

Development Committee

Wednesday, 12th December, 2007

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor M. Browne (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Kelly); and
Councillors Attwood, Convery, D. Dodds, Ekin, Empey,
Humphrey, Kyle, C. Maskey, P. Maskey, McCarthy,
McCausland, Mhic Giolla Mhín and Stoker.

Also attended: Councillor Newton.

In attendance: Ms. M. T. McGivern, Director of Development;
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager;
Mr. T. Husbands, Managing Director,
the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls; and
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Cunningham, Crozier and Hartley.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd December, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Creative Industries – Additional Initiatives" which, at the request of Councillor Newton, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Creative Industries – Additional Initiatives

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 14th November under the heading "Creative Industries – Additional Initiatives" which had been taken back by the Chairman at the Council meeting on 3rd December at the request of Councillor Newton. An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

"The Committee considered a report regarding additional activities which the Department was considering undertaking within the Creative Industries Sector:

'Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Creative Industries is one of the priority sectors identified in Belfast City Council's Local Economic Development Plan 2006-2010. To date, work within the sector has focused on the key areas of business development, capability development and space.

Priority activities to be supported by Belfast City Council include:

- *Provision of tailored business information*
- *Guidance and mentoring with regard to business start up and business development*
- *Access to finance*
- *Sales and international marketing*
- *Infrastructure and export development.*

Key Issues

Delivery of a portfolio of eight projects to support the sector is underway at present. As part of the further development work in the sector, a number of new projects have been identified which, it is considered, will further enhance the creative industries in Belfast. Proposed projects are as follows:

1. South by Southwest 2008 and Nashville Event

South by Southwest 2008 (SXSW) is the premier global event focusing on the creative side of the music and entertainment business which takes place in Austin, Texas from 12-15 March 2008.

It involves a conference – attended by more than 10,000 people – and a festival with performances from over 1500 acts on 75 stages throughout the city. SXSW remains the key US showcasing, deal striking, networking and media forum for the international media industry and attendance at the event remains a key priority for all of those interested in the business of media and creativity.

Through participation in this event, Belfast City Council will be on a global platform showcasing the wealth of talent and creativity in Belfast, offering an opportunity for five of Belfast's up and coming bands to perform and do business and promoting a positive image of the city in terms of tourism, business development, inward investment and innovation.

The four day programme will consist of attendance at the exhibition and conference and two 'Belfast nights', providing live music in one of the festival venues in the city of Austin.

In July 2007, Belfast City Council in partnership with NIMIC (Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission) planned and delivered a Belfast Nashville showcase concert in Belfast. This event was attended by a significant contingent from Nashville including the Mayor of Nashville. Through the Council's Sister City relationship with Nashville, the Mayor was keen to look at the possibility of mutual showcasing in Nashville and at SXSW.

It is proposed that the Belfast delegation will travel to Nashville after the SXSW event. A showcase event will be organised in Nashville, celebrating the Sister City relationship in 'Music City' and offering an opportunity to further promote Belfast in Nashville. It will be linked to a tourism development initiative which this Committee approved in September 2007.

It is recommended that the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee be in attendance along with the Director of Development and that Members give consideration to allocating additional resources to the management and co-ordination of the event when in the United States.

It is envisaged the total number of additional resources required would be up to a maximum of three officers to assist with company networking, civic itinerary, business meetings, travel and project management.

If this proposal progresses, participation in the SXSW event will be a collaborative project between Belfast City Council, NIMIC, DCAL and Invest NI.

2. Fashion Design Masterclasses and Showcase

Members may be aware that Belfast Fashionweek is a week-long event of in-season fashion shows by Belfast retailers. The event will take place in March 2008 with nightly shows by independent and high street retailers at a range of Belfast's venues.

It is proposed that Belfast City Council sponsor a number of activities to raise the profile and quality of fashion and design in the City

Fashion Design Masterclass

A series of fashion design master classes will be organised for graduate designers, small established designers, independent retailers and SME's within the wider fashion/design/retail industry. Belfast City Council funding would help support the costs incurred in bringing the best speakers to motivate local retailers, graduates, SME's and others involved in the industry here. Potential speakers will include:

- *Established internationally-renowned designers with Irish links – John Rocha, Philip Treacy, Louise Kennedy and Paul Costelloe*
- *Mary Portas, from BBC's Mary Queen of Shops*
- *Michelle Mone, founder of the Ultimo Bra Company.*

Graduate and New Designer Showcase

A showcase of design from local talent will be organised in the course of Fashionweek. This will be one of the key events in the week-long programme and will be widely promoted, using the Belfast City Council branding. It will draw on companies already assisted through Belfast City Council's Creative Design programmes.

Anticipated outputs for the Masterclass and Showcase are as follows:

- *To provide 20 participants business development opportunities through peer mentoring and learning.*
- *To identify new markets and networks for participants.*
- *To raise the profile of the independent design industry in Belfast.*
- *To identify viable new business opportunities for participants.*
- *To increase access to international and national buyers requirements in the fashion design sector.*
- *To encourage greater research and development among participants.*
- *To increase the capability requirements among participants.*

- *Increase in employment among participants.*
- *Increase in new product development.*
- *Increase in sales in new markets.*
- *To showcase 10 new independent designs and designers to an international audience.*
- *To identify new sources of funding available for fashion designers through networking with industry professionals and representative bodies*

Resource Implications

Financial Resources

Budget for participation in SXSW event: £40,000.

Budget for sponsorship of Belfast Fashionweek events £35,000 (£25,000 for the Fashion Design Masterclass and £10,000 for Graduate and New Designer Showcase).

Human Resources

Civic representation from Belfast City Council by Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee and Director of Development.

Up to a maximum of three Council officers to assist with company networking, civic itinerary, business meetings, travel and project management

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- *Note the contents of the report*
- *Approve the proposed action plan and expenditure of up to £75,000*
- *Approve delegation of Chair, Deputy Chair and Director of Development and up to a maximum of three Council officers to assist with company networking, civic itinerary, business meetings, travel and project management.*

Key to Abbreviations

- SXSW** - **South by South West 2008**
- NIMIC** - **Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission**
- DCAL** - **Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**
- SMEs** - **Small and Medium Enterprises'**

The Director informed the Committee that, subsequent to the report having been prepared, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission had confirmed that they would be providing £20,000 and £5,000 respectively towards the South by Southwest 2008 and the Nashville events. In addition, given the significance of the events and the involvement of Belfast's Sister City of Nashville, it was considered appropriate for the Lord Mayor to participate in the visit. She indicated that the total costs associated with the trip would be in the region of £50,000, rather than the figure indicated in the report. She pointed out that, since the trip to Austin and Nashville would involve both tourism and creative industry events, it would be necessary for four officers to participate in the visit.

The Director explained that the South by Southwest event would be a tremendous promotional opportunity for Belfast since it received global television coverage and the timing of the event was opportune as it would be taking place shortly after the new brand image for the City had been launched. In addition, both Ulster Television and BBC Northern Ireland had indicated that they might be interested in covering the festival should the Council decide to showcase local talent at the South by Southwest event.

She informed the Members that the groups which would represent the City in the South by Southwest festival would be selected by the Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Council.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed, in connection with the South by Southwest and Nashville events, that a sum not to exceed £50,000 be allocated to this visit, that the Lord Mayor, the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Director of Development (or their nominees), together with a maximum of three other officers, participate and authorised the payment of travel and subsistence allowances in connection therewith. In regard to the Belfast Fashion Week event, the Committee agreed the action plan for the event and authorised expenditure up to a maximum £35,000."

The Director informed the Committee that, since last month's meeting, the Council had secured space on a stand at the South by Southwest 2008 event and that the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure had indicated that he would be participating in the visit. In addition, both the British Broadcasting Corporation Northern Ireland and Ulster Television were bidding to cover the Festival should the Council decide to showcase local talent.

Councillor Newton informed the Committee that he had concerns regarding the costs to the Council of participating in the South by Southwest and Nashville events and the Belfast Fashion Week. He was of the opinion that the size of the delegation which would travel to America was excessive. He stated that, since the Director had indicated earlier in the meeting that the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure would be

participating in the visit to America, he had further concerns that the focus at the South by Southwest Festival would switch from Belfast to Northern Ireland. He requested that the Director provide a breakdown of the costs which would be associated with both the visit to America and the Belfast Fashion Week, together with the benefits which would accrue to Belfast.

The Director informed the Committee that the costs associated with the South by Southwest and Nashville events might not be as much as the £50,000 referred to in the minute of 14th November, although, since the Lord Mayor and the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure would be in attendance, it was likely that the Council would be hosting a reception at the Festival. She pointed out that, since the visit to America would involve both tourism and creative industry events, it would be necessary for four officers to participate in the trip to Austin and Nashville.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed to adhere to its decision of 14th November.

Belfast Welcome Centre and Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau Business Plan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members are requested to receive a presentation from Gerry Lennon of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau on their draft marketing and visitor servicing plan and to consider the Bureau's application for funding.

Key Issues

Tourism is a major success story in Belfast, reflected by a significant growth in tourism numbers and spend, investment by public and private sectors in the tourism infrastructure and the establishment of a strong presence on the international stage.

