

Development Committee

Wednesday, 13th June, 2007

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Ms. M. T. McGivern, Director of Development;
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;
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, D. Dodds and Ní Chuilín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 30th April and 15th, 16th and 23rd May, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th June.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the Members to the first meeting of the Development Committee following the introduction of the Council's new governance arrangements on 4th June.

Day and Time of Future Meetings

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, the Committee gave consideration to the day and time of its future meetings. After discussion, it was agreed that, where possible, the Committee would meet at 4.30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month.

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls Board

The minutes of the meeting of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls Board of 30th May were approved and adopted.

**Change of Membership on the
Belfast Local Strategy Partnership**

The Committee Administrator reported that notification had been received from the Democratic Unionist Party Grouping that it wished Councillor Rodway to replace Councillor McKenzie as one of its representatives on the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership.

The Committee approved the foregoing alteration to the membership of the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership.

Change Management Process

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members are aware that from 1 April 2007 as a result of organisational restructuring the Community Services Unit including travellers work and children and young people, events and the Waterfront and Ulster Halls were transferred to the existing Development Department. The consequence is a new Development Department and the process of creating this new entity has begun through a structured change management process. Alongside these changes, major changes in governance have also occurred and from 1 June 2007 all 5 sub-committees which previously managed work across these areas have been stood down and the Development Committee is now solely responsible for this broad range of work. This will have implications for the organisation of business for this Committee.

This report sets out the key actions required in relation to the change process.

Key Issues

Integrating the Community Services Unit, Events, and the Waterfront and Ulster Halls into the Development Department will require the implementation of a significant programme of work and resource investment. A Best Value Review of Community Services completed in 2004 made a number of recommendations that would allow the service to realise its full potential and significantly improve performance management. Few of these recommendations have been implemented. It is also becoming clear that there are large variations in performance across the functional areas; eg the average days lost due to sickness per full time equivalent post in Community Services is 16 days and the Waterfront Hall 9 days. This compares with the Development Department at 6.23 days. The challenge to the Committee and to officers is a very large one. The size of the change management process which is now taking place cannot be underestimated.

The Development Department has worked hard over the 8 years of its existence to create excellence across a number of areas:

- to have a clear vision for Belfast and a focused strategy;
- to create a culture of achievement and positive outcomes;
- to develop processes and systems of excellence;
- to have motivated, energetic and happy officers working in partnership with ambitious Members to make Belfast better; and
- to have the correct structure to make things happen effectively and efficiently.

The Department has been successful in achieving this and this is demonstrated by the attainment of:

- Steps to Excellence at gold;
- Investors in People;
- a wide range of awards;
- strong efficiency record; and
- an absentee rate of 6.23 days.

This is a momentum which we want to keep up. However, the challenge to the Committee and to officers is a very large one if we are to do so.

Merging with other services will create a number of issues for us across a wide range of issues. Major work will have to be enacted to achieve in the first instance consistency of practice across the new Department. This will include the need for restructuring given that many functions are duplicated and in many instances triplicated. The aim of restructuring will be to rationalise and release further resources into the process. A Change Management Board has already been established and has done a first audit of the current situation and created a comprehensive action plan for the 07/08 year which has set challenging targets. This falls into 4 categories and Committee are asked to consider and give approval for these key targets for the year.

General Departmental Issues

- The roll out of Year II of the Capital City II Strategy as previously agreed for those units within the former Development Department.
- The amendment of the Capital City II Strategy to include these new additions to the Department.

- The endorsement of the existing workplans agreed for 07/08 by the Tourism and Promotion of Belfast, the Arts & Culture and the Economic Development Sub-Committees.
- The restructuring of the Department as appropriate and the use of BIS to assist in this process, areas of particular need include Business Support, Policy, Events, the Waterfront Hall/Ulster Hall merger, Community Services overall and, the management structure, including the roles and responsibilities of the Heads of Service.
- The re-engineering of processes and systems to achieve consistency of practice across the new Department, including a review of grant aid programmes.

Community Services

- The production of a strategy for community engagement in line with Capital City II.
- The production of a community support plan for application to DSD by October 2007.
- A public consultation process on both strategy and plan completed by end of 2007.

Waterfront/Ulster Hall

- Completion of refurbishment process in both.
- The production of a strategy in line with Capital City II.

Committee Issues

- A revamped agenda process.
- The creation of new methodologies in relation to information sharing for the Committee.
- Agreement around business management.

Each of these targets creates a separate project plan with key milestones and time deadlines. Overall the list provides a significant workload on top of the ongoing work which the Department has already agreed to. The challenge for Members and officers is immense.

Resource Implications

Financial

It is envisaged that this work will be done within existing Departmental budget. Where additional resources are required updated Committee approval will be sought.

Human Resources

Major and significant in relation to restructuring and roles/responsibilities.

Recommendations

Members are asked to endorse the change management process and targets as indicated and to approve:

General

- The roll out of the Capital City II Strategy and the endorsement of workplans for 07/08 as agreed by Tourism and Promotion of Belfast, the Arts & Culture and the Economic Development Sub-Committees.
- The amendments of Capital City II Strategy to include the area of Waterfront Hall/Ulster Hall and Community Services by December 2007.
- The restructuring of the Department and the engagement of BIS to assist in this process in relation to Business Support, Policy, Events, Waterfront Hall/Ulster Hall merger, ongoing Community Services changes and the overall management structure.
- The re-energising of processes and systems to achieve consistency of practice including a review of grant aid programmes.

Community Services

- The production of a Community Services strategy by October 2007.
- The production of a Community Support plan by October 2007.
- The undertaking of a public consultation process on strategy and plan to be completed by December 2007.

Waterfront Hall/Ulster Hall

- **Production of a Waterfront Hall/Ulster Hall strategy.”**

The Director of Development drew the Committee’s attention to various aspects of the report. She indicated that it was her intention to submit reports to the August meeting of the Committee regarding the use of delegated authority, the establishment of Working Groups and Councillor representation on various outside bodies.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report and noted the information which had been provided by the Director.

European Unit

Implications of a Review of the Unit

The Committee considered the undernoted report regarding the implications of a review of the European Unit which had been undertaken by a firm of consultants:

“Relevant Background Information

The European Unit was established formally in 2003, to drive forward the Council’s European Agenda and to promote the issues and opportunities arising from Europe and to ensure that the Council and the City were well placed to take advantage of being part of a European City Region.

To undertake this role, the Unit, was tasked with delivering on a number of fronts;

- To promote the Greater Belfast Metropolitan region as a dynamic vibrant European destination
- To participate in projects and networks of European cities to exchange best practice and to showcase Belfast City Council
- To raise awareness of European affairs and the impact of EU intervention within the metropolitan region
- To maximize European funding opportunities
- To contribute to EU policy formulation

Internally the Unit’s focus was primarily to support three Departments, Development, Community and Recreation and Health and Environmental Services, while also supporting the wider corporate agenda.

The support to the Council departments is financed as follows;

EU Manager

100% by Development Department (permanent post)

EU Officer 1 (fixed term ending December 2007) –

50% through Development Department’s Local Economic Development Plan

50% through Health and Environmental Services

EU Officer 2 (ending December 2007) -

75% through Development Department

25% through Parks and Leisure (formerly 50% until the transfer of Community Services and the Waterfront and Ulster Halls)

Administration Officer

Through Development Department core business support

Impact

Over the period 2003 to 2006, the Unit has developed its role and remit, internally and externally, working closely with the Councils within the Metropolitan area, Statutory Partners drawn from Central Government and education, as well as the private sector.

The Unit has also successfully promoted the Council's role nationally and internationally as a pro-active member of significant networks, including Eurocities.

In a relatively short period of time, the Unit has moved from a concept, promoted within the Development Department to a fully functioning unit, delivering a wide range of outputs on behalf of the Council and the wider City region.

As outlined in detail in the review document summary attached as Appendix 1 the Unit has exceeded its targets and expectations against all of its priority areas.

These include:

1. Promoting the Greater Belfast Metropolitan region as a dynamic vibrant European destination.
2. Participating in projects and networks of European cities to exchange best practice and to showcase Belfast City Council.
3. Raising awareness of European affairs and the impact of EU intervention within the metropolitan region
4. Maximising European funding opportunities
5. Contributing to EU policy formulation

Finally in terms of the results and impact of the work it is useful to highlight the six accolades gained by the Unit reflecting the Council's contribution and the efforts being made to position Belfast and the metropolitan area as an integral part of Europe.

The review report therefore indicates a level of significant achievements on all indicators and especially underlines the level of funding which the unit has delivered – in total €5.3million which is a ratio of 1:18 for the Council.

Key Issues

The Council's European Unit, is regarded as a specialist unit with considerable expertise, a tremendous commitment to its work and the ability to deliver at high level both in policy and operationally. Over a relatively short period of time, the Unit has raised the profile of the Council and the City and has delivered a range of tangible results for the City and wider City Region.

The Unit is perceived as a tremendous resource for the Council and the City.

The contribution of the Unit is evident in its role as a source of European funding, a policy guide and influencer, a networker leading the way in Eurocities, hand holder to staff and a facilitator of a large number of inward and outward visits. The Unit delivers on policy, strategic issues and project activity.

The changing environment at home and within Europe will require the Unit to continue and perhaps expand its activities. Funding, policy, networking will continue to dominate with perhaps a greater role to support key functional areas within Council, including Good Relations and Human Resources, influenced by new communities emerging in Belfast and Northern Ireland. The Review of Public Administration will mean the transfer of the responsibility and delivery of European Programmes to local authorities. Belfast City Council has the opportunity now to build on and improve its EU support resource to be ready to embrace this enhanced role.

