

Development Committee

Monday, 15th October, 2007

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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

Also attended: The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor (Councillor Rodgers),
the High Sheriff (Councillor Kirkpatrick) and
Councillors Lavery, Mullaghan and Rodway.

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

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Campbell.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 12th and 18th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

Castlecourt and North West Quarter

Pursuant to its decision of 8th August, the Committee received Messrs. M. Griffith, R. Hart, S. Hassel and W. Pinkerton on behalf of Westfield Shoppingtowns Limited regarding its proposals for Castlecourt and the wider development of the North West Quarter of the City.

Mr. Hassel informed the Members that Westfield Shoppingtowns Limited had plans to develop the Castlecourt Shopping Centre. However, they were unable to undertake any such work due to a decision taken a number of years ago by the Government to introduce a sequential planning process which prioritised the Victoria Square development in the City. His Company believed that if Castlecourt were allowed to expand it would assist the existing traders within the City, would attract additional new shops to Belfast and would benefit consumers.

Mr. Hassel indicated that the commercial situation within Belfast had changed since the Department for Social Development had introduced the sequential planning process and that there was no longer any reason to prevent Westfield from undertaking its proposed expansion of Castlecourt. He pointed out that it would take a number of years for the planning application to be processed and for the extension to Castlecourt to be built, by which time the Victoria Square development would be well established within the City.

Mr. Hassel concluded his presentation by requesting that the Council support Westfield Shoppingtowns Limited in its efforts to persuade the Government to abandon its sequential planning process, which prevented the Company from applying for permission to extend Castlecourt.

He then answered various questions which were put to him by the Members, following which the deputation retired from the meeting.

Following discussion in the matter, the Committee requested that the Officers of the Development Department prepare a report to be submitted to a future meeting regarding the issues raised by the deputation.

Multi-Annual Funding for Culture and Arts

The Managing Director of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls presented the undernoted report on applications which had been submitted from culture and arts organisations in respect of Multi-Annual Funding:

“Relevant Background Information

Multi-Annual Funding for culture and arts was implemented in 2004 after extensive consultation to inform the process and criteria for assessment.

A two-phase process was adopted:

- **Phase 1 – selection of Multi-Annual Funding clients based on organisational capacity and detailed analysis of the organisation’s strategic direction**
- **Phase 2 – application progress to decide on apportionment of funding based on submission of three year programme**

11 Multi annual funding clients were selected and they were awarded 3 year funding from April 2005 – March 2008.

The 11 existing Multi-Annual clients have been reviewed as part of an external evaluation conducted by Deloitte, the consultants were also asked to evaluate the benefits of Multi-Annual Funding in terms of both the clients and in terms of delivery of the Council’s

own objectives. The purpose this evaluation was to inform future consideration of which organisations should continue to receive Multi-Annual funding. As the clients are in the third year of funding the review was focused on the monitoring and evaluation completed for year 1 and 2 of the funding.

In parallel with this process a call for expressions of interest was issued to organisations not currently receiving Multi-Annual Funding but who would wish to be considered in a future process. 63 organisations responded by the deadline of 24th July 2007 and officers contacted all of the interested organisations to discuss eligibility. One to one meetings were held with 34 organisations to provide detailed advisory sessions. Further information including assessment criteria on the tender process for Multi-Annual Funding was issued and 22 tenders were received by the deadline of 7th September 2007. These organisations were evaluated against the assessment criteria

Further information including assessment criteria on the tender process for Multi -Annual Funding was issued and 22 tenders were received by the deadline of 7th September 2007. These organisations were evaluated against the assessment criteria, the scores awarded and full details of the assessments provided are available on the Members' Portal.

Phase 2 of Multi Annual Funding will be via a programme application. This will coincide with Annual Funding the deadline for applications is 16th November 2007.

