

Minutes of Budget and Transformation Panel Meeting

13 June 2019

Attendance

Members:

Alderman Brian Kingston (Chair)
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Alderman Sonia Copeland
Councillor George Dorrian
Councillor Fiona Ferguson
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Donal Lyons
Councillor Áine Groogan (For Cllr Mal O'Hara)

Apologies: Councillor O'Hara

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Development
Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

1. Governance

Budget and Transformation Panel / Party Group Leaders Forum

The City Solicitor outlined updated terms of reference for both the Budget and Transformation Panel and the Party Group Leaders Forum, highlighting the differences between the two and also the fact that neither had any decision making powers. He also proposed that the Budget Panel is renamed and options for this would be included in the June SP&R report.

Working Groups

At the June SP&R committee parties will be asked for nominations on a number of working groups and outside bodies and the Chief Executive asked party group leaders to consider who their nominees would be. A specific report on the Climate change group and the Customer Focus group would also be presented to committee requesting nominees from each party. The City Solicitor agreed to circulate the list of working groups and outside bodies to Party Group Leaders.

Bonfire Governance Arrangement

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services outlined the governance arrangements for dealing with Bonfires which included the Inter agency group and the Bonfire Panel which would be presented to SP&R at its meeting in June. A discussion also took place on problem bonfires.

2. Finance

The Director of Finance and Resources circulated a report outlining the 2018-19 year-end financial position which will be presented to members at the June SP&R committee. The report also contained a number of requests for funding from outside bodies which had been referred to the Committee, and the Director outlined why these requests could not be met at this time through year end underspends or reserves. Members of the Panel expressed concern that the Tribunal Service continued to be under funded and requested an urgent meeting with DfC to discuss this, as it provides a vital service to the community and that this be prioritised by the Council where possible.

3. Corporate Plan

A summary of this years corporate Plan will be presented to SP&R with a request to have a workshop with members in August to discuss the priorities set out in the plan. The Chief Executive proposed that this would be followed up with a joint meeting between Party Group Leaders and the Senior Management Team to discuss longer term priorities over the term of the new council.

4. Memorandum of Understanding – BCC and BHC

A draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and Belfast harbour Commission was circulated and members were advised that this would form the basis of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the two organisations. The Members welcomed the developing working relationship with the Harbour which would contribute to the growth and regeneration of the City.

5. Rainbow Flag / Pride

The City Solicitor outlined a previous notice of motion and the outcome of a subsequent equality screening relating to a request to fly the rainbow flag over city hall on 3rd August 2019 to mark Pride. This will be presented for a decision to the SP&R Committee at its meeting in June.

6. Planning Update

The Chief Executive updated the panel on the live planning applications and informed the panel of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee this month and next.

7. AOB

(i) Wreath Laying – Remembrance Sunday

The City Solicitor outlined a request which had been received to lay a wreath at the UDR window in the City Hall on Remembrance Sunday. This would take place before the main event at the Cenotaph.

(ii) Language Strategy

An update on the language Strategy Action Plan was circulated for information.

(iii) Use of City Hall

In his absence, the Chief Executive raised a request from Councillor Hutchinson for the use of the City Hall Reception room by the Unionist Centenary Group to mark the 98th anniversary of the first sitting of the NI Parliament. Members did not have concerns but requested some more information.

(iv) Request Councillor Kyle to address SP&R Committee

The Chief Executive outlined a request from Councillor Kyle to address the SP&R Committee in relation to issues raised by users of Avoniel Leisure Centre relating to the closure of this centre and Templemore at the same time. Members of the panel were aware of some of these issues and agreed that the discussion at committee would be a useful way to clarify some of the concerns.