

Development Committee

Wednesday, 18th October, 2006

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McCausland (Chairman);
the High Sheriff (Councillor Humphrey); and
Councillors M. Browne, Convery, Crozier, D. Dodds,
Empey, Hartley, Kelly, Long, Maginness, A. Maskey,
P. Maskey, Newton, Ní Chuilín, Smyth and Stoker.

In attendance: Ms. M. T. McGivern, Director of Development;
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;
Ms. S. Wylie, Head of Urban Development; and
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 7th and 20th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd October, subject to:

- (i) the amendment of the minute of 20th September under the heading "De-designation of Laganside Corporation" by the addition to the All-Party deputation to meet with the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Social Development of the name of Councillor Crozier; and
- (ii) the amendment of the decision of 20th September under the heading "Special Meetings" to provide that all Members of the Council be invited to the special meeting to be held to receive a presentation from Translink.

Arts Sub-Committee

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Arts Sub-Committee of 4th October be approved and adopted.

Economic Development Sub-Committee

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development Sub-Committee of 4th October.

Tourism and Promotion of Belfast Sub-Committee

In considering the minutes of the Tourism and Promotion of Belfast Sub-Committee of 9th October, several Members expressed concern that, with relatively little notice, the meeting had been moved from its usual date at the request of the Chairman (Councillor D. Dodds) and that this had resulted in items due to be considered by the Sub-Committee having to be removed from the agenda. As a result, a number of Members had been unable to attend the meeting.

In response, the Chairman (Councillor McCausland) stated that the Chairmen of Committees and Sub-Committees were permitted to change the date of any meeting, although he accepted that Members should be informed as soon as possible regarding any such change.

Noted.

Adoption of Minutes

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Tourism and Promotion of Belfast Sub-Committee of 9th October.

Gasworks – Cusp Plot 4 Hotel Application

(Mr. C. Quigley, Director of Legal Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report regarding the request from Cusp Limited to construct a hotel on Plot 4 of the Gasworks Site.

A copy of the report, with the exception of Appendix A referred to therein, is set out hereunder:

“Relevant Background Information

The Development Committee at its meeting on 21 June 2006 received a report outlining a proposal from CUSP for Council Consent to vary its lease to permit a hotel development on plot 4 Gasworks.

The application has been vigorously contested by Inislyn/Radisson the owners and operators of the existing hotel on the Gasworks Site.

Following advice from the Director of Legal Services the matter was deferred pending the completion of an economic appraisal which would look at the benefits and drawbacks of permitting a second hotel to operate at the Gasworks.

Consultants, Grant Thornton, were appointed to carry out the detailed appraisal and an executive summary of their report is attached at Appendix A. The full appraisal report is available to Members. It is to be treated as commercially sensitive.

Key Issues

The report examines the business case to be made for a second hotel and a range of issues including:

- The legal position viz-a-viz lease conditions**

- Council/Business relations in terms of maintaining Council integrity as both a credible landlord and as a civic leader which acknowledges the importance of positive strong relationships between the Council and the private sector.
- The health of the relevant market sectors of office property and hotel development.
- The Council's vision and masterplan for the Gasworks Site.

The report weights the various factors both monetary and non-monetary, looks at a range of options for development and all the issues put forward following extensive consultation and research.

It concludes that consent for the proposed development may be granted subject to a number of pre-conditions being included in any agreement with CUSP.

These are detailed in the report but summarised as follows:

- Provision of jobs within the completed development for local people including appropriate training and access.
- Public consultation by CUSP including demonstration of community benefit.
- Delay the completion of the hotel by minimum of 3 years but with a recommendation of 4.
- Provision of an international brand select services hotel.
- Resolution of car parking issues including provision of replacement car parking for plot 4 by CUSP.
- Acceptable financial terms and conditions from CUSP.

Review of the pedestrian access opening arrangements to the site.

Resource Implications

Financial

Financial implications to be agreed with CUSP.

Asset and Other Implications

The proposal if accepted may lead to legal challenge by Inislyn/Radisson.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the appraisal from consultants Grant Thornton and to decide whether to accept the recommendations contained therein.