Key Issues

Evaluation of Multi-Annual Funding

There was a clear consensus among the Multi-Annual Funding clients that Multi-Annual Funding has been a great success and has facilitated and encouraged longer term planning and sustainability as well as offering opportunity for organisations to focus on delivery of core objectives.

Multi-Annual Funding was also positively assessed in terms of the Council's strategic objectives particularly in terms of Quality of Life, Economic Impact and Good Relations. It was assessed as being able to successfully contribute to the delivery of the Integrated Cultural Strategy.

Evaluation of Existing Multi Annual Funding Clients

Each of the existing Multi-Annual Funding clients was evaluated to assess the strength of their programme delivery against the criteria under which they were selected and awarded funding. It focused on the objectives set by the organisations themselves as part of the Multi-Annual Funding process.

7 of the organisations consistently met objectives and can continue to be awarded funding through a Multi-Annual (3 year) process.

The Linen Hall Library and Belfast Film Festival only met some of the objectives. The evaluation of these organisations was compared with the organisations seeking Multi-Annual Funding. On further comparison it was found that the Linen Hall Library is still very strong in relation to the Phase I criteria despite current difficulties - it had scored particularly highly and was clearly a flagship organisation. The Belfast Film Festival while it was rated sufficiently highly to be awarded Multi-Annual Funding in 2006 has fallen below targets and particularly in relation to audience development and education and outreach. The Belfast Film Festival does not compare favourably to other organisations seeking Multi-Annual Funding.

There were two organisations which met some but not all objectives. Both these organisations have raised issues relating to future programme delivery. Belfast Festival at Queen's have raised issues about its continued financial viability and it is seeking a funding package from major stakeholders. The Lyric Theatre is due to close in January 2008 and it is still aiming to gain a commitment on funding to secure its capital project.

It is recommended that given the issues raised as part of the evaluation that the Linen Hall Library, Belfast Festival at Queens and the Lyric Theatre are kept under review at the end of the first year of a further award of Multi-Annual Funding.

Assessment of Multi-Annual Funding Tenders

Two organisations scored particularly highly with four organisations scoring over 70%, this was the previously applied threshold for Multi-Annual Funding. It is therefore recommended that the four organisations are admitted to Multi-Annual Funding.

We therefore recommend that the following organisations continue to receive Multi-Annual Funding:

Beat Initiative
Belfast Community Circus
Belfast Festival at Queen's
Crescent Arts Centre
Grand Opera House
Lyric Theatre
New Belfast Community Arts Initiative
Old Museum Arts Centre
Ulster Orchestra
Linen Hall Library

We further recommend that the following new organisations are admitted to a Multi- Annual Funding:

Belfast Exposed
Cinemagic
Northern Visions
Young at Art

Belfast Film Festival will no longer be eligible for Multi-Annual Funding but can apply for funding on an annual basis.

Resource Implications

Financial

£923,000 was awarded to organisations through Annual and Multi-Annual Funding in 2007/8 financial year. (This included an additional amount of £33,000 which was found from grants which were not either accepted or recouped). In order to award an inflationary increase in grant awards it is recommended that a minimum of £960,000 is provisionally agreed for Multi-Annual and Annual Funding. This represents a 4% increase in funding.

Human Resources

This will be absorbed within the planned work of the Culture and Arts Unit.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- (1) Approve the organisations indicated for Multi-Annual Funding**
- (2) Agree that the Multi-Annual and Annual Funding programme application deadline is 16th November 2007**
- (3) Agree a provisional budget of a minimum of £960,000 for Multi-Annual and Annual Funding”**

During discussion in the matter, a Member raised concerns regarding certain aspects of the report regarding the application from Cinemagic.

