

Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting 9 March 2017

Attendance

Members:

Alderman Pat Convery
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Deirdre Hargey (For Cllr Jim McVeigh)
Councillor Lee Reynolds

Apologies: Alderman Browne, Councillor Hussey (Chair), Cllr McVeigh

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

In attendance for item 5

Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager

1. Capital Programme

The Director of Finance and Resources provided an overview of the Council's commitments in the capital programme for 2017 / 18 which would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) committee in March. He outlined the key areas of committed spend and the current remaining balance which he is recommending remains unallocated at this time.

The Chief Executive responded to a query in relation to the development of the new leisure facility at Andersonstown and she informed members that a mobilisation workshop in relation to the programme would be held with members.

2. City Hall Hospitality

The Chief Executive referred to a report which was being presented to SP&R to clarify the definition of events booked in the city hall that would be able to apply for hospitality. The members agreed that a degree of flexibility was required so that the Council could continue to support local charitable and international events while keeping within the agreed revenue estimates.

3. City Development Forum

The Chief Executive discussed with the panel the possibility of establishing a mechanism whereby developers could update the Council on future development proposals at an early stage in an informal setting. The Director of Planning and Place outlined the benefits of such a process and explained that similar arrangements were in place in other cities. The members discussed the proposal and asked for further consideration to be given to how such a forum might operate and also how the community could also be better supported in relation to inputting into proposed developments in their areas.

4. Planning Update

The Director of Planning and Place informed the panel of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee this month. He also updated them on suggested improvements to the Planning Service in relation to customer and member contact processes.

5. Party Group Leaders Briefings (N Lane attended in relation to this item)

a. Decade of Centenaries

The Panel agreed to the proposed approach to the 2017 / 18 Decade of Centenaries Programme which would be presented to March SP&R.

Members also discussed Council's recent decision that the Diversity Working Group be brought to a conclusion and a Historic Belfast Working Group be established to prioritise historic events and related issues with Good Relations being discussed by Party Leaders and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The Party Group Leaders agreed to discuss Good Relations issues at the Budget Panel meeting if there was sufficient time and if not they would meet on a monthly basis as a Party Leaders Forum. It was suggested that this monthly meeting is scheduled in the diary possibly the Thursday after SP&R and the group would meet as required.

b. Draft Language Framework

The City Solicitor updated members on the background to the current proposed framework which had been previously circulated and the Good Relations Manager outlined the key elements contained in the document. The members discussed the content of the draft framework and highlighted a number of queries which officers agreed to clarify. Additional information was also requested in relation to costs for implementation and a timeframe for consultation. Members agreed that the framework

would be included in party group briefings for March and brought back to the Panel in April before submission to SP&R.

6. AOB

Bonfire Management

It was agreed that details of a workshop to be held on 14th March on Bonfires would be circulated to members to maximise participation in the event.

Capital of Culture

The Chief Executive update the panel on recent discussion with Derry / Strabane on the process for the proposed joint bid.