Documents Attached

**Appendix A – Executive Summary Economic Appraisal CUSP
Plot 4 Gasworks ‘Commercial in Confidence’.”**

Copies of the full appraisal report from the Consultants were tabled for the information of the Members.

During discussion in the matter, concern was expressed in relation to certain aspects of the report and in relation to the pre-conditions which the Consultants had suggested be included in any consent that the Council might give to the requested change of use.

The Director of Legal Services informed the Committee that the agreement between the Council and Inislyn, the Company which had developed the Radisson Hotel within the Gasworks Site, did not give the Company exclusive rights to develop a hotel within the Site. He pointed out that the Council was entitled to amend any lease on the Site and indicated that Inislyn’s lease for the plot earmarked for the hotel had itself been varied in order to permit it to provide an office block on part of the plot. As landlord of the Gasworks Site, the Council would wish to ensure, as a matter of commercial prudence, that any additional hotel development would not adversely affect the existing Radisson Hotel. However, the Consultants’ report indicated that there was room in the hotel market for the development of a hotel of a different type at the Site and, therefore, there was, in his opinion, no legal impediment to the Council agreeing that Cusp could vary its lease of Plot 4 on the Gasworks Site in order that the Company might develop such a hotel.

During further discussion, Members expressed the view that, since it was generally accepted that Belfast had insufficient hotels to cater for the number of tourists who wished to visit the City, a decision required to be taken regarding the request from Cusp Limited which was in the best interests of the City as a whole.

Accordingly, it was

Moved by Councillor Hartley,
Seconded by Councillor Long,

That the Committee agrees to the request from Cusp Limited to vary its lease in order that the Company might construct a hotel development, rather than an office block, on Plot 4 at the Gasworks Site.

On a vote by show of hands fifteen Members voted for the proposal and one against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Dissolution of the Laganside Corporation – Progress Report

(Mr. C. Quigley, Director of Legal Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 20th September, it had considered a report regarding the de-designation of Laganside. At that meeting, the Committee had agreed that the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Social Development be requested to meet with an All-Party deputation from the Committee.

The Director of Legal Services indicated that, subsequent to the last meeting of the Committee, a formal consultation letter had been received from the Department for Social Development in relation to a proposal to introduce a draft Order, the effect of which would be to dissolve formally the Laganside Corporation and transfer its functions to the Department for Social Development on 1st April, 2007. This would mean that all assets and liabilities, except contracts of employment (other than that of the River Warden) would be transferred to the Department. The Department had indicated in its letter that, due to time constraints, it was not able to follow the course of action which had been proposed by the Council in terms of carrying out a due diligence exercise and negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding. The Department had indicated its intention to negotiate with the Council in relation to its taking over ownership and statutory responsibility for the public assets of Laganside as well as the management of the River Lagan. This would be operated through the establishment of a Service Delivery Agreement under which the Department would, in effect, appoint the Council as its managing agent in relation to the management of the public assets.

The Director of Legal Services informed the Members that the Laganside Development (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which had established the Laganside Corporation, permitted the Government to dissolve the Company.

During discussion in the matter, several Members expressed concern that, under the proposals, the Council would be made statutorily responsible for the public assets of the former Laganside Corporation but would be receiving little or no resources to meet the costs of maintaining these areas. In contrast, the Department for Social Development would benefit from the rental income received from the major office developments which had been undertaken within the Laganside designated area and there remained a significant possibility that the Government would sell the commercial assets and thereby obtain valuable income.

The Committee agreed that the Council's response to the Consultation Document regarding the dissolution of the Laganside Corporation be in line with its decision of 20th September, in which it expressed its dissatisfaction in relation to the proposals regarding the future assets and liabilities of Laganside. In addition, the Committee agreed that a press statement be issued as soon as possible expressing the Committee's concern at the manner in which the Department for Social Development had acted in the matter.

Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme

The Committee considered a report regarding the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme, a copy of which, with the exception of Appendix 1 referred to therein, is set out hereunder:

“Relevant Background Information

The proposed Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme (SNAP) is ultimately about ensuring that public services are designed around the needs and preferences of local people and communities. It is therefore an integral part of Community Planning, linking community needs to the overall vision for the city. Appendix 1 provides more detail on the proposed SNAP model.