Accordingly, after further discussion, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application from Cinemagic and agreed also that the undernoted organisations receive Multi-Annual Funding:

Beat Initiative
Belfast Community Circus
Belfast Exposed
Belfast Festival at Queen's
Crescent Arts Centre
Grand Opera House
Linenhall Library
Lyric Theatre
New Belfast Community Arts Initiative
Northern Visions
Old Museum Arts Centre
Ulster Orchestra
Young at Art

The Committee agreed further that the deadline for the receipt of applications for Multi-Annual and Annual Funding for the year 2007/2008 be 16th November, the budget for which would be approximately £960,000, allowing for an inflationary increase of 4% from the current year.

**Rolling Programme to Support Innovation
in Culture, Arts and Heritage**

The Managing Director of the Waterfront and Ulster Halls reminded the Committee that the former Development (Arts) Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 4th January, had agreed to the continuation of the Rolling Programme to Support Innovation in Culture and Arts during the financial year 2007/2008. He pointed out that the purpose of the Programme was to assist arts or heritage organisations to avail of the opportunity of grant-aid which arose during the year, including those which became available after the closing date for the 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 Programme had been received:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Creative Exchange	The development of a project involving twelve artists with a perceived mental or physical disability	£3,000	Funding of £2,660
Belfast Charitable Society	The undertaking of a feasibility study and the digitalisation of the Society's historic archive material	£3,000	Not to award a grant on this occasion
Lagan Legacy	The development of an oral/visual reminiscences project entitled "Oceans in Mind"	£5,000	Funding of £2,000
Kabosh	The commissioning of	£3,000	Funding of

	a playwright to create a script focusing on the experiences of the Jewish community in Belfast		£2,660
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The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Arts Council of Northern Ireland Conference

The Committee was advised that the Arts Council of Northern Ireland would be hosting in the Grand Opera House on 8th November a Conference entitled "Art at the Heart". The Conference, which would explore the theme of socially and politically engaged art, had a delegate fee of £60.

The Director of Development recommended that any Member of the Committee who so wished, together with a maximum of three officers, be authorised to attend the Conference.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and authorised the payment of the associated Conference fees and subsistence and travelling allowances in connection therewith.

Annual Events Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Over that last fifteen years Belfast City Council has developed an annual programme of events. These events span the calendar year from the St Patrick’s Day concert and parade in March to a New Year’s Eve concert at end of December and include major sporting events (Appendix 1). The events attract an average of a quarter of a million people, generating up to £6 million additional economic activity for Belfast.

The annual budget for these events is £1.8 million. The annual return on the Council’s investment averages £4.28 for every £1.00. The events have also attracted an average of 15% of out-of-state visitors which adds to the vibrancy and cultural activity of Belfast. The programme is also an attraction to local citizens and rate payers, providing large-scale free public events with extensive positive media coverage.

Key Issues

Breakdown of Civic Events

At September’s Committee meeting, Members requested that a breakdown of events with regard to the perceived cultural background of the civic programme be presented to Committee. Appendix 1 indicates the overall general events programme which is primarily based around key public and celebratory holidays. Information showing the series of events that may be perceived as being supportive of particular community identities was circulated and is available on the Members’ Portal. Members are asked to note this information.

Annual Events Programme

Members are asked to approve the Annual Events programme and its related funding as contained in Appendix 1. Members are requested to note that the finances are part of the Department's annual estimates.

2007 New Year's Eve Concert

In February 2007 Committee agreed to staging a New Year's Eve concert for this year. The normal venue for this event would be outside City Hall. In order to stage such a concert at this venue it is normal to close at least one road lane outside City Hall for a minimum of 24 hours. However, DOE Roads Service have informed the Council's Events Manager that due the ongoing high volume levels of road works (West Link, M2, Belfast sewer improvements), on key arterial routes, closure of roads in front of City Hall will not be possible. DOE have stated that such a road closure, combined with extensive road works across the city and the high volume of traffic due to post Christmas and pre-New Year retail sales would cause significant traffic jams.

Members are therefore requested to agree that the 2007 New Year's Eve concert is located at Custom House Square. This space is more conducive to such an event given that it a purpose built performance space with an audience capacity of 5,500.

