

Joint meeting of the Lord Mayor, Party Leaders & Committee Chairs
24th October, Ulster Hall

Present

Councillors G Robinson, T Attwood, M Hendron,, C Stalford, J Hussey, D Hargey,
P McCarthy, J McVeigh
J Huish (Facilitator)

Apologies

W Humphrey, D Browne, J Kyle, L Patterson, T Ekin, D Lavery,
G McCabe

1 – Governance Issues

- The introduction of AWG's and the onset of RPA necessitates a fundamental review of Governance Structures,
- Range of thoughts for discussion
 - Need to evolve structures so they are fit for future purpose
 - Need to ensure all members clearly involved
 - Opportunity to lead governance across NI
 - Governance needs to be more joined up across structures
 - Need to develop scrutiny function – internal and external
 - Need to develop area working (internal and external), external bodies role and partnership working
 - Move to a more themed approach
 - SP&R to take on strategic co-ordination role - consider a hybrid cabinet / committee style model with corporate strategic responsibility
 - Need to consider impact of RPA – especially community planning, planning, wellbeing, regeneration etc
 - Need to streamline structures and reduce meetings for members, make member input more effective in leadership terms
 - Consider delegation of decisions
 - Fundamental review of member roles and responsibilities (and review allowances accordingly)
 - Need to build development activities into Belfast Members Academy to ensure members have capacity and knowledge to meet new challenges
 - Review meeting times
- Need to develop an options paper for discussion by year end

2 – Evolve Existing Processes

- Evolve existing processes
 - Develop 18 month rolling forward work plan for Council, PLF, SP&R & Committees – linked to Group Meetings and briefings
 - To build a clear schedule and cycle of meetings as the basis for that workplan across all structures, including groups
 - Regular briefing note (monthly) for all members raising key issues from committees
 - Need to use Belfast Members Academy to ensure member understanding and skills are appropriate

3 – Member Support Going Forward

- Need to think about a new style democratic services – role of committee clerks
- Need to consider support mechanisms for each Party Group

4 – Longer Term Vision & Programme for Government

- **Develop Longer Term Vision & Values**
 - Need to begin a discussion on 15-20 year future of the City
 - Need to involve other partners in developing the vision, though need for an internal view first
 - Needs to build on
 - existing strategies and frameworks
 - work of SP&R, committees and area working groups
 - evidence of need
 - Need to establish an agreed set of values and ambitions
- **Develop Programme for Government**
 - Need to establish clear Programme for Government for Belfast
 - Initial Programme for Period to election
 - 4 year Period with indicative Programme
 - Need to establish strategic framework with budgets, outcomes etc linked to corporate plan
- **Develop Associated Partnership & Lobbying Programme**

5– Other Issues – for future discussion

- Community Facilities strategy – review
- Lesiure review – begin by defining leisure – community hubs
- Corporate HQ – renting vs owning