

Chief Executive's Department



Internal document



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1.0 Introduction

At the core of the Chief Executive’s Department is the service it provides to Councillors. This comes in the form of Committee and Council support, policy advice, legal advice, human resources, equality & good relations, media relations, communications and business support. Over the coming months a key focus of work for the Department will be to support all Council Members, induction for new Members and the new Lord Mayor to ensure that all Councillors get the support they need to fulfil their local leadership role.

2.0 Background

The corporate plan embodies what the council intends to achieve. It sets out Members’ ambitions for the city and their commitment to improving quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in and visits the city. It is based upon an assessment of need in the city, the views of residents on what the council’s priorities should be and a commitment to strong political and executive leadership.

Whilst the corporate plan focuses on issues which cut across council departments it also reflects the importance of the vital services provided on a daily basis.

The corporate value creation map (VCM) is used to performance manage the corporate planning process, which encourages services to work together across the Council to improve quality of life and the different elements that contribute to this aim.

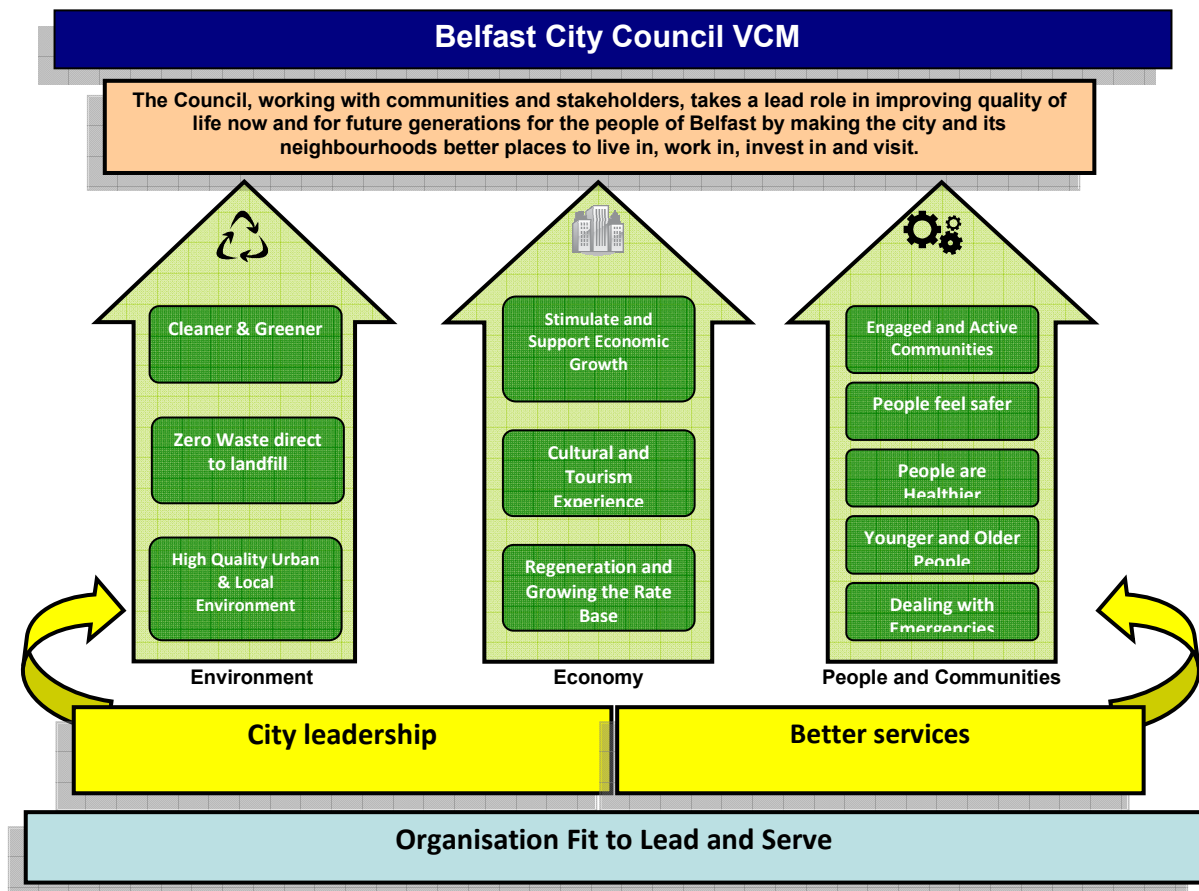


Fig 1: Corporate Value Creation Map

This Departmental Plan describes how the Chief Executive Department's proposed actions and targets for the year 2011/ 12 complements that in the Corporate Plan. This Plan is the basis for management of the Department by the Committees and senior managers. It provides explicit links between core departmental activity and corporate strategy.

Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the Chief Officer has been given the delegated authority to undertake the activities as outlined in section 7. Progress update reports will be submitted to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee twice yearly.

3.0 Corporate Values

The Department adheres to the Council's corporate values which state:

Focus on the needs of customers, foster a 'can do' attitude and be problem solvers

Provide first class services which are responsive to citizens needs and continuing to ensure that the Council is a place where things happen.

Provide value for money and improve services

Deliver high quality, value for money services at all times and continually improving our services.

Work together

Work with our partners across Belfast to ensure that our combined efforts contribute to the continued success of our city.

Respect each other, be fair, promote equality and good relations

Improve access to our services: valuing diversity, ensuring that everyone shares in the city's success and tackling discrimination in all its forms by treating all communities and people equally.

Act sustainably

Use our resources effectively and efficiently and promote the principle of sustainability in all our activities.

Ensure the highest standards of health and safety

Maintain the highest possible standards of health and safety at all times to ensure we protect our employees and all those who use our services.

Value our employees

Continue to support all our employees to help them fulfil their potential.

4.0 Strategic themes

The corporate value creation map defines six strategic themes. These were chosen as priorities for the Council in the context of a wider analysis of need in the city, the views of the public, and the statutory and strategic challenges and opportunities that are likely to impact on the Council. The themes are:

City leadership – strong, fair, together

Better opportunity for success across the city

Better care for Belfast’s environment

Better support for people and communities

Better services – listening and delivering

Better value for money – a can-do, accountable, efficient council

The last of these themes underpins all of the Council’s work, and is further defined by the following strategic elements within the value creation map:

- Corporate human resource management
- Corporate financial planning
- Corporate information management
- Corporate planning and performance
- Corporate communication
- Corporate assets
- Corporate governance and risk

5.0 Changes in internal and external environment

At the core of the Chief Executive's Department is the service it provides to Councillors. This comes in the form of Committee and Council support, policy advice, legal advice, equality and good relations, media relations and communications and business support. The upcoming assembly and local government elections will therefore have a significant effect on the Chief Executives Department, both in preparing for the elections and in supporting the new Council. Over the coming months support to all Council Members and induction for new Members will be a key focus of the department which will work to ensure that all Councillors get the support they need to fulfil their local leadership role.

The current economic climate continues to play a significant role in the planning of the Chief Executive's Department. The department has been contributing to the Council's efficiency agenda and has been demonstrating better value for money in the services that it provides. It is becoming more and more important for the Council to take a leading role in the city, seeking new ways to collaborate with other organisations for the greater benefit of the local people and advocating for the maximum possible resources for Belfast. The Chief Executive's Department remains committed to working in partnership with other key statutory service providers to deliver more integrated, responsive and improved services to the citizen. The department also seeks to identify any viable opportunities which secure greater value for money and service improvement.

The Chief Executive's Department will continue to support Members in this process by building upon, for example, the meetings held between Ministers and Council members in the run-up to the finalisation of the NI Executive's budget.

The Department has played a key role for both the Council and the local government sector in the ongoing modernisation programme and the potential transfer of new functions to councils. Again as policy continues to emerge on these issues at a regional level, the department will support Members in both shaping and responding to new developments.

Listening to the rate payers is vital in planning our services and last year the Chief Executive's Department commissioned a public survey on behalf of the Council to ascertain what the people of Belfast thought of the services we provide. The results were encouraging, showing that our residents enjoy living in Belfast and have seen many improvements over the past three years – for example, 78% are satisfied with the services we provide, compared to 74% in 2007. The department will continue to provide members with feedback from local people and to create a more strategic approach to consulting and engaging with local communities in order to support effective organisational planning and performance management.

External funding has proven more and more difficult to source and the Department has been working to find as many ways as possible for alternative sources of funding. The Council is currently developing a resourcing strategy that will help identify these funding streams and the Chief Executive's Department will play an integral part in this.

