

Development Committee

Wednesday, 6th August, 2003

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) SUB-COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor C. McGimpsey (Chairman); and
Councillors Alderdice, M. Browne, Crowe,
McAuley, O'Donnell, O'Reilly and Rodgers.

In attendance: Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;
Ms. C. Linney, Economic Development Manager; and
Miss L. Hillick, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Hutchinson, McCarthy and Newton.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4th June, which had been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as correct.

West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Forces' Reports

Meeting with Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, the Council, at its meeting on 6th May, had agreed that the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment be requested to receive an All-Party deputation in relation to the progress achieved in respect of the above-mentioned Task Forces' Reports. In this regard, the Head of Economic Initiatives submitted a report in relation to a meeting which had been held with the Minister on 30th June and the progress which had been achieved thereat. A copy of the report, with the exception of the appendices referred to therein, is set out hereunder:

"Purpose of Report

To provide an update to Members on the meeting with the Minister for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) on the progress of the West Belfast Task Forces.

Background

Members will be aware that a meeting was requested with the Minister for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to discuss the progress of the West Belfast Task Forces.

Meeting with Minister Ian Pearson

An all party delegation representing the Economic Development Committee attended a meeting with the Minister on Monday 30th June, 2003. The delegation included; Councillor Pat Convery, Councillor Chrissie McAuley, Councillor Jim Rodgers, Councillor Hugh Smyth, and Councillor Eric Smyth.

The Minister for the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment, Ian Pearson MP was accompanied by Deputy Secretary, Wilfie Hamilton and Invest NI representative Mr Tim Losty.

A full brief on the development of the Task Forces was provided to members in advance and this is attached in Appendix I.

Belfast City Council led the discussion and stated their concerns to the Minister regarding the lack of progress on the recommendations contained within the Task Forces reports.

Members stated that the Task Force models need to make a real difference to communities in the west of the City and at present they are seen as cosmetic exercises.

Whilst the members accepted that a number of recommendations were progressing such as the targeted initiatives on employability, there was concern regarding the delay in the Mackies site and in the development of a Local Area Plan to take advantage of the new Executive Integrated Development Fund.

The Minister assured the Council members that he was committed to driving the recommendations of the Task Force forward and that the west of the City would benefit from the new integrated development fund.

To ensure that the Task Force recommendations progressed forward and that an action plan for targeting the Integrated Development Fund is compiled, a new working group is to be established, which will be led by community participants.

Members expressed a wish to be a member of this working group to ensure the Task Force recommendations were driven forward.

The Minister gave a commitment to establish the Taskforce Working Group as a priority and to hold the first meeting in July 2003.

Members also stated that it was important for the Council to be a key player in all the areas of development identified in the taskforce reports.

The other groups established to implement the taskforce implementations are:-

- The Local Enterprise Council
- Employers Forum
- Employment Services Board (Belfast City Council represented)
- Social Economy Network

The Minister stated that the Council was welcome to be involved in all areas of development of the taskforces. A letter has been received from the Minister which is attached in Appendix II inviting Council representation on the Taskforce Joint Working Group, Enterprise Council and Employers Forum.

A press release was issued immediately following the meeting to make the public aware that the Economic Development Sub Committee of Council had concerns regarding the progress in developing the recommendations of the Task Forces reports. A news article was published in the Irish News and the Belfast Telegraph on Wednesday 2nd July 2003, copies of which are attached in Appendix III.

Joint Working Group

It is proposed that the Joint Working Group will comprise a Task Force Liaison Group, the DETI Inter-departmental Group and officials from City Councils of Belfast and Lisburn.

The Task-Force Liaison Group will comprise a Chairperson (J Simpson) and 3 Members from each of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Communities, 2 of which will be the Chief Executives of the Partnerships Boards (7 in total). The Liaison Group will undertake to inform the wider community of progress.

The proposed role of the Joint Working Group is to: -

- * Review recommendations of the Task Forces' report
- * Confirm existing sources of funding
- * Prepare an Integrated Area Plan
- * Target support from the Integrated Development fund by December 2003

Short term resources are required to service the Working Group comprising of a development officer, an administrator and a technical consultant. Council have been asked to consider providing staffing resources to the Joint Working Group. However at this time resources within the Economic Development Unit are stretched given the pressure to deliver the Local Economic Development Plan.

Recommendation

To note the foregoing report and to agree Council should be represented on the Taskforce Joint Working Group, Enterprise Council and Employers Forum.

To note a request from DETI for Council to consider providing staff resources to service the Joint Working Group.

Decision Required

As above."

After discussion, during which the Sub-Committee expressed concern that the Council was being requested to provide staff resources to service the Joint Working Group, the Sub-Committee agreed:

- (i) that the Council be represented on the West Belfast Task Forces' Joint Working Group by the Head of Economic Initiatives (or her nominee);
- (ii) that the Head of Economic Initiatives investigate the benefits to be obtained from two Members, representing the West Belfast and Shankill areas of the City, being appointed to participate on the Working Group; and
- (iii) due to the strain which would be placed on staff resources within the Economic Development Unit, to reject the request which had been received from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment that the Council provide staffing resources to service the Joint Working Group.

Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme

The Head of Economic Initiatives submitted a report seeking approval for the Council to deliver a Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme. A copy of the report, with the exception of the appendix referred to therein, is set out hereunder:

"Purpose of Report

To seek approval to deliver a Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme under the Local Economic Development Plan.

Background

As members may be aware the Council through both officers and Members receives a number of requests from local communities for small economic development projects.

The aim of this newly proposed Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme is to promote and support Economic Development activity in local communities throughout the city.

There are a number of regeneration initiatives and/or agencies operating in the City, from Belfast Local Strategic Partnership, Urban II, DSD, IFI etc, therefore the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme will aim to compliment existing provision.

Funding assistance is required to enable groups to deliver smaller localised community economic development projects.

The Programme will be delivered in partnership with local community representative bodies e.g. NIVT, the local area partnerships and other key agencies involved in community regeneration in the City, such as Belfast City Council's Community Services.

The Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme will concentrate on providing assistance to projects that have fundamental economic principles.

