

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 8th March, 2013

## MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);  
Aldermen M. Campbell and R. Newton; and  
Councillors Attwood, Convery, Corr, Haire,  
Hanna, Hendron, Hussey, Jones, Lavery,  
Maskey, McCarthy, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín,  
Ó Muilleoir and A. Newton.

Also Attended: Councillor Spence.

In attendance: Mr. C Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive\Town solicitor;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;  
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported by Councillor Reynolds.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 8th and 22nd February were taken as read and signed correct. It was reported that those minutes have been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th March, subject to the amendment of the minute under the heading "ILLUMINATE - Project Completion and Governance Arrangements" to provide that the proposed lighting scheme to mark the Orangefest celebrations would be in orange and purple rather than orange alone.

### Investment Programme

#### Maximising the Regeneration Impact of the Stadia Developments

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for consideration the undernoted report:

#### **"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 In receiving a presentation on the Leisure Estate Review at a special meeting on 1 March 2013 the Committee asked that a further detailed report was produced detailing progress and regeneration opportunities in relation to the stadia development.**

**2**     **Progress to Date**

- 2.1**     In 2011 the Council commissioned and endorsed a report that set out potential regeneration opportunities in the broader areas adjacent to the two stadia and tasked Council officers to engage with the stadia developers to mutual advantage.
- 2.2**     For most of 2012 engagement was limited due in large part to the sporting bodies ie IFA and GAA together with Sports NI, who were managing the process, being fully focussed on the stadium delivery. There is a tight timeline for delivery in that the public money allocated to the stadium must be spent within the Comprehensive Spending Review period which ends in 2015 or else it is at risk. As a result very limited attention was given to wider regeneration issues.
- 2.3**     During 2012 the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) took a more hands on approach to the delivery process and began to seek evidence of community benefit from the stadium schemes given the level of public money being made available. DCAL retain a percentage of the overall funding for the stadia which it can make available for sustainable community benefit if it is satisfied with the proposals.
- 2.4**     In November 2012 DCAL officials met Council staff to seek Council support in creating additional community benefit. While this was a welcome approach it is very tightly time bound as DCAL was seeking Council commitment in line with its stadium delivery schedule which had started and requires major Council decisions by April/May 2013.
- 2.5**     Committee in December 2012 agreed that officials should continue to work on a strategy with DCAL, IFA and GAA to ensure the greatest mutual benefit in terms on community gain from these projects and to report back in January in the context of the Leisure Estate Review.
- 2.6**     In January 2013 Committee agreed:
- to note the potential for comprehensive regeneration at both sites through collaborative development and the wider social, physical and economic benefits possible through maximising the major DCAL investment as a key element of Phase 1 of the Leisure Review.

- to approve in principle the redevelopment of both the Olympia and Andersonstown Leisure Centres and associated assets to form Phase 1 of the Citywide Leisure Review to allow progression to stage 2 appraisal as part of the Capital Programme.
- to approve the proposed timetable and process for concurrent development of options for both sites
- to note the proposed public engagement focus on options
- to approve the progression of further analysis of options 1 and 2 emerging from the feasibility study on Windsor/Midgely Park/Olympia by Hamilton Architects
- to note the continuing development of initial concepts around Casement Park/Andersonstown by Consarc Design Group.

**3     Key Issues – Windsor/Olympia**

- 3.1     Option 2 which includes moving leisure provision into the new stadium; relocation of community centre provision into the Village area; redevelopment of the Olympia site to provide a new alignment and replacement for Midgely Park; a new pitch; play provision; some commercial development and new public realm and access to the stadium from Boucher Road was the Council preference.**
- 3.2     Two community engagement sessions have taken place and during debate option 2 is closely aligned to public response although further consultation will be necessary on detail.**
- 3.3     DCAL/Linfield and the IFA also favour this option as the Council use of stadium space for leisure in the widest sense meets the sustainable community benefit criteria and of course it provides a much better setting and access for the new stadium adding to its offer.**
- 3.4     Currently an economic appraisal is underway to test the extent of leisure offer available in the stadium space, the cost of the overall option as opposed to replacing Olympia as is, including IFA rental agreements with Linfield on Midgely Park etc.**

