

Causeway Coast & Glens Shadow Council

Transferring Functions and Group Committee Thursday 4th September 2014

Table of recommendations

No	Item	Recommendation
3	Minutes – Meeting held 10 th July 2014	<i>Confirmed</i>
4	Planning Service Reform and Transfer Project – Location of Planning Staff	<i>Approve Option 1, explore tenure of up to 3 years</i>
5	Planning Service Reform and Transfer Project - Capacity Building and Training Plan for Elected Members	<i>Note</i>
6	Interim Work Plan for Tackling Area Based Deprivation	<i>Agreed</i>
7	Transfer of Functions Due Diligence Update	<i>For information</i>
8	Date of Next Meeting	<i>Thurs 2nd October, 7pm, Moyle</i>

Transferring Functions and Group Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of Causeway Coast and Glens Shadow Council Transferring Functions and Group Committee, held in the Planning Service Offices, County Hall, Coleraine on Thursday 4th September at 7.35pm.

In the Chair: Councillor Mullan

Members present: Councillors Baird, Beattie, Chivers, Cole, Douglas, Duddy, Fielding, Knight-McQuillan, Loftus, McCaul, McGuigan, McKeown, McKillop (S), Stevenson

In attendance: Mr D Jackson, Chief Executive Designate
Mr R Baker, Leisure and Development Lead
Mr Paul Carr, DSD
Ms S Kelly, Head of Organisation Development
Mrs Denise Dickson, Area Planning Manager
Mrs S Duggan, Programme Administrator
Mr Stephen McMaw, Head of Convergence
Mr D Wright, Head of Finance

The Chair invited Members and Officers to receive a tour of the Planning Service Offices at 7pm, after which the meeting commenced at 7.35pm.

The Chair welcomed Mrs Denise Dickson, Area Planning Manager, to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were recorded from Councillors' Callan, King, McCandless and Watton.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

3. Minutes – Meeting held 10th July 2014

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record. The Chair advised Members that they had been adopted at the Shadow Council meeting on 24th July 2014.

4. Planning Service reform and Transfer Project – Location of Planning Staff

The Head of Convergence presented the report, circulated, summarised undernoted

Background

The Planning function will transfer to the Causeway Coast and Glens Council (the Council) with effect 1st April 2015. A project plan for the

transfer process was presented to Elected Members at the meeting of the Transferring of Functions and Group Committee held on 10th July 2014. In line with this project plan the Shadow Council is now tasked with deciding on the initial location of the Planning Staff in preparation for the operational transfer of the function.

Options for Location of Planning Staff

A number of options are available to the Council in respect of location of Planning Staff on 1st April 2015 as detailed below.

Option 1 - Planning Staff remain in County Hall

There is currently an open lease arrangement between the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) who own the County Hall site and Department of Environment (DoE). The Council is at liberty to continue with the lease if it so chooses. The cost of annual lease will be the £59,200 per annum allocated to transfer from DoE. There will therefore be no additional cost to the Council with this option. The site is purpose built for the Planning Function. The minimal duration of tenure will be subject to negotiation with DFP. The cost equation is detailed in the table circulated within the report.

Option 2 - Lease Commercial Property

The Council may wish to lease commercial property to accommodate the Planning Function. The average commercial rate for administration type floor space according to local Estate Agents is £8 per square foot. Based on the Planning Service requirement for 1056 square metres of office space this equates to £90,848 per annum rental. In addition there will be a service charge normally based on £0.50p per square foot (£5,678.00 per annum), insurance and rates. There may also be car parking costs depending on the location. Due to the operational requirements associated with the Planning Function, there is likely to be costs associated with providing specific offices, file room space, reception area and so on. The estimated costs are detailed in the table circulated in the report: Total estimated cost Year 1 £129,026; Total estimated cost Year 2 (Minus Capital Outlay) £79,026.

Option 3 - Relocate to one of existing Council Headquarter buildings

The third option available to the Council is to relocate the Planning Function into one of the existing Council Headquarter buildings. An illustration of total floor space in each of the Council headquarters is detailed in Annex B-E, circulated. (Some adjustment has been made to compensate for non-office space). The table circulated in the report identifies the impact of relocating the Planning Function to one of the Council Headquarters: Total estimated cost Year 1 £167,726; Total estimated cost Year 2 (Minus Capital Outlay) £107,726.

