

**Budget and Transformation Panel  
Minutes of meeting held on**

**Thursday 2 December 2010**

**Present:**

Cllr I Crozier	DUP (Chair)
Cllr D Browne	UUP
Cllr M Jones	ALL
Cllr P McCarthy	SDLP
P McNaney	Chief Executive
J Thompson	Director of Finance and Resources
G Millar	Director of Property and Projects
R Cregan	Head of Finance and Performance

**A. Revenue Estimates 2011/12**

1. The Director of Finance and Resources outlined the timetable for finalising the rates and estimates for 2011/12 as follows:



2. Given that the January Committees followed very early in the New Year, it was recognised that the 10 December Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would need to recommend a level for the district rate for 2011/12 so that the January Committee papers could be prepared.

## **B. Update on LPS and rates issues**

3. The Director of Finance and Resources informed Members that the **EPP for 2011/12 has been received from LPS and it shows zero growth** this and explained that this means that the council can expect the rate base to yield the same level of rates for 2011/12 as was estimated for 2010/11.
4. Members were asked to note that the figures provided in the rates scenarios at the October and November SP&R meetings were based on a zero growth assumption which means the figures will not change with the notification of the EPP.
5. The Head of Finance and Performance provided Members with an update on the work being done to implement the Memorandum of Understanding between BCC and LPS. This work includes:
  - a. The inspection of vacant properties by Building Control staff.
  - b. The development of a suite of performance indicators which covers the key LPS activities.
  - c. The development of a benchmark framework with the Institute of Revenue, Rating and Valuation.
  - d. The development of a programme to enhance rates relief uptake levels.
6. The Head of Finance and Performance then went on to outline a number of the key rates issues facing the council, the city and LPS. These include:
  - a. The level of rates arrears and rates write-offs
  - b. Vacant properties
  - c. The introduction of domestic vacant rating
  - d. The increase in losses arising from properties excluded from paying rates on non-domestic vacant properties.
7. Members agreed to recommend to the SP&R committee that the council should issue a formal letter to LPS raising its concerns and asking about the actions being taken to address the key rates issues.
8. Members agreed that the council should revise the popular booklet, "Guidance on Rates for Councillors" produced by the council in conjunction with the IRRV to account for a number of rating policy changes.
9. Members agreed that an update report should be provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources committee.

10. Members agreed that these rates issues should form part of the agenda for the meeting with the Minister of Finance and Personnel which has been arranged for 20 December.

### **C. Corporate Planning**

11. The Chief Executive reminded Members that a workshop on the corporate plan had been arranged for 15 December 2010 between 12.00pm and 2.00pm. The purpose of the workshop is to further discuss the priorities for the corporate plan and the delivery of projects and services across the city.
12. Members requested that the workshop be held in the city centre in order to facilitate attendance by Members.