- 3.5 If option 2 is viable it can really only happen in two phases:
- i. to build the leisure element in the stadium and;
  - ii. when that is complete demolish Olympia and redevelop the site as Phase 2. Obviously this allows continuity in terms of leisure provision but will mean some temporary loss of pitch provision to both the Council and Linfield.
- 3.6 The big issue for DCAL/IFA in regard to this is timetable. Planning permission for Windsor has been granted including an extension to the West stand which could provide leisure space. DCAL/IFA intend to begin construction in September and would need a decision from Council in April/May as to whether or not option 2 Phase 1 and 2 is a consideration for the tendering process.
- 3.7 It is intended that worked up capital costs for the option(s) to redevelop Olympia will be available for Members in the April/May period. Obviously this will be a major decision in terms of capital spend as Phase 2 and Andersonstown Sites run in conjunction if approved.
- 4 **Key Issues – Casement/Andersonstown**
- 4.1 Options for collaborative leisure at Casement/Andersonstown essentially is one of three broad options:
- i. development leisure space within the stadium equivalent in space terms to the existing leisure centre and redevelop the leisure site in some other way;
  - ii. Share leisure provision with between the stadium and a replacement of the Andersonstown Leisure Centre site.
  - iii. Provide all new leisure facilities at the Andersonstown Leisure Centre site and have a different form of community benefit associated with the stadium.
- 4.2 A number of meetings took place with the GAA integrated design team to test option (i) and after some difficulties about available space proposals were identified that could provide equivalent floor space within the stadium to include both wet and dry facilities.

- 4.3** The option however had some obvious drawbacks in that it required additional basement development for a pool which besides construction cost increases had implications for the stadium timetable which is running behind the Windsor Park programme. Furthermore there may be operational and access restriction on major match days and it would take a further two months design work to get a real understanding of cost and facilities available.
- 4.4** A public meeting was also held in Andersonstown Leisure Centre which was very well attended in regard to the three options above and there was overwhelming support for option (iii) i.e replace the Andersonstown Leisure Centre on its existing site. Both DCAL and the GAA were at the public meeting.
- 4.5** Although one public meeting does not represent everyone the view from political representatives in the area is also that a replacement of Andersonstown on the existing site is preferable with a different form of community benefit to be derived from the stadium development.
- 4.6** Council officers view is that there is very limited scope in continuing with a leisure centre within the stadium option given the obvious difficulties. We have however continued engagement with DCAL officials as to how best to ensure community benefit for the public money associated with Casement.
- 4.7** As noted DCAL have constituted an interdepartmental group to develop comprehensive regeneration plans and have indicated to Council officers that community benefit could be extended outside the stadium boundary to potentially North Link pitches eg the Ravenhill stadium community benefit proposal is considering a pitch in a nearby school.
- 4.8** In terms of the Leisure Centre site initial planning assessment indicate that planning would be available for the replacement Leisure Centre on the same location or included behind the existing centre to allow continuity of provision during construction and then some commercial development on the road frontage. There will of course be some issues with neighbours and tenants ie Ulster Bank.
- 4.9** The planners were opposed to any car park provision on the site associated with the stadium development however it may be worthwhile for the Council to commission a wider traffic impact study in the effect of both stadiums and associated regeneration plans given the potential impact to the South West of the City and the Boucher Road area in particular which contains a number of Council assets.

- 4.10 Council officers have also been in contact with DSD who have a high level South West Gateway Masterplan which they are about to begin to operationalise particularly in regard to traffic issues and would be keen to work with Council.

## **5 Comprehensive Regeneration**

- 5.1 DCAL have had one meeting of an interdepartmental group intended to create comprehensive regeneration plans which a Council officer attended. Rather than wait until this group again meets and as per the Committee's decision on 1 March, Council officers have begun developing comprehensive regeneration plans, the first cut of which is attached as an appendix.