Titanic 2012 Programme

Over the last six years Belfast City Council has taken the lead on all things Titanic within the City. This has included the creation of the annual Titanic Made in Belfast festival, the establishment of the Titanic Forum and an array of tourism lead Titanic products including: Titanic interactive trail; the regeneration of the Thompson Pump House and Dock; Titanic heritage literature and significant input into the Titanic Signature Project and its bid for Big Lottery funding.

Members are now requested to approve that Officers develop a programme of events to mark the centenary of the vessel in 2012. This would be a significant tourist opportunity for the City and would potentially involve local, national and international links. If approved a draft programme would be reported to Committee detailing the proposed events and their connected resource requirements.

Titanic 2012 Memorandum of Understanding

Over last few months a number of key locations connected to the Titanic story (Liverpool, Southampton, Cobh, Cherbourg, Halifax, Nova Scotia & New York) have been requested to sign a memorandum committing them to a loose form of co-operation regarding the 2012 centenary. Belfast has now been asked to sign this memorandum along with Liverpool in October 07. Members are requested that the Council sign the memorandum, which is not a legally binding document, but would allow for alliances to be further developed as the centenary approaches.

Tenders for Provision of Events Services 2008 – 2011

To enable the delivery of the Council's events programme a number of supply services are required. These services have been tendered over the last seven years and the existing contract will expire by mid-2008. Members are requested to give approval for the Department to go to public tender on the following items and delegate authority for their approval to the Chair, Deputy Chair and Director of Development.

- Production management. This entails the supply of generators, port-a-cabins, fencing and ancillary services connected major public events. Total cost of the contract is £100,000 per annum.
- Supply and management of PA, Stage and Lighting for events –Total cost £100,000 per annum
- Supply and management of LED Screens – Over the annual events programme a number of large-scale LED screens (25m²) are required. This tender would include recording and outside broadcast facilities. Total cost is £100,000 per annum.
- Stewarding – Professional stewarding is required to deliver the events. The total cost of this tender would be approximately £100,000.

Resource Implications

Financial

Appendix 1 indicates the annual civic and sports programme with individual events budgets. The total overall budget for this programme is £1.8 million. This is the annual budget for events run by the Council and is not new money. All funding exists within the Department's annual finances. The normal return on this investment is £6 million, which means £4.28 for every £1 of Council monies.

Recommendations

Members are requested to recommend the following.

- Recommend the annual civic and sports events programme
- Note information in relation to community identities.
- The creation of a Titanic Centenary programme (which will be reported in detail to Committee for approval) and the signing of a memorandum of partnership between key Titanic locations across Europe and North America
- That the Council's New Year's Eve Concert be staged at Custom House Square
- Agree to the issuing of the aforementioned tenders and delegated authority for their approval to the Chair, Deputy Chair and Director of Development.

Appendix 1

Strategy Objective	Activities / Projects	Committee Approval	Cost of Project / Activity £
3.2	St Patrick's Day	Policy & Resources 18 May 2007	£110,000.00
3.2	World Irish Dancing	Tourism & Promo' Sub 14 June 2006 P D917	£100,000.00
3.2	Titanic Made in Belfast	To be requested at October's Committee	£150,000.00
3.2	Lord Mayor's Carnival	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£5,000.00
3.2	Belfast Maritime Festival	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£250,000.00
3.2	Opera in the Gardens	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£80,000.00
3.2	Proms in the Park	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£80,000.00
3.2	Garden Gourmet	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£70,000.00
3.2	Halloween BCC-£150,000; Metro-£15,000	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£150,000.00
3.2	Christmas	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£150,000.00
3.2	New Years Eve	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£200,000.00
3.2	Economic Surveys & Contingency	To be requested at October's Development Committee	£50,000.00

