

## Development Committee

Wednesday, 3rd June, 1998

### MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) SUB-COMMITTEE

Members present: The High Sheriff (Councillor J. Clarke) and Councillors Attwood, Empey, Hartley, Hayes, Jones, McAuley, McDonnell, M. McGimpsey, McKnight and Wilson.

Also attended: Councillor Cobain.

In attendance: Mr. J. McVey, Head of Economic Development, Arts and Tourism;  
Mrs. N. McKeagney, Economic Development Officer;  
Mr. R. Wilson, Members' Services Manager;  
Mrs. E. Kelleher, Assistant Public Relations Officer; and  
Mr. R. Boyd, Committee Clerk.

#### **Nomination of a Member to take the Chair**

Nominations were invited for a Member to take the Chair to oversee the Election of the Chairman.

Councillor McKnight was proposed by Councillor Hartley and seconded by Councillor McAuley and Councillor Wilson was proposed by the High Sheriff (Councillor J. Clarke) and seconded by Councillor Empey.

On a vote by show of hands six Members voted for Councillor McKnight and four for Councillor Wilson. It was accordingly

Resolved - That Councillor McKnight take the Chair.

(Councillor McKnight in the Chair.)

#### **Apology**

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor E. Smyth.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 6th May, which had been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as correct.

**Election of Chairman**

Nominations were invited for the Office of Chairman for the ensuing year. Councillor McAuley was proposed by Councillor Hartley and seconded by Councillor Hayes and Councillor Empey was proposed by Councillor McDonnell and seconded by Councillor Wilson.

On a vote by show of hands four Members voted for Councillor McAuley and seven Members for Councillor Empey.

It was accordingly

Resolved - That Councillor Empey be re-elected Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the period to end on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council to be held in June, 1999.

Councillor Empey took the Chair and thanked the Members for his re-election.

(Councillor Empey in the Chair.)

**Election of Deputy Chairman**

Nominations were then invited for the Office of Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year. Councillor McDonnell was proposed by Councillor Attwood and seconded by Councillor M. McGimpsey. There being no other nominations it was accordingly

Resolved - That Councillor McDonnell be re-elected Deputy Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the period to end on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council to be held June, 1999.

Councillor McDonnell thanked the Members for his re-election.

**URBAN Programme**

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th May, it had considered a request from the Greater Shankill Partnership in association with the Upper Springfield Development Trust to make a presentation to the Sub-Committee in relation to the URBAN Programme which was currently operated by those two Bodies. The Sub-Committee had agreed to accede to the request on the understanding that the presentation would be restricted to a maximum of fifteen minutes.

It was reported that Ms. C. Regan, of Making Belfast Work, Mr. J. Redpath, of the Greater Shankill Partnership, and Ms. G. McAteer, Ms. A. McAllister and Ms. S. Kielty, of the Upper Springfield Development Trust, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman (Councillor Empey).

Ms. Regan informed the Sub-Committee that she was the URBAN Manager with Making Belfast Work and had been responsible for the financial management and development of the URBAN Project over the last two years. She stated that the Greater Shankill Partnership and the Upper Springfield Development Trust had, until 1995, been working separately on development strategies for their individual areas.

She informed the Members that the two community organisations had become aware of

the possibility of achieving funding from the European Commission under the URBAN Community Initiative through the network "Quartiers en Crise", Neighbourhoods in Crisis, and had successfully achieved funding from the European Union of 11.3 million Ecu (£7.5 million). She indicated that matching funding had been provided by Making Belfast Work and that this, along with some additional European Union assistance, had realised approximately £12.5 million for the project at Upper Springfield and Shankill. She reported that Quartiers en Crise had remained involved with the combined project and had assisted in establishing the trans-national links which were a requirement of the European funding of the project and had organised a conference in Cosenza, Italy during 1996.

Mr. Redpath informed the Sub-Committee that the Early Years Project in the Shankill area had been initiated as a result of research which had been undertaken to look at possible solutions to alleviate the problems of deprivation and the development of a long-term regeneration strategy to address such problems. He stated that the Early Years Project currently employed approximately eighty persons many of whom were local parents who acted as Project Workers and who offered personal support to under five year-olds and their parents. He indicated that the Project was designed to nurture the skills of parents and raise their self-confidence and self-esteem and help to equip their children for life by providing a foundation of positive pathways for social, educational and economic well-being. He expressed the view that the opportunity to submit a joint bid with the Upper Springfield Development Trust for European funding had provided the means to make a significant positive impact on the regeneration of the Shankill area.

Ms. McAteer informed the Sub-Committee that the Upper Springfield Development Trust was a community-based partnership involving community, statutory and private sectors. She stated that the aim of the Trust was to facilitate the social, economic and physical regeneration of the Upper Springfield area. She informed the Members that research had indicated that, because of high unemployment levels and poor qualifications amongst young people, it would be most appropriate to target for a regeneration programme young people between 11 and 25 years-of-age in the Upper Springfield area. She indicated that, as a result of the URBAN Initiative, seventy-five people, many from the local community, were employed delivering a wide range of programmes to the community including drama, outdoor pursuits, personal development and career mentoring.

Ms. McAllister outlined for the information of the Members the principal aims of the Upper Springfield URBAN Initiative and the various means by which the URBAN Programmes were delivered. She stated that the principal achievements of the Programme to date had been:

- (i) the creation of seventy-five local jobs;
- (ii) the improved employability profile of young adults in the area;
- (iii) the increased take-up of educational, training and employment opportunities;
- (iv) the quality of young people with the necessary confidence and life skills to compete in society;

- (v) the increased numbers of young persons actively involved in youth activity; and
- (vi) the evidence of an improvement in the physical environment of the area.

Ms. McAllister stated that the programme had provided a basis on which to plan further progress in the area and had created a foundation for shared learning between the two communities. She expressed the view that projects in the Shankill and Upper Springfield areas had led to the development of mechanisms which allowed local people to become involved in the social and economic regeneration of their communities and had created a means, through partnership, to promote innovative practices in relation to the regeneration of the areas.

