

Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting 14th September 2017

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Deirdre Hargey (Chair),
Councillor Tim Attwood
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Ciaran Beattie (for Cllr Jim McVeigh)
Councillor Adam Newton (for Cllr Lee Reynolds)
Alderman Jim Rodgers (for Alderman D Browne)

Apologies: Alderman Browne, Cllr Reynolds, Cllr McVeigh

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
Lorraine Dennis, Equality Officer (for item 7)
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

1. Efficiency Programme

The Deputy Chief Executive provided an updated position on the efficiency proposals that had been discussed at party group briefings. He outlined a number of areas where potential savings could be made as well as areas where the organisation may be able to secure additional income. The panel discussed the proposals which would be presented to SP&R at its September meeting.

2. SMART Belfast Framework

The Deputy Chief Executive outlined a number of emerging initiatives and funding packages to support Belfast's digital infrastructure including the launch of the Smart Belfast Framework on 26th September 2017. It was agreed that these programmes will enhance the City's position in Information Technology and Innovation and support the local SME sector.

3. Belfast City Region Growth Deal

The Chief Executive circulated a report on the decisions required to progress the ongoing work on a Belfast City Region Growth Deal which will be presented to the September meeting of the SP&R Committee. The proposals have been discussed at an SP&R

workshop earlier in the month and included the geographic area, overall objective and key themes. The Panel discussed the need to ensure any deal had a positive impact on deprived areas and the Chief Executive outlined a number of key features including the focus up front on inclusive growth and the development of programmes focussing on skills and employability.

4. European Capital of Culture 2023

The Chief Executive outlined to the Panel the ongoing work on the development of the European Capital of Culture bid with Derry and Strabane District Council in particular the development of the stage 1 bid document which is due to be submitted on 27th October 2017. A presentation on stage 1 of the bid would be made to the SP&R Committee and includes the proposed high level cultural programme and initial financial considerations.

5. Visit of The Lord Mayor of the City of London,

The Chief Executive provided details of the planned visit to Belfast by the Lord Mayor of the 'City of London and the opportunities presented by this visit to promote Belfast as an investment location. It was agreed details of the visit would be sent out to members of the Panel.

6. Belfast Agenda

A copy of the final draft of the Belfast Agenda was circulated and would be presented to September SP&R for approval. The next steps include the development of delivery plans with the other partners and a launch of the document at the end of October 2017.

7. Language Policy

The City Solicitor provided an overview of the consultation responses to the draft language policy and the need to develop an action plan to implement the policy once it is approved. Members of the Panel discussed the recommendations following the consultation process and agreed to feedback to the City Solicitor if they wanted further briefings before the final report was presented to Committee

8. Council Meetings

The Chief Executive reminded members about some of the protocols surrounding the Council meetings. A query was raised in relation to use of mobile phones by members of the public at council and committee meetings and the City Solicitor agreed to look into this.

9. Position of High Sheriff

Councillor raised the nomination process for the position of High Sheriff and agreed to speak to party group leaders to see if they could reach an agreement on the process.

10. Planning Updates

The City Solicitor informed the panel of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee this month. A query was raised in relation to recent changes in the Planning Service and further information on this was requested.

11. AOB

Freedom of the City

The City Solicitor outlined proposals for alternative options on how citizens could be recognised by the council which would be presented to SP&R in September.