Programme Content

The boundaries for all activities are set by the Local Economic Development Plan. In short, all proposals must fall within the following themes:

- * Economic growth
- * Knowledge and Learning
- * Regeneration and Renewal
- * Sustainable Development

Projects will be expected to produce one or more of four output types:

- * Job creation
- * Community Capacity Building for Economic Development
- * Derelict land/buildings brought back into business use
- * Business Growth Support

It is important to note that under DETI guidelines, local economic development funding cannot be used for retail regeneration or the development of the social economy.

Budget

A total budget of £200,000 has been recommended for the Programme.

Applications for projects will be in the range of £5,000 - £10,000.

Please note that this funding is made up of both Belfast City Council and EU funding under the Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme, and can therefore not be used in projects that include other elements of EU funding.

Application Process

The Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme would run from September 2003 – June 2004. A first call would be issued in September 2003, followed by a second call in December and a third call in March if applicable, pending interest.

A short application form would be used to enable groups to supply the relevant information to satisfy funding criteria and audit requirements, without being cumbersome for local groups.

A detailed analysis of the programme and application are attached in Appendix I.

Recommendation

To agree to deliver the Neighbourhood Economic Development Programme in the City to a value of £200,000.

Decision Required

As above.”

After discussion, during which the Head of Economic Initiatives answered various questions which were put to her by the Members, the Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation contained within the foregoing report.

North Foreshore Economic Development Land

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 4th June, it had agreed to provide funding in the sum of £100,000 towards the Council's purchase of the North Foreshore site for economic development activity and had agreed also that information in relation to the Council's overall plan for the site be presented to a future meeting.

Accordingly, the Economic Development Manager reported that, during July, the Council had purchased the above-mentioned site from the Department for Social Development at a cost of £960,000. The Economic Development Unit had been working in conjunction with various Council departments to address the potential for development at the site and the mixed-use option which had been agreed by the Development Committee was currently being investigated in order to ascertain its feasibility. She pointed out that an area of approximately fifty acres located to the South/West of the Site was being considered for possible economic development activity and that the remainder of the land would accommodate waste management and leisure activities. The Economic Development Unit was undertaking currently research in respect of potential economic development activity at the site and had identified that environmental businesses were a growth sector which could be located at the North Foreshore. Preliminary findings had indicated that the current business market within the City required a growth in environmental activity and a number of options were being explored currently with representatives from the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment. However, in order to further any development in this regard, a feasibility study, economic appraisal and business plan would be required to be undertaken to identify market opportunities for environmental businesses growth and to promote the development of a business park at the North Foreshore.

Accordingly, she recommended that, in order to initiate economic development activity at the North Foreshore site, the Sub-Committee grant authority for a feasibility study, economic appraisal and business plan to be undertaken and approve costs up to a maximum of £30,000 in connection therewith.

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.

Belfast Enterprise Week

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th April, 2002, it had agreed to provide financial assistance in the sum of £15,000 towards the costs associated with the first Belfast Entrepreneurship Week. The Head of Economic Initiatives stated that a varied programme of events associated with the event had taken place throughout the City during the week commencing 27th May. The Eurocities Network had originated the programme and similar entrepreneurship events had taken place in various cities across the European Union, including Barcelona, Dublin, Turku and Leipzig.

The Head of Economic Initiatives pointed out that Eurocities was currently supporting the sharing of experience between the cities involved in the enterprise events and representatives from Dublin had attended the Belfast event. However, whilst representatives from other cities would be invited to attend this year's event, it was proposed that its focus would be on outreach activities to local communities.

She informed the Sub-Committee that the Council had been liaising with local partners to formulate a Belfast programme which would identify three underlying themes, namely, creating an entrepreneurial culture, promoting business start-up and supporting business growth. Preliminary discussions had been undertaken with the Belfast First Stop Shop, Invest Northern Ireland, the Local Enterprise Agencies,

Sentinus, Shell LiveWire, Young Enterprise, the Prince's Trust and various other bodies which had confirmed their willingness to co-operate with the Council on this initiative. She proceeded to outline a draft programme of activities and stated that the Economic Development Unit would ensure that the events contained therein would be acceptable to all those interested in setting-up or expanding a small business. Funding for the initiative would be sought from Invest Northern Ireland and the Local Enterprise Agencies would provide a contribution in-kind by way of the organisation of a range of activities contained within the programme. It was anticipated that the full cost of the event during the week-long programme which would be held during October, 2003 would be £30,000 approximately and she recommended that the Sub-Committee approve a financial contribution of £15,000 towards the costs associated with the event.

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.

Belfast First Stop Business Shop

The Sub-Committee considered a report, copies of which had previously been circulated to the Members, in relation to the draft 2003/2004 Operational Plan for the Belfast First Stop Business Shop.

The Sub-Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and agreed to receive at its next monthly meeting a presentation from the Manager of the First Stop Business Shop in relation to the Plan.

Business in the Community

The Sub-Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report in respect of the Council's funding of Business in the Community's JobHelp ProHelp project to enable further information to be obtained. It was agreed also that a further report in this regard be submitted to a special meeting, to which representatives of Business in the Community would be invited, date of which to be agreed in conjunction with the Chairman (Councillor C. McGimpsey).

Employability Initiatives

The Head of Economic Initiatives submitted the undernoted report in relation to various employability initiatives which were planned or were being delivered currently throughout Belfast:

"Purpose of Report

To provide Members with details on the types of employability initiatives currently planned or being delivered in the city and to request approval for the Chair and Deputy Chair to undertake a best practice visit in September.

Background

Belfast has undergone a significant level of Regeneration in recent years creating new investment and prosperity in the City.

Although this overall new improvement in the economic climate has brought a definite reduction in the levels of unemployment (the level of unemployment per claimant count in Belfast was 5% in the month ending June 2003), the patterns associated with long term unemployment in the City still prevail and remain stubbornly resistant to change.

This resistance gives an indication that the mainstream programmes in existence have to a large extent, failed for those long-term unemployed individuals. In response to this a number of targeted interventions are currently either being planned or delivered in all parts of the City. There are two particular employability models being delivered i.e. Labour Market Intermediaries and Intermediate Labour Markets, Explanations of each of these is as follows:

Employability Models

A. Labour Market Intermediaries

Labour Market Intermediaries are a recently developed response to long term unemployment.

