

## **Derry City and Strabane District Council**

### **Governance and Strategic Planning Committee**

**Open Minutes of Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall on Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 4.00pm.**

**Present:- Councillor Carlin (in the Chair); Aldermen Hussey, Kerrigan, and Thompson, Councillors Boyle, Cooper, Dobbins, C Kelly, McGuire, McMahan, O'Reilly, and Robinson.**

**Non-Member of Committee:- Councillors Carr, Donnelly, and P Kelly.**

**In Attendance:- Chief Executive (Mr J Kelpie), Director of Environment & Regeneration (Mrs K Philips), Director of Health & Community (Ms K McFarland), Lead Democratic Services & Improvement Officer (Ms E Cavanagh), Lead Human Resources Officer (Ms P Donnelly), Lead Legal Services Officer (Mr P Kingston), Business Support and Change Manager (Ms R Craig) and Administrative Assistant (Mrs M Doherty).**

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#### **GSP107/16 Notice and Summons for Meeting**

The Chief Executive read the Notice and Summons for the Meeting.

#### **GSP108/16 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Alderman Ramsey and Councillor Reilly.

At the outset of the last meeting the Chairperson took the opportunity to thank all Elected Members, the Chief Executive, Staff, members of the press and members of the public, all of whom had assisted her in role as Chairperson of this committee. She stated that she had a busy tenure as Chairperson, the committee had dealt with a lot of business in an efficient manner. She referred to the level of commitment shown by this Council and she felt proud of how Council had conducted its business.

A Member of the Sinn Fein grouping, thanked his party colleague for the work that she and completed in her role as committee Chairperson and the manner in which she had done it.

A Member of the SLDP grouping on behalf of his party thanked the Chairperson for how she has conducted herself in her role, he stated that he had always found her to be fair.

An Independent Member of Council also thanked the Chairperson. He echoed the similar views of the previous speakers and stated that he always found her to be fair and treated everyone equally.

A Member of the DUP grouping stated that he wished to be associated with all the previous comments and wanted to record his thanks for the Chairperson's ability to keep Members in order.

Another Independent Member of Council thanked the Chairperson for all her hard work. He stated that she had carried out her role in an efficient and courteous manner and he congratulated her on a job well done.

### **GSP109/16 Declarations of Members' Interests**

The Chairperson declared an interest in relation to agenda item 10– Public Consultation on Proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor and agenda item 21 – Scheme of Allowances and Member Support Services.

### **Open for Decision**

The Chairperson advised Members that agenda item 10 – Public Consultation on Proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor would be brought forward in business as the reporting officer had another meeting to attend. Members were in agreement.

### **GSP110/16 Public Consultation on Proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor**

The Director of Environment and Regeneration presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval to submit a formal response to Department for Regional Development in respect of their consultation on the draft orders and environmental statement of the A5 dualling project.

A Member of the Sinn Fein grouping welcomed the report and stated that this was a vital project for the regeneration of the North West. He highlighted the association that this project had with the North West Gateway Initiative and the better linkages that this project will create. He stated that the statutory process should be allowed to progress as soon as possible and that nothing should jeopardise its development.

An Independent Member of Council recorded his abstention in relation to this matter.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council considers and endorses the consultation response to DRD regarding the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor.**

**GSP111/16 Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's business.

**GSP112/16 Confirmation of the Open Minutes of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 5 April 2016**

The open Minutes of Meeting held on 5 April 2016 (GSP75/16 – GSP101/16) were confirmed and signed by the Chairperson.

**GSP113/16 Matters Arising**

**GSP81/16 North West Strategic Partnership Working**

In response to an Independent Member of Council the Chief Executive clarified that there were pre and post-election discussions with officials in the Executive Departments. He advised that those discussions are still ongoing in relation to the Financial contributions.

**GSP114/16 Deputation – Mr Ian Snowden, DSD Northwest Development Office - Preparation for the Arrival of the Syrian Refugees**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Ian Snowden, of the DSD Northwest Development Office to the Meeting and invited him, to make his presentation to the Committee.

