

Development Committee

Monday, 9th October, 2006

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT (TOURISM AND PROMOTION OF BELFAST) SUB-COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor D. Dodds (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Patterson); and
Councillors M. Browne, Hartley and Mullaghan.

In attendance: Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;
Mr. G. Copeland, Events Manager;
Ms. O. Murtagh, Tourism Development Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the High Sheriff (Councillor Humphrey) and Councillor Hendron.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th September were taken as read and signed as correct.

Lagan Navigational Project

The Tourism Development Manager reminded the Sub-Committee that the Ulster Waterways Group had expressed an interest in developing the Lagan Canal, which ran from Lough Neagh to Belfast Lough, for the purpose of promoting tourism and water-based activity. To this end, a report exploring the feasibility of the establishment of a Lagan Navigation Trust, which would include Belfast, Castlereagh, Lisburn and Craigavon Councils, was being produced currently. It was reported that a draft business plan had been developed and that a meeting to consider its findings would be held in the offices of Lisburn City Council on Tuesday, 24th October.

The Sub-Committee was informed that an application had been submitted to Ulster Garden Villages to draw down a funding contribution of £1 million towards the opening of the Stranmillis Gateway Lock One and that an officer post was eligible for funding through the financial assistance of that organisation. In addition, a funding application had been submitted to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's Tourism Development Scheme in relation to the opening of Lock One and that match funding of £50,000 would be included within the Department's draft Revenue Estimates as the Council's contribution to a combination of funding towards the delivery of the Lagan Navigational Initiative.

After discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed:

- (i) that any Member of the Sub-Committee who so wished be authorised to attend the aforementioned meeting in Lisburn on 24th October and attendance thereat be considered as an approved duty;
- (ii) to the recruitment by the Council of a Lagan Corridor Officer on a two year fixed-term contract, funded totally by Ulster Garden Villages, on the understanding that there would be no cost incurred by the Council; and
- (iii) that a sum of £50,000 be included within the Department's 2007/2008 draft Revenue Estimates towards the Project.

It was noted that, since the recruitment of the Lagan Corridor Officer would have no financial implication for the Council, that a request be made to the Council's Recruitment Review Panel that the matter be expedited forthwith.

**Delivering Successful Events –
Strategies to Improve Belfast's Cultural Potential**

The Sub-Committee was advised that the above-mentioned Seminar had been held on 12th September. The Seminar, which had been organised by the Events Section, had been attended by over 160 delegates. Twelve speakers had delivered presentations on issues such as event delivery, logistics, health and safety, programming, capacity building, funding and marketing. It was reported that positive feedback had been received and the event had been considered to be a success.

Noted.

Evening Economy Update

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of a report which outlined the progress achieved to date in respect of the Evening Economy Campaign and which provided an overview of the steps which were to be undertaken to promote the campaign further.

World Travel Market – London

The Sub-Committee was advised that the World Travel Market would take place in London from 6th till 9th November and would provide an opportunity for the Council to promote the City as a tourist destination. It was reported that this event was held annually and that delegates included many key stakeholders in the tourist industry. It was pointed out that the cost per person of attending would be in the region of £532.

The Committee approved the attendance at the event, on 6th and 7th November, of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Head of Economic Initiatives, together with one other officer from the Department, and authorised the payment of the associated travel, subsistence and attendance allowances in connection therewith.

**Conference Subvention – 14th Annual
Conference of the British HIV Association**

The Tourism Development Manager advised the Sub-Committee that the above-mentioned Conference would be held at the Waterfront Hall from 22nd till 25th April, 2008. The organisers had indicated that approximately 400 persons, the majority of whom would be staying in hotel accommodation throughout the City, would be participating in the Conference. The application had been assessed in accordance with the agreed funding criteria and, accordingly, she recommended that, since the Conference would enhance the image of the City as an international conference and leisure destination, that a subvention of £3,000 be allocated towards the cost of the Conference.

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.

Post Event Reports

Proms in the Park 2006

The Sub-Committee noted a report in respect of the hosting of the Proms in the Park 2006, which had been held in the grounds of the City Hall on 9th September, granted the authority for the hosting of the event in 2008, subject to the approval of the Policy and Resources Committee, and agreed that appropriate hospitality be provided thereat. It was noted that, should the City Hall grounds be unavailable, a suitable alternative venue would be sought within the City.

Garden Gourmet 2006

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of a report regarding the hosting of the Garden Gourmet event held at the Botanic Gardens on 16th and 17th September and agreed to host the event in 2007.

**Request to meet with the Minister with responsibility
for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment**

The Chairman (Councillor D. Dodds) reminded the Sub-Committee that the principal Committee, at its meeting on 22nd March, had agreed to forward a letter to the Minister with responsibility for Enterprise Trade and Investment, Ms. Maria Eagle, M.P., requesting that she meet with a delegation from the Sub-Committee to discuss issues regarding the promotion of tourism in the City. She reported that a response had been received on behalf of the Minister indicating that she had acceded to the request and, subject to diary commitments, would meet with a deputation from the Sub-Committee in due course.

The Sub-Committee agreed to note the information which had been provided.