Based on best practice from the USA and Britain, a Labour Market Intermediary seeks to bridge the gap between employers needs and clients job aspirations and skills requirements.

The Labour Market Intermediary has a team of Case Workers who provide one to one advice, guidance, mentoring and support to individuals to enable them to acquire the necessary skills and competencies required to compete for and gain employment.

A key example of a labour market intermediary is Belfast GEMS which was initiated by Belfast City Council and currently operational in the South and East of the City.

B. Intermediate Labour Markets

Intermediate Labour Markets are also known as Transitional Employment Programmes. The main aim of this type of employability initiative is to give those who are most removed from the Labour Market a bridge back to the world of work by providing paid work on a temporary contract together with training, personal development and job search activities. Such programmes can assist a very long term

unemployed individual to obtain in the necessary skills motivation and work experience they require to enable them to get access into the mainstream labour market.

A key example of an Intermediate Labour Market model was the Upper Springfield Development Trust's £6.3 million URBAN programme which created 80 jobs to develop extensive youth and community programmes and facilities for the local youth. It employed 45 people between 18-25 years of age, and had a 97% success rate.

Local Employment Provision in Belfast

At present there are a number of Local Employment Initiatives currently being delivered in the City and others that are still in the planning stages. These can be highlighted as follows:

A. South and East Belfast

The Belfast GEMS model is still operational in these two areas of the City. This Labour Market Intermediary was formally launched in January 2002 with the aim of supporting and enabling long-term unemployed people living in South and East Belfast to maximise their potential and access jobs within the Gasworks and Laganside areas.

The initiative has proved to be successful, with over 176 people securing employment, and 237 people undertaking training to enhance their employability.

B. North Belfast

The Prospects Project which is managed by the North Belfast Employment Centre has been in operation since May 2001. It is a pilot Labour Market Intermediary which is currently being funded by the Department for Employment and Learning. Prospects targets the harder to reach individuals such as the very long term unemployed and those facing multiple barriers to employment.

The prospects project works mainly in outreach centres in community based locations throughout North Belfast.

An evaluation of the project is currently being undertaken by Deloitte and Touché. If the outcome of this evaluation is successful then it is likely that the contract will go out to tender in December 2003.

The Economic Development Unit has also participated in discussion with key stakeholders in North Belfast including North Belfast Partnership Urban II, Local Strategy Partnership, Department for Employment and Learning and the Belfast Regeneration Office regarding the potential of developing a Belfast GEMS type initiative in North Belfast. It is anticipated that such proposals will be brought to Committee at a later stage.

C. West Belfast

The Connections project which is managed by Worknet is the second of the pilot Labour Market Intermediaries to be funded by the Department for Employment and Learning. Their target market includes jobseekers, lone parents, women returners and the disabled. This pilot also commenced in May 2001.

This pilot is also being evaluated by Deloitte and Touche.

D. Targeted Initiatives in West Belfast and Greater Shankill

A number of months ago the Department for Employment and Learning announced a £14million budget to deliver 'Targeted Initiatives' in four areas of Northern Ireland. Two of the chosen areas will be West Belfast and Greater Shankill, each area receiving over £3million over a three year period. This comes as a response to recommendations contained within both the Employability and West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Force reports. One of the key features of the Targeted Initiatives programme will be Job Assist Centres (JAC'S).

JAC'S will be community based and will provide an integrated, flexible, one to one service with individuals and will therefore be similar to the LMI concept delivered elsewhere in the City. The core Principles of the Job Assist Centres are currently being devised by the Department of Employment and Learning and it is anticipated that the contracts will go out to tender in November. It is envisaged that there will be seven Job Assist Centres in the West Belfast and Shankill areas.

Another aspect of the Targeted Initiative Programme will be the Transitional Employment Programmes which will operate in a similar capacity to an Intermediate Labour Market. The core principles of this initiative are currently being developed by the Department for Employment and Learning and it is expected that the contracts for these will go out to tender in late Autumn 2003.

The Economic Development Unit participates on the Employment Services Board which oversees the delivery of the Targeted Initiatives

E. Citywide Approach to Employability

A number of key stakeholders such as Department for Employment and Learning, Local Strategy Partnership, the Belfast Regeneration Office, Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment, the Belfast City Council and the Area Partnerships have met on a number of occasions to look at Transitional Employment models on a citywide level. To this end, it is a tremendous accolade that the fifth Transitional Employment Convention is being held in Belfast on 17th – 19th November, 2003.

This conference will provide a platform upon which to showcase studies such as Belfast GEMS as well as having the chance to learn from best practice at a national and international level.

In addition to this conference, Belfast Local Strategy Partnership has also commissioned research to identify and develop citywide Intermediate Labour Market Initiative. A project team comprising the following has been established:

- * Belfast Local Strategy Partnership
- * Belfast City Council
- * Department of Employment & Learning
- * Invest Northern Ireland
- * Worktrack Lead Partner Belfast
- * New Deal Lead Partner Belfast
- * South Belfast Partnership Board
- * East Belfast Partnership Board
- * West Belfast Partnership Board
- * Greater Shankill Partnership Board
- * North Belfast Partnership

It is anticipated that best practice Belfast Local Strategy Partnership may target up to £4million for the delivery of such a project in partnership with other funding which will be sought from Council and Government Departments.

As a means of undertaking research for this citywide initiative, a best practice visit has been organised to take place in September 2003 (15th–17th) for the aforementioned stakeholder group. This visit will enable stakeholders to

view successful Transitional Employment Programmes being delivered in Liverpool, Sheffield and Manchester. The visit will also entail meetings with Local Strategic Partnerships and a meeting with at least one of the local Councils. It is therefore requested that Member's give consideration to approving the attendance of the Chair, Deputy Chair and an Officer on this best practice visit in September.

