

Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting 15 June 2017

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Deirdre Hargey (Chair),
Councillor Tim Attwood
Alderman Browne
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Ciaran Beattie (For Cllr Jim McVeigh)
Councillor Lee Reynolds

Apologies: Cllr McVeigh

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance
Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services (for items 7 & 8)
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

1. Year End Finance

The Deputy Chief Executive circulated a report on the year end finance position which would be presented to the June SP&R Committee. He outlined the council's year end financial out turn, the implications for reserves and a number of funding requests which had been received. The members discussed the process for re-allocation of underspend and the need to ensure that all members understood the process. They also discussed the possibility of having a prioritised list of projects linked to the achievements of outcomes in the Belfast Agenda which could be considered as part of this process. The Chief Executive agreed to take a report on the financial process to a future meeting of the SP&R Committee and the members agreed to consider the requests in the year end report at SP&R on 23rd June 2017.

2. Efficiency Programme

The Deputy Chief Executive outlined to the Panel the proposed approach for identifying and securing the previously agreed efficiency target for the 18/19 budget. He highlighted that this programme would now need to focus on organisational transformation if the efficiencies were to be achieved. A query was raised in relation to the savings generated by Leisure which the Director confirmed were on target. The Chief Executive also reminded members that they had agreed to commission an independent review of the new leisure operation

and the terms of reference for this would be brought to the June SP&R meeting. The Chief Executive also agreed to take forward a review of the implementation of the route optimisation report.

3. Corporate Plan and Annual Report

The corporate plan 2017-21 and the 2017 Annual report were circulated to the Panel. The Chief Executive outlined to members the process for the development of the plan which is aligned to the Belfast Agenda and outlines the Council's contribution to the delivery of its objectives. She also told the panel that this was a high level document and a detailed delivery plan would also be presented to Committee.

The Annual Report sets out the key achievements the council had made over the past year and the Chief Executive outlined the wide range of activity and how all services are contributing to the delivery of the priorities. Members asked how these messages were being communicated and it was agreed that the information should be used in a range of ways to ensure effective communication.

4. Growth Deal

The Chief Executive provided the Panel with a paper setting out an overview of the emerging city growth deal for Belfast which would be used to further develop and refine the specific ask and would be used to engage partners and stakeholders in the process. She asked members to review the document and feedback any comments. This would then be presented to June SP&R for approval.

5. Exhibition Refresh Policy

The City Solicitor circulated an updated Memorabilia Policy in relation to the new exhibition space in the City Hall which had previously been discussed with Party Group Leaders. A previously agreed amendment to the policy had not been incorporated into this current version and the City Solicitor agreed to update it and re-circulate to the Party Group Leaders. It was agreed that this would then be included on the agenda for the next Party Leaders' Forum.

6. Planning Updates

The Chief Executive informed the panel of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee this month.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services joined the meeting

7. Update on Memorial Policy

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services updated the members on the implementation of the Memorial Policy. Members agreed to hold a special meeting of the Party Leaders' Forum on this.

8. Use of Council Properties

The Panel were updated on a current review being undertaken in relation to the hiring of council premises and that an updated policy would be brought back to them for consideration.

9. AOB

City Development Forum

The Panel agreed to consider two items at the next meeting which is scheduled for 3 July 2017, due to time pressures. The Panel also agreed that the City Development Forum be included on the agenda for the next Party Leaders' Forum.

European Capital of Culture Bid

The Chief Executive reminded members about the upcoming workshop on Monday 19th of June and encouraged that all parties send at least one representative.

Freedom of the City

The Chief Executive asked if parties could respond to the previous Lord Mayor's proposal in relation to Freedom of the City. It was also agreed that a report on options on how citizens could be recognised by the council would be considered at the next Party Leader's Forum.

Bonfire Management

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services updated the panel on the current bonfire management programme including a number of issues that had recently be raised through the media. Some members raised a number of concerns relating to specific sites and the involvement of partners in working with the Council. The Director provided details on the extensive engagement process with communities and partners and the Chief Executive highlighted how resource intensive this process is and the possible need to review resources in the future.