It was recommended that the Transfer of Functions and Group Committee approve Option 1 as detailed in the report, circulated.

It was proposed by Councillor Duddy, seconded by Councillor Stevenson and **AGREED: to recommend that Council approves Option 1 as detailed in the report, exploring a minimal tenure duration of up to 3 years.**

5. Planning Service reform and Transfer Project – Capacity Building and Training Plan for elected members

The Chief Executive Designate presented the report, circulated, summarised undernoted.

Information has already been forwarded to all Councillors on a series of training sessions programmed to run from early September 2014 to late January 2015 on the planning reform and transfer project. This programme of training has been produced by the DoE Planning Policy Division and is based on four modules. Each module explores a different aspect of planning as it will affect the new Council.

The four modules are designed to help prepare for the transfer of planning functions to the new Councils and to provide capacity building for Councillors on the new planning system, the processes involved in making planning decisions and the need to comply with ethical standards.

The Planning Service would encourage members to attend one training session per module in order to get the most out of this capacity building programme and they would particularly urge attendance by Councillors who may intend to sit on the Council's Planning Committee.

It was recommended that the Transferring Functions and Group Committee note for information the Capacity Building and Training Plan for Elected Members as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 in the report, circulated.

IT WAS AGREED: to recommend that Council note, for information, the Capacity Building and Training Plan for Elected Members as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 in the report, circulated.

6. Interim Work Plan for tackling Area Based Deprivation

- * Councillors Duddy and Knight-McQuillan left the meeting at 8.18pm during consideration of the undernoted matter.

The Leisure and Development Lead presented the report, circulated, summarised as undernoted.

1.1 Synergy With The DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Framework 2013.

Community development is one of the functions which will be transferred to the new Councils from 1st April 2015. It is therefore necessary that any strategy developed is aligned to the Department for Social Development's (DSD's) Regeneration and Community Development Framework 2013. This is the key policy for the delivery of regeneration and community development in the region and sets the policy context for both the transfer of the responsibilities to Councils

and the allocation of monies to Councils for the delivery of community development support.

The Framework highlights the importance of community development in the pursuit of policy aims and recognises the importance of strong community infrastructure to enable social and economic objectives to be achieved in more sustainable and efficient ways.

The policy priority themes of the Department for Social Development's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Framework 2013 are reflected in the proposed Tackling Deprivation Framework.

1.2 Tackling Deprivation in the Context of Community Development.

Communities with lower levels of capacity will find it difficult to achieve significant social, economic and physical regeneration without the required level of support or intervention to break the 'cycle of deprivation'.

Therefore successful community development activity within the Causeway Coast and Glens area is essential if the capacity of such communities is to be increased to ensure the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to make positive contributions to the social, physical and economic regeneration of the new Council area as a whole.

This outcome will be achieved through the delivery of four distinct but interdependent objectives of the new draft Community Development Strategy:

- 1. Promotion of Core Community Capacity Building.**
- 2. Promotion of Productive Engagement.**
- 3. Targeting of Deprivation through Partnership Working.**
- 4. Supporting Community Infrastructure to maximize Sustainability.**

The four strands each work with different constituent groups, using various methodologies to deliver on different outcomes, but with only one strategic aim; to develop the overall Community Capacity of the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area.

The desired outcome of the work will be:

- Increased partnership working in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area;**
- Development of a more sustainable community sector in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area;**
- Greater social cohesion in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area;**
- Increased connectivity between neighbourhoods, towns and villages in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area;**
- Early identification of local solutions for emerging needs in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area; and**
- Increased community capacity in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area.**

The end of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme in March 2015 will present both an opportunity and challenge for the new Causeway Coast and Glens Council area (CC&G). The Community Development Strategy provides an opportunity to disseminate the best practice partnership model developed in the existing Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships across the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area.