Key achievements include:-

- **Tourism has more than quadrupled over the last 6 years with annual growth averaging 25-30%.**
- **1.2 million overnight visitors, with an increase of 3% on the previous year and 1,014,947 of these overnights were from out of state, an increase of 11% on the previous year.**

- In 2006 Belfast hosted 71 conferences, equating 23,150 delegates generating £17.88 million spend into the local economy.
- In 2007 Belfast secured 31 cruise ships equating to 38,456 visitors, an increase of almost 25% in visitor numbers on 2006.
- During 2006, the Belfast Welcome Centre handled 383,582 enquiries and the TIC at the International Airport handled 56,936 totalling 440,518 enquiries.
- A new Tourist Information Centre was established in the George Best City Airport and has handled 11,700 enquiries over its first two and a half months of operation.
- The NITB 2007 Tourism Barometer to June 2007 highlights Belfast as the most buoyant region in Northern Ireland.
- Belfast voted the UK's second favourite city in the Guardian/Observer's Annual Travel Awards.
- Financial support is being requested from the Development Committee to support the marketing and visitor servicing activities of the Bureau.

Marketing and Communications	£655,636
Belfast Welcome Centre	£399,772
Airport TIC's	£51,500
Domestic marketing and 'Whatabout' guide	£200,000

- The Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau are seeking an additional uplift of £500,000 funding from Belfast City Council. Members will be aware that the core funding of the Bureau from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, over recent years, has been limited with funding allocated to specific project delivery rather than resourcing the Bureau to undertake out of state marketing. As the Capital City and the tourism gateway to the rest of Northern Ireland, it is important that image led marketing of Belfast is undertaken to identified target market segments. Funding from the private sector will also be sought to match the Council's additional uplift. This increase will deliver an additional 43,000 out of state

overnight visitors. The Bureau have indicated that the total Belfast City Council contribution will deliver 7.8 million total visitors, £385 million revenue, nearly 1.2 million out of state overnight stays and leverage of close to £1 million private sector funding. The Bureau has set the following departmental targets to be achieved.

2007/2008

Leisure Tourism

Implement out of state campaigns	43,000 additional pure holiday visitors from campaigns 61% prompted recall 30% motivation to visit
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Belfast Tourism

Increase the volume and value of conferences secured by BVCB	80 conference bids 45 wins, 13,000 delegates £7 million spend
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Attract cruise ships

31 ships and 38,000 passengers

Visitor servicing

Increase enquiries and outputs	+6% increase in throughput and 5% increase in enquiries.
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Communications

Implement the Communications Plan to increase PR and WOTs	300 press reps welcomed £2.5 million ad equivalent. 80 million WOTs.
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The achievement of the Bureau's objectives will be monitored through the establishment of benchmarking criteria, appropriate performance measurements and destination indicators which will be measured through the Belfast Tourism Monitor. Members will be aware that the Bureau undertakes additional activity by the promotion of the Council's Civic Events programme through a marketing campaign aimed at the domestic market. Furthermore the 'Whatabout' guide is produced to indicate up to date and accurate information on the events, entertainment and what's on programme for the City. Funding of £700,000 is requested towards undertaking these activities.

Members will be aware that the Belfast Welcome Centre has been in operation in Donegall Place since 2001. Approval is required to identify any future location of the Belfast Welcome Centre in order to prepare for the expiry of the current lease and the future visitor servicing and retail requirements of this gateway Tourist Information Centre.

Resource Implications

£1,806,908

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve:

- Funding of £655,636 towards the marketing activity of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau payable in two instalments – April 2008 and October 2008.
- Funding of £399,772 towards the operation of the Belfast Welcome Centre payable in 4 instalments.
- Funding of £51,500 towards the operation of the International and City Airport Tourist Information Centres.
- Funding of £200,000 towards the domestic marketing campaign and the What About Guide.
- An additional uplift of £500,000 for marketing and visitor servicing payable in two instalments.
- Investigation of accommodation arrangements in relation to the future requirements of the Belfast Welcome Centre.

Key to Abbreviations

BVCB – Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
WOTs – Weighted Opportunity To See
TICs – Tourist Information Centres”

The Committee was advised that representatives of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau were in attendance to address the meeting. Accordingly, Mr. C. Rogan, Chairman, Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, and Mr. G. Lennon, Chief Executive of the Bureau, together with Messrs. D. Pennick, President of the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce and S. Magorrian, who were Members of the Board of the Bureau, were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Rogan thanked the Members for providing the Bureau with an opportunity to address the Committee. He pointed out that the Bureau operated the Belfast Welcome Centre as well as Tourist Information Centres at the Belfast International and George Best Belfast City Airports. In addition, the Bureau undertook marketing and visitor servicing activities for the Belfast City Council area. He reminded the Members that the success of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau had resulted from the decision by the Council to establish and fund the Bureau since its inception in 1999.

Mr. Lennon pointed out that in 1995 Belfast had attracted 200,000 overnight visitors and that this had risen to 1,200,000 by 2006, resulting in tourism spend of £324 million and the creation of 17,800 jobs. In the same period, the growth in tourism across Northern Ireland had been 19% whereas that in Belfast had been 117%.

He pointed out, however, that the Bureau was of the opinion that it could no longer rely on incremental growth in visitor numbers but would need a significant increase in its marketing budget to continue to attract tourists. Accordingly, he requested that the Council provide an additional £500,000 towards the marketing and visitor servicing work of the Bureau. The Bureau was confident that its enhanced marketing activities would result in a 22% increase in visitor numbers and a 33% increase in tourism spend during the period 2008-2011. He reminded the Committee that the Bureau was receiving financial assistance from other Local Authorities in the Greater Belfast Area, from Government Departments and from the private sector and that the Bureau would be seeking increases in support from these sectors as well as the Council.

A number of Members expressed concern at the low level of funding provided by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and pointed out that the Bureau had been established originally as a partnership between the Tourist Board and the Council. However, this was no longer the case since the Council was providing currently the majority of funding. It was pointed out that Belfast was both a destination in itself and a gateway to the rest of Northern Ireland and that the majority of visitors to the Province spent part of their holiday in Belfast.

In reply, the representatives of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau indicated that the Northern Ireland Assembly would be increasing the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's budget for marketing for the 2008/09 year and that the Bureau would be meeting in the near future with the Chief Executive of the Tourist Board to request a substantial increase in funding to the Bureau.

After further discussion, the representatives of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau thanked the Committee for receiving them and retired from the meeting.

The Committee agreed to:

- (i) provide financial assistance of £655,636 towards the marketing activity of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, to be paid in two instalments, April and October, 2008;

- (ii) provide an additional amount of £500,000 for marketing and visitor servicing by the Bureau, to be paid in two instalments during the financial year 2008/2009;
- (iii) provide financial assistance of £399,772 towards the operation of the Belfast Welcome Centre, to be paid in four instalments during the financial year 2008/2009;
- (iv) provide financial assistance of £51,500 towards the operation of the Belfast International and George Best Belfast City Airport Tourist Information Centres, to be paid during the financial year 2008/2009;
- (v) provide financial assistance of £200,000 towards the domestic marketing campaign and the "Whatabout" guide, to be paid during the financial year 2008/2009; and
- (vi) investigate the future accommodation requirements of the Belfast Welcome Centre.

Arising from discussion in this matter, the Committee requested that a press release be issued regarding its concerns at the lack of financial support provided by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau.

Media Report September – November

The Committee noted a report which outlined the amount of media coverage and the extent of press and media enquiries received concerning the work of the Committee during the period from 1st September till 30th November, 2007.

Broadway Junction Public Art

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

Members will recall that Belfast City Council has agreed to lead the commissioning and project management of a major piece of Public Art for the Broadway Roundabout as part of the improvement of the M1/Westlink. After an international competition Ed Carpenter an American artist was selected to carry out the commission.

The selection process through which Mr Carpenter was appointed involved a two phase system. Phase 1 involved an expression of interest from artists, from which seven were selected. Phase 2 involved the shortlisted artist responding with design concepts to a detailed project brief. The BCC Artist-in-Residence consulted with community groups in the formulation of the brief. Community representative were invited the selection panel which received presentations from the shortlisted artists.

The project to date has been taken forward through a partnership between the Department for Regional Development (Roads Service), Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate (Department for Social Development), the Arts Council for Northern Ireland and Belfast City Council. The Roads Service is responsible for the ongoing structural work relating to the roundabout/junction which is part of the M1/Westlink improvement scheme, and the Arts Council and DSD are providing the majority of funding for the project.

The Development Committee of 16 November 2005 agreed that Belfast City Council take on responsibility for the future maintenance of the art piece. At the Development Committee meeting of Wednesday 14th February 2007, it was further agreed that

- Belfast City Council co ordinate the further design of the Broadway Junction Art Piece, including management of the contract and the partnership agreements.
- The Project Management Unit undertakes the project management role up to a cost of 50K spread over the 07/08 and 08/09 financial years.
- To commit to a contribution of 20K to the capital cost of the project during the 08/09 financial year.
- That continuation with these commitments were subject to a favourable economic appraisal and adequate funding being secured to meet the shortfall.

The recommendations identified that:

- The Committee should also agree what representation Members wish to have on the Project Board and/or Steering Group.

Key Issues

Project Update

There have been considerable delays in the project due to uncertainty over the agreed project commitments from the project partners. These have now been resolved and the roles and responsibilities clarified.

- Belfast City Council have undertaken an Economic Appraisal (funded by DSD) carried out by KPMG in June 2007 This was approved by Department of Finance and Personnel in October 2007.
- The contribution from DSD has been confirmed subject to normal administrative processes.