Mr. Redpath informed the Sub-Committee that, to develop further the trans-national links with approximately seventy European cities which were also involved in the URBAN Initiative, it was intended that Belfast would host a major international conference in 1999 which would bring both civic and community representatives to the City to exchange information and share views on the various regeneration projects undertaken under the Initiative from all parts of Europe. He suggested that the Sub-Committee might consider hosting the conference in partnership with the two Belfast-based URBAN Projects and Quartiers en Crise.

Ms. McAteer and Mr. Redpath then answered a number of questions which were put to them by the Members concerning the two URBAN Projects and the Chairman (Councillor Empey) thanked them for the information which they had provided and the interesting presentation which they had made on the Projects. He indicated that the two groups should liaise with the Economic Development Unit in relation to the proposal to host an URBAN Initiative Conference in Belfast in order to allow the Economic Development Officer to prepare a full report on the matter which would be considered by the Sub-Committee in due course. The members of the deputation then left the meeting.

### **Economic Development Communications Strategy**

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th May, it had endorsed the key findings of an interim report on the Economic Development Communications Strategy and had agreed to receive a further presentation on the Communications Strategy at its next meeting. A copy of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

*"The Economic Development Officer reminded the Sub-Committee that, at its meeting on 4th March, it had agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation from the Consultants in respect of the Economic Development Communications Strategy. She informed the Members that it had been thought appropriate to prepare an interim Draft Communications Strategy Document, copies of which had previously been circulated, in order to allow any comments which the Sub-Committee might wish to make on the proposed Strategy to be incorporated within the final Draft which, she stated, would be circulated for consideration by the Sub-Committee at its next meeting.*

*The Members were informed that Ms. I. Kane and Mr. S. Mitchell of the Council's Consultants, Mitchell Kane Associates, were present and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman (Councillor Empey).*

*Ms. Kane outlined for the information of the Members the principal strengths and weaknesses which had been identified as a result of the Communications Audit which had been conducted and which had included interviews with approximately fifty internal and external key persons in relation to perceptions of the Council's economic development activities. She also detailed the principal issues which it had been identified should be addressed in relation to the proposed Communications Strategy, including target audiences as well as communication messages, methods, targets and proposed management, monitoring and evaluation procedures. A summary of the principal elements of the Interim Draft Communications Strategy, copies of which had previously been circulated to the Members, is set out hereunder:*

***'The key findings of the audit may be summarised into strengths and weaknesses as follows:***

**Strengths**

- ***The Council's role in economic development is understood to be relatively new and subsequently, to date, little has been expected in terms of results.***
- ***The Council is perceived as having adopted a progressive and dynamic approach to economic development. Examples include the extensive consultation undertaken in formulating the Economic Development Strategy and the partnerships and forums which have been developed.***
- ***The Council is perceived as having established itself as a credible player in the field of economic development. This perception is enhanced by the fact that the Council's role in economic development is relatively new and that it operates in a unique political environment unlike other economic development organisations.***
- ***It is perceived that the appropriate role for the Council in economic development is that of co-ordinator and facilitator, as opposed to leader.***
- ***The civic role of the Council is highlighted as a key factor for promoting the City.***
- ***The Council is perceived to operate as an integrated and cohesive unit for the purposes of economic development within the city.***

- *There is a general understanding of the Council's involvement in economic development but a need to communicate and clarify its specific strategy, role and position vis-a-vis other economic development agencies within the City.*
- *There is an awareness but lack of clarity on the Council's four roles and three themes within its Economic Development Strategy.*
- *There is an understanding of the key outputs for economic development projects but a lack of understanding of the ongoing process to achieve these results.*
- *Word-of-mouth and the media are the most effective methods of communicating and promoting the Council's economic development work.*

#### **Weaknesses**

- *There is an imbalance in the understanding of the four roles and three themes within the Economic Development Strategy. For example, there is a higher awareness and better understanding of the role of promotion and the theme of inward investment.*
- *There is a lack of understanding of which themes specific projects relate to.*
- *There is an imbalance in the awareness of the projects within the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan. For example, there is a higher awareness of inward investment and capital or "visible" projects.*
- *There is a need to provide regular up to date information on what is being done and when as well as publicity on final outputs.*
- *There is a need to provide more information on the Committee and management structure, in terms of both Members and officers of the Council's economic development work.*
- *There is a need to keep communication clear, concise and focused on a number of common messages.*

#### **Issues to be Addressed**

***From the audit findings, a number of key issues have arisen. These issues may be summarised under a number of themes as follows:***



### **Target Audiences**

*It is important to identify to whom the Council wishes to promote its economic development work and to ensure that methods of communication are tailored for these audiences. Based on the distinctions identified from the audit, it is recommended that communications are targeted at the following audiences:*

- **Internal**
  - **Members**
  - **Officers**
- **External**
  - **International audiences with an interest in or relevance to economic development within the City**
  - **Statutory organisations involved in economic development within the City**
  - **The private sector**
  - **The community and voluntary sector**
  - **Funding recipients and project deliverers for Belfast City Council's economic development projects**
  - **The media**

### **Communication Messages**

*From the research findings, it is evident that a focus is required across publicity relating to the Council's economic development work. It is recommended that the Economic Development Strategy should be the focus across publicity and, where appropriate, with reference made to the roles and themes within it. This will help clarify the Council's Strategy and position vis-a-vis other economic development organisations within the City.*

### **Communication Methods**

*A number of methods are recommended for effectively communicating the Council's economic development work, these include;*

- **Briefings**

*Based on the effectiveness of word-of-mouth communication, it is recommended that briefings are offered for target audiences. These briefings should be tailored to the specific needs and interests of the target groups and would range from informal one-to-one lunch meetings to large scale structured presentations.*

- **Midpoint Review/Economic Development Annual Report**

*Based on the need to communicate ongoing progress as well as final outcomes, it is recommended that a midpoint review is undertaken and a report produced. This report could be linked to and produced in the form of an annual report for the Economic Development Section as a whole.*