Members will be aware that a special Development Committee meeting was held on 31st October 2005 to discuss a detailed report setting out proposals to progress with a SNAP pilot (based on integrating service delivery within the Council) in five areas across the City. At that meeting, the Committee recognised that SNAP would need to be delivered in conjunction with, and as part of, the Council's improvement agenda and it agreed, in principle, that the initiative should be developed further.

Progress has been made on the purchase of a software package to begin the process of collating area based data and a mapping exercise on existing Council neighbourhood services has been completed. However, since that time, the proposals for the Review of Public Administration have become clearer and have influenced thinking on the implementation of SNAP. In particular, the model for community planning which has been presented to the Local Government Task Force (see Diagram 1 in Appendix 1) demonstrates the importance of area based approaches to the planning and integration of public services at neighbourhood level. Local councils will also be given an increased role in local regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.

On 23rd June 2006, the Policy and Resources Committee also agreed that the Council should begin the process of Embryonic Community Planning from April 2007, i.e. to pilot new ways of working to help the organisation and its partners move towards the processes, arrangements and structures necessary for Community Planning which will be a statutory requirement in 2009. Therefore, the introduction of SNAP should allow the Council, as part of its improvement agenda, to prepare for undertaking its larger urban regeneration and the neighbourhood aspect of its community planning role.

The success of SNAP will be dependant on an up-to-date information platform that will provide an accurate picture of neighbourhoods in the city and the Committee is also being asked to consider an accompanying report on the development of detailed area profiles.

Key Issues

The SNAP pilot envisaged in 2005 has not progressed as quickly as anticipated due to significant changes in respect of the Review of Public Administration, developments in the Council's improvement agenda, the need to develop neighbourhood based information systems and the lack of dedicated staff to drive the process forward.

Given the developments in respect of community planning mentioned above, it is considered that SNAP should no longer be developed as a pilot in a small number of areas across the city, but rather should be progressed in neighbourhoods city wide. The stages likely to be involved in the implementation of SNAP are:

- appoint a staff team to develop and implement SNAP;
- develop a detailed project plan for the early phases;
- develop the information systems necessary to delivery SNAP;
- determine and propose defined neighbourhood areas for delivery of SNAP;
- develop mechanisms for engaging elected representatives in the process;
- ensure that SNAP is an integral part of the Council's next corporate strategy and the community planning process;
- mobilise internal services in the SNAP process and thus ensure that they are fully engaged in the corporate approach to neighbourhood working;
- examine how we currently deliver our services and our capacity to adapt them to best serve our neighbourhoods and put in place mechanisms for joining up service delivery;
- examine the capacity of local communities to articulate their requirements and work with them to develop this;

- map the role, function and future plans of partner organisations at a neighbourhood level;
- research and produce proposals for community engagement;
- develop a detailed implementation plan for delivering SNAP;
- scope future resource needs to ensure effective implementation; and
- to put the infrastructure in place to enable SNAP to be rolled out.

The following staff team would be necessary to develop and implement the first stages of SNAP:

- Neighbourhood Renewal Manager – responsible for developing and leading the programme preparations and later the roll out of the full programme.
- Communication and Information Officer – to assist the Neighbourhood Renewal Manager in respect of research, liaison with Departments and other agencies, community engagement and general communication.
- A Research Assistant – to assist the Neighbourhood Renewal Manager with collation of data and the implementation of the ‘SNAPstats’ package leading to the development of area profiles.

Further reports will be brought back to Committee at appropriate stages, in particular when more detailed project plans have been developed.

Resource Implications

Financial

The cost of appointing the three officers required to develop the programme is likely to be in the region of £105,000. The relevant proportion of this sum has been allocated within the existing Development Department revenue estimates for 2006/2007.

There will also be costs associated with production of information, hosting of meetings, and events, research and community consultation, etc. which again have been allowed for in the revenue estimates.

