



Belfast City Council (Shadow)

Report to:	Shadow Planning Committee
Subject:	Programme of work to facilitate the transfer of powers & progress report
Date:	22 nd January 2015
Reporting	John McGrillen, Director of Development
Contact officer:	Eve Bremner, Programme Manager, ext. 3275

1.0	Relevant background information
1.1	Members will be aware that an internal officer team has been established to support the transfer of planning by 1 st April 2015. The local DOE Planning Office has also now committed staffing resource to assist this work and staff will be co-located from mid-January onwards. An MOU has been agreed between Belfast City Council and the DOE as to how the transfer will progress.
1.2	A detailed project plan has been developed to support the delivery of the transition and an officer Steering Panel reports on progress regularly to the Director of Development and TMT.
1.3	The following report provides a high level update on progress and outlines key priorities for coming months. A more detailed report on progress against individual work streams can be found in Appendix 1.

2.0	Key issues
2.1	Key activities undertaken in December and January include: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Governance - consultation with party groups took place in December and subsequently governance proposals, including the scheme of delegation and committee protocol, are being brought to Shadow SP&R on 30th January.Planning portal - a connection to the regional Planning Portal has been established on the Council's network.Resources - revenue budgets have been developed and will be brought through the political process in January and February.Staff transfer - names of transferring staff have been confirmed. A total of 43 individuals will join the Council; equivalent to 40.5 Full time equivalent posts.Accommodation - office accommodation has been confirmed in the Cecil Ward building. Decant and works are due to take place from late January onwards to facilitate planning staff moving to their new offices by April.

	<p>6. Capacity Building - a range of 'mock' committee sessions have been scheduled from January onwards to give members an opportunity to experience the decision making process in a test environment.</p>
2.2	<p>Priorities for February include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Works to Cecil Ward to facilitate Planning staff moving in late-March 2. Confirmation of revenue budgets 3. Completion of process mapping to resolve interface with Council systems such as SAP 4. Recruitment of Director of Planning & Place 5. Putting in place an interim Business Support resource (following the transfer of the current DP Admin post within the local Planning Office) that can be embedded with the Planning Team to learn about their systems. 6. Confirmation of committee room arrangements 7. Providing training to transferring staff on Council systems. 8. Increased public communications e.g. correspondence with applicants with regard to transfer and new contact details
2.3	<p>Some key dates in February that members may wish to be aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd February, 12.30-2pm - Meet & greet with local planning office staff (<i>Shadow Planning Committee members</i>) • 6th February, 12.30-2pm - Meet & greet with local planning office staff (<i>Open to all other members</i>) • 10th-12th February - Members study visit to Cardiff • 18th February, 5pm & 19th February, 12.30pm - Session on Local Development Planning (<i>Open to all members; NB this is a repeat of a session previously delivered to Shadow Planning Committee</i>) • 19th February, 4.30pm - 'Mock' Committee session (<i>Shadow Planning Committee members prior to committee session</i>) • 24th February, 12.30pm - Fraud awareness (<i>Open to all members</i>)
2.4	<p>Further details of these sessions are available from Lisa Rogan, Human Resources (ext. 3251) or Barry Flynn, Democratic Services (ext. 6312).</p>

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no cost implications associated with this report.

4.0	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality or good relations implications identified at present.

5.0	Call In
5.1	N/A

6.0	Recommendations
6.1	Members are asked to note the report.

7.0	Decision Tracking
7.1	Members should note that the Director of Development will ensure that any decisions in relation to the programme of work will be brought before the appropriate committee.

8.0	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 - Project Progress report 09.01.15	