Mr Snowden thanked Members for giving him the opportunity to present to Council. He advised that since the presentation had been distributed to Members, his role had changed and he now worked as Director of Strategic Policy & Planning for the new Executive Department for Communities. He proceeded to deliver his presentation (a copy of which had been previously distributed to Members) highlighting the following:

- The preparations for the arrival of the Syrian Refugees.
- The Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, highlighting the Prime Minister's commitment to accept 20,000 Syrian refugees into the UK.
- The work of the Strategic Planning Group in considering the strategic issues.
- The work of the Operational Planning Group in developing a detailed plan to manage the arrival of the groups of refugees.
- The objective of ensuring that the Refugees are treated with respect and dignity.
- The process of receiving the Refugees from arrival to induction.
- The settlement and integration of the Refugees is critical and key workers have been assigned to each family.
- The role of the local communities in assisting the Refugees.
- The recent arrivals in Derry; 10 out of the 12 families have arrived.
- The assistance that had been provided such English lessons.
- The Education Authority have identified schools for the children and GP places have been allocated.
- Further groups are expected in Northern Ireland through to 2020.
- Planning for other groups to come to Derry City and Strabane District Council area and the role Council will play in the arrival of later groups.

In response to a non-committee Independent Member of Council, Mr Snowden advised that none of the first group have been placed in Strabane but it is envisaged that some of the later groups may be placed in Strabane in 2017/18.

A Member of the Sinn Fein grouping, thanked Mr Snowden for his presentation. He highlighted the work undertaken by the Mayor in the provision of care packs and organising an action group. He welcomed the reception that the Refugees had received and stated that he was aware that the refugees were very grateful for all that has been done

for them. He sought clarification around the placing of the refugees in temporary accommodation. In response, Mr Snowden advised that the Refugees have been dealt with by the normal homeless procedures operated by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. He advised that it is anticipated that the Refugees will be in permanent housing within the next 3-6 months.

In response to an Independent Member of Council, Mr Snowden advised that there had been no indication by the Executive of how many of the 20,000 Refugees entering the UK will be placed in Northern Ireland; at a guess this figure would be between 600-1500 however this will be determined by the Home Office. He further added that if the conflict was to end that there would be no need to continue with the programme and currently under the humanity protection scheme refugees who have lived here for 5 years are entitled to apply to stay.

Councillor O'Reilly joined the meeting at this point

A Member of the SDLP grouping thanked Mr Snowden for his presentation. He welcomed the reception that Refugees received and stated that it was remarkable the care and compassion shown; he stated that the Irish are known for these attributes. He sought clarity around the education barrier for the children and the provision of support for their faith. In response, Mr Snowden advised that the priority for all the Refugees was to learn the English language and this particular group have begun that process; adding that some of the children have picked it up quite quickly.

Councillor Dobbins joined the meeting at this point

An Independent Member of Council also thanked Mr Snowden for his presentation and he stated that he was delighted with the welcome that the Refugees had received. He raised his concerns over information on social media that was incorrect with regards to the assistance that the refugees are receiving. He asked if the Department could be doing more to address this. In response, Mr Snowden advised that the Department is aware of the misinformation that is circulating through social media and they have issued briefings with the correct information. He confirmed that the refugees are receiving what they are entitled to.

A non-committee Independent Member of Council advised that he too was concerned about the issues with misinformation that had been circulated on social media about the refugees. He also stated that it was great to see the welcome that they have received in the City.

Mr Snowden advised Members that the refugees are very vulnerable and can become targets and therefore those who have been assigned to work with them can become very protective but this is to ensure the refugees are safe guarded. He highlighted the role of the key workers and the importance of the key worker being the first point of contact for the refugees to ensure that all the arrangements put in place work.