- Further resources have been secured from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to meet the shortfall in the projected budget of £400,000 (excluding in kind costs).
- Technical details have been prepared by the artist as part of the commissioning process
- No contract is formally in place yet although the artist has demonstrated good faith and has continued to work 'at risk' to develop the technical specification required.
- The Artist selected for the Broadway Junction Public Art Piece has contributed a public seminar in May 2007 as part of the *State of the City* process.
- The forward progression of the project will see further community engagement, advised by the proposed steering group, which will concentrate on addressing any issues, providing input on design details and giving ownership of the sculpture to the local community.

Projected Budget

The following budget has been agreed as the basis for the project in 2007 - 2009.

<u>Funding Body</u>	<u>In cash</u>	<u>In kind</u>	
ACNI (Lottery)	£50,000		<i>Initial grant agreed Jan 06</i>
ACNI (Lottery)	£30,000		<i>Additional sum agreed Apr 07</i>
DSD	£300,00		<i>Economic Appraisal submitted July 07 and agreed in principle Oct 07</i>
BCC	£20,000		<i>Agreed Feb 07</i>
BCC		£50,000	<i>Project management costs, agreed Feb 07</i>
DRD (Road Service)		As part of M1/Westlink contract	<i>For foundations and structural support</i>
TOTAL	£400,000		

Project Board and Steering Committee

Proposed membership and terms of reference for both a Project Board and Steering Group are attached for approval. See Appendix 1.

The Project Board, will have the primary role in decision making, the membership reflects the different agencies charged with delivering the project. A smaller operational unit at officer level is also proposed in order to efficiently deliver the decisions of the Project Board.

The Steering Group is proposed as a consultative and advisory group whose role is to ensure representation of the local community and other relevant groupings.

Next Steps

The next steps in the project will be to:

Finalise an agreed schedule for implementation of the project

Enter into formal contractual arrangements with the artist for delivery of the project

Engage with the neighbouring communities and stakeholders

Resource Implications

The wider staffing resource implications for public art are being addressed within the context of the Business Improvement Review currently underway for the Culture and Arts Unit.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members of the Development Committee:

- (1) Approve the membership and terms of reference for the Project Board and Steering Group.
- (2) Agree that the Chair of Development Committee or his nominee is represented on the Project Board.
- (3) Councillor representation from the adjacent electoral areas of Balmoral and Lower Falls is sought for the Steering Group.

Appendix 1

Broadway Junction Artwork
Membership for Project Board and Steering Group

Project Board (Decision making),
Steering Group (Consultative)

Project Board

- Planning Service (Ian McCallister)
- Department of Social Development, (Jackie Johnstone/Ronan Corrigan)
- Department of Regional Development, Roads Service (Tom McCourt/Roy Spiers)
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland (Paul Harron)
- PSNI (tbc)

Belfast City Council

- Chair of Development Committee, Cllr Michael Browne (Chair)
- Head of Culture and Arts/Managing Director, Waterfront and Ulster Halls, Tim Husbands
- Project Management Manager, Michael Stanley
- Culture and Arts Manager, Siobhan Stevenson

Steering Group

In addition to members of the Project Board
Representatives from:

- Local Councillors in adjacent electoral areas of Balmoral and Lower Falls
- PSNI
- Environment and Heritage Service
- Greater Village Regeneration Trust
- St James Forum
- BCC Youth Council
- Boucher Road retailers
- Park Centre
- Ulster Wildlife Trust
- Belfast City Centre Management (Character & Style Working Group)
- Visual Arts Ireland
- Arts and Business

Broadway Junction Public Art Piece
Draft Terms of Reference for Project Board, Steering Group

Overview of Terms of Reference;

The Broadway Junction Public Art Project is a joint project between Belfast City Council, Department of Social Development, the Northern Ireland Roads Service (Department for Regional Development) and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The key objective of the project is to create a large scale public sculpture at the Broadway junction both in line with its proscribed budget and to the satisfaction of both the local communities and the wider citizenry.

Project Board

Purpose:

- Developing and agreeing the project schedule, objectives controls and processes;
- Approving key decisions in the procurement process;
- Agreeing the internal and external communications plan;
- Identifying resources for the project;
- Resolving issues referred to it by the Steering Group;
- Monitoring and assisting the progress of the Operational Unit;
- Creating appropriate evaluation processes at the termination of the project.

Frequency of Meeting - Once every two months for the duration of the project.

Steering Group

- Advise the Project Board of key issues of stakeholders within the local, city and national contexts.
- Develop consensus throughout constituencies with regard to the Broadway sculpture;
- Assist the Project Board in communicating with the key identified constituencies;
- Monitor the progress of the Project Board;

Frequency of Meeting - Quarterly (as appropriate)"

During discussion in the matter, a Member expressed the opinion that it might prove to be difficult for the Council to persuade the residents of the St. James's and Greater Village areas to be supportive of the piece of public art to be located at Broadway unless the project was undertaken as part of a larger regeneration scheme for the two areas.

After further discussion, the Committee approved the terms of reference for the Broadway Junction Public Art Project Board and the Steering Group and agreed that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman (or their nominees), together with one Councillor from each of the Balmoral and Lower Falls Electoral Areas, be appointed to the Project Board.

Nomadic Trust

The Director reminded the Members that the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 23rd March, had agreed to provide a maximum of £250,000 to the Nomadic Trust under a five-phase funding arrangement. The second payment was dependent upon the Council receiving an economic appraisal regarding the future of the ship. She reported that this had now been received and had recommended that the best option would be to develop the Nomadic as a static floating attraction. Accordingly, she recommended that the second tranche of the funding in the sum of £50,000 be released to the Nomadic Trust.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Support for Sport

The Committee considered the following requests for assistance which had been received under the Support for Sport Scheme in relation to events and promotions:

<u>Organisation/Event</u>	<u>Summary of Event and Amount Requested</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Belfast Karate Youth International 2008	Funding in the sum of £6,290 in relation to the holding in March of an eight nation invitational karate event for the under seventeen age group	Offer support of £4,000
Malone Under 12 International Festival of Rugby	Funding in the sum of £5,070 in relation to the holding in April of the first International Festival of Rugby for the under twelve age group	Offer support of £3,500
Celtic Cup	Funding in the sum of £8,000 in relation to the holding in May of the seventeenth Celtic Cup, which was a Primary School Football Tournament due to be staged at the Billy Neill Centre	Do not support as the event is to be held outside Belfast City Council's area

<u>Organisation/Event</u>	<u>Summary of Event and Amount Requested</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Under 15 Tri-Nations International Soccer Tournament	Funding in the sum of £5,000 in relation to the holding in May of an under fifteen soccer tournament for teams representing Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Wales	Offer support of £3,000
Belfast Duathlon 2008	Funding in the sum of £7,000 in relation to the holding in April of the Irish National Duathlon Championships	Offer to underwrite the event up to a maximum of £6,000
World One-Armed Golf Championships	Funding in the sum of £10,000 in relation to the holding in June of the World One-Armed Golf Championships due to be held at Dunmurry Golf Club	Although the event is being held outside Belfast City Council's area, offer support of £5,000 since it will generate approximately 500 bed nights in Belfast
Belfast Rat Race	Funding in the sum of £10,000 in relation to the holding in August of the Rat Race, which was an urban adventure event	Offer to underwrite the event up to a maximum of £10,000
Commonwealth Ten Pin Bowling Championships – Belfast 2008	Funding in the sum of £9,075 in relation to the holding in November of the Commonwealth Ten Pin Bowling Championships – Belfast 2008, due to be held at the Dundonald Ice Bowl	Although the event is being held outside Belfast City Council's area, offer support of £6,500 since it will generate considerable bed nights in Belfast and the City's name will be reflected in the event title
Tour of the North Cycle Race	Funding in the sum £1,250 in relation to the holding in March of the Prologue Time Trial at Stormont	Offer support of £1,000
The Belfast Canoe Polo Cup 2008	Funding in the sum of £1,100 in relation to the holding in March of the Belfast Canoe Polo Cup	Do not Support
The World Blind Golf Championships	Funding in the sum of £10,000 in relation to the holding in August of the 2008 World Blind Golf Championships	Offer support of £5,000

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Neighbourhood Economic Development
Programme Phase III**

The Committee was reminded that the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme had been introduced by the Council in 2003 to promote and support economic development activity in local communities throughout Belfast. Through the Programme, small grants had been made available to enable groups to deliver localised community economic development projects and, since its inception, £500,000 had been allocated to improving employability and economic conditions in areas of need. The Committee, at its meeting on 13th June, had agreed to implement Phase III of the Programme and had allocated an amount of £200,000. However, it had been established recently that a sum of £110,000, which had originally been set aside for area-based business development activity, would not now be spent in the current financial year. It was, therefore, available to be used for the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme if the Committee approved this virement.

The Director reported that 52 applications for assistance had been received and assessed. As a result of this process, she was recommending that 17 projects, costing £310,000, be funded under the third phase of the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to the virement of £110,000 to the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme Phase III and adopted the recommendation of the Director on the applications for funding.