There is a need to communicate to the Council and City, what is happening post 2007, in terms of the European agenda and spelling out the opportunities and challenges that will develop. Part of this may be a wider role for the Unit, supporting other Local Authorities, as they in turn develop an interest in a European agenda, building upon the success in Eurocities with perhaps a presence in Brussels. However this can not be undertaken successfully without adequate resources.

The European work is done with a limited staff resource which, it is acknowledged, is considerably overstretched. Equally, within the context of the pressures facing the Council over the coming period and the drive of internal reforms, it is increasingly important that the Unit, more explicitly promotes the value added by its work, in delivering the Council agenda and core objectives.

Finally as a European City, Belfast has a choice, either to compete and participate in Europe and European affairs or retreat to a position of being on the edge, isolated and parochial. Active participation requires a specialist Unit, within the Council, to ensure that the views of the Capital City are heard and equally to ensure that the City is aware of the future developments within Europe. Fulfilling this role lends itself to the Council's strategic leadership role at the City and Regional level.

Moving Forward

The challenges in European work will not diminish over the next number of years. The loss of transitional objective one status for Northern Ireland means that we have to refocus our efforts in relation to other European funding in the future. To do this effectively means maintaining the level of engagements and networking we have already achieved so that we can pinpoint and access opportunities

This review has indicated the level of significant achievements over the past three years and also the need now to put in place a strong framework for future action. In relation to this a number of issues now need to be addressed. These are:

1. The need to consolidate the current staff team and place the 2 fixed term Officer posts on permanent contract
2. The need to consider the review recommendation in relation to the establishment of a third officer post.

In relation to the two officer posts the Department has been in receipt of European funding for a percentage of these posts plus direct funding from Health and Environment Services and Community and Recreation for services provided. Providing the arrangements with Health and Environmental Services and with the new Parks and Leisure Department are maintained, the full costs of these two posts can be covered within the Departmental core costs and it is proposed to proceed to recruit these posts on a permanent basis from December 2007 when the current LED contribution runs out. In relation to the establishment of a third post, further work is required to analyse both the need and the resourcing for such a post. What is clear is the increasing use of the European Unit by all parts of the Council. There is a need to itemise this and to investigate whether these sections not covered by service agreements would be prepared to resource such a service.

Resource Implications

Financial

Providing current arrangements can be kept in place no increase cost for two current posts. Issues related to establishment of a third post to be investigated.

Human Resources

Creation of 2 permanent EU officer posts from December 2007, with possibility of a third

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members

1. Note the content of the independent European Unit review
2. Agree to recruit the two permanent or fixed term posts
3. Note action in relation to the establishment of a third post.”

During discussion in the matter, the Director indicated that she was keen to make permanent the two fixed-term posts of European Union Officer and, if sufficient funding were obtained, to create a third such post within the Unit.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report regarding the review of the European Unit. In addition, the Committee agreed that the two posts of European Unit Officer be created as permanent positions and, should sufficient funding be available, that a third post of European Unit Officer be created, subject to the matter being assessed by the Council's Business Improvement Section.

Update Report

The Committee considered the undernoted report regarding the progress which had been achieved in the previous month by the European Unit:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that each month progress is reported in relation to European project development. The following report outlines development in relation to

- (i) Opportunity Europe
- (ii) EU50
- (iii) Committee of the Regions Open Days 2007
- (iv) Interreg Technical Assistance
- (v) Eurocities AGM

Key Issues

(i) **Opportunity Europe**

In respect to future European celebration events, Members will be aware that a key initiative implemented on an annual basis by the European Unit is the 'Opportunity Europe Programme'. Working in partnership with the European Commission Office, universities, Office of the First and Deputy First Minister and Language Network NI, the purpose of the event is to encourage young people to continue language learning and inform them of career and volunteering opportunities in so doing.

It is planned that this year's two day Opportunity Europe fair will take place in St George's Market on 13 and 14 November. In light of participant feedback the programme will be structured to include taster sessions of non-curriculum languages, workshops on employment opportunities, European quizzes, theatrical performances and media sessions in other languages. A flavour of Europe will also be provided via the ever popular dance and food corners. A full programme should be available by end of June 2007.

(ii) **EU 50**

Following Committee approval on 17 January 2007, the European Unit lead a series of events to profile the 50th anniversary of the European Union. The project outputs include:

- Over 8,000 attended the European Play day in Lady Dixon Park on 28 April. The preparatory efforts of the community and play staff are to be commended in this regard
- Profiling the European dimension to the City Marathon by sponsoring entertainment along the route
- A business seminar attended by representatives of Romanian and Bulgarian Trade departments. Invest NI have agreed to organise trade missions to the same should there be substantive follow-up interest
- Europe Day (9 May) reception attended by over 100 delegates, representing regional government, Member States, key stakeholders and the newly elected Assembly

- Cross-border train ride with children from the community centres linking with Special Olympic athletes from Dublin
- European music night in the Cathedral Quarter
- Association with a NICVA led community seminar attended by over 40 organisations
- Extensive Programme PR

(iii) Committee of the Regions, Regional Open Days – 8 to 11 October 2007

The idea behind Open Days is to enable Europe's regions and cities to show how they promote jobs and growth. Last year more than 130 regions participated, with around 500 speakers at 100 events. As well as a series of themed seminars, there will be numerous cultural events and exhibitions, both in Brussels and in Member States. In addition an 'Investor's Café', intended to introduce businesses to regional development bodies, will be hosted by the Committee of the Regions. Open Days provides an opportunity to: promote Belfast and Northern Ireland, showcase regional policy interventions that have been successful, learn from other regions, and possibly meet partners for transnational project proposals.

A group of Open Days 2007 conglomerates will represent the European regions and cities. They have been selected by the organisers following a call for interest. Belfast has been selected to be a representative on the Celtic Regions conglomerate under Northern Ireland which consists of: Wales (UK), Asturias (ES), Brittany (FR), Irish Regions (IE), Norte (PT), Northern Ireland (UK), Scotland (UK), South West UK (UK). The focus of this conglomerate will be on maritime development and energy policy. The workshops will be held on 9 October 2007 in Scotland House, Brussels. Speakers from Belfast will include Kyle Alexander and Mike Smith discussing Laganside and the Titanic Quarter. This event will be an excellent opportunity to highlight the successes of Belfast in this area.

It is requested that the Chair of Development, Deputy Chair or nominees agree to attend the Regional Open Days with the Director of Development and the European Manager and host a drinks reception in the Northern Ireland Office in Brussels in the evening of 10 October. It is envisaged that this would be an excellent opportunity to put regeneration plans and successes led by Belfast City Council to a wide ranging audience of Elected Members, officials, and experts in Europe

For the group of four people including the drinks reception it is estimated that the cost will be £5,000 to include flights, accommodation and subsistence from the 8 to 11 October 2007.

(iv) Interreg Technical Assistance

Members will be aware that to date Belfast City Council has been awarded £260,000 to act as Secretariat to the COMET Interreg Partnership (comprised of Councils of Lisburn, Belfast, Castlereagh, North Down, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey).

The core work of the Partnership is to maximise funding opportunities under the Interreg IIIA Programme (1million Euros secured to date for the region) and to position COMET to access the forthcoming Interreg IVA Programme.

The secretariat through the European Unit has recently submitted an application for further technical assistance. If secured Belfast City Council will be required to allocate a maximum match funding amount of £10,317. Members are requested to approve this in advance.

(v) Eurocities AGM

Members will be aware that each year Belfast City Council is represented at the Annual General Meeting of the Eurocities Network of Europe's Largest local authorities. This takes place in November each year in the city of the current Eurocities President and is attended by the Director of Development the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development the European Manager or their nominees.

The 2007 AGM is scheduled to take place in Gdansk Poland from 21 to 24 November 2007. This is the first time a New Member of State has hosted a Eurocities AG and will focus the conference on 'Demographic Challenge and Inclusion'. The format of the conference will allow for active involvement of the Eurocities Forums and Working Groups and will also provide space for extensive political debate.

Members are requested to approve the attendance of the Chairman and Deputy Chair of Development together with the Head of Economic Initiatives and the European Manager or their nominees. It is expected that the cost of attendance will not exceed £4,000.

Resource Implications

Financial

- (i) Opportunity Europe
The European Unit has set aside £20,000 to provide workshops and activities at St George's Fair.
- (ii) Committee of Regions
It is anticipated that a maximum of £5,000 will be incurred for the attendance of the Director of Development, the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or their nominees and European Manager to attend the Regional Open Days event including hosting a drinks reception in Brussels.
- (iii) Interreg Technical Assistance
Belfast City Council is required to contribute a maximum of £10,317 to match fund the Interreg technical assistance leverage.
- (iv) Eurocities AGM
A maximum of £4,000 will be required to cover the cost of attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development, or their nominees, the Head of Economic Initiatives and the European Manager.