Role of Belfast City Council

Belfast City Council has a key role to play in Local Employability initiatives and has given a commitment to further expanding this role in both the Development Department Strategy, 'Capital City' and its Local Economic Development Plan. The role of Belfast City Council to date has been very much centred around Belfast GEMS in the South and East whereby it acted as a catalyst linked to the development opportunity of the Gasworks.

However, other key roles are emerging. In the West and Greater Shankill area of the City, Belfast City Council is a member of the Employment Services Board which is the overseeing body of the Targeted Initiatives Programme for that area. Belfast City Council will continue to actively participate on this group and identify potential linkages for involvement.

In the North of the City, Belfast City Council is participating in discussions with key stakeholders regarding the potential for developing a local Employment Initiative. Discussions are still in the early stages.

The city-wide research initiative being undertaken by the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership will identify options for the involvement of all geographical areas in this important field. Upon completion, the report will make recommendations which will be communicated to Committee to allow Members to decide how best local Economic Development funding should be applied within any emerging integrated approach to local employability initiatives.

Finally, as a major employer in the City, the Council can use these initiatives as a means of recruiting the more harder to reach individuals which can assist the organisation to address barriers that lead to the under-rep of certain groups within the work force. A key example of this is Contract Services who are currently facing a number of difficulties in attracting women to undertake roles particularly in the cleansing section.

The Economic Development Unit is currently liaising with Contract Services as a means of identifying potential initiatives throughout the City who may assist them with this area.

Proposal

Members are asked to note:

- * the range of employability initiatives throughout the City
- * the commencement of research into the formulation of a city-wide approach to local employability initiatives.
- * the need to determine in the future whether to apply local economic development funding to an integrated approach.

It is also recommended that Members give approval for the Chair and Deputy Chair of Economic Development plus an officer to attend the best practice visit to Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield in mid September as part of the ongoing research to identify a citywide employability model.

Environmental Implications

None.

Capital City Strategy Reference

2.2 To address inequality and promote equity within neighbourhoods.

LED Plan Reference

To bring jobs to people and people to jobs.

Budgetary Implications

£1,500 (£500 per delegate attending visit).

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members;

- (i) Approve attendance on the best practice visit for the Chair and Deputy Chair of Economic Development plus one Officer.

Decision Required

To approve the foregoing recommendation.”

After discussion, during which a Member pointed out that the special meeting which had been agreed earlier in the meeting should take place subsequent to the above-mentioned best practice visit, the Sub-Committee authorised the attendance of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) and approved the payment of the associated attendance, travel and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

Belfast in the USA

The Sub-Committee considered a report, which had been prepared by the Head of Economic Initiatives, in relation to progress which had been achieved in respect of the "Belfast in USA" visit which would be held during October, 2003. A copy of the report, with the exception of the appendix referred to therein, is set out hereunder:

"Purpose of Report"

To advise members with respect to the plans for the forthcoming 'Belfast in USA' visit in October 2003.

Background

Members will be aware that, under the Outward and Forward Looking City theme of the Local Economic Development Plan, Belfast City Council has undertaken to expand and develop the Friends of Belfast initiative.

Friends of Belfast is a social capital network of over 350 business leaders, academics and politicians throughout Canada and North America. These individuals use their influence and sectoral expertise to open doors for business, cultural and investment opportunities for Belfast. Members will recall their decision to approve a new Friends of Belfast Strategy, which outlines a range of activities targeted around the four key cities of New York, Boston, Denver and Pittsburgh. Included in the Strategy is the objective to facilitate and host inward and outward trade and cultural missions from these cities.

Members will recall their decision at the Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting of 4th December, 2002 to approve the new Friends of Belfast Strategy for the period 2003-2006. The implementation of this Strategy will be delivered within the overall framework of the new Development Strategy, for the same period.

Having sought Members' approval of the three year strategy, officers engaged with the Head Friends of Belfast to scope out a detailed action plan for the period 2003-2004. This action plan seeks to undertake achievable tasks with tangible economic development outcomes for Belfast. It was approved by the members of the Economic Development Sub Committee at their meeting on 5th February, 2003.

At this meeting, as part of the one year Action Plan, members also gave approval for a Belfast City Council to lead an outward visit to Boston and New York from 4th – 9th October, 2003.

The purpose of the visit will be to showcase a new modern and innovative Belfast to audiences in both cities, developed through the Friends of Belfast network. The delegation will be led by Belfast City Council and will involve key partner organisations including Queen's University, Investment Belfast Limited, Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education and the Arts Council. Partner organisations will travel at their own expense and will follow independently organised programmes of meetings.

However, the overall delegation will come together to promote and market Belfast at a showcase event held in both cities, when a number of announcements will be made in relation to proposed activities within both cities. In addition Investment Belfast Limited will undertake to organise a business briefing in each city to targeted audiences of business leaders in the fields of property development and financial services.

The Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau will also hold its own briefing sessions to conference associations and tour operators.

During recent months a planning group has been meeting regularly to develop the programme for the visit.

Agreed objectives have been developed and may be summarised as follows;

<u>Objectives</u>		
	(i)	To develop a positive image for Belfast which will give confidence to potential investors and position the city as having a supportive business environment and a dynamic knowledge based economy.
	(ii)	To identify and generate new business sectoral links between Belfast and North America.
	(iii)	To secure international associations and conference business through North America Ambassadors.
	(iv)	To raise awareness of the Belfast leisure and tourism produce with key influence in New York.
	(v)	To enhance the cultural product in Belfast by building connections and capacity.

	(vi)	To make a number of announcements of new initiatives between Belfast and the USA in areas of tourism, culture and arts and Economic Development.
	(vii)	To raise the profile of Belfast as a key tourist destination with the Friends of Belfast.

