereby they agree to dispose of land that may potentially be required for continued leisure or community provision on the Avoniel site.

However, in order to inform both the BELB and BCC decision making process, a valuation of the subject land and assessment of the costs for relocating the play-centre and playground could now be obtained. This will be used for the purposes of the BELB Economic Appraisal but on the basis that no decision has yet been made by the Council as to whether or not to dispose of the land. Upon completion of the Council's feasibility study the Council will be better placed to make a decision on whether any of the land is surplus to Council requirements.

2.4 Castlereagh

Preliminary discussions have taken place with Belfast Metropolitan College regarding their planned re-development of the campus at Montgomery Road. Given the proximity of the Robinson Centre, due to transfer to the Council on 1 April 2015, officers have explored the potential of integrating leisure provision into the new college campus. There would be advantages to this, particularly as a large number of sports studies students are located at the campus currently. Belfast Metropolitan College has proceeded with the development of an Outline Business Case, presented to the Department of Employment and Learning in February 2014. They are seeking authority to proceed to the next stage and to identify funding streams for the development in the context of the next

Comprehensive Spending Review. In the Outline Business Case, they have included an option which includes the potential for leisure provision. This allows the Council a future opportunity to formally consider a decision to co-invest in an integrated campus. However it should be noted that this scheme is at a very early stage of consideration. A survey is being completed on the Robinson Centre to determine its physical condition, as well as examining the contractual arrangements currently in place for gym provision.

2.5 Conclusion

Each of the capital proposals, as outlined above, give the Council the opportunity to fulfil its strategic objectives for the Leisure Transformation Programme, as outlined at 1.1. Officers will continue to proactively engage with partners over the coming weeks, with the intention to bring feasible proposals for Members' consideration in late summer/early autumn, within the affordability limits established by the SP&R Committee.

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial Implications: A valuation and assessment of costs will determine the financial implications associated with the BELB proposals that include Council lands.

Asset Implications: Unknown at present – to be determined as part of the feasibility studies underway and **Human Resource Implications:** Staff resource from Parks & Leisure and Property & Projects.

4.0 Equality Implications

To be screened when Phase II capital programme is considered by Committee

5.0 Recommendations

Members are requested:

- i. To note the update as outlined above in relation to Phase 2 of the Leisure Transformation Programme; and**
- ii. Authorise officers to obtain a valuation of the Council's land adjoining the Avoniel Leisure Centre site, as referred to above, and an assessment of the costs for relocation of the Council facilities currently located on the subject lands. This is subject to the valuation and assessment of costs being used to inform the BELB Economic Appraisal process but on**

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**the basis that no decision has been made by the
Council as to whether or not to dispose of the land.”**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Department for Social Development –
Capital Programme/Funding - Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that responsibility for Urban Regeneration and Community Development will transfer to the new Councils on 1 April 2015.

1.2 Whilst DSD will retain responsibility for the overarching policy on urban regeneration and community development, and will be responsible for regionally significant interventions, the transfer will incorporate four main areas:

- **Area Based Regeneration – Neighbourhood Renewal, Masterplans and Frameworks**
- **Physical Development – Comprehensive Development, Public Realm / Environmental Improvements and Urban Development Grants (UDGs)**
- **Community Development – Community Support Programmes, Belfast Area Partnerships & Community Investment Fund**
- **Transfer and Maintenance of Assets – This consists of the current DSD land bank, public spaces, the management and maintenance of the Lagan Weir and the management of the river between the Lagan and Stranmillis Weirs**

1.3 In order to facilitate effective change management, a two stage transfer process has been agreed through the former Statutory Transition Committee and with DSD:

- **Transition – to focus on the practical arrangements/decisions necessary for Council to maintain and deliver agreed transferred services and resources on 1 April 2015. This will provide service continuity and allow planning to take place for transformation over the 2015-2017 period.**

- Transformation – to focus on developing the future vision, outcomes and delivery models for urban regeneration and community development and to align with the Community Planning process, post 2017.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 In preparation for the transfer of functions, DSD has formulated a resource allocation model to distribute its current resources across the 11 new Councils. This distribution model is principally based on urban population and levels of deprivation. A prospective budget reduction of 4% across the NI Executive Departments was also factored into the model.
- 2.2 Under this Regional Allocation Model the new Belfast City Council area will receive a total allocation of £20,418,000(indicative at present) as set out in Table 1 below. The allocation will however transfer as part of the rate and it will be for the new Council to decide how this money is ultimately allocated.

Table 1: DSD Allocation for Belfast City Council:

Component	Draft Allocation
Tackling Disadvantage	£8,700,000
Physical Regeneration Component	£5,585,000
Community Development	£1,715,000
Total Programme	£16,000,000
Laganside (ring-fenced for Belfast)	£2,592,000
Salary and GAE costs	£1,826,000
Total Allocation	£20,418,000

- 2.3 Over the last number of weeks, Council officers have been conducting a due diligence exercise which has involved analysing the average DSD expenditure in the new Council areas over the past seven financial years. This analysis is set out in the table below which clearly indicates that Belfast is the only area which will experience a reduction in the level of resource allocation in comparison to previous years. It should be noted however that expenditure (particularly capital) varies significantly from year to year in some areas.

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Table 2: Summary of DSD's Historic Spend within new Council Cluster Areas:

New Council Cluster	REGIONAL BUDGET MODEL ALLOCATION (£,000s)	Average Spend 2007-2014 (£,000)	SURPLUS/ DEFICIT compared to Average (£,000s)
Antrim & Newtownabbey	£4,532	£1,026	£3,506
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	£6,663	£5,314	£1,349
Belfast	£20,418	£26,952	-£6,534
Causeway Coast & Glens	£4,890	£2,352	£2,538
Derry & Strabane	£7,453	£7,248	£205
Fermanagh & Omagh	£2,568	£1,931	£637
Lisburn & Castlereagh	£3,495	£3,188	£307
Mid & East Antrim	£4,609	£1,619	£2,990
Mid Ulster	£3,467	£1,687	£1,780
Newry, Mourne & Down	£4,989	£4,029	£960
North Down & Ards	£5,043	£1,891	£3,152

- 2.4 In addition to the analysis above, Council officers working alongside DSD officials have identified that some £15.7m will be spent in supporting neighbourhood renewal and community development activity in Belfast during the 2014/15 financial year. The STC, recognising the fact that there was no time to put a new delivery model in place prior to transfer, previously agreed that the current levels of revenue support would be made available between 2015-2017 to meet the needs of communities across the city and to address the chronic levels of deprivation in 14 Neighbourhood Renewal areas.
- 2.5 Almost £2.6m has been allocated to Belfast for the Lagan Weir. Officers estimate however that the annual cost is likely to be £2.7m (consisting of £1.95m annual maintenance and £750,000 towards the sinking fund). The sinking fund provides the resources for seven yearly dredging and replacement of the rams every ten years.
- 2.6 Officers also estimate that the current sinking fund has a shortfall of circa £3.5m which would require a one off capital injection from DSD.
- 2.7 If one assumes that the salary allocation of £1.82m for posts associated with the services transferring from DSD to the Council are realistic (current DSD salary costs in Belfast are circa £2.6m), there will only be £300k available for the delivery of capital projects.
- 2.8 The consequences of this and a number of associated recommendations are set out in an associated report prepared by the Director of Property & Projects attached to this report.

Transitional Funding

- 2.9 One of the principles of Local Government Reform is that functions should transfer at 'nil cost' to Councils. The due diligence work done to date demonstrates that whilst this might apply for 10 of the new Councils, Belfast City Council will lose out substantially in comparison to expenditure in previous years.
- 2.10 There is clearly a case therefore for transitional funding to be made available to Belfast City Council for the 2015-17 period given the likely reduction in resources, the fact that 8 out of 10 of the most deprived wards in NI are in Belfast and 14 out the 36 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas are in the new Belfast city Council Area.
- 2.11 A 2 year Transitional Funding period would allow the Council to provide appropriate support to communities whilst giving time to restructure service delivery and align resources with the new Community Planning Process.
- 2.12 BCC officers are currently preparing a case for Transitional Funding to be presented to DSD at a future meeting with the Minister as a follow up to the previous meeting with Party Leaders on 28 April 2014

Projects of Regional Significance

- 2.13 When the Party Leaders previously met with the DSD Minister on 28 April 2014, Members made the case that there were a number of physical projects currently being progressed by DSD which the Council could not possibly fund from the resources due to be allocated under the Regional Allocation Model. In particular, Members referenced the next phase of Belfast Streets Ahead (BSA3) which alone has a projected cost of £37m.
- 2.14 At the Minister's suggestion Council officers, in consultation with DSD officials, are currently working on a policy paper which will set out the key principles that could define 'Projects of Regional Significance'.

This policy will consider specific references to Projects of Regional Significance within NI Executive policy documents including the DRD Regional Development Strategy and DSD's own Urban Regeneration and Community Development Framework. Officers will also draw on examples elsewhere, particularly in Scotland and Australia.

The policy will be based on two key principles:

- Scale – i.e. where the scale of the project is such that it would be unreasonable to expect the funding to

come from the notional allocation from DSD to Local Government e.g. Streets Ahead 3

- Impact – i.e. where the project is associated with schemes which will have impact and benefit beyond the Council's boundaries eg the relocation of the University of Ulster, Transportation Hub, Rapid Transit, York Street Interchange and the National Stadia

2.15 It is intended that this policy would apply to the whole of local government across a range of Executive Departments and deal with existing and future large scale projects.

2.16 It is intended that this paper would be presented to the DSD Minister and potentially the DFP Minister requesting that there should be an ongoing process for defining major projects as regionally significant which would enable them to be financed by the Executive (many delivered in partnership with Local Government).

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Council officers are currently working with DSD officials to extend revenue funding to existing recipients of DSD grants for the period up to 31 March 2017 in line with the decision previously taken by the Statutory Transition Committee.

3.2 In the absence of Transitional Funding or funding for Projects of Regional Significance there will be little, if any finance available to support capital projects currently being taken forward by DSD.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

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

5 Recommendations

5.1 Agree to the development of position papers to support requests for both Transitional Funding and funding for Projects of Regional Significance, including University Ulster/Royal Exchange/BSA3, National Stadia and Belfast Rapid Transit;

Seek a further meeting with the DSD Minister to make the case for Transitional Funding for the period 2015 -2017 and the allocation of resources for Projects of Regional Significance.”

Appendix 1

1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that as part of the Local Government Reform, the Council will become the regeneration authority for the city. This will result in the transfer from DSD of a significant number of assets and liabilities; funding for capital projects; masterplans and regeneration plans; contracts and non property assets. The DSD transferring functions cover 3 broad areas including;

- **Area Based Regeneration – including Neighbourhood Renewal (physical and revenue) projects; Belfast Area Partnerships, Masterplans & Frameworks**
- **Physical Development – Comprehensive Development, Public Realm/Environmental Improvements and Urban Development Grants (UDGs)**
- **Community Development – Community Support Programmes & Community Investment Fund**

1.2 Members will be aware that a proposed budget of £20.418M has been identified, within the proposed regional Allocation Model for the new Belfast City Council, to cover the delivery of the transferring regeneration functions. This is to cover the delivery of any physical projects; ongoing revenue projects; the costs associated with managing and maintaining all transferring assets; contractual commitments; human resource and administrative costs. This model was considered by the Statutory Transition Committee at its meeting on 15 Jan 2014.

1.3 Implications arising out of this paper have an impact on some of the Council's emerging BIF and LIF projects – these are outlined in the 'Area Working Update' report which is also on the agenda for discussion at today's Committee and also potentially on some Capital Programme projects that DSD were supporting.

2.0 Current status

2.1 As outlined above, a proposed budget allocation of just over £20m will be transferring to the Council to cover the transferring regeneration functions (both revenue and capital). A substantial amount of this has been will be required to support ongoing neighbourhood renewal (revenue) projects while other money from the allocation has to be set aside for the Lagan, asset related expenditure and to cover staffing costs. This level of commitment to existing activity leaves a very limited potential to support physical / capital projects development. Specifically at least around £15m is

required in terms of revenue spending, £2.5m for the Laganside assets and almost £2m staffing costs leaving minimal capital expenditure.