Recommendations

Members are asked to

- To note the success of EU50 Programme

- To approve the European Unit's budget of £20,000 to Opportunity Europe and the attendance of the Chair of Development or his nominee at the press launch of the European Fair.
- To authorise the expenditure incurred by the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or their nominees and the Director of Development and the European Manager at the Regional Open Days from 8 to 11 October including hosting a drinks reception on 10 October at a total cost, of £5,000
- To approve £10,317 to match fund the Interreg Technical Assistance Leverage
- To authorise the expenditure incurred by the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or their nominees, the Head of Economic Initiatives and the European Manager at the Eurocities AGM."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure in Belfast

The Committee considered the undernoted report regarding the creation of a Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure in the City:

"Relevant Background Information

Introduction

Council has agreed to consider the creation of a Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure for the city. This is an important opportunity for Council to address the current gaps in the provision of Culture and Arts infrastructure in the City of Belfast. The lack of facilities was one of the key reasons for the city's failure in relation to the City of Culture bid, Imagine Belfast. There is now an opportunity for strengthening the cultural infrastructure as there are currently a number of capital projects which have secured a considerable resource but are now seeking further resources to move forward. Belfast City Council have been approached to play a important role in ensuring that these projects come to fruition and can contribute positively to the City's image, quality of life and in the social, environmental and economic regeneration of Belfast. The proposed fund will underpin the role of Belfast as a cultural capital and creative driver within Northern Ireland.

At meeting of the Arts Sub-Committee on 4 January discussion took place around a draft report prepared by the Director of Development to explore the possibility of the Council creating a one-off cultural infrastructure fund to assist the cultural renaissance in Belfast. Consultations were subsequently carried out with Party Groupings. Overall there was support for the concept although Members were keen to clarify actual costs and criteria for funding and eligibility and the DUP raised the need for other infrastructure needs to be addressed. The Arts Sub-Committee of 28 February 2007 considered the response from the Party Groupings. It was agreed that before seeking agreement to the proposal from the Policy and Resources Committee for Council to commit funds, officers should proceed with detailed work so that a complete and full report could be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee. Further detailed proposals are attached as Appendix 1.

The fund would take the form of a one-off award for capital development projects. Its purpose would be to support a number of cultural infrastructure projects in the city and include support for some of the large scale capital projects currently seeking funding.

Funding would be available for projects scheduled for completion in the period 2007 to 2010. Northern Ireland is now turning to a new administrative framework and Belfast City Council faces a future with a new identity and much greater responsibilities and resources. The creation of this fund will leave a positive legacy for Belfast City Council for future generations.

Key Issues

The proposed fund is outlined in the attached report in Appendix 1. The proposal is for a two Phase process and includes full details of Phase 1 which would allow for the selection of potential projects. It is recommended that the specific requirements of Phase 2 are further developed in line with the roll out of the fund and the projects considered. The figures indicated for the various options identified are based on the discussions with other funding bodies regarding their arrangements.

Members are asked to consider the report and consider if it identifies an appropriate mechanism for implementation of funding. Members attention is drawn to the following points:

Organisations who can apply

- Funding is directed at arts and heritage projects
- The fund considers buildings and venues but not venues of a temporary nature

- The fund includes heritage restoration projects but the strength of the application would, in part, be judged on the continued use rather than restoration per se
- The applicant needs to be a constituted organisations (they also have to demonstrate a track record – this may relate to the expertise within a newly constituted organisation)
- The criteria excludes applications from public/statutory bodies

Monitoring Options

Several options are provided for monitoring of the selected projects. Further discussion is required to ascertain the level of involvement and influence Council may wish to have on the implementation of projects.

Resource Implications

Financial

Potentially in the region of £3m-£5m.

Human Resources

Options for resources to implement the fund are highlighted in the report and would be part of the overall agreed financial resources.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the attached report and to recommend that:

- 1) the proposed scheme provides the basis of a Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure in Belfast
- 2) the Policy and Resource Committee consider the proposal to commit funds of up to £5 million for the implementation of the fund.

APPENDIX 1

Creation of a Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure

Introduction

Council has agreed to consider the creation of a Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure for the city. This is an important opportunity to instigate the development of a significant, sustainable and exciting cultural legacy for the city and for the Council to play an ambitious leadership role in ensuring the ongoing sustainability of an active and dynamic cultural resource in the city.

The proposal to develop a Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure has arisen out of an appreciation of the role and function of culture in income generation and growth.

Culture has become an increasingly important contributor to the resurgence of cities as places which attract residents, workers, visitors and investment. Successful cities have a rich and varied cultural offer which improves quality of life and marks them out as desirable and attractive places. The 'cultural critical mass' which successful cities create is a principal economic and social asset. Belfast, as a gateway to the region, has much to gain from strengthening its cultural provision and in particular to building the cultural infrastructure. Creative and cultural industries and cultural tourism are all growth areas within the economy and make a significant contribution to wealth creation. Culture and arts also perform as potential catalysts of regeneration in urban areas and it is believed that investment in the infrastructure has the ability to spark meaningful long-term social and economic renewal. A developed cultural infrastructure communicates an image and identity which promotes a confidence and underlines the determination to succeed as an economic and cultural centre. It will underpin the role of Belfast as a cultural capital and creative driver within Northern Ireland.

Objectives of the fund

The fund would take the form of a one-off award for capital development projects. It would substantially raise the profile of Belfast City Council in both the immediate and longer term. Its purpose would be to support a number of cultural infrastructure projects in the city and include support for some of the large scale capital projects currently seeking funding. Funding would be available for projects scheduled for completion in the period 2007 to 2010. Northern Ireland is now turning to a new administrative framework and Belfast City Council faces a future with a new identity and much greater responsibilities and resources. The creation of this fund will leave a positive legacy for Belfast City Council which will be remembered for future generations.

Key benefits of the fund

- Recognition of the Council as a leader in cultural development
- Substantial and enduring profile for Belfast City Council
- Reinforcement of Belfast as a cultural capital and creative driver for the region
- Provision of a strengthened infrastructure for cultural development

- Development of the unique cultural identity of Belfast City Council, reinforcing the cultural tourism product
- Improved sustainability for existing flagship organisations
- Improved cost effectiveness for cultural venues
- Improved customer and corporate facilities at cultural venues

Outline of the Proposed Fund

Proposed level of funding

The purpose is to significantly contribute to an uplift of the cultural infrastructure in the city. It is suggested that to be effective the scheme should consider applications up to the value of £1 Million. To have a significant impact a fund value of up to £5 million should be considered. A minimum of £3 Million is required to make the fund viable. It is anticipated that a fund of this size could award between 6 and 10 grants ranging in size from around £200,000 to £1 Million. The level of grant awarded would be consistent with the scale and scope of the proposed project.

What type of activities can the fund support?

Belfast City Council's Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure can assist arts and heritage organisations to undertake capital projects which create an enhancement to the cultural infrastructure and provide clear public benefit. It includes major new and permanent capital projects and improvements to existing buildings or venues within the Belfast City Council area.

Eligible costs include:

- Building or capital development
- Project management and other costs directly related to capital projects
- Equipment and fit-out
- Purchase of the asset
- Services to the building or capital development

Resources are not available through this scheme for feasibility studies or proposal development costs including design costs or for improvements to the public realm including public art.

What the fund would look like?

It is anticipated that the fund would take the form of a two phase application process:

Phase I is an initial selection process to identify projects that meet the criteria of the scheme to a sufficiently high standard to be considered for funding. Phase I will determine the range of projects to be funded and may provide an indicative value of any proposed award. It will not provide a guarantee of funding and will not therefore provide a basis for the commencement of any works for which funding is sought. The Phase I application process will be for a single deadline and projects selected will be required to proceed to a Phase II application within 1 year of selection.

Phase II will require more detailed information from the applicant to ensure that the capital project has been accurately costed, carefully planned and scheduled and that the processes for managing and implementing building and fit out are appropriate and accountable. Details will also be required on the sustainability of the project to ensure that the continued operation of the building for cultural use is viable for the longer term. Successful completion of a Phase II application will enable an award of funding to be made. Only projects selected at Phase I will be eligible to proceed to a Phase II application. Phase II applications can be submitted at any stage for up to 1 year from the date of selection at Phase I.

Criteria for the fund

Phase I

Eligibility criteria

Applicant organisations **MUST** meet all of these criteria in order to be eligible to apply:

- the application must be submitted before the deadline
- applications must be submitted by the applicant group itself
- operate or intend to operate as an arts or heritage focused organisation throughout the year
- be properly constituted and have evidence of a constitution/articles of association or have plans in place to ensure that the organisation will be fully constituted before funding is committed
- operate on a not-for-profit basis
- demonstrate that there are at least provisional commitments for income from sources other than the Council

- demonstrate professional financial management and accounting.
- The organisation should supply audited accounts for one year or for new organisations a bank statement to demonstrate evidence of the organisation's bank account
- agree to co-operate fully with the Council's monitoring and evaluation process
- demonstrate professional management and governance (details of all members of the Board, staff and proposed Project Management Board will be required)
- ensure that sufficient insurance and liability cover will be sought for the programme of works

The fund will not consider:

- organisations that are able to share out profits to members or shareholders
- projects which could be undertaken on a commercial basis
- organisations whose normal activity is not arts or heritage-related
- individuals
- other local authorities
- other public or statutory organisations
- groups of organisations or individuals
- infrastructure projects that are not arts or heritage-related
- projects that are of a temporary nature
- activities that provide no potential benefit to the public, either in the short or long term
- goods or services that have been bought or ordered before receiving an offer letter
- activities that have already taken place or are already underway at time of assessment
- projects or equipment that duplicates what already exists
- costs that are already covered by other funding or income sources
- loans or deficits

Criteria for selection

The following 5 areas are suggested as criteria for the cultural infrastructure fund. These will be considered equally in evaluating the projects suitability for selection. It is recommended that organisations should be required to demonstrate strength in each of the 5 areas to be considered for selection.

