

Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum

12 September 2019

Attendance

Members:

Alderman Brian Kingston (Chair)
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Councillor George Dorrian
Councillor Fiona Ferguson
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Donal Lyons
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Mal O'Hara
Alderman Jim Rodgers (for Cllr Copeland)

Apologies: Councillor Copeland

Officers:

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

1. Leisure Update

Members were updated on ongoing issues at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre which was impacting on the overall development of the site. It was agreed that Members of the East Area Working Group together with officers would meet with the contractor and community representatives.

The Director of Finance and Resources also informed the forum that a report would be going to committee on the Leisure Transformation programme and would include in relation to Girdwood recommendations for the Council to act as Delivery Agent as requested by DFC and to appoint an Integrated Consultancy Team to develop concept designs.

2. Finance

Medium Term Financial Plan/Efficiencies

The Director of Finance and Resources outlined the priorities and work in progress to establish the efficiency agenda and associated targets for 2020/21 – 2022/23, which would be presented to Septembers SP&R committee.

3. Area Working Groups

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services circulated a revised terms of reference for the area working groups which was going to be discussed at September Committee.

Members asked that, if it was feasible, could some of the area working group meetings take place outside of city hall.

4. Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission (*Grania Long, Commissioner for Resilience attended for this item*)

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the first meeting of the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission and also outlined to them the proposed future membership which would be presented to SP&R committee. The members highlighted the importance of the inclusive element of the commission and also sought assurances that sustainable growth was also a focus, and that this should be reflected in the membership and engagement process.

5. Industrial Relations Framework

The Chief Executive informed members that a review of the Industrial relations Framework had been undertaken and the report was currently with the trade unions for comment.

Further updates would be brought to members following the trade unions response.

6. Notices of Motion

The City Solicitor sought the views of the forum on discussing better ways of dealing with notices of motion given that some members had raised with him the number that were currently being raised at council meetings. He also highlighted the issue of the staff resources that are required to follow up on such a high volume of notices of motion. The panel expressed the importance of being able to raise issues at full council for debate given not all parties were represented on all the committees. They asked to be provided with clear guidance on how issues can be raised by members at a committee and the process for doing this. They also agreed to receive a report on the impact on resources arising from notices of motion.

7. 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.

The members requested that a report on the development of the North Foreshore is brought to a future meeting.

8. AOB

Belfast Local Full Fibre Networks Procurement

The Director of Finance and Resources informed members that the Council had now completed the procurement process to enable them to move ahead with the implementation of the £11.5M Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme. The £11.5m was awarded to the council following a successful application to the Department of Culture Media and Sport's (DCMS). Belfast is the first city to complete the full process to go live with the project. An update report will be presented to SP&R committee.

9. 50th Anniversaries *(David Robinson, Good Relations Unit also attended for this item)*

Kate Turner, Healing Through Remembering joined the meeting and provided an overview on the organisations work in relation to a 'Day of Reflection'.

The members requested party group briefings on the proposals for the 50th Anniversaries of the conflict including a day of reflection.