Human Resources

A full resource scoping study for SNAP needs to be completed, once a detailed project plan has been developed. However, in the interim, it will be necessary to appoint a Neighbourhood Renewal Manager, a SNAP Communication and Information Officer and a Research Assistant. Full job descriptions and salary scales still need to be agreed with the Business Improvement Service and also the posts need to be assessed through the Vacancy Control Process. These posts would be fixed term for two years with the possibility of extension.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- agree that SNAP is progressed across the city, rather than in specific pilot areas as an integral part of the embryonic community planning process and the improvement agenda; and
- approve the creation of the posts of Neighbourhood Renewal Manager, Communication and Information Officer and Research Assistant as a first step in the creation of a SNAP team.

Key to Abbreviations

SNAP – Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Detailed background on the proposed SNAP model.”

During discussion in the matter, the Director of Development indicated that the three posts which she was requesting be created would require to be assessed by the Business Improvement Service and would need to be approved by the Review Panel which had been established to scrutinise the management of the recruitment of staff.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report, subject to the approval of the Review Panel to the creation of the new posts.

**Neighbourhood Profiles for the Strategic
Neighbourhood Action Programme**

The Director informed the Committee that, in order to deliver a more strategic and focussed service through the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme, the Council would need to have access to accurate information at a ward level on such issues as demographics, deprivation, employment, housing, health, education and access to local services. It would, therefore, be necessary to create detailed neighbourhood profiles of Belfast's fifty-one wards in order to establish the baseline positions.

She indicated that the most efficient method of undertaking this work would be through an external research organisation, at an approximate cost of £70,000. In addition, a sum of £10,000 would be required to audit existing data and to create a robust corporate data collection process.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that tenders be issued to obtain the information required in connection with the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme, at a cost not to exceed £80,000.

North Foreshore – Big Lottery Fund Application

The Committee considered a report in relation to the application which had been made to the Big Lottery Fund regarding the North Foreshore. A copy of the report, with the exception of the appendices referred to therein, is set out hereunder:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware of the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) Living Landmarks application in relation to the Giants Park project at North Foreshore which funds up to £25 million for successful projects. The Next Stage plan was submitted to BIG on 29th September 2006 and an extracted project description, cost plan and funding schedule are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The plan sets out the main items of work to be carried out in order to submit the Stage 2 application by the closing date of 31st May 2007. The Big lottery will fund up to £250k of the cost of preparing this Next Stage Plan, and the final amount of this contribution will be announced shortly. Big Lottery has indicated that £140 million is available to fund Living Landmark projects across the UK, and Giants Park is among the final 23 awarded development funding.

Members are reminded that a project team of consultants was appointed in January 2006 to provide technical assistance with the development of the Environmental Business Park Feasibility Study/Masterplan and this team was appointed under BCC's framework agreement. The same project team assisted with the BIG Stage 1 application, and met with the BIG review team during their visit to BCC in May 2006, helping to bring about a successful outcome to the application.

The items below summarise the work that is included within the Next Stage of the Giants Park project and to remain on programme this needs to begin immediately:

- Planning Application (including production of an Environmental Impact Statement)
- Technical Advice (development of infrastructure, and design of park)
- Community Engagement and Public Consultation (Advisory panel, PR, events, workshops)
- Feasibility study and Business plan (marketing and communication, needs analysis, financial appraisal)

Some parts of these proposed activities will require further consultancy and specialist assistance.

Members are also reminded that at the September meeting of the Development Committee they were advised that key components of the Big Lottery application process included community engagement, public consultation and stakeholder management.

As well as the internal working groups dealing with the North Foreshore, it is clear that there is an expectation by the Big Lottery that an advisory group should be convened. It should be as representative as possible of the stakeholders in relation to the park's development. Appended at Appendix 2 is a list of those groups who participated in the last consultation with their comments. Members are asked to consider this list and to add or amend as they feel appropriate.

The advisory groups exist for the purposes of being a forum for views on issues that will be presented to them as the project develops. They are not a decision making body.

The Council in addition will have to demonstrate that it has undertaken a wide ranging engagement process with stakeholders across the city which will need to use innovative methodologies. Last time we issued 500 consultation documents and had over 3,000 web hits recorded, we would seek to significantly increase contact numbers in the next stage.

It is therefore essential that the work of consultation starts as soon as possible.

