

# Development Committee

Tuesday, 20th January, 2015

## MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);  
Aldermen M. Campbell, Ekin, Kingston,  
Stalford and Webb;  
Councillors Beattie, Convery, Kelly,  
Kennedy, Kingston, Kyle, Magee,  
McAteer, Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Donnghaile  
and Spence.
- In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;  
Mrs. L. Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives  
and International Development; and  
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager; and  
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Keenan and Verner.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 16th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 5th January, subject to the omission of the item under the heading "Wheelworks Art Cart", which, at the request of Councillor Kyle and with the permission of the Council, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Invest NI**

The Committee agreed to request that the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee consider inviting representatives of Invest NI to address a future meeting of that Committee to discuss the Council's role in attracting Foreign and Direct Investment to the City.

### **Wheelworks Art Cart - Reconsidered Item**

In accordance with the decision of the Council of 5th January, the Committee considered further the following minute:

**“Wheelworks Art Cart**

*The Committee was advised that a request had been received from Wheelworks, a youth arts group based in Belfast, seeking financial assistance to oversee the replacement of its purpose-built mobile arts hub, that is, the Arts Cart. The Director reported that the Arts Cart was used by Wheelworks to bring high-quality arts provision to communities in which there existed a lack of arts infrastructure and where levels of engagement were below average. The current Arts Cart was 14 years old and it was deemed necessary to acquire a replacement. He indicated that the total cost of the project would be £212,000, with the Arts Council providing £200,000 of that amount. Accordingly, the Director indicated that the Council had been requested to fund the projected shortfall of £12,000, provision for which existed within current departmental budgets.*

*The Committee agreed to provide £12,000 to Wheelworks for the purposes outlined.”*

The Committee considered a number of documents which had been received on behalf of the Wheelworks organisation. Those documents outlined the scope of its work throughout Belfast and gave a breakdown of the number of children who had benefitted from the project, together with an overview of the range of activities which had been delivered.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 16th December, subject to the Director discussing with Wheelworks the feasibility of extending and enhancing its outreach work within the east of the City.

**Support for Business Improvement Districts - Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that, at the December 2014 meeting of the Development Committee, a request for support from those working on the Business Improvement District (BID) applications for the Cathedral Quarter and Lisburn Road areas was presented to the committee for consideration.**
- 1.2 Members will also recall that the committee previously agreed to provide £45,000 to Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) to support the recruitment of a member of staff to carry out preparatory work on a Business Improvement District (BID) for a defined area within the city core. The council’s funding was matched with a similar amount from Department for Social**

Development (DSD), with the funding to be allocated over an 18 month period.

- 1.3 BCCM, Cathedral Quarter Trust and Lisburn Road Business Association (LRBA) were the three Belfast-based organisations selected to become pilots as part of a BIDs Academy'. This was an initiative by DSD to identify areas that had the potential and interest in becoming a BID area and to provide them with support to strengthen their initiative and make them better prepared once the BIDs legislation was in place and organisations were formally invited to apply to become a BID.
- 1.4 After discussion at the December 2014 meeting, Members asked that engagement take place between council officers and representatives from BCCM to see whether they had any capacity or resources available to provide support to CQT and LRBA to help them undertake the necessary preparatory work on their BID submissions. They also asked that maps of the BID areas in the city centre and Cathedral Quarter be provided for their information.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Cathedral Quarter Trust requested a contribution from the council of up to £37,000 towards a resource to carry out the BIDs preparatory work. They have already carried out a significant volume of work in analysing the database provided by Land and Property Services (LPS) and now need to spend time on additional promotion of the BID and securing support for the submission from local businesses. This work is currently being done within their own resources (both staff and financial resources) but they consider that it will require a full-time staff resource along with some administrative support and some overhead costs associated with promotional activities. They expect the overall costs to be in the region of £70-£80,000 and are seeking match funding from NITB and DSD.
- 2.2 Lisburn Road Business Association (LRBA) have carried out some preliminary work on the BID to date including defining the area, getting the database from LPS and undertaking some planning and preparatory works to set out the programme of activity for the coming year. The next stages for the group are to create a BIDs website and develop a regular newsletter, undertake a survey of the 300+ businesses in the BID area and carry out a review of services/ agreements currently in place within the BID area to clarify the baseline. Following that, they will develop a communications plan, develop the business plan

and implement the campaign in the run up to the decision date in late Autumn 2015. LRBA currently has £12,000 that it has secured from Area Working Group monies and is using this to undertake the preliminary work. It estimates that it will need one full-time resource (costing around £35,000 p.a.) plus some overhead costs (indicative costs around £15,000) to carry out the required development activity.

- 2.3 The Development Committee was previously advised that there was no budget available with the Development Department to finance either of these requests in the draft budgets for 2015/16 or in the current financial year.
- 2.4 Officers from the Development Department also engaged with BCCM to identify whether they had any resources or capacity that they could allocate to support the development of the BIDs in Cathedral Quarter and Lisburn Road areas. At this point, BCCM have advised that their BIDs Manager has a full programme of work to meet the requirements set out in the BCCM BIDs submission. As such, she would not be able to provide any substantial support to either Cathedral Quarter Trust or Lisburn Road Business Association (LRBA).

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 CQT have requested funding of £37,000 towards the cost of a BIDs Manager as well as some overheads. LRBA have requested funding in the region of £50,000 to support this activity. This represents a combined financial request of around £87,000. As highlighted above there are no resources currently available to meet these costs.

### **4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

- 4.1 There are no specific equality and good relations implications.