- 1) Key investment benefits of the project including:
 - evidence of need or demand for the project
 - value for money
 - leverage of other funding
 - enhancing the economic infrastructure of Belfast

- 2) Key cultural benefits of the project including:
 - strength and quality of enhancement to cultural infrastructure
 - innovation and creativity of planned activity
 - enhancing the cultural experience of those living, working, and visiting Belfast
 - demonstrable track record in arts/heritage activity

- 3) Key public benefits of the project including:
 - enhancing participation opportunities
 - widening access to cultural activities
 - developing audiences for arts / heritage activities
 - engaging with communities and marginalised groups

- 4) Key infrastructure benefits of the project including:
 - ambition and impact of arts / heritage project
 - enhancing the cultural infrastructure of Belfast
 - enhancing the public realm
 - enhancing the use of public spaces

- 5) Capacity of the organisation to deliver the project including:
 - effective management and governance
 - effective strategic planning to inform proposed project
 - outline business plans
 - sound financial management
 - appropriate staff structure for proposed project

Phase II

Only applicants who have been selected via a Phase I application process will be eligible to proceed to Phase II of the scheme.

Criteria for approval of an award

At Phase II organisations will be required to demonstrate that they can satisfy the criteria identified in Phase I through the continued development of the proposal. Organisations must provide sufficient information and evidence to assure Council of the longer term viability of the project. They must provide detail to demonstrate that appropriate measures are in place to assure the projected completion of the project within the proposed time frame and budget. Where possible projects are encouraged to apply the Office of Government Commerce Achieving Excellence in Construction Guidance and to implement the OGC Gateway™ process.

Additional information will be sought under each of the 5 areas. The nature of the information or evidence which may be sought is outlined here. It is recommended that these are refined and developed into a schedule or check list for each selected project. The precise criteria for approval of an award will be tailored to each project dependant on the scale and scope of the proposed work.

- 1) **Key investment benefits of the project**
Additional information sought might include:
 - detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of the project
 - detailed evidence of leverage of other funding

- 2) **Key cultural benefits of the project:**
Additional information sought might include:
 - costed and verified business plans to ensure sustainability of arts / heritage project
 - developed artistic policy or interpretation plan
 - outline programme for arts/heritage activity

- 3) **Key public benefits of the project including:**
Additional information sought might include:
 - audience development proposals
 - accessibility audit
 - proposals for engaging with communities and interest groups

- 4) Key infrastructure benefits of the project including:
Additional information sought might include:
- details of architectural competitions
 - an overview of the proposed procurement route
 - detailed project design drawings and plans
 - details of enhancement to the public realm
- 5) Capacity of the organisation to deliver the project including:
Additional information sought might include:
- effective operational plan for proposed capital works
 - effective business plan for planned activity (up to 5 years post completion)
 - sound financial management
 - risk identification and management processes
 - effective project monitoring processes

Council Process for Selection and Approval

Assessment

An initial assessment of the merit of each application against the published criteria would be required and would involve a detailed consideration and scoring of each application. Recommendations would then be made to a panel of elected representatives.

It is recommended that a Panel of Elected Representatives is established comprised of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee and representatives from each party grouping. Members may wish to consider the secondment of external expertise to assist in informing the decision making. This might include representatives of other key funding bodies or individuals with experience of capital projects. The panel's purpose would be to review applications to both Phase I and Phase II of the fund and to oversee the ongoing monitoring of the successful projects (should Council decide to keep this in house). The panel would initially be responsible for considering the all applications received under Phase I and making recommendations to Council of projects selected to proceed to Phase II. It would also consider proposed a range fro the value of the award. Phase II applications would be reviewed on submission by the panel and approval of the final award and the letter of offer would be made by the panel within the parameters laid out by Council. Further ratification by Council would not be necessary provided the awards are consistent with the earlier agree recommendations.

Appeals process

It is recommended that an Appeals Process is put in place for applications to Phase I and for contesting any decision arising from the roll out of the programme. An appeal of a Phase I decision would involve the Panel of Elected Representatives revisiting the detail of the applications and, if considered appropriate, receiving direct representations from the applicant.

Post application process

Applicants will be notified by letter of their success of a Phase II application and will be invited to meet to agree the project details and the drawing up a formal letter of offer.

A formal letter of offer which includes a schedule for payment of the grant will be issued to each successful applicant. This letter will form a legal contract for delivery of the project within the anticipated time-frame. Any alteration to delivery of the project as outlined in the formal letter of offer should be agreed in writing between the applicant and the Council. Failure to deliver the project as outlined in the letter of offer and without written agreement may result in withdrawal or reduction of the award.

An offer of funding through the Belfast City Council Cultural Legacy Fund should be accepted within one month of offer.

A clear timetable for completion of the project will be required. Spend against awarded funds will be expected to be completed by May 2010 although the official opening may be outside this time period.

Belfast City Council will be featured in the publicity relating to the capital projects funded and invited as appropriate to take part in official launches and openings.

Monitoring of successful projects

Robust processes for monitoring the implementation of the capital projects will be required to ensure that Council interests are taken into account in the management of the projects and that the Council ensures that resources can be allocated in a accountable and timely manner.

Several options exist for ongoing monitoring of successful projects.

Option 1

Council staff carry out monitoring of project implementation. Under normal circumstances this would involve Council representation on the Project Board and attendance at management team meetings for the project where required. A combination of cultural expertise and technical expertise will be required. This may be best achieved through a combination of staff within Culture and Arts and Project Management.

Option 2

Council staff oversee the appointment of an external consultant to monitor project implementation and to produce regular written reports highlighting issues which may be of concern or interest to Council. These would then be considered by Council Officers and if required the Panel of Elected Representatives to inform alteration to the proposed project delivery.

Option 3

Council delegates responsibility for ongoing monitoring and distribution of funding to another funding body in most instances this will be the Arts Council for Northern Ireland who have indicated a willingness to consider this for projects that they fund currently. It would only be possible for projects being jointly funded by ACNI.

Resource Considerations for Creation of a Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure

There are staffing resource implications for the development of a cultural infrastructure fund. The development and administration of funding for capital projects is not part of the normal responsibilities within Culture and Arts. Current staff are fully deployed in carrying out responsibilities within the Culture and Arts business plan.

It is essential that at least one staff member is dedicated to the overseeing the development and implementation of the fund. There are various options for administering the fund these will require resources, however, some of these may be secured through outsourcing aspects of the work.

Assessment of Phase I and II applications

It is difficult to anticipate the number of applications which might be received for Capital Projects. It is likely that there will be at least 6 applications from projects already known to Council. A figure of between 10 and 20 applications therefore seems reasonable and an anticipated number of successful projects of between 6 and 10.

Assessment of Phase I would require detailed consideration and scoring of each application against the criteria and drafting of strengths and weaknesses and overall recommendations to be put before the Panel. It is anticipated that this will take 2-3 days per application and be carried out over a period of 2 months. Outsourcing of this element would cost up to £24,000 but could be carried out by two Officers.

Costs for options identified for project monitoring

Option 1

Each project requires an estimated input of 3-4 days per month and together with reporting processes and internal management procedures the total time taken for 10 projects would exceed the amount possible by one staff member. Two staff positions would therefore be required for the period of the fund.

Council would wish to employ Officers with relevant expertise and at a level appropriate to ensure suitable experience. This may most appropriately be done with a combination of Culture and Arts and Project Management staff. It is suggested that this would involve costs of up to £75,000 per year a total projected cost of £225,000 over the duration of the fund.

Option 2

An external consultant would be required to be involved in 3-4 days per month in each project with additional reporting and advisory responsibilities. This would amount to approximately £1,000 per month per project. For 10 projects this would total a yearly figure of approximately £120,000 and a total of £360,000 for the duration of the fund. This option would also require a member of Council staff to oversee the consultants and to coordinate reporting procedures on the capital projects.

Option 3

The Arts Council for Northern Ireland have indicated that a nominal fee would be charged for this option. It would only be available for projects that they fund currently. A fee of several thousand pounds per year per project would apply. This would only be possible for the small number of projects jointly funded with the Arts Council for Northern Ireland / DCAL, there are 3 major projects within Belfast at present and a further 2 smaller ones. Potential costs would therefore be in the order of £45,000 - 60,000 for shared projects over the 3 year period. This option would also require an additional arrangement for the other projects and may require internal staff resources of at least one Council Officer or outsourcing of monitoring for the other projects.

Recommendations for assessment, monitoring and administration of the fund

The preferred process would be to deliver the scheme in house and to select option 1 for monitoring. This would require staff positions to be established to undertake assessment, monitoring and general administration of the fund and coordination of the internal panel. It is anticipated that 2 Officers and a Project Assistant would be required to undertake all duties relating to the award and management of the grants and to meet the internal requirements with appropriate procedures and financial processes. These posts would be secured for the duration of the fund, anticipated at 3 years. The engagement of one Officer with culture and arts expertise and one with project management expertise would provide the best combination of skills to address both cultural and technical areas. Their duties would be to assess, award and monitor the grants, co ordinate the Panel of Elected Representatives, track payments of grant awards and to finalise overall monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the fund. Total costs would be in the order of £300,000 (This is a figure of 10% or less of the overall fund value if it is to be agreed at a sum of £3-5 Million).”

The Director drew the Committee’s attention to various aspects of the report and indicated that the impetus for the creation of a Legacy Fund had arisen from requests for financial assistance which the Council had not been able to fund. She pointed out that there was general support for such a scheme from the Party Groupings represented on the Council and that, should the Committee be in favour of creating the Fund, the matter would need to be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to enable the necessary finance to be provided.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the proposals outlined in the report provided the basis for the creation for a Legacy Fund for Cultural Infrastructure in Belfast and that the matter be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for further consideration.