1.3 Community Development in the Context of Community Planning

Community Planning will undoubtedly lead to the need for more inter-sectorial partnership working. The Council's unique role at the heart of service delivery in the Causeway Coast and Glens area provides an opportunity to support community organisations and service providers to engage with the relevant statutory agencies to develop the policy decisions which impact on the social, economic and physical regeneration of the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

The new Council's role in developing Strand 3 of the Community Development Strategy will be to:

- ***Create effective collaborative relationships;***
- ***Enable partnership working;***
- ***Develop a framework for collaborative working;***
- ***Increase connectivity ;***
- ***Develop the Councils role as the key 'honest Broker'; and***
- ***Create linkages within services where synergy exists.***

In order to incentivise this partnership approach to decision making, a Community Investment Chest will be available to provide match funding for interventions developed through the Council led Inter-sectorial partnerships.

Anticipated outcomes associated with objective 3 include:

- ***The promotion of collaborative working across the new Causeway Coast and Glens Council area;***
- ***A reduction in the instances of displacement or duplication in relation to service provision;***
- ***A targeted approach to addressing deprivation and evidenced community need; and***
- ***Increased value for money in relation to public expenditure.***

The options presented within the report at Annex A, circulated were recommended to Council for the delivery of an interim function aimed at tackling area based deprivation, based upon the following:

- A 'Strategically driven' function.
- Objective measurement to assess the need.
- The top 20% of deprived areas, which extends the existing function throughout the CCG District.
- Intervention themes based upon statistical and anecdotal consultation.

- A simplified process in which Council is the approval & funding authority.
- An opportunity to 'pilot' the process, programme and themes for 18 months.

Approval will allow officers to develop the function, being cognisant of the themes from the 27th August 2014 Workshop, for Shadow Council's further consideration.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson seconded by Councillor Baird and **AGREED: to recommend to Council that the options presented within Annex A, circulated are recommended for the delivery of an interim function aimed at tackling area based deprivation, based upon the following:**

- A 'Strategically driven' function.
- Objective measurement to assess the need.
- The top 20% of deprived areas, which extends the existing function throughout the CCG District.
- Intervention themes based upon statistical and anecdotal consultation.
- A simplified process in which Council is the approval & funding authority.
- An opportunity to 'pilot' the process, programme and themes for 18 months.

7. Transfer of Functions Due Diligence Update

The Head of Convergence presented the report, circulated, as undernoted for information.

Background

1.1 At the Transfer of Functions and Group Committee on 10th July 2014, Elected Members were given an update on the due diligence work being undertaken by the new Councils through Deloitte. Deloitte was initially commissioned by the Transfer of Functions Working Group (ToFWG) to review the resources proposed to accompany the Transfer of Functions to Local Government. The primary aim of this work was to provide assurance to Local Government that the resources transferring meet the principle set by Central Government that the transfer should be cost neutral to the Ratepayer.

1.2 At the Transfer of Functions Working Group meeting held on 4th August 2014, a number of fundamental issues were raised in relation to transfer costs. It appeared that there were substantial differences in the income and expenditure figures provided in the Deloitte report and those presented by individual Government Departments.

1.3 At the meeting, Department of the Environment representatives stated that where there was any operational profit in relation to the functions transferring, this would result in a corresponding reduction in the funding transferring with that Function. This caused some concern with Local Government representatives who challenged the detail of the information they were receiving from Central Government Departments and the various inconsistencies that keep appearing.

1.4 Discussions also took place regarding the detail of functions transferring and their fitness for purpose. As a result it was generally accepted by Local Government representatives that there was a need to undertake localised due diligence work in an attempt to ensure assets such as Car Parks are not in fact liabilities requiring expenditure over and above the financing being transferred with the function.

1.5 Given the range of concerns expressed at the meeting it was agreed that Local Government would engage Deloitte to carry out further due diligence checks in relation to the latest information from Central Government Departments and further agreed that each Council would take on the role of carrying out due diligence work at a local level.

1.6 Since that meeting on 10th July Local Government has now formally engaged Deloitte to further their work on the issues of concern in relation to transfer costs.

1.7 At a local level, a member of Causeway Coast and Glens Cluster Staff has been given the role of inspecting the car parks that are transferring to provide a condition report on their fitness for purpose. This will be part of the on-going due diligence work at a local level.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 2nd October 2014 at 7.00pm, Moyle District Council Offices.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.