The Chief Executive's Department will continue to find ways in which technology can improve our services to both Councillors and the public. The Council's web site has been redesigned, giving it a more customer friendly look and we are looking at ways for making more of our services available on line. The increased use of social networking sites has seen the introduction of Belfast City Council pages on both Facebook and Twitter that are regularly updated, giving the Council direct access to members of the public and an opportunity to gain immediate feedback on Council announcements. Live web streaming of Council meetings is being developed this coming year, further enhancing the access that the public have to the democratic process.

The Chief Executive's Department is revising the Council's current Equality Scheme, in line with recent revised guidance from the Equality Commission, to ensure that the organisation fulfils all the equality commitments required under current legislation.

Promoting Equality and Good Relations is key to improving the quality of life for everyone in the city. The Council was awarded £6.3 million under priority 1.1 of the EU Peace III Programme. This programme supports peace and reconciliation and ran from 2008 to 2010. The Chief Executive's Department, through the Good Relations Unit, managed this funding ensuring that a number of peace and reconciliation projects were undertaken across the city. It is the intention of the department to continue this momentum with further peace & reconciliation work.

Internally, the Chief Executive's Department underwent significant change in 2010/11. The most significant changes included the amalgamation of the Legal Services Department into the Chief Executive's Department; the Director of Legal Services becoming the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor; the Strategic Policy & Planning team transferring from the Core Improvement Department into the Chief Executive's Department; and Registration Services (Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships) was transferred from Finance & Resources Department to the Chief Executive's Department. In July 2011, the Human Resources Section will transfer from Finance & Resources Department to the Chief Executive's Department.

The department remains heavily involved in the Council's on-going improvement agenda to ensure that the Council is capable of delivering high quality services during this time of change in the public sector. In order to support this, the Council is working towards producing an organisational development strategy and the Chief Executive's Department will continue to play a key role in this.

6.0 Departmental structure

The Chief Executive's Department is one of six Departments which make up the officer structure of the Council. The various Departments are shown in Figure 2 below and Figure 3 sets out the Department's Service structure.

Fig 2: Council Departments

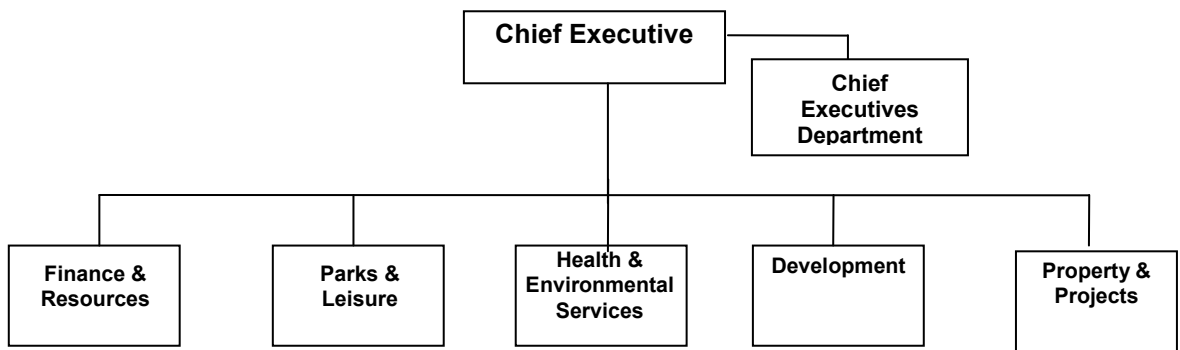
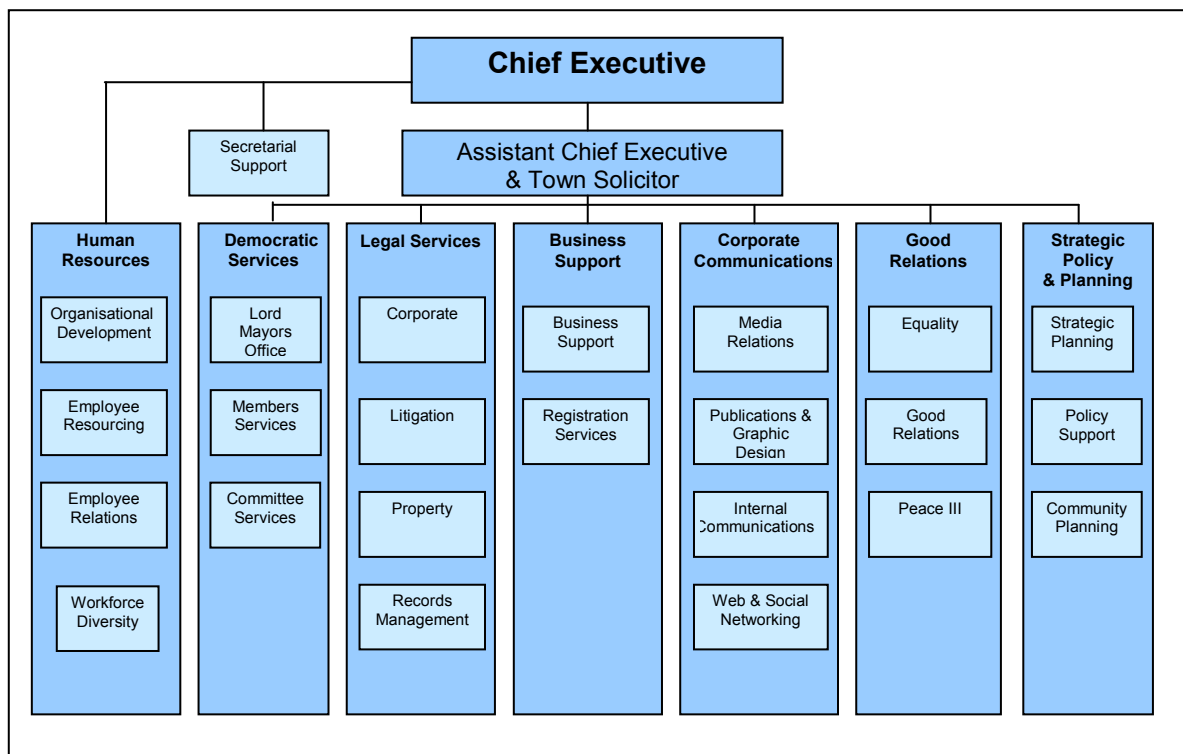


