



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Corporate Plan 2011/12 and future development
Date:	Friday 3rd June 2011
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Background information

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Council and its corporate priorities through the development of the corporate plan. The Committee is also responsible for allocating resources to ensure that corporate priorities as agreed in the corporate plan are implemented.

At the meeting, Members will receive a presentation from officers which is intended to inform Members about work underway to support the Committee in fulfilling this role and to allow Members to begin to consider the ways in which they wish to shape the future direction of the Council and the city. This paper is intended to act as context to the presentation and to highlight some of the key processes which exist to help the Committee get things done.

The Corporate Plan

The Council is the largest local authority in Northern Ireland, employing over 2300 people with an annual expenditure of around £168 million. It has 6 operational departments delivering a wide range of services from street cleansing and refuse collection to running the city's parks and leisure facilities. It has a wide regulatory role, involving services such as environmental health and building control and works in partnership with other organisations to tackle issues such as community safety and health improvement. The Council plays an important role in supporting local economic growth, the arts and tourism and promoting the development and regeneration of the city. It is consulted on key issues impacting upon the city and its people and communities, including local area planning.

In short, the Council is a large and diverse organisation which plays an important role in shaping, developing and investing in the city and local areas. A key role of the SP&R Committee is to provide overall direction to this work, to make sure that the resources are available to deliver it and to hold officers to account for making it happen. The corporate plan and processes linked to it, including the setting of budgets and the development of the capital programme help the Committee to fulfil this role.

The Corporate Plan – current status

The corporate plan, helps Members get things done by setting out:

- The Council's vision for the city and its priorities – based upon engagement with

local people and analysis of data about the city;

- The key actions that will be implemented in the year ahead;
- Performance indicators, allowing for regular review of progress;
- Financial information, setting out how resources have been allocated across the Council to ensure that things get done.

The Council's previous corporate plan covered the period 2008 – 2011. A key task for the coming year will be for officers to work with the Committee to agree the Council's priorities and plans and how resources will be allocated to these for the remainder of the Council term. A detailed project plan, outlining a timetable and process for developing the new plan will be brought to Committee for approval in August.

Over the past year, the SP&R Committee worked with all Members to prepare a draft update of the plan for 2011/12 so that there might be continuity in terms of the Council's over-all direction, whilst the new Committee considers future priorities. This update work was carried out in line with the development of the Council's budget for 2011/12, which was agreed by the SP&R Committee in February 2011.

In updating the corporate plan, the Committee was guided by analysis of information about the type of city that Belfast is, the issues that people across the city face and by feedback from local people about what they believe the Council's priorities should be. Feedback from residents in 2010, obtained through surveying over 1600 citizens in their own homes was that the Council's priorities should be:

- Creating a safer city
- Making the city cleaner and greener
- Supporting children and young people
- Investing in improving local areas
- Helping to support and improve the city's economy
- Providing value for money services

These priorities are reflected in the Council's draft vision and priorities for 2011/12 which are set out at Appendix 1.

Further information on the draft interim corporate plan for 2011/12 and on the actions that departments will undertake to achieve the Council's priorities will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

Related work – managing people, projects, money and assets

Whilst working with the Committee to develop the new corporate plan, officers will also be working with Members to develop key strands of work designed to ensure that resources are available to allow the Council to continue to invest in the city, make sound financial plans to safeguard vital service delivery, and ensure the Council is run efficiently and provides value for money. At the meeting, Chief Officers will set out the key pieces of work involved and how Members will lead the process of taking these forward.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report by way of background to a presentation by Chief Officers at the meeting about development of the Committee's key strands of work for the year ahead.

Draft Vision and Priorities 2011/12

Our vision is to ensure that *'The Council, working with communities and stakeholders, takes a lead role in improving quality of life now and for future generations for the people of Belfast by making the city and its neighbourhoods better places to live in, work in, invest in, study in and visit.'*

To deliver on this vision our Corporate Plan sets out 5 themes, these are:

Theme	What they mean
City leadership	Providing leadership and strategic direction for shaping, developing and managing the city
Environment	Caring for Belfast's environment and creating a sustainable, clean and healthy living space for all
Economy	Creating a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy
People and communities	Creating stronger neighbourhoods
Improving our Services	Delivering value for money, customer focused services with the right level of resources to deliver Council and ratepayer priorities

More information about each of these themes is set out in the following pages.

City Leadership

Contributing to the leadership and strategic direction for shaping, developing and managing the city

Our priorities:

Place Shaping

- Using our capital programme and City Investment Fund to improve the city's economy and help regenerate local areas;
- Finding new ways of attracting funding to create sustainable investment across the city;
- Influencing the future development of the city and identifying the physical infrastructure needed to support the city's future economic competitiveness and growth;
- Preparing for the effective delivery of the new responsibilities that we will receive as a result of local government reform;
- Creating an effective Community Planning Framework.

