

## **Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting 6 December 2012**

### **1. Attendance**

Members:

Cllr Tim Attwood  
Cllr Deirdre Hargey (Chair)  
Cllr Maire Hendron  
Cllr John Kyle  
Cllr Jim McVeigh

Officers:

Peter McNaney, Chief Executive  
Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources  
Gerry Miller, Director of Property and Projects  
Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

### **2. Revenue Estimates**

The Director of Finance and Resources provided an update on the revenue estimates for 2013/14 and the further work undertaken which could reduce the current increase of 0.86% to 0%.

He highlighted that the planned approach to the efficiency programme had enabled £2.1m of cash savings to be removed from the 2013/14 estimates while ensuring adequate resources would be here provided to maintain service delivery and safeguard the investment programme commitments. The planned approach to the efficiency programme would continue with work already in progress for 2014/15. He also stressed that any further reductions in the 2013/14 estimates to bring the rate below zero would be outside of the planned efficiency programme and could only be achieved through cuts to the Capital Programme, Belfast Investment Fund, Council Services or Council Programmes.

It was noted that the results of the further work to reduce the rates increase to zero would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 14 December 2012.

The need to undertake major investment in the Leisure Estate was discussed in terms of the issues arising from the RPA boundary changes and the strategic opportunities arising from the "Stadia" projects. It was noted that the financing of a major investment in leisure would have to be undertaken as part of a transformation programme with a major focus of improving health in the City. There was also recognition that while investment would be required across the City, this would have to be phased in line with the opportunities and available finance.

### **3. Business Alliance and the Rates**

It was agreed that the Party Group Leaders should meet with the Business Alliance representatives and in early January 2013 ahead of the final consideration of the District at the January 2013 SP&R meetings. The meeting would be an opportunity to brief the Business Alliance and seek their views on the proposal for a zero rate increase while maintaining the capital investment commitments of the investment programme. It was also agreed that a similar briefing should be arranged Construction Industry Professionals

#### **4. Investment Conference**

The Chief Executive presented proposals for the City Development Agenda Conference and it was agreed that it would be a powerful symbol of confidence in Belfast if the First Minister and Deputy First Minister addressed the conference. It was also agreed that the conference programme should provide the opportunity for the involvement of Government Ministers' in the breakout sessions, should they be available and that specific provision should be made for the views of young people as part of the programme. Also, if possible, the programme should include a breakout session on the potential for Leisure Transformation in the City and that exhibition stands, providing information on key projects within the investment programme, would be set up at the conference.

The updated report will be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration at its meeting on the 14 December 2012.

#### **5. Review of Governance Arrangements**

The Director of Finance and Resources distributed a draft report on the review of governance arrangements outlining the three broad options emerging from the Party Group Leaders Forum.

It was agreed that the paper should be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on the 14 December 2012 with a recommendation to hold Member workshops in January 2013, with a further report, following the workshops, to be presented to SP&R in February 2013.

#### **6. Date of Next Meeting**

2.30pm, 17 January 2013.