Rolling Programme to Support Innovation in Culture, Arts and Heritage

The Managing Director of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls informed the Committee that the former Arts Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 4th January, had agreed to the implementation of the Rolling Programme to Support Innovation in Culture, Arts and Heritage during the financial year 2007/2008. He pointed out that the purpose of the Programme was to assist organisations to avail of opportunities for grant-aid which arose during the year, including those which would become available after the closing date for Annual Funding and Multi-Annual Funding applications. Grants awarded through the scheme would range from £250 to £3,000.

He reported that the undernoted applications for funding under the terms of the Programme had been received:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
The Black Box Trust	The creation of a gallery for new and emerging visual artists	£3,000	Funding of £3,000
Green Shoot Productions	The development of a high-quality theatre programme in the Mount Vernon area	£3,000	Funding of £2,500
Kabosh Theatre Company	The commissioning of a Jewish playwright to create a script focusing on historical and contemporary experiences of the Jewish community in Belfast	£3,000	Not to award a grant on this occasion
Polish Association of Northern Ireland	The organisation of a Polish Week in Belfast	£3,000	Not to award a grant on this occasion
Tinderbox Theatre Company	To enable Tinderbox to participate in a major festival in Poland	£3,000	Funding of £3,000

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Cathedral Quarter

After discussion, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report regarding the development of the Cathedral Quarter and a proposal to create a position of Cathedral Quarter Development Manager which would be funded by the Department for Social Development.

Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme – Phase 3 Request

The Committee was advised that the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme had been introduced by the Council in 2003 in order to promote and support economic development activity in local communities. During Phase 1, £200,000 had been allocated to the Programme and Phase 2, which had been

launched in August, 2005, had made available grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 to enable community organisations to improve employability and economic conditions in areas of need. A total amount of £300,000 had been allocated during the second phase and this had resulted in, inter alia, eighteen persons obtaining full-time employment, the creation of six thousand square feet of workspace in the Shankill area, the leveraging of £603,665 of funding and the launch of the West Belfast Traders' Association.

She pointed out that to date the Programme had attracted considerable interest from organisations in the social economy and community sectors involved in local economic development throughout Belfast and indicated that, in line with the Council's current Economic Development Strategy, the key themes for Phase 3 of the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme would include business competitiveness and community economic regeneration. She indicated that grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 would be awarded to non-profit making community neighbourhood groups, together with their associated business partners, to plan, develop and invest in activities which contributed to the economic fabric of their own area. The Programme would be launched officially in September with a closing date for applications in November and letters of offer being issued in December. The Economic Development Unit intended to hold a series of clinics throughout the City which would provide opportunities for representatives of organisations to speak on a one-to-one basis with officers regarding the scheme.

The Committee noted the information provided, agreed that an amount of £200,000 be made available for Phase 3 of the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme and that a further £5,000 be provided to market and develop the scheme.

Economic Development Unit – Update Report

The Committee considered the undernoted report regarding work being undertaken by the Economic Development Unit:

“Relevant Background Information

Members are asked to approve a number of Project proposals recently received by the Economic Development Unit.

- 1. Belfast Business Awards 2007**
- 2. Access to Finance Programme**
- 3. PLATO Update**
- 4. Manufacturing Export Programme**
- 5. Jobsfair**

Key Issues

1. Belfast Business Awards 2007

Belfast City Centre Management Company (BCCM) in conjunction with Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC) successfully held the Belfast Business Awards in 2004 and 2006 as a means of recognising the efforts of businesses in the City of Belfast, and raising the profile of exemplary companies and individuals among the business sector.

BCCM and BCTC are seeking the support of Belfast City Council as a key partner of the Belfast Business Awards 2007.

2. Access to Finance Programme

Members are asked to note at the Development (Economic Development) Sub-Committee of 4 October 2006, approval was sought to develop a business support and growth initiative to assist 20 local companies to develop their business through access to forms of finance, and to increase awareness of the benefits of financial planning and efficiency.

In response to a public advertisement tenders were received from four organisations. Each was evaluated using pre-determined criteria and the most robust and economically advantageous tender was that submitted by FPM Chartered Accountants.

3. PLATO Update

PLATO Belfast is a two year structured small business development programme. It is based on a network principle whereby large companies, known as parent companies, help and support small companies in their area.

The current Plato Belfast programme has been successful with all the key targets having been achieved or exceeded including recruitment of over 40 Belfast based small businesses. An energetic private sector Board, under the Chairmanship of Brian Donaldson of Maxol has been established and 9 high quality parent companies have been recruited these include Andor Technology, Allied Bakeries, Viridian Group PLC, Powerteam Electrical Services, Finisco, Delta Print and Packaging, Maxol, Radisson SAS Hotel and PriceWaterhouse Coopers.

Belfast City Council has supported PLATO Belfast in providing £50,000 over two-year period 2005-2007. Following the evaluation report Plato has proved to be a positive intervention for Council recruiting many small businesses in Belfast and whilst drawing upon the expertise of some of the best known business organisations in Northern Ireland. A waiting list currently exists for companies seeking on to PLATO phase two and negotiations have begun with the funding partners (Invest NI and Intertrade Ireland) to ensure secure additional finance for the programme. It employs a full time Plato Belfast Manager and administration support.

Furthermore, PLATO has attracted the interests of neighbouring Councils from the COMET region. The COMET councils wish to implement the recommendations from the manufacturing sector review that highlighted a number of possible interventions. The first of which is to consider a mentoring programme, specifically for the manufacturing sector. It is proposed that the current Plato model is a suitable medium for this type of activity. A minimum of 6 Belfast businesses will be supported as part of a COMET wide Plato Manufacturing programme.

In light of this it is requested that Members consider an extension of funding for a further year of £25,000 on condition that other sources of funding are confirmed, including Invest Northern Ireland and Intertrade, and a bespoke PLATO Manufacturing Programme at a cost to the Council of £15,000. The PLATO Manufacturing Programme is based on a £100K proposal, £26K of this is allocated from the COMET SLA, the remainder will be provided by the COMET Councils participating in the PLATO Manufacturing Project.

4. Manufacturing Export Programme

Members are asked to note at the Development (Economic Development Sub-Committee of 7 February 2007, approval was sought to develop a manufacturing export development programme to assist 10 local companies to grow their business through mentoring and development of an export plan and to identify potential markets outside of Northern Ireland.

In response to a public advertisement tenders were received from five organisations. The most robust and advantageous tender was that submitted by Lestas Consulting.

5. Jobsfair

Members will be aware that Council currently manages and funds elements of a city wide employability consortium which comprises of GEMS NI (S), LEAP (N) and Stepping Stone (E).

Proposal

GEMS NI is requesting support to manage a Belfast Service Sector Jobsfair in partnership with Time Associates, Sector Skills Councils for Tourism & Hospitality and Retail Sectors, People 1st and Skillsmart. The aim is to host the 2008 event in the Waterfront over 2 days.

The following objectives have been stated:

- Recruit 45 employers with at least 3,000 job vacancies on offer
- Engage the city wide consortium in the management group and to promote opportunities to the long term unemployed across the City
- Attract 2,000 visitors
- Job match 600 people to interview
- 100 people securing jobs at time of final evaluation

Based on positive experiences of previous Jobsfairs a number of companies have expressed an interest in participating in Jobsfair 2008, a sample of which include IKEA; ASDA; GEM; Flagship Media Group; Henderson Group; TK MAXX; Semi-Chem; The Royal Hospitals; Abbey and HBOS.

Resource Implications

Financial

1. Belfast Business Awards:

The total project cost for hosting the Belfast Business Awards in the Waterfront Hall on 22 November, 2007 is £74,750. BCCM are seeking a £17,000 contribution from Belfast City Council - £10,000 as a key partner, and £7,000 towards venue hire for the Gala Awards Dinner. Other sources of funding include private sector sponsorship of £35,000 and ticket sales of £22,750.

2. Access to Finance Programme

A budget of £40,000 was approved for delivery of an Access to Finance Programme on 4 October 2006 but the actual cost of the Programme is £39,500.

3. PLATO Update

£40,000 – for next phase of PLATO Belfast and PLATO Manufacturing

4. Manufacturing Export Programme

A budget of £30,000 was approved on 7 February but the actual cost of the programme is £28,650.

5. Jobsfair

GEMS NI have asked Belfast City Council to consider funding £11,140 towards the costs of the Jobsfair.

Human Resources

Programme development by Economic Development Officers

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members

- Note the contents of the report
- Approve the budgetary implications of £17,000 for major sponsorship of the Belfast Business Awards
- Approve the appointment of FPM Chartered Accountants for the provision of an Access to Finance Programme – subject to a Form of Contract being drawn up by Legal Services.
- Approve the appointment of Lestas Consulting for the provision of a Manufacturing Export Programme – subject to a Form of Contract being drawn up by Legal Services.
- Approve the budget of £11,140 to deliver the jobsfair upon confirmation of securing other funders.
- Approve the budgetary implications of £25,000 for the next phase of PLATO Belfast.
- Approve the budgetary implications of £15,000 for the PLATO COMET Manufacturing Programme.

Key to Abbreviations

BCCM- Belfast City Centre Management Company
BCTC- Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce
LED – Local Economic Development
GEMS NI – Gasworks Employment Matching Service
LEAP – Local Employability Access Partnership”

The Head of Economic Initiatives explained various aspects of the report and answered questions from the Members regarding its contents.