2.2 DSD officials have shared their long lists of proposed capital projects for funding under Neighbourhood Renewal and Public Realm/Environmental Improvement Schemes with Council officials. The proposed commitment under Neighbourhood Renewal Capital alone is over £10million for project costs up to 16/17 whilst there is nearly £40million of potential Public Realm/Environmental Impact schemes, based on initial outline budgets. This excludes any commitment to Masterplans, Strategic projects etc.

2.3 It is clear that the transferring budget allocation is significantly less than the financial commitment required to progress all the physical projects currently being developed or proposed by DSD. In the context of the proposed Allocation Model settlement and the initial levels of projected budget commitments the scope for the Council to carry out physical projects will be limited. The Council will not be in a position to continue the investment at the current levels or deliver the numbers of projects that help enhance quality of life, reanimate the city and attract investment and economic activity and will require Members to take some challenging prioritisation decisions. This paper is to assist DSD in making a realistic bid for monies this year and a further paper will be going to the Shadow SP&R in regard to potential additional transition funding and addressing some large projects via regional funding.

3.0 Neighbourhood Renewal Capital Projects – Proposed prioritisation

3.1 There are a number of DSD projects that the Council needs to consider now to ensure that budgets are confirmed and to maximise links with other funding streams, particularly those where the Council has an interest or where they relate to citywide strategic projects.

3.2 Council officers have considered the detailed list of proposed Neighbourhood Renewal Capital projects and have categorised and assessed these on a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) basis to reflect their potential and to highlight what stage they have reached– on the basis of:

1. Projects which are likely to be completed by March 2015 and will have no ongoing implications for the Council
2. Projects which may have implications for the Council post 2015 but where there is overlap with emerging Council supported projects including potential BIF/LIF/SIF projects; and

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3. Projects which are not developed enough to incur any significant expenditure by DSD this year and therefore no investment decision is possible / required at this stage.

A more detailed explanation of the RAG status and how this was awarded is outlined in appendix 1.

4.0 1. Projects which should be completed by March 2015

- 4.1 On the basis of the information and discussions to date with DSD officials, the following existing BCC projects in Table 1 should be completed with all spend committed by the by end of MARCH 2015 and therefore should have no ongoing implications for the Council. A risk always remains that schemes will not finish on time with a potential liability for Council.

Table 1 – Projects which should complete by March 2015

Area	Project	Description	Total Cost	DSD 14/15	Other funding	RAG
West	Sarsfields GAC	Site development works	£160k	£80,000	LIF - £80k	
North	Girdwood Park	Infrastructure Works	£11.7m	£6,200,000	BCC-SEUPB	
Centre	Lagan Weir	Footbridge Replacement	£3.68m	£3,680,000	Lagan River Study/ Gateway	
DSD COMMITMENT 14/15				£9,880,000		

- 4.2 Members are asked to note however, that although the assumption is that none of these projects will have an impact on the Council post March 2015, there is always the possibility as with any capital project that they may be delays in procurement and/or unforeseen circumstances that will have an impact on the delivery timescale. Members are asked to note therefore that a risk assessment on the potential for slippage is currently underway in conjunction with DSD to ascertain the potential implications for the 2015/16 financial year and ways to offset this risk.
- 4.3 Members are also asked to note that discussions are ongoing at Ministerial level in respect of transitional arrangements in respect of projects that may have an implication post 2015. This will include the

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potential for a transition funding which could address the expectations and challenges identified in 2.3 above and will be reported to the Shadow SP&R Committee.

- 4.4** Members are asked to note that a number of projects which could potentially result in financial commitments beyond March 2015 have been identified and that these therefore may have a subsequent capital implication for the Council (further agreement will also be required from Shadow Committee). As part of the baseline process DSD had profiled potential expenditure on a number of projects beyond 31st March 2015. However, under LGR restrictions DSD cannot commit to funding projects post 2015 without the agreement of the appropriate Council. The projects below (Tables 2, 3 & 4) have been identified as overlapping with emerging Council supported projects including LIF, potential BIF and SIF projects. DSD have sought confirmation that these projects can be progressed now and that these will form part of the Council's forward work programme in order to enable the continuation of developmental activity and to provide continuity in ongoing physical investment across the city.

Table 2 – BCC Projects Included in DSD June Monitoring Round Bid

Area	Description	Description	Total Cost	DSD 14/15	Other Funder	RAG
West	Cluain Ard community facility	Refurbishment and upgrade	£360k	£90,000	£75,000 LIF (through DD) DCAL, CISTE	
West	St Mary's CBS	Pitch development	£1.4m	£600,000	BIF – Not yet agreed	
POTENTIAL DSD COMMITMENT				£690,000		

Table 3 – Projects Potentially Funded from Slippage if Deliverable 2014/15

Area	Description	Description			Other Funder	RAG
South	FASA (Shaftesbury Sq)	Refurbishment of new premises	£350k	£200,000	£150,000 LIF SIF 0 for a wider project – not approved	
Shankill	N I Alternatives	Relocation to Woodvale Road	£180k	£180,000	N/A	
East	Ballymac Friendship Trust	Refurbishment of existing centre	£200K	£200,000	Project is in for SIF for a new build project	
West	Frank Gillen Centre	Expansion of parking area and EI scheme.	£50k	£50,000	Linked to LIF & West Intervention	
West	Whiterock Community	Creation of new public space,	Up to max	£618,000	Capital Prog	

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	centre	play area and MUGA				
POTENTIAL DSD COMMITMENT				£1,248,000		

Table 4 – Projects not included in DSD Bid Proposal

Area	Description	Description			Other Funder (Potential)	RAG
West	St John's Bosco	Refurbishment and upgrade of facility on Conway Street			Sport NI Special Boxing Fund	
North	North Belfast WISP	Refurbishment of existing facility			LIF SIF	
North	Westland Community Group	Replacement of temporary community facility building.			LIF SIF	
South	Stranmillis Gateway	Bridge and lock			BIF – Not yet agreed	
West	Davitts GAC	Sports facility			BCC	
West	Radio Failte	Irish language radio station			BCC Ciste/DCAL	
Shankill	Welcome Church	Community			BCC	
North	Midland Boxing Club	Boxing club			BCC/DCAL	
Shankill	St Andrews	Community			BCC	

4.5 The above information is based on information received from DSD at the time of writing. Council Officers believe some further movement may be possible re the status of the projects with DSD. However, there is very limited time to agree a definitive list with DSD if a June monitoring round bid is to be made and money secured. Members are asked to agree that Council Officers work with DSD on the basis of the above tables and try and get as big a commitment as possible. Obviously a number of projects will not be funded by DSD and Members now need to think through future priorities and how they might be funded given Council's upcoming regeneration role. This may include changes to the LIF/BIF funding regimes which is also highlighted in the Area Working paper.

5.0 Other proposed Neighbourhood Renewal projects

5.1 Members should be aware that the tables in this report relate only to projects linked to Council funding and the DSD bid will include a number of other projects both in Belfast and in the incoming areas, although a lot of these are related to public realm works.

5.2 There are also a number of proposed Neighbourhood Renewal capital projects on DSD's lists for which there is no requirement for an

immediate decision as the projects are not yet developed up enough to incur expenditure by DSD within the current financial year.

Members are asked to note that DSD will not be able to develop these projects to a stage where significant expenditure is possible and if ANY of these projects are progressed now any associated capital implications will be the responsibility of the Council. It is therefore recommended that none of these projects are progressed in the interim and that these be further considered in the context of the Council policy or priorities that may define a Forward Work Plan for physical projects for post 2015, which will take account of affordability limits for investment going forward.

6.0 Public Realm/Environmental Improvement Projects

- 6.1** Members are asked to note that DSD are continuing work on a range of Public Realm/Environmental Schemes (PREI) which are all due to complete by the end of March 2015. A list of these is attached at Appendix B. No decisions are required on these projects as work is currently underway and there should be no financial implications for the Council post March 2015.
- 6.2** In addition to these, 21 other PREI schemes have been worked up by DSD. Most of them have been worked up to design Stage C and initial consultation has been undertaken on a number of them. DSD are continuing to work the other schemes up to this stage. However Members are asked to note that none of these schemes are contractually committed for delivery. These PREI schemes have an estimated cost of over £37million between now and 2016/17 if they were progressed. This is only for delivery – Members should note that there may also be an ongoing maintenance implication from these types of projects.
- 6.3** This would have significant capital consequences for the Council and it is therefore recommended that the Council does not commit to any of the PREI schemes that could potentially have an implication post 2015 as the Director of Finance & Resources is unable at this stage to confirm that these schemes would be within the affordability limits of the Council given the ongoing rate calculations and outcome of the rate setting process. It is therefore proposed that whilst these schemes MAY be considered once available funding has been clarified (post 2015 and in the context of the Council's forward work plan for physical projects) an appropriate policy frameworks for prioritising these schemes will be required. Members are asked if they agree with this proposed recommendation.

7.0 Masterplans

- 7.1** Members are asked to note that a range of Masterplans will also transfer over from DSD. While some of these may need to be revisited given the time which has elapsed from their publication others are more recent and have a Delivery Executive and/or an Implementation governance structure in place including for example the recently formed DSD/BCC Delivery Executive for Glen 10, a proposed implementation delivery structure for the Greater Ballysillan Masterplan while project boards are also currently in place for the Queen's Quay project, Shaftesbury Square, South West Gateway etc which raises expectations that projects are going to be delivered. However Members are asked to note that no specific DSD funding has been profiled against the implementation of these Masterplans. It is envisaged that the range of masterplans will need to be reconsidered in the context of the Council's new Planning / Community Planning processes going forward

8.0 Urban Development Grants (UDGs)

- 8.1** Members will be aware that DSD currently funds a range of projects under its Urban Development Grants funding stream. These are discretionary grants used for promoting job creation, inward investment and environmental improvement by developing vacant or underused sites.
- 8.2** The current total expenditure profile on UDGs from now to 2016/17 is just over £4million. Again there is no direct associated budget line for these. The nature of UDG's is such that the grants may not become payable until several years from the date of application, which could leave the Council with an unclear financial liability on an annual basis. Members are asked to note that the application process for Urban Development Grants (UDG's) remains open and DSD are continuing to deal with new applications.
- 8.3** It is therefore proposed that a recommendation is made that this funding stream is closed to new applications from now and that the Members are asked to note that UDG is a discretionary funding stream and as such the Council has no obligation to continue with it post transfer. Further consideration can be given to the reinstatement of such funding as circumstances allow in future years.

9.0 Equality Implications

This would have been considered by DSD and proposals are based on finance and deliverability given the short period left before March 2015.

10.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and -

Overall

- note that the funding allocation which is transferring across from DSD does not match the levels of financial commitment required to progress all the physical projects currently underway or proposed by DSD and that this will require Members to take some challenging prioritisation decisions.

Neighbourhood Renewal Capital Projects

Projects due to complete by 31st March 2015

- note that a risk assessment on the potential for slippage/over run of these types of projects is underway with DSD to ascertain the potential implications for post March 2015.
- Agree that Council Officers work with DSD on the basis of projects identified in Tables 2, 3 & 4 to maximise DSD expenditure in Belfast as much as possible for 2014/15. There will be no definite list of projects until DSD monitoring bid is completed.

Public Realm/Environmental Improvement (PREI) projects

- note that there a number of schemes currently underway which are due to complete by March 15
- Note that over 20 other PREI schemes have been worked up by DSD but that none of these are contractually committed for delivery
- agree that the Council does not commit to any of the proposed PREI schemes that could potentially have an implication post 2015 as these would have significant implications for the Council and the Director of Finance & Resources is unable at this stage to confirm that these schemes would be within the affordability limits of the Council.
- It is proposed that these schemes MAY be considered once available funding has been clarified (post 2015 and in the context of the Council's new capital

**programme) and the appropriate policy frameworks for
prioritising these schemes are agreed**

Masterplans

- **note that there are a number of project boards and delivery structures in place for existing Masterplans which raises expectations that projects will be delivered but that no specific DSD funding has been profiled against the implementation of these Masterplan**
- **these will have to be reconsidered in the context of the Council's new Planning / Community Planning processes going forward**

Urban Development Grants (UDGs)

- **agree if a recommendation is made to DSD at a Ministerial level that this funding stream is closed to new applications from now on and that the ongoing liabilities associated with this funding stream up to now remain with DSD"**

During discussion, the Members expressed the need to put pressure on the Department for Social Development in relation to the Transitional allocation model for funding and to seek to have additional mechanisms for accessing further funds for capital projects in Belfast. A further Member expressed the urgency of completing the proposal papers referred to in the report and requested that those be presented to the Members at the earliest opportunity.

