

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

**Open Minutes of Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Derry on Tuesday 8 January 2019 at 4.00pm.**

**Present:- Councillor Hastings (in the Chair), Aldermen Hussey, Kerrigan, Ramsey and Thompson, Councillors Cooper, Duddy, Fleming, Gallagher, M McHugh, McKeever, McKnight, McLaughlin and Tierney.**

**In Attendance:- Chief Executive (Mr J Kelpie), Lead Legal Services Officer (Mr P Kingston), Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer (Ms E Cavanagh), Strategic Business Manager (Mrs R Craig), Lead Statistician (Mr H McNickle) and Committee Services Assistant (Ms N Meehan).**

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### **GSP1/19 Notice and Summons for Meeting**

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

### **GSP2/19 Member Attendance and Apologies**

The Chief Executive completed the roll call.

### **GSP3/19 Declarations of Members' Interests**

There were no Declarations of Members' Interests.

### **Open for Decision**

#### **Chairperson's Business**

### **GSP4/19 New Year's Wishes**

The Chairperson wished Members, Officers and the Press a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

### **GSP5/19 Condolences**

With the permission of the Chairperson, Alderman Kerrigan referred to the recent deaths of the father-in-law of Alderman R Hamilton and the uncle of Alderman Bresland and requested that letters of condolence be sent to both Members.

**GSP6/19 Confirmation of the Open Minutes of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 27 November 2018**

The Open Minutes of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 27 November 2018 (GSP167/18-GSP180/18) were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**GSP7/19 2021 Census: Outputs Strategy Consultation**

The Lead Statistician presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with a corporate consultation response on the 2021 Census: Output Strategy Consultation for Northern Ireland.

The Statistician provided Members with an in-depth overview of his report. He provided an update in regards to the 2021 Census and referred to a previous email sent requesting Members input into the corporate response. He drew particular attention to the following two issues – (i) Flexible Dissemination System; and (ii) Changes in Geographies upon which the Census results would be based, both of which were considered in detail in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report. He outlined for Members the following two options put forward by NISRA.

Option 1 – Produce the same geographies as 2001 and 2011;  
Option 2 – Create a new small area statistical boundary which nests within the 2014 boundaries.

The Lead Statistician advised that he was recommending acceptance of Option 2 pointing out that the new small areas would fit neatly into existing Wards and (District Electoral Areas) DEAs. This would permit non-expert users to have complete access to the data. He referred to the example outlined in Appendix 2 which highlighted the potential risk of data being interrogated or manipulated.

The Lead Statistician concluded that 9 January, 2019 was the closing date for receipt of responses from Members, following which he undertook to prepare a final corporate response for submission to NISRA.

In response to a query from Councillor Cooper, the Lead Statistician confirmed that all data already collected and published would still be available. He continued that NILGA were also in support of Option 2.

However, there were a number of other agencies/departments involved in the consultation whose comments would also be taken into consideration prior to a final decision being agreed. He reassured that no data would be lost.

Councillor Cooper advised that his Party would support Option 2.

Alderman Hussey also expressed his support for Option 2.

In response to a query from the Chairperson, the Lead Statistician advised that NISRA had information in respect of small areas with a population of forty or less. However, these figures were somewhat unclear. He continued that this would not impact on Wards or DEAs but would have a considerable impact on (Super Output Areas) SOAs. He said those concerned with manipulating or interrogating data would be aware that it had been changed at the smallest level.

Subsequently, the Committee

**Recommended**      **that Members endorse the draft corporate consultation response to the 2021 Census: Output Strategy Consultation for Northern Ireland.**

**GSP8/19      Implementation of Local Government Resilience Resourcing Model**

The Chief Executive presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek agreement from Members to implement the new local government resourcing model by agreeing to the principles set out within the attached Services Level Agreement.

The Committee

**Recommended**      **that approval be granted in respect of the implementation of the new local government resourcing model by agreeing to the principles set out within the Service Level Agreement.**

**GSP9/19      Performance Improvement Duty – Audit and Assessment Report for 2018-19**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She stated that the purpose of the report was to advise of and seek Elected Member

endorsement of the outcome of the Improvement Audit and Assessment for 2018-19 (Appendix 1), carried out by the Local Government Auditor.

Councillor Gallagher queried if the Auditor had commented in relation to Council's contribution to the bid for European City of Culture.

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer explained that in regards to the Auditor's work, this was defined as being an Improvement Audit and Assessment with the focus being on Council's performance management framework and Department for Communities guidance and it was therefore concerned with Annual Performance Reports and Annual Improvement Plans. She stated that the Auditor had not gone into specific detail and had made no reference to the European City of Culture Bid.

In response to a further query from Councillor Gallagher, the Chief Executive pointed out that this was specifically an Audit of Council's improvement objectives and not its annual performance. He explained that Council was required to outline five areas of improvement by 30 June each year and this Audit referred specifically to the five areas which Council had submitted to the Audit Office in June 2018. He stated that the issue being referred to by the said Member was outside the scope of this Audit and would fall within the remit of the wider Audit.

Councillor Gallagher suggested that Council's contribution to the European City of Culture Bid should have been addressed as part of the indicators contained within the audit in terms of Council efficiency.

Councillor McLaughlin said she felt that based on the scope of the Audit this was a good outcome with only two minor recommendations which she assumed would be addressed by Officers.

Subsequently, the Committee

**Recommended that Elected Members consider and endorse the outcome of the Improvement Audit and Assessment for 2018-19, carried out by the Local Government Auditor.**

### **Open for Information**

#### **GSP10/19 North West Regional Development Group Minutes**

The Strategic Business Manager presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the meetings of the North West Regional Development Group.

Alderman Hussey sought an update in regards to the establishment of the Medical School at Ulster University.

The Chief Executive said he understood that the University had submitted its' initial Business Case to the Department of Health in respect of the proposed Medical School, following which the Department had provided detailed and substantial feedback to the University. He said he understood that the University was currently addressing the many points raised in order to provide the Department with a revised version of their outline Business Case for further consideration.

Alderman Hussey pointed out that the ultimate decision would be made by the Department of Finance.

The Chief Executive said he understood that the proposals had not yet been submitted to the Department for Finance and could not confirm if this would be possible without Ministerial approval.

In response to comments made by Councillor McLaughlin, the Chief Executive said that Council had been advised by Ulster University that if the Business Case was not signed off by the end of May 2019 it would not meet its' original aim to have medical students at its Magee Campus by September 2019 as it would not meet the deadline for the submission of UCAS applications and would therefore be deferred until the following year.

The Chief Executive pointed out that pressure had been applied to Civil Servants and in particular the Department for Health by Officers, Members and Council as a corporate body. However, he would welcome any additional proposals put forward in this regard.

Councillor McLaughlin suggested that given the importance of the proposed Medical School for the City and particularly in regards to a City Growth Deal, Council contact the Department in relation to a decision being made in respect of the siting of a Medical School at the Magee Campus.

Subsequently the Committee

**Recommended that Council write to the Department for Health requesting that it progress the proposed Medical School at the Ulster University's Magee Campus without delay in order that it could be pursued prior to the end of May 2019 deadline.**

**The Meeting then went into Confidential Business.**