During discussion, a number of Members expressed concern that the Department for Employment and Learning was not providing any financial assistance towards the costs associated with the Jobs Fair to be organised by the Gasworks Employment Matching Service (Gems). Following a suggestion from a Member, the Head of Economic Initiatives undertook to request Gems to provide transport to enable unemployed persons from the outer regions of the City to travel to the Jobs Fair.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.

Belfast City Centre Management

Update Report

The Head of Economic Initiatives advised the Committee that Mr. Billy McGivern had been appointed as the new Chairperson of Belfast City Centre Management. She advised the Committee further that the position of City Centre Manager was vacant currently and that the post of Development Manager within the organisation would become vacant in the near future.

She informed the Members that Belfast City Centre Management had accepted the offer made by the Committee at its meeting on 30th April whereby the Company would be managed in a caretaker capacity by a Council employee or through the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, or a hybrid of both, until 31st March, 2008, the date on which the Council's current funding arrangement with the Company would end. The organisation had agreed to accept the offer for a six month period, with a possibility that it would be extended until 31st March, 2008. During the same period, Belfast City Centre Management intended to undertake a recruitment exercise for the position of City Centre Manager and would be obtaining the necessary funding to meet the costs associated with that position from sources other than the Council.

The Head of Economic Initiatives pointed out that, in accordance with the Committee's decision of 30th April, the contents of the Belfast City Centre Action Plan had been discussed with representatives of Belfast City Centre Management. Following these discussions, the Company and the Belfast Chamber of Commerce had indicated that they were considering undertaking their own research into the key challenges facing the City centre over the next year.

Noted.

Board of Belfast City Centre Management

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Committee that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the former Economic Development Sub-Committee had represented the Council on the Board of Belfast City Centre Management. She pointed out that, given the matters which would be discussed by that organisation in the coming months, it was important for the Council to fill those two positions which had become vacant following the introduction of the new governance arrangements within the Council. Accordingly, she recommended that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) be appointed as the Council's representatives on the Board of Belfast City Centre Management.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that at the Development Committee meeting in October 2005, approval was given to initiate the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme as a means of guiding Council’s service delivery at a local level. The key priority for taking SNAP forward is to create the appropriate policy framework and mechanisms within which Council can undertake area based planning and link this to area based delivery. SNAP is also an integral part of the Community Planning process and will play a key role in linking community needs to the overall vision for the city.

There are a number of key stages that will be involved in the establishment of SNAP, these can be detailed as follows:-

- Appoint a SNAP team;
- Develop a detailed project plan for the early phases;
- Develop the information systems necessary to deliver SNAP;
- Develop mechanisms for engaging elected representatives and officers in the process;
- Determine and propose defined neighbourhood areas for the delivery of SNAP;
- Mobilise internal services within the SNAP process and ensure they are engaged in the approach to neighbourhood working;
- Examine how BCC currently delivers its services and its capacity to adapt them to best serve neighbourhoods;
- Put in place mechanisms for joining up service delivery;
- Map the role, function and future plans of partner organisations at a local level;
- Research and produce proposals for community engagement;

- Develop a detailed implementation plan;
- Identify resource requirements for implementation;
- Put in place the necessary infrastructure to enable SNAP to be rolled out

Key Issues

The SNAP team comprising of a Manager, Communication and Information Officer and Research Officer have been appointed and in position since April 2007 for an initial two year period. The team will be responsible for developing the SNAP framework and necessary mechanisms for rolling out the programme. A project plan has been developed identifying the key activities to be undertaken and associated targets, outputs, timescales and resources assigned. An update on progress is contained within Appendix 1.

In order to progress the initial work of SNAP a number of key pieces of work need to be undertaken that would need the approval of the Committee in order to progress. These can be detailed as follows:

- Citystats
- External Partnership Organisation research
- Communications Action Plan

Citystats

Members will be aware that approval to implement Citystats was granted at the May 2006 Committee meeting. This information system will enable Council to build up a complex profile of the city's neighbourhoods and put in place a robust evidence based decision making system based on accurate and current data from a wide range of services. A software package has been purchased to begin the process of creating area based profiles. This work for which a budget has already been approved will be undertaken via the use of a secondment from an organisation such as NISRA and through Consultancy Services.

External Partnership Organisation Research

A key requirement for SNAP is to develop an understanding of the neighbourhood in which services will be delivered. To this end, key research needs to be undertaken to map the on-going work of other organisations and groups operating at a neighbourhood level.

This will ultimately result in the creation of a neighbourhood services database. A budget of £40,000 would be required to map these organisations at a local level and to create and maintain a database of neighbourhood services. A full breakdown of proposed activities is contained within Appendix 1.

Communications Action Plan

A key aspect of SNAP will be to develop the appropriate communications mechanisms in order to engage effectively within Council, with elected Members and with citizens and external organisations. A workshop was held with Corporate Communications in order to determine the key messages and activities that would need to be undertaken to drive forward SNAP. It is recommended that a Communications Action Plan is developed which will firstly focus on information and awareness raising of SNAP. Members are asked to consider approving a budget of £20,000 to undertake the development and implementation of the first phase of the Communications Action Plan.

Resource Implications

Financial

Members are asked to approve a total budget of £60,000 to undertake work pertaining to SNAP. An overall budget has been approved through the Estimates process.

Human Resources

Managed and implemented by the SNAP team

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve the following:

- Approve a total budget of £60,000 to undertake key pieces of work to drive forward the SNAP programme of work as identified above.”

During a lengthy discussion in the matter, Members enquired as to how the Council intended the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme to relate to neighbourhood renewal and community planning and how the Programme would seek to address the problem of poverty within the City.

In response, the Director of Development indicated that the Programme, which was an integral part of the Council's community planning process, aimed to improve the services which the Council provided to communities. She pointed out that a Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme Steering Group, involving Elected Members, would be established and she encouraged Councillors to participate in the Neighbourhood Panels which would be appointed under the scheme. She informed the Members that she would be submitting to a future meeting a report which would contain further information on how the Programme would be rolled out across the City and that proposals for alleviating poverty within the City would be an important aspect of the Community Services Strategy which would be presented to the Committee later in the year.

Following further discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided by the Director and authorised expenditure in the sum of £40,000 in relation to the External Partnership Organisation Research and £20,000 for the first phase of the Communications Action Plan as outlined in the foregoing report.

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 Director 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.

She reported that ninety-eight Project Grants had been received, seventy-seven of which had been recommended for grant-aid and it was proposed that £38,460 be allocated in this regard.

The Committee considered the applications which had been received and agreed with the Director's recommendations as indicated below:

Recommendations for Grant Approval

	APPLICATION NO.	REQUESTED	RECOMMENDED
NORTH			
174 Older Peoples Group	628	£500	£500
Ainsworth Residents Association	658	£500	£500
Ardoyne Fleadh Cheoil	591	£500	£500
Ballysillan Avenue Residents	631	£500	£500
Benview Community Centre	586	£500	£500
Cliftonville Comm. Regeneration	717	£480	£480
Docksiders Senior Mens Group	624	£480	£480
Donegall Park Avenue Seniors	617	£500	£500
Donegall Park Avenue Association	719	£1000	£500
Evergreen Senior Citizens Club	615	£500	£500
Friends of Clifton House	740	£500	£500
Glenbank Comm. Association	602	£500	£500
Harbour Lights Seniors Group	744	£500	£500
Ligoniel Family Centre	585	£500	£500
Lower Oldpark Comm. Association	725	£500	£500
Lower Oldpark Friendship Club	715	£500	£500
Manor Street/Cliftonville	729	£500	£500
Mid Skegoneill Comm. Group	730	£500	£500
Midland Art Club	597	£500	£500
Midland Senior Citizens	598	£500	£500
Mountainview Pensioners Association	620	£500	£500
Old Ardoyne Residents Group	625	£500	£500
Sacred Heart Pensioners	593	£500	£500
Sailortown Regeneration Group	613	£500	£500
Shore Crescent Friendship	714	£500	£500
St Kevins Senior Citizens	595	£500	£500
St Silas Senior Citizens	616	£500	£500
Star Neighbourhood Centre	608	£500	£500
Trinity/New Lodge Senior Citizens	732	£500	£500
Tigers Bay Residents	716	£500	£500
The Thursday Club	596	£500	£500
The Vine Centre	722	£500	£500
Tudor Renewal Residents Association	649	£500	£500
Westland Community Group	727	£500	£500
Whitecity Over 50's	712	£500	£500
		Sub- total	£17,460