In response the Chief Executive Designate explained that the Proposal papers had almost been completed, however, as they were being developed it had become clear that additional work on economic returns would be required to be undertaken and that the papers would be completed by the end of the month so that a meeting could take place with the Minister (DSD) as soon as possible.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations as set out in paragraph 5 of the report and paragraph 10 of the appendix.

Neighbourhood Renewal Projects

Area Working Update

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for consideration the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1** Members are aware that since their inception the AWGs have played an integral role in recommending investment decisions in terms of LIF and Local Interventions to the SP&R Committee. It was also previously agreed at SP&R in November 2012 that the AWGs would play a central part in recommending decisions related to the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) given their knowledge of local areas. The final decisions on what projects to invest in under BIF lies with the SP&R Committee.
- 1.2** It is recommended that this report is read in conjunction with the report on DSD projects which is also on the agenda for discussion at Committee today as these are closely interlinked.

2.0 Current status – BIF projects

- 2.1** Members are aware that BIF was established to enable the Council to take a lead role and work in partnership to deliver key investment projects across the city. An overview of the objectives of BIF is attached at Appendix 1. Members have previously agreed an approval process for all BIF projects which reflects the Stage Approval process that all capital projects must go through whereby decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R Committee in its role as investment decision maker.
- 2.2** Members will recall that a detailed report on area working was taken to SP&R in March where it was highlighted that it is key that investment decisions on projects are not taken in isolation and it is important the links and inter-dependencies between projects and different funding streams are taken into consideration. This is particularly important in the case for BIF projects which Members are subject to securing match funding of at least 50% from other sources.
- 2.3** Importantly Members will also appreciate that the investment context is changing as under LGR the Council will become the regeneration authority for the city with a transferring regeneration budget. Members will be aware that DSD funding will cease to exist next March and this will have an impact on the match funding requirement. There are a number of projects where DSD are identified as a potential funder and where funding has been profiled in principle but not yet committed.
- 2.4** In April SP&R Committee agreed to move a number of BIF projects to Stage 2 (development of an OBC) due to their state of readiness, potential funding being available etc. These included Stranmillis Gateway (part of the wider Lagan Corridor project), St. Comgall's and the development of a pitch at St. Mary's CBS. Members are asked to note that two of these projects are dependent on securing DSD in

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order to meet the BIF criteria of securing 50% match funding and DSD have asked for confirmation from the Council that these projects will be part of the Council's forward work plan in order to bid for funding for these projects -

Project	Project details	Overall Cost	BIF funding sought	Match funding
St. Mary's CBS – Pitch development	Development of a community/school sports training facility including a 3G Pitch with changing pavilion, community gym and training room	£1.4m	£600k	DSD - £600k – not secured St. Mary's - £200k
Stranmillis Gateway (part of the Lagan Corridor project)	development of a cascade weir, a lock, an iconic footbridge, a commercial facility and high quality landscaping with associated paths which will see the development of a gateway for the Lagan and the Lagan Valley Regional Park.	£3.5m	£1.75m	Ulster Garden Villages £1m DSD £80k

However there are a number of issues which Members are asked to consider in relation to these projects. These are outlined below

2.7 St. Mary's CBS Pitch Development

Members are asked to note that:

- The St. Mary's proposal is dependent on receiving £600k from DSD. At the moment this money is not yet committed. DSD have indicated that they could bid for this money if they get commitment from the Council that this project will be part of the Council's Forward Work Plan (*Members are asked to refer to the 'DSD –Capital Project Update report' which is also on the agenda for discussion today*)
- The Council would look to front-load DSD monies on this project, however if the 600k from DSD is not spent by the end of March 2015 then this will have implications for the 50% match funding criteria of BIF
- DSD have indicated that one of their likely conditions of funding will be that the Council deliver this project due to the limited capacity of the school to do this.

This will have resource implications for the Council in terms of overall project delivery.

- Planning permission is in place for this however there needs to be further work in terms of design. The delivery programme will need to be tested to see if £600k of work can be delivered in time for the end of March deadline. Members are asked to note that the delivery timescale for this project is already tight and this is without the possibility of any procurement challenges and/or any other unforeseen circumstances which could delay the delivery timeline – again if this was delayed this would have an impact on the match funding requirement
- a key component of this project will be to develop a secured community access agreement for the facility – this is not yet in place and will require further consultation with the school, Parks & Leisure Department and Legal Services.
- The trustees of the school have written asking that BCC undertake delivery and stating that they are keen to work with BCC/DSD to restore the above issues.

2.5 Stranmillis Gateway

Members are asked to note that -

- The Stranmillis Gateway project is not currently at a state of readiness where it can be delivered. Work is currently underway on an Economic Appraisal and working up detailed design in order to allow the project to be fully costed.
- DSD have indicated that they would be happy to fund the costs of these pieces of work. At the moment this money is not yet committed. DSD have indicated that they could bid for this money if they get commitment from the Council that this project will be part of the Council's Forward Work Plan (*Members are asked to refer to the 'DSD –Capital Project Update report' which is also on the agenda for discussion today*).
- Members are asked to note that it is envisaged that both the EA and the design work for this project will be completed by the Autumn time and so it is likely that the DSD monies (if secured) could all be spent this year

2.8 Members are therefore asked to -

- consider if they agree IN PRINCIPLE that the above projects can be progressed – Members are asked to note that this will dependent on getting confirmation from DSD that monies can be secured for these projects and that all monies can be committed and

spent this year – particularly in the case of St. Mary's CBS where if this cannot be committed then this will have implications for the 50% match funding criteria

- note that in the case of the St. Mary's CBS project that this will commit the Council to a £600k investment under BIF – again it is stressed that this would be contingent on getting confirmation from DSD that their monies can be secured and
- note that the St. Mary's CBS project would be required to be delivered by the Council and that there are a number of other outstanding issues to be resolved in terms of this project ie community access agreement.

2.9 Members are asked to note that work is continuing on the development of the OBC for St. Comgall's and that the Council is working closely with Falls Community Council and OFMDFM on this project.

3.0 Belfast Investment Fund – Additional projects

3.1 The East AWG has recommended that an additional project, the development of a new community facility by Bloomfield Community Association, be added to the emerging BIF list. Members are asked to consider if they wish to progress the project as recommended by the East AWG to be moved to Stage 1 (i.e. the development of an SOC) which will test its feasibility in the first instance. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any project.

3.2 An emerging BIF project proposed via the West AWG is for the development of a community facility at Blackmountain however it was not possible for this to be progressed due to land ownership issues. Members are asked to note that the Council has been informed that they may now be opportunity to acquire this land and Members approve is sought to authorise officers to enter into negotiations to acquire this land using BIF funding.

4.0 Belfast Investment Fund – Going forward

4.1 As outlined above, the Council will become the regeneration authority for the city from 1st April 2015 taking over responsibility for this function from DSD. DSD funding was a key mechanism for many projects for securing the 50% match funding which is required under the current BIF criteria. Members are also aware that the Council's boundary is changing which will see it take in additional 50,000 people. There is a need for the Council to start planning in terms of investment for the new enhanced geographical boundaries of the Council. At present none of the current proposed BIF proposals are within the new boundaries of the enhanced city council area.

- 4.2 Members will also appreciate that many of the BIF projects which have been proposed have not been given a strategic context nor detailed their overall benefit at a city wide level. Under LGR the Council will also become responsible for developing a community plan for the city and as part of this the new Transformational Committee will be looking at the roles, responsibilities and governance arrangements for the new Area Working Groups. Furthermore, future DSD regeneration funding to BCC will be allocated in line with community plans and regeneration policy.
- 4.3 Members will also be aware that all LIF is due to complete at the end of the current Council term (end of March 2015). LIF has been a key mechanism for helping Members engage at a local level and for helping to progress smaller neighbourhood projects. There will be further slippage in LIF spending as some joint projects with DSD do not go forward.
- 4.4 In light of the above and the changing context of local government roles and responsibilities and the new areas, Members are asked to consider if it is now timely to look at the objectives and criteria of BIF and consider if there is scope for BIF and LIF to be realigned with future DSD funding as a neighbourhood regeneration fund in the future. Members are asked to note that if they agree to this that further consultation and work with Members will be undertaken in the coming months

4.0 Equality Implications

Emerging equality implications to be considered as further details emerge of projects

5.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and -
Belfast Investment Fund – St. Mary’s CBS pitch project and Stranmillis Gateway

- consider if they agree IN PRINCIPLE that the above projects can be progressed – Members are asked to note that this will depend on getting confirmation from DSD that their monies can be secured and also that their monies can be committed and spent this year – particularly in the case of St. Mary’s CBS where if this cannot be committed then this will have implications for the 50% match funding criteria.
- St. Mary’s – note that this will commit the Council to a £600k investment under BIF – again it is stressed that this would be contingent on getting confirmation from

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DSD that their £600K can be secured and committed by end of March 15

- **note however that this project would be required to be delivered by the Council and that the delivery programme for this project (in order to get £600k worth of work completed by end of March) is already very tight**

Belfast Investment Fund – Additional projects

- **consider if they wish to progress the project as recommended by the East Area Working Group (new community facility for Bloomfield Community Association) to be moved to Stage 1 (development of an SOC) which will test its feasibility in the first instance**
- **agree if they wish to authorise officers to enter into negotiations to acquire land at Blackmountain**

Belfast Investment Fund – Going forward

- **Consider if, in the context of the Council becoming the regeneration authority from 1st April 2015, its new role as being responsible for developing a community plan for the city and its enhanced boundaries, that the objectives and criteria of BIF should be re-examined and consider the scope for BIF and LIF to be repackaged as a wider neighbourhood regeneration fund. Members are asked to note that if they agree to this that further consultation and work with Members will be undertaken in the coming months.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Notice of Motion – Real Jobs

The Committee was reminded that on 6th January the following Notice of Motion had been considered by the Council:

“This Council recognises the increasing social and economic hardship experienced by people in our communities as a result of growing unemployment and cuts to welfare benefits. The Council accepts that it has a duty to use the powers available to it (including but not limited to planning, regulation and procurement powers), to generate positive outcomes for the most marginalised in our communities and hereby commits to including at every available opportunity a ‘Real Jobs’ clause in contracts tendered by the Council to procure goods, services and capital works. The ‘Real Jobs’ clause will guarantee ring fenced, fully paid jobs and apprenticeships for the long-term unemployed (12+ months).”

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The motion had been referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee when it had been agreed that a report on the matter should be submitted in due course. The Director of Property and Projects explained that, since January, a number of actions had been undertaken in order to progress the Real Jobs motion, these had included:

- The Standards of existing social causes had been amended to reflect the requirement of the motion as opportunities arose;
- The intent of the motion had been captured in capital works tenders for the Waterfront Hall, Connswater Greenway Phase II, the Innovations Centre, the Girdwood Hub and the Olympia Leisure Centre;
- 1226 employment weeks have been secured in upcoming contracts which had been ring-fenced entirely for people who had been out of work for over 12 months; and
- Employment weeks were used as that ensured contractors were required to fulfil the minimum number of weeks, whereas, by specifying job numbers there was not the same certainty about duration of employment.

He pointed out that issues remained with the apprenticeships aspects of contracts as there was often a mismatch between contract duration and the length of time taken to complete an apprenticeship. However, officers were currently looking at models of how that had been addressed elsewhere, for example, in Manchester. Another consideration was the need to comply with the requirement of partners/funders in respect of contractual matters, and again, ways of dealing with that issue were being explored.

The Director of Property and Projects stated that work was under way to develop a social clauses policy which would include addressing the issues set out and which would improve also consideration of the "living wage" proposal which had been agreed by the Council earlier in the year. A full report on progress would be submitted to the Committee in September. As a direct employer the Council had made considerable progress in respect to supporting people into employment, including the long-term unemployed. Over the past two years the Council had:

- Delivered 601 job opportunities and provided 526 work experience placements;
- Ring-fenced five permanent administrative posts to the long-term unemployed/economically inactive and provided a two week pre-employment programme for 40 long-term unemployed/economically inactive participants to help them apply for the 5 ring-fenced posts;

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- Delivered a similar programme for seasonal cleansing operative positions, inviting 30 people to participate and helping them apply for five ring-fenced posts;
- Provided 16 one year paid industrial placements for students at local universities;
- Created 10 new Apprenticeships;
- Committed £300,000 to a bursary scheme to help those aged 16-24 into further education, training and employment and awarded approximately £93,000 to date to 432 young people; and
- Part funded European Social Fund funded programmes which had resulted in 1,551 people gaining recognised qualifications/accreditation and 604 people moving into employment.