The Chairperson in concluding thanked Mr Snowden for his presentation. She highlighted the hard work and dedication that has went on in the background to ensure that the transition for the refugees went smoothly. She commended the Mayor and the community in all their efforts to ensure that the refugees received a great welcome to the area. She stated that it was the role of Councillors, the community and the press to get the correct information out in the public to ensure that the warm welcome continues for the refugees.

Mr Snowden left the meeting at this point

Councillor McGuire joined the Meeting at this point.

### **GSP115/16 Community Planning**

The Business Support and Change Manager presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report updated Members in relation to the emerging outputs from the community planning thematic working groups and the strategic, editorial and integration analysis. The report outlined the high level contents of the draft Community Plan and pre-consultation. The report also advised Members of the project plan and timelines for the development of the draft Community Plan. The report further sought Members endorsement of the pre-consultation approach on the emerging content and the time lines for developing the community draft plan.

A Member of the Sinn Fein grouping thanked Officers for the report and welcomed the fact that the Community Plan was starting to take shape. He highlighted the One Plan and how it addressed areas of need which should be considered in the context of the Community Plan. He further stated that the working group will bring this plan to the next

level. He referred to the requirement to deliver new physical infrastructure to accommodate new economic and community initiatives. He further stated the need to develop existing infrastructure such as Ebrington etc.

An Independent Member of Council made reference to the earlier Members comments and stated that Council should be giving consideration to all Area Plans, not just the One Plan. He highlighted area 3.2 of the report where it described the Community Plan as ambitious and visionary; and requested the word realistic be included. He stated that he did not want to create expectations that cannot be achieved.

He further referred to point 3.4 of the report in relation to the Programme for Government and stated that it should be noted that the change in political position could include new alternative views and this should be taken on board.

A Member of the Sinn Fein grouping in referring to the previous speakers comments, stated that the rural proofing aspect of the community plan needs to be kept at the forefront and the new Programme for Government should ensure that it addresses rural issues; such issues cannot be lost in the new Government.

The Chairperson concluded by thanking Officers for all their hard work she stated that the report presented was very informative with a lot of detail. She congratulated staff on the work to date.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council endorses the pre-consultation approach adopted herein and be advised that, subject to Programme for Government timelines, the draft Community Plan will be issued for formal consultation in mid-summer 2016.**

### **GSP116/16 European Youth Capital**

The Chief Executive presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report updated Members on the submission of the European Youth Capital 2019 concept paper

and sought Members approval to move forward to the next stage of the competition and to allocate a budget to cover the financial costs of the bid process.

An Independent Member of Council congratulated Officers on all the work undertaken in the bid European Youth Capital so far. He referred to the minutes of the previous meeting where there was an issue raised in relation to the branding used for the bid and asked if any action had been taken to address these issues. He was concerned at the lack of detail in the report in relation to addressing the issues around branding. The Chief Executive in response, drew Members attention to point 3.2 of the report. He stated that the report outlined work carried out by the communications team following comments from Elected Members in updating the communications plan and developing key campaigns to get the entire community behind the bid. He highlighted the link in the report that demonstrated some of the work that the communications team had begun in developing the logo for engagement of all the community.

A Member of the SDLP grouping congratulated Officers on the work completed and stated that it was fantastic to see engagement with the children and young people this process had given them a voice. She stated that there still needed to be more work undertaken to get the bid over the line.

An Independent Member of Council stated that the European Youth Capital shortlisting was a great story for this City and District. He queried if there were plans to capture those young people who have not been involved in the process so far, or was it intended to work with the same groupings.

The Chief Executive in response advised Members that it is the intention to go beyond the groupings already captured to ensure more voices are included.

A Member of the Sinn Fein grouping also congratulated Officers in the success of getting the bid for European Youth Capital to the next stage and stated that he looked forward to the bid being developed further.

Another Member of the SDLP grouping queried if the financial support from ILEX had been utilised as part of the initial stage or was it going to be used as part of the next stage. He further queried if any indication of financial support had been given from any of the Government

Departments or OFMDFM. He stressed that it was incumbent that they offer support for this project. In response, the Chief Executive advised Members that as before Council has engaged and is currently engaging with various departments in a bid to secure financial support.

