

**Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting
11 September 2014**

1. Attendance

Members:

Councillor Lee Reynolds (Chair)
Alderman David Browne
Councillor Deidre Hargey (for Councillor Jim McVeigh)
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Mervyn Jones (for Councillor Maire Hendron)
Councillor Bernie Kelly (for Councillor Tim Attwood)
Councillor Michael Long
Alderman Gavin Robinson

Apologies:

Councillor Tim Attwood
Councillor Maire Hendron
Councillor Pat McCarthy
Councillor Jim McVeigh

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Jill Minne, Director of Organisational Development
Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

2. Special Council Meeting

The Panel noted that the Special Council meeting with the Lord Mayor of Boston would include the Elected Members from both the Council and the Shadow Council.

The Chief Executive advised that when final arrangements are made, a briefing note would be provided to the Party Group Leaders.

3. Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)

The Panel noted that further information on the role and time commitment required for those Elected Members nominated to PCSP recruitment panels would be distributed to the Party Groups by close of business on the 11 September 2014, together with a request for Elected Member nominations.

4. Community Event for Carl Frampton

The Panel fully supported the proposal to hold a local small scale community event to recognise the achievement of Carl Frampton in gaining the IBF World super-bantamweight title. Details would be provided to Elected Members at a later stage.

5. Leisure Transformation Programme.

The Director of Finance and Resources provided an update on the financial due diligence work being undertaken by the Council and Deloitte in relation to the LTP. He advised that this work would be completed by the end of September with a report presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in October 2014.

A specific issue was raised in relation to the occupancy of a Council property by staff who will transfer to the Leisure Trust. It was noted that this was being addressed by the Parks and Leisure Department.

6. 2015/16 Rates Update

The Director of Finance and Resources advised that a brief update report would be presented to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 26 September 2014 on the rate setting process for 2015/16.

He advised that given the detailed work being undertaken on the costs of service convergence and the new rate base and the further transfer of functions due diligence work being undertaken at a regional level, it was unlikely that Council would be in a position to consider details budget allocations and proposals for the district rate in 2015/16 until November 2014.

7. Super Connected Cities

The Director of Finance and Resources advised that that a proposal to proceed with a tender for the provision of Wi-Fi in the City Centre would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 19 September 2014. It was noted that given the EU tender limit, the proposed implementation of public Wi-Fi points would have to be reduced, however this would be supplemented by the installation of public Wi-Fi in around 190 Council and Public facilities.

The Director also advised that a decision regarding the installation of Wi-Fi on Translink Buses was expected on the 26 September 2014.

Following discussion, the Director agreed to investigate whether a secondary contract could be let by a government department to further supplement the Council led contract.

8. Use of i-pads

The Panel recommended that a paper on the use of i-pads should be presented to the next Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting proposing that hard copy Committee Booklets are no longer printed for Committee with effect from the 1 November 2014.

9. Fleet Livery

The Panel agreed that the proposals for a revised approach to the application of fleet livery, which would still utilise the Council's existing logo, should be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 19 September 2014. Members asked that, in order to inform the decision, the report should be accompanied by illustrations of vehicles using the revised approach.

10. Governance and Organisational Development

The Director of Organisational Development Panel advised that a report outlining the proposed approach to the development for new governance arrangements and structures would be presented to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 26 September 2014. She outlined that the new organisational structure must be based on Members' strategic direction and is therefore inextricably linked to the new governance arrangements. The Director also outlined that the Council would be working with the Local Government Association to establish a baseline of the organisation through a peer review challenge and also to analyse the spans of control and accountability within the organisation.

The Chief Executive agreed to arrange the initial engagement meetings with the Party Group Leaders which would initially be facilitated by Jon Huish.

11. Belfast Investment Fund / DSD

Following the August meeting with the DSD Minister, DSD declined to commit any details of their priorities for the use of June monitoring round monies until they had clarity as to whether the Housing and Regeneration Bill was agreed by the Executive.

The latest information available is that the Bill was not agreed this week and therefore the timetable for enactment cannot be met in this financial year. The transfer from DSD is potentially therefore stalled with unknown impacts on project funding and subsequent prioritisation issues for Council regarding the use of BIF and other matched funding. Council officers will meet with DSD officials to try and gain a better understanding of what next steps might be, but regardless some in depth briefing with Party Groups will be required over the coming month or so on how we go forward with our planned physical developments in the City.

12. Risks associated with ERDF Funded Projects

The Director of Property and Projects highlighted those projects where the Council was a operating at risk as Letters of Offer had still not been received. It was noted that the Director of Finance and Resources would be meeting with DFP in relation to these projects and to raise recent correspondence regarding spending profiles on other schemes where Letters of Offer had already been received.

13. Social Clauses

It was noted that the Director of Property would be presenting a report to the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining the progress being made on the inclusion of social clauses in Council contracts, but also highlighting some of the practical difficulties in ensuring compliance with the clauses.

14. Date of Next Meeting

To be advised.