The Council had been recognised recently for its work in supporting the long-term unemployed by the Business in the Community Organisation when it had received a Northern Ireland Impact Award.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Corporate Plan and Performance Management

Annual Report 2013/2014

The Committee was reminded that on an annual basis the Council produced a Corporate Plan which outlined its priority actions for the coming year. Departmental plans were developed also which provided details on how those priorities would be delivered through key services and projects. In 2012 the Council had produced also an Investment Programme which outlined the Council's commitments to developing the City and supporting the local economy up to 2015. The Annual Report provided an update on how the organisation had performed against all those plans during 2013/2014.

The Committee approved the contents of the Annual Report for 2013/2014.

Democratic Services and Governance

**Requests for the Use of the City Hall
and the Provision of Hospitality**

(Councillor Jones left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.)

The Committee considered the undernoted requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality:

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Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
ASTM International	ASTM International Committee Conference Reception and Dinner 24th September, 2014 Approximately 40 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £200
Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland Cancer Registry	Cancer Conference 2014 Welcome to Belfast Reception and Dinner 8th June, 2015 Approximately 500 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Queen's University Belfast	21st Annual Meeting of Society in Europe for Simulation Applied to Medicine 25th June, 2015 Approximately 600 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	Delegates will be staying in accommodation in Belfast and the conference will take place within the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

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<p>Mediation Northern Ireland</p>	<p>Roma Parenting and Employability Award Ceremony 11th July, 2014 Approximately 60 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>This event would seek to celebrate the achievement of the participants whilst recognising their hard work and commitment to increasing their employability skills.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hally</p>
<p>Wave Trauma Centre</p>	<p>Trauma Training Learning Pathway Awards 2014 4th September, 2014 Approximately 150 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event seeks to promote the success of those who, due to their experiences during the troubles have returned to education and training through the support of WAVE Trauma Centre.</p> <p>Accredited certificates will be awarded on the night to individuals who have successfully completed Open College Network courses through WAVE.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'Better opportunities for success across the city', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better services – listening and delivering'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and provision of hospitality in the form of tea/coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate Cost £375</p>

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<p>Employers for Childcare Charitable Group</p>	<p>Childcare Works Awards 2014 24th September, 2014 Approximately 100 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event will promote the adoption of family friendly working practices and will recognise and reward examples of excellence by businesses and other organisations. 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 tea, coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £250</p>
<p>Irish Football Association</p>	<p>Irish FA McDonald's Grassroots Football Awards 2014 23rd October, 2014 Approximately 150 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a drinks reception</p>	<p>This event seeks to recognise and celebrate all those individuals who have significantly contributed to grassroots football in communities across Northern Ireland. The event will particularly recognise the important role that grassroots football plays in bringing people together to play the game irrespective of race, gender, religion and other barriers which exist within society. The awards will be presented to volunteers, parents, coaches, clubs, caretakers etc who give their time to delivering grassroots football. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong,</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500</p>

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			fair and together' and 'Better opportunities for success across the city'.	
Chartered Institute of Marketing	<p>CIM Ireland Marketing Excellence Awards</p> <p>6th November, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 450 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	<p>This Awards ceremony seeks to promote the marketing excellence throughout the business community by recognising industry, professional and personal success in marketing and sales.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of red/white wine and soft drinks.</p> <p>Approximate cost £500</p>
Flax Trust	<p>Flax Trust Inter-Community Schools Choir Award</p> <p>4th December, 2014</p> <p>Approximately 500 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	<p>This event will aim to inspire communication and integration across the divide. It will provide an opportunity to bring together schools from across North Belfast to demonstrate through music the work which is being carried out to help build cross-community relationships.</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' and in addition would contribute to the Council's thematic area of Children and Young People.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p> <p>Approximate cots £1,250</p>

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<p>The Scout Association</p>	<p>Queen's Scout Award and Chief Scout's Award Certificate Presentation 9th January, 2015 Approximately 450 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits</p>	<p>This event aims to recognise the achievements of young people who have successfully demonstrated the determination and persistence required to achieve their personal best in terms of effort, commitment and self-reliance. 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 tea/coffee and biscuits. Approximate cost £1,125</p>
<p>Chartered Institute of Housing</p>	<p>Chartered Institute of Housing in Northern Ireland Housing Awards 2015 27th February, 2015 Approximately 250 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event seeks to recognise the achievements and contribution made by individuals who have contributed to providing affordable housing in thriving and safe communities. This event would contribute to the Council's key themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together', Better opportunities for success across the City' 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 pre-dinner drinks reception Approximate Cost £500</p>

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<p>InterTrade Ireland and The Irish Times</p>	<p>All-Island Innovation Awards 17th April, 2015 Approximately 250 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event aims to showcase and reward business success and innovation across the island. It will seek to recognise the ground breaking product and service innovations that have an impact on society both economic and social.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's key themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and Better opportunities for success across the City'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p> <p>Approximate Cost £500</p>
<p>H&J Martin Limited</p>	<p>H&J Martin Limited 175th Anniversary Dinner 9th October, 2014 Approximately 200 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event will celebrate the 175th anniversary of the company and their contribution to the life of the City through provision of employment to the citizens of the City. Their reputation for high quality construction has seen the company build the most iconic landmarks in Belfast including the City Hall and the Grand Opera House.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's key themes of 'City Leadership, Strong, Fair and Together' and Better opportunities for success across the City'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p> <p>Approximate Cost £500</p>

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<p>Glentoran Community Trust</p>	<p>Vienna Cup Centenary Dinner 1st November, 2014 Approximately 100 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception</p>	<p>This event will celebrate the centenary of Glentoran winning the Vienna Cup, the first European trophy won by a British team and the only European trophy won by an Irish team. In this decade of centenaries the event will mark that eight members of the winning team were involved in the building of the Titanic and it is also hoped that guests will attend in period costume. 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 pre-dinner drinks reception Approximate Cost £500</p>
<p>Organisation of Malayalis in Northern Ireland</p>	<p>'Ponnonam 2014' Celebration Event 7th September, 2014 Approximately 500 attending</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>	<p>Ponnonam 2014 is the celebration of the various cultures within the Indian community for people from the state of Kerala. This programme consists of a series of events which include children's entertainment activities, a special vegetarian lunch and a stage programme showing the talent of the community through song and dance. The aim of the event is to promote cultural diversity and also to</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall</p>

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			forge closer relationships between the Indian community and the citizens of Belfast. This event would contribute to the Council's key themes 'City Leadership - strong, fair, together' and of 'Better support for people and communities'.	
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Additional request

The Committee agreed to the provision of appropriate hospitality for the 36th Ulster Division Commemorative Event on 4th August, 2014.

The Committee adopted the remaining recommendations as set out.

Allowances for the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff

The Committee was reminded that the Personal and Entertainments Allowances for the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff were reviewed annually. The established practice had been that the Personal and Entertainments Allowances should take into account increases in the cost of living by increasing the allowances in line with the Consumer Price Index. The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Committee that, in the last three years, it had considered three options, which were to increase the allowances by a percentage equivalent to the Consumer Price Index, increase the allowances by a percentage equivalent to the District Rate increase for the year or not to increase the allowances for the year. In the previous three years the Committee had decided not to make any increase in the allowances and, accordingly, the Lord Mayor's Personal and Entertainments Allowances for those years had been maintained at £34,800 and, £25,900 respectively with the Deputy Lord Mayor's and the High Sheriff's Personal and Entertainments Allowances remaining at £6,250 and £735 respectively.

The Committee agreed that the Entertainments Allowances for the Deputy Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff be increased to £1,000 and that no increase be made in the remainder of the Civic Allowances for the year 2014/2015.

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee was reminded that there had been several reports submitted over the past year in order to prepare the organisation for the Shadow Council term which had commenced recently. One of the issues which had been discussed was the call that there would be on Members' time over the period from now until 31st March, 2015 when the existing Term of Office would come to an end. That was

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particularly the case for the 36 Members who were serving both on the existing Council and on the Shadow Council.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that, given that one of the key tasks which the Committee usually spent a considerable amount of time on - namely the discussions around the striking of the District Rate – would this year be a responsibility of the Shadow Council, it was suggested that it might be possible for the existing Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to revert routinely to only holding one meeting each month. He pointed out that officers were currently trying to design a monthly Committee Schedule to incorporate the meetings of the four Shadow Committees into an already busy meeting schedule. It would be important that the schedule of meetings was prepared in such a way as to allow issues which would have to be raised both with the existing Council and with the Shadow Council to happen in an orderly way so that there was not any undue delay in decisions being actioned.

The Committee agreed to revert to a single meeting each month initially for the months of August and September and to review the situation after that time.

Finance/Value-for-Money

Capital Programme Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of report

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

- **proposed recommendations for movement between the Capital Programme stages specific project updates**
- **an update on the communications and engagement activities for capital projects planned for the coming months**

2.0 Relevant Background Information

Capital Programme – Key highlights and Comms Activity - February –May 2014

2.1 Significant progress has been made in the delivery of the capital programme since it was agreed by SP&R Committee. Details of the current status of all Capital Programme projects are attached at Appendix A. Photos of projects are attached at Appendix B. The Property & Projects department is happy to arrange site visits for Members/ Party Groups to any Council funded capital project.

2.2 Key highlights since the last quarterly report in February include -

- the completion of the new £680,000 3G pitch in Marrowbone Millennium Park
- the completion of the roll-out of Phase 3 of the Alleygating Programme
- MUGA programme - refurbishment work completed at 6 sites – Finlay Street, Clara Street, Victoria Park, Willowbank, New Lodge and Dover street
- construction work began in April on the new £11.7m Girdwood Hub together with DSD infrastructure works and a new housing development
- Enabling works have commenced on the £29.5million extension to the Waterfront to provide dedicated exhibition and conference facilities
- the opening of the Sam Thompson Bridge in Victoria Park as part of Phase 1 of CCG in April
- the appointment of a contractor for the Public Bike Share Scheme
- work is underway at Drumglass Park
- contract awarded for new pitch at Cliftonville as part of the Bunscoil Ben Mhadign development (subject to legal agreements)
- The Welcome Centre has won two major awards including the '*Best Innovation Award*' at the NITB Tourism Awards and an award at the Royal Society of Ulster Architects Design Awards. The Mary Peter's Track also won the RUSA Design Award in the most contested category.

2.3 Members are asked to note the activity undertaken between February and May in relation to the Capital Programme and the wider Investment Programme including -

- 120 articles placed in local and national media specifically for Investment Programme projects, with 73% generated through proactive activity including a focus on the above projects and; rates freeze for second year in a row; Launch of connection voucher scheme for businesses (Super-connected Belfast) and adoption of living wage
- Ten-page pullout in City Matters magazine (April 2014), reaching 130,000 residents, with detailed case studies and an update on overall progress
- Increase in web traffic, with updates pushed out to almost 400,000 visitors per month
- More social media posts, with Facebook reach now extending to over 100,000 people
- Branded signage installed at high visibility points within capital projects

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- ‘Big Picture’ staff briefing in February 2014, accompanied by regular updates and news items in Intercom, Team Brief, Interlink and TV screens in frontline locations
- Update booklet for elected members, produced ahead of May elections
- A detailed breakdown of all activity is listed in Appendix C, together with an example (Girdwood Hub) of how coverage is generated across our main communications channels.

Key Issues

2.4 Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three Stage process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Importantly it will also enable Members to focus on delivering the projects which can have maximum benefits and investment return for the city and local areas.

Proposed movements from ‘Stage 2 – Uncommitted’ to ‘Stage 3 – Committed’

2.4 Members are asked to consider if they wish to progress the project as outlined in Table 1 below from ‘Stage 2- Uncommitted’ to ‘Stage 3- Committed under the Capital Programme and is advanced to tender preparation stage. Members are asked to note that the costs cited are pre-tender estimates only. These costs will be challenged and assessed at the tender preparation stage.