In relation to the role of Councillors with this advisory panel. Members need to consider how best they can be involved in the process. A number of Members already serve on the North Foreshore Steering Group. Members are asked to consider whether this group should work with the advisory panel for the bid, or if a more specific group should be set up for this purpose.

Key Issues

It is crucial to the development of the Big lottery Stage 2 Plan that work begins immediately if we are to remain on programme and complete our Stage 2 application by 31st May 2007.

Resource Implications

Financial

Big lottery has notified us that they will grant aid up to £250k, to develop the project to the next stage. The total costs of work to the next stage are estimated at £340K. A number of pieces of work included in this process would have to be undertaken by Belfast City Council regardless, these include environmental impacting statementing, planning applications and technical developments issues. For this reason the Committee is asked to approve £90K expenditure which is contained within the North Foreshore budget line.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- approve the key activities as outlined in the cost plan.
- approve the establishments of an advisory panel.
- consider memberships of this panel.
- consider the issue of member involvement in the advisory panel.
- approve the expenditure of £90K in relation to the bid.

Key Abbreviations

BIG – Big Lottery Fund

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Project description, cost plan funding schedule
Appendix 2 – Summary Overview of Consultation Feedback.”

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (i) that work begin immediately in connection with the submission of the planning application, the gathering of technical advice including the development of infrastructure and the design of the Giant's Park, community engagement and public consultation and the undertaking of a Business Plan and Feasibility Study for the proposals;
- (ii) that a focus group, involving any Member of the Council who expressed an interest in the matter, be established to advise the Council on issues regarding the development of the Project;
- (iii) that the public consultation process through the establishment of an advisory panel be as inclusive and wide-reaching as was practicable; and
- (iv) that the Council's contribution in connection with the preparation of the bid to the Fund not exceed £90,000 and that the total cost of undertaking this work be limited to £340,000.

Celebrate Belfast – Progress Report

The Committee noted the progress which had been achieved in relation to the Celebrate Belfast initiative. In addition, the Committee agreed that a special meeting be held early in 2007 to receive a presentation regarding the results of the Celebrate Belfast programme of events.

Response to Draft Planning Policy Statement 5 and Statutory Consultation on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Draft Planning Policy Statement 5

The Committee considered a response to the above-mentioned document which dealt with retailing, town centres and commercial leisure developments.

The Council's response welcomed the strategic planning guideline contained within the Draft Statement "to create a thriving metropolitan area centred on a revitalised City of Belfast". However, it indicated that the Council was concerned at the lack of a clear policy in the Draft Statement relating to the Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre. Accordingly, the response requested that the Draft Planning Policy Statement include in unambiguous terms the type and size of retailing units which would be permitted in out-of-town-centre locations.

The Committee agreed that the draft comments, a copy of which was available for inspection in the Members' Library, be forwarded to the Department for Regional Development as the Council's formal response to the Draft Planning Policy Statement 5.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Statutory Consultation

The Head of Urban Development informed the Committee that, as part of the ongoing Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan process, the Planning Service was undertaking currently statutory consultations regarding the representations which had been made to it on the Draft Plan. This provided the Committee with a further opportunity to make representations regarding the Metropolitan Area Plan policy and zonings in relation to the Council's statutory functions. She reminded the Members that a copy of the response had been circulated to them and indicated that a copy was available for inspection in the Members' Library.

The proposed response indicated:

- (i) that the Council welcomed the strategy to protect existing open space but had concerns that the Plan failed to provide the local policy dimension in relation to an Open Space Strategy; and
- (ii) the Council had concerns regarding the Plan's Public Services and Utilities Strategy. The Utilities Strategy failed to facilitate adequately the delivery of a modern, integrated waste management infrastructure for the City and did not address adequately bin storage and collection for commercial and residential properties and the siting of public conveniences in urban centres.

The Committee agreed that the draft comments be forwarded to the Planning Service as the Council's formal response to the current statutory consultation regarding the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Renewing the Routes – Progress Report

Shop Frontage Work - Woodvale

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 20th September, it had agreed that an amount not to exceed £100,000, which was being funded by the Brighter Belfast Initiative, be spent on an enhancement scheme to be undertaken on a portion of commercial frontage on the Woodvale Road.