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SOUTH			
Lower Ormeau/Botanic Environment	611	£500	£500
NI Tolerance Educational & Cultural Assoc	756	£500	£500
NI Comm. For Refugees/Asylum	755	£500	£500
Silver Threads Ebor Street	650	£500	£500
St John Viannie	610	£500	£500
Taughmonagh Evergreens	633	£500	£500
		Sub-total	£3,000
EAST			
Ardcarn Residents	632	£500	£500
Ballymac Friendship	726	£500	£500
Clarawood 50 Plus Club	734	£500	£500
The Oak Partnership	626	£500	£500
Residents of Cherryvalley/Kensington/Shandn	753	£500	£500
Short Strand Comm Forum	651	£500	£500
St Columcilles Wednesday Club	724	£500	£500
Walkway Community Association	654	£500	£500
Wandsworth Community Associations	579	£500	£500
Lagan Village Hall	634	£500	£500
Roslyn Street	630	£500	£500
		Sub-total	£5,500
WEST			
An Monia Tober	636	£500	£500
Albion Community Group	737	£500	£500
Artability	656	£500	£500
Beechmount Comm. Project	732	£500	£500
Cairde Naomhl Pol	735	£500	£500
Clonard Senior Citizens	741	£500	£500
Conway Youth Centre	653	£500	£500
Denmark Street Comm. Centre	718	£500	£500
Fruithill Fold Tenants Association	605	£500	£500
Highfield Residents Association	652	£650	£500
Holy Trinity Centre Monday Club	623	£700	£500
Link Womens Group	604	£500	£500
Lower Shankill Group Welfare	600	£500	£500
Lower Shankill Community Association	711	£500	£500
Mid Andersonstown Festival Committee	603	£500	£500
SCA Montague Day Centre	738	£500	£500
Sherbrook Senior Citizens	609	£500	£500
Stadium Projects	739	£500	£500
Sountlink Fellowship Day Centre	713	£500	£500
St Michaels Craft Class	661	£500	£500
Tearmann Fold	752	£500	£500
Twin Spires Community Group	614	£500	£500
Townsend Street Pres. Church	746	£500	£500
West Belfast Comm. Forum	618	£500	£500
Gort An Muna Historic & Cultural Society	704	£500	£500
		Sub-total	£12,500

Recommendations for Grant Refusal

<u>Group Name</u>	<u>Applic No.</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Reason for Rejection</u>
N. Belfast Community Safety Partnership	606	North	£500	Not meeting the criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
Friends of Waterworks	728	North	£500	Not meeting the criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
Grapevine Senior Citizens Group	721	North	£500	Not meeting the criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
Indian Senior Citizens Club	612	North	£500	Not meeting criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
Sailortown Arts & Crafts	742	North	£500	Not meeting criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'
Olympia 60 Plus Club	743	South	£500	User group of Directly Managed Community Centre
Retired Senior Volunteer Programme	607	South	£500	Incomplete application
Morton Senior Citizens Club	750	South	£500	User group of Directly Managed Community Centre
St Lukes Family Centre	720	West	£500	Outside BCC boundary
Beyond Skin	745	East	N/A	Application withdrawn
Short Strand Community Forum	659	East	£500	2nd application
Glencairn Senior Citizens	748	West	N/A	Application withdrawn
Glen Residents Association	723	West	N/A	Application withdrawn
Highfield Community Centre Ctte	733	West	£500	User group of Directly managed Community Centre
Word of Faith	751	West	N/A	Application withdrawn
Bethel Senior Citizens	747	West	£500	Not meeting the criteria of 'A well Run Community Group'
Church of The First Born	754	West	£500	Incomplete application
Clonard Senior Citizens	660	West	£500	2nd application
Friends of Fruithill	619	West	£500	Incomplete application
Habinteg Pensioners Group	599	West	£500	Incomplete application
N&W Belfast Trust Quality User Group	749	West	£500	Not meeting criteria of 'A Well Run Community Group'

(The Deputy Chairman, Councillor Humphrey, in the Chair.)

Gasworks Site

Safety at the Water Feature

The Committee considered a report regarding the water feature located within the Gasworks Site. The report indicated that, under the terms of the lease between the Council and the developers of the Radisson Hotel, the Council could only alter substantially or replace the water feature with the approval of the developers. In addition, a report which had been commissioned from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents had indicated that the existing arrangements at the water feature provided the Council with an adequate legal defence should an incident occur, that reducing the depth of water in the feature would be counter productive as it would be likely to encourage greater numbers of people to the facility, thereby increasing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour, and could well create a precedent for the reduction of water levels at other sites owned by the Council where water was a feature.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the water feature at the Gasworks Site remain in its current format, that the additional security patrols introduced last year and the fencing erected in 2004 remain in place. In addition, the Committee agreed that the project to partially fill the water feature in the Gasworks be removed from the Capital Programme.

Wheel Clamping Services

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 21st March, it had requested details of the wheel clamping services operating within the Gasworks Site. She pointed out that the service was required in order to ensure the free flow of traffic within the main roads of the estate, since the provision of double yellow lines had proven to be an insufficient deterrent. The service had been the subject of competitive quotations on a number of occasions, with the fee revised on an annual basis. The current contract was due for renewal. In addition to the clamping scheme operated by the Council, one developer, Ormeau Gasworks Limited, operated a private clamping operation on the land which it leased. She indicated that a number of complaints had been made regarding this private operation.

The Head of Economic Initiatives informed the Members that all developments within the Gasworks Site had dedicated car parking provision for staff and visitors, that the wheel clamping contract operated only in the main estate roads on which double yellow lines were painted, that the company undertaking the contract ensured that drivers parked on double yellow lines were dissuaded from remaining stationary by making them aware of the clamping regime and that no occupied vehicles were clamped. In the previous six months, nine vehicles only had been clamped. She pointed out that, since all release fees were returned to the Council by the operator, there was no incentive for the company which undertook the contract to maximise the number of vehicles clamped.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that quotations be sought for the renewal of the wheel clamping service within the Gasworks Estate.

Site B Northern Fringe

The Committee considered the undernoted report regarding Site B on the Northern Fringe of the Gasworks:

“Relevant Background Information

Site B Northern Fringe, located at Cromac Street/Raphael Street (Appendix 1), is currently occupied as the replacement Council staff car park due to ongoing requirements of the Belfast Sewers Project which will continue until mid 2009. The site has been identified in the draft BMAP document published in 2005 as a potential ‘Gateway’ development opportunity.

The draft Northern Fringe Masterplan, prepared by Consarc, indicates that this 1.38 acre site can accommodate construction of a landmark building of between seven to eight storeys providing some 114,000 sq feet of development space.

DFP currently have a requirement for a new headquarters building for the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland for some 93,000 sq feet to be located within Belfast City centre. They have sought expressions of interest from developers to provide an appropriate facility ready for occupation by mid 2010.

The PRONI brief requires provision of office and specialist storage facilities. PRONI also want to promote public use of the premises by providing research facilities, exhibition space, lecture rooms, cafeterias, and public space with a strong commitment to provision of public art. There is a desire to create a high quality landmark modern headquarters building for storage of the countries historic archive collection.

Inislyn have submitted a proposal for this PRONI requirement based on the development of Site B on the Northern Fringe. From twenty responses received by DFP the Inislyn proposal has been included on a shortlist of five. The other short listed proposals are located at College Sq East, Titanic Quarter, East Bridge Street and Cusp Plot 4 in the Gasworks.

Prior to submitting their proposal Inislyn were advised in writing of the masterplanning currently underway in respect of the Northern Fringe and of Council’s property disposal policy for the Gasworks of bringing development sites to the market through development briefs. They were also advised of the possible delay caused by the Belfast Sewers Project (Appendix 2)

Inislyn have advised PRONI that Site B is not in their ownership and is currently being masterplanned as part of Council's Northern Fringe extension to the existing Gasworks site. Inislyn have now formally sought Council's views on progressing Site B as a possible location for the PRONI headquarters building to the next stage of the process (Appendix 3)

Key Issues

- The siting of PRONI's new headquarters has been a topical issue stretching back over several years. The Crumlin Road Gaol Steering Group (which includes political representatives from Belfast City Council) had previously endorsed PRONI as an anchor tenant in the re-development plans for that site. However Minister Eagles ruled out the Crumlin Road Gaol site as ineligible, prior to her departure. It is understood that the Northern Assembly may be asked to review this decision.
- The next stage of PRONI's selection process is the submission of a formal tender by 22nd June 2007 in order to progress to preferred bidder status.
- If successful Inislyn will immediately deliver another 'blue chip' high profile Government tenant for the Gasworks which will enhance the credibility of the site as a leading commercial hub within the City.
- The proposed public nature of the building will substantially increase the number of people benefiting from the Estate's high quality public realm.
- By releasing Site B without adopting the development brief route will provide Council with a more immediate income secured in a currently buoyant property market.
- BMAP envisages the development of a substantial landmark building on Site B which a developer would be reluctant to provide on a speculative basis if procured through a longer development brief process.
- PRONI wish to purchase the site rather than making annual equity rental payments. There is precedent for disposal of land at the Gasworks with the Halifax development.
- Disposal of Site B could be effected with either Inislyn or directly to PRONI whereby Inislyn would construct the building under licence. The Director of Legal Services would not recommend a direct one-to-one deal with Inislyn.

- The nature and scale of the proposed development means that it can be fast tracked through the planning system.
- For security reasons PRONI have ruled out any form of basement car parking which is one of the site's attributes identified in the Northern Fringe Masterplan.

Options

- Not to consider early release of Site B and maintain Council's standard disposal policy in relation to the Gasworks by releasing land on 125 year leases only through a competitive tender process subject to adoption of the Northern Fringe Masterplan and securing outline planning approval.
- To negotiate immediate sale of Site B directly with PRONI. This option would be tied to delivery of the PRONI project as their new headquarters premises.
- To negotiate a Purchase Option with PRONI which would permit Site B to progress to the next stage of the selection process subject to subsequent agreement of appropriate disposal terms.

Resource Implications

Financial

Council will receive an immediate and secure income from Site B without waiting for outline planning approval and embarking on the disposal process of a development brief.

Under Section 96(5)(a) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 there is an obligation to achieve full market value in any property transactions.

Asset and Other Implications

Immediate development will act as a catalyst for further development of the Northern Fringe.