**Careers Education, Information, Advice
and Guidance Strategy for Northern Ireland**

The Committee agreed that the undernoted document be forwarded as the Council's response to the consultation exercise in relation to a new Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy:

- “1. Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the draft Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Strategy for Northern Ireland.**
- 2. The Council is committed to improving the quality of life, now and for future generations. While we do not have legislative authority for the skills development agenda, we consider that a well-trained workforce is central to the city's future economic growth.**
- 3. Belfast City Council considers that an appropriately structured and resourced careers education, information, advice and guidance strategy can play a central role in shaping the city's workforce.**

4. Research currently underway for Belfast City Council on future skills needs within the city¹ (scheduled for completion by end December 2007) makes a number of observations with regard to the current CEIAG provision.
- It is a widely-held belief among those interviewed (principally employers and education providers) that the careers guidance provided in schools is not of sufficient quality
 - Some are of the opinion that careers guidance and an entrepreneurial culture should be coached from primary level
 - Concern was expressed about the skills and practical experience of careers teachers and the information with which they are provided to assist them in their tasks
 - It was suggested that poor careers guidance and advice during secondary school has contributed to a mismatch of skills in the labour market. In particular, concern was expressed about the number of students being guided into 'saturated' HE degree course rather than 'unsaturated' degree courses for which there is marketplace demand, or alternatively towards the vocational route or job market
 - It was thought that this mismatch was increasing the chances of graduates seeking opportunities offshore or working outside of their chosen field of study, underutilising the value of their degree
 - Examples of mismatches included:
 - Within the health sector, a large number of graduate physiotherapists are finding limited places available after graduation
 - Universities are struggling to fill many of their engineering courses even though there is over-demand for these types of graduates in the marketplace
 - Demand within the ICT sector has meant that a number of education providers now provide conversion courses for graduates.

¹ Regional Forecasts, *Labour Supply and Demand Analysis for the Belfast City Council Area (draft)*, December 2007

- Concern was expressed about the number of graduates being guided down the academic route and the resultant drop-out rates and the value placed on degrees
 - The issue was raised in relation to the funding conflict of interest at Year 13 whereby secondary schools are rewarded for each pupil they retain after GCSE level. It was suggested that it is not in the school's interest to guide pupils towards further education colleges
 - Job placements or 'real life' work experience is considered an important component for young people to gain an understanding of the type of job in which they may be working.
5. Belfast City Council's views are largely shaped by these findings and by our discussions with partners as part of our efforts to support the development of the city's economy. Through our Local Economic Development Plan, we have identified a number of priority themes including:
- Business Competitiveness
 - Talent
 - Community Economic Regeneration.

We believe that careers guidance plays a critical role in ensuring that people are encouraged to consider employment in those fields where, research tells us, the future jobs will be found. In order to do this, those providing careers guidance must be fully aware of all research and trends and must be aware of the skills required for specific sectors.

6. In response to the questions asked as part of the consultation process, we have included a number of comments and observations as they relate to Belfast City Council.

Do the proposals to develop labour market information and to develop the Careers Service website as an information hub meet the needs of clients and the CEAIG community?

We welcome the proposals to enhance access to the current labour market information and propose that DEL works with other relevant partners to identify information requirements in order to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from information gathering. For example, we would be keen to gain access to key labour market information at city council level in order to help us target our skills development and business support activity.

Information provided electronically can be useful as a 'first point of contact' but it is important that careers staff are able to provide 1-2-1 support and guidance as a next step.

What are your views on the proposals in relation to the provision of Careers Advice and Guidance for Young People?

We welcome the proposals to integrate careers guidance from the age of four years. We also accept the partnership model for delivery of the careers guidance service. We would stress the need for increased linkages with the private sector – they will dictate future skills needs and their input needs to feature strongly in any careers guidance activity.

Do you support the proposals to provide different levels of service in Careers Resource Centres, depending on client need i.e. self-help, brief staff-assist, and individual case-managed services?

We feel that services should be tailored to customer need and, as such, we welcome the suggested approach. However, we would suggest that, even when the customer takes a lead in identifying their own resources, careers guidance staff should ensure that they are given sufficient structure and direction. Moreover, it is important to follow up on contacts to ensure that customers have been able to find the information and resources that they need. As such, it will be important that all customers register their details, regardless of the level of support required.

What are your views on the proposals in relation to the provision of Careers Advice and Guidance for Adults?

We feel strongly that even those already in the labour market can make use of targeted careers guidance. As such, we would welcome improved linkages with employers or sectoral bodies to help employees identify work progression options within specific sectors.

Do you support the formation of a forum of CEIAG delivery partners?

We support the formation of a forum of CEIAG delivery partners as a means of sharing information and ensuring consistency of approach. We would welcome the opportunity to be informed of the work of the group, particularly any actions which may impact on our work to promote the city's economy.

What are your views on the proposals to develop flagship Careers Resource Centres and offer services under the Extended School provision?

We support the development of flagship Careers Resource Centres but would caution that these centres need to be branded very differently from the Jobs and Benefits Offices, as the careers service provision here clearly has not worked.

We also welcome the proposal to offer services within extended schools. However it is clear that the costs of providing this service will be extensive and, as such, it may include careers information only. If this is the case, it would be important to consider how interested parties can register their details to allow follow-up on a 1-2-1- basis if necessary in order to ensure that the guidance and advice facility can be provided to those who require such assistance.

Do you agree that a review of the provision of work-based learning opportunities, for staff involved in careers provision, is required?

As indicated at the beginning of this response, our own research has flagged up concerns among employers and education providers about the levels of industry awareness among those providing careers guidance to adults and young people. We would therefore welcome the proposal to offer increased work-based learning opportunities to staff as well as encouraging opportunities for peer learning and feedback among colleagues to disseminate findings, given the difficulty in arranging such placements.

Do the proposals adequately address concerns about the alignment of impartial careers information, advice and guidance and the needs of the economy?

While we accept that this is a DEL and DE managed initiative, we see an opportunity to give a larger role to DETI in an enhanced Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Strategy for Northern Ireland. Careers guidance should be provided in line with individual needs and in light of emerging labour market trends. Given the work undertaken by DETI to identify future growth sectors, it is suggested that more explicit links are made with this department and that, on the basis of their assessment, careers guidance staff are informed of key growth sectors and opportunities within them. Such co-ordination can only help the region's economy achieve its full potential.

We would also suggest that consideration be given to direct private sector input to this work."

**Request to Support the Ulster Community
Investment Trust's Trade Show**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report regarding a request which had been received from the Ulster Community Investment Trust for the Council to support the Trade Show which would be held in conjunction with the Trust's annual conference in June 2008.

Estates Management – Markets

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Vehicle Parking at St George's Market

Belfast City Council Officers along with certain Members of Council have held regular meetings with DRD Roads Service, PSNI, and Market Traders since the refurbishment of St George's Market in 1999 to discuss trader and customer car parking issues at the Market.

Unit Lettings at Smithfield Market

The Development Committee at its meeting on 22 September 1999 granted the authority for the Director of Development, in consultation with the Chairman of the Development Department, to approve the terms of future lettings, subject to those terms being reported retrospectively, to the Development Committee.

Key Issues

Vehicle Parking at St George's Market

Recent changes to car parking have taken place in the area around St George's Market. Ten pay and display parking bays have been introduced to May Street, at the rear of the Court House and there are proposals to establish approximately 20 additional pay and display parking bays into nearby Vernor Street.

The Council was informed by letter from the Roads Service, Eastern Division that the Roads Service proposed an amendment to the On-Street Parking (NI) Order 2000 and a Notice of Intention regarding this proposal was placed in the Northern Ireland daily newspapers on Wednesday 7 November 2007.

The Committee is asked to note the letting of units in Smithfield Market agreed under the delegated authority of the Director of Development, in consultation with the Chairman of the Development Department:

**Units 16 – Smithfield Market –
Disability Appliances Workshop**

Tenant: Ann Collins
Shopmobility Belfast
Westgate House
Queen Street
Belfast BT1 6ED

Unit Size: 426 Sq Ft Ground Floor

Terms: £520.00 per Month

Tenancy Agreement for 6 Months and
Monthly there after commencing
1 December 2007.

Units 17/18 – Smithfield Market - Second Hand Goods

Tenant: Mary Hamill - Previously Occupied
Unit 26/27

Unit Size: 917 Sq Ft Ground Floor
475 Sq Ft Mezzanine First Floor

Terms: £995.00 per Month

Tenancy Agreement for 6 months and
Monthly there after commencing
1 November 2007.

Units 21 – Smithfield Market - Boxing Equipment

Tenant: Charles Brown
6 Springbank Drive,
Dunmurry
BT17 0QN

Unit Size: 235 Sq Ft Ground Floor

Terms: £260.00 per Month

Tenancy Agreement for Six Months and
monthly thereafter commencing
1 December 2007.

Units 26/27 – Smithfield Market – Coffee Shop

Tenant: Michelle Lafri
18 Burnside Park
Belfast
BT8 4HU

Unit Size; 865 Sq Ft inc storage Area

Terms: £810.00 per Month

Tenancy Agreement for Six Months and
monthly thereafter commencing
1 December 2007.

Units 36/37 – Smithfield Market - Hydroponics

Tenant: Colin Larmour and Romek Czerepowick
1A Ballymacormick Park 34 Meadowvale Crescent
Bangor Bangor
BT19 6BX BT19 1HX

Unit Size: 575 Sq Ft Ground Floor
290 Sq Ft Mezzanine Floor

Terms: 805.00 per Month

Tenancy Agreement for Six Months and
monthly there after commencing
1 December 2007.

Recommendations

- That Committee note the continuation of discussions between Belfast City Council, Market Traders and the DRD Roads Service with a view to progressing the parking issues at St George's Market for the benefit of traders, customers and local residents.
- To note the terms of the lettings, set out above.

Key to Abbreviations

DRD - Department of Regional Development
P.S.N.I. - Police Service of Northern Ireland”

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to note the result of the ongoing discussions regarding the parking issues at St George's Market and the information provided regarding the letting of units 16, 17/18, 21, 26/27 and 36/37 at Smithfield Market.