- **Web Page**

*As an innovative method of communication which can be updated on an ongoing basis, it is recommended that a user-friendly Web Page is designed for the Council's economic development activities. This would be provided through the Council's Intranet which is linked to the Internet and updated on an ongoing basis.*

- **Advertising**

*A review of potential advertising publications has resulted in approximately five to eight main publications per year recommended for large impact advertising and editorial. For the forthcoming year these include:*

- *The Irish Times "Business Network"*
- *The Irish Times "Corporate North"*
- *Corporate Northern Ireland*
- *Omnibus*
- *British Relocation (Northern Ireland Publication)*
- *Financial Times (Ireland Feature)*

- **Design Guidelines**

*To ensure a consistent brand identity and aid familiarisation of the Council's economic development work, it is recommended that all publicity materials (for*

***example: publications) are consistent with the design of***

*the Economic Development Strategy document. These guidelines will be consistent with Council's overall design guidelines and will be provided to funding recipients and project deliverers.*

- **Postcard Mailshots**

*Based on the need to provide ongoing up to date information and to incorporate innovative methods of communication, it is recommended that a database of key target audiences is compiled and used for mailshooting. It is proposed that a monthly mailshot is used to provide a snapshot of the Council's key economic development initiatives at that time. This could be produced in the form of a monthly postcard forming an annual calendar at the year end.*

- **Media (Newspapers/Radio/Television)**

*It is recommended that use of the media is maximised for promoting the Council's economic development work. This will be achieved through a planned and systematic approach based on projects within the Economic Development Strategy.*

**Communication Targets**

*A number of broad communications targets have been set. These targets are based on increasing awareness and understanding of the Council's economic development work, including its Strategy, roles and themes. Using the current audit findings as a benchmark, the audit will be repeated on a small scale at a later stage so as to measure changes against the current baseline.*

*In addition to broad targets, specific communication outputs and measurable targets will be set for individual projects within the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan.*

**Management Procedures**

*A co-ordinating team will be established to manage the ongoing implementation of the Communications Strategy. The co-ordinating team will include a representative from each of the following:*

- *Mitchell Kane Associates,*
- *the Economic Development Unit,*

- *the Public Relations Unit.*

***The co-ordinating team will meet monthly to agree key common actions for the forthcoming month and to review progress of the previous month.***

***The co-ordinating team will provide a quarterly progress report to the Economic Development Sub-Committee.***

**Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures**

***The ongoing progress of the Communications Strategy will be monitored against the pre-determined communication targets and outputs.***

***Progress against targets will be reported in the quarterly report to the Economic Development Sub-Committee.'***

*Ms. Kane and Mr. Mitchell then answered a number of questions concerning the Interim Draft Communications Strategy which were put to them by the Members. Several Members pointed out that the Council's role in jointly funded ventures was often not clear, so that members of the public generally did not realise the full extent of the Council's support for economic development within the City. A Member expressed concern that there was a danger of losing sight of the Council's strategic objectives in economic development issues and expressed the view that the proposed Communications Strategy should be focused in such a way as to clarify the strategic objectives pertaining to the various economic development initiatives which the Council had undertaken.*

*The Chairman (Councillor Empey) thanked Ms. Kane and Mr. Mitchell for their presentation and they left the meeting.*

*In reply to a question from a Member concerning the ongoing role of the Consultants in relation to the Communications Strategy when it had been agreed, the Economic Development Officer stated that the Consultants had been appointed to both devise and implement the Council's Communications Strategy for Economic Development work over the period from 1997 till 1999 and that this role had been included in the fee which had been agreed when the Sub-Committee had appointed Mitchell Kane Associates in March, 1997.*

*In reply to a further question from a Member concerning the role of the Council's Public Relations Office in relation to the communication of Economic Development work, the Assistant Public Relations Officer pointed out that the remit of the Communications Strategy was much broader than simply public relations issues and included the development of a specific branding for all publications associated with the Council's Economic Development initiatives, as well as more general communication matters in respect of both external and internal audiences. She stated also that, given its already heavy workload, the*

*Public Relations Office would not have the resources to implement the proposed Communications Strategy in relation to the vast range of initiatives which were undertaken within the Economic Development Action Plan.*

*After further discussion the Sub-Committee noted the comments which had been made in relation to the Communications Strategy, endorsed the key findings of the interim report which had been presented and agreed to receive a further presentation on the Communications Strategy at its next meeting, prior to which the final Draft Strategy would have been completed and circulated to the Members."*

The Members were informed that Ms. I. Kane and Mr. S. Mitchell of the Council's Consultants, Mitchell Kane Associates, were present and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman (Councillor Empey).

Mr. Mitchell outlined for the information of the Members the principal recommendations of the Communications Strategy Report, copies of which had previously been circulated to the Members. He stated that a two-tiered approach had been recommended within the Report, Tier 1 highlighted the strategic issues which should be addressed and these had been outlined to the Sub-Committee at its meeting on 6th May. He stated that the proposed Tier 2 of the Communications Strategy would provide information that was more specific to the needs of individual target audiences and would accommodate emerging communication opportunities which might arise as the individual projects within the Economic Development Action Plan evolved. He pointed out that this portion of the Communications Strategy should not be interpreted as a final blueprint, but would require adjustment on an ongoing basis as the various activities developed.

Mr. Mitchell then detailed for the information of the Sub-Committee a breakdown of the various activities and costs which were associated with Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the proposed Communications Strategy. A summary of the principal elements of the Communications Strategy Action Plan and a breakdown of the costings involved are set out hereunder:

### **"Action Plan**

**The Communications Action Plan follows the same format as the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 1997-1999. It is subdivided into three themes:**

- \* Inward Investment**
- \* Business Development**
- \* Community Economic Development**

**Within each theme, the respective projects are addressed individually with recommended communication activities provided for each project.**

**The attached Action Plan provides outline recommended communication activities for each project within the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 1997-1999.**

In implementing the Communications Action Plan, a number of key factors need to be considered, these may be summarised as follows:

#### Flexibility

Owing to the changing nature of the projects within the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, the Communications Action Plan will need to be flexible. For example, some projects are awaiting confirmation of funding before being established while other projects will require changes during their implementation. For those projects which are not yet at an early stage of development, it is not yet possible to recommend communication opportunities.