The Director recommended, in order to expedite the procurement process to allow for deadlines in relation to the expenditure to be met, that the Committee delegate to her, in consultation with the Chairman, authority to accept the most advantageous tender received for the works, within the overall budget of £100,000. She pointed out that terms of reference would be issued to those firms which had been placed on the Select List for shop frontage work which had been approved by the Committee at its meeting on 16th March, 2005 and that the Legal Services Department would draft the appropriate legal documents.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Carlisle Circus Art Work Commission

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th April, it had agreed that a short-listing panel be established in order to facilitate the selection of an artist who would undertake a commission involving a piece of public artwork to be located within Carlisle Circus.

The Director indicated that the Panel, which comprised two Members of the Committee, together with representatives from the local community, the Department of Regional Development, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Arts Council and Council officers, had completed its assessment of the short-listed artists and had selected Mr. Iain McColl to undertake the commission.

Noted.

Proposed City Summit

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that, at the "Belfast: State of the City III Conference" held on 9th May, the Minister with Responsibility for the Department for Social Development had announced his intention to hold a City Summit later in the year, the theme of which would be his five opportunities and challenges for Belfast City centre. She pointed out that the Committee had established recently a political Working Group and an internal Officer Group to develop a City Centre Strategy and that a report in this regard would be submitted to the Committee in the near future.

She reported that the Department for Social Development envisaged the City Summit involving approximately forty stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary/community sectors who would hold a focussed discussion on moving the City centre forward. It intended to have this facilitated by an expert in the field and hoped to organise the event this year. She indicated that the Department had suggested that the Summit be held in the City Hall, although no formal request had yet been received.

The Director stated that the proposal from the Department for Social Development was complementary to the work which the Committee had already begun in this regard and it would be beneficial if the Committee had agreed the Council's position regarding its City Centre Strategy prior to the Summit taking place.

Following discussion in the matter, the Committee agreed to host jointly the City Summit with the Department for Social Development and that a Member from each of the Political Groupings represented on the Council be invited to participate in the event and that attendance thereat be considered an Approved Duty.

Interreg – Progress Report

COMET Interreg Board

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that the Chairman (Councillor McCausland) and Councillor Michael Browne represented the Council on the COMET Interreg Board.

She pointed out that the current Interreg III Programme would be replaced in 2008 by a similar initiative entitled "Territorial Co-Operation". Given that the eligible area of the inter-regional strand under the new scheme would be extended by 150 kilometres, the COMET Partnership had been examining potential areas for collaboration with the Dublin Metropolitan Region and Scotland. As a means of initiating this process, the COMET Interreg Board had visited Dublin on 19th and 20th September, where a facilitated programme of meetings involving the Government of the Irish Republic, Dublin City Council and various urban regeneration stakeholders had been held. She pointed out that the COMET Board would be visiting other regions within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and recommended that the Committee agree to authorise retrospectively the payment of attendance, subsistence and travel allowances for Councillors Michael Browne and McCausland in connection with the visit to Dublin in September and agree to meet similar expenditure in connection with any future visits which they might undertake as members of the COMET Interreg Board. She pointed out that any travel outside Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland would be brought before the Committee for approval in advance of any such visits.

The Committee noted the information provided by the Director of Development and adopted the recommendation.

"Brownfields Hidden Opportunities" Conference

The Director of Development advised the Committee that the above-mentioned Conference, which was being held as part of the Brownfield European Regeneration Initiative, would be held in the City Hall on 23rd and 24th November. Since the Conference would be opened by the Chairman of the Committee and a number of Council officers would be addressing the Conference delegates, she recommended that any Member of the Committee who so wished be permitted to attend the Conference, for which no fee was being charged, and that the payment of attendance, subsistence and travelling allowances be authorised.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Development Department Annual Review 2005/2006

The Director circulated for the information of the Members copies of the Annual Review of the work which the Development Department had undertaken during 2005/2006. She indicated that the document showed the activities which had been undertaken by the Department and was therefore a measure of the effectiveness of the Committee.

Following discussion in the matter, during which the Director indicated that she would submit a report to a future meeting regarding the publications which the Department proposed to publish in 2007, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Annual Review.