Belfast City Centre Management

The Committee agreed to receive at its January meeting a presentation from representatives of Belfast City Centre Management regarding its Business Plan for the forthcoming year.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Councillor Empey declared an interest in this matter in his capacity as Minister for Employment and Learning and left the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed.

The Committee was reminded that twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships were operating currently within Belfast. Although these organisations were at various stages of development, ten of them had submitted Action Plans to the Council for consideration. The Director reported that the Council had prepared responses to the Action Plans which had been submitted by the South West Belfast and Lenadoon Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, copies of which had been circulated and were available on the Members' Portal.

During discussion in the matter, several Members expressed concern that it appeared as if the concept of Neighbourhood Renewal was no longer a priority matter for Government Departments. In response, the Director of Development indicated that on several occasions she had raised similar concern with officials from the Department for Social Development.

In response to a Member's question regarding the membership of the Belfast Strategy Group, the Director informed the Members that she had been advised that the Department for Social Development would be issuing shortly a letter offering her a place on the Group and that she would submit this letter for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee endorsed the contents of the Council's responses to the South West Belfast and Lenadoon Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership's Action Plans. In addition, the Committee requested that a letter be forwarded to the Minister with Responsibility for the Department for Social Development requesting that he meet with a deputation from the Committee regarding the concerns which it had in connection with the Department's failure to progress the Neighbourhood Renewal projects within Belfast.

Community Services Grant Aid – Implications of Impending Grant Aid Review

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Community Services offer a range of grants as set out in the policy ‘A Guide to Grant Aid for Community Organisations’, which was agreed by Council in January 2004. The grant categories within this Policy are:

- Revenue Grant
- Capacity Building Grant
- Advice Services
- Community Development Project Grant
- Summer Play Schemes
- Community Chest.

In May 2007, Committee agreed to defer the planned review of this policy to ensure it encompassed the impact of the changing policy context. Committee agreed it would be premature to consider the shape of any future grant aid programme in advance of information in relation to a number of significant developments each with their own timeframes specifically:-

1. Council's Community Support Plan 2007-10
2. Council's Corporate Plan 2007-9
3. DSD's Grant Aid Strategy for Support Organisations
4. DSD's Advice Services Plan
5. RPA - the possible devolution of DSD responsibilities including grant making to local authorities
6. Current corporate review of all BCC grant making programmes

Committee agreed that any review of Community Services grant aid must be informed by the above developments.

Of particular importance will be the CSP which will establish the strategy and action plan for the Unit 2007-10 thus making the relevant connections with other internal and external strategies

As the original timeframe of 2007 would not facilitate this, the first 3 grant categories are currently closed to application pending the outcome of the review. To facilitate this, Committee agreed an extension to the current grant aid contracts to 31 March 2009. It is anticipated that the next open call for grant application will therefore be September 2008.

In reaching this decision, Committee was mindful of the pressures this may have on community groups currently not funded under these grant programmes, particularly new groups. Committee instructed staff to monitor and respond proactively where possible.

Key Issues

In order to ensure Belfast City Council proactively meets its obligations to provide, 'equality of treatment and opportunity for everyone', staff have completed a review in order to identify any specific issues which may limit grant access for community organisations in advance of the grant aid review.

1. Support for the Advice Sector

We have appointed Deloitte to conduct a review of current BCC strategy, operational management arrangements and evaluation of outcomes to date. They will also make recommendations on adjustments required in order to ensure the current approach complements the regional strategy, 'Opening Doors: The Strategy for the Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community' (Sept 2007), while continuing to meet the needs of the citizens of Belfast. This report will be available in December 2007 and it is hoped to incorporate any Councillor approved changes into funding allocations for 2008/09. Current funding contracts are for the period to 31 March 2008.

2. Capacity Building Grant

Funding in this category will include the larger area based community development support agencies. Due to the nature of the applicant, it is likely that the current funding arrangements will have permitted existing organisations to apply for grant support.

Current grant recipients received contracts offering extended funding for 1 year to 31 March 2008. Groups have been made aware that subject to appropriate monitoring returns, awards will be further extended to March 2009 in line with Committee decision.

The agreed extensions to existing funding arrangements should therefore have limited access implications. These will be restricted to the Play Resource Centre where special arrangements were agreed due to a successful appeal. This group has not yet secured any contract extension, but it is proposed to offer them a one year arrangement to bring them into line, not exceeding £30,000.

3. Revenue Grant

This grant offers support towards the running costs for community buildings. Precedence is given to neighbourhood groups who can demonstrate they run a broad based programme. The level of grant support is banded depending upon the size of the building, programme content and throughput and current running costs. Assessment considers issues of service duplication either by the type of programme offered or the groups targeted. Funding is normally multi-annual for a period of up to 3 years.

As per Committee approval, groups in receipt of revenue grant were offered a 2 year extended contract to 31 March 2009. Each annual payment is subject to an appropriate monitoring review.

The inability to invite applications for funding under this grant type is the most problematic with respect to 'equality of treatment and opportunity'. Officers are aware of recently constituted community organisations who have not had an opportunity to apply for BCC revenue support to date. The delay in the BCC grant review would therefore restrict access opportunities for these new groups until April 2009.

Based on the above, members are asked to note the following potential options and associated issues.

Option 1:

Staff will continue to respond to community requests indicating that we are currently closed to applications for financial assistance in these 3 grant categories. Staff will proactively assist groups to identify and access funding where possible pending the next planned open call for community grant support in September 2008.

Option 2:

Extend the contract of the Play Resource Centre for one year up to an amount not exceeding £30,000. This will be subject to assessment within current specific support criteria and procedures.

Option 3:

We identify and consider the allocation of a limited additional budget resource to reactively respond to appeals for Revenue Grant support on a one year basis only. This will be limited to applications from groups who have had no previous opportunity to access support from this grant category. Any applications received would be competitively assessed within the current criteria and procedures, to a maximum additional available budget of £50,000.

Option 4:

The Capacity and Revenue Grant categories are reopened to application via public advertisement. This option must be discounted as current commitments via contract for Revenue grant recipients are to 31 March 2009. The available budget is therefore exhausted and without additional funds this option is not considered viable.

Resource Implications

Financial

Option 1: There are no additional financial implications.

Option 2: This option will have additional financial implications not exceeding £30,000.

Option 3: Given the average level of grant aid, and the limit on additional finance available, it is proposed a total additional revenue grant budget for the period 2008/09 of £50,000 for competitive allocation.

Option 4: Discounted.

Human Resources

There are no additional staff resource implications resulting from this report

Recommendations

It is recommended that committee consider the following

- Sourcing additional finance to facilitate a one-off additional allocation to the Revenue Grant budget where new groups will compete for available resources to a limit of £50,000.
- Source additional finance to extend the current contract for a specified support arrangement with the Play Resource Centre up to £30,000 subject to assessment, which will be presented to Committee for consideration.

Key to Abbreviations

DSD – Department of Social Development
CSP – Community Support Plan”

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (i) that the Revenue Grant budget for the financial year 2008/2009 be increased by £50,000 to enable grant-aid to be paid to Groups which have had no previous opportunity to obtain funding under this heading; and
- (ii) to provide a maximum of £30,000 in the financial year 2008/2009 to the Play Resource Centre, subject to the application from the organisation being assessed by the Department, the outcome of which would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Community Development Project Grants

The Committee was advised that Community Development Project Grants were awarded to organisations which supported and strengthened local efforts to enhance and improve the quality of life within a neighbourhood or area. The maximum amount which could be awarded under this scheme was £500.

The Community Services Manager explained the main components of the Grant Scheme and who could apply. She informed the Committee that the maximum amount which could be awarded to a Community Group under the authority delegated currently to the Director of Development in any one financial year was £500. In previous years, in order to permit applications received under the Christmas Community Chest, which enabled organisations to hold events during the Christmas period for local residents, to be progressed using this delegated authority, the former Community and Leisure Services Sub-Committee had approved the payment of Community Development Project Grants. This was now the responsibility of the Development Committee and it would be necessary, therefore, for it to approve the payment of grants.

In addition, the former Community and Leisure Services Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 7th March, 2006, had agreed that the Council should award two Community Development Project Grants per year as part of a specific funding package to a number of locally managed community facilities located on Council-owned land, or which were formally managed by the Council, subject to a satisfactory proposal being submitted. She reported that such a proposal had been submitted from Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre.

She reported that forty-four Project Grant applications had been received, thirty of which had been recommended for grant-aid, and it was proposed that £14,997 be allocated in this regard.