Expected outputs have been identified and monitoring systems will be put in place to measure actual performance against these. This may be summarised as follows;

Outputs

a) **Tourism**

- To showcase Belfast to 15 high profile media representatives
- To showcase Belfast to 12 associate conference buyers
- Announce Tourism links to showcase the Belfast product in USA
- Launch of Belfast and South Street Seaport link through the Titanic Collection
- Secure a follow up FAM visit for 7 IS media
- Secure 8 expressions of interest for using Belfast as a conference destination
- To secure 70% coverage from the FAM visit
- Raising awareness of tourism and Conference product and Belfast as a tourism destination

b) **Culture/Arts**

- Announcement of artists residence initiative by Arts Council for NI
- Development of links and US programme with the Northern Ireland Bureau.
- Opening of refurbished flat for NI Artist in residence
- Raising profile of culture and Arts sector in Belfast and Northern Ireland
- Launch of NI Moving Exhibition in Ireland House

c) **Economic Development**

- Promotion of leading technologies created in Belfast

- Briefing on strengths of Belfast financial sector to six global financial services companies in Boston and New York
- Follow up meetings and secure visit of at least one company per city to Belfast.
- Announcement of special relationship with Belfast and New York City Government
- Announcement of BCC's new International Policy
- Announcement of Belfast to Dublin flight
- Coverage by business journalists in Boston Globe & Herald, New York Times, Washington Times & Post.
- One return visit to Belfast by business journalist
- Property briefing to 6 potential investors in Boston and New York City.
- Follow up activity and secure one investor visit per city to Belfast
- Research briefing to 50 blue chip companies in new York.

A draft programme has been developed in conjunction with the Head Friend of Belfast for both cities, a copy of which is attached as Appendix I of this report.

It is proposed that members consider the proposed visit and agree to the participation of the Chair of Economic Development, Deputy Chair of Economic Development, the Director of Development, the Head of Economic Initiatives and the Economic Development Manager or their nominees,

<u>Approximate Costings:</u>	
Flights, Accommodation and Subsistence	£10,000.00
Promotional Materials	£6,000.00
Receptions	£6,000.00
Public Relations	£2,000.00
Other (Gifts etc)	£1,000.00
Total	£25,000.00

Environmental Implications

None.

Capital City Strategy Reference

Leaving a legacy

To enhance the competitiveness of the city, to showcase Belfast as a prime investment location and place to visit, live and work.

LED Plan Reference

Outward and forward looking region

To showcase best practice through European and International networks.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- a) approve the planned programme of activity and attendance of representatives for the Belfast in USA visit from 4th – 9th October, 2003.**
- b) approve a maximum budget of £25,000 for the visit.”**

The Head of Economic Initiatives pointed out that the Economic Development Unit had sub-contracted a Communications Consultant in the United States to co-ordinate the public relations aspects of the visit. She stated that she was confident that the Consultant would be able to obtain maximum publicity for the visit.

After further discussion, during which several Members expressed the view that the officers within the Economic Initiatives Section should encourage Belfast-based journalists to accompany the delegation, the Sub-Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.

Marketing Belfast Through European Embassies

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 5th February, it had agreed to accept an invitation from the Austrian Ambassador to stage in the Embassy in London a promotional event in order to market Northern Ireland investment opportunities.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that the visit had taken place on 13th March and had been attended by Councillor O'Donnell, the Head of Economic Initiatives, the Economic Development Officer and the Chief Executive of Investment Belfast Limited. The delegation from Northern Ireland had included also Economic Development officers and Elected Representatives of Derry City Council and representatives of Invest Northern Ireland. The purpose of the event had been to promote Northern Ireland as an overall investment location and to enter into a joint marketing venture with Derry City Council and the North West region.

She stated that the event had been well attended with over thirty trade commissioners, commercial attachés and Embassy staff from European countries represented in London and, subsequent to the visit, the Council had had a number of follow-up contacts and visits, including letters received from the Czech Embassy and the Bulgarian Commercial Attaché expressing a desire to undertake a fact finding visit to Belfast in order to explore further investment and economic opportunities. In addition, the Council had hosted an exploration visit from the Swiss Consul General and Commercial staff from the Czech Consul who had since expressed their intention to lead targeted trade missions to Belfast later in the year.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that the Economic Development Offices of both Derry and Belfast City Councils had been meeting regularly for the purposes of sharing European contacts and in order to build up a template programme of inward activities for future visits. She stated that the current local Economic Development Plan was currently supporting three export related programmes for Belfast companies for the purpose of pursuing new business opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe. This came at an opportune time, as the European Union prepared for enlargement with the accession of new member states in May, 2004. It was anticipated that this would lead to greatly increased economic activity within Central and Eastern Europe and, based upon these developments, officers of Derry City Council and Belfast City Council had assessed the interest of those who participated in the Austrian Embassy event and were proposing to invite twenty commercial staff to Belfast and Londonderry on a detailed exploratory visit.

The Head of Economic Initiatives pointed out that a draft programme had been developed in relation to a pilot visit in October, 2003 and it was anticipated that a delegation of European commercial staff from London would spend one day in Belfast followed by a day in Londonderry, with both Councils sharing the programme costs in partnership with Investment Belfast Limited, Derry Investment Initiative and Invest Northern Ireland. It was anticipated that the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment would host a welcome breakfast and that Investment Belfast would host a business lunch. Accordingly, she recommended that the Sub-Committee approve costs in the sum of £1,000 in connection therewith.

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.

Governor of Maine Visit

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Sub-Committee that, subsequent to participating on the Northern Ireland Trade and Investment Conferences in Washington and Pittsburgh in 1995 and 1996, respectively, the Council had been undertaking economic development activity throughout North America. The Council had engaged in economic activity in Portland, Maine and, in November, 1998, the Council had signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Senator George Mitchell. However, since 2002, activity with Portland, had lessened due to an economic downturn in the State and a reduction of its resources for international trade activity.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that the Council, through the Chairman of the Economic Development Sub-Committee (Councillor C. McGimpsey), had recently received a request from the Maine International Trade Centre to host, during the period from 18th till 25th October, 2003, a business and civic delegation which would be led by the Governor of the State, the Right Honourable John Buldacci. The delegation would include thirty participants who would visit the Coleraine and Derry City Council areas, followed by a one-day visit to Belfast. The focus of the visit would be to tour the University of Ulster campuses and to facilitate business to business match-making in the hi-tech growth sector industries.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Sub-Committee approve the provision of hospitality in the sum of £500 and authorise the attendance of the Members of the Sub-Committee at a lunch on Wednesday, 22nd October to welcome the delegation.

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.