### **5 Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Members are asked to:**

- Note the requests for financial support towards the BID development process from CQT and LRBA
- Note the advice from BCCM that they are not in a position to provide any substantial support to either Cathedral Quarter Trust or Lisburn Road Business Association

- **Advise on how the requests for support from Cathedral Quarter Trust and Lisburn Road Business Association should be considered in the absence of any financial resources at this point in time.”**

The Director outlined the principal aspects of the report and answered a range of Members' questions.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that officers from within the Department would continue to facilitate discussions with representatives from both the Cathedral Quarter Trust and the Lisburn Road Business Association in respect of the BIDs process.

#### **Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee - European Engagement**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Assembly's Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) Committee inviting the Council to make a presentation at its meeting scheduled for 12th February. The Director reported that the presentation would relate to the Council's strategic approach to European engagement.

The Committee agreed that the Chairman and the European Manager be authorised to make a presentation to the DCAL Committee as outlined.

#### **Markets Rights Policy**

(Ms. N. Largey, Council Solicitor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to defer, until its meeting in February, consideration of the above-mentioned report to enable Members to undertake further consultations within their respective parties in respect of the matter.

#### **Consultation Exercise - Generalist Advice Services**

The Committee endorsed a draft response to the Department for Social Development's consultation exercise which was entitled, 'A Strategy for the Delivery of Generalist Advice Services in Northern Ireland from 2015 to 2020'.

To read that response, click on the following link: [Council Response](#)

#### **Request for Funding - WOMEN'STEC**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1 **Background Information**

- 1.1 **A request for funding has been received from WOMEN'STEC for short term funding to address critical and immediate cash flow issues.**

- 1.2 Based in Belfast, WOMEN'STEC provides training for women in non-traditional skills, specifically for the construction and ICT sectors and employs 5 staff. The aim of the organisation is to target social and economic disadvantage by supporting females back into employment, to promote workforce diversity and address skill shortages. The organisation operates training programmes across a number of disciplines including joinery, furniture making, plumbing, painting and decorating, ECDL, social media and digital services.
- 1.3 WOMEN'STEC is primarily funded through the delivery of a European Social Fund (ESF) project entitled 'Extend Training in the Community', expected to conclude in March 2015. To date over 300 women have benefited from this project, which supports females in disadvantaged areas to access soft skills, vocational skills and employability training to improve their ability to participate in the labour market or engage in further training.
- 1.4 Members will be aware that the ESF is an EU fund to address economic activity and increase workforce skills. In Northern Ireland the programme is administered by the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL). A call for projects under the new ESF programme was launched by DEL at the end of November 2014, closing 9 January 2015. Successful projects will be operational from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018.
- 1.5 Members will also be aware of the challenges faced by organisations in finding match funding for ESF projects. While projects may be approved for funding, many do not have their match funding identified and this is likely to generate significant demands on the council and other potential funders when the assessment process concludes in February 2015.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The current ESF project delivered by WOMEN'STEC entitled 'Extend Training in the Community (ETC)' will end in March 2015 and is the main source of income for the organisation. The programme is fully funded by ESF and the Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO). However changes to the rules in vouching expenditure of ESF projects and a delay in payments due to new audit requirements by DEL, have led to cash flow issues.
- 2.2 To alleviate financial pressures WOMEN'STEC has approached the Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT) to obtain a bridging loan of £20,000. However they have recently been

advised that the application cannot proceed until additional resources are secured. In order to lever loan funding WOMEN'STEC must provide confirmation, by the end of January, that additional funding of £18,500 has been secured. If funding cannot be secured at that level, it is expected that WOMEN'STEC will cease to operate beyond February 2015.

- 2.3 WOMEN'STEC are continuing efforts to alleviate immediate cash flow issues and £1,500 has been secured through their social economy trading arm. Clanmil Housing Association has also committed £10,000 and engagement with private sector organisations is also taking place. However no further commitment has been confirmed. Despite these efforts a funding gap still exists to draw down the UCIT loan of £7,000.
- 2.4 WOMEN'STEC have submitted a project for consideration in the most recent call for applications for the new ESF programme. This new project 'Supporting People –Empowering Communities' (SPEC) will be delivered in partnership with Clanmil Housing Association. Targeting Clanmil Housing residents from across Belfast, this project will deliver training on DIY maintenance and money management. In addition the programme will offer apprenticeships and work experience placements to WOMEN'STEC students.
- 2.5 Delivery of this project will be dependent upon a successful ESF application and securing match funding requirements. Members will be aware that the ESF is a competitive process and that not all projects will be successful in receiving funding. WOMEN'STEC are seeking funding from a range of sources but they do not have all their match-funding in place at this point (like many other ESF applications).
- 2.6 To enable WOMEN'STEC to continue to operate in the short term and lever the loan from UCIT, members are asked to consider providing funding up to £7,000 to address the immediate cash flow issues faced by the organisation.

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 The resource implication for this request is to provide £7,000 of funding to help the organisation access a bridging loan from UCIT. The Director of Development will be required to discuss this request with the Director of Finance and Resources given that no provision has been made within the current departmental budgets.

4 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

4.1 None.

5 **Recommendation**

**That the Director of Development engages with the Director of Finance and Resources to discuss the request given that no provision has been made within the current departmental budgets.”**

The Committee agreed, in principle, to accede to the request and authorised the Director to discuss the matter with the Director of Finance and Resources to ascertain if a sum of £7,000 could be identified from within the Council's budgetary underspend for that purpose. In addition, the Committee delegated power to the Directors to make the payment should sufficient funds be identified.

Chairman