The Communications Action Plan therefore acts as a framework which will remain adaptable to the changing projects and their corresponding communication requirements.

#### Partnership Projects

A number of projects within the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan involve partnerships with other organisations. For example, the First Stop Shop and Investment Belfast Ltd which were established as companies limited by guarantee. Projects such as these will have their own operational marketing plans. Subsequently, within this Communications Strategy, only outline recommendations can be made for these projects which the project implementers may consider.

In addition, recommendations made are pending the completion of marketing plans for the project and will need to remain adaptable and reviewed accordingly in this respect.

#### Strategic Issues

A number of strategic issues, as previously identified, will be incorporated across all projects within the Action Plan, for example:

- \* Target audiences to be reached
- \* Communication messages to be conveyed
- \* Preferred communications methods
- \* Design and PR guidelines
- \* Monitoring and evaluation procedures

#### Costings



**Where possible, specific costings have been provided against recommendations within the Action Plan. For those projects which are not yet established or fully developed and for which**

recommendations are pending, corresponding costings cannot be provided at this stage but will be accounted for within the overall budget.

The attached Action Plan includes detailed costings for each project. The following table provides a summary of the costings. The table is sub-divided into two tiers:

1. Tier 1- Overall Strategic Recommendations
2. Tier 2 - Individual Action Plan Projects

A number of projects have a promotional element built into their budget and costs have been assigned accordingly to their relevant budgets. Where projects do not have a promotional element, cost will be assigned to the main Economic Development Action Plan budget under the sub-theme of 'Promotion Materials'

TIER I: Overall Strategic Recommendations		
	Project Budgets	Main Budget
Briefings - Internal and External		In House Provision Based on Use of the Economic Development Folder/info Pack
Design Guidelines		600.00
Belfast City Web Site	8,000.00 ICT Forum Budget	
Economic Development Annual Report		7,500.00
Launch of Economic Development Annual Report		In House Provision
Media Guidelines for Funding Recipient		In House Provision
Funding Plaques		1,450.00
Advertising		14,270.00
Post Belfast		4,500.00
Economic Development Multi Purpose Folder/Info Pack		7,000.00
Database		In house provision

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,000.00</b>	<b>35,320.00</b>
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**Total for Tier I = 43,320.00**

TIER II: Individual Action Plan Projects		
	Project Budgets	Main Budget
<u>Economic Development Promotion at Home and Abroad</u>  Promotional Pack  Media Exposure Programme  Fam Trip Programme Video Diary/Belfast Fact-File	       10,600.00 Investment Belfast Ltd Budget	   Use of Economic Development Multi-Purpose Folder/Info Pack  In House Provision  In House Provision
<u>Investment Belfast Ltd</u> Official Launch	6,235.00 Investment Belfast Ltd Budget	
<u>ICT Forum Promotional Programme</u>  Promotional Programme	1,500.00 ICT Forum Budget	
EDITRAIN II		300.00
<u>First Stop Business Shop</u> Point of Sale Promotional Materials		
<u>Belfast on Show</u> Event Management Promotional Materials Including Invitations, Exhibition Pack	5,500.00 Belfast on Show Budget	In House Provision

Media Exposure		In House Provision
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Development (Economic Development) Sub-Committee,  
Wednesday, 3rd June, 1998

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<u>Belfast Business Opportunity Profiles</u>		300.00
<u>Directory of Belfast Industrial Estates</u>  Summary Leaflet		1,200.00
<u>Belfast Business Directory</u>		300.00
<u>City Business Club</u>  Point of Sale Promotional Materials and Advertising	1,200.00 City Business Club Budget	
<u>Business Development Consultative Forum</u>		Budget To Be Established
<u>Business to Business Bridge</u>	300.00 Business to Business Bridge Budget	
<u>Product Expansion Programme</u>		300.00
<u>Overall Management Forum</u>		Budget To Be Established
<u>Development of the Arterial Routes/ Urban Research Study</u>		Budget To Be Established
<u>Development of the Retailers Forum</u>  Co-ordinated Newsletter And PR	1,150.00 Traders Forum Budget	
<u>City Management</u>		300.00
<u>Management Development Initiatives for City</u>		300.00

<u>Centre Traders</u>		
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<u>Management Development Programme for Retailers on Arterial Routes</u>	300.00 Project Budget	
<u>Management Development Programme for Women Owner Managers</u>	300.00 Project Budget	
<u>Women in Enterprise Forum</u>	300.00 Forum Budget	
<u>Telemarketing Training for Women</u>	300.00 Project Budget	
<u>Access to Employment for Local Communities</u>		Budget To Be Established
<u>Provision of a Telecottage Facility in Belfast</u>	300.00 Project Budget	
<u>Bridging the Gap</u>		300.00
<u>Research into Social Firms Initiative</u>	300.00 Disability Forum Budget	
<u>Disability in Enterprise Forum</u>	300.00 Forum Budget	
<u>Access to Employment for People with Disabilities</u>	300.00 Disability Forum Budget	
<u>Youth in Enterprise Forum</u>	300.00 Youth Forum Budget	
<u>Access to Employment for Young People</u>	300.00 Disability Forum Budget	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,985.00</b>	<b>3,600.00</b>



**Total Tier II = £34,585.00**

**Total Tier I + Tier II = £77,905.00"**

Mr. Mitchell answered a number of questions which were put to him by the Members concerning the Communications Strategy Report. In reply to a question concerning the monitoring of the Communications Strategy, Mr. Mitchell stated that it was intended that the co-ordinating team would review and monitor the progress of the Communications Strategy and would provide a quarterly progress report to the Sub-Committee. He stated that Tier 1 of the Strategy would seek to increase public awareness of the Council's strategy, roles and themes in relation to economic development and such awareness would be measured against the current benchmark which had been ascertained during the recently conducted Communications Audit. He stated that, as Tier 2 of the Strategy was project-based, it would be necessary to set specific outputs and targets for each of the individual projects within the Economic Development Action Plan.