The Committee considered the applications which had been received and agreed to adopt the recommendations as indicated below:

Recommendations for Grant Approval

Group Name	Requested	Recommended
NORTH		
Ballysillan Senior Citizens' Association	£500.00	£500.00
Brookvale Seniors' Club	£500.00	£500.00
Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum	£500.00	£500.00
Dance Starz	£500.00	£500.00
Duncairn Senior Citizens	£500.00	£500.00
Marrowbone Community Association	£500.00	£500.00
North Belfast Cultural Society	£500.00	£500.00
North Belfast Women's Initiative & Support Project	£500.00	£500.00
Shared History Interpretive Project	£500.00	£500.00
Star Neighbourhood Senior Citizens	£500.00	£500.00
Woodvale Young At Heart 50+ Group	£500.00	£500.00
York Road Civil Defence Association	£500.00	£500.00
Sub Total	£6,000.00	£6,000.00
SOUTH		
Abingdon, Barrington, Colchester Residents' Association	£500.00	£500.00
Finaghy Community Development Association	£500.00	£500.00
Greater Village Regeneration Trust	£500.00	£500.00
South Belfast Malecare	£500.00	£500.00
Village Focus Group	£500.00	£500.00
Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre	£500.00	£500.00
Sub Total	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
EAST		
Avoniel Over 50's Club	£500.00	£500.00
Courville House Committee	£500.00	£500.00
Crossroads	£500.00	£500.00
Palmerston Residents' Association	£497.00	£497.00
Sub Total	£1,997.00	£1,997.00

WEST		
Blackie Community Groups' Association	£500.00	£500.00
Friends of Fruithill	£500.00	£500.00
Glencolin Residents' Association	£500.00	£500.00
Greater Shankill Senior Citizens	£500.00	£500.00
Highfield 50+	£500.00	£500.00
Lower Andersonstown Mothers' Support Group	£500.00	£500.00
Rosgoill Community Association	£500.00	£500.00
Tar Anall	£500.00	£500.00
Sub Total	£4,000.00	£4,000.00
TOTAL	£14,997.00	£14,997.00

Recommendations for Grant Refusal

Group Name	Request	Reason for Refusal
NORTH		
Ballysillan Elim Community Outreach	£500.00	Not meeting criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
27th Belfast Scout Group Holy Family	£500.00	Not meeting criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
Midland Art Club	£500.00	2nd Application in current cycle
Midland Senior Citizens	£500.00	2nd Application in current cycle
North Belfast Community Development and Transition Group	£500.00	Not meeting criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
Salisbury Special Olympics Club	£500.00	Not meeting criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
Small Steps Adult Education Group	£500.00	Not meeting criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
SOUTH		
Community Conscious	£500.00	Incomplete Application
Golden Girls & Darby Girls	£500.00	Incomplete Application

EAST		
Ballymac Centre	£500.00	2nd Application in current cycle
Residents of Cherryvalley/Kensington	£500.00	2nd Application in current cycle
WEST		
Highfield Residents' Association	£480.00	2nd Application in current cycle
Springfield Park Residents' Association	£500.00	Incomplete Application
Shankill Creche	£500.00	Application Withdrawn

Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre has been leased by Council to the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum (The Forum) for a period of 10 years from October 2000. The lease agreement includes an external sports pitch adjacent to the centre.

A Service Level Agreement forms the basis of a contract between the Forum and the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) under which the Forum grants LORAG use of Shaftesbury to deliver a programme of activities in response to local community needs in order to ensure a broad base of activities and opportunities for each age group.

LORAG have secured funding of £2.3million for the development of a sports and health facility at Shaftesbury which includes an upgrade of the sport pitch to a third generation pitch.

- **The Community & Leisure Services Sub-Committee meeting of October 2005 agreed (subject to legal requirements) to extend the lease to 25 years which is a condition of the funding.**
- **The Community & Leisure Sub-Committee meeting of 6th February 2007 authorised the construction of a sports facility at Shaftesbury including an upgrade of the sports pitch to a third generation pitch. The construction will be at no cost to Council.**

Key Issues

The community and political environment has changed significantly since Council entered into the lease agreement with the Forum in 2000. The recently established Inner South Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership is representative of the community organisations in the Lower Ormeau. Given the strategic role of the Neighbourhood Partnership it would be the view of the Forum that its role in the area has become less significant. The Neighbourhood Partnership is better placed strategically to address the issues of the area previously within the remit of the Forum.

LORAG are a member group of the Forum and are represented on the Neighbourhood Partnership. They have demonstrated their capability which is evidenced by the various project successes and the capital investment in Shaftesbury. Facilitation of the Forum is also impacting on valuable community funds and staff resources.

The Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum have therefore now formally requested that Council authorise the transfer of the Lease agreement of Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre to LORAG.

A Council Officer was in attendance at a meeting of the Forum where the issue of transfer of lease was discussed and agreed.

Resource Implications

Financial

- The Community & Leisure Sub Committee of 7 March 2006 agreed a three year cycle of Revenue Funding to seven Community Managed Facilities.
- As part of this package, the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum were awarded funding in the amount of £50,000 per annum (to include an uplift of 3% in years 2 and 3).
- The transfer of the lease agreement at Shaftesbury from the Lower Ormeau & Markets Community Forum to the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group will have no further financial implications for Council.

Asset and Other Implications

The recommendation will improve communications, facility management issues and strategic development.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum surrender the current lease agreement to the Council in consideration of Council granting a new lease in respect of Shaftesbury Recreation Centre to the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) for a term of 25 years.

Key to Abbreviations

LOMCF – Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum
LORAG – Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group”

Several Members raised a number of concerns regarding the membership of the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum, the Lower Ormeau Residents’ Action Group and the Inner South Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership. In addition, Members questioned the duration of the lease which was being requested.

The view was expressed that, given these concerns, the matter should be deferred to enable further information to be obtained. However, as there was uncertainty as to whether the deferral of the request might have an adverse effect on the substantial funding being providing towards the development of the sports and health facility and the upgrading of the pitch, the Committee agreed that the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum could surrender its current lease agreement with the Council in respect of Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre and that the facility be leased for a period of twenty-five years to the Lower Ormeau Residents’ Action Group, subject to all Members of the Committee being provided with further information prior to the Council meeting on 7th January, 2008.

Youth Forum

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

On 15 June 2005 the Community and Recreation Committee agreed to the establishment of a Youth Forum for Belfast City Council. Since then a Children and Young People Coordinator has been appointed and the Youth Forum has been established.

The Youth Forum consists of 36 young people (13 – 18yrs) from across the City. The Forum is split into issue based sub groups as directed by the young people themselves and have looked at issues including mental health, suicide, drugs and alcohol, anti social behaviour, facilities and youth provision.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to elected members on recent work of the Youth Forum.

Key Issues

Youth Forum Update

The first Youth Forum meeting was held in the Council Chamber on 23 May 2006. Prior to this, in April 2006 the young people took part in an extensive induction and training programme which included learning how a council works. The young people also highlighted issues of importance to them and split into sub groups based on these issues.

The young people communicate regularly:

- With elected members, through the Youth Champions Group;
- With officers, through the interdepartmental group for provision of services to children and young people,
- With Belfast's voluntary and statutory youth providers through the Joint Youth Panel, which is Chaired by Belfast City Council
- And via regular consultation workshops at youth forum meetings.

These mechanisms have proved useful in helping the young people achieve their goals.

Since the establishment of the Youth Forum sub group work has been based on issues including Suicide; Drug and Alcohol misuse; Facilities for Young People; Good Relations; etc.

More recently the Youth Forum has been working in sub groups on the following issues:

- Teen Pregnancy – a report has been written for consideration by the Minister for Education (depending on Council approval)
- NI Youth Assembly – a report has been written proposing a NI Youth Assembly. The group hope to use it as a lobbying paper and as a submission to the consultation on a NI Network for youth (depending on Council Approval)
- Citizenship – a sub group worked with the European Unit on the Opportunity Europe Event in St George's Market

- Youth Awards – a sub group are working with the Community Safety Unit on planning a Youth Awards Event
- Intergenerational Project – work with Age Concern addressing safety issues for older and younger people
- Talking Anti Social Behaviour – work with Parks on the ASB pilot project
- Anti Bullying work – work with the Anti Bullying Forum on a poster campaign
- Youth Exchange Visit – funding has been approved for a Youth Exchange visit involving a Youth Forum from Finland

Other Work recent with Council Departments:

- Tourism Unit / Economic initiatives Unit - Branding Belfast
- Parks & Leisure – ongoing work on developing a Skatepark for Belfast
- Play – Party in the Park
- Leisure – Mystery Visits Report
- Good Relations – ongoing work on promoting good relations / consultation on Peace and Reconciliation Plan (Peace III)
- Cleansing – Consultations on recycling, waste and Anti Litter Campaign
- Community – Work with travellers liaison group
- Community Safety – Get Home Safe Campaign

It should be noted that the views of the Youth Forum, are not necessarily the views of Belfast City Council. This point was agreed in the early development of the Youth Forum where council agreed that:

The Belfast City Council Youth Forum should ‘Act as a mechanism through which the Council can consult with young people and; act as a mechanism through which the young people can raise and discuss issues of importance to them and which can be raised with Council Officers and Elected Members.’

Youth Forum Review

As part of the proposals on establishing a Youth Forum, it was agreed that it should be reviewed after two years. The current membership of the Youth Forum will complete their two year term in office in March 2008.

The review of the Youth Forum is underway and it is anticipated an evaluation report will be available during late January 2008. Recommendations from the review will inform a committee report (February 2008) to facilitate member agreement on the future shape and support for the Youth Forum. Should Council choose to continue with the project, the recruitment process will be initiated to enable new members to take up their seats by May 2008.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report in relation to the significant progress made to date by the Belfast City Council Youth Forum.
- Note that the teen pregnancy sub group to seek a meeting with the Minister for Education, and for the NIYA sub group to use their paper to lobby for a Youth Assembly.
- Based on the outcome of the review, give approval for the life of the current Youth Forum to be extended until May 2008.

Key to Abbreviations

OFMDFM – Office of the First and Deputy First Minister
BCCYF - Belfast City Council Youth Forum
UKYP – United Kingdom Youth Parliament
NIYA – Northern Ireland Youth Assembly
ASB – Anti Social Behaviour”

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report regarding the work being undertaken by the Belfast City Council Youth Forum and that one of its sub-groups had requested to meet with the Minister for Education regarding teenage pregnancy and agreed that the members of the current Youth Forum retain their seats until May, 2008.