Strategy Objective	Activities / Projects	Committee Approval	Cost of Project / Activity £
	Sports Events		
	Marathon (annual)	Community & Recreation June 2006 Agreed funding for three years	£30,000 per year
	World Rugby	Community & Recreation Feb 2006	£75,000
	Tall Ships	Community & Recreation Sept 2006 £80,000 over four years	£20,000
	Transplant Games	Community & Recreation Sept 2006	£6,000
	Northern Ireland Snooker Trophy	Community & Recreation Sept 2006 Agreed funding for three years	£50,000 per year
	Indoor Athletics	Community & Recreation March 2007 Agreed funding for three years	£20,000
	Golf	Community & Recreation Feb 2007	£6,000
	Support for Sport		
	Events funding	On going reports to Committee	£85,000
	Hospitality funding	On going reports to Committee	£31,000
	Sail Training	Community & Recreation Dec 2006 Agreed funding for three years	£35,000
	Total		£1,753,000.00"

Following further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

Interreg Multi-Annual Plan

The Committee considered the undernoted report regarding the Interreg Multi-Annual Plan:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will recall their decision on 18 August 2004 to agree the Council's involvement in the Comet Interreg Partnership. As part of the next stage of development the Partnership has developed a multi annual funding proposal to go forward under the Interreg IVA Programme on behalf of the Comet Interreg Partnership. The Comet Interreg Partnership was established in April 2005 to maximise cross border funding opportunities for the Greater Belfast Metropolitan Area. This collective is made up of six Councils and social partners representing Belfast, Lisburn, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, North Down and Newtownabbey. The Board consists of twelve elected members (two per Council including the Chair and deputy Chair of Belfast City Council's Development Committee) and twelve social partners representing

the four pillars – rural, trade union, private and voluntary and community. The Board is managed via a Comet Secretariat based within Belfast City Council's European Unit through a service level agreement with other Councils. The Interreg Programme 2007-2013 is the fourth programme of its kind funded through the European Regional Development Fund.

The new Interreg Programme known as Interreg IV, will be delivered throughout NI and the border region and will include a Scottish dimension with the west of Scotland eligible for the first time. The Programme will last for six years and has a total value of 258 million euros. Since November 2006 the Comet Secretariat and Partnership has been working intensively to:

- Raise awareness of the IVA opportunities.
- Encourage the development of programme ideas in line with programme criteria.
- Provide significant hand-holding to help potential partners understand Interreg and develop concrete proposals.
- Provide feedback to guide the direction of a Comet Plan and assist partners to identify specific activities that should be undertaken.

During the last six months, in the absence of the Interreg Manager currently on maternity leave, the Comet Secretariat has been working with an appointed consultant, Shane Wolsey, to develop a Multi Annual Plan of Interreg eligible projects for the Comet area. This Plan contains eighteen projects and an overall value of £17,575,281 which also includes staff resources to deliver, manage and monitor the plan. Comet is one of five Interreg Partnerships to develop a Multi Annual Plan and has gained ground from a position of disadvantage to be the first Partnership ready to submit a plan. This will be economically appraised by the SEUPB and a grant funding decision will be based on the quality of the plan and the strength of the eighteen projects therein. The Plan will be submitted by BCC on behalf of Comet Councils and as such, a letter of offer will be made to BCC if the Plan is successful.

Key Issues

Members are asked to consider the content of the Comet Multi Annual Plan. The Plan runs to over 100 pages a full copy is available in the Members' Library or an e-mailed copy available to Members on request from the European Unit.