There followed a lengthy discussion in the matter, during which several Members expressed concern that a substantial amount of the work which had been identified in implementing the strategy would be carried out in-house and it was questioned whether sufficient resources were available within the Economic Development Unit and the Public Relations Unit. Concern was also expressed that, if there were not sufficient resources to administer the Communications Strategy Action Plan, the potential impact of the Strategy might be diminished. It was suggested that the staffing of the Public Relations Unit needed to be reviewed to enable it to provide the necessary level of support for the implementation of the strategy. The Head of Economic Development, Arts and Tourism expressed the view that, whilst there might be resourcing difficulties in implementing such a Strategy, it would ultimately provide some significant benefits to the Council in terms of the profile and perception of economic development activities supported by the Sub-Committee. He further indicated that the Communications Strategy for Economic Development might provide a useful model which could be adopted by other services within the Council on a Corporate basis.

The Members' Services Manager stated that the staffing of the Public Relations Unit had not been reviewed since 1988 and it was important that this should be done in view of the many increased requirements for public relation support which had emerged in recent years, particularly in the areas of economic development, arts and tourism. He stated that the Chief Executive was aware of the need to review the level of public relations support and he pointed out that the recent review of the Members' Services Section, which had been approved by the Council on 1st June, would result in the Public Relations Unit reporting through the post of Assistant Chief Executive directly to the Chief Executive. He welcomed the comments of the Members and the recognition of the increasing importance of the public relations function in supporting the high profile activities of the Council.

During further discussion, several Members expressed the view that the proposed Economic Development Communications Strategy would impose considerable additional pressures on the Economic Development Unit and the Public Relations Office and it was indicated that the issue of resourcing should be addressed as a matter of urgency. It was also suggested that, in order to maintain the co-ordination of activities within the Council, it was important to maintain as much as possible of the work relating to communications issues in-house.

After further discussion the Sub-Committee adopted the Communications Strategy Report and agreed that the Members' Services Manager should relay the concerns of the Sub-Committee in relation to the resources available for the implementation of the Communications Strategy to the Chief Executive. It was further agreed that the Economic Development Officer report to a future meeting regarding the progress of the Economic Development Communications Strategy as soon as an assessment could be made of its impact.

**Economic Development Action Plan - 1997/99**

**Funding Report**

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th May, it had noted a report on the funding of the 1997/99 Action Plan and had agreed that a further report identifying possible options for the addressing of the shortfall in European Funding be submitted for consideration to a future meeting.

The Economic Development Officer spoke to the undernoted report, copies of which had previously been circulated to the Members, detailing the current position and proposed options in relation to the funding of the Economic Development Action Plan 1997/99:

**"Purpose of Report**

**To advise Members of potential options which could be implemented to address the shortfall in funding for the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999.**

**Background**

**At the meeting of the Economic Development Sub-Committee on 6th May 1998, it was agreed that the Economic Development Officer would provide a report on the options available to the Council in addressing the shortfall in European Union and Making Belfast Work funding for the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999.**

**Members will be aware that in applying for external funding to assist in the implementation of the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999, the Economic Development Officer submitted applications to the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and Making Belfast Work. A summary of the monies applied for is detailed as follows:**

**European Regional Development Fund**

**Table 1**

	<b>BCC</b>	<b>ERDF Sought</b>	<b>ERDF Granted</b>	<b>Shortfall</b>
<b>Theme I</b>	<b>£650,000</b>	<b>£650,000</b>	<b>£545,419</b>	<b>£104,581</b>
<b>Theme II</b>	<b>£892,866</b>	<b>£892,866</b>	<b>£725,371</b>	<b>£167,495</b>

<b>Theme III</b>	<b>£605,000</b>	<b>£605,000</b>	<b>£475,210</b>	<b>£129,790</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,147,866</b>	<b>£2,147,866</b>	<b>£1,746,000</b>	<b>£401,866</b>

The actual allocation for Belfast City Council under the European Regional Development Fund was £1.746 million which represents 25% of the total Northern Ireland European Regional Development Fund budget.

#### European Social Fund

An application totalling £672,167 was made to the European Social Fund, the application was made in two stages, June 1997 and December 1997 respectively.

A summary of the European Social Fund monies applied for from the Department of Economic Development and the resulting funds granted is summarised in table 2.

**Table 2**

	BCC	ESF Sought	ESF Granted	ESF Shortfall/Gain
Theme I	£242,215	£447,828	£101,428	(£346,400)
Theme II	£120,799	£224,339	£351,064*	+£126,725
Total	£363,014	£672,167	£452,492	(£219,675)

\* This includes an amount for the First Stop Shop. The ERDF budget for the First Stop Shop will be adjusted accordingly.

A total of £452,568 was granted by the European Social Fund to assist Belfast City Council in implementing its training projects. The EDITRAIN II project did not receive funding from the European Social Fund as part of the Belfast City Council submission. However, matched funding at a rate of 35% totalling a contribution £187,600 from Belfast City Council for EDITRAIN II is still included in this funding equation.

The overall funding sought from the European Union may be summarised as follows:

**Table 3**

	BCC	EU Monies Sought	EU Monies Granted	Shortfall
Theme I	£892,215	£1,097,828	£646,847	£450,981
Theme II	£1,013,665	£1,117,205	£1,076,435	£40,770
Theme III	£605,000	£605,000	£475,210	£129,790
Total	£2,510,880	£2,820,033	£2,198,492	£621,541

**The total shortfall in monies from the European Union to assist in the implementation of the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999 is £621,541**

In submitting applications to the Department of Economic Development for European funding the Economic Development budget for the period 1st April 1997 to 31st December 1999 was estimated at £2,510,880. In actual fact the Economic Development budget for this period will be £3,040,000 broken down as follows:

1997-1998	£980,000
1998-1999	£1,080,000
1999-2000	<u>£980,000</u>
Total (3 Years)	£3,040,000

This represents an additional £529,120 of funding already provided for within the Economic Development budget which has not been accounted for in the application for European Union assistance.

