

Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting 11 October 2018

Attendance

Members:

Alderman Jim Rodgers
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Tim Attwood
Councillor Nuala McAllister (For Cllr Long)
Councillor George Dorrian (for Cllr Reynolds)
Councillor Peter Johnston (for Alderman Browne)

Apologies: Councillors Long, Reynolds and Alderman Browne

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

1. HR Update

The Chief Executive advised the panel that an update report on HR matters including current recruitment processes, customer focus and procurement will be presented to the October SP&R Committee. Members had received contact details of the new area managers and were also advised who to contact in relation to Cleansing matters. It was agreed that these staff should be invited to the next meeting of the Budget Panel to be introduced to members and provide an overview of their role. It was also suggested that a session should be held with members and senior planning officers.

2. Bank Buildings

The Chief Executive outlined the ongoing work in response to the recent fire at Bank Buildings and advised the panel that a special meeting of the Planning Committee would be held on 26th October to consider the listed building application. The NICS have also agreed to co-chair a joint taskforce on City Centre Recovery, which would include exploring funding from a number of government departments. Members raised some concerns from effected businesses that had not been contacted by the council, and the Chief Executive undertook to follow this up but also encouraged any business to contact the staff directly to discuss their individual circumstances.

3. Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD)

The Panel were given an update on the BRCD negotiations and were reminded of the importance of the funding envelope agreed by Treasury. The Chief Executive also discussed the Westminster event on 24th October including the proposed running order for the day. All parties have already agreed to attend the event and are liaising with the CX office in relation to travel.

4. Temporary Posts

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy provided an update on ongoing work to reduce the number of temporary posts in the organisation, which are largely due to ongoing departmental restructures. A report detailing numbers and next steps will be considered by the SP&R committee at their October meeting.

5. Planning Update

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

6. AOB

Blitz Memorial

Councillor Johnston requested an update on the position on the Blitz memorial and it was agreed that this should be raised at the meeting in relation to the City Hall grounds.

Brexit Committee – Meetings in Brussels

A report on a proposed cross party delegation from the Brexit Committee visit to Brussels will be presented to the SP&R committee in October.

Animation of the City Centre

Sean Dolan joined the meeting and presented to members emerging proposals on animating various zones in the city centre following the Bank Buildings fire. The members welcomed the proposals and the ongoing work to support traders and increase footfall in the city centre. The Director of Finance and Resources said they were exploring various ways of funding the proposals.