

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 7th February, 2024

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nic Bhranair (Chairperson);
Alderman Lawlor;
Councillors Bunting, Canavan, S. Douglas,
Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Lyons,
Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe, McCormick,
McDowell, McDonough-Brown, I. McLaughlin,
Murray and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Douglas.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 10th and 23rd January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st February.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 2.d) Belfast 2024 Music Heritage Programme, Councillor McCabe declared an interest, in that she was employed by Féile an Phobail and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

Councillor Gormley also declared an interest in item 2.d) Belfast 2024 Music Heritage Programme, in that he was a Board Member of LORAG who had applied for funding under the Programme but had been unsuccessful.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following five items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of

exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

Regeneration Lobbying and Advocacy Paper
and Regeneration Framework Update

The Committee was provided with an update regarding the work which had been undertaken in relation to a Regeneration Lobbying and Advocacy proposition and a Regeneration Framework.

The Director of City Regeneration and Development presented a summary of a proposal to advance a direct advocacy with both the UK Government in Westminster and the Northern Ireland Executive. During discussion, it was suggested that this work should include an approach via the Shared Island funding structures.

During further discussion, a Member suggested that the Committee write to the new Minister for Communities to welcome him to his position and call on him to work with all relevant stakeholders to achieve the conferring of regeneration powers to councils with the appropriate budgets within this Assembly mandate.

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. Noted the update on the Regeneration Funding Lobbying and Advocacy Proposition Paper, including presentation summary slides as presented to Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum on 11th January, 2024;
- II. Noted that a report was being brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in February seeking agreement on advancing this advocacy work. This would include a proposal to advance a direct advocacy with both the UK Government in Westminster and the Northern Ireland Executive (when re-established) and informed by a detailed stakeholder mapping and engagement plan;
- III. Noted the update on the Regeneration Framework and its interdependencies with the Advocacy and Lobby Proposition work and that further Member engagement was planned in respect of the Regeneration Framework over the coming weeks; and
- IV. Agreed to write to the new Minister for Communities to welcome him to his position and request that he would work with all relevant stakeholders to achieve the conferring of regeneration powers to councils with the appropriate budgets within this Assembly mandate.

Update on externally funded placemaking and active travel projects: Active Travel Enablers, Grey to Green and South West Quarter

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an update on the delivery of external funded placemaking and active travel projects including Grey to Green, Active Travel Enablers, Business and Community Cluster Grants and the South- West Quarter Revitalisation.

During discussion, the Senior Development Manager explained further the process for secured Cycle Parking Facilities and the covered Cycle Stands City Wide project, together with the potential reallocation of covered and secured cycle lanes and their locations. He also advised that he would provide further detail on the application of the secure cycle parking at Finaghy Primary School.

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. Noted the update in relation to the Council and Department for Communities funded Great Victoria St Tactical Regeneration work;
- II. Noted the ongoing delivery of the Department for Infrastructure funded Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund 2022/23, including the issues experienced in delivering some of these project strands and the on-going work which was being undertaken to progress covered cycle stands and secure cycle parking facilities;
- III. Noted that officers were working with delivery partners, including Queens and Maritime Belfast, to provide additional funding to deliver previously approved projects within the conditions of the Letter of Offer; and
- IV. Noted that the Chief Executive would be writing to the Minister for Infrastructure to reiterate the Council's concerns in relation to the short timeframe available for the delivery of the Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund and the potential for a more flexible approach to in-year funding.

Belfast Zoo - Scale of Charges 2024-25

The Director of Economic Development outlined the increase to the Zoo scale of charges for the financial year 2024-2025 and confirmed the date of implementation.

The Committee:

- Noted the price increases for existing categories; and
- Noted the change of date for the introduction of price increases to commence on Monday, 8th April, 2024.

Belfast 2024 Music Heritage Programme

The Director of Economic Development informed the Committee of the results of the Music Heritage Programme 2024 process and sought approval for the recommendations which had been outlined in the report. He also updated Members on the Gradam Ceoil bursary project.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of this report and agreed the recommendations under the Music Heritage Programme 2024, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- Agreed to continue the Gradam Ceoil bursary project with an allocation of £15,000.

Belfast 2024 funding reallocation

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Committee that the Council, at its meeting in January, had agreed that the reports associated with Belfast 2024 be referred back to both the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, for consideration to be given to reprofiling the funding for the Power Plants project towards the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.

He stated that Members were asked to consider referring the decision of the reallocation and repurposing of this budget to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Flynn,

Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees not to refer the decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee or consider the reprofiling of the funding for the Power Plants project towards the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.

On a vote, two Members voted for the proposal and seventeen against and it was declared lost.

The recommendation as outlined in the report was put to the Committee and agreed.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to refer the decision of the funding reallocation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Workshop

The Committee noted the forthcoming joint workshop of the People and Communities Committee and the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, scheduled for 20th February with the NIHE in relation to housing supply and demand.

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure

The Committee noted the correspondence received from the Department for Infrastructure which provided an update on queries which had been raised at the Special Committee in November 2023.

Strategic and Operational Issues

Minutes of the Belfast Stories Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Belfast Stories Working Group of 23rd January, 2024.

Request to Present – Living with Water Team (NIW)

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from the Living with Water Team at the Special Committee meeting on 27th March, 2024.

Request to Present – Visit Belfast

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation on Visit Belfast's 2024-25 Business Plan at the Committee meeting on 13th March, 2024, including a request for Council support towards the work programme for the coming financial year.

Chairperson