#### Making Belfast Work

The funding sought from Making Belfast Work for the period 1997-1999 may be summarised as follows:

Table 4

	MBW Funding	Result
Inward Investment Forum	£150,000	Awaiting Approval
First Stop Shop	£230,000	Approved
Development of the Arterial Routes	£150,000	Rejected
Development of the Retailers Forum	£160,000	Rejected
Access to Employment for Local Communities	£400,000	Rejected
Business Opportunity Profiles	£25,000	Rejected
Belfast on Show	£100,000	Rejected
Telecottage	£80,000	Implementing Agent received Funding
Total	£1.295 million	

Of those projects which have been rejected for funding by Making Belfast Work, two projects are dependent on Making Belfast Work funding and would therefore not be in a position to be

**progressed under the 1997-1999 Action Plan. These projects are  
the Development of the Arterial Routes and Access to Employment**



for Local Communities respectively. All other projects could be progressed but at a reduced rate or through the implementing body obtaining funds from another external source.

**Options**

In view of the total shortfall in European Union funding totalling £621,541 for the 3 year Action Plan 1997-1999 and the shortfall in Making Belfast Work funding for this plan three options may be presented to address the situation.

(i) **Option 1 - Reduce Funding for Individual Projects in the 1997-1999 Action Plan**

This option would involve reducing the budget for specific projects contained within the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999.

Those projects which could best be targeted for a reduction in funding may be summarised as follows:

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In implementing the reductions in individual budgets outlined above the resulting shortfall in European Union monies would be £391,541 as set out in Table 6.

**Table 6**

	BCC	EU Monies Sought	EU Monies Granted	Shortfall
Theme I	£892,215	£1,097,828	£646,847	-£450,981
Theme II	£813,665	£917,205	£1,076,435	+£159,230
Theme III	£575,000	£575,000	£475,210	-£99,790
Total	£2,280,880	£2,590,033	£2,198,492	£391,541

This shortfall could be provided for in part through the corresponding savings in the Economic Development budget totalling £230,000 which would be introduced by implementing this option. This would leave a net shortfall of £161,541. Added to the unmatched Economic Development budget of £529,120 this would provide a total of £367,579 of uncommitted monies which could be used to consider new projects up to the end of December 1999.

**Assessment of Option 1**

The suggested reductions in specific projects contained within Option 1 would still allow these projects to be progressed but on a smaller scale than initially proposed.

**(ii) Option 2 - Remove Specific Projects from the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999**

In the current Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999 there are two projects which are unlikely to be progressed without corresponding funding from Making Belfast Work. These projects are:

		Total	BCC	ERDF	MBW
Theme II	Development of Arterial Routes in Belfast	£450,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000*
Theme III	Access to Employment for Local Communities	£1.2 million	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000*

In removing these projects from the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999 the resulting shortfall in European Union monies would be £71,541(as set out in Table 8). This shortfall could be provided for through the corresponding savings made in the Economic Development budget totalling £550,000. This would leave a net figure of £478,459 which could be reintroduced into the Economic Development budget.

Table 7

	BCC	EU Monies Sought	EU Monies Granted	Shortfall
Theme I	£892,215	£1,097,828	£646,847	-£450,981
Theme II	£863,665	£967,205	£1,076,435	+£109,230
Theme III	£205,000	£205,000	£475,210	+£270,210
Total	£1,960,880	£2,270,033	£2,198,492	£71,541

The net savings introduced by implementing Option 2 would therefore total £478,459 which added to the figure of unmatched Belfast City Council funding of £529,120 for the period of the Economic Development Action Plan would leave a total of £1,007,579 of uncommitted monies in the Economic Development budget monies which could be used to consider new projects up to end of December 1999.

#### Assessment of Option 2

The disadvantage of implementing Option 2 would be that two of the more high profile projects contained within the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999 would not be progressed.

However, in relation to the Development of the Arterial Routes project, which aimed to implement some of the recommendations arising from the Urban Research Report, the Department of the Environment have already begun implementing some of the recommendations contained within this report.

#### (iii) Option 3 - Reduction in funding for Individual Projects and Removal of Specific Projects from the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999

This option would involve implementing a combination of reducing budgets for specific projects and removing some projects from the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999.

**Those projects which could best be targeted for a reduction in funding may be summarised as follows:**

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The project which could be targeted for removal from the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999 may be summarised as follows:

	Total	BCC	ERDF	MBW
Development of the Arterial Routes	£450,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000

In implementing Option 3, the resulting shortfall in European Union monies would be £291,541 as set out in table 9.

This shortfall in European Union funding could be provided for through the introduction of corresponding savings of £330,000 which could be made in the Economic Development budget by implementing Option 3, leaving a net saving of £38,459. This net saving of £38,459 added to the figure of unmatched Belfast City Council funding of £529,120 would leave a total of £567,579 of uncommitted monies in the Economic Development budget.

Table 9

	BCC	EU Monies Sought	EU Monies Granted	Shortfall
Theme I	£892,215	£1,097,828	£646,847	-£450,981
Theme II	£713,665	£817,205	£1,076,435	+£259,230
Theme III	£575,000	£575,000	£475,210	-£99,790
Total	£2,180,880	£2,490,033	£2,198,492	£291,541

### Assessment of Option 3

In implementing Option 3, Belfast City Council could progress with most of the projects contained within the 1997-1999 Action Plan. In addition, Belfast City Council would be in a position to progress the 4 flagship projects at community level by providing the additional £400,000 needed to implement the project from the current economic development budget leaving a total of £167,579 which could be used to fund new projects.

### Policy Assessment

In considering the three options presented above within the context of the strategic objectives and roles outlined for Belfast City Council in the Economic Development Strategy 1995-2000, option 3 would enable Belfast City Council to implement the

majority of projects already contained within the Economic Development Action Plan 1997-1999.