- 5.2 Various reports commissioned by the Council have identified the major physical, social and economic regenerative impacts of stadia development and the consequent economic multiplier effect. Consideration needs to be given to the benefits of greater construction spend, the use of social clauses, tourism, economic development, support etc.

- 5.3 Member's views are sought on these over the next few weeks as Council officers engage with other departments in terms of making these plans reality.

## **6 Resource Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

Not quantified at this stage but likely to involve significant financial investment in regard to the two leisure centres and associated assets required to fulfil regeneration opportunities.

### **6.2 Human Resources**

There will be significant staff resource requirements from relevant departments in order to develop each project in line with DCAL's tight timeframe.

- 6.3 Potential staffing issues will be examined as part of the overall review of the leisure estate. Any resultant HR issues will be managed in accordance with the Council's processes, policies and procedures for dealing with HR matters and TU consultation.

6.4 **Asset and Other Implications**

Unknown at this stage, however comprehensive regeneration of the significant stadium developments should lead to improved services and benefits for the community and aesthetic improvements at Council sites.

7 **Recommendations**

7.1 The Committee is asked to:

1. To note progress to date.
2. To move both regeneration plans forward in tandem and in conjunction with government departments given the one off strategic opportunity and DCAL community benefit commitment.
3. To engage in whichever way suits Member best with officers and provide feedback on the appended draft regeneration plans.
4. To continue the in principle decision to move both the Olympia and Andersonstown Leisure Centres to stage 2 of the Capital Programme as the first phase of the Citywide Leisure Estate Review; and to develop both regeneration plans concurrently as far as possible working toward an investment decision in May with a completion date in 2016.
5. To refocus the economic appraisal at the Casement/Andersonstown development on the Andersonstown site and maximise regeneration benefits of both the Leisure Centre and Stadium.
6. To authorise officers to undertake a wider traffic impact study for South West Belfast in conjunction with DSD in the first instance.”

The Director of Property and Projects provided details in relation to the work which had been undertaken in order to date and the work which was still required to be undertaken in order to progress the matter.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed also that work be undertaken in order to draw up a consultation plan for leisure provision for the east and north of the city and that a report thereon be submitted to the Committee in due course.

### **Democratic Services and Governance**

#### **Appointments to the Belfast Education and Library Board**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting on 18th May, 2012, the Committee was reminded that correspondence has been received from the Department of Education indicating that, following the selection process which had been carried out to appoint 4 Members to the Board from the 8 names submitted, which involved the completion of application forms by the nominees, an eligibility sift of applications against the criteria and, for those who met the eligibility criteria, a conversation with a purpose, the outcome was that three of the nominees did not progress beyond the eligibility sift stage and one candidate had withdrawn from the process.**
- 1.2 This has resulted in only four eligible candidates remaining in the process and the Minister for Education has asked for the current pool of candidates to be augmented before he made his choice of candidates to be appointed. The Department had therefore requested the Council to submit an additional four nominations, who would be required to undergo the same selection process as that set out above. It was noted at that time that those Councillors who had previously been nominated and who did not progress beyond the eligibility sift would not be eligible for re-nomination.**
- 1.3 The Committee agreed that the Minister be requested to make as many appointments as possible from those candidates who had already been deemed to be appointable, in line with the Council's d'Hondt system of proportionality which provided that the four appointments should comprise two Sinn Féin Party representatives and one each from the Democratic Unionist and Social Democratic and Labour Parties, with any places remaining unfilled using this process to be selected from those Parties which had not been offered their entitlement. In addition, the Committee agreed that should the Minister not agree to make such appointments, then the undernoted**



process should be employed to select the additional four nominations:

Choice 11 – Democratic Unionist  
Choice 12 – Sinn Fein  
Choice 13 – Democratic Unionist  
Choice 14 – Alliance

- 1.4 However, if the Democratic Unionist Party maintained its previous position of only submitting one candidate (which it had already done as part of the process in October, 2011), then the nominations from the Parties willing to supply names would fall to:

Choice 12 – Sinn Fein  
Choice 14 – Alliance  
Choice 15 – Ulster Unionist  
Choice 16 – Sinn Fein

## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Correspondence has now been received from the Department indicating that the Minister is unwilling to make any appointments to the Board until he receives an additional 4 nominations from the Council and those persons have completed the selection process. Accordingly, in line with the Committee decision of 18th May, the Party Leaders concerned have been requested to provide the names of suitable candidates.