In response to a non-committee Independent Member of Council, the Chief Executive clarified that the European Youth Capital bid is representative of both City and District and as outlined in the report the funding needed for the next stage has been identified by the Lead Finance Officer.

The Chairperson welcomed the report and she sought clarification if the bid was to be unsuccessful could the work done in this bid be transferrable to another bid further down the line. In response, the Chief Executive advised Members that certainly the work that has been completed and the work that will be done in the next stage can form the basis of future bids but he was hopeful that the bid would be a success. He further added that with any key accolades huge benefits can be had from the process in itself. This bid has highlighted our youth and the region at a european level and the benefits of that are untold. This process has given Council the opportunity to engage with children and young people and the benefit of that is a great legacy.

Another Independent Member of Council also welcomed the report and congratulated Officers on the work completed. He stated that Council should safe guard against creating false expectations, as the City of culture promised so much in terms of legacy and jobs; which was not the case. He added that Council should be realistic on what is deliverable.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the move to the next stage of the European Youth Capital (EYC 19) Competition and allocates a budget of £84,000 to cover the financial costs of the stage 2 bid process.**

**GSP117/16 Corporate Planning, Improvement and Performance Review Framework**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to

Members. The report advised Members of the hierarchy of plans and reporting mechanisms that is proposed will constitute the Council's corporate planning, improvement and performance review framework. The report also sought Members endorsement of same.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the Corporate Planning, Improvement and Performance Review Framework.**

### **GSP118/16 Audit and Inequalities and EQIA Update**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report updated Members in respect of the identification of the merging issues arising from Council's draft Audit of Inequalities. The report further updated Members on progress of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

A Member of the Sinn Fein grouping thanked Officers for the report. He raised his concerns as to what role Council can play in some of the suggested areas of improvement. He sought clarification if Council would be the only agency or would other agencies address the areas of improvement. The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer in response advised that the Audit of Inequalities identifies issues which are solely in relation to Council services provision however consultation with the Equality Assurance and oversight group had highlighted issues relating to the emerging Community Plan. She stated that the two processes have worked alongside in synergy and thus Council has the advantage of an integrated community planning process.

In response to an Independent Member of Council, the Chief Executive advised that under legislation Council has a legal obligation to bring statutory and non-statutory agencies together to participate in achieving the outcomes of the Community Plan and identifying ways in which that they can address the issues that have been found.

The Chairperson thanked Officers for the very detailed report. She stated that this gave a clear indication as to where Council is at in terms of the Audit of Inequalities.

In response to a non-committee Independent Member of Council, the Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer advised that the report is in draft format and that further updates were required in terms of boundary alignment and that she welcomed Member feedback.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council**

- (i) Considers the contents of the draft Audit of Inequalities and provide feedback/commentary; and**
- (ii) Notes the progress in terms of the Audit of Inequalities and Equality Impact Assessment processes.**

#### **GSP119/16 Strategic Support Services Delivery Plan 2016/17**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report presented for Members consideration and approval the Delivery Plan for the Strategic Support Units for the year 2016/17.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the Strategic Support Unit – Service Delivery Plan 2016/17.**

#### **GSP120/16 Membership of Business in the Community**

The Business Support and Change Manager presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval to become a Member of the Business in the Community to further support Councils approach to corporate responsibility.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the request to become Members of the Business in the**

**Community to further support Council's approach to corporate responsibility.**

**GSP121/16 Policy and Procedure for Protecting Dignity at Work**

The Lead Human Resources Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval for the adoption of a Council policy and procedure for Protecting Dignity at work.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the policy and procedure for Protecting Dignity at Work.**

**GSP122/16 Career Break Policy**

The Lead Human Resources Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval for the adoption of a Career Break Policy which has been developed for Council.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the Career Break Policy.**

**GSP124/16 Employee Wellbeing – Extension of Westfield Health Benefit**

The Lead Human Resources Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval for the proposed extension to the current Westfield Health Service Provision to all employees and the extension of Carecall services for further six months, pending completion of a tender for one ongoing provider.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council aligns the provision of Employee Assistance Programmes to all employees equally at this time and that a tender is completed within the next 6**

**months, to select one service provider which offers both Health Benefits and Counselling services.**

### **GSP125/16 Mayors Civic Ball**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval for the issues of 40 complimentary tickets at a cost of £50 per ticket to be issued to the Mayors Civic Ball 2016.

