



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Public consultation on zero hours contracts
Date:	17 October 2014
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Director of Organisational Development, ext 6039

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	At its meeting on 1 October the Council agreed that the draft response to the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) consultation paper relating to zero hours contracts, be taken back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for further consideration of the responses to Questions 3 and 10.

2.0	Key issues
2.1	A draft response (attached at Appendix One) contains proposed revisions to the answers provided at Questions 3 and 10 and also proposes minor revisions to some of the other answers to strengthen the Council's position on this subject.
2.2	Revised draft answers to Questions 3 and 10 are set out below for members consideration: Q3. Would banning zero hours contracts or exclusivity clauses create any negative impacts for SMEs? The revised draft response is as follows: Belfast City Council only endorses the use of zero hours contracts where both parties to the contract enjoy flexibility; i.e., where there is no detriment to workers when they are offered work but are unable to accept work, (i.e. where there are no exclusivity clauses). Such an approach can provide advantages, provided these contracts are not open to abuse by employers. Q10. Do you think that there would be benefit in introducing a compensatory arrangement similar to that adopted in the Republic of Ireland which would guarantee a minimum payment for workers on zero hours contracts who had an expectation of work, but who were not called to work in a given week? If so, could you suggest 1) what the minimum payment might be based upon; and 2) in what circumstances such a payment might be triggered For circumstances in which zero hours contracts are misused by employers a compensatory arrangement might offer a deterrent to such misuse. This however would not be necessary for properly constituted zero hours' contracts which genuinely offer flexibility to both parties to the contract, where there is no detriment to workers when they are offered work but are unable to accept work, (i.e. where there are no exclusivity clauses).

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> There are no financial implications contained in this report.
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> There are no HR implications contained in this report.
3.3	<u>Asset and Other Implications</u> There are no Asset or Other implications contained in this report.

4.0	Recommendations
4.1	Members are asked to agree the revisions to the Council's response to DEL's public consultation on zero hours' contracts attached at Appendix One.

5.0	Abbreviations
5.1	DEL – Department of Employment and Learning SMEs – Small and medium-sized enterprises LGSC – Local Government Staff Commission JNCC – Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee CMT – Corporate Management Team

6.0	Documents attached
6.1	Appendix One – the Council's draft response to DEL's consultation on zero hours contracts.