

Budget and Transformation Panel

Friday 10 June 2011

Present:

Cllr D Hargey	SF (Chair)
Ald D Browne	UU
Cllr T Attwood	SDLP
Cllr T Hartley	SF
Cllr M Hendron	ALL
Cllr R Newton	DUP

P McNaney	Chief Executive
J Thompson	Director of Finance and Resources
S McNicholl	Planning and Policy Manager

1. Background to Budget and Transformation Panel

The Panel agreed its terms of reference, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. In response to a question raised by a Member, it was agreed that information on the review of agency and over-time working would be brought to the Panel's next meeting. **Action: J Thompson, J Minne.**

It was also agreed that consideration should be given to how employees with excellent attendance records could be acknowledged. **Action: J Minne**

2. Financial Report – Quarter 4 2010/11

The Panel considered the report on the Council's year-end financial position, noting the impact on reserves and the potential for a £2.5m local capital investment fund. The Panel approved the report for submission to the SP&R Committee.

3. Local Capital Investment Fund

The Panel considered the proposal to set up a local capital investment fund to provide the Council with the ability to invest in smaller scale local/neighbourhood capital schemes on a partnership basis. The fund would offer the potential for greater alignment with other emerging funding streams such as the OFMDFM's Social Investment Fund, DCAL's stadia investment and DSD capital investment funding.

Members stressed the importance of considering alignment with funding streams from all government departments and of the need for a robust and effective process for prioritising projects and allocating funds. Members asked that best practice from else-where should inform the development of the process. It was agreed that Members would be fully engaged in the establishment of this process over the summer months. **Action: J Thompson and Chief Executive**

The Panel supported the proposal to develop a local capital investment fund which will be submitted to the next meeting of the SP&R Committee. **Action J Thompson.**

4. Forward work plan for Rates

J Thompson circulated the timetable for the rate-setting process for 2012/13. The Panel noted the timetable and its link to the development of the Medium Term Financial Plan, in line with the prudential code.

During discussion the issue of rates debt collection emerged and it was agreed that an up to date report on rates debt collection would be brought to the Panel together with a report on LPS progress in August. It was further agreed that Land and Property Services would be invited to the Panel's meeting in October to discuss rates collection and forecasting issues.

Action: J Thompson

5. Efficiency Programme 2012/13

The Panel discussed and agreed the report on the efficiency programme for submission to the meeting of the SP&R Committee on 17th June.

6. Allowances for Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff (referred from SP&R)

The Chief Executive outlined that this report had been referred to the Panel by the SP&R Committee. The Panel considered the report and proposed that further information should be obtained from the Lord Mayor's Support Unit about use of the Lord Mayor's allowances by other civic dignitaries so that this could be submitted to inform the Committee's consideration of the options contained within the report. The Panel were minded to recommend no increase in the allowances for the year ahead. **Action: Chief Executive**

7. Member Development (referred from SP&R)

The Chief Executive outlined that this report had also been referred to the Panel by the SP&R Committee. The Panel discussed the report and agreed the importance of reconstituting the Members' Development Steering Group of party leaders or their nominees. Members discussed how, under the previous Council improvement programme, the use of peer Members from other regions had been useful in supporting Member development and in working with parties. It was agreed that this approach should be explored again as part of the new development programme. It was also proposed that Member development should address both the strategic and the more operational aspects of Members' work in the Council. **Action: Chief Executive**