- Eighteen projects contained within the plan, four of which are BCC lead, seven of which are lead by BCC Stakeholders, therefore impacting on BCC areas.
- BCC as Comet secretariat will be the lead organisation responsible for the delivery, audit, monitoring and verification of the Plan
- The Plan, if successful, will be 100% funded and will have built-in resources to put a team in place to deliver the programme of activities including an Interreg Manager, Finance Manager, Finance Officer, Administrative Officer and a Monitoring Officer.
- BCC will receive a letter of offer if the plan is positively appraised
- BCC is currently developing a robust service level agreement to share the risk of the plan delivery with the other five Comet Councils
- The Comet partnership Board will continue to exist as an advisory Board for the Comet Interreg Plan and will have an overseeing and promotional role, however the six Councils are ultimately accountable for the Plan implementation.
- BCC will in turn develop a legal agreement with the (potential) eighteen project delivery bodies contained within the plan
- Comet is seeking 'additional activity' funding under each of the three themes – enterprise, tourism and collaboration - to allow for the development of new activities with partners as the plan progresses
- Comet also has twelve other Interreg projects contained within the four other Interreg Partnership Interreg Multi annual Plans.
- Comet also has a Tourism Marketing project going forward under a departmental tourism plan to SEUPB and an independent environmental project going directly forward to SEUPB

In Summary

The Comet Interreg Plan known as the Comet Partnership Programme aims to transfer knowledge, develop skills and build capacity within the Comet area 2007-2013. The overall plan was approved by the Comet Interreg Partnership Board at its meeting of 15 August 2007, to be submitted to the SEUPB by 1st September 2007. This is subject to a parallel process of ratification by the six Comet Councils.

As indicated previously the Comet Partnership Programme contains eighteen projects.

Resource Implications

Financial

Should the Comet Interreg Multi Annual Plan be successfully appraised by the SEUPB (September – December 2007) a letter of offer will be issued to BCC on behalf of the Comet Councils. The Plan in a current or reduced form would be 100% funded therefore no direct financial implications exist for BCC or the other Councils. BCC would process claims on a quarterly basis for the project delivery agents within the Plan. BCC would in turn make a claim to the SEUPB and be paid in arrears. BCC would then cascade this down and pay the project delivery agents in arrears. This approach is similar to that of the Council's Local Economic Development Plan. There may be instances where delivery organisations would find it difficult to wait for payment in arrears, however SEUPB has undertaken to process claims and payments to BCC within thirty days.

Human Resources

If the Comet Plan is successfully appraised there will be 100% funding for a staff unit to deliver, monitor and manage the successful projects. These costs total £1,522,648 or 8.66% of the total programme costs. BCC on behalf of Comet will be the employer of the staff team.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note and approve the submission of the Comet Interreg Multi Annual Plan known as the Comet Partnership Programme, to the SEUPB under the Interreg IVA Programme.

Key to Abbreviations

ERDF	–	European Regional Development Fund
SEUPB	–	Special European Programmes Body
Interreg	–	Interregional Co-operation
BCC	–	Belfast City Council
Comet	–	Councils of the Metropolitan Region”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

City Branding

The Director reminded the Members that a City Branding initiative was being undertaken in order to position Belfast competitively in the national and international marketplace and that a leading firm of branding experts, Lloyd Northover, had been appointed to facilitate the process. She reported that the Company was in the process of undertaking research to test a number of brand propositions and suggested that it would be beneficial for the Committee to receive at its monthly meeting in November a presentation from Lloyd Northover regarding its findings.

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation on the City Branding initiative at its November meeting.

World Travel Market

The Committee was advised that the World Travel Market would be taking place in London on 12th November. This event provided an opportunity for the Council to launch new initiatives and to advise national marketing agencies, travel writers and tour operators of new tourism opportunities in Belfast.

The Director indicated that two new Belfast Guides would be launched at the World Travel Market and that attendance at the event would cost in the region of £600 per person.

The Committee approved the attendance at the event of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Head of Economic Initiatives, or their nominees, and authorised the payment of the associated travel and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

Draft Community Support Plan 2007-2010

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Community Support Plans have their origins in the review of the Community Services Programme ‘Beyond the Centre’ undertaken by the Department for Social Development (DSD) in January 2000. Beyond the Centre reaffirms that Councils play a pivotal part in the support of local communities. The review concluded that each local council should prepare a new three-year community support plan in full consultation with the local community.