Project	Project overview	Proposed Stage	Estimated Gross Cost	Estimated Net cost
Boxer Statues	The design and installation of 3 sculptures in 3 council owned parks across the city which will recognise the contribution of boxing to the city	Stage 3- Tier 1 (Schemes at tender preparation stage)	Up to a max of £247,500	Up to a max of £247,500

Boxer Statues

2.5 Members will acknowledge that Belfast has a proud association with the sport of boxing. The city has a long line of amateur and professional champions who have placed Belfast on the

international map and represented the city with skill and pride. The scope of the project is the design and installation of three pieces of public art in three locations in the city, specifically:

- Two boxing sculptures, one of the boxer John Caldwell located at Dunville Park and one of Rinty Monaghan located at Buoys Park (Cathedral Gardens) and;
- A boxing themed piece of public art/statue at Woodvale Park to commemorate all boxing heroes of the local area.

- 2.6 The Director of Finance & Resources has recommended that a maximum of £247,500 be allocated to this project for the 3 statues and has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. Members are asked that officers will continue to proactively explore options for additional match funding for this project in the interim.

3.0 Updates on capital projects

MUGA Programme – Navarra Place

- 3.1 Members will recall that they agreed in January to progress a MUGA Programme. At this stage it was highlighted that a series of condition surveys to inform a rolling programme of refurbishments would be undertaken. Members are asked to note that these are underway and that an update on the MUGA Programme, including a proposed rolling programme for refurbishments, will be brought back to Committee later in the year. In the interim however there is an opportunity for the Council to acquire land at Navarra Place off the Whitewell Rd in Belfast which could be suitable for a MUGA. This land is adjacent to the community centre and an existing playground. Members are therefore asked to give approval to officers to proceed with the acquisition of land at Navarra Place from the NIHE

Fleet Replacement Programme

- 3.2 Members are aware that detailed consultation is underway with Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council in relation to the transfer of assets required on foot of Local Government Reform. In terms of fleet assets, a final list of transferring vehicles has recently been received from both councils, identifying the type and number of assets to be made available. This list includes a number of assets which are quite old, and whose condition might best be characterised as poor. Replacement of these assets will therefore be necessary during the current financial year.

- 3.3 In addition, Members will be aware that the service levels, standards and processes applied to the current BCC area by Cleansing Services in the delivery of domestic refuse collection and street cleansing could not be delivered using the transferring assets alone, and that consequently there will need to be some additional procurement of assets in order to ensure that service levels to rate-payers in the incoming areas are consistent with those applied elsewhere in the city.
- 3.4 Committee approval is therefore sought to incur expenditure not exceeding £1.7m from non-recurring sources during the 2014/15 financial year in order to ensure that all necessary fleet resources are in place by vesting day, 1st April 2015. The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. Approval is also sought to initiate the necessary procurement processes and for the delegation of subsequent evaluation and award processes to the Director of Property & Projects.

ERDF funded projects – update

- 3.5 Members will be aware that a key component of the Investment Programme was a number of projects which were designed to enhance the city's economic infrastructure. These projects were subject to securing funding from ERDF and the tight timescales for the delivery of these projects has been previously highlighted to Members as all ERDF monies need to be committed and spent by the end of 2015. Members will recall that they previously agreed in June 2013 that these projects would remain at '*Stage 3 – Tier 0 Scheme*' (Schemes at Risk) on the Capital Programme until a letter of offer was received but that in recognition of the tight timescales that they should be progressed to tender stage on the basis that no construction contracts will be awarded until an LOO was received
- 3.6 Members are asked to note that Council officials have been proactively working on a daily basis with officials from InvestNI to facilitate the information needed for the Economic Appraisals for these projects to try and secure the LOOs. This has involved intensive officer time on the collation, analysis and presentation of vast amounts of information back to InvestNI. An update on the current status of the ERDF funded projects is outlined below for Members consideration. To date a letter of offer has only been received for the Waterfront project with the rest still to be received.

North Foreshore - Infrastructure to develop a Green Economy Business Park

- 3.7 It is understood that the North Foreshore project has been signed off by the InvestNI Board and is currently with DFP for final sign-

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off. It is anticipated that the letter of offer should be forwarded to the Council by the end of June. Members will be updated at Committee if the LOO is received by the Committee date. A design team has been procured and work is progressing on this project.

Innovation Centre

- 3.8** A letter of offer is not yet in place for the Innovation centre proposal however it is understood that this may be received in the coming weeks. Members are asked to note that work has been progressing and that the tenders for this project are due to be returned in July. An update on this project will therefore be taken to Committee in August.

Creative Hub

- 3.9** Members will recall that they granted approval in February to the acquisition of a building at 19-21 Donegall street to be refurbished to provide premises for the proposed Creative Hub project. This approval was however subject to a letter of offer being in place for the project. This acquisition was due to complete by the start of July. However Members are asked to note that the Economic Appraisal process for this project has been extremely protracted and is still ongoing with the EA process now not due to complete until at least mid July. This will mean it will be at least the late Summer before a letter of offer will be forthcoming. This will have a consequential impact on the timescale to complete the acquisition of the proposed premises and discussions are ongoing with the landlord to seek an extension to the July deadline. Members will be verbally updated of the current status of these negotiations at Committee on 19th.

Belfast Waterfront Conference and Exhibition facilities

- 3.10** Members will recall that in January the Council received a LOO for £18.5million towards the £29.5million extension of the Waterfront to provide dedicated conference and exhibition facilities. As outlined in 2.2 above enabling works for the project are currently underway. Members are asked to note that the tender for the contract for the main works for the Waterfront project are due to be evaluated by 17th June and a verbal update on the outcome of this tender process will be given at Committee at its meeting on the 19th.

4.0 Capital Programmes – Communications and Events updates

- 4.1** Members are asked to note that a number of key events in relation to schemes under the Capital Programme are being held over the next quarter (where already planned).

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- **Community Information Day at Girdwood Hub – 17 June 2014**
- **Belfast: Future City conference – 20 June 2014**
- **Capital investment into school pitches – June 2014**
- **Award of contract for Belfast Waterfront Conference and Exhibition Centre and start of work on site – end June/early September 2014**
- **Reopening of Drumglass Park – end June 2014**
- **Launch of Pitches Strategy – June/July 2014**
- **Appointment of contractor for Phase 2 of CCG and completion of Phase 1 works – August 2014**
- **Start of work at Tropical Ravine – Autumn 2014**

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and Movements

- **Boxer Statues - agree if the proposed Boxer Statues project is progressed from ‘Stage 2 – Uncommitted’ to ‘Stage 3 – Committed’ and agree that this projects is advanced to the invitation of tenders, to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver. Members are asked to note that the Director of Finance & Resources has recommended that up to £247,500 is the maximum amount available to this project.**

Project Updates

MUGA programme

- **Note that an update on the MUGA Programme, including a proposed rolling programme for refurbishments, will be brought back to Committee later in the year and that in the interim there is an opportunity for the Council to acquire land at Navarra Place which could be suitable for a MUGA. Members are therefore asked to give approval to officers to proceed with the acquisition of land at Navarra Place from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive**

Fleet Replacement Programme

- **Committee approval is sought to incur expenditure not exceeding £1.7m from non-recurring sources during the 2014/15 financial year in order to ensure that all necessary fleet resources to facilitate service**

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convergence are in place by 1st April. The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.

- Approval is also sought to initiate the necessary procurement processes and for the delegation of subsequent evaluation and award processes to the Director of Property & Projects.

ERDF funded projects

- note the updates presented in relation to the ERDF funded projects and that verbal updates will be given to Committee on the position in relation to the acquisition of premises at Donegall Street for the Creative Hub and the tender in relation to the Waterfront

Communication and Engagement – Capital Programme projects

- Note that communications and engagement activity which is planned over the coming months.”

The committee adopted the recommendations.

Financial Reporting – Quarter 4 2013/2014

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee’s consideration the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed on 18 June 2010 that:

- The Council would produce financial reporting packs for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and each Standing Committee on a quarterly basis
- The Budget and Transformation Panel would also receive monthly financial updates if there were any significant issues to report.

1.2 The reporting pack contains a summary dashboard of the financial indicators and an executive summary explaining the financial performance. It also provides a more detailed explanation of each of the relevant indicators covering outturn for the year, implications for reserves, payment of creditors and recovery of debt. The reporting of procurement compliance to members was introduced as part of the quarterly financial reporting from quarter 1 2012/2013.

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1.3 The style and layout of the financial reporting pack reflects the discussion and feedback arising from the Members' financial training at the end of September 2010.

1.4 Central Finance and departmental management teams have worked together to develop the information within the reporting packs.

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 Financial Outturn 2013/14

The year end financial position for the Council is an under-spend of £366k (0.3%), which is well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

2.2 As in Quarter 3, the key elements of the under-spend relate to savings in employee costs through unfilled posts and the receipt of additional income primarily within Building Control relating to regulation certificates, entertainment licenses and property certificates. The outturn figure includes £286k of expenditure which was previously classified as capital.

2.3 LPS Rates Finalisation

The year end outturn as reported by LPS is a positive settlement to BCC of £1.667m. The main reason for the positive settlement was a slight growth in the domestic rate base and the positive outcome of the vacant rating inspections undertaken by the Building Control Service. Non Domestic rates income remained static as the additional income from the vacant property inspections helped offset the slight decline in the non-domestic rate base of the City.

2.4 Finance Officers have been working will be working with LPS and the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) to validate the rate base for the new Council. This will be a key element of the district rate setting process for 2015/16.

2.5 Capital Financing

The capital financing budget was fully utilised during the year resulting in all capital expenditure incurred being fully financed

2.6 Capital Expenditure

In the twelve months to 31 March 2014 the Council incurred net expenditure of £6.56m on capital schemes. In addition £5.22m of levered monies was also spent on capital schemes during the year bringing the gross capital expenditure to £11.78m for 2013/14. Non-recurring project expenditure was £1.2m against a budget of £957k,

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with the over spend due to slippage in 2012/13 schemes which were brought forward to 2013/14.

2.7 Reserves Position

At the year end the Council had specified reserves of £7.3m and General Reserves at the end of 2013/14 will sit at £14.27m. However as reported to the Committee in April 2014, the Voluntary Redundancy exercise has been completed as part of the Leisure Transformation Programme. At this stage it is too early to confirm the total VR costs, but it is recommended that members ear mark the year end outturn under spend and the rates finalisation amount to finance the cost of the voluntary redundancies and leisure pension costs. When the final VR and pension costs are confirmed these will reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

2.8 Investment Programme

Committed expenditure approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for the 3 year Capital Programme stands at £39.7m, leaving £35.3m of schemes within the 3 year programme at the uncommitted or emerging project stage. A separate report, which will be considered at this meeting, provides an update on the physical progress of projects within the Capital Programme.

2.9 Belfast Investment Fund

At the 31 March 2014 the Belfast Investment Fund stood at £19.2m with a forecast balance of £22m by the end of 2014/15, excluding any additional capital receipts processed during 2014/15.

2.10 Local Investment Fund

Committed expenditure on LIF projects at the year-end totals £4.8m, leaving a balance of £0.2k in the Local Investment Fund.

2.11 Levered Monies

The amount of levered external funding for the Investment Programme which has been agreed in principal increased to £69.9m at the year-end, with £49.8m of these funds confirmed through letters of offer.

2.12 Other Financial Indicators

58.8% of debt was collected within 30 days which was slightly below the target of 60.0% while debt under 90 days old represented 62.7% of total debt as compared to the target of 65.0%. However

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total debt reduced to £3.7m compared to last year's position of £4.2m.

2.13 The average number of creditors paid within 28 days for 2013/14 was 85.8% which was above the target of 85.0% and represented an increase of over 5% during the year. Work continues in this area to meet the Investment Programme commitment of 90% of creditors paid within 28 days by 2014/15.

2.14 Treasury Management

The year-end Treasury Management report has also been circulated.

3.0 Resource Implications

3.1 The year end outturn was an under spend of £366k (0.3%) and general reserves are £14.27m.

4.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality and good relations implications associated with the report.

5.0 Recommendations

- Members are also asked to note the above report and associated financial reporting pack
- Members approve the ear marking of the year end outturn and the positive rates settlement to finance the voluntary redundancies and leisure pension costs arising from the leisure transformation programme.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Annual Report from the Audit Panel

(Alderman Rogers, Chairman of the Audit Panel, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee noted the contents of a report and the comments of Alderman Rogers in relation to the annual report from the Audit Panel.

Minutes of Meeting of the Audit Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel of 10th June.