Links with China

The Sub-Committee considered a report, copies of which had previously been circulated to the Members, in relation to progress which had been achieved in respect of partnership links with China and with the Chinese Community in Belfast.

After discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and agreed also to receive at its October meeting a presentation by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in relation to the business and cultural interests of the Chinese Community in Belfast.

48th World Congress of the International Council for Small Businesses

The Sub-Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the key outcomes of the 48th World Congress for the International Council for Small Businesses which had taken place in Belfast during the period from 15th till 18th June, 2003.

Belfast City Airport

The Sub-Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to a visit to the Belfast City Airport:

“Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on the outcomes of a visit to Belfast City Airport by a delegation from Development (Economic Development) Sub-Committee on 23rd June, 2003 and to propose a Special Committee meeting to be attended by the Airport's senior management team in October, 2003.

Background

Members will be aware that, at the Development (Economic Development) Sub-Committee of 2nd April, 2003, it was proposed to undertake a site visit to Belfast City Airport to meet the Managing Director with a view to instigating closer working relationships. Following agreement of this proposal, the visit was organised for 23rd June, 2003.

Members of the Airport's Senior Management Team gave Members a briefing on the airport, focusing on recent and planned developments including the acquisition by Ferrovial, plans for new investment and possible new routes to continental Europe.

Acquisition by Ferrovial

Belfast City Airport was acquired by Ferrovial from Bombardier for a price of €49.3 million in May 2003. The Spanish company is one of the world's leading private sector developers of transport infrastructure, with €1.7 billion in committed investment in 16 toll roads, 13 airports and 175,000 parking spaces. The company has a turnover of €5 billion.

Ferrovial currently manages thirteen airports worldwide including Australia (20% stake in Sydney airport), Mexico (owns nine airports here) and Chile. The company also owns two UK airports: Bristol and Belfast City. Collectively, these airports handle 42 million passengers per year. Ferrovial is keen to increase its portfolio of airports and plans to acquire one airport per annum for the coming years.

The staffing arrangements at Belfast City Airport will remain unaffected by the acquisition and the team will soon be joined by two Spanish members of staff.

Contribution of Belfast City Airport to the Local Economy

Belfast City Airport is a significant contributor to the local economy, as illustrated by the following figures:

	Direct	Indirect	Total
No. of employees	360	450	810
Salaries and Wages	£5.4 million	£6.2 million	£11.6 million
Local Suppliers	£2.3 million	£2.4 million	£4.7 million
TOTAL INVESTMENT	£7.7 million	£8.6 million	£16.3 million

New Infrastructure Developments

The tunnel directing vehicular traffic from the Airport towards Belfast has recently opened to traffic. In addition, there are plans to extend the train line to the City Airport in the future.

New Links

The Airport has recently attracted a range of new direct links to Ireland and the UK including:

- Nine flights per week to Cardiff with Air Wales
- Eleven flights a week to Cork with JetMagic
- 10 flights a week to Dublin with Aer Arann.

It was also revealed that discussions are currently ongoing with a view to attracting direct services to Paris and Brussels from Autumn 2003. This will be a significant boost for international business activities and will support the Economic Development Unit's export programmes which are currently being developed.

Business Priorities for the Coming Year

- Concentrate on the further commercial development of the airport i.e. developing the land around the airport as well as the retail opportunities within the airport
- Realise the potential of the airport as a strategic employment location
- Develop new direct services to European destinations (discussions are at an advanced stage with a view to providing direct services to Paris and Brussels – both to run twice daily – from October 2003.)
- Support increased tourism and inward investment
- Enhance Belfast as a conference destination (Belfast City Airport are collaborating with Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau on this)
- Undertake the re-surfacing of the runway – this £6 million investment is to be completed by the end of the year (all work is being undertaken by local companies).

Enhancing Links with Belfast City Council

The Managing Director at Belfast City Airport identified the following areas for enhancing collaboration between Belfast City Council and Belfast City Airport:

- Undertaking joint working on areas of mutual interest (e.g. increasing investment, economic development and tourism)

- Facilitating site visits to the airport for Council members
- Undertaking joint representation in development activities e.g. marketing visits
- Providing regular briefings on development plans to Council
- Promoting the airport to those in the North and West of the City who may not be aware of its services and employment opportunities.

The Managing Director agreed to present to Committee in Autumn 2003 to provide an update on development plans for the airport services and for the surrounding land.

Environmental Implications

None.

Capital City Strategy Reference

To drive the economic growth of Belfast.

LED Plan Reference

To support and develop business growth and competitiveness.

Budgetary Implications

None.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members:

- Note the outcomes of the visit to Belfast City Airport
- Agree to a presentation by the Management Team at a future Special Meeting of the Development (Economic Development) Sub-Committee.

Decision Required

To approve the foregoing recommendations.”

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.

Review of Insolvency Legislation

The Sub-Committee considered the undernoted report, which had been prepared by the Head of Economic Initiatives, in relation to the Council's response in respect of proposed changes to the Northern Ireland Insolvency Legislation:

"Purpose of Report"

The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of proposed changes to the insolvency legislation in Northern Ireland and to present a draft response to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) consultation document from Belfast City Council.

Background

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has instigated a review of the legal framework on personal and corporate insolvency in Northern Ireland in order to help promote business enterprise.

The current law, as contained in the Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989:

- Subjects all bankrupts to the same process and restrictions irrespective of the facts of their individual case or whether they were in any way culpable
- Introduced the administration procedures in an attempt to encourage the continuation of a debtor's business as a going concern where possible
- Introduced the administrative receivership procedure allowing the appointment of an administrative receiver to realise property to satisfy a debt.

The Department produced a consultation document in April 2003 entitled 'Productivity and Enterprise: Insolvency - a Second Chance'. This consultation document sets out the broad parameters of the current legislative framework and proposes a series of revisions with a view to:

- Encouraging responsible risk taking
- Providing certainty and fairness to creditors and other stakeholders
- Addressing the fear of failure and reducing the stigma of bankruptcy
- Encouraging those who have failed honestly to try again while providing robust and effective remedy against the small minority who abuse their creditors.

