

Minutes of Meeting of Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum

9th December, 2021

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Nuala McAlister
Councillor Donal Lyons
Councillor Mal O'Hara
Alderman Brian Kingston
Councillor Arder Carson (*for Cllr Beattie*)
Councillor Fiona Ferguson
Alderman Sonia Copeland
Councillor Ronan Mclaughlin (joined the meeting)

Apologies: Councillor Ciaran Beattie

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism (for Item 1)
Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services (for Items 2 & 3)
Cathy Matthews, Director Resources and Fleet (Item 11 AOB)
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

1. St Patrick's Day 2022

The Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism outlined for Members the new approach to St Patricks Day from 2022 onwards which was considered at CG and R Committee in October. She provided an update on progress to date with the four agreed proposals and outlined options for Members consideration. It was noted that this is a commissioning process rather than a traditional funding or tendering process. A report will be brought to SP and R Committee detailing the options discussed for Members consideration.

2. Waterworks

The Director of Neighbourhood Services briefed Members on the Council's response to the current Avian Flu outbreak at the Waterworks site. There was detailed discussion on the evolving situation and Members discussed their concerns both at the site and in the wider context within Northern Ireland. The Director advised that a meeting had been arranged with representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Public Health Agency and he would ensure the issues and concerns raised would be

highlighted at the meeting. An update will be circulated by Friday 10 December and a report reviewing the situation and procedures going forward for any future outbreaks will be brought to a future meeting for Members consideration.

3. Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme 2022

The Director of Neighbourhood Services outlined for Members the proposed delivery model for the 2022 Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme. He advised that officers had considered operational learning from 2021 and previous schemes along with feedback from members to inform the development of the delivery model for 2022. To allow for the timely administration of this funding programme, a report detailing the recommendations discussed will be brought to December SP and R Committee for approval.

4. Finance

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources outlined for Members the ongoing process to develop the revenue estimates and setting of the District Rate for 2022/23. He outlined the priority growth proposals following further Director challenge meetings. He advised that some Party Group briefings had already been arranged and are available if required. Members to contact the Director if they wish to request a Party Briefing. A report will be brought to December SP and R Committee for consideration.

5. PGL's/CMT Away Day - 12 January 2022

The Chief Executive presented for Members a draft agenda for the joint Party Group Leaders/Chief Officers Management Team Away day which is scheduled for 12th January 2022. She outlined for Members the proposed strategic focus for the day and the proposed format. The agenda will be circulated to Party Group Leaders for their review and comment. The Chief Executive also presented for members an overview of the key achievements that the Council has progressed this year along with accolades awarded which will form part of the discussion on the day.

6. Update on City Region Growth Deal

The Chief Executive provided the Members with an update on the Belfast Region City Deal and the key next steps for the formal signing arrangements. Members noted that further information would be circulated.

7. Reconfiguration of the Brexit Committee

The City Solicitor provided an update on the report that was considered by November SP and R Committee. He advised that discussions around the proposal to extend the remit of

the Brexit Committee and the draft terms of reference presented to SP and R Committee were still ongoing. A report would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January seeking approval for the reconfigured Committee for consideration.

8. Castle Cavehill and North Foreshore Working Group

The City Solicitor outlined proposals for the re-establishment of the North Foreshore Working Group which would include the proposal to include council owned land at Belfast Castle and Cavehill in the remit of the Working Group. Some queries were raised by Members and the City Solicitor will consider as part of the re-establishment of the group. He advised a report will be brought to December SP and R Committee seeking party nominations.

9. City Centre Bye-Laws

The City Solicitor provided an update for Members in relation to the city centre bye laws report which was referred back to the SP and R committee following the November Council meeting. Following Party Group Briefings, he advised that the Bye-Laws are currently being redrafted to include feedback from Members. There was detailed discussion on the current situation in the City Centre and some issues were raised in relation to enforcement issues which the City Solicitor provided clarity on. A report will be brought to SP and R Committee in January for Members consideration.

10. Planning Update

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in December.

Members also discussed ongoing issues with statutory consultees including specific concerns in relation to NI Water and noted that a joint meeting has been arranged with NI Water and Party Group Leaders.

11. AOB

Update on Christmas and New Year Waste Collections

The Director Resources and Fleet outlined for Members the proposals for Christmas and New Year waste collection arrangements and advised that this will be closely monitored in the lead up to Christmas in order to ensure full collection operations over the holiday period. A member raised a query in relation to the Bryson collections and the Director provided an update.

Council / Committee Meetings

The City Solicitor provided an update for Members on the governance arrangements given the current Covid-19 situation for Committee meetings. Members noted the proposal that the Council meeting, SP and R Committee, Planning and Licensing committees continue in the current format. All other committees would return to fully remote meetings and the arrangements will put in place by Democratic services to provide support for the Committee Chairs. A Member raised a query in relation to the Licensing committee and it was agreed to take the view of the Licensing committee on the preferred format.