## **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 None.

## **4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 4.1 None. The identification of those Parties entitled to nominate Members for consideration for appointment is based upon the Council's accepted system of proportionality.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Committee is requested to note the information."

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Request for the use of the Council Chamber**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Council's Parks and Leisure Department for the use of the Council Chamber to facilitate a discussion between the Council's Youth Forum and the Sligo Youth Parliament. The event would take place on Saturday, 13th April and would include thirty young people and leaders.

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Committee that the Growing Respect Programme was funded as part of Belfast's PEACE III Plan and was overseen by the Parks and Leisure Department. The Youth Parliament had been asked to participate in the Cross-Border element of the Programme. As part of its participation through exchange visits, the Department would like to host a facilitated discussion with Sligo Youth Parliament which would encourage them to explore common issues, such as young people's possible involvement in local government decision making. The event would involve young people aged between thirteen and eighteen and there would be adequate staff and other leaders available to ensure the smooth running and safety of the event.

The Committee agreed to accede the request.

**Notice of Motion Re: Carl Frampton**

The Committee was reminded that at the Council meeting on 4th March the following Notice of Motion had been proposed by Councillor Spence:

"This Council congratulates Carl Frampton on becoming the European Boxing Union Champion and agrees to have a civic reception to recognise the achievements he has made to date."

In accordance with Standing Order 11(e), the Motion stood referred without discussion to the Committee.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Spence indicated that, in his opinion, there were two possible options which the Committee could consider for the hosting of an event to recognise the achievements to date of Carl Frampton. The first would be similar to the event which had been held in 2010 to recognise the achievement of Paddy Barnes in winning the Gold Medal in the European Amateur Boxing Championships or, secondly, the Committee might consider holding a larger event in the Banqueting Hall which would allow for a wider range of persons to be invited.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to the hosting of an event, similar to that which had been held in 2010 for Paddy Barnes, to recognise the achievements to date of Carl Frampton.

**Notice of Motion Re: Shared City Vision**

The Committee was reminded that at the Council meeting on 4th March, the undernoted Notice of Motion had been proposed by Councillor Atwood:

“The Investment Programme, which the Council launched a year ago, was a strong and visible symbol of the Council’s leadership of the city and its desire to improve quality of life across Belfast. This Council now commits to underlining its city leadership role by engaging key city stakeholders, community partners and the people of the city in creating a longer-term, shared city vision, underpinned by a set of clear quality of life outcome indicators.

In taking this action, the Council will be well prepared for its new role in 2015 when it will be the planning and regeneration authority for Belfast with a duty to create a community plan for the area. This work will provide a clear statement of ambition for Belfast and act as a focus for partnership working. It will allow us to set the bar high for delivery for each and every community across Belfast.

A city outcomes framework will help ensure the decisions the Council and its partners make about investment and service delivery are evidenced-based and have the greatest chance of improving competitiveness, reducing inequalities and tackling persistent disadvantage.”

In accordance with Standing Order 11 (e), the Motion had stood referred to the Committee without debate.

The Committee agreed that a report and Action Plan be submitted to the Committee in due course encompassing the terms and issues as set out in the Motion.

**Cross-Cutting Issues**

**Belfast Health and Social Care Board - Consultation on the Future of  
Emergency Services Departments in Belfast**

The Committee was advised that the Belfast Health and Social Care Board was undertaking a consultation exercise on the Future Configuration of Emergency Department Services in Belfast and had offered to brief the Committee on the options in this regard. The consultation period would last for 13 weeks and the deadline for responses was 10th May, 2013.

The Committee agree to hold a briefing session, to which all Members of the Council would be invited, to receive a presentation in this regard.

Chairman