With regard to the implications of the reforms on personal insolvency, the key measures are as follows:

- Reducing the discharge period for most bankrupts from the current three years to a maximum of twelve months
- Reducing the stigma of failure by reviewing the relevance of statutory restrictions on undischarged bankrupts that appear unnecessary or outdated
- Providing for a tougher regime of restrictions on bankrupts whose conduct has been irresponsible, reckless or otherwise culpable
- Allowing the official receiver to act as supervisor in post-bankruptcy individual voluntary arrangements.

The impact of the proposed reforms on corporate insolvency measures will be to create a fairer system in which there is a duty of care to all creditors. The proposals will seek to streamline the administration procedure and to enhance its effectiveness.

Those most affected by the proposed legislative changes will be the individuals who have become insolvent for genuine reasons and who have not been involved in any financial wrongdoing. At the same time, the revision will offer protection for the public by imposing specific restrictions – by means of a Bankruptcy Restriction Order – for set periods on those insolvent individuals whose conduct has fallen short of the normal standards of commercial probity.

The consultation exercise generated by this document is currently open and all responses are required to be presented to DETI by 31st August, 2003.

A draft response from Belfast City Council is included in annex to this report (Appendix I).

Copies of the full version of the consultation document have been placed in the Members' library for reference.

Environmental Implications

None.

Capital City Strategy Reference

To drive the economic growth of Belfast.

LED Plan Reference

To promote an entrepreneurial culture within the city.

Budgetary Implications

None.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members:

- Note the current review of the legal framework on personal and corporate insolvency in Northern Ireland to help promote business enterprise
- Approve the attached response to the consultation exercise on the above on behalf of Belfast City Council.

Decision Required

To approve the foregoing recommendations.

Appendix 1

**PRODUCTIVITY AND ENTERPRISE: INSOLVENCY –
A SECOND CHANCE**

**A Response to the Consultation Document
on behalf of Belfast City Council**

Introduction

Belfast City Council welcomes the current Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's proposals to further modernise the legal framework on personal and corporate insolvency in Northern Ireland with a view to promoting business enterprise in the region.

As the capital city of the region and the location of an estimated 10,000 businesses, Belfast is a key centre of enterprise in the region. Belfast City Council acknowledges that a vibrant economy is one of the key elements required for a successful city. To this end, we support all endeavours to promote and enhance economic activity in the city and the wider region.

Background

Through its Development Department, Belfast City Council has consolidated its role as a key driver in the economic development of the region's capital city. It therefore has a role to play in all initiatives to enhance the economic development and competitiveness of the city and, ultimately, the wider region.

As the largest local authority in Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council is in receipt of considerable financial support under the EU's Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme to promote local economic development initiatives. The aim of the programme is to encourage economic development through a locally-based District Council-led strategic approach, complementing the work of DETI's main development agencies.

Belfast's Local Economic Development Plan is focused round a number of key priority themes. These include:

- Promoting Entrepreneurship
- Increasing Investability
- Creating Clusters
- Driving Economic Change
- Fostering Neighbourhood Renewal
- Outward and Forward Looking Region.

Belfast City Council is involved in a range of activity to support the development and growth of the indigenous business sector in the city. These range from efforts to support improvements in the volume and value of business start-ups – in line with Invest NI's Accelerating Entrepreneurship strategy – to providing programmes to support business growth in a range of key sectors including manufacturing, creative industries and information and communication technology.

In locating its support at this level of enterprise, Belfast City Council recognises the difficulties faced by those entering self-employment or starting and growing a new business. While the level of business failures within the first three years of operation is lower in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK, it remains the case that almost one in three businesses does not survive longer than three years.

While some commentators note that this 'churn' of business is healthy for any modern economy, it remains the case that business failure has far-reaching implications, not only for the business itself but for the owner, employees, shareholders and other stakeholders. It also has implications for business support organisations and policy makers in the field, as it can identify where intervention may have led to a recovery rather than a closure.

Belfast City Council's approach to improving the creation and sustainability of businesses in the City Council area is based on a preventative and supportive approach. This is built around the provision of sound advice and support, primarily offered through Belfast First Stop Business Shop. This walk-in facility, located in

Wellington Place in Belfast city centre, offers access to a range of information, guidance and support. The Shop also acts as a signposting facility, pointing would-be or existing businesses to the most appropriate source of support to deal with their enquiry.

Belfast City Council acknowledges that the perception of entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland is not as positive as it is elsewhere. This requires a consolidated effort to promote entrepreneurship in a more positive light. However we acknowledge that an incremental approach must be taken. As a result, Belfast City Council is supporting Young Enterprise in offering all primary pupils in the Belfast City Council area an introduction to key business concepts. In addition, through Belfast First Stop Business Shop, we are proactively promoting enterprise awareness to target groups and in target localities which may not, traditionally, have considered the option of self-employment.

Belfast City Council also supports the Business Start Programme. This programme – which is delivered through the Local Enterprise Agency network – offers a range of training and mentoring support to those interested in setting up their own business. The programme aims to equip individuals with the necessary information and resources to help them overcome the commonly-encountered hurdles associated with setting up and growing a small company. Initial research undertaken after the first year of the programme suggest that the business survival rate for companies participating in the programme is 91% (PWC).

However despite intervention by business support agencies and the best efforts of those setting up their own business, Belfast City Council acknowledges that the current legislative framework for dealing with business failure needs to be revised. This review is a welcome development as it signals the necessary changes at legislative level which are required to endorse and underpin our efforts to promoting a more entrepreneurial society. However we also acknowledge that the revisions must provide adequate legislative cover to ensure that stakeholders and creditors do not unnecessarily bear the brunt of business failure.

Comments on the Proposed Legislative Changes

Belfast City Council broadly welcomes the proposals outlined in this paper to help promote business enterprise. It does so with the proviso that full regard is paid to the need to strike a balance between protecting creditors and customers of businesses on the one hand and encouraging entrepreneurship on the other hand.

Belfast City Council particularly welcomes the change in the discharge period and the proposal that 'the vast majority of bankrupts will get an automatic discharge and release from bankruptcy after twelve months (or earlier if the Official Receiver has completed his enquiries'. This will be an important facilitator of new business starts and will help people start over again after a business failure which has come about on genuine grounds.