Good Relations and Equality

- Creating better relationships with organisations locally, regionally and internationally to tackle poverty, address inequality and improve quality of life in the city
- Leading the development of good relations across the city, mainstreaming equality and respecting diversity
- Securing Peace III investment to create shared space and positive relations in the city.

What local people said about city leadership

- 96% of residents say they enjoy living in Belfast and more than four in five (84%) are satisfied with living in their local area
- In the last three years, more than half of residents think that the city has improved
- 80% of residents think that the council is important in their everyday lives
- 73% of residents think that the council makes Belfast a better place to live
- 66% of residents agree that the council is the organisation best placed to direct the future shape of the City
- one in three residents feel that 'investing in improving local areas' should be one of the Council's key priorities
- 75% of residents feel that the council is helping to promote good relations in the city

Environment

Caring for Belfast's environment and helping to create a sustainable, clean and healthy place to live for everyone.

Our priorities

Making the City Cleaner and Greener

- Keeping all parts of the city clean
- Improving the quality of parks and open spaces
- Promoting Belfast as a Sustainable City which looks after its environmental, social and economic future
- Improving the Council's energy efficiency and carry out services in a way which reduces our carbon footprint

Zero Waste Direct to Landfill

- Achieving our target of zero waste direct to landfill by 2015
- Increasing ways for households to recycle

High Quality Urban and Local Environment

- Improving the appearance of local areas across the city

What local people said about improving our environment

- 96% of residents say they enjoy living in Belfast and more than four in five (84%) are satisfied with living in their local area
- Residents have stated that making the City cleaner and greener should be one of council's top three priorities
- Almost nine in ten feel that the council is working to make the City cleaner and more attractive
- 28% of residents felt that cleaner streets would most help to improve their quality of life
- 31% of residents felt that the streets need to be better maintained

Economy

Creating a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy

Our priorities

Cultural and Tourism Experience

- Maximising tourism potential and making best use of the city's cultural products to promote Belfast
- Delivering a programme of events which will enhance the vibrancy of and attract tourism to the city

Contributing to regeneration and growing the rates base

- Developing relationships with those working to grow the local economy
- Supporting local regeneration activity
- Supporting growth of the city's rate base
- Developing the economic potential of the North Foreshore

Supporting Economic Growth

- Helping to maximise employability
- Supporting job creation
- Supporting business growth and competitiveness
- Working with our partners to improve the overall city centre experience and vitality
- Ensuring our markets continue to provide a unique shopping experience for residents and visitors alike.

What local people said about improving the local economy

- 55% of residents feel that the council is helping to improve the local economy
- 33% of residents feel that better employment opportunities would most help to improve their quality of life
- A quarter of residents questioned stated that 'helping to support and improve the city's economy' should be one of the council's key priorities

People and Communities

Improving quality of life across all neighbourhoods

Our priorities

People feel safer

- Helping to make people feel safer and addressing antisocial behaviour

People are Healthier

- Giving people opportunities to be more active
- Working with partners and communities to improve health and well-being in the city
- Provide high quality regulatory services to protect people's safety and health, such as building control and food safety

Engaged and Active Communities

- Making sure the Council is better engaged with local people and is involving them in improving the city and their local areas
- Helping local people get the best use out of the Council's assets
- Supporting local community development

Younger and Older People

- Creating and co-ordinating opportunities for children and young people
- Working with partners to improve services to older people and reducing isolation

Dealing with Emergencies

- Supporting local people affected in a crisis such as during flooding or severe weather

What local people said about improving life for people and communities

- More than half of residents feel that there is a strong sense of community in their local area
- Safety is the top key priority for residents, especially in the City centre after dark.
- Almost half of residents questioned feel that lower levels of anti-social behaviour and crime would be most likely to improve their quality of life.
- Residents feel that investing in improving local areas is also a key priority for the Council.
- 37% of residents felt that more activities for children and young people would most help to improve their quality of life
- 56% of residents feel that the council is helping to create a better city for older people
- 75% of residents believe the council is helping to promote healthier and more active lifestyles
- 86% of residents are generally satisfied with our Parks and Open Spaces

Improving our services

Delivering value for money, customer focused services

Our Priorities

- Enable value for money service delivery by ensuring efficient use of resources to achieve Council priorities
- Make best use of technology to deliver services when and where they are needed
- Providing adequate support to our services to ensure that resources are fully aligned to our corporate priorities
- Attracting and developing people who will work together to deliver our services and develop the organisation for the future
- Facilitating the effective planning, management and reporting of Council activities

What local people told us about improving services

- 78% of residents are satisfied with the services which the council provide
- 75% of residents thought that the council makes Belfast a better place to live
- 64% of residents thought the council was efficient in the delivery of its services
- 53% of residents felt our services had got better over the past three years whilst just 4% felt that they had got worse
- 23% of residents felt that 'providing value for money services' should be one of the council's key priorities