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Assurance Framework

The Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Committee that the Council was required to produce a complex set of draft accounts for external audit review and, in support of that, to produce an Annual Government Statement which described the Council's governance arrangements and the process for monitoring their effectiveness. He submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which outlined the key elements of the year-end process and the Assurance Framework which the Council had developed over recent years to help ensure that the Council complied with statutory requirements and that Members and senior officers could have effective, ongoing oversight of the Council's governance and assurance arrangements.

The Committee noted the contents of the Council's Assurance Framework.

Belfast City Council Financial Accounts 2013/2014

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to present to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the Financial Accounts of the council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for 2013/2014.

The Financial Accounts are an important element of the council's overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council's finances and its financial position.

The Financial Report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014, as attached, have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14 based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department of the Environment Accounts Direction, Circular LG 11/14 dated 7th April 2014.

I can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department of the Environment and in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

The Financial Report includes the Councils Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2013/14, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by Department of the Environment (DOE), NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'.

Specifically the AGS sets out:

- **scope of responsibility of the Council in relation to governance**

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(£8,031,207) which has been set up to repay interest only loans relating to housing stock that transferred to the NIHE. The NIHE currently pay principal and interest on these loans to BCC, with the sinking fund being to repay the principal on maturity.

Debt

The overall level of trade debtors had decreased steadily over the previous 6 years, reducing from £10m at 31 March 2008 to £3.7m at 31 March 2014. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below:

	31 March 2013	31 March 2014
Less than three months	£3,015,062	£2,339,223
Three to six months	£84,508	£236,153
Six months to one year	£226,735	£302,390
More than one year	£883,437	£854,286
Total	4,209,742	£3,732,052

Creditors

The Department of the Environment has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year the council paid 60,395 invoices totalling £110,577,429

The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 23 days for the year ended 31 March 2014.

The Council paid 25,026 invoices within 10 days, 51,048 invoices within 30 days, and 9,347 invoices outside of 30 days.

The council endeavours to process invoices as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process. Payment timescales are also monitored and reported to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on a regular basis.

Annual Governance Statement

The disclosures within the Annual Governance Statement were arrived at after considering the Council's corporate risk register, significant events / issues and the disclosures made by Chief Officers in their individual assurance statements. The significant governance issues for the Council have been considered by the Audit Panel and relate to the following:

- meeting the challenges presented by Local Government Reform;
- failure to sustain and enhance the rate base and manage the rate setting process for the Shadow Council;

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- **failure to attract EU / other external funding and manage and deliver designated capital projects within deadlines and in compliance with funding requirements;**
- **delivery of the Leisure Transformation Programme;**
- **Peace III project;**
- **external fraud risk; and**
- **whistleblowing.**

Resource Implications

Financial

None

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendation

The Committee is requested to approve the Council's financial accounts and report, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the year ended 31st March, 2014."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

The Committee approved the revised Health and Safety Policy and the Health and Safety Responsibilities Code of Practice, copies of which would be made available on the Council's website.

Minutes Meeting of Budget and Transformation Panel

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 12th June.

Request for Funding – Common Purpose Belfast

The Committee was advised that a request for financial assistance in the sum of £6,000 had been received from Common Purpose Belfast in connection with its 2014 Navigator programme. The money would be used to offer three part-funded places on its Programme for emerging leaders from non-profit organisations in Belfast. Last year the Council's contribution had been used to fund participants from Cancer Focus, Opportunity Youth and African Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland. The programme was designed to draw together local leaders, emerging leaders and senior managers from all walks of life who could potentially play a role in shaping the

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future of Belfast. The Council had supported Common Purpose Belfast since its inception in 1996.

The Director of Finance and Resources reported that the application could be considered in the context of Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which provided the Council with discretionary powers to consider agreeing to the request for financial assistance. He indicated that the application met the criteria for the funding in that regard.

Accordingly, it was

Resolved – That expenditure in the sum of £6,000 be approved for the aforementioned Programme under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to, the District and the inhabitants of the district, with the Committee being satisfied that the benefits so accruing would be commensurate with the payment being made.

The Committee agreed further that any Member of the Council who wished to participate on the Programme be funded from a central budget and not from their Personal Development Plan Budget.

Approval to Seek Tenders

The Committee approved the commencement of tendering exercises and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to accept the most advantageous tenders received in respect of the following:

Goods and Services	Estimated Value per Annum	Period of Contract
Ormeau Park, Phase 11, replacement of 350m of railings	£92,000	N/A
Ozone/Tennis Centre, replacement of existing Tennis Court surfaces	£120,000	N/A
Ozone/Tennis Centre, Upgrade lighting to the main tennis courts	£75,000	N/A
Botanic Gardens, alterations to Palm House Heating to accommodate Queens University Belfast CHP Heating System	£61,000	N/A
Templemore Baths, Avoniel Leisure Centre, Whiterock Leisure Centre and Ballysillan Leisure Centre	£165,000	N/A

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Belfast Zoo, High Voltage installation for the site	£350,000	N/A
Digital Services Building, Lift replacement	£50,000	N/A
Legionella Monitoring and Risk management	£45,000	1 year, with 2 years optional renewal

**Northern Ireland Housing Executive Benefit –
Server Requirements**

The Committee was advised that the Council's Digital Services delivered hosting, managed applications and software development services to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to support payment of housing benefit, rates relief and Lone Pensioner Allowances to claimants across the region. The annual income for delivering those services was approximately £1.7 million.

In providing those services, the Council aimed to ensure the timely payment of over £650 million to over 160,000 claimants annually. Given the current economic circumstances, both the amounts being paid and the number of claimants requiring those benefits was increasing each month, putting an additional strain on the infrastructure that was required to support the IT systems and increasing the risk of damage to the Council's reputation if the services were not provided. In order to protect the income generated by Digital Services and the IT services it delivered to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, a refresh of infrastructure was required to ensure that the service quality was maintained. The Committee was advised that, in order to cater for legislative changes affecting Housing Benefit, a new version of the Housing Benefit software had been implemented six months previously. The resultant software upgrade had had a negative effect on the system performance to such an extent that the servers that supported the Housing Benefit system were performing at their limits.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive had also indicated that it would require an additional training environment to be ready for September, 2014. Currently there was not enough server capacity to support that additional requirement. Accordingly, Digital Services was recommending that an investment in ICT infrastructures be made to support the on-going requirements of the Housing Benefit system and to provide capacity to support anticipated future enhancements. Whilst there was some uncertainty regarding the long-term role of the Housing Executive and the impact of Universal Credit, it was expected that the Housing Benefit Service would continue to be carried out for at least the next three years covering the lifespan of the proposed service upgrade.

In order to support the system the following infrastructure enhancements were being proposed:

- (i) replace the current server and storage environment with

Capital Costs

Oracle's SPARC T5-2 server and storage - £90,000

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Revenue Costs

Annual Support and Maintenance - £20,000

Oracle Database and Application Licensing
(to cover an additional processor) - £12,000

- (ii) Use the current live server and storage environment to support disaster recovery, test and training to take as much workload from the live environment as possible.

The Housing Executive had agreed to make a contribution to the costs of providing an improved server environment. It had agreed to pay £45,000 towards capital costs and Digital Services would increase the current payment terms between the Council and the Housing Executive by £32,000 to fully meet the increase in revenue costs.

The Committee authorised the procurement of a new server and storage environment to meet the hosting requirements of delivering the Housing Benefits system for the next three years.

Human Resources

Year-End Absence Rates 2013/2014

The Assistant Chief Executive/Head of Human Resources reported that, at the end of March, 2014, the average number of days' sickness absence per full time employee was 9.90 which meant that the Council had met its March, 2015 target one year early. She informed the Committee that five departments had met their target, viz., the Chief Executive's, Finance and Resources, Development, Parks and Leisure and Property and Projects. In addition, 43.18% of staff had no absence during the year compared to 39% the previous year.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the corporate target for March, 2015 remain at 10 days.

**Potential Industrial Action involving
Belfast City Council Employees**

The Committee was advised that, during June, the Local Government Trade Unions would be balloting their members on industrial action with the result being known by the end of June, 2014. The Assistant Chief Executive/Head of Human Resources stated that it was anticipated that that would result in strike action by UNITE, NIPSA, GMB and SIPTU members which was planned for 10th July, 2014. Should that be the case, the Council would initiate its Industrial Action Contingency Group (IACG), which was chaired by herself and would establish contingency planning arrangements in the event of industrial action. That Group would manage all issues arising from the strike through a planned and co-ordinated approach to ensure that essential services were

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maintained where possible and that communication was on-going with Elected Members, the media and the workforce. The Group would determine exemption arrangements, that is, those individuals or groups of staff who should remain in work during industrial action to minimise disruption to service provision, meet health and safety obligations and provide business continuity in so far as was practicable, for example, Registrars, Malone House and Belfast Castle staff for weddings and civil partnerships, cemetery operatives and health and safety staff. The Group would discuss and seek to agree those exempt staff with the Council's Trade Union Co-ordinators.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Order 55 and the authority delegated to him, the Director of Finance and Resources had authorised the appointment of a number of individuals who were related to existing officers of the Council.

Noted.

Asset Management

Corporate Accommodation Issues

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

(i) Accommodation Strategy

- 1.1 In addition to the City Hall and Cecil Ward Building Members will be aware that the Council lease two city centre office premises (Adelaide Exchange, Lanyon Place) where there is an opportunity to terminate occupation in each by 2017.**
- 1.2 At its meeting of 21st February 2014 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee endorsed a Corporate Accommodation Strategy, informed by an Economic Appraisal undertaken by Deloitte, which identified the preferred option for the Council to acquire, develop and own new offices which should be located in as close proximity as possible to the retained office accommodation in City Hall and Cecil Ward Building.**
- 1.3 The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee was advised at its meeting of 4th April 2014 of an unsuccessful attempt by the Council to acquire the Clarendon House site adjoining the Cecil Ward Building. In this event the Committee approved the undertaking of a further site search to review all alternative accommodation options**

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available for the Council with a further report to be brought back to Committee with an update on any revised options. In the intervening time a number of direct approaches have been received with regard to provision of office accommodation for the Council.

- 1.4 Legal Services have confirmed that there are constraints around the Council's ability to progress direct discussions with developers/contractors to provide office accommodation to a Council specification, in the absence of a public procurement exercise. Therefore the Council will be required to publicly tender for the provision of new offices.

(ii) Interim Office Accommodation

- 1.5 With the effective date for Local Government Reform (LGR) of 1st April 2015 there will be an accommodation requirement for associated staff transferring from both local and central government departments.
- 1.6 Members are aware that whilst the Council's Accommodation Strategy has taken account of the need to factor in additional office space requirement associated with LGR the outworkings of the Strategy will not provide the longer-term solution until the end of 2016.
- 1.7 In order to accommodate this shorter-term staff office requirement as a result of staff transferring under LGR there will be an immediate requirement to procure additional interim accommodation on a short-term basis that would be required until the Council's new offices are provided under the Accommodation Strategy.

(iii) City Hall Accommodation

- 1.8 Following the Council elections the Sinn Féin representation on Belfast City Council has increased to 19 Councillors. Sinn Féin has requested to utilise, for a temporary period, the former Legal Library on the ground floor of City Hall as additional space associated with the Sinn Féin Party Rooms. Currently this room is utilised on an ad hoc basis for meetings.

2 Key Issues

(i) Accommodation Strategy

- 2.1 Based on identified accommodation needs and the specific drivers previously endorsed by Members, the Council now have a Corporate Accommodation Strategy following completion of the Economic Appraisal which recommended the construction and ownership of approximately 100,000 sq feet of purpose built office accommodation

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located in close proximity to both City Hall and the Cecil Ward Building.