Fig 3: Chief Executives Department - functional chart



7.0 Key Achievements 2010/ 11

7.1 City Leadership

Key achievements

- Successfully delivered a number of good relations events throughout the city
- Oversaw the delivery of Phase 1 of Peace III, consisting of £6.3m
- Distributed 57 small grants under Phase 1 of Peace III (totalling almost £1 million)
- Continued to support the Migrants Forum
- Secured funding for and commenced a community planning pilot
- Established a cross party working group on community planning
- Prepared bids for Phase 2 of Peace III
- Supported and taken a lead on the RPA process, both in the Council and across the local government sector, and taken a leading role in the local government sector's Improvement, Collaboration & Efficiency (ICE) Programme
- Revised the Good Relations Plan
- Provided key legal support for the Connswater Community Greenway project
- Provided strategic advice and assistance to Arc 21 in respect of Organic Waste Treatment and Residual Waste Treatment contracts
- Put in place funding agreements to facilitate the development of the Lyric and MAC
- Advised on issues relating to the proposed local government and planning reform
- Conducted approximately 1000 prosecutions in a diverse range of issues affecting health and the environment
- Registered 4,367 births, 1,335 marriages and conducted 67 civil partnerships

7.2 Better Value for Money – An Organisation Fit to Lead and Serve

Human Resource Management

- Absence reduced to 10.3 days in 2010/11. This means that we surpassed our two year target in one year.

- Voluntary Redundancy (VR) exercises resulted in:
 - 53 staff released on VR
 - total cost of VR £4.7 M
 - Year on year savings of nearly £2M
 - Supernumerary situation resolved after 10 years

- People in post down by 80 this year. Control mechanisms in place re vacancy control; reporting mechanisms continuously improving re employee spend.
- Out of the 36 young people placed in Belfast City Council as part of the Young Persons Employment initiative (YPEI) 17 (almost 50%) have found employment.
- Of the 19 placements provided for the Public Employment Partnership programme (PEP), 7 found employment (36.8%)
- Learning and Development Policy agreed with Trade Unions (including the learning agreement and a corporate approach to personal development planning)
- Ongoing development activity - 211 employees have attended Step up to Learn (Literacy and numeracy) and 292 employees have attended Frontline Development Programme. Ongoing mandatory training like Equal Opportunities etc.
- Reviewed the management development programme
- Implemented a departmental restructure
- Council achieved gold status in the Opportunity Now benchmark

Elected member development

- 4 Women's Leaders Programmes (32 officers and 9 elected members)
- Joint member / officer steering group
- Participation in NI Elected Member Development Charter project
- Currently revising the member induction programme for implementation following the elections