Recommendations

In the event that the competition is re-opened, Members are asked to support the Crumlin Road Goal's Steering Group proposal that the Gaol is the optimum site for the location of the New PRONI headquarters, or if this is not an option to agree to negotiations with PRONI to secure an appropriate development on the best terms possible, of this prominent site within the Gasworks Northern Fringe.

Key to Abbreviations

BMAP – Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan
DFP – Department of finance & Personnel
PRONI – Public Records Office of Northern Ireland”

During discussion in the matter, a Member informed the Committee that, following a recent meeting between Elected Members and the Minister for Social Development, he had been advised earlier in the day that the new Headquarters Building for the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland would not be located on the site of the former Crumlin Road Gaol. He suggested, therefore, that the Council should endeavour to ensure that this building was located on Site B of the Northern Fringe of the Gasworks Site.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed to maintain its support for the location of the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland Headquarters Building at the site of the former Crumlin Road Gaol. The Committee agreed further that, if this location were to be excluded as an option, negotiations be undertaken with the Public Records Office to secure the development of the Headquarters Building, on the best possible terms, within the Gasworks Northern Fringe site.

Tender for the Provision of a Shuttle Bus Service

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th February, 2006, it had agreed to the introduction, for an initial period of one year, of a shuttle bus service operated by Translink between the City centre and the Gasworks Site. Half of the costs of providing the bus were recovered through the service charge paid by tenants within the Gasworks, with the balance being met through income generated from the visitors' carpark located within the Site.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that more than 2,000 passengers were using the service on a weekly basis. Accordingly, since the trial period was due to finish in September, the provision of the service would require to be tendered on a formal basis and she requested authority so to do.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

Laganside – Management of Public Assets

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 16 May 2007 the Development Committee were asked to note that discussions were taking place between Council officers and The Department for Social Development (DSD) regarding the future management of the ‘Public Assets’ of the former Laganside Corporation. Members were also informed that DSD had set up a ‘holding operation’ to deal with the continuing maintenance and management of the ‘Public Assets’. A list of the main ‘Public Assets’ is provided in Appendix 1 to this report.

Further discussions with DSD have now taken place and the following further information can be provided:

- DSD currently manage the 'Public Assets' through some 41 supplier contracts plus substantial input from DFP Property Division and the River Manager (seconded from DSD) and River Warden who is directly employed by DSD.
- The total contact budget estimate for 2007/08 is £1.323M. This amount includes hard charging by DFP Property Division and £300K set aside for payment of Events and Community Grants. It excludes DSD's own administration costs.
- In addition to the above budget DSD's own staff salary costs for 07/08 could be in the region of £60,000 to £100,000 per annum. This is purely an estimate as DSD have no previous experience of administering these physical assets or grants. Overhead Costs would be in addition to these amounts.

As a result of recent discussions DSD have indicated they would be willing to enter into a fixed term arrangement (possibly 2 or 3 years) with Belfast City Council which would pass responsibility for managing all existing contracts to the Council. DSD would retain an oversight role and measure performance through a mutually acceptable set of Performance Indicators.

Ownership of the 'Public Assets' would remain with DSD. DSD would however fully fund the Council in respect of the contract costs and their administration and may be prepared to consider funding additional developmental work aimed, among other things, at enhancing linkages between the Laganside area, the city centre, and other parts of the city.

If the Council agree to take-on the maintenance and management of the 'Public Assets' this would be governed by a legal agreement (a Memorandum of Understanding) with DSD in relation to the overall operation. Service Level Agreements would also be entered into for each individual cost centre (e.g. Lagan Weir would be a cost centre and the Managed Workspaces would be another etc.). Performance Targets for each area would be agreed between the parties as part of the MoU and SLA arrangements.

Key Issues

- DSD and the Council could enter into legal arrangements to pass maintenance and management of the Laganside 'Public Assets' to the Council for a fixed term of 2 or 3 years. DSD would fully fund the Council's role (including staff costs).
- Any arrangement would be subject to agreement on detailed terms and budgets.
- While DSD are keen for the Council to step into this role as soon as possible, it is likely that setting up and agreeing detailed arrangements, including staffing and recruitment, could defer commencement of the role by Council until the beginning of April 2008.
- DSD would retain 'ownership' of the 'Public Assets'. This effectively defers consideration of the important issue concerning the source of funding (i.e. via national or local taxation) for the expected multi-million pound major infrastructure maintenance and renewals as reported to Committee at its meeting on 16 March 2006.

Resource Implications

Financial

While some existing staff resource would be utilised in taking forward the proposals and in preparing and agreeing terms and conditions the key objective of the exercise would be to ensure DSD fully fund all costs associated with the maintenance and management of the Laganside 'Public Assets'. The longer term maintenance and renewal of major infrastructure is not being contemplated at this stage.

Human Resources

Additional Council staff would be required to fulfil the role currently staffed by DSD. Staff would be required for the duration of the fixed term contract and would be fully funded by DSD.

Asset and Other Implications

As ownership of the 'Public Assets' remains with DSD there are no 'Asset' implications for the Council at this time.

Recommendation

Committee is recommended to agree in principle that the Council take responsibility (target commencement date 1 April 2008) for maintenance and management of the 'Public Assets' of the former Lagside Corporation subject to detailed legal and financial arrangements being agreed and put in place between the Council and the Department for Social Development.

Key to Abbreviations

DSD – Department for Social Development”

The Director drew the Committee's attention to various aspects of the report and answered questions from the Members concerning it. During this discussion, a Member expressed the view that the bed of the River Lagan was Crown Property and not owned by the Department for Social Development as indicated in the report.

Following discussion in the matter, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendation contained within the report, subject to clarification being obtained by the Director regarding the ownership of the bed of the River Lagan.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

The Director of Development informed the Committee that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Public Local Inquiry, which had commenced in April, would be undertaken in two stages. The first, which was underway currently and was scheduled to finish on 26th June, was considering the strategic or regionally significant issues, including the main Plan policies and proposals, and the Council was participating in this stage. The second phase, which would address the more local or site-specific issues, would be held in October. She pointed out that formal written submissions to be considered during stage two had to be submitted by 23rd August. She reminded the Members that a list of the site-specific issues to be included in the Council's submission to the second phase of the Inquiry had been circulated with the papers for the meeting and was available on the Members' Portal.

The Director recommended that a special meeting of the Committee, to which all Members of the Council be invited, be held to receive an update report on stage one of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Public Local Inquiry and to review the site-specific issues which the Council wished to raise during the second phase of the Inquiry.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

North Foreshore – Risk Assessment and Management

The Director of Development informed the Committee that, as part of the planning process for the Council's proposals for the North Foreshore, the Council was required to provide information regarding the nature and extent of contamination on the land, the risks associated with developing the site and a remedial

strategy to eliminate or minimise those risks. In addition, the Council was required to submit a Risk Assessment and Management Report in connection with the development of the contaminated land. Accordingly, a tendering exercise had been undertaken in order to procure such a Report.

The Director reported that nine submissions had been received. These had been judged on professional competence and cost and, as a result of this assessment, she recommended that the contract be awarded to the company which had submitted the most economically advantageous tender, namely Golders Associates (UK) Limited, Edgewater Road, Belfast in the sum of £104,475. She recommended also that Golders Associates be sub-contracted to carry out ground investigation works at a cost not to exceed £17,000 and the undertaking of a ground stability report which had been estimated would cost £25,000.

The Committee adopted the recommendations, subject to the completion of an appropriate legal agreement to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services.

Support for Sport – Hospitality

The Committee considered the following requests for assistance which had been received in relation to the provision of hospitality under the Support for Sport Scheme:

58th Old Boys' Outdoor Bowling Club	Event hospitality in the form of a buffet for 100 people in Castleton Bowling Club on 19th October	Provision of support up to a maximum of £250
Glentoran Football Club	Event hospitality in the form of a sit-down meal for 225 people in the City Hall on 28th July	Provision of support up to a maximum of £1,440
Shaftesbury Bowling Club	Event hospitality in the form of a buffet for 70 people in Civil Service Bowling Club on 5th July	Provision of support up to a maximum of £350

The Head of Economic Initiatives informed the Members that the former Community and Recreation Committee, which had been responsible previously for the provision of hospitality under the Support for Sport scheme, at its meeting on 17th April, had agreed, due to the forthcoming closure of the City Hall, to provide funding to enable hospitality to be provided at external venues in connection with events being organised by Bloomfield Football Club and the Irish Cricket Union. She pointed out that, since the City Hall closure had been delayed, the two organisations had indicated that they now wished to use the City Hall for the functions associated with their sports events. This would result in additional expenditure of approximately £3,036.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations in relation to the applications submitted by the 58th Old Boys' Outdoor Bowling Club, Glentoran Football Club and Shaftesbury Bowling Club. In addition, the Committee agreed that Bloomfield Football Club and the Irish Cricket Union be offered additional support of £2,336 and £700 respectively to enable them to provide hospitality in the City Hall to those persons taking part in the sports events.

(The Chairman, Councillor Michael Browne, in the Chair.)

Smithsonian Festival in Washington

The Director reminded the Committee that, following decisions taken by the former Economic Development Sub-Committee and the Development Committee, the Council would be represented at the Rediscover Northern Ireland programme of events which would be held as part of the Smithsonian Festival in Washington later this month. Those decisions had authorised the Lord Mayor and the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Development Committee to participate in the trip but had not been extended to cover nominees in the event of any of those persons being unable to attend. She informed the Members that the Deputy Chairman of the Development Committee was unable to participate in the trip to Washington and requested that the Committee authorise the Deputy Chairman to appoint a nominee to attend in his place.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

Chairman