- 2.2 Following the failure to secure ownership of the Clarendon House site as advised at the 4th April 2014 meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, there have been a number of unsolicited approaches made to the Council from the private sector offering to satisfy the Council's office requirement.
- 2.3 Council's Legal Services have confirmed that EU Procurement Regulations prevent any developer directly providing offices to the Council's specification, irrespective of whether they control the site or not, without the Council first of all publically advertising the opportunity, as the courts construe such an arrangement as a Public Works Contract. Legal Services have however confirmed that the acquisition of land and/or buildings on the land is expressly excluded for the EU Procurement Regulations.
- 2.4 The potential now exists to progress the Council's Accommodation Strategy through a public procurement exercise on the basis of a design and build contract. This procurement exercise would entail the Council specifying their accommodation requirements for a shell building and request submissions based on the cost of providing such new offices with the Council assuming outright ownership upon completion. A separate contract could subsequently be procured for fit-out to the Council's specification.
- 2.5 Should Members be minded to progress the Council's Accommodation Strategy through a public procurement exercise for development of offices the selection criteria would be established and drawn from the existing Deloitte Economic Appraisal. This would capture those potential sites where it is understood the private sector is willing to develop offices for the Council, as well as any other sites/proposed developments in the defined area. This tender process would also include the remaining Council's own sites that possess the necessary scope for development which will be determined through individual Planning Assessments.
- 2.6 The defined timeline to have any new office accommodation constructed and available for occupation, driven primarily by break options in the Council's existing leased premises (Adelaide Exchange, Lanyon Place), means that there is approximately 2½ years in which to undertake a public procurement and have the building completed ready for occupation by end of December 2016. Failure to progress the outworkings of the Council's Accommodation Strategy and have new offices available within this timescale will mean that the Council will remain committed to occupying leased accommodation beyond 2020.

2.7 The Committee is asked to note that evaluation criteria of the tenders will be based on both cost and further specific criteria (location, scale, timeframe etc) drawn from the previous Economic Appraisal recommendations that underpin the Council's Accommodation Strategy. Provision of the Council's new office accommodation is an emerging project in the Capital Programme the cost of which is subvented by redirecting rent/ service charges currently incurred in the Council's leased premises (Adelaide Exchange, Lanyon Place) to a loan.

(ii) Interim Office Accommodation

2.8 There remains ongoing uncertainty around the policy position for 2.8 the transfer of staff accommodation assets associated with LGR transferring functions from the central government departments. It has however emerged that current occupational leases are either expiring immediately prior to April 2015 or arbitrarily extended for a short period beyond this date. These central government decisions on lease end dates do not necessarily relate to the Council's Accommodation Strategy timeframe which is primarily driven by the Council's existing leases in Adelaide Exchange and Lanyon Place which cannot be terminated (without incurring a financial penalty) before 2017.

2.9 There is currently no surplus space remaining within the Council's office estate that could accommodate the estimated number of transferring staff.

2.10 The procurement of sufficient interim office accommodation now will provide flexibility to commence any potential decants of existing staff in order to provide the opportunity to integrate staff associated with transferring functions more fully into the Council's existing structure. This additional office space will also assist any future restructure of the new Council to be developed operationally prior to relocation to new office premises under the Accommodation Strategy.

(iii) City Hall Accommodation

2.11 With the increase in Sinn Féin's representation following the May Council elections Sinn Féin have requested additional Party Room accommodation within City Hall. The former Legal Library, immediately adjacent to their Party Rooms, is currently utilised as meeting room space as and when required and therefore not permanently occupied. Council officers will aim to find alternative meeting space in the interim period.

2.12 As part of the wider review of City Hall, within the context of the Council's Accommodation Strategy, there is scope to revisit the availability of space in the future when detail of the future structure of

the new Council is known and the longer-term accommodation requirements within City Hall are agreed.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Finance

(i) Accommodation Strategy

In the short-term there are costs associated with undertaking this tender exercise. Thereafter the Director of Finance & Resource will work with the Director of Property & Projects to develop a financing model for the new offices.

(ii) Interim Office Accommodation

Discussions at a regional level are being progressed with DOE and DFP regarding an appropriate funding model in respect of accommodation costs arising from the transfer of functions under LGR.

(iii) City Hall Accommodation

Any costs of refurbishment can be met within existing planned maintenance budget.

3.2 Assets

(i) Accommodation Strategy

Development of new offices within the city centre will provide a regenerative impact in the area. Surrender of the existing leases at Adelaide Exchange and Lanyon Place will also free up good quality city centre office accommodation that is currently in short supply for inward investors or other occupier demand.

Implications for the Council's city centre sites will depend upon whether one of the Council's own sites is selected for development.

(ii) Interim Office Accommodation

Inclusion of additional office space within the Council's estate until such time long-term office accommodation is provided through the Accommodation Strategy.

(iii) City Hall Accommodation

Possible conversion work to assimilate the former Legal Library with the existing Sinn Féin Party Rooms.

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Human Resources

Staff resource required within Property and Projects and Legal Services to progress.

5 Recommendations

5.1 (i) Accommodation Strategy

The Committee is requested to approve the commencement of a tendering exercise to procure new build office accommodation in the city centre on the basis as outlined above. Committee is also requested to give delegated authority to the Director of Property and Projects to award the tender in line with the evaluation criteria with a further report to be brought back to this Committee to provide an appropriate update.

(ii) Interim Office Accommodation

The Committee is requested to note the content of this report and to endorse progressing discussions regarding office accommodation issues arising under LGR that fits with the Council's Accommodation Strategy and which may require an interim accommodation solution with a further report to be brought back to this Committee to provide an appropriate update.

(iii) City Hall Accommodation

The Committee are requested to consider the proposal to temporarily utilise the former Legal Library on the ground floor of City Hall with the existing adjoining Sinn Féin main Party Rooms."

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed also to allocate one office for use by all the Independent Members of the Shadow Council on an interim/temporary basis.

**Connswater Community Greenway –
Orangefield Park**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to commence the process to vest an area of land adjacent to Orangefield Park

- 1.2 At its meeting on the 26th February 2014 the East Area Working Group considered a report on the proposals in relation to the preliminary steps towards vesting the strip of land at Orangefield Park in connection with the relocation of the Knock River in order to achieve the required flood defences in the area. The East AWG agreed to the proposed vesting of the land as outlined.
- 1.3 At its meeting on the 12th June the Parks and Leisure Committee approved the recommendation to commence the process to vest an area of land adjacent to Orangefield Park, subject to SP&R Committee approval.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Knock River has been relocated into Orangefield Park as part of Phase 1 of the FAS/CCG scheme in order to achieve the required flood defences in this area. Under the FAS/CCG proposals the residents's fences or gardens have not been disturbed by the work to relocate the river, however the relocation of the river has created a strip of land, incorporating the flood defences, along the former bed of the river. Half the bed of the former river is owned by the Council but, as outlined below, an owner has not been identified for the other half. The Council, as part of the CCG, has constructed the fence on the current Council's boundary, leaving a strip of land between the resident's rear garden fences and the Council's boundary fence. Clearly this, if left as is, will create issues around responsibility for maintenance and left unattended the land would become overgrown and a source of invasive species, litter and vermin.
- 2.2 The Estates Management Unit has carried out extensive research but has been unable to find out who owns this area of land. It has however been established that the land is not owned by the adjoining residential landowners. Given that a landowner cannot be identified, the only way the Council can acquire the land is by vesting under the Recreation and Youth Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.
- 2.3 In March 2013, prior to the commencement of Phase 1 of the FAS/CCG works the Estates Management Unit contacted all of the residents whose property backs on to the Knock River at this location to let them know that the FAS/CCG contractor would not require access to their gardens and inviting them to make contact to discuss the FAS/CCG proposals. In addition, East Belfast Partnership together with the Council officials and Rivers Agency staff held public meetings to which all residents affected by the FAS/CCG proposals were invited. The public response to the FAS/CCG proposals that the strip of land may be acquired and maintained by the Council has been largely favourable.

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3 Resource Implications

3.1 Finance

The cost of the vesting will be taken from the CCG Land Acquisition funding and while the cost is currently unknown, the land has little or no value due to its location, lack of access and the presence of invasive species.

3.2 Assets

The strip of land, if acquired, will be fenced into Orangefield Park and maintained by Parks staff.

3.3 Human Resources

Officers from Estates and Legal Services will, subject to Members approval, commence action to vest the land.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 None

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to approve the commencement of the process by Legal Services and the Estates Management Unit to vest the land outlined red on the attached plan under the Recreation and Youth Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

City Hall Car Parking

The Committee considered a report in relation to car parking arrangements in the City Hall courtyard and approved the short-term changes as set out in the report in order to facilitate increased Member parking. It was agreed also that a wider, corporate review of car parking be undertaken and a report thereon be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Leases and Licences

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

(i) Proposed licence from DSD at River Terrace

1.1 Following a request from St John Vianney Youth Centre to explore the option of establishing a community led garden on land at River Terrace the Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 4th

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December 2013, approved the further investigation of the potential for the development of the community garden at River Terrace with a further report to be brought to Committee in due course.

- 1.2 At its meeting on the 12th June 2014 the Parks and Leisure Committee approved the recommendation to take a licence of the land required from DSD to allow the Council to further the investigation of the potential for development of a community garden at River Terrace, subject to terms to be agreed between Legal Services, the Estates Management Unit and the Department of Social Development. The report was further subject to SP&R approval.

(ii) Belfast Zoo – Bat Flight and Release Enclosure

- 1.3 At its meeting on 10th April 2014 the Parks and Leisure Committee approved permission for the NI Bat Group to locate a permanent facility for the flight training and rehabilitation of rescued native bats within the Zoo, thereafter ownership of the enclosure would become vested in the Council.

- 1.4 The Group have secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the cost of constructing this enclosure and the Group will remain responsible for operating and caring for any bats kept in this new facility.

- 1.5 Development of the enclosure would be facilitated by a licence agreement with the Group to permit its construction by a third party which, once satisfactorily completed, ownership of the enclosure will transfer to the Council.

(iii) Lease to Westland Community Group

- 1.6 The Westland Community Group has held a lease for the site on which they erected a portacabin at Westland Road in the Council's Upper Waterworks site since the 27th June 2001.

- 1.7 At its meeting on the 12th June 2014 the Parks and Leisure Committee approved the grant of a new Lease in respect of land at Westland Road/Upper Waterworks to Westland Community Group subject to:-

- i) Terms and conditions to be agreed between Property and Projects/Legal Services and the Westland Community Group.
- ii) Approval of the SP&R Committee in line with Standing Orders.

1.8 The SP&R Committee at its meeting on the 25th Jan 2013 had endorsed the North Area Working Group recommendation to provide Local Investment Funding of £65,000 to allow the Westland Community Group to build a new community centre on the site of the existing community centre at Westland Road. However, even if this funding is not forthcoming, a renewal of the existing lease is required to allow the Westland Community Group to remain in occupation of their current site.

(iv) Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme

1.9 At its meeting on 25th April 2014, Members of the SR&R Committee granted approval for the Council to enter into appropriate Licences, Land Access Agreements and Street Works Licences in relation to securing a number of bike docking stations in the city centre. A schedule of 24 docking stations were previously identified but on the basis that definitive locations would need to be agreed between the operator and the Council in line with the contract requirements for a total of 30 docking stations. All docking stations have now been identified to complete Phase 1 of the scheme

(v) Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal

1.10 The Council have occupied Courtney Hall, a building owned by the Trustees of the 26th Scout Group and situated on the Cregagh Road since 2007, as alternative accommodation for Loop River Play Centre. Community Services had previously confirmed a continued need for this facility for a programme of activities during the day. A new licence agreement for occupation was approved by the Development Committee on 17th September 2013 and SP&R Committee on 25th October 2013 for a further two years from 1st November 2013. Over recent months Community Services occupational needs have varied and as a consequence approval is sought for payment of revised rents to the Trustees.

2 Key Issues

(i) Proposed licence from DSD at River Terrace

2.1 The land at River Terrace required for the redevelopment as a community garden is owned by DSD. DSD have agreed in principle to grant the Council a licence at nil cost to allow the Council to develop the land as a community garden. It is proposed that the licence remains in place until the land is transferred to the Council on the 1st April 2015 as part of Local Government Reform.

(ii) Belfast Zoo – Bat Flight and Release Enclosure

2.2 The Licence Agreement will be granted to the Group which will, within the terms of the Licence, permit them to engage a contractor to

construct the enclosure at a defined location previously identified in the Zoo. Specification of the enclosure is subject to the Council's prior approval and its development will be in accordance with the terms of the HLF offer of grant funding.