The DSD’s Community Support Programme partly funds all local authorities in Northern Ireland through the implementation of their community support plans. In 2007/08 DSD has a budget of £16.74 million to deliver to local authorities. Belfast City Council is eligible for £1.34 million. The amount of eligible funding for the years 2008/09 and 2009/10 has not yet been released. Nevertheless the Council is required to submit a three-year plan.

This first draft of the Community Support Plan has been devised in a changing external and internal environment. As Northern Ireland still lacks a proper strategic framework for community development, the absence places significant challenge on the Council to develop a framework for its own activities. Internally, the Council is currently going through a period of reorganisation and efficiency improvements in preparation for the changes which RPA will bring. As a result of this, the Community Support Unit joined with the Development Department during April 2007. This occurred in order to allow Council to address the needs of future community development in a wider city development context. This has placed a greater emphasis within the Development Department on using community development approaches to develop a wider, strategic focus for supporting sustainable communities in Belfast.

In addition, the Community & Leisure Services Sub-Committee had approved a new staffing structure for Community Services on the 2nd August 2005. This Sub-Committee further agreed on the 8th May 2007 that, given the imminent move of the Community Services Unit to the Development Department, it was considered that the immediate and full implementation of the new structure was no longer appropriate for the Department and the Unit. It was therefore agreed that an interim structure be put in place which would be reviewed within one year following the development of the Community Support Plan, the Play Review and the review of Departmental Capital City Strategy. The interim structure has been implemented to a certain extent but it has not been possible to implement fully.

Key Issues

As mentioned earlier, this draft Community Support Plan is being developed in a period of substantive environmental change both internally within council and externally within the community & voluntary sector. In this regard the Council needs to pursue further research and improvements in order to prepare its comprehensive Community Development Strategy and adopt the emerging policies that are around the notion of sustainable communities.

The draft Community Support Plan has therefore been developed for the period 2007 – 2010 around a process which focuses on three key activities:

- (1) Continue to deliver high quality services
- (2) Community services review and improvement activities
- (3) Future strategic planning

This document is the first draft of the plan and is being presented to initiate a process of engagement with Councillors and other key stakeholders. During November and December of this year we will be undertaking extensive consultation with key stakeholders to obtain their views on what is being proposed. We also plan to have a number of facilitated workshops with Councillors to further develop the contents of the plan. The draft plan therefore represents the first iteration of the document and will be modified to take into account Councillors' views and the findings of the consultation exercise. The final form of the Community Support Plan will be presented to members at the beginning of next year.

However, DSD require the Council to submit a draft three year community support plan for the period 2007 to 2010 by the end of October. This is needed in order to release the £1.34 million funding to Council for 2007/08 and any subsequent funding in following years.

On completion of the consultation process it is envisaged that a final structure can then be developed which will ensure that actions from the Community Support Plan are effectively implemented. Any such structure would be developed in line with current procedure and practice with the full involvement of the relevant Trade Union Forum.

Resource Implications

Financial

Only the net expenditure for the first year of the plan 2007/08 has been agreed at £6,776,921.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to approve:

- (1) Submission of the draft Community Support Plan to DSD, subject to final ratification by Council, in order to gain funding
- (2) Initiation of Members' engagement and the public consultation process.
- (3) To note the intention to create a final structure for implementation in April 08."

During discussion in the matter, several Members expressed reservations regarding certain aspects of the draft Plan and suggested that consideration of the matter be deferred. However, having been advised by the Director that the document required to be submitted to the Department for Social Development not later than 31st October in order that the Council might receive funding for the Community Support Plan, the Committee agreed that the draft Plan, a copy of which is available on the Members' Portal, be submitted to the Department and that the document be considered further at the November meeting of the Committee. It was agreed also that the initiation of the public consultation exercise regarding the draft Community Support Plan be delayed for one month but that the Development Department commence immediately the consultation process with the Party Groupings on the Council. In addition, the Committee noted that, since it was intended to finalise the staffing structure for the Community Services Unit by April, 2008, no further action would be taken regarding the introduction of an interim structure.