Against this development, we consider it important that the 'tougher regime of restrictions' referred to in the document is imposed on those who have behaved in a manner which is irresponsible or reckless or who are otherwise culpable in the case of a business closure. This will be a concern for creditors and stakeholders and it will be important to ensure that the revised legislation provides adequate cover to allow them to recover their assets, as appropriate.

Belfast City Council considers that it will be important to communicate these proposed changes – and the implications of the final revisions – to the business community, in order to ensure that they are aware of how they will affect their business. In this regard, we would recommend a comprehensive and visible promotion and communication campaign. We would be pleased to assist in the implementation of this campaign for companies located in the Belfast City Council area."

After discussion, the Sub-Committee approved the comments contained within the report as the Council's response to the proposed changes to the Insolvency Legislation and agreed that the response should be amended to include the view that any proposed amendments to the legislation should contain measures to discourage repeat offenders.

Shopmobility Belfast

The Sub-Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to a request for funding which had been received from Shopmobility Belfast:

"Purpose of Report

To advise Members of a request received from Shopmobility Belfast for funding to assist with the ongoing development costs of their services in Belfast for the period 2003 – 2004 and to secure approval.

Background

Shopmobility Belfast is an initiative whereby people with limited mobility are assisted to shop and use the social, commercial, cultural and artistic facilities of the city centre. This assistance is

in the form of providing electrically powered and manual wheelchairs, scooters and provision of personal physical help where necessary. This is a free service with no membership fee which is available from two centres - Victoria Centre and Castlecourt plus an additional outreach facility in the Parkcentre. Parking facilities have been allocated to the scheme in Victoria Square and accessible buses/taxis also feed into the system. The scheme has been in operation for seven years and has over 3,500 members.

The ongoing development of Shopmobility has been a part of Belfast City Council's Economic Development Strategy since 1995, under the theme Community Economic Development. To date they have received £102,000 towards the ongoing development costs of Shopmobility including; rental of city centre premises, marketing and promotional materials, and the purchase of a Mobility Unit and Minibus to provide the service in such areas as: Yorkgate, the Kennedy Centre, Belfast City Council amenities and for community group activities and events within the North, South, East and West of the City. To date Belfast City Council has received a high level of promotional coverage for its support to the project.

An evaluation of the project was undertaken by Belfast City Council in 2001 which highlighted that Shopmobility has well established management and administrative systems and that the project has enjoyed consistent annual growth in service delivery since formation.

Key achievements in the past year in Castlecourt, Victoria Centre and Park Centre include the following:

* Total bookings	2765
* Total Hours equipment used	7247
* Total new Members	306

Key activities planned for 2003-2004 include:

- * To maintain a headquarters for their satellite service and satellites throughout the City
- * To provide a quality shopmobility service in Belfast
- * To maintain an efficient and responsive system of administering Shopmobility Belfast services
- * To ensure that Shopmobility is adequately staffed
- * To recruit and train volunteers to help run the service
- * To provide Shopmobility clients with adequate mobility appropriate to their needs
- * To organise at least four assessable rambles and produce a booklet on rambles in Northern Ireland

- * To print and launch an Access Guide of Belfast City Centre
- * To increase their outputs of 2001-2002 by 15%

Funding Request

Shopmobility has approached the Economic Development Unit for a contribution of funding of £20,000 towards the running and expansion costs (salaries, rent, overheads, minibuss and mobile unit) over 2003-2004.

The total cost of running Shopmobility Belfast for the period 2003 - 2004 is £163,000. Other funders include the Community Fund, Department for Regional Development, Motability, South & Eastern Health Trust, North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust as well as donations/collections and Shopmobility Income.

Reasons to fund Shopmobility

Belfast City Council is committed to the development of the City Centre and actively works to ensure it is accessible for all citizens. Adherence to that principle assumes added significance for those whose mobility may be limited. This reflects the aims of Belfast City Council's transport policy to encourage integrated sustainable access throughout the City and to its view of promoting pedestrianisation access surrounding City Hall.

Belfast City Council has committed to the new Equality scheme in Belfast, and disability access to the City Centre's commercial, cultural and social facilities would be an integral part of this commitment.

The Development Department's new Capital City strategy highlights access as a priority under its Diminishing Barriers aim and has given a commitment to promote mobility for all citizens in the City. Shopmobility can help to achieve such an aim.

Belfast City Council has funded Shopmobility since its early establishment as part of its commitment to the economic development of the city centre and the Council continues to be widely recognised in all Shopmobility promotional literature as a key supporter of this project.

Environmental Implications

None.

Capital City Strategy Reference

2.1 To promote mobility for all citizens.

LED Plan Reference

To ensure equity and opportunity for all communities within urban renewal.

Budget

Allocation of £20,000 for the period 2003-2004.

Recommendation

To agree to fund the project for the period 2003/2004 to the total of £20,000 towards the ongoing development costs.

Decision Required

To approve the foregoing recommendation.”

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.

Economic Research Institute

The Sub-Committee was informed that the Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland was a new independent economic research body which was being established currently to assume the functions of the Northern Ireland Economic Council and the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre. The organisation would have two primary functions, including the provision of economic research and analysis and advice aimed at challenging and developing policy making and strategic thinking in Northern Ireland as well as the provision on a commission basis of economic research consultancy services to Government departments and the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Members of the Board would be drawn from the academia, business and trade union sectors.

The Economic Development Manager reported that, whilst the Chairman and Board members of the Institute had yet to be announced, the Head of Economic Initiatives had been recommended by the selection panel for appointment to the Board. The announcement of the full Board would be made in September, following Ministerial endorsements, and she had been recommended for appointment as a result of the fact that the Institute would play an important role in establishing regional economic policies for Northern Ireland. She recommended that the Sub-Committee endorse the appointment of the Head of Economic Initiatives as a Board member of the Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland.

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**Development (Economic Development) Sub-Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2003**

After discussion, the Sub-Committee endorsed the appointment of the Head of Economic Initiatives to the above-mentioned institute and congratulated her on this achievement.

Chairman