Policy, Planning & Performance

- Undertook a review of markets policy
- Updated the disability action plan and held conference on disability
- Provided policy and project delivery support to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, Chief Officers Management Team, Chief Executive's Department and Property & Projects Department
- Coordinated and facilitated the development of service, departmental and corporate plans across the organisation.
- Reviewed and improved the planning process of the Council, coordinating with the estimating and rate setting process
- Responded to a number of policy and legislation consultations in relation to local government reform, planning reform, and others

Assurance, Governance & Risk

- Prepared for the May 2011 elections
- Successfully regained Lexcel and ISO accreditation for Legal Services
- Defending employment and liability claims worth a potential £3.2m for a total outlay of £600,000, giving an approximate saving of almost £2.6m
- Providing advice on procurement matters and other issues of risk, and framing decision making in a legal context
- Provided legal services in house, enabling the Council to make significant savings compared to using external solicitors for these services

Communication and Engagement

- Brought a number of advertising campaigns in house, delivering approximately £550,000 worth of advertising for £300,000
- Undertook 80% of graphic design work in-house
- Developed the Council's website that is now attracting 2 million unique visitors per year
- Improved our website content to be placed in the top 1/3rd of local government websites in the independent SOCITM ranking
- Commenced the use of Twitter and Facebook as new channels for communicating to stakeholders
- Piloted video messaging to front line staff
- Carried out public, Councillor and employee consultations
- Issued over 500 press releases and dealt with over 500 media enquiries
- Issued approximately 130,000 copies of City Matters, five times a year to every household in Belfast

8.0 Key actions for 2011/12

8.1 City Leadership

- Within the Council's remit, prepare for and undertake the May 2011 elections
- Implementation of Phase 2 of the Peace III programme
- Develop and deliver area based pilots which integrates proposed transferring functions (e.g. planning and regeneration) at the local level
- Complete community planning pilot and develop a community planning model
- Implement the Good Relations Plan
- To support the civic dignitaries through the organisation and delivery of a programme of initiatives, events and engagements during their term of office
- Support the Memorabilia Working Group
- Support the Centenary Working Group
- Develop an external relations strategy

8.2 Better Services

- Expand range of e-enabled customer services including on line booking for leisure facilities and purchase of dog licenses
- Commence live web streaming of Council meetings
- Achieve efficiencies of £220,000 as set out in the efficiency programme for 2011/ 12

8.3 Better Value for Money – An Organisation Fit to Lead and Serve

Human Resources

- Develop and implement the HR capacity building and organisation redesign aspects of the council's emerging organisational development strategy
- Implement a corporate framework for the effective management of employee costs associated with absence rates, agency workers, overtime and staff numbers
- Develop and implement an elected member development programme, including an induction programme and improved personal development planning processes

- Develop and implement a leadership development programme for senior and middle managers
- Continue to implement the chief officer/head of service and senior manager individual performance management and personal development planning scheme
- Implement a revised industrial relations framework to ensure effective consultation, negotiation and partnership working with the Council's trade unions
- Organise the annual staff recognition scheme - the Making A Difference (MAD) Awards - scheduled for November 2011 - and review the staff suggestion scheme

Policy & Planning

- Participate in the local government led improvement programme and identify/ pursue potential collaborative opportunities for the Council which may improve service delivery and maximise value for money
- Revise the Council's Equality Scheme in line with the revised requirements from the Equality Commission
- Support the corporate planning process for 2012 – 13 by:
 - Providing strategic support to elected Members and Chief Officers
 - Integrating local area working and community planning into the corporate planning process
- Develop a debt management policy
- Support the development of a Council resourcing strategy
- Integrate financial and business planning

Communication

- Improve internal communications to front line staff, including:
 - rolling out the 'Getting People Connected' project and installing display screens in the remaining council sites
 - Developing and piloting an ezine (a newsletter sent by email) to be sent to casual and part-time colleagues to improve communications to this hard to reach group of employees
 - Widening the roll out of the video version of the team brief
- Review advertising policy and approach to secure efficiencies
- Prepare for upcoming events in 2012 and beyond – Titanic Centenary, Titanic Signature Project, London Olympics, Connswater Community Greenway