Renewing Communities Local Masterplans

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from RPS Consulting, which had been appointed by the Department for Social Development to undertake work in relation to the development of the five local area Masterplans within the City, to make a presentation to the Committee.

During discussion in the matter, the Committee was advised that a Masterplan for the West Belfast and Greater Shankill area was being undertaken on behalf of the business community in that area and was being funded by them. It was suggested that it would be beneficial for the Committee to be made aware of the work which this privately funded organisation was undertaking.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that a special meeting be held in February to receive presentations from RPS Consulting in relation to the five local area Masterplans and from the business community in connection with its privately funded Masterplan for West Belfast and Greater Shankill and that all Members of the Council be invited to attend that meeting.

Accessible Transport Strategy 2015

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) for Northern Ireland was published in March 2005 with the vision *‘to have an accessible transport system that enables older people and people with disabilities to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life.’*

A number of objectives were set out in the strategy to achieve the vision and an action plan was designed to achieve these objectives. The Department of Regional Development are currently undertaking a review of the Action Plan. The consultation document outlines the key achievements over the last two years including the:

- **Decriminalisation of parking enforcement and improved access to parking for disabled people**
- **Installation of an audio & visual announcement system on all new Translink trains and ongoing development to extend this to bus services**
- **Travel Safe publication– guide to community safety for people with learning disabilities**
- **Introduction of a door-to-door service for urban areas**

- Establishment of the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) as an independent body to advise government, transport providers and others on issues that affect the mobility of older people and people with disabilities
- Baywatch campaign to highlight the abuse of parking bays for disabled people; and
- Review of the concessionary fare scheme

The UK and Ireland Planning Research Conference 2008 is scheduled to take place at Queen's University in March 2008. The Conference will provide an opportunity for leading international planning researchers to present and debate current issues in planning research around the theme of Sustainability, Space and Social Justice.

The event will be held over three days between the 18 and 20 March and will include themed papers, plenary sessions and study tours complemented with a Civic Reception and Conference Dinner. Queen's University who are arranging and hosting the Conference have submitted a request for support or sponsorship for the event.

Key Issues

Accessible Transport Strategy

- The consultation states that 58% of the action contained in the Action plan have been achieved, others actions extend beyond the two year Action Plan period and remain on target for completion.
- Information and Training have been identified as the two areas which continue to present barriers to accessing fully the range of transport services
- Consultation with the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) states that the focus of the review of the Accessible Transport Strategy action plan should be on Information and Training

The vision outlined in the Accessible Transport Strategy supports the Council aspirations in this area and the achievements in respect of the implementation are welcomed. The focus of the review on information and training is recognised as an important step to the overall improvement for accessible transport and would be supported as a priority.

Further action, in addition to that outlined could be appropriate, to ensure improvements in the built environment remove physical barriers for disabled and the elderly in accessing transport. The review could also usefully consider City Centre Public Realm and Bus Re-routing schemes to maximise the potential for improved accessibility and the integration of services and routes through the to minimise the necessity for changes and journey disruption.

UK and Ireland Planning Research Conference 2008

The Conference is supported by the Royal Town Planning Institute and it is anticipated that event will bring around 100 international, national academics / practitioners to Northern Ireland and is an important opportunity to present a positive future for planning and local development in the region.

The conference is non-profit making event and our sponsorship/ support will enable the Council to be recognised in the conference brochures and displays in addition to displays within the conference venues. The Council for the support would be given the opportunity for:

- the Council logo printed on conference bags
- acknowledgement conference promotional material
- recognition through branding at the various sessions registration area
- 3 full delegate passes for the conference and conference
- dinner and special delegate rate for other delegates
- complimentary exhibition space
- acknowledgement in all press & media activity
- link from the conference website via the Council logo
- the opportunity for inserts in the delegate bags

The support of this event in addition to bringing delegates to Belfast will enable the Council to continue to influence the agenda for Planning within the city and the wider region. This is particularly important as we prepare for the likely devolution of planning powers to Councils due to the outworkings of the Review of Public Administration process. Supporting the conference will also start to position Belfast as a major player the future planning policy. This will also build on the previous initiatives such as the Autumn and State of the City Lecture series through which the Council facilitated the debate around new or innovative approaches to regeneration and planning. On the basis of the Conference context and the opportunities for the Council outlined above support of £2,500 towards the organisation and hosting of the event is recommended.

The support of the Conference would entitle the Council to three send representatives to the Conference on the basis of the three free places allocated. It is suggested that the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee, or their nominees, be authorised to attend the Conference as an approved duty in conjunction with the Director of Development or appropriate nominated officer.

Resource Implications

Financial

Resources to meet the recommend support to the Conference can be met from existing budgets

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- consider the draft response to the Accessible Transport Strategy 2015 and agree an appropriate response for submission to the Department of Regional Development;
- endorse the recommendation that support of £2,500 towards the organisation and hosting of the UK and Ireland Planning Research Conference; and
- approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee, or their nominees, at the UK and Ireland Planning Research Conference as an approved duty.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the undernoted document be submitted as the Council's response to the Accessible Transport Strategy 2015 Consultation Exercise:

“Question

Do you believe the Accessible Transport Strategy has had a positive or negative impact to date?

Response

The Council welcome the achievements to date outlined in the Accessible Transport Strategy 2015 Draft Action Plan 2007/2009 and believe they have had a positive impact to date.

Question

Can you say why?

Response

The Council recognise that there can be a conflict in making mainstream public transport system fast and efficient and also making it accessible to all. In particular the Council was concerned that the introduction of the Metro Service and the rationalisation of routes would be a disadvantage to people with reduced mobility. Therefore, the introduction and the intention to extend the door to door urban transport scheme is encouraged to complement the mainstream service.

Question

The new Action Plan has priorities associated with Information and Training. Do you agree that these should be the priorities?

Response

The focus of the review on information and training is recognised as an important step to the overall improvement for accessible transport and the Council strongly supports this action. However the Council would encourage the further action to ensure improvements in the built environment to fully remove the physical barriers for disabled and the elderly for accessing transport.

The Council strongly supports the continuation of physical improvements and the improvement of public transport overall for Belfast.

Question

The new Action Plan has other measures carried forward from the previous Action Plan. Are there other measures you believe should be included?

Response

The Council would like the review to consider the implications of the City Centre Public Realm, City Centre Bus re-routing scheme and the development of through routes to ensure maximisation of the potential for improved accessibility.

Question

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation can you advise which organisation?

Response

Belfast City Council”

In connection with the Planning Research Conference, the Committee agreed to provide a sum of £2,500 towards the organisation of the Conference and approved the attendance of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, together with the Director of Development, (or their nominees) at the event.

Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration

The Committee agreed that the undernoted document be forwarded as the Council’s Response to the consultation exercise being undertaken in relation to an Inquiry being conducted by the Northern Ireland Assembly’s Committee for Social Development regarding Town Centre Regeneration:

“1. Introduction

There are a number of examples of the role that the Department of Social Development (DSD) has played in contributing to town centre regeneration across Northern Ireland. This approach and intervention rightly recognises the important role for these centres as the basis for longer term sustainable regeneration that will support wider economic development in line with the aspirations of the Regional Development Strategy.

- 1.2 These interventions have however suffered from the absence of a national strategic framework to examine town centre regeneration for Northern Ireland. An understanding of the context for such regeneration activity and the ability to influence inter-related processes is critical in shaping policies and guiding interventions. Whilst the focus by DSD has been on the delivery of programmes to enhance regeneration activity through direct interventions as part of the wider Executive, there is a responsibility to join up policy initiatives and ensure the potential for regeneration and development is maximised.**

- 1.3 In considering regeneration activity and the potential for the maximisation of regeneration benefits, the Department must take account of the potential for such work to be undermined by potentially conflicting policies or decisions such as those in relation to out of town retail. The weakness and underperformance of many centres has been exacerbated by the failure to control the centrifugal pressures for the development of out of centre retail and other services. The failure to ensure that policies and decisions across the Executive recognise the clear benefits of harnessing private sector as well as public sector investment in furthering the sustainable regeneration of the centres across Northern Ireland is a continuing weakness.

2. General Comments

- 2.1 At present there is no shared agenda or agreed development vision, strategy or framework for Belfast. Different government departments as well as the local authority are involved in regeneration. A comprehensive co-ordinated city centre vision and strategy with regional importance should be devised with clear direction for the city centre and buy-in from all stakeholders encompassing regeneration and future stewardship.
- 2.2 Although DSD have acknowledged in their Neighbourhood Renewal agenda that there needs to be an integrated and joined up approach for all agencies to work closer together this sentiment has not been adhered to. At a strategic level there is limited engagement with Councillors who are the democratically elected mandate to work to address regeneration initiatives.
- 2.3 Through the State of the City initiative for Belfast there is overall agreement that collectively all agencies must work in collaboration however, Belfast City council would welcome the opportunity to work closely with DSD in agreeing the priorities for city centre regeneration.
- 2.4 As the Lyons review of local Government underlined place shaping is one of the key roles and responsibilities of local government it is evident from the current situation that the city centre does not have that capacity. The Council welcomes the opportunity to work with all stakeholders and in particular DSD to effectively build that capacity.

