

Democratic Services Section



Your reference

Our reference

Date 14 February 2011

Mr S Wilson MP MLA
Minister of Finance and Personnel
DFP Private Office
Craigantlet Buildings
Stoney Road
Stormont Estate
BELFAST BT4 3SX

Dear Minister *Sammy*,

Thank you for meeting the delegation from the council on 8 February 2011 at such short notice. We welcomed the opportunity to discuss with you our concerns about the timeliness and accuracy of the recent EPP and APP notifications to the council from LPS. We appreciated the acknowledgement from both LPS and yourself about the difficulties this created for the council, along with your assurances about the need to take action to ensure this situation does not happen again.

At the meeting we outlined for you the many examples of partnership working between LPS and the council. We are keen to build on this relationship and to work together to ensure that the city's rate income is maximised and that the accuracy and timeliness of forecasts are improved. As such, the council will commit to the following improvement actions which will be incorporated into the Memorandum of Understanding between LPS and the council for 2011/12:

1. work with LPS and IRRV on benchmarks to compare LPS and BCC performance with other local authorities;
2. work with LPS to develop monthly monitoring statements;
3. continue to support LPS through the work of building control; and
4. based on information provided by LPS on non-domestic vacant properties, we will work internally and with other bodies such as DSD and DETI to actively manage the rates base in the city.

At the meeting it is our understanding that you agreed to progress the following:

City Hall
Belfast BT1 5GS
Tel: 02890 320202

- 2 -

14 February 2011

Mr S Wilson MP MLA

1. To commission an independent assessment by IRRV of what has happened and to identify recommendations to improve future forecasting and monitoring. We welcomed your commitment that Councils would have an input to this review process and that an associated action plan would follow and be implemented;
2. improved and more regular liaison with councils, for example, through the provision of monthly monitoring information and a clearer oversight role, for councils as key stakeholders, in future reviews and action plans; and
3. the immediate introduction and timely monitoring of LPS performance compared to benchmarks which are currently being finalised. These would be monitored by both councils and the Department with clear commitment from LPS management to timely and accurate provision of information and action plans to address areas of poor performance.

We appreciate the time you gave us on 8 February and look forward to working with you and your officials on these important matters.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Ian Crozier

Chairman

Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

City Hall
Belfast BT1 5GS
Tel: 02890 320202