- Finalise and implement the corporate consultation and engagement strategy

Asset Management

- Develop a property disposal policy

Assurance, Governance & Risk

- Support the Committee system and ensure that Councillors have the information available to enable effective decisions to be made
- Effectively implement the Council's new Scheme of Delegation and develop a Code of Governance
- Develop and implement a new Council constitution
- Review and update Council policy on Declaration and Register of Interests

9.0 Key performance indicators 2011/ 12

City Leadership

	Annual Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Council Departments delivering Good Relations Projects under Phase 2 of the Peace III programme 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of bonfire related incidents recorded against groups participating in the Council's Bonfire Programme 	10%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new community groups availing of the Council's Good Relations Fund 	10

Better Services

	Annual Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall satisfaction with Council services 	78%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of equality complaints 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % complaints responded to within corporate target 	100%

HR Management

	Annual Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average number of working days per employee lost due to absence (measured against agreed targets) 	8.28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variance between actual direct employee costs and budget 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variance between actual Staff Number and agreed establishment 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Councillors with PDPs 	65%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Chief Officers, who receive (at least) annual feedback on their performance 	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Heads of Service and Senior Managers who receive (at least) annual feedback on their performance 	90%

Finance

	Annual Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Variance between net expenditure and budget 	+ 1 / -3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Variance between planned net expenditure and forecasted net expenditure 	+ 1 / -3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Variation between forecast outturn at period 6 and actual outturn at period 12 	+ 1 / -1%

Corporate Policy, Planning & Performance

	Annual Target
• % PIs with valid data collected and reported upon	85%
• % PIs on target	TBA *

Communication & Engagement

	Annual Target
• Visits to Council website	1,000,000
• % media releases used	80%
• Number of followers of Council's Twitter site	5,000
• Number of fans of Council's Facebook site	5,000

(*Target to be confirmed at year end)

10.0 Financial Information

For 2011/12 department plans, the financial information focuses on the 2011/12 estimates.

The estimated net expenditure for the Department for 2011/12 is £5,741,665 plus an additional £2,043,104 coming to the Chief Executive's Department with the transfer of Human Resources to the department in July. A breakdown of the revenue estimates by the Department's main services is provided in the table below, showing the expenditure for each section approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of the annual budget setting process.

	Net Expenditure 2010/11	Net Estimated Expenditure 2011/12
Democratic Services	2,693,677	2,427,317
Corporate Communications	1,054,205	1,068,222
Business Support	257,815	837,765
Good Relations	457,078	408,208
Legal Services	793,745	530,431
Strategic Policy and Planning	484,640	469,722
Total	5,741,159	5,741,665
Human Resources *		2,043,104
Town Planning Committee	27,000	26,500

* Please note that the Human Resources function moves from the Finance & Resources Department to the Chief Executive's Department in July 2011, resulting in an increase in the departmental net expenditure.

11.0 Monitoring and review arrangements

The Council has introduced an integrated performance management system that enables regular, up to date reporting to be undertaken at corporate, departmental and service level.

Key performance indicators have been identified for all services within the Chief Executive's Department and are contained within section 8 of this plan.

A number of PIs and tasks have been identified as corporately significant and are contained in the corporate plan. They will be reported on a quarterly basis to COMT to ensure ongoing management of the key priorities.

12.0 Committee membership

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee Membership

Chairman	Councillor Deirdre Hargey
Deputy Chairman	Councillor Gareth McKee
Councillors:	Alderman David Browne Alderman May Campbell Alderman Ian Crozier Alderman Robin Newton Councillor Tim Attwood Councillor Patrick Convery Councillor Matt Garrett Councillor Tom Haire Councillor Claire Hanna Councillor Máire Hendron Councillor Mervyn Jones Councillor Danny Lavery Councillor Nichola Mallon Councillor Conor Maskey Councillor Jim McVeigh Councillor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir Councillor Adam Newton

Good Relations Partnership

Chairman

Councillor Máire Hendron

Deputy Chairman

Councillor Conor Maskey

Members

Councillor Tim Attwood

Councillor Ian Crozier

Councillor John Kyle

Councillor Bob Stoker

Ms Sharada Bhat

Mr Seán Brennan

Mr Peter Bunting

Rev Lesley Carroll

Ms Angila Chada

Ms May De Silva

Rev Barry Dodds

Mr Rory Galway

Ms Jennifer Hawthorne

Mr Paddy Mackel

Ms Michelle Marken

Ms Amy McKenna

Mr Patrick Scott

Ms Elaine Wilkinson