**Recommendation**

**It is recommended that Members consider the three options presented above for the purpose of addressing the shortfall in funding for the 1997-1999 Action Plan and agree to implement Option 3.**

**Each of the options presented in this report will be subject to approval from the Department of Economic Development European Union Branch.**

**Decision Required**

**To agree the foregoing recommendation."**

During discussion in the matter the Sub-Committee expressed a preference for the implementation of Option 3 as detailed in the report which involved a reduction in the budgets of specific projects and the removal of certain projects from the Action Plan. However, several Members expressed concern that the project which had been identified for removal from the Action Plan had been the Development of the Arterial Routes. It was pointed out that, although the Sub-Committee's support for the project was relatively small, the nature of the project and the Council's involvement in it was significant in that it redressed the general perception that the Council was more interested in the development of the City centre than it was in the regeneration of other areas. It was also pointed out that the project provided support for valuable nodes of retail activity which not only generated income for small businesses but provided employment and a valuable focus for local communities.

The Economic Development Officer indicated that funding might be available for the Development of the Arterial Routes through the slippage of other projects or from alternative external sources.

In reply to a question from a Member concerning the criteria which would be applied in respect of the proposed Flagship projects, the Economic Development Officer stated that these criteria had not yet been agreed and that she would report further to the Sub-Committee in this regard.

After further discussion the Sub-Committee agreed in principle to the implementation of Option 3 as outlined in the report of the Economic Development Officer, subject to the retention of the Development of the Arterial Routes project within the Action Plan and the investigation of funding options to provide financial support for this project.

**Belfast On Show**

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th May, it had authorised the Economic Development Officer to pursue the possibility of hosting a Belfast on Show event in Boston with a view to ascertaining the level of interest which existed amongst local businesses in terms of participating in such an event and the benefits which had accrued from the previous event held in London.

The Economic Development Officer informed the Sub-Committee that, in order to gauge the level of interest amongst Belfast companies in participating in a Belfast on Show event in Boston, a telephone sample of twenty LEDU companies had been conducted, some of which had previous experience of exporting and some of which were seeking to break into export markets. She stated that, of the companies sampled, 40% had indicated that they would be interested in participating in such an exhibition. Based on this sample and the response which had been received, LEDU had indicated that it was likely that as many as thirty companies from the Belfast area would be willing to participate in such an initiative.

The Economic Development Officer reported that she had been liaising with the office of the Mayor of Boston in order to ascertain the likely response in Boston to such a venture. She stated that there had been considerable enthusiasm for the holding of a Belfast on Show exhibition and the Mayor's office had agreed to identify companies from Boston and North America which would be interested in identifying joint ventures and trade alliances with Belfast companies. She informed the Sub-Committee that the Mayor's office had suggested the first week in December, 1998 as being the most appropriate to hold the event and had proposed that this week would be designated as a Belfast/Boston week in order to promote the venture. She stated that the Mayor's office had also proposed broadening the scope of the event to provide a forum for the promotion of Arts and Tourism.

The Economic Development Officer reported that, at the recent meeting of the Friends of Belfast Network the view had been expressed that the Belfast on Show event would provide an excellent opportunity for the City to sell itself as a business location to Boston in particular and to North America generally.

In reply to a question from a Member regarding whether there were sufficient resources within the Economic Development Unit to administer the proposed event, the Head of Economic Development, Arts and Tourism stated that this was a matter of some concern and one which he would review as the project developed. A Member emphasised the need in the promotion of the Belfast on Show event to highlight the strategic aims of the Council in relation to economic development.

After further discussion the Sub-Committee agreed in principle to the holding of a Belfast on Show event in Boston during December, 1998 and instructed the Economic Development Officer to provide further regular reports in relation to the project.

### **Friends of Belfast**

The Sub-Committee was reminded that Mr. John Cullinane had initiated a Friends of Belfast Network in North America and Canada with a view to promoting partnerships with key persons across all sectors of industry and academia for the purpose of stimulating business opportunities and investment links between Belfast and North America. The Sub-Committee was further reminded that, at its meeting on 31st March, it had agreed to be represented at the Inaugural Meeting of the Friends of Belfast in Boston on 19th May.

The Economic Development Officer reported that the Inaugural Meeting, which had been arranged by Mr. John Cullinane and Mr. Frank Costello, had taken place

and had been attended by nearly seventy people who had indicated a willingness to give a commitment to the City of Belfast and who wished to work to benefit both the economy and the citizens of Belfast.

The Economic Development Officer reported that the meeting had resulted in the establishment of a number of sub-groups which would deal with the undernoted sectors in order to facilitate the Council in stimulating business opportunities and investment links with Boston:

- (i) software;
- (ii) image of Belfast/perception;
- (iii) education;
- (iv) finance and legal;
- (v) telecommunications;
- (vi) real estate/development;
- (vii) environment; and
- (viii) health care.

The Economic Development Officer stated that the sub-groups covered a diverse range of interests and it was intended that they would meet two or three times per year in order to ensure that progress was made in developing and implementing projects through the Friends of Belfast Initiative in Boston. She stated that it was intended that the model established in Boston would be replicated in other cities and regions throughout North America and Canada.

The Economic Development Officer stated that substantial support had been expressed by members of the Friends of Belfast for the proposed Belfast on Show Initiative and there were many offers of assistance for the event.

The Economic Development Officer reported that it was proposed that the Friends of Belfast Initiative would progress by:

- (i) each of the sub-groups created in Boston meeting during June or July; the meetings would be facilitated by Mr. John Cullinane and Mr. Frank Costello;
- (ii) a group of Friends of Belfast in Boston visiting Belfast in the Autumn in order to undertake an itinerary of visits of key companies and organisations in each of the sectors serviced by the sub-groups which had been created;
- (iii) the Friends of Belfast in Boston participating in the proposed Belfast on Show event in December, 1998 for which some members would provide support and guidance;
- (iv) a Friends of Belfast web site being established by the Economic Development Unit by July, 1998; and
- (v) a range of promotional material being distributed to the Chairpersons of each of the sub-groups in Boston.