- 2.3 Ownership of the enclosure will pass to the Council upon completion of its construction and the Licence Agreement will cease to have any further effect. As owners of the asset the Council will assume responsibility for all future maintenance liabilities over the life of the enclosure. There are established access procedures at the Zoo that will permit required day-to-day access for members of the Group to undertake all management and care of the bats kept in the enclosure during normal working hours.**

(iii) Lease to Westland Community Group

- 2.4 The current lease to Westland Community Group has expired and although they have been holding over and continuing to pay rent a new lease is now required. A new lease is also required because there is a slight change to the area required for the proposed new modular building, car parking and access. In addition, the SP&R Committee's clarification of LIF Guidance to Members at its meeting on the 22nd June 2012, clarified that a LIF proposal in respect of a Council asset could be eligible if it was subject to a lease of reasonable duration from the Council. The proposed new five year lease will give the Westland Community Group sufficient security of tenure to seek LIF support of £65,000.**

(iv) Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme

- 2.5 Committee approval is required to the inclusion of the additional docking station sites in the legal process to enable appropriate Licences, Land Access Agreements and Street Works Licences to be prepared. This will complete the contract requirement for 30 bike docking stations supporting 300 bikes. The precise location of the sites will be agreed with Scheme Operator prior to completing the legal process.**

(v) Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal

- 2.6 Due to Community Services changing needs for use of the Premises several new levels of rent have been agreed with the Trustees. The Council currently have exclusive use of part of the building and part-time use of the remainder. Details of the rent are as set out below in the Resources Section.**

3 Resource Implications

Finance and Assets

3.1 (i) Proposed licence from DSD at River Terrace

Parks and Leisure have allocated £50k of capital funds to South Belfast part of which could contribute to the build of a community garden at River Terrace. DSD have agreed to nil rent for the licence, pending transfer of the site to BCC under LGR on 1st April 2015.

3.2 (ii) Belfast Zoo – Bat Flight and Release Enclosure

The cost of construction of the Bat Flight and Release Enclosure will be met by the HLF grant and apart from a minimal annual maintenance outlay there are no utility costs associated with operation of the facility.

Ownership of the enclosure will pass to the Council upon completion of construction. Provision of this enclosure provides a further visitor attraction for the Zoo.

3.3 (iii) Lease to Westland Community Group

The Westland Community Group has agreed to pay a rental amount of £700 per annum for the site. The provision of a new modular building on the site will support the development of community programmes at this location.

3.4 (iv) Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme

The licence agreements are on the basis of a nil rental. Capital and revenue financial implications were included in the report to the SP&R Committee on 21st March 2014. DRD will meet the full capital cost of the Public Bike Hire Scheme.

3.5 (v) Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal

The new Licence agreement for Courtney Hall would operate with the Council liable for payment of a weekly rent of £220.00 inclusive of heating and electricity from commencement on 1st November 2013. It is then intended that the required hours per week would then be reduced from 24th June 2014 and the rent would reduce to £190.00 per week until licence expiry or termination. The only exception to this is that a four week long summer scheme is planned for July/August 2014 during which exclusive full time use of the Premises would be required, during which the rent payable by the Council would rise to £330.00 per week. In addition to this it is proposed that any extra requirement for time outside the hours

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detailed above would be payable at £5.61 per hour. These costs would be met from within existing Community Services budgets.

Human Resources

3.6 Staff resources from the Estate Management Unit, Parks and Leisure Department and Legal Services will be required to complete all agreements.

4 Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that Members agree:

- (i) To take a Licence from DSD following investigation by the Parks and Leisure Department into the potential for the development of a community garden at River Terrace, subject to terms to be agreed between Legal Services, Estates Management Unit and DSD.**
- (ii) To authorise the grant of a Licence to the NI Bat Group in respect of an identified location within the Zoo, subject to the incorporation of terms to be agreed by Legal Services and Estates Management Unit. Thereafter that the Council will assume ownership of the bat enclosure once constructed.**
- (iii) To grant a new Lease to Westland Community Group as outlined above subject to terms to be agreed between Legal Services, the Estates Management Unit and Westland Community Group.**
- (iv) To the inclusion of the additional bike docking stations which completes the contract requirement for a total of 30 docking stations. Appropriate Licences, Land Access Agreements and Street Works Licences will be entered into in relation to these stations, as agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 April 2014.**
- (v) To the following revised Licence agreement rents for Courtney Hall:-**
 - 1. £220 per week from 1st November 2013 until 23rd June 2014.**
 - 2. £190 per week from 24th June 2014 until licence expiry or termination.**

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3. **£330 per week during the four week summer scheme in July/August 2014**
4. **An additional £5.61 per hour for any extra hours which may be required during the proposed term of the licence.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Use of the City Hall and Grounds for the BIG Music Project

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the BIG Music Project, which was funded by the Big Lottery Fund, for the use of the City Hall and part of the City Hall grounds for an event on Saturday, 18th October, 2014. The Project proposed to organise a one day event that would attract over 2,000 young people through music artist performances. The event would promote opportunities for young people to engage with the music industry, sign up to a music competition and explore a Work Opportunities Programme. It would include concerts, workshops, exhibitions, inspirational speakers and a trade fair.

The Committee approved the use of the City Hall facilities for the BIG Music Project on Saturday, 18th October, 2014, at no cost to the Council.

Council Chamber Seating Arrangements

The Committee deferred consideration of a report in relation to the Council Chamber seating arrangements to enable further discussions to be undertaken and to enable costings in relation to Option 2 to be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Good Relations and Equality

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership of 9th June and adopted the recommendation of the Partnership to provide up to £5,000 from the Summer Intervention Fund to the Blackie River Community Group.

Cross-Cutting Issues

IBM Smarter Cities Challenge and the Contribution to Community Planning

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 **To update Members on the IBM’s ‘Belfast Smarter Cities challenge’ report. IBM are seeking approval for the publication on their website of either their full report and/or the attached executive summary.**

1.2 Officers are currently integrating many of the report's recommendations into the council's proposals for Community Planning and urban regeneration in the city. These recommendations have been particularly useful in providing independent expertise on possible approaches to jointly measuring the impact of the work of our new community planning partners.

2.0 Background

2.1 Belfast was awarded an IBM Smart Cities Challenge grant in 2013. A team of six experts travelled to the city to propose more effective approaches to planning and decision-making in the city. The team carried out extensive interviews with elected members, community organisations, academics, community leaders and services providers – particularly those faced with the challenge of tackling deprivation and health inequalities in parts of west and east Belfast.

2.2 IBM's final recommendations seek to address the fundamental issue of how Belfast's statutory and non-statutory partners can work together in a 'smarter' way to tackle persistent, complex social problems.

2.3 The team presented their initial findings at a conference hosted by the Lord Mayor in October 2013 and subsequently prepared a draft report which was presented to Strategic Policy and Resources committee in March 2014. Members deferred a decision on publishing the full report until they received more detail about how the recommendations can be integrated into future governance arrangements for the city.

2.4 In the interim IBM wish to publish an executive summary of the report in order to promote their work and the work of the council to a broader audience.

3.0 Key issues

3.1 IBM's key findings will be of no surprise to Members, nor indeed to anyone else involved in work that seeks to address the major social issues in our city, whether they are issues of poverty, social inequality, crime, segregation or health deprivation. Their findings confirm the broad consensus of their interviewees that such complex, seemingly intractable, problems require well thought out intervention and the sustained and focused application of resources by many different organisations working together at the local, regional and national levels to achieve shared outcomes. They suggest that this not the case in Belfast.

3.2 In summary their main findings note that:

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- I. The problems of deprivation in Belfast are already well known.
 - II. There has been an abundance of interventions and funding especially in the most segregated neighbourhoods.
 - III. There are many short-term, individual interventions taking place with varying levels of success (often anecdotal or qualitative).
 - IV. Measurement strategy focuses on independent individual and city variables, instead of the causal relationships among variables and outcomes.
 - V. Many uncoordinated initiatives, agencies and government departments are addressing similar (or the same) issues independently based on individual, agency and political needs.
 - VI. Funding support for interventions is often short term and does not address lasting social change.
 - VII. Accountability is based on allocation of resources rather than desired outcomes.
 - VIII. Belfast lacks an agreed long-term strategy (mission, vision, values, and priorities) that drives measurable initiatives and outcomes.
- 3.3 The general view expressed by many interviewees was that, while many of the statutory interventions over the past years have been significant and worthwhile, ultimately the core 'intractable' issues of deprivation, inequality, etc. remain largely unresolved. There was a strong sense that the city needs thinking on smart governance and decision-making.
- 3.4 In developing this smart way of working, the report focuses on three systemic issues:
- Governance – The city currently does not have a governance structure that can easily identify shared priorities; agree interventions; or hold partners to account.
 - Co-ordination – With the involvement of so many organisations (public, community and voluntary) in the city, it is very difficult to co-ordinate interventions and

resource allocation in ways that maximise our combined impact.

- **Measuring success** –The city has no common basis against to jointly measure the impact of our work; to understand what has worked and what hasn't; or to share this learning with others.

3.5 The recommendations (summarised in Appendix 1) suggest that the city can begin to deal with these issues in three phases:

(1) Create a collaborative planning environment

The city should put in place a Community Planning framework and a shared structure for better community engagement. They recommend the active involvement of community planning partners (particularly in terms of shared decision-making and data collection) and a strong approach to community engagement.

2) Define an evidence-based decision-making

The Community Planning process should foster a planning culture based on outcomes that allows partners to make decisions based on objective data. To measure such shared outcomes the authors make the case for a basket of 'common metrics'. If organisations agree to measure success using standard approaches then it begins to make it easier for partners to find out if their interventions are actually making a difference to people's lives.

(3) Technology

The city should put in place suitable software systems to manage the large number of data associated with this approach. The authors identify three key pieces of technology: A web-based portal to makes it easier for partners (and citizens) to engage and to gather and compare results; an analytics tool to support decision making by Members and officers; and a shared database to capture and manage the data over time.

Taking forward the recommendations

3.6 The full report is a substantial document that focuses on the technicalities of change management, planning and project management arrangements. At its core however is the judgement that Community Planning, if done well, can help overcome systemic barriers to tackling major social problems facing the city. This conclusion reflects the experience of others particularly the Scottish Government which considers community planning at the local

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authority level to be central in achieving better outcomes for its citizens.

3.7 The draft report IBM has already informed initial thinking by officers on a new Community Planning process for Belfast including:

- the need to base our planning around a shared outcomes framework that provide opportunities for collaborative gain and to which partners can be held to account;
- The need for partners to agree standard measures of impact, for both individual projects and for the combined work;
- The need to create a management system that can collate evaluation data from all partners and provide analytical tools to support evidence-based decision-making.

Next steps

3.8 Following publication of the executive summary IBM have offered to facilitate a change management workshop with officers to determine pragmatic next steps for the council in terms of further integrating the recommendations into our design work for community planning. Such steps are likely to include:

(i) The development a set of common metrics: The idea of common metrics was warmly received when raised at the IBM conference. OFMdFM are currently testing such measures in relation to measuring the impact of Delivering Social Change which is Government's programme to tackle social inequalities. Council officers are proposing to adopt a similar set of measures to baseline and evaluate the impact of its own work over time. We would also wish to work with relevant partnerships to build their capacity to develop and manage similar measures. Officers continue to engage with OFMdFM on this, with the aim of creating a shared set of standardised measures for community planning.

(ii) System to manage impact data: IBM did not provide indicative costs for their technology proposals but this element is likely to prove expensive. (For example, a city technology platform currently being developed in Glasgow has a multi-million pound budget.)

However, as a first step officers are proposing that the council begin with a modest pilot to adapt one of its own in-house data management system for this purpose (eg, the Belfast Citystats system). This would allow us to begin to manage and share

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evaluation data generated by the council and its partners in preparation for community planning.

The learning from this pilot would inform any future decisions to progress to a more ambitious system. And may also form the basis of joint funding proposals.

(iii) **Data analysis and decision-making:** IBM recommends that the council test how it might use its success measures to inform decision making with our partners. This would enhance in-house analytical skills to support decisions on interventions.

Officers are proposing that could be done in a number of ways. For example, in support of the 'local area working' strand of the community planning programme. The proposal would be to facilitate analysis and decision-making by the Area Working Groups (AWGs) and local partners using neighbourhood area data.

As part of a bid to the Technology Strategy Board, the council has been asked to participate in 'Project Stentor' which seeks to build a system and methodology for supporting local decision-making. If successful, Project Stentor would begin work with the AWGs in autumn 2014.

(iv) **Urban data reference group:** In preparations for the IBM research visit, officers established a data reference group which brought together staff from a number of organisations and agencies. Officers are proposing to reconvene this group in order to support the data requirements for community planning in the city.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

5.1 There are no equality or good relations implications at this stage.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Committee is requested to note the proposed next steps and agree to the publication of the executive summary and/or the full report on the IBM website."

The Committee adopted the recommendation to facilitate the IBM report being published.

Chairman