- 2.5 The Council suggested that DSD work in partnership to ensure maximisation of the impact on city centre and engagement in the proposed City Investment Fund. The Department would also have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership and creativity by persuading Department for Finance & Personnel (DFP) to engage in pursuing new EU financial opportunities.
- 2.6 The Council would suggest that efforts to improve relationships within the city and tackle the problems associated with division would require a long-term commitment and a joint approach from all service providers. The Council looks forward to working with DSD on dealing with visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism and promoting good relations across the city, as outlined in the 'Shared Future' document and would welcome a statement of support for this within any strategy for the city centre.
- 2.7 The Council supports the view that we need to have a long term programme based approach addressing clearly defined needs to have a sustainable impact. This should be clearly based on the positive benefits associated with the regeneration of centres as the basis for the future sustainable development of the region.

3. Specific Comments

Assess the scope and effectiveness of the programmes and policies adopted by the DSD to regenerate town centres.

- 3.1 In the absence of a coherent national strategic agenda it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of DSD programmes and policies to regenerate centres as there is limited baseline data and targets to measure impact and success. However it is evident that a number of specific and partnership projects have contributed to improving the aesthetics and environments including public realm projects and the Renewing the Routes programme.
- 3.2 As a result of the absence of a regeneration framework a number of long term aspirational plans have developed for parts of the city centre including the North West Quarter and North East Quarter.

- 3.3 Policies have been weakened by the lack of influence over the wider decision making and the adverse impact proposals for out of centre retail on both business confidence and investment. The clear policy in relation to the support and control of development proposals for the centre of Belfast (Victoria Square and Cathedral Way) was undermined by the inability to align other policies or decisions by the Executive. The clear advantages and additional benefits from regeneration investment in city centres has not been articulated or introduced into these related processes. Whilst work by the University of Ulster has highlighted the positive longer term returns from investment in brownfield developments (for both the investor and surrounding communities) the assessments have yet to capture or incorporate these broader advantages into the processes.
- 3.4 The emphasis on retail lead town centre regeneration would be considered as an effective and partially successful approach. The value of the approach taken in relation to the major development proposals for centre of Belfast (Victoria Square and Cathedral Way) and has been successful in relation to the positive partnerships developed; the direct tangible economic and social benefits and the emphasis or focus of actions on the development of existing retail centres.
- 3.5 The legacy of DSD's Laganside Corporation has been a major contributor to the city centre regeneration linked to the Waterfront. The work in improving the physical environment in the city was impressive and the contribution to employability activity was welcome, albeit although it appears as something of an afterthought to the development activity. The tangible outputs in terms of jobs created for the local community and community grants schemes helped the local community buy into the new developments and helped re-establish a connection with the river. Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to continue working closely with DSD to maximise the impact of the foundation activity initiated by Laganside.
- 3.6 Activation of centres is an important element of strategy and the Council would welcome the opportunity to develop activity through the utilisation of Laganside funds for events developing on the activity previously delivered through this former DSD conduit. However better co-ordination with existing funding organisations e.g. BCC, ACNI and NIEC would provide a more effective package of support covering

any gaps. The Council would support the provision of additional public funding for specific projects i.e. SS Nomadic and the Belfast Wheel. The Council's continuous co-ordination programme is supported and we hope that this can be extended across the city centre.

- 3.7 The positive work by DSD should continue through investment in signage and branding and late night openings, as well as more and more alternative events in city centre such as big wheel. The limitations on future public resources necessitate partnership and pooling of resources in order to be more efficient and effective in achieving outputs.
- 3.8 We are also happy with our continuous co-ordination and involvement in events to promote DSD's 'Streets Ahead' programme and we hope that this can be extended right across the city centre.
- 3.9 The Neighbourhood Renewal work has been disappointing, in terms of the protracted and confusing process. Neighbourhood Renewal areas are small and they don't consistently cover the city or the city centre. Little consideration appears to have been given to linkages between Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships or connections from neighbourhoods to the city centre.
- 3.10 The current strategy does not fully consider the needs of city centre dwellers or the opportunities presented by encouraging retention and expansion of this group. The absence of a strategy, and therefore associated implementation regeneration programmes, means that initiatives fail to target service provision for current dwellers or provide strategies to retain and expand this city centre asset. There is a need for both economic and social assets to be considered in the development of any centre regeneration strategy and associated programmes by DSD.
- 3.11 The value and longer term benefits of town centre regeneration requires consideration and focus due to the proposals and approvals of purpose built out of town shopping centres in direct competition the retail and service offer of town and city centres. Nationally there are moves towards preventing the town clone syndrome where High Streets become replicas of each other through an emphasis on encouraging the development of the independent retail sector an area that requires greater emphasis in policy.

- 3.12 The Council strongly welcomes looking closely at the economic conditions that are having an impact on centre regeneration including the level of rent, the number of vacant properties, the land speculation issue and supply and demand.

Identify areas where the application of regeneration funding has failed to address disadvantage and poverty.

- 3.13 Evidence suggests that, while regeneration policies have gone some way towards improving the physical form of the city, they have had only a modest impact on areas of disadvantage. Indeed, in some cases, the gap between the poorer areas and the rest of the city has actually increased.
- 3.14 We strongly advocate the need for new imaginative ideas to link the city centre to communities such as Lower Falls and the Markets. We would recommend commissioning a European Union (EU) study as many EU cities have successful city centres that are well linked to communities that surround them.
- 3.15 Belfast does have a number of wards listed in the multiple deprivation index as deprived neighbourhoods and communities. Initiatives to address these including new targeting social need plans have been introduced. The Council recommends the need for an anti-poverty strategy for the city to identify where gaps in earning, education attainment and living conditions exist.
- 3.16 It is imperative that all of Belfast's communities have easy access to, and take ownership of, the economic opportunities and the cultural, social and retail facilities in the city centre. Without access to these facilities, the quality of life within the surrounding neighbourhoods will be severely comprised and without the support and patronage of local people, the city centre will not be able to sustain itself.

Consider the nature and effectiveness of engagement with local communities and other key stakeholders when taking forward regeneration initiatives.

- 3.17 Stakeholders could also be the other policy makers in the executive such as the planning service as their input is valuable in understanding and influencing the context to ensure that the potential for regeneration is maximised.
- 3.18 The Council strongly recommends that future regeneration initiatives or strategies need to consider all stakeholders who use the city centre including the growing population of children and young people. Belfast must plan holistically around the needs and asset value of young people ensuring they are valued and understood by other city centre users including the private sector, rather than the current trend which appears to concentrate on their negative potential, for example Anti-Social Behaviour.
- 3.19 The Council's Waste Management Service has little awareness of DSD's regeneration initiatives, which indicates a lack of effectiveness of engagement with a significant stakeholder. The Waste Management Service would welcome the opportunity to engage with DSD to explore a number of relevant issues.
- 3.20 The 'Door Project', a multi-agency youth initiative supported by the Council, has been seeking to provide a 'safe space' facility in the town centre over the last 3/4 years. The project had secured up to £3m in support of the project. However the escalating cost of city centre property has resulted in an inability to secure an appropriate site within their financial means. Funders have had to withdraw and the Project Committee has now abandoned their efforts to progress the project further. This project illustrates the need for any centre regeneration strategy to consider the 'drivers' and 'barriers' for regeneration.
- 3.21 The strategy must ensure that it connects neighbourhoods to the citywide agenda. Neighbourhood dwellers must be actively engaged ensuring they have access to and benefit from the targeted wealth and job creation. They must also feel that the retail, cultural and social offer includes their needs alongside the needs of targeted visitors. For example the perception of many residents in North Belfast is that they have been denied access to the wealth and job opportunities that resulted from the Laganside regeneration project. This is compounded by the planning decisions which have resulted in the physical connectivity barriers between them and the city centre.

Identify and consider relevant experience elsewhere in terms of effectiveness of policy interventions.

- 3.22 The emerging approach in other part of the United Kingdom provide a useful insight into the value of clear contextual guidance that provides guidance and protection for the sustainable development of the existing urban areas.

‘Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. The planning system has a key role in facilitating and promoting sustainable and inclusive patterns of development, including the creation of vital and viable town centres. The Government is committed to developing and supporting successful, thriving, safer and inclusive communities, both urban and rural – a vision set out in the Communities Plan.’ (PPS 6: Planning for Town Centres, ODPM, 2005)

- 3.23 The context for regeneration activity is critical and the Social Development Committees review of DSD must through consideration of the broader actions ensure that the utilisation of its resources and budget is not undermined by decisions and policies generated within other Departments.

- 3.24 This policy approach, in PPS6 above, ensures that an impact assessment is undertaken for ‘any application for a main town centre use which would be in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location and which is not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan strategy’. The guidance also states that all options in a town centre should be thoroughly assessed before peripheral or less central sites are considered. There are numerous examples of developments that have been detrimental to the vitality of town and city centres in the absence clear guidance and the priority established in PPS6. There are, however, also positive examples of policy has contributed to the development of viable and vibrant town centres.

- 3.25 In terms of the future the Council would recommend that DSD via the DFP seriously reconsiders the opportunity to use EU funding 2007-2013 to earmark the city centre as an urban area for concentrated effort.

- 3.26** On 26th October, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published the Local Government White Paper '*Strong and Prosperous Communities*'. The White Paper advocates: 1. Strengthening the role of local Councils as strategic leaders and place-shapers through the creation of enhanced partnership frameworks and joint delivery models between central and local government and partner agencies including the third sector; and 2. Creating stronger cities and strategic regions through devolving greater power and resources to city and regions, promoting the concept of City Development Companies and encouraging the creation of Employment and Skills Boards in core cities.
- 3.27** DSD along with the Council should really put resources into piloting BIDS given their success elsewhere in USA etc."

Chairman