During discussion in the matter a Member questioned whether the Sub-Committee should not be focusing more on European opportunities than on those from North America. However, the view was expressed that, as a considerable amount of effort had already been put into the development of liaisons with North America that these should continue to be exploited, although, it was accepted that opportunities within Europe should not be ignored.

The Economic Development Officer and agreed that it would be appropriate to develop the European dimension in relation to economic development and informed the Sub-Committee that, following the recent visit by representatives from the Council to Brussels, it had been indicated that Androvilla Kaminara, a senior Civil Servant with DG XIII, the European Commission's Directorate General with responsibility for Information Society, Research and Telecommunications, would visit Belfast during the Summer.

After further discussion the Sub-Committee noted the report of the Economic Development Officer.

(The Deputy Chairman (Councillor McDonnell) in the Chair.)

### **Belfast European Partnership Board**

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th May, it had deferred consideration of a report on the consultation being undertaken by the Belfast European Partnership Board in relation to its strategy on the administration of the second tranche of the European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. The Sub-Committee considered the undernoted report, copies of which had previously been circulated outlining the background to the consultation by the Partnership Board:

#### **"Purpose of Report**

**To advise Members of the consultation process in relation to the role of the Belfast European Partnership Board (BEPB) in delivering the second round of Peace and Reconciliation Funding.**

#### **Background**

**Members will be aware that the Belfast European Partnership Board (BEPB) was established as a District Partnership for Belfast in March 1996 with responsibility for distributing funds under Sub-Programme 6 of the European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.**

**The Board comprises representatives from Belfast City Council, the voluntary/community sector and business, trade union and statutory sectors.**

**Members will also be aware that the Belfast European Partnership Board has recently undertaken a consultation process**

**to refine and refocus its strategy before administering a second tranche of Peace and Reconciliation funding.**

The Board produced a consultation paper outlining several themes and options for the second programme which will build on the success of the first round. Ten consultation sessions were held across Belfast during the month of May 1998, including nine community based workshops and one seminar which took place in the City Hall on 19th May 1998. To date the consultation process has involved other funding bodies including the Area Partnerships, Intermediary Funding Bodies and Political Parties represented on the Board.

In preparation for distributing the second tranche of funding, the Belfast European Partnership Board has identified three strategic objectives which may be summarised as follows:

1. Developing active citizenship through engagement of partnerships
2. Reconciliation - supporting projects to ensure a meaningful contribution to peace and reconciliation
3. Promoting shared ownership of the city.

The Board has also outlined several guiding principles which any future project should seek to address. These include the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence.

As part of the consultation process, Members are asked to consider two potential delivery mechanisms for the next tranche of Peace and Reconciliation funding under the District Partnership Measure in Belfast. These may be summarised as follows:

1. Continue with the current strategy of open ended applications.
2. Adopt a programme approach.

The second approach is favoured by the European Commission and would involve an mix of block grants and a small grants scheme. The existing strategy focuses largely on capacity building at local community level.

Many community development programmes and innovative employment programmes were funded particularly for women, youth and ex-prisoners.

Targeting interface areas of the city was a priority in the last round of funding. The criteria used to select projects placed an emphasis on local needs, access to services, the likely impact of

**the project on local people and how the project would increase the local people's capacity to relate to division.**

## **2. Programme Approach**

The Board would identify various priority theme areas and target groups and would then invite organisations to submit bids. A block grant (75% of the overall budget) would then be awarded to the successful applicant who could deliver the programme or sub-contract various elements to other networks/organisations with similar specialisms.

Such a programme of activities would have to meet the criteria of that particular theme. Clear guidelines would be issued in advance of the submission deadline for applications detailing:

- \* What work is needed to be carried out
- \* How a programme should be delivered and managed
- \* The expected, measurable outcomes

Programme applicants would be encouraged to collaborate with other agents representing the community sector, Belfast City Council and statutory bodies thus ensuring the widest possible participation and promoting a sense of 'ownership in a shared city'.

### **Small Grants Scheme**

The Belfast European Partnership Board would invite applications from across the city for small grants up to a maximum of £30,000. An allocation would be set aside for the North, South, East and West of the city to be divided into smaller grants according to clear criteria.

Both approaches would involve introducing flexible allocation templates which would be designed to promote clear transparent guidelines on types of eligible projects or themes. These guidelines would be distributed made public in advance of the call for applications. An appeals procedure would also be put in place.

The Belfast European Partnership Board will continue to address the issues of equity and imbalance in areas where community infrastructure is weak and where applications were not forthcoming or successful in the first round. A total of £2.6million has already been ring-fenced to address these areas.

The Belfast European Partnership Board has stressed a commitment to choosing activities which will foster peace and reconciliation and which will address the issues of equity, diversity and interdependence.



**Proposal**

1. Members consider the options for allocating the next tranche of funding outlined in this report and forward their views to the Belfast European Partnership Board as soon as possible.
2. It is proposed that Members consider any other indicators which the Board could use to further enhance the reconciliation element of the programme and to ensure equity of funding across the city.

Indicators which are already being used by the Board include the Robson Index (by deprivation and population) and the cost of the 'Troubles' report.

3. Members forward any comments or views in relation to the work of the Economic Development Sub-Committee of the Board which was set up to analyse the problems encountered by Community Economic Development Agencies in accessing funding in the last round.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members consider the options outlined for a future funding strategy by the Belfast European Partnership Board and forward comments to the Board by mid June 1998.

**Decision Required**

**To approve the foregoing recommendation."**

During discussion in the matter the view was expressed that the administration of the first tranche of Peace and Reconciliation funds had not targeted many smaller areas of deprivation, particularly in East Belfast and it was suggested that the application of the Robson Index by the Board had caused such small areas of extreme deprivation to be overlooked.

After further discussion the Sub-Committee agreed in principle to recommend to the Partnership Board the "programme approach" of administering the second tranche of Peace and Reconciliation funds as had been outlined in the above report.