An Independent Member of Council sought clarification as to who the Civic Dignitaries are, that would be invited. He queried if half of the allocated amount could be used to invite members of the Community/voluntary sector in acknowledgment of the work that they have done.

A lengthy discussion ensued and Members agreed that the no. 40 complimentary tickets would be awarded and that the Mayor would be made aware of today's discussion. It was further acknowledged that the Mayor, who has completed the official Mayor role very fairly and who has had a lot of engagement with wide ranging spectrums of the community would administer the tickets in an equitable manner.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the issue of no. 40 complimentary invitations to the Mayor's Civic Ball 2016 and that the cost of £2,000 be credited to the Civic Ball account.**

### **GSP126/16 Proposed Schedule of Meetings for 2016/17**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval for the proposed schedule of meeting for 2016/17.

The Committee

**Recommended that subject to modifications due to public holidays and other circumstances that Council adopts the proposed Meeting Schedule for 2016/17.**

### **GSP127/16 Results of Elected Member Survey and Action Plan**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report briefed Members on the findings of the Councillor Satisfaction Survey 2016. The report also sought Members approval for the associated action plan.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council**

- (i) Notes the finding of the customer satisfaction survey;**
- (ii) Approves the action list arising from the areas of improvement identified from these findings, and**
- (iii) Approves a designated training day and time per month to use as required and when suitable.**

### **GSP128/16 Scheme of Allowances and Member Support Services**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval for an updated Scheme of Allowances.

A non-committee Independent Member of Council advised that he was aware that across all of the 11 Councils there was no consistency in the level of support services provided to Members.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council**

- (i) Approves the updated scheme of allowances, and**
- (ii) Subject to any further clarification form the Department of the**

**Environment that the rates of electric vehicles are effective from 1 April 2015, and the change in broadband allowance will be effective from the date at which addendum 3 was issued.**

### **GSP129/16 Customer Care Polices and Publications**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. The report sought Members approval for the amended 'Guide to Making Comments, Compliments and Complaints and for Members to note for information, the customer publications on the 'Customer Charter' and the 'Guide to Making Comments, Compliments and Complaints'.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approves the amended Guide to Making Comments, Compliments and Complaints and note for information the Customer Care publications.**

### **Open for Information**

The Chair agreed that the following reports which had been previously circulated to Members would be noted for information:

### **GSP130/16 Partnership Panel**

### **GSP131/16 Implementing a Fresh Start – Clause 65 Engagement and Consultation**

An Independent Member of Council raised his concerns that the consultation period in respect of the above had been shortened from 8 weeks to 12 weeks. In response, the Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer advised that this information was provided to Members in terms of an update that had been received by Council.

### **GSP132/16 Secretary of States Garden Party**

**GSP133/16 Syrian Refugees****GSP134/16 Any Other Business**

The Lead Legal Services Officer advised Members of an enquiry received in relation to reallocating positions of Responsibility and Membership of Committees, when a Member resigns from a political party. He stated that the query was accompanied by legal opinion of a QC for Belfast City Council. He advised that this legal opinion contradicts the advice provided by the Department in addressing this matter. He further added that Council are currently seeking clarification from the Department in light of this information and that a report will be brought to Committee for consideration when this matter has been addressed by the Department.

In response to a Member of the SDLP grouping the Lead Legal Services Officer advised that Derry City and Strabane District Council in dealing with these matters previously had always acted upon the advice of the Department.

The Meeting then went into Confidential Business.

The Meeting terminated at 5.55pm

**Chairperson:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_