



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Report on management arrangements in Property and Projects Department
<b>Date:</b>	23 September 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources

### Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to consider the appropriateness of the current management structure within the Property and Projects department in the context of the changing needs of the organisation.

The Property and Projects department was created by the council in September 2009 on the back of an independent report on the governance of major projects which highlighted the need to formalise the effective management of major project risks. Members agreed that a Director of Property and Projects post be created with responsibility for:

- Facilities Management (Facilities, Property Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance).
- Asset Management
- Estates Management
- Capital Programme
- City Investment Strategy
- Procurement

Currently, a Head of Facilities Management and principal officer grade in each of the functional areas support the director.

### Key Issues

Since the department was created in September 2009 the needs of the organisation have changed significantly in two key areas – the scale and complexity of physical projects which the council is becoming increasingly engaged with, and the role of procurement in delivering efficiency cash savings.

#### Scale and complexity of physical projects

In terms of the city investment strategy, members have expanded the role of the council to not just being a funder of projects but also to be the facilitator of project development with a range of partners across the public, business and community sectors. At present, the Property and Projects department is engaged in the development of over 30 potential partnership projects.

In addition, the council has taken on responsibility for the delivery of the Connswater Community Greenway. Members have indicated their desire for the council to use its project delivery experience to support the development of a number of agreed schemes across the city to enable them to bid for funding from council funding streams such as the city investment strategy, and local investment fund and external funding such as ERDF, Peace III and the social investment fund.

Consequently, the majority of the section's time is now being spent on the development of city investment projects and the delivery of Connswater Community Greenway.

### **Role of Procurement**

The council has agreed efficiency targets of £2m for each of the next two years. The efficiency programme is a key element of the financial strategy of the organisation and the savings it generates supports the additional investment in capital projects while at the same time keeping the district rate as low as possible. Procurement is a key strand of the efficiency programme and members have already considered today an independent report which recommends that a more strategic approach is required if further procurement savings are to be delivered. The report also recommends that a Head of Procurement post should be created.

### **Key Recommendations**

It is recommended that a new head of service post is created in the Property and Projects department. This post would be responsible to the director for the council's procurement function and the Project Management Unit. The post holder would be responsible for delivering the recommendations contained in the independent review of procurement and the operational elements of the capital programme and city investment strategy. The creation of the post would therefore serve to enhance the council's ability to assist schemes to be developed to a stage where they are capable of being delivered subject to funding.

It is also recommended that the post should be self-financing through the delivery of procurement savings which means that there would be no additional cost to the ratepayer. These savings would be delivered in the context of an overall procurement efficiency target which would be set by Members.

Members are requested to note that the Budget Panel, at its meeting on 13 September 2011, agreed with the creation of the proposed Head of Service post. The Panel, while recognising that the number of Heads of Service posts has been reduced from 26 to 15 over the past five years, also recommended that further review of senior management posts in the organisation should take place as part of the 'employee costs' strand of the council's efficiency programme.

### **Implementation Issues**

In accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection:

- the post would be publicly advertised and the selection panel would comprise the Chair of the Committee and two other elected members from political parties not already represented by the Chair, along with the Director of Property and Projects and another director/appropriate head of service;
- the entire selection panel would be representative of gender and community background with all panel members having attended recent training in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques; and
- an observer from the Local Government Staff Commission and a professional assessor could also be in attendance during the selection process but with no voting rights.

The proposed recruitment and selection is as follows:

- following council ratification, the vacancy to publicly advertised on 3 and 4 November 2011 with a closing date of 18 November 2011;
- the panel short-list to take place on 29 November 2011 from 1:30pm to 3:30pm;
- short-listed candidates invited to attend a full day assessment centre on 6 and 7 December 2011;
- Members' briefing and the selection panel meeting to approve the outcome of the assessment centre to be held on 8 December 2011 from 9:30am to 10.30am; and
- the selection panel interviews to be held on 15 December 2011 (all day to be kept free).

### **Financial Implications**

A job description has been prepared for the proposed post of Head of Procurement and Projects with an evaluated indicative grade of SCP66 - £56,755 – SCP74 - £67,565.

### **Decision Required**

Members are asked to agree the following:

- (a) The creation of a new Head of Procurement and Projects.
- (b) The new post holder will be responsible to the Director of Property and Projects for the Procurement Unit and the Project Management Unit.
- (c) The post will be financed through procurement efficiency savings.
- (d) Further review of senior management posts in the organisation to be included as part of the 'employee costs' strand of the council's efficiency programme.
- (e) The post will be recruited in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
- (f) That in the interests of making an early appointment, the selection panel be given full delegated authority (through the Director of Property and Projects) to offer the post to the recommended candidate with the outcome of the appointment being reported back to committee for notation.
- (g) That a review of the number of senior management posts be undertaken as part of the employee costs strand of the council's efficiency programme.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

None

### **Documents Attached**

None