**Strategic Neighbourhood Action
Programme – City Places**

The Director reminded the Members that the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme had been established in April in order to allow the Council to develop policies and procedures which would enable it to target its service delivery more accurately within well defined small geographical areas across Belfast, which were to be known as "City Places". She indicated that in recent months research had been undertaken to identify a range of options as to how "City Places" might be identified. These were:

- (i) areas with an average population size of 13,704 and a maximum of 17,721;
- (ii) areas with an average population size of 19,163 and a maximum of 23,663;
- (iii) areas with an average population size of 12,702 and a maximum of 17,000 and which used the proposed Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan boundary for the City centre; and
- (iv) areas with an average population size of 14,494 and a maximum of 19,643 and which would be aligned closely with the Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership areas.

The Director outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the four options and pointed out that in recent weeks a number of the political parties represented on the Council had been briefed regarding this matter.

Arising from discussion in the matter, several Members expressed concern that only Central Government Departments were represented on the Belfast Strategy Group, which had been established by the Department for Social Development to develop overarching strategies in relation the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that Option 1, as outlined above, be used to define the "City Places" within the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme. In addition, the Committee agreed that a letter be issued to the Minister with responsibility for the Department for Social Development requesting that the membership of the Belfast Strategy Group be expanded to include Council representation and representatives from other Public Sector stakeholders.

Neighbourhood Renewal

The Committee was reminded that twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships were operating currently within Belfast. Although these organisations were at various stages of development, seven of them had submitted Action Plans to the Council for consideration. The Director reported that the Council had prepared a response to the Action Plan which had been submitted by the Inner East Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, a copy of which had been circulated and was available on the Members' Portal.

The Committee endorsed the contents of the response to the Inner East Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership's Action Plan.

Summer Playscheme 2007

The Committee noted the contents of a report regarding grants which had been awarded or applications which had been rejected in connection with the 2007 Summer Playscheme, under powers which had been delegated to the Director by the Community and Recreation (Community and Leisure Services) Sub-Committee at its meeting on 8th May.

Council's Response to Barring Consultation

The Committee noted the contents of a report regarding the Council's response to a consultation exercise concerning the implementation of legislation in Northern Ireland which aimed to establish a list of people who would be barred from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

Clarawood Community Association – Anne Napier Centre Lease

The Community Services Manager advised the Committee that the Clarawood Community Association had, until 2005, obtained funding from the Council in connection with a community project based in the Anne Napier Centre. However, due to difficulties between the Association and the Belfast Education and Library Board, the Group had ceased to exist in the Spring of 2003. Subsequently, a new Group had been formed early in 2004 in order to re-start the project. To prevent a similar situation arising, it had been suggested by the Board that the Council become the tenant of the Centre under a Licence Agreement and, consequently, sub-let the building to the new Clarawood Community Association.

She reported that negotiations with the Board regarding the Licence Agreement had been taking place for the previous two years, with the only outstanding issue to be resolved being the level of rent to be applied, and that a Lease had been prepared by the Legal Services Department. It had been intended originally that the Council would pay only a peppercorn rent for the building. However, due to the recent financial difficulties which had been experienced by the Belfast Education and Library Board, it had been established that the Council would be charged a sum not to exceed £6,637.23 per year to cover internal and external maintenance and utilities charges. This figure did not include any rental charge which would be determined by the District Valuer. A formal agreement with Clarawood Community Association could not be reached until the full cost implications were known. She indicated that it was anticipated the full costs would be passed on to the Community Association who would pay it out of the revenue grant which it would receive from the Council, thus ensuring that there would be no direct cost to the Council. However, if the Association were unable for any reason to pay this amount, the Council would still be liable for the charge made by the Belfast Education and Library Board.

Noted.

Chairman